

OAKRIDGE & WESTFIR

COMMUNITY TOURISM PROFILE

Community findings from the
Lane County Destination Master Plan

JLL



Community Tourism Snapshot

Oakridge and Westfir have built a community identity around outdoor recreation over the past two decades, drawing visitors primarily for mountain biking, hiking, trail running, river recreation, and access to the Willamette National Forest. The Oakridge Mountain Biking Area covers more than 350 miles of trails within and around the Willamette National Forest, with the majority open to mountain bike access, and is recognized by the International Mountain Bicycling Association as a Ride Center destination. Westfir's most recognizable asset is the Office Covered Bridge, Oregon's longest covered bridge at 180 feet, built in 1944 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places; it connects directly to the North Fork Trail and anchors Westfir's own visitor identity alongside the broader trail network. Local entrepreneurs, guides, outfitters, and recreation businesses have developed alongside the trails to support an expanding outdoor recreation economy.

The JLL Demand Driver Scorecard shows mountain biking and the Willamette National Forest scoring high enough to draw visitors from well beyond the region, Oakridge and Westfir's strongest draws. Mountain biking as an activity scores at this level countywide, reflecting the sport's overall popularity rather than Oakridge specifically; the Oakridge Mountain Biking Area itself, as a named destination, scores somewhat lower, meaning the area's name recognition among riders has not yet caught up to the quality and scale of the trail network itself. Willamette Pass, Salt Creek Falls, hiking, camping, road cycling, and fishing all score high enough to pull visitors specifically to the area, though typically from a more limited geographic radius, adding year-round depth across multiple visitor interests.

Nearly half of visitors travel from outside Oregon. Visitor spending is concentrated in fuel and food, with lower spending on lodging, retail, and recreation services. The volume of visitation is strong; the economic return per visitor is not proportionate to it. Increasing overnight stays and expanding recreation services are the most direct ways to address this.

Oakridge and Westfir residents are supportive of tourism: 85% of the 47 respondents view tourism positively, and 86% of 43 respondents would recommend the community to family and friends. Residents support tourism's role in the local economy and expect future growth to create living-wage jobs, support local businesses, protect forests and rivers, maintain housing affordability, and preserve the community's rural character.

Stakeholder and resident input pointed to several shared priorities: building on the outdoor recreation economy, expanding visitor amenities that extend stays, improving transportation and community infrastructure, and keeping tourism growth in line with community values and capacity.

Strategic Opportunity

Oakridge and Westfir can strengthen their position as a leading mountain biking destination in the Pacific Northwest, building on an established trail network and recreation economy to grow year-round visitation, support locally owned businesses, protect natural resources, and improve quality of life for residents.

Opportunities

1. Strengthen the Area's Reputation as a Mountain Biking Destination

Supports Lane County Destination Master Plan Priorities: Build a Year-Round, County-Wide Visitor Economy • Champion Strong Regional Branding and Marketing

Mountain biking is the community's primary competitive asset and functions as a national draw for the area as a whole. That recognition currently attaches to mountain biking as an activity more than to the Oakridge Mountain Biking Area as a specific, named destination: riders may know the sport is popular in Oregon without necessarily knowing to come to Oakridge for it.

Closing that gap requires continued investment in trails, bike-specific services, and destination marketing that builds awareness of Oakridge and Westfir, by name, among riders at a national scale.

Recommendations

- Continue investing in trail development, maintenance, and expansion, including beginner and intermediate terrain that broadens the riding audience and supports longer seasons
- Develop bike-specific services including rentals, repairs, shuttles, and route planning that give visitors reasons to spend locally and stay longer
- Use Travel Lane County's countywide brand and marketing platform to promote Oakridge and Westfir's trail network, the Office Covered Bridge, and Willamette National Forest access as part of a coordinated regional campaign, with local outfitters and businesses driving which events and assets are featured

2. Enhance the Visitor Experience and Increase Overnight Visitation

Supports Lane County Destination Master Plan Priorities: Close the Infrastructure Gap • Build a Year-Round, County-Wide Visitor Economy

Visitor spending in Oakridge and Westfir is concentrated in fuel and food, with lower spending on lodging, retail, and recreation services.

The volume of visitation is not the constraint; the connection between the trail network and the two downtowns is. Visitors who arrive for the trails have limited practical ways to reach town by bike or on foot, and limited reasons to stay once the ride ends.

Recommendations

- Develop direct trail and path connections linking the mountain biking trail network to downtown Oakridge and Westfir, so visitors arriving by bike can reach local businesses without needing a vehicle
- Encourage investment in lodging, visitor accommodations, and recreation-supporting amenities that extend visitor stays
- Improve visitor infrastructure and amenities, including wayfinding, trailheads, bicycle facilities, transportation connections, visitor information, and community beautification
- Develop multi-day itineraries and coordinated visitor communications highlighting recreation opportunities, local businesses, dining, events, and seasonal experiences

3. Protect Community Character Through Stewardship and Strategic Investment

Supports Lane County Destination Master Plan Priorities: Invest in Tourism that Supports Resident Quality of Life • Connect the Industry

Resident support for tourism in Oakridge and Westfir is high: 85.1% rate its overall impact as positive and 86.1% would recommend the community to family and friends.

That support is not automatic; tourism growth that strains infrastructure, limits housing availability, or degrades the natural environment will erode it. Investments should protect both the natural resources that attract visitors and the community conditions that make those resources accessible over the long term.

Recommendations

- Protect forests, rivers, trails, and public lands through responsible recreation, environmental stewardship, and visitor education
- Coordinate tourism investments with community priorities, including workforce housing, transportation improvements, public infrastructure, and long-term economic resilience
- Strengthen collaboration among community organizations, businesses, and public agencies while using tourism data to guide decision-making and build community support

Seasonality Considerations

Oakridge and Westfir's annual event calendar includes the Oakridge Tree Planting Festival each May, Mountain Bike Oregon in Westfir each June, the Oakridge Keg & Cask Festival each August, and the Westfir Bridge Lighting Festival each December, which scores as one of the strongest shoulder-season events of any in the county's event matrix.

Even with this spread, the winter months beyond the December bridge lighting represent an opportunity: trail-based recreation is weather-dependent, so visitation likely still concentrates in the drier months.

Recommendations

- Continue to support and grow the Westfir Bridge Lighting Festival as the community's strongest existing shoulder-season draw
- Explore additional winter or early-spring programming, potentially tied to indoor recreation or the community's proximity to Willamette Pass, to extend visitation beyond the current May-through-December event spread

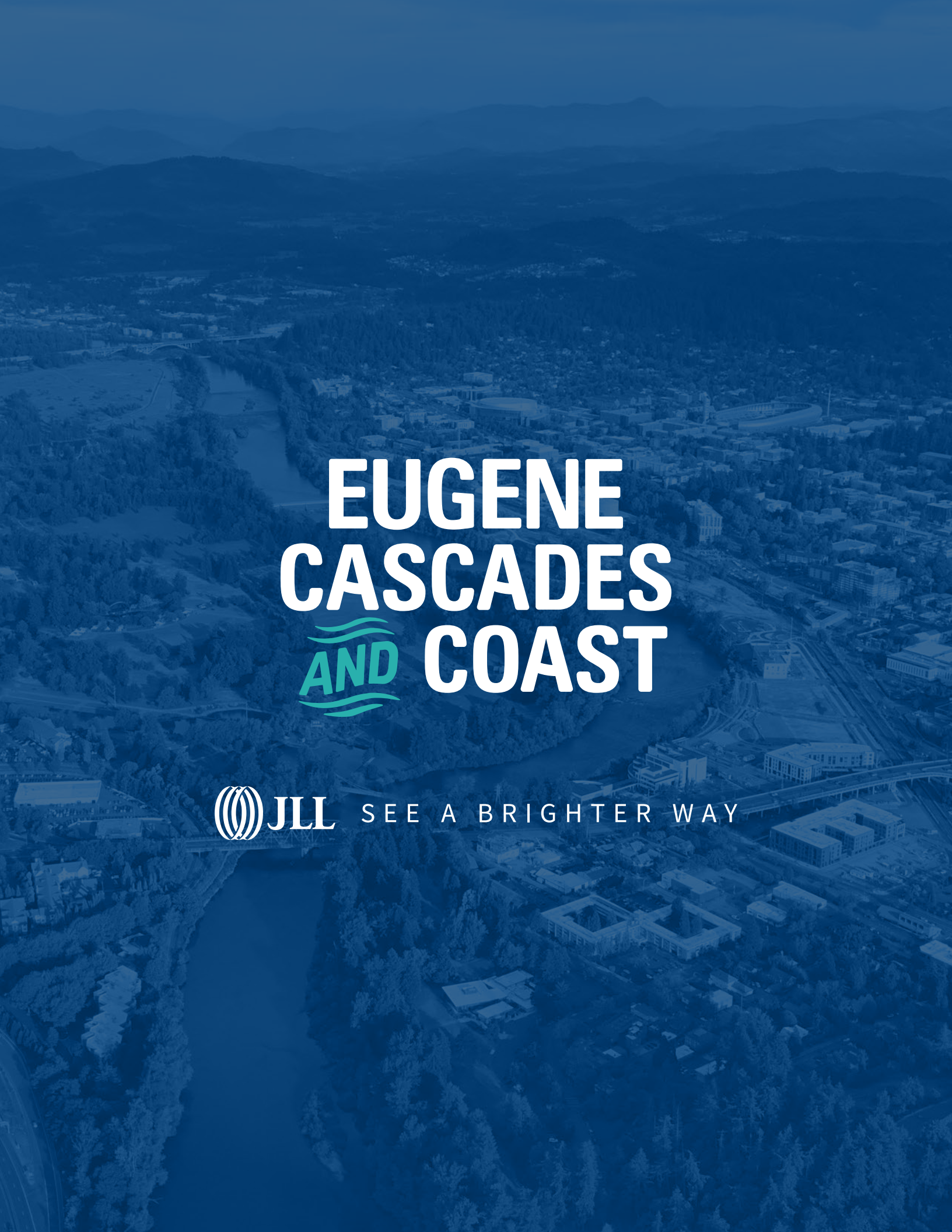
Strategic Outlook

Oakridge and Westfir have a strong foundation: two assets, mountain biking and the Willamette National Forest, that score high enough to draw visitors from well beyond the region, high resident support for tourism, and an established outdoor recreation economy with regional and national reach. The near-term priority is converting that foundation into stronger per-visitor economic returns by increasing overnight stays, expanding recreation services, and building name recognition for Oakridge specifically as a mountain biking destination. Investment in trails, amenities, and community infrastructure can advance these goals without compromising the rural character and natural environment that define the community.

Research Basis

The analysis and recommendations in this profile are synthesized from multiple data sources gathered as part of the Lane County Destination Master Plan planning process. Zartico visitor data reflects figures as of January 2026; other sources were gathered through a research process conducted from October 2025 through July 2026. Sources were reviewed together and interpreted collectively rather than reported individually.

Zartico Visitor Snapshot (Oakridge & Westfir); JLL Demand Driver Scorecard; Lane County Event Matrix; Resident Survey (community-level results and open-ended responses); Community Survey Results; Stakeholder Engagement Synthesis Report; Lane County Site Visits and Meetings; Lane County Interview Notes Compilation; Lane County Thematic Analysis; Lane County Destination Master Plan.


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