

Sustainable City Year Program

2024-26



Business, Marketing, and Economic Development

Project	Outcome
A Marketing Blueprint to Enhance Local Businesses in Oakridge	Students partnered with four local businesses (Brock's Wood Lot, Mill Pond Station, The Campfire, and Trans Cascadia Excursions) to develop customized marketing and operational strategies that promote year-round visibility, resilience, and growth. Through research-driven recommendations focused on branding, digital outreach, and community partnerships, student teams provided actionable tools to support each business in enhancing its local impact and contributing to Oakridge's broader economic development goals.
Marketing Strategies to Enhance Local Businesses	Marketing Management students identified challenges and opportunities for three Oakridge businesses: Westfir Lodge & Mountain Market, Oakridge Hardware, and Totally Pawsome. Through their analyses, student groups delivered tailored recommendations to each of three businesses with the goal of supporting long-term resilience and overall economic vitality. Among the recommendations were a Christmas village market event at Westfir Lodge, an Oakridge-Hardware sponsored bike ride event, and a customer rewards program and online marketing techniques for Totally Pawsome.
Elevating Oakridge: A Marketing Initiative for Tourism	To support Oakridge's long-term economic development, students developed a comprehensive tourism marketing strategy grounded in extensive community research, including surveys, focus groups, secret shopping, interviews, and benchmarking. Recommendations offered practical, low-cost tools to increase regional visibility, attract targeted visitor segments, and strengthen local business engagement through a unified brand identity, influencer campaign, and community coupon book.
Oakridge Industrial Park Marketing Strategy	To support economic development at the Oakridge Industrial Park (OIP), Oregon Consulting Group students developed a strategic marketing plan aligned with economic goals to attract businesses. The final deliverables included a targeted recruitment strategy, customizable marketing tools, and a scoring system to evaluate prospective companies, with recommendations focused on digital outreach, financial incentives, and streamlined business recruitment processes.
Community Event Planning	Students conducted an economic assessment and used their research to develop 13 event proposals designed to strengthen Oakridge's economy, increase tourism, and reinvigorate community identity. The event proposals include winter and shoulder season events that highlight the City's natural assets and increase foot traffic to local businesses.

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Architecture, Planning, and Public Policy

Project	Outcome
Introducing Middle Housing in the City of Oakridge (Year 1)	Architecture students developed context-sensitive design proposals to aid the City of Oakridge in introducing middle-density housing as a means to diversify its housing stock and support long-term community sustainability. Students' work resulted in key recommendations—including zoning code reforms, targeted infill development, and use of Elk Meadows as a pilot site—to guide Oakridge in potentially implementing thoughtful, inclusive growth strategies.
Middle Housing Development Ideas (Year 2)	In the course's second year, architecture students developed affordability-centered housing proposals for three sites within Oakridge, including duplex, townhouse, and apartment building designs. Students sought to maintain unity across the City and focused on site design, building orientation, privacy gradients, and surrounding context. Final designs offered insightful development recommendations for the 2nd and Teller, Salmon Creek, and Uptown Urban Infill sites.
Wastewater Treatment Facility Analysis and Capital Improvement Plan Development	Students conducted a comprehensive policy and capital improvement analysis for Oakridge's aging wastewater treatment facility, evaluating operational challenges, climate and wildfire resilience, power reliability, and future regulatory impacts. Students then developed a Capital Improvement Plan that included prioritized recommendations such as constructing a water tower for wildfire protection, replacing the backup generator, installing on-site solar power, and deferring per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) related upgrades until federal requirements and technology costs evolve.
Oakridge Municipal Court Program Policy Report	To improve justice implementation in the Oakridge Municipal Court system, students developed a framework for a "Community Service Program" that allows eligible defendants to fulfill fines through volunteer work. Recommendations included clear implementation steps, legal guidelines, and administrative forms to support partnerships between the court and local nonprofit or public agencies.
Willamette Activity Center Operational & Fundraising Strategy	The goal of the Willamette Activity Center (WAC) is to transform the 29,000 square foot building into a resilience hub for various community services. Students worked with local and regional nonprofits to understand their space needs and develop budget estimates for operating the WAC to plan and fundraise for the building's redevelopment and reopening.

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Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Project	Outcome
Open-Source Oakridge: Exploring Open-Source Software and Creating a Buildable Lands Survey for the City of Oakridge	Students researched, evaluated, and made recommendations on the ideal suite of open-source GIS products that could best meet the City of Oakridge's needs. Students then researched housing data, established criteria, and conducted GIS analyses to develop a map showcasing parcels that could be suitable for various levels of densification.
TV Butte Quarry: Environmental Impact Assessment	Students conducted a preliminary GIS-based assessment of the proposed Old Hazeldell Quarry's environmental and social impacts, identifying potential concerns related to visibility, noise, wildlife disturbance, hydrology, and slope stability. The students' analysis highlighted the need for a comprehensive Environmental Impact Assessment and long-term monitoring to guide responsible decision-making and foster transparency with the Oakridge community.

Field Hydrology

Project	Outcome
TV Butte Surface Water and Groundwater Monitoring	The Field Hydrology class project centered on the Oakridge alluvial aquifer—the City's primary drinking water source—and its potential interaction with TV Butte. Students' fieldwork in hydrology, geophysics, and geochemistry revealed important findings: groundwater flow tracks surface topography, chemistry shows influence from TV Butte, and aquifer productivity is lower than in the past.

Journalism and Communication

Project	Outcome
Engaged Journalism: Assessing the Information Needs of Oakridge	Students assessed the state of local news and civic information in Oakridge by surveying residents and engaging in direct community outreach, revealing gaps in information access and trust. Based on their findings, students recommended strategies such as increasing media literacy, hosting community listening sessions, expanding digital communication tools, and fostering partnerships through a local civic hub.
Oakridge Public Art	The Oakridge First Friday Art Walk served as a client for the student-run full service advertising agency Allen Hall Advertising (AHA). Students developed creative assets and an overall brand guide to support consistent advertising efforts. Creative assets included photos, videos, flyers, and social media accounts to promote the First Friday Art Walk.

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