

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

Nearly one third of a million people call the 1,893 square miles of Clackamas County home.

The County's settlement pattern has resulted in small communities, most of which are clustered in the northwest part of the County. Most of the housing is attractive and structurally sound. Business and industry have established the reputation of being good neighbors.

County residents value the clean water, the thriving fisheries of the rivers, the glistening year-round snow of Mt. Hood, and the verdant carpet of timber on mountain slopes. They also value the proximity of jobs, services, and the cultural advantages of Portland.

This combination of an unspoiled natural environment, rich in contrasting beauty, and the pleasant cultural environment of local communities and neighboring Portland, has inspired County residents to turn their attention to what the future may bring.

WHY PLAN?

Planning is essentially an organized attempt at community foresight. It seeks to guide the future conservation and development of an area within a framework of goals and policies consistent with physical constraints, legal requirements and attitudes and resources of the community. The basic aim of the Comprehensive Plan is to organize and coordinate the complex interrelationships among people, land, resources, and facilities in such a way as to protect the future health, safety, quality of life and welfare of Clackamas County residents.

GOALS

The overall goals of the Plan are:

- Balance public and private interests and adopt a coordinated set of goals and policies to guide future development in Clackamas County.
- Identify the most appropriate land uses for individual sites by evaluating site characteristics in light of market demand, human needs, technology, and state, regional, and County goals.
- Provide for growth in areas where public facilities can economically be provided to support growth.
- Create development opportunities most compatible with the fiscal and financial capacity of the County and its residents.
- Implement the policies of this Plan by adopting a zoning map and set of regulations, and by guiding public investments to support anticipated growth.

- Establish a system whereby individual interests may be compared to stated County policy, and provide a process for review and amendment of those policies as expressed in this Comprehensive Plan.

FOUNDATION IN THE PAST

This Plan is the culmination of Clackamas County's comprehensive planning efforts. The first Plan was adopted in 1974, with major updates in 1980 and 1992. In addition, revisions to the plan text and maps have been made periodically in response to an opportunity, or a state, federal or regional requirement. All revisions to the plan have been developed through a process including public input in development of plan concepts, and public hearings on specific proposed plan language. Much of the Plan is carried over in each update.

Revisions to the Plan are necessary because:

- The Plan calls for regular review and revision.
- Statewide Planning Goals, adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission in 1974, require periodic review.
- The County's population, housing, natural resources, employment and traffic have changed since the first Plan was adopted, and are expected to continue to change over time.
- New state laws, Administrative Rules (OARs), and court decisions regularly occur that further specify the relationship between planning and zoning, or establish new requirements or opportunities.

This Plan considers, and includes as a part of this Plan, the Mt. Hood Community Plan adopted in 1982 by Order No. 76-1855 and all subsequent amendments to it. All parts of the Mt. Hood Plan are deemed consistent with this Plan. Procedures for amending the Mt. Hood Community Plan shall be governed by policies for amendments and procedures in Chapter 11 of this Plan.

HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

While continuity is one strength of comprehensive planning, the ability to adapt policy to changing needs and conditions is another. This plan builds on earlier Comprehensive Plans. It addresses concerns about energy and housing, for instance, which our society ignored previously. It attempts to resolve administrative problems encountered during the first years the Plan was used. With each update, the Comprehensive Plan is supported by better information and a more effective citizen involvement process. Consequently, this Plan can better guide development to the year 2020 than its predecessor, and it contains policies for future revision and amendment.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This Plan, together with its supporting documents and the Court Orders by which it is adopted, is an official policy statement of the County.

Goals and Policies in this Plan direct future decisions on land use actions, ordinance amendments, zone changes, capital expenditures, procedures, and programs.

Plan Maps, in conjunction with the goals and policies, direct development and identify areas subject to various policies.

Each chapter of the Plan consists of:

- Background
- Issues
- Summary of Findings and Conclusions
- Goals
- Policies

The facts on which the Plan is based are in the supporting documents listed at the end of the Plan and in the Court Orders by which the Plan is adopted.

The Land Use chapter defines land use categories, specifies the site conditions used to qualify land for each category of use, and explains allowed uses or uses which may be established under certain conditions. Other chapters contain policies that are less site specific. Cross-references are provided where pitfalls to using the Plan are anticipated. Chapter 10 of the plan includes specific community or design plans, where certain policies may apply that do not apply elsewhere under the plan.

Most development proposals need only comply with provisions of implementing measures such as the zoning and subdivision ordinances. Some may require a zone change. Changes of the zoning map may be approved to allow a use equal to, or of less intensity than, the Plan specifies.

If the Plan does not accommodate the requested zone change, the applicant may request a Plan amendment. In most cases, the easiest way to accomplish this is to seek reclassification on the land use map based on the criteria for designating the desired category and showing that the site in question meets those criteria (see Chapter 11 for amendment procedures).

If a more fundamental change is desired, such as a change in the County's goals or definitions, the same procedure must be followed. However, changes must comply with state and regional goals and result in a Plan which is internally consistent.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

Policies throughout this Plan, as well as in Chapter 11, direct how the Plan will be implemented. The costs involved and the limitations on County financial resources will require that priorities be set to insure that implementation of the Plan is financially responsible.

WHAT DOES THIS PLAN DO?

Overall Perspective

- Recognize urban-rural identities
- Resource preservation emphasis in farm, forest, and rural areas
- Manage growth in urban areas
- Diverse, interesting, and active urban community in the northwest corner of the County
- People activities focused at urban centers
- Landscapes, rivers and other natural attractions protected.

Prospects for the Urban Community

- Energy savings in land use patterns, housing, and transportation
- Desirable and affordable housing
- Livable neighborhoods
- More jobs for present and future residents
- Protected open spaces, streams, and hillsides
- Cost efficiency in providing roads, sewers, and other public services
- Fairer system of distributing necessary costs.]