

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

The West of Sandy River Rural Area Plan is an integrated land use and transportation plan that builds upon the County's Comprehensive Framework Plan. Upon adoption by the Board of County Commissioners, it will constitute an official element of the Framework Plan. The Plan contains specific policy direction and implementation measures for the West of Sandy River area. The County began the planning effort for the West of Sandy River area in October of 1998 with a Community Open House to identify issues and opportunities in the study area. This "scoping phase" began the planning process and included a scoping report that was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners. During this time, a group of Portland State University Students developed a planning document for the Orient and Pleasant Home Rural Centers.

After adoption of the Scoping Report in 1999 the Multnomah County Chair appointed the West of Sandy River Area Task Force, consisting of thirteen citizens from the area. One Planning Commissioner, a representative of the elected County Commissioner from the area, and a representative from the Sandy River Basin Watershed Council all served liaison roles during the planning process. The Committee held monthly meetings between September 1999 and November 2001 to review all elements of the plan. The Committee's role was to review and comment upon materials prepared by Planning Division staff, make policy recommendations to the Multnomah County Planning Commission and Board of Commissioners, and provide a forum for additional public involvement in the preparation of the West of Sandy River Rural Area Plan.

Planning and Zoning History

Planning in the study area began in 1958 when zoning was first introduced with the application of a range of zoning categories. Areas in the vicinity of Orient and Pleasant Home were designated with zones appropriate for urban development including a 10,000 square foot parcel size for residential uses, and designation of land into commercial and manufacturing zones. Land surrounding the rural communities was zoned with the "SR" designation that allowed a range of parcel sizes from 40,000 down to 10,000 square feet. The east and northern areas along the Sandy River were zoned for a minimum of 2 acre parcel sizes.

A draft area plan, *Framework Plan for East Central Area of Multnomah County*, was completed in November of 1974, but was apparently not adopted. The coverage area of this plan was between SE 162nd Ave. and the Sandy River, and the Multnomah – Clackamas County line and the Columbia River. This area included land within the five local government jurisdictions of Fairview, Gresham, Troutdale, Wood Village, and Multnomah County. The plan did distinguish between rural and urban land, and contains a Sewerage Service area boundary map that closely matches the current UGB location.

In October 1977, the original zoning categories were updated to meet the requirements of the new statewide planning system. Primary objectives of this effort were to separate urban and rural land, and to decide which lands should be protected for farm or forest resource use, and which were committed to non-resource uses to comply with Statewide Planning Goals. This was a county-wide effort, and resulted in new zones including EFU-38, CFU-38, MUF-20, MUA-20, RR, RC, and SEC (Goal 5 natural resources overlay zone). All land outside of Urban Growth Boundaries or cities was assumed to be rural resource land unless the County was able to show why an "exception" to the use requirements of Goal 3

(farmland) or Goal 4 (forest land) was justified. The adopted ordinances, plan, and zoning maps were subject to review and acknowledgement by the Land Conservation and Development Commission. The County plan was acknowledged by LCDC in June of 1980, after zoning designations for some properties were changed to either include them as exception land or resource land.

Multnomah County followed up the 1977 comprehensive rezoning of the County with a study of all of the rural communities. The planning staff at that time produced a draft *Rural Centers Plan*, dated September 1981, that analyzed the eight communities that had received Rural Center (RC) zoning in 1977. The study noted that the policy for RC areas that was adopted in the 1977 Comprehensive Framework Plan was to limit the "intensity and types of uses in the rural centers ...to be appropriate for a rural community." The study identified several planning issues that affected the Orient and Pleasant Home communities including proximity to the urban services in Gresham, limitations of the soils for septic systems, use of urban standards for design review, and zoning for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. These are among the issues that are addressed in the proposed West of Sandy River plan.

In October of 1983, the County completed a process that included additional analysis of some parcels to determine whether they could be rezoned as exception rather than resource land. Parcels totaling 4,100 acres in 42 locations county wide were successfully changed from the resource designations of EFU and MUF to exception land zones MUA-20 and RR through this process. Land within the West of Sandy River area was rezoned during this process. The October 1983 changes marked the end of the County's efforts to distinguish between resource and exception land. The 1987-98 Periodic Review process included changes to the County plan and ordinances, most of which had little if any affect on land in the study area.

COUNTY APPROACH TO RURAL AREA PLANNING

The County Framework Plan contains policies and strategies intended to guide development county wide. Policy 1, Plan Relationships, sets out how the county wide Framework Plan policies relate to the community plan policies. The policies in the West of Sandy River Rural Area Plan should be designed to be consistent with the Framework Plan. The provisions of the community plan are intended to prevail over any conflicting provisions of the Framework Plan.

The Rural Area Planning Program, of which this plan is a part, was initiated in 1993 by Multnomah County. With the annexation of urban unincorporated communities and the increasing land use issues faced in the rural areas of Multnomah County, the Board of Commissioners directed the creation of five rural area plans in order to address land use issues in and community needs and values in these areas. The other four rural areas and plan adoption dates are:

- West Hills Rural Area Plan (adopted October, 1996)
- Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Rural Area Plan (adopted October, 1997)
- East of Sandy River Rural Area Plan (adopted July, 1997)
- Columbia Gorge Rural Area Plan (planning process is pending)

Tables 1 and 2 are intended to compare the West of Sandy River plan area to the other completed rural area plans. The numbers in Table 1 show that the WSR plan area is the smallest of the four plan areas so far with over 5,000 acres less than the next largest plan area, Sauvie Island. It is also a distant second to Sauvie Island in the amount of farmland in the EFU zone, but it has a significantly larger amount of land in the EFU than either West Hills or East of Sandy River. A very small amount of land is in the CFU zone relative to both the West Hills and East of Sandy River plan areas, and nearly all of this is located

along the Sandy River. The plan area also has a significantly larger amount of RC zoning than any of the other plan areas, and this is located primarily within the Orient rural community.

Table 1: Acreage in Zones-Rural Plan Areas

	EFU	CFU	MUA-20	RR	RC	Total
West Hills	1,820	15,110	280	2,090		19,300
East of Sandy River	2,017	21,871	626	724	73	*25,311
Sauvie Island	11,800		3,600		3	15,400
West of Sandy River	3,691	2,008	3,170	590	151	9,610

*Total acreage does not include 53,920 acres in National Forest.

**Data sources are the listed RAP's.

Table 2: Farmland and Dwelling Comparisons

	Land in Farm Zones*	Total Dwellings	Acres of Land per Dwelling
West Hills	11%	920	21.0
East of Sandy River	10%	731	34.6
Sauvie Island	99.99%	270	57.0
West of Sandy River	70%	1,234	7.8

*Land in Farm Zones includes both EFU and MUA-20

In Table 2, the column, "Land in Farm Zones," represents the amount of land in the plan areas that is in both the EFU and MUA-20 zones combined. Farming occurs on land in both the EFU and MUA-20 zones in the Sauvie Island plan area as well as in WSR. Staff presents this information in this way because of the significant amount of MUA-20 land in the WSR plan area that is being farmed. Approximately 56% of the MUA-20 acreage in the WSR plan area is either in farm deferral or is confirmed to be growing crops, mostly nursery stock (see Table 3).

The comparison of the number of acres of land per dwelling shows that there is a significantly higher gross density of dwellings in WSR plan area compared to the other areas. This, coupled with the amount of land in farm use, supports the characterization of the plan area as supporting significant farm activity that occurs in relatively close proximity to residential uses. Additional related data is included in Tables 3, 4, and 5.

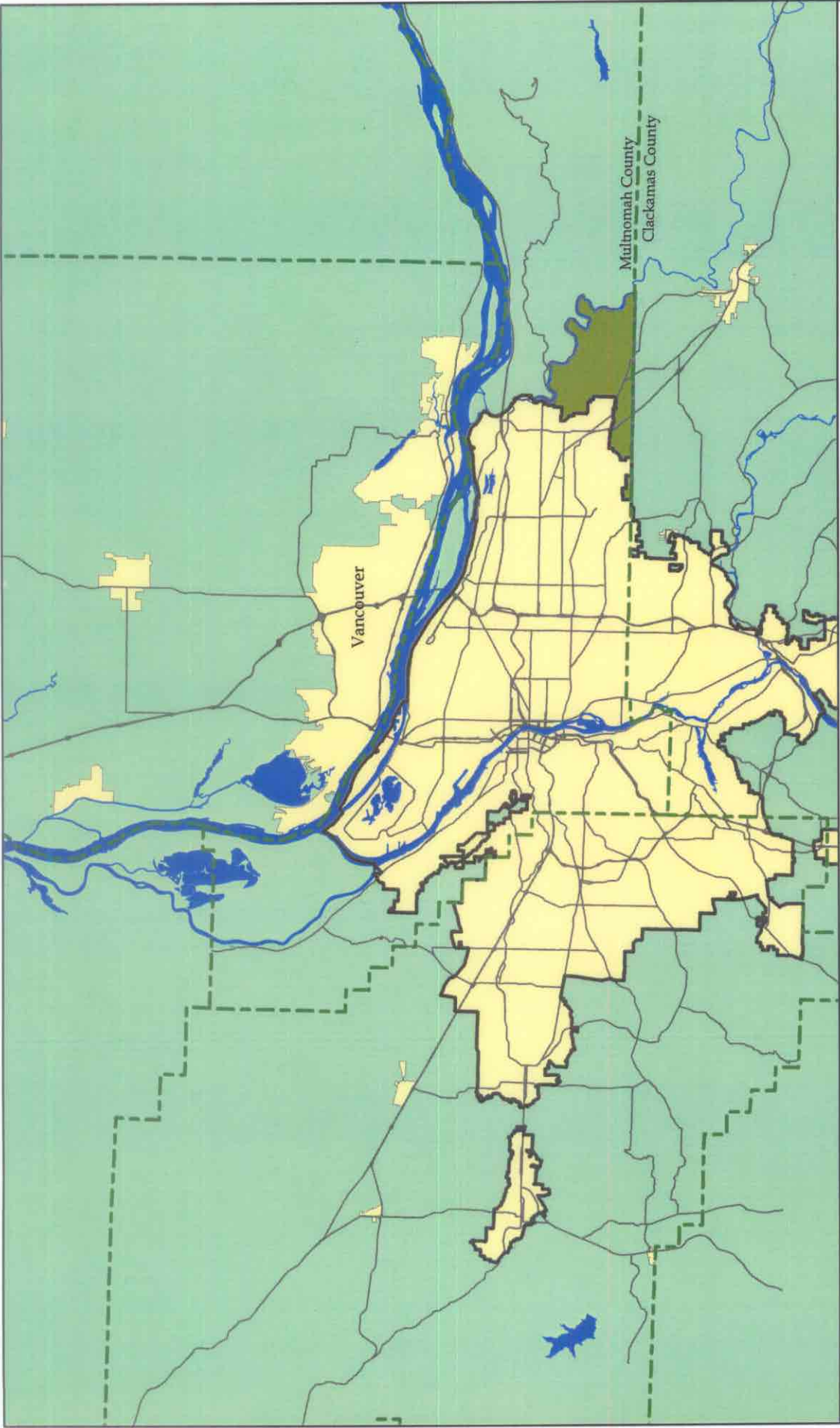
STUDY AREA

As shown in Figure 1, the West of Sandy River rural area is bounded on the east and north by the Sandy River, on the south by Clackamas County, and on the west by the city limits of Gresham and Troutdale. The area includes a narrow western leg bounded on the north and west by the city limits of Gresham and on the south by Clackamas County, and in island of rural land along Rodlun Road between Gresham and the County line. The area is open to urban influence to a greater degree than the other plan areas due to its proximity to the existing UGB and the planned Metro 2040 Town Center of Damascus, and due to a lack of physical barriers, such as the steeper topography of West Hills, and the limited access to Sauvie Island and the East of Sandy River area.

Two unincorporated rural communities, Orient and Pleasant Home, are located in the south central part of the plan area immediately north of Clackamas County. US 26 traverses diagonally for a distance of a little over one mile through the western leg of the area. The plan area encompasses approximately 9,610 acres, including 219 acres in the Rodlun Road area.

The plan area is characterized by rural agricultural land bisected by several riparian corridors. The predominant land uses in the plan area are nurseries, berry farms and pastures. The plan area is located in two major drainage basins, the Sandy River and the Willamette River. Three large riparian systems are present: Beaver Creek, which flows northwest through the central portion of the area to the Sandy River; Johnson Creek, which flows west along the southern portion of the area; and the Sandy River, which forms the north and east plan area boundary. Kelly Creek North (a tributary to Beaver Creek) and Kelly Creek South (a tributary to Johnson Creek) as well as many unnamed tributaries to Beaver Creek, Johnson Creek and the Sandy River are present in the plan area.

The east edge of the plan area is defined by approximately 11 miles of the Sandy River canyon. It contains large expanses of native upland forest habitat within Oxbow Park, forest land in private ownership, and also some land owned by the Nature Conservancy. Smaller blocks of forest exist along portions of the Beaver Creek drainage area. Connectivity between the riparian corridors in the study area and these blocks of upland forest increases the wildlife habitat value of both the riparian corridors and adjacent upland forest resources.



West of Sandy River Rural Area Plan
Figure 1
Study Area Vicinity

- West of Sandy Study Area
- Urban Areas
- County Lines
- Metro Urban Growth Boundary

Figure 1: Vicinity Map

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

Task Force

The citizen Task Force was the key component of the public involvement and outreach efforts. The Task Force met 16 times over the life of the planning effort. The Task Force meetings were open to the public and time was reserved at each meeting for public comments. Public announcements of Task Force meetings were sent to all residents in the Orient and Pleasant Home areas and to people who indicated an interest in Task Force meetings. This list grew to over 210 people by the end of the Task Force meetings. Task Force meetings were held in the study area whenever possible. Meeting locations in the study area included Sam Barlow High School, Orient Middle School, Multnomah Grange, and the J. Frank Schmidt Nursery.



Task Force members and staff discuss maps.

The Task Force provided input and direction on all major policy decisions in the plan, from transportation improvements to new zoning in the Orient rural center. The Task Force operated on a consensus basis and worked through any disagreements before recommendations were made.

Technical Advisory Committee

Three Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings were held during the planning process. Meetings were held to review transportation, land use and environmental work. The TAC reviewed the same material that the Task Force reviewed, but from the perspective of the agencies and organizations they represent. Agencies and organizations that were invited to comment and attend the meetings included the Department of Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Forestry Board, Oregon Association of Nurserymen and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. A full list of TAC members is in the Appendix.

Open Houses

Two open houses were held to obtain broad public input on the creation of the plan. The first open house was held as part of the scoping phase on October 14, 1998. This open house was designed to identify issues to be addressed during the planning process. Approximately 1,100 mailers that included a questionnaire were sent to property owners in the study area resulting in over 100 attendees at the open house and 45 returned questionnaires. The results of this effort were compiled into the Scoping Report, which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on January 12, 1999.

The second open house was held on June 28, 2001 at the Multnomah County Yeon Shops (due to the unavailability of space in the study area). The purpose of the open house was to solicit input on the range of policies and implementing actions recommended by the Task Force. Notices were sent to all property owners in the study area as well as to people who indicated an interest in the project. The open house included displays of transportation improvements, zoning changes in Orient and areas recommended for environmental protections. There were opportunities to discuss and provide input on the proposals with project staff. An exit questionnaire also was available for those wishing to express their opinions in that

manner. Approximately 30 people attended the open house with the majority of comments being made verbally to staff. There were very few comments about the plan recommendations. Those comments that were about the plan were supportive, particularly of the transportation improvements. A number of people at the open house asked about future urban growth boundary expansions.

Landowner Meetings and Outreach

Two meetings were held for landowners potentially impacted by new environmental regulations proposed in the West of Sandy River Rural Area Plan. The landowner meetings were held before regularly scheduled Task Force meetings on May 24 and June 21, 2001. Notices were sent to all landowners who had a portion of their property near an identified natural resource, such as a stream, based on the initial resource mapping. Approximately 900 of these notices were mailed in this outreach effort. The meetings included a brief presentation about the process being used to determine the appropriate environmental protections and then a general open house where landowners had an opportunity to discuss their situation with staff and make comments on the mapping of natural resources.

Approximately 30 people attended the first land owner's meeting and about 10 people attended the second meeting. A list of common questions that were asked by participants was compiled and presented to the Task Force for their consideration. Those questions were generally about farming regulations and the County's role in regulating farming practices.

In addition to the two landowner meetings regarding Goal 5, a brief telephone survey of eight nursery operators in the study area was conducted by County staff. The survey was used to identify issues to be addressed and was focused on farming in the plan area. The responses were used to draw a general picture of some characteristics of nursery farming in the area and are discussed in more detail in the Land Use portion of this plan.

Orient and Pleasant Home Involvement

Portland State University Planning Effort

Graduate planning students, beginning in October 1998, conducted a separate planning process for the Orient and Pleasant Home Rural Centers. This process included open houses at the East Orient School on January 19, and February 9, 1999. Fliers were sent to all landowners in the Orient and Pleasant Home areas inviting them to the meeting. Thirty-eight citizens attended the first open house and shared their concerns and goals for the Rural Center.

Based on comments from the first open house and additional research, the students drafted a set of "solutions" for the issues identified by residents. The second open house was used to discuss the proposed solutions. Thirty-two people attended this meeting. The students drafted a plan based on this involvement and their research and presented it to County staff. The majority of the recommendations from that plan are incorporated in the West of Sandy River Rural Area Plan.

Business Owner Meeting

A special meeting was held on July 26, 2001 to solicit the input of business owners in the Orient and Pleasant Home rural centers. Task Force members and staff were concerned business owners in these areas might need an additional opportunity to discuss with staff, the recommended zoning changes required by the state Unincorporated Communities Rule. Notices were sent to all 27 businesses that had been identified in Orient and Pleasant Home. Six people attended this meeting and two other property owners followed up with staff individually.

Scoping Report

The Scoping Report is an adopted County document that guided the completion of this plan. The project team frequently referred to the Scoping Report during the planning process and made every effort to address all of the issues raised in that report.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

This plan is organized by four major topic areas:

- Environmental and Natural Resources
- Land Use
- Rural Center
- Transportation

Within each of these sections there are generally three major categories:

- Introduction
- Inventory and Analysis
- Findings and Conclusions
- Policies and Strategies

The findings and conclusions are the results of the inventory and analysis and include recommended implementing actions such as updates to the specific land use codes for the West of Sandy River Rural Area.

The policies and strategies also are specific to the study area and are intended to guide future development and County decisions in the study area.

The Appendix of this plan includes detailed information not appropriate for the body of the plan, such as the detailed land use code recommendations, the detailed environmental work and the public involvement and outreach details.