

The Planning Process For The Multnomah County Comprehensive Framework Plan

This policy section of the Framework Plan was developed based on the inventory information contained in Volume I. These policies and strategies combined with the data inventory and a map, will form the first part of the three-part Comprehensive Plan.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN IN THREE STAGES

The County Comprehensive Plan has been developed in three stages:

- The Framework Plan
- The Development Plan
- The Operations Plan

Stage I--The Framework Plan

This plan sets the framework for inter-relating all of the Statewide Goals into a broad statement of public policy. All of the goals are addressed, making it a Comprehensive Plan. However, the details are expanded in the Development and Operation Plans.

The major thrust of the Framework Plan is to identify natural resource and rural settlement areas as well as where urbanization will occur. Implementation measures involve the adoption of zoning and other ordinances pertaining primarily to the non-urban area.

The Framework Plan is designed to:

1. Provide a factual data base for establishing and evaluating policies and strategies;
2. Identify land use needs and relationships and provide the basis for further plan making and refinement;
3. Delineate broad land use classifications;
4. Establish an urban growth boundary in accord with the needs of the County and in conformance with Metro and LCDC requirements;
5. Identify goals, policies, strategies and standards for each of the Framework Plan elements, and provide a basis for more detailed plans and decisions on specific land use actions;
6. Provide framework policies, strategies and standards applicable to the Development Plan and Operations Plan.

Stage II--The Development Plan

This plan is an amplification of the Framework Plan and includes Functional and Community Plans. The urban and future growth areas are the primary focus of these plans. Contained in these plans will be all of the statewide goal requirements not addressed in detail in the Framework Plan. Because community issues, needs and values will vary, Community Plans will be individualized to local areas.

Implementation through ordinances and programs will primarily address urban concerns and the

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conversion of rural lands to urban use.

The elements of the Development Plan are:

1. Functional Plans that address specific functions such as Housing, Open Space and Recreation, Transportation, Energy and Economic and Community Development. These plans are prepared within the framework established by the Framework Plan and serve as summaries for action on specific issues.

The Functional Plans address a broad range of issues in each specific functional area and include alternative policies and strategies that can be applied to specific problems.

2. Community Plans are prepared within the broad policy parameters of the Framework Plan and are a detailed amplification of that plan as applied to each urban community. The Functional Plans are used at the community level to identify policies and strategies for addressing specific local opportunities and problems.

Stage III--The Operations Plan

This plan consists of those measures designed to carry out the Framework and Development Plans. These implementation measures are:

1. Implementation Planning including definition of the Operations Plan purpose and general statement of program actions regarding ordinances, planning process and plan or implementation revisions and changes.
2. Community Development Ordinance setting out the policy content for preparation, implementation and maintenance of a codified set of ordinances for effectuation of the Comprehensive Plan. (Zoning and Land Division Regulations; Capital Improvement Program, etc.)
3. Planning Process and Policy Framework specifying the policy means by which land use decisions are to be made.
4. Revision and Change Procedures citing the policy options for review actions on plans and implementation measures.
5. Capital Improvements Program identifying governmental expenditures over a 5 or 6 year period of streets, sewers, parks and other governmental activities related to land use.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The County's planning process consists of seven steps:

1. Establish a work program.
2. Collect an inventory of data.
3. Identify issues and evaluate alternatives.
4. Prepare a plan.
5. Adopt a plan.
6. Implement the plan.
7. Review and update.

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1. **The Work Program** established the methodology and general schedule for comprehensive planning within the parameters established by law. (See the section federal, state and regional requirements.)
2. **The Inventory** involves gathering information on physical, economic, environmental and social factors – the topics covered in Volume I, some of which are expanded with greater detail in later stages of the Comprehensive Plan.
3. **Identification of Issues and Alternatives** is accomplished through citizen town meetings and staff review of data.
4. **Plan Preparation** is based on an analysis of pertinent laws and court decisions, the inventory, issues, alternatives and public values. This is a policy plan. It includes Policies, which are general courses of action designed to guide decisions, and strategies, which are stipulated courses of action for implementing the general policies. The policies are adopted public statements of policy, while strategies are recommended courses of action and, as contained in this plan, are not legally binding.
5. **Plan Adoption** is the legal process by which the plan becomes the official policy statement of Multnomah County. The specific process is discussed in the following section under Plan Adoption Process.
6. **Plan Implementation** occurs through legislative instruments adopted by ordinance and utilized by the public and private sectors. Major implementation measures are the Community Development Ordinances includes zoning and subdivision regulations and development standards. The Capital Improvements Program outlines in five or six year periods the capital expenditures for streets, sewer, water, parks and other governmental activities related to the physical development of the community.
7. **Review and Update** provides a means of ensuring that the Comprehensive Plan remains in tune with changing circumstances. To determine whether the plan goals, purposes and policies remain in the public interest, an inventory process must be established, and the plan must be revised and updated to reflect changing conditions or values. Revisions or amendments to the adopted Plan (text and/or map) follow the same process as initial adoption: citizen review opportunities including the Community Group participation program, Planning Commission public hearings and recommendation, and Board of County Commissioners hearings and adoption of revisions or amendments.

PLAN ADOPTION PROCESS

Adoption of any plans involves a multi-step process including actions by planners, citizens, the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners, all operating within the legal framework. The purpose of this process is to adopt a plan which meets all legal requirements and represents the community values of Multnomah County residents.

The following is a summary of roles and responsibilities of the planning staff, citizens, Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners.

Planning Staff: The staff of the Division of Planning and Development, Department of Environmental Services is responsible for developing a work program, collecting and organizing information and drafting a plan.

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The interdisciplinary staff which includes skills in economics, geography, natural sciences, planning, law, architecture, political science, and sociology prepares alternative policies and draft proposals for consideration by citizens, Planning Commission and Board. To insure compatibility of county plans with other governmental agency plans, the staff also engages in interagency coordination procedures and meetings.

Citizens: Residents, landowners, business operators and special interest groups participate in plan development, adoption and revision through a variety of methods described in the County's adopted Citizen Involvement Program. The value judgments essential to decisions on appropriate policy by direction and how data is used depends upon continuing participation by the public.

In drafting the first Framework Plan, 35 public discussion meetings were held on issues such as the citizen involvement program, verification of data, definition and designation of natural resource areas, and policy direction on residential, industrial, and commercial land uses, transportation, public facilities and services.

Planning Commission: The Multnomah County Planning Commission consists of nine citizens from various areas of the County who are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners to serve without pay. The Commission analyzes data and views expressed by citizens and interest groups, draft proposals prepared by staff conducts public hearings and recommends a plan to the Board of County Commissioners.

Planning Commissioners have toured the County on several occasions for an on-the-ground look at planning areas and have participated in the public discussion meetings in order to better understand the values expressed by the public.

Board of County Commissioners: As the elected governing body of the County, the County Commissioners initiate the Planning Department work program, insure adequate budget and staff, hold public hearings, review recommendations of the Planning Commission, citizens and staff as charged by law, and are the final decision makers on the plan.

PURPOSE

The goals of Multnomah County's Planning Program are to protect the public health, safety and welfare by assuring that:

1. Multnomah County's unique natural resources are protected and that renewable resources are utilized in a responsible manner.
2. The people of Multnomah County are provided with a safe and healthy living environment.
3. Public services and support facilities are provided in a timely, safe and efficient manner as an integral part of the development process.
4. Citizens, special interest groups and investors are able to clearly identify the planning issues and problems and participate in formulating solutions.

The goals of the Framework Plan are to:

1. Formulate a plan within the standards set by law and which reflects the citizen needs and desires and the unique character of Multnomah County.
2. Identify the suitability and capability of the lands within Multnomah County to support various land uses and adopt basic land use categories and standards to protect these resources.

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3. Define the natural restraints, hazards and opportunities and adopt appropriate land use standards to protect both land and developments.
4. Provide adequate land for urban development and adopt development standards and land use locational criteria to encourage a people oriented environment.
5. Define a method to determine the need for public services and a program to finance them.
6. Establish a uniform County-wide policy framework for:
 - a. The development and maintenance of individualized community plans, and
 - b. The review of development proposals.¹
7. Provide an established set of policies to be used by:
 - a. **Citizens** in preparing community plans, reviewing development proposals and testifying before decision makers.
 - b. **Interest groups** in reviewing plans and proposals and testifying before decision makers.
 - c. **Investors** in preparing applications to be reviewed by the County, public agency personnel and decision makers.
 - d. **County and public agency personnel** in providing assistance to citizens, interest groups and investors, and in making recommendations to decision makers.
 - e. **Decision makers as the standard** for approval or approval with conditions or denial of plans or development proposals.
8. Provide the standard on which the tools of implementation are applied including, but not limited to zoning, subdivision and partitioning regulations capital improvements programming and design review.

¹ Development proposals are defined as any action which requires a major or minor revision to the Comprehensive Framework Plan, a zone change, a conditional use, a community service designation or design review, or any action which results in a major partition or subdivision of land.

PLAN FORMAT

Each Plan Section is organized in the following manner:

1. An introductory statement, including a discussion of the intent and purpose, precedes each policy.
2. The policy statements are of three types:
 - a. **Performance criteria policies** which establish standards for environmental quality, energy conservation, transportation facilities, public utilities and uses, and open space.
 - b. **Locational criteria policies** which establish criteria for the designation of land use areas on the plan map and in making decisions on development proposals. These policies apply to the location of housing, commercial, industrial and public facilities.
 - c. **Policy directives** to the County for making decisions and preparing plans.
3. Strategies which are recommendations and set forth the means for implementing the plan (i.e., the preparation of specific plans, adoption of regulations and special study commissions).

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PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This plan, as a legal document, is a statement of public policy. There are many tools of implementation which will be used to carry out the plan. Some of these tools will be contained in the Multnomah County Code, Community Development Title. The Community Title will include the following list of Articles; however, it should be noted that after each policy within the plan is a Strategy Section. With each Strategy Section the provisions are listed which should be contained in the Community Development Title Chapters to carry out the policy.

Planning Authority
Land Division

Zoning
County Streets and Roads
Service District

Community Development Title (Title 11)

Planning Authority Chapter that provides for:

1. Organization of the Planning Commission and delegation of its powers and duties;
2. Procedures for revising the Comprehensive Plan and its implementing measures; and
3. Such other planning provisions and standards as may be prescribed by the Board of County Commissioners.

Zoning Chapter that provides for:

1. Land use and development according to prescribed standards, considering the urban, rural and natural resource features of the Comprehensive Plan;
2. Zoning Districts appropriate to the land use designations of the Plan, considering appropriate and permitted uses and development, facilities and services within urban, rural and natural resource areas;
3. Design Review standards and guidelines to encourage attention to site use and structure design, considering environmental features, the character of the area, intended development functions, human, social and aesthetic needs, and creative project planning;
4. Planned development standards and guidelines for greater design flexibility through the planned unit development functions by specifying the types or characteristics of development that may be permitted, which may differ from one area to another;
5. Special planned areas to permit mixed use and development flexibility by authorizing development according to prescribed conditions standards and guidelines to achieve the intent and policies of the Comprehensive Plan;
6. Site development standards to provide development terms and standards for off-street parking, signs and similar elements required to carry out the intent and policy of the Comprehensive Plan.
7. Use and development standards appropriate to the land use zoning district statements of intent and purpose;
8. General provisions regarding special districts, conditional uses, non-conforming uses,

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variances, exceptions and legality;

9. Method of administration; and
10. Such other zoning provisions as may be required to carry out local, regional and statewide planning requirements or as may be prescribed by the Board of County Commissioners.

Land Division Chapter that provides for:

1. Land division standards, criteria and procedures for subdivision, and major or minor partitioning;
2. Methods of administration; and
3. Such other land division provisions as may be required to carry out local, regional and Statewide requirements or as may be thereby prescribed by the Board of County Commissioners.

County Streets and Roads Chapter that provides for:

1. Coordinated arrangement and improvement of streets and roads in accordance with authority granted in State and local statutes to attain the following law in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan:
 - a. Adequate supervision, control and direction for the laying out, opening, establishment, locating, relocating, changing, alteration, straightening, working, grading, maintenance and keeping in repair and improvement of streets and roads; and
 - b. Adequate prescription of the methods and manner of working, improving and repairing all roads and streets with consideration for:
 - a. Adequate right-of-way for streets;
 - b. Adequate street improvement including access to abutting properties, curbs and pavement as well as traffic control;
 - c. Adequate pedestrian and bikeway facilities; and
 - d. Adequate drainage.
2. Methods of administration; and
3. Such other road and street standards as may be required to carry out the intent of this Article and the Comprehensive Plan.

Service District Chapter that provides for:

1. Sewer regulations;
2. Sewer service charges;
3. Methods of administration; and
4. Such other public facility and service standards as may be required to carry out the Comprehensive Plan or as may be thereby prescribed by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Community Development Title Chapter were formulated during the various phases of the planning process considering the following:

1. Preparation of implementation measures to accord with the timing of, and need to carry out the Comprehensive Plan;
2. Sufficient time for collection of necessary factual information, gradual refinement of implementation measures, and identification and resolution of issues; and
3. Adoption of implementation measures to accord with the intent, purpose, policies and terms of the Comprehensive Plan.

HOW TO USE THE PLAN FOR LAND USE ACTIONS

1. Functions of the Plan

The plan serves an administrative as well as legislative function. With respect to administrative or quasi-judicial matters, the plan establishes a policy framework for decision making on such matters as:

- a. Revisions to the Comprehensive Plan;
- b. Zone changes;
- c. Conditional uses or community service uses; and
- d. Subdivisions and major partitions.

2. Land Use Actions - How to Use the Plan

In order to determine the effect of the plan on individual parcels of land or on proposals for development, the following steps can be followed:

- a. Determine the Land Area Classification that applies to the parcel of land (Urban, Rural Center, Rural Residential, Agriculture, Multiple Use-Farm, Commercial Forest or Multiple Use-Forest) and read the related plan text and policies;
- b. Call the County, Land Development Section, and ask for the zoning designation on the property by providing them with the legal description (i.e., the Section Township Range and Lot Number or Subdivision Name Block and Lot Number);
- c. If the plan and zoning accord with what you want to do, check with the Land Development Section to determine if there are any other applicable regulations; or
- d. If the plan or zoning prohibits the proposed use, request of a pre-application conference with the Land Development Section staff for assistance in determining all of the alternative courses of action.