

Staff is proposing the following value statements and introductory text for inclusion in the Comprehensive Plan as a substitute for individual rural area vision statements or a single countywide vision statement. The Board of County Commissioners originally adopted these values in 1999 and officially reaffirmed them in 2007. We have revised and expanded upon them in an attempt to better represent the community values that have been expressed during the course of the comprehensive plan update.

Each of the currently adopted Rural Area Plans contains a Vision Statement or something comparable that conveys what each community cherishes and desires to retain or to achieve in the future. Staff believes that the following land use planning values, already adopted by the County, capture in a more general way the ideals expounded in the individual rural area plans. These values appropriately serve as the planning principles upon which the Comprehensive Plan is based.

Copies of the Rural Area Plan vision statements are attached for the sake of comparison.

### **Land Use Planning Values in Multnomah County**

The State of Oregon places great importance on land use planning and has a long tradition of recognizing the benefits of a strong statewide planning framework. Multnomah County has also embraced land use planning as a necessary means to preserve its rural lands predominantly for agricultural and forestry uses, to protect natural resources from environmental degradation, and to foster a high quality of life for rural residents.

In 1999, the Board of Multnomah County Commissioners formally established their commitment to sound land use planning and its many related fields by adopting value statements. These values were reaffirmed by Board action once again in 2007.

The values previously adopted by the County appropriately lay the foundation to this Comprehensive Plan document. To that purpose, the following value statements have been taken from those adopted in 1999, reaffirmed in 2007, and updated as part of the Comprehensive Plan to reflect those things the County cherishes and desires for all who live and work here.

**We value** the preservation and protection of:

- Wildlife and its habitat
- Streams and other natural resources
- Scenic Views
- The Columbia River Gorge
- Forest Lands, and
- Farm and Nursery Production

**We value and promote** inclusion, diversity and equity in and throughout our communities.

**We value** sustainability and resiliency to climate change, with an eye to the future, and believe that maintaining the quality of life in the rural areas of Multnomah County provides a social benefit that serves those on both sides of the urban growth boundary.

**We value and promote** the health and safety of our communities.

**We recognize** that we are part of a larger ecosystem and want to make decisions accordingly, working with other jurisdictions and stakeholders with common purpose.

**We value** rural communities and rural character and support an economically viable rural lifestyle.

**We support** the Statewide Planning Goals adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission in 1975 and strive to further those goals with locally adopted plans and policies.

**We support** the "recreational values" and "cultural and historic values" imbedded in the goals.

**We value** the ability to travel by a variety of modes and a transportation system that provides choices for rural residents, while minimizing adverse impacts on residents and natural resources.

**We value** clear, courteous, respectful and responsive communication and collaboration with the many communities and its members, and with jurisdictions involved.

**We seek** fairness, equity and balance in finding creative solutions that build community as well as benefit the public.

**We value** swift, accessible and understandable processes that are administered in a consistent and predictable manner in compliance with applicable local and state laws.

**We value** history and a sense of place.

**EAST OF SANDY RIVER RURAL AREA PLAN**  
**Citizens' Advisory Committee**  
**PREAMBLE/VISION STATEMENT**  
**for**  
**Rural Multnomah County, East of the Sandy River**

We the citizens of rural Multnomah County, east of the Sandy River, set forth this vision for our unique community over the next forty years. It is our intent that the rural area plan, developed in cooperation with Multnomah County, shall serve as a framework to realize this vision. We expect our county government, through use of all planning tools and policies available, to serve as our advocate regarding all concepts and policies herein.

**For our environment, we envision:**

- The people of our community living in close proximity to nature, conserving and caring for our precious natural resources.
- Healthy and unpolluted air, soils and streams.
- Diverse and robust native plants and wildlife.
- A night sky free from increased light pollution and a community free from increased noise pollution

**For our community, we envision:**

- Maintaining and enhancing our quality of life through neighborly communication, education, cooperation, and community facilities.
- Expanding our commitment to land stewardship through the use of sustainable forestry and farming practices
- Working with all available resources to promote and encourage forest and farm economic development projects and to create conservation land trusts.
- Working with all available resources to purchase land for public benefit
- Setting an example of how our diverse community, young and old, can work together in creating viable and productive forests and farms on both small and large acreages.
- Creating education and work programs which provide forest and farm experiences for people from other communities as well as our own.

**For our future, we envision:**

- The residential density east of the Sandy River stabilized at levels allowed by current zoning.
- The Urban Growth Boundary maintained west of the Sandy River.

This vision statement is created to ensure that with vigilance and foresight, the unique rural character of our area shall be maintained and enjoyed by present and future generations.

## Introduction

# Community Vision

The policies in this document should be read in harmony with the following vision statement. This statement was developed with the Community Advisory Committee & broader public to be a compass that directs the policy framework.

The vision for the Sauvie Island & the Multnomah Channel planning area is to retain its cherished rural character and agricultural productivity, to enhance resource protections, and to reduce and manage cumulative impacts of recreation, visitation, and commercial activities in order to preserve the distinctive character of the island and channel for future generations.

Those who live on, work on, and visit Sauvie Island, value the Island's productive farm land, which provides fresh food for both locals and the region. Many who live here have a deep sense of place and are passionate about protecting and preserving a beloved way of life characterized by the predominance of nature, wildlife and water.

The Multnomah Channel is historically significant concerning the early settlement of the area. The marina community is dedicated to preserving and enhancing the channel environment and wildlife habitat on which they live. They desire to see continuation of floating home moorages as a part of the mix of uses on the channel.

The community strives to coordinate with state and local agencies to implement projects that protect and enhance the natural and cultural features of the area. Community health and safety continue to be a high priority for many residents, particularly the public road system and along the rail line adjacent to the Channel. By providing safe, accessible roads and facilities, the variety of multi-modal users may be accommodated.

Sauvie Island and the Multnomah Channel, as one rural area, both deeply value their commitment to the land and water that surrounds them. The community recognizes and respects the rich cultural history of both the native inhabitants and settlers who followed. It is this history, along with current commitments and values, which has helped create such a strong sense of place and devotion to preserving its uniqueness.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Policies for the various zones beginning with Exclusive Farm Use in Policies 11 – 15;
- Parks and open spaces in Policies 16 – 19;
- Flood hazard areas in Policy 20;
- The Orient and Pleasant Home rural communities in Policies 21 – 27;
- Transportation system in Policies 28 - 38.

### **West of Sandy River Vision**

The citizen task force created a vision to help guide the planning process, as follows:

As residents and landowners in the area between the cities of Gresham and Troutdale and the Sandy River, our vision is that we will continue to enjoy our rural lifestyle. We value all of the features that make this a rural place including the quiet open spaces, vistas of productive farm and forest lands and of Mt. Hood, country roads, healthy air, soils and streams, and a night sky where we can clearly see the stars.

We envision that the Orient and Pleasant Home rural centers will continue to prosper within defined areas in order to provide for the needs of residents and visitors. We want our roads to continue to serve as the transportation network for the area, while remaining usable for people enjoying the country and accessing the Sandy River, with opportunities for exercise by walking, running, bicycling and horseback riding.

In order to maintain this vision, we recognize that the planned density of residential development must not increase, that the agricultural economy of the area must remain strong, and that development of new non-agricultural businesses should serve the needs of the local area. This plan is intended to help us in our stewardship of the environment, our lifestyle, and our community over the next 20 years.

West of Sandy River  
Rural Plan Area

# Proposed Community Visions by West Hills CAC Members

## West Hills Community Vision:

*The vision for the West Hills planning area is to retain its cherished rural character, natural features, scenic views, forestry and agricultural productivity, to enhance resource protections, and to reduce and manage cumulative impacts of traffic, recreation, and development in order to preserve the distinctive character of the West Hills for future generations.*

## Rural Character of the West Hills:

What is the cherished rural and distinctive character of the West Hills that is to be preserved for future generations?

The West Hills are part of the Tualatin Mountains, bordered on the east by US Highway 30 and Multnomah Channel, to the north by Columbia County, to the west by Washington County and the Tualatin Valley, and to the south by the city of Portland and Forest Park. The hills are mostly forested with native trees and laced with numerous healthy headwater streams, with some agricultural land along the southwestern edges near Washington County. Views of our steep, densely forested hills from Portland, Sauvie Island, and the Tualatin Valley provide a strong sense of place in the western part of the Portland metropolitan region. The impression one gets when visiting these hills is of a sparsely occupied area with extensive wildlife habitat and open space, where people use the land to produce trees and food, and share the land with wildlife.

**The rural and distinctive character of the West Hills to be preserved, its “sense of place”, includes the following:**

- **Natural beauty:** The extensive forests, open space and greenery of the area, with occasional views of four Cascade peaks, the Coast Range, the Tualatin Valley, and the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, give the hills a rare and special beauty.
- **Sparse population and low-intensity uses:** The land is intended for growing trees and food, raising livestock and preserving wildlife and habitat.
- **Low environmental impacts:** Thriving diverse wildlife and plant life, quietude, good air quality, healthy headwater streams, good water quality and availability, and residents committed to protecting and enhancing the environment contribute significantly to the area's low impact on the environment. Our forests provide many valuable eco-system services, cleaning our air, filtering and buffering storm water, and absorbing carbon.
- **Diverse landscapes, life forms & uses:** Rich productive farm fields and forests, wildlife, plant life, all coexist with a small human population.
- **Family-owned farms:** Some farms have been in the same families for generations.
- **High-value forestry lands and natural features:** All of the West Hills was designated by the county as Rural Reserves for Natural Landscape Features because of the extensive high value wildlife habitat, headwater streams, and scenic views that provide sense of place for the region. This area provides critical habitat connections between Forest Park and the Coast Range, Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel, and the Tualatin Valley. Most of the West Hills was also highly suitable as Rural Reserves for Forestry.

- **Wildlife and habitat:** The West Hills are a long, narrow extension of the Coast Range ecoregion that reaches into the Willamette Valley ecoregion. The West Hills connect wildlife in Forest Park to the Coast Range, Tualatin Basin, Multnomah Channel, Sauvie Island, and the Columbia River and Willamette Rivers. This confluence of three different habitat types (valley, river/wetlands, and mountains) provides particularly rich but fragile (due to its long narrow shape and nearby urbanization) wildlife connections of statewide importance, identified by the State of Oregon's Department of Fish and Wildlife as a Conservation Opportunity Area. Large areas of contiguous forest canopy provide an increasingly rare and valuable habitat for neo-tropical migrant birds and other habitat specialists. Pockets of rare native oak woodland and savannah are also valued.
- **Public lands:** Metro owns over 1000 acres near the northern end of Forest Park to ensure wildlife connectivity. These Metro properties are part of a large and extensive network of protected natural areas in the West Hills that extend into the city of Portland's jurisdiction, including Forest Park Conservancy's Ancient Forest Preserve, over 5000 acres in Portland's Forest Park and the Audubon Society of Portland's 150-acre Nature Sanctuary, Washington Park, and the Hoyt Arboretum. The Bureau of Land Management owns land north of Cornelius Pass Road used for forestry and recreation. Nearby Burlington Bottoms is part of this network of public land, providing high value breeding ponds for amphibians that migrate to and from our upland forests.
- **Finite geographical features:** Our steep hills, many streams, landslide hazards, and the presence of Forest Park work together to limit our rural road system. Access is limited to a relatively small number of rural roads despite our proximity to developed urban areas in Portland and Washington County.
- **Rural landscape:** The area is peaceful, and natural sounds generally dominate the few man-made noises. There are few paved surfaces other than main roads, minimal signage, homes that fit into the landscape, an absence of commercial enterprises & buildings, and a notable absence of suburban-like developments and subdivisions once you leave Portland and urban areas in Washington County.
- **Community services:** Skyline Grange, Skyline Elementary School, Skyline Ridge Neighbors, and Forest Park Neighborhood Association provide community and communication for area residents. West Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District provides assistance to property owners interested in sustainable farming and forestry, fights invasive plants, and restores native habitat. There are no sewers and limited public water facilities in the area. Ground water via wells supply most water needs.
- **Sense of place:** The community and visitors are inspired by extensive closed-canopy forests that connect to Forest Park, views of mountains, rivers, and valleys, nature, wildlife, habitat and the serene and quiet quality of rural life. Residents are committed to retaining and improving the environmental quality of land, water and sky for future generations of humans and wildlife.
- **True rural community:** The West Hills are an outstanding example of a supportive rural community. Residents are all each other's neighbors, regardless of distance. While interests are diverse, they enjoy each other's company and help one another in times of need.