

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Process

Purpose and Values

This Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that guides future growth and development in unincorporated Multnomah County. The Plan was substantially updated in 2015, reflecting the first major overhaul of the Plan since it was adopted in 1977. The policies and strategies included in this document take into account the broad range of changes that have occurred since the original Plan was adopted nearly 40 years ago. It also incorporates information from the County's previously adopted rural area plans.

All cities and counties over a certain population in Oregon must adopt and maintain their Comprehensive Plans, given that they form the policy and factual basis for local jurisdictions' land use planning programs. Comprehensive Plans must be consistent with state and regional goals, laws, administrative rules, and other requirements and guidelines. The Plan includes a combination of goals, policies, and strategies to implement state and regional requirements and to address local land use related planning issues and priorities. The Plan provides the broad policy and factual basis for Multnomah County's land use planning program and ultimately guides all actions relating to the use of land in the rural portions of the County. In addition to these broad mandates, the Plan serves the following purposes:

- Provides the basis for land use decisions made by County staff, the Planning Commission, and Board of County Commissioners, such as approval of land use permits, Plan and Zone map amendments, adoption of Zoning Code amendments, and other legislative or discretionary decisions
- Serves as an organizational and management tool to help guide decisions by County staff and decision-makers related to use of land
- Identifies "strategies" needed to implement the Plan, recognizing that the ability and timeframe for implementing these strategies will be subject to constraints on funding; changes in federal, state or regional laws; and other limitations



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. The County also recognizes the unique position its rural lands occupy – areas with a distinct rural character that sit on the edge of a dense urban metropolitan area. The proximity of urban and rural areas enhances both of them. The city would be stifling without the ability to venture to nearby, big open areas. And the rural pockets would not be as vibrant without the urban attractions of the city next door.

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 values statement have been taken from those adopted in 1999 and reaffirmed in 2007, and have been updated 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 both inside and outside 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” embedded 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.





Plan Structure

Organization

This Plan addresses the following topics:

1. Introduction and Citizen Involvement
2. Land Use
3. Farm Land
4. Forest Land
5. Natural Resources
6. Historic and Cultural Resources
7. Natural Hazards
8. Parks and Recreation
9. Rural Economy
10. Housing
11. Public Facilities
12. Transportation

Chapter 12 references the County's Transportation System Plan (TSP), which is a separate document of the Comprehensive Plan.

For each of the other topics addressed, the Plan typically includes information about existing and future conditions and goal and policy statements. Each chapter also includes information about the County as a whole, as well as specific information about the County's planning subareas where applicable.

The chapters include the following:

- Introduction to a given topic
- The County's goal with respect to that topic
- Policies and strategies that apply County-wide (across all subareas)
- Policies and strategies specific to individual subareas

More information about these subareas is included later in this chapter of the Plan.



Goals, Policies, and Strategies

Goals. Goals are broad statements of intended outcomes. They provide a foundation and general direction for policies. This Plan includes an overall goal for each chapter of the Plan.

Policies and strategies form the backbone of this Plan. A **policy** is a commitment to a general course of action designed to guide decisions. By adopting a land use policy, the County obliges itself to render decisions consistent with that policy.

A **strategy** is a specific course of action for implementing a particular policy. The County is not obligated to implement an adopted strategy and the ability and timeframe for implementing any given strategy is subject to constraints on funding; changes in federal, state or regional laws; and other limitations.

The Plan includes numerous policies addressing a variety of topics. In general, policies are not prioritized within the Plan and, when more than one policy applies to a specific matter, they should be applied, if possible, in a manner that gives full effect to each policy. In the event that it is not possible to give full effect to each policy that applies to a specific matter, then the County shall determine the policy or policies that take precedence and must explain the basis for this determination.





THE PLANNING PROCESS AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Preparing the Plan

Oregon Statewide Goal 1 directs local jurisdictions “to develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.” While the Statewide Goals are not prioritized, citizen involvement is symbolically listed as the first goal of the planning program. Multnomah County conducted an extensive citizen involvement program in preparing and updating its Comprehensive Plan.

The most recent Plan update process included the following activities:

- Community Advisory Committee (CAC) and Subcommittee meetings, including 12 CAC meetings and 20 subcommittee meetings, all of which were open to the public.
- Use of the County’s website and social media to provide information about the planning process, including project updates, event announcements, draft documents.
- Direct mailings to County properties and residents about open house events and key milestones
- Email updates to community groups and individuals (using a voluntary sign-up process and contact information collected at public meetings)
- News releases to local media outlets about upcoming meetings and key milestones

The CAC was selected through a public process. Potential CAC members completed an application process and were ultimately appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. The 16 members of the CAC provided equal representation of the East of Sandy, West of Sandy, SIMC and West Hills areas. The CAC also included two non-voting members from the Multnomah County Planning Commission. CAC members reviewed, discussed and recommended approval of all of the policies and strategies identified in the Comprehensive Plan, including new policies and those retained from earlier editions of the Comprehensive Plan and Rural Area Plans. Members of the CAC also served on four subcommittees where they engaged in more in-depth discussion of policy issues and recommendations. Each subcommittee met at least four times and addressed the following topics:

- Land Use
- Farm, forest, and mineral resources
- Air, land, water, and wildlife resources and natural hazards
- Transportation and public facilities, including elements of the County’s Transportation System Plan



- Community meetings (three rounds) and additional meetings with existing community groups
- Online meetings and surveys
- Opportunities to comment and talk with staff via e-mail, phone or in person

Citizen Involvement Program

Citizen involvement is essential to implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. It helps ensure that planning decisions and processes best reflect community interests and necessities. It also provides for continuous mechanisms to communicate citizens' needs and issues to the County. Finally, it satisfies state legal requirements for citizen involvement that must be incorporated in County notification and other processes. In addition to these general requirements, other specific needs and conditions help to shape a variety of land use actions. Ongoing citizen involvement is likely to improve land use planning outcomes.

Citizen involvement processes also serve a number of other specific objectives, including:

- Inform implementation programs, grant applications, and other land use actions that require review and input from the community and its citizens
- Provide an important avenue for strengthening community identity
- Create a forum to voice concerns about non-land use planning issues that can be forwarded to other County departments and staff
- Provide notification to affected communities and citizens concerning public hearings on land use actions, allowing citizens time to prepare for and participate in these processes
- Create opportunities to bring together citizens who may have different viewpoints, allowing for increased understanding of planning issues and impacts
- Improve citizens' familiarity with planning processes and terminology
- Make more efficient use of staff time by helping ensure that organizations and the public generally are familiar with and in the best position to engage in land use planning
- Help overcome some citizens' reluctance to participate in planning processes



Goal: To promote equitable participation by all members of the community in the development and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan by ensuring access to information and transparency of decision-making, and providing multiple and meaningful opportunities to become involved.

In conducting citizen involvement activities, the County adheres to the following principles:

1. Citizen involvement is essential for creating the most effective land use planning processes and outcomes.
2. An informed public is critical to effective participation in land use planning. This requires the County to provide education and understandable information for the public to have a clear understanding of the processes, procedures, and timetables of action concerning land use planning issues, as well as to provide comprehensive information about the matters at issue.
3. Active relationships with geographic communities, neighborhood associations, community groups, and interested citizens promote ongoing dialogue and build their trust in the County.
4. Ongoing education of citizens, community organizations, County officials, and staff concerning community organizing, networking, and cooperation is strongly encouraged to maximize the effectiveness of citizen involvement efforts over time.
5. Multiple citizen input and involvement opportunities and activities will be provided during all phases of land use planning actions. An emphasis will be placed on providing opportunities and activities that generate input and involvement as early as possible to ensure its timeliness.
6. Work to provide meaningful citizen engagement opportunities for under-represented community members, including communities of color, to engage populations that are not traditional participants in land use planning efforts.
7. Land use planning processes, outreach, and involvement activities will respect and encourage participation of all citizens and vested organizations, regardless of background or viewpoints.
8. Design and coordinate outreach and involvement activities to ensure the best use of citizens' time and efforts.
9. Consistently evaluate the effectiveness of outreach and involvement opportunities and utilize this information to improve subsequent opportunities.



The County uses a number of strategies to implement the public involvement goals and principles described above. The County supports and will facilitate a Citizen Involvement Planning Program that is appropriate to the scale of current planning efforts and that offers opportunities for citizens to be involved in all phases of land use planning processes. It will provide:

1. Assistance through the distribution of information on planning
2. Coordination of citizen involvement activities and opportunities
3. Structures for citizen involvement in the development of land use plans and policies
4. Opportunities for citizen involvement in regional, state, and federal programs and the administrative decision-making process

In providing these opportunities, the County will:

1. Provide public education and information on planning programs, issues, and problems to citizens
2. Maintain a three-stage citizen involvement approach to implement land use planning that provides involvement opportunities and activities in all process phases, and which provides:
 - a. Opportunities for addressing countywide concerns on a countywide basis through appropriate methods such as town meetings, forums, questionnaires, surveys, and workshops
 - b. Opportunities for participation in more specific issues to be embodied in community plans through:
 - (1). Citizen-initiated groups, and
 - (2). Specialized citizen task forces
 - c. Ongoing citizen participation in community-level planning, implementation, evaluation, and revision of the Comprehensive Plan, and citizen input on zoning, subdivisions, and capital improvements;
3. Respond to citizen recommendations to assure that citizens receive a response from policy makers which includes the rationale used to reach a decision
4. Periodically evaluate the Citizen Involvement Planning Program



PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Relationship to Other Plans/Documents

Multnomah County has adopted a variety of plans and initiatives since the Comprehensive Plan (known as the Framework Plan) was initially adopted in 1977. These plans and initiatives cover a variety of topics including transportation, health, sustainability, and emergency preparedness, all of which provide direction for the Comprehensive Plan.

The **Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area** is an 80-mile long river canyon, combining natural scenic features with a critical transportation corridor for resource dependent communities, farms, and forest uses. The Scenic Area was established in 1986 with adoption of the National Scenic Area Act. The purpose of the National Scenic Area Act is to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and to protect and support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan (Management Plan) includes policies and regulations that local governments within the Scenic Area must follow and implement. The County adheres to this Plan through application of County Zoning Code provisions specific to the Scenic Area and in compliance with the Management Plan.

Multnomah County's **Transportation System Plan (TSP)** is a separate document that serves as a supplemental element of the Comprehensive Plan. Historically the TSP has been comprised of multiple individual plans with either a focus on various transportation modes, specific geography, or policies and standards. The most recent update of the TSP (2015-2016), which was done in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update, combines and updates information from the following individual planning documents into a single, integrated TSP:

- Bicycle Master Plan (1990)
- Pedestrian Master Plan (1996)
- East of Sandy Rural Area Transportation Plan (1997) (Transportation section)
- Westside Rural Area Transportation System Plan (1998)
- Functional Classification of Trafficways: Findings and Recommendations Technical Report (2003)
- Multnomah County Urban Pockets TSP (2005)



- West of Sandy Rural Area Transportation Plan (2005) (Transportation section)
- Transportation Capital Improvement Plan and Program Fiscal Years 2014-2018 (2014)
- Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Rural Area Transportation System Plan (2015)

Multnomah County's **Health Equity Initiative** works to address the root causes of socioeconomic and racial injustices that lead to health disparities. Launched in 2007, the Health Equity Initiative is a countywide effort focused on health inequities that also collaborates with local organizations to support policy change and monitor results. Specific policies from that document have been incorporated in applicable sections of this Plan. It also is referenced here as a supporting document to the Comprehensive Plan.

Multnomah County's **Equity and Empowerment Lens** is a quality improvement tool used to improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs. Begun in 2010, the Equity and Empowerment Lens is a set of principles, reflective questions, and processes that focuses at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels by considering what is and isn't working around racial equity and shifting thinking to encompass it. This tool is used by all County staff in day-to-day operations, planning, and communications with citizens and stakeholders.

Multnomah County's **2015 Climate Action Plan** serves as the 40-year roadmap for the institutional and individual change needed to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. The County Climate Action Plan is regularly updated. The 2012 Climate Change Preparation Strategy showed the County to have made substantial progress in carrying out actions under the previously adopted plan. Relevant policies from that document have been incorporated into various chapters of this Plan. The Climate Action Plan also is referenced here as a supporting document of the Comprehensive Plan.

Multnomah County's **Hazards Mitigation Plan** is an educational and planning document, which meets federal planning requirements by addressing hazards, vulnerability, and risk. The mitigation plan is a necessary requirement for federal mitigation grant fund eligibility. Relevant policies from that document have been incorporated into various chapters of this Plan. The Hazards Mitigation Plan also is referenced here as a supporting document of the Comprehensive Plan.



Plan Area Generally

Description of Plan Area and Map

Multnomah County is Oregon's most populous county. There are six cities within the County, including Portland, the State's largest city, Gresham, Fairview, Troutdale, Wood Village, and Maywood Park. The County also contains portions of two other cities: Milwaukie and Lake Oswego.

Multnomah County is one of three counties to be partially under the jurisdiction of Metro, the regional government and Metropolitan Planning Organization, and TriMet, the regional transit agency. Metro is responsible for maintaining an urban growth boundary (UGB) – a land use planning line to control urban expansion onto rural areas such as farms and forest lands.

Urban and Rural Reserves are lands outside of the UGB and provide future guidance on urban expansion. Urban Reserves are lands suitable for accommodating urban development over the 50 years after their designation. Rural Reserves are lands that are high value farms and forests or have important natural features and are protected from urbanization for 50 years after their designation. This Plan focuses on the rural areas of the County outside the urban growth boundary.

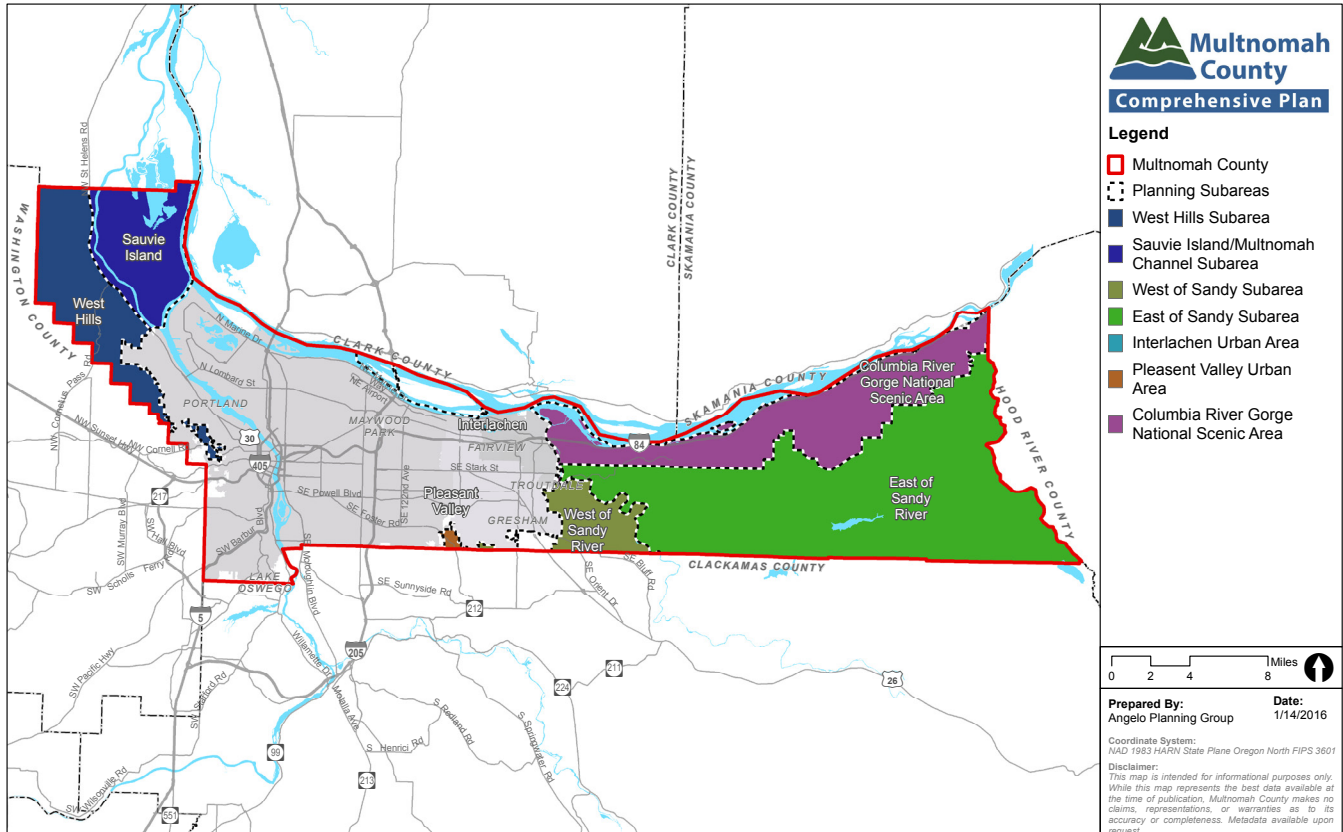


Figure 1- Multnomah County Subareas



County-wide Demographic Data

In 2010, Multnomah County's population was 735,334, including incorporated cities. This was a significant increase of 11% from the 2000 population of 660,486. The majority of the population in Multnomah County lives within incorporated urbanized areas such as Portland and Gresham. Multnomah County's rural population consisted of approximately 25,050 people. Population densities in rural unincorporated areas of the County range from 0 to 5 people per acre. The 2014 certified population estimate for Multnomah County is 765,775 (Portland State University).

Overall, Multnomah County has a somewhat higher proportion of African American and Asian residents when compared to the state as a whole. Multnomah County and the state have roughly the same proportion of Hispanic/Latino, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander residents. However, the County's rural areas have contrasting demographic profiles when compared to the County as a whole and the State of Oregon. In general, the rural areas tend to have significantly less racial/ethnic diversity than other portions of the County or the state as a whole. This information is summarized in Table 1.

Median household income is generally higher in the rural areas of Multnomah County. Western Multnomah County in the West Hills has a significantly higher median household income compared to the rural areas and Multnomah County generally. Unemployment in the rural western area of Multnomah County is at, or below, unemployment for the County as a whole. Except for the easternmost census tract in Multnomah County, poverty in the rural areas is well below the County average. The easternmost census tract is likely to be below the County's average poverty level, but it is possible to be higher as well due to margin of error.

Table 1 – Race and Ethnicity

	EAST OF SANDY RIVER	WEST OF SANDY RIVER	WEST HILLS	SAUVIE ISLAND	MULTNOMAH COUNTY	STATE OF OREGON
Race						
African American	0.7%	1.0%	1.0%	0.2%	5.4%	1.8%
American Indian or Native Alaskan	0.6%	0.7%	0.8%	1.8%	0.8%	1.4%
Asian	1.3%	3.1%	11.0%	1.0%	6.5%	3.7%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.1%	0.5%	0.3%
Other Race	1.3%	3.5%	0.8%	5.2%	0.2%	5.3%
Two or More Races	3.4%	3.7%	3.8%	2.5%	5.4%	1.8%
White	92.7%	87.6%	82.5%	89.2%	72.1%	83.6%
Ethnicity						
Hispanic or Latino	3.5%	7.8%	3.3%	0.9%	10.9%	11.7%
Non-Hispanic or Latino	96.5%	92.2%	96.7%	90.1%	89.1%	88.3%

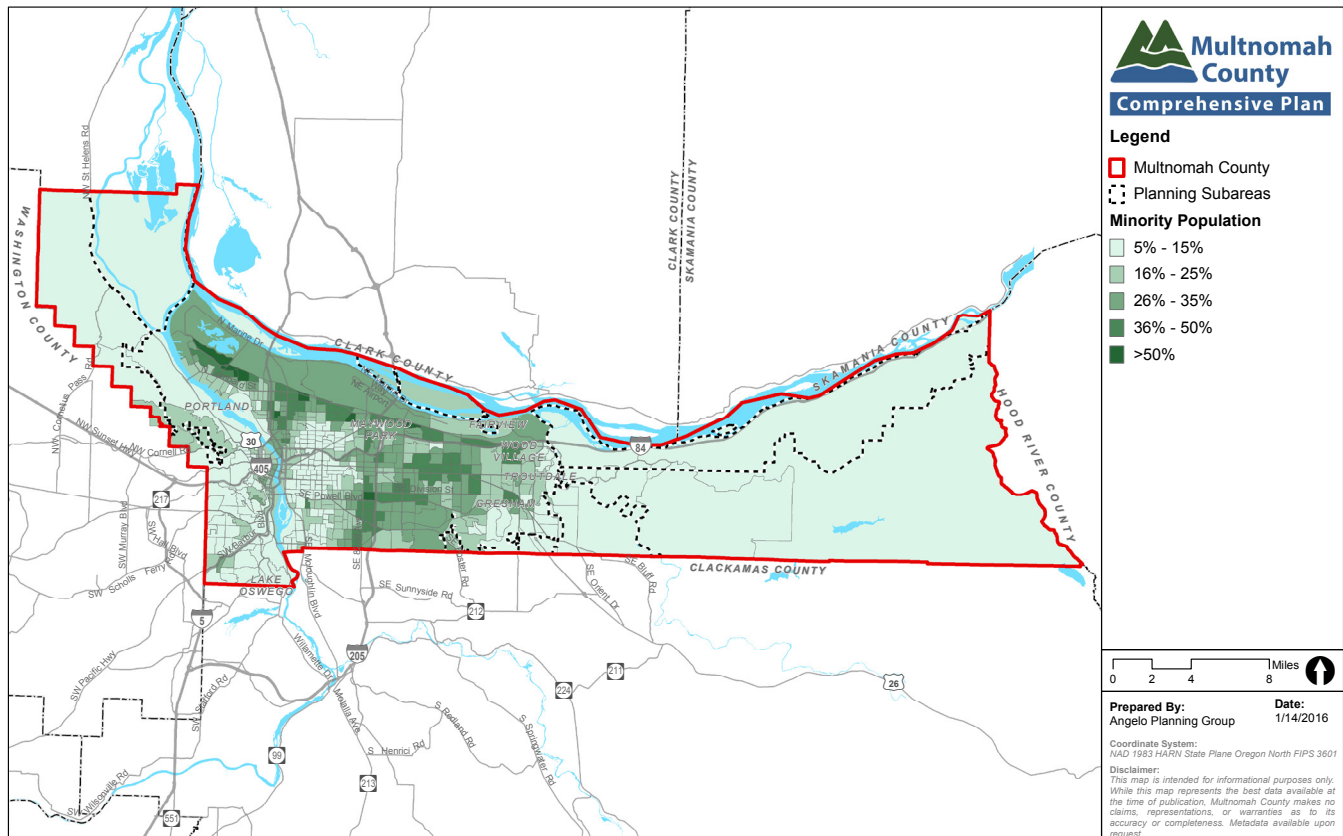


Figure 2- Percent Minority (including non-white, non-Hispanic/Latino populations)

In Multnomah County, roughly 53% of households are Family Households, defined by the US Census Bureau as “a group of two or more people related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together.” The only rural area that has a similar family household percentage is Sauvie Island, with 56.8%. All other rural areas have higher than a 70% Family Household rate. For comparison, 63.4% of Oregonians live in Family Households.

The State of Oregon and Multnomah County have similar median ages (38.4 and 35.7, respectively). However, the median age in rural areas in the County is significantly higher. Of the County’s rural areas, Sauvie Island has the highest proportion of nonfamily households, the lowest average household size, and the highest median age.

Metro provided information about anticipated employee and household growth in Multnomah County’s unincorporated areas. Employment is projected to grow at approximately 3.5 percent per year from 2010 to 2040. Households are projected to grow at about 3.2 percent per year from 2010 to 2040. However, these projections include both the urban and rural areas of unincorporated Multnomah County. Projected growth in urban unincorporated pockets is projected to be higher than in the rural unincorporated areas of Multnomah County.



Subareas, Including Rural Planning Areas and Urban Pockets

Multnomah County's rural area includes several subareas with unique environmental, land use, and transportation characteristics and issues. Over the last 20+ years, the County has addressed these circumstances by implementing land use and related planning efforts through adoption and use of a series of Rural Area Plans and corresponding Zoning Code chapters. These rural subareas (and plan adoption dates) include the West Hills (1994), the East of Sandy River (1995), the West of Sandy River (2002), and Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel (2015). These plans include a summary of background information, planning issues, policies, and strategies specific to each area.

The most recent (2015-2016) update of this Plan integrates and updates information from those Rural Area Plans into this single, all-encompassing Comprehensive Plan by incorporating policies and strategies from those plans where still applicable. Many of those policies and strategies are appropriate to apply to the entire County, while others are unique to specific subareas. This Plan also includes narrative information describing unique conditions or circumstances in each of the subareas.

The unincorporated portion of the County also includes land within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, Pleasant Valley, Springwater, Interlachen, Bonneville, and several major islands within the Columbia River, as well as small pockets of unincorporated land within the urban planning area boundaries of the cities of Portland and Troutdale. However, because these areas of the County are subject to other planning programs and land use authority, this Comprehensive Plan does not apply to them. A brief summary of these rural planning subareas and unincorporated pockets follows.

East of Sandy River

The East of Sandy River subarea is generally characterized by forest and commercial timberlands over the vast majority of its area, much of which is within the Mt. Hood National Forest. The western-most portion of this subarea contains the vast majority of non-forest uses, mainly consisting of agricultural, rural residential, and rural service development.

As part of the previous rural area planning effort for the East of Sandy area, the community developed and adopted the following vision statement for this area and reaffirms its validity as part of this County Comprehensive Plan.



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.



West of Sandy River

The West of Sandy River subarea 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 is open to urban influence to a greater degree than other planning subareas due to its proximity to urban development and a lack of physical barriers common to the other subareas, such as the steeper topography of West Hills, and the more limited access to Sauvie Island and the East of Sandy River area.

As part of the previous rural area planning effort for the West of Sandy area, the community developed and adopted the following vision statement and reaffirms its validity as part of this County Comprehensive Plan.

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 area. The plan is intended to help us in our stewardship of the environment, our lifestyle, and our community over the next 20 years.



Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel

The northern half of Sauvie Island lies within Columbia County and is outside the jurisdiction of this Comprehensive Plan. The southern half of Sauvie Island and Multnomah Channel is located within Multnomah County and is dominated by agricultural uses and a wildlife preserve. Various water-related uses exist on and along Multnomah Channel, ranging from protected wetlands to marinas and floating home moorages. Sauvie Island and the Multnomah Channel are unique in that the area is a mix of agricultural uses, recreational uses, and natural protected areas, all within close proximity to the City of Portland to the south.

As part of the previous rural area planning effort for the Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel area in 2014-2015, the community developed and adopted the following vision statement and definition of rural character.

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.



Rural Character

What is the cherished rural and distinctive character of the island and channel that is to be preserved for future generations? The SIMC Scoping Report states “Many of the issues identified during the scoping process were directed at keeping the island and channel as a rural area, with a focus on farming, connections to wildlife and nature, and an overarching concern about the future development of the area. Almost every response submitted indicated that the rural character of the area is threatened. Sauvie Island consists primarily of a state wildlife area that occupies most of the northern 2/3rds of the island and agricultural lands in large blocks that occupy most of the southern third of the island. Acreage home sites, many in farm use or habitat restoration, are concentrated in several areas along or near Gillihan Road, Sauvie Island Road and Lucy Reeder Road, and there are several moorages and marinas located up and down the channel. The impression one gets upon visiting the island is of a sparsely occupied area dedicated to agricultural production, wildlife habitat and open space, where people use the land to produce food and share the land with wildlife.

The rural and distinctive character of the SIMC area to be preserved, its “sense of place”, includes the following:

- **Natural beauty:** The openness and greenery of the area, together with expansive views of four Cascade peaks and two rivers, give the island a rare and special beauty in the Portland metropolitan area.
- **Sparse population and low-intensity uses:** The land is intended for growing food, raising livestock and preserving wildlife and habitat.
- **Low environmental impacts:** Low-density vehicular traffic, thriving diverse wildlife and plant life, quietude, good air quality, good water quality and availability, and residents committed to protecting and enhancing the environment contribute significantly to low impacts.
- **Diverse landscapes, life forms and uses in a single bounded area:** Rich productive farm land, rivers and lakes, fields and forests, wildlife, marine life, plant life, all coexist with a small human population in the SIMC area.
- **High-value farmland:** All of the agricultural land on Sauvie Island is foundation farmland, which is considered by the State of Oregon to be the most highly valued agricultural land in the State. For this reason, Multnomah County and the State of Oregon have designated Sauvie Island as a Rural Reserve.



- **Island/Channel community services:** There are no sewers or public water facilities. Ground water via wells supply all water needs. Sheriff's patrol and the small volunteer RFPD provide police, fire and emergency services.
- **Family-owned farms:** Some farms have been in the same families for generations.
- **Wildlife and habitat reserves:** 11,564 of 26,000 acres of the island area is owned by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and reserved for wildlife and habitat.
- **Finite geographical features:** Unlike other rural areas, access and egress and the area itself, are defined by the water on all sides, a single bridge, and minimal road connectivity.
- **Undeveloped natural features:** There are few paved surfaces other than main roads, minimal signage, an absence of commercial enterprises & buildings other than farms and a few cottage industries, and a notable absence of suburban-like developments and subdivisions.
- **Access to community services:** Unlike many rural areas, services are easily accessible within 10-15 miles to the north, south and west, in urban areas, including grocery stores, hospitals, and an entire full-service Portland metropolitan area.
- **Sense of place:** The community and visitors to the island and channel value and are inspired by open farmland, open waterways and vistas, nature, wildlife, habitat and the serene and quiet quality of rural life. Community members are committed to retaining and improving the environmental quality of land, water and sky for future generations and all life forms.
- **True rural community:** An outstanding example of a supportive rural community, where we are all each other's neighbors, regardless of distance. While interests are diverse, they enjoy each other's company and are there to help one another in times of need."



West Hills

The West Hills subarea is generally located between Sauvie Island and Forest Park to the east, Washington County to the west, Columbia County to the north, and City of Portland to the south. The area's predominant use is forest and commercial timberland generally located to the north, away from urbanized areas. Exclusive farm uses and rural residential uses are also common in the area, and are located in the southern area, closer to urbanizing areas in the City of Portland and unincorporated Washington County.

As part of the 2014-2016 County Comprehensive Plan update process, West Hills community members created the following vision statement and definition of rural character for the West Hills.

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 ecosystem services, cleaning our air, filtering and buffering storm water, and absorbing carbon.
- **Diverse landscapes, life forms and 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 1,000 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.



Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area - Relationship to the Comprehensive Plan

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area covers 80 miles along the Columbia River, including portions of Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco Counties in Oregon; Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania Counties in Washington; and the Mt. Hood and Gifford Pinchot National Forests. The purpose of the National Scenic Area is to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and to protect and support the surrounding economy by encouraging growth in existing urban areas. Planning and development in this area is governed by the Management Plan, the Rural Area Plan Policy Document and a chapter of the County's Zoning Code that applies specifically to that area. The Rural Area Plan Policy Document serves as the Comprehensive Plan element for that area.

Urban Pockets - Pleasant Valley, Springwater, Government Island, McGuire Island, Interlachen, Bonneville

Urban pockets are typically small unincorporated areas of Multnomah County surrounded by or adjacent to urban areas. The County reviews development proposals for land use and impacts to the County's road system in these areas.

The Pleasant Valley urban pocket is under County zoning but lies within the UGB and is being planned by Gresham for eventual annexation into the City. Land within this subarea will be zoned and developed in accordance with the Pleasant Valley Plan upon annexation to Gresham or when the City and County enter into an intergovernmental agreement transferring zoning authority to Gresham. Similarly, the Springwater area also lies within Gresham's portion of the UGB and this subarea will be zoned and developed in accordance with the Springwater Plan upon annexation to Gresham. Other urban pockets exist in Troutdale and Portland urban planning areas. Significant urban pockets around Portland include Dunthorpe, portions of the West Hills, and West Hayden Island. These areas will be planned and zoned by those cities in the future, subject to intergovernmental agreements between the cities and County.

Government Island and McGuire Island are also within the unincorporated portion of the County and are used primarily for agricultural and open space purposes with boat access to the shore/beach areas and limited recreational facilities in those areas. The islands do not have any full-time inhabitants, public facilities, or road access.

Interlachen is a small residential community located between Fairview Lake and Blue Lake and is surrounded by the City of Fairview. It is zoned entirely



Urban Low Density Residential and largely built out.

Bonneville is a small unincorporated area located between I-84 and the Columbia River near the Bonneville Dam and near the Hood River County boundary. The area is zoned Rural Center and Commercial Forest Use.

EQUITY

Equity and Empowerment Lens

With the help of the County's Equity and Empowerment Lens, this Comprehensive Plan seeks to incorporate and embody the County's commitment to racial/ethnic equity and empowerment. The Equity and Empowerment Lens is a tool used to improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation, which lead to more racially equitable policies and programs. At its core, it is a set of principles, reflective questions, and processes that focuses to shift the way we make decisions by deconstructing and reconstructing what is not working around racial equity, with an emphasis on engaging communities of color.

Goal and Policies

Goal: To support access to all people and to ensure that planning policies and programs are inclusive.

A number of policies related to equity have been incorporated in this Plan.

- 1.1** Acknowledge the needs of low-income and minority populations in future investments and programs, including an equity analysis consistent with required federal, state, and local requirements.
- 1.2** Consider and seek to achieve social and racial equity in evaluating and making planning decisions.

Strategy 1.2-1: *Incorporate an equity analysis when developing implementation standards, and processes that accounts for health, safety, and disparate impacts on low income, communities of color, and immigrant and refugee communities.*

- 1.3** Provide meaningful citizen engagement opportunities for communities of color in planning, decision-making, and evaluation.

Strategy 1.3-1: *Review and work towards removal of barriers to equity through targeted outreach that results in meaningful participation and feedback.*

- 1.4** Use the County Equity and Empowerment Lens when developing policy, implementing codes, and capital projects.