

URBAN AND RURAL RESERVES

Shaping the Region for the next 50 years



The people of the Portland metropolitan region have a rare opportunity to thoughtfully determine the shape and scale of their urban areas and rural landscapes for the next half century.

It's the same whether you're a third-generation Oregonian or arrived here last month. There's a reason we all love the Portland area. It's our innovative spirit, our distinctive communities, our passion for the outdoors, the beauty and diversity of our environment and our local seasonal food. Around here, nature is close to home and country is close to city. Within minutes of downtown Portland you can kneel in a farm field and bite into a sweet fragrant strawberry you've just picked or hike along a river of glacier melt, listening to the long liquid song of a winter wren.

This juxtaposition of cosmopolitan bustle, agricultural bounty, natural beauty and active outdoor recreation didn't happen by accident. The region is lively and livable because a few decades ago we made a commitment to contain sprawl, invest in our existing communities, think beyond the automobile, and protect the trees, wildlife and flowing water that make this place so spectacular.

We are again at a defining moment in which important decisions must be made.

We are embarking on a new process for determining how the region will grow over the next 40 to 50 years.

The decisions we make now will set us on a long-term trajectory that will influence every aspect of our lives – where our food comes from, how we travel, where we shop, how and where we work, our opportunities to interact with our neighbors and our proximity to wildlife and wild places. In many ways we are setting the stage today for who we will be as a society in 50 years. We're making these important decisions on behalf of our children and grandchildren.

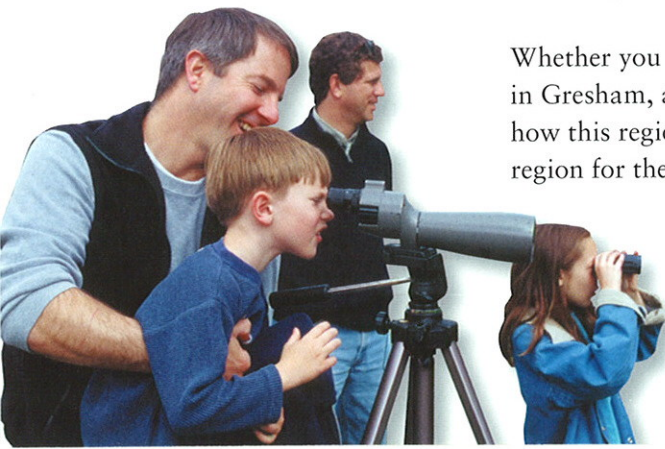


This effort will establish urban reserves to accommodate future city development and rural reserves to protect valuable farmland, forest land and natural areas.

Thriving communities, spectacular natural areas and productive cultivated landscapes make up the physical, social and economic fabric of our region. They are interwoven and give this place its unique character. We cannot separate one from the others and still retain the qualities of the whole. City dwellers depend upon their rural counterparts to provide much-loved fresh locally grown produce, plants and flowers. They visit pumpkin patches, cycle through rolling rural landscapes and enjoy tours in our local wine country. Proximity to the city provides farmers a reliable local market for their products and travel routes to send their products around the world. City centers provide rural residents access to world-class shopping, entertainment and education.

With careful analysis and thoughtful consideration, we can create a plan for our region that retains these important connections. We can provide space for a variety of neighborhoods, businesses and industries connected by an affordable and sustainable transportation system. We can provide a predictable future for farm and forest landowners. We can protect natural areas that provide clean water, clear air and native wildlife habitat – the places that keep us grounded and whole.

Whether you live in an apartment in Goose Hollow, a cottage in Hillsboro, a bungalow in Gresham, a condo in Lake Oswego or a berry farm in Scholls, you will be affected by how this region grows. This is your chance to join with neighbors and help shape our region for the next 50 years.



How will we do this?

Across the region, civic leaders are engaged in a collaborative planning process that will consider the shape of our region over the next several decades. Citizens and officials are working in concert to craft policies and choose investments that will enhance existing communities. As part of this work, Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and Metro are leading a regional effort to identify land for urban or rural use for the next half century.



Under the Oregon land use system, Metro maintains the urban growth boundary (often referred to as the UGB) surrounding the Portland metropolitan area. This line encircling the region separates urban communities from rural lands. Every five years Metro calculates how much acreage is needed to maintain a 20-year supply of land to accommodate projected urban growth and expands the boundary when necessary to respond to that need.

Under this longstanding system, every five years the citizens of the region wrestle with identifying areas for urban expansion. This system keeps landowners at the edge of the boundary in limbo, never knowing whether or when their lands might be destined for urbanization. It also makes it difficult to invest in and enhance our communities.

After the last urban growth boundary decision, the region's leaders proposed a solution. As a result, in 2007, the Oregon Legislature approved Senate Bill 1011. This legislation enables us to identify and designate areas outside the current urban growth boundary that are best suited for future housing and employment as urban reserves. SB 1011 also provides a new opportunity to identify areas that should remain working farms and forests or natural areas for the next 40 to 50 years. Metro will still revisit the supply of developable land every five years, but will locate future urban growth boundary expansions in urban reserves.

Collaborative solutions to regional challenges

Establishing reserves is part of a broader regional planning effort that includes:

- planning regional transportation
- focusing investments
- working with neighboring communities
- tracking and anticipating economic and employment trends
- analyzing regional infrastructure.

The steering committee includes representatives from businesses, agriculture, and environmental and social advocacy organizations.

How will the decision be made?

A regional Reserves Steering Committee is guiding the process for establishing urban and rural reserves. Each of the three counties has also established its own advisory committee to help their respective county commissions address local concerns and priorities. Committee members represent a broad array of interests from around the region.



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The Reserves Steering Committee includes officials from local cities, counties, state agencies and Metro, as well as representatives from a variety of businesses, the agricultural industry, and environmental and social advocacy organizations. Reserves Steering Committee meetings are co-chaired by representatives from the three counties and Metro. They are:

- Clackamas County Commissioner Martha Schrader
- Multnomah County Commissioner Jeff Cogen
- Washington County Chair Tom Brian
- Metro Councilor Kathryn Harrington

The Reserves Steering Committee meets each month. The county committees also meet regularly and all meetings are open to the public. More information, including meeting schedules and materials, can be found on the Metro and county web sites listed on page 8.

The reserves will be formally designated through agreements between the Metro Council and Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington county commissions.



When will all this happen?

During summer 2008 the three counties and Metro will invite citizens across the region to consider which areas should be studied for potential designation as urban or rural reserves. The study area will be determined in the fall of 2008. Over the winter of 2008-09, lands within the study area will be analyzed to determine their suitability for designation as either an urban or rural reserve. In May of 2009, the regional Reserves Steering Committee will recommend specific lands for designation.



Following extensive public outreach, the counties and Metro will vote on specific urban and rural reserve designations in late fall 2009. You'll have opportunities during every phase of this process to share your views.

After reserves are designated, the Metro Council will evaluate the region's land supply and adjust the urban growth boundary as needed.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5
November 2007 – March 2008	April 2008 – August 2008	September 2008 – April 2009	May 2009 – September 2009	October 2009 – December 2009
Establish committees, project approach and public involvement process	Identify reserves study area	Analyze reserves study area	Recommend urban and rural reserves	Adopt urban and rural reserves

Milestones

Agree on factors and process	Select reserves study area	Recommend preliminary reserves	Create inter-governmental agreements on reserve designations	Counties designate rural reserves; Metro designates urban reserves
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What factors will be considered when creating reserves?

Historically, Metro has based urban growth boundary decisions in large part on soil types, parcel size and current zoning. Senate Bill 1011 provides a pathway for selecting urban reserves based on how well lands can be woven into the urban fabric of the region while simultaneously protecting our most valued agricultural lands. It also provides a completely new tool for protecting significant natural areas outside the urban growth boundary. Urban and rural reserves will be determined based on a broader array of factors that focus more on the land's suitability for urban or rural uses.



Cities
Neighborhoods
Communities

Factors considered for urban reserve designation include:

- Can the land be developed at urban densities that make efficient use of existing and future infrastructure?
- Does the land have enough development capacity to support a healthy economy?
- Can water, sewer, schools, parks and other urban-level services be provided efficiently?
- Can the land accommodate a well-designed system of streets, trails and transit?
- Can the area be designed to preserve and enhance natural ecological systems?
- Is there enough land to accommodate a range of housing types?
- Can the area be developed while preserving natural landscape features?
- Can the area be designed to minimize conflicts with farms, forests and important natural features on nearby land, including adjacent rural reserves?

URBAN

RURAL

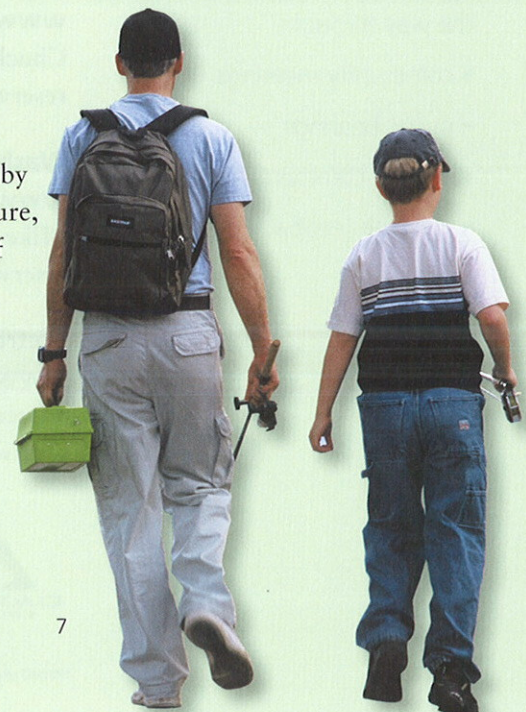


Factors considered for rural reserve designation include:

- Is the land in an area that is potentially subject to urbanization?
- Is the area capable of sustaining long-term agriculture or forestry operations?
- Does the area include:
 - natural landscape features such as natural hazards?
 - important fish, plant or wildlife habitat?
 - lands that protect water supply and quality?
 - features that provide a sense of place such as rivers or buttes?
 - lands that separate cities?
 - lands that provide access to recreational opportunities?

These factors are based on the results of a comprehensive study conducted in 2006 by a partnership of the three counties and Metro, the Oregon Department of Agriculture, and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. The Shape of the Region Study identified how agricultural economy, natural areas and urban communities all contribute value to this region. The full results from the study can be found online at www.oregonmetro.gov/reserves.

Farms
Forests
Natural Areas



How can I learn more?

The Metro web site is a great source of up-to-date information on reserves designation and related regional planning processes. Each of the three counties maintains a web site stocked with information on their respective activities and meetings. You can also attend Regional Steering Committee meetings and county advisory committee meetings to listen to deliberations. These meetings provide time for public input. Throughout 2008 and 2009, the three counties and Metro will provide lots of information and many opportunities for residents to weigh in on reserves designation, so stay tuned.



BE INVOLVED

You will have opportunities to learn what's going on and voice your ideas and concerns at every step of the way through:

- community meetings
- public hearings
- written comments
- web site feedback.

Clackamas County

www.clackamas.us/transportation/planning/reserves.htm

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