



Introduction to Use and Development of Property in the National Scenic Area

Welcome to Multnomah County Land Use and Transportation Planning. Our planning staff is here to assist you in understanding rules for developing in the National Scenic Area and to help you tailor your project to meet them. As part of that effort, we have developed a series of handouts to explain the development standards and processes that you will need to follow.

Note: Development is defined as any mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation, land division, or structure, including but not limited to new construction of a building or structure.

This handout provides an overview of the types of development allowed in various parts of the gorge along with the level of review the County applies to each.

What is the National Scenic Area?

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area was created by an Act of Congress in 1986. The purpose of the National Scenic Area regulations are to ensure that development does not compromise the scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources in the area. Consistent with the Gorge Commission's Management Plan, Multnomah County regulates what, when, where, and how development can occur in the County portion of the National Scenic Area to ensure that these resources are protected. The County's land use rules are listed in Chapter 38 of the County Code.

What is in this handout?

- How to find zoning
- How to find out what uses or development are allowed
- What County process applies
- What is the difference between processes
- Where to go to get a building permit

How Do I Know What Uses Are Allowed On My Property?

Every property in the gorge has a land use or zoning designation that lists permitted uses and identifies if they are subject to review. Zoning designations are shown on official maps at the County, and our planning staff would be happy to assist you in identifying the zoning for your property. The property, or portions of the property, may also be in a Hillside Development Overlay zone. The Hillside Overlay applies to any area that is shown on the County's "Slope Hazard Map" or is sloped 25 percent or more. The Overlay regulates grading in known hazard areas to minimize public and private loss due to earth movement (slides, debris flows, etc.). Our planning staff can help you determine if your property is in a Hillside Overlay.

This table lists all the Multnomah County National Scenic Area zoning designations, with their abbreviations and purposes.

Land Use	Zoning Designations	Zoning Designations Abbreviation	Purpose
Forest	Gorge General Forestry	GGF-20, -40, -80	Protect and enhance forest land for forest uses
	Gorge Special Forestry	GSF-40	
Agricultural	Gorge General Agriculture	GGA-20	Protect and enhance agricultural land for agricultural uses
		GGA-40	
	Gorge Special Agriculture	GSA-40	
Rural Center	Gorge General Rural Center	GGRC	Protect and support the economy of the NSA by recognizing the Corbett community as a service center and gathering place and allow uses compatible with the commercial, rural residential, and public facility and service character of that community



NSA Handout #1: Introduction to Use and Development of Property

Land Use	Zoning Designations	Zoning Designations Abbreviation	Purpose
Open Space	Gorge General Open Space	GGO	Protect those most significant and sensitive scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources on unimproved lands from conflicting uses and enhance them where appropriate
	Gorge General Open Space	GGO-GW	
	Gorge Special Open Space	GSGO-SP	
	Gorge Special Open Space	GSO	
Recreational	Gorge General Public Recreation	GG-PR	Protect and enhance opportunities for recreation uses on lands suitable for recreation
	Gorge General Commercial Recreation	GG-CR	
	Gorge Special Public Recreation	GS-PR	
Residential	Gorge General Residential	GGR-2, -5, -10	Protect and enhance the character of existing residential areas, and to ensure new residential development does not adversely affect the scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources
	Gorge Special Residential	GSR	
Commercial	Gorge General Commercial	GGC	Protect and support the economy of the NSA by encouraging commercial activities in areas where the topography and proximity to transportation, commercial, and industrial facilities and other amenities make them suited for commercial uses

If you know which of these designations applies to your property, you can go to the "NSA Use Tables" (National Scenic Area Handouts #2a and b.) to see what uses are allowed and the type of review that is required. The table shows whether the use or development is **allowed outright** (A), permitted with **expedited review** (E), permitted with **site review** (R), permitted as a **conditional use** (C), or **not permitted** (blank).

What Are the County's Review Processes?

The figure on the following page shows:

- 1) The County processes for allowed, expedited, review, and conditional uses and
- 2) How the processes differ.

Unless a use or development is allowed outright, every application for a use or development in the National Scenic Area will follow either the expedited, site review, or conditional use process. For more details on the expedited and site review processes, review National Scenic Area Handouts #4 and #5, respectively.

Following the figure are some key concepts to review before proceeding to fill out an application for one of the three processes.



Review Processes in the National Scenic Area

This graphic shows the County review processes in the National Scenic Area. Allowed uses do not have a planning review process, but a building permit may be required. The purpose of the expedited development review process is to provide a streamlined review for proposed development that has a small scale impact on the resources of the National Scenic Area. The expedited review process has a faster approval time and requires applicants to submit less complex materials and address fewer approval criteria than the site review or conditional use processes, as indicated by the arrow on the left side. Site review is intended for proposals that are more complex and have a greater potential to affect the resources. Conditional uses provide community services that may be appropriate in a given area when they do not conflict with the area's resources.

Less

Amount of time
to approval

Complexity of
materials to
submit

Expense for
applicant &
County

County staff
discretion

Public notice

More

Allowed Uses

Process:

- No scenic review
- No public notice
- No comment period
- If building permit is required, over the counter sign-off from planning required prior to review by Gresham Building Department

Expedited Review ****New****

Process:

- Pre-filing meeting (optional)
- Completeness review at the counter using boilerplate checklist
- Checklist used as decision; mailed as Preliminary decision with 14-day comment period, decision final if no comments received
- If comments received, then decision is modified to address comments and mailed for 14-day appeal period
- Appeal is to Hearings Officer at public hearing
- Building permit may be required and is separate from this process

Amount of time to approval: 21 to 45 days

Complexity of materials to submit: Limited criteria to comply with

County staff discretion: Little, if any

Public notice: As proposed, the comment and appeal periods are combined. Management Plan mandates 10-day comment period to select agencies and appeal period for same agencies and the public.

Site Review

Process:

- Pre-filing meeting
- 30-day completeness review
- 14-day comment period (20 for cultural resource agencies)
- Prepare decision (typically 14 to 30 days)
- 14-day appeal period
- Appeal is to County Hearings Officer at public hearing; Hearings Officer decision appealable to Gorge Commission
- Building permit may be required and is separate from this process

Amount of time to approval: 90 to 120 days from submittal (typical)

Complexity of materials to submit: Extensive; full criteria of code apply

County staff discretion: Moderate

Public notice: Limited agency notice when application submitted for completeness review; full public and agency notice when application complete.

Conditional Uses

Process:

- Pre-filing meeting
- 30-day completeness review
- 20-day advance notice of public hearing (hearings held once per month)
- Staff report available 7 days prior to hearing
- Hearings officer takes testimony at the hearing and makes decision within 14 days of the date the record is closed
- Hearings Officer decision is County final decision, appealable to the Gorge Commission
- Building permit may be required and is separate from this process

Amount of time to approval: 120 to 150 days from submittal (typical)

Complexity of materials to submit: Extensive; full criteria of code apply

County staff discretion: Most

Public notice: For pre-filing meeting, limited agency notice when application submitted for completeness review and full public and agency notice when hearing date is set.



Key National Scenic Area Terms and Concepts

There are some key concepts unique to the National Scenic Area and critical to understanding the processes and what can be approved on property.

General Management Area vs. Special Management Area. Most private property is designated General Management Area (GMA). Most Special Management Area (SMA) property is federally owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service. Different standards and criteria apply to the GMA than the SMA. Zoning designations in the GMA begin with GG. Zoning designations in the SMA begin with GS.

Key Viewing Areas. Key Viewing Areas (KVAs) are those portions of important public roads, parks or other vantage points within the National Scenic Area from which the public views National Scenic Area landscapes.

Visually subordinate. The relative visibility of a structure where that structure does not noticeably contrast with the surrounding landscape, as viewed from a specified vantage point (generally a KVA). Structures that are visually subordinate may be partially visible, but are not visually dominant in relation to their surroundings.

Not visually evident (SMA). A visual quality standard that provides for development or uses that are not visually noticeable to the casual observer. Developments or uses shall only repeat form, line, color, and texture that are frequently found in the natural landscape, while changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., shall not be noticeable.

Landscape setting. The combination of land use, landform, and vegetation patterns, which distinguish an area from other portions of the National Scenic Area. The "Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan Landscape Settings" map (1992) shows landscape settings.

Buffer zone. A setback area established and managed to protect sensitive natural or cultural resources from human disturbance or conflicting uses, or an area to protect recreational, agricultural, or forest resources from conflicting uses. In instances involving a wetland, stream, or pond, the buffer area includes all, or a portion, of the riparian area.

Building vs. Structure. Building: A structure used or intended to support or shelter any use or occupancy. Buildings have a roof supported by columns or walls. They include, but are not limited to, dwellings, garages, barns, sheds and shop buildings. Structure: that which is built or constructed, an edifice or building of any kind, or any piece of work artificially built up or composed of parts joined together in some definite manner. This includes, but is not limited to, buildings, walls, fences, roads, parking lots, signs, and additions/alterations to structures.

What Happens After the County Reviews Development for Compliance with National Scenic Area Rules?

Depending upon your project, a building permit may be needed. Within the National Scenic Area, the City of Gresham processes building permits for Multnomah County. To find out if you need to obtain a building permit, you will need to:

- Contact the City of Gresham (503-618-2832) or Troutdale (503-665-5175) Building Departments about the proposed development and obtain information about applying for a building permit(s).
- Coordinate with the Multnomah County planner who reviewed the National Scenic Area application. The County planner will need to review the building permit application and sign it prior to the applicant submitting it to the City of Gresham.
- Submit the County-approved building permit application materials to the City of Gresham or Troutdale. (The County will provide you with a list for what you will need to bring in).

Important: The City of Gresham will not review applications for building permits in the National Scenic Area until the County has verified that the development complies with National Scenic Area rules and has stamped its approval on the building plans.