Frequently Asked Questions

Question: What is a Comprehensive Plan?

***Answer**: A Comprehensive Plan is a policy document that guides future growth and development in the County. All cities and counties over a certain size in Oregon must adopt and regularly update their Comprehensive Plans. These documents address topics such as land use, housing, economic development, transportation, parks and recreation and air, water and land resources. Comprehensive Plans must be consistent with state and regional goals, laws, administrative rules and other requirements and guidelines. For each topic addressed, the Plan typically includes information about existing and future conditions and goal and policy statements.*

Question: Does the Multnomah County Comprehensive Plan address County social service programs?

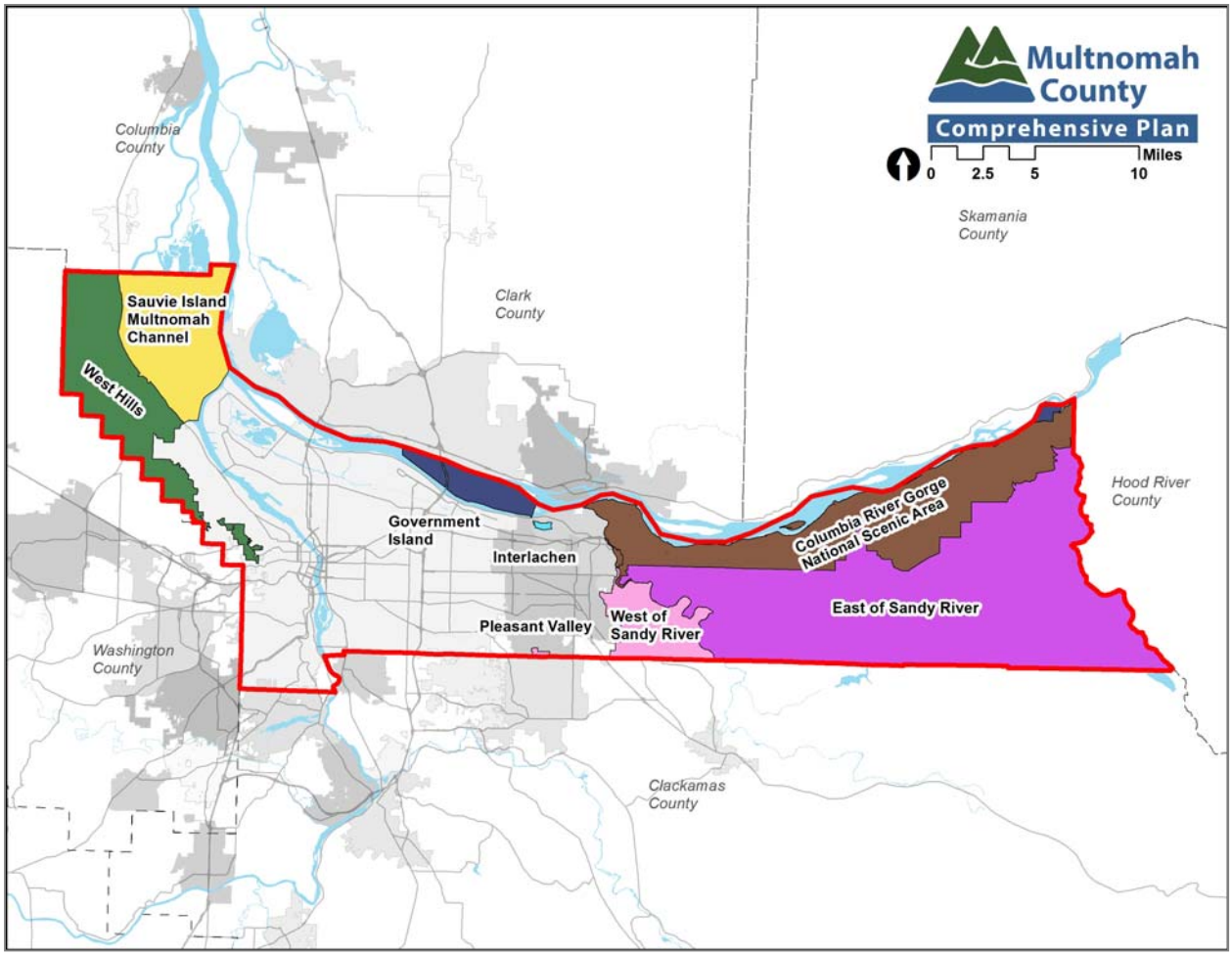
***Answer**: While the County provides many social and other services to residents throughout the County, the Comprehensive Plan will provide very limited information and policy direction related to non-land-based facilities and services. However, to the extent that public health issues impact these other topics, they may be addressed to some degree in the Plan.*

Question: How long will the planning process take?

***Answer**: The Comprehensive Plan Update process is designed to take approximately two years. Citizens will have a variety of opportunities to be engaged during this process, with an emphasis on identifying key issues and concerns early in the process, reviewing work completed by the planning team and advisory committees during the middle, and reviewing a draft Comprehensive Plan at the end of the process.*

Question: Does the Multnomah County Comprehensive Plan apply to the entire County?

***Answer**: The Comprehensive Plan focuses primarily on the unincorporated, rural areas of the County, in particular the West Hills, the areas east and west of the Sandy River, and Sauvie Island. It also addresses unincorporated areas in Interlachen and a portion of Pleasant Valley. It will not focus on the unincorporated, urban areas of the County which lie within the Metropolitan Urban Growth Boundary. Each city within the County has jurisdictions for planning within its urban planning area boundary and has its own Comprehensive Plan. Those cities coordinate with the County and the regional government (Metro) to ensure that all of these plans are generally compatible with one another.*



Map of Project Study Area

Question: How does the Comprehensive Plan relate to Zoning in the County?

***Answer**: The Comprehensive Plan provides a set of broad policies that establish the basis for future land use development patterns and regulations in the County. The County's Zoning Map and Development Code provide specific regulations about how property owners may use and develop their land consistent with state, regional and local laws and other requirements. The County will be updating its Development Code as part of the Comprehensive Plan update process, to ensure that the Code fully complies with statutory requirements and that it is consistent with any new Plan policies that direct Code changes. Similar to the Comprehensive Plan, the Development Code only applies to the rural areas of the County. Within incorporated cities in the County, each city has jurisdiction for land use planning and zoning and applies its own development code. This also applies to some rural areas that are within the Metro Urban Growth Boundary but have not been annexed to a city.*

Question: Does the Comprehensive Plan address roads in the County?

***Answer**: The Comprehensive Plan currently includes policies related to transportation facilities. As part of the Comprehensive Plan Update process, the County also will be updating its Transportation System Plan (TSP) as part of this process. The TSP will guide future construction, improvements and maintenance of new and existing roads, as well as facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users. Some of the information included in the TSP also may be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan. It also will incorporate information from a separate but linked transportation planning process for Sauvie Island.*

Question: What will happen to the new Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Rural Area Plan?

***Answer**: Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel is in the final stages of conducting its own rural planning process. It will be essential to incorporate information and policies associated with that process into the Comprehensive Plan Update. While the Comprehensive Plan update process represents an opportunity to decide how best to integrate that information, the County does not intend to revisit policies adopted as part of the Sauvie Island process, except where a policy may be applicable countywide.*

Question: How can I participate in the planning process?

***Answer**: The Comprehensive Plan Update process represents an important opportunity to strengthen the County's relationship with its residents, property owners, business owners and other stakeholders. Understanding people's needs and concerns will be essential to preparing an effective Plan. A variety of strategies will be used to inform people about the Comprehensive Planning process and encourage them to participate, including use of the County's website, regular emails to interested parties, news releases to local media outlets, community meetings, other small-scale community outreach events (e.g., small group gatherings or meetings with existing community groups), online meetings or surveys, meetings of Community and Technical Advisory Committees, and the ability to comment via e-mail, phone or in person.*

Question: How can I get more information about the planning process?

***Answer**: The County has created a new project web page for the Comprehensive Plan Update process*: *multco.us/compplan. It is a great source of information about upcoming events and draft work products. Visit the website to sign up to be on the project mailing list. You can also contact Senior Planner Rich Faith at 503-988-3931 or rich.faith@multco.us for more information.*