



## Summary of Public Meetings

April 2016

### **Prepared for**

Multnomah County

### **Prepared by**

JLA Public Involvement

## OVERVIEW

Multnomah County held two public meetings in April 2016 for the Multnomah County Comprehensive Plan Update process. The purpose of these events was to:

- Share the Draft Comprehensive Plan and Transportation System Plan
- Invite participants to ask questions of staff and committee members
- Collect feedback from the community and share it with the Planning Commission
- Involve the CAC members in the presentation and discussion of information at the events
- Share information:
  - Where to find the full plan online
  - How people can participate in the public hearing process

In total, 75 people signed in at the two public events (46 at the West side event, 29 at the East side event).

## COMMUNITY MEETING DETAILS

Public meetings were held on the east and west side of the County:

- April 5, 2016, 6:00-8:30 p.m.  
West County Meeting  
Skyline Elementary School Gymnasium  
11536 NW Skyline Blvd, Portland, OR 97231
- April 7, 2016, 6:00-8:30 p.m.  
East County Meeting  
East Multnomah County Building  
600 NE 8th St #300, Gresham, OR 97030

### Meeting Format

The meetings had a series of four sessions where guests could learn about different subjects within the Comprehensive Plan. Those subjects were:

1. Farm, Forest and Rural Economy
2. Land Use, Housing, Public Facilities and Parks & Recreation
3. Natural Resources, Natural Hazards and Cultural Resources
4. Transportation System Plan (TSP)

Upon arrival, attendees were asked to sign in at the welcome area and were given project handouts and a comment form. Guests were briefly given directions on the format of the

meeting before being encouraged to review the project background and choose their first subject area. The sessions were located in separate rooms and restarted every 30 minutes. Guests rotated between sessions. At each station project staff and CAC members presented information about the subject from the draft plans. Guests were also given handouts at each station with more in-depth information pertaining to each subject area. Following the presentations, guests were given the opportunity to ask questions and share their perspectives, which were documented by staff.

Each presentation included the following information:

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Topic Overview
3. Summary of Important Policy Recommendations
4. Question and Answer

After 30 minutes, guests were encouraged to choose another subject area and proceed to the corresponding session. The cycle repeated four times to allow guests to attend all of the presentations, or leave at their leisure.

### Agenda

I.	Arrival, Refreshments	6:00 – 6:05 p.m.
II.	Welcome and Activity Introduction	6:05 – 6:10 p.m.
III.	Presentation Rotation 1	6:10 – 6:40 p.m.
IV.	Presentation Rotation 2	6:45 – 7:15 p.m.
V.	Presentation Rotation 3	7:20 – 7:50 p.m.
VI.	Presentation Rotation 4	7:55 – 8:25 p.m.
VII.	Wrap-up	8:25 – 8:30 p.m.

### NOTIFICATION

The following forms of notification were used to invite people to the two events:

- **Website announcement:** Meeting information was posted on the project website starting on March 10, 2016
- **Email Announcements:** Email announcements were sent to the interested parties email list, existing groups, advisory committees, and neighborhood associations
  - Save the date – sent on March 10, 2016
  - Invitation – sent on March 28, 2016
- **Mailings** – Mass mailing to all postal addresses in the affected areas of unincorporated Multnomah County
- **Flyers** at the County Planning Desk

## PRESENTATIONS & KEY INPUT

During each presentation, comments and questions were documented on large pieces of paper. Below is the input received from both meetings.

### FARM, FOREST & RURAL ECONOMY

Multnomah County staff gave an overview of Farm, Forest and Rural Economy in regards to the Plan, and reviewed the goals and intents of each. The attendees were then given a more in-depth description of the policies of interest including:

1. Agri-tourism, Farm Stands, and Outdoor Gatherings
2. Aggregation Policies and Siting of Homes
3. Rural Centers (Industrial Site and Design Standards)

Following the presentation, guests were given the chance to ask any questions as well as give their perspective.

### Discussion & Questions

- Will the County limit development in Commercial Forest Use Districts (CFUs)?
  - No changes will be made to those existing policies.
- Will there be any change to the farm income test?
  - The County will be keeping with the state standard farm income test of \$80,000.
- How will small farm stands be treated?
  - Residents with small farm stands with no promotional activities will need to go through a Type 1 review. There will be few requirements, the County just needs to be alerted.
- How will AirBnB and other short-term rentals be handled?
  - Except for temporary health hardship dwellings, secondary or accessory dwellings will not be permitted. Short-term rentals will require a Conditional Use Permit for lodging within an existing dwelling.
- Has horse-boarding been considered during this process?
  - Horse-boarding is covered by the state, which the county follows. It is not a permitted Agricultural Use, but could potentially be allowed as a Conditional Use.
- Does the Plan address properties in unincorporated Portland urban planning areas?
  - This is not covered in the County's plan, but will be included in the City of Portland's Comprehensive Plan.
- Will the rules be stricter for Exclusive Farm Use (EFU)?
  - Policies will be more stringent in regards to outdoor gatherings and farm stands, but the County made efforts to maintain the status quo and align with state law.
- Are farm stands allowed on Sauvie's Island?
  - Farm stands will be allowed as a Type I or Type II permit depending on the type of farmstand. There will also be more stringent siting standards for large

farmstands. These standards are aimed limiting the extent of farm stands in an effort to retain productive farmland.

- What are the policies on tent communities?
  - There are codes, but the County can only enforce what they know about. Compliance program is complaint driven.
- A resident was denied permission to install solar panels on farm/forest buildings. Consider reviewing and altering standards.
  - Staff is not aware of details of this case, but resolution to the issue may be through code changes to the residential alternative energy code to allow more flexibility if that is possible at the local level. Staff encouraged the property owner to contact us to further discuss his past experience with us and explore options.
- Clustering standards appear to be too strict.
  - The County worked to balance the requirements with community values such as maintaining rural character, and maintaining limits on rural sprawl.
- How does state law connect with County requirements for clustering of farm and forest mixed zones?
  - For Rural Residential zones there is some flexibility in regards to uses, but it is still subject to state limits on rural density.
  - Rezoning is difficult, but possible, and often requires a Goal Exception.
- What are the policies on marijuana grow operations and buildings on CFU land?
  - Regulations regarding marijuana grow operations were just passed on March 31<sup>st</sup>, and they addressed setbacks, smells, etc.
- Balance developed (paved) areas with natural spaces to protect bees and promote beekeeping as a part of agri-tourism.
- Clarify the zoning of EFUs vs. CFUs.
- Is Corbett a rural center? Can Corbett Hardware be rebuilt?
  - Corbett is in the Gorge Rural Center and Corbett Hardware could likely be rebuilt.
- What are the policies on weddings and family reunions?
  - If customers are being charged, it is considered commercial activity and could potentially be regulated by the County.
  - Private events are not reviewed by the county. The Land Use office is concerned with properties being used as commercial venues.
- Rural Reserves
  - The County has designated, but still in the courts
- SEC-V View
  - The County is considering expanding the overlay to the west side of the West Hills and would be protective of the scenic quality of the West Hills as seen from the Tualatin Basin.

Multnomah County staff gave an overview of Land Use, Housing, Public Facilities and Parks & Recreation in regards to the Plan. The attendees were then given a more in-depth explanation of the policies of major interest under those topics, such as:

1. Maintaining Rural Character
2. Reuse of Vacant Commercial and Industrial Buildings in Rural Centers
3. Code Enforcement
4. Undergrounding Private Utility Lines
5. Rest Stops Along Heavily Traveled Recreational Routes

Following the presentation, guests were given the chance to ask questions and give their perspective.

### **Discussion & Questions**

- Does the Plan change anything regarding replacement dwellings?
  - There will be no changes to when replacement dwellings are permitted, however, the Plan could result in changes to setback requirements and other siting standards.
- County staff should spend more time in the rural areas meeting with property owners to better understand how regulations impact us.
- Ensure that code compliance rules treat unintentional code violators fairly.
- Many were pleased with the County's goal to not increase density.
- Bus service is not available to many parts of rural Multnomah County.
- Does the Plan change the zoning requirements in scenic areas?
  - No, it does not apply to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.
- What is the maximum floor area allowed for commercial and industrial buildings in rural centers?
  - The maximum is 4,000 square feet for commercial properties, and 15,000 square feet for industrial properties.
- Will the rest stops on bicycle routes be under the County's control?
  - Not necessarily, but the County must approve the land use permit.
  - Metro's mountain bike park could also serve as a rest stop.
- Many felt that it is the responsibility of the County to protect county lands from Metro's proposed park development. There are restrictions that prevent residents from building accessory units, e.g., shop buildings, sheds, etc. The same restrictions should apply when Metro wants to build a mountain bike facility with park amenities.
- Many rural roads are too narrow or have too many blind curves to act as recreational bike routes. There was concern that providing bike infrastructure and rest stops would increase recreational bicyclists, contributing to traffic conflicts and lack of safety.
- Rest stops for recreational bicyclists are a necessity to prevent public indecency. There should be spacing requirements between rest stops to support the needs of bicyclists.

- Bicyclists cause less damage to the road and do not contribute emissions. Some felt that this should be considered as an argument in favor of increased bike infrastructure.
- Does the Plan allow multigenerational housing?
  - The Plan does not address this issue. The County must comply with state law for housing in rural areas. There is a provision for farm help housing.
- How will the new marijuana grow operation standards affect rural communities?
  - Only indoor operations are allowed in rural centers, with requirements concerning smell, lighting, etc.
- Is the County responsible for noise ordinances that would restrict private property owners from shooting guns?
  - There is a noise ordinance, but the Sheriff's Office is responsible for ensuring public compliance.
- West County suffers from increased through-traffic from Portland and Washington County.
- West County property owners feel unfairly burdened by development restrictions that retain farm, forest and open spaces for the enjoyment of urban growth in Washington County.
- Many recreational sites in East County are becoming crowded, e.g., Oxbow trailheads on the Sandy River, Lewis and Clark State Park. Increased usage is resulting in lack of parking, unsafe or illegal parking, and litter on trails and at parking areas.
- The bee population is crucial for thriving agriculture, however, the bee population is in decline due to lack of pollinator plants. Establish development standards that require landscaping that includes pollinator plants, as well as limits impacts to and removal of existing pollinator plants.
- Housing prices are increasing and rural communities need to invest in housing and services for the growing homeless population.
- Does the Plan address the Sheltered Nook Subdivision off Cornelius Pass Road?
  - No, there is no mention of this subdivision.
- How does the Plan affect Measure 49 properties?
  - It has no effect on Measure 49 claims.
- It could be a big expense to property owners who will be responsible for undergrounding private service lines.

## NATURAL RESOURCES, NATURAL HAZARDS & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Multnomah County staff gave an overview of Natural Resources, Natural Hazards and Cultural Resources in regards to the Plan, and reviewed the goals and intents of each. The attendees were then given a more in depth description of the policies of interest including:

1. Natural Hazards, including expanded inventories of hazard areas related to landslides, wildfires and river channel migration areas
2. Natural Resources, including future addition of some stream corridors and wildlife habitat areas to County environmental overlay zones

3. Scenic Views, including possible expansion of the County's view protection overlay zone in the West Hills area
4. Historic and Cultural Resources, including policies associated with adaptive reuse of historic structures

Following the presentation, guests were given the chance to ask any questions and give their perspective.

### **Discussion & Questions**

- Compliance with natural resource and natural hazard requirements is costly to property owners.
- Many residents felt that there needs to be a better balance between the competing needs of wildlife / natural hazard areas, with property owner rights.
- Make efforts to balance wildfire protection with the SEC zoning and natural resource requirements.
- Residents are struggling to meet the SEC-V requirements as well as the tree preservation and thinning goals. The objectives do not align, making it confusing and onerous for the property owners. Would expanding SEC-V eliminate the ability of property owners to cut down trees?
  - Not if the tree cutting were for personal use of the trees or commercial harvest, subject to the Forest Practices Act. Most of the SEC-V requirements focus on structures and other development within the overlay zone.
- Some felt that the 300' stream buffer is excessive. Consider making that buffer more flexible in specific cases to reduce the burden on property owners and increase development potential.
- If a resident owns a replaceable dwelling in an area susceptible to landslides, are they required to conduct a geotechnical analysis when replacing that dwelling in the same place?
  - The Hillside Development regulations require a permit and geotechnical analysis for replacement dwellings located within the overlay even if the dwelling is proposed to be located in the same location.
- Is the County addressing light pollution issues?
  - Existing code requirements already require that outdoor light fixtures focus light downwards. New policies call for the County to adopt "dark sky" lighting requirements and the County intends to pursue that recommendation.
- It appears that clear-cutting operations are not subject to the same stream protection requirements as other types of building and development.
- Diversity of vegetation is crucial to bee and other pollinator populations. Has the County conducted an inventory of tree types and overall diversity of vegetation?
  - No, this has not been done.
- There was enthusiasm for protecting historic structures. It's important for the County to connect and collaborate with the groups or communities aimed at preserving that character.

- Has the Plan developed any new data regarding areas that historically have been prone to landslides?
  - Yes, the Plan incorporates data on those areas from the state Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and those areas are proposed to be added to the County's Hillside Development Overlay Zone in the future.
- Is the County adding protections to the state requirements (e.g., The Forest Practices Act)?
  - There are potential conflicts between the state and county requirements, for example, with higher vs. lower density uses.
- Do the landslide requirements apply to construction of new roads?
  - Yes, to the extent they are defined as development and/or subject to grading or building permits.
- West County residents did not feel they should be paying taxes to protect Washington County views.
- Expanding SEC-V to the west side of the West Hills would restrict the property rights of residents in Multnomah County, for the purpose of protecting Washington County views. Consider eliminating the SEC-V overlay to diminish burdens on property owners.
- What is the County's position on Metro's proposed mountain biking park? Will they need to abide by the same rules as property owners in the area?
  - There isn't an official County position, however, the park will be required to go through a conditional use permitting process, and meet the same requirements as any other conditional use in the area.
- Many of the fish-bearing streams that the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) has designated east of Sandy area are not shown on County maps.
- Some felt that the updated Stream mapping seemed arbitrary and politically motivated.
- Landslides are often the result of animal (mole) tunnels. Water seeps into those tunnels and decreases the structural integrity of the slope.

## TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN

Multnomah County staff gave an overview of the Transportation System Plan in regards to the Comprehensive Plan, and reviewed the goals and intents of each.

Following the presentation, guests were given the chance to ask any questions and give their perspective.

### Discussion & Questions

- Ensure infrastructure serves all road users.
- There was a desire for policies that prioritized the needs of rural residents, while also balancing the needs of commuters.
- Educate bicyclists on safe riding practices.
- Increase safe bike infrastructure.
- Rural communities are in need of transit for disabled and senior residents.

- Rural communities need to prepare for the growing senior population. Make efforts to invest in public transportation that conforms to the rural character.
- Congestion in the I-5 Corridor and from the St. John's Bridge impacts West County.
- Prioritize Skyline for improved bike safety.
- There was concern about allowing hazardous material freight to travel on Cornelius Pass Rd.
- Logie Trail on Skyline is in need of maintenance.
- West Hills residents need safe transportation infrastructure for students (Skyline School).
- West County residents identified Reeder Rd as a priority.
- Motorhomes and buses on the Historic Columbia River Highway and at the Vista House cause congestion and mobility issues.
- The Historic Columbia River Highway cannot support the weight of many users. Consider implementing weight restrictions for tour buses and motorhomes.
- The Springdale curves are unsafe for bicycles. Invest in wider shoulders and bike infrastructure.
- Please fix safety concerns about accessing Foster from 172nd. Problems arise due to increased traffic congestion on Foster
- Gordon Creek Rd lacks parking space and shoulders for bicycles.
- East County roads are deteriorating and are in need of maintenance.
- Prioritize the Nielson Rd-Woodward Rd Bicycle Detour project.
- The crosswalk at 179<sup>th</sup> and Main St in Gresham causes issues.

## COMMENT FORMS

Guests were given a simple comment form with space to provide any additional remarks. Only two comment forms were collected between the two meetings.

The two respondents thanked staff for their work and complemented the format of the meeting. They were both supportive of the draft plans. One respondent said, "Eventually (with the aging population and housing cost issues for young people), you may want to define a way for semi-separate living quarters to be allowed within existing structures." Both commenters were residents of rural Multnomah County.