

1 > PLANNING PROCESS

The update to the Clatsop County Parks and Recreational Lands Master Plan builds on Oregon’s long history of land-use planning and policymaking at the state and local level. Key milestones are described here.

> Statewide Planning Goals

The State of Oregon has long maintained a strong statewide program for land-use planning. The foundation of the program is a set of 19 Statewide Planning Goals to which local governments are required to conform. In more than three decades since the goals were first established, there have been modifications in process, but the goals themselves have remained the same.

The 19 goals express the state’s consistent policies on land use and related topics such as citizen involvement, housing, natural resources and recreational needs. Most of the goals are accompanied by “guidelines” that suggest ways in which a goal may be applied but (as noted in Goal 2) the use of the guidelines is not mandatory.

Local comprehensive planning is the means by which municipalities achieve the Statewide Planning Goals. State law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive plan, along with the zoning and land-division ordinances necessary to put the plan into effect.

Oregon’s Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) reviews local comprehensive plans to ensure consistency with the Statewide Planning Goals. When LCDC officially approves a local government’s plan, the plan is said to be “acknowledged” and becomes the controlling document for land use in the area covered by the plan.



“There is a shameless threat to our environment and to the whole quality of life, an unfettered despoiling of the land. Sagebrush subdivisions, coastal ‘condomania’ and the ravenous rampage of suburbia in the Willamette Valley all threaten to mock Oregon’s status as the environmental model for the nation ...

“We are in dire need of a state land-use policy, new subdivision laws and new standards for planning and zoning by cities and counties. The interests of Oregon for today and in the future must be protected from grasping wasters of the land ...”

*From Gov. Tom McCall’s opening address to the 1973 Legislative Assembly
January 8, 1973*

Later that year, the Legislature adopted Senate Bill 100, creating Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals.



Oregon's planning laws apply not only to local governments but also to special districts and state agencies. The laws strongly emphasize coordination – that is, the need to keep plans and programs consistent with each other, with the goals themselves, and with acknowledged local plans.

> Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan

Clatsop County's Comprehensive Plan is consistent with Oregon's Statewide Planning Goals. First adopted in 1983 and amended over the years, the plan represents literally thousands of hours of work by citizen advisory committees, the Clatsop County Planning Commission and staff of the Community Development Department, all supported by the active involvement of interested residents.

The Clatsop County Plan is a statement of public goals, policies, objectives, standards and maps used in making specific decisions about present and future land use. As a long-range policy guide it represents a public statement of the most desirable land conservation and development uses for the next ten to 20 years.

As a vital, living document, the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan is flexible enough to change as long as goals and policies, once established, maintain their consistency and the integrity of commitment that underlies them.

> Goal 8

Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 8 requires local governments to inventory recreation needs based on public wants and desires. They are also required to inventory recreation opportunities that are available, based on adequate research and analysis. Goal 8 urges long-range plans, policies and action strategies.

Oregon Statewide Planning Goals

- 1: *Citizen Involvement*
- 2: *Land Use Planning*
- 3: *Agricultural Lands*
- 4: *Forest Lands*
- 5: *Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources*
- 6: *Air, Water and Land Resources Quality*
- 7: *Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards*
- 8: *Recreational Needs***
- 9: *Economic Development*
- 10: *Housing*
- 11: *Public Facilities and Services*
- 12: *Transportation*
- 13: *Energy Conservation*
- 14: *Urbanization*
- 15: *Willamette River Greenway*
- 16: *Estuarine Resources*
- 17: *Coastal Shorelands*
- 18: *Beaches and Dunes*
- 19: *Ocean Resources*

Among issues addressed, it focuses attention on the need to:

- Meet recreational needs for high-density population centers and persons of limited mobility and finances.
- Provide maximum conservation of energy and minimize environmental impact and deterioration.
- Make services available to the public at nominal cost.
- Meet the needs of visitors to the state.

Goal 8 works in synergy with other elements of the statewide plan. Goal 1, for example – the Citizen Involvement Goal – requires that the county develop and implement a program that provides an opportunity for citizen involvement in all phases of the land-use planning process.

Goal 9 – the Economy Goal – requires the county to plan for economic development. In Clatsop County, tourism plays a key role. Large shares of the county’s recreational resources are provided for or are used extensively by tourists. Planning for these types of recreational facilities maintains the county’s economic health both by encouraging tourism and providing opportunities to keep people healthy.

> The 1992 Recreation Master Plan

Clatsop County’s Recreational Lands Master Plan is a subset of Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 8. The original Recreational Lands Master Plan was adopted Dec. 23, 1992, representing the combination of two planning documents:

1. A recreational needs background report that inventoried existing recreational facilities; examined general recreational needs; and reviewed land-use controls relating to recreational uses.
2. A management tool for county-owned lands that inventoried county-owned sites; provided site-specific recommendations; and examined the county’s park management structure.

*Oregon Goal 8
(www.co.clatsop.or.us)
reads as follows:
“To satisfy the recreational needs of the citizens of the state and visitors and, where appropriate, to provide for the siting of necessary recreational facilities and destination resorts.”*

*Goal 8 – Recreational Lands, Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan
reads as follows:
“Provide opportunities for Clatsop County residents and visitors to enjoy a variety of quality outdoor recreational activities through the development and maintenance of a well-balanced county-wide park system.”
(Goal #2, page 3)*

Goals, Policies and Action Plans on behalf of Goal 8 (amended by Ordinance 05-04) were last updated and adopted by the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners in March 2005 (www.co.clatsop.or.us).

During the process of developing the master plan, the Clatsop County Recreational Lands Committee affirmed the following mission statement:

“As the rest of the world sees Oregonians able to mix economic prosperity with conservation, they will be encouraged to balance their communities, cities and counties in a healthier manner.”

*Boone Johnson
From SOLV’s Oregon
Owner’s Manual*

“The mission of Clatsop County Recreation Resource Planning is to pursue adequate funding to support Park and Recreation staffing with the ability to implement the plans formulated in the Clatsop County Recreational Lands Master Plan and management policies.”

While the master plan served successfully as a tool for managing the county’s recreational resources, even during times of great financial pressure, it is now out-of-date and does not address the future of recreational lands in Clatsop County. It does not provide the broad vision needed for park and trail systems, nor an approach for resolving funding issues.

> Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee

On Oct. 27, 2004, the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners ordered the preparation of an updated Clatsop County Recreational Lands Master Plan. The county’s Recreational Lands Planning Advisory Committee, a group of citizens named by the county commissioners to guide the county on recreational land-use issues, was named to supervise the preparation of the plan update.

> Master Plan Task Force

The committee created a task force consisting of 12 citizen volunteers. Those who served included community residents, business and civic leaders, educators and recreation professionals. In updating the master plan, the Task Force set goals and priorities, recommended suitable projects for the county's parks and other recreational lands, and formulated recommendations.

The Task Force met at least once a month (Appendix A – Meeting Schedule). Members completed extensive on-site inventories of land managed for recreation in Clatsop County, as well as land not currently managed for recreation but *available* for that purpose. The new plan is expected to serve the county's recreational land-use planning needs for the next ten years.

“A child born today could conceivably live to see 2115. The planning done today will affect that child’s sunset years as well as the childhood of that child’s grandchildren. We’re really setting the tone, vision, the future of the quality of life for generations.”

*Mary Blake
Task Force member
and general manager,
Sunset Empire Parks
& Recreation*

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