

Who is responsible for long range planning in Washington County?

- The Board of County Commissioners, five elected officials who are the county's ultimate decision making body for planning policy related to land use and transportation. Washington County is responsible for the rural areas of the county and urban areas outside of cities. Their decisions must be consistent with regional and statewide planning requirements.
- The Planning Commission, nine members appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for four-year terms. The Planning Commission advises the Board on legislative planning and development issues such as the adoption, revision or repeal of any Comprehensive Plan element, including implementing regulations. For certain types of quasi-judicial plan amendments, the Planning Commission makes the final land use decisions for the county. Planning Commission decisions may be appealed to the Board of Commissioners.
- The Department of Land Use and Transportation's Long Range Planning Division, organized into three groups: community planning, transportation planning, and economic, demographic and geographic information services (EDIS).
- Adopted planning policies are implemented via the Community Plans, the Transportation Plan, and the Community Development Code which is administered by the county's Current Planning and Building Division of the Department of Land Use and Transportation. Additionally, the policies are carried out by other DLUT Divisions, namely Engineering, Operations and Capital Project Management.

How does the Long Range Planning Division organize its work?

Community Planning

The Community Planning Program is responsible for upkeep of the county's Comprehensive Plan. Other major responsibilities include participating in regional and state planning initiatives, addressing local planning issues identified through the annual Work Program and coordinating the monthly Planning Director meetings. For large planning activities that affect all local jurisdictions in Washington County, Long Range Planning typically coordinates the work of all local governments, providing local planning staff and elected officials with a regular forum to address these projects.

Our Annual Work Program outlines tasks necessary to keep the Comprehensive Plan in conformance with regional, state and federal law. These responsibilities include direct involvement with individual citizens, community organizations, cities and affected county and state agencies.

Community Planning also processes boundary changes for special service districts, including annexations and extra-territorial service line extensions.

Community Planning represents the county in other jurisdictions' park and trail planning and coordinates the expenditure of Metro's county Natural Area Bond revenue and county park SDC funds. The program provides support to the County Administrative Office and Board of Commissioners about urban service issues.

There are two application deadlines each year, February 15 and August 15. Complete applications received by February 15 will be placed on the Planning Commission's summer hearing schedule; those received by August 15 will usually be scheduled for a fall or winter hearing. An application cannot be scheduled for a hearing until it is deemed complete and accepted by the county.

An initial deposit must be submitted with the application (refer to the county's current fee schedule for the deposit amount). This payment is a deposit towards the cost of processing the application. The applicant will be required to sign a contract and agree to pay the full cost of processing the application.

For more information, please contact us at:

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The Planning Process in Washington County



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*Washington County Department of
Land Use & Transportation*

Transportation Planning

The Transportation program's primary responsibility is preparing and periodically updating the long-range (20-year) county Transportation Plan. Other duties include working with Metro and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) on regional transportation issues and initiatives, travel forecasting, oversight and coordination of the countywide Transportation Development Tax (TDT), bicycle and pedestrian planning, and planning support for the Capital Project Management, Engineering and Operations & Maintenance divisions.

We also coordinate monthly Washington County Coordinating Committee meetings, providing local elected officials with a regular forum to discuss transportation issues. Transportation planning activities include considerable involvement and discussion with county interest groups and residents in general.

Economic and Demographic Information Services

This program provides technical support for long-range planning and transportation projects. Program activities include: population and employment forecasting, growth analysis, data support for travel demand modeling, and management of population, employment, housing and development-related information to support a variety of public facility and service programs throughout the county. This program is also responsible for the establishment and ongoing coordination of Long Range Planning's Geographic Information System (GIS).

How are issue topics brought to the planning process?

- Citizen input, often via the Citizen Participation Organizations (CPO's) and their leadership group, the Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI)
- State and regional requirements for coordination and compliance
- Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission input
- Staff input, especially county Current Planning staff who are charged with implementing the long range community plans
- We also get input from special service districts and the development community.

Work Program

Each year after considering Plan upkeep requirements and issue topics brought forward by the above parties, the Long Range Planning Division prepares a draft work program for approval by the Board of Commissioners. The draft work program describes and prioritizes potential planning projects and land use ordinances. When there are a number of large planning tasks to be addressed, staff will prepare a multi-year work program.

The draft work program is then distributed to the Planning Commission, CPOs, CCI and other interested parties for consideration and comments. Staff may prepare an issue paper about a subject when the Board asks for additional information before making a decision about the work program. It is also posted on the division's Web page. After considering available staff resources and public comments, a final work program is approved by the Board.

Land Use Ordinances

A Land Use Ordinance adopts, amends or repeals the provisions of an element of the county's Comprehensive Plan, including related maps, the development code or otherwise directly governs the use of land through a legislative process. It does *not* include such subjects as financing public improvements, road engineering and utility standards, building code, development fees, sewer or septic regulations or nuisance control.

If a property has been recently brought into the Urban Growth Boundary by Metro, then a legislative plan amendment would involve removing the property from the Rural Plan map, adding it to the appropriate Community Plan map and giving the property an urban plan designation. We do a legislative plan amendment when there are multiple properties. Single properties are addressed through a quasi-judicial plan amendment.

The ordinance season is from March 1 to October 31 of each calendar year. No proposed land use ordinance may be adopted on or after November 1. If a final decision on a land use ordinance has not been reached by October 31, the ordinance is deemed rejected unless the Board continues its consideration after March 1 of the subsequent year. There is no limit to the number of ordinances that may be introduced in any calendar year.

Citizens who want to receive descriptions of all proposed land use ordinances during a calendar year may subscribe to a mailing list for a small fee.

Quasi-Judicial Plan Amendments

Quasi-Judicial Plan Amendments usually involve requests to amend the comprehensive plan map and designation for a specific parcel. Quasi-judicial plan amendments differ from legislative plan amendments (i.e., land use ordinances) in that they involve a limited number of parcels; legislative map amendments generally affect a large number of parcels or all parcels of land similarly designated.

Amendments can involve a change to either the Rural/Natural Resource Plan or urban Community Plans. Quasi-judicial plan amendments are processed through a Type III or public hearing procedure and are subject to the rules and procedures set forth in ORS 197.763 for notice requirements and hearing procedures. In most cases the Planning Commission is the final decision-maker.

In cases where a plan amendment requires an exception to statewide Planning Goals or involves a map change affecting the EFU, EFC or AF-20 Districts, the Planning Commission makes recommendations to the Board of Commissioners. In these cases, two hearings are required, one before the Planning Commission and one before the Board.

The first step in the quasi-judicial plan amendment process is to talk with a county planner about the process and potential issues. This information can easily be provided over the telephone. If a person decides that they would like to submit an application, the planner will schedule a pre-application conference, at which the staff planner will provide more detailed information about potential issues and criteria to be addressed, an estimate of application costs, written handouts and application forms, and a written summary of the topics discussed.