

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Adopting the March 31, 2000)
NW Oregon Regional Plan and Recommending) RESOLUTION NO. 40-00
the Regional Plan be Submitted to the)
Governors' Community Solutions Office)

WHEREAS, the counties, cities, ports, economic development groups and private sector communities within Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties joined together with the Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Land Conservation and Development, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Housing and Community Services and the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department to form the NW Oregon Regional Partnership in 1998 to guide economic and community development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Partnership has developed a NW Oregon Regional Plan providing a framework to guide economic and community development in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Partnership has conducted three public regional forums to develop the NW Oregon Regional Plan; and

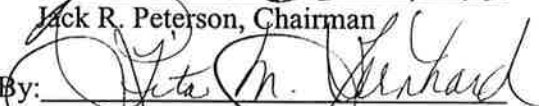
WHEREAS, the Regional Partnership, at a March 31, 2000 public forum, formally approved the NW Oregon Regional Plan.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED THAT the governing body of Columbia County hereby adopts the March 31, 2000 NW Oregon Regional Plan and recommend that it be submitted to the Governors' Community Solutions Team Office.

Dated in St. Helens, Oregon this 3rd day of May, 2000.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By: 
Jack R. Peterson, Chairman

By: 
Rita Bernhard, Commissioner

By: 
Anthony Hyde, Commissioner

NW OREGON REGIONAL PLAN

March 31, 2000

Purpose

The purpose of this Regional Plan is to guide the work of the Northwest Oregon Regional Partnership for the next two years. The Plan represents the action plan component of the region's Community Services Agreement between all participating partners. Included in this Plan are the Regional Partnership's strategic priorities, goals, short and long term implementation plans, and staffing resources. The desire to continue the Partnership for the next two years and ratification of this Plan has been reviewed and supported by the broad membership of the entire Northwest Oregon Regional Partnership.

The NW Oregon Regional Partnership is charged with developing, funding, implementing, and monitoring the Regional Investment and Rural Investment Programs in accordance with ORS 285B.230 to ORS 285B.263 and ORS 285B.269, as amended by Senate Bill 1128, and OAR 123-044-0000 to 123-044-0090 and OAR 123-045-000 through 123-045-0060. This Plan is in satisfaction of these statutory and regulatory requirements.

Introduction

The Northwest Oregon Regional Partnership naturally partners Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties for community and economic development. Similar geographic, demographic, economic and cultural characteristics weave throughout the region. The NW Oregon Regional Plan is designed to complement and coordinate with Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties economic development activities; Columbia Pacific Economic Development District, port and local community development efforts; and local industry expansion plans. Recognizing limited resources, the Regional Plan focuses on a two-year timeframe, uses existing staffing, and provides specific direction for accomplishing measurable outcomes.

Vision of the Region

Committed to coordinated economic development planning and investment, the NW Oregon Regional Partnership envisions a future of balanced growth, and involvement of all communities within the region. NW Oregon describes itself as:

"Promoting and Sustaining Healthy Communities Through a Diversified Economic Base while Being Responsible Stewards of the Region's Natural Resources."

Principal characteristics of this vision include maintenance of the quality of life; new and enhanced family wage jobs; livable and healthy communities; and diversification and expansion of employment opportunities through retention and expansion of existing businesses, while attracting and supporting new business development.

Diverse employment opportunities for the current population, based on value-added, export-oriented and effective work force training, will provide increased entry and family wage jobs. Maintaining the quality of life includes the visual attractiveness of the area, access to and use of the physical environment, improved and enhanced infrastructure including telecommunications, safeguarding of the region's natural resources, population density, education, community facilities and services, public safety, quality housing affordable to all ranges of incomes, leisure time and improved transportation capability.

The total labor force for the region stands at 75,250, which comprises just over 51% of the population. The labor force has grown consistently yearly since 1990 in each county. Female participation in the region's labor force was 45% in 1997, the same as the State average.

The population base in the three and a half counties is generally homogeneous in nature. Minorities have a low representation region wide in the labor force, ranging from 3.4% in Tillamook County to just under 10% in western Washington County, although there is a growing presence of Hispanics in Tillamook and western Washington county. Hispanics and Native Americans comprise the largest minority groups. The 1990 Census indicates that about 13% of the region's population had incomes below the poverty level; however, a 1995 estimate showed that number dropping to 11%, slightly better than the statewide average. For minority populations, the percentage living below the poverty level is about twice the region's average.

Seasonal unemployment continues to play a major role in the region's economy, particularly in Tillamook County, interior mountain areas and rural western Washington County. Lumber and wood products, construction, fishing and processing, visitor-related activities and agriculture typically have seasonal components based principally on weather conditions. A long-term wet weather pattern creating more severe winters and recent flooding have aggravated this condition. There is anecdotal evidence that a significant pool of area workers consider themselves under-employed, whether or not they are part of the contingent work force. Whenever a mill or other manufacturing facility accepts applications for openings for higher paying or full-time jobs there is inevitably a flood of applicants. Non-manufacturing businesses are seeing more of this behavior as the region continues to experience slow growth.

Within the region, Columbia County has historically had the highest annual covered job wage. This is due to high paying jobs in the paper and utilities industries. While the closure of the Trojan facility resulted in the loss of hundreds of high paying jobs, this loss has been somewhat offset by a growing suburban setting in the southeastern part of the county. Low housing costs and a better quality of life setting have encouraged population growth from those working in the Portland urban area. Nevertheless, annual covered wages in all counties in the region lag the State average of \$28,407 with Tillamook County being the lowest at \$21,015. Columbia County ranked 6th among Oregon counties with an average wage of \$27,273, Clatsop County 22nd with a \$23,205 average, while Tillamook County's \$21,766 average wage ranked 30th among all counties and equaled 74% of the state average. In 1997, all four counties in the Partnership lagged the State and US averages for per capita personal income. Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties show a per capita income slightly above \$21,000, ranking 10th among Oregon's counties. Western Washington County per capita income, estimated at \$21,367, is 75% of the overall Washington County per capita income.

The region also lags the State average in annual job growth most years. In 1997, Oregon experienced a 2.7% growth rate while the region figure was only slightly over 1% for 1997 and 1999. In recent years, job cuts have continued in timber and wood products, seafood, fishing and processing and certain agricultural products such as berries. The recent Asian crisis and slump in the semiconductor industry have put further pressure on timber and wood products and the limited high-tech industry located in the region.

NW Oregon is reasonably diversified and prime for economic development growth. Resource gaps are primarily a lack of access or a problem with under-utilization. Historically associated with its abundant natural resources, NW Oregon's employment and investment in lumber, wood products, seafood and agriculture have declined significantly in recent years. As the resident labor force seeks employment outside the region, there is an increasing need to expand and/or develop skilled jobs locally. To effectively compete in today's increasingly technology-based economy, the region's infrastructure, capital resources, support services and labor force skills need to be upgraded as well.

Long -Term Implementation Plan

The foundation for NW Oregon's long-term economic and community development is the NW Oregon Regional Partnership. The Partnership is a collaborative working relationship among local leaders in the public and private sector and the State Community Solutions Teaming including Economic and Community Development, Housing and Community Services, Environmental Quality, Transportation and Land Conservation and Development. Roles of each partner in the long term economic and community development of NW Oregon will evolve over time, but initial expectations include:

- Local governments -- Generally, cities and communities in NW Oregon are responsible for identifying and prioritizing their community development needs. An established criteria for receipt of Rural Investment funds is local prioritization of a project application as evidenced by inclusion on the County's SCERT list or through some other documented public process. Business development projects funded through the Regional Investment Fund require the satisfactory conclusion of local permitting and planning processes.

The Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District's was formed to provide regional strategic planning, support for infrastructure improvement, business development activities, acquisition of grant funds, and community and business loan programs for Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties.

County Economic Development Councils. Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties operate EDC's to support the economic health and quality of life. Membership is comprised of public and private partners. Activities include strategic planning, outreach to the business community, business development, acquisition of grant funds for locally defined projects and technical assistance.

The ports of St Helens, Astoria, Nehalem, Garibaldi and Tillamook Bay provide both business and community development support. County economic development councils provide county economic development direction, and in some cases, revolving loan fund resources.

- Regional Workforce Investment Boards and One Stop Centers. The region is covered by two local Workforce Investment Boards. Their mission is to strengthen the area's workforce by coordinating the human investment resources of local communities. Their efforts are based on public-private sector coordination and planning. Primary focus is on workforce-related education, training, employment services, and support services.
- Quality Housing affordable to all income ranges.
- Private/Non-Profit sector -- Typical actions needed from the private and non-profit sector are the development of business plans, match leverage, job creation and retention, and involvement of the local community.
- State government -- Actions needed from State government for the NW Oregon region are primarily of implementation of the NW Region Consolidated Plan (housing), financial support for rural infrastructure (roads, water, wastewater, telecommunications, etc), technical assistance with infrastructure feasibility and engineering plans, coordination/ communication amongst the various State agencies and Governor's office, and support with local business development and expansion activities. NW Oregon's Area Commission on Transportation provides input to ODOT's Six-Year and Supplemental Transportation Improvement plans.
- Federal government -- Regarding the region's economic and community development, the Federal government can provide the most support through continued funding of its Community Development Block Grant program and the Economic Development Administration and its various special public infrastructure financing programs (water/wastewater, environmental quality, US Forest Service, etc).

Short-Term (Two-Year) Implementation Plan

Achieving NW Oregon's long-term vision and goals will require a building upon successful completion of shorter term projects and activities. For the 1999 - 2001 biennium, a broad based list of multiple types of projects that meet local priorities will be addressed:

A. Project Areas

- SCERT Projects -- Those that have been prioritized by local counties and have gone through the State SCERT prioritization process. Regional and Rural Investment funds may be available to assist with local matching funds. These projects would likely be infrastructure, community facility and community preparedness projects.
- Regional Projects -- Projects addressing the region's key strategic emphases: telecommunications, transportation, workforce, fish recovery, and others that involve two or more of the Partnership's counties or are multi-region in nature.
- Local Community/Immediate Opportunity Projects -- Projects of priority to local communities, and where start-up or gap financing funds are needed.
- Private Sector Investment - Projects that create jobs and investment including start-ups, retention, expansion and new company siting that fit with local goals and priorities.

B. Resources

The primary resources for regional implementation of the Short-Term Implementation Plan are the State of Oregon lottery funds through the Regional and Rural Investment funds. These funds are administered for Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties through the Northwest Oregon Economic Alliance under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Regional Partnership. Administration of the Regional and Rural Investment funds for western Washington County is being negotiated. Costs for staffing of the Northwest Oregon Regional Partnership will be shared equally by all four counties in the Partnership.

I Regional Investment Fund

- Funding Emphasis -- Regional Investment funds will be focused on those projects and activities creating or leading to family wage or above industry average wage jobs. With a majority of Columbia and western Washington county workers commuting out of the area to work, and Clatsop and Tillamook counties having an excess of labor over the number of skilled jobs, NW Oregon clearly has a labor pool for creation of new jobs within the region. The priority will be, however, on creation of the highest paying jobs possible.
- Trade Sectors -- Rather than limiting funds to pre-selected industry sectors, the NW Oregon Regional Plan encourages projects and activities that diversify the local and regional economy. Rich in natural resources, NW Oregon needs to focus for the next two years on supporting projects that add value or involve secondary uses of the region's nature-based industries. Key to this trade sector will be highest and best use of the region's natural resources.

Diversification in other trade sectors will mean supporting projects that provide off-season employment opportunities. Also, telecommunications business growth is essential to the future of the region
- Types of Funding -- Regional Investment funds will be available in multiple formats, to best suit each project and contractor:
 - Business technical assistance and planning grants -- Types of projects could include a regional commercial/industrial inventory of land and facilities, business recruitment and marketing, targeted industry studies on business retention and growth/diversification opportunities
 - Business loans -- Low interest loans for businesses are available for business expansion and diversification.

II Rural Investment Fund

- Funding Emphasis -- Rural Investment funds will be focused on implementation of local community priorities. Given the need to grow and diversify the region's economy, local community projects that focus on strengthening a community's economic environment will receive highest priority.
- Types of Community Projects -- Rural Investment funds will be available for:
 - Community infrastructure
 - Community facilities
 - Gap financing of community projects, to leverage other resources, to provide local matching funds
 - Downtown development
 - Leadership/Community technical skills development
- Project Funding Criteria -- Rural Investment Fund project application decision-making criteria will include:
 - Linkage with local community needs and priorities. Only the highest priority projects from a local community will be considered for funding.
 - Local community development impact. Regional priority will be placed on those projects having the most impact.
 - Other funding resources and networking with other partners. Consideration will be given to projects that leverage other funding resources
 - Need for gap or seed financing in order to access other funding programs.
 - Specific and clearly obtainable economic and/or community development objectives, including a plan for performance measurement.
 - Demonstrates that the project is ready to proceed (eg, land use, permitting, financial commitments) and will be completed by June, 2001.
 - Financial feasibility.
 - Ongoing sustainability.
 - Retains, creates, or leads to an increase in the number of above average industry wage jobs in the region for area residents.
 - Leverages other sources of funds.
 - Demonstrates ongoing sustainability
 - Demonstrates other unique characteristics, such as achieving Oregon Economic and Community Development Department goals in terms of average wage level of jobs created, firm size of companies receiving benefits, businesses benefited that are minority owned, businesses benefited that are woman-owned, and number of Oregonians benefiting from the project.

Semi-annual reporting and documentation of project progress, budget and achievement of performance measures are required of all funded projects.

- Budget -- As a guide, Rural Investment funds will generally be allocated:

- Community infrastructure, leadership/vision/capacity	80.0%
- Immediate opportunity project set aside	9.8%
- Administration (NOEA - 8.2%; Col-Pac EDD/Regional Pshp - 2.0%)	<u>10.2%</u>
	100.0%

- Schedule for expenditure, monitoring and performance reporting of the Regional Investment funds is:

	<u>Timing</u>
- Call for project applications, funding decision-making, Completion of contracts	Spring, 2000
- Multi-region projects	By Fall, 2000
- Immediate opportunity projects	Ongoing, but no new projects after December, 2000
- Performance reporting	Semi-Annually
- Administration	Ongoing

- Proper Balance Between Jobs and Housing -- “Support development that provides for a balance of jobs and affordable housing within a community to reduce the need to commute long distances between home and work, thereby minimizing personal community costs as well as the public and societal cost of expanding the transportation infrastructure.”

(*) From Governor’s Executive Order 97-22, December 16, 1997 -- “The state shall strive to ensure that its programs and activities help build and maintain quality communities which have clean air and water, housing that is affordable to community residents, a balance of jobs and housing in proximity to one another, development patterns that minimize the cost of public services, and a mix of residential, commercial, industrial and institutional uses that supports a balanced transportation system.”

Management Plan

- Regional Partnership

Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and western Washington counties have created a collaborative partnership to provide a forum for coordination of local, state, federal , and private community development planning and investments. The goal is to work together to improve coordination, so that strategies and processes for community development are leveraged to the highest extent possible to meet agreed upon priority issues, challenges and goals. The Regional Partnership does not replace or supersede any local, state or federal government authority for regulatory or investment decision-making, but serves as a communication and resource coordination forum.

Regional Partnership responsibilities include:

- Providing strategic direction to development of Regional Plan and NOEA activities
- Ratification of the Regional Plan
- Coordination/Communication of Regional Plan with other NW Oregon issues/projects/activities
- Implementation of the Regional Plan
- Oversight of NOEA contract

- Staffing and Management of the NW Oregon Regional Partnership

The Regional Partnership has designated the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District to provide staffing and management. Approximately 2% of the Regional Investment Fund and 2% of the Rural Investment Fund will be allocated to cover general staffing costs for the two year period. As more specific projects are developed within the subcommittees, other sources will assist with management and staffing needs. An example of this is the development of the NW Oregon Commission on Transportation (NWACT). Funding for the staffing responsibilities associated with the NWACT will be supplemented by ODOT.

Staffing and management responsibilities to the Regional Partnership by the Columbia Pacific EDD are:

- Provide administrative and staff services for the Partnership in order for the Partnership to perform its functions and duties as outlined in the Community Solutions Agreement (CSA).
- Ensure that the Partnership carries out functions outlined in the Community Services Agreement. Specifically, those functions are to: identify priority regional community and economic development issues, problems and goals; develop strategies to address issues and problems and meet the goals; and develop community development performance measures for the Partnership that provide measurable indicators of success on the above strategies as directed by the Partnership.
- Ensure completion and implementation of a Regional Plan guiding the future work of the Partnership.