

---

# CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN



**2040**

**This page intentionally blank.**

---



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**ADOPTED JULY 23, 2022**

### **BOARD OF CLATSOP COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

- Mark Kujala, Chair (District 1)
- Lianne Thompson, Vice-Chair (District 5)
- John Toyooka (District 2)
- Pamela Wev (District 3)
- Courtney Bangs (District 4)

### **CLATSOP PLAINS CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

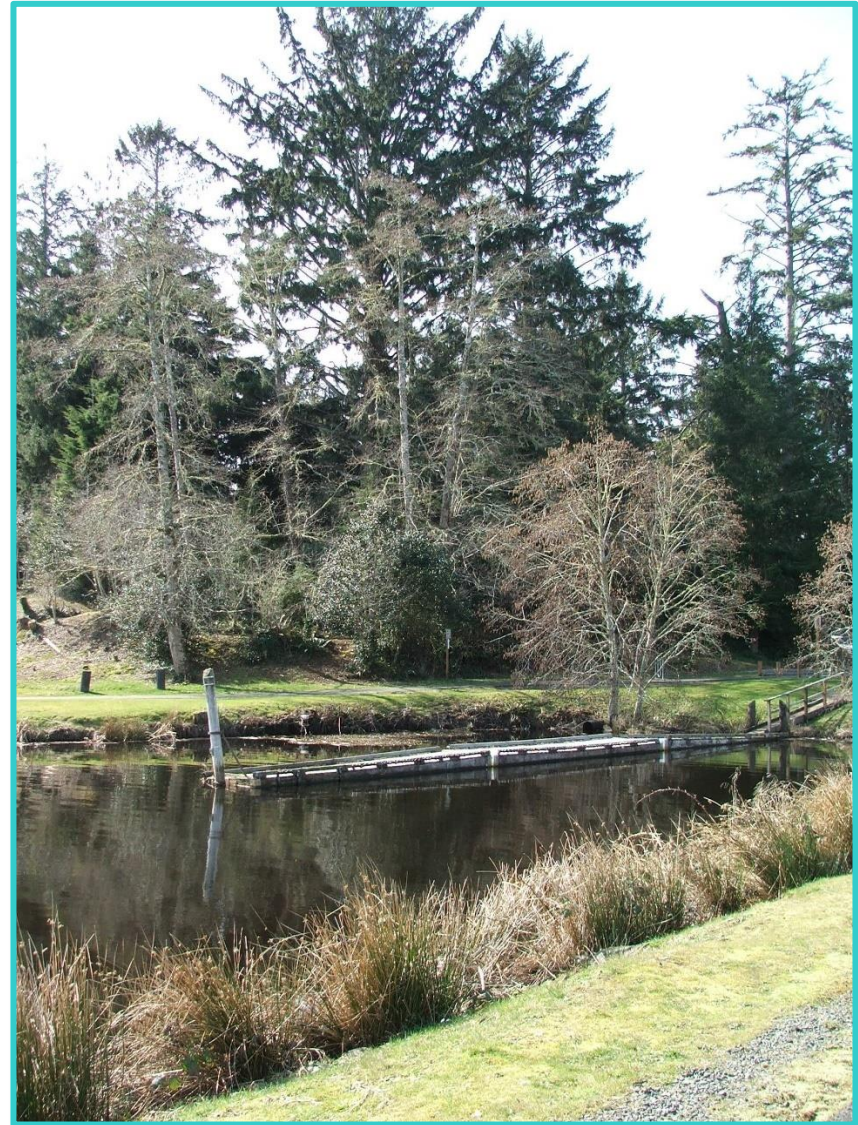
- Mary Kemhus, Chair
- Devon Abing
- Don Abing
- Diane Heintz
- Phillip Johnson
- Maria Pincetich
- Robert Stricklin

### **CLATSOP COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION**

- Nadia Gardner, Chair
- John Orr, Vice-Chair
- Christopher Farrar
- Cary Johnson
- Lam Quang
- Robert Stricklin

### **STAFF**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| • Don Bohn, County Manager                | • Jason Pollack, Planner                         |
| • Monica Steele, Assistant County Manager | • Victoria Sage, Planner                         |
| • Julia Decker, Planning Manager          | • Clancie Adams, Permit Technician               |
| • Ian Sisson, Senior Planner              | • Gail Henrikson, Community Development Director |



## Table of Contents

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>                         | <b>2</b> |
| Purpose .....                                     | 2        |
| Scope .....                                       | 2        |
| Planning Process .....                            | 2        |
| Using the Plan .....                              | 2        |
| Review and Update .....                           | 2        |
| <b>OVERALL GOAL FOR THE CLATSOP PLAINS.....</b>   | <b>4</b> |
| <b>LOCAL HISTORY .....</b>                        | <b>4</b> |
| <b>CURRENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS .....</b>          | <b>4</b> |
| <b>FUTURE TRENDS .....</b>                        | <b>4</b> |
| <b>LANDSCAPE UNITS.....</b>                       | <b>4</b> |
| Introduction .....                                | 5        |
| Coastal Shorelands and Other Shorelands.....      | 5        |
| Beaches .....                                     | 5        |
| Dunes .....                                       | 5        |
| Findings of Minimizing Environmental Effects..... | 5        |
| Estuary Resources .....                           | 5        |
| Alluvial Lowlands.....                            | 5        |
| Alluvial Terraces .....                           | 5        |
| Coast Range Foothills .....                       | 5        |
| <b>NATURAL RESOURCES .....</b>                    | <b>4</b> |
| Forest Lands .....                                | 5        |
| Agricultural Lands .....                          | 5        |

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Mineral Aggregates .....                             | 5        |
| Water Quality – Clatsop Plains Aquifer .....         | 5        |
| <b>CRITICAL HAZARD AREAS .....</b>                   | <b>4</b> |
| Mass Movement .....                                  | 5        |
| Flooding.....  | 5        |
| Compressible Soils .....                             | 5        |
| Wind and Ocean Shoreline Erosion .....               | 5        |
| <b>CULTURAL .....</b>                                | <b>4</b> |
| Housing .....  | 5        |
| Public Facilities and Services .....                 | 5        |
| Sewer Systems .....                                  | 5        |
| Water Systems .....                                  | 5        |
| Schools .....  | 5        |
| Flood Control .....                                  | 5        |
| Fire Protection .....                                | 5        |
| Transportation .....                                 | 5        |
| Highways .....                                       | 5        |
| Rail.....  | 5        |
| Air Transportation.....                              | 5        |
| Preservation, Recreation, and Open Space Areas ..... | 5        |
| Resource Management.....                             | 5        |
| Preservation .....                                   | 5        |
| Aquifer Recharge .....                               | 5        |
| Historic Areas .....                                 | 5        |

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Fish and Wildlife Areas.....   | 5        |
| Recreation.....  | 5        |
| Parks.....   | 5        |
| Trails – Bike / Foot .....   | 5        |
| Scenic Areas .....   | 5        |
| Open Space .....   | 5        |
| <b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT .....</b>   | <b>5</b> |
| Development.....   | 5        |
| Rural Lands.....   | 5        |
| Rural Agricultural Lands .....   | 5        |
| Forest Lands .....   | 5        |
| Conservation Other Resources .....   | 5        |
| Natural .....  | 5        |
| <b>GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES.....</b>   | <b>5</b> |
| <br><b>Index to Maps and Figures</b>   |          |
| <b>MAP 1:</b> Landscape Units for the Clatsop Plains Area .....                                      | <b>2</b> |
| <b>MAP 2:</b> Hazards in the Clatsop Plains Area.....  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>MAP 3:</b> Preservation, Recreation, Scenic and Open Space Areas for the Clatsop Plains Area..... | <b>2</b> |
| <b>MAP 4:</b> Clatsop Plains Maps (with letters A, B, C) .....                                       | <b>2</b> |
| <b>MAP 5:</b> Comprehensive Plan for the Clatsop Plains Area.....                                    | <b>2</b> |
| <b>FIGURE 1:</b> Profiles of the Landscape Units .....   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>FIGURE 2:</b> Rural Lands Chart .....   | <b>2</b> |

## INTRODUCTION

We no longer live in a time when we are few and the land is wide and waiting for us. We have reached the point where we can no longer insulate ourselves from the punishment and pollution we visit upon the earth and the atmosphere, and where the natural resources we once regarded as so endlessly available and expendable are becoming increasingly hard to get. The spread patterns of settlement and development that characterize our past urban growth are the unfortunate legacy of our old illusion that we had endless acres of land to build upon and unlimited resources to enjoy and consume.

While the land surface area of the County remains constant over time, inevitably the population has and will continue to grow. There will be greater demand and need for more land for urban or suburban type development, and the choices made in the use of land frequently reduce substantially the options for future uses. For example, the decision to commit land to a subdivision precludes the use of that land for many other purposes for decades to come.

Common resources, such as streams, lakes and air are by their very nature, subject to exploitation. Differing from land, such resources are difficult, if not impossible, to reduce to individual ownership; thus they are subject to overuse and congestion.

All too often, land use policies formulated to address the foregoing concerns, problems, and situations take a totally negative view toward growth. In truth, such plans and regulations should only take a negative view toward unplanned or poorly planned growth which ultimately can cost the general public and taxpayer uncalled for and unnecessary damage to their physical, social, economical and environmental situations. Commonly, when land use designations or policies are established, they set forth definitively those lands which cannot or should not be developed. There is, however, a lesser effort to set forth guidelines or policies as to which lands can or should be developed and standards for such development.

### **Purpose**

With this awareness, the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan was developed for the purpose of providing a guide to development and conservation of Clatsop County's land resources. It is a generalized long-range policy guide and land use map that provides the basis for decisions on the physical, social and economic development of Clatsop County. It represents a public statement of the most desirable land conservation projections for the next 20 years. These policies and statements are based on inventories, developmental limitations, projected needs, public attitudes and the State LCDC Goals and Guidelines Statewide Planning Goals.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

The Plan also coordinates the various factors which influence community development such as sewer and water, transportation, housing, commerce, industry, schools, land use, recreation, and natural resources. It established goals and policies which recognize and plan for the interrelationships and interactions of these factors.

The main objectives of this Comprehensive Plan are:

- a. To the highest possible extent, prevent future conflicts between land use and activities.
- b. To provide an objective basis for the land use decisions of elected officials, planners, public agencies, and individual citizens.
- c. To provide a source of information describing the conditions and characteristics of the community.
- d. To identify the direction and nature of changes which may be expected within the community.
- e. To provide a better understanding of specific actions, programs, and regulations which may affect the general public.
- f. To establish a balance between the competing state and county resource preservation goals and development preferences.

The Comprehensive Plan for the County has been updated with the expressed purpose of providing an accurate statement of the County land use program and to comply with the State Land Use Goals.

### Scope

The scope of the Plan is comprehensive and long range. To provide common direction and consistency within each city and county Comprehensive Plan in Oregon, the Legislature in SB100, 1973, directed the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) to adopt Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines. Goals are required to be addressed by law in Comprehensive Plans. Guidelines are suggested ways to achieve the statewide values contained in the Goals. The Statewide Goals and Guidelines are to be used by cities and counties, special districts, and state and federal agencies in preparing, adopting, revising, and implementing comprehensive plans. They form the foundation of Oregon's land use program.

~~Today,~~ Oregon's 19 Statewide Planning Goals, which were developed through numerous public meetings, identify statewide values, policies and concerns of Oregonians. The Goals provide the skeletal framework for comprehensive plans with each local government filling in and adopting the plan to reflect their own local needs and concerns.



The In order to incorporate and address those local needs and concerns, Clatsop County has taken an exception to the Statewide Planning Goal 3: Agricultural Lands and a portion of the Statewide Planning Goal 18: Beaches and Dunes Goal #18. An exception is when the governing body, in this case the Board of County Commissioners, decides it cannot apply a Statewide Planning Goal requirement for a specific situation. A list of all exception areas is available at the Clatsop County Community Development Department.

It is extremely important to maintain a clear distinction between the Comprehensive Plan itself and implementing measures. Implementing measures include such controls as the zoning and subdivision codes, public land acquisition, taxation policies, and public improvement. These measures are specifications which are taken to transform the Plan proposals and policies into reality. This Plan does not automatically change zoning; however, an Oregon Supreme Court decision in 1975 reaffirmed that the Comprehensive Plan and the implementing zoning must be consistent with each other and the zoning must be subordinate to the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan establishes a guide for future zoning within the County as well as a plan for all other land use decisions.

### **Planning Process**

In looking at the various uses of land and consequences of its use, the Comprehensive Plan looks to the future of the County and provides for the orderly and systematic growth of the communities in the County. Clatsop County's Comprehensive Plan consists of background data from various sources and documents. The Comprehensive Plan is a result of combining all these sources, in addition to local needs to develop public policies in the form of goals, policy statements, generalized maps, and standards and guidelines.

Within the Comprehensive Plan, there are goals, policies and recommended actions which are Countywide and which apply to the entire unincorporated County. However, within each of the Community Plans sections, other goals, policies and recommended actions apply only to a particular planning area, such as the Clatsop Plains. Goals are indicators of the direction a community desires to direct its efforts whether it be for growth, housing, or natural resource protection. Policies are established to achieve the intent of a goal; they are more specific in nature and imply a commitment of growth, preservation, or a desired change in the development pattern of a specific area of the County. The plan maps, therefore, are designed to be utilized with the written text of the plan and not as an independent element. The plan map is a conceptualized picture of the development and protection of the natural environment as envisioned at a particular point in time. As time passes, new approaches may occur necessitating changes in goals

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

and policies which will be reflected in the plan map. The Clatsop Plains Citizen Advisory Committee did not identify any required changes to the plan map or zoning that would be needed through the 20-year planning horizon of 2040.

The maps contained in the Community Plan are as close as possible to scale and utilize definable legal boundaries when possible. When conflicts arise between the text and map, the written text prevails. In certain circumstances maps are referred to outside the plan document, i.e. Flood Hazard Maps, which are site specific.

Recommendations contained in the plan reflect some possible conflict or concern and suggest future studies or considerations. They do not carry the weight or effect of goals or policies.

The Comprehensive Plan is flexible in the sense that it is a living document subject to change, and therefore amendable. The plan is inflexible by the reason that once goals and policies are established they must maintain their consistency and their integrity of commitment which underlies them, until amendments are adopted.

When the original Clatsop Plains Community Plan was adopted, a classification system was developed as a tool to implement the various policies contained in the Comprehensive Plan. The system reflected either what an area already was or what the community wanted the area to become. Some of the factors considered in designating properties were the types of public facilities available, existing uses and lot sizes, identified forest and agricultural lands and the future land use needed, such as housing. The classification system has six designations:

- DEVELOPMENT
- RURAL LANDS
- RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS
- FOREST LANDS
- CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES
- NATURAL.

These classifications are used to designate different areas on the Comprehensive Plan Map. They are defined in the Community Development section of the plan.

### Using the Plan

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

A primary consideration in the preparation of a Comprehensive Plan should be its usefulness. The Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan and the attendant community plans are a statement of public goals, policies, objectives and standards that are intended to be used in making specific decisions about present and future land use, along with various maps.

In addition, the plan contains intent statements in a narrative form. These statements explain the basis and intent for the County's position on each subject in the plan and have significance in clarifying and setting County policy. Goals, policies, objectives and standards are implemented when the County reviews individual land use actions. To determine whether a specific land use proposal is appropriate, a decision must be made concerning the applicability of each goal, policy or standard.

### Review and Update

The original Clatsop Plains Community Plan was adopted on November 21, 1979 (Ordinance 79-10). The Clatsop Plains Community Plan, along with the community plans for each of the other five planning areas in Clatsop County is broken down into landscape units. Goals, objectives, policies and/or recommendations are provided for each of the landscape units. Additional sections in each community plan also include specific policies for the planning area related to the 18 statewide planning goals. Since originally adopted, the Clatsop Plains Community Plan has been amended several times:

- **Ordinance 82-03:** Prohibiting clustering of development in Surf Pines
- **Ordinance 82-32:** Amendments to include findings on the Clatsop Plains groundwater protection plan
- **Ordinance 83-17:** Amendments to address comments from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
- **Ordinance 84-09:** Amendments to address comments from DLCD
- **Ordinance 84-10:** Amendments to address comments from DLCD
- **Ordinance 03-08:** Amendments related to revised policies in Goal 7 and Goal 18
- **Ordinance 14-03:** Incorporate new policies developed during the North Clatsop Plains Sub-Area Plan the County prepared in partnership with state and local community partners. The plan included a series of policy actions intended to maximize the compatibility of future land uses and activities with Camp Rilea's operations, sensitive natural and ecological resources, and the existing, rural open space and character of the North Clatsop Plains and its coastal communities. The document also presented a comprehensive approach to improving and protecting water quality and trail connectivity for multiple users, and minimizing the potential for traffic congestion near the Camp Rilea entrance at Highway 101.

In addition to the amendments noted above, the Clatsop Plains Community Plan is designed to work in coordination with other sub-area plans that have been created either by Clatsop County or other agencies within the planning area. These sub-area plans include:

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- North Clatsop Plains Sub-Area Plan
- Fort Stevens Master Plan (2001)
- Fort Stevens State Park Historic Fort Area – Site Development Plan (2001)
- Oregon Solutions Clatsop Plains Elk Project Declaration of Cooperation

To maintain the Comprehensive Plan as an accurate statement of County land use goals and policies based on current inventory data, it is necessary to periodically review and evaluate it. If changes in the social, physical or economic conditions of Clatsop County occur it will be necessary to restate the land use goals and policies as well as the land use designations on the plan map. Plan amendments may range from individual property requests to a complete plan revisions. The need to revise the plan on an individual property can be considered through an application by an affected property owner. A review of the entire Plan should occur at least every 5 years.

The flexibility of the planning program through amendments and changes based on new information is important but, at the same time, the integrity of the goals and policies must be maintained through long term stability and consistency in their application.

## OVERALL GOAL FOR THE CLATSOP PLAINS

The Clatsop Plains Citizen Advisory Committee recognizes that the natural resources and amenities of the Clatsop Plains are in fact the features which make it a desirable place in which to live. Protection of these resources (the forest, dunes, open spaces, views, animal life and habitat, ocean beaches, lakes and streams, to name a few) is paramount if the quality of life is to be maintained for both existing and future residents. Development must be required to respect these resources and amenities since poor development or over-development could very easily destroy these values which make up the traditional character of the Clatsop Plains.

The community goals and policies which follow in this plan are the basis from which the implementing ordinances have and will be developed.

The Clatsop Plains Community Plan is an amplification of some of the policies in the Countywide Elements section of the Comprehensive Plan, and also contains policies addressing particular concerns people have for the Clatsop Plains. The goals in the Countywide Comprehensive Plan are used at the community level to identify policies and strategies for addressing specific local opportunities/problems.

## LOCAL HISTORY

The Clatsop Plains planning area encompasses approximately 16,307 acres in the northwest section of Clatsop County along the coast. This planning area, for the most part, relates toward the ocean, with the various beaches and rolling dunes; and toward the several lakes in the planning area. The Clatsop Plains is essentially bisected by U.S. Highway 101. This highway is a major line for north-south movement down the Oregon Coast as well as a corridor of travel between the two population centers in the plains.

Chinook ikanum (stories) tell of the origin of the Clatsop Plains land form. Its extensive freshwater lakes and marshes provided a habitat for various species of waterfowl and large herds of deer and elk, and its proximity to the rich salmon runs in the Columbia and other small and large tributaries to the Columbia, such as the Skipanon (formerly known as the Skipperneway) provided the local Clatsop people with enough resources to provide for their sustenance and trading requirements.

The Chinookan name "Clatsop" refers to dried and pounded salmon. This was a primary food source and trade item for this area's First People. The strategic location near the mouth of the Columbia River (Iyagay'l imal or "Great River") Positioned Clatsop Chinook



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

in the middle of an extensive trade network that stretched up the Columbia to the Rock Mountains and beyond as well as the great distances up and down the Pacific sea coast.

The geographical location and the physical environment of Clatsop Plains provided the setting for one of the earliest pioneer settlements in Oregon. The rolling hills with the absence of thick timber made the area ideal for agricultural development.

Lewis and Clark chose to make their encampment on the edge of the Clatsop Plains on the Netul (now Lewis and Clark) River. They were ill-prepared for the extremes of the Northwest coastal winter and their journals recite gloomy tales about the cold and damp winter of 1805 - 1806. HOWEVER, the same accounts also mentioned an abundance of game that provided for their needs during the LONG winter and AS supplies for their return trip to the East the following spring.

As Euro-American pioneers began to trickle into the Oregon country in the 1830's and early 1840's, Clatsop Plains became one of the first areas of settlements. Solomon Smith was the first Euro-American settler to realize the advantage of the rolling meadows for agriculture. His strategic marriage to a Clatsop woman, Celiast, furthered his successful life on the Plains.

By 1843, the news of rich farmlands in Oregon brought an influx of new settlers into the Willamette Valley. Solomon Smith and others encouraged several of these families to settle on Clatsop Plains rather than the Willamette Valley.

Of all the early American historical events on Clatsop Plains, perhaps the most significant was the establishment of the Pioneer Presbyterian Church. As the congregation grew, it became impractical to meet in private homes and the first building was erected in 1850. A severe windstorm destroyed the original building in 1872 and a new church was immediately constructed. By 1926, the second church was dilapidated and beyond repair, so a fund raising project was started to build a new structure.

As new towns and cities came into being, Clatsop County residents felt they needed military protection. In 1852, an Executive Order was given to build a fort West of Hammond and to name it Fort Stevens in honor of General I.I. Stevens, who had been the territorial governor of the Washington Territory. The fortification was started in 1863 and completed in 1864, being the first coast defense installation at the entrance to the Columbia River.

A revered male Clatsop elder named Cullaby, whose name now marks a large lake in the central area of the Clatsop Plains, helped maintain a village site, now long gone, on this lake that feeds the Skipanon River. Gone are the many seasonal salmon runs in the Skipanon due to past heavy non-native commercial fishing pressure, and development on the middle portion of this river, and the introduction of non-native fish into the lake, and severe clear-cutting and degradation of the headwater creeks that fed the lake and river.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

Up to a few years ago, For many decades, the Clatsop Plains was primarily an agricultural area. Development has been mostly around the small lakes, and the Skipanon River and streams in the area, such as the Neacoxie, and in the towns of Warrenton, Hammond, and Gearhart. In 1905, a ditch was constructed that changed the flow of the Neacoxie River into the Skipanon River. The ditching, which opened up more land for grazing, impacted Clatsop Chinook transportation routes. In recent decades, the surge in real estate prices and the increased demand for upper-middle-housing, including vacation homes, has resulted in willing local landowners selling agricultural lands for residential development.

During the 1920s, the Astoria Golf and Country Club was established, taking advantage of the rolling hills and soil that Solomon Smith found so attractive many years earlier. Also, during this time, the Roosevelt Coast Military Highway from Astoria to California was completed, which is now called the Oregon Coast Highway U.S. 101. In 1927, Fort Clatsop, now Camp Rilea, was constructed. The ongoing use of this military installation continues to shape land use planning efforts in the Clatsop Plains planning area.

Despite bombardment of one of their most important villages, Neahkeluc, now underneath the former U. S. Coastal Guard Station of Point Adams, by the Hudson's Bay Company, and treaty negotiations that attempted to remove them from their aboriginal lands, the Clatsop People continue to reside in Clatsop County today. Most are enrolled in the Chinook Indian Nation (CIN) that is comprised of the five westernmost Chinookan-speaking tribes. The CIN includes the Clatsop and Kathlamet of Oregon and the Lower Chinook, Wahkiakum, and Willapa of what is now Washington State. In 2019, the CIN purchased 10 acres along Tansy Creek, the site of a historically-located Chinook village. In 2020, the North Coast Land Conservancy transferred ownership of historical tribal lands at Neawanna Point Habitat Reserve to the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes. Federal recognition of the Clatsop and Nehalem tribes was terminated by Congress in 1954. The tribe is now organized as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. NCLC has been in conversation with tribal members for about three years, exploring options for how the Conservancy might help them acquire property in their traditional homelands.

In 2021, the Board of Clatsop County Commissioners voted to approve a resolution supporting federal recognition of the Chinook Indian Nation. To date, this federal recognition has not been granted and the two recognized tribes are the Confederated Tribes Grande Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz.

## CURRENT ISSUES AND CONCERNS

---

## **HOUSING**

Within the Clatsop Plains Planning Area, the majority of new residential growth has been west of Highway 101. This development has primarily occurred in one-acre-lot subdivisions which have benefited from transfer of density from other parcels. The density transfer program encourages the clustering of higher-density housing in order to preserve open space and environmentally-sensitive areas. Several revisions have been made to the density transfer regulations over the years, resulting in an incomplete count of the number of units transferred and remaining credits that have yet to be applied. Review and revision of this program is strongly recommended within the next two to five years.

In 2019, Clatsop County and the cities of Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside and Cannon Beach, completed a housing study to identify opportunities and weaknesses associated with housing supply in Clatsop County. That report concluded that while the County has a surplus of potentially buildable lands, certain types of housing and housing products at specific price-points are either missing from the county's housing inventory, or are not provided in sufficient quantities.

In March 2020, the coronavirus pandemic resulted in changes worldwide that have significantly altered housing markets, including in Clatsop County. Some people choose to leave more densely populated areas and relocate to more rural areas. Others benefited from remote work options, which no longer tied workers to a specific geographic location. As a result, the median selling price of a home in Clatsop County rose from \$322,500 in November 2018 to \$502,500 in September 2021 (Source: Realtor.com). While some of these home sales will be to households that become permanent Clatsop County residents, many will be vacation homes and some of those will be used for short-term rentals.

The increase in median housing prices, coupled with a lack of long-term rental units, will result in increased pressure to increase housing stock by constructing new residential units. While Goal 14 stresses that higher intensity uses and dense development be directed to urban areas, there is, and will continue to be, a movement to increasing housing development on rural lands. Encroaching residential development has the potential to impact inventoried Goal 5 resources, including wildlife habitat, groundwater, and open spaces.

## **WATER QUANTITY AND QUALITY**

In 1977 the then Oregon Environmental Quality Commission passed a resolution which prohibited any development utilizing septic tanks in the Clatsop Plains area. After several studies, including groundwater investigations and analysis, the moratorium was fully lifted in August 1982. As a result of these studies, the aquifer reserve overlay was created and groundwater monitoring was instituted.

During the process of updating the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan and associated community plans, it has become apparent that the communities are strongly concerned about water quantity and quality and that there is insufficient current data available to provide a foundation for policy and projects. This was recognized in the 2020 Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Commissioners in December 2020. One of the five focus areas in the strategic plan was Environmental Quality. The recommendations from this focus-area group of community stakeholders included the following:

### **Tier 1:**

1. Create the Environmental quality Action Team with the following tasks:
  - a. Assess existing studies and State and local initiatives on Climate Conditions and natural Climate Solutions<sup>1</sup> that apply to Clatsop County
  - b. Initiate, oversee, and review studies of natural resource conditions where information is lacking. Priority should be given to fresh water sources.
  - c. Review resilient lands mapping completed for Oregon to ensure those systems and places remain resilient.
2. Initiate a moratorium on building homes with septic systems on less than one acre in the Clatsop Plains area. Complete a water assessment study to analyze groundwater quality and quantity and prepare projections for future use. Such study should also include surface water.

This work is currently ongoing and, to date, no moratorium has been issued for development in the Clatsop Plains. However, it should be noted that the City of Warrenton issued an emergency order in March 2020, which prohibits new connections or expansion of existing water services outside of the city boundaries. Because much of the new residential development west of

---

<sup>1</sup> Natural climate solutions (NCS): Changes in land management, ecosystem restoration, and avoided conversion of forests and habitats.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

Highway 101 relies on water from Warrenton, this moratorium has had an impact on new development in the Clatsop Plains Planning Area.

### **WILDLIFE HABITAT**

#### **Clatsop Plains Elk Project**

In April 2019, Governor Kate Brown designated the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative as an Oregon Solutions Project. The Governor designated Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer and Seaside Mayor Jay Barber as co-conveners of the project and Oregon Solutions formed a project team of 26 members consisting of key stakeholders, private landowners, state agency staff, local community and government leaders, academics, Governor's Regional Solutions staff, and area non-profit representatives to focus on the goals of reducing conflict between elk-human interactions, increasing safety, and promoting cohabitation between elk and people in the Clatsop Plains area.

A kick-off meeting with the entire project team was held on May 28, 2019. At that meeting, the team drafted the following purpose statement in order to form the scope of the project:

The community in and around the greater Clatsop Plains study area seeks to reduce elk-human related conflicts. We have expressed a sense of urgency and willingness to work collaboratively to identify management solutions and implementation strategies. The purpose of this collaborative is to find viable ways to improve public safety and reduce property damage through outreach and education and a community-wide approach to reducing urban elk interactions while maintaining healthy and viable herds as a valuable cultural and natural resource.

The project team organized its work through four different sub-committees:

- Elk Management
- Human Behavior Management
- Land Use
- Data

A steering committee oversaw the general work of the sub-committees and full project team.

The work of these four sub-committees culminated in a Declaration of Cooperation, which was signed by Clatsop County on September 1, 2021. By signing the Declaration, the County committed to undertaking the following actions:



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Pass a “no feeding” ordinance for unincorporated areas west of Highway 101
- Assist in the guidance and education of residents and tourists regarding elk safety, landscaping, and best practices for pets; support the development of content, printed materials, and community outreach.
- Conduct community outreach and education to assist residents when making elk fencing options
- Identify land to be maintained in an undeveloped state for the purpose of creating wildlife corridors, open space requirements for subdivisions, and other practices that will decrease pressure on elk habitat. Build necessary partnerships for support and implementation.
- Review subdivision ordinances, develop educational campaigns, and work with private property owners to build support for requiring minimum open space requirements and regulations that provide adequate elk habitat and forage within and between adjacent developments.
- Integrate land use issues regarding the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative into the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan update process. Use the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative Declaration of Cooperation as consideration and guidance for zoning code discussions (open space requirements, locations, designs) and density transfer discussions.
- Develop and implement an informal process of coordinating with and notifying developers and private landowners of the presence of elk in areas they may be converting from a more natural state to residential or commercial use. An informal process might include:
  - Ensuring that developers and land owners are aware of wildlife buffers and other land use recommendations from the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative
  - Providing an additional disclaimer on over-the-counter building permits to advise applicants of the possible presence of elk
  - Providing mapping of wildlife areas in conjunction with notifications
  - Working with real estate agents to build support for notifying potential buyers of the presence of wildlife where they are buying a home or setting up a business
- Provide ODFW with copies of all public notices for conditional use permits, even in areas not officially designated as Big Game Habitat
- Assist in education and outreach, in coordination with Warrenton and Gearhart, to inform the public and local officials on the relationship between land use planning and wildlife interactions
- House and administer GIS data for the Clatsop Plains Elk Collaborative map
- Review the County’s density transfer program and adjust as needed to disperse density transfers throughout appropriate areas of unincorporated Clatsop County

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Support requests for culling permits made by cities within the Clatsop Plains area that would be conducted on unincorporated land outside of city limits when the elk are understood to be biologically attached to the city making the request. This does not require a formal resolution.
- Consider passing a formal resolution for a culling permit from ODFW when requests are made by private entities for elk on unincorporated land that are not biologically attached to a city.

### **CAMP RILEA**

Camp Rilea, formerly named Camp Clatsop, was constructed in 1927. Camp Clatsop was an important mobilization site during WWII and was the first encampment location of the Oregon Army National Guard after the war. In 1959, the installation was renamed Camp Rilea in honor of Major General Thomas E. Rilea, the Adjutant General of the State of Oregon from 1941-1959. The Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, comprising 3,000 acres, offers both military and civilian users training options including fire ranges, barracks and other facilities. The County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) is also housed at Camp Rilea.

In 2012, Clatsop County, in partnership with Camp Rilea, the City of Warrenton, and several state and local organizations and agencies, completed the *Camp Rilea Joint Land Use Study* (JLUS). When Camp Rilea was first constructed, the surrounding area was rural with few residences. New development over the decades brought residents into closer proximity with Camp Rilea, raising concerns for long-term compatibility between military and civilian uses. The JLUS was intended to bring all parties involved in planning of the areas surrounding Camp Rilea together in order to address current and future compatibility issues and improve coordination between local jurisdictions, federal and state agencies, Native American Tribal groups, Camp Rilea / Oregon Military Department, and the public. While the study resulted in several operational and land use recommendations designed to enhance compatibility between potentially conflicting uses, residents surrounding the camp continue to report concerns over noise and pollution. As part of this comprehensive plan update, a representative of Camp Rilea was appointed to the Clatsop Plains Citizen Advisory Committee.

### **CHANGING CHARACTER**

During discussion of the Clatsop Plains Citizen Advisory Committee, the question of whether the planning area still retains its rural, or even semi-rural, character, has been debated. Development within the City of Warrenton, both commercial and residential, has expanded to the south end of its city limits, adjacent to the north boundary of the planning area. Residential development on the west side of Highway 101, within unincorporated Clatsop County, while relatively less dense than urban areas, has altered the landscape and reduced open space. Additional, denser, urban residential development has and is occurring on the north end of the

City of Gearhart. Much of this new development has replaced agricultural lands and farms which had previously replaced traditional native gathering places and villages. Additional community discussions regarding the existing and future character of the Clatsop Plains Planning Area should be conducted.

## FUTURE TRENDS

### **HOUSING**

As noted above, the County completed a housing strategies study in 2019. In early 2020, the coronavirus pandemic occurred, resulting in significant, and possibly permanent, changes to how and where people live and work. A shift to telecommuting or remote work occurred during this period, which in turn led to a desire for open space and larger homes or second homes. Correspondingly the real estate market saw a dramatic increase in the number of property sales and the selling price of homes. The 2019 study, which was completed prior to the pandemic, does not anticipate or capture these potentially permanent shifts in the housing market. It is recommended that either the study be updated to incorporate this new dynamic and/or that a housing needs analysis and building lands inventory be completed by the County within the next 2-5 years.

### **BEACH ACCRETION AND EROSION**

Throughout the course of history, beach erosion and accretion has naturally occurred. In recent decades, partially due to the construction of the South Jetty and Fort Stevens State Park, accretion along the Clatsop Plains oceanfront has accelerated. As a result, there has been pressure at times to either increase dune grading efforts to protect views or to allow the subdivision of accreted land in order to create additional residential lots. As noted by the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute in its 2020 report *Future Climate Projects Clatsop County*, sea levels are projected to rise 0.5 feet by 2040 under an intermediate scenario. Under the high and extreme scenarios, sea level rise is projected as 1.3 to 1.6 feet by 2040. Pressure to locate more residential development along the oceanfront may increasingly conflict with the need to mitigate damage to people and property from coastal erosion and sea level rise.

### **TRAFFIC**

As the demand for housing increases there is also a corresponding increase in the need to provide new roads to those homes. Again, while Goal 14 directs new housing development primarily to urban areas, partitioning and subdividing of rural lands continues to occur in unincorporated Clatsop County. The construction of new roads, or the expansion of existing roads, has the potential to

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

eliminate or reduce wildlife habitat.

### **TOURISM**

Clatsop County has historically had a strong tourism base. Per information from Travel Oregon, in 2019 local recreationists and visitors spent \$785 million on outdoor recreation in Clatsop County. Many of those visitors are drawn by Goal 5 resources, including scenic views and sites, open spaces, and wildlife. As visitation increases there is the potential for conflicting uses and unintended consequences which may threaten inventoried Goal 5 resources.

### **AQUIFER AND CARRYING CAPACITY OF THE LAND**

The Clatsop Plains Planning Area contains many significant wetlands and coastal lakes. The environmentally-sensitive character of this area will likely always require monitoring to ensure the availability and quality of drinking water and wildlife habitat. The recommendations of the 2020 Strategic Plan should be completed and acted upon in order to determine what, if any future restrictions, may be required to ensure that development does not exceed the carrying capacity of the air, water, and land within this planning area.

### **AGRICULTURE**

Local Native American tribes traditionally collected food from animals and plants naturally occurring within the Clatsop Plains planning area. Subsequent settlement by non-Native American peoples transitioned to a more cultivated agrarian system, which was primarily centered on the grazing of cattle and ranching. As agriculture continues to change and adapt smaller farms and new crops may become more viable during the planning horizon. While cranberries have long been associated with the wetlands on the Clatsop Plains, near the Coastal Foothills, other agricultural uses such as flower cultivation, egg production, and grazing of sheep may become more prominent. Self-sufficiency should be encouraged in food production and support should be provided for future agricultural opportunities.

Climate change will also likely alter agricultural practices over the next 20 years. As noted by OCCRI in its 2020 report for Clatsop County, average temperatures are project to rise 2.1°F by 2040. Instances of drought will also increase due to low summer moisture, low spring snowpack, low summer runoff, low summer precipitation and higher summer evaporation.

### **WILDLIFE HABITAT**

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

As noted above, the continued pressure to construct new residential units within the Clatsop Plains Planning Area, particularly west of Highway 101, will result in the continued loss of wildlife habitat. With regard to elk specifically, the original community plans and comprehensive plan did not identify this area as likely elk habitat. However, as development has increased, and new residents have created landscapes with vegetation preferred by elk, human and animal interactions have risen. In order to balance the habitat needs of both people and wildlife, the County should review its subdivision regulations to address the following:

- Is the currently-required 30% open space sufficient?
- Is open space connected to provide a continuous corridor for wildlife?
- Are there water and forage opportunities within that open space?



## LANDSCAPE UNITS

### INTRODUCTION

The basic idea of the landscape unit is that it reflects a set of characteristics which, taken together, constitutes a natural process. The soils, hydrology, wildlife, vegetation, and land forms are interrelated as a functional unit. The landscape units provide a framework for development that is based on the land's capability. Each piece of land is in a landscape unit. The landscape units which occur in the Clatsop Plains planning area are Coastal Beach, Dunes, Alluvial Lowlands, Alluvial Terraces, Coastal Range Foothills, Estuary Wetlands, Freshwater Wetlands, Waterbodies, and Shorelands. Figure 1 demonstrates the profiles of the landscape units, while Map 1 shows their locations in the Clatsop Plains planning area.

Further discussion on each landscape unit's capabilities and limitations can be found in the Clatsop Plains Environmental Plan (1974). The Environmental Plan contains four elements: landscape units, critical hazards areas, an open space program, and priority resources areas. Each element performs a specific purpose in incorporating environmental data and policies into the Community Plan Element. The policies in the Environmental Plan are the basis and background for the policies in this section and other sections of this plan.

### COASTAL SHORELANDS AND OTHER SHORELANDS

The Statewide Coastal Shorelands Planning Goal #17 established the coastal shorelands planning area to include lands west of the Oregon Coast Highway U.S. 101 and 500 feet from the shoreline of coastal lakes. The purpose of identifying shorelands is to conserve and protect shorelands, recognizing their value for protection and maintenance of water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and aesthetics. The management of these shoreland areas shall be compatible with the characteristics of the adjacent waters.

Within the State Coastal Shorelands Goal, the process for determining the extent of the shorelands requires that coastal shorelands include the following:

1. Lands which limit, control or are directly affected by the hydraulic action of the coastal water body, including floodways;
2. Adjacent areas of geologic instability;
3. Natural or man-made riparian resources, especially vegetation necessary to stabilize the shoreline and to maintain water quality and temperature necessary for the maintenance of fish habitat and spawning areas;

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

4. Areas of significant shoreland and wetland biological habitats;
5. Areas necessary for water-dependent and water-related uses, including areas of recreational importance which utilize coastal water or riparian resources, areas appropriate for navigation and port facilities, and areas having characteristics suitable for aquaculture;
6. Areas of exceptional aesthetic or scenic quality, where the quality is primarily derived from or related to the association with coastal water areas.
7. Coastal headlands.

The above resources have been inventoried and are found in Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands. The extent of the Coastal Shorelands is shown on maps in the above referenced Goal.

### BEACHES AND DUNES

Beaches consist of gently sloping areas of loose material (i.e. sand, gravel) that extend landward from the low-water line to a point where there is a definite change in the material type such as vegetation. Dunes are hills or ridges of sand formed by wind along sandy coasts. The Dune landscape unit includes the following land forms:

- Active dune is dune that migrates, grows and diminishes from the force of wind and supply of sand.
- Conditionally stable dune is a dune which is presently in a stable condition, but vulnerable to becoming active due to fragile vegetative cover.
- Older stabilized dune consists of a dune which is stable from wind erosion, has significant soil development, and may include diverse forest cover.
- Interdune area is a low-lying area between higher sand land forms which is generally under water during part of the year. Within the interdune areas, there is a deflation plain which is wind scoured to the level of the summer water table.

The County has taken an exception to Goal 18: Beaches and Dunes restricting development on an active dune in the Surf Pines residential area. Continued development in this area must minimize environmental effects. Developments or activities in this area that might be considered as having a possible environmental effect include:

1. whether or not the area is subject to flood hazards or storm waves,
2. de-vegetation of dune areas that might result in wind erosion and damage to nearby properties,
3. possible drawdown of the groundwater, and

4. possible pollution of the groundwater.

## ESTUARINE RESOURCES

There are two estuary systems within the Clatsop Plains: the Clatsop Spit area which is part of the Columbia River and the Necanicum Estuary.

### THE COLUMBIA RIVER ESTUARY

A plan for the shoreland and estuary of the Columbia River was prepared by the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce (CREST), whose recommendations form the basis for managing the resources of this area. CREST is a bi-state voluntary planning organization that was organized in 1974 to develop a coordinated regional estuary management plan for the Lower Columbia River. The County has participated in the planning of the estuary as a member of the regional council of CREST.

The following definitions will help one better understand this portion of the Clatsop Plains Community Plan concerning the estuarine areas and their related coastal shorelands.

#### Definitions

### AQUATIC AREAS

Aquatic areas include the tidal waters and wetlands of the estuary and non-tidal sloughs, streams, lakes and wetlands within the shoreland planning boundary. The upper limit of aquatic areas is the line of non-aquatic vegetation or, where such a line cannot be accurately determined, Mean Higher High Water (MHHW) in tidal areas or Ordinary High Water (OHW) in non-tidal areas.

### SHORELAND AREAS

Estuary Shorelands include forests, cliffs and steep topography, diked farm and urban lands along the estuary and the tidal reaches of estuary tributaries; and shoreline areas suitable or already developed for water-dependent uses.

CREST has developed an inventory of Estuary and Shoreland Resources and Regional Policies for the Columbia River Estuary. The policies serve as the base policy statement for the County on development and other actions related to the estuary. This plan

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

included subareas around the Upper Skipanon River, the Youngs Bay Astoria Planning Area, and Fort Stevens. Over time, as the planning area boundaries were revised, portions of these subareas appear to have been excluded from the Clatsop Plains Planning Area. Discussion during the citizen advisory committee meetings in 2021 have included expansion of certain planning area boundaries to include unincorporated portions of these subareas. This document has not been updated since the 1980s and it is recommended that the County update this inventory within the next 2-5 years.

### ***Fort Stevens State Park / Mouth of the Columbia***

This subarea consists of the northern part of Fort Stevens State Park and includes Clatsop Spit, the bay behind the spit known as Trestle Bay and the adjacent shorelands southeast to the City of Warrenton urban boundary. This area does not overlap with other management units and contains waters, wetlands and shorelands.

Erosion problems along Jetty Sands and on Clatsop Spit just south of the South Jetty, use of the area by four-wheel vehicles, removal of beach logs, the possibility of ocean waves breaching the spit south of the jetty, and biological restoration are ongoing issues of concern. Per information from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, the Mouth of the Columbia River's jetty system was constructed between 1885 and 1939. The system consists of three rubble-mound jetties: North Jetty, South Jetty and Jetty A. Constructed on massive tidal shoals and totaling 9.7 miles in length, the jetties minimize navigation channel maintenance and make passage safer for vessels transiting between the Pacific Ocean and the Columbia River. Both north and south jetties recently required critical repairs to ensure their continued function until the implementation of the Mouth of the Columbia River Jetty System Major Rehabilitation Project, which provides a long term repair and maintenance plan for the jetty system. This plan is incorporated into the *MCR Jetties Major Rehabilitation Evaluation Report*. The last critical repairs occurred to North Jetty in 2015, South Jetty in 2007 and Jetty A in 1962. In 2021, the observation tower at Lot "C" at Fort Stevens was closed during rehabilitation of the South Jetty. That work is expected to be completed in 2023.

The jetties are regularly pounded by Pacific Ocean waves between 10 and 20 feet high with winter storms bringing extreme waves in excess of 30 feet. Over the years, many areas of each jetty were severely damaged by these waves. Increased storm activity and the loss of the shoaling sand upon which the jetties are built have taken a toll on the structural integrity of the jetties.

If a critical section of the jetties were breached during a large storm, sand could be deposited into the federal navigation channel potentially shutting down commercial shipping. Restoring the channel entrance would require expensive emergency repairs to the jetty and dredging to restore the channel to depth.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

While some structural control over erosion south of the jetty may eventually be required, non-structural means of erosion control are more suitable in a State park. Restoration would involve increasing the size of Trestle Bay by sand removal at the edges, allowing wetland habitat to replace upland habitat.

The existing Clatsop Plains Community Plan includes a policy requiring to the County to adopt the *Fort Stevens State Park Plan* as part of the Clatsop Plains Community Plan. This was completed in 2001 when the County approved Ordinance 01-01. That same ordinance also created the Parks Master Plan (PMP) Zone, which appeared to be intended for Fort Stevens. However, the zone change was never completed. Discussion with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) staff as part of this update concluded with OPRD requesting the PMP zoning not be applied to the park.

### *The Necanicum Estuary*

The Necanicum Estuary is located in the cities of Seaside and Gearhart and the County. This estuary is confined to the area of sands that have built up as a result of longshore drift and wind transport of Columbia River sediments. A seasonal high water table exists over much of the area surrounding the estuary. Water quality problems within the basin include low levels of dissolved oxygen and high levels of phosphorous content, both of which occur in the Neacoxie River.

The Necanicum Estuary has been physically altered by humans through numerous fillings, riprapping and the extension of the sand spit.

In planning for the Necanicum Estuary, the cities of Seaside and Gearhart jointly worked together with the County to develop a coordinated plan for the estuary in the 1980s. As with the Columbia Estuary Management Plan prepared by CREST, this plan has not been updated in several decades and it is recommended that Clatsop County do so within 5-7 years of this update as increased development and environmental and climate changes may necessitate policy revisions. Neal Maine, a local biologist, served as a consultant providing biological information and technical expertise to the Necanicum Estuary Committee which consisted of the cities' and County's elected officials and staffs.

The Necanicum Estuary is classified as a Conservation Estuary. Conservation estuaries shall be managed for long-term uses of renewable resources that do not require major alterations of the estuary.

## ALLUVIAL LOWLANDS

---

---

## **CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040**

Alluvial lowlands occur on valley floors which have resulted from the deposition of material by water. Examples in the Clatsop Plains are the lowlands along the Skipanon and Necanicum Rivers. Characteristics of the alluvial lowlands landscape unit are floodplains, diked lands and peat soils.

### **ALLUVIAL TERRACES**

Alluvial terraces are relatively flat or gently sloping topographic surfaces which mark former valley floor levels. Stream down-cutting has caused the terraces to be higher than the present valley floor. Alluvial terrace deposits consist of gravel, sand, and finer material. Alluvial terraces are present above the Skipanon River and in the area east of the Necanicum River.

### **COAST RANGE FOOTHILLS**

The Coast Range foothills in the Clatsop Plains consist of the western slopes of the Clatsop Ridge. The ridge divides the Lewis and Clark River drainage on the east from the Skipanon River drainage and the Clatsop Plains on the west. These foothills are minor hills on the edges of the Coast Range Mountains. They range in elevation from 50 to 500 feet, are generally composed of sedimentary rock, and tend to have rounded ridge tops.

**MAP 1: GENERALIZED LANDSCAPE UNITS**



**INSERT MAP HERE**

## NATURAL RESOURCES

### FOREST LANDS

Most of the forest lands within this planning area have a forest site class of 2 and 3 and are privately-owned. There are several small holdings owned by the State, County and numerous small woodlot owners. Past development pressure has been directed away from forest lands, except when adjacent to urban areas, due to the high groundwater or steep slopes.

### AGRICULTURAL LANDS

Over the years, most of the farming on the Clatsop Plains has been on the peat bogs for cranberry production and grazing of livestock on the rolling dunes. Most development is not suited for cranberry bogs due to the high groundwater and compressible soils. Large parts of the Clatsop Plains dunes have been committed for uses other than farming over the years.

### MINERAL AGGREGATES

Over the years, several areas in the Clatsop Plains have been mined for sand. The availability of sand will continue to play an important role in various construction projects in the County.

There are no extensive gravel deposits in the Clatsop Plains. Basalt is the major source of crushed rock.

### WATER QUALITY - CLATSOP PLAINS AQUIFER

Per information from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) the Clatsop Plains Planning Area is located within the North Coast Basin, which extends from the Columbia River to the southern Tillamook County line (Figure 1). The basin consists of eight watersheds. Six watersheds drain to the Pacific Ocean:

- Necanicum
- Nehalem
- Tillamook Bay
- Nestucca
- Netarts/Sand Lake
- Neskowin



## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

Two of the watersheds drain to the Columbia River:

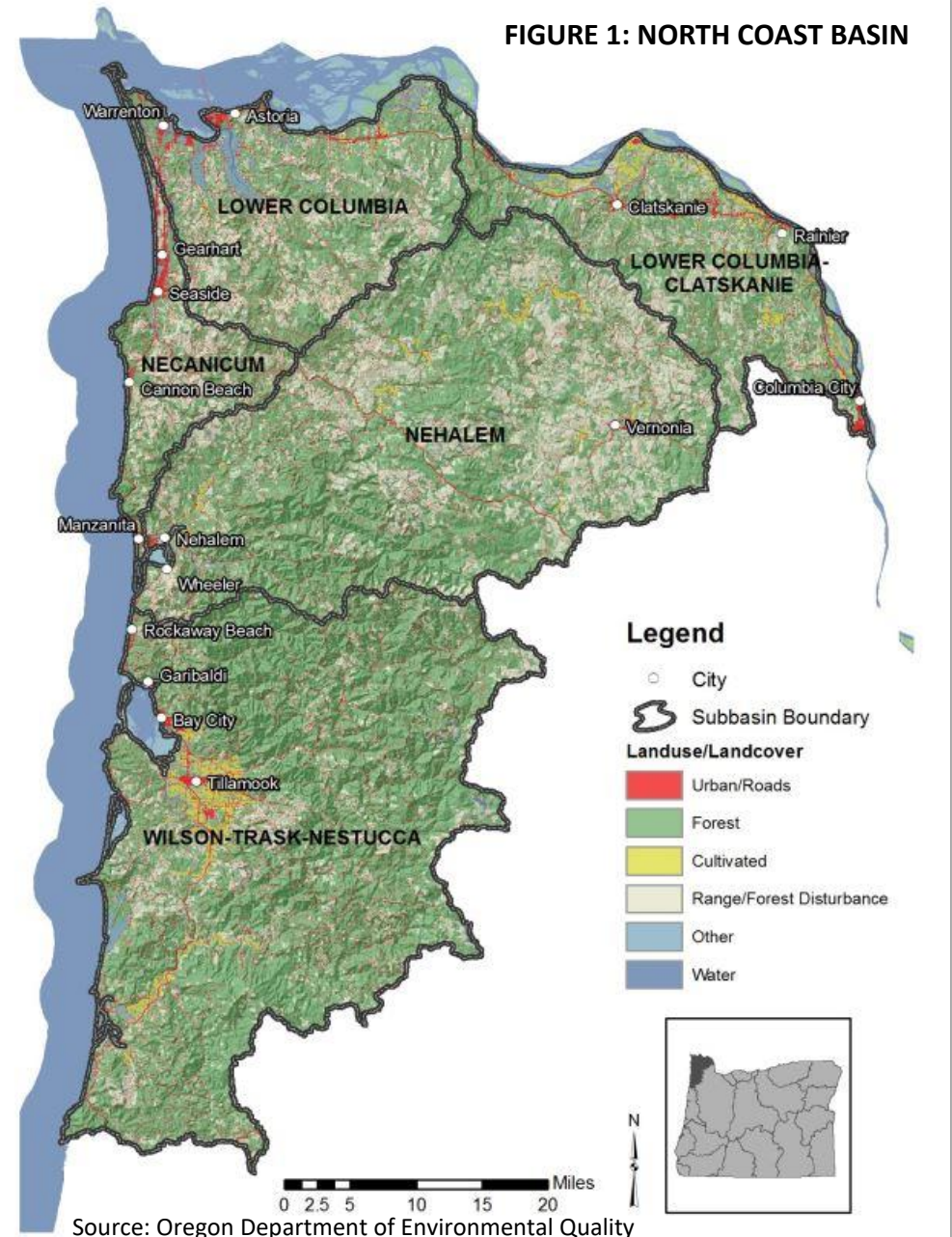
- Lower Columbia
- Lower Columbia-Clatskanie

As noted in the current-adopted Clatsop Plains Community Plan, water quality issues have been an ongoing concern in this planning area. This included a moratorium in the 1970s through 1982 that restricted, and eventually prohibited, development that utilized on-site waste disposal systems. This moratorium was lifted in 1982. However, during the drafting of the 2020 Strategic Plan, it was noted that a future moratorium on septic utilization may be required while water quality studies are conducted.

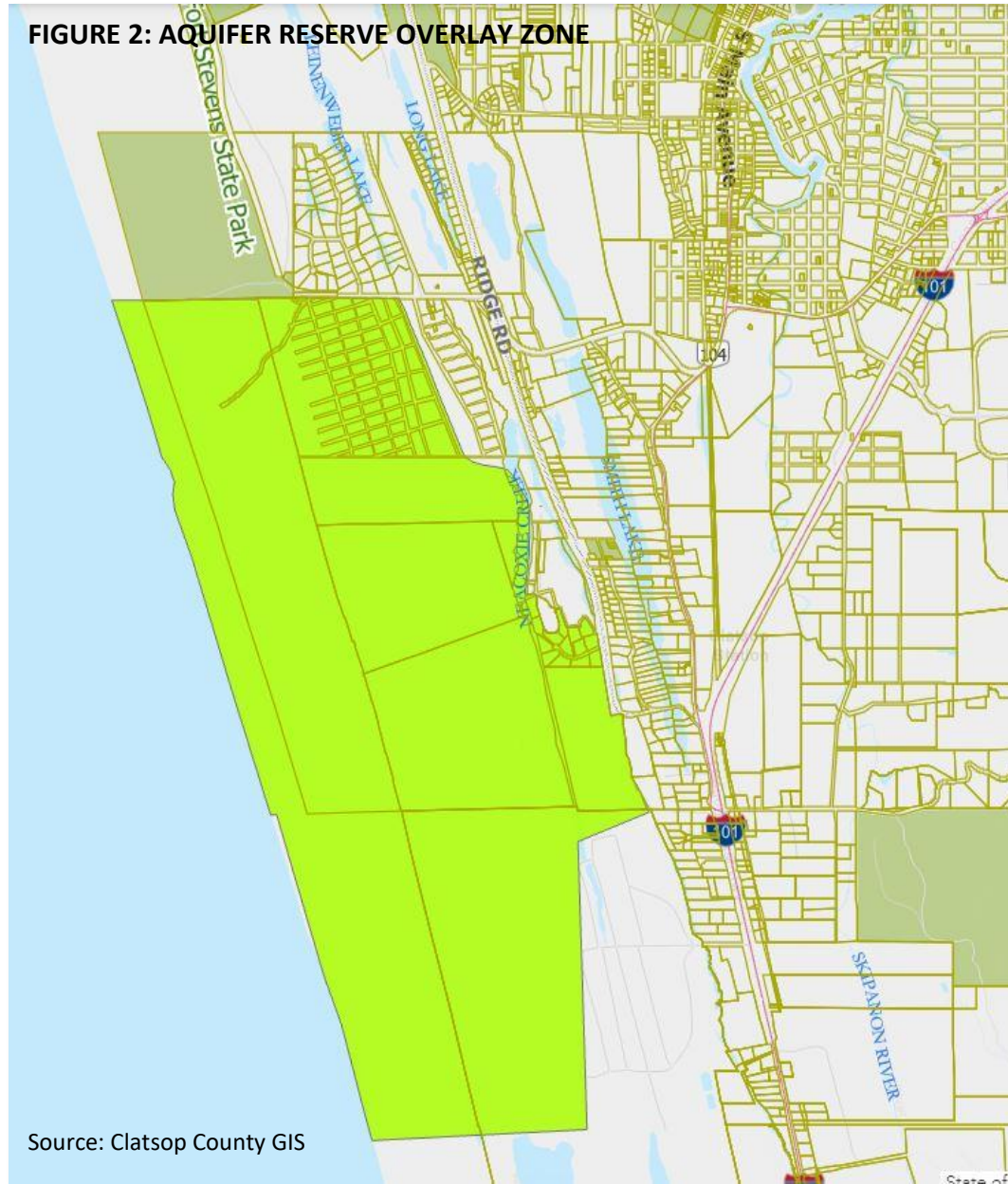
In 1982, the County adopted an Aquifer Reserve Overlay Zone, which covers lands in the North Clatsop Plains area, including a portion of Camp Rilea (Figure 2). The purpose of the overlay is to protect the aquifer as a future drinking water source by controlling activities which may occur on the ground surface.

On the sand dunes of the Clatsop Plains, about 80 inches of precipitation falls annually of which one-half is estimated to recharge the groundwater retained by the pervious loose sands.

FIGURE 1: NORTH COAST BASIN



**FIGURE 2: AQUIFER RESERVE OVERLAY ZONE**



## CRITICAL HAZARD AREAS

The intent of this section is to identify those hazards unique to the Clatsop Plains, and to establish a procedure whereby proposed uses of these areas can be examined in order to protect life and property. Maps 2 and 3 show the various types and locations of hazards in the Clatsop Plains.

### MASS MOVEMENT

Potential mass movement areas within this planning area exist in the Coastal Foothills. All of these areas are within a CONSERVATION or FOREST LANDS designation, which only allow low intensity uses.

### FLOODING

Several areas of the Clatsop Plains are subject to a seasonally high water table. Also, areas along the beaches and estuaries are subject to damage from high storm tides or tsunamis.

### COMPRESSIBLE SOILS

Most of the soils with high groundwater levels also experience problems due to the compressible properties of the soil. Within the Clatsop Plains Plan, a high percentage of the compressible soils are designated for farm or forest use or are zoned Lake and Wetlands.

### WIND AND OCEAN SHORELINE EROSION

The coastal beaches and dunes of Clatsop County are fragile landscape units. They are fragile because they are composed of easily moveable sand, which if not managed properly, may threaten human life and property.

Beaches are the key resource in the formation of sand dunes by wind action and the development of sand spits by littoral drift. Vegetation, wetness of sand, and sand supply are also critical in the formation of dunes, which are also the same forces which erode them.

Wind and ocean shoreline erosion show up on the beach by wearing away of the foredune. The major hazards associated with these types of erosion are to structures or buildings. These may be damaged by removal of material from under the foundations, sand blasting, or by burial. As new homes are constructed in areas near the dunes and shorelines, erosion control measures during construction are required. Revegetation plans are also required. However, these are sometimes not implemented despite

permitting requirements. Additionally, homeowners may choose to re-landscape properties with invasive or inappropriate plants once a Certificate of Occupancy for the home has been issued. Continued education for property owners regarding the importance of dune vegetation maintenance should be undertaken by Clatsop County.

### **EARTHQUAKE / CASCADIA SUBDUCTION EVENT**

Clatsop County has not been the center point of any recorded earthquakes. The earthquake risk that faces the communities of the Oregon coast has really only come to be understood since the 1960s. Before then, the seismic risk of the Pacific Rim was associated with volcanoes, but earthquakes were not understood to be a natural hazard of high potential magnitude to which Oregon is very vulnerable. On April 13, 1949, a major earthquake (magnitude 6.8) originating near Olympia, Washington caused eight deaths and estimated \$25 million in damage. In Oregon, widespread damage was observed, including injuries in Astoria. This event and then the Alaska earthquake of 1964 with its resulting tsunami that impacted the Oregon coast was a major catalyst for the scientists in the field of seismic study. Emerging tools and scientific vigor set several researchers on the path to discover the Cascadia subduction zone and arrangement of plates in the Pacific Northwest, but also to develop methodologies to document the history of tsunamis that affirm the occurrence of high magnitude earthquakes in the historical record.

In 1989, the devastating Loma Prieta earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area instigated awareness and action around the risks of earthquakes in Oregon. The science was conclusive enough to be acted upon by policy makers that citizens demanded—the groundswell of knowledge and advocacy coming from the north coast of Oregon. By 1991, the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC), or Earthquake Commission, was formed as a result of Senate Bill 96 spurring regional partnerships with other states and scientists, and the support for seismic safety standards in State building code.

### ***Liquefaction***

Liquefaction occurs when saturated soils substantially lose bearing capacity due to ground shaking, causing the soil to behave like a liquid. This in turn causes soils to lose their strength and their ability to support weight. The DOGAMI Natural Hazard Risk Report for Clatsop County conducted in 2018 built upon previous studies by the department and identified locations within the study area that are comparatively more vulnerable or at greater risk to CSZ M9.0 earthquake hazard. With specific regard to the Clatsop Plains Planning Area, the study identified the following:

- Very high liquefaction soils are found throughout most of the populated coastal portions of Clatsop County

- Because of the liquefaction and landslides, communities and structures on higher ground will likely be “islands” disconnected from other communities by severed transportation routes.

## **TSUNAMI**

Tsunamis have historically been rare in Oregon. Since 1812, Oregon has experienced about a dozen tsunamis with wave heights greater than 3 feet; some of these were destructive. The City of Seaside is the most vulnerable city due to its low elevation and high number of residents and tourist population within the predicted inundation zone. Although many communities have evacuation maps and evacuation plans, many casualties are expected. The built environment in the inundation zone will be especially hard hit.

A Tsunami Hazard Overlay (THO) was drafted and proposed to the Board in 2015 (Ordinance 15-04). Based upon public comment and input, the Board at that time the item was tabled indefinitely. The public comment received focused on the following concerns:

- General unintended consequences
- Restrictions on future development
- Stricter building code requirements
- Disclosure statement would affect property sales
- Increased costs for new homes
- Restrictions on the use of density credits
- Increased insurance rates
- Decline in property values

The purpose of the proposed THO was to:

- Reduce loss of life
- Reduce damage to private and public property
- Reduce social, emotional, and economic disruptions
- Increase the ability of the community to respond and recover

It should be noted that one of the critical facilities currently located within the tsunami inundation zone is the County’s Emergency Operations Center at Camp Rilea.



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

A significant portion of new residential growth is centered in the Clatsop Plains and coastal areas of Clatsop County. This increase in development may also be reflected in a corresponding increase in loss of life and/or property damage when a tsunami occurs.

Adoption of the TOZ is a recommended mitigation action in the adopted Multi-Jurisdictional Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan.

### ***Tsunami Evacuation Facilities Improvement Plan (TEFIP)***

On August 22, 2019, the County received an award letter from the Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program to prepare a Tsunami Evacuation Facilities Improvement Plan (TEFIP). This plan will augment existing efforts by the Emergency Management Division of Clatsop County, which in past years has installed “You are Here” signs at a majority of beach access points. An emphasis will be placed on identifying trails and paths that can provide year-round recreational opportunities while also functioning as evacuation routes in the event of a disaster. The project began in January 2020 and is expected to be completed in early 2022.

**MAP 2: CLATSOP PLAINS HAZARDS**



**INSERT MAP HERE**

**MAP 3: CLATSOP PLAINS HAZARDS**



**INSERT MAP HERE**



## HOUSING AND PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### HOUSING

Per information from the 2020 decennial census, the unincorporated northwest portion of Clatsop County, which includes the Clatsop Plains planning area, grew 33% between 2010 and 2020, reaching a total population of 3,393. When the original Clatsop Plains Community Plan was adopted in 1980, it was estimated that total population in this area would be 3,599 by 2000. It was also estimated that approximately 900 new housing units would be needed in the Clatsop Plains area by the year 2000. In 2019, the County, in coordination with the five incorporated cities, completed a housing study. This study forecasted that over 1,500 new housing units would be required across the county to accommodate current and future residents, while allowing for a continued supply of vacation property. While growth has been slower than projected over the past four decades, it has always been anticipated that growth, especially residential growth, would be directed to this area of the county. Need to obtain data on actual number of homes constructed since 2000.

The *Clatsop County Housing Strategies Report*, adopted by reference as part of the Comprehensive Plan, was an in-depth study of the current and projected housing conditions across the county, and included recommended strategies to better align the housing supply with local needs. The report included the following findings:

#### 1) Sufficient Supply, but Not the Right Types of Housing

- Technically, there seems to be a sufficient supply of land and number of housing units to meet both current and future needs. In 2019, there were 1.4 housing units in the county for each permanent resident household, with an estimated vacancy rate of over 27%. However, much of this supply serves the secondhome and short-term rental market, leaving insufficient supply for year-round residents to both purchase or rent. In addition, some of the supply of future residential land suffers from a variety of constraints related to natural features and hazards, infrastructure challenges, or other issues.

#### 2) Add the Right Types of Supply

- Strategies should focus on adding the right type of supply, meaning home-buying opportunities at affordable price points, and more multi-family rental housing.

- Adding “missing middle” housing types such as townhomes, cottage clusters, and mediumdensity housing can help to meeting the needs of first-time homebuyers. This housing, if not located in the most sought after beach locations, should be less attractive to second home buyers.
- Increased multi-family rental housing development should be encouraged to serve the local service, tourism, and other working-class sectors.

### **3) Control Commercial Use of Residential Land**

- Non-residential uses of housing units should be discouraged and/or controlled to the extent possible. This includes housing used purely for short-term rental and investment income. It can be helpful to shift the mindset to thinking of these as commercial uses (like a hotel) taking place in residential zones where they may not be appropriate.
- This does not necessarily include second homes, which may be vacant for much of the year, but are not being used as a commercial venture.

### **4) Use Available Residential Land Efficiently**

- Remaining available residential land should be used efficiently. This means encouraging middle- and high-density residential zones to be used for housing at these densities, and not be built out with low-density housing that don’t meet the intention of the zones.
- An added benefit of efficient use is that it encourages housing types that may more naturally serve the local residents, including “missing middle” types and multi-family rental housing.

### **5) Focus on Workforce Housing**

- Strategies should focus on the needs of the county’s current and future workforce (at all income levels.) While subsidized housing is very important and should be continually expanded, there are also existing programs and institutions for providing units at these lowest price points.
- If more non-subsidized housing is provided for the general market, this has the beneficial effect of allowing some older housing to become available to lower income residents as well.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

The 2019 housing study also found that the supply of residential buildable land is concentrated in north County, primarily within and around the cities of Warrenton and Astoria. It was also noted that while there is a substantial supply of buildable residential land in the unincorporated portions of Clatsop County, many of those areas may lack a full set of commercial and other support services and non-municipal water and sewer districts may not have the infrastructure or plant capacity to serve increased development. Additionally, Oregon statewide land use planning system, and in particular Goals 10 (Housing) and 14 (Urbanization), is focused on directing growth to urban areas.

New housing development within the Clatsop Plains area is primarily concentrated on the west side of Highway 101 in the area between the incorporated boundaries of Warrenton and Gearhart. Since 2010, Clatsop County has approved several new subdivisions in the area, including:

- Polo Ridge (30 lots)
- Clatsop Estates (9 lots)
- West Dunes (15 lots)
- Westlake Village/Dune Estates (87 lots)
- Manion Pines (7 lots)

The majority of these subdivisions have been developed with one-acre lots and are a result of density transfers applied from other, more environmentally-sensitive areas of unincorporated Clatsop County. While most of the subdivisions have been completely built-out, construction of new housing units within some of these developments has been halted due to the unavailability of potable water.

In 2020, the City of Warrenton, which had previously supplied potable water to houses within this area of the Clatsop Plains, adopted a moratorium which prohibited the issuance of any new water connections outside the incorporated boundaries of the city. Additional concerns regarding water quality and quantity, the impacts of septic systems on the coastal lakes and creeks in this area, and a decreasing capacity to treat septage from those systems have arisen within the past several years. These concerns over water quality/quantity are also reflected in the Strategic Plan approved by the Board of Commissioners in December 2020.

In addition to water issues, in 2020 the coronavirus pandemic began to change where and how people live and work. These changes were captured in the Clatsop County housing market, where the number of homes sold, and a corresponding increase in median prices, have further reduced the inventory of affordable housing within the Clatsop Plains planning area. (Need to obtain real estate data for this period.)

**PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES*****Sewer Systems***

Within the planning area, sewer systems operate in the Cities of Warrenton and Seaside. Camp Rilea in the unincorporated Clatsop Plains area has a small sewer system.

The City of Warrenton sewage treatment plant currently services a population equivalent of 2,000 people with a design capacity population equivalent of 4,500 people (or 450,000 pgd of sewage). The city may need to expand the treatment plant sometime around 1985 due to sewer service extended to Fort Stevens State Park and the Town of Hammond. Both the Cities of Warrenton and Seaside have policies of not expanding the sewer system to unincorporated private property.

The sewage treatment plant at the City of Seaside is serving a population equivalent of 5,000 people which is at the capacity of the treatment plant. The plant's efficiency has degraded over the last few years and is unable to consistently maintain the required treatment standards. The City is in the process of trying to expand the treatment plant, which would occur sometime around 1981.

To meet the continued expansion of the National Guard training program, a sewage lagoon system has been constructed on the southeast boundary of Camp Rilea. The system is designed for a population equivalent of 300 people year round. Camp Rilea sewer system could provide treatment to a sanitary district in the area around Sunset Beach and Cullaby Lake. The district, if formed, would have to operate the treatment plant and pay for expansion of the treatment system.

| TABLE 1: CLATSOP PLAINS PLANNING AREA - SEWER SYSTEMS |                       |                                   |                              |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| System  | Number of Connections | Estimated Total Population Served | Estimated Capacity of System |
| City of Warrenton                                     |                       |                                   |                              |
| City of Seaside                                       |                       |                                   |                              |
| Camp Rilea  |                       |                                   |                              |
|   |                       |                                   |                              |
|   |                       |                                   |                              |
|   |                       |                                   |                              |

***Water Systems***

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

Within the Clatsop Plains area, there are nine six water systems: City of Warrenton, City of Gearhart, Camp Rilea, Sunset Lake RV Park, Water Service District, Palisades Pipeline Company, City of Seaside, and Stanley Acres and Surf Pines Water Association.

The City of Warrenton system furnishes water for a surprisingly large area which includes, in addition to Warrenton, the City of Gearhart, Fort Stevens, Camp Rilea, Sunset Lake Water Service District, Shoreline Development Inc., and the Palisades Pipeline Company. The Warrenton water supply pipeline parallels the coast just east of U.S. 101 for the entire distance from Gearhart to Warrenton. The system has approximately 1,385 connections of which 375 are in the unincorporated plains. The main water line has the capacity between 12 or 15 mgd. At the present time, the City of Warrenton has instituted a moratorium on new water connections outside the incorporated city limits. At the present time, Warrenton is looking for additional sources for water supply, as well as additional storage capacity.

The City of Seaside provides water to Stanley Acres and the area to the south of Seaside. The main water supply is from a source on the south fork of the Necanicum River about eight miles southeast of the city. An auxiliary supply source is located on the Necanicum River below the reservoir. The water system must serve a five-month summer population of up to 15,000 on the week days and 30,000 on weekends. Future water supply capability is good, but additional storage capacity may be necessary.

Below are the water systems in the unincorporated Clatsop Plains. Shoreline Development Inc. is the only system looking at possible future expansion of its service area.

| TABLE 2: CLATSOP PLAINS PLANNING AREA - DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS |                       |                                   |  |                              |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--|------------------------------|
| System   | Number of Connections | Estimated Total Population Served | Existing Source and Water Rights   | Estimated Capacity of System |
| <u>Camp Rilea</u>  | <u>75</u>             | <u>136</u>                        | <u>Groundwater</u>   |                              |
| <u>Gearhart Water Department</u>                               | <u>1,400</u>          | <u>1,465</u>                      | <u>Groundwater</u><br><u>Purchased surface water</u><br><u>System interties with Warrenton and Seaside</u> |                              |
| <u>Seaside Water Department</u>                                | <u>3,500</u>          | <u>6,400</u>                      | <u>Surface water</u>   |                              |
| <u>Sunset Lake RV Park</u>                                     | <u>100</u>            | <u>170</u>                        | <u>Groundwater</u>   |                              |
| <u>Stanley Acres Water Association</u>                         | <u>112</u>            | <u>315</u>                        | <u>Surface water</u><br><u>Purchased surface water</u>   |                              |

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

|                    |       |       |                 |  |
|--------------------|-------|-------|-----------------|--|
|                    |       |       | City of Seaside |  |
| Warrenton, City of | 3,539 | 9,100 | Surface water   |  |

Source: Oregon Health Authority

~~System: Shoreline Development Inc.~~

~~Estimated Total Population Served: 69 services~~

~~Existing Source and Water Rights: City of Warrenton~~

~~Estimated Capacity of System: 89 services~~

~~System: Surf Pines Water Association~~

~~Estimated Total Population Served: 110 services, all metered~~

~~Existing Source and Water Rights: Two well systems~~

~~Estimated Capacity of System: No data~~

~~System: Palisades Pipeline Co.~~

~~Estimated Total Population Served: 33 services, all metered~~

~~Existing Source and Water Rights: City of Warrenton~~

~~Estimated Capacity of System: No data~~

### Schools

The two school districts within the planning area: ~~(Warrenton-Hammond School District #30 and Seaside School Districts #10).~~ In 2018, voters approved a bond initiative to allow the Seaside Middle and High Schools, as well as District administrative offices to be relocated outside of the tsunami inundation zone. Those facilities were completed in 2020 and the previously-used school facilities have or will be sold.

In 2018, voters in the Warrenton-Hammond School District also approved a \$38.5 million bond to fund several facility construction and upgrades. The District has purchased 58 acres outside of the inundation zone and has constructed a new middle school at that location. The ultimate plan is to relocate all schools to this location, which would serve as a master campus. ~~have no plans at this time to build any new schools in the Clatsop Plains. Warrenton School District will be building a new school to replace the Warrenton Elementary and Ft. Stevens Junior High School.~~

TABLE 3: CLATSOP PLAINS PLANNING AREA – SCHOOL SYSTEMS

---

**CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040**

| System            | <b>Seaside School District #10</b> |                              |                            |  | <b>Warrenton-Hammond School District #30</b> |                              |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|------------------------------|
|                   | <u>Pacific Ridge Elementary</u>    | <u>Seaside Middle School</u> | <u>Seaside High School</u> | <u>Cannon Beach Academy Charter School</u> | <u>Warrenton Grade School</u>                | <u>Warrenton High School</u> |
| <b>Grades</b>     | <u>K-5</u>                         | <u>6-8</u>                   | <u>9-12</u>                | <u>K-5</u>                                 | <u>K-8</u>                                   | <u>9-12</u>                  |
| <b>Enrollment</b> | <u>654</u>                         | <u>374</u>                   | <u>427</u>                 | <u>45</u>                                  | <u>690</u>                                   | <u>254</u>                   |
| <b>Capacity</b>   |                                    |                              |                            |  |  |                              |
| <b>Year Built</b> | <u>2003</u>                        | <u>2020</u>                  | <u>2020</u>                |  |  |                              |

**Source:** Oregon Department of Education At-A-Glance District Profiles 2020-21

**District #30 Warrenton**

|                          |                     | Enrollment | Year      |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------|-----------|
|                          | Grades (As of 1978) | Capacity   | Built     |
| Warrenton Elementary     | K-6                 | 369        | 370+ 1916 |
| Fort Stevens Junior High | 7-8                 | 101        | 125 1890  |
| Warrenton High School    | 9-12                | 281        | 300 948   |

**District #10 Seaside**

|                             |                     | Enrollment | Year     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|------------|----------|
|                             | Grades (As of 1978) | Capacity   | Built    |
| Seaside Heights Elementary  | K-6                 | 458        | 478 1974 |
| Gearhart Elementary         | K-6                 | 244        | 275 1948 |
| Broadway Junior High School | 7-8                 | 251        | 280 1949 |
| Seaside High School         | 9-12                | 508        | 600 958  |
| Cannon Beach Elementary     | K-6                 | 150        | 140      |

**Flood Control**

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

The Skipanon Water Control District previously covered the Skipanon River area, Warrenton, and Cullaby Lake. The District provided flood protection, controlled the water level for recreation use at Cullaby Lake and helped to minimize shrinking and swelling of the peat soils. The District was dissolved in 2020 and its assets were transferred to the City of Warrenton and to Clatsop County.

### ***Fire Protection***

Fire protection in the unincorporated Clatsop Plains is provided by three Rural Fire Protection Districts (RFPD): Warrenton RFPD, Gearhart RFPD, and Seaside RFPD. These rural protection districts levy taxes and contract for service from the cities. The cities' fire departments are all-manned primarily staffed by volunteers. The City of Seaside's paid fire staff include the Fire Chief, Division Chief of Prevention, Division Chief of Operations, and two firefighter positions, with fire insurance ratings varying from 4 to 8. The rate is based upon distance from the fire station, size and location of the fire hydrant. None of the fire districts have plans to place fire stations in the Plains.

The Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department covers 28 square miles ranging from Cullaby Lake in the north, extending to the Gearhart City limits to the south. From milepost 8.5 on Lewis & Clark Road to the east and to the Pacific Ocean on the west. The department responds to approximately 500 incidents yearly, and has the capacity for 35 volunteers to serve on the roster. The department responds from two stations, Station "2899" located at 670 Pacific Way in downtown Gearhart and from the Hertig Station on Highway 101 and Westlake Lane. The department responds to all emergencies including, but not limited to:

- all fires
- emergency medical calls
- vehicle accidents
- natural disasters
- hazardous materials incidents
- requests for public assist
- search and rescue
- automatic/mutual support to departments throughout the county and statewide when needed

### Fire Protection Policy



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

The County shall encourage the improvement of fire protection in the Clatsop Plains. The County shall work with local residents as well as the Rural Fire Protection Districts in examining the various methods available to improve fire protection. One method which could be used is to require subdivisions and planned developments to dedicate a site, funds, or construction materials for a fire station in the Clatsop Plains.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### *Highways*

Roads within the County maintenance system are generally narrow and uncongested. Most of the driving in the planning area is done on U.S. Highway 101, which is the main connection between the cities of Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart and Seaside. The seasonal fluctuation in traffic on U.S. 101 near Gearhart varies as much as 57% from January to August, while U.S. 26 can vary 68%. U.S. 30 and Route 202 have much less variation, 30% and 28% respectively. On a peak day, traffic counts show U.S. 26 and 101 are well over the design capacity for a 2 lane highway.

U.S. 101 was built before the State began to acquire right-of-way along highways. The State Highway Department has only a few areas along U.S. 101 where access points can be limited. This, combined with the City of Warrenton main water line running parallel to U.S. 101 and the City have no policies controlling water hookups, has created concern over strip development along the highway. There are already approximately 170 different access points along U.S. 101 between the cities of Warrenton and Gearhart.

A proliferation of access points to U.S. 101 and other roads can: (1) destroy the traffic function of the streets and highways, (2) create safety hazards, and (3) result in costly highway improvements at the expense of the public and individual property owners.

Access controls along U.S. 101 can possibly provide the most cost-effective means of maintaining manageable highway capacity and should be implemented wherever feasible. Control of access will improve the capacity of the highway, and reduce accidents and congestion.

#### *Rail*

Rail service in Clatsop County is provided by Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corporation and is limited to freight traffic. The line running from Seaside to Camp Rilea has been abandoned. Most of the railroad right-of-way has reverted back to the adjoining property owners.

#### *Air Transportation*

The Seaside Airport, which was operated by the State of Oregon until 1990, is the only airport in the planning area. In 1990, the airport was deeded to the City of Seaside with the condition that it be kept open and operating as an airport for at least 20 years. Since 2003, the City has made over \$1 million worth of improvements at the airport, including upgraded drainage, taxiway and runway repairs and realignment, new beacon tower and rotating beacon, new runway lighting, obstruction removal and aviation easements, security fencing, and improved visitor parking. The single paved runway is suitable for most light single and some twin engine aircraft weighing less than 12,500lbs. There are no instrument approaches and fewer than 10 aircraft are based at the field. In 2019, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reclassified all airports in the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) and deemed Seaside to be “unclassified”. This means that the airport is no longer eligible for regular FAA airport improvement funding. The general aviation airport has a low number of users, consisting mostly of single engine aircraft. The Aeronautics Division of Oregon Department of Transportation is very much concerned with existing and proposed development around the end of the airport runways. They will be conducting a study of the airport sometime in 1979, which will provide some direction on the future of the airport.

#### **PRESERVATION, RECREATION, SCENIC, AND OPEN SPACE AREAS**

The rural atmosphere of the Clatsop Plains is directly related to the large proportion of land that is presently in open space. Forest lands along the Coastal Foothills form the eastern boundary of the Clatsop Plains, while to the west is a wide strip of sandy beaches. Between the beaches and forest lands large amounts of open space still exist in the form of farms, large ownership of land, Camp Rilea and golf courses.

One of the highest priorities for the Clatsop Plains CAC has been the importance of maintaining the rural character of the Clatsop Plains and to preserve large amounts of open space. However, with property tax laws, property rights, and local government financial limitations to purchase open space, there is no simple solution to this objective. The Community Plan recommends a strategy for preserving open space that is consistent with the statewide planning goals as well as local concerns. The policies for the preservation of open spaces and for the accommodations of residential development in the planning area is reflected in the following sections on open space

Open space can exist through a wide variety of different land uses as shown by the following categories:

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

### CATEGORIES

Resource management  
Preservation  
Recreation  
Scenic/buffer

### EXAMPLES

Forest/farm lands  
Aquifer recharge, historic, fish and wildlife areas  
Fort Stevens State Park  
Open space in subdivisions

Maps 3A and 3B 4 show the location of the various types of open spaces within the planning area.

**MAP 3**



**MAP 4**



### ***Resource Management***

Open space is one of the benefits that results from resource management. Resource management relates to the ability of the land to yield a resource on a sustained basis. These resource management lands, such as forest and agricultural lands, provide or have potential economic value which requires some form of protection to maintain their wise utilization.

### ***Preservation – Aquifer Recharge***

#### **Aquifer Recharge**

The Clatsop Plains aquifer is like a large underground lake which has the potential of supplying vast amounts of drinking water. Based upon recommendations from the Clatsop Plains Groundwater Protection Plan (208 Study) approximately 1,444 acres or 2.25 square miles has been set aside as an "aquifer reserve" area.

### ***Preservation - Historic Areas***

The Clatsop Plains Planning Area is rich in history, containing many historical sites associated with both native persons who originally utilized the resources within this area and the subsequent non-native immigrants that settled in the same area. Maps 3A and 3B Map 5 shows the mapped historic sites and includes new sites recommended for inclusion in the Goal 5 Historic Areas inventory.

### ***Preservation – Fish and Wildlife Areas***

The Clatsop Plains is an area well-endowed with diverse and plentiful wildlife areas. This abundance of both numbers and species types is largely resultant from diversity of habitats. Zones of transition, such as the shorelines, estuary and forest lands provide areas rich in animal life.

The Plains is fortunate in having large blocks of land in both public and private ownership which has not been developed. Fort Stevens State Park, Camp Rilea and timber holdings east of Highway 101 provide most of the prime wildlife habitats on the Clatsop Plains.

MAP 5

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

Increased residential development in the Clatsop Plains area has resulted in an increased number of interactions between elk and humans. Changing elk migration patterns have also played a role in the increase. In 2019, Clatsop County, in coordination with the cities of Warrenton, Gearhart and Seaside, participated in a process lead by Oregon Regional Solutions to develop tools and strategies to minimize impacts due to encounters between elk and humans. A formal Declaration of Cooperation was signed by all parties on September 1, 2021.

The Declaration of Cooperation details a list of commitments that Clatsop County agrees to fulfill. Among those is a commitment to review the County's density transfer requirements, especially within the Clatsop Plains area.

### ***Recreation - Parks***

Within this planning area, there ~~is one national historic park (Lewis and Clark National Historic Park) and are~~ three State parks (Fort Stevens, Ecola and Elmer Feldenheimer ~~Forest Preserve State Natural Area~~).

~~A portion of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Park is located within the Clatsop Plains Planning Area. While the visitor center and Fort Clatsop are located to the east of the planning area, the Fort to Sea Trail is almost entirely located within the Clatsop Plains Planning Area.~~

Fort Stevens, ~~Oregon's largest park~~ one of the nation's largest campgrounds per information from Oregon State Parks, has extensive day use and overnight sites. ~~A visitor center and overnight camp entrance road have been proposed for the park. The park, which consists of 4,300 acres, provides a variety of recreation opportunities, including camping, beach-combing, a freshwater lake, trails, wildlife viewing, and an historic shipwreck. Visitors can also view year-round military displays at the military museum and information center.~~

Ecola State Park has picnic facilities as well as a hiking trail to the top of Tillamook Head or across the head to Ecola Point and Indian Beach. ~~The park stretches along nine miles of coastline and offers outstanding sightseeing and recreational opportunities, including cliff side viewpoints of secluded coves, forested promontories and a long-abandoned lighthouse. The park's network of trails includes an eight-mile segment of the Oregon Coast Trail, and a 2 ½ mile historical interpretive route called the Clatsop Loop Trail.~~

Elmer Feldenheimer is a Forest Preserve to the east of Ecola and was created to protect forested areas in Ecola State Park.

The Del Rey Beach ~~State Recreation Site~~ ~~wayside~~ provides access to the beach and parking. ~~The State Parks would like to develop a wayside at DeLaura Beach when funds are available.\*~~

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

There are ~~four~~ three County parks in the planning area: Carnahan Park, Cullaby Lake, and Smith Lake Park ~~Sunset Beach, and DeLaura Beach~~. The County parks system has no capital improvement program and no park acquisition program. Any improvements and maintenance of parks is done by the County Public Works Department.

During the update of the Clatsop Plains Community Plan, the CAC members discussed the importance for the County to continue to keep small, isolated parcels of undeveloped land. While those parcels might not be suitable for park development, they do play a significant role in the providing resting and sheltering areas to wildlife and birds.

### ***Recreation – Trails Bike/Foot***

Bicycle touring along the Oregon Coast has become increasingly popular. Three bicycle routes pass through the planning area; the Oregon Coast Bicycle Route, the Trans-American Bikeway, and the Northwest Oregon Loop Bicycle Route. After crossing the old Youngs Bay Bridge these trails follow the Lewis and Clark Road to Seaside. From Seaside south, they follow U.S. Highway 101.\*

In 1975, the State Transportation Commission established the Oregon Coast Trail. Between the mouth of the Columbia River and Gearhart all of the Coast Trail is on the beach. At the City of Gearhart, the trail turns on the highway shoulder into the City of Seaside, where it follows city streets to the beach access. From the southern edge of Seaside, the Coast Trail ascends Tillamook Head to Ecola State Park.

### ***Scenic Areas***

Scenic areas are defined as those sites, viewpoints, areas or structures that have significant visual worth, and that are pleasing to look at. This is resource that is of greatest importance to this planning area. Places such as Tillamook Head, the vast sandy beaches and the Clatsop Spit attract visitors from all over the world due to the scenic beauty of these areas.

### ***Open Space***

Forest, agricultural, natural and recreational areas play one part of the role in preserving the rural character of the Clatsop Plains. Another aspect of rural living is the open spaces between development and different land uses. In order to preserve the semi-rural character of the Clatsop Plains, both aspects of open space must exist. To that end, the Community Plan Open Space Policies were developed to preserve and enhance the rural quality of the Clatsop Plains.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

---

The purpose of this section is to provide a guide for development whether it be residential, commercial, industrial or recreational, and to preserve the high quality of life in the area. The intent of the plan is NOT to stop or limit rural growth, but rather to direct growth into appropriate locations. In looking at appropriate locations for various types of development, consideration was given to preserve resource lands (agricultural or forest lands), level of public facilities and services available, the land carrying capacity, and the different needs for various uses within urban and rural areas.

### ***DEVELOPMENT***

DEVELOPMENT lands or areas designated DEVELOPMENT are areas with a combination of physical, biological, and social/economic characteristics which make them necessary and suitable for residential, commercial, or industrial development and includes those which can be adequately served by existing or planned urban services and facilities.

Areas within Urban Growth Boundaries and Rural Service Areas are included in this designation. Lands within an Urban Growth Boundary are those determined to be necessary and suitable for future urban growth. These lands can be served by urban services and facilities, and are needed for the expansion of an urban area. The Urban Growth

Boundaries are based upon the cities' population projections and needs for residential, commercial and industrial lands. Clatsop County maintains Urban Growth Boundary Management Agreements with each incorporated city.

Rural Service Area is an unincorporated area located some distance away from a city which contains residential densities similar to those found in cities. The size of Rural Service Areas is based upon many factors, some of which are population projections, capacity of public facilities and proximity to a city.

Predominant uses in the DEVELOPMENT land use category include:

1. Medium to high density single family houses (less than 1/2 acre).
2. Multi-family housing (apartment, mobile home parks).
3. Offices, commercial facilities.
4. Industrial facilities (light/heavy).

### ***RURAL LANDS***

Figure 3.  
Rural Lands Chart

|                                  | A             | B          | C          |
|----------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|
| Number of parcels out of wetland | 189           | 175        | 503        |
| Acreage out of wetlands          | 290.82(a)     | 1238.54    | 822.23     |
| Ave. parcel size (acres)         | 1.53(b)       | 7.08       | 1.65       |
| Median parcel size (acres)       | 0.5           | 0.5        | 0.5        |
| Parcel size range                | 0.06-12.67(b) | 0.22-267.1 | 0.03-106.4 |
| No. Parcels 20 ac. or greater    | 1             | 15         | 2          |

a) Not including the 1500 acres of Camp Rilea out of wetlands.

b) Not including Camp Rilea.

Breakdown of parcels 20 acres or greater:

Area A: 1500 acres.

Area B: 25.0, 26.0, 30.0, 31.03, 35.37, 38.94, 40.0, 42.0, 43.3, 53.13, 60.0, 74.23, 114.2, 267.1 acres.

Area C: 32.0, 106.4 acres.

RURAL LANDS. Rural lands are those lands which are outside the urban growth boundary and are not agricultural lands or forest lands. Rural Lands include lands suitable for sparse settlement, small farms or acreage homesites with no or hardly any public services, and which are not suitable, necessary or intended for urban use.



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

RURAL LANDS are those which, due to their value for aquaculture, low density residential uses, high intensity recreational uses, and non-renewable mineral and non-mineral resource uses should be protected from conversion to more intensive uses. Rural subdivisions, major and minor partitions, and other uses served by few public services which satisfy a need that cannot be accommodated in urbanizable areas are also likely to occur within this designation.

Most RURAL LANDS designations in this plan area contain old town plats and fragmented land ownerships. These areas may require vacation and replatting or utilization of a Planned Development to protect the natural resources of the area. ~~This designation fulfills the recreational tourist demand for housing which has been characteristic of Clatsop County's Clatsop Plains area.\*~~

### ***Purpose and Intent of Rural Residential Development in the Clatsop Plains Planning Area:***

It is the purpose and intent of Clatsop County to maintain the rural character of residential land outside urban growth boundaries within the Clatsop Plains planning area by preserving and protecting concentrated open space and natural resources, and minimizing the impact of rural residential development on essential services, while also allowing low density residential development.

The County recognizes that achieving the density permitted in rural residential zones through clustered development pattern better promotes the County's purpose and intent of maintaining the rural character of any area than does the traditional grid pattern of development where lots are not clustered and are created to directly correspond to the density permitted in the base zone. Through clustering development, where the density permitted in the base zone is satisfied by combining smaller individual lots with larger expanses of open space, the County is able to retain the greatest concentration of permanent open space with the least impact on essential services. Conversely, large lots developed in a grid pattern extending over an entire subdivision or planned development site, negatively impact the rural character of an area by minimizing the amount of permanent open space and attendant resource protection, while increasing the public facility infrastructure necessary to service development covering a large, expansive area.

Therefore, it is the County's purpose and intent that all residential planned developments and subdivision developments in the Clatsop Plains planning area shall be clustered which will ensure that the rural character is maintained.

### ***Rural Lands West of U.S. Highway 101***

~~The area shown on Map 1 comprises approximately 4,000 acres. It~~ This area is located west of U.S. Highway 101 between the Urban Growth Boundaries of Warrenton on the north and Gearhart on the south. An exception is not necessary for this area because it is not resource land under the definitions in Goal 3 - Agricultural Lands or Goal 4 - Forest Lands.

**RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS**

RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS are those lands that are to be preserved and maintained for farm use, consistent with existing and future needs for agricultural products, forest and open space.

Predominant uses in the Rural Agricultural Lands Classification include:

1. Farm use
2. Low density residential (1 acre or larger)
3. Commercial (gas station, grocery store)
4. High intensity recreation (i.e. golf course)

**FOREST LANDS AND CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES**

FOREST LANDS AND CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES. Conservation and Forest Lands areas provide important resource or ecosystem support functions but because of their value for low-intensity recreation or because of their unsuitability for development (e.g. hazard areas) should be designated for non-consumptive uses. Non-consumptive uses are those uses which can utilize resources on a sustained yield basis while minimally reducing opportunities for other future uses of the area's resources.

FOREST LANDS. Forest lands are those lands that are to be retained for the production of wood fiber and other forest uses.

CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES. Conservation Other Resources areas provide important resource or ecosystem support functions such as lakes and wetlands and federal, state and local parks. Other areas designated CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES include lands for low intensity uses which do not disrupt the resource and recreational value of the land.

Predominant uses in the Forest Lands Classification and the Conservation Other Resources Classification include:

1. Forestry / forest processing
2. Small woodlots
3. Parks / recreational use
4. Community watersheds

**NATURAL**

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

A NATURAL designation will be used for lands which have not been significantly altered by man and which, in their natural state, perform important resource or ecosystem support functions.

Publicly owned fragile and ecologically valuable areas, especially wetlands, marshes, stands of old growth timber and isolated lakes, are most likely to be designated as NATURAL. NATURAL areas identified by the Oregon Natural Heritage Program as well as fish and wildlife areas and habitats identified by the Oregon Wildlife Commission will be considered for a NATURAL designation.

Predominant uses in the NATURAL Classification include:

1. Open space
2. Scientific study
3. Low intensity recreation (trails, nature observation)
4. Wildlife habitat

## GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

### OVERALL CLATSOP PLAINS PLANNING AREA GOAL 1

The Clatsop Plains Community Plan shall provide for planned and orderly growth of the Clatsop Plains planning area which is in keeping with a majority of its citizens and without unduly depriving landowners and/or residents of the reasonable use of their land. The plan shall:

1. protect and maintain the natural resources, natural environment and ecosystems,
2. respect the natural processes,
3. strive for well-designed and well-placed development, and
4. preserve the semi-rural, agricultural, open space and marine characteristics of the area.

In order to meet the Goal, the County shall:

1. Use the physical characteristics described in the section on landscape units as the major determinants of the location and intensity of the use of the land.
2. Retain as much of the land as possible in its natural state.
3. Review, update and amend the plan on a regular basis as needs, additional data and/or economics demand.
4. Expand the boundaries of the Clatsop Plains Planning Area to include Fort Stevens, portions of the Columbia River and the ocean shore to the territorial sea line.

### CLATSOP PLAINS PLANNING AREA GOAL 2

To preserve to the fullest possible extent the scenic, aesthetic, and ecological qualities of the Coastal Shorelands and other shorelands in the Clatsop Plains in harmony with those uses which are deemed essential to the life and well-being of its citizens.

### GENERAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

---

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Policy 1:** The predominant growth (residential, commercial, and industrial) shall occur within the Cities of Seaside, Warrenton, and Gearhart, as well as those areas in the Urban Growth Boundaries.
- Policy 2:** Residential, commercial and industrial development shall be directed away from those areas designated FOREST LANDS, RURAL AGRICULTURE LANDS, CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES, and NATURAL.
- Policy 3:** Maintain an overlay zone for the North Clatsop Plains Sub-Area that:
- Prohibits increases in residential densities through zone changes and density transfers;
  - Allows multiple density transfers from a single density transfer sending site, and requires that all receiving sites be located outside the North Clatsop Plains Overlay District;
  - Encourages wildlife corridor protection through clustered development and open space preservation; and
  - Applies noise attenuation construction standards to new dwellings in areas impacted by noise from Camp Rilea.
- Policy 4:** In divisions of land into lots where future partitions or resubdivisions could occur, lots should be designed to take the potential for future divisions of land into consideration.
- Policy 5:** Natural features such as creeks and ridges should be used wherever possible as a boundary between intensive uses such as commercial activities and low intensive uses.
- Policy 6:** Plot plans or building plans may be required to indicate on them how storm water is to be drained. Access permits shall be reviewed by the Oregon Department of Transportation and Clatsop County Public Works to insure adequate drainage is provided.
- Policy 7:** Incentives shall be provided to encourage developers to use innovative methods to provide a high quality of design, energy conservation and low income housing.
- Policy 8:** The following policies shall be used when examining commercial development in the Clatsop Plains:
- To direct and encourage commercial activities to locate within urban growth boundaries. This will be most convenient for customers because most people will live in the urban areas. Also, business requirements for water, sewer, fire protection and other public services can best be met.
  - To group business activities into clusters or "centers". This will be more convenient for patrons, permitting them to accomplish more than one purpose during a stop. It will also avoid mixing homes with scattered businesses. Joint use of vehicular access and parking at commercial centers will be more economical and be less disruptive for street traffic.
  - To prevent "strip" commercial development along arterials, particularly U.S. Highway 101, and to limit business to designated strategic locations. To reserve non-commercial portions of arterials so that property owners may develop residential or other uses without fear of disruptive business development next door.
  - To emphasize and support existing town centers as business places. These centers are important for community

identify, social cohesion, civic activity, public service, convenience, attractions and amenities. They should continue to be a focus for commercial activities as well.

- e. To concentrate new commercial development in and adjacent to existing, well-established business areas. To increase the patronage and vitality of these areas and to avoid undue dispersal of new commercial activities.

### GENERAL LANDSCAPE UNITS POLICIES

- Policy 1:** Excavations in sedimentary highland (Toms) should be properly engineered to assure against slop failure
- Policy 2:** Proposed projects involving modifications of established drainage patterns should be evaluated in terms of potential for altering land stability.
- Policy 3:** Loss of ground cover for moderately to steeply sloping land may cause erosion problems by increasing runoff velocity and land slumpage. Vegetative cover for moderately to steeply sloping areas shall be maintained.

### COASTAL SHORELANDS AND OTHER SHORELANDS POLICIES

The following are in addition to those found in Goal 17: Coastal Shorelands and Goal 5: Open Space, Scenic and Historic Areas and Natural Areas Element.

- Policy 1:** No filling or alteration to designated and mapped critical natural holding basins such as lakes, wetlands, or marshlands, unless permitted by the Department of State Lands.
- Policy 2:** Culverts and other roadway or driveway improvements considered necessary by the Clatsop County Community Development Department, County Public Works Department, and state agencies shall be installed in such a manner as not to impede the flow of the drainage way nor impede the passage of resident or migratory population of fish.
- Policy 3:** Mining, dredging, or removal of gravel and similar materials from streams and other surface water shall be strictly controlled to prevent adverse alterations to flow characteristics, siltation pollution, and destruction or disruption of spawning areas.
- Policy 4:** Shorelands identified in this plan for their aesthetic, scenic, historic or ecological qualities shall be preserved. Any private or public development which would degrade shoreland qualities shall be discouraged.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Policy 5:** The public has a right to enjoy and utilize all the public water bodies. No improvement shall be permitted which impedes this ability. Care also must be exercised in protecting the privately owned shorelands.
- Policy 6:** Public and private bridge crossings over public water bodies shall be constructed to standards that ensure maximum protection to the persons utilizing the structure and to the water system it crosses. To the maximum extent possible, minimum fill and/or removal shall take place during construction of the bridge.
- Policy 7:** Shorelands in Rural areas shall be used as appropriate for the following:
- A. farm use,
  - B. private and public water dependent recreation,
  - C. aquaculture, and
  - D. to fulfill the open space requirements in subdivisions and planned developments.

### Recommended Action

A study should be undertaken to determine a means to remove vegetation in the various lakes within the Clatsop Plains due to the hazards it causes in recreational use of water bodies.

## BEACHES AND DUNES POLICIES

- Policy 1:** Uses permitted on the beach, the area located west of the statutory Vegetation Line as established and described by ORS 390.770, or the line of established upland shore vegetation, whichever is further inland, shall be consistent with the requirements ORS 390.605 - 390.725 and Oregon Administrative Rules adopted pursuant thereto. Residential development and commercial and industrial buildings are prohibited. The County will coordinate its actions in beach areas with the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation.
- Policy 2:** Uses permitted on active foredunes, on other foredunes which are conditionally stable and are subject to ocean undercutting or wave overtopping, and on interdune areas (deflation plains) that are subject to ocean flooding shall be limited to low intensity uses which have minimal impact on the dune system and which have a minimal monetary value. Residential developments and commercial and industrial buildings are prohibited.

- Policy 3:** The County, in making land use decisions in beach and dune areas, other than older stabilized dunes, shall consider the impact of the proposed development on the site and on adjacent areas, and the methods that are proposed for protecting the site and adjacent areas from any potential adverse effects of the proposed development.
- Policy 4:** The stability of all types of dunes, in relationship to the potential for wind erosion, is based on the maintenance of its vegetative cover. For this reason, the county shall implement a wind erosion control program that minimizes site disturbance, provides for temporary and permanent sand stabilization, and requires the continued maintenance of newly established vegetation.
- Policy 5:** On active and conditionally stable dunes, pedestrian, bicycle, equestrian and vehicular circulation shall be managed to minimize adverse impacts to dunes and their stabilizing vegetation.
- Policy 6:** Foredunes shall be breached only on a temporary basis for emergency purposes such as fire control, cleaning up oil spills, or alleviating flood hazards. Breaches in foredune areas shall be restored in a manner that is consistent with the character of the area prior to the foredune breaching.
- Policy 7:** Foredune grading for view enhancement or to prevent on-going sand inundation may be allowed for structures in foredune areas that were committed to development on or before January 1, 1977 and where an overall plan for managing the foredune grading is prepared. Before construction can begin, the foredune grading plan must be adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan.
- Policy 8:** The extensive modification of dune areas other than that permitted by an approved plan for foredune grading for view enhancement, is strongly discouraged because the shape of unmodified dune forms is an essential element in defining the physical character of the Clatsop Plains.
- Policy 9:** Clustering of development is encouraged so that development occurs on the most stable dune areas, with less stable areas retained as open space.
- Policy 10:** Removal of vegetation which provides wildlife habitat shall be limited. Unnecessary removal of shoreline vegetation shall be prohibited.
- Policy 11:** In order to establish construction feasibility, within the dune construction area, and to provide recommendations on methods to mitigate potentially hazardous conditions, a site specific investigations by registered professional geologist or certified engineering geologist shall be required for the issuance of a development permit in all beach and dune areas that the Community Development Director considers to have a hazard potential.



---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Policy 12:** On-site sewage disposal systems shall be prohibited in active foredunes, on other foredunes which are conditionally stable and are subject to ocean undercutting or wave overtopping, and on interdune areas (deflation plains) that are subject to ocean flooding.
- Policy 13:** Beachfront protective structures shall be permitted only where development existed on or before January 1, 1977.
- Policy 14:** Where appropriate, developers may be required to dedicate easements for public access to the beach.
- Policy 15:** The county supports studies designed to increase scientific knowledge about the processes that have shaped and will continue to shape the dunes of the Clatsop Plains.
- Policy 16:** Wind energy or wave energy generation facilities in Clatsop County's territorial sea may require companion facilities in beach and dune areas. When reviewing these facilities, the County shall consider the effects and impacts, both harmful and beneficial, of the entire project, not just the beach and dune area component, on beach and dune resources.

## FORT STEVENS STATE PARK SUBAREA POLICIES

- Policy 1:** The County will work with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to prohibit off-road vehicles on dune or wetland areas in the park and on the Natural wetland-salt marsh in Clatsop Spit.
- Policy 2:** Clatsop County and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department shall work together to implement the adopted *Fort Stevens Park Master Plan*.

## ALLUVIAL LOWLANDS POLICY

- Policy 1:** Development on peat and other compressible soils shall be discouraged. In those areas where development has already occurred on peat and other compressible soils, policies on those soils in the Countywide Comprehensive Plan shall apply.

## ALLUVIAL TERRACES POLICY

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**Policy 1:** The County should encourage development on this type of landscape unit due to the slight to moderate slopes and the moderately well-drained soils.

## COAST RANGE FOOTHILLS POLICY

**Policy 1:** The predominant land use on this landscape unit should be forestry and low density residential use. This is due to the characteristics of soils in this landscape unit which have potential for mass movement.

## CLATSOP PLAINS AQUIFER POLICIES

**Policy 1:** Land use actions (i.e. Comprehensive Plan changes, zone changes, subdivisions, planned developments, and conditional use permits) shall be reviewed by the Planning Commission and the Community Development Department to ensure that the proposed activity will not:

- a. adversely affect the water quality
- b. result in the drawdown of the groundwater supply
- c. result in the loss of stabilizing vegetation, or
- d. allow salt water intrusion into the water supply

**Policy 2:** The County shall re-evaluate the Clatsop Plains Community Plan to determine whether existing policies and standards are adequate to protect water quality in the aquifer, lakes and streams. Consideration shall be given to protection of the lakes from further degradation (eutrophication), and possible remedial actions to improve water quality.

**Recommended Action 1:** To avoid desiccation of the groundwater lakes and encroachment of sea water, a water management program which is consistent with the water-budget equation for the Clatsop Plains should be developed. The County should request technical and financial assistance from state and federal agencies in evaluating water development potentials.

## NATURAL HAZARDS POLICIES – WIND AND OCEAN SHORELINE EROSION

---

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**Policy 1:** Clatsop County shall prohibit:

- a. the destruction of stabilizing vegetation (including the inadvertent destruction by moisture loss or root damage)
- b. the exposure of stable and conditionally stable areas to erosion, and
- c. construction of shore structures which modify current or wave patterns or the beach sand supply

**Policy 2:** Erosion shall be controlled and the soil stabilized by native, non-invasive vegetation and/or mechanical and/or structural means on all dune lands.

**Policy 3:** Removal of vegetation during construction in any sand area shall be kept to the minimum required for building placement or other valid purpose. Removal of vegetation should not occur more than 30 days prior to grading or construction. Permanent revegetation shall be started on the site as soon as practical after construction, final grading or utility placement. Storage of sand and other materials should not suffocate vegetation.

**Policy 4:** In all open sand areas, revegetation must be clearly monitored and carefully maintained, which may include restrictions on pedestrian traffic. Revegetation shall return the area to its pre-construction level of stability or better. Trees should be planted along with ground cover such as grass or shrubs. To encourage stabilization, a revegetation program with time limits shall be required by the Community Development Department as a condition of all land use actions (i.e. Comprehensive Plan changes, zone changes, subdivisions and partitions, planned developments, conditional use permits etc.).

**Policy 5:** Removal of vegetation which provides wildlife habitat shall be limited. Unnecessary removal of shoreline vegetation shall be prohibited.

**Policy 6:** Site specific investigations by a qualified person such as a geologist, soils scientist, or geomorphologist may be required by the County prior to the issuance of development permits in open sand areas, on the ocean front, in steep hillsides of dunes, regardless of the vegetative cover, and in any other conditionally stable dune area which, in the view of the Planning Community Development Director, may be subject to wind erosion or other hazard potential. Site investigations may be submitted to the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries and other agencies for review of recommendations.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**Policy 7:** Log debris plays an important role in the formation and maintenance of foredunes. Therefore, driftwood removal from sand areas and beaches for both individual and commercial purposes should be regulated so that dune building processes and scenic values are not adversely affected.

### NATURAL HAZARDS POLICIES – EARTHQUAKE

**Policy 1:** The County shall develop and implement a program to retrofit County bridges that are identified by a seismic vulnerability assessment.

**Policy 2:** Structures and public facilities owned and/or operated by Clatsop County should be seismically retrofitted.

**Policy 3:** The County should work with private land owners to identify lifelines routes and assembly areas that can be utilized following a seismic event.

**Policy 4:** The County should develop incentive programs to encourage homeowners to perform seismic retrofits to existing structures.

### NATURAL HAZARDS POLICIES – TSUNAMI

**Policy 1:** The County should identify viable sites for vertical evacuation construction.

**Policy 2:** Clatsop County should implement a Tsunami Hazard Inundation overlay and develop regulations and maps for hazard mitigation planning.

**Policy 3:** The County shall establish long-term supply and staging areas outside of inundation zones.

**Policy 4:** Clatsop County shall continue to upgrade and improve tsunami evacuation routes.

## HOUSING GOAL AND POLICIES

**HOUSING GOAL 1:** To provide adequate numbers of housing units at price ranges and rent levels commensurate with financial

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

capabilities of the households in the region and to allow for flexibility in housing location, type and density.

**Policy 1:** Planned developments, the voluntary vacation or replatting of old subdivisions, and other land use actions shall encourage the preservation of steep slopes and other sensitive areas in their natural condition.

**Policy 2:** The location of a mobile home on an individual parcel of land shall be allowed in FOREST LANDS and RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS areas which are in conjunction with a farm or forestry use. In areas designated RURAL LANDS, a double wide or wider mobile home shall be allowed except in Surf Pines (zones SFR-1 and CBR), Smith Lake (zone SFR-1) and Shoreline Estates (zone RSA-SFR).

**Policy 3:** Within two to five years of the adoption of this plan, the County shall review and, if necessary, revise its transfer of density regulations.

**Policy 4:** Within two to five years of the adoption of this plan, the County should update the 2019 Housing Strategies Study and/or conduct a housing needs analysis and building lands inventory.

## PUBLIC FACILITEIS AND SERVICES POLICIES - SEWER

**Policy 1:** Sewage systems shall be allowed in those areas outside of the Urban Growth Boundary only to alleviate a health hazard or water pollution problem which has been identified by the Department of Environmental Quality and will be used only as a last resort.

## PUBLIC FACILITEIS AND SERVICES POLICIES - FIRE

**Policy 1:** The County shall encourage the improvement of fire protection in the Clatsop Plains. The County shall work with local residents as well as the Rural Fire Protection Districts in examining the various methods available to improve fire protection. One method which could be used is to require subdivisions and planned developments to dedicate a site, funds, or construction materials for an additional fire station in the Clatsop Plains.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

---

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Policy 1:** Streets in new developments shall be designed to minimize disturbance of the land by following contour lines (as an alternative to a grid pattern) and avoiding cut-and-fill construction techniques.
- Policy 2:** Unnecessary rights-of-way should be used as green belts, walking trails, equestrian paths or bike paths where appropriate.
- Policy 3:** To minimize negative visual and noise impacts of U.S. 101, a buffer screen of existing vegetation shall be required for residential properties along U.S. 101. Planted vegetation should be encouraged in those areas along U.S. 101 where none presently exists. The buffer shall be 25 feet wide, unless the size of the lot and natural topography would create a hardship.
- Policy 4:** At the time of a major or minor partition, access points shall be examined. Consolidation of existing access points or easements for adjoining properties to allow a common access point shall be considered.
- Policy 5:** It is the County's intent to develop a system of collectors, frontage roads and common access points to solve the problems that many access points create along U.S. 101. In order to carry out this intent the County shall do the following:
- a. Require new developments to have access taken from the existing collectors and frontage roads unless a variance is given.
  - b. New access points on County and public roads shall be reviewed by the County. New access points shall be reviewed based upon proximity to existing access points and safety standards developed by the Oregon Department of Transportation.
- Policy 6:** Clatsop County, in coordination with the Oregon Department of Transportation, should conduct a study of the Clatsop Plains to analyze access controls and problems in establishing criteria for collectors and frontage roads. The study should include: designation of specific access points, location of frontage roads, criteria for temporary access points, etc.

## HISTORIC AREAS POLICIES

---

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**Policy 1:** The County shall work with the Clatsop County Historical Society, the Chinook Indian Nation and other organizations to identify and protect important local historical and archeological sites. Compatible uses and designs of uses should be encouraged for property near or adjacent to important historical or archeological sites.

**Policy 2:** Clatsop County shall protect significant historical resources by:

- encouraging those programs that make preservation economically possible;
- implementing measures for preservation when possible;
- recognizing such areas in public and private land use determinations subject to County review.

## FISH AND WILDLIFE AREAS GOAL AND POLICIES

**FISH AND WILDLIFE AREAS GOAL 1:** To preserve wildlife habitats and natural vegetation as an essential part of the ecosystem for both humans and wildlife.

**Policy 1:** Maintain important fish and wildlife sites by protecting vegetation along many water bodies, classifying suitable land and water locations as NATURAL or CONSERVATION, and otherwise encouraging protection of valuable fish and wildlife habitats.

**Policy 2:** Private and public owners of property on which valuable habitat is located will be encouraged to adequately protect important fish and wildlife sites. The private owners which participate in preserving the natural character of these sites will be assisted in taking advantage of reduced property taxes for protecting such areas. New subdivisions shall be required to leave undeveloped reasonable amounts of property which is needed for protection of valuable fish and wildlife habitat.

**Policy 3:** Intensive recreational development shall not locate within sensitive crucial habitat areas.

**Policy 4:** Habitat of all species indicated as endangered, threatened or vulnerable shall be preserved. Nesting sites of endangered bird species shall be protected and buffered from conflicting uses. Within one year of the adoption of the updated comprehensive plan, staff shall review the County's Sensitive Bird Habitat to verify all endangered, threatened or vulnerable species are identified. This overlay should continue to be reviewed and updated every two years.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**Policy 5:** Provide a natural waterway between Cullaby Lake to the adjacent drainage canal such that salmonids and lampreys can ascent it without the need of a fish ladder.

**Policy 6:** The County shall, in coordination with the cities and other appropriate organizations, implement the requirements of the Oregon Solutions Clatsop Plains Elk Project Declaration of Cooperation, which was signed September 1, 2021.

## RECREATIONAL POLICIES

**Policy 1:** Recreational vehicle parks shall only be permitted in the urban growth boundaries in the Clatsop Plains.

**Policy 2:** The dune area west of Sunset Lake and the land northeast of Camp Rilea should be encouraged to be kept in public and non-profit ownership. These areas should be preserved for their scenic value as well as for wildlife value.

**Policy 3:** Clatsop County will work with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to coordinate beach access points and paths and to create a unified public education program about the fragility of dune systems and the need to avoid accessing unofficial systems and paths.

**Policy 4:** Clatsop County and the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation shall work together to implement the Fort Stevens State Park Plan.

**Policy 5:** State and local jurisdictions shall cooperate to evolve the most efficient traffic flow patterns, parking arrangements and policy requirements for areas on and adjacent to active dune areas, especially parks and beach accesses.

**Policy 6:** Clatsop County will work with Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Military Department to provide an additional trail connection(s) between the north end of Camp Rilea, the beach and Fort Stevens to the existing Fort-to-Sea Trail, and to address trail gaps within and adjacent to Camp Rilea.

**Recommended Action:** Further research should be done to develop additional trails going from Fort Clatsop National Park to the coastal beaches.



## SCENIC AREAS GOAL AND POLICIES

**FISH AND WILDLIFE AREAS GOAL 1:** Preservation of important vistas, views of the ocean, and other significant visual features should be encouraged.

- Policy 1:** In order to provide the greatest view potential for properties along the ocean, the building height shall be limited to 18' on beach front lots and 26' for adjacent properties. This policy applies to the beach/ocean in all directions.
- Policy 2:** If property above Thompson Falls is developed, some areas shall be set aside as open space. This policy applies to properties along Lewis and Clark Road, above Thompson Road in Gearhart-Seaside area, the ocean and Tillamook Head.
- Policy 3:** Excessive sign sizes and numbers of signs shall be discouraged by local regulations. No new billboards or other off-premise signs shall be allowed, except in commercial or industrial zoned land with strict controls. This policy applies to views along U.S. Highway 101 from the ocean dunes to the west to the Coastal Foothills to the east.
- Policy 4:** No intensive development on the foothills or on top of dune ridges should be permitted. This policy applies to the Coastal Foothills and dune ridges in all directions.

## OPEN SPACE POLICIES

- Policy 1:** Land owners shall be encouraged to retain or preserve large parcels of undeveloped land as open space under the provisions of the open space taxation program.
- Policy 2:** The County shall carefully consider the feasibility of all methods for the preservation of open space as the opportunities arise.
- Policy 3:** The County, through regulations in its land use code, shall continue to prescribe a maximum lot coverage in those areas designated DEVELOPMENT.
- Policy 4:** All planned developments and subdivisions in the Clatsop Plains planning area designated RURAL LANDS shall cluster land uses and designate areas as permanent common open space. No reversionary clause shall be permitted in common open

space. The minimum percentage of common open space shall be 30%, excluding roads and property under water. The clustering of dwellings in small numbers and the provision of common open space assures good utilization of land, increased environmental amenities, maintenance of a low density semi-rural character, maintenance of natural systems (dunes, wetlands), and may be used as an open space buffer between the residential use and adjacent military lands, agricultural or forest uses. This policy shall apply in all RURAL LANDS areas in the Clatsop Plains except for the area commonly known as Surf Pines. Clustering shall be prohibited in the area known as Surf Pines. Surf Pines is further described by the following description (see Appendix B) and map.

**Policy 5:** Permanent open space shall include, whenever possible, steep dunes which would require substantial alterations for building, buffers along streams, water bodies, deflation plains, areas abutting military lands, and farm and forest lands.

**Policy 6:** Buffers (screening) shall be provided in all subdivisions and planned developments along property lines adjacent to arterials and/or collectors.

**Policy 7:** Permanent open space as part of subdivisions or planned developments adjoining one another shall be interrelated and continuous whenever possible. This could mean that open space could continuously follow ridge tops, deflation plains, wildlife corridors, property lines abutting military lands, or shorelands. The Clatsop County Department of Planning and Development shall prepare a map of potential systems of open space to be used as a guide for developers.

**Policy 8:** Streams and drainages which form a system of open space shall be preserved.

**Policy 9:** Allow more than one density transfer per sending site, until all allowed density is removed.

**Policy 10:** Require receiving sites for density transfer be located outside of the North Clatsop Plains Overlay District.

**Recommended Action 1:** Coordinate the Transferable Development Rights program with land trusts, cities, state and federal agencies, and other potential agency partners to facilitate density transfers out of the North Clatsop Plains Overlay District.

**Recommended Action 2:** Explore the feasibility of adopting a Purchase of Development Rights program to protect open space within the Clatsop Plains / North Clatsop Plains Sub-Area, including consideration of financing options for program start-up and possibilities of mitigation banking.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

**Recommended Action 3:** Encourage the use of conservation easements where transfer of development rights and other regulatory approaches are not workable or achievable, and coordinate with land trusts, cities, state and federal agencies, and other agency partners, in educating property owners on the benefits and stewardship responsibilities that come with having a conservation easement.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES – DEVELOPMENT LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

**Objective 1:** To ensure optimum utilization of urban and urbanizable lands and to provide for an orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land uses.

**Objective 2:** To encourage development in this area to relive the need for development in other areas.

**Objective 3:** To encourage the location of public and private facilities and services so that they do attract residential development to locations inside DEVELOPMENT areas.

**Objective 4:** To avoid the extension of urban services (i.e. sewer systems) into outlying sparsely settled areas (1 acre or greater sites).

**Rural Service Area Policy 1:** The minimum building site in Rural Service Area shall be 7,500 square feet in sewer areas and 15,000 square feet in unsewered areas.

**Rural Service Area Policy 2:** The area known as Shoreline Estates shall be designated a RURAL SERVICE AREA, due to the existing facilities available. The land area for this designation shall not be larger than the existing treatment plant's capacity. The expansion of the RURAL SERVICE AREA designation should NOT be allowed. It is the intent of the Community Plan to encourage urban densities to occur within the cities and the Urban Growth Boundaries where more facilities and services are available.

### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GOAL AND POLICIES – RURAL LANDS CLASSIFICATION

**RURAL LANDS GOAL 1:** To preserve and maintain the present overall rural quality of life now enjoyed in the Clatsop Plains

**Policy 1:** The minimum parcel size for all residential building sites in the RURAL LANDS plan designation shall be two acres

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

one acre, except as provided in Policy 2.

- Policy 2:** Rural residential subdivisions shall be required to have paved streets, except if the subdivision involves extremely large land parcels or only a few land parcels are involved and there is no potential for increase traffic demand on the roadway.
- Policy 3:** When considering new commercial areas or expansion of existing commercially zoned land the policies pertaining to commercial land in the General Development policies, as well as the following standards, shall be used:
- Adequate off-street parking shall be provided to prevent traffic congestion resulting from on-street parking.
  - A buffer and screen shall be provided between commercial and residential uses.
  - Signs shall be designed so as not to distract from the surrounding area.
  - The size of neighborhood commercial uses shall be sized to serve every day personal needs of the surrounding rural population and generate little or no traffic from outside of the rural area.
  - Review by State and County Road officials for safe access including adequate site distance.
- Policy 4:** Clatsop County anticipates that a majority of the County's housing supply will be provided within the various cities' urban growth boundaries consistent with Statewide Planning Goal 14: Urbanization. Approval of subdivisions and planned developments shall relate to the needs for rural housing. Through the County's 2019 Housing Study, the County has determined that 1,500 additional residential units are required to accommodate current and future residents, while allowing for a continued supply of vacation properties. The rural housing needs should be reexamined every two (2) years from the date of adoption of this plan.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES – RURAL AGRICULTURAL LANDS USE CLASSIFICATION

- Objective 1:** To protect agricultural land from urban expansion.
- Objective 2:** To restrict intensive development on undeveloped shorelands.
- Objective 3:** To preserve the rural character of uplands and woodlands areas, and maintain open spaces and opportunities along the shoreline for recreational uses compatible with low density residential activity.
- Objective 4:** To retain rural areas as sparse settlement, small farms or acreage homesites with hardly any public services.

---

## CLATSOP PLAINS COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

- Objective 5:** To limit the intensity of residential development in order to prevent the gradual development of conditions which would require additional services or higher quality of existing services.
- Objective 6:** To maintain the open spaces between various types of development so as to preserve the rural character of the area.
- Objective 7:** To provide for housing types (i.e. acreage homesites) which cannot be accommodated in cities, Urban Growth Boundaries or Rural Service Areas.
- Policy 1:** Residents and property owners should be encouraged to promote self-sufficiency with regard to food production. Examples of farm activities particularly suited to the Clatsop Plains Planning Area include, but are not limited to, cranberries, sheep, cattle, flowers and egg production.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES – CONSERVATION OTHER RESOURCES USE CLASSIFICATION

- Objective 1:** To conserve and protect natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources.
- Objective 2:** To develop for low intensity uses which do not substantially degrade the existing character or interrupt the flow of natural resource use or recreational benefits.
- Objective 3:** To protect life and property in hazardous areas.
- Policy 1:** The minimum building site in Rural Service Area shall be 7,500 square feet in sewered areas and 15,000 square feet in unsewered areas.

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICIES – NATURAL LAND USE CLASSIFICATION

- Objective 1:** To preserve, restore and protect these areas for scientific, research and educational needs and for the resource and ecosystem support values and functions they provide.
- Policy 1:** Areas rich in wildlife or of a fragile ecological nature, shall be preserved as NATURAL areas. The following areas shall continue to be designated NATURAL: Clatsop Spit, Tillamook Chute, portions of Fort Stevens, Carnahan Lake, Slusher Lake and portions of the Tansy Estuary and Necanicum Estuary.
- Policy 2:** The NATURAL aquatic designation for Slusher Lake shall extend 100 feet measured horizontally from the aquatic-shoreland boundary.

**Policy 3:** The County shall work with the owner of Taylor Lake to designate the lake as NATURAL and amend the zoning to comply with the new land use designation.

**IMPLEMENTING OREGON ADMINISTRATIVE RULES (OAR):**

[660-023](#) – Procedures and Requirements for Complying with Goal 5

[660-016](#) – Complying with Statewide Planning Goal 5

[660-031](#) – State Permit Compliance and Compatibility

**COORDINATING STATE AGENCIES:**

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)

Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA)

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD)

Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE)

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL)

Oregon Health Authority (OHA)

Department of Geology and Mineral Inventories (DOGAMI)

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)

**BACKGROUND REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DATA:**

*Necanicum Estuary Inventory*, Neal Maine, June 1979

*Estuary and Shoreland Resources and Regional Policies for the Columbia River Estuary*, CREST

*Fort Stevens Park Master Plan*, 2001

[\*Columbia River at the Mouth, Oregon and Washington Major Rehabilitation of the Jetty System at the Mouth of the Columbia River\*](#), USACOE, 2012