
SOUTHWEST COASTAL COMMUNITY PLAN



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SOUTHWEST COASTAL COMMUNITY PLAN 2040

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INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Coastal Planning Area begins at the south end of Cannon Beach, spanning south to the boundary between Clatsop and Tillamook County, bounded on the west by the Pacific Ocean, covering approximately one mile inland to the east.

The Planning Area includes the unincorporated community of Arch Cape and the neighborhood known as Cove Beach. The primary development pattern is medium-density residential with limited small-scale commercial. The eastern side of the planning area is predominantly forestland.

The area also includes popular recreation and scenic areas such as Arcadia Beach, Hug Point, the Arch Cape headland, Oswald West State Park, the Oregon Coast Trail, and the Oregon Coast Bike Route.

The original Southwest Coastal Community Plan was adopted on June 1, 1979 (Ordinance 79-4).

Amendments to the original plan have been made by:

- Ordinances 03-08, 03-09, 03-10 and 03-11, May 2004
- Ordinance 17-02, adopted May 25, 2017

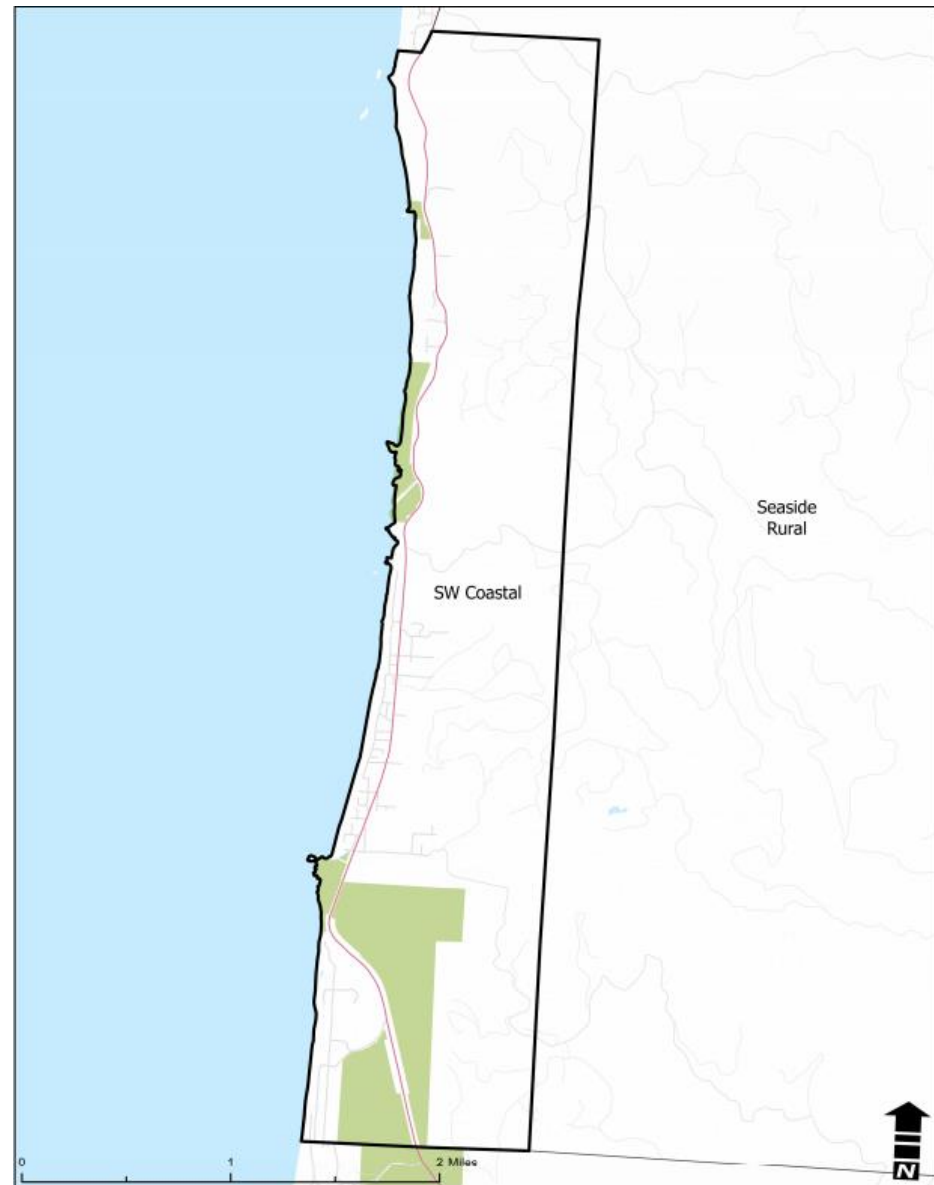
Planning Area Demographics

Size: 5 sq. mi

Population: 305

Housing Units: 436

(source: 2020 Decennial Census)



History of the Area

Prior to the arrival of European settlers, the Clatsop Indians inhabited what is now known as Arch Cape and Cannon Beach. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains a database of significant cultural and archaeological resources and sites and requires notification from developers when artifacts are discovered.

Although much of the land in Arch Cape was settled by homesteaders, there is historical evidence that the area was pristine when the first settlers arrived, and to carve out a living on the land took incredible amounts of effort. Dense stands of spruce had to be cleared for homesites or agriculture. Much of the food the early settler families had consisted on was the abundant clams, crabs, deer, elk, salmon, and berries in the vicinity. Some cultivation and dairying was carried out.

Cannon Beach received its name when a broken foredeck of the U.S. gunboat "Shark", which was wrecked at the bar while leaving the Columbia River on September 10, 1846, washed up on the beach near the present community of Arch Cape. An attempt to recover the cannons was thwarted by the tide, but one appeared several years later and was salvaged. The name Cannon Beach was applied to the settled community to the north where it has remained since. It is now on display at the Cannon Beach History Center. Two additional cannons from the "Shark" were found on Arch Cape Beach in 2008 and are on display at the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

A mail route between Astoria and Tillamook was established in the late nineteenth century. In order to provide a rest-stop for carriers between the two points, a post office was established at the Austin Hotel in the north end of Arch Cape which existed from 1891 to 1901. The route itself was a difficult one following paths over Tillamook Head and the beach at low tides around the points.

Much logging of timber in the Arch Cape area was done during the first world war when it was found that old growth spruce made excellent airplane frames. The surrounding mountains and hillsides were clear-cut during the 1960s.

Throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was extensive subdivision of the old homesteads into uniform parcels of real estate, with many lots 5,000 square feet. Most of the early development occurred on a lot-by-lot basis in the 1940s and 1950s with many structures used as summer beach cottages. Although the permanent resident population grew over the years, the majority of landowners were part-time residents, using their homes on weekends and during the summer. Many part-time residents became full-time residents when they retired.

As development increased, so did the need for public facilities. In the 1940s and 1950s several small private water systems were built, with several of those private systems being consolidated and forming districts. As the availability of water grew in Arch Cape, so did development, although the Department of Environmental Quality became concerned about water rights for Shark Creek and directed the Arch Cape district to severely reduce water usage in 1966, a situation which continued until a sewer system was built in the mid-1970's. A second water source was developed on Asbury Creek in 1999 to meet water demand during the driest months of the year. Extensive upgrades were made to the Distribution System in 2010, and the water treatment plant was completely upgraded with a new membrane treatment system in 2014. The Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District in 2023 purchased 1,441 acres of forest land above Arch Cape which includes the watershed for Arch

Cape's drinking water. In the Cove Beach community just south of the Arch Cape Tunnel, a spring at the north end of the community is the primary water source.

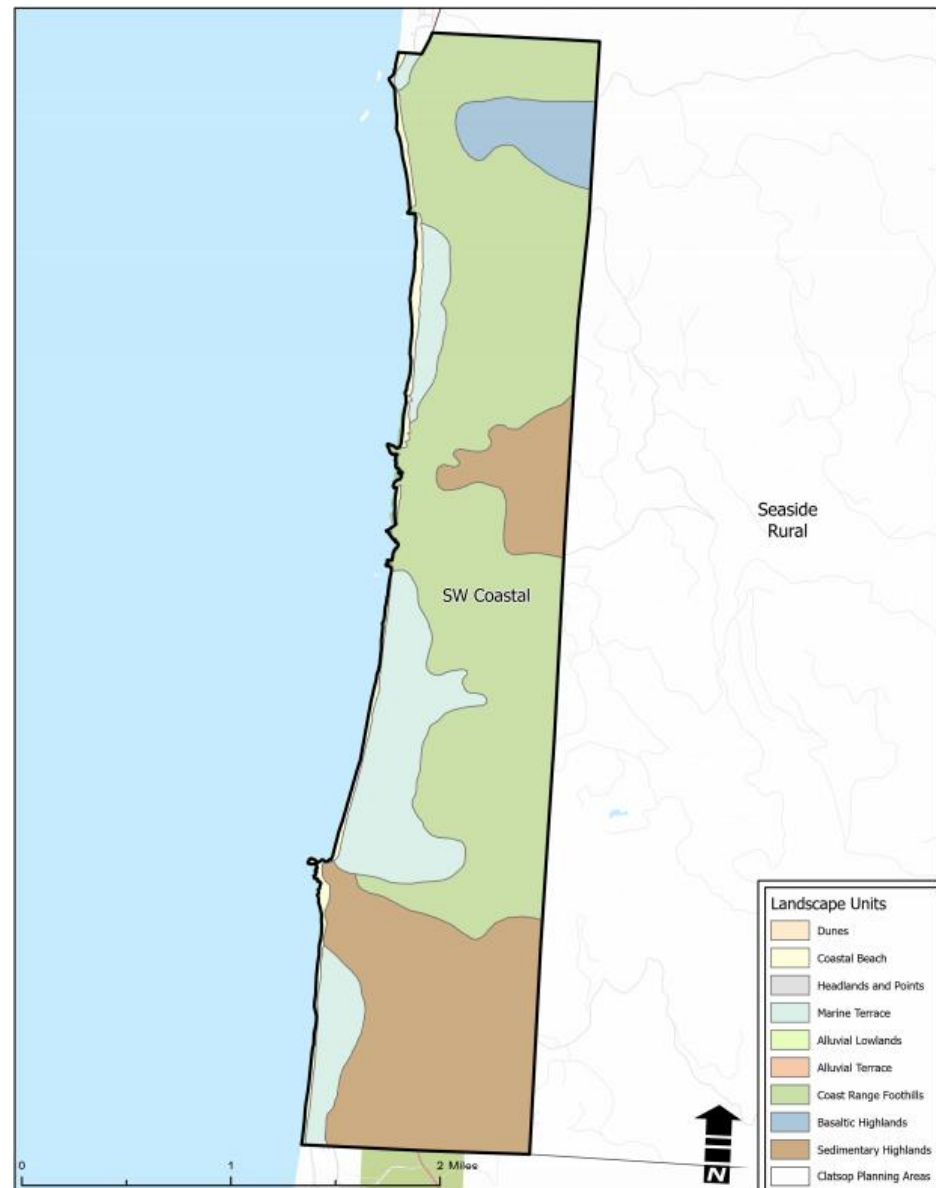
The people who live in and visit the Southwest Coastal Planning Area consider the community a unique place with a special character. The coastal setting, the headlands, the beaches, the streams, the wetlands, the vegetation, and the type of development that has been built are some of the factors that make up the community character. Residents and property owners generally consider this character something to be preserved.

Landscape Units

The *Environmental Plan of Southwest Clatsop County* was completed in 1974 and describes the landscape units found in the area, each of which has unique physical and environmental characteristics, such as geology, soils, moisture, vegetation, wildlife, hazards, etc. The landscape units provide a framework for development that is, in part, based on the land's capability for development.

A list of the landscape units can be found below, and they are depicted in Map 2 (right). Details about the characteristics of each landscape unit can be found in the Goal 2 element of the Comprehensive Plan.

- Coastal Beaches
- Headlands and Points
- Marine Terraces
- Alluvial Lowlands
- Alluvial Terraces
- Coast Range Foothills
- Basaltic Highlands
- Sedimentary Highlands



Map 2: Landscape Units

CRITICAL HAZARD AREAS

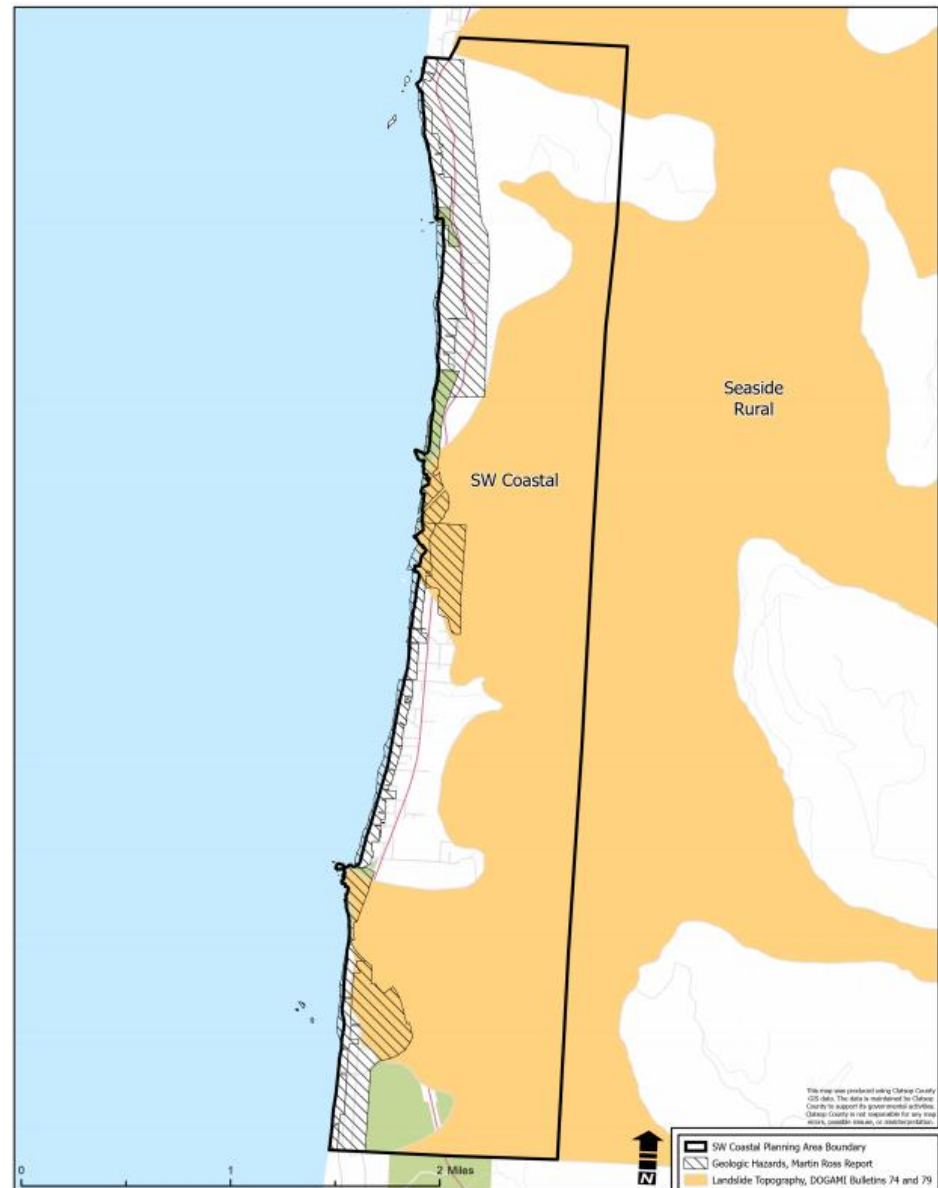
There are numerous hazards in the area which can and do affect people's lives and property. Below is a brief discussion of the hazards together with policies to manage development in the natural hazards areas. Maps 3 and 4 show the various mapped hazards in the planning area.

Landslides

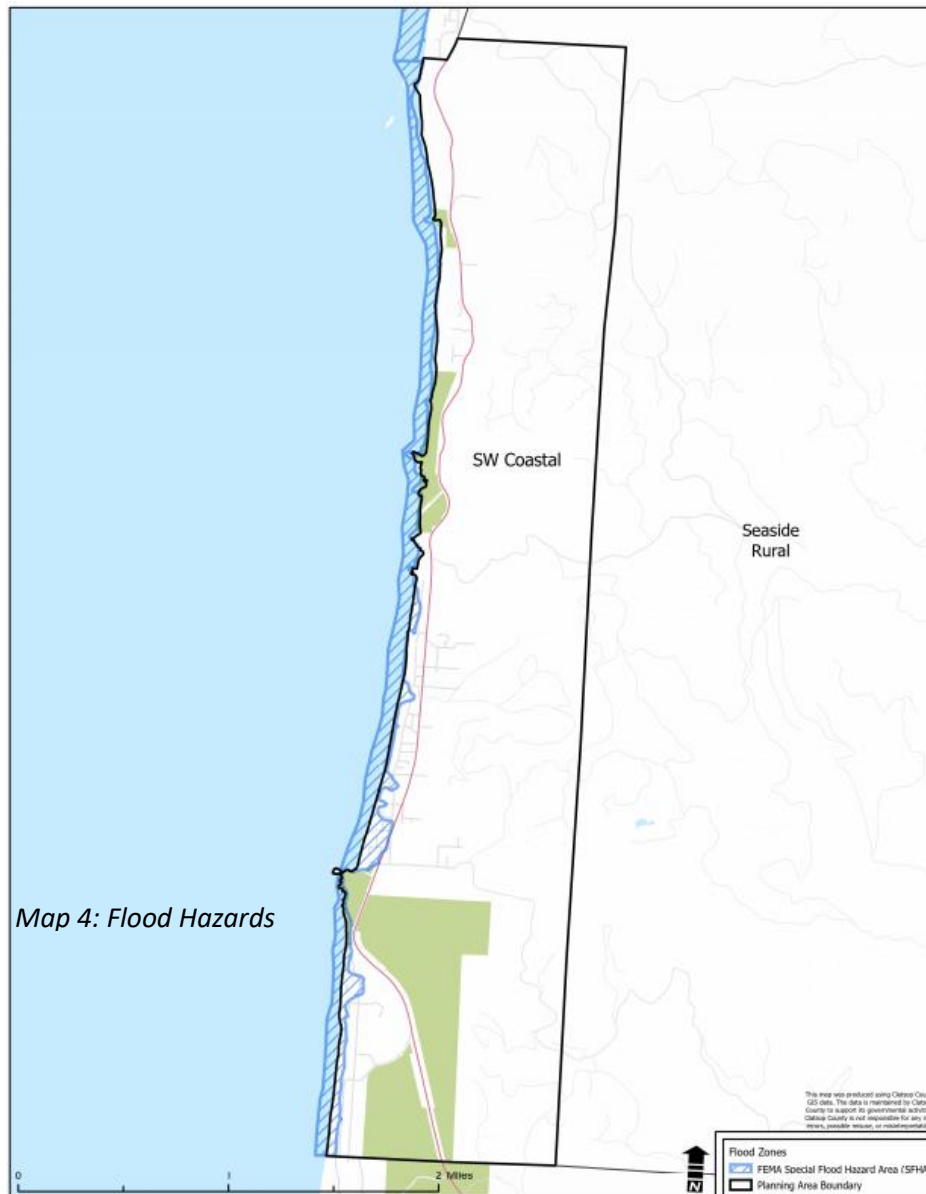
Landslides can be started by storms, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, fires, and human modification of land. In a landslide, masses of rock, earth or debris move down a slope. Landslides may be small or large, slow or rapid.

In the Southwest Coastal Planning Area, the areas largely free from landsliding problems are those with gently sloping inland portions of the marine terrace at Arch Cape, Arcadia Beach and Cove Beach. Other areas in the planning area have had a history of landslides. As a result, a study was undertaken by Martin Ross at the request of the Clatsop County Department of Community Development to identify the geologic hazards and to develop policies and recommendations regarding potential development in these areas. The study area included the coastal portion of Clatsop County from Cannon Beach to the Tillamook County line. This report is included as part of the inventory data.

Certain parts of the Southwest Coastal planning area are at risk of catastrophic landslides which have the potential to isolate communities from service centers to the north and south. Landslides may be accompanied by utility outages and damage



Map 3: Geologic Hazards



to infrastructure. Residents and visitors alike should be prepared for the possibility of two weeks sheltering in place until outside assistance is available.

Coastal Erosion

The combination of storms, high tides, and the relative soft material of the marine terrace, plus the lack of sand buildup account for the critical erosion in the study area. While sand is building up from Tillamook Head to Camp Rilea, it is being washed away on the south side of the head. The rate of erosion varies from 0.5 to 15.0 feet a year, depending on the rock types and other factors such as shoreline configuration. Martin Ross' report provides additional information on the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.

Sea level rise and increased storm events are expected to result in accelerating and worsening coastal erosion. Over time, there will likely be more damage to and loss of roads, utilities, beach accesses, decks, and houses. The loss of land and beaches may result in additional shoreline armoring and beachfront protective structures, which could reduce beach access and beach area. If it is not along the entire beach, armoring in select areas will may accelerate land loss in unarmored areas.

Increased coastal erosion may have significant impacts to industries such as fishing, farming, logging, and tourism. Pressure to develop housing and services further inland may also affect land use policies and decisions in the Southwest Coastal region.

Stream and Ocean Flooding

There are several creeks in the area which could be subject to flash flooding, the largest of which is Arch Cape Creek. Areas along the coast, which are subject to the 100-year flood, have

been mapped under the National Flood Insurance Program and are designated on Flood Insurance Rate Maps. Increased seasonal heavy rains and sea level rise will result in more flooding.

Earthquakes and Tsunami

A tsunami is a series of waves usually caused by an undersea earthquake. As these waves enter shallow water near land, they increase in height and can cause great loss of life and property damage. The first wave is often not the largest; successive waves may be spaced many minutes apart and continue to arrive for several hours.

In June 2013 the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries released new maps showing the coastal areas within the Southwest Coastal Planning Area to be within tsunami inundation zones. These maps, drawing on the latest scientific data, identify those areas at risk of inundation from a projected worst-case local Cascadia zone tsunami and a worst-case distant tsunami.

Wildfire and Drought

Increased seasonal drought will result in reduced surface and groundwater. Drinking water may not be available to all users during dry seasons. Some streams and wetlands may have less water in dry seasons, impacting fish and other wildlife.

Communities within the Southwest Coastal Planning Area are situated adjacent to forestland, and many of the undeveloped lots within the AC-RCR and CR zones include forests. Due to drought and associated pests and diseases, forestland wildfire risk is increasing. As a result, the communities have increasing wildfire risk and have potential for low air quality due to smoke from nearby and distant wildfires.

Public Facilities and Services

Statistics concerning public facilities are updated in the Goal 11 Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

The availability of either adequate water or waste systems has limited development in the past and will greatly influence future growth. Map 5 (right) shows the various public facilities and services in the area as well as roads in the area.

Sewer System

The Arch Cape Sewer Service District sewer system was completed in 1975. It is designed for a population of 1,150 persons with present population in the summer months being around 450 to 500 persons.

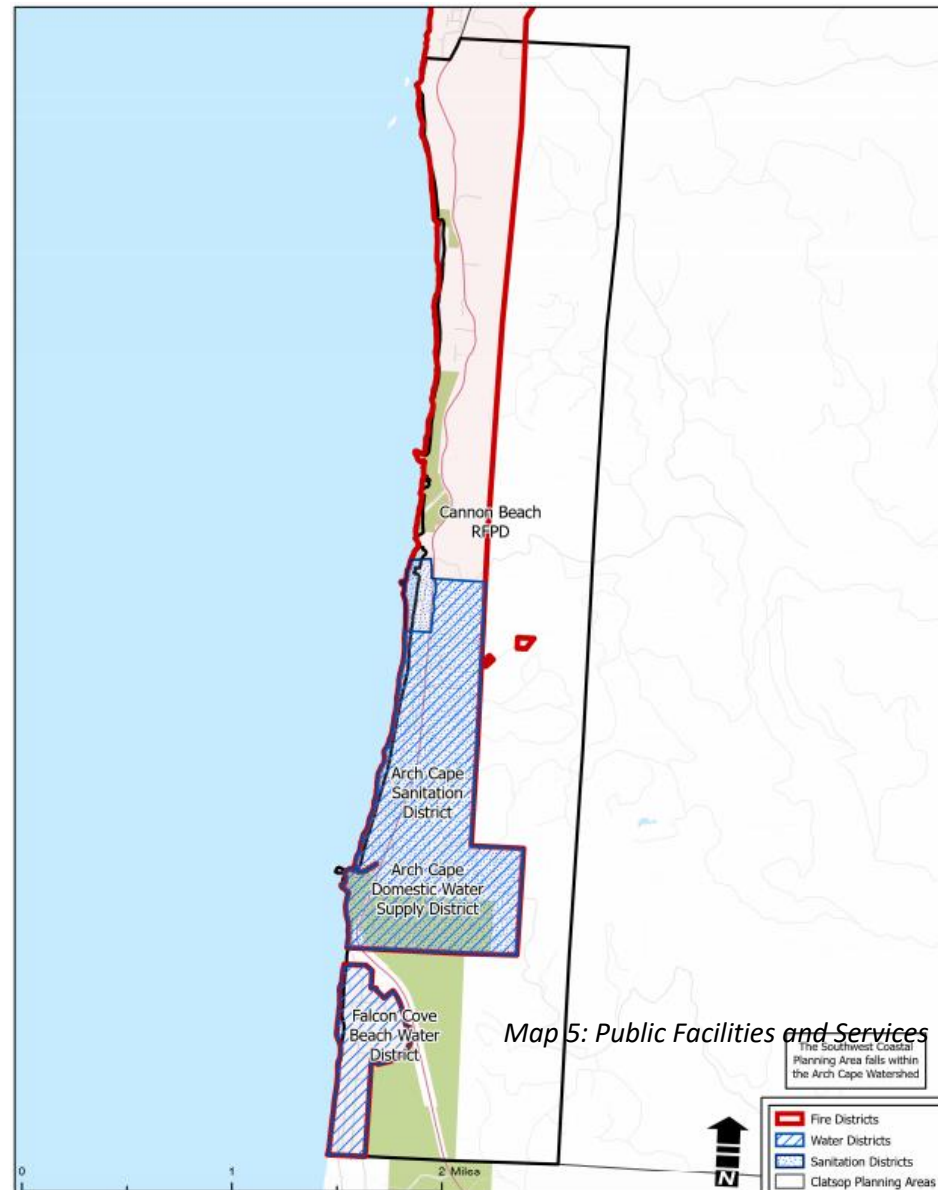
Water Systems

In the Southwest Coastal Planning Area there are several public water systems: Falcon Cove Beach Domestic Water Supply District, Arch Cape Water Service District, Cannon View Park, Inc., and several small, isolated shared systems.

Falcon Cove Beach Domestic Water Supply District has about 96 connections with a capacity of approximately 125 connections.

The Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District presently has 295 connections and the capacity, at this time, is 430. A second source was developed on Asbury Creek in 1999 to meet water demand during the driest months of the year.

Extensive upgrades were made to the distribution system in 2010, and the water treatment plant was completely upgraded with a brand-new membrane treatment system in 2014.



Cannon View Park, Inc. has approximately 50 connections with a capacity of approximately 73. Ninety-five percent of the present connections are for vacation homes. Recent improvements to the system's new distribution lines and storage tank have addressed the system's supply and fire protection problems.

Schools

The Southwest Coastal Planning Area is within the Seaside School District #10. With predominant population consisting of either seasonal or retirement age, the anticipated growth in the planning area will not be a burden to the existing school facilities.

Fire Protection

Fire protection is provided by Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District which has 20 volunteer firefighters, three engines and two brush trucks. With the station in Arch Cape and the replacement of the older pumper, the fire insurance rating in this area is 3 or 3x.

Police

Residents in this area receive police services provided by the County Sheriff and State Police. The Sheriff's Department patrols the area on an average of once a day.

Storm Drainage

At the present time, there are no formal storm drainage facilities in the south County area. All drainage flows into natural drainages or collects into low areas. The clay soils (marine terrace) form an impervious barrier to storm water, as well as septic tank effluent.

Transportation

There is a heavy reliance on the automobile in the area, in part due to the isolation from urban areas and the fact most residents and property owners have at least one vehicle. Highway 101 is the only through street in and out of the area, with a 55 mph speed limit except around several curves where reduced speeds are advised, and through Arch Cape where the limit is reduced to 50 mph.

On the east side of Highway 101 in Arch Cape is a grid network of platted public rights-of-way, many of which are undeveloped. As development interest has increased in this area, so has the need to extend road access and utilities. New roads and road extensions are required to be built to current County road standards.

Many residents walk extensively for both transportation and pleasure. Pedestrian safety when walking along or across Highway 101 is a community concern. Residents and visitors on the east side of Highway 101 must cross it to get to the beach, visit friends, and pick up mail.

As of 2021, there are limited public transportation options available in the Southwest Coastal Planning Area. Tillamook County Transportation District operates a NW Connector service (Route 3) that goes to/from Cannon Beach three times a day and that can be flagged by a rider at the



Map 6: Open Space, Parks, Recreation, Beach Access

Arch Cape Deli (or other point along Highway 101 where there is a safe pullout for the transit bus). Once at Cannon Beach, a rider can connect with the Sunset Empire Transportation District Route 20 to/from Seaside (about 12 times/day) with a number of other possible onward bus connections from the Seaside Bus Depot. There is also a connection in Cannon Beach to a NorthWest Point bus to/from Portland (2 times/day), and a mini-van service exists for the elderly and disabled.

Open Space, Historic, Recreation, Scenic and Natural Areas

Map 6 shows the recreation, open space, historic, scenic and natural sites in the planning area.

In the planning area there are two State parks, Oswald West and Hug Point, which provide parking, beach access, and picnic facilities. There are also two wayside parks, one at Arcadia Beach and one across from Cannon View Park.

There are three bicycle routes which pass through the planning area, the Oregon Coast Bicycle Route, the TransAmerica Bicycle Trail, and the Northwest Oregon Loop Bicycle Route. All three routes follow U.S. Highway 101.

On January 22, 1975, the State Transportation Commission established the first stretch of the Oregon Coast Trail (OCT) from the Columbia River spit to Barview at the north end of Tillamook Bay. The route follows 5 miles of beach and comes across the Arch Cape Creek footbridge into Oswald West Park. The trail climbs the headland and continues on toward Neahkhanie Mountain and Tillamook Bay. The OCT continues south to the California border.

Arch Cape Creek constitutes one of the most important natural resources in the Southwest Coastal Planning Area. The creek is identified by the community as an extremely important natural

area, scenic resource and wildlife habitat. Although it is not pristine or undeveloped, it is still highly valued by local residents. Other streams in the area that are considered valuable to the community are Asbury and Shark Creek, in Arch Cape, as well as Cedar Creek and Mason Creek, in Cove Beach.

There are several off-shore rocks in this planning area which are part of the Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). According to USFWS, the refuge includes 1,853 rocks, reefs, and islands and stretches from Tillamook Head near Seaside south to the California border. All of the rocks and islands of the refuge are designated National Wilderness Areas, with the exception of 1-acre Tillamook Rock. Most of Oregon's estimated 1.2 million nesting seabirds use Oregon Islands Refuge as a place to raise their young, and Oregon's seals and sea lions use the islands as a place to haul out and rest or to give birth to their pups.

The Southwest Coastal Planning Area also includes a portion of one of the five Oregon Marine Reserves, which are ocean areas dedicated to conservation and scientific research. The Cape Falcon Marine reserve extends 2-3 miles out from Oswald West State Park, south to Neahkahnie Beach. Rules within the Marine Reserve area include no ocean development and no take of animals or seaweeds. The shoreside area along the Cove Beach neighborhood is designated as a Marine Protected Area, which prohibits ocean development but does allow recreational hook and line fishing from the shore and any legal take, not otherwise restricted, above the low tide line.

There are two historic sites in this planning area, both in Arch Cape. One a wayside across from Cannon View Park which contains a replica of the cannon for which Cannon Beach was named, along with a sign giving the history of the cannons. The other is the site of an early post office established in the late 1800s when mail was carried south along the beach and around the headlands at low tide. The original cannon was for many years was displayed outside the post office.

There are two historic sites in this planning area, both in Arch Cape. One a wayside park containing a replica of a cannon from the U.S. gunboat "Shark", and the other is the site of an early post office established in the late 1800s. The cannon, for which Cannon Beach is named, was found by the Tillamook Indians shortly after the "Shark" was shipwrecked at the mouth of the Columbia in 1846, and for many years was displayed outside the post office. Two more cannons from the "Shark" were found on Arch Cape Beach in 2008. The first cannon is now on display at the Cannon Beach History Center, while the others are at the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

In 2021, the North Coast Land Conservancy acquired 3,500 acres of temperate rain forest land above Arch Cape, known as the Rainforest Reserve. Together with the adjacent Oswald West State Park and Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, it helps forms a continuous 32-square-mile conservation corridor stretching from the summits of coastal-fronting mountains to the nearshore ocean. The Rainforest Reserve is North Coast Land Conservancy's largest habitat reserve and one of the largest privately conserved properties in western Oregon. It is the mountainous horizon line you see looking southbound from Astoria to Cannon Beach, or north from Rockaway Beach and Nehalem Bay. It is home to rare plants and animals and forests of spruce and hemlock growing toward maturity, helping to combat the climate crisis by retaining and improving forest health and wildlife habitat and biodiversity.

In 2022, the Arch Cape Domestic Water Supply District purchased approximately 1500 acres of forest land above Arch Cape. This land includes the watersheds for Arch Cape's water, and will provide clean water, stabilized water rates, and conservation and recreation opportunities. It will become part of the conservation corridor that includes Oswald West State Park, the Rainforest Reserve, and Cape Falcon Marine Reserve.

Development Patterns

The development pattern of the Southwest Coastal Planning Area consists generally of small to medium-size residential lots within the Arch Cape and Cove Beach communities, with some limited commercial development in Arch Cape. Surrounding the residential areas is a mix of recreation land and public and private forestland. Development in the past has occurred mostly on the marine terrace landscape unit along the coast with the predominant use being housing.

The Course of Future Land Uses

The goal of this community plan is to provide a guide for development, whether residential, commercial, or recreational development, allowing for a high quality of life in the community. Land use policies are intended to control the direction of growth in the area and provide a basis for implementation measures such as zoning or capital improvement programs.

The plan recognizes the unique character of the Southwest Coastal Planning Area in that it is a place for people to reside and recreate in within a natural, scenic setting. The main thrust of the Plan is to maintain the natural beauty, neighborhood character, and livability of the area during growth and development. Map 7 (right) shows the Comprehensive Land Use Designations for the Southwest Coastal Planning area.



Map 7: Comprehensive Plan Land Use Designations

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

LANDSCAPE UNITS

Water Bodies and Coastal and Stream Shorelands Goal

To conserve, protect, and where appropriate, develop the coastal and stream shorelands in the Southwest Coastal Planning area; and to conserve, protect, and where appropriate, develop the lands near and adjacent to water bodies in the Planning Area. The following policies are in addition to those found in the Goal 16 and 17 elements of the Comprehensive Plan.

Water Bodies and Coastal and Stream Shorelands Policies

1. A vegetated buffer shall be provided along either side of Arch Cape Creek, Asbury Creek, Shark Creek, Cedar Creek, Austen Creek, and other creeks and drainage ways critical to local drinking water supply and erosion control in order to provide clean drinking water, protect riparian vegetation, prevent loss of property due to erosion, and protect the aesthetic value of the streams.
2. Clustered development, including open space or neighborhood park sites and wildlife corridors, should be encouraged for subdivisions or planned developments within the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.
3. Activities of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department which pertain to the Southwest Coastal planning area should be reviewed by the County to ensure their compatibility with the County's comprehensive plan.
4. The County is encouraged to coordinate with OPRD and local residents to develop a comprehensive beach access plan for the SW Coastal Planning Area which balances accessibility, safety, wildlife habitat, and coastal erosion.

Water Bodies and Coastal and Stream Shorelands Recommendations

1. Where feasible, beach access points should be provided at the ends of platted streets. Beach access points should be designed, constructed, and maintained to be accessible to persons with limited mobility. Creation of new access points, or improvement of existing access points in fragile, steep, or otherwise hazardous areas should be avoided.
2. The County should consider mapping of the drainage systems in the planning area.

Headlands and Points Policies

1. The County may encourage the State of Oregon to purchase the privately-owned portion of the Arch Cape headland as it is an important natural and scenic resource that should be permanently protected.
2. The County should explore including the Arch Cape Headland in the County's Goal 5 scenic resources inventory.

Wetlands Policies

1. The County should adopt a local protection program for any lakes and wetlands in the Southwest Coastal Planning Area identified as significant.
2. The County may work with property owners to explore opportunities to apply the LW Zone to further protect significant wetlands within the SW Coastal Planning Area.
3. Clatsop County may establish setbacks to wetlands.

CRITICAL HAZARD AREAS

Critical Hazard Areas Goal

To prevent harm to people and damage to property through the use of reasonable building controls. To work together to prepare for the survival needs of residents and visitors.

Coastal Armoring Policies

1. The County should work with DLCDC and the Oregon Parks & Recreation Department to identify properties eligible for beach armoring and to establish a comprehensive beach armoring plan for each community within the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.
2. The County should evaluate requests for shoreline protective devices such as seawalls, revetments or dikes for their impacts on adjacent property, visual impacts, impact on public access, and potential public costs.

Wildfire Hazard Policies

1. The County may consider fire resilient building requirements for dwellings in or adjacent to forestlands in the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.

HOUSING

Housing Goal

To provide for a wide range of housing needs in the community. To maintain the current residential character of the community. To encourage development which blends with its rural setting and preserves natural resources to the maximum extent possible.

Housing Policies

1. The County should develop clear and objective standards to preserve the natural landscape, trees, and existing native vegetation.
2. The County should encourage the development of housing for low- and moderate-income persons in the Southwest Coastal Planning Area through agencies such as the Northwest Oregon Housing Association (NOHA), Farmers Home Administration (FHA), U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the State Housing Division.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public Facilities Goal

To provide appropriate levels of public facilities and services capable of meeting the existing and future needs of the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.

Public Facilities Policies

1. Prior to approving vacation of a public right-of-way, the County should evaluate the right-of-way for possible significance as part of a greenbelt or pathway system.

Public Facilities Recommendations

1. The County may coordinate with area watershed councils to map and define the watersheds in the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Goal

To safely and efficiently meet the transportation needs of the Southwest Coastal Planning Area while keeping its semi-rural character. To improve safety for vehicles and pedestrians accessing Highway 101.

Transportation Policies

1. The County may plan for the use of platted, public rights-of-way within the SW Coastal Planning Area to enhance mobility for pedestrians and/or cyclists. When considering proposals to vacate platted, public rights-of-way, the County should examine the potential significance of the right-of-way as part of a network of pedestrian and/or bicycle routes within the SW Coastal Planning Area.
2. The County should coordinate with ODOT to a plan for bicycle and pedestrian pathways throughout Arch Cape, emphasizing safety and connectivity across Highway 101.
4. The County may coordinate with the Oregon Department of Transportation to determine whether speed limits on Highway 101 though Arch Cape should be further reduce in order to improve safety for pedestrians.
5. The County may create a transportation plan for the east side of Arch Cape that identifies common frontage roads, limits access points onto Highway 101, facilitates building streets to minimize disturbance to the land, and converts rights-of-way that are not needed for motorized travel into bike paths or pedestrian trails.

OPEN SPACE, HISTORIC, RECREATION, SCENIC AND NATURAL AREAS

Open Space, Historic, Recreation, Scenic and Natural Areas Goal

To preserve the open space and recreation qualities of the riparian areas, wetlands, beaches, and the surrounding forest areas throughout the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.

Open Space, Historic, Recreation, Scenic and Natural Areas Policies

1. Activities of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department which pertain to the Southwest Coastal area should be reviewed by the County to ensure compatibility with the County's comprehensive plan.

2. The County may collaborate with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department to retain the scenic values of the Oregon Coast Trail.
3. New County-operated parks and recreation sites within the planning area should be neighborhood oriented, low impact in terms of traffic generation, and designed in a compatible manner with the surrounding environment.

DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Growth Policies

1. The County may maintain the low density, residential character of the Southwest Coastal Planning Area.