

Vernonia Comprehensive Plan first in a four part series

Statement of Purpose—Comprehensive Plan: "A generalized, coordinated land use map and policy statement of the governing body of a state agency, city, county or special district, that interrelates all functional and natural systems and activities relating to the use of land." —ORS 197.015(4)

Planning: "To establish a land use planning process and policy framework as a basis for all decisions and actions related to the use of land and to assure an adequate factual base for such decisions and actions."

"Uncoordinated use of lands within this state threaten the orderly development, the environment of this state, and the health, safety, order, convenience, prosperity and welfare of the people of this state." —the preamble to Senate Bill 100

The emphasis in each of these statements is coordination of land use, or more appropriately, the coordination of developing use of land. Although Vernonia is not rapidly growing, the resources that are present are being used in some cases to their fullest extent, such as upon O-A hill, while other areas are not being used at all, such as the Oregon-American mill site. The task of a comprehensive plan should not only be to prescribe future uses of undeveloped land, but to suggest ways in which land that has been misused in the past can be used to better advantage in the future.

The comprehensive plan should be an "impermanant constitution" for the city, reflecting the hopes and desires of the people through citizens groups, elected officials, and public meetings. A recent court case has established the comprehensive plan as the "controlling land use planning instrument for a city . . .", and states that if the plan and zoning ordinances are in conflict, then the plan will take precedence. Before this decision, plans were often adopted by the municipality then placed on a shelf, becoming a "vest-pocket tool of the planning commission", only to be consulted when convenient or needed.

It is the hope of the authors that this plan will be used often, and that it will become an everyday tool of the city as a whole.

Land Use Planning—The statewide land use planning goal states that it shall be the intention of local plans: To establish a land use planning process and policy framework as a basis for all decisions and actions related to use of land and to assure an adequate factual base for such decisions and actions.

Introduction—The approach of the Vernonia Comprehensive Plan is to provide the factual base in the form of an inventory which is adopted as part of the plan. It includes those forces which have bearing on the use of the land; forces within the human and natural environment and the activities of man. As more information becomes available and situations change, the Plan will have to change also. The plan inventory shall be updated periodically and like the current inventory, reviewed and adopted as part of the plan. A state land use goal requires that the comprehensive plan and implementation ordinances be reviewed and, as needed, revised on a periodic cycle to take into account changing public policies and circumstances.

Building on this factual base is the policy framework which serves as a guide to decision making. The importance of the Plan as a guide to land use has been established recently by the Oregon Supreme Court. The use of policies in the Plan therefore, satisfies this ruling. Policies are the controlling statements and if they are in conflict with other directives such as zoning and other city ordinances, they shall be considered dominant. It is the intent of the Plan that where policies do not address a particular problem or provide necessary direction, it is the duty of the decision makers to base their findings on a combination of the factual base, statements of intent, community need, and the testimony of citizens within the community.

Community or "public" need is a phrase that requires some definition. It can be variously defined, but it is generally accepted that an action occurs in the public interest when it provides a benefit to a large number of people as opposed to a privileged few. The expenditure of public money is especially applicable. When tax revenues are spent in such a way that it enhances the lives of the people of the community as a whole, as in the case of a sewerage treatment plant, it could be said that it is in the public interest or serves a community need. When that expenditure benefits only a few, as in the placement of a lateral sewer line to serve a small number of homes, then it could be said that it is not fulfilling a public need and the cost should be borne by those who are benefiting. According to Donald Ashmanskis, and Oregon circuit court judge: "the meaning of 'Public Need' must be determined, not by looking in a dictionary, but by analyzing and considering specific proposals. Phrases such as 'Public Need' take shades of meaning from the underlying factual situation. Proof of public need must be supported by 'because' and 'why' evidence and findings."

In summary, the role of decision makers in matters of land use regulation is not to be taken lightly. There must be good reasons for changes in land use, and decisions must be reached in an open process. The Plan is intended to provide a guide to decision making.

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Nehalem Valley Calendar

Wednesday December 13

Seniors Immunization and Blood Pressure clinic at Vernonia Health Center all day
VHS Wrestling vs. Yamhill-Carlton at VHS 7 pm
GED class VHS Rm 1 at 7 pm
Adult Basketball at Washington Grade School at 7:30 pm
Natal Grange regular meeting at Natal Grange Hall
Pythian Sisters regular meeting at i.o.o.f. hall at 7:30 pm
Vernonia Planning Commission (CPAC) meeting at City Hall 8 pm

Thursday December 14

7th & 8th Boys Basketball at HildaLanti
Freshman Boys Basketball at Rainier
Girls Basketball vs. Rainier at VHS
Adult Volleyball at Washington Grade School at 7 pm
4-H Arts-Crafts at VHS 3 pm
Christmas Ornament class at Community Center 7:30 pm
Vernonia School District Board Meeting at Dist. office 8 pm
Seniors Van to St. Helens Nursing Center at 9 am
Boy Scouts at Scout Cabin 7 pm
Jewell High School girls basketball tourn. at OES

Friday December 15

Seniors Christmas Potluck at Senior Center 12:30 pm
Jewell High School girls basketball tourn. at OES
P.C.C. Gymnastics classes program at VHS music room 7:45 pm
VHS Wrestling at Sheridan tourn.
4-H Marine Science at Washington Grade School 3:15 pm
VHS Boys Basketball at Yamhill-Carlton JV starts 6 pm

Saturday December 16

Santa will be at Vernonia Laundromat at 10 am
Jewell High School Boys Basketball at Nestucca at 6 pm
VHS Student Body Dance in VHS gym 8-11 pm

Sunday December 17

Caroling — contact Christian Church for details

Monday December 18

Painting Class at Senior Center 10 am-3 pm
Community Prayer group in portable classroom no. 2
CAMPfire Girls in Washington Grade School cafeteria
American Legion Auxillary at Legion Hall 1 pm
Christmas Program for Jewell School in Auditorium at 7:30 pm

Tuesday December 19

All Seniors lunch at Washington Grade School and dress rehearsal of Christmas program at 12:30 pm
Jewell High School Boys Basketball vs Knappa at JHS 6 pm
4-H Cook-Sew at VHS 3:15 pm
VHS boys basketball at Rainier
Freshman boys basketball at Tillamook
VHS girls basketball vs. Tillamook at VHS
Washington Grade School Christmas Program at WGS Aud. 7:30 pm
Vernonia Jaycees at I.O.O.F. Hall

Wednesday December 20

Christmas carol sing-in at Lincoln School 1:45 pm
Vernonia High School Christmas Program in VHS Aud. 7:30 pm
Adult Basketball at WGS 7:30 pm
Upper Nehalem Valley CPAC meets at West Or. Elec. coop 7:30 pm

Thursday December 21

Freshman boys basketball at Clatskanie
VHS wrestling vs Rainier at VHS
Adult volleyball at WGS 7 pm
Mist Grade School Christmas Program at Mist School 10:30 am

Friday December 22

VHS girls and boys basketball tourn. at Seaside

Saturday December 23

Santa Claus will be at Birkenfeld Country Store all day
VHS girls and boys basketball tourn. at Seaside

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