

Comprehensive plan continued

Managing Development—The goal of this plan is to guide the development of Vernonia in a rational manner, allowing for a high quality of development in and around the city.

It is the intent that the plan be used as the primary tool for managing the development of land, and settling conflicts when they arise. It is not intended to be overly restrictive or permissive, but to provide a balance useful to the whole community.

Plan Objectives—The following objectives form the plan's central concept:

1. Preserve stable and viable neighborhoods.
2. Cluster high intensity uses around the central core.
3. Infill vacant land inside the urban growth boundary before going outside.
4. Provide an equitable cost system for new development.
 - A. The incremental cost for public facility expansion caused by new growth shall be the burden of new development.
 - B. Cost for upgrading outdated facilities or overburdened facilities shall be the burden of all residents.
5. Provide for safely engineered building in hillsides and other potential hazardous areas.
6. Encourage planned unit developments.
7. Encourage maintenance of natural environment.

Plan Implementation Policies

1. In order to avoid uncontrolled growth and development within the City, the comprehensive plan shall be adopted which will coordinate development regulated by the zoning and subdivision ordinances and building code.
 - A. In order to evaluate development requests and proposals for change in land use Planning, Commissioners and the City Council shall determine conformance with the plan, the character of the area in which the change is proposed and whether or not the action would have a positive or negative effect on the area. Considerations shall include at least appearance, nuisance, environmental damage potential, and the impact on public facilities.
 - B. In circumstances where a proposal will have an effect on the existing character of the area, the burden of proof is on the applicant to show a public need and that the proposal will enhance rather than detract from the community.

2. A capitol improvement process as described in the public facilities section shall provide a method for evaluating and prioritizing needed improvements in public services and facilities.

3. The plan and implementing ordinances shall be maintained at city hall and the city library for review by any interested citizen.

4. The Plan and implementation ordinances shall be reviewed every two years to identify problem areas made known through the planning process. The Planning Commission shall take action to correct those problem areas that are found to be detrimental to the community. Citizen input shall be weighed heavily in the process.

Coordination Policies

1. The Comprehensive Plan shall be coordinated with plan of other jurisdictions and agencies that have an impact on land use in and around the city, such as Columbia County, the State Forestry Department, and the State Highway and Parks Departments. Development proposals of such agencies shall be presented to the planning Commission for their review.

2. The City of Vernonia and the Vernonia Citizens Advisory Committee shall work with Columbia County, the Vernonia-Pittsburg Citizens Advisory Committee and area agencies in the management of an urban growth boundary for the Vernonia area. The Urban growth area coordination agreement shall be appended to the Plan.

The Comprehensive Plan Map—As stated in the statement of purpose to this Comprehensive Plan and ORS 197.015, the comprehensive Plan is a generalized Coordinated Land Use Map and policy statement of the city that inter-relates all functional and natural systems and activities relating to the use of land. This section contains the plan map.

The City has adopted the City Comprehensive Plan as the Zoning Map. Growth and annexation requests are expected to develop the need for an expanded development plan. Therefore, two management areas are provided for by this Comprehensive Plan. The first area involves the management of the land within the existing city limits. Here the City of Vernonia City Council and Planning Commission shall manage land use through this Comprehensive Plan. The second area involves the management of the unincorporated area within the urban growth boundary. The management of this area is by agreement coordinated between the City of Vernonia and Columbia County. The city's designations are included on the Comprehensive Plan Map. The map designations have the following definitions:

Low Density Residential, LD, indicates areas of low intensity development where residential densities of .5 units per acre form a transition zone between the areas of higher density and rural areas of the county that do not have natural boundaries such as ridge tops, rivers or roads.

Medium Density Residential, R, indicates areas where the prevailing development pattern and expected development sets the density at 8 units per acre.

High Density Residential, GR, indicates areas in close proximity to services, parks, schools and arterials where historic development and future trends indicate potential for multi-unit, duplexes, four-plex and similar land uses.

General Commercial, GC, indicates areas where activities of a commercial nature historically, economically and socially provide the greatest benefit to the city.

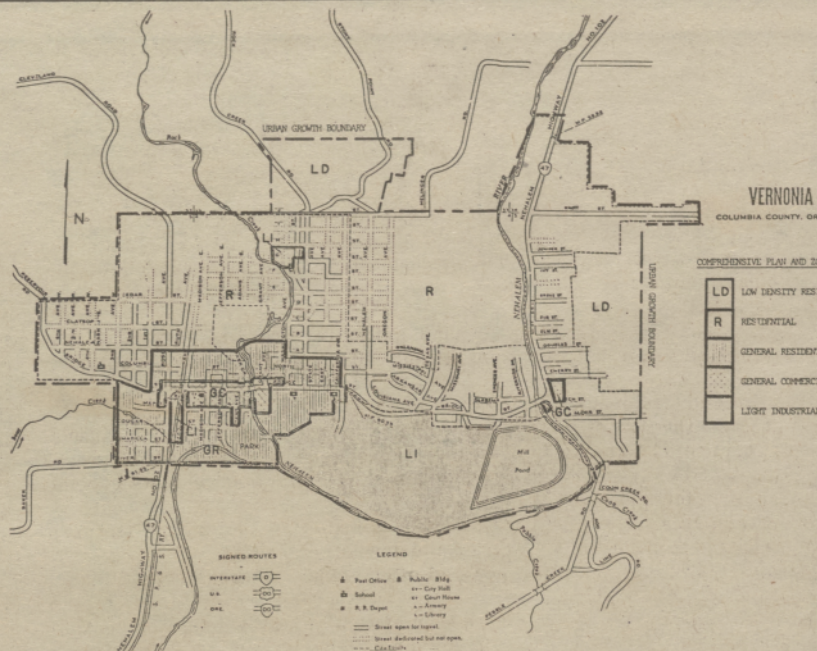
Light Industrial, LI, indicates the area most suitable for industrial activity within the planning area, having access to the highway, sewage disposal and power facilities while being buffered from most other areas by parks and open spaces.

Natural Resources

Air, Land, and Water Resources—The City of Vernonia recognizes the need to maintain and improve the quality of its air, land and water resources.

Air, water, and land quality has been recognized at all levels of government as essential in order to conserve these resources. Federal, state and local governments have established standards designed to ensure the quality of these resources and to ensure the public health and welfare.

Air, water and land quality levels are affected by the activities of many jurisdictions. This leads to spillover effects; such as air pollution generated in Longview, Wa., reduces the air quality of adjacent Columbia County, Or.



At present the air quality in Vernonia is not a problem. The wigwam burner of the Shake mill is seldom used and is scheduled for destruction in the next few years. The shake mill itself is a non-conforming use and redevelopment of the area for housing is expected.

There are no other sources of air pollutants other than the automobile. The rural character of the area and dispersed settlement pattern keeps auto pollutant levels low.

Problems with unauthorized dumping and wrecking yards persist.

Water quality in the Vernonia area has consistently been determined good by the Department of Environmental Quality.

Air, Land, and Water Resource Policies

1. The City Planning Commission shall review all residential and commercial proposals for potential degradation of air, land and water resources.
2. Clean industries should be encouraged to locate in the City. The Planning Commission shall review all industrial development for compliance with this goal.
3. Industries which pollute the air, water or land quality resources of the City of Vernonia shall not be approved.
4. The City shall work with DEQ for maintenance and preservation of the regional air quality resources.
5. Solid waste dumping shall be permitted only at the City's Dump or other approved dumping facility as approved by the Planning Commission.
6. The City will cooperate with Columbia County in the management of the city Dump to aid in the recycling and encouragement of recycling of materials.
7. Auto wrecking and junk yard operation shall be a conditional use requiring fencing and rodent control in high industrial zone. Junked cars and salvage yards on private property in residential or commercial areas provide breeding grounds for rodents and pests and degrade surrounding property values, therefore the city shall actively seek the removal of junk yards and wrecked automobiles in these areas as a threat to public health, safety and welfare in accordance with the nuisance portions of the municipal code.
7. All logging in the watershed of Rock Creek shall conform to the Forest Practices Act, and be monitored by the Department of Forestry, such that Vernonia's clean water supply is assured.
9. Surface water quality near the city's sewage lagoons shall be monitored by the Department of Environmental Quality to continually record the relation with the environmental protection acts' clean water standards.

Agricultural Resources—The City of Vernonia recognizes the importance of agricultural activities to the area's economy. It represents a second income upon which many residents depend or supplement their food supply.

The existence of a number of small grazing areas supporting a horse, cow, or just a garden plot within the city limits and surrounding the city helps to maintain the city's present character which this plan seeks to preserve.

It is the intent of this plan to maintain the character of the area such that agricultural activities remain suitable.

Agricultural Resource Policies

1. Grazing areas, residences and farm buildings appropriate for agricultural purposes shall be permitted outright in the city's zoning ordinances.

Forest Resources—The City of Vernonia wishes to preserve forest land for forest activities where suitable within the City and on City owned land outside the city.

The City of Vernonia intends to use its two forty acre sites northwest of the city limits for forest practices. Forested areas inside the city limits shall be protected and preserved where that use preserves steep slopes, as on O-A hill, and provides soil stabilization such as the flood zones of the Nehalem River and Rock Creek.

The major industries in the City of Vernonia are logging and forest related activities. The City recognizes that little land within its city limits is suitable for logging activities due to its proximity to the city. Conversations with major timber companies during the planning process indicate that logging land close to the city may generate public outcries due to the poor aesthetic appearance during the logging operation and subsequent reforestation period.

Forest Resource Policies

1. Commercial logging shall be a conditional use within the City's stream and river banks and steep slope areas as shown in the Vernonia Inventory requiring Planning Commission approval.
2. The Building Inspector shall work with developers to preserve trees on lots for purposes of soil stabilization and to preserve the character of the city.
3. Logging of the Flood Zones of the Nehalem River and Rock Creek as indicated in the Vernonia Inventory section of this Plan shall be a conditional use.
4. The forested areas as identified in the Vernonia Inventory shall be protected from development by excluding those large parcels suitable for forestry and reforestation from the urban growth area of the City of Vernonia.

Flood and Steep Slope Hazards

Vernonia has four areas of potential hazard to development. These areas