

# Summary of 2040 Growth Concept

**REGIONAL FRAMEWORK PLAN  
SUMMARY OF 2040 GROWTH CONCEPT**

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## Summary of 2040 Growth Concept

This section describes the 2040 Growth Concept, the unifying concept around which this Regional Framework Plan is based. This Growth Concept contains refinements to the original Growth Concept that was adopted in 1995. This Plan anticipates that the Growth Concept and the provisions of this Plan will continue to evolve.

The Growth Concept states the preferred form of regional growth and development and includes the Growth Concept map. The preferred form is to contain growth within a carefully managed Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Growth occurs inside the UGB in the form of infill and redevelopment with higher density developed in areas where it is appropriate. Expansions of the UGB are done carefully to allow for the need for additional land. This concept is adopted for the long-term growth management of the region including a general approach to approximately where and how much the UGB should be ultimately expanded, what ranges of density are estimated to accommodate projected growth within the boundary, and which areas should be protected as open space.

The basic philosophy of the Growth Concept is to preserve our access to nature and build better communities for the people who live here today and who will live here in the future. The Growth Concept is an integrated set of objectives, which guide all Regional Framework Plan policies.

The Growth Concept sets the direction for development of implementing policies in Metro's existing functional plans and the Charter-required Regional Framework Plan. This direction will be refined, as well as implemented, in subsequent functional plan amendments and framework plan components. Additional planning will be done to test the Growth Concept and to determine implementation actions. Amendments to the Growth Concept and some Regional Framework Plan policies may be needed to reflect the results of additional planning to maintain the consistency of implementation actions with the stated policies.

Fundamental to the Growth Concept are:

- A hierarchy of mixed-use, pedestrian friendly centers that are well connected by high capacity transit and corridors
- A multi-modal transportation system that ensures continued mobility of more people and goods throughout the region, consistent with transportation policies
- Coordination of land uses and the transportation system, to embrace the region's existing locational advantage as a relatively uncongested hub for trade
- A jobs-housing balance in centers and a jobs-housing balance by regional sub areas to account for the housing and employment outside of the Centers
- An urban to rural transition to reduce sprawl, keeping a clear distinction between urban and rural lands and balancing re-development
- Separation of urbanizable land from rural land by the UGB for the region's 20-year projected need for urban land

- Rural reserves that are intended to assure that Metro and neighboring cities remain separate

The result is a compact urban form for the region coordinated with nearby cities to retain the region's sense of place.

There are a number of components that make up the building blocks of the Growth Concept. These building blocks are discussed below.

### **Centers**

Mixed-use urban centers inside the UGB are one key to the Growth Concept. Creating higher density centers of employment and housing and transit service with compact development, retail, cultural and recreational activities in a walkable environment is intended to provide efficient access to goods and services, enhance multi-modal transportation and create vital, attractive neighborhoods and communities. The Growth Concept uses interrelated types of centers:

- The central city is the largest market area, the region's employment and cultural hub and accessible to millions of people.
- Regional centers serve large market areas outside the central city, connected to it by high-capacity transit and highways and are accessible by hundreds of thousands of people.
- Connected to each regional center, by road and transit, are smaller town centers with local shopping and employment opportunities within a local market area and accessible to tens of thousands of people.

Planning for all of these centers will seek a balance between jobs, housing and unique blends of urban amenities so that more transportation trips are likely to remain local and become more multi-modal.

Creating higher density centers of employment and housing provides many advantages to communities. These centers provide citizens with access to a variety of goods and services in a relatively small geographic area, creating an intense business climate. Having centers also makes sense from a transportation perspective, since most centers have an accessibility level that is conducive to transit, bicycling and walking. Centers also act as social gathering places and community centers, where people would find the cultural and recreational activities and "small-town atmosphere" they cherish.

The major benefits of centers in the marketplace are accessibility and the ability to concentrate goods and services in a relatively small area. The problem in developing centers, however, is that most of the existing centers are already developed and any increase in the density must be made through redeveloping existing land and buildings. Emphasizing redevelopment in centers over development of new areas of undeveloped land is a key strategy in the Growth Concept.

### **The Central City**

Downtown Portland serves as the major regional center and functions well as an employment and cultural hub for the metropolitan area. It provides accessibility to the many businesses that require access to a large market area and also serves as the

location for cultural and social functions that draw the region together. It is the center for local, regional, state and federal governments, financial institutions, commerce, the center for arts and culture, and for visitors to the region. In addition, downtown Portland has a high percentage of travel other than by car - three times higher than the next most successful area. Jobs and housing are readily available there, without the need for a car. Maintaining and improving upon the strengths of the regional downtown shall remain a high priority.

Improvements to the transit system network, development of a multi-modal street system and maintenance of regional through routes (the highway system) would provide additional mobility to and from the city center.

### **Regional Centers**

There are seven regional centers, serving four market areas (outside of the central city market area). Hillsboro serves the western portion of the region and Gresham the eastern. Gateway serves most of the Portland area outside the central city as a regional center. Downtown Beaverton and Washington Square serve the east Washington County area, and downtown Oregon City, Clackamas Town Center together serve Clackamas County and portions of outer southeast Portland.

These regional centers are the focus of compact development, redevelopment and high-quality transit service, multi-modal street networks and act as major nodes along regional through-routes.

Transit improvements will include light-rail connecting all regional centers to the central city. A dense network of multi-modal arterial and collector streets tie regional centers to surrounding neighborhoods and other centers. Regional through-routes are designed to connect regional centers and ensure that these centers are attractive places to conduct business. The relatively small number of centers reflects not only the limited market for new development at this density but also the limited transportation funding for the high-quality transit and roadway improvements envisioned in these areas.

### **Town Centers**

Smaller than regional centers and serving populations of tens of thousands of people, town centers are the third type of center with compact development and transit service. Town centers provide local shopping, employment and cultural and recreational opportunities within a local market area. They are designed to provide local retail and services, at a minimum and vary greatly in character. Some will become traditional town centers, such as Lake Oswego, and Forest Grove, while others will change from an auto-oriented development into a more complete community, such as Hillsdale. Many also have regional specialties, such as office centers envisioned for the Cedar Mill town center. Several new town centers are designated, such as in Happy Valley and Damascus, to accommodate the retail and service needs of a growing population while reducing auto travel.

### **Main Streets and Neighborhood Centers**

During the early decades of this century, main streets served by transit and characterized by a strong business and civic community were a major land-use pattern

throughout the region. Examples remain in Hillsboro, Milwaukie, Oregon City and Gresham as well as the Westmoreland neighborhood and Hawthorne Boulevard. Today, these areas are undergoing a revival and provide an efficient and effective land-use and transportation alternative.

Main streets typically serve neighborhoods and may develop a regional specialization - such as antiques, fine dining, entertainment or specialty clothing - that draws people from other parts of the region.

### **Station Communities**

Station communities are nodes of development centered around a light-rail or high-capacity transit station that feature a high-quality pedestrian environment. They provide for the highest density outside centers. Station communities encompass an area approximately one-half mile from a station stop.

### **Corridors**

Corridors are not as dense as centers, but are located along good quality transit lines. They provide a place for increased densities and feature a high-quality pedestrian environment and convenient access to transit. Typical developments along corridors include rowhouses, duplexes and one- to three-story office and retail buildings. While some corridors may be continuous, narrow bands of higher intensity development along arterial roads, others may be more nodal, that is, a series of smaller centers at major intersections or other locations along the arterial that have high quality pedestrian environments, good connections to adjacent neighborhoods and good transit service. As long as increased densities and a range of uses are allowed and encouraged along the corridor, many different development patterns - nodal or linear - may meet the corridor objective.

### **Regionally Significant Industrial Areas, Industrial Areas and Employment Areas**

The Portland metropolitan area economy is heavily dependent upon wholesale trade and the flow of commodities to national and international markets. The high quality of the freight transportation system and, in particular, the inter-modal freight facilities is essential to continued growth in trade. The inter-modal facilities (air and marine terminals, freight rail yards and common carrier truck terminals) are areas of regional concern, and a functional plan will identify and protect lands needed to meet their current and projected space requirements.

Regionally Significant Industrial Areas and Industrial areas are set aside primarily for industrial activities. Supporting uses, including some retail uses, may be allowed if limited to sizes and locations intended to serve the primary industrial uses. These areas include land-intensive employers, such as those around the Portland International Airport, the Hillsboro Airport and some areas along Highway 212/224. Areas of high agglomerative economic potential, such as the Sunset Corridor for electronics products and the Northwest industrial sanctuary for metal products, are supported with transportation planning and infrastructure development designed to meet their needs. Other employment centers are designated as employment areas, mixing various types of employment and including some residential development as well. These areas include

limited retail commercial uses primarily to serve the needs of the people working or living in the immediate area.

### **Neighborhoods**

Residential neighborhoods remain a key component of the Growth Concept and fall into two basic categories. Inner neighborhoods include areas such as Portland, Beaverton, Milwaukie and Lake Oswego, and include primarily residential areas that are accessible to employment. Lot sizes are smaller and provide better access to jobs and shopping.

Outer neighborhoods are farther away from large employment centers and have larger lot sizes and lower densities. Examples include cities such as Forest Grove, Sherwood and Oregon City, and some additions to the UGB.

### **Transportation Facilities**

Adoption of the 2040 Growth Concept established a new direction for planning in the region by linking urban form to transportation. This new direction reflects a commitment to develop a regional form that is based on efficient use of land and a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation system that supports the land uses in the 2040 Growth Concept and accommodates all forms of travel.

In this new relationship, the 2040 Growth Concept provides the desired urban form for the Regional Transportation Plan to support. The 2040 Growth Concept Map identifies one possible regional transportation system. Therefore, the 2040 Growth Concept Map does not prescribe or limit what the adopted regional transportation system will include.

The Concept map shows some transportation facilities to illustrate new concepts, such as “green corridors,” and how land-use areas, such as centers, may be served based on agreements with affected agencies and jurisdictions. Neither the current regional system nor final alignment choices for future facilities are intended to be represented on the Concept map.

### **Open Spaces and Trail Corridors**

Recognition and protection of open spaces both inside the UGB and in rural reserves are reflected in the Growth Concept. The areas designated open space on the Concept map are parks, stream and trail corridors, wetlands and floodplains, largely undeveloped upland areas and areas of compatible very low-density residential development. Many of these natural features already have significant land set aside as open space. The Tualatin Mountains, for example, contain major parks such as Forest Park and Tryon Creek State Park and numerous smaller parks such as Gabriel Park in Portland and Wilderness Park in West Linn. Other areas are oriented toward wetlands and streams.

Designating these areas as open spaces has several effects. First, it generally removes these lands from the category of urban land that is available for development. The capacity of the UGB then has to be calculated without these areas, and plans to accommodate housing and employment have to be made without them. Second, these natural areas, along with key rural reserve areas, receive a high priority for purchase as parks and open space, through programs such as Metro’s Open Spaces Acquisition program. Finally, functional plan requirements have been developed to protect critical

fish and wildlife habitat areas without conflicting with housing and economic goals. This will provide protection of environmentally critical areas, compatible development of sensitive areas, and allow transfer of development rights from protected natural areas to other lands better suited for development.

(RFP's Summary of Growth Concept, Open Spaces and Trail Corridors, updated 9/29/05, Metro Ord. 05-1077C, Exb. B, Amend. 1.)

### **Neighbor Cities**

The Growth Concept recognizes that neighboring cities outside Metro's boundaries are likely to grow rapidly. There are several such cities proximate to the Metro region. Metro will pursue discussion of cooperative efforts with neighboring cities. Neighbor city coordination will be achieved with the completion of intergovernmental agreements concerning key concepts. Communities such as Sandy, Canby and Newberg will be affected by Metro, city and county decisions about managing growth within Metro. A significant number of people may be accommodated in these neighboring cities, and cooperation between Metro and these communities is necessary to coordinate planning to address common transportation and land-use issues.

Cooperative planning between a city outside the region and Metro could also be initiated on a more limited basis. These cooperative efforts could be completed to minimize the impact of growth on surrounding agriculture and natural resource lands, maintain a separation between a city and the Metro UGB, minimize the impact on state transportation facilities, match population growth to rural resource job and local urban job growth and coordinate land-use policies. Communities such as North Plains and other communities adjacent to the region such as Estacada and Scappoose may find this more limited approach suitable to their local situation.

### **Rural Reserves**

Some rural lands adjacent to and nearby the regional UGB may be designated as rural reserves. This designation is intended as a policy statement by Metro to not extend the UGB into these areas and to support neighboring cities' efforts not to expand their urban growth boundaries into these areas in order to keep adjacent urban areas separate.

Rural reserves may be designated in areas that are most threatened by new development, in areas that separate communities, or in areas that exist as special resource areas. Rural reserves may also separate cities within the Metro boundary. Cornelius, Hillsboro, Tualatin, Sherwood and Wilsonville all have existing areas of rural land that provide a break in urban patterns. The objectives for rural land planning in the region are to:

- Maintain the rural character of the landscape.
- Support and maintain our agricultural economy.
- Avoid or eliminate conflicts with farm and forest practices.
- Help meet regional needs for open space and wildlife habitat.
- Help to clearly separate urban from rural land.

Rural reserves are further protected from development pressures by the rural zoning of the counties. New rural commercial or industrial development is restricted.



The reserves may include some purchase of natural areas adjacent to rivers, streams and lakes to ensure that water quality is protected and wildlife habitat enhanced. Large natural features, such as hills and buttes, may be included as rural reserves because they buffer developed areas and are poor candidates for compact urban development.

The primary means of achieving rural reserves would be through the Regional Framework Plan for areas within the Metro boundary, and voluntary agreements among Metro, the counties, neighboring cities and the state for those areas outside the Metro boundary. Metro will seek agreements, which would prohibit extending urban growth into the rural reserves, and require that state agency actions be consistent with the rural reserve designation.

**Region 2040 Growth Concept Map  
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