



CITY OF HOOD RIVER

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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To: City of Hood River Planning Commission

From: Kevin Liburdy, Senior Planner

Date: March 12, 2018

Re: Hood River Comprehensive Plan and Code Amendments (File No. 2018-07)

INTRODUCTION

Preparation of the Westside Area Concept Plan is one of several actions expected to be taken in response to the City's 2015 Housing Needs Analysis and Housing Strategy. The Westside Area Concept Plan Report reflects more than a year of public discussion. However, as explained in the Report, refinements are recommended prior to adoption.

As discussed at Planning Commission work sessions on January 16 and February 20, 2018, a series of Planning Commission hearings will be held prior to forwarding recommendations to the City Council and County Board of Commissioners for adoption of the Concept Plan or components of it. A "process roadmap" was prepared to help guide the public hearing process.

The existing vision for "the Westside" was established with adoption of the City's comprehensive plan nearly 40 years ago. The Concept Plan provides an opportunity to update that vision and to address a variety of current issues including housing and public infrastructure needs, and livability.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BACKGROUND

Since 1973, Oregon has maintained a strong statewide program for land use planning. The foundation of that program is a set of Statewide Planning Goals. The goals express the state's policies on land use and related topics, such as citizen involvement, housing, and natural resources.

Oregon's statewide goals are achieved through local comprehensive planning. State law requires each city and county to adopt a comprehensive plan and the zoning and land-division ordinances needed to put the plan into effect. Plans are reviewed for such consistency by the state's Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). When LCDC officially approves a local government's plan, the plan is said to be "acknowledged," and it then becomes the controlling document for land use in the area covered by that plan.

Staff from the City of Hood River and Hood River County began working with the City- and County Planning Commissions and citizen groups circa 1976 to prepare a local comprehensive plan addressing applicable Statement Planning Goals. In 1979, after approximately three years of work, the City Council and the Hood River Board of Commissioners were presented with the *City-Westside Comprehensive Plan*. The document was intended to serve as the comprehensive plan for the City, and as one of five unit plans that made up the County's comprehensive plan.

In 1980 the City adopted the comprehensive plan as well as an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), urban growth management policies and procedures, and a land use plan map affecting property located outside of the city limits but inside the UGB. However, the Department of Land

Conservation and Development determined that revisions were needed and it was not until 1984 that the City's comprehensive plan was acknowledged.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATES AND HOUSING NEEDS

Since 1984, numerous amendments have been made to the City's comprehensive plan including updates to Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement), Goal 9 (Economy), Goal 10 (Housing), Goal 11 (Public Facilities) and Goal 12 (Transportation). However, the zoning that is in place today on the west side of Hood River largely reflects the land use map that was adopted in 1980. And, the Urban Growth Boundary has not been amended since 1986.

Several efforts have been made in recent decades to address housing needs. In 1991 the city council established a Housing Sub-Committee. A subsequent resolution included recommendations such as conducting a housing inventory and needs analysis.

In 1995, pursuant to Goal 1 (Citizen Involvement), the City adopted a 20-year Community Vision as a working document. Among other issues, that vision explains the community's interest in "housing affordable by all." The document was considered a first step in an ongoing process to address a variety of challenges, and it expected that the community could grow and still remain unique.

In 2005, in response to growth and development-related issues, the City initiated the Hood River 2020 Community Visioning Process to reexamine the community's vision statement and identify steps to implement the vision. Housing affordability again was found to be a significant concern, and participants also were interested in promoting quality design. Based on recommendations in the Hood River 2020 Final Report, the City adopted ordinances to allow Accessory Dwelling Units and facilitate additional density for affordable housing through the Planned Unit Development process, as well as to address maximum lot coverage.

Following incorporation of the community visioning documents into the comprehensive plan and adoption of several related code amendments, the Great Recession changed the City's focus from housing-related concerns to employment, ultimately leading to preparation of an Economic Opportunities Analysis and Goal 9 amendment in 2011.

By 2014 housing was again considered a priority and the City obtained a grant to prepare a Buildable Lands Inventory and Housing Needs Analysis, as well as a Housing Strategy. One of the key issues raised at that time was whether someone who works in Hood River can afford to live in Hood River.

2015 HOUSING NEEDS ANALYSIS AND HOUSING STRATEGY

Although the City's 1991 Housing Sub-Committee recommended conducting a housing inventory and needs analysis, it was not until 2014 that the City applied for a grant and moved forward with this project. In summary, the City's Buildable Lands Inventory and Housing Needs Analysis (2015-2035) found:

- Hood River's policies generally met the State's requirements for Goal 10 (Housing) except the City needed clear and objective standards for development of townhouse projects.
- Expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) in the future will be extremely difficult. The UGB is surrounded by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and by high value farmland.

- Based on population projections at the time the analysis was prepared, the UGB had just enough land to meet the City's 20-year needs for residential development. However, several factors are expected to affect land supply including growth in the number of second homes and short-term rentals. Also, about 65 acres of residentially zoned land in the UGB currently is in agricultural use (i.e. orchards).
- The City has a limited supply of land zoned for multifamily development.
- The City has a deficit of affordable and attainable housing to meet current and future needs.
- In 2015, nearly one-third of Hood River's households were unable to afford their current housing (i.e. cost burdened), with roughly 40% of renters unable to afford their housing costs.
- One factor that was found to contribute to the reduced housing affordability is growth in demand for second homes and short-term rental housing.

In association with the Housing Needs Analysis, a three-pronged Housing Strategy was prepared that recommends: 1) efficient use of use of land within UGB - numerous actions are recommended such as identifying land to rezone to allow moderate and higher-density housing for single-family and multi-family development; 2) regulating and monitoring short-term rentals; 3) developing affordable housing, including by partnering with the Mid-Columbia Housing Authority.

Before addressing land use efficiencies, the City Council moved forward with a process to prepare and adopt regulations for short-term rentals and also initiated efforts to partner with the Mid-Columbia Housing Authority to develop affordable housing.

WESTSIDE AREA CONCEPT PLAN

In June of 2015, the City and Hood River County were co-applicants for a grant through Oregon's Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program to fund preparation of a concept plan for the west side of Hood River. The City's Housing Needs Analysis had not yet been adopted but it was far enough along to demonstrate that west side of Hood River contains the vast majority of developable residential land in the UGB. And, the three-pronged Housing Strategy memo had been drafted that included recommendations to increase the efficiency of use of land in the UGB.

Consistent with the purposes of the TGM program, the goal of the grant was to develop an integrated land-use and transportation plan, facilitate development of workforce and affordable housing, refine the City and County Transportation System Plans, and apply smart growth development strategies including: 1) efficient use of land resources, 2) full utilization of urban services, 3) mixed use, 4) transportation options and 5) detailed, human scaled design.

In August 2015 the City Council adopted the Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) and acknowledged the Housing Strategy, and the findings and recommendations of the HNA and Housing Strategy were relied upon as the Westside Area Concept Plan Report was prepared between August of 2016 and December of 2017.

The Westside Area Concept Plan Report (December 29, 2017) addresses the following topics:

- Neighborhoods and Districts
- Streets and Transit
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Connections
- Parks and Open Space
- Land Use
- Implementation, specifically:

- Strategies to deliver of workforce and affordable housing
- Transportation System Plan updates
- Comprehensive plan policies and zoning code updates
- Planning for parks and urban services including water, sanitary sewer and stormwater
- Infrastructure funding

The Concept Plan Report is an interim step in preparing an adoption-ready Westside Area Concept Plan. It is interim because the City and County will continue to discuss and shape the plan including the Land Use Framework, for which three scenarios have been drafted. One of the key remaining issues is to determine the appropriate acreage to devote to higher density zoning.

The Concept Plan Report includes a Technical Appendix featuring:

- Appendix A: a relatively brief summary of public comments received during the roughly 15 months the consulting team was working on the project.
- Appendix B: addresses infrastructure needs and funding.
- Appendix C: includes three memos explaining how the City's Housing Needs Analysis and Housing Strategies have been used in the Concept Plan.
- Appendix D: includes draft code amendments, some of which are intended to be specific to the Westside area and some of which could be applied more broadly.

NEXT STEPS

As addressed in the agenda for the March 19, 2018 Planning Commission meeting, a hearing will be opened to begin the process of reviewing the Westside Area Concept Plan Report and making refinements. Staff will provide additional direction during the hearing.