

BLUEPRINT FOR OREGON'S FUTURE

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS TO HELP US MEET OREGONIANS' SHARED GOALS



November 2007

Oregonians' Shared Vision and Goals

Thousands of Oregonians have spoken.

Over the past two years, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Bus Project, and over 50 other organizations hosted a series of town hall forums in 16 locations across the state. Called "Envision Oregon," these forums challenged more than 2,200 participants from over 140 towns and places in Oregon to describe their vision for Oregon's future, and to help create strategies for making that vision a reality.

Forum participants represented all types and sizes of communities from very rural to very urban, and a mix of ages, gender, and party affiliation. Yet what emerged was a remarkably consistent set of values we hold and visions we have for our future. Scientific polling results confirm these values are shared by Oregonians statewide.

Our shared goals include:

1. Economic security for our families. Oregonians need secure, fulfilling jobs that pay enough for families to live on. Land use planning can play a big role in ensuring we meet that need. The Oregon economic engines of farming, forestry, tourism and recreation are based on our ability to protect Oregon's incredible farm and forest lands, rivers, habitat, and other natural resources from damaging development. Our vibrant communities and stunning landscapes are a competitive advantage, drawing talented people and entrepreneurs from across the country. Growing efficiently saves households and taxpayers money. Finally, restoring and protecting "green infrastructure" such as streams, habitat, and parks provides economic benefits through increased property values, water filtration, temperature moderation, and cleaning the air.
2. Improved health for our families. Our families deserve clean drinking water and clean air. Oregonians want safe neighborhoods where children can walk to school, and communities where people of all ages and abilities can walk, ride a bicycle, or take transit instead of having no choice but to drive everywhere or be isolated in their homes. We can benefit from local agriculture, which provides healthy food while supporting community-building farmers markets and the emerging economy focused on Oregon food.
3. Protection of the places that make Oregon a place we're proud to call home. Oregon's verdant farmland, vibrant cities, bucolic coastline, rugged mountains, and inspiring deserts are legendary. We have a responsibility to make certain that future generations can enjoy these treasures, by ensuring growth enhances our home, rather than marring Oregon's unique beauty and undermining our economic engines.

The Blueprint

This Blueprint starts by looking at the big picture: what are our shared **goals and visions** for our future?

We then look at **challenges** we'll face in the decades to come. We review general **strategies** for meeting our goals.

Finally, we outline **actions** citizens and elected officials can take immediately to make our vision come about.

The Challenges We Face in Meeting Our Goals

By 2040, Oregon's population is projected to grow by 1.7 million people – equal to more than 135 new cities the size of La Grande, or 80 new Newbergs, or 22 new Bends. These new Oregonians will need about 700,000 new homes and 800,000 new jobs. Where will these people live, work, shop, learn, and play? How will they get from place to place?

We will face challenges from expanded international trade, skyrocketing obesity rates and health care costs, exploding transportation costs, and a carbon-constrained economy.

And climate change will define Oregon's future. Our mountain snow packs and agricultural microclimates are as much at risk as arctic icecaps and low-lying communities across the world. Taking action will protect Oregon's farming industry, ski industry, wine industry, and tourism industry, and help protect us from invasive species that could ruin our food supply and damage our health. Aggressive action will also benefit fish and wildlife species and natural ecosystems that would otherwise face radical changes, and protect our forests from fires and invasive pests. Taking action will make our economy more robust and resilient in the carbon-constrained future.

The Legacy We Enjoy Today

Things look different in Oregon, and it's not by chance.

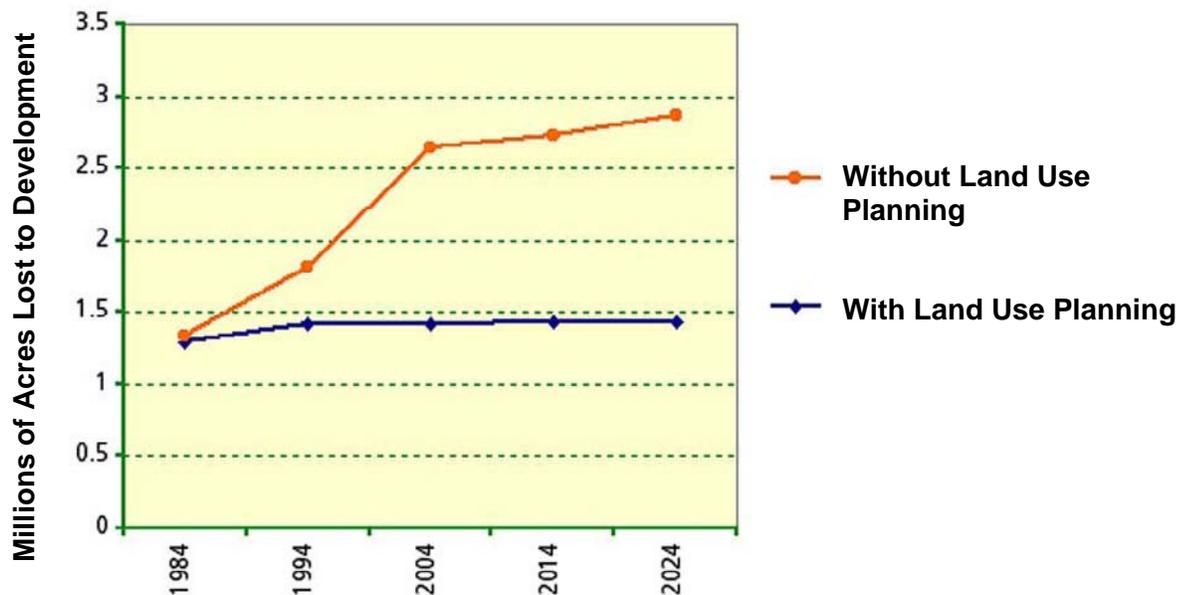
In 1973, a visionary Governor joined with a bipartisan coalition of legislators to create America's most comprehensive land use planning program. The following year, ten thousand Oregonians came together in meetings and hearings across the state to collectively formulate the goals and principles of our land use laws. In thirty-three years since, that program has evolved and grown to meet new challenges.

The system we created has served Oregon well. Efficient development patterns save taxpayers and homeowners money. Oregon's wine country is producing world-class wines instead of being lost to sprawl, and farming and forest industries remain central parts of Oregon's economy. People visit Oregon for its beautiful places and spend money here. Our economy is strong, our citizens have transportation and housing choices, and our communities are healthy.

This project is the result of us asking, in the spirit of the citizens who created the land use program, "What's next?"

In light of our common goals and shared vision of the legacy we want to leave our children, we will be forced to answer difficult questions:

- Will we pave over 150,000 acres of pristine farm and forest land, fish and wildlife habitat, wetlands, streams, and significant natural resources to make room for new Oregonians, or will we find a better way to grow?



- Will we keep contributing to the global climate change that threatens our economy, natural ecosystems, fish and wildlife species, the health and well-being of our citizens, and the places that make Oregon special, or will we do our part to counter it?
- Will we once again give Oregonians a meaningful voice in deciding the future of our communities?
- Will we let international competition eliminate Oregon jobs and Oregon's agricultural markets, or will we find ways to help our farmers and businesses compete in the global marketplace?
- Will we mortgage the state's transportation budget for generations by building multi-billion dollar freeway expansions, or will we find more climate-friendly and cost-effective ways to move people and freight?

Key Strategies to Help Us Meet Our Goals

Oregonians broadly agree about how we should go about meeting our common goals in face of these challenges. Our land use planning and transportation systems have taken some initial steps, but to truly succeed we must:

Make our towns and neighborhoods safer and healthier. Few factors affect the health and safety of our children and ourselves as much as neighborhood design. Crime rates are at their lowest when neighbors know each other, and this happens best when neighborhood design encourages people to interact. In well-planned neighborhoods, transportation is safe and accessible for people of all ages, with parks, schools, work, and shopping near our homes. People have choices in how to get around. Safety is enhanced with houses oriented toward sidewalks, bicycle lanes, neighborhood stores and parks, and schools within walking and biking distance. These neighborhoods encourage the active daily lifestyle that can stave off obesity, diabetes, and other conditions that are increasingly prevalent in today's society.

Invest in farming and forestry. We must ensure family farming and forestry remain economically rewarding, as they are key elements in Oregon's economy. This will require increased protection of Oregon's best farm and forest land from incompatible uses that can be located elsewhere. It will also mean investing in farming and forestry as industries and finding economic opportunities such as mixing wind power generation with farming and expanding value-added processing opportunities.

Protect Oregon's special places. Oregon's tourism industry brings in \$7.9 billion each year. Our rolling farmland, verdant forests, sweeping coastline, and beautiful mountains provide limitless opportunities for residents and visitors alike to explore our state. Oregon should identify and protect Oregon's special places as complete landscapes, including working farms and forests, water resources, scenic and natural areas, fish and wildlife habitat, and publicly owned recreation lands. We should also protect Oregon's coast, mountains, rivers and lakes, the high desert and canyon country, and natural areas within cities.

Plan for transportation given today's climate threats and tomorrow's needs. We have to stop planning transportation as if it were 1950. As our population ages, budgets shrink, and climate warms, we need to make transportation investments that reduce our need to drive, rather than build projects designed decades ago that increase our need to drive. Our investments need to be better coordinated with our larger goals and land use strategies, and meet the needs of all Oregonians, not just those who can drive.

Provide more parks, trails, and natural areas. As Oregon's population grows, we need to ensure our communities provide places for people to play and enjoy activities such as wildlife viewing, hiking, hunting, fishing, and biking. Oregon should expand its system of state parks and recreation areas, and communities must ensure there are comprehensive networks of parks, trails and natural areas for families to enjoy for physical and mental health. These also provide economic benefits by reducing flooding, cleaning the air, and increasing property values.

Moving Forward: Action Items

Many of the above strategies are moving forward thanks to the land use planning system Oregonians have crafted over the years. But to meet today's most pressing challenges, we need the 2009 Oregon Legislature to further improve our land use and transportation planning laws.

We propose actions in three areas: protecting Oregon's best farmland, forest land, and natural areas; ensuring transportation and development projects reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and building a healthy, climate-friendly transportation system.

Policy papers on each of these three areas are available at <http://www.friends.org/issues/blueprint>

1. Protect Our Best Farmland, Forest Land, and Natural Areas

Oregon is blessed with some of the world's best farmland. This farmland is the base of tens of thousands of jobs for Oregonians, as well as being a source of healthy food, a resource for our energy needs, and an alternative to fuel-intensive shipping of food from thousands of miles away.

Oregon is also known for our productive forests and woodlands that are the basis of thousands of jobs across the state. Wood products help us build our homes and businesses and meet everyday needs such as paper.

Natural landscapes and access to fish and wildlife habitats contribute significantly to our state's economy as well through tourism, quality of life benefits, and ecosystem services like protecting water quality and clean air.

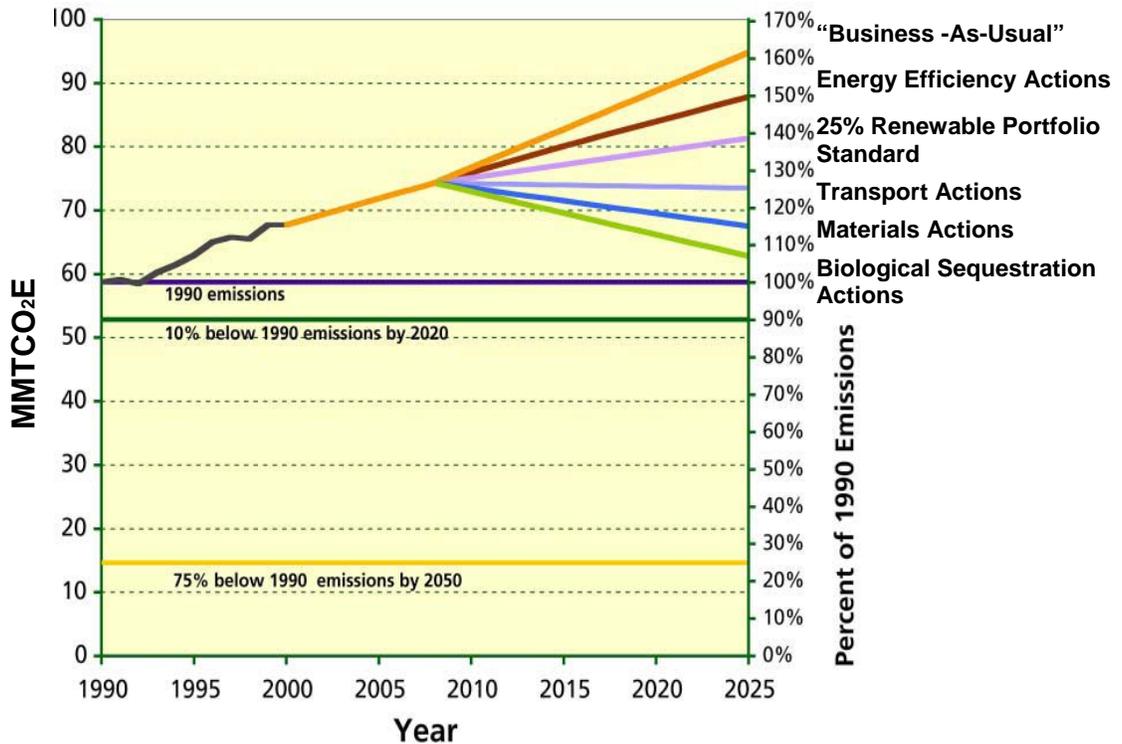
Yet development pressures -- from expanding cities, vacation-home destination resorts, or conflicts with neighbors -- threaten these industries and places that define Oregon.

To protect our best farmland, forest land, and natural areas, the 2009 Legislature should:

1. **Enact a land stewardship program** to fund the purchase of easements on farm, forest, and range lands. This would complement our land use laws, and could be funded by a windfall tax on properties whose value dramatically increases by being brought into the urban growth boundary.
2. **Create a rural reserves program** requiring cities to work with the Oregon Departments of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fish and Wildlife to ensure our cities don't expand onto our best farmland, forest land, and natural areas.
3. **Strengthen state farmland laws** to protect Oregon's best farmland from developers of the long list of non-farm uses currently allowed in Exclusive Farm Use zones.

2. Ensure Transportation and Development Projects Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Global warming threatens Oregon’s economy, Oregonians’ health and safety, vulnerable fish and wildlife habitat, and our quality of life. Recognizing these threats, the 2007 Legislature committed to stopping the growth of greenhouse gas emissions by 2010, to reducing them by 10% below 1990 levels by 2020, and to reduce them 75% below 1990 levels by 2050. Strong and decisive action is required.



A tax on carbon emissions is an efficient, powerful way to make those who are imposing the costs of climate change pay for their damage. Adopting a carbon tax at the federal level may be the fairest and most effective means of implementing this goal. In the meantime, there are important steps Oregon can take to reduce carbon emissions and to prepare Oregon communities for a carbon-limited future.

To reduce transportation-caused greenhouse gases, which are 38% of Oregon’s greenhouse gases, the Governor’s Advisory Group on Global Warming recommends Oregon improve vehicle fuel efficiency, increase the use of biofuels for transportation, and reduce the amount of driving Oregonians need to do, by improving land development patterns.

All three steps are needed to meet the state’s global warming goals; the legislature has taken action on the first two. If we are to reduce transportation greenhouse gases another 400,000 tons a year by 2025 through land use, as the state policy calls for, we need to do a much better job of planning. The extra driving caused by inefficient sprawling

development results in the average household pumping out four thousand pounds more greenhouse gases per year than an average household in a well-planned development.

To ensure transportation and development projects reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the Governor and 2009 Legislature should:

- 1. Require transportation programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions** so we can meet the emission reduction targets in Oregon law. We can't meet our greenhouse gas reduction goals if we focus our spending on widening highways, or building new highways, to serve new low-density car-dependent development.
- 2. Hold inefficient development responsible for its climate impact.** State law should require developers outside urban growth boundaries to offset the increase in greenhouse gases they produce, and should require similar greenhouse gas offset payments from large commercial big box developments and office parks located in car-dependent locations. An offset system is in use today by electric utilities and industries that burn coal or natural gas. Those companies compensate for the additional pollution they cause by paying others to reduce their carbon production. The same should happen in land use, by charging inefficient sprawling development a carbon impact fee adequate to pay for projects or incentives to reduce emissions in our existing communities.
- 3. Direct state agencies to better implement land use laws that require efficient development.** Well-designed development results in 20% to 55% less driving than standard patterns, with concurrent savings in greenhouse gas emissions. Current state laws – statewide land use goals 10, 11 and 14 – are designed to ensure new development is efficient, but these laws have not been applied consistently, and must be better implemented. Special attention should be given to areas where urban growth boundaries are expanded.

3. Create a Healthy, Climate-Friendly Transportation System

Over the next 30 years, Oregon will grow to more than five million people. Our people and our economy will need a strong, balanced transportation system to serve us. Governor Kulongoski and the Legislature are taking this challenge seriously, and discussing a new transportation funding package to be acted on in 2009.

A well-designed transportation package will benefit Oregon. But a poorly-designed package will undermine Oregon's communities and our commitment to take climate change seriously. To succeed in a time of limited transportation resources, we can't rely upon isolated transportation projects, today's traffic reports, or the belief that everyone can or wants to drive a car. Instead, we must focus on where we want our transportation system to be in 30 years, and start to build the system that will get us there.

Four principles should guide the Legislature’s design of a transportation funding package in 2009. The Legislature should:

- 1. Fix roads first before expanding them.** The Legislature should change the formula for distributing existing highway dollars to local governments and the state so we have enough resources to maintain the existing transportation system. If more resources are needed for maintenance, we should raise those first before raising taxes for transportation system expansion. The Legislature should repeal the law that requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to spend money on road expansion regardless of maintenance needs. Both state and local governments should include the costs of mitigating stormwater runoff impacts in maintenance budgets.
- 2. Create real choices and true balance.** One out of every four Oregonians – roughly a million people – are too young, old, sick, or poor to drive. This number will grow as our population ages. The Legislature should require that local or state proposals to increase transportation capital construction funding reduce the need to drive and reduce the number of miles Oregonians drive by expanding transit, pedestrian, and bicycle investments and improving the local street systems needed for short trips.
- 3. Make better use of existing systems before funding expansions.** In congested areas, we should increase funding for programs such as access management (that increase road capacity by controlling where and when cars enter the road), crash response (because about one-quarter of congestion is crash-related), and transportation demand management (programs that reduce the peak demand on roads by shifting when and where people drive and the method of travel). These are low-cost alternatives to expensive, disruptive road expansion.
- 4. Put transportation expansion proposals through a “carbon filter.”** As mentioned on page X, any new transportation projects must be designed to reduce our need to drive and result in reduced carbon emissions.

Help Make Oregonians’ Vision Happen

Elected officials, from city councilors to the governor, can take action by changing our laws and funding priorities. But everyday citizens are critical to ensuring our common vision becomes a reality. Here are seven things you can do:

1. Share this Blueprint with others. Email it to friends, and circulate it at local community and service group meetings. Ask for the support of your friends and local organizations in making these policies come about.
2. Host a debate or develop a questionnaire for local candidates about their potential leadership and support on these issues, especially the three action areas. Distribute

the answers to let people know who's supporting making our common visions come to reality.

3. Join the 1000 Friends' Action Alert network to help lobby on specific bills when the legislature is in session. Visit http://www.friends.org/forms/take_action.php to sign up.
4. Draft and submit letters to the editor and opinion pieces to newspapers and internet sites about these issues, linking them to a current development or policy proposal and the history of Envision Oregon.
5. Write to your legislator in support of these concepts.
6. Get your local groups to support these concepts. Whether it's a neighborhood association, farm bureau, environmental group, or civic organization, getting these policies passed will take a broad group of supporters.
7. Financially support 1000 Friends of Oregon, whose dedicated staff will work on making this happen.

Conclusion

As Oregonians, we want to leave a legacy for our grandchildren of economic security, healthy families, and protected places that make Oregon our proud home. Bringing that dream to reality will require hard work, hard choices, and true leadership from citizens and our elected officials. That work begins today. Please join us.

Learn More

To read more about 1000 Friends of Oregon or join us, visit us on the web at <http://www.friends.org> or call us at (503) 497-1000.

To learn more about Envision Oregon, the project that helped inspire and inform this document, visit <http://www.envisionoregon.org>.

Background information and links

1000 Friends of Oregon Farm, Forest background paper

http://www.friends.org/resources/blueprint/farm_forest_background_paper.pdf

Smart Growth America: Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/gcindex.html> (September 2007)

Sightline Institute: Increases in Greenhouse Gas Emission from Highway-Widening Projects

http://www.sightline.org/research/energy/res_pubs/climate-analysis-gge-new-lanes-10-07

Governor's Advisory Group on Global Warming *Oregon Strategy for Greenhouse Gas Reductions* (2004)

<http://www.oregon.gov/ENERGY/GBLWRM/docs/GWReport-FInal.pdf>

Funders' Network – Transportation reform and smart growth report.

http://www.fundersnetwork.org/info-url_nocat2778/info-url_nocat_show.htm?doc_id=82108

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/transportation.html#tands>

Improving Transportation without putting nature second.

<http://www.transact.org/report.asp?id=206>

Surface Transportation Policy Partnership: The State of Our Nation's Roads

<http://www.transact.org/library/roadconditiondecoder.asp>

STPP "Mean Streets 2004"

<http://www.transact.org/report.asp?id=235>

National Governors Association – Fixing It First Targeting Infrastructure Investments to Improve State Economies and Invigorate Existing Communities

<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.9123e83a1f6786440ddcbeeb501010a0/?vgnextoid=6f85303cb0b32010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD&vgnnextchannel=4b18f074f0d9ff00VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>

Smart Growth America survey on how Americans prefer to spend transportation dollars.

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/narsgareport2007.html>

Oregon Transportation and Growth Management Program

<http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/index.shtml>

Smart Growth America Paving Our Way to Water Shortages: How Sprawl Aggravates the Effects of Drought

<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/waterandsprawl.html>

House Bill 3543

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/07reg/measpdf/hb3500.dir/hb3543.en.pdf>

Land Stewardship Compensation initiative

http://egov.sos.state.or.us/elec/web_irr_search.record_detail?p_reference=20080123..LSCYYY123

