

Draft Update to Land Use and Transportation Element  
of the  
Ocean Shores Comprehensive Plan  
Public Involvement Process Responsiveness Summary.

The Ocean Shores Planning Commission has completed a review of the Land Use and Transportation Elements of the Comprehensive Plan. The process has included an update of the Community Profile Section as well, to assure that decisions made are based on the best possible data about the community. An important part of this process has been the involvement of the public. As a formal part of the process, the Planning Commission conducted a public meeting in June 2006 for the purpose of identifying issues of concern to members of the public. Subsequent to that meeting, all of the issues identified by the public were discussed as a significant part of the overall discussion on update of the plan. After completion of a preliminary draft the Planning Commission conducted a formal public hearing on the Plan, as required by law, and again the comments were summarized and discussed before finalization of the Draft Comprehensive Plan Update Amendments. The following is a summary of the comments from both events along with an explanation of how the Planning Commission's recommended draft update responds to those comments. It should also be noted that the Planning Commission allows comments from the public as both a formal and informal part of the regular Planning Commission meetings. As the Commission worked through the plan update, numerous members of the public were involved in the discussion.

**Issues identified at the June 2006 Public Meeting.**

**Transportation and Infrastructure**

Level of Service Needs on Public Infrastructure

*Issue: Comment indicated a need for measures to determine where resources should be applied.*

*Response: The 1998 Comp Plan applied level of service standards to the arterial and collector streets of the City. While the plan identifies some needed improvements, the overall finding was that significant capacity for additional development existed at that time. There is not now a perceived need to address level of service issues on other public facilities nor is data generally available on issues such as park use.*

*Action taken: Update of transportation element.*

Lack of Public Parking/Facilities

*Issue: Insufficient public facilities for tourists and residents. Parking is insufficient on peak tourist days.*

*Response: The Planning Commission included parking as an issue within the overall issue of downtown revitalization.*

*Action taken: Policies and specific actions are included in both the Transportation Element and the Land Use Element. In the transportation plan, policies T1.7 and T1.8 address parking. In the Land Use Element, policy LU 1.12 proposes formulation of a downtown revitalization plan.*

Water Supply

*Issue: Protect adequate water supply for the City*

Response: The city is required to maintain a comprehensive water supply plan by provisions of state law administered by the Department of Health. The current adopted (1998) comprehensive plan includes a description of the City's water system and needed improvements in order to support expected development.

The Public Facility and Utility Element of the comprehensive plan is not currently part of the scope of work on updating of the plan however the Land Use Element includes a policy on protection of the City's water supply in LU 3.3.

### Streets

*Issue: Street maintenance.*

Response: The basic issue of street maintenance is generally outside the scope of the comprehensive plan. It is a somewhat unique issue in Ocean Shores because so much of the street system was completed around the same time in the 60's and is now in deteriorated condition. The City is working on addressing this issue. The comp plan looks at the basic adequacy of the street system and includes provision to assure that new development makes proper provision for streets based on the scale, location and types of development.

Action taken: The Plan includes policies on adequacy of public facilities requirements for new development in LU 4.3.

### Street flooding of South End

*Issue: Streets are subject to backup of water from rainfall resulting in ponding on streets and adjacent properties.*

Response: The comp plan includes a section on Stormwater Management. The city has acknowledged that problems exist resulting in part from a lack of ongoing maintenance of the drainage system and is working on addressing this issue. . The plan also addresses frequently flooded areas and requirements to assure that development in flood prone areas is managed for compliance with flood hazard reduction requirements. The city has adopted the State Stormwater Management Manual that establishes standards for managing water quantity and quality.

Action taken: The land use element includes LU 1.14 addressing street flooding and LU 3.4 on development in frequently flooded areas.

### Non-motorized Transportation Needs/Plan

*Issue: The city needs more facilities for non-motorized transportation. A specific suggestion was made that some of the City's four lane roads be reduced to two lanes and bicycle and pedestrian facilities added in place of the two removed lanes.*

Response: While a full non-motorized transportation plan is not within the scope of this project, the updated Transportation Element includes an entire section of policies that encourage/support continued development of pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the community in T2.

Activities/space for youth (ball fields, parks, etc)  
Need for additional Park/Green Space

*Issue: City has inadequate facilities for young people such as parks, ball fields, community center etc. and generally not enough open space.*

Response: The 1998 Comprehensive Plan has a Parks and Recreation element that addresses the need for such facilities. It is not within the scope of work of this project to update the Parks and Recreation Element.

## **Environment**

Fresh Waterways

*Issue: Protect the City's system of canals and lakes from degradation.*

Response: The Comprehensive Plan recognizes the value of the City's waterway system and includes policies promoting protection of it. The critical areas provisions address the system as it is clearly fish and wildlife habitat and includes wetland areas.

Action taken: The Land Use Element includes policies for protection of the fresh waterway system as a part of protection of the City's natural assets and visual appeal in LU 2.1 and LU 2.6. The critical areas section also addresses related issues in LU 3.8 and LU 3.9.

High Rises on Ocean Front Limited or Prohibited / Public Shoreline Intact

*Issue: High Rise hotels and condos block the visual access to the Ocean Beaches. This is combined with a concern that public access to the beach and dune lands will be compromised.*

Response: The comprehensive plan is not proposing significant (or any) changes in the zoning of the beachfront area. This means that at the north end and the south end, high density tourist oriented hotels and condos will continue to be allowed. However, the plan specifically states that the beach and dune area should be maintained as community open space and natural area and that access to the public beaches should be protected as new developments occur. Consideration was given to provisions addressing view blockage but ultimately the conclusion was that such provisions were not appropriate.

Retain Forest Land/Ecosystem/Wildlife / Tie clearing of lots to development

*Issue: As the city develops, native vegetation is lost and the wildlife it supports is diminished. Sometimes lots are cleared of vegetation for speculative reasons or beyond that which is necessary to facilitate authorized development of the property.*

Response: The update addresses the issue and promotes retention / replacement of natural vegetation for both aesthetic and erosion management purposes while also providing individual lot owners the ability to develop and use their property.

Action taken. The Land Use Element includes policies LU 2.3 and LU 3.5.

### Weatherwax Property

*Issue: The Weatherwax property is the largest unplatted and undeveloped parcel in the City. The City acquired the property in 1999. The property is in a relatively undisturbed condition and includes forested areas and water frontage on Duck Lake. Substantial community controversy exists over the proper future use of the property. Various proposals have been considered but thus far no decision has been made. An immediate decision on the future of the property is not required.*

Response: A good decision on the future of Weatherwax property requires much more information on the economic and ecological issues involved. The update to the Land Use Element identifies the broad community values involved in the decision and articulates a framework for a process to make decisions about the property's future.

Action taken: Policy 1.13 designates the Weatherwax property as a special area and recommends a full study and evaluation of options and public involvement throughout the process.

### **Zoning and Land Use**

#### Rezone Golf course back to PR-Leave Intact

*Issue: Golf Course should be rezoned back to PR and maintain in its' present configuration.*

Response: While the update identifies the golf course as a important community asset to be maintained, downtown revitalization and continued development are also important values. At this time no changes to the Land Use or Zoning map are proposed for any reason. A downtown revitalization plan is proposed by the update and that is the appropriate time to make decisions concerning this property.

#### Area of B-1 and B-2 Zoning tied to population base.

*Issue: This is a proposal to tie the growth of commercial areas to the population growth of the community as a whole.*

Response: The existing comprehensive plan policies and the proposed update amendments do not support this approach. The growth of tourism and general commercial uses will almost certainly be driven by growth in demand by the population base together with growth in number of part-time residents and tourists. Expanding the commercial base of the community facilitates the accomplishment of other community interests and improvements by increasing the tax base.

Action Taken: None.

#### Retain Small town feel

*Issue: People move to Ocean Shores because it is a small town and has a rural feel to it. The comp plan should encourage the retention of this character.*

Response: Even with the growth that is occurring now and is likely in the near future, Ocean Shores will likely retain its small town and rural character for a long time. However, the fact that the city is fully platted in urban scale lots dictates that in the long run the City will develop a more urban character over time. Changing this likely

outcome would require a very large commitment of City resources to purchase of land and replatting or unplatting areas to reduce the overall number and density of lots. Consideration of this kind of change is well beyond the scope of this project to update the comprehensive plan.

#### Acknowledge Full Time Owners who are Part Time Visitors (Campers)

*Issue: Camping by the owners of undeveloped lots is a traditional use of those lots within the City. Some concerns have been expressed by homeowners and others about such use leading to consideration of limits on such camping. As lot owners campers contribute to the tax base of the community and when they visit they contribute to the economy of the City.*

Response: The update amendments to the Land Use Element support the continued use of undeveloped lots by their owners for camping.

#### Affordable Housing

*Issue: Home prices are rising and less affordable for middle income families and individuals.*

Response: The price of land and homes in Ocean Shores is rising in response to increasing demand for such properties. Reliable data on home prices is only available on a county level and while it is likely that Ocean Shores prices are somewhat higher than Grays Harbor County as a whole, it is also likely that Ocean Shores has a major influence on the Grays Harbor County averages. As of July 2006, the median price of a home sold in Grays Harbor County was \$149,300 (up 21% from the previous year) while the median price statewide was \$293,000 (up 14.9%). So while home prices are clearly rising, Ocean Shores prices likely remain relatively affordable as compared to the state as a whole. The Update amendments to the Comprehensive plan addresses the issue by assuring that a variety of residential use types and densities are available in the City. LU 1.1, and LU 5.3.

#### Downtown Revitalization

*Issue: The central retail and tourism area of the City lacks coherency and suffers from insufficient parking during peak tourist periods, poor traffic circulation, insufficient facilities for pedestrians and other non motorized vehicles. These issues diminish the attractiveness of the area for visitors and residents and limit growth of existing business and potential for new business.*

Response: The existing comprehensive plan recognized a general need to “enhance to overall quality of the City’s ... business districts” and includes a number of policies that address the various issues. The Update amendments specifically proposes initiation of a formal planning process on downtown revitalization in LU 1.12 and includes related policies in the Commercial Land Use Policy Section LU 6.

#### No Commercialization of Jetty area

*Issue: Some proposals have been made to allow commercial uses in the far southern part of the City.*

Response: The draft comprehensive plan does not advocate further commercial uses in that area.

#### All City Facilities in B2 Zone

*Issue: Should valuable B-1 zoned land be used for City Facilities.*

Response: City facilities have a wide variety of purposes and locational needs. The community should maintain the flexibility to locate facilities where they best serve the community within the existing land use planning and zoning framework.

Action taken: None.

#### Vision for Div 17 Tract 3 (R-7 Zone)

*Issue: The City should have a vision for what will happen on Div 17 Tract 3.*

Response: The city has not typically tried to make specific plans for privately held property within the City beyond that provided by the Comprehensive Plan and the applicable land use regulations. There does not appear to be a reason to treat this particular property differently at this time.

Action taken: None.

### **Other**

#### Make Comp Plan available on Web/CD form

*Issue: Comp Plan is a large document that is expensive to buy. If it were available on CD and on the Web it would be more accessible.*

Response: Updated Plan will be available as a PDF document. This will facilitate both CD and Web availability.

#### Issue Comp Plan Survey to all residents and owners (newspapers)

*Issue: Survey all community members to get true picture of community interests and values.*

Response: A full survey is not within the scope or budget of the current update project.

#### Encourage Information Technology and Light Industry Jobs

*Issue: City should broaden the economic base and encourage clean industry.*

Response: The draft comprehensive plan does not specifically address these economic sectors. The plan does encourage broadening the base of employment generally and specifically with regard to clean light industrial uses.

Action taken: There are policies in the update that encourage increasing the attractiveness of the City for these uses in LU 7.3.

#### Fire Code Compliance

*Issue: Enhance fire codes and code compliance.*

Response: As a general matter fire codes and code compliance are not issues to be addressed within the comprehensive plan.

Shooting Near Homes near wildlife reserve

*Issue: The Oyehut Wildlife Recreation Area is surrounded by the City on three sides and houses are close to the reserve in some areas. Oyehut is a facility of the Department of Wildlife and hunting is allowed there. Some shooting occurs in close proximity to homes.*

Response: As a general matter the City has some authority to regulate shooting but that authority may be limited by the fact that Oyehut is state owned property. Regulation of shooting is a police matter not generally under the purview of the comprehensive plan.

**Issues Raised and Comments on the Planning Commission Draft**

**Update Amendments at the Public Hearing of November 30, 2006**

**Comments on Data:**

*Issue: Inclusion of non-city recreational lands specifically the Oyehut Wildlife Recreation Area, golf course and community club properties. Various comments indicated that inclusion of these properties distorts the true picture of public open space in Ocean Shores.*

Response: The Existing Land Use data table (Land Use Element Page 4) is a reasonably accurate picture of the land use in Ocean Shores. It is a cataloging of what exists within the City. Any number of categories could be lumped or split however these categories have been used for some number of years and thereby provide a basis for assessing change that is consistent over time.

*Issue: The accuracy of tourism data is questioned.*

Response: The statement concerning annual visitors on page 13 of the Community Profile was not changed from the 1998 document. The City's current published Community Profile brochure uses numbers consistent with the statement in the Comprehensive Plan Community Profile. The numbers are based on traffic counts.

*Issue: A question as to whether the wetland delineation data has been updated was raised.*

The Data on wetland area and type is, as stated in the document, based on a 1996 comprehensive review conducted for the city. No other citywide documentation is available to my knowledge. The data provides a reasonably accurate picture of the character and extent of wetlands in the City. As a matter of policy the plan states that those identified wetlands and any subsequently identified wetlands are addressed by the wetland policies of the plan.

**Comments on Plan policies.**

*Issue: Comments were received both in favor of and opposed to B-3 Designation.*

Response: The plan calls for creation of a B-3 zone as a means of implementing the Resort Tourist Comprehensive Plan designation. The Resort Tourist designation is

applied to the areas adjacent to the Beach at the north end of the City (the major hotel area) and at the south end (the condo/timeshare area). Creation of the B-3 as a means of assuring that valuable hotel area land is protected from incompatible uses does not appear to be substantially controversial, while application of the B-3 zone in the southern condo timeshare area as a means to allow compatible commercial uses is controversial. The Planning Commission considered various options that might allay the concerns about use of the B-3 in the southern area and, while expressing no intent to promote application of the zone in the southern area, concluded that it was not appropriate or necessary to make any change at this time.

*Issue: The reasons for encouragement of planned unit developments in LU 1.8 (Page 20) is questioned.*

Response: As indicated in the policy, planned developments can result in greater open space, superior design and more urban amenities. The general approach is to allow greater flexibility within the site on such things as setbacks, lot sizes and uses as incentives so that a developer has a reason to go through the extra process necessary to gain approval of such developments.

*Issue: Comments indicated that Policy 1.11 concerning the golf course should not provide for the maintenance of this facility in perpetuity or indicate that it is a unique facility.*

Response: Whether it is unique or not is a debatable point but of no real relevance. The golf course is clearly important to the community and the policy for maintenance of it in perpetuity is an expression of that importance.

*Issue: Comments about Pyramid Zoning indicated some concern that the change would be detrimental to some individuals and perhaps to the vitality of the commercial areas of the City.*

Response: The reason for the change is to preserve relatively scarce commercially designated lands for commercial uses. The policy includes provision for residences on the second floor or above. Existing uses can and should be grandfathered in such that they can continue to use their property as they have in the past.

*Issue: A comment indicated vegetation adjacent to lakes and canals on City owned land should be preserved.*

Response: The plan includes a variety of policies supporting maintenance of natural vegetation and preservation of wildlife habitat. As indicated by City staff, problem is awareness on the part of property owners of the city owned areas and enforcement.

*Issue: Comments indicated that there should be height limits on beach front properties, views should be protected and the commercial area should not be extended further south along the beach.*

Response: The city has not historically included height limits in any of the land use regulations and no proposal to change that policy is included in the plan. Consideration was given to a variety of view corridor protection policies and in the end it was decided that none were workable. The plan designation of the beachfront and adjacent areas along Ocean Shores Blvd. as Resort Tourist has not been changed as does extend to

Pacific Avenue. There is no current plan to change the zoning of the area however the plan would support such a change.

*Issue: Accuracy of statements regarding 1999 public process on Weatherwax property. Comp Plan page 6.*

Response: The statement was distilled from city documents on the issue and has been corrected to more accurately reflect the 1999 process.

*Issue: A comment questions why beach erosion hazard is not a landslide hazard.*

Response: The type of erosion experienced along the shoreline of Ocean Shores is addressed by the erosion hazard section.

*Issue: A comment noted that wind erosion is addressed by the plan but the general hazard of high winds is not.*

Response: The specific hazards addressed in this section are the geologic hazards as specifically required in state law and identified in state regulation and includes movement of earth by wind. Hazards to buildings directly associated with high winds are not specifically listed as a requirement and are generally addressed by the building code.

## **Issues Raised and Comments on the Planning Commission Draft**

### **Comprehensive Land Use Map at the Public Hearing of July 31, 2007**

*Issue: Several comments indicated continued concern with applying the Resort Tourist Commercial designation in the jetty area. These comments focused for the most part on opposition to commercial development in that area not on opposition to the current type of development in the area.*

Response: The Planning Commission determined that the Resort Tourism Designation is the appropriate designation for the area but perhaps the text of the Comprehensive Plan should be changed to more accurately reflect the purpose of the designation as applied in the Jetty area. The draft plan has been modified accordingly.