

# PLANNING DEPARTMENT



## STRATEGIC PLAN

**A DEPARTMENT FOCUSED ON:  
“SERVICE, SUSTAINABILITY & SOLUTIONS”**

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**Prepared for: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Work Session**

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“Shifting from backward focus to Forward Focus fundamentally alters the mindset of the people in an organization by highlight their successes, inviting creativity and suggesting new possibilities. It’s no surprise that when organizations and individuals direct more energy toward their objectives, they reach those objectives more quickly. Forward Focus fuels the engine of achievement while generating happier, healthier, more satisfied, and more loyal employees.”

-- Ed Oakley and David Jackson; co-authors of *Be a Trusted Leader*

# I. Planning Department Overview

## ABOUT US

The County of Wasco was organized by the territorial legislature in 1854. This 250,000 square mile county, the largest ever established in the United States, has since been pared to its current size of 2,387 square miles. The county lies east of the Cascade Range along the Columbia River, and is bounded on the west by the forests of Mt. Hood National Forest, on the north by the Columbia River, and on the east by the Deschutes and John Day Rivers. A large portion of the southern half of the county is comprised of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation.

Oregon, like most of the Western States, is largely owned by the federal government with a vast majority of federal lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service. In Wasco County 57% of the land is privately owned (roughly 881,000 acres), whereas 5% of the land is owned by BLM (roughly 84,000 acres), 10% by the U.S. Forest Service (roughly 160,000 acres) and 6% by other entities (roughly 398,000 acres), primarily the Indian Trust. A majority of the private land in the county is either agricultural land, forest, or an agriculture/forest mix.

Wasco County is home to 25,485 residents in 6 incorporated cities, 5 rural communities, unincorporated urban areas and rural acreage (an average of 10.6 persons per square mile). While the population in the State of Oregon increased by 12% from 2000 to 2010, Wasco County experienced an increase of 6% during the same time period. The county is currently the twenty-third most populated in the State of Oregon. The population of the county is slightly larger than neighboring Hood River County and Jefferson Counties, and significantly larger than neighboring Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler counties.

Oregon has maintained a strong statewide program for land use planning since 1973, and has adopted 19 Statewide Planning Goals. These goals serve as the basis for local land use programs. As required by state law, Wasco County has a Comprehensive Plan that implements state and regional policies, local aspirations, and establishes a framework that guides land use throughout the county. The County's Land Use and Development Ordinance (LUDO) includes specific regulations that apply to the development and use of property in unincorporated areas.

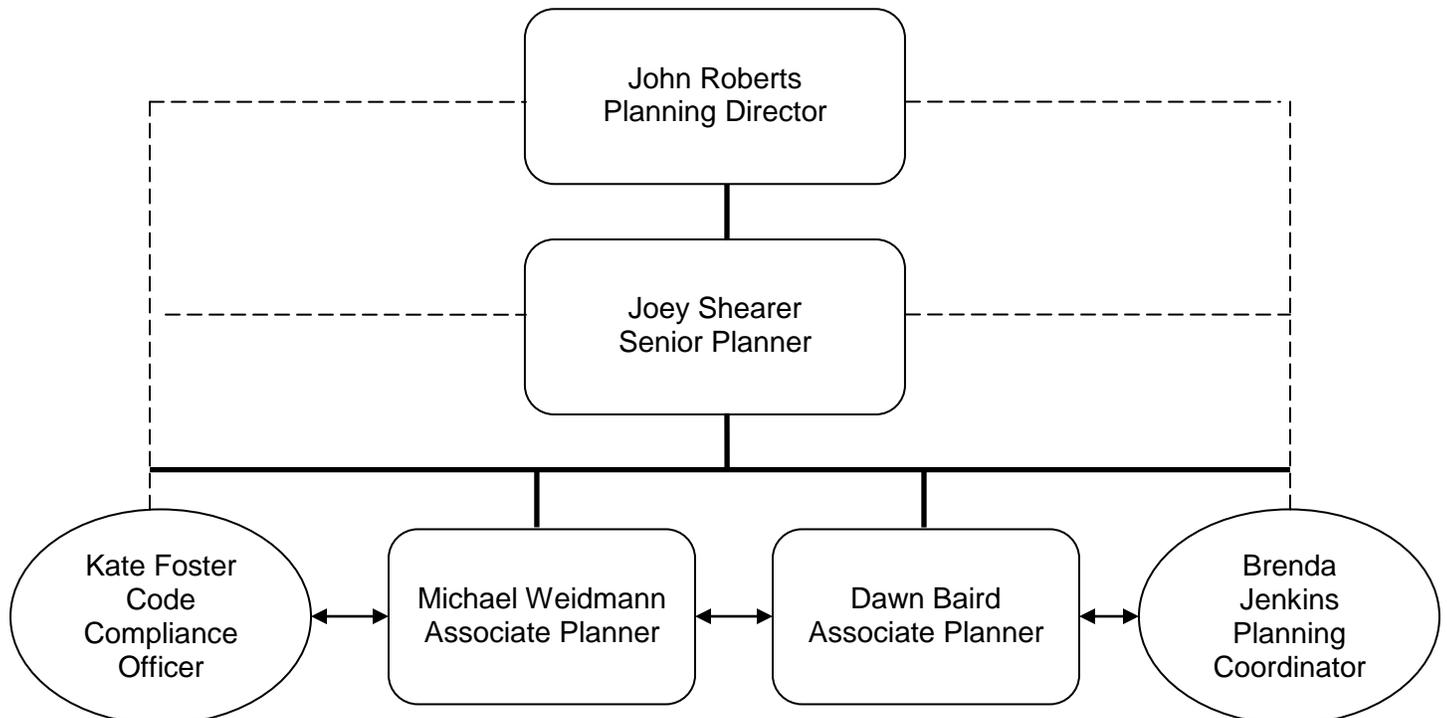
Northern Wasco County contains 44,710 acres (2.9% of the county) in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Wasco County is one of three counties in the state within the boundaries of the National Scenic Area. Property use and development within the county's NSA boundaries is governed by the Wasco County National Scenic Area LUDO.

## STAFF

Wasco County Government employs approximately 145 individuals spread across 20 separate divisions. The planning department staff of 6 FTEs is 4.1% of the county's total employees and includes the planning director, 1 senior planner, 2 associate planners, 1 code compliance officer and 1 planning coordinator. One staff member has advanced certification as American Institute Certified Planners ("AICP") and two staff members are commissioned notaries. Staff members continually consider further AICP, floodplain or local government management certifications.

During 2012 the planning department experience some staffing changes and as a result was short-staffed a 1/3 of its FTEs for 20% of the year (unfortunately during the busiest months of September and October). The staff changes included: backfilling the Code Compliance Officer position, promoting the existing associate planner to the senior planner position and hiring a new associate planner.

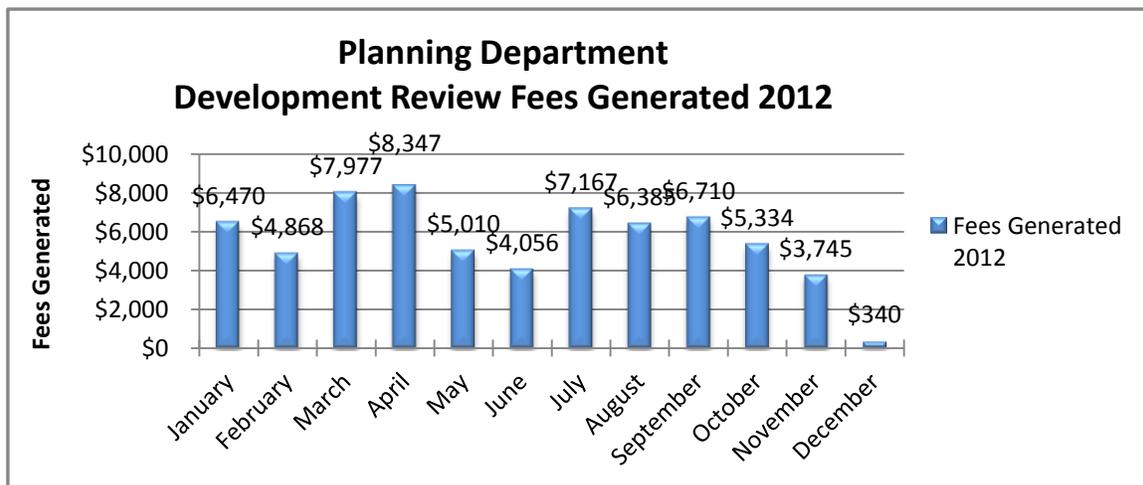
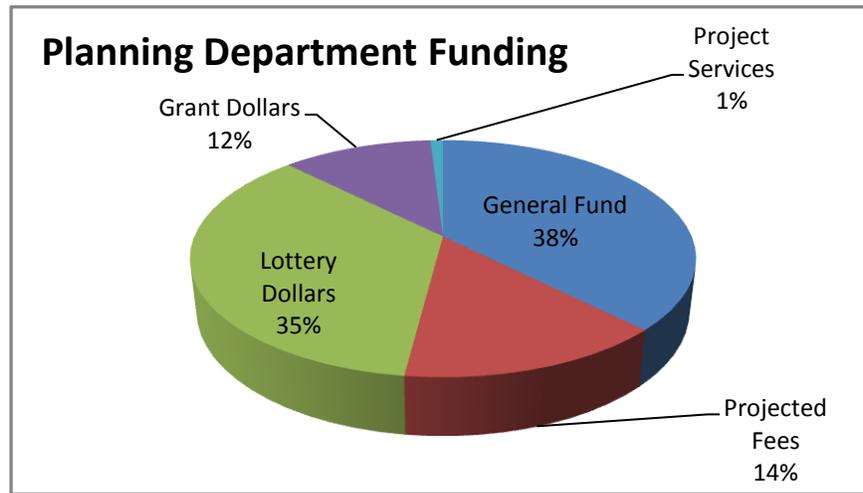
### Planning Department Organizational Chart & Staff



## FUNDING

The department's \$521,116 annual budget for Fiscal Year 12/13 represents 1.53% of the county's total budget and is funded through five different sources. Approximately 1/3 of the department's funding comes from the county's general fund and another 1/3 from state lottery monies. Land use application revenue provides approximately 15% of the budget; in 2012 the department generated \$66,409 in revenue through processing 135 land use applications. The remainder of the budget is comprised of grants (12%) and project services 1%. Invariably, these funding streams vary from year to year.

The largest budget expenditures are for personnel performing public service functions, processing land use applications, and updating land use plans and regulations. The department's remaining resources are spent on special projects and inter-jurisdiction coordination.



## PLANNING DEPARTMENT CORE VALUES

- Team Player – Being flexible, knowledgeable, and proud of the work the planning department does. Everyone should participate and take responsibility to **help find solutions**.
- Customer Service – Providing service that is friendly, fair, empathetic and helpful.
- Goal Oriented – Helping to establish achievable goals, concrete objectives and accountability.
- Be Open to Change - Improving Operational Functions - Working to find **solutions** to help improve how the planning department can enhance its processes and procedures to achieve a higher level of efficiency and service.
- Simpler Can Be Better - Demystifying the planning process by continually looking for ways to make it **simpler**, while still effectively performing duties.
- Transparency - Being open and honest, relating personal experiences and identifying frustrations within county government and with the public.
- Relationships – Devoting constant attention to building positive relations with customers, community partners and one another.
- Lead Not Follow - Learning from the experience of others, looking for answers that are right for Wasco County and do not necessarily follow what others have done.
- Be Prepared and Organized – Knowing what support you have, knowing your limits or boundaries and acknowledging **preparation is the key to success**. Being fully prepared to thoroughly review problems and discuss every aspect of an issue.
- Make Each Other Better - Adding value to one another by helping, sharing information, providing appropriate assistance and advice and performing duties in a manner that takes into consideration the impact to others.

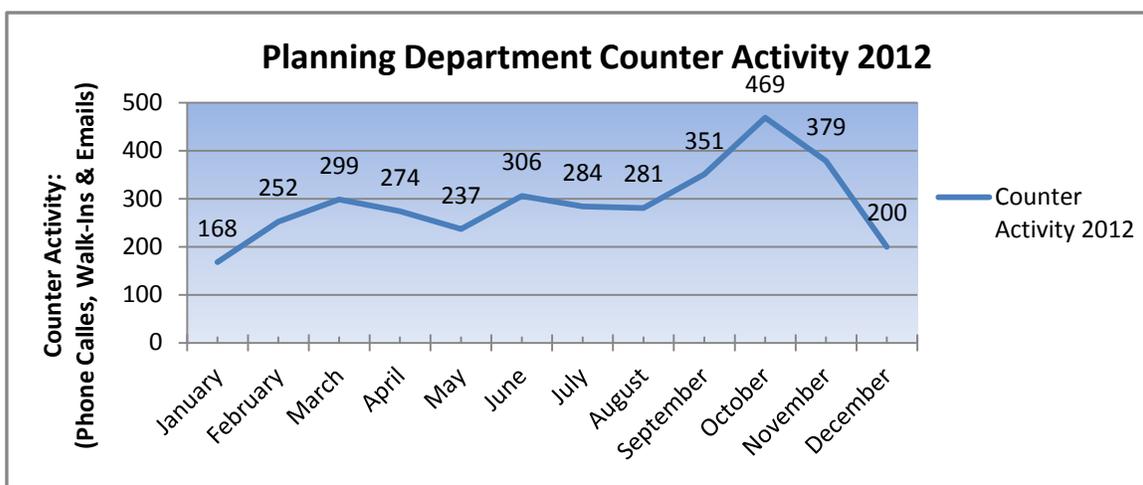
# PLANNING DEPARTMENT CORE FUNCTIONS

There are a significant number and wide-range of responsibilities the planning department performs. The five core functions the department performs are listed as follows:

## 1. PUBLIC SERVICE

Much of what the planning department does is communicate with residents and the public: developers, real estate agents, business owners, citizens, interest groups and homeowners. Helping people understand the often complex land use regulations and navigate the permitting process is essential. On a practical level, this means having staff available to talk to people. This is accomplished by staffing a dedicated telephone line, email account and walk-in counter in the customer service lobby during business hours. Business hours are Monday – Friday 10:00 am to 4:00 p.m. or by appointment Monday – Friday 7:00 am to 5:00 pm.

During the 2012 calendar year, planning department staff responded to a total of 3,500 service requests (this does not include follow-up correspondence). Of this total 1,078 (31%) of the service requests were from people who came to the counter, 1,639 (47%) customer phone calls and 783 (22%) emails. This is an average of 14 inquiries per day, which doesn't include the 800 plus Code Compliance contacts. In 2012 September through November were the busiest months and December was the slowest. The department strives to respond to all telephone and email inquiries within the same business day that they are received, or the first business day after those that come in outside of business hours. Providing excellent customer service is a top priority of the department.



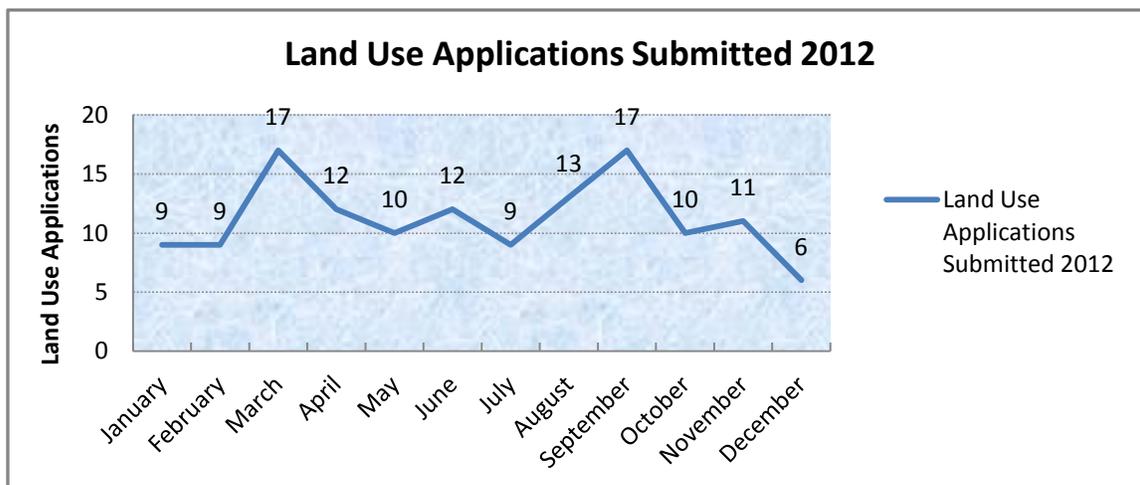
## 2. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The planning department is responsible for reviewing requests for new development. This occurs through building permits, land use compatibility statements for state-issued permits and land use applications. Depending on the type and complexity of a development proposal, the review process ranges from an over-the-counter sign-off for a simple building permit to a complex quasi-judicial hearing process before the planning commission and/or Board of Commissioners. A unique challenge for the planning department is administering both the Wasco County National Scenic Area Land Use and Development Ordinance and Wasco County Land Use and Development Ordinance.

In most cases, state law requires a final local decision on an application within 120 or 150 days from the date the complete application was filed. However to try to be as responsive as possible to the needs of the community and businesses, planning department staff work to issue staff decisions within 45 days.

In the 2012 calendar year, 135 land use applications were submitted for review; of which approximately one-third were located within the National Scenic Area. The majority of staff time is spent processing land use applications, which includes land divisions, scenic area reviews, conditional use permits and temporary hardship dwellings.

An important component of the review process is ensuring an opportunity for public review. Notifications of land use applications are sent to property owners near the affected property and to other agencies. Additionally, site inspections and field work accompany nearly every type of land use review or approval, either as follow up based on a previous condition of approval or in conjunction with an active planning case or building permit review.



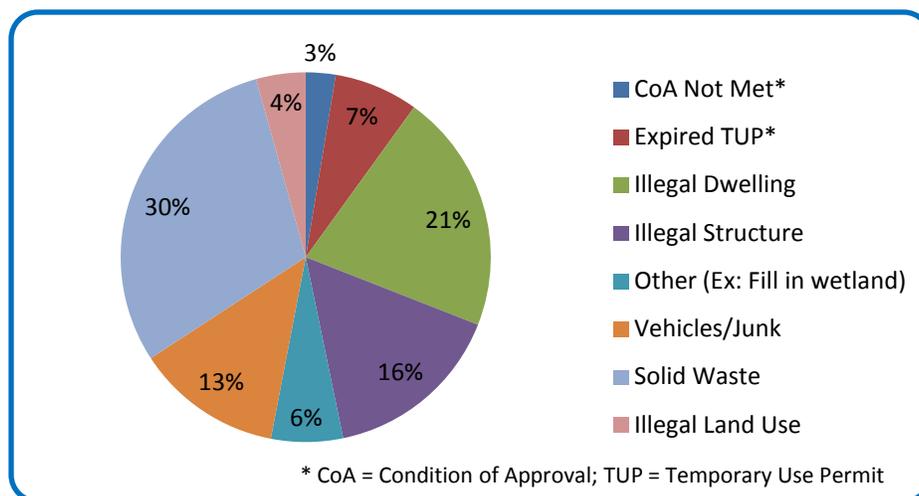
### 3. PROJECT PLANNING

Project planning includes long-range planning efforts; synthesizing federal, state, regional and local land use planning regulations; maintaining and updating the Wasco County Comprehensive Plan; managing grant projects; collaborating on transportation planning projects; producing special studies or supporting documents on population, land use inventories, transportation and land use analysis; use of Geographic Information Systems and production of maps; and drafting and presenting to decision-makers proposed amendments to the Wasco County Comprehensive Plan and Land Use and Development Ordinance.

Another important component of project planning is public outreach. This involves developing and sustaining contacts; participation with community civic organizations or special interest groups; and ongoing external communications such as department newsletter (“Connections”), interested parties lists, press releases and public awareness campaigns.

### 4. CODE COMPLIANCE

Wasco County Code Compliance’s primary goals are to serve the community through a complaint-driven program and seek voluntary compliance. Assessment of past accomplishments and articulation of future goals and objectives drives the compliance program towards constant improvement and better service. The current version of the Code Compliance Ordinance (WCCNAO) was adopted in July of 2009 and amended in April of 2011; since its inception, the program averages 80 complaints (i.e., enforcement files) per year. Cumulatively since November of 2008 the program has “opened” 350 official enforcement files and resolved 314 of those. The types of violations the program deals with generally fall into one of eight categories, identified in the graph below:



In 2012 the Code Compliance program started tracking “alerts,” the pre-complaint stage for possible future enforcement files. Additionally, through the program “community contacts” and “total efforts” are tracked for both alerts and enforcement files. Community contacts include site visits, phone calls, customers in the office at the counter or in a meeting room, and emails. “Total efforts” is a sum of community contacts plus letters sent and complaint forms received. The average number of actions per enforcement file from 2008 to mid-2012 was 9.3.

## 5. INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION

Planning department staff represents the county on a variety of inter-jurisdictional committees designed to increase inter-governmental coordination and cooperation in administering regulations and serving our residents, which includes:

- Staff Support to Governing Bodies - Providing staff support to governing bodies (Board of Commissioners, planning commission, committees for citizen involvement), including research, development of proposals, arranging public hearings, and serving as technical advisors on development and land use matters to fulfill federal, state and local requirements.
- Special Project Support and Economic Development - Providing special project support to economic development entities, Board of Commissioners or county in general, in areas associated with economic development, planning or the related expertise of the department staff in organizational issues, citizen involvement and development of legislation or policy.



## **2012 PROJECTS**

In light of the responsibilities detailed above, the planning department engaged in the following special projects during 2012:

### **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW: RENEWABLE ENERGY & WIND POWER PROJECTS**

- LUDO Amendments: Amendments to Chapter 19 of the Land Use and Development Ordinance (“LUDO”) focused on the siting of energy facilities and were adopted on April 10, 2012. Numerous open houses, public hearings and support documents were conducted and developed to facilitate the adoption process.
- PGE Referral – Cascade Crossing: Extensive work was conducted in conjunction with the state’s Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC) to respond to PGE’s Cascade Crossing submittal (500 kV transmission line co-located). The first round of referral comments were submitted in April 2012.
- Brush Canyon Wind Power Facility: Extensive work was conducted in conjunction with EFSC to respond to E.ON Climate & Renewable North American Inc. “Application for Site Certificate” and “Response to Additional Information.” Referral comments were submitted in June and November 2012

### **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW: DEVELOPMENT REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

In 2011 the planning department applied for and received a Technical Assistance grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development (“DLCD”). The purpose of the grant was to advance the issue of streamlining development review and land use approvals in the county through: 1) auditing and evaluating various development review processes and procedures for efficiency improvements, 2) identifying differences that exist between federal, state and local land use regulations, and 3) developing strategies to implement identified changes.

To help facilitate this process the planning department formed a Development Review Advisory Committee that met three times in 2012. The advisory committee helped issue a request for proposals (RFP) from qualified professionals or firms to conduct a development review improvement process audit. Angelo Planning Group was subsequently selected, met with the advisory committee twice and completed the deliverables outline in the grant.

### **PROJECT PLANNING: UPDATE TO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**

Revisions to the Wasco County Comprehensive Plan were presented to the Board in January 2012 and remanded back to staff for additional changes. These updates have been

completed and will be presented to the Board in February for adoption.

The main purpose of the comprehensive plan is to function as a visionary policy document with a 20 year horizon. More specifically, it is intended to represent the desires of the citizens of Wasco County providing a generalized direction for development, preservation, the planning process, citizen involvement and numerous other elements related to land use planning. Due to frequent changes in circumstances, law and the desires of the citizens of the county, the major components should be updated every five to ten years. The LUDO includes the specific rules and regulations that are meant to implement this vision and amendments to it are required to be consistent with comprehensive plan language.

Major components of the comprehensive plan have not been updated since 1983 resulting in them being out of date. Other components have been updated but not included into the body of the document because until recently the document only existed in a paper format which made it very difficult to amend.

#### **PROJECT PLANNING: UPDATE TO NATURAL HAZARDS MITIGATION PLAN**

Wasco County went through the process to update the existing Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan in 2012. This work was performed in cooperation with the Oregon Partnership for Disaster Resilience, Resource Assistance to Rural Environments and Oregon Emergency Management utilizing funds obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program. With re-adoption of the plan Wasco County will maintain their eligibility to apply for federal funding towards natural hazard mitigation projects. This local planning process included a wide range of representatives from city and county government, emergency management personnel, and outreach to members of the public.

A natural hazards mitigation plan provides communities with a set of goals, action items, and resources designed to reduce risk from future natural disaster events. Engaging in mitigation activities provides jurisdictions with a number of benefits, including reduced loss of life, property, essential services, critical facilities and economic hardship; reduced short-term and long-term recovery and reconstruction costs; increased cooperation and communication within the community through the planning process; and increased potential for state and federal funding for recovery and reconstruction projects.

#### **PROJECT PLANNING: UPDATE TO PLANNING COMMISSION BYLAWS**

New bylaws unanimously adopted by the planning commission and approved by the Board of Commissioners took effect September 19, 2012. The task of revising the bylaws included research and several work sessions with the planning commission and Board. The bylaws

were last amended in 1990. The 2012 update improves the clarity and completeness of the bylaws, adopts the provision to allow for up to 2 alternate positions, and creates an advisory committee to make recommendations to the Board regarding reappointments and/or appointments.

### **PROJECT PLANNING: URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY (UGB) EXPANSION**

The planning department worked with the City of The Dalles and their consultant to update the City's UGB. Staff helped facilitate internal discussions and organized a joint planning commission meeting. The intent of the UGB expansion is to incorporate approximately 620 acres into the UGB, which is significantly complicated by the National Scenic Area Act. The cultural resources study and mitigation measures are currently being evaluated as work continues.

### **PROJECT PLANNING: GIS ONLINE INTERACTIVE MAP & GIS PARTITION LAYER**

The planning department helped facilitate the placement of a GIS intern in 2012 (i.e., Sherzod). Sherzod accomplished the following projects during his 9-month internship:

- Created a database for the County Surveyors' land corner records and hyperlinked them to GPS coordinates.
- Hyperlinked County Surveyor's books to a GIS layer.
- Scanned planning department partition plats and created a GIS map layer; hyperlinked GIS parcels to scanned partition documents.
- Created a web-based mapping online interactive GIS map.

Sherzod's work was invaluable to the County Surveyor and planning department as his projects improved access to information. Specific beneficiaries of these projects will be: survey community, property owners, realtors, development and economic communities. The county's GIS department continues to work on finishing the online web map or making it "live" for the public to use (the mapping will be similar to Hood River County's). The online mapping platform will be a great tool for the community to use to research property information, which is presently involved or tricky to obtain.

### **PROJECT PLANNING: PRESENTATIONS & OUTREACH**

Planning staff prepared and conducted presentations for the following community organizations in 2012:

- The Dalles Chamber of Commerce Power Breakfast.

- Mid-Columbia Association of Realtors concerning legal lots (i.e., lawfully established lots).
- Mid-Columbia Association of Realtors regarding development activity.
- Partners for Economic Progress.

Planning staff was actively engaged with the following community organizations:

- Government Affairs.
- The Dalles Chamber of Commerce “Coffee Connections.”

## **INTER-JURISDICTIONAL COORDINATION & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

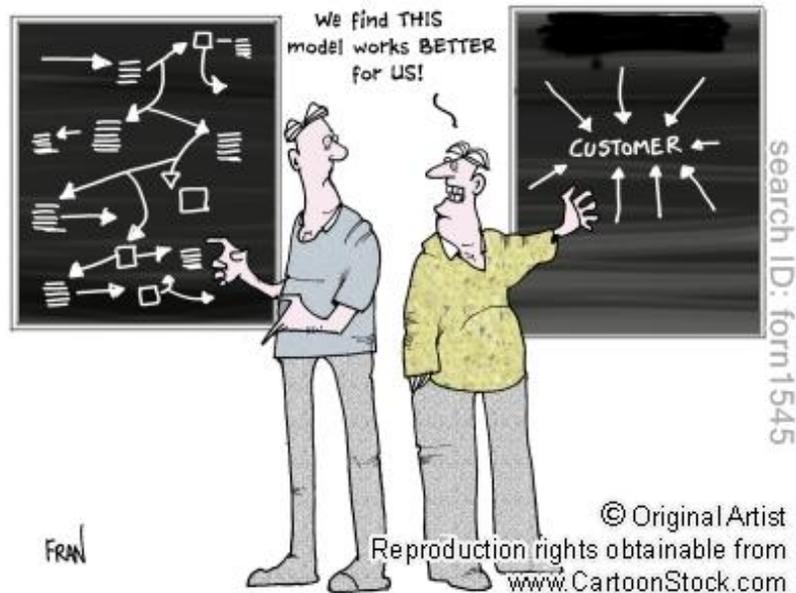
The planning department participated in a wide variety of inter-jurisdictional working groups and committees outside the county in 2012:

- Endangered Species Act (ESA) and National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP): Staff worked with DLCD ESA Working Group on the ramifications of recent Federal ESA lawsuits, the restructuring of the FEMA District X Program, and implementation, outreach and anticipated transition challenges for complying with the new regulations. Work is ongoing.
- National Scenic Area (“NSA”) Boundary Adjustment & Assessment Report: Staff worked with the Gorge Commission staff to re-evaluate the differences in the NSA boundary descriptions juxtaposed against recent surveys. Staff also participated in the “Assessment Report” (facilitated through the Oregon Consensus Program and the William D. Ruckelshaus Center), which was released in September 2012. Work is ongoing with the boundary adjustment project.
- Association of County Planning Director (AOCPD): Staff participants and works monthly with the AOCPD to assess: Oregon land use laws, statewide planning issues, legislative topics or policy directive for the Association of Oregon Counties, and management and leadership tips for planning directors.
- I-84 Corridor Strategy Team: Planning department staff attends and participates in the I-84 Corridor Strategy meetings. Issues addressed in 2012 included: projects within the Gorge, intelligent transportation system upgrades, design standards and placement of strategic signage.
- Riverfront Trail Committee: Staff participates on the Riverfront Trail Committee Board of Directors. When completed, the Riverfront Trail will stretch 10 miles from

the Discovery Center to the Dalles Dam Visitor Center. The trail is paved and, for the most part, is separated from auto traffic. The committee is currently working on completing the last 1.5 miles while enhancing amenities along (and increasing the connectivity of) the trail. The Riverfront Trail is maintained by Northern Wasco County Parks & Recreation District/

Germaine to economic development, the planning department participated in several core working groups and committees outside the county:

- The Dalles Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee: Staff worked frequently with committee members to explore the feasibility and development of a trail from the Discovery Center to Squally Point.
- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (“MCEDD”) & Wasco County Economic Development Commission (“EDC”): Planning department staff frequently works with the MCEDD and the County’s EDC. In 2012 staff participated in MCEDD’s regional “Stronger Economies Together” project and regularly assisted the Wasco EDC staff in exploring opportunities or identifying needs and issues.



## II. Strategic Plan: Focus Areas Goals, Objectives & Performance Measures

<b>COMPARISON OF STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS</b>		
<u>Wasco County Strategic Plan</u>	=	<u>Planning Department Strategic Plan</u>
<b>Focus Areas (6)</b>	=	<b>Focus Areas (8)</b>
Technology	=	Technology, GIS, Information Services & Operational Efficiencies
Customer Service	=	Customer Service & Operational Efficiencies
Employee Satisfaction	=	Employee Satisfaction & Personnel
Infrastructure	=	Infrastructure & Assets
Communication	=	Communication & Public Involvement
Financial Health	=	Financial Health
		Code Enforcement
		Economic Development
<b>Strategy Statement</b>	=	<b>Goal</b>
<b>Directional Statement</b>	=	<b>Objectives</b>
<b>Key Intended Outcomes</b>	=	<b>Performance Measures (Accountability)</b>
		<b>WORK PROGRAM PRIORITIES</b>

## FOCUS AREA: Technology, GIS, Information Services & Operational Efficiencies

*“Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach a person to use the Internet and they won’t bother you for weeks, months, maybe years.” -- Anonymous*

Goal: To acquire and use appropriate technologies to effectively support and perform department and job related duties and better serve the public.

### Objectives:

1. GIS - Enhance the effectiveness of GIS to support mapping and geographic analysis needs, create better linkages to property records and availability of information to the public.
2. EDEN - Use EDEN to enhance operational efficiencies, communication between departments and other entities permit systems, and locate information in one location.
3. WEBSITE - Continue to maintain and keep data current on the planning department website, increase the number of transactions online and website hits, and develop better online e-commerce applications.
4. OTHER – Continue to explore the use of new information technologies and services to enhance operational efficiencies as they evolve and become available.

### Performance Measures:

#### GIS:

- Update federal, state and local GIS data/layers applicable to the LUDOs, Environmental Protection Districts (“EPDs”) and zoning.
- Update and sustain the newly created GIS “partition layer” and accompanying hyperlinks to assist in determining legally/lawfully created parcels.
- Assist in finishing the GIS online “**Wasco County Web Map**” to enable easier access to property records, property data and online mapping applications.
  - Link this mapping tool to the planning department website.
  - Take initiative to solicit a soft funding request/support to community users of the web map to help assist in its sustainability.
  - Educate community users on the availability of the web map (e.g., press release, presentation to Mid-Columbia Association of Realtors, references on handouts, etc).

#### EDEN:

- Continue to reconfigure EDEN to make it easier for staff to use: develop well organized EDEN applications for planners, permit technicians, plan reviewers, building inspectors and environmental health inspectors to retrieve information, past approvals and maps pertaining to their respective needs.

#### PLANNING DEPARTMENT WEBSITE:

- Conduct an “audit” of the planning department’s website to evaluate consistency in format, relevance and/or appropriate links and overall functionality.
- Based on availability of Association of Counties (AOC) funding dollars, explore the transition of the planning department website to the possibly new county platform and protocols.
- Continue to expand the website to provide more services or a “one stop shop” for all of planning department’s data and application processes. Add interactive forms to help staff process incoming information through online ecommerce applications.
- Identify and create pre-printed series of maps that will be provided in PDF on the department website.

#### OTHER APPLICATIONS:

- Support any efforts to enhance document retrieval application records/searches.
- Automate applications to retrieve land use history maps and documents scanned by the Clerk’s office.
- Continue to pursue avenues and funds to acquire LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). Payment for LIDAR would likely be processed through Department Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) and the Oregon LIDAR Consortium.
- Explore the cost and practicability of instituting full service ePermitting Accela Automation software to enhance a more seamless permitting system or a one stop shop. This includes automated planning and building permit management, a public user web portal, integration with GIS, and potential to interface with other existing 3rd party systems such as Document Management systems.



## FOCUS AREA: Customer Service & Operational Efficiencies

*“Customers don’t expect you to be perfect. They do expect you to fix things when they go wrong.” -- Donald Porter*

### Customer Service Mission:

- ❖ A planning department program that projects CORE values and trust!
  - Competence: Technical and interpersonal skills required to get the job done.
  - Openness: Freely sharing ideas and information.
  - Respect: Having motives for protecting the dignity of the other person, honesty.
  - Expectations: Reliability, predictability and clarity.

Goal: To be respectful and responsive in meeting our customer’s needs and doing it in a positive manner that projects CORE values and trust.

### Objectives:

1. Encourage **employee-led process** and procedure improvements that enhance and result in increased customer service levels.
2. Continually re-evaluate and streamline processes and procedures to make development review understandable and accessible to non-planners.
3. Continually assess customer feedback to ensure that the “front counter” is run efficiently, wait times are minimized and comprehensive and accurate information is provided.
4. Keep our records current and readily available.
5. Work with partner agencies on process improvement initiatives between agencies that have the ability to impact customer service levels (particularly the Assessor, Building Codes and Environmental Health).

### Performance Measures:

#### EXTERNAL CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Maintain front-counter duty and phone coverage Monday through Friday (10:00 AM – 4:00 PM) or by appointment as needed to all public inquiries.
- Return all phone calls and emails within 24 hours (i.e., ensure responsiveness to informational requests).
- Create a customer service training manual and set of simple procedures to institute at the front counter.

#### INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF IN-TAKE / APPLICATIONS

1. Understanding: Ensure applicants have a high level of understanding of the process and know what to expect by the time they submit an application.

- Increase the number of applications deemed complete to 100% when submitted vs. high level of incomplete applications.
2. Simple process: Without detrimentally adding to the workload of staff, eliminate as many steps as possible required of applicants:
- **Create good handouts describing processes or land use issues and applications.**
  - Create a list of **standardized conditions** in relation to **land use decision templates** for the most common applications.

#### INTERNAL PROCESSES:

- Sustain the **Development Review Advisory Committee** and meet regularly. Work with the advisory committee to prioritize strategies and actions recommended by Angelo Planning Group.
- Make periodic **updates to the ordinances (LUDOs)** to coincide with legislative changes. This will ensure the ordinances are consistent with state law and allow an opportunity to make changes which do not warrant a full long range planning project. Failure to make these updates results in working out of the ordinances as well as from Oregon Revised Statutes and Oregon Administrative Rules. This is confusing for both applicants and staff.
- **Institute means to more effectively conduct property research.**
  - Implement a program to scan, archive and catalog old files. The planning department needs to insure thousand of old files and planning cases are much more secure, accessible and organized. This could be accomplished through the scanning of all old permits and files and attaching them to EDEN, P:Drive or ultimately GIS enhance web mapping (note these are old paper files that contain accompanying maps).
- **Process no appeals to LUBA or Gorge Commission.**

## **FOCUS AREA: Employee Satisfaction & Personnel**

*“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest.” -- Benjamin Franklin*

Goal: Create a work environment that enhances employee satisfaction levels and achieves staffing levels that align with programmatic needs.

### Objectives – Employee Satisfaction:

1. Develop and empower individuals to continue to improve the effectiveness in serving their local government, planning department and citizens.
2. Increase workforce engagement through including employees in departmental decision making, meetings and regular communication.
3. Provide training opportunities to sharpen existing skills or develop specialized skills, which in turn, will help them take up new roles to enrich their expertise in planning and local government.
4. Expand understanding and knowledge in new areas to effectively serve constituencies.

### Performance Measures - Employee Satisfaction:

- Conduct annual performance evaluations/appraisals. Byproduct of evaluations shall be to: 1) review strategic plan and update performance measures, 2) identify three tangible work related goals for the forthcoming year to increase employee satisfaction, and 3) identify trainings to bolster job skills or knowledge.
- Provide opportunities for continuing education, primarily in three areas: 1) planning law, practices and/or ordinances, 2) customer service, and 3) agriculture or forestry/resource protection.
- For each position update performance measures for 3-months, 6-months and 1-year periods.

### Objectives – Personnel:

1. Provide sufficient staff to maintain a high level of customer service, and active current and long range planning and code enforcement programs.
2. Provide sufficient staff to adequately perform the **five core functions** of the planning department.

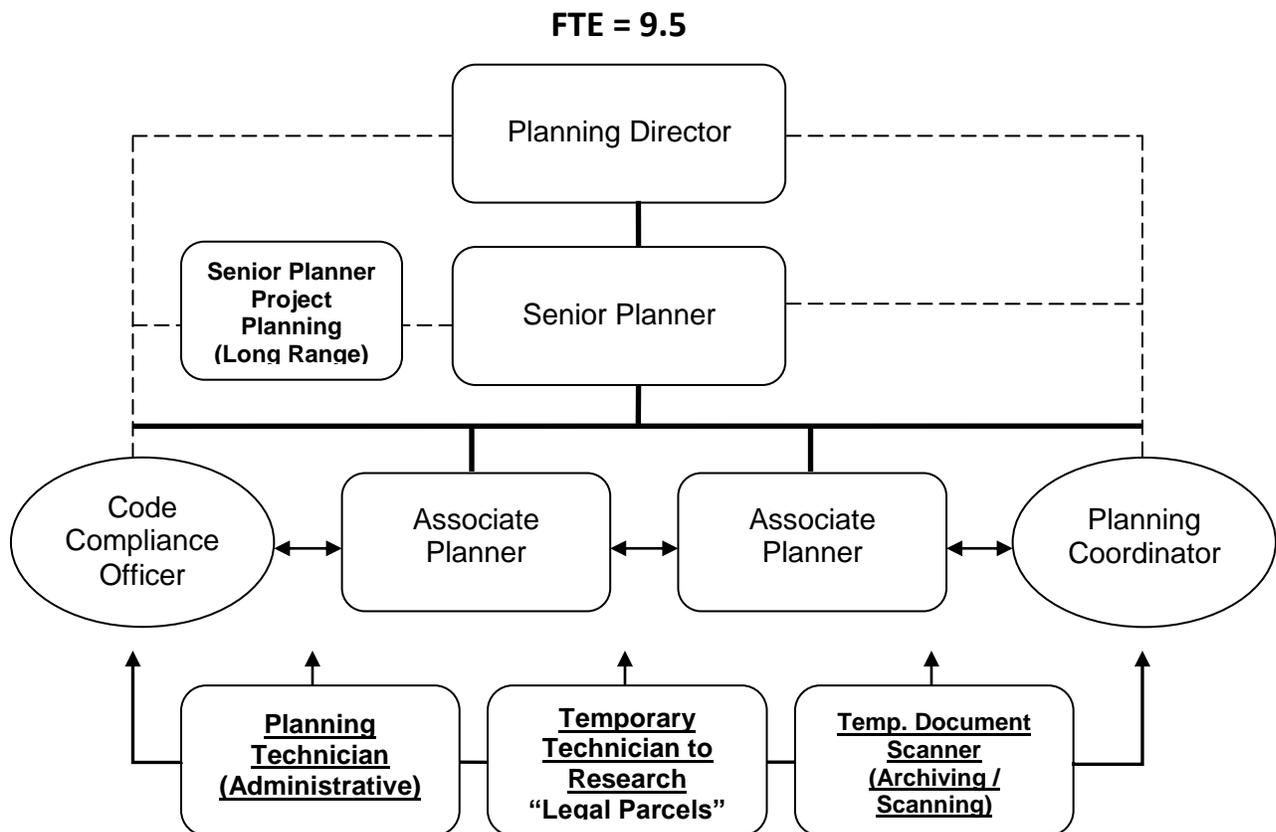
### Performance Measures – Personnel:

- Annually conduct an audit within the planning department to evaluate and determine the most critical staffing resource needs. Ideally this would include:
  - Full time **project planner/long range planner** to increase number of meaningful special and long range planning projects that reflect the desires of Wasco County and the Board of Commissioners.

- Full time **planning technician** to perform routine administrative and planning related tasks, such as: working closely with the public on a regular basis to provide customer service on planning issues, file/data management, administration assistance, general clerical duties, permit assistance, special projects.
  - **Planning technician** to research legal/lawfully created parcels (aka: “legal parcel determination”).
  - Temporary **document scanner** to scan all planning files to make them more accessible and searchable, and possibly tie or hyperlink to GIS.
- Focus on long term funding or grant funding opportunities that can supplement any of the aforementioned (e.g., RARE Intern at \$20,000 per year).

Ideal Wasco County Planning Department  
Organizational / Personnel Structure

The following structure/flowchart, or some variation of it, would allow the planning department staffing to perform all of the department’s core functions and performance measures contained in the strategic plan. **More importantly, it would enable more aggressive work program priorities to be identified and attained**, resulting in achieving a higher level of service for all planning activities. Additional staffing identified in **Bold**:



## FOCUS AREA: Infrastructure & Assets

*“Infrastructure: Sooner Or Later, It Matters.” -- IBM*

Goal: Maintain and improve our department’s infrastructure and assets and continually improve our professional image.

### Objectives:

1. Categorize and maintain an inventory and plan of replacement for all capital equipment that includes expected life span, rotation schedule, cost, etc. (i.e., vehicles).
2. Work to develop alternate or innovative methods of maintenance that result in extended life and work efficiency.
3. Regularly invest in capital projects that enhance the infrastructure of the planning department.
4. Work to find ways that leverage existing dollars through grants or other funded programs that enhance the infrastructure of the planning department.

### Performance Measures:

- Continue to assess and implement vehicle maintenance schedule and plan.
- Redesign office space to consist of **lowered ceilings**, a new entry point, improved HVAC system and reconfigured office space.
- Leverage money to install a **drop-down/lowered ceiling**.
- Professionally clean new carpet on a regularly basis.
- Annually repair damage to walls and corners (i.e., apply speckle and paint).
- Annually evaluate downstairs and upstairs storage space and re-arrange or purchase filing cabinets if necessary.



## FOCUS AREA: Communication & Public Involvement

*“The difference between involvement and commitment is like ham and eggs. The chicken is involved; the pig is committed.” -- Martina Navratilova*

**Goal:** Provide meaningful opportunities for the public to participate in land use and increase the public’s comprehensive understanding of land use planning.

### Objectives:

1. Educate and give the public opportunities for feedback regarding the service the department provides.
2. Through effective communication efforts continually work to make the planning department more accessible and **transparent** to the public.
3. Engage the public in long range planning projects and afford opportunities for residents to effectively shape the future of their community through participation in the master planning process.
4. Explore mechanisms by which we communicate with a focus on enhancing our ability to reach out to a more technological advanced society.
5. Maintain positive and regular communication with identified media outlets.
6. Promote regular top-down and bottom-up communication within county organizational levels.

### Performance Measures:

- Meet state mandated notification requirements to ensure citizens opportunities to participate and comment in current or long range planning projects.
- Staff the planning commission and provide them with opportunities for regular trainings and continuing education.
  - Update planning commission training manual and code of conduct.
- Publish and distribute the department’s newsletter (“**Connections**”) on a periodic basis.
- Once a year provide the county administrator material for the Wasco Wire.
- Participate with community based organizations (e.g., Government Affairs Committee).
  - Suggest planning department staff attend one community based organization meeting per year.
- Continuously educate the public about how land use planning adds value to the community or respond to specific issues. Actively search out groups and do presentations that explain the value of planning:
  - Twice a year present to a community group (e.g., real estate community, Chamber Power Breakfast, Partners for Economic Progress, Rotary).
- Provide press releases or update information to identified media outlets.
  - Once a year provide the Board of Commissioners details on a topic/subject to present on radio outlets or to other groups/constituencies.
- **Hold First Friday Planning Department BBQ (recently rebranded as “What The BBQ”) once a year.**

## FOCUS AREA: Financial Health

*"We didn't actually overspend our budget. The allocation simply fell short of our expenditure."*  
- Keith Davis

Goal: Explore avenues and available resources to increase revenue to cover 100% of departmental costs.

### Objectives:

1. Develop budget strategies that are long term in nature and focus on sustainability.
2. Conduct annual budgeting with a realistic approach to assigning resources to programs and budgeting services and revenue conservatively.
3. Work to identify means to generate more revenue and unique and/or new stable funding streams that will help supplement or leverage traditional revenue streams.
4. Continually be aware to identify opportunities to eliminate excess spending.

### Performance Measures:

- On an annual basis in January review the **department's fee schedule**:
  - If warranted, and based on sound research, change fee schedule and development fees to address inefficiencies, new types of land use decisions and possible new revenue streams. For example, more thoroughly address **pre-application meetings**, realistic costs for **legal/lawfully created parcel determination**, land use verification requests and conditional use permits, review of commercial energy facilities, and fee waivers.
  - Explore instituting an annual automatic "adjustment" to the fee schedule based on the Oregon Consumer Price Index.
- Explore all opportunities to generate more revenue. For example, expand the role and parameters of the code enforcement officer to include conditions of approval. This could cause the necessity for new applications for expired applications and/or change in uses.
  - Work with AOC PD, AOC, DLCD or Gorge Commission to be aware of new types of funding streams available to planning departments.
- On a monthly basis monitor budget expenditures and status.

## **FOCUS AREA: Code Enforcement**

*“The best way to get a bad law repealed is to enforce it strictly.” -- Abraham Lincoln*

Goal: Improve service to our community through a complaint-driven program, which involves voluntary compliance.

Objective:

Simplify and ensure accuracy of compliance materials accessed by the public and the complaint-submission process.

Performance Measures:

- Continue to simplify the complaint form for ease of use.
- Improve readability of website and update content to ensure links and data are current.
- Raise awareness in the community to counter the most common misperceptions that lead to violations through outreach (e.g., presentations, handouts). Common misconceptions include:
  - Structures less than 200 sq ft are exempt from permits; therefore, they do not need to meet setbacks or comply with other land use overlay zones such as floodplain.
  - Structures greater than 200 sq ft used for minor uses such as wood or junk storage do not need land use review or a permit.
  - Since the structures are on the tax rolls, it means the county knows about them; therefore, if nothing has been done they are legal.

Objective:

Cultivate expansion opportunities for the compliance program.

Performance Measures:

- Present appropriate opportunities to the County Road Department and the City of Mosier in order to enlist their participation in the compliance program.
- Identify land use applications in need of condition of approval follow up by Compliance Officer (e.g., Temporary Use Permits are 100% enforced after expiration).

Objective:

Participate in trainings and community involvement to improve job performance in all areas.

Performance Measures:

- Participate with the Oregon Code Enforcement Association (OCEA), including conference participation, training, networking, and meetings.
- Pursue OCEA training in order to achieve Level 1 certification after 1 year of service in the profession.
- Explore training opportunities related to customer service, enforcement, or other useful subjects for improvement of job performance.
- Attend one community networking opportunity per quarter either as a witness to the meeting or an official speaker. Examples: Rotary Club, Kiwanis.

Objective:

Improve enforcement filing, tracking and processes.

Performance Measures:

- Polish enforcement filing system for faster and more accurate internal use.

- Continue developing violation tracking design to better assess future measurement data.
- Communicate with other departments and agencies with which the Compliance Officer has frequent contact to ensure accurate flow of information (e.g., Assessor's, MCCOG, Public Health).

Objective:

Update the Wasco County Code Compliance and Nuisance Abatement Ordinance to reflect changes needed to achieve community goals and objectives.

Performance Measures:

- Track amendments necessary to update the Wasco County Code Compliance and Nuisance Abatement Ordinance.
- Assess needed changes after the potential separation of the Public Health District.
- Explore Code Enforcement ordinances and practices used by other Oregon jurisdictions to identify possible areas of improvement.
- Maintain awareness of compliance issues and trends common to other jurisdictions, agencies, and special areas such as the Columbia River Gorge.
- Continue to participate in LUDO amendments by providing information and insight to ensure code enforceability. Examples include detached accessory structures and guest homes.



## FOCUS AREA: Economic Development

*“The economy depends about as much on economists as the weather does on the weather forecasters.” – Jean-Paul Kaufmann*

Goal: Work to sustain the core economic development functions and responsibilities of the planning department in light on constantly changing external conditions.

### Objectives:

1. Fulfill the department’s three-legged mission to foster economic development through effectuating respective policies and/or programs regarding: 1) Community Character, 2) Public Service, and 3) Development Review. **Reference Accompanying Flowchart**
2. Coordinate and participate with various inter-jurisdictional entities to respond to present and future economic development opportunities and/or projects.

### Performance Measures:

#### PUBLIC SERVICE

- Maintain and update information regarding commercial or industrially zoned land in Wasco County (i.e., 21 properties of industrial land totaling 313 acres).
- Provide assistance to county economic development representatives.
- Continue to provide special project support and collaborate with economic development partners throughout the county (e.g., attend Wasco County Economic Development Commission quarterly meetings and Chamber Economic Development Committee monthly meetings).

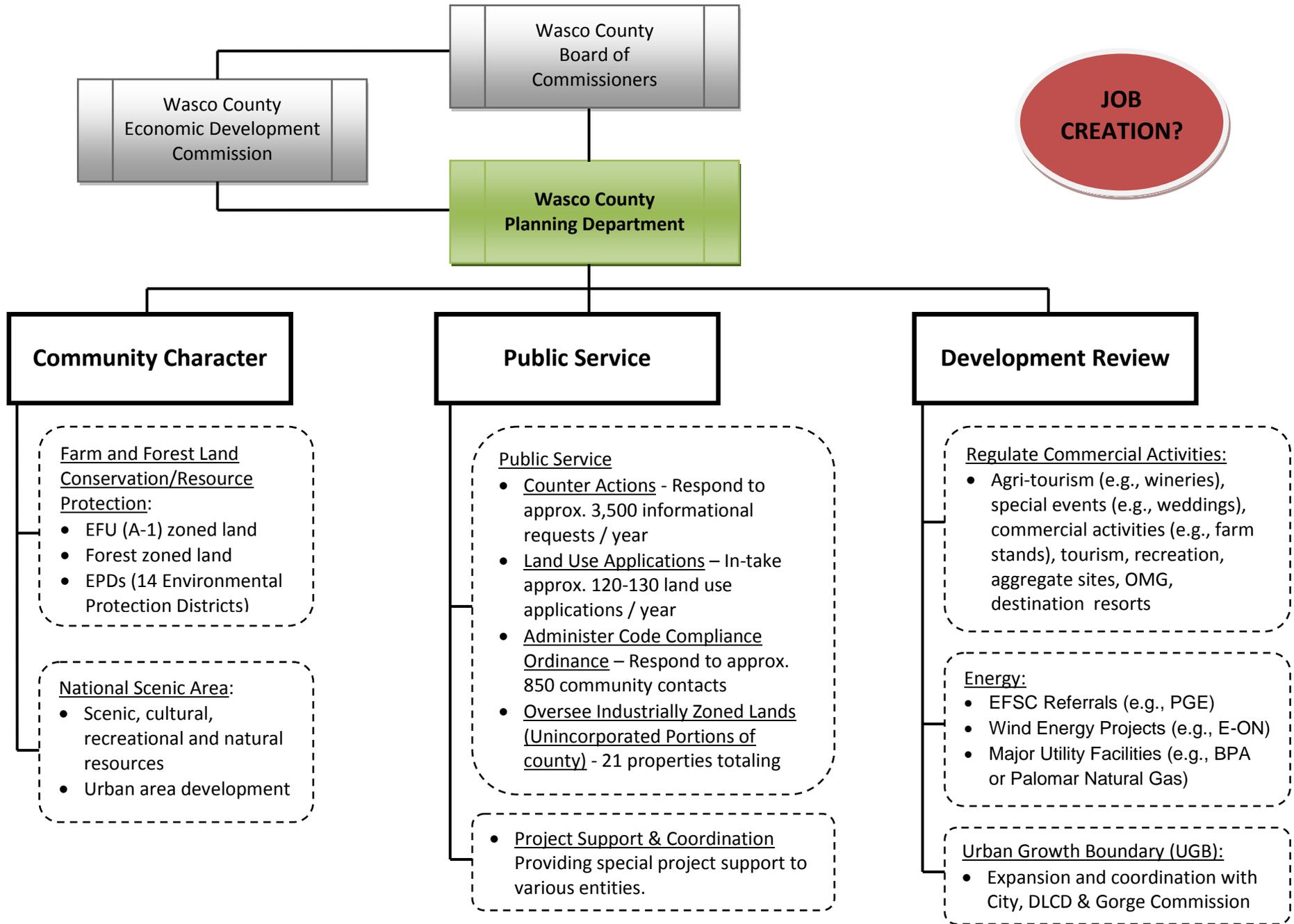
#### DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

- Evaluate and amend land use regulations to encourage and facilitate economic development. Examples of **commercial activities** or events to evaluate:
  - Weddings, OMGs, farm stands, wineries, agri-tourism, destination resorts, vacation homes, guest homes.
- Facilitate energy facility related proposals through conducting thorough referrals or processing applications internally (e.g., EFSC referrals, wind energy projects, major and minor utility facility expansion).
- Work with the City of The Dalles and Gorge Commission to amend the city’s UGB.

#### OTHER

- Update build-out or buildable lands study on a regular basis (i.e., every 2-5 years)

# Wasco County Planning Department: Economic Development Functions & Responsibilities



### III. 2013 Work Program Priorities

#### Public Service

- GIS: Continue to update and sustain the newly created GIS “partition layer” and accompanying hyperlinks to assist in determining legally/lawfully created parcels.
- GIS: Support efforts to finish and sustain the Wasco County Web Map.
  - Solicit a soft funding request to significant users in the community of the Wasco County Web Map to help enable sustainability of the mapping project.
- GIS: Educate the community and users on the availability of the Wasco County Web Map (e.g., press release or presentation(s) to Mid-Columbia Association of Realtors).
- GIS: Finish the “partition scanning project.” This involves scanning all partition files into the P:Drive and ultimately GIS database.
- EDEN: Continue to streamline steps in EDEN to make it easier for everyone on staff to use.
- WEBSITE: Link the Wasco County Web Map to the planning department website.
- WEBSITE: Conduct an “audit” of the planning department’s website to evaluate format, appropriate links and functionality.



#### Development Review

- MANUAL: Create a customer service training manual and set of simple procedures to institute at the front counter.
- HANDOUTS: Create easy to understand handouts describing important or various land use processes.

- APPLICATION FORMS: Create new application forms to make them more consistent and user-friendly or applicable.
- STAFF REPORTS: Evaluate new template for staff reports and findings.
- STAFF REPORTS: Create a list of standardized conditions in relation to land use decision templates for the most common applications.

### Project Planning

- **DEVELOPMENT REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Based on the recent audit conducted in 2012, meet with the Development Review Advisory Committee in March to prioritize strategies identified in the Angelo Planning Group Recommendation Actions and Strategies Report to pursue.**
- PERSONNEL: Focus on long term funding and/or grant funding opportunities that can supplement any additional personnel. Of priority are a RARE (Resource Assistance for Rural Environments) Intern or Transportation & Growth Management (TGM) grant to assist with 1) prioritized amendments to the LUDO resulting from the development review audit conducted, and 2) evaluation of commercial activities in resource zones.
- UPDATE LUDO: In light of the 2012 development review audit, pursue funding to support a comprehensive update to the LUDO.
- FEE SCHEDULE: Thoroughly review the department's fee schedule and amend accordingly.
- INTERNAL ORGANIZATION: Institute means to more effectively conduct property research and implement a program to scan, archive and catalog old files.

### Code Compliance

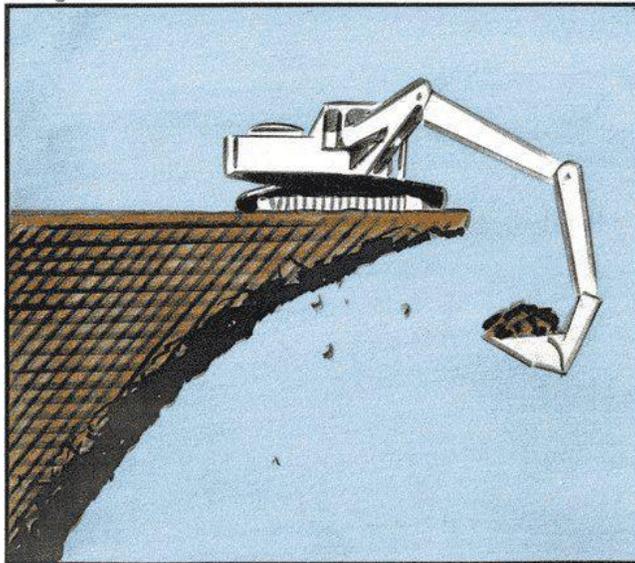
- Update the Wasco County Code Compliance and Nuisance Abatement Ordinance to reflect changes needed to achieve community goals and objectives.

## PERSONNEL

- PERFORMANCE MEASURES: Update performance measures for each position based on 3-month, 6-month and 1-year expectations.
- TRAINING MANUAL: Update employee training materials.

*“There is no shame in not knowing; the shame lies in not finding out.”*  
-- Russian Proverb

Prosigamos



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