

## ALTERNATIVE FUTURES<sup>1</sup>

The 1972 Jackson County Comprehensive Plan recognized that change is a basic element of society, and therefore, the Plan envisioned the need for review and modification every five years.

The change which the 1972 plan envisioned has occurred. Since 1972 approximately 20,000 additional persons have moved to Jackson County, a 20 percent increase in six years. Additionally, attitudes have changed, perhaps in part because of these new residents, but most likely due to a shift in the attitude of society as a whole toward environmental concerns including air quality, energy, natural resources, and carrying capacity.

These concerns, or the degrees of concern, are not shared equally by all Jackson County residents. Differences become obvious at any meeting at which land use, zoning, subdivision development, carrying capacity or other related subjects are discussed. These vocal expressions of diverse opinions did little to provide clear direction for plan amendment.

The comprehensive plan revision process needed a beginning which would provide clear direction for preparation of amendments. This beginning took the form of an "Alternative Futures" proposal. Four alternative futures were developed for public review and discussion. Each represented a contrastingly different approach to future development of the county in hopes of addressing the issues frequently mentioned by the public. The alternative futures were:

- A) A highly urbanized county wherein all valleys would eventually be urbanized.
- B) A limited growth concept where development would only occur in cities.
- C) A plan based on the 1972 Comprehensive Plan, which envisions extensive rural development, reflecting in part the current trend.
- D) A plan which emphasized the creation of dense rural neighborhoods and preservation of the overall rural character in most other outlying areas.

Extensive public comment was solicited and received on the four alternatives. Each alternative received some public comment, with Number 2 receiving the strongest support, followed closely by Number 4.

Based on testimony presented, the Board of Commissioners and Planning Commission developed a direction for the comprehensive plan by selecting those compatible characteristics of Alternatives 2 and 4, which received public support. The direction for the comprehensive plan is delineated in the following accepted statement by the Board of Commissioners and the Planning Commission:

"Future development should be based on improvement in air and water quality, energy efficiency and restraint in use of nonrenewable resources. The Board of Commissioners is committed to trying new approaches and appropriate technology (pro-active) as opposed to limiting adverse impacts (reactive). To achieve this would require:

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<sup>1</sup>Adopted by Ordinance 80-17, effective 10-28-80 (File 80-1-ZOA)

- i) Local regulations imposed by city and county governing bodies regarding air and water quality control.
- ii) Emphasis upon alternative energy technologies to meet demands.
- iii) Recreation opportunities located closer to urban and compact community areas with emphasis upon nonmotor opportunities. Developed sites will be accessible by public transit or nonmotor means.
- iv) Public transit routes, supplemented by expanded bicycle facilities and opportunities for carpooling, vanpooling, and local employment to reduce reliance on private vehicles.
- v) Public facilities sited to serve developing neighborhoods.
- vi) Active promotion of energy conservation and efficiency by the cities and county, and other jurisdictions and agencies.
- vii) Design-review standards and building code requirements to ensure energy efficiency.

Preservation of open space, forest lands, and agricultural areas and maintenance of the overall rural character of the county. To do this would require:

- i) More efficient use of rural land with emphasis upon farm and forest production, homes in hamlets versus five-acre lots, appropriate types of community-level facilities.
- ii) Preservation of agricultural lands for farm uses on the valley floor. Some agricultural holdings may become smaller, worked by families to produce more locally-consumed foods. Some less productive farmlands may be developed for rural residences.
- iii) Expanded rural communities located in cleaner air areas in proximity to schools, businesses, and other employment opportunities.
- iv) Outward expansion of urban centers restricted to areas serviced by public transit, water, and sewers.
- v) Provision of open spaces and greenways along with neighborhood facilities like ball fields and field houses.

The encouragement of new industry should be predicated upon the existing local skills among the unemployed and upon the industries presently in Jackson County. Timber, agriculture, tourism, medicine, and the commercial center for southern Oregon will remain as mainstays of the local economy. New industries which are nonpolluting and energy efficient should be encouraged to add economic diversification to the area<sup>2</sup>. Additionally,

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<sup>2</sup>Added by Board of Commissioners' memo dated 7-28-78.

home industry or business such as a doctor's office, insurance office, and so on, should be encouraged<sup>3</sup>.

Enhancement to quality of life beyond the physical environmental amenities shall be emphasized:

- i) Cultural opportunities will increase in urban areas and in neighborhood centers.
- ii) Historic and natural areas shall be preserved.
- iii) Education and vocational training should be provided<sup>4</sup>."

The comprehensive plan, based on the cited direction, will, upon adoption, serve to guide all future land use and related activities in the unincorporated area of Jackson County. It will be the foundation upon which all other more detailed studies leading to implementation will be developed. Zoning ordinances, subdivision ordinances, public facility plans and programs will eventually be updated to conform to the adopted policies and direction of the comprehensive plan. Additionally, the plan, when adopted, will satisfy the requirements of ORS 215.050, which states that all comprehensive plans or amendments shall conform to the Statewide Planning Goals.

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<sup>3</sup>Added by Planning Commission action, 6-5-78.

<sup>4</sup>Added by Planning Commission action, 6-5-78.