

INTRODUCTION

Wasco County citizens are fortunate to live in an area with abundant natural resources which form the basis of the viable economic system. However, poorly considered land use decisions leading to a disorderly and uneconomic land use pattern can threaten this way of life. We must consider land a resource which must be managed, and not merely a commodity which may be sold and purchased. Once land has been committed to a particular use, it is usually physically impossible, or economically impractical, to reclaim it. Therefore, all options must be carefully considered prior to a land use decision. This is the purpose of planning.

Scope of the Plan

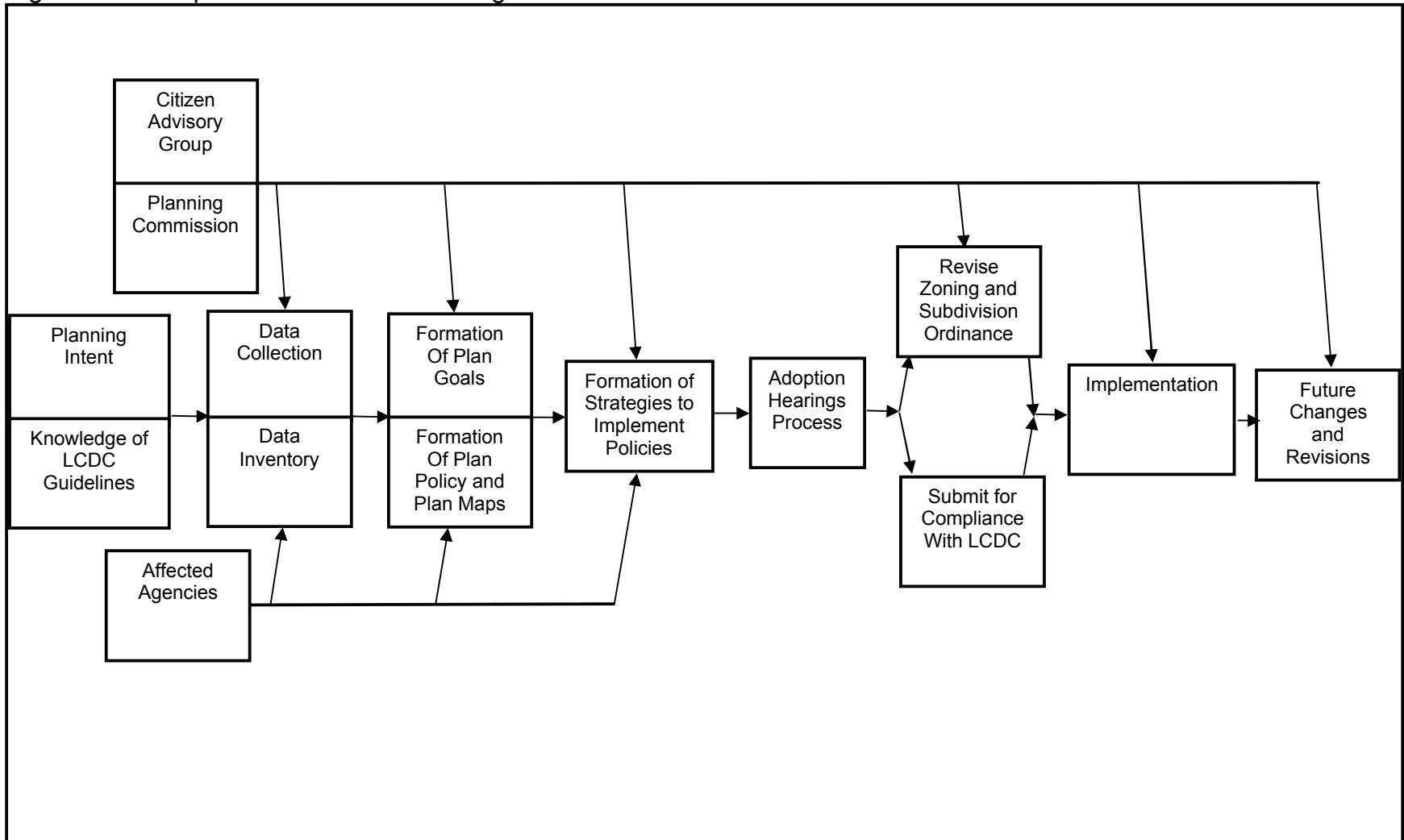
In the effort to achieve a viable citizen involvement program at the inception of the planning process in Wasco County, the County was divided into seventeen planning units; each unit representing a specific geographic area. Changes in staff personnel prompted the reformation of the seventeen units into five units, known as the Western, Eastern, Central, Southern, and The Dalles Urban Units. Plans for the Western, Eastern, Central and Southern Units were adopted by the County Court in January of 1980 and taken to the Land Conservation and Development Commission for acknowledgement. Due to an excess of repetitive information and the difficulties presented in correlating, reviewing, and utilizing four separate county plans, it was decided, based on comments and suggestions from the Land Conservation and Development Commission staff and reviewing agencies, that they would be combined into one Comprehensive Plan. The Dalles Urban Plan remains as the Plan for the City of The Dalles and surrounding urban area. The county-wide approach to planning will continue to allow active citizen participation while giving a clear and concise picture of the County's goals and avenues for achieving those goals.

Since this plan attempts to address all topics of interest to the citizens of Wasco County, an extensive amount of detail must be avoided. Such detail is not needed in a plan which assigns future general land uses. More detailed information may be necessary when considering specific developments and projects on the land, and should be provided by the developers.

Generalized Planning Process

The planning process, as shown on the following schematic, is a continual process. It begins with a knowledge of the intent of land use planning and the Land Conservation and Development Commission's (L.C.D.C.) 14 Goals and Guidelines.

Figure 1 – Comprehensive Plan Planning Process



Data is collected and gathered into an inventory document which will become the factual basis for the plan. An analysis of the data is then undertaken. This becomes a complex consideration of the physical, social, economic, energy, and environmental data with respect to future land use. Goals and policies, to accommodate data analysis and the direction of the area's future, are then made. The plan is adopted through a hearings process, and the zoning and subdivision ordinances reflect the comprehensive plan. The plan must also be submitted to the Land Conservation and Development Commission for compliance with the state-wide goals. Citizen advisory groups, the Planning Commission, and a variety of governmental agencies are involved throughout the process. The comprehensive plan is not a static document but can be revised and updated as needed.

Planning Intent

The intent of the plan is to establish a single, coordinated set of policies which will act to provide for orderly development of Wasco County. These policies will give a direction to planning, establish priorities for action, serve as a basis for future decisions, provide a standard by which progress can be measured, and promote a sense of community for an improved quality of life. It will also help all levels of government and private enterprise to understand the wants and needs of Wasco County citizens.

Comprehensive Plan Definition (Oregon Revised Statute 197.015)

"Comprehensive plan" means a generalized, coordinated land use map and policy statement of the governing body of a state agency, city, county, or special district that interrelates all functional and natural systems and activities relating to the use of lands, including but not limited to, sewer and water systems, transportation systems, educational systems, recreational facilities, and natural resources and air and water quality management programs.

"Comprehensive" means all inclusive, both in terms of the geographic area covered and functional and natural activities and systems occurring in the area covered by the plan.

"General nature" means a summary of policies and proposals in broad categories and does not necessarily indicate specific locations of any area, activity or use. A plan is "coordinated" when the needs of all levels of governments, semi-public and private agencies and the citizens of Oregon have been considered and accommodated as much as possible.

"Land" includes water, both surface and subsurface, and the air.

Citizen Involvement

Citizen involvement is an integral part of the overall planning process. It encompasses not only the review and acceptance of the comprehensive plan, but requires citizens to be involved in each phase of plan development.

To ensure continued meaningful citizen involvement and influence in the development of various plans and ordinances the County will organize staff and work with a number

of citizen advisory groups. The County's planning program (and state law) has continued to progress to a point where clear topic areas have developed. It is critical the Planning Department be able to seek the expertise and opinions of individuals with knowledge and interests in these various subjects. For this reason the pre existing regionally defined citizen advisory group format of citizen involvement is now being organized around specific planning topics and tasks. The advisory groups will be set up to represent issues including but not limited to the following subjects:

- ◆ Transitional Lands Study Area
- ◆ Goal 3 Lands
- ◆ Goal 4 Lands
- ◆ Rural Communities
- ◆ National Scenic Area

This arrangement provides input on specialized topic areas while also representing regional interests as they align themselves with the topics and their related planning tasks. Citizens serving on these committees will focus in depth on projects within their focus area. They will meet regularly on at least a bi-annual basis to review the workings of adopted ordinances and plan provisions affecting their immediate interests. In addition to these regular meetings, they will coordinate with staff, as needed, to provide input on suggested revisions and critical issues prior to bringing these issues before the Planning Commission.

Advisory group members shall also be charged with seeking and bringing to the planning process the broader input of the citizens with whom they live and work. Members represent or have affiliation with groups that have special knowledge (or interest) regarding the focus subject. In addition to bringing input to the planning process, advisory groups will also carry the knowledge they gain back to those same citizens. The County will continue to encourage input from the broader public throughout its planning process at the advisory group level, before the Planning Commission and before the County Court.

Citizen Advisory Group membership will be by appointment of the County Court. Group size will vary depending on interests to be represented. Terms of appointment will be determined by the advisory group members.