

# **WASCO COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**



## **2014 STRATEGIC PLAN**

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

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**Prepared for: January 15, 2014  
Wasco County Board of Commissioners  
Work Session**

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*“Everyone favors the protection of agricultural lands  
but usually someone else’s.”*

– Ronald Eber

# 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 25,810 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.

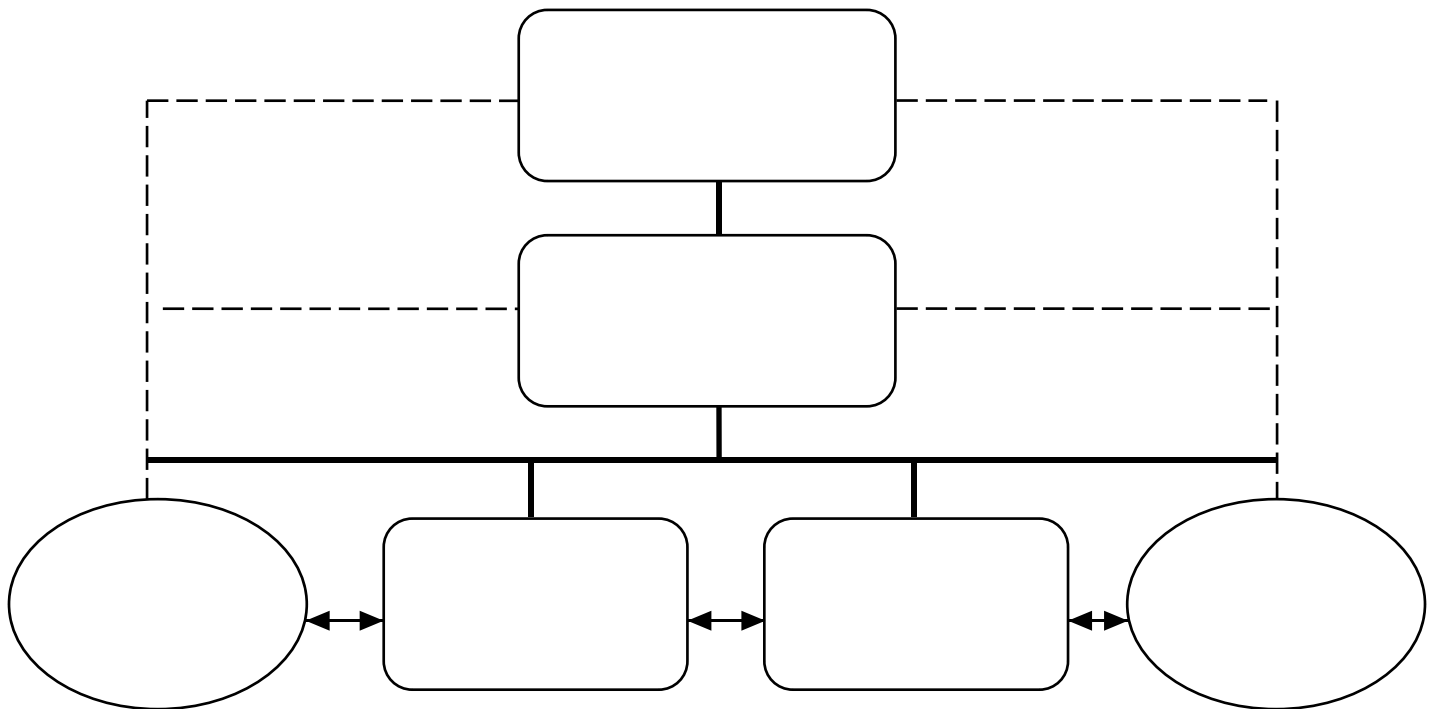
Northern Wasco County contains 44,710 acres (2.9% of the county) in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Wasco County is one of three counties in the state within the boundaries of the National Scenic Area. Property use and development within the county's NSA boundaries is governed by the Management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

## STAFF

Wasco County Government employs approximately 125 individuals spread across 19 separate divisions (Less the North Central Public Health District). As such, the planning department staff of 6 FTEs is 4.8% 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 2013 the planning department experienced some staffing changes and as a result was short-staffed an FTE for 25% of the year (June through August). The staff change included backfilling the associate planner position with a new associate planner.

### Planning Department Organizational Chart & Staff

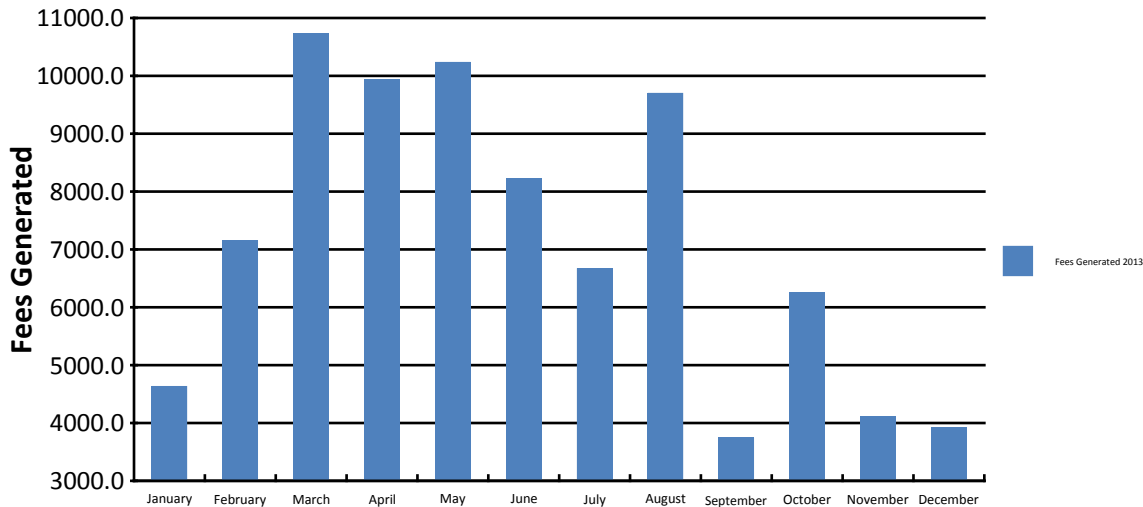


## FUNDING

The department's \$484,649 budget for Fiscal Year 13/14 represents 1.42% of the county's total budget and is funded through four different sources. Approximately 44% of the department's funding comes from the county's general fund and another 26% from state lottery monies. Land use application revenue provides approximately 20% of the budget. The remainder of the budget (approximately 10%) is comprised of an annual National Scenic Area grant from DLCDC. 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.

In 2012 the department generated \$66,409 in revenue through processing 135 land use applications. In 2013 the department generated \$85,357 in revenue through processing a 172 land use applications (**28% increase in fees**). In light of other revenue streams (e.g., code compliance fines) the department generated **\$96,765** in 2013.



## PLANNING DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Wasco County Planning Department is to encourage land use which strikes a balance between development and resource protection, and which preserves and enhances the character, livability, and economy of Wasco County.

## PLANNING DEPARTMENT TOP 10 CORE VALUES

- Team Focus – Being flexible, knowledgeable, and proud of the work the planning department collectively does. Everyone should participate and take responsibility to **help find solutions**.
- Make Each Other Better - Helping, sharing information, providing appropriate assistance and advice and performing duties in a manner that takes into consideration the impact to other staff and customers.
- 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.
- **Relationships** – Devoting constant attention to building positive relations with customers, community partners, other departments 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** – Being fully prepared to thoroughly review problems and discuss every aspect of an issue. Knowing what support you have, knowing your limits or boundaries and acknowledging **preparation is the key to success**.

## **PLANNING DEPARTMENT CORE FUNCTIONS**

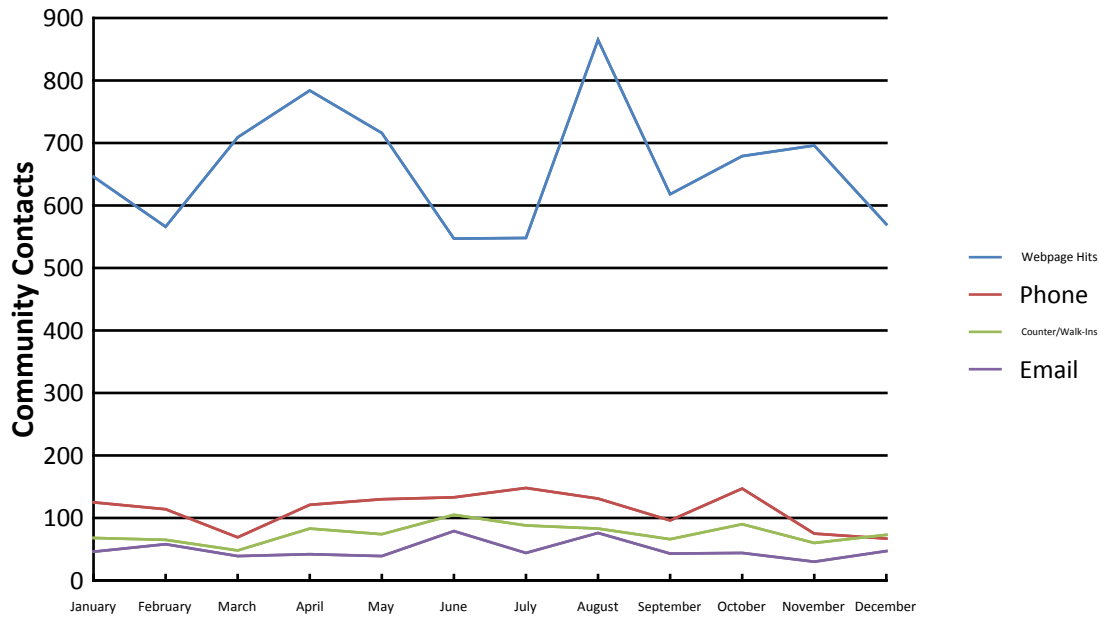
There are a significant number and wide-range of responsibilities the planning department performs. The six core functions of the department are as follows:

### **1. PUBLIC SERVICE**

Much of what the planning department does is communicate with residents and the public: contractors, 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 imperative. 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. The department strives to respond to all telephone and email inquiries within 24 hours. Providing excellent customer service is a top priority of the department.

The “traffic” at the front counter in 2013 was very similar to 2012 (i.e., the department responded to approximately 3,000 service request, which is about 14 inquires per day). Of this total phone calls were the most common, followed by walk-ins and then emails. In 2013 the largest number of service request were received in June and the fewest in April.

Webpage: In 2013 the department’s webpage was significantly re-branded and updated. On any given month webpage visits account for 70 - 82% of all counter activity. Overall, there were nearly **8,000 unique visits** to the department’s homepage in 2013.



## 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 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 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, targets are to issue staff decisions within 45 days with the county and 60 days within the National Scenic Area.

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.

In the 2013, 172 land use applications were submitted for review (an **increase of 27%** from 2012). The top six application types and totals in 2013 were as follows:

- Ministerial structural (Type 1) = 50 (29%)



- ÿ Ministerial non-structural (Type 1) = 25 (14.5%)
- ÿ Land division (Type II) = 14 (8%)
- ÿ National Scenic Area reviews (Type II) = 13 (7.5%)
- ÿ Forest farm dwelling (Type II) = 9 (5%)
- ÿ Subject to Standards (Type II) = 9 (5%)

The amount of time spent on an individual review varies greatly. In 2013 the following development reviews consumed significant staff time and resources:

- ÿ Easton – single family dwelling in the NSA (Rowena Dell Subdivision)
- ÿ Seven Mile Rezone
- ÿ WTF Outdoor Mass Gathering
- ÿ Watson – single family dwelling along the Deschutes River
- ÿ Discovery Center – renewable energy proposal

Some of these applications have/had a long standing history with the county, binding Settlement Agreements or involved ongoing litigation.

### **3. PROJECT PLANNING / SPECIAL PROJECTS**

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; 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 LUDO.

In 2013 the following were the special projects staff exerted a significant amount of time on:

- ÿ *Brush Canyon Wind Power Facility* – Submitted multiple referrals and comments to the Energy Facility Siting County (EFSC).
- ÿ *PGE Cascade Crossing* – Submitted multiple referrals and comments to EFSC.
- ÿ *Washington Family Ranch Young Life* - Attended to the development of HB 3098 and crafted a subsequent draft Intergovernmental Agreement.

In addition, progress was made on the following projects: Updating the fee schedule; Chapters 1, 2 & 3 of the LUDO; the comprehensive plan; code compliance ordinance; engaging in continued City of The Dalles Urban Growth Boundary expansion efforts, and pursuing acquisition of Lidar data.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH:** 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. In 2013 the following represent notable outreach efforts:

- ÿ Attended 9 Government Affairs meeting.
- ÿ Presented at Government Affairs twice (wind energy and code compliance).
- ÿ Presented to the Mid Columbia Association of Realtors twice.
- ÿ Presented to the Lions Club with respect to the code compliance program.
- ÿ Created and distributed 2 issues of the department's newsletter.
- ÿ Distributed notice regarding replacement dwellings to those affected by Government Flats fires.

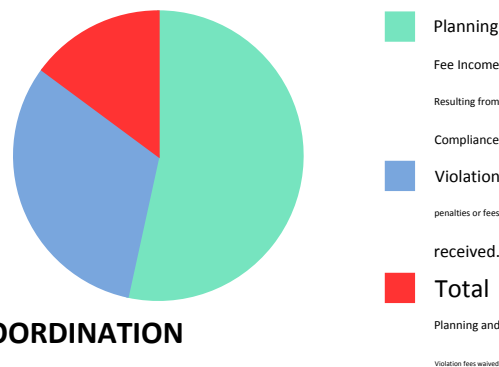
#### **4. CODE COMPLIANCE**

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 74 complaints (i.e., enforcement files) per year or an average of 1.4 complaints per week. Cumulatively since November of 2008 the program has "opened" 396 official enforcement files and resolved 344 of those; not counting open, current enforcements, the program has a 98% success rate. The types of violations the program deals with generally fall into one of eight categories, identified in the graph below:

In 2013, the Code Compliance program also tracked 16 new "alerts", or issues that may become future enforcement files upon receipt of a complaint. For each enforcement file, the Compliance Officer averages 6.3 phone calls and 1.9 site visits. Approximately 16% of those site visits are located in South County, 31% in Central County, and the remaining 53% in

North County. On average, 20% of these violations and accompanying site visits occur within the National Scenic Area. Typically the lifespan of an enforcement file falls into one of two categories: either it will be resolved in less than one year or it will not be resolved for three years or more.

The Compliance program is not self-funded through fees; however, some income generation results from land use application submittal and penalties during the enforcement process. In 2013, the Planning Department generated **\$16,005.24** in revenue resulting from applications submitted in conjunction with the compliance program and received an additional **\$9,500** in penalty fees.



## 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. The following represent synergetic efforts with other regulatory entities and groups in 2013:
  - Participated in a regional *Natural Resource Conservation Service* meeting.
  - Organized one meeting with *Mid Columbia Building Code Services*.
  - Participated in 7 monthly *Association of County Planning Director (AOC PD)* meetings and worked 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.
  - Attended quarterly Gorge Planners Meetings hosted by the *Columbia River Gorge Commission* planners.
- Special Project Support & 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. In 2013 the planning department participated in a wide variety of inter-jurisdictional working groups and committees outside the county:

- *National Scenic Area (“NSA”) Boundary Adjustment & Assessment Report*: Worked with the Gorge Commission staff to re-evaluate the differences in the NSA boundary descriptions juxtaposed against recent surveys.
- *Riverfront Trail Committee*: Participated 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 Dalles Chamber of Commerce Economic Development Committee*: Frequently attended monthly meetings.
- *Wasco County Economic Development Commission (EDC)*: Attended 3 commission meetings and assisted EDC staff in exploring destination resorts regulations and strategies to enhance rural communities in the county.
- *Port of The Dalles*: Participate on the Port of The Dalles TAC to help address wetland issues, wetland delineation and funding to support industrial land preparedness.

## **6. ADDRESSING**

Addressing is another technical function that is the responsibility of the planning department. The planning coordinator assigns new addresses in an accurate and sequenced manner and modifies existing addresses to ensure that citizens can be located in case of an emergency and recognized by U.S. Postal Service. New addresses are issued to properties that are approved for dwellings and commercial businesses in unincorporated portions of the county. Addresses are not assigned to vacant properties. The addressing database is maintained by the GIS department and shared across a broad spectrum of end users. Of the 172 land use application processed in 2013, 10 (5.8%) were for new addresses.

### **OTHER IMPORTANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2013 (Process Improvements & Trainings)**

In light of the responsibilities and accomplishments identified above, the planning department also engaged in the following process and operational efficiency improvements during 2013: overhauled and updated webpage, streamlined steps and routing functions in EDEN for all 30 application types, updated almost all application forms, continued to scan/backfill partitions to enhance GIS legal parcel data.

Staff also attended annual trainings in 2013, which included: Code Compliance Code Enforcement Association, Oregon American Planning Association, Oregon Planners Institute, Association of Oregon Counties conferences and League of Oregon City land use seminar. Inversely, two introductory land use trainings were provided by staff to appointed and elected officials; one-training to newly appointed planning commissioners and one-training for Commissioners Kramer.



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

<b>COMPARISON OF STRATEGIC PLANNING EFFORTS</b>		
<u>Wasco County Government 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**

*“Every path has a few puddles.” -- Old Farmer’s Advice*

**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 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 GIS “partition layer” and accompanying hyperlinks to assist in determining legally/lawfully created parcels.
- Update GIS to enable easier access to property records and data.
- Educate community users on the availability of the GIS Interactive Web Map.

#### **WEBSITE:**

- 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.

#### **OTHER:**

- Support efforts to enhance document retrieval application records/searches (e.g., consolidation of databases or linking new Manatron data to GIS).
- Continue to pursue avenues and funds to acquire LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging).

## **FOCUS AREA: Customer Service & Operational Efficiencies**

*“Here is a simple but powerful rule: always give people more than what they expect to get.”  
- Nelson Boswell*

**Goal:** To be respectful and responsive in meeting our customer’s needs and do it in a positive manner that projects the department’s core values.

### **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. Develop a 3 – 5 year strategy to increase the accessibility of records and reduce time spend to access records.
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).
6. Provide customers essential information about partner agency operations that improve the customer experience with the county.
7. Provide opportunities for employee continuing education in customer service.
8. Expand understanding and knowledge in new areas to effectively serve constituencies.

### **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).

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

- **Understanding:** Increase the number of applications deemed complete to 100% when submitted vs. high level of incomplete applications.
- **Simplify process:** Create a handout for clients describing land use process and application.

#### **INTERNAL PROCESSES:**



- **Institute means to more effectively conduct property research.** Implement a program to scan, archive and catalog old files. The department needs to insure thousand of old files and planning cases are more secure, accessible and organized. This could be accomplished through the scanning of all old documents and attaching them to EDEN, storing them in the P:Drive or ultimately attaching them to tax lots in GIS. It can also be accomplished by ensuring all parcel information in Eden is up-to-date.

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

*“Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot that comes from bad judgment.”  
- Old Farmer’s Advice*

**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 about internal projects, management perspectives, and professional opportunities.
3. Provide training opportunities and resources 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.

### Performance Measures - Employee Satisfaction:

- Conduct annual performance evaluations/appraisals to: 1) review strategic plan and update performance measures, 2) identify 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 and communicate to employees performance measures for 3-months, 6-months and 1-year periods.

### Objectives – Personnel:

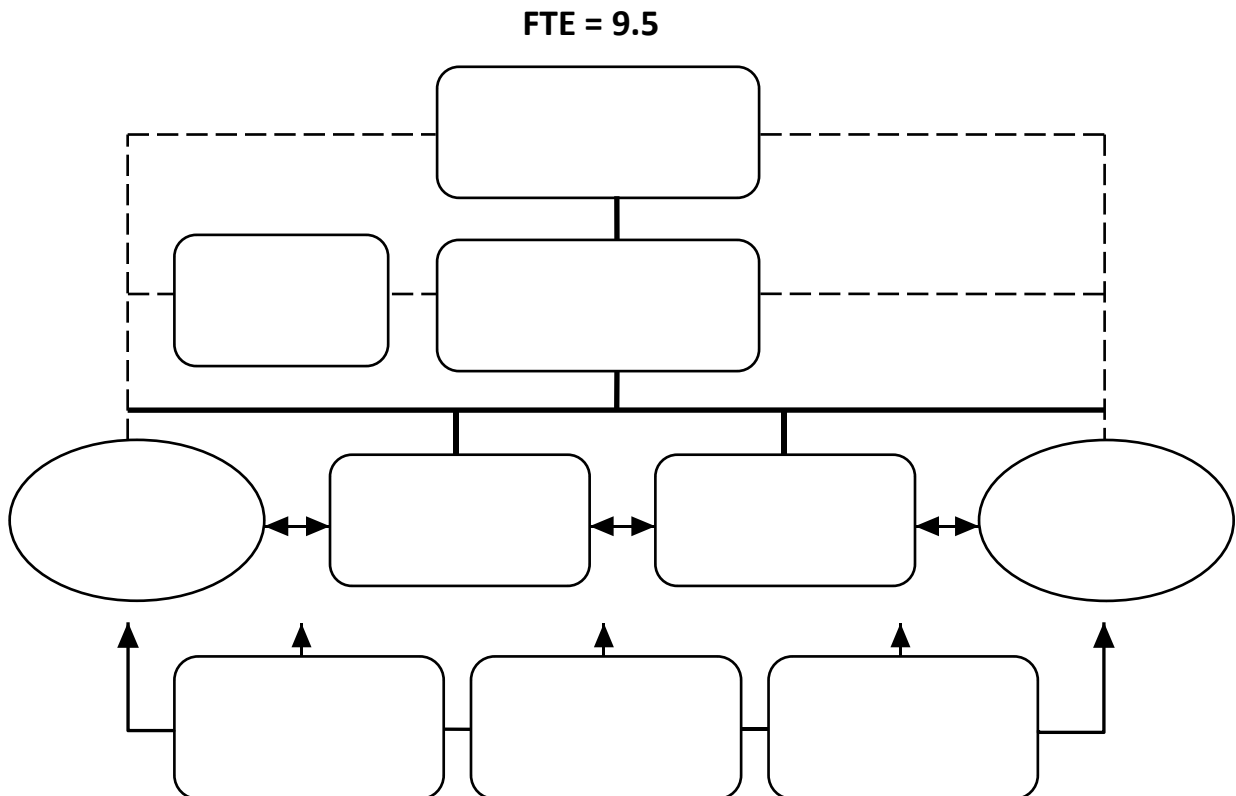
1. Provide sufficient staff to maintain a high level of customer service, and active current and long range planning and code enforcement programs.
2. Provide sufficient staff to adequately perform the six core functions of the planning department.

### Performance Measures – Personnel:

- 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 the Wasco County 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 opportunities to supplement any of the aforementioned.

Hypothetical Wasco 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 **Underline**:



## **FOCUS AREA: Infrastructure & Assets**

*"If you want to truly understand something, try to change it." - Kurt Lewin*

**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 and work environment 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 reconfigured office space or entry point.
- 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 more you say, the less people remember." -- François Fénelon*

**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. Give the public opportunities for feedback regarding the service the department provides.
2. 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.
3. Maintain positive and regular communication with identified media outlets.
4. 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. 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, Rotary).
- At least once a year provide the Board of Commissioners details on a topic/subject to present on radio or media outlets and to other groups/constituencies.

### **FOCUS AREA: Financial Health**

*"Having more money doesn't make you happier. I have 50 million dollars but I'm just as happy as when I had 48 million." - Arnold Schwarzenegger.*

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:

- Update 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, 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 frequent basis monitor budget expenditures and status.

### **FOCUS AREA: Code Enforcement**

*“It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.” – Old Farmer’s Advice*

**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 (e.g., 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, and 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**

*"Timing has a lot to do with the outcome of a rain dance." – Old Farmer's Advice*

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 or projects.

Performance Measures:

PUBLIC SERVICE

- 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).

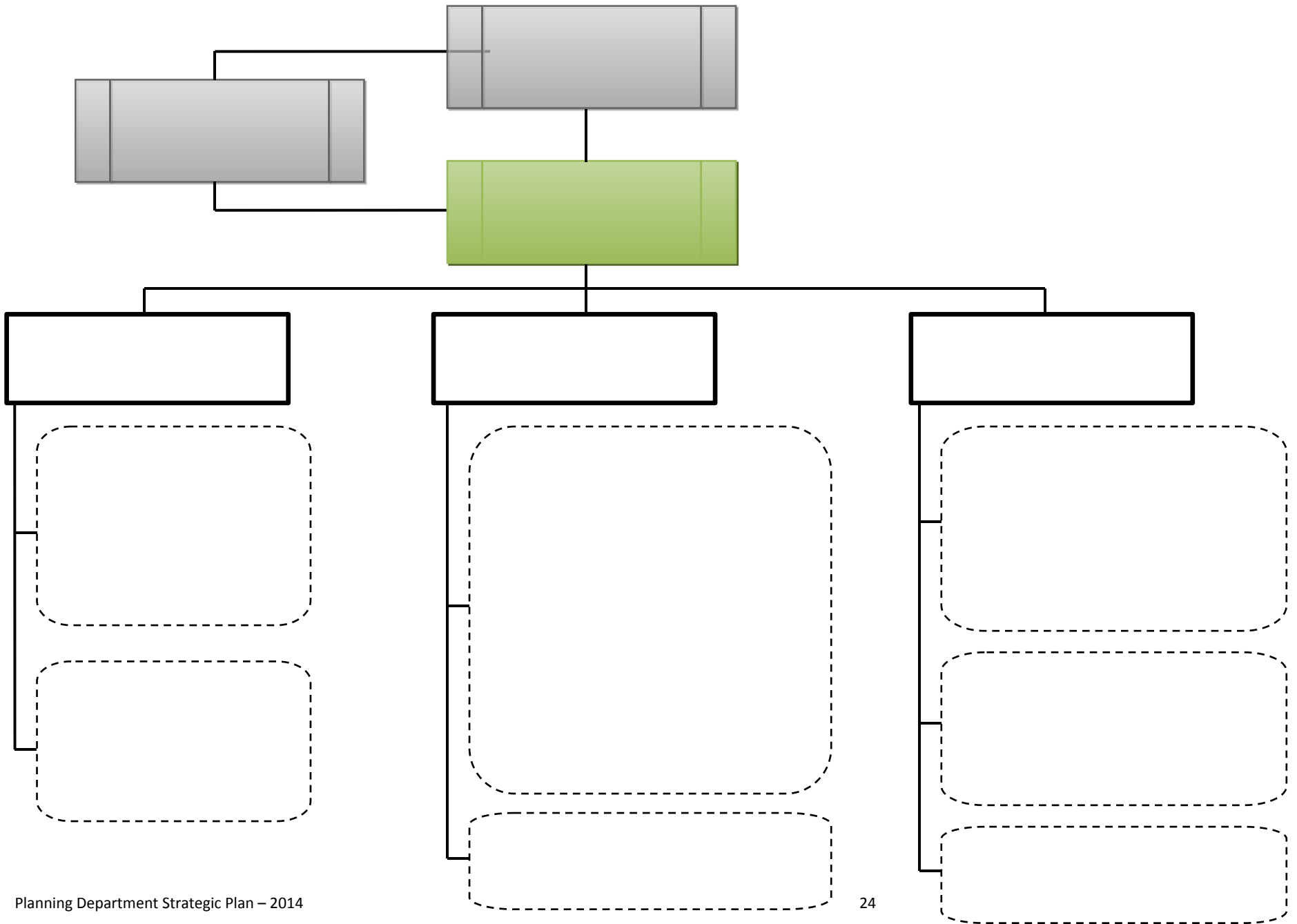
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

- 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, 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. 2014 Work Program Priorities

*"Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier than puttin' it back in."  
– Old Farmer's Advice*

## PRIORITY PROJECTS

- Comprehensive Plan Update: Adopt updates to Wasco County Comprehensive Plan.
- Fee Schedule - Thoroughly review the department's fee schedule and amend accordingly:
  - Determine new fees necessary to include and existing fees to eliminate.
  - Create more uniform and clearer policies to consistently assign fees (i.e., better define when fees are applicable).
  - Assess housekeeping changes to improve usability for staff and public (i.e., format and organization that is easier to understand).
  - Evaluate and amend criteria to qualify for a fee waiver (i.e., clarify income requirements for those requesting fee waivers).
  - Evaluate realistic costs of filing an appeal, request for continuance and expedited reviews.
  - Explore implementation of Consumer Price Index (CPI).
- LUDO Update - Update Land Use and Development Ordinance Chapters 1, 2 and 3:
  - Address "housekeeping" issues such as organization, renumbering, formatting, clerical/grammar errors, correcting cross-referencing, etc.
  - Emphasize simplification and streamlining where the law allows.
  - Improve functionality to create more sustainable or reasonable processes.
  - Align current rules with recent legislation where no policy changes would be made other than those expressed in the legislation (i.e., incorporating House Bill directive and accompanying Department of Land Conservation and Development rulemaking).
  - Enhance clarity or understanding of more substantive and complex issues; particularly issues identified by the recent audit conducted by Angelo Planning Group.
- Washington Family Ranch - Young Life MOU: In light of HB 3098, draft Memorandum of Understanding to document the good faith agreement between the parties for payment of services provided by the county.
- OMG / Special Event Regulations: Research and draft regulations to address gatherings and special events in the community.
- Code Compliance Update: Update the Wasco County Code Compliance and Nuisance Abatement Ordinance to reflect changes needed to achieve community goals and objectives.

## ADMINISTRATIVE / PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

- Applications/Handouts: Finish the audit and project to create new applications and handouts describing processes or land use issues.
  - Create an “applicant guide” handout to accompany all land use applications.
- Scan Partition Files – Partition Layers: Finish the project to scan all partition files into the P:Drive and ultimately hyperlink to GIS database (aka “partition layer” or “legal parcel layer”).
- Burned Files: Scan box of burned files (pre 1985) into EDEN and attach to parcels.
- Legal Parcel Determination: 1) Create EDEN permits from all of the old Legal Parcel Determinations (“LPD”) and link Access Database files on legal parcels to EDEN.
- Location Files: Scan location files into EDEN and attach to parcels.
- Performance Measures: Develop 3 month, 6 month and 1 year quantitative performance measures for all positions.

## ONGOING EFFORTS / SPECIAL PROJECTS

- UGB / JMA: Research and explore updates to the Urban Growth Area Joint Management Agreement between the City of The Dalles and Wasco County.
- Lidar: Continue to pursue avenues and funds to acquire LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging).

