

CITY OF UMATILLA, OREGON  
COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN  
INTRODUCTION

## HISTORY

Early attempts at settlement in Umatilla County were unsuccessful due to local Indian wars. The Old Town Site was the location for an Indian Village occupied by the Umatilla Indians. Early exploration and movement through this region was associated with the Oregon Trail. Locally, the primary east-west alignment of the Oregon Trail was through what is today the town of Echo, approximately thirteen miles south of Umatilla. Additional explorations and movements through the Umatilla area include the route of Lewis and Clark along the Columbia River and the Whitman Mission route.<sup>1</sup> A spur of the Oregon Trail connected Echo with what was, at the time, Umatilla Landing.

Shortly after 1872, a settlement was started on the Columbia River just above the mouth of the Umatilla River for the purpose of transferring goods to the Walla Walla route destined for Powder River. This site, initially known as Umatilla Landing, became Umatilla city and was the county seat from 1862 to 1868. The City began to thrive with the addition of area mining discoveries a short time later. During this time, the town had six stores, three hotels, a drugstore, two dance halls, two feed stores, two barber shops, two blacksmith shops and twenty-two saloons. Many Chinese lived in the area panning for gold and working on the railroad.<sup>2</sup>

In 1865, the council repealed the charter, and the City was not re-incorporated until 1906. By 1868, the economic prosperity of the City was declining due to a decrease in trade with mines. With the growth of agricultural activity in the area, the City became a local service center.<sup>3</sup> Expansion of the livestock industry and the development of dryland wheat farming continued to bring people into the area until the 1920's. Between 1920 and 1940, area growth waned. In the late 1940's, area growth was stimulated by the installation of the Umatilla Ordnance Depot and with the construction of McNary Dam.<sup>4</sup> Throughout its history, the growth of Umatilla has been influenced by fluctuations in the agricultural economy and development along the Columbia River, and the immediate future will likely follow a similar pattern.

## PLAN SUMMARY

The Comprehensive Plan presented here is the synthesis of a dynamic and ongoing process that will guide the City of Umatilla's future growth. The plan is the result of efforts by the City Council, Planning Commission, Committee for Citizen Involvement and residents of the Umatilla area through a series of public workshops that were initiated on September 14, 1976.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Map of the Primary Route of the Oregon Trail, 1841-1848, and Federal Works Agency, Preliminary Map of the Oregon Trail and the Principal Pioneer Routes to California.

<sup>2</sup> Swanson, Cultural Resource Survey of Umatilla, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Umatilla County Planning Commission, Comprehensive Plan Part I, p. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> USDOT, I 82/128 EIS, p. 2-25.

To prepare for the City's growth, a set of goals were developed and specific policy decisions made. Policies related to growth management consider economic viability, neighborhood livability, energy conservation, and maintaining resource quality.

The City's population grew rapidly in the 1970's at an average annual growth rate of 34%. Agri-business, annexation and construction were the main contributors. Population forecasts for the year 2000 range as high as 16,000 because of new construction, such as Alumax, P.G.E., and the McNary second powerhouse. Increased employment opportunities and secondary business activity will pressure city growth.

Using population projections, it was possible to determine potential housing needs as a basis for anticipated expansion of urban facilities and services (water, sewer, streets, schools, police, fire protection). The housing demand is expected to peak in the 1980's (with construction slowdowns) and by the year 2000, the housing demand could total over 3,100.<sup>5</sup> The land required for residential use is estimated at 1,535 acres.<sup>6</sup> Corresponding growth in manufacturing, commercial, and public facilities will require 1,885 acres.<sup>7</sup> An additional 3,500 acres, within the Urban Growth Boundary, is unavailable for development because of hazards (floodplain) or resource value (agricultural land, gravel deposits, historic sites). The total projected land use required within the Urban Growth Boundary will be 6,720 acres.<sup>8</sup>

The Comprehensive Plan deals with the urbanization of undeveloped land and establishes an Urban Growth Boundary. Recommendations as to where specific land uses will be located are also included. The updated Urban Growth Boundary (the limit to where public facilities will be extended) and land uses will be based on considerations of land use efficiency and compatibility, along with the logical and economical extension of public facilities and transportation system. Just as the community will change by this growth, so will the objectives and attitudes of the people. Therefore, the plan should be regarded as presenting decisions about the future as they are seen at this point in time. A program for updating the plan annually is part of this document, to assure that decisions remain relevant to community change.

The Comprehensive Plan provides the City of Umatilla with a tool to help decide the kind of an environment and future in which its citizens will live. In dollars and cents it can save costs in extending public facilities while striving for a more equitable tax base. It can help establish better living, working and shopping areas that are more compatible and accessible. Preservation of resources will help maintain that which has either social or economic value to the community.

The Comprehensive Plan for the City of Umatilla is a statement of policies that will guide the future growth of the City. These policies are choices made by the citizens and enacted by the City Council, to determine how development and conservation will occur in Umatilla.

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<sup>5</sup> Projected for the year 2000, total includes existing land uses.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

In developing the Comprehensive Plan, the intent has been to focus on future physical development of the City while remaining general in nature. It is intended that specific and detailed physical design proposals should be considered as the plan is updated and revised.

The Policy statements set forth a guide to courses of action which are intended to carry out the Goals of the plan. The policy statements present to City officials and potential developers a clear picture of the City Council's position on matters pertaining to physical improvements and developments.

#### 1999 UPDATE

The City received a Periodic Review Notice in 1997. A Transportation System Plan (TSP) and Buildable Lands Analysis and Future Lands Needs Analysis (BLA) were prepared and serve as background information for the Comprehensive Plan. These documents provided updated information and analysis of the City's needs and opportunities, in some cases substantially changing previous data on available lands and land needs. The studies are incorporated into relevant sections of the Comprehensive Plan and implementing ordinances. (*Ord. 688*)

