



**JACKSON
COUNTY**
Oregon

MEMO
I N T E R - O F F I C E

Development Services

Kelly A. Madding
Director

10 S. Oakdale, Rm 100
Medford, OR 97501
Phone: 541-774-6519
Fax: 541-774-6791
maddinka@jacksoncounty.org

To: Jackson County Planning Commission
From: Kelly A. Madding
Subject: Greater Bear Creek Regional Problem Solving Process (RPS) Plan; File: LRP2009-00010
Date: January 22, 2010

Staff has made revisions to the draft version of Chapter 1 of the RPS Plan since the materials for this file were distributed to your Commission for this hearing. This version of Chapter 1 incorporates those revisions. The only substantive revision was made to Section 6.1, starting on page 12. Specifically, a more detailed description of the proposed community buffers was added.

-135-

Jackson County Planning Commission

File No. LRP2009-00010 Exhibit # 5

Offered by: Staff

Date: 1-26-10 Received by: UMC

Chapter 1

RPS Overview

1. REGIONAL CHALLENGES

The Greater Bear Creek Valley presents many demographic, physical, and socio-economic challenges to planning for the future. While Jackson County contains nearly 1.8 million acres, over 80 percent of the County is forest resource land and nearly half of that is owned by the federal government. What remains are 360,000 acres for other uses—agriculture, homes, industry, commerce, transportation, parks, and non-forest open spaces. Recent population growth, most of it compressed into the narrow ribbon of land that is the Bear Creek Valley, has been significant. For example, during the past fifty years, Jackson County's growth rates have rivaled those seen during the gold rush of the 1880s. The countywide population more than doubled from 94,533 residents in 1970 to 194,515 residents in 2005. Of the nearly 100,000 person increase to the county over that period, seventy-seven percent of the growth occurred within the municipal boundaries of the cities of Ashland, Central Point, Eagle Point, Medford, Phoenix, and Talent.¹ Over the period, Ashland increased its population by 1.69 times, Central Point by 3.9 times, Eagle Point by 6.11 times, Medford by 2.49 times, Phoenix by 3.62 times, and Talent by 4.5 times. The population of the unincorporated urban area of White City also increased by approximately 3,000 residents between 1980 and 2005².

In addition to the normal pressures from a population growth rate of this magnitude, historic settlement patterns have caused this growth to occur in the midst of the region's best agricultural lands, which although under increasing pressure, still manage to play a large role in the valley's economy. As a result of these settlement patterns most of the land adjacent and nearby the cities available for urban growth is agricultural land. Finally, the region has also seen an increased diversity in political and social attitudes due to the considerable in-migration from other states, which has caused cultural shifts.

To attempt to address the region's growth-related challenges, the State of Oregon and local jurisdictions have engaged in a decade-long collaborative effort to create a Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Plan (Regional Plan). This Regional Plan will establish a practical planning base to better accommodate future growth and preserve the region's most positive attributes.

1.1 Regional Growth Factors

The Region's moderate climate, natural amenities, and cultural resources such as a vibrant performing arts community will continue to fuel the driving force in the region's population growth—in-migration. In the year 2000, 37 percent of Jackson County's residents had arrived from outside of the county within the previous 5 years. Between 2000 and 2004, in-migration accounted for over 90 percent of Jackson County's net population growth. In-migrants cite reasons for coming to Oregon such as: living near family or friends, quality of life, and employment. Among these in-migrants, the "Baby Boomer" generation is the predominant age group, although younger residents (aged 5-17) are also a significant age group for several cities in the region.

¹ Source: U.S. Census 1970, and Jackson County Comprehensive Plan Population Element (original source being the PSU Center for Population Research 2005 Jackson County Population Estimate).

² JCCP Population Element