

NOWx2

PLANNING FOR TWICE
OUR POPULATION

*2 times as many people
2 times as many cars
2 times as many homes*

***What will it equal for
the Bear Creek Valley?***

Mail Tribune

What is this all about?

The official title is "Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Problem Solving."

Basically it's Jackson County, Medford, Ashland, Central Point, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Talent, Phoenix, and the state of Oregon sitting down at the same table trying to figure out how to make room for long-term future population growth while preserving the places and features of the valley that we all enjoy.

What is NOW*2 ?

NOW*2 is a unique exploration of growth and long-range planning for the Greater Bear Creek Valley - the population center for Jackson County. While most studies are pegged to a time line, say 20 years or 30 years, NOW*2 shifts the focus to people.

It asks, 'What could this valley be like with twice the population we have today?'

Let's look first at the simple math of the proposition. We're starting with a present day population of 135,000 within the study area, which is a rounding off of the year 2000 census. Multiply times two and you get what we're trying to plan for: 270,000 individuals. More than a quarter million people. Right here in the Rogue Valley.

Rather than contemplating when growth will happen, and at what rate, NOW*2 addresses how it might happen, and how development should proceed to preserve and enhance the features and amenities we value today.

Realistically, NOW*2 takes a very long-term perspective. Various population forecasts and historical experience suggest that the Greater Bear Creek Valley might expect to double in population sometime between 2040 and 2060, but no one can really know for sure.



Those of you who have a few years under your belts no doubt have a feel for the changes that can occur with the kind of growth we are trying to plan for. Our population right now is about twice what it was in the 1960s. Fewer than 70,000 people then; more than 135,000 now; and 270,000 someday. Think of the changes that have occurred since the '60s in this valley.

We'll never know how much better this valley would be now, and what mistakes we could have avoided, if this process had taken place in the 1960s. We can say, though, that if we don't try today to plan ahead, this valley could very well become what the people moving here now are seeking to escape.

What are we trying to accomplish?

We hope to reap as much benefit as possible from the population growth that surely is coming our way, while avoiding the pitfalls - loss of agricultural land, loss of open space, reduced community identity, and transportation and other infrastructure problems.



Participants in the process agree that taking charge of our future by planning collaboratively on regional issues is more effective than planning city by city. They also think that we need



to be willing to look far into the future, well beyond the usual 20-year time frame.

More specifically, we are trying to put lines on a map to guide us, and those who follow us, to the parts of the valley where we should and should not grow. We are trying to guide cities to areas that can readily receive urban services and foster community identity. We are trying to keep cities from growing into one another, and onto valuable farm land. We are trying to save the important parts of what we are now while we are becoming something else.

At this point in the process it appears that we have identified enough land for future growth. We won't be forced to look towards our best resource lands and open space - even with twice as many people here as we have right now. For all those who love our varied landscapes and independent cities, that is very good news.

As you go through this material you will see a lot of lines on maps. They are all still tentative recommendations and proposals. The result of a lot of work to date, they have been erased and redrawn many times. No doubt, they will continue to change as this project continues. ■

This publication is a product of the Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Problem Solving project, involving the cities of Medford, Central Point, Talent, Jacksonville, Eagle Point, Ashland and Phoenix, and Jackson County, Medford Water Commission, Bear Creek Valley Sanitary Authority and the State of Oregon. The project is being coordinated by the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, a voluntary association of local governments in Jackson and Josephine counties that provides technical assistance in areas of land use, transportation, water quality, public involvement and special services to seniors and the disabled. At present, funding for this effort is coming from the participants themselves.



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Why do we need a regional plan?

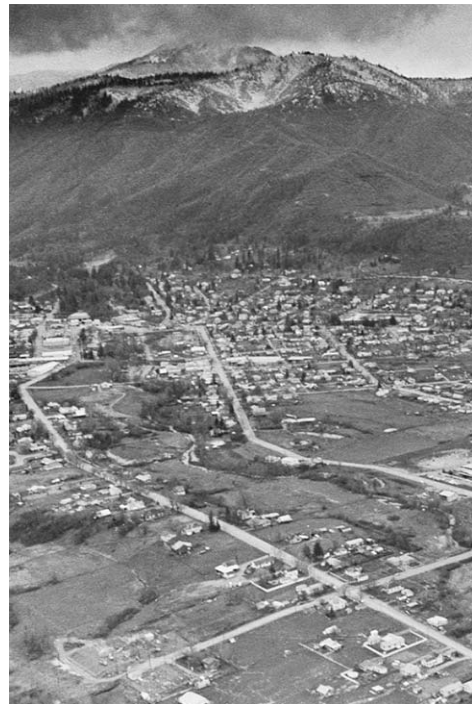
This has been one of the fastest growing regions in the state of Oregon for decades, a trend that probably isn't going to change anytime soon. The demand for space for more people, more business, and more services has had, and will continue to have, repercussions on our region.

For example, some in this valley call farmland an endangered species. This is not to say that our cities have specifically targeted farmland in their growth plans - more often there hasn't been much choice in the matter. Cities share the valley with some of the best agricultural land around.

As cities have grown in this valley, the rural spaces between them have shrunk. Medford and Central Point have actually grown together. Many of the participants in this project are concerned about the prospect of this valley becoming a single, unbroken, unchanging urban stretch from Ashland to Central Point to Eagle Point.

With growth issues especially, we are finding that many decisions made within single communities can have impacts on the communities around them, and on the larger region. In addition, impacts can flow the other way too, from the regional level to the community one. We need a way of making cooperation between jurisdictions more of a way of life than it is right now.

Finally, the region is facing what many describe as a transportation crisis, caught in a situation of overwhelming need and minimal funding. While not much more than time and an upturn in the economy can help with our present situation, the only way to avoid being caught in a similar trap in the future is to plan transportation needs well in advance. To do that, we need to know where our growth will occur well into the future.



WHY this area?

In short, this is where the people are. At first glance Jackson County may seem large. At 2,800 square miles, or 1.8 million acres there should be plenty of room for this **NOWx2** population of 270,000. But 80 percent of the county is forest resource land, and half of the county is actually owned by the federal government. So what's left for us?

Increasingly, the answer has been the narrow center of the county, the flat land and rolling hills of the Bear Creek Valley. Historically, this is where commerce settled, where major cross-roads developed and where more and more people made their homes and built their lives. Right now 70 percent of the county's population lives within the valley.

The communities within the valley have a history of working together on regional issues such as drinking water systems, waste water treatment, transportation and air quality. **NOWx2** capitalizes on these long-standing relationships. ■



Where are we going to grow (and not grow)?

We began this project by identifying lands that appeared to offer the most value to the region by staying rural, due to their agricultural importance or their role in providing space between cities. From there, each city was asked to outline the areas that appeared to have potential for future urban growth, avoiding, where possible, the generally recommended "non-growth" areas.

Where is the best farmland?

A special committee, the Resource Lands Review Committee, worked with computer models, surveys, and their own extensive agriculture experience to draw rough maps for cities to use to guide their initial selections of growth areas. As the cities came back with ideas, the resource committee more closely reviewed each proposed growth area. Members were looking to conserve land that: has been agriculturally viable in the past and/or is agriculturally viable at present and/or has a strong likelihood of being agriculturally viable in the future.

Many factors were considered in the identification of important farmlands. Markets, economies, management, competition, location, climatic factors, soil quality, and the potential for future crops are just some of the considerations that can play into a decision about what should and should not continue long term as farmland. The committee members' recognized expertise and

local experience in farm and forestry has been extremely useful in producing practical recommendations.

The committee's review is guided by state law, which requires preservation of important agriculture land for continued farm uses. You can see the results of their work on the color maps. The Resource Lands Review Committee's recommended agriculture areas show up in red striping. These are the areas that the Committee recommends should not be urbanized.

Remember these are recommendations, and still await ratification or potential modification by the Policy Committee. In addition, there may be a need for the Policy Committee, faced with a sufficiently compelling urban-based justification, to recommend an area for future urban growth even though it is recognized as part of the commercial resource lands base.

Where else do we not want to grow?

Cities — and ultimately the people living in them and near them — need some room. Community Buffer Areas create space around cities, protecting each city's identity and preserving the valley's many transitions between urban, suburban, and rural. The Citizen Involvement Committee, which drew these buffers, wanted to answer an often-heard concern: "We don't want this valley to end up looking like something out of California, where you never really know when you are leaving one city and entering another." Buffers would be preserved through existing zoning - no new restrictions would have to be imposed.

The proposed buffers are in orange on the maps. There are two kinds:

Rural Buffer: Open areas, often farms, that provide a marked contrast with urban areas; and

Urban Buffer: A point along a densely populated unincorporated area that borders a city boundary, or along the shared boundary between two cities (Medford and Central Point). Architectural features or design standards could be used to achieve the separation effect here, since no rural lands remain.

Where do we want to grow?

On the maps, suggested growth areas show up in green. Some cities are showing more potential growth areas than others. Reasons for these difference vary. Sometimes steep slopes, major transportation routes, or farmland limit proposed growth areas. In some communities, a local desire to grow, or not to grow, drives the recommendations. Some of the areas that have been suggested may be important in improving the efficiency of city services, strengthening the transportation system, enhancing existing neighborhoods, or making better use of urban land already within a city.

As they stand right now, the potential growth areas, even without counting the areas with the most significant agricultural concerns, add up to at least enough land to accommodate our NOWx2 doubling of the current valley population — 270,000 people.

Adoption of this plan would streamline the approval process for cities needing to expand their urban

growth boundaries. Of course, many of the potential growth areas are likely to remain undeveloped for many years given the long-range nature of NOWx2 planning. Indeed, some of the areas may remain outside city development for the next 50 years.

By setting out growth areas now, development can occur now, next year, and for years to come in ways that support growth in the more distant future. Everything from roads to parks to water systems can be planned and built with greater efficiency. That saves public money while enhancing public service.

Where are we on the other project work?

In addition to mapping buffers and growth areas, the committees have also been busy with other aspects of the regional plan, such as cataloging regional open space, drafting a policy for city and county joint management of the future growth areas, and devising a regional standard on agricultural buffering between farms and residential developments. There will be opportunities for public discussion and evaluation of everything you see here, including the additional work we couldn't fit onto these pages, beginning in January 2003. The review process is described on page 11.

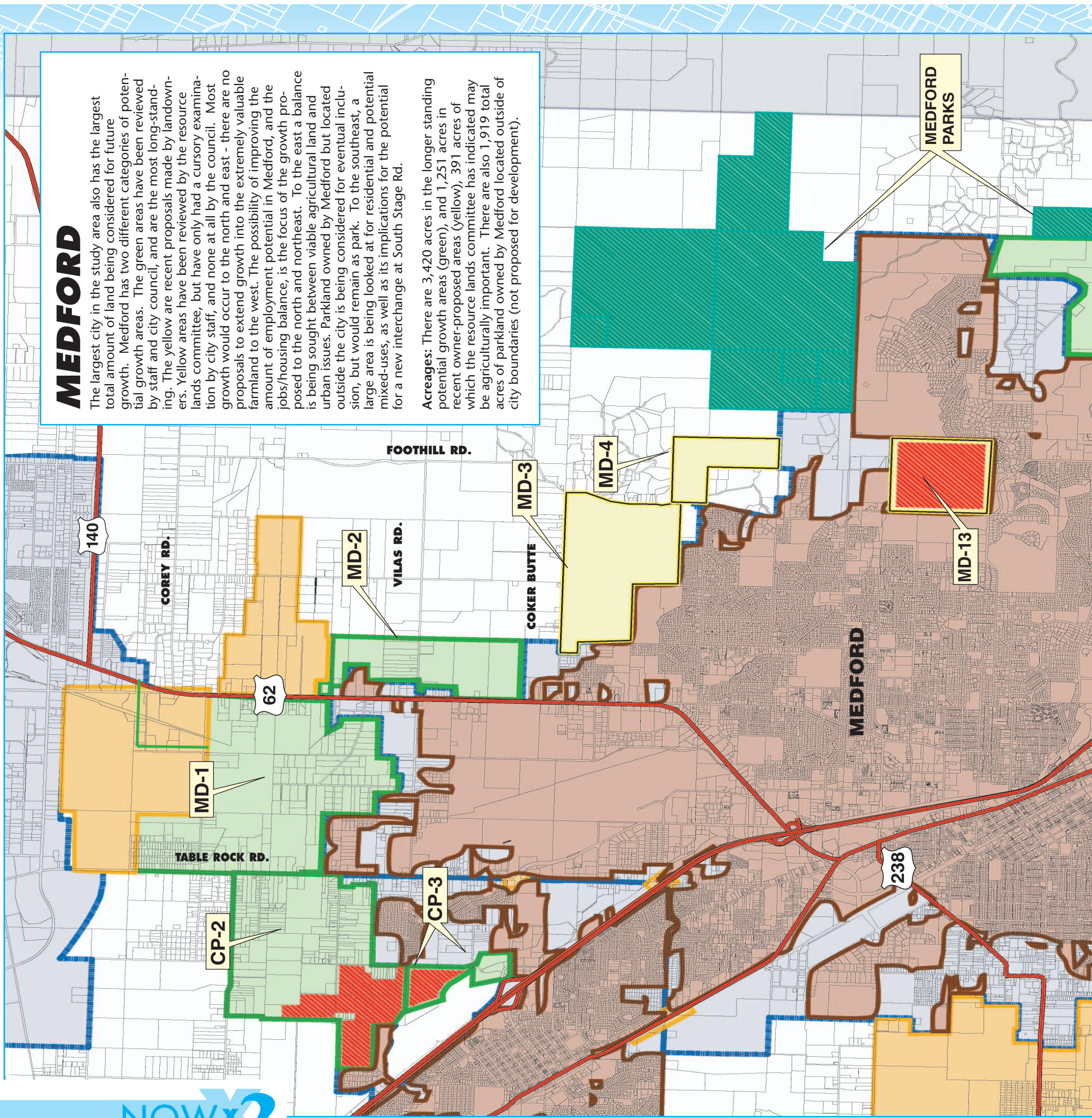
Who's been doing all this work? The role and makeup of all the committees working on NOWx2 is on page 7. ■

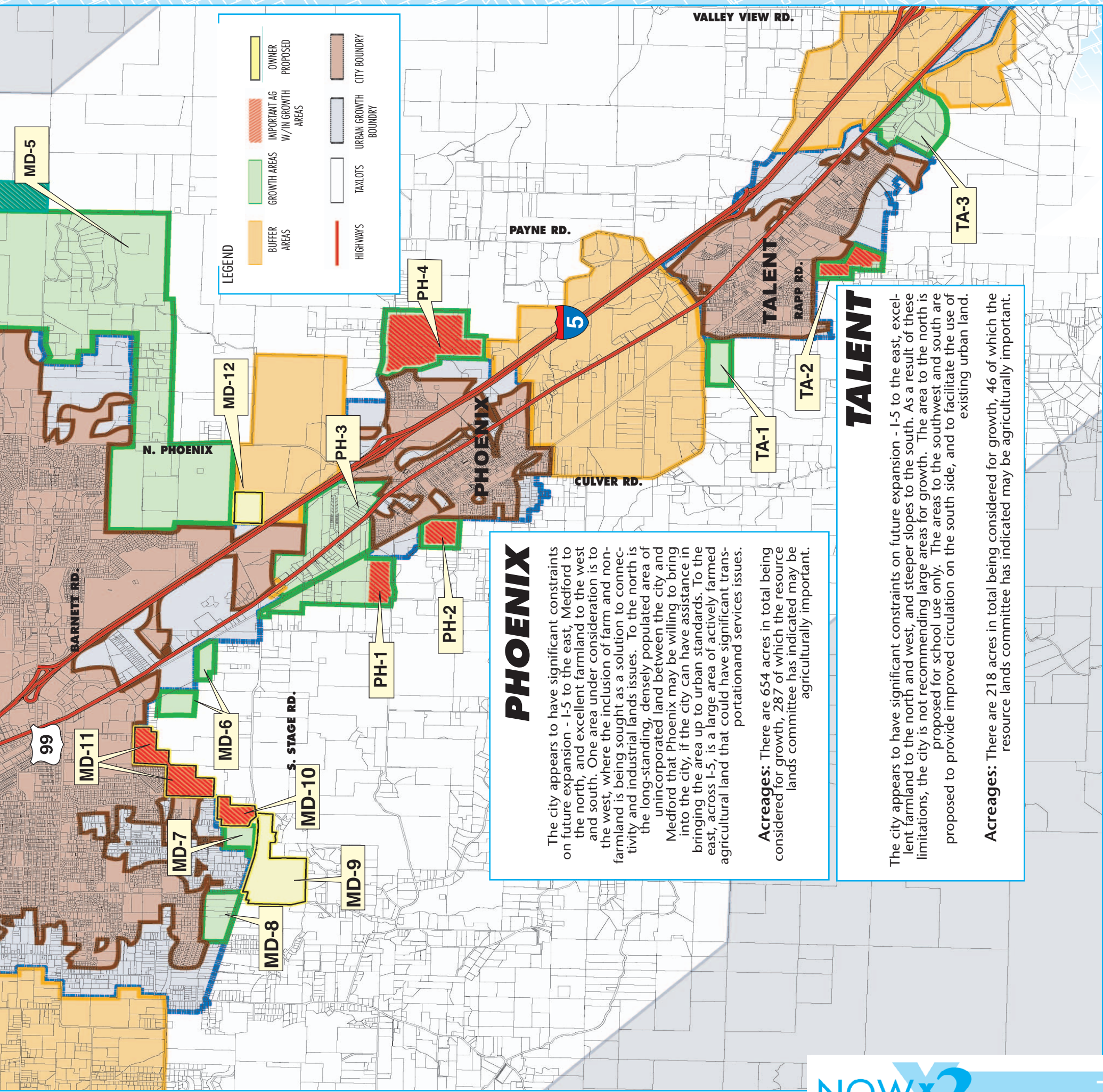


MEDFORD

The largest city in the study area also has the largest total amount of land being considered for future growth. Medford has two different categories of potential growth areas. The green areas have been reviewed by staff and city council, and are the most long-standing. The yellow areas are recent proposals made by landowners. Yellow areas have been reviewed by the resource lands committee, but have only had a cursory examination by city staff, and none at all by the council. Most growth would occur to the north and east - there are no proposals to extend growth into the extremely valuable farmland to the west. The possibility of improving the amount of employment potential in Medford, and the jobs/housing balance, is the focus of the growth proposed to the north and northeast. To the east a balance is being sought between viable agricultural land and urban issues. Parkland owned by Medford but located outside the city is being considered for eventual inclusion, but would remain as park. To the southeast, a large area is being looked at for residential and potential mixed-uses, as well as its implications for the potential for a new interchange at South Stage Rd.

Acreages: There are 3,420 acres in the longer standing potential growth areas (green), and 1,251 acres in recent owner-proposed areas (yellow), 391 acres of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important. There are also 1,919 total acres of parkland owned by Medford located outside of city boundaries (not proposed for development).





PHOENIX

The city appears to have significant constraints on future expansion - I-5 to the east, Medford to the north, and excellent farmland to the west and south. One area under consideration is to the west, where the inclusion of farm and non-farm land is being sought as a solution to connectivity and industrial lands issues. To the north is the long-standing, densely populated area of unincorporated land between the city and Medford that Phoenix may be willing to bring into the city, if the city can have assistance in bringing the area up to urban standards. To the east, across I-5, is a large area of actively farmed agricultural land that could have significant transportation and services issues.

Acreages: There are 654 acres in total being considered for growth, 287 of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important.

TALENT

The city appears to have significant constraints on future expansion - I-5 to the east, excellent farmland to the north and west, and steeper slopes to the south. As a result of these limitations, the city is not recommending large areas for growth. The area to the north is proposed for school use only. The areas to the southwest and south are proposed to provide improved circulation on the south side, and to facilitate the use of existing urban land.

Acreages: There are 218 acres in total being considered for growth, 46 of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important.

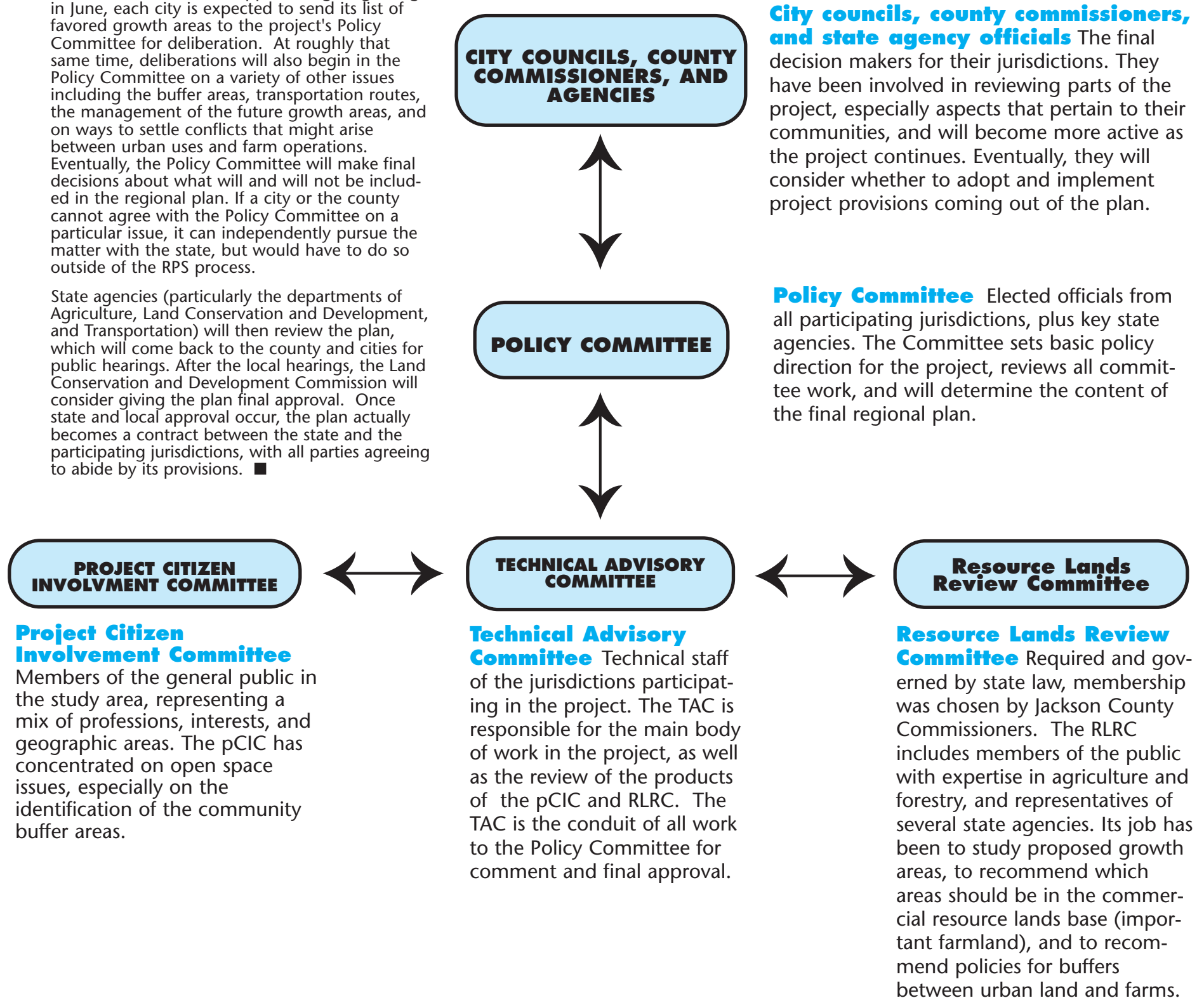
How is this project structured?

How will decisions be made?

All work so far is in the form of recommendations - no final decisions have been made. Nonetheless, the time for decisions is approaching. Beginning in June, each city is expected to send its list of favored growth areas to the project's Policy Committee for deliberation. At roughly that same time, deliberations will also begin in the Policy Committee on a variety of other issues including the buffer areas, transportation routes, the management of the future growth areas, and on ways to settle conflicts that might arise between urban uses and farm operations. Eventually, the Policy Committee will make final decisions about what will and will not be included in the regional plan. If a city or the county cannot agree with the Policy Committee on a particular issue, it can independently pursue the matter with the state, but would have to do so outside of the RPS process.

State agencies (particularly the departments of Agriculture, Land Conservation and Development, and Transportation) will then review the plan, which will come back to the county and cities for public hearings. After the local hearings, the Land Conservation and Development Commission will consider giving the plan final approval. Once state and local approval occur, the plan actually becomes a contract between the state and the participating jurisdictions, with all parties agreeing to abide by its provisions. ■

Committees and stakeholders have played important roles in the project.



Who can you talk to in your community?

Name	Jurisdiction	Phone Number	Email Address
Alan DeBoer, Mayor	Ashland	488-6002	awdb@aol.com
John McLaughlin, Planning Director	Ashland	488-5305	mclaughj@ashland.or.us
Ken Gerschler, Community Planner	Central Point	664-3321 ext. 293	keng@ci.central-point.or.us
Tom Humphrey, Planning Director	Central Point	664-3321 ext. 230	tomh@ci.central-point.or.us
Garey Walruff, Councilor	Eagle Point	826-4212	no e-mail address available
David Hussell, City Administrator	Eagle Point	826-4212	davidhussell@cityofeaglepoint.org
Jim Lewis, Mayor	Jacksonville	899-1231	jvillemayor@charter.net
Paul Wyntergreen, City Administrator	Jacksonville	899-1231	jvillepaul@charter.net
Lindsay Berryman, Mayor	Medford	774-2000	cnclmed@ci.medford.or.us
Mark Gallagher, Principal Planner	Medford	774-2382	mark.gallagher@ci.medford.or.us
Don Walker, City Administrator	Phoenix	535-1955	phoenixcityadm@aol.com
Jeannell Wyntergreen, Comprehensive Planner	Phoenix	535-2050	jwplanning@wave.net
Marian Telerski, Mayor	Talent	535-1566	telerski@internetcds.com
Kevin Cronin, City Planner	Talent	535-7401	kevin@cityoftalent.org
Sue Kupillas, Commissioner	Jackson County	774-6119	KupillSC@jacksoncounty.org
Raul Woerner, Planner III	Jackson County	774-6918	woernerg@jacksoncounty.org
Laura Hodnett, Public Information Coordinator	Medford Water Commission	774-2436	laurah@ci.medford.or.us
Chuck Root, Manager	Bear Creek Valley Sanitary Authority	779-4144	croot@bcvsa.org
Michael Cavallaro, Project Manager	Rogue Valley Council Of Governments	664-6676 ext. 203	mcavallaro@rvcog.org

Making Our Own Rules

On the web

A copy of this NOW*2 publication, complete with maps, is available on the Rogue Valley Council of Governments web site:
www.rvcog.org.

Also, more information about the Regional Problem Solving project is on our web site. Click on Greater Bear Creek Valley Regional Problem Solving.

NOW*2 is a Regional Problem Solving project. The Oregon Legislature set up Regional Problem Solving to help regions address land-use issues particular to a local area. Communities identify a problem, or set of problems, that state land use laws don't address, and then collaborate on a solution.

In the Greater Bear Creek Valley, issues stem from cities growing in close proximity to one another and to the region's best farmland. The Regional Problem Solving process gives the valley certain freedoms to find new ways to manage land and development.

For example, one state rule designed to protect farmland could have the opposite effect here. The rule says residential land in

a rural area has a high priority to be developed into urban land. This rule protects farms in a place like the Willamette Valley, with large tracts of uninterrupted farmland. In Jackson County, however, we have a lot of residential land sprinkled out among some of our best and most productive farms and orchards. Strictly applying the state rule here in some cases would force cities to grow into farmland simply because there were concentrations of rural housing nearby. Meanwhile, less valuable resource land would have to remain undeveloped.

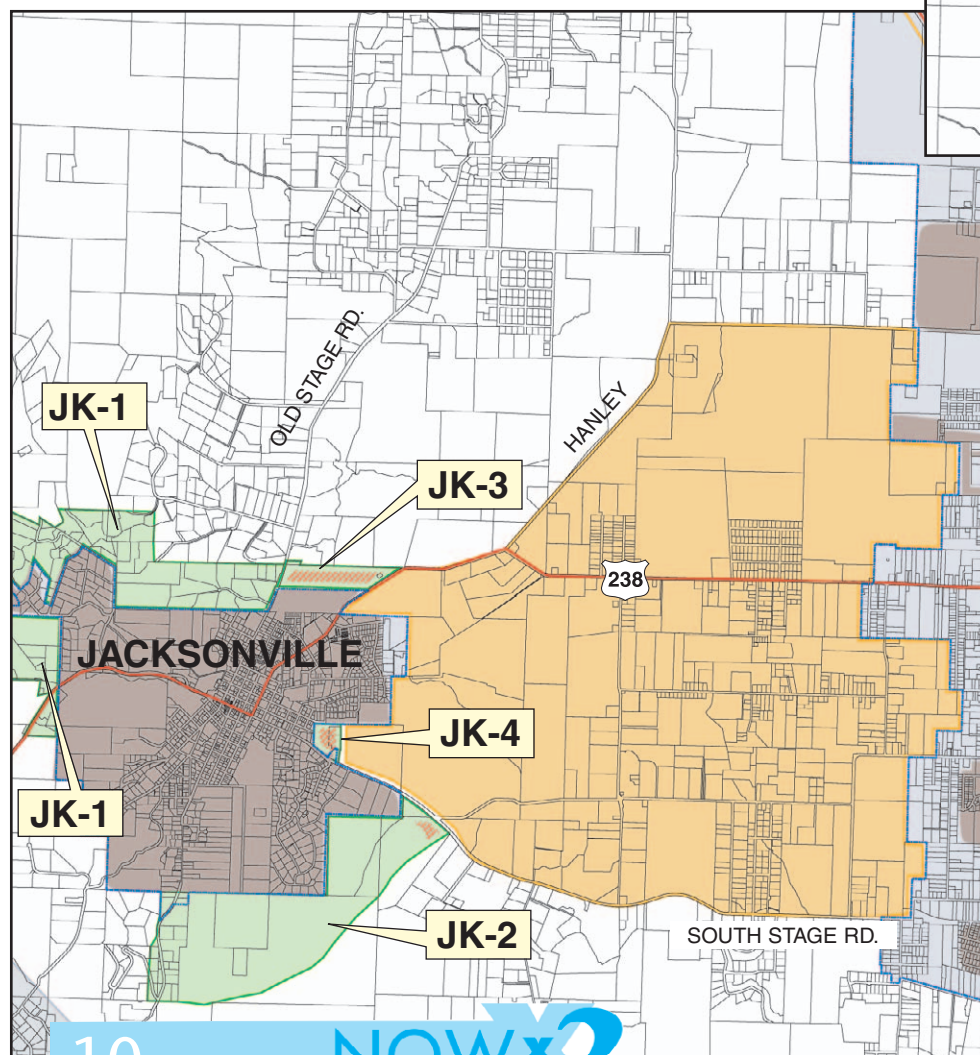
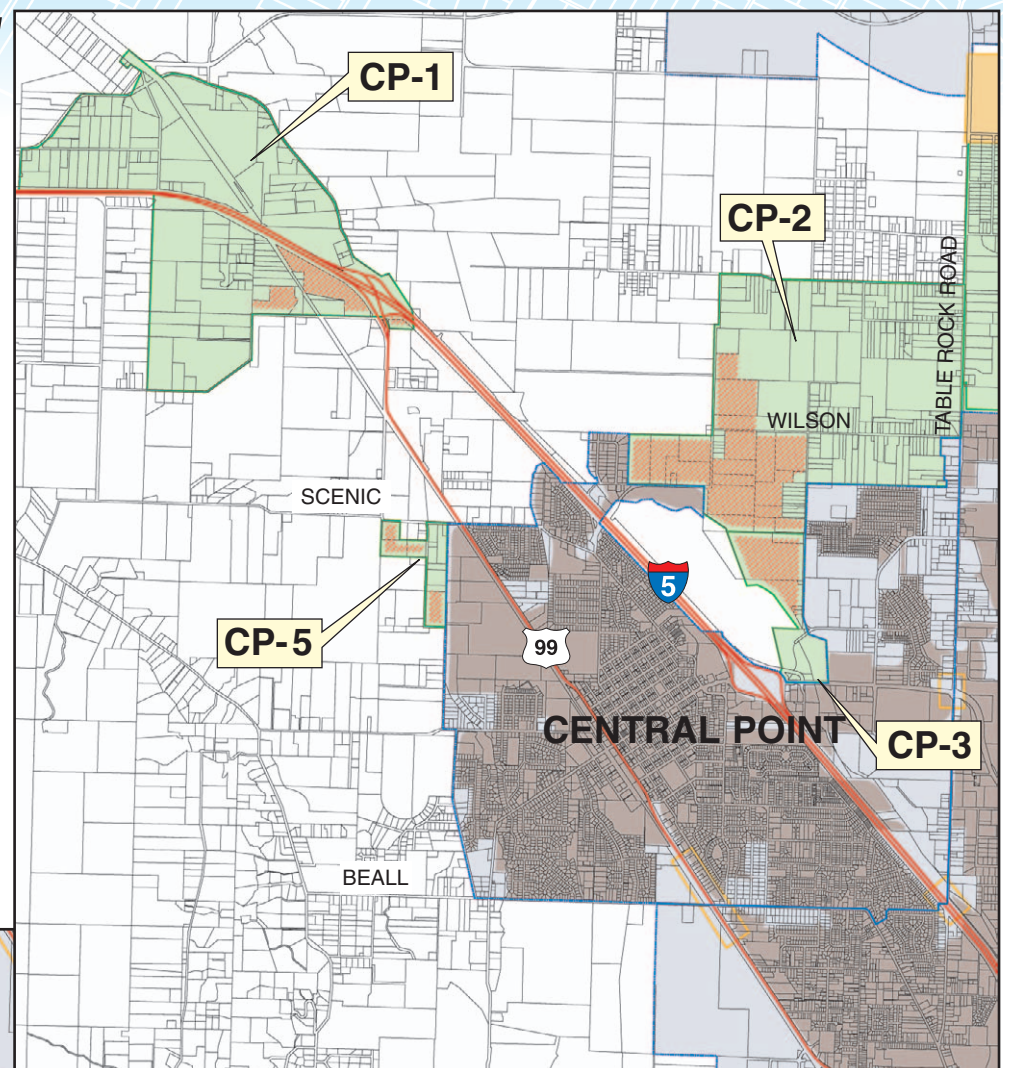
Regional Problem Solving allows us to say 'No' to this kind of decision making, and devise rules that make sense here.

Clearly, our cities are giving up some of their autonomy if they come together under a regional plan. Yet by acting alone, individually, they may not be any more likely to solve all of their problems, much less avoid the impacts of decisions by their neighbors. In the end, autonomy lost by collaborating may actually be autonomy gained. ■

CENTRAL POINT

The city is constrained by Medford to the east and south, by excellent agricultural land to the west and north, and by vernal pools and a fairly densely settled area of rural residential land to the north. Although growth to the west and northwest is limited by the high quality farmland, there is a growth area to the northwest with poor-quality soil, beyond the quality agricultural areas, that is being considered. How this area could resolve the development pressure it might put on the intervening farmland, and how it might mitigate the transportation implications of its development, need to be considered. The other major growth area for the city could be to the north, although agricultural issues play a part there, too. The Expo and related county land are also factors in the remaining Central Point options being studied.

Acres: There are 1,745 acres in total being considered for growth, 304 acres of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important.



LEGEND



JACKSONVILLE

The city continues to pursue a need to provide an alternate route around the city for heavy through traffic, while at the same time dealing with difficult terrain, some agricultural issues, the old dump site to the south, and a great deal of settled rural residential areas on its periphery. Development consistent with the city's special character will mean that new growth areas would probably be, on average, of lesser density than other communities in the valley.

Acres: There are 652 acres in total being considered for growth, 49 acres of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important.

When should you get involved?

In a word, Now. As you can see, NOWx2 has produced a lot of ideas and recommendations for preserving the flavor of the Greater Bear Creek Valley as communities grow. More than 100 people - citizens, elected officials, specialists of varied expertise - have participated on the project committees. More ideas, more voices will help to fine tune these ideas, tempering proposals with a greater understanding of what individuals and the larger community thinks is important. The names of project contacts are provided on page 9 so you can call or e-mail for information, and so you can find out dates and times of the meetings in your community. A six-month city review period is expected to begin in January. The public input cities receive will certainly contribute to the outcome.

When will we know more about this review process?

We're working on a variety of ways to draw the public into the review process. Look for:

- ◆ Public displays in city halls and libraries;
- ◆ More work with local media to help get the word out;
- ◆ NOWx2 information packets at local gathering places (cafes, grocery stores, community centers);
- ◆ Wider distribution of the survey included in this newsletter;
- ◆ Public forums where people can ask questions of staff and elected officials;
- ◆ Presentations to community groups;
- ◆ Mailings (in utility bills, newsletters) to get the information out; and
- ◆ City council and planning commission meetings.

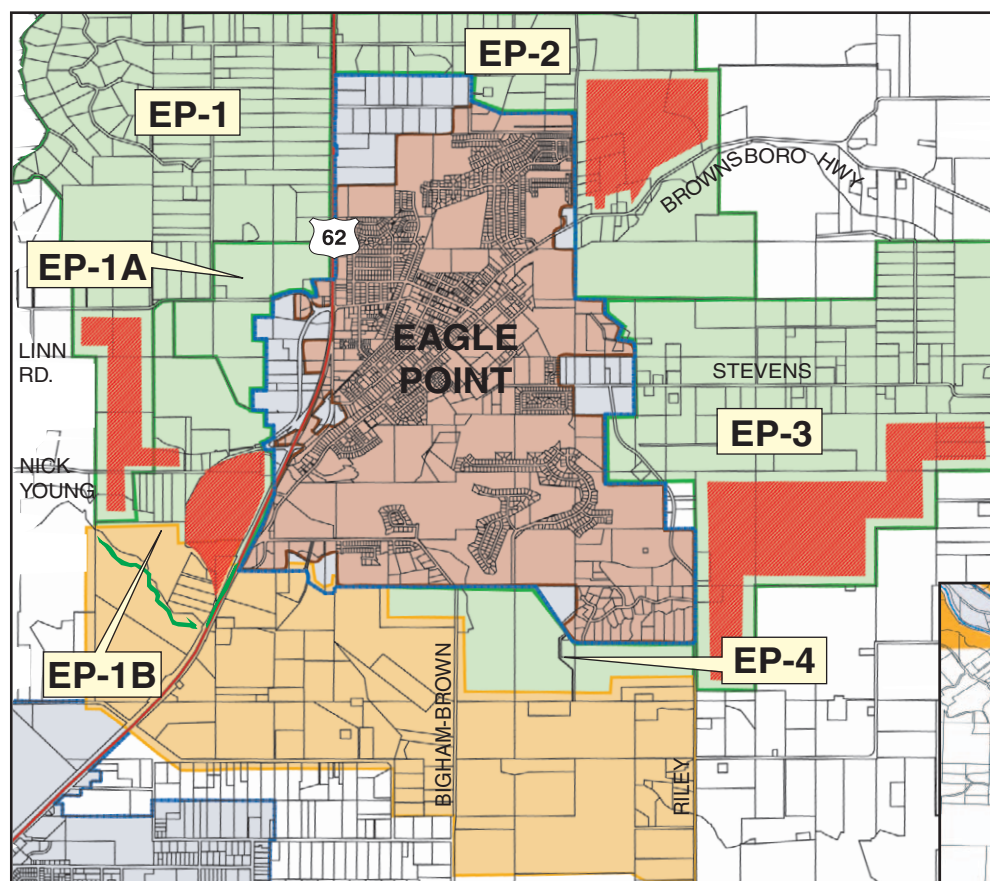
When will this project be finished?

That is the toughest question of all. Because of the significance of what the cities and the county are trying to do, it is more important that everyone feel comfortable with the plan than it is to meet an arbitrary deadline. Yet participants are committed to having a real and useful regional plan, not an unending planning process.

By next June, the Policy Committee should begin deliberations on the various plan elements, a process that probably will go into late winter or early spring 2004. The draft regional plan could be ready by late spring 2004, and approved by the participating jurisdictions by fall 2004. A state-approved plan may come back to us in early 2005. We are all working hard to make sure the product is worth the wait. ■

Survey Questions

1. Where do you live? What is your Zip Code? _____ In the County ☐ In the City of _____
2. After learning more about this project, how likely do you think it is that we can keep this valley livable and beautiful even with twice as many people as we have right now?
☐ extremely ☐ very ☐ somewhat ☐ not very ☐ forget it ☐ no idea
3. If your city (or the part of the county in which you live) had a choice of how much it grows in the future, what would you like to see?
☐ fast growth ☐ moderate growth ☐ slow growth ☐ no growth ☐ don't care
4. In planning for our valley's future, how important do you think it is to protect good agricultural land from being built on?
☐ very important ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important ☐ don't care
5. How important do you think it is to maintain a buffer of rural land between cities so they don't grow into each other?
☐ very important ☐ somewhat important ☐ not important ☐ don't care
6. If we're going to conserve farmland and open space, we may have to make the most of the land within our cities. How much of an increase in the use of smaller lots, duplexes, townhouses, and apartments within our cities would you be comfortable with to achieve this?
☐ big increase ☐ moderate increase ☐ slight increase ☐ none ☐ too much already ☐ don't care

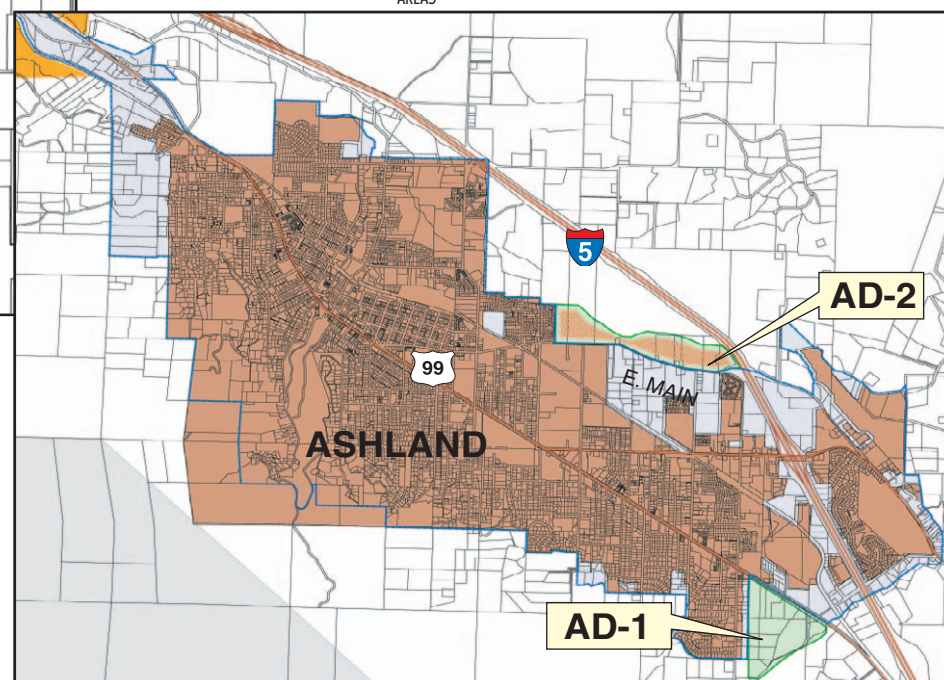


EAGLE POINT

Eagle Point has the highest percentage of growth areas compared to its present size, but has a number of potential issues with traffic, slopes, wetlands, and agricultural lands. Future growth to the west of Hwy. 62 may require expensive improvements to Hwy. 62; slope could be an issue to the west and east of the city; wetlands may restrict growth to the south; and agricultural land is primarily an issue to the northeast and southeast.

Acreages: There are 3,652 acres in total being considered for growth, 866 acres of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important.

LEGEND



ASHLAND

The city appears to have significant constraints on future expansion - I-5 to the east, Talent to the north, steep slopes to the south, and resource lands to the southeast. The area to the south may represent the farthest extension of the city in that direction. The other remaining area between the city and I-5 represents one of the last areas of buildable county land on the Ashland side of the highway.

Acreages: There are 187 acres in total being considered for growth, 96 of which the resource lands committee has indicated may be agriculturally important.

Please clip out and mail this completed survey

Survey Questions

← continued from other side

7. How much would you be willing to spend a year in additional taxes to purchase important regional open space (including buffers)?
☐ \$200 ☐ \$150 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ less than \$50 ☐ \$0 ☐ don't care
8. Do you think that neighboring cities should plan cooperatively and share decision-making responsibilities on certain growth issues, even if it means that each city might not get exactly what it prefers?
☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no ☐ don't care
9. Do you think citizens have enough opportunity to get involved in planning for the future?
☐ yes ☐ maybe ☐ no ☐ don't care
10. Which of the potential growth areas from the maps seem to make the MOST sense to you? Please mark up to 6, using the coding for each growth area (for example, EP-1) () () () () () ()
11. Which of the potential growth areas from the maps seem to make the LEAST sense to you? Please mark up to 6, using the coding for each growth area (for example, EP-1) () () () () () ()