Choices for the Future

The Willamette Valley

Prepared for:
The Citizens of the Willamette Valley

Prepared by:
The Willamette Valley Livability Forum

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This document was developed by the ***Willamette Valley Livability Forum***, a voluntary consortium of citizen leaders and representatives of businesses, non-profit organizations, and local, state, and federal governments. The Forum was created in December 1996 by Governor John Kitzhaber to identify and promote solutions to the growth and development issues that face Willamette Valley communities. This report represents completion of the first phase of the Forum's work. It brings together the results of the Forum's valley-wide survey of citizen attitudes regarding growth-related issues, its 50-year vision for the Valley's future, and research on issues and trends from a variety of sources. The report also contains recommended actions as important next steps toward achieving a preferred future.

The Forum hopes to continue its efforts to build partnerships among Valley leaders and decision makers through additional collaborative planning activities and public outreach. In doing so, the Forum seeks to enhance the collective understanding of the Willamette Valley as a region and community and to facilitate the development of regional approaches that will assist in achieving a shared vision of the future.

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Introduction

This report is about choices.

You make choices every day. When to get up. Where to work. What to do with your kids. What to have for dinner. Whether to drive or walk to the store. What to do on the weekend.

Communities also must make choices every day. Bigger choices. Whether to build or fix a road. Whether to allow a mall to be built. How to finance a new school. How to squeeze in all the people who want to live in their community—and still protect the farms, forests, wildlife and waters—and leave a cushion to absorb future growth.

This report gives you an opportunity to join community leaders throughout the Willamette Valley in making some of the toughest choices those of us who live in and love the Valley have ever faced. It's about deciding what we can do ***now*** to make sure that this Valley remains healthy, green, livable, diverse, and the important economic center it is—for the next 50 years.

We love it here. But we know that all isn't perfect in our Eden. The evidence is everywhere. Houses encroach on some of the best farmland in the world. Our jobs are farther from our homes. Our roads are full. Native fish are disappearing. Buildings are blocking our favorite views. There are just more ***people*** around. It's called growth, and it's a concern—an enormous one.

Fortunately, as you know, Oregonians don't sit around and wait for things to ***happen*** to them. They think, talk, choose, and act to preserve what makes Oregon special.

That's why in 1996 Governor John Kitzhaber created the Willamette Valley Livability Forum. He assembled 88 business, government, community, and citizen leaders—farmers, high-tech executives, mayors, and more—creative thinkers who put their diverse experiences and abilities to work for a common purpose: to envision a better Valley. The two-year effort of this diverse group produced the document you are now reading: *The Willamette Valley Choices for the Future.* It's the big picture. It traces some of the choices that have gotten us where we are today and identifies important trends already occurring that will shape our reality for the next 50 years. Most important, it proposes a vision of how that future could be better and recommends actions we can take now to help us get there. Our choice is simply to accept the trends or to use our combined creativity and commitment to make a different, better future.

This is not the first time residents of the Valley have been asked to consider choices for the future. Just over 25 years ago, Oregon's visionary former Governor Tom McCall commissioned a landmark report titled *The Willamette Valley Choices for the Future.*

That report challenged us to protect the best—farmland, forests, even favorite views—while managing how we grow. Within a year after the report was published, Oregonians created the

nation's first statewide land use planning and growth management program, one that Oregonians have consistently supported.

Now we're at the next major turning point. Our choices over the past 25 years have brought us closer to the better future envisioned in the 1972 report. But, as you'll read, we continue to face immense challenges. More than 1.7 million additional people likely will live in the Valley by the year 2050—people who will move here and the children of those who live here now. Where will they live, work, and play? What will happen to the other species that live here—the threatened salmon, the deer, the birds, the endangered native plants, and wildlife?

To make the future better, the Forum proposes that we embrace a values system like that of the Native Americans who had ancestral homelands in the Valley. A basic premise of that system is that everything in nature is interconnected.

In this report, the Forum presents information about the Willamette Valley and its people and prosperity under six key elements of livability: land use, water/environment, transportation, community, economy, and decision making. However, like the Native Americans, we must recognize that each of these elements is connected to and interacts with every other element to determine the health of our physical environment and communities. Any decision or choice made in one area affects the others and overall livability in the Valley.

This report on the state of the Valley, including the vision for its future, is not a blueprint; it doesn't specify what we must do to ensure a more livable Valley in the year 2050. Instead, it's meant to stimulate discussion and help build consensus. It presents the challenges we face and a general framework within which to address them. It will get you thinking. What do you need? What do you want? What will the natural systems in the Valley support? What will work for the greatest good? How can you help? Please think about these questions as you read.

Then get involved in the solutions. Thinking and talking about problems and challenges and suggesting answers are important. But the next steps—deciding on the actions that will get us where we want to be and then taking them—are even more important. The Forum is suggesting some actions we can take. Look them over and take the time to talk with your elected officials and community leaders about them, the issues the report raises, and your desires for the Valley's future. Also, please fill out the response form at the end of the report and send it to the Forum. It's another way to contribute to this Valley-wide discussion.

Then in another 25 years we'll evaluate how we've done and what we can do better. No doubt we'll write another Choices for the Future. It is essential that we continue our practice of envisioning and planning for our future, not letting it just happen to us.

The year 2050 sounds like it's a long way away. It is, when we focus on our daily routines. But it's not far off when it comes to building communities, protecting our environment and planning for our future. That's why this report, and the planning process it represents, is so important. It gives us an opportunity few others have: to manage growth in a way that enhances the future livability in the Valley.

The Legacy We Inherited

Before we consider the choices we must make to safeguard the future of the Willamette Valley, we need some history. How did we get to where we are today? How have people lived, changed, and prospered here? What lessons can we learn from the past?

As we explore the Valley's past, several fundamental currents emerge.

One is that this is the Valley of a mighty river—one that carves the landscape and colors all activity in the region. It brings soil to the Valley floor, nurtures plants and wildlife, and provides water for drinking, irrigation, recreation, and industry. It's an essential transportation artery along which cities have grown and on which goods are transported.

And it was—and still is—beautiful.

It is also clear that life in the Valley is ever-changing. Natural forces, humans, animals, plants—all combine to alter the Valley's environment. It's also obvious that, with a few remarkable exceptions, the Valley's population has grown steadily and moderately since the 1850s. We can tell that we must be vigilant to protect this vibrant, yet fragile, Valley. To do so, we must collaborate to create and implement a vision that allows people to continue to live prosperously in this special place.

The First Humans Arrive

The first humans arrived in the Valley about 10,000 years ago. Some lived here year-round; others visited the Valley to trade, harvest foods in season, or just to survive especially harsh winters. Naturally, they clustered near the river. They relied on nuts, berries, and roots. They also hunted game and fished for salmon at Hyas Tyee Tumwater—what Euro-American settlers later named Willamette Falls near Oregon City.

Then the river roamed broadly through its basin. The Valley floor was thickly wooded, interspersed with wetlands, prairies, and clusters of hardy oaks. Those first humans began the process of changing the Valley landscape to meet their needs, a process that has accelerated ever since. They used fire as a tool to manage the landscape. Their periodic burning suppressed invading shrubs and tree seedlings, thereby maintaining the oak and grassland savanna favored by deer and elk. The burning also helped improve habitat for the most important edible plants—berries, camas, tarweed, and acorns.

The Valley's abundant resources, mild climate, and location between the coastal and inland peoples made it a natural economic and transportation center—just as it is today.

Most of those who lived here were called the Kalapuyans. Historians believe they had several names for the river that was their lifeline, including *Spill Water* and *River With No Sides*. Some of the natives named it the *River of Life*. Certainly for the Kalapuyans, and the many other people who have relied on the river for thousands of years, that is precisely what it was.

The First Euro-Americans

(early- to mid-1800s)

Until the early 1800s, the Kalapuyans were joined by few Euro-Americans—just traders, missionaries, and trappers seeking beaver pelts for the hats that were fashionable at that time.

Caucasians began to hear about the Valley's many attractions in the early 1800s and settlers began to move in. For the most part, the Native Americans welcomed the white settlers. The Native Americans experience with European and American traders led them to see the settlers as a new source of wealth. Unfortunately, the newcomers brought diseases that nearly destroyed the Native Americans by the mid-1800s. The few survivors were moved by the federal government to the Grand Ronde reservation near what is now Valley Junction, and a way of life and deeply-rooted cultures almost vanished.

As a people who lived lightly on the land, the Native Americans left few lasting marks. Some that are noticeable are the many Valley rivers and locations that bear their tribes' names: Clackamas, Tualatin, Yamhill, Molalla, Luckiamute, Santiam, and Calapooia.

It wasn't until the 1840s that the Valley's appeal became well known, when a land rush and a gold rush converged. First came waves of settlers, most of them farmers, drawn by promises of free homesteads in Oregon. Between 1840 and 1860, 53,000 immigrants reached Oregon's valleys, traveling by wagon over the famous Oregon Trail. Most of them headed for the Willamette Valley. They built their homes where the grasslands and forests touched, out of reach of the rivers' frequent floods and near the game, fuel, and building materials they found in the forests. Soon they began producing lumber, wool, dairy products, and an enormous variety of crops. Yet, very few people lived in the Valley.

Then in 1849 gold was discovered in California. The Valley's new residents understood their opportunity and began producing and exporting agricultural and wood products to the boomtowns to the south. Lumber became Oregon's principal export. New mills and towns to support them sprang up along the banks of the Willamette. The river became a transportation and shipping hub. Later, when the gold rush died, the young lumber industry declined until the turn of the century.

Soon settlers began struggling with the problems of land claims, courts, and organized government. Britain and the United States still jointly occupied the region. But in 1843, Valley representatives formed a provisional government, and in 1849 Oregon was proclaimed to be legally under the authority of the United States. Local political boundaries began to emerge and by 1850 there were seven counties in the Valley. In 1859, Oregon became a state, with its capital, Oregon City, logically located in the Willamette Valley.

The wave of immigration also increased the rate of change in the landscape. Settlers, who intended to build permanent settlements, ended the Native Americans' fire management practices. The prairies were turned into farms and orchards. Creeks were dammed to create irrigation sources and to improve navigability.

The Pace Quickens: The Steamboat and Railroad Era
(1850s to early-1900s)

During the next 50 years, the Valley's population continued to grow rapidly, and Valley communities, still largely agricultural and timber-based, continued to expand. Portland, a transportation and shipping hub, was emerging as the dominant Valley city. Multi-storied buildings and a well-developed inner-city trolley system already were in place by 1910.

Transportation's role in the Valley's transformation became more evident during this time. Steamboats, which began operating on the Willamette in 1850, allowed the population and economy to grow. When locks were installed at Willamette Falls, the steamboats could travel to Valley communities beyond Oregon City—even as far as Eugene if conditions were just right. This important step permitted development of the Valley's fertile interior. Smaller riverboats ventured up the Tualatin, Yamhill, and Long Tom rivers.

Then the trains came. By 1887 Portland and Eugene were linked by rail. This marked the next major era in the Valley's development, dramatically redefining population, transportation, economic, and political centers, as well as altering the landscape. When the railroads arrived, they replaced the steamboat industry and essentially bypassed once-thriving river communities such as Peoria, Lincoln, and Fairfield. New towns sprouted on the rail lines. Moving freight to distant markets became much easier.

The Industrial Era and the Neglected River
(1900s to World War II)

By the turn of the century, the lumber industry began to grow once again and by 1932 Portland was considered the lumber capital of the world. An offshoot—the paper pulp industry—started at this time. Agricultural producers continued to diversify and solidify, and other manufacturing and financial industries were created and began to thrive.

Perhaps ***the*** icon of this era was the car. Unlike the canoe, the horse, the wagon, the riverboat, and even the train—all of which altered the Valley's landscape comparatively little—the car transformed it altogether. By 1923, when Highway 99 was completed, it was possible to drive the full length of the Valley. An expanding network of roads and city streets allowed residents in most Valley communities to travel by car.

Imagine the freedom Valley residents felt! Imagine, also, the consequences of that freedom. For instance, automobile travel reduced people's need for the types of services and facilities that had characterized communities and their economies since the early 1800s. Auto-related businesses replaced community icons such as livery stables and blacksmith shops, as well as the streetcar lines that had linked Oregon City to Portland and the surrounding communities.

Perhaps the most evident effect was the acceleration of a trend the railroads had begun a few decades before: the gradual urbanization of the Valley. By the 1930s most Valley residents lived in cities, particularly Portland. Rural communities were shrinking, even disappearing.

Roads and gasoline-powered vehicles completed the transition away from riverboat trade. Wharves and docks were torn down. Cities, towns, and industries turned their backs on the river. What was once viewed as a lifeline was now used as a disposal area for waste. The worst offenders were municipal sewer systems and pulp plants. As a result, the neglected Willamette became heavily polluted. By the 1930s, the river was almost biologically dead—and certainly unsafe for swimming.

By 1936, Oregon had 48 separate laws relating to water pollution, but these laws were confusing, so compliance and enforcement were negligible. After an opinion piece that appeared in *The Oregonian* in October 1936 pointed out that six cases of typhoid had been traced directly to swimming in the Willamette River or Columbia Slough, Portland's Board of Health banned swimming in the city's rivers.

But residents demanded something better for their river. In November 1938, with frustration over the swimming ban mounting, schoolchildren held a rally outside of Portland's City Hall and demanded action to clean up the river. Later that year, Valley residents used Oregon's new initiative and referendum process to propose— and then pass overwhelmingly—the Water Purification and Prevention of Pollution Bill. The new law imposed strict pollution limits on pulp plants and created tax incentives to help pay for them. Legislation also required every Oregon city to build sewage treatment facilities and banned the dumping of raw sewage into rivers. All of that was very promising, but unfortunately, clean-up efforts stalled with the onset of World War II.

The Clean-Up Begins
(Post-World War II to the early-1970s)

Between 1940 and 1970, another rush doubled the Valley's population. Most of these new residents headed for the cities, continuing the urbanization trend. In 1961, Interstate 5 was completed between Portland and Salem. And Portland continued to cement its reputation as a transportation hub and thriving industrial and seaport city.

But there was a new twist. Instead of moving into the cities themselves, people settled in outlying areas and communities that were a short distance from their jobs. As a result, the urban cores became less dense, while the new suburbs filled. Simultaneously, many smaller, rail-dependent Valley towns shrank or vanished as cars and trucks and better roads made traveling easier and rail shipping less important.

Another development had enormous impacts on the Valley. From the early-1940s to the late-1960s, the Army Corps of Engineers built 13 reservoirs in the Willamette Basin. These provided irrigation water and inexpensive hydropower, and most importantly, minimized the Willamette's damaging floods. This was especially noteworthy after the Memorial Day flood of 1948 destroyed Vanport, a suburban Portland city that had been home to 17,500 people**.** Unfortunately, the dams also contributed to the decline of native migratory fish populations—particularly salmon.

Valley residents became ever more aware of pollution in the rivers and streams. Fortunately, federally funded sewage treatment facilities and other pollution controls helped to restore the Willamette River. However, the increasing volumes of pollutants created by the growing population and industries offset any improvements. Some considered the Willamette the most polluted river in the Northwest and among the dirtiest in the nation.

This captured the attention of a Portland television newscaster named Tom McCall. In 1962, he produced the documentary, *Pollution in Paradise***.** In it, he showed footage of raw sewage and industrial waste pouring from pipes into the Willamette; minnows dying within minutes of being exposed to the river's oxygen-depleted water; and even pollution-tolerant carp, dead and floating on a film of oily scum.

Five years later, in his successful bid for governor, McCall called for stricter pollution laws and a cleaner Willamette. After being elected, he fulfilled those campaign promises. By 1968, all single, identifiable sources of water pollution discharges were regulated by the state. Laws were tightened or rewritten and the Department of Environmental Quality was created to monitor water quality. Legislation creating the Willamette River Greenway Program called for buffers of undeveloped land along both sides of the Willamette, and limited the kinds of development and land uses allowed on its banks.

By mid-1972, Oregon already had achieved under the federal Clean Water Act what Congress required the rest of the nation to achieve by 1977. So successful was the clean-up that in June 1972 the Willamette landed on the front cover of *National Geographic* magazine, which pronounced the Willamette a "river restored."

People around the world began to look to the state for inspired leadership and effective programs. The publicity only increased the Valley's attractiveness and the population continued to surge.

All of this concerned Valley residents, particularly the Governor. It was this concern that caused McCall to utter his famous statement: "I welcome visitors. I urge them to come, and come many times to enjoy the beauties of Oregon. But I also urge them: for heaven's sake, don't move here to live."

The Fight to Save the State's Farms and Forests
(mid-1970s to 1990)

Up until the early 1970s, land use planning in Oregon had been almost entirely a local issue. But as population, sprawl, and pollution grew during the 1960s and early-1970s, residents became alarmed.

To protect what they could of the state's bests—its farm and forest lands, still-rural character, livable cities—Governor McCall and several residents and community leaders launched another far-reaching concept: statewide land use planning. In 1973 the Legislature made it law with the passage of Senate Bill 100.

Oregon's planning program required the state, cities, and counties to develop plans based on prescribed statewide goals. A key component of the program mandated that each city establish an urban growth boundary (UGB) that would mark its urban limits. By the late 1980s, cities' and counties' plans were in place.

Ironically, while the foundation was being laid to reduce urban sprawl, population and employment growth in Oregon and the Valley had slowed considerably as the result of a sharp economic downturn in the early 1980s. Most Valley communities experienced an economic recession and lost a portion of their jobs and population. By 1987 there were signs that the economy was on the rise again, and by the 1990s the Valley's population and economy again were booming.

Considering the mounting impacts generated by growth in the Valley, *National Geographic*'s declaration of victory probably was premature. It was true that significant gains had been made to control pollution entering the Willamette River from industrial and sewage treatment plant discharge pipes. However, not all of the pollution sources were that obvious. Overlooked was the fact that the Valley's waterways collect virtually everything dripped, spilled, or sprayed on the ground. The problem was worsened because the River's natural ability to cleanse itself of these pollutants had been compromised by alterations to its floodplain and the loss of some riverside vegetation.

This is the legacy we've inherited. What can we learn from history and apply to our lives today and to our plans for the future? Perhaps more than anything, we have learned that change is guaranteed and constant and that we need to remain vigilant in responding to the changes to keep the Valley livable.

The Challenges We Face

Now we look at life in the Valley today and the challenges we must face and overcome to create the legacy we want for future generations.

What do we need to do now to preserve or enhance the things we value most about this wonderful place? How can we leave the Valley a better, richer home for our children and grandchildren? Will we create livable urban communities? Will we save our small towns? Will we improve water quality and the health of the Valley's watersheds and save the salmon that rely on them? Will we leave productive farms and forests? Will we reduce our dependence on the automobile? Will we make the public investments to ensure high-quality educational opportunities? Will we solve the housing affordability problem? Will we give future generations a strong base for continued improvement in the livability in the Willamette Valley? Will we be as vigilant as we must be?

Who We Are

First, let's define who *we* Valley residents are. Today, in spring 1999, over 2.3 million people—about 70 percent of Oregon's population—live in the Valley. Despite what Tom McCall urged in 1972, people are coming here—and they're staying. Oregon's strong economy, fabled environment, and quality of life continue to attract them. As a result, since 1970, the Valley's population has increased by approximately 835,000, continuing the steady growth that was predicted over 25 years ago.

However, this growth has occurred faster in the last few years. In fact, the Valley's population growth is outpacing both state and national rates. Between 1970 and 1990, the Valley's population grew at about 1.61 percent per year. Between 1990 and 1998, that jumped, to 1.82 percent. Since 1991, 74 percent of the state's newcomers have settled in the Valley.

About 70 percent of all new Valley residents moved here from other states. Less than half of the people living here are native Oregonians, and approximately one out of seven of us has moved here in the last five years.

You could say that the wagon trains are still rolling in.

The Issues That Concern Us

For hundreds of years, Oregon—and the Willamette Valley in particular—have drawn people with dreams of a better life. And until recently, most people felt that there was plenty of room for everyone.

But today, it's clear that the rapid population growth of the last several years is increasing the competition for space and raising many concerns about future livability in the Valley. By 2050 we expect an additional 1.7 million residents in the Valley—for a total of close to four million people.

That's enough people to add three cities the size of Portland or 13 cities the size of Eugene to the Valley floor.

This growing population is the reason that we are, once again, looking ahead to the future and considering what life in the Valley could be as a result of our choices we make today.

We know that trying to make growth *go away* is not the answer. After all, we want our children to be able to live here. And as long as we work to enhance livability in the Valley, we can expect more people to move here. We also know that we don't want to discourage growth by letting our quality of life decline. So, as far as we know, the number of people living in the Valley inevitably will continue to grow. But ***how*** we grow—how we design and build our communities and how we protect the natural environment—is up to us.

To learn what Valley residents think about growth in their communities and future livability in the Valley, the Forum hired the Portland polling firm of Davis & Hibbitts, Inc. to ask Valley residents how they feel about these complex issues. The pollsters conducted phone interviews of 600 adult residents of Marion and Polk counties; 800 residents of Lane, Linn, Benton, and Yamhill counties; and 150 residents in Columbia County. They also compared data from this and other surveys they had conducted on growth and livability issues in Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties.

There was strong agreement on some important basics. Overwhelmingly, people love and value their Valley communities. About 90 percent were very or somewhat upbeat about their community. When asked what is most important to them about the quality of life in the community they live in, most of them listed a low crime rate, a feeling of personal safety, or good police protection. Next, they valued a closeknit community, including friendly or helpful neighbors—a community that felt comfortable to them. In third place was the notion that their area was fairly rural, not overpopulated, or had a rural or small-town atmosphere. Finishing fourth was the importance of good schools, quality education, and quality school curriculum.

The interviewers then asked survey respondents to consider 16 issues and rank them based on how much they worry about each. The residents of all Valley counties except one—Yamhill—chose the quality of education as their greatest concern. Those in Yamhill County ranked education second to traffic congestion. Overall, the top five issues that Valley residents were most concerned about were: quality of education, crime, traffic, preservation of open space and natural areas, and protection of fish and wildlife.

Finally, Davis & Hibbitts' interviewers asked participants to rate the desirability of 13 different future events and then to rate the probability that each event would happen in their community. Valley residents chose the following four possible outcomes as being most desirable: good air quality and water quality; sufficient supplies of water to support communities, industry, fish, and wildlife; maintaining the unique character and livability of communities in their county; and a significant amount of open space, natural areas, fish and wildlife habitat, and public parklands in their county.

In general, Valley residents were somewhat optimistic that we'll achieve these in the future, although they ranked the likelihood that we'll do so lower than the desirability for each. For more information about the survey, see Appendix A.

Forum members also answered the poll questions. Members of other Valley groups who reviewed the Forum's draft vision provided responses to similar questions. All of the responding groups agreed on many of the most important issues. Clean air and water, preservation of open space and natural resources, and livable communities were the characteristics they valued most about the Willamette Valley. And they identified the following as top concerns:

- Overpopulation,
- Loss of open space and natural areas,
- Quality of the education system, and
- Traffic.

Together, these surveys reveal a lot about how residents feel about life in the Valley. Now let's consider some of the tough challenges we face to preserve these values and resolve the growth-related issues that concern us.

How We Use the Land

Even with the continuing population expansion, our 25-year-old statewide land use program has done what it was designed to do: control urban development and save our farms and forests. Without that protection, the cities in the Valley likely would have grown closer to one another as predicted, and we would have lost thousands of acres of valuable farmland.

Yet, we are hardly complacent. We are concerned about sprawl and unwise and inefficient land use, and the impacts on productive farms and forests, open space, and the health of our watersheds and wildlife habitats. We are also concerned about losing the vitality of **our** downtowns and main streets and the quality of our neighborhoods.

Since we've chosen to protect as much of the forest, farm, and natural resource lands as possible, we know that we have to ensure the best use out of every developable acre to accommodate the Valley's growing population. We ask ourselves what type of development patterns should we encourage and support. With more compact, well-designed, mixed-use development, we may be able to better protect farm and forest lands and open spaces; improve access to jobs, shopping, and entertainment; and enhance the livability of our downtowns and neighborhoods. Continuing low-density development patterns likely will increase commute times and traffic congestion, accelerate the loss of productive agricultural and forest lands, use up open spaces, and erode the unique character of each of our communities.

Those living in the Valley's urban-areas are grappling with the very big and difficult choices affecting how their communities should grow. Unfortunately, with the exception of the Portland metropolitan area, cities are pretty much dealing with growth issues on their own instead of working with neighboring cities and the counties to manage regional growth.

Our four major urban areas along the I-5/Willamette River corridor—Portland, Salem/Keizer, Corvallis/Albany, and Eugene/Springfield—continue to accommodate most of the growth. We are making more efficient use of residential land inside these areas by building higher-density housing. However, single-family, detached homes, including manufactured homes, still dominate the housing mix. Most new residents are moving into single-family houses built on the outer edges of these urban areas or into new developments that are turning small Valley towns near these areas into suburbs.

While we have controlled the rate and location of urban development with the establishment of urban growth boundaries (UGBs), we are quickly using up the land within those boundaries. As that land supply dwindles, we've found short-term solutions by expanding our original UGBs and developing marginal resource lands, floodplains, and *open spaces* inside the boundaries.

As a result, our cities are slowly becoming denser. However, if we continue to develop at current and planned densities over the next 50 years, it is estimated we will need to add 54,000 acres of land inside our UGBs by 2050. That 54,000-acre increase represents about 84 square miles of Valley land.

This would continue another troubling and challenging trend—conversion of agricultural land to residential uses. We can expect that we will need to convert thousands of acres of agricultural land that now lies adjacent to UGBs to urban uses by the year 2050.

Despite our best intentions, new development continues to consume farm and forest lands, and not only through expansion of UGBs. New homes are still approved on the Valley's farm and forest land every year. However, Valley farm and forest lands are much better protected now than before 1993. The tightening of planning laws in 1993 and 1994 significantly reduced the annual number of dwellings approved on better resource lands.

The amount of land dedicated to agriculture remains about the same as it was in 1990 and is likely to remain at approximately 20 percent of the Valley in 2050. The number of farms in the Valley has also remained fairly stable. Yet, the average size of Valley farms continues to decrease. In part, this is because more farmers are growing specialty crops that require less land and because larger parcels are being divided into *hobby* farms: rural acreage that is farmed on a very part-time basis. Three-fourths of the Valley's agricultural sales continue to be generated by less than 10 percent of the Valley's farms.

How We Interact with the Natural World Around Us

It must be obvious to anyone who lives in the Valley that growth will put more pressures on the Valley's natural environment. The soils, water, air, plants, and animals—the elements that support all life in the Valley—are imperiled by the increasing impacts of our growing human population. Fortunately, in the Oregon tradition, many groups, individuals, and local, state, and federal agencies are working to improve the environmental health of the Valley.

Of particular note are organizations that have been formed to help ensure coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and policy makers in the Valley. These include the voluntary watershed councils that exist in nearly all of the tributary basins in the Valley and the new Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI). WRI is a broad-based effort to promote, integrate, and coordinate efforts to protect and restore the health of the Willamette Watershed. A major task of the Initiative is to help write the *Willamette Chapter* of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds (See Appendix C.)

Water

Water—the availability and quality of it—is becoming an ever greater concern in the Valley.

Because there are more of us, the demand for water from the Valley's rivers—for drinking, irrigation, industry, fish and wildlife, recreation, power generation, pollution abatement, and more —is increasing dramatically. Yet, despite our renowned precipitation, we may not have enough water to meet our future needs. Our current efforts to address water supply issues are beginning to focus on the need to better manage our watersheds, coordinate water supply planning, and increase water conservation.

In addition, our health and prosperity are tied to the health of the river. Yet, the quality of the Willamette water is declining. In fact, the river is considered only *marginally healthy* for drinking, irrigation, recreation, and wildlife. The main reason for marginal health is surface water runoff. As the Willamette and its tributaries flow through forests, farms, and urban areas, they collect the pesticides, motor oil, and other chemicals that we apply at home and work. Although we lack an effective system to track contaminants, identify their sources, and determine when dangers exist, we know that all of us will have to take part in restoring the river.

Also, some Valley communities still discharge raw sewage into the Willamette and its tributaries during emergencies. The City of Portland is spending millions of dollars to prevent these "combined sewage outflows."

Willamette water quality becomes even more of an issue because some Valley cities—notably Tigard and Wilsonville—are considering developing the Willamette River as a water supply source.

This *River of Life*, so vital in the lives of the 2.3 million people who live here—is in peril once again. As you read in the first chapter, Valley residents have polluted and then cleaned up the river twice before. We need to clean it up again.

The Natural Environment

The health of the Valley's natural habitats and native plant and wildlife species also is deteriorating. Since 1850, Valley residents have converted wetlands and streamside vegetation to other uses. We still are. Three percent of the Valley's remaining wetlands (approximately 6,549 acres)

was lost between 1982 and 1994, despite a state policy of no net loss of such important areas. We have destroyed 99 percent of the Valley's original wet prairie grasslands and 72 percent of its bottomland hardwood forests. Twenty-six native plant and animal species have lost more than half of their habitat since 1850.

In addition, by ditching, damming, and channeling the river, we have eliminated side channels, tributaries, sloughs, and islands. Not only has this reduced the river's ability to absorb floodwaters, but it has also destroyed important fish and wildlife habitat.

Obviously, these changes to the Valley's natural habitats are having profound effects on the native plant, fish, and wildlife species. The recent listing of upper Willamette chinook salmon and steelhead as *threatened* under the Endangered Species Act is a clear message that the damage to their habitat threatens their existence.

The listing of these native fish species will bring new federal rules for urban residents, farmers, foresters, and businesses in the Willamette Valley. It will have an enormous impact on many activities, including building construction near rivers and streams, road construction, farming, and management of stormwater runoff. Everyone will need to share the burden of saving salmon and steelhead by restoring habitat and cleaning up water pollution.

Air Quality

Air quality is one relatively bright light in our environmental picture, thanks to regulations and technological improvements. Yet recent gains have reached the point of diminishing returns. A recent analysis in *The Oregonian* predicted that air quality in Portland would get worse in the next decade because of increased industrial emissions and traffic-related road dust. In addition, new federal clean air standards will make it more difficult for all major urban areas in the Valley to achieve compliance with federal air quality laws.

How We Get Around

We often say that our transportation system isn't as bad as many other regions'. Unfortunately, it also isn't as good as it could be.

As the Valley's population has grown, we've built or improved roads, trying to make travel faster and more convenient. Yet despite our efforts, many Valley roads—particularly those in urban areas—are congested.

Our prosperity depends on a high-quality transportation infrastructure. Congested roadways increase the cost of doing business by lengthening travel times for individuals, and interfering with industry that relies on *just-in-time* freight delivery. Traffic congestion also affects our perception of livability, and polls indicate that Willamette Valley residents worry that congestion will get worse.

The trends over the past 25 years indicate that there is good cause for that worry. Not only are there more of us living and working in the Valley, we are driving more. In fact, the number of miles we travel in cars and trucks has increased at a faster rate than has our growing population. If that trend continues as our population increases, we can expect that we will spend more time in our cars and it will take us longer to get where we want to go.

Unfortunately, the predominant land use and development patterns in the Valley's communities require dependence on cars, rather than supporting other, more environmentally friendly—and often less expensive—forms of transportation, including transit, bicycles, and walking. In addition, strip commercial developments along our busiest and fastest state highways increase congestion, thereby reducing the ability of these highways to handle traffic.

Public transit could help ease this situation. Transit service and use within and between our cities have increased somewhat, and transit-oriented developments are sprouting along the light rail line in the Portland metropolitan area. Yet two of our largest urban regions—Salem/Keizer and Albany/Corvallis—lack transit service for people commuting from homes in one community to jobs in another. In general, most Valley residents do not have convenient alternative transportation choices, and many do not have access to public transportation at all.

Also, although bicycling and walking to work are becoming more popular in many Valley cities, neither is having a significant impact on congestion.

Fixing this situation is expensive. At this point, we don't have the resources to maintain the existing road system and make needed improvements. In addition, state gas tax revenues can only be spent on highway improvements. The revenues cannot be spent on transit, which might be a cost-efficient alternative to road construction. Therefore, it appears that, until we can find effective solutions, our transportation system will continue to deteriorate, our roads will get more crowded and less safe, and *road rage* incidents and accidents will continue to climb.

How We Live Together

Communities are the heart of life in the Valley. They're where we live. They reflect how we want our daily lives to feel. They provide or support vital services, such as schools, neighborhoods, cultural activities, public safety, and parks.

And most of them are growing. Regardless of how fast they're growing, all of them are having trouble paying for the new services and facilities their new residents require. Those that are growing slowly are having a hard time raising the money to pay for infrastructure improvements necessary to attract new residents and employers. Fast-growing communities are struggling to expand their infrastructure as quickly as necessary while not compromising their quality of life or their natural environment.

Housing

Over the last several years, housing in the Willamette Valley has become much less affordable. Housing prices are continuing to rise. Many families that want to own a home are finding that

their incomes are not keeping up and they are priced out of the market in many Valley communities.

The lack of affordable housing in one community often means that people cannot live where they work, but instead must commute between communities. This not only increases personal transportation costs, which further erodes their ability to afford to buy a home, but also puts additional strains on the transportation system.

State land use goals and administrative rules require cities to plan and zone for a mix of housing types and densities. Some communities are attacking the housing affordability problem in this way.

As an example, a recent Oregon Housing Cost Study conducted by the Committee to Study Housing Affordability showed that in the Portland metropolitan region, housing costs have climbed 34 percent in the last five years. But during the same period, higher-density development and increasing choices of housing types, including attached single-family homes, helped make a larger share of the housing stock more affordable.

Yet, all Valley communities continue to struggle to help residents build and buy homes they can afford.

Education

Education is a building block of strong communities. Not only does it help to create informed and interested residents who care about and engage in their communities, but education is critical in ensuring a prosperous economic future for Valley communities. Where will the new community leaders, artists, doctors—and more—come from if we don't educate our children well?

In recent polls, Valley residents stated that their greatest concern about livability in the Valley is education. Our schools and higher educational system are not being funded adequately to meet the needs of a growing population and an increasingly complex world. In addition, most of the funds for education are now based on state income taxes, which puts existing school financing at risk in bad economic times. Although some communities would like to spend more on their children's education, state law prevents them from doing so.

As a result, class sizes are too big. School materials, facilities, and equipment are inadequate. Enriching and popular after-school activities are being eliminated. All of this—and more—when added to the pressures of a growing and changing population, are making it more difficult for our children to get a high-quality education and for employers to find the skilled employees they need.

Crime

For many years, crime has been one of the primary concerns of residents in many Valley communities. It still is. Most people assume that crime rates increase when an area's population grows. However, according to the study conducted by the Governor's Task Force on Growth in Oregon,

there is no evidence of a link between population growth and reported crime rates. The report found that Oregon's crime rate has fluctuated widely over the past 20 years, while population has grown steadily over this period.

In fact, certain kinds of crimes are actually decreasing in some Valley communities. One reason is that there are more police assigned to community policing, which can prevent problems before they lead to crimes. And still another is that some new developments are being designed to reduce crime by *putting more eyes on the street.* These developments include a mix of daytime and evening activities and homes better oriented to the street so people can interact with their neighbors more and observe street traffic better.

How We Make A Living

As many long-term Valley residents know, the strength of our economy has varied over the years. However, except for the recession in the 1980s, Oregon and the Valley generally have experienced a good rate of economic growth for several decades. Between 1990 and 1996, Oregon's employment growth rate was double the national rate. However, in 1998, Oregon began to feel the effects of the Asian crisis as evidenced by lower exports and employment.

Oregon's per capita personal income has been rising faster than the nation's since the late 1980s because of the state's stronger economy. It is slowly approaching the national average again after it fell during the 1980s recession. In 1988, it reached its lowest point of only 91 percent of the national average, but by 1997 it had increased to 96 percent of the national average. In 1998 it again declined to 95 percent. Per capita income in the Valley also dropped below the national average during the recession of the 1980s, but by 1996, Valley incomes were slightly above the national average.

Today, the economy of the Valley, which accounts for more than 75 percent of the non-agricultural jobs in Oregon, continues to diversify and grow. In recent years, employment growth has been more rapid in the Valley than in the rest of the state. More than 137,000 non-agricultural jobs were created between 1990 and 1995. Between 1995 and 1997, employment in the Willamette Valley grew by 8.4 percent. The growth in high-technology industry employment in the Valley has been a particularly strong part of the recent economic health. Urban areas, particularly the Portland area, have benefited from the growth in this industry. In the Portland area, high-tech is now the largest employer in the manufacturing sector.

While unemployment is low and wages are increasing, there are several concerns.

First, the economic recovery of small towns in the Valley outside of the Interstate 5 corridor has been spotty or nonexistent. As a result, many of these towns are considered to be distressed areas and are targets for efforts to help encourage job creation. They have not recovered the family-wage jobs lost when the lumber and wood products industry declined in the 1980s. Nor have they seen much of the high-tech related economic upswing.

Second, a larger percentage of households are struggling financially. This is indicated by the significant increase in the number of individuals living below the federal poverty level and the growing number of people holding more than one job.

Third, we don't produce enough skilled workers to fill certain better paying jobs. Also, movement of additional skilled workers to Oregon is expected to decline because of higher home prices in the Valley, as well as the economic recovery in California. The forecasted continuing shortages of skilled workers likely means slower employment growth and difficulty in attracting the kinds of companies and entrepreneurs that will keep our economy dynamic and resilient.

Fourth, many communities' lack of infrastructure limits or delays further economic development. For instance, although the importance of telecommunications technologies to the Valley economy is growing, service in the Valley ranges only from very basic to intermediate. In addition, many communities face very real challenges to provide water and wastewater treatment services for future industrial and commercial expansion. We continue to provide some funding to improve water and wastewater treatment systems in smaller communities, but our investments are not guided by a regional growth plan, nor are they coordinated with other public investments in the region.

One of the major limitations is funding. The property tax revenue available for local government services and infrastructure development is declining. Consequently, local governments are turning to fees and charges on developers to help fund new infrastructure. This has the undesired effect of increasing the cost of housing. The shift in Oregon's tax system—away from property taxes and to an increased reliance on state income taxes—is increasing the sensitivity of funding to changing economic conditions.

How We Make Decisions

We have several hundred governmental units, each with its own areas of expertise and responsibilities. These units include: the Legislature; the Governor; over 100 state agencies, boards, and commissions; 110 Willamette Valley cities and counties; many special districts; and a number of federal agencies and tribal governments. Their decisions have enormous impacts on life in the Valley. So do those of countless businesses and non-profit organizations, and the individuals who live here. Each group's actions in response to growth can affect everyone in the Valley.

Public policy issues are becoming more complex and interconnected, and we see the need to address political, social, and environmental issues in a regional, Valley-wide context. Yet none of our planning and management systems currently requires that kind of cooperation.

State agencies are making some community development problems worse by investing in and administering programs and regulations in a piecemeal fashion. Also, many communities believe that state agencies do not implement growth management programs and policies consistently. The Governor's Community Solutions Team, consisting of the directors of five state agencies, is trying to address these problems through better coordination at state and regional levels.

We need better coordination among all decision-making units. We have very few ways to bring representatives from neighboring Valley communities together to discuss and coordinate the impacts they have on each other in areas such as jobs and housing.

We do have our statewide planning system which ensures that communities plan and zone enough land to accommodate future growth. And governmental partnerships, such as Metro and the three Councils of Governments in the Valley, are giving more attention to regional approaches for managing growth and resolving city-to-city and city-county issues.

In addition, new regional partnerships are being formed that involve both governmental units and private interests. The Willamette Valley Livability Forum, Willamette Restoration Initiative, and the Southern Willamette Research Corridor are examples of collaboration between public agencies and private interests that address important regional issues in the Valley.

Federal agencies are also doing more to coordinate their programs in the Valley. One example is the Willamette Province, which is bringing together several federal agencies to provide data that communities can use to determine how best to restore the health of their watersheds.

Despite these efforts at coordination, there are a few problems to overcome. One is funding. Planning and cooperation like this cost money. And frankly, there isn't enough to tackle the job or to spread it among Valley communities equally.

Another is public involvement. A recent statewide study on growth found that many citizens feel disconnected from their local governments on growth issues. They're increasingly interested in preventing or limiting population growth in their communities. They resist authorizing new sources of revenue. They often don't vote. They're less involved in community decision-making processes.

Taking the Next Steps

To plan our future, we must understand these issues and trends that already shape our lives—and decide if, how and when to change them. Valley residents already are working hard to address these and many, many other important issues. But are we doing enough to achieve the future we want for our children and grandchildren? What do we want the future to be like?

The Legacy We Seek to Create

As we approach the 21st century, we can be sure that the Willamette Valley will continue to face significant challenges and changes. To make the intelligent choices that will protect livability in the Valley for the next 50 years, we must consider what the Valley's past and current trends and issues indicate we likely will face in the future.

Of course, we can't predict the future with any certainty. All sorts of surprises await those who follow us. What we can do now is take our best, informed guesses at what might lie ahead and begin to take steps now to ensure that life will be the best it can be for all future Valley residents.

First we need a plan. And before we can create that plan we need to have a picture of what we want the future to look like.

The Willamette Valley Livability Forum created such a picture — a 50-year vision of a preferred future. Below, that vision is presented as a scenario that summarizes what the Valley's people, physical landscape, character, and its prosperity might be like in 2050. Read it as if it is describing your life — or your children's or grandchildren's lives — in the Willamette Valley 50 years from now. How does it feel? Is it the type of legacy you would like to create for future generations?

Livable, Compact Cities and Towns

Our Vision

In the year 2050, the Willamette Valley is a beautiful place in which to live. Its cities, towns, and rural areas compose a network of diverse, distinct, well-defined, and livable communities. Valley cities and towns use land efficiently. They have vibrant downtowns and mixed-use business districts, productive industrial and employment centers, and high-quality neighborhoods — all linked by convenient transportation options, parks, and green spaces. Strong land use planning, urban growth boundaries, and design requirements enable and encourage more residents to live closer to where they work, shop, and play, helping to preserve the rural landscape of working farms and forests, open spaces, rivers and natural areas.

How It Could Be in 2050

We have effective regional approaches to manage population growth in the Valley. Communities in the four sub-regions of the Valley, the areas around Portland, Salem/Keizer, Albany/Corvallis, and Eugene/Springfield, are working together with citizens, local governments, state and federal agencies, private businesses, and resource industries in new partnerships to achieve a shared regional vision. They understand the geographical and economic relationships in their region, as well as the interconnections among land use, environmental health, transportation, and livability in their communities and the Valley.

In addition to our urban growth boundaries (UGBs) and regional visions and cooperation, we use a number of new growth-management tools to implement local comprehensive plans that are

the basis for our vision for the Valley's future. These include: financial incentives, coordinated and focused public investments, and design standards for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development.

The great majority of us live inside UGBs. The area within these boundaries has had a remarkably small expansion, given that our population has almost doubled since 1990. We have achieved significantly higher densities in urban areas.

Our compact urban areas are separated from one another by farmland and open space. Most of our cities and counties are cooperating to establish greenbelts, protected open spaces, surrounding their growth boundaries. As a result, in just minutes, most of us can walk, bike, take a bus, or drive to the edge of town and enjoy the many pleasures of a rural or natural setting.

We have carefully guided the development of our communities to provide and encourage the use of a variety of convenient transportation options. For example, we have clustered higher-density residential developments in and around active commercial centers, and we have created pleasant and safe walking and biking environments that also support use of public transit.

Our decisions to limit the expansion of our UGBs have helped us create incentives to use land in our communities more efficiently and redevelop underused areas. By applying design standards, we fit new housing and small stores into older neighborhoods when appropriate. We also have converted abandoned industrial sites and other neglected areas into lively new mixed-use centers. Our encouragement of developments that combine housing, stores, offices, and even light industrial manufacturing, gives people more choices about where to live. Once again it is possible for people to choose to live over or near the store or office.

We have achieved our goal of increasing the supply of affordable housing in every Valley community. We have provided a wide variety of housing choices, including attached single-family units (rowhouses) and well-designed apartment buildings. We have also improved affordability by encouraging development on smaller, less expensive lots, allowing an additional housing unit to be built on larger single-family lots, and permitting a mix of housing, offices, and stores in a single building. Living in compact cities allows most of us to spend far less money on transportation and daily commuting. That makes it possible for more of us to own our own homes.

By insisting on more efficient development patterns, we have also reduced the amount each of us pays for public services, such as water and wastewater treatment. We have also been able to spend more of our public resources to keep our town centers attractive, safe, and vital. The new regional partnerships and coordinated and focused investments of our local governments and state agencies have made it possible for all communities to provide essential urban services, including water, wastewater treatment, public transportation, parks, and libraries. All Valley cities and towns are full-service communities.

We've also recognized the importance of and accepted the challenge to integrate parks, other open spaces, riparian areas, and other natural resources with the built environment. We have

preserved and restored natural drainage systems, wetlands, and riparian areas to improve water quality and wildlife habitats. We've protected more open spaces and natural areas inside our cities. Carefully planned purchases of parklands and rights of way have allowed us to connect public open spaces and natural areas into urban greenways. As a result, each of us has easy access to natural and open areas in and throughout our communities.

Our decision to maintain UGBs and place strict limits on rural development have also saved most of our productive farms and forests from urban development. We have not allowed any additional rural residential development in over 30 years, except in designated rural unincorporated communities, and then only when it's been consistent with state and county rules and regulations. We also have stopped constructing non-essential homes on prime farm and forest lands with the consensus support of both economic and environmental interests.

Healthy Watersheds

Our Vision

In 2050, the Willamette Valley is a rich, biologically diverse natural environment, nourished by a network of rivers, streams, and aquifers clean enough to be sources of drinking water, safe enough to fish and swim in, and healthy enough to sustain thriving populations of native fish, wildlife, and plants. Air and water quality throughout the Valley are excellent, and there is enough water to sustain the Valley's communities, economy and natural systems.

How It Could Be in 2050

Our growing population and the resulting increased pressure on our natural environment have led us to expand our commitment to protecting the Valley's air, water, and other natural resources. Each of us now has a better understanding of what we can do to protect our natural environment.

More volunteers are participating in efforts to restore riparian areas, maintain greenways, and carry out other environmental programs and projects. We have formed non-profit land trusts in all of the larger cities in the Valley to purchase and protect remaining natural areas.

Our state agencies and cities are coordinating their investments in infrastructure improvements to accommodate our growing population and higher density development. They also are buying and restoring greenspaces to offset the environmental impacts of an increase in the amount of pavement, buildings, and other impervious surfaces in the Valley.

Most of our cities have responded to the increasing demand for natural, open spaces inside their UGBs and the need to reduce water pollution from stormwater run-off by establishing greenways that provide open space, help control floods, and reduce pollution.

Many cities have created broad ecosystem restoration banks, which were formally known as mitigation banks. Through these, new development helps pay for restoration of wetlands, riparian areas, and endangered species habitat; stormwater treatment; and floodplain repair.

By coordinating investments through regional partnerships, we have preserved greenbelts and wildlife corridors around cities. Cities also have signed agreements with farmers to help preserve portions of their land as open space and natural habitat. In most of these areas that are adjacent to UGBs, there are marshes and ponds and other features that treat stormwater pollution naturally and store water to diminish flooding and provide wildlife habitat.

To respond to the increasing demand for open space and outdoor recreation, we have developed significantly more parks throughout the Willamette River Greenway and created other greenways that link urban areas and neighboring towns and cities in the Valley.

Watershed management and water conservation are our top priorities. We have made enormous progress in our efforts to conserve and protect our water supplies. In particular, with the support of federal and state agencies, we have greatly increased collaborative regional efforts to protect the health of our watersheds.

In addition, we have conducted a number of coordinated water supply studies and have implemented water conservation plans. We decide how to use water in the Valley based on regional priorities, and we are now pricing water to encourage conservation. In addition, much of the landscaping throughout the Valley relies on native plants that thrive in our climate and use less water.

Demand for water for irrigation has declined since we began shifting to crops that are better suited to the Valley's soils and climate. Most irrigation water actually comes from the re-use of wastewater.

Many of our communities take their drinking water from the Willamette River. This is possible because water quality in the Willamette and its tributaries has improved remarkably since 2000. In fact, very few segments of the Willamette's tributaries continue to violate federal clean water standards. For this, we credit our decades-long management of land uses and stormwater runoff.

Natural treatment of stormwater, pre-treatment of stormwater, and urban design requirements that limit the amount of paved surface also have helped. In addition, the fact that we drive our cars less and have provided few additional roads and parking lots to accommodate them has dramatically reduced stormwater pollution.

In addition, to offset the amount and quality of the water that runs off paved surfaces in our cities, farmers have been paid to take old river channels, low swales, and wetlands out of agricultural production and restore them to their natural state. Also, our conversion to organic agriculture has virtually eliminated chemicals and pesticides that previously poisoned Valley waters.

Managers of both private and public forest lands have improved their practices dramatically. Our federally managed forests have 300-foot-wide riparian buffers along streams. Private and state forest lands have 100-foot-wide stream buffers. Forest roads and culverts are designed and maintained to prevent soil erosion and runoff.

Because all streams in the Willamette River basin are healthy again, native fish populations are increasing. Most species are now considered strong enough to ensure survival.

Happily, we also meet federal and state standards for air quality throughout the Valley. Air quality is better because we are using improved emission-reducing technologies, driving less, and using alternative fuels in our cars. Open burning is used only for the ecological purposes of restoring habitat, just as native Valley residents did thousands of years ago.

Convenient Transportation Choices

Our Vision

In 2050, the Willamette Valley is linked by a balanced, interconnected transportation system that provides a range of convenient and accessible transportation choices and supports the safe, efficient movement of people and goods within and between communities. This system employs land use planning, community design, demand and access management, and new technologies to help reduce congestion and preserve and enhance a sense of community and Valley livability.

How It Could Be in 2050

The compact development of our cities and towns, as well as changes in the way we pay for transportation, have made it possible to provide a high level of public transit service throughout the Valley. We have made a major shift from planning and designing our communities around automobiles to other options that give all residents convenient, accessible, and affordable transportation choices. As a result, we are conserving resources and open space, reducing impacts on the environment, and improving the vitality of our communities and economy.

Most of our communities have improved residents' transportation choices by making the creation of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environments a priority in both public and private developments. In addition, all Valley cities and towns have made access to the transit system a top factor in approving the location and design of major commercial, industrial, and residential developments.

Use of transit has increased significantly, not only because of compact development patterns, but also because local governments, businesses, educational institutions, recreational programs, and non-profit organizations have become full partners in providing and supporting the use of a range of transportation options. Innovations in the design of transit vehicles, including greater use of electricity for power, have increased passenger comfort while reducing noise and air pollution.

Rail is now an essential part of our transportation system. We have achieved our vision of frequent, reliable high-speed train service between Eugene and Portland. The light rail system has expanded throughout the Portland metropolitan area and is also a new feature in Salem/Keizer and Eugene/Springfield. We have built commuter rail connections between McMinnville and Portland and Corvallis and Albany.

Using a single ticket, we can travel between and within all the major cities in the Valley on public transportation.

The efforts of regional partnerships among public agencies and private businesses have paid off. We have been able to reduce the amount of inter-city commuting by helping communities better match jobs and housing and also by improving access to advanced telecommunications technology. Fewer people have to commute to a job; they can instead work at home or anywhere else that's appropriate. Valley-wide, workers are telecommuting an average of two and one-half days a week.

While we have built a few major new roads in the Valley since 2000, we have ensured that they support transit, bicycles, cars, and trucks equally. Since 2000, the only lanes that have been added to freeways are those dedicated to transit.

Congestion on our highways and regional roads has stabilized at a moderate level. There are actually fewer registered vehicles in the Valley than there were in 2000. In fact, there are fewer vehicles than people for the first time since the 1990s. Total miles traveled by vehicle in the Valley has held steady for a number of years, and the average amount of vehicle miles traveled by individuals has decreased by 20 percent over the past 50 years.

We have changed the way we pay for transportation. In addition to federal funds, fuel taxes, and user fees, we have been using congestion pricing (e.g., toll roads and bridges) to help finance the system. We also pool funds from all sources and allocate them to the parts of the system that need the most attention. We have enough resources to maintain all components of the transportation system in good, safe operating condition.

We have made great strides in improving the efficiency of the transportation system by building passenger and freight intermodal stations in every city and town served by rail. These ensure easy connections for passengers and freight traveling by bus and rail.

In addition to improved train-bus connections, our transportation system now provides frequent scheduled train and bus service to the Portland International Airport and Eugene's airport, which is now a full-service, national airport with direct connections to all major hubs in the U.S.

Healthy, Caring Communities and Neighborhoods

Our Vision

The Willamette Valley is home to a diverse people who are connected by a common geography and certain shared values. Valley residents take great pride in working together to build distinctive, caring communities with open, safe, and secure neighborhoods; affordable housing; high-quality education; available social services; accessible parks, natural areas, and recreational opportunities; and a healthy environment. Valley communities are close-knit, but not closed off. They are friendly places that bring people together, where neighbors know and help one another.

How It Could Be in 2050

We are much more ethnically diverse than we were in 2000. The percentage of the population that is Hispanic has more than doubled to 15 percent. African-Americans constitute 5 percent, Asian/Pacific Islanders comprise 10 percent, American Indians make up 1 percent of the Valley population, and 69 percent is white non-Hispanic.

Affordable housing, once a seemingly unattainable goal, is available in every Valley city and town. We have helped make attractive, affordable housing a reality by encouraging innovative designs and advanced building techniques. We have increased the choice of housing types, supported development of attached single-family homes, and decreased the average size and, therefore, the cost of building lots. These efforts, coupled with lower transportation costs and growing incomes, mean that more people can afford to — and do — own their own homes, and that fewer people must leave their communities in order to find a safe, comfortable place to live.

Our renewed and consistent investment in schools and education, which we began at the turn of the century, has paid off. All of us have easy access to high-quality education, from early-learning programs through high school and post-secondary education at community colleges and universities. Continuing education programs are readily available to the residents of all cities and towns in the Valley.

Our school buildings and equipment are up-to-date and in good condition. Schools are fully equipped with computers and are linked to information sources through advanced telecommunications technology. Reliable and adequate funding supports a wide range of educational and extracurricular programs.

Coordinated investments in our communities' infrastructure, compact urban development, convenient alternative transportation choices, open spaces and greenways, and schools have increased the quality of our neighborhoods and communities.

We have a greater sense of connection with those who live in our community and region. We embrace the visions for our own city or town, and the shared vision of our broader regional community — the Willamette Valley. We understand our roles in preserving and enhancing the livability of both. As a result, we are more involved in local and regional affairs than at any time in history. All communities have active neighborhood programs, and those neighborhood organizations participate fully in community decision making.

The partnerships formed to revitalize downtowns, neighborhoods, local schools, and natural resources in the Valley are a true success story. Governments at all levels, non-profits, businesses, and residents work together to protect and restore these essential pieces of our lives in the Valley.

Because all Valley residents have access to computers and communication technologies, they participate directly in the evaluation of impacts of proposed actions. Government officials now have the ability to poll citizens electronically on almost any pending action.

Educated Workforce, Good Jobs and Prosperity

Our Vision

In 2050, the Willamette Valley's economy is dynamic, diversified, and strong. A well-trained and educated workforce supports it. A wealth of good jobs enables residents to achieve a level of prosperity that is in harmony with community values and the natural environment.

How It Could Be in 2050

Our Valley economy continues to benefit from regional partnerships formed around the turn of the century. The resulting coordinated regional planning and infrastructure investments have helped smaller communities in particular. Strategic investments, along with new financial incentives for businesses, have helped rebuild distressed economies and revitalize downtowns. Today, all smaller cities and towns share fully in the Valley's economic growth and prosperity.

Compared to a half-century ago, the Valley's economy is even more diversified. While farm and forest resource-based sectors contribute to our stable economic base, strong growth has occurred in tourism, manufacturing, and businesses that are closely tied to the knowledge and information economy.

Because our natural-resource industries are using more reprocessed materials and fewer raw materials, the number of successful recycling businesses continues to grow.

Valley agriculture produces more food, fiber, and diverse specialty crops than in the past. The demand for organically grown foods has climbed significantly. This has actually increased farm labor employment while reducing the use of — and impacts associated with — pesticides. We also have created new demand for nurseries to grow native plants for use in restoring Valley riparian areas, wetlands, and other natural areas.

We definitely live in the *information age*. Improved access to advanced telecommunications technology has helped small communities in particular. Industries and businesses, attracted to these livable communities and their skilled workforce, have chosen to locate within them and support their rejuvenation.

Our cities are busy and friendly environments. Financial incentives have backed revitalization efforts, creating a great variety of food service, retail, entertainment, educational, and cultural opportunities. Employment is at an all-time high. Non-agricultural employment has doubled since 1990; we gained over 630,000 jobs since the year 2000. Building on the Valley's enhanced livability and quality of life, per capita income remains above the national average, and the average amount of disposable income has increased.

All counties in the Valley have a skilled and educated workforce, which has greatly reduced the need for employers to bring in workers from outside of the Valley. This is the result of significant improvements in the affordability and availability of post-secondary and higher education throughout the Valley. Partnerships between colleges, universities, and businesses now offer a range of workforce development options for skill-building, retraining, and career education.

Collaborative Approaches to Local and Regional Problems

Our Vision

In 2050, Willamette Valley residents' ideas, plans, and actions are guided by a shared regional vision. Practical solutions to Valley-wide issues and problems are collaboratively developed through intergovernmental cooperation and action; informed public and private sector dialogue; and the broad, inclusive, and timely involvement of Valley citizens.

How It Could Be in 2050

Collaboration is our fundamental community ethic. It guides all problem-solving and decision-making in the Valley.

For many years, our regional, collaborative partnerships have coordinated public investments, regional planning, and development of proposed solutions to region-wide land use, environmental, watershed health, transportation, and economic issues. These partnerships involve representatives of and obtain support from all local governments in each region, as well as state agencies, businesses, industry, and non-profit organizations.

The concept of sustainability — of planning and acting to ensure the long-term survival of all living things — guides our decision making. We base our choices on shared visions, goals, and targets. We use scientific and analytical processes to evaluate alternative approaches and outcomes and track performance.

When conflicts occur, we use those differences to stimulate renewed efforts to create and build consensus around the best possible outcomes. We favor the use of collaborative problem-solving processes that involve all interested parties.

We have invested in our most important civic asset: the ability of our citizens to participate in local and regional decision making. We have given ourselves the information, technical, and financial resources to support our involvement in our communities' affairs.

Taking the Next Steps Toward a Livable Future

If you agree with the Forum's vision of a preferred future, it is time to begin to make it happen. It's one thing to create a vision, to dream great dreams. All of us enjoy that. But it's another thing altogether to make that vision a reality. That's where the action part comes in.

Forum members didn't want to simply present a future scenario for the Valley for you to consider. They also wanted to identify some important steps that could help us achieve the preferred future, as well as suggest important specific actions we could take to help us move in that direction.

If we ***are*** going to create that legacy for those who will live here after we are gone, we who live in the Valley today must commit to changing the way we do things and the way we live to ensure a healthy future. Some of these changes involve major shifts that will move us away from local control — while protecting local interests and values — and toward cooperative region-wide teamwork. Many of these changes also require modifications to local, state, and federal policies and laws. As we said, change on this scale won't be easy. However, if we don't begin to transform our thinking, our institutions and our actions, we won't get to that very appealing preferred vision.

Please consider the recommendations that follow as important next steps toward a livable future.

If we can achieve these recommendations, we will have built a solid foundation that will make future actions that much more successful. If we don't achieve them, we may just wander into the future without creating the legacy we want to leave the next generations. Please join in and help create that legacy. If we don't, who will?

Land Use

The Forum recommends that we develop and use regional approaches within the context of the statewide planning program to manage growth, and that we guide development so that future generations may enjoy livable, compact communities.

Regional Approaches to Managing Growth

As growth occurs, decisions made by one community have an impact on neighboring communities and the entire Valley. For instance, let's say that one community takes actions that increase housing costs. Because people will want to and need to live in that area, the increased housing costs shift the pressure of building more housing to nearby communities. Or, if many jobs are created in one community while most of the housing is in another, then traffic between the two areas will increase, and more and better roads linking the jobs and homes will be needed. And if

one community's urban growth boundary is too small to accommodate its growth, or citizen-driven initiatives have limited its ability to expand, newcomers may need to buy homes that have been built in rural or agricultural areas, or in nearby communities that are not prepared to accommodate significant growth.

Oregon's planning system is designed to ensure that statewide land use goals are met and that communities plan and zone enough land to meet their growth projections. Unfortunately, the system lacks regional policies for dealing with inter-city impacts that concern issues such as jobs, housing, and growth. The planning system also lacks a way to bring representatives from neighboring Valley communities together to discuss and coordinate the impacts they have on one another. In addition, small cities that don't have full-time planning staff risk being left out of discussions about regional land use issues.

Existing regional partnerships, such as Councils of Governments, and new partnerships being formed with the support of the Governor's Community Solutions Team and Community Development Office, could help develop these regional growth-management approaches.

Recommendation: Develop and implement regional, multi-jurisdictional approaches to manage growth that involve all affected communities.

Actions to Consider:

- **The urban areas of Salem/Keizer, Albany/Corvallis, and Eugene/Springfield; neighboring cities within a 30-minute commute; and applicable county governments should work collaboratively through their Councils of Governments to develop and adopt inter-jurisdictional growth management framework plans for their region.**
- **The Legislature, state agencies, and local governments should provide funding to support the development, adoption, and implementation of regional plans in the three regions listed above.**
- **State agencies, in cooperation with local governments, should help guide policy development and provide technical support for regional, multi-jurisdictional approaches to growth management, and deal with issues such as jobs/housing balance, adequacy of public facilities and services, protection of farm and forest lands, and environmental impacts.**
- **Federal, state, and local agencies and the universities should work together to develop and coordinate a network of geographical databases so that all Valley residents can get data on all aspects of land features, land use, and land restoration opportunities in the Valley.**
- **Federal, state, and local agencies and the universities should cooperate in supporting the development and continuing use of basin-wide assessments of growth options similar to the Willamette Valley Alternative Futures Research Project and the work of the Pacific Northwest Ecosystem Research Consortium.**

Things to Think About:

- **Are existing intergovernmental structures and processes (e.g., intergovernmental agreements, Councils of Governments) adequate to foster regional coordination of growth management?**
- **What approaches should we take to measure, evaluate, and address inter-jurisdictional impacts related to jobs, housing, infrastructure, and growth?**
- **Would the benefits of new regional approaches to managing growth still allow some local control?**
- **How can we include the land use interests of small cities in regional decision making processes?**
- **How can we support active participation by citizens in regional decision making?**

Livable, Compact Communities

Because the Valley's population continues to grow, it is becoming more essential to pay attention to how we design and build our communities. Dispersed development patterns and sprawl can significantly limit our ability to retain the qualities we want in our communities and also achieve the vision of a preferred future. Compact, mixed-use development patterns can help enhance economic opportunities and livability by reducing the cost of public services and facilities, improving accessibility and mobility, increasing the diversity and affordability of housing, and helping to promote a sense of connection to the places in which we live, work, and play.

Several programs and initiatives are under way to encourage and support the development of compact livable communities. These include the Transportation and Growth Management Program jointly administered by the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Department of Land Conservation and Development, and the Smart Development Program administered by Livable Oregon, Inc. In addition, Governor Kitzhaber's Executive Order 97-22 directs state agencies to work with local governments to stimulate the development of compact livable communities consistent with a set of *Quality Development Objectives*. Also, the new Oregon Livability Initiative proposes a way to plan and deliver assistance from state government to local communities to help them achieve these objectives.

Recommendation: Support local efforts to develop compact, mixed-use, well-designed development patterns in urban areas.

Actions to Consider:

- **State agencies, in partnership with local governments and the private sector, should develop and use economic incentives to encourage compact development patterns.**
- **Local governments should provide incentives, such as density bonuses and transfers, reduced system development charges, property tax exemptions, and streamlined permitting processes, to encourage higher-density, mixed-use development.**
- **Local communities should change local plans and ordinances to limit the extent of future linear commercial development along streets and highways.**
- **Local governments should adopt design standards for multi-family residential development and requirements for a mix of housing types in order to help protect the quality of**

our neighborhoods while still accommodating higher population densities.

- **Local, regional, and state governments should work together to acquire and protect urban green spaces and park lands so that communities will have well-integrated natural and built environments.**
- **State and local governments should provide more public information and educational programs about growth issues and impacts so residents can participate fully in making growth-management decisions.**

Things to Think About:

- **How can communities work more effectively with the private sector to encourage well-designed, transportation-efficient development?**
- **Would the use of economic incentives to encourage desired types of development produce benefits that outweigh any loss in local revenues?**
- **Can higher residential densities in both new development and existing neighborhoods be accommodated while still protecting the quality of life in those neighborhoods?**
- **How can communities respond to citizens' initiatives that reduce options for managing growth?**

Water/Environment

The Forum supports the recommendations contained in the 1997 report of the Willamette River Basin Task Force and the initiatives to restore the health of the Willamette River watershed. The Forum also encourages the coordinated planning of future water supplies.

Watershed Health Restoration and Water Supply Planning

Many streams in the Valley fail to meet state and federal water quality standards. In addition, pesticides, heavy metals, dioxins, and other pollutants are present in the water and sediments of many of the Valley's rivers. Agriculture, industry, and municipalities and other major water users reduce naturally low summer stream flows. As a result, there is not enough water in the summer to meet all needs. The Willamette Basin's native salmon and steelhead species have been designated as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. Nearly 50 other native plant and wildlife species are at risk in the Valley. Naturally functioning wetlands, riparian areas, and floodplains can provide flood water storage, enhanced water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, open space, parks, and increased property values. However, much of the wetland, riparian, and floodplain areas in the Valley have been developed or degraded.

Local, state, and federal agencies are working to resolve these environmental issues through their planning, land management, capital improvement, and environmental programs. In addition, watershed councils, which exist throughout the Willamette Basin, are helping to coordinate the efforts of government agencies, businesses, industry, non-profit organizations, and citizens to improve watershed conditions.

Current efforts to address water supply issues, including the pressure on groundwater supplies, are beginning to focus on the need to balance uses and increase water conservation. Examples of these include Metro's 2040 Framework planning and the work of the Regional Water Providers Consortium for the Portland Metropolitan Area. As the Valley population increases, such efforts become ever more important to ensure adequate water supply for fish and wildlife, municipal and agricultural uses. In addition, we must find a way to balance the conflicts between the need for additional beneficial water storage projects and their potential negative impacts on the environment.

New collaborative efforts now underway provide an opportunity to better coordinate and integrate actions to improve the health of the Valley's environment. The Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI) will oversee an integrated, coordinated approach to maintaining and improving watershed health and will help write the Willamette Chapter of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds. The Oregon Plan is a comprehensive statewide effort to restore salmonid populations and water quality through voluntary actions and the use of incentives. WRI also presents an opportunity to implement many of the Willamette River Basin Task Force's recommendations. In addition, the Aquatic Conservation Strategy of the Northwest Forest Plan provides a way for the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies to participate in efforts to improve watershed health in the Willamette Province.

Recommendation: Support the Willamette Restoration Initiative and its efforts to inventory, coordinate and integrate watershed health-related activities in the basin, including prioritizing and implementing many of the Willamette River Basin Task Force's recommendations to restore the health of the basin.

- **The WRI, Forum, and state and federal agencies should collaborate to get technical assistance and facilitate the flow of information to support the efforts of watershed councils in carrying out long-term watershed management efforts.**
- **The state should provide a stable source of matching funding for watershed councils throughout the basin to serve as an incentive for local fundraising efforts.**
- **Appropriate state agencies should work together with water providers to coordinate water supply planning in the Valley and develop a strategy (e.g., objectives, criteria, and standards) to meet future water needs that includes preservation of important instream values, promotion of water conservation, and re-use of wastewater.**
- **The WRI should use the Forum as a sounding board for specific proposals, including asking for ideas about how its proposals can be integrated with broader land use, transportation, economic, and community issues and priorities.**
- **The Forum should help define relationships between growth and watershed health and identify a range of growth-management strategies that support WRI goals and objectives.**

- **The WRI and Forum should continue working together to increase public awareness of and involvement in watershed health issues by promoting the development and monitoring of indicators of watershed health. This information should be shared at annual, public gatherings in the basin.**

Things to Think About:

- **How can the Forum and the Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI) work together to improve watershed health and enhance future livability in the Willamette Valley?**
- **How can the WRI ensure that its proposals to improve watershed health are balanced and integrated with other economic and livability issues and initiatives?**
- **How can the WRI increase public involvement in and responsibility for improving the vitality of the Valley's watersheds?**
- **To what extent will the availability of water constrain our ability to manage growth or promote desired growth patterns?**
- **How should the Forum and WRI work with cities, counties, and watershed councils to support their efforts to plan for long-range water resource needs?**

Transportation

The Forum generally supports the recommendations in the Willamette Valley Transportation Strategy adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission in 1995. For the purposes of this report, the Forum is highlighting the need for improvements in travel capacity in the Interstate 5 (I-5) corridor, including east-west connections to the corridor, improved passenger rail service, the provision of transit service between metropolitan centers and neighboring cities, and planning for future commercial airport service.

Improved Travel Capacity in the Interstate 5 Corridor

The Interstate 5 corridor is the *backbone* of the Willamette Valley. Its ability to function effectively in the future relies on local and state governments' decisions about matters such as land uses at interchanges, additional access to the freeway, development of parallel highways, and connections between different modes of travel. Choices about improvements in the Interstate 5 corridor also can have profound effects on development patterns and travel habits in the Valley. The Oregon Department of Transportation, affected local governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Area Commissions on Transportation are beginning to collaborate on the development and adoption of an Interstate 5 Corridor Plan.

In addition, the condition of the roadway system in the Valley is declining. Current funding levels are inadequate to maintain the existing system properly and make needed safety improvements. Also, funding for building additional roadway capacity is scarce. Consequently, cities, counties, and the state must rely on effective management of the existing roadway system to minimize increases in travel times, improve safety, and reduce congestion.

Recommendation: Provide additional travel capacity and improved intermodal connections in the I-5 corridor to accommodate projected growth, considering the need to support various transportation modes (trucks, autos, and transit).

Actions to Consider:

- **The I-5 Corridor Plan should emphasize management programs to reduce driving, especially during peak hours, through the use of alternative modes, pricing, and other economic tools.**
- **A regional forum (e.g., Willamette Valley Livability Forum or a Forum subcommittee), Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Area Commissions on Transportation should serve as the key stakeholder groups that develop the I-5 Corridor Plan.**
- **The Plan should include specific proposals for managing land uses around both rural and urban interchanges.**
- **The state should address the need to coordinate enhancements and safety improvements in alternate parallel highways and existing east-west connections and crossings at I-5.**

Things to Think About:

- **As *peak hour* auto and truck trips on I-5 increase, is construction of additional lanes the best way to deal with congestion?**
- **How do we ensure that highway safety is maintained or improved as growth occurs? Should we increase state police enforcement and spend more money on safety improvements?**
- **Should pricing and other economic incentives be used to encourage truck and auto trips to occur during *off-peak* periods?**
- **How can we improve east-west movement of traffic and connections to I-5?**

Inter-City Passenger Rail (High-Speed Rail)

The passenger rail line from Eugene to Portland is part of the federally designated Northwest High Speed Rail Corridor that extends to Vancouver, British Columbia. The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) is developing Oregon's portion of the corridor, in cooperation with Amtrak and the freight railroads, to provide additional travel capacity in the I-5 corridor. Work is progressing incrementally, as resources become available. The short-term goal of the Oregon Passenger Rail Project is to increase the number of trains operating in the corridor; raise passenger train speeds to 79 miles per hour in 80 percent of the corridor by 2002; improve rail stations in Eugene, Albany, and Salem; and provide better connections by motorcoach to the rail line from southern Oregon, the coast, and eastern Oregon. The objective is to increase ridership and revenues to support operations by improving the frequency and reliability of passenger rail.

Recommendation: Improve the frequency and reliability of passenger rail service from Eugene to Portland to provide additional travel capacity and travel options in the I-5 corridor.

Actions to Consider:

- **The Legislature should provide funding to add another daily round-trip train between Portland and Eugene/Springfield as recommended by the Oregon Passenger Rail Project.**
- **The state should provide financial support to assist cities in developing active, intermodal transportation hubs near train stations in Eugene, Albany, Salem, and the Portland area.**
- **The state should promote and help support good connections to the train stations from outlying communities.**

Things to Think About:

- **What barriers or obstacles need to be addressed to make passenger rail an attractive alternative to auto travel?**
- **How could improved (e.g., more frequent, reliable, faster) passenger rail service benefit your community?**
- **How can we improve connections to the rail corridor from outlying Valley communities?**
- **How should passenger rail service improvements be funded given that gas tax funds may be spent only on roads and highways?**

Inter-City Commuter Services to Major Employment Centers

Inter-city commuting to major employment centers is increasing in the Willamette Valley. Unfortunately, most of the commuting is done in private automobiles. This results in congested highways. According to ODOT's Willamette Valley Transportation Strategy, urban areas with populations of 2,500 or more within 20 miles of metropolitan or large central-city employment centers should have peak-hour commuter transit service. Both the Portland and Eugene metropolitan areas have this kind of transit service, but Salem/Keizer and Albany/Corvallis do not have institutions or service providers to address this major transportation need.

The greatest unmet needs for service involve connecting outlying communities to Salem/Keizer and Albany/Corvallis. Communities that should have better access to Salem/Keizer include Dallas, Monmouth, Independence, Mt. Angel, Silverton, and Stayton. The Albany/Corvallis area should have employment commuter connections with Philomath, Lebanon, and Sweet Home.

Recommendation: Provide transit service adequate to meet commuter needs between metropolitan centers and neighboring cities when it is justified by potential ridership.

Actions to Consider:

- **The Oregon Department of Transportation; Benton, Linn, Marion, and Polk counties; the cities of Albany, Corvallis, Keizer, and Salem; and existing public transit providers in these areas should collaborate to provide commuter transit service within the next five years.**
- **The state should provide matching funding for regional inter-city transit to encourage local and private sector contributions.**
- **Federal, state, and local governments should work together to develop and use technology to allow on-demand public transit service to be available in the near future.**

Things to Think About:

- **Is there enough demand for inter-city transit services to justify the cost of initiating them?**
- **What barriers exist to providing these transit services (e.g., financial, organizational)?**
- **What role should private sector employers play in funding inter-city transit services for their employees, or in providing incentives to employees to use transit services?**
- **To what extent will increased inter-city transit service decrease the need for future highway capacity increases?**

Planning for Future Commercial Air Service

Commercial air transportation is a major component of the Valley's economy and livability. Plans are under way for the long-term expansion of Portland International Airport to accommodate the demand created in the northern Willamette Valley and southern Washington. Alternatives to meet demand in the mid- and southern Valley include re-establishing commercial service in Salem, expanding service capacity at the Eugene airport, and providing better ground transportation connections between major urban areas and airports.

Recommendation: Identify and evaluate options for accommodating future demand for commercial air service in the Willamette Valley that take into account the distribution of demand; the potential to increase service levels; and the impacts on the local economy, land use, and environment.

Actions to Consider:

- **The Oregon Department of Transportation, Port of Portland, Metro, and the cities of Eugene and Salem should participate in coordinated planning efforts to determine how best to respond to the need for future commercial air service in the Valley.**
- **The state should support the City of Eugene in implementing plans to add a parallel runway to accommodate increased demand for commercial air service in the Valley.**
- **The state should encourage commercial airlines to develop additional service in the mid- and southern Willamette Valley.**
- **The Oregon Department of Transportation should study the demand for and feasibility of establishing more extensive ground transportation connections between major cities and the airports.**

Things to Think About:

- **Is further decentralizing domestic commercial air service in the best interests of the Valley's future economy and livability?**
- **To what extent should decisions concerning distribution of commercial air service be made jointly by all jurisdictions that currently support commercial service?**
- **To what extent can regional and state plans and goals alter airline decisions?**

Community

The Forum recommends that Valley residents create and promote a shared vision for a preferred future for their communities. The Forum also recommends that communities focus on providing adequate, affordable housing; enhancing the livability of neighborhoods; and improving educational opportunities for all residents.

Affordable Housing

Providing affordable housing for the residents of the Willamette Valley—especially for families with children in the home—continues to be a challenge. Housing prices have continued to rise. Many Valley families that want to own a home are finding that, given current income levels, they cannot afford a home in many Valley communities.

A full spectrum of housing types is needed to accommodate people in different stages of life and who have different needs and preferences. State land use goals and administrative rules require cities to plan and zone for a mix of housing types and densities. During the last five years, higher-density development and increasing choices of housing types, including attached, single-family homes, have helped make more homes affordable in the Portland metropolitan area. However, in most communities, much of the land has been developed at lower densities than planned, thus increasing costs and limiting choices in housing types. In addition, neighborhood opposition can make it more difficult and more expensive to build subsidized housing for low-income residents.

We need to take the necessary actions to close the gap between the cost of housing and what people can afford to pay for a home. We need to reduce the cost of housing, emphasize home ownership, and increase funding for housing development and home-ownership programs. But perhaps more importantly, we need to continue to develop our economy and increase family incomes.

Recommendation: Promote the development in all Willamette Valley communities of enough units and kinds of affordable housing to meet residents' needs, preferences, and financial circumstances.

Actions to Consider:

- **State and local governments should implement a strategy focused on providing a full range of housing types and prices in every neighborhood in each Valley community.**
- **State government should help local governments respond to the need for more affordable housing in their communities by serving as an information clearinghouse on ways to improve affordability and by providing financial incentives to encourage developers to build affordable housing.**
- **State and local governments, consulting with the building industry, should work together to identify the reasons why more affordable housing units are not being built.**
- **State and local governments, consulting with the building industry, should work together to identify and make appropriate changes to streamline and decrease the cost of permitting processes.**
- **Federal, state, and local governments should work together to promote the development of innovative housing types that are more affordable and well-designed (e.g., townhouses, stacked manufactured units).**
- **The state should provide leadership in developing new mechanisms for financing the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing, including supporting increased funding for Oregon's Housing Trust Fund and leveraging other housing funds in the Department of Housing and Community Services to construct affordable housing units.**

Things to Think About:

- **Should state and local governments provide additional incentives to the private sector to encourage the construction of affordable housing?**
- **Should the state make some of its revenue-sharing programs contingent upon local government efforts to provide for adequate affordable housing?**
- **What changes in regulations could help ensure that all Willamette Valley communities are better able to provide adequate amounts of affordable housing?**
- **How can the state help local governments, non-profits, and businesses provide more housing for the homeless?**

Increased Investment in Schools and Education

Investing in schools and educational institutions to provide access to a wide range of high-quality educational opportunities is key to building and sustaining strong communities. Based on recent surveys conducted for the Forum, the quality of public education from preschool through post-secondary programs is the top concern of Valley residents and Forum members. Those of us who live in the Valley are also concerned about providing educational programs that support civic and social responsibility and sustain active citizen involvement in public affairs.

Larger class sizes and inadequate funding, school infrastructure, and telecommunications facilities and services limit the ability of most communities to provide high-quality educational opportunities. In addition, the shift in Oregon's tax system to increased reliance on income taxes to fund education has increased the sensitivity of education funding.

Recommendation: Make increased investment in schools and education a high priority.

Actions to Consider:

- **State and local governments and educational institutions should work together to develop and offer community-based educational programs to increase citizen participation and leadership.**
- **State and local governments and educational institutions should work together to support educational reform efforts that will enhance the future quality of Oregon's public education.**

Things to Think About:

- **How can state and local governments work together to get the funding necessary to correct current deficiencies in K-12 public education?**
- **How can Oregon ensure that its public schools continue to provide high-quality educational opportunities?**
- **What are the best ways to use the educational system to support and promote active citizen involvement in public decision-making?**

High-Quality Neighborhoods

It takes livable communities to have a livable Willamette Valley, and high-quality neighborhoods are the building blocks of livable communities. The feelings residents have for the Valley and their own communities are based on how they feel about the character and quality of their neighborhoods. The factors determining neighborhood, community, and Valley livability are much the same. They include the quality of the natural and *built* environments, the health of the economy, personal safety, services for those in need, cultural diversity, the quality of educational opportunities, affordable housing, and the ability to get around easily. Each community should have the support and resources to create a vision of livability that is based on maintaining the quality, character, and livability of its neighborhoods.

Recommendation: Support preservation and enhancement of the safety, quality, and livability of neighborhoods in all Valley communities.

Actions to Consider:

- **Communities should establish funding sources for the acquisition of open space, development of parks, and other neighborhood enhancement activities.**
- **Communities should work with developers and residents to create and build prototypes that show how design features can enhance neighborhood livability.**

- **Communities should develop walkable neighborhoods with safe and easy connections to schools, parks, and neighborhood stores for children, adults, and senior citizens.**
- **The state should provide additional financial and technical assistance and training to help communities plan and implement approaches that will protect the quality and character of their neighborhoods as new development occurs. This should be done by expanding the Transportation and Growth Management Program or creating new programs under the direction of the state's Community Solutions Team.**

Things to Think About:

- **Can compact growth and the resulting increases in density in residential neighborhoods be compatible with the actual and perceived livability of communities?**
- **How important are good urban design, mixed uses, and ease of movement in creating livable neighborhoods?**
- **What assistance—incentives, capital projects, financial tools, and expert consultation—is needed to help communities improve neighborhood livability?**

Economy

The Forum recommends cooperative regional planning that supports sustainable economic development and increased investment in advanced telecommunications technology and workforce education and training.

Regional Planning for Sustainable Economic Development

Industries as diverse as agriculture, forestry, mining, tourism, and high-technology all play important roles in the Valley's economic future. These industries can influence the Valley environment in both positive and negative ways. The challenge is to build on this economic base, while ensuring a sustainable use of the natural resources upon which they depend. Preservation of farm and forest land adjacent to expanding cities, maintaining adequate water supplies and water quality as industrial and residential water demands increase, and protecting important scenic resources are examples of the steps that must be taken to sustain our economy. To meet this challenge, it is important to have a Valley-wide perspective. The state's strategic plan, *Oregon Shines*, is an excellent starting point for a long-range, regional planning.

Given the population growth that's expected in the Valley during the next 50 years, it may make sense for planners to encourage growth where it can be accommodated in the most cost-effective and environmentally sound way. The availability and adequacy of infrastructure (e.g., water supplies, sewage treatment, and transportation) and affordable housing, and the impact on natural resources are major issues related to locating and managing growth in the Valley. Through cooperative Valley-wide planning, state and local governments could coordinate public investments, improve efficiency, and provide incentives so that growth can occur where it helps us achieve our preferred future. The Governor's Community Solutions Team and Community Development Office are developing programs that support regional partnerships and the coordination of public investments.

Recommendation: Facilitate more systematic and cooperative Valley-wide planning for sustainable economic development.

Actions to Consider:

- **The Forum should convene a work group in 1999 to consider the long-term economic and growth trends in the Willamette Valley, and identify how to facilitate cooperative valley-wide planning for sustainable economic development based on the principles described in the Forum's vision and *Oregon Shines*.**
- **The state should provide additional funding to help local communities and regions coordinate and build the infrastructure that's essential to support sustainable economic development in the Valley.**
- **Local jurisdictions should explore additional inter-jurisdictional efforts, in cooperation with the private sector, to develop and share the costs of new infrastructure.**
- **State and local governments should provide sustained funding to support business-education partnerships that are developing programs to improve workforce training.**

Things to Think About:

- **How important, from an economic perspective, is preservation of agricultural and forest land near urban areas?**
- **Should we discourage certain types of new industries if they compete for the resources being used by existing industry?**
- **Should state and local governments provide economic incentives to encourage businesses to participate in protecting and restoring the Valley's environmental health?**
- **Should the state provide incentives to businesses to locate in the Willamette Valley's smaller cities, especially those with high unemployment rates, or in economically disadvantaged communities outside of the Willamette Valley altogether?**

Investment in Advanced Telecommunications Technology

Effective telecommunications systems are essential for the functioning and growth of businesses, educational institutions, and governments. They are regional resources and their presence or absence can determine the future of development in a region. Telecommunications technology is of such growing importance to the development of a region that the lack of more advanced telecommunications facilities and services could well result in a loss of economic development.

Unfortunately, telecommunications systems in the Valley range from very basic, ten-year-old services to systems that are now considered *intermediate*. Most communities in the Valley, particularly those in rural areas, still are far from having the advanced telecommunications services that are critical to future economic success. In order for Oregon to keep pace with other Western states, improving telecommunications infrastructure must become a statewide priority.

Recommendation: Make the improvement of telecommunications infrastructure a state investment priority.

Actions to Consider:

- **State and local governments should work with providers to install advanced telecommunications facilities and services throughout in the Valley.**
- **The state should establish a Telecommunications Facilities and Services Fund to provide advanced technology to sparsely populated areas and to help businesses, institutions, and communities connect to advanced systems. The state should also establish appropriate methods to finance the fund.**
- **Local governments should establish telecommunications plans that create policies to protect public interests in the public right-of-way, encourage development of advanced facilities, and identify ways to encourage the use of those facilities.**

Things to Think About:

- **Which policy and regulatory changes must we make to support the development of advanced telecommunications infrastructure in all Valley communities?**
- **How can we maintain or reduce costs and ensure appropriate levels of service for all users?**
- **How can we work together more effectively to provide telecommunications services to improve efficiency?**

Investment in Workforce Education and Training

The state's strategic plan, *Oregon Shines*, emphasizes the need to create the "best trained and educated workforce in the United States." If we accomplish that, or at least make progress toward that goal, Oregon will attract successful companies and business people that will keep the State's—and the Valley's—economy strong. Unfortunately, we still do not produce enough skilled workers to fill all of the best-paying jobs. To get there we need to improve our post-secondary educational system—our community colleges and universities—to a point where they provide a high-quality education for recent high school graduates, retrain and re-educate our current workforce, and contribute a community resource that attracts relocating businesses and fosters development of new businesses and jobs.

We cannot achieve this without additional state financial support. This will facilitate public-private workforce initiatives and support community college and university programs that provide workforce-training services to businesses and industry.

Recommendation: Make increased investment in workforce education and training a priority.

Actions to Consider:

- **State and local governments should support public-private partnerships to develop and share training programs for the existing workforce.**
- **State and local governments should support partnerships between public educational institutions to increase the access to seamless educational opportunities for more of the Valley's workforce.**
- **The Legislature should support new funding models and equity for community colleges.**
- **State and local governments should create strategies that include the involvement of post-secondary educational institutions in the development of state and local economic development programs.**

Things to Think About:

- **How critical is the quality of educational opportunities to the economic health of the Valley and to the Valley's ability to attract new businesses?**
- **How should Oregon respond to federal workforce initiatives regarding the allocation of funding to regions and the creation of one-stop social and educational resource centers?**
- **How do we maintain and improve the technologies needed to ensure the high-quality education and training that will keep Oregon competitive?**

Decision Making

The Forum recommends regional partnerships, collaborative problem solving, and renewed citizen participation to ensure that all those having a stake in the future livability of the Valley have an opportunity to participate in the decisions that will affect them.

Regional Partnerships

The growth-related public policy issues discussed in this report are complex and interconnected. With the support of the Governor's Community Solutions Team and Community Development Office, several new partnerships are being formed to address these complex and inter-related issues and to accomplish objectives that cut across jurisdictional and institutional boundaries. These partnerships include Area Commissions on Transportation, community development boards, and the Willamette Restoration Initiative.

The Forum's members strongly support using regional partnerships and approaches to address issues of common concern. For the past two years, the Forum has brought together leaders from government, business, education, and non-profit organizations to identify and analyze issues, share information, and explore innovative regional approaches to Valley-wide problems and concerns.

Given the Forum's membership, structure, and accomplishments, it could continue to bring together representatives of all Valley communities to discuss and coordinate actions to achieve a preferred future for the Valley and to address the inter-jurisdictional impacts of our choices. The Forum also could serve other roles—as an information center and clearinghouse on topics of

Valley-wide interest, and a source of people who will participate in other regional initiatives and programs. In addition, the Forum could help convene and coordinate other regional partnerships and programs to address important shared issues and concerns.

Because the Forum does not have a dedicated funding source, it relies on the commitment and financial support of the organizations represented by its members and on its ability to obtain grants from public and private sources. Consequently, the ability and willingness of its members to contribute time and other resources will determine the Forum's future role and activities.

Recommendation: Continue to support the use of collaborative, regional partnerships to respond to regional issues, engage citizens in choosing a preferred future, and identify and support local and regional actions to achieve that future.

Actions to Consider:

- **The Legislature should encourage state agencies to provide financial and technical support for collaborative, regional partnerships.**
- **The Forum should support other regional partnerships and programs by:**
  - **Serving as a sounding board for proposals developed by the regional partnerships,**
  - **Helping the regional partnerships share information and priorities with each other and related organizations, and**
  - **Serving as a convening and coordinating body to help integrate the work of the regional partnerships and help them focus on Valley-wide issues.**
- **Regional partnerships should work with the federal agencies participating in the Willamette Province project to obtain assistance in taking steps toward achieving a preferred future.**
- **State and local governments should work with regional partnerships to initiate and support a campaign for renewed citizen participation that includes improvement of the ability of citizens to participate in decision making that is focused on growth and achieving a preferred future.**
- **The Forum should work with regional partnerships to produce a periodic *report card* on the state of the Valley and progress toward a preferred future.**

Things to Think About:

- **Does the Forum provide an effective vehicle for public/private stakeholder discussions and recommendations about how to resolve Valley-wide issues?**
- **How should regional programs and approaches be funded to ensure efficient use of resources?**
- **Is it cost-effective to invest public and private financial resources to support regional efforts?**
- **What can regional programs do to ensure that Valley residents are actively engaged in creating and achieving a preferred future for the Willamette Valley?**

Collaborative Problem-Solving

One individual or organization working alone cannot solve the Willamette Valley's problems. Achieving the Forum's vision of a preferred future will require the leadership, commitment, and cooperation of all levels of government, as well as individuals, businesses, and non-profit organizations. To be effective, stakeholders will need to work together to build consensus. Their ability to do so is essential so we can provide a healthy and prosperous future for our children and grandchildren. Yet, inevitable conflicts will occur. To use conflict as a catalyst to create the best possible outcomes, we will need to use collaborative problem-solving approaches.

Oregon has created the Public Policy Dispute Resolution Program to help empower public policy bodies to use collaborative approaches in making decisions and solving problems. In addition, the state's Regional Problem Solving Program, administered by the Department of Land Conservation and Development, supports a collaborative approach for resolving regional land use issues. The Forum supports the collaborative decision-making process and could help apply this approach throughout the Valley to assist regional decision-making and problem-solving efforts.

Recommendation: Develop a collaborative problem-solving framework and process for dealing with Valley-wide and sub-regional decisions and conflicts.

Actions to Consider:

- **The Forum should work with Oregon's Public Policy Dispute Resolution Program to identify resources that help evaluate and resolve inter-jurisdictional conflicts in the Valley.**
- **The state should expand its Regional Problem Solving Program and make it available to Valley jurisdictions.**
- **State, regional, and local governments should experiment with alternative conflict resolution techniques when neighboring communities disagree about growth and land use policies.**
- **Oregon's Public Policy Dispute Resolution Program should provide opportunities for Valley officials to participate in collaborative decision-making training programs.**

Things to Think About:

- **How can the Forum support efforts to resolve Valley issues and conflicts in a way that best meets the interests of all affected stakeholders?**
- **What resources are available to help jurisdictions collaborate with one another in addressing issues of mutual concern?**

Now It's Up to You

Now all of us must ask ourselves that very piercing question that the regional thinker, Lewis Mumford, posed to Oregonians more than 50 years ago: "Are you good enough to have this country in your possession? Have you got enough intelligence, imagination, and cooperation among you to make the best use of these opportunities?"

Oregonians asked—and answered—that question 25 years ago. They thought creatively, collaborated, and made choices—and then they acted to protect the best. We continue to benefit from their foresight, courage, and commitment.

Unfortunately, we also know that even the best innovations and intentions aren't always enough. To be truly successful, we must be vigilant. One stunning example of this is the condition of the *River of Life*. Twice before, Oregonians have cleaned up the Willamette River. Now we need to do it again.

So today we must make choices for the next generations. What will those who are living in the Valley in 2010, 2030, and 2050 say about our choices and contributions? Will we have seen their needs clearly? Will we have been creative? Collaborative? Committed? Courageous? Will we have helped them and the Valley's natural environment endure?

If future generations answer those questions with a loud "Yes!" then we met Mumford's challenge.

To ensure that we do, the Forum needs your help. Your insights, experience, and thoughts ***are*** important. That's why the Forum asks you to consider seriously the vision and recommendations described here. Discuss them with your family, friends, community leaders, and decision makers. And tell the Forum and the policy makers what you think.

Do you agree with the recommendations? Which actions would you support? Which actions should have highest priority? What additional recommendations and actions should all of us consider? Please use the following tear-out response form to give the Forum your thoughts and suggestions. Alternatively, you can use the Forum's Web site to respond to the report, at http://www.lcog.org/wvlf/.

Your input *will* be heard. And it will make a difference. Even more, your actions will help lead us toward a better 2050. If we achieve it, our children and grandchildren will thank us. What better legacy can we create?

Appendix A

Willamette Valley Survey on Concerns About Growth and Future Livability

Introduction

Between August 16 and 26, 1998, Davis & Hibbitts, Inc. conducted a survey of 950 Willamette Valley residents age 18 and over. Interviews were conducted by telephone from a list of Valley residents provided by Scientific Telephone Samples, Inc. Interviews lasted an average of 13-14 minutes in length. Overall, 200 interviews were conducted in Lane, Linn, Benton, and Yamhill Counties, and 150 interviews were conducted within a portion of Columbia County. The margin of error for the 200 sample surveys is ±7%; for the 150 sample survey, it is ±9%.

Also, between March 17 and 26, 1998, Davis & Hibbitts, Inc. conducted a survey of 401 Marion County residents and 206 Polk County residents over the age of 18. Interviews were also conducted by telephone, and the survey instrument used in the March and August surveys was the same. The margin of error for the Marion County survey is ±5%; for the Polk County survey it is ±7%.

Data from the two surveys, separated by only five months in time, are discussed in this memo. In addition, a section at the end of this document compares, where possible, data from the Willamette Valley surveys of March and August 1998 with data from assorted surveys we have completed on livability concerns in the Tri-County area. Because the heart of the Willamette Valley studies consisted of the desirability/probability scaling questions (which we have not asked in the Tri-County surveys), we will not be able to directly compare all aspects of the surveys. Nonetheless, some questions from the Willamette Valley surveys have been asked in the Tri-County area, and we can use them for direct comparisons. Further, our entire database allows us to make what we think are some reasonable inferences about similarities and differences between the Valley and the Tri-County area on issues.

Findings

To begin the survey, we asked respondents within the seven counties if they had a very or somewhat positive, or very or somewhat negative opinion of their community. Overall, 90% of those polled had either a very or somewhat positive feeling, while only 9% had a very or somewhat negative feeling. Those who felt very positive outweighed those who felt very negative by a 38% to 2% margin. On balance, we found respondents in all counties upbeat about their community. We do note that Lane County's rating of 82% positive to 17% negative was somewhat lower than any of the other counties surveyed. Marion County residents also rated their community a bit lower than the average (83% positive, 14% negative). Thus, the two largest population counties in the Valley (Marion, Lane) were slightly less positive about their community than the remaining counties, which received positive ratings of between 89% and 93%. Also, we note that respondents over age 55, those with an education that went beyond high school and those with an income of over $50,000 were all somewhat more inclined than the average to view their community very positively.

We then asked respondents within the seven counties, when thinking about the quality of life in the community where they live, what was the single most important thing to them. Topping the list overall, at 25%, was a low crime rate or a feeling of personal safety or good police protection. Finishing second, at 12%, was the notion of having a closeknit community, which included friendly or helpful neighbors or a community that the respondent felt comfortable with. In third place, at 11%, was the notion that their area was fairly rural, or was not overpopulated, or had a rural or small town atmosphere. Finishing in fourth place, at 7% was good schools or quality education or quality curriculum within the schools. Beyond this, 6% said that the most important thing to them was having a peaceful, quiet or tranquil environment in their community. There were a number of other responses, but none of these were mentioned by more than 5% of those polled.

Residents in Lane, Marion, and Linn Counties were somewhat more likely to mention crime or public safety concerns than respondents in the remaining counties. Those in Benton County were more inclined to say that the most important thing to them was that the area was not overpopulated or too developed. This was also true of respondents in Columbia County. Those in Yamhill and Polk Counties were more likely than respondents in other counties to say that having a closeknit community that is friendly or having helpful neighbors was the most important thing to them.

We then read respondents within the five counties a list of 16 possible issues. We asked them to rate these issues on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 meant they did not worry about it at all and 10 meant they thought or worried about it a great deal. The table below shows the overall results for each county for each of these particular issues and also incorporates the results from the Marion and Polk county surveys conducted in spring 1998. It is important to keep in mind, as we review these issues, that we are rank ordering them by county. That is, we are looking at the issue relative to where it is ranked compared to other issues within that county, not compared to the other counties. For example, both Marion and Polk rated economic health/availability of jobs at 6.0 on the 0 to 10 scale. However, the 6.0 rating places jobs/economy as the second ranking issue overall in Polk County, but only the seventh ranked issue in Marion County.

Table I
Concern/Worry Over Issues
(10=Worry About it a Great Deal; 0=Don't Worry About it at All)

Issue	Marion	Polk	Benton	Lane	Linn	Yamhill	Columbia
Quality of public education	7.3	6.9	6.6	7.0	7.1	6.4	6.4
Crime	7.3	5.7	5.5	6.7	6.8	5.8	5.4
Traffic congestion	6.5	5.1	5.5	6.2	5.9	6.5	5.9
Preservation of open/natural areas	6.3	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.0	5.8	6.2
Protection of fish/wildlife	5.9	5.3	5.9	6.5	6.1	5.6	5.9
Health of economy/availability of jobs	6.0	6.0	5.7	6.1	6.3	5.4	5.8
Cost and availability of housing	6.0	5.7	6.0	5.9	5.8	5.4	5.7
Condition of roads and highways	6.1	5.6	4.8	5.4	6.2	6.1	5.9
Population growth	5.9	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.6	6.3
Air quality	5.7	4.9	5.1	6.2	6.2	5.1	5.2
Having effective and open decision making	5.9	5.5	5.5	5.7	5.9	5.3	5.9
Water quality	6.1	5.4	5.7	5.3	5.8	5.4	5.7
Urban sprawl	5.5	5.0	4.7	5.2	5.0	5.0	6.1
Availability of parks	5.1	4.3	4.8	5.6	4.9	4.5	5.6
Water availability	5.1	5.1	4.3	4.8	4.8	5.2	4.8
Increasing ethnic/cultural diversity	4.8	4.3	4.1	4.7	4.3	3.9	3.5

Source: Davis & Hibbitts, Inc. (1998)

While it is fair to say that there is considerable similarity among the various counties we surveyed, there are also some distinct differences. Reviewing the counties one by one, the top three issues from the spring survey in Marion County were the quality of public education, crime, and traffic congestion. Within Polk County, the top two issues were the quality of public education and the health of the economy/availability of jobs. There was a three-way tie for third place in Polk County between crime, the preservation of open and natural areas, and the cost and availability of housing. In the most recent survey, we found that the primary issue in Benton County was the quality of public education, with the cost and availability of housing the number two issue, and in a tie for third we found preservation of open spaces and natural areas and the protection of fish and wildlife. Within Lane County, the top three issues were the quality of public education, crime, and the protection of fish and wildlife. Turning to Linn County, the top issue was the quality of public education, the second most important was crime, and third was the health of the economy and the availability of jobs. Within Yamhill County, a different profile presented itself. The top issue was traffic congestion, the second was the quality of public education, and third highest rated issue was the condition of roads and highways. Lastly, the portion of Columbia County that we surveyed also indicated a concern over growth issues. Thus, in Columbia County, while the quality of public education was number one, the second rated issue was population growth, and the third issue was preservation of open space and natural areas.

In summary, it is no surprise that all of the counties showed a high level of concern about the quality of public education. The issue of crime was a more serious concern in Marion, Lane, and Linn counties. The health of the economy and the availability of jobs was of particular concern in Linn and Polk counties. The cost and availability of housing was more of a concern in Benton and Marion counties than in other counties, while Columbia County, again, exhibited somewhat more concern than other counties over population growth and urban sprawl. Finally, in terms of relative ranking, Yamhill County rated traffic congestion and the condition of roads and highways somewhat higher than the other counties.

Other Findings

There are a couple of other points we want to make before reviewing other results from the survey. First, as to subgroup differences, we did not find a large number. However, there are a few variances worth noting. One example is that the quality of public education is of somewhat more concern to respondents aged 18-54 than it is to respondents age 55 and over. Women expressed slightly higher concern over the cost and availability of housing, as well as crime, than did men. Those 18-34 rated the cost and availability of housing somewhat higher than those age 35 and over. The same cost and availability of housing priorities were stated by those with a household income of under $30,000. This issue was rated at 6.2 among this income group, but at only 5.6 or lower among those with a household income of over $30,000. Also, we note that it was those with a household income of over $50,000 who appeared somewhat more concerned with environmental issues, including population growth and urban sprawl.

Opinions on Growth

We then asked respondents to use a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 meant no more growth in their county and 10 represented as much additional growth as possible. The overall rating of respondents was 4.4, which is slightly toward the no growth side. Further, the results were remarkably consistent within counties. The lowest rating was 4.1 in Benton County; the highest rating was 4.6 in Lane County. Also we note that, overall, only 12% placed themselves in positions 8, 9, or 10 on the scale, which is a fairly high growth position. At the same time, 22% placed themselves in positions 0, 1, or 2 on the scale, that is, a low or no growth position. This pattern was followed throughout all of the counties as well; that is, there were more respondents placing themselves in the low or no growth end of the scale than placing themselves in the high growth end of the scale.

We then asked respondents, using the same 0 to 10 scale, where 0 represents an extremely poor job and 10 represents an extremely good job, how well the impacts of growth are being managed in their county. The overall average was 5.0, and again, we found little difference within the various county ratings. Benton County received the highest rating at 5.3 and Marion County the lowest rating at 4.7. The remaining counties fell between these scores.

Desirability and Probability of Events Within County

In an extensive final two questions, we asked respondents how desirable it was on a scale of very desirable, somewhat desirable, not too desirable, or not at all desirable to have 13 specified outcomes occur within their county. We then followed up by asking them how probable it was, on a scale of very probable, somewhat probable, not too probable, or not at all probable that those outcomes would be true in their county in the next 20 years.

In reviewing these results, we found much more similarity than dissonance among all of the counties. The top item in all five counties for desirability was having the air and water quality be good 20 years from now. Other items at or near the top of the list in all five counties included that there are sufficient supplies of water to support communities, industry, and fish and wildlife; that there is a significant amount of open space in the counties; that the economy is diversified and based on a variety of different types of industries and businesses; that communities in the counties are livable and maintain their unique character; and that young people are able to stay in the area and find good jobs if they want to stay.

As we found in the spring survey in Marion and Polk Counties, we were not surprised that respondents in all counties rated these things as desirable to occur. For example, in Benton County, the lowest rated item was that the Portland area and the rest of the valley work together on issues of common interest, while the highest rating was that air and water quality is good. The same was true in the remaining counties. All of the counties rated all of the items clearly well to the desirable side.

However, when we look at what people think will actually happen in their county in 20 years, we do find some differences. First, we should note, that as we found in Polk and Marion Counties in the spring, all of the counties are actually reasonably optimistic about their futures. A majority in every instance, except one, felt that what we described to them would very probably or somewhat probably be true in their county in 20 years. The only instance where this was not believed to be the case was having high-quality public transit in communities and between cities.

Nonetheless, there were some areas in which there was some disconnect between what respondents saw as desirable and what they thought would happen in 20 years. Again, in each case, more respondents were optimistic that what we described would occur than that it would not occur. But the greatest disconnect, consistently within the counties, occurred in the area of whether the air and water quality would be good in 20 years, whether there would be enough open space, whether there would be sufficient supplies of water for all the needs that would be required, whether young people would be able to stay in the county or community and get a good job, and whether the economy would be diversified enough.

Attitudes Toward Growth and Community in the Tri-County Compared to the Willamette Valley

The Willamette Valley studies of this year and our Tri-County studies over the past few years indicate a populace that likes its community at present and generally feels pretty upbeat. Thus, in the Willamette Valley studies, between 82% and 92% in each county had a positive view of their community. While not a precise match, our question of "is the area headed in the right direction or off on the wrong track" in the Tri-County has yielded results consistently in the 65% *right direction* range over the past three years. It is probable that a question in the Tri-County area that asked about positive/negative feelings toward their community would have elicited a somewhat higher result than 65%, but probably not quite as high as the 82% to 92% figures we found in the Willamette Valley studies. When it comes to growth, the Valley and Tri-County look very similar. Thus, a 1,000-sample poll we conducted in fall 1997 found Tri-County voters at 4.6 on a 0 to 10 scale regarding growth (0 = no more growth, 10 = as much growth as possible) and Willamette Valley registered voters were at 4.4 in the same study. In the 1998 studies we conducted for the Willamette Valley Livability Forum, the average of all counties was also 4.4, with not much variation in the separate counties' attitudes toward growth (all fell between 4.1 and 4.6). In summary, the Valley and Tri-County area look similar in their attitudes about continued growth: they are slightly tilted toward a slow growth perspective. It is important to keep in mind that in each of these surveys, the strong *no growth* wing in each case slightly outweighs the strong *pro growth* wing. However, in all cases, those in the middle, positions 4, 5, and 6 on the 0 to 10 scale, outweigh those on the wings.

Likewise, when it comes to how local officials are handling growth, averages clustered around the 5.0 mark, the mid-point. Further, nearly all of the county scores clustered near the middle rating of 5.0 (Benton County at 5.3, was highest rated; Marion County at 4.7, was lowest). Our survey of September 1997 rated local governments' job at managing growth overall at 4.7, and results among Willamette Valley voters were nearly the same, 4.8, as were the Tri-County results.

In summary, there is at present very little or no difference between the Willamette Valley counties and the Tri-County area in how they view growth, and in rating the job they think local officials are doing in managing growth. However, it is true, as common sense would suggest, that areas of Oregon which are feeling more of the pressures of population growth express more worries about it.

Issue Differences

As to issues of concern for residents of the Valley compared to residents of the Tri-County area, there are also more similarities than not. Most residents of both areas showed concern over the quality of public education, crime, and the preservation of open space/natural areas. These were the key issues in most Valley counties; they would definitely rate highly in the Tri-County area. However, there are some areas of difference as well. Traffic congestion would rank high on the list in the Tri-County; in the Valley, it was a major concern only in Marion, Columbia, Lane, and Yamhill counties, and much less so in Polk, Benton, and Linn counties in terms of rank ordering.

Right now, economic health and jobs would be relatively low on the concern level in the Tri-County; this is somewhat more of a concern in the Valley, especially in Polk and Linn counties.

Also, it is probable that population growth and the cost and availability of housing would rank higher in the Tri-County area than in most of the Valley counties; however, note that population growth was rank ordered higher in Yamhill and Columbia (geographically closer to the Tri-County) than anywhere else in the Valley, and housing concerns were rated higher in Polk and Benton counties. Again, it is our opinion that if we had asked exactly the same poll of Tri-County residents that we did of Valley residents, we would have seen more similarity than difference in how the various counties rank ordered the issue concerns we presented them, with the exceptions noted above.

Appendix B

The Willamette Valley Livability Forum

What is the Willamette Valley Livability Forum?

To meet the challenge of addressing the Willamette Valley's ongoing changes, Governor Kitzhaber brought together 88 Valley citizens to form the Willamette Valley Livability Forum.

The Forum is not a new level of government, and has no regulatory power. Created in December 1996, this broad-based, voluntary effort consists of representatives from state government (8), local and regional government (28), federal and tribal government (4), educational institutions (6), valley citizens (9), business and industry (21), and non-profit organizations (12). Past and current members are listed below.

The Forum's purpose is to find and promote solutions to the growth and development issues that Willamette Valley communities face. A governor-appointed Board of Advisors guides the Forum and a Resource Group assists staff in implementing the Forum's Work Plan. Past and current members of the Resource Group are listed below.

The Forum's Mission

Enable leaders and citizens to create and promote a shared vision for enhancing the livability of the Willamette Valley and to advise local and state officials on issues relating to the economic development and physical environment of the Valley.

The Forum's primary objective is to build linkages among Valley leaders and decision makers to enable them to share concerns, better understand trends and interrelationships, promote partnerships and coordination, take a holistic and integrated approach to decision making, and create and implement a vision to guide the Valley's growth.

The Forum's Accomplishments

The Forum's primary accomplishments in its first two years include:

- Preparation of an inventory of Valley studies and research efforts,
- Identification of key issues and concerns,
- Completion of a Valley-wide survey assessing citizen attitudes toward growth,
- Development of a 50-year vision for the Valley's future,
- Development of regional indicators and benchmarks for monitoring watershed health, and
- Preparation of this report on the state of the Willamette Valley.

How to Obtain More Information About the Forum

For more information about the Forum, please contact the office by mail at 125 East Eighth Avenue, Eugene, OR 97401; by telephone at (541) 682-4429; by fax at (541) 682-4099; or by e-mail at forum@lane.cog.or.us.

Current and Former Members of the Forum
Bolded names identify members of the Advisory Board.
Asterisks (*) identify members of the Vision Task Force.
Two asterisks (**) identify members of the Editorial Committee.

Jeff Allen, Oregon Environmental Council
Andy Anderson, Oregon Farm Bureau
Dorothy Anderson, Eugene Water & Electric Board
Ward Armstrong, Oregon Forest Industries Council
Keith Bartlett, Hewlett-Packard, Inc.
Janet Bechtold, Sherwood School District
Helen Berg, Mayor, City of Corvallis*
Rita Bernhard, Commissioner, Columbia County
Senator Lee Beyer, District 21
Tom Brian, Commissioner, Washington County
Susan Brody, Oregon Transportation Commission**
Sam Brooks, Brooks & Associates
Mike Burton, Executive Officer, Metro
Jon Carnahan, President, Linn-Benton Community College
Karla Chambers, Stahlbush Farms
Art Christiansen, Norpac, Inc.
Marilyn Coffel, Fred Meyer*
Steve Cogan, Fred Meyer Real Estate*
Jay Compton, Riverbend Sand & Gravel*
Greg Conser, Conser Homes
Steve Cornacchia, Commissioner, Lane County
Julia Crown, Sherwood High School (Student)
Dick Culbertson, Mayor, City of Oakridge; LCOG Board
Kent Daniels, Commissioner, Benton County
Jessie Davis, Siletz Tribal Council
Dennis Derby, Double D Development
Rob Drake, Mayor, City of Beaverton
Kappy Eaton, League of Women Voters*
Dick Ebbert, Pacific Power & Light
Gordon Faber, Mayor, City of Hillsboro
Randy Franke, Commissioner, Marion County*
Dave Frohnmayer, President, University of Oregon
Dean Funk, Portland General Electric
Judie Hammerstad, Commissioner, Clackamas County
Kathryn Harrison, Grand Ronde Tribal Council
Nancy Hedin, City Club of Portland
Dr. Robert Heffernan, Citizen Representative
Larry Hilderbrand, The Oregonian*
Pat Hocken, Lane Transit District
Sue Hollis, Administrator, City of Dayton
Mike Houck, Coalition for a Livable Future*
Michael Jordan, Commissioner, Clackamas County
Jim Just, Friends of Linn County
Gregg Kantor, 1,000 Friends of Oregon and Livable Oregon, Inc. Boards
Darrel Kenops, Willamette National Forest and Willamette Province Advisory Committee
Governor John Kitzhaber (Robin McArthur-Phillips, alternate)**
Dennis Koho, Mayor, City of Keizer
Virginia Lang, US West Communications
Rochelle Lessner, Portland General Electric

Robert Liberty, 1,000 Friends of Oregon
Diane Linn, Commissioner, Multnomah County
Craig Lomnicki, Citizen Representative
Ted Lopuszynski, Commissioner, Yamhill County
Don Lutes, Springfield Planning Commission
Marlene Mangan, Willamette Industries
Guy March, Councilor, City of Philomath
Catherine Mater, Economic Development Commission
Jack McGowan, SOLV
Chuck McLaran, Mayor, City of Albany
John Miller, Wildwood Incorporated and Mahonia Vineyards
Gretchen Miller Kafoury, Commissioner, City of Portland
Judy Nelson, U.S. Bureau of Land Management and Willamette Province Advisory Committee
James Nicholson, Sprague High School
Chet Orloff, Oregon Historical Society
Dale Penn, Sprague High School (Student)
Linda Peters, Commissioner, Washington County
Gretchen Pierce, Hult & Associates
Ernie Platt, Matrix Development
Mike Propes, Commissioner, Polk County
George Pugh, Board of Agriculture*
Dr. F. Louis Rios, Citizen Representative
Dr. Paul Risser, President, Oregon State University
Robert Rohlf, Councilor, City of Tigard
Deborah Saweuyer-Parks, Oregon Corporation of Affordable Housing
Dave Schmidt, Commissioner, Linn County
Brian Scott, Livable Oregon, Inc.
Dr. Ethan Seltzer, Institute of Portland Metro Studies, Portland State University**
Peter Sorenson, Commissioner, Lane County
Bob Speaker, Commissioner, Benton County
Robert Stacey, Oregon Environmental Council and Livable Oregon, Inc. Boards
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Peter Tarzian, Housing and Community Services Commission
Jean Tate, Metropolitan Affordable Housing Corporation**
Paul Thalhofer, Mayor, City of Troutdale
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Tony Van Vliet, Environmental Quality Commission
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Sara Vickerman, Defenders of Wildlife
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Nita Ornelas Werner, Ornelas Enterprises Inc.
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Appendix C

The Willamette Restoration Initiative

What is the Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI)?

The WRI is a new, broad-based effort to promote, integrate, and coordinate efforts to protect and restore the health of the Willamette River watershed. A major task of the Initiative is to help write the *Willamette Chapter* of the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

WRI Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals

Vision

The Willamette Basin must attain a dynamic balance between diverse human and ecological needs. Basin residents should live in healthy watersheds with functioning floodplains and habitats supporting a diversity of native species. Opportunities should exist for people to interact with the wildness of a restored, healthy river system. Valley residents should be part of a larger Basin community, connected by a system of rivers and streams. That system should provide healthy aquatic life, clean drinking water, safe places for recreation and support for a vibrant economy. Residents must accept individual and collective responsibility for this vision, and provide leaders with a mandate and the resources necessary to achieve and sustain it.

Mission

Develop a community-based, comprehensive, integrated strategy for enhancing, restoring, and conserving the biological integrity and economic vitality of the Willamette River basin.

Values

WRI will:

- Use inclusive, cooperative approaches.
- Take a long-term view of restoration, while targeting high-priority short-term actions.
- Base its actions on sound science.
- Employ and promote flexible planning and implementation strategies that consider natural cycles and processes and respond to new information.
- Develop practical, economically sound strategies.
- Initiate a comprehensive, coordinated approach to restoration by recognizing and respecting existing efforts, especially at the local level.
- Investigate incentive-based approaches to help craft creative solutions.

Goals

1. Clean Water: The Willamette River and its tributaries meet or exceed standards, are clean enough for safe swimming and fishing, and offer safe and affordable drinking water sources.
2. Healthy Native Habitats: Habitats for native species are abundant and provide the natural processes necessary for self-sustaining populations.

3. Strong Economy: A robust basin economy draws continued strength from sustainable natural resource use and restoration strategies.
4. High Quality of Life: Basin residents have the opportunity for frequent interaction with healthy streams and natural settings in urban, rural, agricultural, and forest lands.
5. Shared Community Stewardship: Basin citizens collectively commit to watershed stewardship by understanding their impacts on, and contributions to, watershed health and each other.
6. Accountable Institutions: Watershed health efforts by government, businesses, and local groups are managed in a cooperative, business-like way, with clear roles, measurable objectives, and specific performance measures which are carefully tracked.

Meeting the Need for Coordination and Integration

The Willamette basin covers about 12,000 square miles and has approximately 16,000 miles of stream. While some of its habitats and species are doing well, a number are in trouble. Steelhead in the lower basin and spring chinook salmon and steelhead in the upper basin are currently listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Species such as the western pond turtle and meadowlark are also declining.

The basin also provides critical human habitat. It includes about 70 percent of the state's population and accounts for roughly half of Oregon's agricultural sales. Our population in the basin is expected to grow by 1.7 million people in the next 50 years.

A wide variety of organizations deal with our impacts on the Willamette watershed, including 21 watershed councils, 11 soil and water conservation districts, about 100 cities, ten counties, four regional government structures, and two resource conservation and development area councils. The basin is also subject to programs administered by at least nine state agencies and more than a dozen federal agencies.

The Initiative is attempting to understand how all of these efforts fit together by systematically finding out about all the restoration efforts in the basin, identifying specific ways to work with ongoing efforts, and recommending new strategies where needed.

Collaboration: Not Re-Inventing the Wheel

The Initiative is charged to work closely with existing groups and programs, including watershed councils, the Lower Columbia River Estuary Program, and the Willamette Valley Livability Forum. In addition, WRI is to coordinate with all other relevant efforts, including soil and water conservation districts, local governments, and the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds.

The WRI Board has also agreed to oversee the American Heritage River (AHR) program in the basin in order to assure that the local interests of the basin's communities are not only protected, but benefit. While the Willamette was designated an AHR before the Initiative was formed, the WRI Board supports AHR's stated purpose—obtaining federal resources to implement local plans to restore and protect rivers environmentally, economically, and culturally. The Board is also aware that a number of communities have concerns about the AHR program and will address them, at a minimum, by guaranteeing local input on program development, requiring the river navigator (a

federally funded AHR position) to serve local needs, and explicitly recognizing property rights in AHR agreements.

WRI and the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds

Executive Order 98-18 directs WRI to "Oversee the preparation of a Willamette Restoration Strategy, including developing Willamette Basin amendments and supplements to the Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds for approval by the Governor and the Legislature." The Initiative will fulfill this charge by working closely with the Legislature and the Governor's Office, using existing Oregon Plan structures and processes (including the Core, Implementation, Monitoring, and Outreach Teams; and the Independent Multi-Disciplinary Science Team.) WRI has neither the authority, desire, nor resources for a solo effort in this regard. Its contribution to the Oregon Plan will come primarily from WRI's ability to help engage new Willamette basin audiences (e.g., local governments, businesses, agriculture, and watershed groups) in designing and implementing a plan that works for this unique basin.

WRI History

WRI was established by Executive Order 98-18 in October 1998. A body like the Initiative was recommended by the Willamette Basin Task Force in December 1997. Specifically, WRI's structure and Board membership were the result of recommendations made by a group chaired by University of Oregon President Dave Frohnmayer, which met in June and July 1998.

WRI Structure

WRI is overseen by a 26-member Board of Directors. The Board includes members from businesses, local government, utilities, tribes, communication media, academia, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts, agriculture, forestry, environmental groups, and state and federal government. The day-to-day activities of WRI are managed by an executive director under direction of the Board.

WRI Authority

The Initiative has no authority. Any influence it wields comes from persuasion alone.

More Information

For more information about the Willamette Restoration Initiative, write to 775 Summer Street NE, Salem, OR 97310; call (503) 986-0034; or fax (503) 581-5115.

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