

## Goal 5 Open Spaces, Scenic & Historic Areas & Natural Resources

### □ Section 6, Open Space

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#### **BACKGROUND**

#### **Statewide Planning Goal 5: Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources**

*“To conserve open space and protect natural and scenic resources.”*

Lake Oswego’s character and identity are closely tied to its natural assets and scenic resources. Such resources include Oswego Lake, the Willamette and Tualatin Rivers, streams, steep wooded slopes, and areas of undisturbed natural vegetation and associated wildlife habitat. Open space includes diverse elements such as wildlife preserves, scenic views, parks, wetlands, stream corridors, ball fields and golf courses. Open space serves several important functions:

Protection of wildlife areas, such as stream corridors, tree groves and wetlands.

Aesthetic character for the urban environment, including natural features such as rows of trees, wooded hillsides and scenic views.

Land for active recreational use, such as ball fields and play grounds. Land for passive recreational use\*, such as wildlife viewing and nature walks.

Public welfare and safety, such as flood protection, erosion control and filtering of surface water.

Economic benefits, such as enhanced property values due to the presence of large trees, views, or other natural features.

Lake Oswego’s open space is comprised of parks, natural areas\* and private lands. Open space may be grouped into two broad categories: 1) natural open space\*; and, 2) developed open space\* as follows:

#### **Natural Open Space\***

Natural open space consists of natural areas\* that may be publicly or privately owned as follows. Natural open space typically includes such areas as stream corridors, wetlands, tree groves and steep slopes.

- A. **Public Open Space\***: Public open space is property that is publicly owned and designated as “Open Space” on the Comprehensive Plan Map; or, property that has been dedicated to the public, designated as a public open space tract or protected through a conservation easement or similar mechanism.

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Public open space is land that is to remain in a natural condition for the purpose of providing a scenic, aesthetic appearance, protecting natural systems, providing passive recreational uses or maintaining natural vegetation.

- B. Private open space (natural areas):** Privately owned open space also contributes to the community's identity or sense of openness where natural or formally landscaped open areas are visible to the public, even though access is limited to members or land owners. The Oswego Country Club, Oswego Lake, and the Hunt Club are examples of private open spaces. Private open space may also be protected within residential and commercial developments through legal instruments such as private open space tracts and conservation easements.

#### **Developed Open Space**

Developed open space includes both public parks and private open space that is formally landscaped. It includes such areas as ball fields, play grounds, neighborhood pocket parks, tot lots, picnic facilities, accessory buildings, paved areas, lawns and similar uses.

- A. Parks:** A park is a publicly owned area that is intended primarily for recreational uses or park purposes, and is designated as "Park" on the Comprehensive Plan Map. Specific parks policies are found in the Parks and Recreation policies of the Comprehensive Plan.
- B. Private landscaped areas:** Privately-owned open space includes areas such as golf courses and cemeteries. It also includes private open space tracts and common areas within subdivisions. Private open space is intended to be used by members or residents only within a private development or subdivision.

Both natural and developed open space are integral components of the community's open space system.

Open space and natural areas are important to Lake Oswego residents, as evidenced since the mid-1970s. In 1975, numerous community volunteers participated in the first natural resources inventory, called the Lake Oswego Physical Resources Inventory (LOPRI). The inventory data was used to create policies and development standards to protect open spaces and natural resources.

Open space has also been designated and purchased by the City over time. In 1978 the Springbrook Park Charter Amendment was passed, setting aside a large tract of land as public open space. Since the original Comprehensive Plan was approved in 1978, five of six areas identified for public acquisition have been purchased by the City or otherwise protected, including land on Iron Mountain, the "Frog Pond" at Village on the Lake (private), the Hallinan Woods, the South Shore Natural Area and a large section of Kruse Oaks in the Westlake area. Other areas within Lake Oswego's open space system in-

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clude a wetland area south of Childs Road, the River Run Park site on the Tualatin River and the Beth Ryan Nature Preserve (owned by the Lake Oswego Land Trust). Many of the City's public parks also contain natural open space, such as the wetlands in Waluga Park and the Willamette River Greenway in George Rogers Park and Roehr Park. [ZC 1-95-1204 Revised; 5/20/97]

As Lake Oswego's population has increased, housing has replaced many previously undeveloped lands. The need for preserving more open spaces has become an ever increasing concern for residents. This was demonstrated by voter approval of a \$12 million bond issue in 1990 to fund the purchase of park and open space lands and to develop pathways. Most of the open space bond fund was depleted by 1994. It is expected that a high demand will continue for undeveloped residential lots, many of which contain natural areas, as Lake Oswego approaches a fully developed state. While substantial progress has been made toward acquiring open spaces, a need still exists for additional land.

Larger open space lands (20+ acres) abut the City limits to the south of Lake Oswego. These areas represent an opportunity for the City, neighboring jurisdictions, and responsible agencies to preserve open space and to provide open space buffers as a transition between neighborhoods and communities far in advance of development pressure.

#### **Summary of Major Issues**

The following are some of the issues, changed circumstances and conditions which were considered in the update of this element of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Open space serves many important functions in Lake Oswego
- Both developed and natural open spaces are integral components of the community's open space system.
- Much of Lake Oswego has been developed, but opportunities still exist to preserve and acquire sensitive natural areas as open spaces. Undeveloped lands abutting the City Limits present an opportunity to preserve and acquire future open space and buffer areas.

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#### ***GOALS, POLICIES AND RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES***

##### ***GOAL***

The City shall protect, enhance, maintain and expand a network of open space\* areas and scenic resources within and adjacent to the Urban Services Boundary.

##### ***POLICIES***

1. Establish an open space network within and adjacent to the Urban Services Boundary (USB) which:
  - a. Preserves natural areas\* in an intact or relatively undisturbed state;
  - b. Provides for maintenance of scenic resources and distinctive aesthetic qualities such as views of Mount Hood, Oswego Lake, the Willamette River, the Tualatin Valley and forested ridge lines;
  - c. Preserves areas valued for community identity benefits\* such as stands of trees and rock outcroppings;
  - d. Protects the public from natural hazards, such as areas subject to flooding, geological instability or high erosion potential;
  - e. Provides buffers between incompatible uses;
  - f. Preserves fish and wildlife habitat; and,
  - g. Provides land which meets the open space and recreation needs of the community.
2. Preserve open space through dedication, deed restrictions, covenants, or other methods as conditions of development approval which, when possible, shall be consistent with the City's parks, open space and pathways plans.
3. Promote an open space network that:
  - a. Maintains the existing tree canopy;
  - b. Provides aesthetic and visual relief from urban development;
  - c. Provides opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle linkage; and,
  - d. Preserves essential natural systems\*.
4. The City shall emphasize protection rather than mitigation of open space functions and values.

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5. Manage publicly-owned, natural open space areas to control access and to maintain a balance of protected natural areas and areas open to the public.
6. Provide regulations such as the Sensitive Lands program and the Open Space Development Standard to preserve natural resources, including essential natural systems, lands containing natural hazards and unique natural areas valued for scientific, educational, recreational, scenic resource and community identity benefits\*. Development will be allowed when compatible with natural systems that are present. [ZC 1-95-1204 Revised; 5/20/97]
7. Require a higher level of protection where all or a portion of a resource is designated within an RP or RC Zone (see Sensitive Lands Policies). [ZC 1-95-1204 Revised; 5/20/97]
8. Establish community open space buffers and protected view corridors between Lake Oswego and adjacent communities, for the purpose of defining the edge of the urban area and preserving the open, rural character of lands outside of the city.
9. Consider the following resources eligible for protection: [ZC 1-95-1204 Revised; 5/20/97]
  - a. Stream corridors and natural drainage ways;
  - b. Flood plains;
  - c. Willamette River Greenway;
  - d. The Tualatin River corridor;
  - e. Wetlands;
  - f. Oswego Lake, its bays and its canals;
  - g. Tree groves;
  - h. Forested ridge lines;
  - i. View points;
  - j. Steep slopes;
  - k. Weak foundation soils;
  - l. High ground water areas;
  - m. Areas of geologic hazard (unstable soils); and,
  - n. Scenic resources.

### ***RECOMMENDED ACTION MEASURES***

- i. Develop a comprehensive open space plan, in coordination with the Metropolitan Greenspaces Plan, to inventory and protect open space and to provide a connected open space network. The open space plan should utilize the City's open space, parks and pathways to provide linkages among open spaces.

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- ii. Develop an open space management program for public and private open space areas to include:
  - a. An inventory and evaluation of maintenance needs;
  - b. Monitoring to ensure continued environmental health and benefit; and,
  - c. Enforcement of conditions of development approvals.
- iii. Preserve open space through measures such as acquisition of land, purchase of development rights and conservation easements to preserve open spaces, buffer areas and views within the unincorporated Urban Services Boundary and on adjacent County lands outside of the Urban Growth Boundary.
- iv. Use a variety of means for a continuing program of open space protection within the City, including fee simple acquisition, gifts, long-term leases, life estates, scenic or conservation easements and other similar methods.
- v. Use a natural resources advisory body\* to advise Council on methods of open space acquisition, open space acquisition priorities and the designation and management of Public Open Space.
- vi. Support the efforts of community groups to enhance and maintain public and private open spaces and to encourage volunteer participation and stewardship of open space land within the City.
- vii. Coordinate with the development of a regional greenspaces system in the Portland Metropolitan area, including an open space buffer for Lake Oswego and adjacent communities in lands just outside the Urban Growth Boundary.
- viii. Coordinate with appropriate jurisdictions to manage development to preserve the open space and rural qualities of the Stafford Area.
- ix. Coordinate with the efforts of the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation and other responsible jurisdictions, agencies and groups to enhance adjacent public open spaces, such as Tryon Creek State Park and the Willamette Greenway, which benefit Lake Oswego citizens.
- x. Coordinate with appropriate jurisdictions and citizen groups to preserve open space lands within and adjacent to the USB.
- xi. Develop ordinances and standards to protect view corridors within the Urban Services Boundary for scenic resources, including views of Mount Hood, Oswego Lake, the Willamette River, the Tualatin Valley and other views valued by the community.