



CLATSOP VISION **2030 TOGETHER**

CLATSOP COUNTY COMMUNITY PROFILE
A Summary of Trends, Issues and Questions for Our Future



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CLATSOP VISION 2030TOGETHER

CLATSOP VISION 2030 TOGETHER is a ‘visioning process’ for the people of Clatsop County, Oregon. Sponsored by Clatsop County, this planning project is designed to engage residents from across our county in a dialogue on where we are as a county today, where we may be headed tomorrow, and where we would like to be in the future – a vision for our county in the year 2030.

The vision and goals developed through this conversation will be used to guide the policies, plans, decisions and actions of Clatsop County, and available to inform the decisions and actions of Clatsop County’s cities and unincorporated communities, local businesses, civic organizations, and community groups countywide.

This **draft document** summarizes information gathered from state, county and local data and forecasts, interviews with community leaders and organizations, websites, and other sources. It is not intended as a comprehensive report on the identified issues. Instead, it provides a “snapshot” of where we are now and identifies some of the issues the **Clatsop Vision** process will address. It is intended to provide a general background and a starting point for community dialogue.

Information presented in this report is organized into the **six draft focus areas** of **Clatsop Vision 2030 Together**: Economy and Jobs; Arts, Culture and History; Health, Safety and Community Resilience; Education and Learning; Environment and Recreation; and Community Development and Planning. These focus areas and compiled information will be updated and refined based on input received from the wider community.



Clatsop County at a glance...



Geography

- Total area: 1,085 square miles, including both land and waterways
- Total area, land only: 905 square miles
- Total area, water only: 180 square miles
- Percentage of land owned by State of Oregon, primarily as forestland: circa 30%
- Highest point in the county: Saddle Mountain summit, elevation 3,280 feet

Population & Demographics

- Estimated county population (2012): 37,301
- Total county population (2010): 37,039
- Total county population (2000): 35,630
- Average population density (2010): 41 people per square mile
- Racial composition (2000): White, 93.14%; mixed race, 2.3%; Asian, 1.21%; Native American, 1.03%; African American, 0.52%; Pacific Islander, 0.17%.
- Hispanic population (2000) (may be of any race): 4.48%
- Total county households (2000): 14,703
- Average household size (2000): 2.35
- Median age (2000): 40 years old
- Median income (2000): \$36,301
- Median income, families (2000): \$44,575
- Per capita income (2000): \$19,515
- Percentage of population living below poverty line (2000): 13.2%
- Percentage of families living below poverty line (2000): 9.1%

Cities & Unincorporated Communities:

- Astoria, pop. 9,477 (2010)
- Seaside, pop. 6,457 (2010)
- Warrenton, pop. 4,989 (2010)
- Cannon Beach, pop. 1,690 (2010)
- Gearhart, pop. 1,462 (2010)
- 35 unincorporated communities – from Arch Cape to Westport

Economy

- Principal industries: manufacturing, tourism, trade, timber, fishing
- Average nonfarm employment (2007): 17,480

Did you know?

- Clatsop County is named for the Native American tribe who first inhabited the area.
- Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery encamped in the area in the winter of 1805-06.
- Astoria, established in 1811, is the oldest city in the county and county seat.
- Fort Stevens is the only continental U.S. military installation attacked during WWII.
- The Port of Astoria will turn 100 years old in 2014.

Focus Area 1 – Economy & Jobs

Where are we today?

- Clatsop County's economy suffered during the Great Recession; today the county's economy is improving although unemployment persists. Wages are chronically low.
- While the county's economy has expanded beyond traditional natural resource industries, forestry in particular remains a significant part of the local economy.
- Logging in the county has not been as heavily impacted as other Oregon counties in recent years, partly due to the large amount of forest land in State or private ownership.
- Major employers in the county include Wauna Paper Mill (Clatskanie), Lektro (Warrenton), U.S. Coast Guard (Astoria, Warrenton) and Astoria School District 1.
- Other major employment sectors include health care, government, services and retail.
- Astoria, Warrenton and Seaside draw significant retail trade from Washington.
- Astoria, Seaside and Cannon Beach attract large numbers of visitors and tourists, including seasonal tourists and cruise ships passengers.
- The Port of Astoria growth has had static growth in recent years, but remains a significant factor in the local economy.
- Many other employers in the county are very small businesses.

Where are we headed tomorrow?

- Clatsop County's economy is slowly diversifying and expanding beyond natural resources.
- Though very significant, fishing-related industries are not as high as a factor in the county's economy as in the past.
- Travel and tourism account for an increasing share of the county's economy.
- Clatsop Community College (CCC) is becoming an important force in the diversification of the county's economy, with a focus on job training and workforce development.
- Increased traffic and traffic congestion will likely further strain the county's highway system and economic growth (U.S. Routes 26, 30, and 101).
- The county's limited highway system may constrain urban growth and development.
- New commercial development in the county has had major impacts on local wetlands.

What issues will we face?

- What is the future of Clatsop County's traditional natural resource industries?
- What new industries will replace jobs that may be lost in natural resources?
- What is the future of large-scale energy-related developments (LNG terminals, coal shipment facilities, etc.) in the county's economy? How would these industries affect local jobs? What would their environmental impacts be?
- How can CCC continue to contribute to job growth and economic diversification in the county?
- How can the county establish more employment opportunities to retain young people who have received higher education or training here but tend to move away?
- What is the future role of tourism in the county? Are there tourism niche markets that would further distinguish and enhance the local economy?
- What is the economic future of smaller, more rural communities in the county?

Focus Area 2 – Arts, Culture & History

Where are we today?

- Framed by the Coast Range, Columbia River and Pacific Ocean, and rich in arts, culture and history, Clatsop County is a travel and tourism magnet.
- As the terminus of Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery (1805-06), the county is the spiritual home of one of the most legendary expeditions in American history.
- The county’s traditional natural resource industries, and the ethnic groups that have worked in them, continue to flavor local heritage, culture and tourist attractions.
- Astoria has numerous historical, arts and cultural attractions, including Fort Stevens State Park, Fort Clatsop National Memorial, Columbia River Maritime Museum, Astoria Visual Arts Center, CCC Art Center Gallery, and Second Saturday Art Walk.
- Seaside, Oregon’s oldest ocean resort community, is an annual draw for seasonal vacationers, featuring the Seaside Aquarium and Seaside Historical Society Museum.
- Cannon Beach, with the iconic Haystack Rock and Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge, has a thriving arts and cultural scene with galleries, festivals and theatre.
- Local arts groups in the county have increased rapidly, including both visual (painters, print-makers, fiber arts, quilting) and performing artists (theatre, poetry, music).
- The Arts Council of Clatsop Council supports, promotes and advocates for local arts.

Where are we headed tomorrow?

- Arts, culture and historical tourism have an increasing presence in Clatsop County.
- Astoria is becoming an arts center, tourist hub and visitor attraction in its own right.
- There will be increased impacts of tourism on local traffic, congestion, and cost of living.
- Tensions may continue between local residents who live and work in the county’s communities, and tourists who come to visit, recreate and enjoy its amenities.
- Tensions *within* the county may continue between the blue collar, working “north,” and the more affluent, vacationing “south” – or it may subside as tourism becomes more present across the county.

What issues will we face?

- How can Clatsop County’s history, heritage and culture be maintained in the face of increasing population, economic growth and new urban development?
- How will the expansion of the county’s tourism economy impact the livelihoods of county residents?
- How can tourism become a driver for living wage jobs in the county?
- How can the arts and cultural communities continue to connect and work together to make the best use of limited resources?
- How can the county mitigate the impact of increased tourism on local traffic, congestion, and the cost of living?
- How will local communities address the tensions between those who live and work in local communities, and those who visit, recreate or vacation here?

Focus Area 3 – Health, Safety & Resilience

Where are we today?

- Clatsop County has a high rate of poverty, particularly in its interior, more rural areas.
- Low wages and chronic poverty lead to poorer general public health in the county.
- A large number of children in the county are uninsured. The State sponsored, County-administered Healthy Kids program provides low-to-no-cost insurance for children.
- The Coastal Families Health Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center, provides comprehensive health care regardless of ability to pay. It sees 5,000 patients annually.
- Community attitudes about self-reliance and resistance to public assistance prevent some residents from seeking out and obtaining health care, particularly in rural areas.
- County-provided social services are currently stretched thin due to lack of adequate financial support. County jails, in particular, operate on minimal funding.
- There are no facilities for mental health services in the county. Neither the medical center nor the county jail can accommodate patients' or inmates' mental health needs.
- Youth and student homelessness is a continuing problem in urban areas.
- Drug abuse is a significant problem in the county, including heroin, methamphetamine, oxycodone (prescription painkiller), and alcohol.
- Much of the drug issue is centered in the rural interior of the county. Meth labs are a public safety threat and law enforcement issue.
- Emergency response is a challenge countywide, due in part to the far-flung geography of the region and inherent constraints of the road and highway system.
- Emergency response times are a particular issue for the interior and southern county. Many areas are reliant on volunteer fire departments for emergency response.
- Countywide emergency preparedness initiatives are making progress, but still have a long way to go in terms of readiness for a major natural disaster (i.e., tsunami).

Where are we headed tomorrow?

- Clatsop County's older population will require attention to age-related health issues, as well as to chronic conditions exacerbated by poor nutrition, obesity, tobacco use, etc.
- A new model emphasizing patient-driven health care is being instituted in some clinics focusing on prevention and client population self-management.
- The County is looking into the hidden costs of an "events-driven" tourist economy, including public police protection, safety patrols, drinking and disorderly conduct, etc.
- Volunteerism, especially around fire protection and emergency response, will continue to play a critical role in the county, especially in rural areas.
- The County is looking at more intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) between incorporated areas to leverage public safety dollars and protect public health.
- Emergency signage, emergency routes and public drills require more attention.

What issues will we face?

- How should the community respond to escalating public health and safety issues, including fire and emergency response, drugs, poor public health, youth homelessness and health issues, the medically uninsured, and a lack of mental health services?
- How should the county prepare for a major public emergency (earthquake, tsunami)?

Focus Area 4 – Education & Learning

Where are we today?

- Clatsop Community College (CCC), a two-year institution with facilities in Astoria and Seaside, is the hub of higher education in Clatsop County.
- CCC offers 5 associate degree programs, 21 applied science programs, and two degree partnership programs with Portland State University and Oregon State University offering joint admission and concurrent enrollment.
- CCC's main campus includes an Art Gallery Center, Performing Arts Center, and the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station (MERTS).
- CCC's South County Campus in Seaside is the college's center for small business and economic development services.
- CCC offers a regular schedule of general workforce training and lifelong learning classes.
- The county has 5 school districts (Knappa, Warrenton Hammond, Astoria, Jewell, and Seaside) with a total of 15 schools serving an estimated 6,045 enrolled students (2013).
- High school graduation rates in the county are considered below average.
- The Northwest Regional Educational Service District's Clatsop Service Center assists schools in achieving State goals by providing opportunities for local students.
- Tongue Point Job Corps Center in Astoria teaches young people job skills to increase their employability, including in advanced manufacturing, automotive and construction.

Where are we headed tomorrow?

- CCC will play an increasingly important role in economic and business development in Clatsop County, focusing on skills development, job training and innovation.
- CCC is partnering with Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria and Providence Seaside Hospital to provide nursing staff and share information and resources.
- CCC financing is restricted by ongoing shortage of State funds for which it competes.
- CCC has received the go-ahead to build an \$8 million student health and wellness center with indoor running track, but must first raise the funding match locally.
- There some resistance to post-secondary education in the Hispanic community due to fear of taking on financial debt.
- The county's school districts are limited by available funding and tight budgets. Voters have turned down some local school district levies in recent years.

What issues will we face?

- How can Clatsop County increase its overall high school graduate rates?
- How can the county increase its emphasis on post-secondary education as the economy continues to move beyond traditional natural resource and blue collar jobs?
- How can the county increase participation in post-secondary education in some parts of the community, including the Hispanic community?
- What are the prospects for establishing a four-year higher educational institution presence or extension in the county?

Focus Area 5 – Environment & Recreation



Where are we today?

- Clatsop County's mountains, forests, rivers, and beaches frame and define the region and its identity, from the Coastal Range to the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean.
- The county's pristine beaches offer a unique environmental perspective on the region's history, showcasing the outcomes of Oregon's famous beach protection laws.
- Approximately 30 percent of all county forestland is owned by the State of Oregon.
- Much of the county's forestlands are privately owned; the Campbell Group LLC of Portland is the largest private holder of land in the county.
- Tension over preservation versus development of the environment has been an ongoing theme in the county's historical growth and development. Public attitudes tend to go back and forth on this issue.
- Significant restoration of natural areas in the county has occurred in recent years.
- The county's natural environment and resources attract waves of visitors annually. Tourism is a major source of economic growth for the region and revenue for the county.
- The trade-off between tourism's economic benefits and its impacts, including the impact of part-time residents, is an ongoing issue and concern in the county.
- Despite all its bountiful natural resources and tourism industry, the county lacks adequate public recreational facilities and amenities.

Where are we headed tomorrow?

- Forestry will likely continue to be a major factor in Clatsop County's economy well into the future.
- Tension over preservation versus development of the county's natural resources will continue to be an important discussion topic in years to come.
- Increased environmental concerns can be expected regarding proposals for large-scale energy-related facilities, shipping and freight (e.g., LNG, coal, gas).
- Increased environmental concerns can be expected with future proposals for land development on environmentally sensitive lands (e.g., wetlands).
- Forest-related "ecotourism" is starting to become an established form of tourism in the county.

What issues will we face?

- How can Clatsop County continue to benefit economically from its natural resources while enhancing its environment and quality of life?
- What are the opportunities to generate job growth through sustainable forestry practices, development of environmentally-friendly industries and green jobs, and ecotourism?
- How will the region meet the demand for more parks and amenities? How will existing parks and natural areas be maintained and preserved with increasing demand?
- What forms of tourism would bring the greatest benefit to the county's environment and quality of life?
- What should the county's approach be to development of proposed large-scale energy-related facilities, shipping and freight?

Focus Area 6 – Community Development & Planning

Where are we today?

- Pressures from new growth and development in Clatsop County have lessened slightly in recent years, due in part to the Great Recession.
- Major commercial development in the county has been concentrated in a few big box commercial areas in Warrenton and Seaside.
- Constraints of the local highway system continue to be an issue with growing tourism generating additional traffic. Highway 101 is the greatest area in need of attention.
- Seaside has grown east of Highway 101 with its most recent commercial development.
- Some commercial development in the county has impacted environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, generating local controversy.
- Smaller development projects in some areas have generated design review and historic preservation issues.
- Housing prices in the county are somewhat depressed.
- There is a perceived divide between housing for the working class and permanent residents of the county versus second-home owners in the county.
- The County's population can increase from 38,000 to 200,000 on major weekends, taxing the community's traffic, roads, parks, and public safety services.

Where are we headed tomorrow?

- A major proposed energy-related development (LNG, coal, gas) going forward in Clatsop County is likely to generate controversy.
- Increased tourism will increase impacts on the county's traffic, roads, parks and public safety services.
- Highway 101 in Seaside and Highway 30 in Astoria are potential candidates for development of a bypass.

What issues will we face?

- How will Clatsop County handle the increase impact of growing tourism on local traffic, roads, parks and public safety services.
- What would be the impact of proposed energy-related developments (LNG, coal, gas) on local development, urban services, traffic and roadways, and the environment?
- When and how will the county proceed with improvement on the local road and highways system to relieve traffic and congestion?