

2023 STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA



CleanWater  Services

Adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and Clean Water Services – December 13, 2022

Introduction

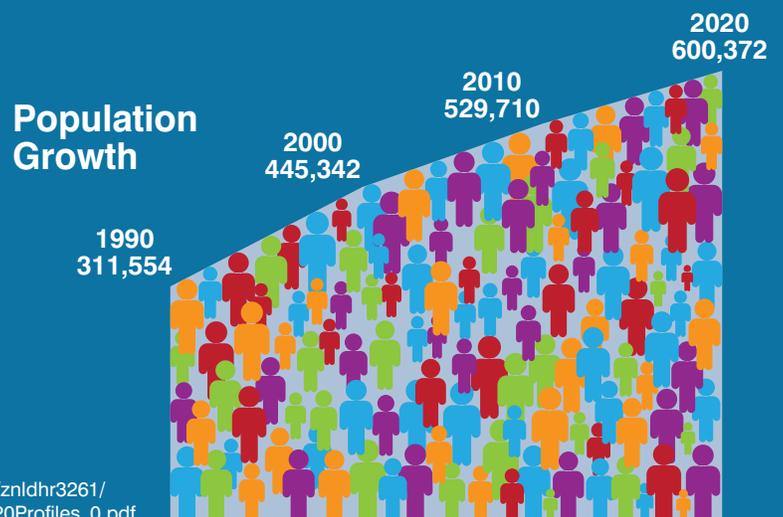
Stretching from the eastern slopes of Oregon's Coast range to the western side of Oregon's largest metropolitan area, Washington County is home to over 600,000 Oregonians, nearly 400,000 jobs and thousands of businesses.

The first residents of Washington County were the Atfalati-Kalapuyans, or the Tualatin Band of Kalapuyans. Today, the county is Oregon's most diverse in population, as well as one of the state's fastest-growing counties. According to the 2020 Census, nearly 40% of county residents are Black, Indigenous, Latino, Asian and People of Color, representing most of the county's net growth over the last two decades.

One-third of Washington County's population, over 200,000 people, live in unincorporated communities such as Aloha, Bethany, Bull Mountain and Garden Home. Another three fifths of the population live in one of the 15 cities located wholly or partially in the county. The remaining five percent live in the large rural area of western Washington County.

Since 1990, Washington County's population has doubled in size. Investments by the county and its cities have diversified our economy, housed a rapidly expanding population and created opportunities for communities to thrive. To support our community, businesses, organizations and institutions, we provide critical and state mandated services throughout the county. This includes hard infrastructure such as roads, affordable housing and public buildings, but also other vital services such as public health, public safety and emergency management.

Washington County is growing rapidly. In the last decade, the population grew by 13 percent¹ which is approximately the same as having 19 people move to the County every day for a decade.



¹Based on https://www.pdx.edu/population-research/sites/g/files/znlidhr3261/files/2021-08/2020%20Census%20Oregon%20and%20County%20Profiles_0.pdf

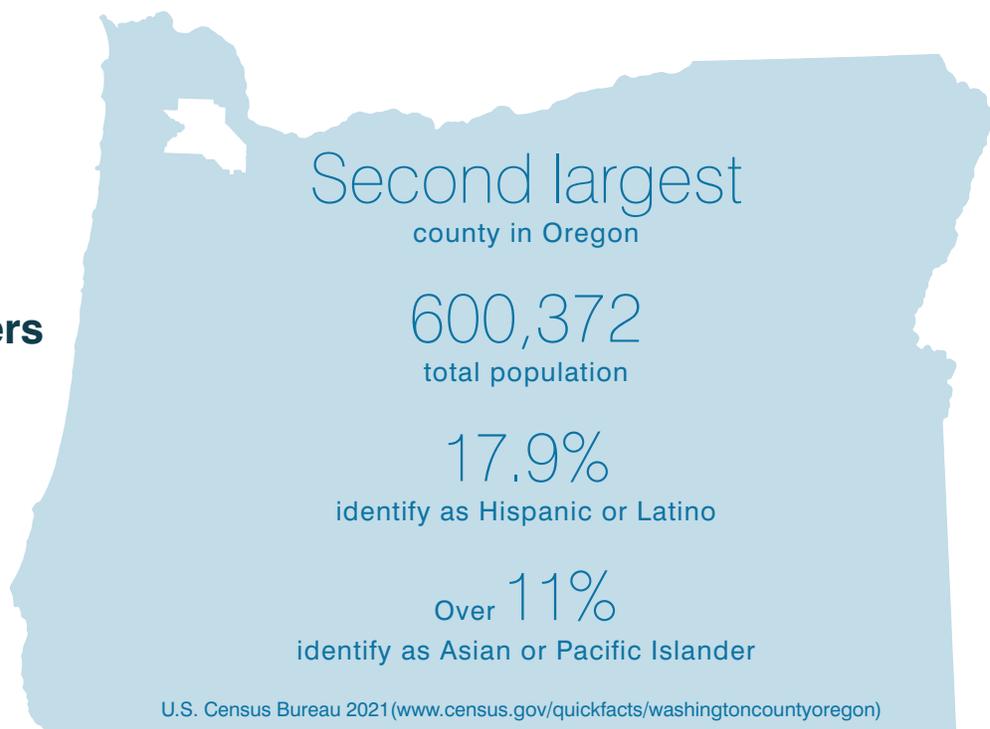
Washington County has worked to create a community of choice by partnering with other government agencies and community-based organizations. But, our rapid growth has created a situation where our revenues are over-stretched and unable to meet community expectations. The passage of Measures 5 and 50 in the 1990s has tied our property tax levels to the historic, agriculturally based county that we were in those days.

Not only do the property tax levels not reflect the growth we have seen, federal and state levels of investments have diminished. Services that we share with the state, such as community corrections, behavioral health and trial courts have not seen long-term sustainable levels of funding, forcing the County to increasingly fill those gaps with our general funds. This limits our capacity to invest in additional programs that our community needs or wants, including a long overdue investment in overcoming barriers and inequities in service delivery to marginalized communities.

The state of Oregon and the Portland Metro Area benefit from Washington County's vibrant economy with our wide array of businesses, ranging from large corporations to mid-size firms to our robust number of small businesses. While our county is strengthened by jobs and business activity, we face increasing challenges to provide housing and basic services to the talented individuals in the workforce and the families they support.

In partnership with our federal, state, regional and local government allies, Washington County is committed to overcome these challenges and create an increasingly safe, equitable and inclusive place to live, work and thrive.

By the Numbers



WASHINGTON COUNTY GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Guiding principles are driven by the overall goals and mission of the Board to provide robust and equitable service delivery to the community.

Maintain the County’s ability to design and implement programs that support, serve, and respond to community needs by defending local control of policies, processes, and outcomes.

Enhance local efforts to serve the diverse population of Washington County in an equitable and inclusive manner.

Oppose efforts to preempt, restrict, reduce, or eliminate existing revenue sources.

Oppose unfunded mandates.

Approach policy solutions through the promotion of recognized best practices and collaborative problem solving.

Maintain and enhance state funding of programs and services provided by the County in partnership with the state.

Support policies that enhance economic growth while advancing a healthy and sustainable environment.

Secure flexibility in funding services and advocate for policies that recognize the critical partnership between state, counties, and cities that is necessary for our economy and community to thrive.



WASHINGTON COUNTY LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Legislative priorities reflect the needs and goals of the Board for the year’s legislative session.

Secure stabilized and sustainable funding for services that the state requires the county to provide.	page 6
Secure State investments supporting local government investments in economic development and job creation.	page 7
Develop policies to enable the county to recruit and retain the talent necessary for our communities to thrive.	page 8
Support funding to initiate the planning process for replacing the county’s almost 100-year-old Courthouse, which will improve how the public safety system serves our growing community.	page 9
Support state funding for the development of the Center for Addiction Triage and Treatment (the CATT) and additional behavioral health infrastructure.	page 10



PRIORITIES

Secure stabilized and sustainable funding for services that the state requires the county to provide.

- Restore adequate funding for state-mandated public safety services such as Community Corrections, Law Library and Juvenile Conciliation.
- Expand resources for Health & Human Services programs to meet increased individual, family and community needs that provide the public safety net, such as disability, aging and veterans, developmental disability, public health and behavioral health services.
- Ensure new state-mandated services and work are accompanied by state investment and funding to cover the county's cost of delivering the services.
- Provide state indemnification for state-required behavioral health services so that the county's funding to deliver services is not outweighed by the potential cost of the risk.



Secure State investments supporting local government investments in economic development and job creation.

- Support the extension and enhancement of Gain Share to offset the investments by local government that create living wage, permanent jobs through Strategic Investment Program (SIP) agreements.
- County investment in the hard and soft infrastructure creates a livable and enticing community that grows and recruits businesses across the state is a vital part of the ongoing partnership of economic development.
- Revenues that offset county investments must reflect increasing costs to meet community needs.
- The tools that local governments use to incentivize need to modernize to continue to support long-term economic growth and development.



Develop policies to enable the county to recruit and retain the talent necessary for our communities and businesses to thrive.

- Develop pathways to education and well-paying jobs through incentive programs for behavioral health staff and the entire health and human services sector.
- Continue to provide the County with flexibility to implement incentive programs to increase recruitment.
- Reduce barriers for potential employees that are needed to provide critical services based on lived experience.
- Increase local coordination and outreach between local government, educational and vocational entities, workforce development boards and the state to alleviate workforce challenges.



Support funding to initiate the planning process for replacing the county's almost 100-year-old Courthouse, which will improve how the public safety system serves our growing community.

- Provide access to justice for County residents in a modern and safe facility.
- Expand capacity for locating additional courtrooms and enabling more responsive judicial services to reflect the needs of our county's growing population.
- Support additional judicial positions for Washington County's Circuit Court to address increasing workload of our judicial system.



Support state funding for the development of the Center for Addiction Triage and Treatment (the CATT) and additional behavioral health infrastructure.

- Investment in the construction of the CATT facility will provide the space to address a recognized shortage of facilities to meet the community need.
- Developing more behavioral health infrastructure is a step toward closing the capacity gap that the Oregon Health Authority and other experts have assessed in drug and behavioral health services.
- Without more beds in facilities, those needing and seeking treatment will be left behind.

COUNTY SERVICE SPECIFIC GUIDING PRINCIPLES



ASSESSMENT, TAXATION, AND ELECTIONS

- Maintain a secure, accessible, and fair election system by utilizing tools to enhance community trust of elections.
- Ensure the right of the voter to access ballot drop sites and other election resources in an environment free of harassment or intimidation that protects voters and election workers.
- Support legislation which enhances the County's ability to provide assessment and taxation services.
- Reduce barriers to maintaining accurate and uniform property assessment in compliance with Oregon laws.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Support Oregon's existing toolbox of economic development incentives available to local government and state agencies.
- Enhance and modernize Oregon's Strategic Investment Program (SIP) & Gain Share agreements as important economic development tools for attracting new investments and encouraging additional investments from Oregon's existing business community.
- Increase long-term, state investment in infrastructure, incentives, and workforce development that supports and bolsters local efforts for economic development.
- Increase opportunities and programs that invest in workforce training for living wage jobs and career advancement.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

- Support legislation to maintain transparency and access to government while sustaining resources to deliver vital services to the community.
- Ensure public records transparency that does not interfere with performing essential county functions in compliance with state mandated deadlines.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

- Maintain and increase funding for all Health and Human Services programs.
- Monitor and preserve local authority and accountability for all Health and Human Services programs.
- Expand resources for governmental public health modernization foundational capabilities and programs outlined in Oregon Revised Statutes.
- Improve child and maternal health and well-being.
- Protect human health through assurance of healthy environments.
- Utilize a data driven approach to Health and Human services that encourages data collection that is shared between the state and local governments.
- Support the development of innovative policies and procedures to meet healthcare crises.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

- Increase access to permanent supportive housing.
- Enhance funding for affordable housing preservation and increase affordable housing supply.
- Ensure affordable housing options for older adults and people with disabilities.
- Reduce barriers to homeownership.
- Support homeless residents with short- and long-term solutions including shelters, temporary housing, permanent housing, and resources for daily life.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND RISK MANAGEMENT

- Maintain and invest in local government opportunities to recruit, develop, and retain a diverse and talented workforce and advance policies and practices that reflect the diverse nature of our workforce.

- Support legislation that allows local government to evaluate and maintain efforts to foster employee development, including training programs and a commitment to active performance management.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

- Strengthen information security by further restricting disclosures on security audits.

LAND USE & TRANSPORTATION

- Maximize safety and equity, increase efficiency, and stabilize investment in Oregon's multimodal transportation system and State Highway Fund.
- Preserve and increase the flexibility of existing funds and creation of new funds to support local government to successfully prepare for climate adaptation and meet mandates for carbon reduction.
- Integrate planning and investments for state and local roads, highways and bridges to create a functional, interjurisdictional transportation system.
- Maintain local options for transportation funding.
- Maintain local ability to sustainably manage land use processes and decisions.
- Support local planning and increase state investments that fosters transit-oriented development efforts to support community housing and transportation goals.
- Support land use processes that increase administrative efficiency and certainty for local governments and the community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Obtain sustainable funding for judicial and public safety resources for vital services that make Washington County a safe place to live, work and thrive.
- Support the development and use of a range of services, including treatment, for justice-involved individuals.
- Support legislation that promotes equity, justice and community safety in the criminal justice system.
- Support legislation that expands youth access and entry points to supportive services.



CLEAN WATER SERVICES



CLEAN WATER SERVICES

GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Clean Water Services will support efforts to maintain and improve the infrastructure, innovation and efficiency of water resources that ensure quality of life throughout the Tualatin River Watershed.

PRIORITIES

- Advocate for ongoing state investments in water-related infrastructure.
- Ensure sufficient funding and service levels for the DEQ Water Quality Permitting Program.
- Advocate for resources and updates to regulatory frameworks that will further promote and incentivize water reuse/recycled water projects.
- Promote water infrastructure readiness to support industrial expansion opportunities.
- Advocate for investments to support enhanced research of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).
- Preserve local infrastructure financing tools for water.
- Seek opportunities to enhance water utility responsiveness and resiliency.
- Advocate for supplemental state funding to continue low-income household water assistance program.

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