

# Columbia Gorge Consortium

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(11/21/2011 Draft)

## Mission Statement:

The Columbia Gorge ~~Sustainability~~ Consortium is a partnership to promote regional vitality that integrates economic development, workforce training, affordable housing, transportation and land use with the stewardship of our resources.

## Vision Statements:

The Columbia River Gorge is a network of strong, healthy communities – each distinct in its people, places and local identity, yet sharing common values that unite our region and its hopes for the future. In our vision, we work to ensure that our communities protect and enhance their identity and quality of life through development of ~~a sustainable~~ strong, interconnected region.

The Columbia River Gorge approach to ~~sustainability~~ regional vitality does not undermine the physical, social or economic systems supporting society. It balances concerns about the environment, quality of life and the economy to create healthy communities with family wage jobs. Our approach plans for society's long-term strength by taking into account the longevity and self-sufficiency of programs and investments while striving to learn and do the things we do better.

The key partners of the Consortium are focused on issues including housing, economic development, workforce training, transportation and land use. Other issues including natural, cultural, social, human and recreation resources are crucial elements of our society and will continue to be considered ~~and included as~~ the consortium matures ~~and conditions change~~. For now, emphasis is placed on the areas represented by the consortium:

**Housing:** Families, youth and elders are supported through a greater diversity of affordable housing, creating opportunities for people of all incomes, backgrounds and generations to own or rent their home. Homes at all price levels are well-built, using local and environmentally friendly products whenever possible, and are available throughout the region. Housing is efficient and utilizes new technologies to reduce consumption of energy and other resources.

**Economic Development:** Regionally we are building on our traditional strengths, resources and innovations to create new opportunities for year-round, locally based, living wage employment. By continually improving regional infrastructure, local communities provide a quality business environment where firms can thrive and return resources to their employees and the communities they serve. In addition, telecommunications capacity meets the education, employment, and commerce

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requirements for viable communities. Communities are focused on retention and expansion of businesses in the region, with support for start-up businesses, knowing that healthy local communities encourage new investment finding its way to the region. We have a diversified, stable economy that enhances the opportunity for employment of citizens in the region and increases the tax base for local communities while simultaneously safeguarding the area's rural qualities, values and resources.

**Workforce Training:** Knowledge and creativity are enabling Gorge communities to adapt to a changing world. The region is focused on lifetime learning and education as the essential foundation for a strong workforce. The agility of the local pre-K-14 education system supports the changes necessary to train and place workers in the ever-shifting workforce. Our youth and incumbent workers are skilled in a wide variety of occupations and careers and are able to find quality employment opportunities without leaving the region, or upon their return home.

**Transportation:** A balanced, accessible transportation system in the Columbia Gorge connects our region and allows people and goods to move safely, efficiently and conveniently. Investments ensure improved connections across the Columbia River with multi-modal opportunities. ~~Transportation options continue to evolve, leading to more efficient use of fuel and alternative forms of transportation that enhance regional mobility for residents, commuters, and visitors. The region has also made substantial progress toward enhancing the pedestrian and bicycle accessibility in and between our communities while acknowledging that the rural characteristics of our region require innovative solutions to transportation issues.~~

**Land Use:** Communities are well managed, urban development is concentrated, and residents enjoy a rewarding quality of life. Gorge towns are 'complete communities' that enable residents to meet many of their needs locally. ~~Land use strategies support sustainable development of housing, transportation, and related infrastructure.~~ Land use strategies support the integration of all socio-economic sectors and services including but not limited to housing transportation, employment lands and related infrastructure. Emphasis is placed on infill or redevelopment across the region to support reduced travel distance to commercial and social amenities and services.