



STAFF REPORT

TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission
FROM: Joanna Kaiserman, Land Use Planner
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DATE: August 13, 2019 (Updated from March 12, 2019)
SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY: Staff Proposed Revisions to Economic Development Chapter 2, Gorge 2020 Management Plan Review and Revision

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Columbia River Gorge Commission and Forest Service staff have developed a working draft of Chapter 2 Economic Development proposed revisions. Staff met with the Economic Vitality Work Group (EVWG) in 2018 seven times and then presented their suggested edits at the March 12, 2019 Commission meeting for discussion. There was general agreement on the EVWG suggested edits, but at that time, the Forest Service needed additional time to review them and make edits of their own. Attachment 2 is the original “redline” that shows the EVWG suggested edits and the Forest Service edits. Attachment 3 is a “clean copy” with accepted changes and only the Forest Service edits highlighted for ease in reading. Commission staff is requesting public comment on the draft edits and additional Commission discussion. The EVWG will meet to finalize the revisions, based on public comment and Commission guidance, next month.

Below is the report provided to the Commission at the March 12, 2019 meeting for background.

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I. Introduction

“Economic Vitality” was selected in 2018 as one of the four “deep dive” focus topics for the Gorge Commission to consider after comments were compiled from the public and agencies during the scoping phase of the Gorge 2020 Management Plan review process. Gorge Commission and

Forest Service staff invited a group of local community leaders and members of the four treaty tribes with knowledge and experience in Gorge business, tourism and commerce to participate in the Economic Vitality Work Group (EVWG). The purpose of the EVWG is to review and provide input on revisions needed to the Economic Development (Chapter 2) section in the Management Plan, to discuss the role of the Gorge Commission in fulfilling the two purposes of the National Scenic Area Act, to serve as a collaborator and partner on regional/bi-state initiatives, and to identify measurable indicators that best represent economic vitality in the National Scenic Area. This staff report is an information item that summarizes the progress to date of the work of the EVWG and provides an opportunity for the Gorge Commission to discuss suggested edits and next steps. The public is welcome to comment.

II. Role of the Commission to date in Economic Development

The two purposes of the National Scenic Area (NSA) Act passed in 1986 by Congress are:

(1) to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and

(2) to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph (1).

The economic vitality of the National Scenic Area and the health of the scenic, natural, recreational, and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge are interdependent. By protecting and enhancing the resources of the NSA, the Commission is also supporting the economy of the region. The Commission is currently involved in activities and partnerships that serve to support economic development in the Columbia River Gorge in several ways, including but not limited to: approval of local Economic Loan Certifications that are consistent with the goals of NSA Act; encouraging and supporting bi-state cooperation, collaboration and innovation on initiatives of regional significance; and developing methods to better track and measure economic vitality using the Vital Sign Indicators initiative process. Examples include:

- 1) **Land Uses:** By protecting farm and forest lands from conversion to residential use in the General Management Area, the Commission supports farm and forest economies, a critical part of the Gorge's economy. By protecting and enhancing the resources mentioned in Purpose (1), the Commission is promoting tourism and protecting the Gorge's unique quality of life which, in turn, attracts businesses, people, and economic growth and serves as an asset that new business considers when locating in the Gorge.
- 2) **Economic Loan Certifications:** Most of the Commission's direct work with economic development is reviewing economic development loan and grant applications that come from the *Oregon Investment Board* and *Washington Investment Board*. The states established these boards specifically to plan for distributing federal economic development grant and loan funds and oversee implementation of the grant and loan programs. Commission staff uses Commission Rule 350-120 to review grants and loans that the states' investment boards approve. The Commission's review is limited to four standards: (1) the activities must be consistent with the purposes of Act, the Management Plan, and land use ordinances; (2) grants and loans may not be used to relocate a business from one community to another; (3) grants and loans may not be used for program administration; and (4) grants and loans are used only in counties which have in effect land use ordinances found consistent by the

Commission and concurred on by the Secretary. Commission staff work closely with MCEDD and Skamania EDC, who administer the grant and loan programs, to ensure that loans and grants provided through the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards are consistent with the Act and the Management Plan. Staff also attend meetings with the Investment Boards to receive updates on loan actions, modifications and reports.

- 3) **Regional Collaboration and Partnerships:** The Commission has a unique role as a bi-state compact agency and can serve as a convener and/or supporter of regional initiatives that involve both states or provide letters of support for local or state-specific initiatives in the NSA that have regional significance.
- 4) **Vital Signs Project: Economic Indicators:** The Commission launched the Vital Signs Indicators (VSI) project in 2007 to develop high level practical measures to assess the condition of Gorge resources. The subsequent VSI report, completed in 2009, presented indicators for measuring the health of the Gorge economy. The 2009 report includes trends through 2007, with some comparisons of 1989 and 1999 statistics. However, due to lack of staff capacity after budget reductions, the Gorge Commission staff were not able to continue the VSI project and develop a tracking system to monitor metrics. The Commission plans to revisit and revise the indicators to better reflect current conditions, select applicable metrics that could be more useful to the Commission, and be measurable in the NSA to reflect the implementation of the two purposes of the NSA Act. Progress will depend on additional resources requested in the FY 2019-2021 budget.

III. Gorge2020 deep dive focus topic: Role of the Economic Vitality Work Group

Commission and Forest Service staff organized an Economic Vitality Work Group (EVWG) with 28 representatives from Oregon and Washington businesses, non-profits involved with tourism and recreation, and other economic interests. EVWG participants were invited to join because they have expertise and represent different economic sectors or organizations that specialize in economic development/coordination in the NSA. The goal is to have a better understanding of economic drivers in the NSA through discussions and to identify gaps/develop ways the Management Plan can more clearly articulate and communicate how the Commission supports economic vitality and the two purposes of the NSA Act. The three main tasks asked of the Economic Vitality Work Group are:

- 1) Review the Chapter 2 Economic Development part of the Management Plan and provide input to the Commission and the Forest Service about information that needs to be updated/revised, added or deleted because it is no longer relevant, and to identify the "gaps";
- 2) Discuss the Vital Sign Indicators for Economics that were recommended in 2009 and determine if there are 3-4 that the group can agree are the most relevant indicators in the NSA that can be monitored over the next decade and identify who might be the entity to monitor and track outcomes; and
- 3) Provide input to the Commission about staff's current role implementing the two purposes of the NSA Act and identify if any changes should be considered. In addition, discuss and identify any new opportunities/new needs/new land uses that are emerging in the next decade that the Commission should consider for the Gorge 2020 plan. This feedback will be shared with the Land Uses & Development Reviews focus topic.

Through the EVWG meetings, the participants have provided input to the staff of the Gorge Commission and the Forest Service. Staff is compiling the group's comments and is sharing those with the Commission. EVWG participants are informed of updates to be presented to the Commission and they are welcome to attend that Commission meeting. EVWG participants are welcome to speak at Commission meetings to make clear any individual positions and perspectives since reaching agreement on each suggested edit was not possible. Materials prepared for the Commission are reviewed by the EVWG first before they are submitted to the Commission for consideration.

IV. Process for EVWG input to the Commission and Forest Service

The EVWG participated in 7 meetings between April 18, 2018 and January 23, 2019. In addition, a subcommittee of three members met on December 12, 2018 to continue the discussion, as requested by Chair Ken Bailey.

The first meeting was held on April 18, 2018 during which the participants were given an overview of the focus topic and the intended tasks for the group. Staff stated that the Commission is not an economic development agency, but the NSA Act has two purposes and the Gorge Commission is committed to clarifying how to fulfill both of those in collaboration with partners in the Gorge.

The ground rules below were established for the EVWG to clearly define the group's role in the Management Plan revision process:

- The EVWG is not expected to provide consensus recommendations as a group to the Commission
- Through the EVWG meetings, the participants will provide input to Commission and Forest Service staff, who will compile the information and share the comments with the Commission. There will also be opportunities for participants to present to the Commission directly at regularly scheduled Commission meetings and workshops
- Presentations can identify points of disagreement, should they arise
- Staff will provide the participants with background and genesis of the existing guidance and policies. There will need to be discussion of gaps, overlap, and/or foreseeable events/projects in the future (bridge development, river transport policies, etc.)

The staff requested that each EVWG participant review the Economic Development Chapter of the Management Plan and provide initial thoughts on what they think is and is not working in the current chapter, as well as what gaps may exist that should be considered in the updated version. Staff requested that the updates to the chapter be strategic and provide concrete examples for how the Commission supports economic development, while protecting the resources.

At the second meeting of the EVWG on May 9, 2018, the group discussed the Economic Development Chapter and invited Ken Bailey to chair the EVWG. He asked Amanda Hoey of MCEDD to take the comments from the group and make an initial round of suggested chapter revision recommendations. The group agreed this provided a good starting point for comments, rather than trying to wordsmith together. Amanda Hoey agreed to summarize the high-level comments and to send out a draft of edits to the Economic Development Chapter for review by the EVWG.

At the third meeting of the EVWG on June 13, 2018, the group was presented with the first round of suggested edits to the Economic Development Chapter compiled by Amanda Hoey. The participants divided into small groups for discussion and a brainstorming activity to review these edits and generate more ideas for things to modify/add to the chapter. The work group re-convened and discussed each section of the chapter, with each of the four break-out groups providing their collective input. As a group, they generated a consolidated list of suggested edits for the Commission and Forest Service to consider when revising the chapter, with the caveat that not all members of the EVWG agreed with the specific input provided.

On August 15, 2018, October 10, 2018, and November 28, 2018, the EVWG met to review the edits to the Economic Chapter compiled at the previous meetings. Each item was discussed, and then a decision was made about whether to keep the edit, remove it, or if the edit needed more discussion. On December 12, at the request of Chair Bailey, three members of the EVWG met with Commission staff to discuss some specific sections that needed more work. On January 23, 2019, the EVWG met to review the draft edits that would be forwarded to the Commission.

V. Edits to be considered

Below is a summary of the suggested edits to the Economic Development Chapter of the Management Plan from the EVWG. All the suggested edits below are draft. These suggested edits represent the views of the EVWG members and are subject to review for consistency by the Commission staff and the Forest Service staff before they are brought to the Commission as final recommendations. At the Commission meeting where the edits are presented, the public will also have a chance to weigh in. Attachment 2 of this staff report is the Chapter 2 Economic Development suggested edits.

The EVWG generally agreed upon the following edits: Below are the suggested language edits and policy suggestions for the chapter that the EVWG agreed upon:

- The EVWG agreed that there needs to be a larger goal statement about the Commission's roles and responsibilities in economic development/vitality in the Columbia River Gorge to define what is meant by the many mentions in the chapter that Commission "shall/will support" economic development efforts, and include references to the partners: cities, ports, tribes, counties, MCEDD.
- The EVWG suggests adding a definition of "vitality" to the purpose/intro to the chapter. Also suggested is to use a quote from the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan to exemplify the use of the term "vitality": "The purpose of the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan is to set forth a vision and strategies for enhancing the economy and quality of life of Oregon and Washington communities located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area".
- The group agreed to add a sentence in the introduction of the Chapter about the economic vitality of the National Scenic Area and the scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources of the Gorge being mutually dependent.
- The EVWG discussed changing the wording in the first paragraph of the introduction from "the second of the Act's two stated purposes" to "One of the Act's two stated purposes". There was discussion about how altering this wording could change how the purposes of the Act are perceived. Some thought that it would help to give the protections of economic

resources the same weight as the protection of resources in Purpose (1), while others cautioned that the Act intentionally put the other SNCR resource protections above economic resources and the language should stay the same. After much discussion, the group agreed to change it to: "One of the Act's two stated purposes..." since it really means the same thing and yet helps convey that the Commission recognizes CRGC's economic development responsibilities as written in the Act.

- Overall, there was agreement to make the wording in the Chapter consistent with that of the Economic Vitality Plan and Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). This includes clarifying the "principal" economic sectors listed in the Chapter to be consistent to those listed in the CEDS. The group also agreed to relate the goals and policies of the Chapter to the goals and policies of the CEDS.
- The EVWG agreed that a policy under *GMA Policies* should be added to indicate Commission participation in updates to the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) as may be requested by MCEDD.
- The EVWG agreed that instead of having a policy about encouraging growth to occur in Urban Areas (#8), it should be replaced with a policy stating that the Commission shall provide a clear process for Urban Area Boundary Revisions and shall coordinate with land use agencies in the GMA. The group acknowledged that this policy may become obsolete depending on the outcomes of the Urban Area Boundary Policy focus topic.
- The EVWG agreed to expand the policy recognizing the special role of the ports to encompass more of what the ports roles are in the NSA, including developers of infrastructure and supporters of economic vitality.

Suggestions that required more discussion: Below are suggested edits that the EVWG still wants to have further discussion about:

- It was suggested that in the title of this chapter, "Development" be replaced with "Vitality". The EVWG discussed that "Development" is associated with an action such as building/construction, whereas "vitality" is more associated with a diverse set of economic activities that lead to economic prosperity but may not involve building or land development. This led to a larger discussion about the need to clarify the Commission's role-whether it is actively involved in economic development or if it has more of a supportive role. Many participants were in favor of using "vitality" if it is further defined and consistent with the language in the Act and the rest of the Management Plan, but others felt that it was important to keep it titled Economic Development to be consistent with the NSA Act language. At the November 28th meeting, workgroup participants agreed to keep the title as is: "Economic Development".
- It was suggested that a 3rd goal be added to the list under *GMA Goals*: "Support the economic vitality goals and plans of the region, designated treaty tribes, states, counties, cities and ports, and communities of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area that are consistent with the National Scenic Area Act." Some in the EVWG had concern about this new goal implying that CRGC will have increased oversight. This 3rd suggested goal was dropped.

- Some EVWG participants suggested a new policy under GMA Policies that would require CRGC to consult with counties about resource protection decisions that might impact future economic development opportunities, and to conduct an economic impact analysis for any new natural resource protection activity. The suggested policy read: *“The Gorge Commission shall consult with Gorge counties regarding regulations and resource protection decisions that may adversely impact future economic development opportunities. An economic impact analysis shall be conducted for any new natural resource protection activity.”*

The EVWG identified several issues with this policy and decided to drop it as a suggested revision for this round of Plan revision. Some of these issues included: the question of what kind of economic development activities this would refer to; where in the NSA this would apply; that the burden that would fall on the applicant to show the impact on economic resources; the role of CRGC in assessing potential economic impact and its capacity to do so; and a discussion about how the counties can add an economic impact analysis on their reviews as they see fit without direction from the Gorge Commission.

- The EVWG suggested revising the policy about allowing commercial uses in only Rural Center, Commercial, and Commercial Recreation land use designations to one supporting commercial uses as consistent with the Act and underlying land use designations outside of Urban Areas. The EVWG agreed that more discussion is needed about the wording of this new policy and what specific commercial activities should be included.
- The EVWG agreed to add a policy about recognizing the importance of adequate infrastructure in Gorge communities for public health and safety. More discussion is needed about how CRGC would support this, whether it means certain projects qualifying for expedited review, or some other type of support. The EVWG also wants to discuss further which infrastructure projects would qualify for this. It was also suggested to add language to the SNCRs chapters about infrastructure, and to link this to the Land Uses and Development Review and Urban Area Boundary Revisions focus topics.
- A member suggested that a National Scenic Area Recreation Master Planning effort should be conducted to ensure the direct and indirect effects of recreation and tourism on gorge communities, business, emergency services, transportation, infrastructure and any cumulative effects to protected resources be evaluated. The Forest Service requests additional discussions to clarify the scope and scale of the policy and does not support the new text as written. The EVWG conversations to date on this proposed text has raised various stakeholder interests but need additional articulation to determine whether the proposed text reflects the implied goals of the policy. Because the Forest Service was shutdown from December 22, 2018 until January 26, 2019, it has been unable to engage in further discussions.

VI. Next steps

The Commission and Forest Service staff would like to take this opportunity for the Commissioners to review the work of the EVWG to date and to discuss how best to move forward. Staff requests Commission feedback about gaps that the EVWG might have missed, areas of agreement the Commission has with the EVWG and areas that need to be further discussed and developed as part of the revised chapter. Staff will take Commission and public comments, reconvene the EVWG, and return with a final recommendation for revisions in summer 2019.

Attachment 1: List of EVWG participants

Attachment 2: Chapter 2 Economic Development suggested edits—tracked changes

Attachment 3: Chapter 2 Economic Development with Forest Service edits highlighted

**List of EVWG
Participants**

Name	Organization/Affiliation
Pat Albaugh	Port of Skamania
Ken Bailey	Orchard View
Angie Brewer	Wasco County Planning
Lynn Burditt	US Forest Service
Michael Cerbone	Multnomah County Planning
Colleen Coleman	City of Mosier
Peter Cornelison	Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Kari Fagerness	Skamania EDC
Casey Gatz	US Forest Service
Amanda Hoey	MCEDD
Buck Jones	CRITFC
Joanna Kaiserman	Columbia River Gorge Commission
Larry Keister	Port of Camas-Washougal
Paul Koch	Port of Cascade Locks
Michael Lang	Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Terra Lingley	ODOT
Joel Madsen	Mid-Columbia Housing Authority
Dave McClure	Klickitat Economic Development
Steve McCoy	Friends of the Columbia Gorge
Carolyn Meece	Business Oregon
Jessica Metta	Gorge Tech Alliance
Carina Miller	Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
Rachel Pawlitz	US Forest Service
Debby Phaneuf	Columbia Gorge Winegrowers
Carrie Pipinich	MCEDD
John Roberts	Hood River County Planning
Casey Roeder	Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance
Randy Settler	Yakama Nation Housing Authority
Jason Spadaro	SDS Lumber
Nate Stice	Office of OR Gov. Kate Brown
Marc Thornsbury	Port of Klickitat
Kathy Ursprung	Wasco County Economic Development/Port of The Dalles
Michael Williams	WSDOT
Krystyna Wolniakowski	Columbia River Gorge Commission

Economic Development Chapter Draft Edits (as of 8/12/19)

Background: This is a compilation of input received from the Economic Vitality Work Group (EVWG) on the Economic Development Chapter of the Management Plan. Below is the original language in each section of Chapter 2 with suggested edits and proposed new language compiled from the EVWG meetings on June 13, August 15, October 10, November 28, 2018 and January 23, 2019. Additional edits were suggested by a subgroup (Angie Brewer, Amanda Hoey, and Colleen Coleman) on December 12, 2018. Some edits have been agreed to by EVWG participants and others still need further discussion before becoming formal suggested edits made by the EVWG.

All the suggested edits below are *draft edits* provided by the EVWG. More discussion is needed by the EVWG before final suggested edits are compiled, and Commission and Forest Service staff will conduct a final consistency review before final recommendations are presented to the Commission for adoption in late summer or early fall of 2019.

The text in blue is the new language proposed and agreed upon by the EVWG participants as of August 12, 2019. Text that is struck through is the current text in the Plan that participants agreed to remove. Text in orange requires further discussion by the EVWG.

Black = original language

~~Strikethrough~~ = language proposed for removal by EVWG

Blue text = new suggested text agreed upon by workgroup participants

Orange = proposed new language that is not agreed upon and will need more discussion

Economic Development

~~The Columbia River Gorge is home to 55,000 people.~~ **The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area spans 85 miles of the Columbia River and includes 292,500 acres of diverse landscapes and 13 urban communities.** Congress intended the **National Scenic Area Act** to support the economy of their communities in the **National Scenic Area**. ~~The second of the Act's two stated purposes~~ **One of the Act's two stated purposes** is "to protect and support the economy of the Gorge by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with protection of scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources [Section 3(2)]."

The term "economic vitality", as used in this chapter, refers to a strong and diverse economy that contributes to an enhanced quality of life. As stated in the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan: "The purpose of the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan is to set forth a vision and strategies for enhancing the economy and quality of life of Oregon and Washington communities located within the National Scenic Area". The economic vitality of the National Scenic Area and the health of the scenic, natural, recreational, and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge are interdependent. The goals and policies in this chapter support the Gorge's economic sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism, while allowing new commercial uses on lands designated Rural Center, Commercial, and Commercial Recreation.

This chapter focuses on the General Management Area as the primary location for commercial development. The Special Management Area includes the region's most sensitive lands and resources. In the Act, Congress explicitly limited new development in the SMA, and directed that commercial development take place outside of SMA.

GMA PROVISIONS

GMA Goals

1. Protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing Urban Areas.
2. Protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with the protection and enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge.

GMA Policies

1. The Gorge Commission shall consult with the States of Washington and Oregon in the ~~development and implementation of state and regional economic development plans.~~ [States' updates to their coordinated Economic Vitality Plan developed pursuant to Section 11 of the National Scenic Area Act.](#)
2. [The Gorge Commission recognizes the importance of their participation in updates to the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy \(CEDS\) as may be requested by Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, the bi-state economic development entity that coordinates the CEDS planning process.](#)
3. The Gorge Commission shall support the economic development efforts of the States of Oregon and Washington pursuant to their economic development plans established under the [National Scenic Area Act.](#) [The Gorge Commission will support and recognize the importance of the economic vitality efforts of regional and community organizations and the four treaty tribes, pursuant to their economic development strategic plans and subject to consistency with the purposes and standards of the Act and the Management Plan.](#)
4. The Gorge Commission shall encourage the States of Washington and Oregon to coordinate their economic development [planning efforts](#) in order to maximize the benefits of federal dollars to all Gorge communities.
5. Agriculture and forest industries in the Columbia River Gorge shall be protected and supported by:
 - preventing fragmentation of the agricultural and forest land base,

- minimizing interference with agriculture and forest practices from conflicting uses
 - enhancing agricultural lands for agricultural uses, forest lands for forest uses and forest lands for agricultural uses
 - aligning with the strategies listed in the Economic Vitality Plan to provide ongoing support for these industries.
 - Promoting and incentivizing conservation efforts such as energy and water efficiency.
6. The economic vitality of the Gorge economy shall be enhanced by encouraging growth to occur in Urban Areas.
 7. The Commission shall provide a clear process for urban area boundary revisions and shall coordinate with land use management agencies in the General Management Area (*cite reference in new 2020 Management Plan after Urban Area Boundary Policy adopted*).
 - ~~7. New commercial uses shall be allowed outside Urban Areas on lands designated:
 - ~~A. Rural Center~~
 - ~~B. Commercial~~
 - ~~C. Commercial Recreation~~~~
 - ~~8. The following commercial uses may be allowed outside Urban Areas:
 - ~~A. Home occupations and cottage industries in all designations except Open Space.~~
 - ~~B. Commercial recreation in appropriate recreation intensity classes throughout the Scenic Area.~~
 - ~~C. Commercial uses in conjunction with public recreation on lands designated Public Recreation.~~
 - ~~D. Conversion of existing industrial sites to commercial use.~~
 - ~~E. Wineries and farm produce stands on lands designated Large-Scale or Small-Scale Agriculture, Commercial Forest Land, or Large or Small Woodland.~~
 - ~~F. Commercial events in all GMA designations except Open Space and Agriculture Special, in conjunction with a lawful winery, wine sales/tasting room, bed and breakfast inn, commercial use or dwelling listed in the National Register of Historic Places.~~
 - ~~G. Commercial uses in all GMA designations except Open Space and Agriculture Special on a property with a building either on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and that was 50 years or older as of January 1, 2006.~~~~
 8. The Gorge Commission will allow commercial uses that are consistent with land use designations contained within this document and consistent with the resource protections policies and guidelines.
 - The Gorge Commission shall support the economy of Gorge communities by encouraging recreation development at appropriate rural locations and coordinating with appropriate

organizations. Examples of coordination could include working with regional economic development entities to:

- Gain perspectives on economic impacts from recreation developments to Columbia River Gorge communities.
- Hear potential concerns for Gorge businesses, organizations, and economic interests on proposed recreation developments.
- Review the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as one source of insight on priorities and regional impacts

9. The Gorge Commission shall recognize the importance of adequate infrastructure (such as water, sewer, roads, telecommunications, and broadband) to protect the health and safety and to support the economic vitality of Gorge communities.

10. The Gorge Commission shall recognize the special role of the five ports in the National Scenic Area as providers of river transportation, and recreation facilities, in Urban Areas, and support their efforts to stimulate urban waterfront economic development by: and as developers of infrastructure to support economic vitality. The Gorge Commission shall support their efforts and stimulate economic development by:

- Assigning priority for revisions to Urban Area boundaries to those requests involving port properties or projects. *(please note: this is original language but not everyone agreed to leave it as it is)*
- Relying upon existing state and federal wetlands regulations on the Columbia River and exempting urban waterfronts from wetland and riparian area guidelines in the Management Plan.

11. Prior to the approval of any grant under the states' plans for economic development projects pursuant to Section 11 of the National Scenic Area Act, the Gorge Commission shall certify that all activities undertaken under the grant are consistent with the purposes of the National Scenic Area Act, the Management Plan, and land use ordinances adopted pursuant to the National Scenic Area Act.

If such activities would take place wholly within an Urban Area, the Gorge Commission shall, after consultation with the appropriate city or county, certify that the activities are consistent with the National Scenic Area Act, the Management Plan, and land use ordinances. *(moved up from 11)* The Gorge Commission shall maintain this certification process so that it is simple, efficient, and speedy to not delay consistent activities. The details of economic development projects shall be confidential consistent with Gorge Commission rules on disclosure of public records

~~11. In consultation with the States of Washington and Oregon and Gorge counties, and after public hearings, the Gorge Commission established a process for certifying that activities to be undertaken under a grant pursuant to Section 11 of the Scenic Area Act are consistent with the purposes of the Scenic Area Act, the Management Plan, and land use ordinances adopted pursuant to the Scenic Area Act.~~

Economic Development

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area spans 85 miles of the Columbia River and includes 292,500 acres of diverse landscapes and 13 urban communities. Congress intended the National Scenic Area Act to support the economy of their communities in the National Scenic Area. One of the Act's two stated purposes is "to protect and support the economy of the Gorge by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with protection of scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources [Section 3(2)]."

The term "economic vitality", as used in this chapter, refers to a strong and diverse economy that contributes to an enhanced quality of life. As stated in the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan: "The purpose of the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan is to set forth a vision and strategies for enhancing the economy and quality of life of Oregon and Washington communities located within the National Scenic Area". The economic vitality of the National Scenic Area and the health of the scenic, natural, recreational, and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge are interdependent. The goals and policies in this chapter support the Gorge's economic sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism, while allowing new commercial uses on lands designated Rural Center, Commercial, and Commercial Recreation.

This chapter focuses on the General Management Area as the primary location for commercial development. The Special Management Area includes the region's most sensitive lands and resources. In the Act, Congress explicitly limited new development in the SMA, and directed that commercial development take place outside of SMA.

GMA Policy

9. The Gorge Commission shall support the economy of Gorge communities by encouraging recreation development in appropriate rural locations **and coordinating with appropriate organizations.** ~~A National Scenic Area recreation master planning effort shall be conducted to ensure direct and indirect effects of recreation and recreation related tourism on Gorge communities, Gorge business and economic interests, emergency services, transportation, critical infrastructure, and any cumulative effects to protected resources have been evaluated (add reference to the Recreation Chapter of the Gorge 2020 Management Plan when completed).~~
 - **Examples of coordination could include working with regional economic development entities to:**
 - **Gain perspectives on economic impacts from recreation developments to Columbia River Gorge communities.**
 - **Hear potential concerns for Gorge businesses, organizations, and economic interests on proposed recreation developments.**
 - **Review the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy as one source of insight on priorities and regional impacts.**

Note: Text highlighted in yellow is new suggested text drafted by the Forest Service
Text in blue is new text suggested by the EVWG participants
Black text is current language in the Management Plan