

Commercial Land

There have been centers of trade and commerce in the Gorge for almost as long as humans have inhabited it. Gorge Indians were renowned traders.

With the exception of a few small community commercial nodes, the commercial centers are located within the 13 designated Urban Areas. These include Hood River, Stevenson, and White Salmon-Bingen, commercial centers that serve both local and regional needs. Smaller, rural community service centers include Carson, Lyle, Mosier, and Cascade Locks, as well as the communities of Corbett and Skamania, designated as Rural Centers in the Management Plan.

SCENIC AREA ACT PROVISIONS

The Scenic Area Act gives clear direction for commercial development in the Gorge: it is to be encouraged to locate within the 13 Urban Areas identified by Congress. The Act directs the Gorge Commission 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" protecting and enhancing scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources [Section 3(2)].

The Act directs the Commission to "require that commercial development outside urban areas take place without adversely affecting the scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources of the Scenic Area" [Section 6(d)(7)].

New commercial development is not permitted in the SMA, except for commercial recreation. When located outside the Urban Areas, commercial development shall be designated for areas outside the SMA "used or suitable for commercial development: *Provided*, That such designations shall encourage, but not require, commercial development to take place in urban areas and shall take into account the physical characteristics of the areas in question and their geographic proximity to transportation, commercial, and industrial facilities and other amenities" [Section 6(b)(5)].

KEY ISSUES

Commercial development in the Scenic Area should reinforce the Act's orientation of promoting and protecting the vitality of Urban Areas, the long-standing centers of commercial trade in the Gorge. Planning provisions need to encourage major commercial development to locate in the 13 Urban Areas designated by Congress.

Commercial development does occur outside the Urban Areas. There are several commercial nodes and, quite noticeably, two rural communities that act as rural service centers and gathering places. These existing commercial areas provide important services to local communities and visitors and need to be protected.

Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area growth and the growing importance of tourism in the Gorge create demands for new commercial uses. Uncontrolled strip commercial development outside the Urban Areas could discourage new commercial growth in these Urban Areas and impact the rural character and scenic qualities of the main travel corridors. New commercial uses must be planned to protect the resources identified in the Scenic Area Act. Maintaining commercial uses to a rural scale helps to serve the rural communities without competing with Urban Areas. Home occupations, cottage industries, and bed and breakfast inns associated with residential use are other uses that can help the rural economy without placing many demands on rural services.

OVERVIEW OF COMMERCIAL LAND PROVISIONS

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the GMA. The Scenic Area Act precludes new commercial development in the SMA, except for commercial recreation.

Commercial designations in the GMA recognize areas outside Urban Areas where commercial use took place in the immediate past or is currently taking place. The GMA policies outline factors

for establishing two commercial designations: Rural Center and Commercial. The communities of Corbett, Oregon, and Skamania, Washington, are designated as Rural Centers. These communities include a unique mix of commercial, public, and residential uses. Corbett and Skamania serve the surrounding rural community as well as tourists.

GMA land use policies and guidelines allow commercial uses in the Rural Centers of a type and scale appropriate to serve the needs of the rural community and limited tourist needs. Uses that cater to the traveling or visiting public may be allowed in a Commercial designation. Building size is limited to 5,000 square feet of floor area per building or use. Both designations allow one single-family dwelling per legally created parcel.

Home occupations and cottage industries may be allowed in other designations if they are determined to be compatible with the surrounding area. Policies are also provided that allow bed and breakfast inns outside the Rural Center and Commercial designations in 5-acre Residential and 10-acre Residential designations and in historic dwellings in other areas. GMA guidelines also establish approval criteria to ensure that uses are rural in scale and compatible with surrounding areas.

Land divisions are allowed in the GMA. Parcel size for commercial development is determined by local governments, based upon site requirements such as sewerage, parking, and building size. Residential lot size is addressed in Part II, Chapter 4: Residential Land.

GMA PROVISIONS

GMA Goals

1. Protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge by encouraging commercial uses to occur in existing Urban Areas.
2. Protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge by allowing new commercial uses outside of Urban Areas where they will not adversely affect scenic, cultural, natural, or recreation resources.

GMA Policies

Designation Policies

1. Designation for commercial uses shall be given to those areas outside Urban Areas that are suited for such uses by physical characteristics, such as slope, and geographic proximity to transportation, commercial and industrial facilities, and other amenities.
2. Areas outside Urban Areas shall be designated as Commercial where commercial use took place in the immediate past or is now taking place and would not adversely affect scenic, cultural, natural, or recreation resources. A commercial use shall be considered to have taken place in the immediate past if it has been active and has not been discontinued for more than 1 year.
3. Areas shall be designated as Rural Center that act as service centers and gathering places for concentrations of rural residences and that have all of the following characteristics:
 - A. Node of existing commercial uses, or an existing commercial core.
 - B. Substantial concentration of rural residences.
 - C. Public, noncommercial gathering place such as a grange hall.
 - D. School.
 - E. Fire station.
 - F. Location along a major travel corridor.
 - G. Definable area within which these characteristics occur.

Land Use Policies

1. Commercial uses shall be allowed outside Urban Areas on lands designated Rural Center, Commercial, or Commercial Recreation (Part II, Chapter 6: Recreation Designations) or as allowed in the recreation intensity classes (Part I, Chapter 4: Recreation Resources).
2. In Rural Centers, commercial uses shall be allowed of a type and scale appropriate to serve the needs of the rural community and limited tourist needs. Such commercial uses shall be limited to small-scale tourist commercial and community commercial to ensure that they do not change the rural character of the community or compete with nearby Urban Areas for the tourist trade.
3. Residential designations and densities in the vicinity of Rural Centers shall be established to limit the need for additional community commercial uses and community services to those lands that are currently available within the boundaries of existing Rural Centers.
4. On lands designated Commercial, single-family dwellings and uses that cater to the traveling or visiting public shall be allowed.
5. Home occupations and cottage industries may be allowed if they are compatible with the surrounding area.
6. The minimum size for new parcels created for commercial uses within a Rural Center shall be based upon the site requirements (sewerage, parking, building size, etc.) for the proposed use. Parcel size shall be determined by the local government on a case-by-case basis.
7. The minimum size for new parcels created for residential uses within a Rural Center shall be 1 acre.

To encourage the efficient use of land, provide public amenities and standards for quality developments, and reduce the cost of providing services within Rural Centers, local governments may allow a minimum parcel size of less than 1 acre within Rural Centers if a planned unit development approach is used for the subject parcel, incorporating features such as consolidated access and commonly shared open areas.

8. Commercial uses located outside Urban Areas and Rural Centers shall be limited to a scale that serves local community and tourist needs.
9. Travelers' accommodations, including bed and breakfast inns, may be allowed in Rural Centers and Commercial designations. Bed and breakfast inns may be located in 5-acre Residential and 10-acre Residential designations. Historic dwellings located outside the Rural Centers, Commercial, 5-acre Residential, and

10-acre Residential designations may be considered for use as bed and breakfast inns.

10. Proposed projects should be encouraged to follow planned unit development approaches, featuring consolidated access, commonly shared landscaped open areas, etc.

GMA Guidelines

Uses Allowed Outright: Rural Centers and Commercial Designations

1. The uses listed in "Uses Allowed Outright, All Land Use Designations, Except Open Space and Agriculture-Special" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines) are allowed without review on lands designated Rural Center and Commercial.

Uses Allowed through the Expedited Development Review Process: Rural Centers and Commercial Designations

1. The uses listed in "Expedited Development Review Process" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines) are allowed with review through the expedited development review process on lands designated Rural Center and Commercial.

Review Uses: Rural Centers

1. The following uses may be allowed within Rural Centers, subject to compliance with guidelines for the protection of scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources:
 - A. One single-family dwelling per legally created parcel.
 - B. Accessory structures for an existing or approved dwelling that are not otherwise allowed outright, eligible for the expedited development review process, or allowed in Guideline 1.C below.
 - C. Accessory building(s) larger than 200 square feet in area or taller than 10 feet in height for a dwelling on any legal parcel are subject to the following additional standards:
 - (1) The combined footprints of all accessory buildings on a single parcel shall not exceed 1,500 square feet in area. This combined size limit refers to all accessory buildings on a parcel, including buildings allowed without review, existing buildings and proposed buildings.
 - (2) The height of any individual accessory building shall not exceed 24 feet.

PART II-Land Use Designations

- D. The temporary use of a mobile home in the case of a family hardship, subject to guidelines for hardship dwellings in "Temporary Use - Hardship Dwelling" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- E. Duplexes.
- F. Fire stations.
- G. Libraries.
- H. Government buildings.
- I. Community centers and meeting halls.
- J. Schools.
- K. Accredited childcare centers.
- L. Rural service commercial and tourist commercial uses limited to 5,000 square feet of floor area per building or use.
 - (1) Grocery stores.
 - (2) Variety and hardware stores.
 - (3) Shops, offices, and repair shops.
 - (4) Personal services such as barber and beauty shops.
 - (5) Travelers' accommodations, bed and breakfast inns.
 - (6) Restaurants.
 - (7) Taverns and bars.
 - (8) Gas stations.
 - (9) Gift shops.
- M. Home occupations or cottage industries in an existing residence or accessory structure, subject to guidelines in "Home Occupations and Cottage Industries" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- N. Utility facilities and railroads.

- O. Recreation development, subject to the guidelines established for recreation intensity classes (Part I, Chapter 4: Recreation Resources).
- P. Places of worship.
- Q. New cultivation, subject to compliance with guidelines for the protection of cultural resources (Part I, Chapter 2: Cultural Resources) and natural resources (Part I, Chapter 4: Natural Resources).
- R. Land divisions, subject to the land use policies in this chapter for minimum parcel sizes.
- S. Lot line adjustments that would result in the potential to create additional parcels through subsequent land divisions, subject to the guidelines in "Lot Line Adjustments" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- T. Resource enhancement projects for the purpose of enhancing scenic, cultural, recreation and/or natural resources, subject to the guidelines in "Resource Enhancement Projects" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines). These projects may include new structures (e.g., fish ladders, sediment barriers) and/or activities (e.g., closing and revegetating unused roads, recontouring abandoned quarries).
- U. Agricultural structures, except buildings, in conjunction with agricultural use.
- V. Agricultural buildings in conjunction with current agricultural use and, if applicable, proposed agricultural use that a landowner would initiate within one year and complete within five years, subject to the standards in "Agricultural Buildings" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- W. Additions to existing buildings greater than 200 square feet in area or greater than the height of the existing building.
- X. Removal/demolition of structures that are 50 or more years old, including wells, septic tanks and fuel tanks.
- Y. Commercial events, subject to the guidelines in "Commercial Events" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- Z. Special uses in historic buildings, subject to the guidelines in "Special Uses in Historic Buildings" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).

Review Uses: Commercial Designations

1. The following uses may be allowed on lands designated Commercial, subject to compliance with the guidelines for protection of scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources and "Approval Criteria for Specified Review Uses," below.

PART II-Land Use Designations

- A. Travelers' accommodations, bed and breakfast inns.
- B. Restaurants.
- C. Gift shops.
- D. Home occupations or cottage industries in an existing residence or accessory structure, subject to guidelines in "Home Occupations and Cottage Industries" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- E. One single-family dwelling per legally created parcel.
- F. Accessory structures for an existing or approved dwelling that are not otherwise allowed outright, eligible for the expedited development review process, or allowed as accessory buildings larger than 200 square feet in area or 10 feet in height.
- G. Accessory building(s) larger than 200 square feet in area or taller than 10 feet in height for a dwelling on any legal parcel, subject to the following standards:
 - (1) The combined footprints of all accessory buildings on a single parcel shall not exceed 1,500 square feet in area. This combined size limit refers to all accessory buildings on a parcel, including buildings allowed without review, existing buildings and proposed buildings.
 - (2) The height of any individual accessory building shall not exceed 24 feet.
- H. Utility facilities and railroads.
- I. Resource enhancement projects for the purpose of enhancing scenic, cultural, recreation and/or natural resources, subject to the guidelines in "Resource Enhancement Projects" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines). These projects may include new structures (e.g., fish ladders, sediment barriers) and/or activities (e.g., closing and revegetating unused roads, recontouring abandoned quarries).
- J. Lot line adjustments that would result in the potential to create additional parcels through subsequent land divisions, subject to the guidelines in "Lot Line Adjustments" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- K. Additions to existing buildings greater than 200 square feet in area or greater than the height of the existing building.
- L. Docks and boathouses, subject to the guidelines in "Docks and Boathouses" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).

- M. Removal/demolition of structures that are 50 or more years old, including wells, septic tanks and fuel tanks.
- N. Commercial events, subject to the guidelines in "Commercial Events" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
- O. Special uses in historic buildings, subject to the guidelines in "Special Uses in Historic Buildings" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).

Approval Criteria for Specified Review Uses

- 1. The uses identified under "Review Uses: Commercial Designations" may be allowed only if they meet the following two criteria:
 - A. The proposal is limited to 5,000 square feet of floor area per building or use.
 - B. The proposed use would be compatible with the surrounding area. Review for compatibility shall include impacts associated with the visual character of the area; traffic generation; and noise, dust and odors.

