
CHAPTER

2

Economic Development

The Columbia River Gorge is home to nearly 55,000 people. Congress intended the Scenic Area Act to support the economy of their communities in the Scenic Area. The second 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 goals and policies in this chapter support the Gorge's principal economic sectors, such as agriculture, forestry, and tourism, while allowing new commercial uses on lands designated Rural Center, Commercial, and Commercial Recreation.

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 their economic development plans.
 2. 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 Scenic Area Act.
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PART III-Action Program

3. The Gorge Commission shall encourage the States of Washington and Oregon to coordinate their economic development planning in order to maximize the benefits of federal dollars to all Gorge communities.
4. Agriculture and forest industries in the Columbia River Gorge shall be protected and supported by preventing fragmentation of the land base and by minimizing interference with agricultural and forest practices from conflicting uses.
5. The economic vitality of the Gorge economy shall be enhanced by encouraging growth to occur in Urban Areas.
6. New commercial uses shall be allowed outside Urban Areas on lands designated:
 - A. Rural Center.
 - B. Commercial.
 - C. Commercial Recreation.
7. 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 shall support the economy of Gorge communities by encouraging recreation development at appropriate rural locations.
9. The Gorge Commission shall recognize the special role of the five ports in the Scenic Area as providers of river transportation and recreation facilities in Urban Areas, and support their efforts to stimulate urban waterfront economic development by:
 - Assigning priority for revisions to Urban Area boundaries to those requests involving port properties or projects.
 - 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.
10. Prior to the approval of any grant under the states' plans for economic development projects pursuant to Section 11 of the Scenic Area Act, the Gorge Commission shall certify that all activities undertaken under the grant are consistent with the purposes of the Scenic Area Act, the Management Plan, and land use ordinances adopted pursuant to the 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 Scenic Area Act, the Management Plan, and land use ordinances.

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. 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.

