

# COMMUNITY CONGRESS V

A Sustainable Clackamas County

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## City Sustainability Initiatives in Clackamas County

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Throughout Clackamas County, cities are engaging their communities in take action to create healthy communities and promote stewardship of natural resources.

### Setting a course for sustainability

In West Linn, a Sustainable West Linn Task Force produced a city sustainability plan with a vision and long-term goals. One action identified in the plan — a green building policy to set standards for new buildings and steps for improving existing buildings — is underway. The City's Water Pollution Control Facility was recognized for excellence by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Oregon City and Lake Oswego have signed on to the Climate Protection Agreement of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. This compact challenges cities to establish targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It includes commitments to promote energy efficiency within municipal operations and the community at large and also calls upon local officials to advocate for state and federal policy changes.

Damascus, one of Oregon's most recently incorporated cities, has sponsored a community-wide dialogue about the future. The process has identified core values that will guide the development of the city's first comprehensive plan. An active citizens committee has guided an assessment of the community's natural features, with broad community participation.

In Tualatin, a visioning project called Tualatin Tomorrow is producing a community action plan to define and achieve common goals, in collaboration with business groups, civic organizations and governmental agencies.

### Town center development

Regional growth plans envision a network of thriving town centers linked by transit and offering a full range of retail and civic services. Development of these centers is a sustainability strategy that will allow people to reduce their driving and enjoy a pedestrian-friendly environment. In Lake Oswego, investment in public infrastructure was the key to igniting town center redevelopment; street improvements and a public plaza which attracted significant private investment. Wilsonville collaborated with Costa Pacific Communities on development of an innovative rainwater management program that attracted U.S. EPA grant funding. Milwaukie also is revitalizing its downtown, anchored in part by municipal investment in the waterfront and other improvements.

### Natural assets

Six Clackamas County cities — Happy Valley, Lake Oswego, Sandy, Tualatin, West Linn and Wilsonville — have earned the title Tree City USA. To participate in this national program, a community must adopt a tree



ordinance, appoint a board, department, or commission to advise the city on such issues, spend two dollars per capita on community forestry activities, and hold an Arbor Day celebration. Last year, Happy Valley set up a “tree bank” to facilitate the new plantings the city requires as mitigation when trees are removed.

Molalla is taking steps to provide adequate parks for its growing community with a parks and recreation master plan. A code requirement of 1.25 acres of parks per 100 residents is one of the tools the city will use to double its park acreage.

In Canby, restoring wetlands is a key strategy to address stormwater issues. Local students participate by removing invasive species and restoring wetland habitats.

Farmers Markets are adding to community life in Boring, Canby Estacada, Lake Oswego, Milwaukie, Oregon City and West Linn. Local governments participate in the markets in a variety of ways, from providing space, assisting with recycling or in the case of Lake Oswego, actually managing the market. The markets play an important role in expanding opportunities for local agriculture.

### Green buildings and facilities

Several Clackamas County cities are using the LEED™ rating system designed by the U.S. Green Building Council. Examples of projects applying this tool (although not seeking a formal building certification) are the Happy Valley city hall and the Tualatin public library and city hall renovation.

The Estacada library features energy-efficient windows and a heating and cooling system that reduce energy costs. Estacada also is constructing bioswales to filter stormwater runoff, including one at a local school and another in downtown.

Oregon City expects to save \$16,000 in annual energy costs as a result of installing updated equipment at a community swimming pool. With incentives from the Energy Trust of Oregon, the project is projected to have a payback of 3.5 years.

The fleet maintenance facilities of Oregon City and Milwaukie have been certified by the Ecological Business Program sponsored by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Participating facilities must show they have adopted a number of best practices to prevent pollution.

### Transportation

Four Clackamas County cities — Canby, Molalla, Sandy, and Wilsonville — operate transit services that have been experiencing tremendous growth and success. All have greatly increased ridership in recent years. Canby Area Transit estimates its services save nearly 1.5 million gallons of gas per year while reducing the number of vehicles on the road. In addition to saving energy and reducing congestion, these transit programs are providing access for people who cannot drive or afford a car.

The City of Lake Oswego is experimenting with a new vanpool in partnership with Flexcar, a private company that rents vehicles to its members by the hour. A Flexcar van is reserved for city employees to commute to and from Southeast Portland. It also is available as a city fleet vehicle or for rental for personal use by city employees.

Recognizing the benefits of flexible-fuel, plug-in hybrid vehicles, the City of Gladstone passed a resolution to join the Plug-In Partners National Campaign. The resolution encourages the city to purchase these vehicles or other more efficient lower emission options. Milwaukie is using a 20% blend of biodiesel in its fleet vehicles and Lake Oswego has eight hybrid vehicles in its fleet.

