



Comprehensive Plan Map Clarification Project

MEMORANDUM

City of Springfield

Date: August 12, 2022
To: Project Advisory Committee
From: Katie Carroll, City Staff
Monica Sather, City Staff
Subject: Summary of Interviews with Oregon Cities

Note: This document is an abbreviated version of a longer document. It does not contain the appendices referenced throughout (list of original interview questions, interview transcripts, and contact information for staff from other jurisdictions). A copy of the full version of this document is available upon request.

INTRODUCTION

As part of the City of Springfield's [Comprehensive Plan Map Clarification Project](#), the project team conducted informational interviews with seven City governments in Oregon to better understand the information displayed on their comprehensive plan maps. These interviews can help to inform the project team's and advisory bodies' efforts to work together to determine what information Springfield's draft comprehensive plan map will show.

This research builds on previous work by the City of Eugene beginning in 2012, and most recently in 2018, as it began to undertake a similar comprehensive plan mapping project. Springfield's project team spoke to staff from the following cities that Eugene once contacted: Beaverton, Bend, Corvallis, Hillsboro, Medford, Portland, Salem. This memo updates the brief notes from Eugene's initial contacts, which indicate the status of each jurisdiction's map. Page 6 provides links to the comprehensive plan map for each city and a summarized version of this memo in table form. The full interview notes are in Appendix B. Appendix C provides contact information for staff interviewed.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Similar Project Work

Of the seven cities contacted, none recently undertook a project similar to Springfield's mapping project. Three (Beaverton, Portland, Salem) undertook policy-driven map amendments in recent years to update designations based on changes to comprehensive plan text. The City of Bend undertook a project in 2018 to resolve conflicts between its comprehensive and zoning maps. Other cities did not report making significant changes to their comprehensive plan maps in recent years.

Despite this, several cities' maps have information that aligns with Springfield's project. Four of the seven cities already have property-specific comprehensive plan maps (Beaverton, Bend, Corvallis, Portland, Salem). Bend's comprehensive plan map follows platted lots. No cities reported having gone from a generalized to a property-specific map in recent history. Hillsboro shows tax lot lines on its printed map¹; designations generally follow these but are not based precisely on lot lines. Portland does not show tax lot lines on its printed map though its map is tax lot-specific.

Considerations for Placement of Designation Boundaries

Flexible Boundaries

Two cities with largely property-specific maps (Bend, Corvallis), have areas where designation boundaries are not-property specific. There are some large tax lots (100+ acres) within Bend's urban fringe (outermost areas) that are more conceptual and have multiple designations. Corvallis also has a map that is more conceptual in urban fringe areas. Corvallis has areas where some ambiguity unintentionally appears. One example is an area near a highway where designations were set based on a buffered distance from a highway. The intent was to ensure these adjacent areas would follow designation boundaries when developed, but this did not occur (for other Corvallis examples, see Appendix B: Interview Notes).

Splits

Five cities reported having split-designated properties, including those with maps that generally follow lot lines. Of the cities with property-specific maps, three have split-designated properties on their maps (Bend, Corvallis, Portland). Corvallis and Portland staff both brought up that having split designations created challenges for property owners wishing to develop. Portland tried to clean up as many splits as possible during a project to re-designate properties on its map. Staff from Portland recommended cleaning splits up while focused on map analysis because it can be more difficult during a full comprehensive planning process, and because you may not revisit areas of the map for many years. Beaverton, which has a property-specific map, cleaned up all its split designations in a prior project. However, it had some splits occur more recently on properties in "edge area" subdivisions, which it resolved during the development approval process.

Public Rights-of-Way

Cities' answers varied as to whether their comprehensive plan maps designate public rights-of-way (ROW). Five cities designate ROW (Beaverton, Hillsboro, Medford, Portland, Salem). However, Hillsboro and Salem's maps do not show ROW as designated- Salem explained this was done for ease of use when orienting to locations on its map. Cities that designate ROW generally designate to the street centerline. Two cities do not designate ROW: Corvallis and Bend. Bend's map shows ROW as designated, but it is not designated in practice. All cities reported that their decisions to designate ROW or to not was consistent between their comprehensive plan map and zoning map (i.e., both maps show colors in ROW or do not).

¹ Most cities also have interactive web-based versions of the comprehensive plan map and other maps, which allow the user to select information they want to see and hide information they do not want to see.

Corvallis's development code specifically says zoning will not apply to ROW, however staff was not aware of similar language that corresponds to this practice for its comprehensive plan map. Corvallis staff was not exactly sure why ROW was not designated but thought it may be based on their buildable lands inventory in order to plan for gross densities that exclude ROW. Bend does not designate ROW because it is not private property.

Portland designates ROW because ROW locations can change over time (such as with vacations). Portland's procedures require a plan amendment to the map every time this happens. Beaverton staff believed the rationale behind its approach to designating ROW is that it has design requirements for bike and pedestrian facilities that are tied to zoning. As such, designating ROW on its comprehensive plan map allows for consistency with its zoning map. Hillsboro designates ROW because streets change over time, and the City wants to keep the designations in place where they were when the map was adopted.

Plan/Zone Conflicts

Four cities (Beaverton, Corvallis, Portland, Salem) resolved conflicts between the map's plan designation and zoning as part of a larger policy-driven project, usually related to a comprehensive plan update. Bend undertook a smaller-scale, administrative project in 2018 that focused on resolving conflicts. Medford has an ongoing program to resolve conflicts on a case-by-case basis to fulfill housing density goals. Medford pays for the rezoning in these cases. Hillsboro has conflicts it would like to resolve but has no timeline.

When resolving conflicts, Bend provided property owners an option to "opt out" of a designation change or rezoning by providing a form for the property owner to sign agreeing that they understood they would be responsible for the cost of making these changes in the future. Portland staff reported doing a lot of outreach and messaging to educate the public on why they were making changes, which generally consisted of up-zoning residential areas to match plan designations. Corvallis addressed conflicts through a prior project but has additional conflicts it hopes to gradually resolve as staff work on neighborhood/specific area plans over the next seven to eight years.

Display of Specific Area Plans

Only two cities show outlines of specific area plans (similar to neighborhood refinement plans) on their maps (Hillsboro, Medford). Hillsboro shows the boundaries of all its "community plans" on its comprehensive plan map. These community plans are also attached to the comprehensive plan's text, and the map legend references the section of the comprehensive plan that each community plan is contained in. Medford shows the boundaries of one area plan on its map because there are more specific development requirements tied to that plan. Medford has one other area plan that is not on the map due to the lack of development regulations being in place for this area.

Staff from Hillsboro thought its map may have some discrepancies between its community plan maps and its comprehensive plan map. Staff suggested making sure a uniform procedure is in place for updating community plans and the comprehensive plan to avoid misalignment and confusion. Hillsboro is currently working on amending a community plan with potential alignment issues in mind, but this has not always happened in the past.

Corvallis shows neighborhood centers (as a circular buffer) on its map. These centers do not have a direct regulatory purpose but play an indirect policy role. Some of these centers are tied to neighborhood plans, but others are tied to the comprehensive plan. Corvallis does not show any other information about neighborhood plans on its map. Bend and Portland both implement area plans through zoning, which is why they do not appear on their comprehensive plan maps.

Display & Plan Designation of Water Bodies

Four of the seven cities (Bend, Corvallis, Portland, Salem) show some water bodies on their maps. Staff in multiple cities speculated the decision was related to ease of use. Ease of use was given as a reason both for showing and not showing water bodies. Multiple cities show water-based information on their natural resource maps; staff at these cities thought this was a reason for not showing water on their comprehensive plan maps. Hillsboro does not show water bodies on its map because these areas are all contained within floodplain or open space designations, which are represented on the map. Portland shows water bodies on its map and designates its water bodies (for example the Willamette River is designated to the centerline). The rationale for this is to have the designation in place per the chance water levels change.

Display of Willamette River Greenway

Of the three cities interviewed where the Willamette River Greenway (WRG) applies, none show the WRG on their comprehensive plan maps. Both Corvallis and Portland regulate the WRG through zoning as an overlay, so it is shown on their zoning map rather than their comprehensive plan maps. Salem does not show it on its comprehensive plan map for ease of use.

Use of the Same Designation as a Base & an Overlay

None of the cities interviewed have a designation similar to Springfield's nodal development designation, which the 2010 version of the Metro Plan Diagram shows as both a base and "overlay" designation.

Use of Aerial Photos

Four cities (Beaverton, Bend, Hillsboro, Portland) used aerial photos to support research and decisions about which designation to use. For example, cities used aerial photos to better understand on-the-ground conditions and existing uses in areas. Beaverton used aerial photos to determine the appropriate commercial designation for sites, looking at site layout and whether existing uses were auto-oriented. Hillsboro used aerial photos when determining designations for urban expansion areas, looking for natural resources and to better understand existing development patterns.

Map Maintenance Procedures

Administrative Procedures for Map Adjustments

Four cities reported having adopted code language to allow for the administrative (staff level) adjustments to map features without necessitating a plan amendment process. Code references for Bend, Corvallis, Portland, and Salem are in Appendix B: Interview Notes. Bend and Salem both have adopted language that covers interpretation of boundaries for

features, including natural features such as water bodies. However, this language only applies to zoning. Portland has adopted language giving the Planning Director authority to make certain corrections to the comprehensive plan and zoning maps beyond the very minor adjustments GIS can do. Portland also has a standard operating procedure for staff to request these changes by submitting a memo with findings. Corvallis has adopted language allowing adjustment of natural features administratively with a site study.

Outside of officially adopted language, a few cities reported that GIS can make changes that are clearly linked to previous errors made when reflecting an approved land use decision on the map.

Map Adjustments Based on Outside Information & Changing Natural Features

For map updates reliant on information from outside data sources, two cities reported having adopted code language allowing changes to be made based on that data, both related to natural resources. Beaverton has code language allowing it to update its wetland inventory map based on outside data, though these features are not on its comprehensive plan map. Corvallis allows natural resource features to be updated based on outside information, some of which comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.

Portland does not have a process in place for updating maps based on data from an outside data source that changes. Portland staff advised that it is helpful to clean up as much data as possible during a project, and to write a clause that allows for flexibility to realign designations to follow natural features. Hillsboro also does not have a process in place to allow this but has some outdated floodplain information on its comprehensive plan map, further highlighting the importance of having procedures for administrative updates.

Snapshot of Approaches to Comprehensive Plan Maps in Cities Across Oregon

City	Print Map	Web Map	Property Specific Map	Designation Boundary Considerations			Plan/Zone Conflicts Resolved	Specific Area Plans Shown	Water Bodies Shown	WRG Shown	Use of Same Designation for Base & Overlay	Use of Aerial Photo for Research	Language in Place to Allow Ongoing Map Maintenance at Staff Level
				Flexible Boundaries	Splits	ROW Designated							
Beaverton	Link	Link	Y	N	N	Y	Y- Project component	N	N	N/A	N	Y	N
Bend	Link	Link	Y- Platted	Y	Y	N	Y- Project purpose	N	Y	N/A	N	Y	Y
Corvallis	Link	Link	Y	Y	Y	N	Y- Project component	N	Y	N	N	N/A	Y
Hillsboro	Link	Link	N	N/A	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N/A	N	Y	N
Medford	Link	Link	N	N/A	Y	Y	Y- Ongoing	Y	N	N/A	N	-	N
Portland	Link	Link	Y	N	Y	Y	Y- Project component	N	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Salem	Link	Link	Y	-	-	Y	Y- Project component	N	Y	N	N	-	Y
Total Yes			5	2	5	5	6	2	4	0	0	4	4

Key
Y = Yes
N = No
WRG = Willamette River Greenway
- = Question not asked or not answered
N/A = Question not applicable

Key Takeaways

There was no consistent approach to map display across all seven cities interviewed. A summary of select topics is below for reference regarding decisions about map display, user experience working with the map, and for maintaining accurate information post-adoption.

- **Similar project work:** No city recently undertook a project similar to Springfield's mapping project, and none reported having gone from a generalized property-specific map in recent history. Despite this, several cities' maps have information that aligns with Springfield's project interests. Five of the seven cities already have property-specific comprehensive plan maps (Beaverton, Bend, Corvallis, Portland, Salem).
- **Leaving plan boundaries flexible:** Two of the five cities with largely property-specific maps (Bend, Corvallis), have some areas where designation boundaries are intentionally not-property specific. These areas are largely in the cities' outlying ("urban fringe") areas outside city limits, but some exceptions apply within Corvallis city limits.
- **Split plan designations:** Of the five cities with property-specific maps, three have split-designated properties (Bend, Corvallis, Portland). Portland recommended cleaning up as many as possible before adoption, which follows Beaverton's approach.
- **Designating public rights-of-way (ROW):** Five cities designate ROW, but two of these do not these designations on their comprehensive plan maps to allow for ease of visual orientation. Two cities do not designate ROW. Some cities emphasized that a consistent policy approach between assigning zoning to ROW and designating ROW on the comprehensive plan map is important.
- **Plan/zone conflicts:** Four cities (Beaverton, Corvallis, Portland, Salem) resolved plan/zone conflicts as part of a separate, larger project. These are the same cities that display tax lot-specific information on their comprehensive plan maps. Two cities resolve(d) conflicts through other means.
- **Display of other adopted plans on the map:** Two cities (Hillsboro, Medford) show outlines of plans for specific neighborhood areas that are regulatory in nature. Because Hillsboro's approach applies a general comprehensive plan designation and a community area plan designation, Hillsboro recognizes a procedure should be in place to update its community area plans and its comprehensive plan to avoid misalignment and confusion.
- **Depicting the Willamette River Greenway (WRG) on the map:** The WRG does not appear on any of the cities' maps though three cities are adjacent to the WRG.
- **Administrative procedures for map adjustments:** Four cities have official procedures in place for interpreting and adjusting boundaries of map features (Bend, Corvallis, Portland, Salem), but only two have these in place for the comprehensive plan map as opposed to zoning maps. Portland's process is worth reading further for an example of adjustments to a comprehensive plan map. In some cities that do not have adopted code language, GIS staff can correct errors on maps only when the correction relates to an approved land use decision.
- **Map adjustments based on outside information and on shifting natural features:** Two cities (Beaverton, Corvallis) have official code language allowing changes to be made based on that data—both related to natural resources, but this information does not affect the information shown on their comprehensive plan maps. Portland does not adjust its map but advised the team to consider adopting a provision that allows for flexibility to realign any designations affected by the location of a natural feature.
- **Additional advice:** All but Medford offered advice for the project beyond the questions asked. This advice is in Appendix B as the last part of each interview.