



**CITY OF ECHO**  
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN  
STAFF REPORT

**HEARING DATE:**  
PLANNING COMMISSION:  
JUNE 24, 2025  
CITY COUNCIL:  
JULY 8, 2025  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
5:00 PM

**REQUEST:** Adopt an updated Comprehensive Plan.

Applicant: City of Echo  
Post Office Box 9  
20 S. Bonanza Street  
Echo, Oregon 97826

Notice to the Department of Land Conservation and Development: May 18, 2025

Newspaper Notice: June 4, 2025

Website, City Hall, and Post Office Posting: May 29, 2025

Adjoining Property Owner Notice: June 3, 2025

Planning Commission Public Hearing: June 24, 2025

City Council Public Hearings: July 8, 2025

Assigned Staff: Dave Slaght, City Manager, and Carla McLane, Echo Contract Planner

**Background:** The Echo Comprehensive Plan has guided the city for many decades with the first known Comprehensive Plan adoption in 1978 with the more modern and current version adopted in 2005. This action will repeal and replace Ordinance ~~XXX~~-2005 that adopted the 2005 version.

**Summary of Changes:** Work on the Comprehensive Plan focused on the general organization of the document along with addressing 20 years of change. The text was reorganized, placing Echo's goals in the same order as the statewide goals, adding a Finding statement or statements for each goal, followed by city Policy statements. Where appropriate the Findings and Policies were updated to reflect current Oregon Revised Statute, Oregon Administrative Rule, case law, or current planning practice. Some goals had narrative associated with them, which was updated as needed. Some goals did not have narrative, in which case narrative was added when appropriate. A more detailed analysis of the proposed changes is provided later in this staff report.

**Approval Criteria and Process:** The current Comprehensive Plan includes Section 7: Plan Amendment that will guide this review to adopt this proposed update to the Comprehensive Plan. The applicable requirements follow in **bold** type with responses in regular type. Future changes,

if this Comprehensive Plan is adopted, will be governed by the Echo Development Code review and amendment provisions. There is also a review of the 14 statewide planning goals as part of this staff report. They follow at the end.

**7-1-6 Plan and Implementation Measure Review: The City Comprehensive Plan and implementation measures shall be reviewed at least annually to determine conformity with changes in:**

- **Oregon Revised Statutes and administrative rules;**
- **Oregon case law;**
- **Oregon Statewide Planning Goals;**
- **Requirements of the City;**
- **Needs of residents or landowners within the City or urban growth area;**
- **and Concerns of the County and other affected governmental units.**

**If the City Comprehensive Plan, implementation measures, or both fail to conform to any of the above criteria, the nonconforming document(s) shall be amended as necessary and as soon as practicable. (Ord. 232-78, 10-18-78)**

Response: The Echo Comprehensive Plan has not had a thorough review since its last adoption in 2005 with limited review since that time. This update has been done to bring the Comprehensive Plan into conformity with applicable Oregon Revised Statute, Oregon Administrative Rule, and the Statewide Planning Goals. Most importantly, this update is designed to acknowledge recent changes related to the growth of the city in the Northgate area and provide clear guidance for how the city can and should grow in the future.

**7-1-7 Plan Amendment Applications: An amendment to the text of this Chapter or to the Comprehensive Plan map may be initiated by the City Council, an affected governmental unit, or by a property owner or resident of the City or urban growth area. An owner of property located within a designated expansion area may apply for amendment of the urban growth boundary. All applications for plan amendments shall be made on forms available from the City accompanied by a fee in an amount established by the City Council. (Ord. 236-79)**

Response: This amendment was initiated as part of a Technical Assistance grant from the Department of Land Conservation and Development designed to update the City of Echo's Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, and Zoning Map. The initial grant request also sought to accomplish an Economic Opportunities Analysis. However, funding was not sufficient to accomplish that task, so a smaller effort has been undertaken to provide city staff and the City Council with a basic understanding of available lands to guide future work to expand the city's urban growth boundary for either residential or employment lands when warranted. The GIS analysis component of this task has been completed and was submitted as part of the Grant's closeout.

The City Council, as part of the grant process, appointed a Public Advisory Committee, or PAC, to provide citizen input to the project. Those PAC members worked with the City Manager and Contract Planner to review the draft Comprehensive Plan, Development Code, and Zoning Map. Twelve meetings of the PAC were held allowing for review of proposed revisions to those city planning documents. The role of the PAC was to be the conduit to the citizens of the City of Echo providing information to them.

Consensus was sought but regularly not accomplished resulting in a couple of items for the City Council to further consider as part of the adoption process which will begin with a Joint Work Session with the PAC followed by at least two Public Hearings. The following summarizes the proposed changes:

**Goal 1 Citizen Involvement:** A couple of paragraphs outlining the intent of this Goal have been added along with a Findings statement and several new Policies. Two members of the PAC suggested that the Department of Land Conservation and Development guidance for their programs also be included; that suggestion was countered by the Contract Planner and other members of the PAC who felt that the city should not be accountable to requirements that would not be achievable. What is included in the DRAFT Comprehensive Plan is a summary of a citizen involvement program that is achievable and balanced for a small rural community.

**Goal 2 Land Use Planning:** A Findings statement was added with the Policies updated to better reflect current planning practices.

**Goal 3 Agricultural Lands:** A Findings statement was added with the Policies updated to better reflect current planning practices and clearly identify Echo as a city providing lands for residential and economic development.

**Goal 4 Forest Lands:** Goal 4 was added and identifies that while no forest lands are present within the city limits, the city is a member of the Tree City USA program and encourages the planting of trees for the benefits that they provide.

**Goal 5 Natural Resources, Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas:** Narrative has been added to this Goal to address Wetlands, Riparian Areas, and Water Resources along with Historic Areas. Findings statements have been added with the previous Policy statements updated and new Policy statements added.

**Goal 6 Air, Water and Land Resources Quality:** A Findings statement was added with the Policy statements updated moving Policy related to flooding to Goal 7. There was disagreement among the PAC members concerning Open Space with the unresolved component affecting Goal 6 Policy statements as well as the Zoning Map (which will be addressed in a separate Staff Report). There are two Policy statements that are available in the REDLINE version that two of the PAC members want to retain; others feel that leaving them is contrary to private property rights, negatively affects future development of land between the two canals, and may create a liability issue for the city. It should be noted that most of the land between the two canals in the area in question is held in private ownership. These Policy statements are duplicated in the Goal 7 section and have been retained there, but the same concerns remain.

**Goal 7 Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards:** Findings statements were added, and Policy statements were relocated from Goal 6 and then updated to reflect current law. See the paragraph above concerning Policy statements 4 and 5.

**Goal 8 Recreational Needs:** A paragraph concerning the Echo Hills Gold Course was added to highlight it as a city recreational asset. Several Findings statements were added to better clarify the recreational opportunities currently available and some that could become available. The Policy statements were updated to better reflect current needs and abilities.

**Goal 9 Economic Development:** An introduction was added to better define this Goal along with several Findings statements. Limited changes were made to the Policy statements.

Goal 10 Housing: This Goal was updated to reflect the work done in 2019 with the Findings and Policy statements drawn almost exclusively from the final report.

Goal 11 Public Facilities and Services: Significant narrative was added concerning the variety of public services and facilities that are in or serve Echo. Findings statements were added with the Policies modernized to reflect current state and federal focuses. The Public Facilities Projects Lists are suggested to be removed as they are better housed in the respective facilities plans or in a city capital improvement plan or program.

Goal 12 Transportation: The Echo Transportation System Plan (TSP) is out of date with the current Comprehensive Plan recognizing policy statements that were probably drawn from an earlier TSP or other planning document. They are not reflective of the current 2001 TSP or the 2006 Interchange Area Management Plan for the Stanfield/Echo Interchange. A Findings statement and updated Polices drawn from the currently adopted documents is suggested.

Goal 13 Energy Conservation: Goal 13 was originally drafted during the energy shortages of the 1970s and continues today to focus on conservation rather than the broader energy generation, transmission, and consumption that should be its focus particularly in this region. To better support this need for a broader interpretation narrative has been added along with two Findings statements. Current Policy was retained with the addition of several new Policy statements.

Goal 14 Urbanization: This Goal guides how cities grow with a focus on urban growth boundary expansions and the orderly progression of public service delivery. Narrative has been added along with a Findings statement related to the 20-year planning horizon for urban growth boundary review. Policy statements were replaced to better reflect current planning practices.

**7-1-8 Plan Amendment: After the City Council determines that proposed amendments should be considered, amendment of the Comprehensive Plan shall be based on the following procedure and requirements:**

- A. The City Council shall set a public hearing date and give notice thereof through a newspaper of general circulation in the City at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing and if applicable, notice shall be mailed to:**
- 1. Property owners within two hundred fifty feet (250') of land subject to a proposed amendment to the Plan map; and**
  - 2. Affected governmental units which may be impacted by or who have requested opportunity to review and comment on proposed amendments.**

Response: Public hearing dates have been set but may need to be modified to ensure that these applicable provisions as well as current requirements under Oregon Revised Statute are accomplished. Notice provided to the Department of Land Conservation and Development will also accomplish notice to other state agencies through their notice provisions.

**B. Copies of proposed amendments shall be made available for review at least ten (10) days prior to the City Council hearing.**

Response: The work of the PAC has been available throughout the duration of the project. A formal posting of the final package was accomplished on May 19 prior to the Joint Work Session that was held on Monday, May 27. Additional changes will be made to the Comprehensive Plan prior to and during the public hearing process but it is anticipated to result in an updated

Comprehensive Plan upon the conclusion of the adoption process. City staff have created a webpage dedicated to this process that has been updated and will continue to be updated until the final package is adopted.

- C. Within ten (10) days after the close of the City Council hearing, the City Council shall make findings of fact and adopt, adopt with changes, or deny the proposed amendments. Adoption of Plan amendments is effective upon;**
- 1. City adoption in the case of amendment of the Plan map for an area within the City limits.**
  - 2. County adoption in the case of amendment of Plan policies or the Plan map for the urban growth area; and**
  - 3. County adoption and Land Conservation and Development Commission approval in the case of amendment of Plan goals or urban growth boundary location.**

Response: No change in the urban growth boundary is proposed as a part of this update. The update does acknowledge recent annexations in the Northgate area with several of the proposed findings and policies addressing those changes. The Comprehensive Plan may be placed before Umatilla County for consideration and adoption based on the current joint management agreement. Notice to the Department of Land Conservation and Development has been accomplished with a Notice of Decision to be submitted upon adoption or denial.

- D. Copies of Plan amendments adopted by the City shall be sent to the county and the Land Conservation and Development Commission within ten (10) days after adoption. (Ord. 232-78, 10-18-78).**

Response: Current Oregon Revised Statute requires notice to be accomplished within five days of adoption.

**Analysis of the Statewide Planning Goals 1 through 14 follows.**

**Goal 1 Citizen Involvement: To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.**

The City of Echo Comprehensive Plan does address Citizen Involvement and, in the current version, has two policies that encourage periodic community surveys and encourage citizens to attend city council meetings and hearings. The proposed Comprehensive Plan was reviewed by a Public Advisory Committee appointed by the city council, generally meeting the first policy, and will be subject to the public hearings process, generally meeting the intent of this second policy. The public hearings have also been noticed as required by the provisions within the current Comprehensive Plan regulations with published notice. Notice was also mailed to affected adjoining landowners of the proposed changes to the Zoning Map.

**Goal 2 Planning: To establish a land use planning process and policy framework as a basis for all decisions and actions related to use of land and to assure an adequate factual base for such decisions and actions.**

Goal 2 establishes the underlining process that a county or a city needs to utilize when considering changes to their Comprehensive Plans, development codes, or maps. The city council, based on requirements of the Technical Assistance Grant, established a Public Advisory Committee, or PAC, to work with staff and the consultant towards amendments to the city planning documents, including the Comprehensive Plan. Application of the criteria above is consistent with the Goal 2 planning process as applied to the review and adoption of an updated Comprehensive Plan.

**Goal 3 Agricultural Lands: To preserve and maintain agricultural lands.**

Goal 3 requires counties to preserve and maintain agricultural land for farm use. Counties must inventory agricultural lands and protect them by adopting exclusive farm use zones consistent with Oregon Revised Statute 215.203 et. seq. Cities do not have this charge with the focus being on the creation of land for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

Echo, like many small eastern Oregon cities, does have some agricultural use within the city limits. The role of protecting agricultural lands is the responsibility of Umatilla County.

**Goal 4 Forest Lands: To conserve forest lands by maintaining the forest land base and to protect the state’s forest economy by making possible economically efficient forest practices that assure the continuous growing and harvesting of forest tree species as the leading use on forest land consistent with sound management of soil, air, water, and fish and wildlife resources and to provide for recreational opportunities and agriculture.**

Goal 4 requires cities and counties to preserve and maintain forest lands for forest and recreational purposes. There are no forest lands impacted by this request or within the City of Echo. The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan do identify within the Goal 4 discussion that the City of Echo is a Tree City USA member and seeks to protect and plant trees for the benefits that trees can provide.

**Goal 5 Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources: To protect natural resources and conserve scenic and historic areas and open spaces.**

The City of Echo is a historical town taking great care to capture and preserve that history. The Umatilla River is a natural resource that is both beautiful and can be menacing during spring flooding season. The proposed amendments to the Comprehensive Plan call these features out and begin to lay the groundwork for future actions to continue to inventory and protect assets that the City Council deem appropriate.

**Goal 6 Air, Water and Land Resources Quality: To maintain and improve the quality of the air, water and land resources of the state.**

Goal 6 addresses the quality of air, water, and land resources. In the context of comprehensive plan amendments, a local government complies with Goal 6 by adopting Findings and Policies that are protective of the environment and can meet both state and federal standards, particularly those related to air and water quality.

The City of Echo is predominantly a residential community with limited commercial and industrial activity. The recent annexation of the Northgate area will add significant acreage to the city’s employment lands inventory and create a space that can provide local services and cater to the traveling population. The siting standards in the proposed Development Code for both the Tourist Commercial and Light Industrial use zones are protective of the property and community and can be seen to implement this Goal. The placement of these activities away from the original town center also provides protection of the historical resources that have been identified.

**Goal 7 Areas Subject to Natural Hazards and Disasters: To protect people and property from natural hazards.**

Goal 7 works to address natural hazards and disasters and through a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan create programs to protect both people and property. Mapping of the flood plain is an important part of communicating where risk is and managing development based on that risk.

**Goal 8 Recreation Needs: To satisfy the recreational needs of the citizens of the state and visitors and, where appropriate, to provide for the siting of necessary recreational facilities including destination resorts.**

The City of Echo has several recreational assets with the most prominent being the Echo Hills Golf Course. The Comprehensive Plan identifies a number of those assets and has policy that is protective and will encourage future development at the Golf Course and of the Umatilla River Trail. These assets are not specifically mapped on the proposed Zoning Map with the recommendation that the Golf Course be zoned for residential purposes to allow future development to incorporate housing as part of the economic opportunity that could be achieved.

**Goal 9 Economy: To provide adequate opportunities throughout the state for a variety of economic activities vital to the health, welfare, and prosperity of Oregon's citizens.**

Goal 9 requires local governments to adopt comprehensive plans and policies that contribute to a stable and healthy economy. Recent annexation of the Northgate project property and the mapping of those use zones will assist in facilitating economic development within the City of Echo, creating jobs and tax base that will be beneficial to the community. The proposed Zoning Map reflects the principles of Goal 9 by depicting where those economic opportunities are at.

**Goal 10 Housing: To provide for the housing needs of citizens of the state.**

A major change in the proposed Zoning Map is to consolidate residential zoning into one singular category that allows development to be managed by impacts, not just the type of housing unit proposed. The proposed Map also has a change in zoning for the golf course, converting it to residential, that will allow future expansions to incorporate housing into that space. Both changes, reflected in the proposed Zoning Map, are supportive of Goal 10 and are consistent with the findings of the Housing Strategies Report completed in 2019.

**Goal 11 Public Services: To plan and develop a timely, orderly and efficient arrangement of public facilities and services to serve as a framework for urban and rural development.**

Goal 11 requires local governments to plan and develop a timely, orderly, and efficient arrangement of public facilities and services. The goal provides that urban and rural development be guided and supported by types and levels of services appropriate for, but limited to, the needs and requirements of the area to be served. The proposed changes to the Comprehensive Plan outline the many public facilities and services available to Echo residents and identify policies that will maintain and grow them over time. Public services are not depicted on the proposed Zoning Map, but the City of Echo can serve the areas that have been mapped for development, whether it be for residential, commercial, or industrial use.

**Goal 12 Transportation: To provide and encourage a safe, convenient and economic transportation system.**

Goal 12 requires local governments to provide and encourage a safe, convenient, and economic transportation system, implemented through the Transportation Planning Rule. The City's adopted Transportation System Plan, while old, still provides a framework for how development and transportation can occur together for the betterment of the City of Echo. Like many of the Goals the proposed Zoning Map does not depict zoning for roads and streets, but it does identify where that infrastructure is at.

**Goal 13 Energy: To conserve energy.**

Goal 13 directs local jurisdictions to manage and control land and uses developed on the land to maximize the conservation of all forms of energy, based on sound economic principles. But like many of the Goals it is not specifically mapped. Electricity and natural gas are available to local residents, but the location of those services is not a part of the land use planning program nor are they mapped by the city. Coordination as part of the development process ensures that these services, mostly under Goal 11, are available for use.

**Goal 14 Urbanization: To provide for an orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land use, to accommodate urban population and urban employment inside urban growth boundaries, to ensure efficient use of land, and to provide for livable communities.**

Goal 14 is mostly achieved through the management of a city's urban growth boundary. The proposed Zoning Map does depict the city limits, the urban growth boundary, and the proposed use zones which all guide how the City of Echo will grow now and into the future. If at a future date the city determines that more land is needed for either residential use or for employment lands an expansion of the urban growth boundary may be necessary to allow for development.