Purpose

There are three primary purposes for this policy:

1. Provide guidance to Oregon’s planners in helping to create sustainable communities and regions.

2. Clarify what elements of the planning process, and what outcomes, are key to creating, maintaining and enhancing the sustainability of Oregon’s communities.

2. Help planners explain to the public what we mean when we talk about “sustainability”.

Sustainability in the Oregon planning context means:

Enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations by helping to create and stabilize places that are equitable, healthy, and resilient, and provide ongoing economic, environmental and social benefits.

Planning sustainably means:

Proactively encouraging participation in the planning process, especially by those groups that have not historically been engaged.

Fostering development of communities that celebrate their diverse cultural backgrounds while working collaboratively to identify shared goals and strategies.

Enabling all community members to have the opportunity to achieve social and economic vitality without compromising the ability of the ecosystem and future generations to thrive.

Using a local government’s comprehensive plan as the primary guiding document for creating places that sustain and enhance ecological and human conditions, and as the primary mechanism to coordinate other plans that affect the sustainability of the built, natural and social environment.

Utilizing sustainability-based performance measures to help guide thoughtful decisions concerning improvements in community quality of life and long term resilience.
**Sustaining Places** are regions and communities that:

Are inclusive and result in ecological and community benefits (e.g. individual and community health, affordable housing, employment, etc.) to their residents.

Work toward a fair distribution of the benefits and burdens of development among the people and places that make up a community as change occurs and public and private investments are made.

Have a land use pattern that protects, and works to rehabilitate, ecological systems and functions; meets a significant percentage of city residents’ daily needs within walking distance and rural residents’ daily needs through a mix of transportation choices; integrates natural features with the urban environment; provides equal access for all residents to parks, schools and other public facilities; meets a significant percentage of business, consumer and raw material needs within their region; and supports affordable housing choices and employment opportunities for residents.

Provide efficient, diverse and redundant infrastructure systems (i.e. transportation, energy, food, water, waste disposal, schools, health facilities, etc.) to meet current and future needs equitably, while minimizing human-caused contributions to climate change and use of non-renewable resources.

Create affordable, flexible and long lasting buildings and spaces through quality design features that enhance the daily lives of all community members.

Support farms, forests, and other natural resource uses to promote ecological, economic and social benefits.