Climate Friendly Areas

As part of the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rulemaking, the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) is considering rules to facilitate the development of walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods in Oregon’s eight metropolitan areas. Because the Portland Metro region has implemented similar requirements, climate friendly area rules will operate differently in that region, reinforcing the region’s Climate Smart Communities program.

What is a Climate Friendly Area?

A climate friendly area is an area where residents, workers, and visitors can meet most of their daily needs without having to drive. They are urban mixed-use areas that contain, or are planned to contain, a greater mix and supply of housing, jobs, businesses, and services. These areas are served, or planned to be served, by high quality pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure to provide frequent, comfortable and convenient connections to key destinations within the city and region.

Why are Climate Friendly Areas important?

A key component of Oregon’s plan to meet our climate pollution reduction and equity goals is facilitating development of urban areas in which residents are less dependent upon the single occupant vehicle. Before the automobile became common in American life, cities grew more efficiently, with a variety of uses in city centers and other areas that allowed for working, living, and shopping within a walkable or transit accessible area. Over the last 100 years, the automobile and planning practices have served to separate activities, creating greater inequities within cities and widespread dependence upon climate-polluting vehicles to meet daily needs. Climate friendly areas will help to reverse these negative trends, with some actions taking place in the short term, and others that will occur with development and redevelopment over time.

Proposed Rules: Metropolitan Cities to Designate and Plan for Climate Friendly Areas

The proposed rules will require cities (and some urbanized county areas) with a population over 5,000 within the seven metropolitan areas outside of Portland Metro to adopt regulations allowing walkable mixed-use development in defined areas within urban growth boundaries. Areas will be sized to accommodate a portion of the community’s housing, jobs, and services. Local governments will determine where these areas will be located, but many of these areas will likely be established in existing downtowns that may currently allow for mixed uses and higher densities. Associated requirements will ensure high quality pedestrian, bicycle, and transit infrastructure is available within these areas to provide convenient transportation options.

The rules provide a process for local governments to first designate climate friendly areas, then later to adopt development standards for those areas. The rules provide some minimum requirements for climate friendly areas, with a set of clear and objective standards that may be adopted, or a process for local governments to craft their own standards. Cities of more than 10,000 will monitor housing production within these areas over time and develop strategies to facilitate desired development.

Draft Rule Language is available at: [https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/LAR/Pages/CFEC.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/lcd/LAR/Pages/CFEC.aspx)

Questions?
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