

Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

This sixth biennial report to the Oregon legislature details the progress Oregonians have made in achieving their year 2000 targets for 90 benchmarks. These benchmark measures are an integral part of Oregon’s long term strategic plan called *Oregon Shines*.

Coming out of a deep recession in the late 1980s, Oregon was not content to passively allow external forces to continue shaping its economic and social future. Oregon leaders and citizens developed a vision. It was and continues to be: “A prosperous Oregon that excels in all walks of life.” To make this vision a reality, Oregon’s stakeholders—public servants and private citizens—worked together to create a set of strategic goals and objectives. They then created benchmarks with targets so they could measure their progress towards these goals and objectives (see Figure 1, page 4).

The Oregon legislature also created the Oregon Progress Board, chaired by the Governor. Its purpose is to remind us of our shared vision, monitor our progress in achieving Oregon’s goals, and bring choices to our attention. This report to the legislature is partial fulfillment of the Oregon Progress Board’s ongoing responsibilities.

Philosophical Underpinnings

Oregon’s strategic plan is detailed in a series of periodically updated publications called *Oregon Shines* (1992, 1997, and upcoming in 2003). It is based on the assumption that the social and economic well being of Oregonians depends on the interconnectedness of quality jobs, a sustainable envi-

ronment, and caring communities. This “Circle of Prosperity” is illustrated in Figure 2, page 5 and states the following beliefs.

1. A clean, appealing environment, a talented workforce and responsive public services will attract and find a base for diverse, value-adding industries that provide well-paying jobs.
2. Diverse, value-adding industries that provide well-paying jobs will:
 - create opportunities for Oregonians, reducing poverty and crime, and
 - generate revenue for excellent schools, quality public service and public facilities.
3. Opportunities for Oregonians, reduced poverty and crime, and revenues for excellent public schools, services and facilities will result in a clean, appealing environment, a talented workforce and responsive government.

Oregon leaders and citizens developed a lasting vision: “A prosperous Oregon that excels in all spheres of life.”

New 2001 Benchmarks

Based on expert feedback, the Oregon Progress Board has modified 32 benchmarks since 1999. In addition, it dropped four benchmarks and added six new ones: #16 exports, #57 hunger, #65 juvenile recidivism, #82 timber harvests, #86 at risk marine species, and #89 nuisance species. Using new benchmark numbers, this report integrates the new 2001 benchmarks (raw data and targets in Appendix A) with analysis of the old benchmarks against their year 2000 targets (raw data and grades in Appendix D).

Chapter 1

Figure 1. Oregon Shines Overview

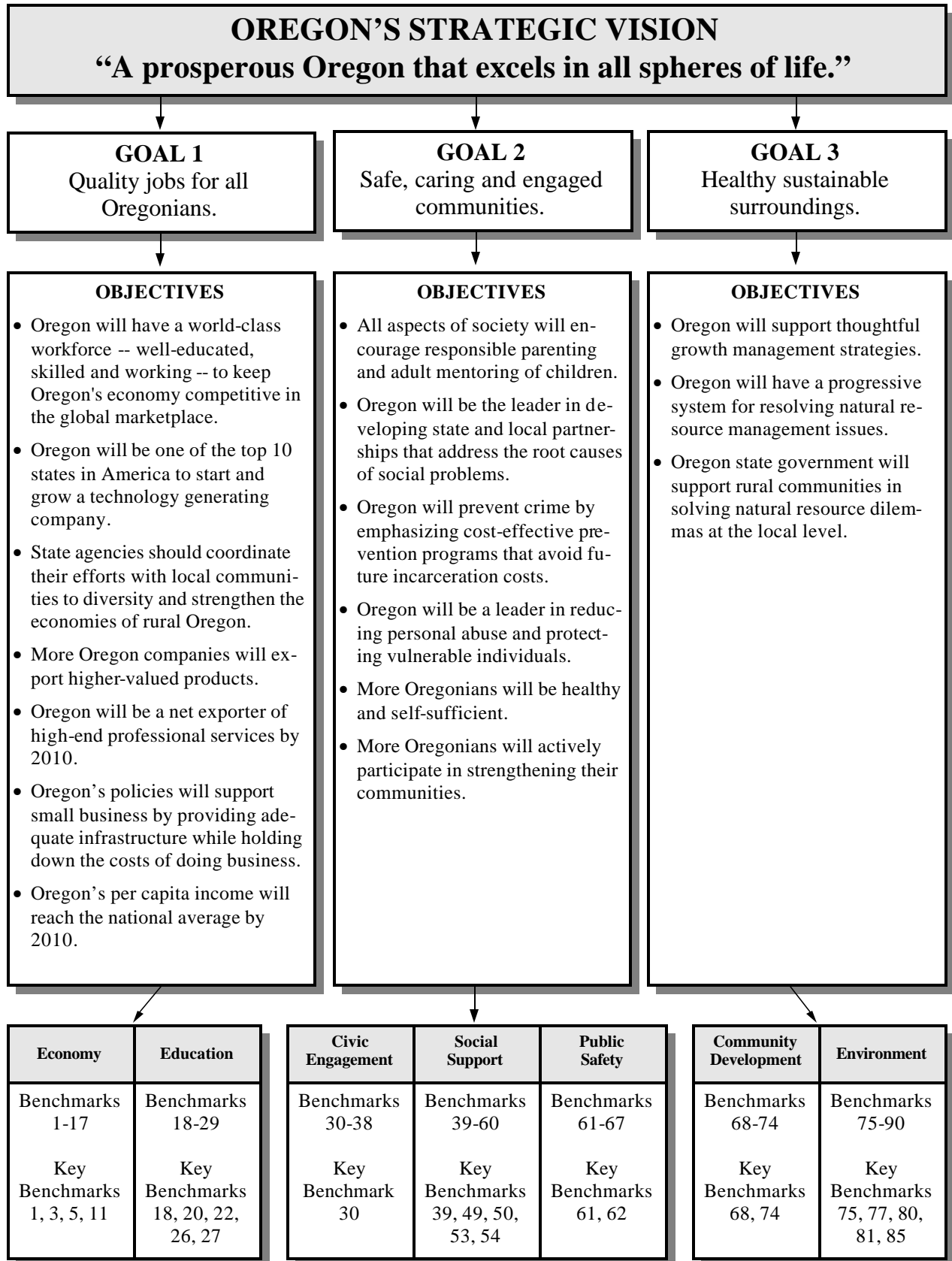
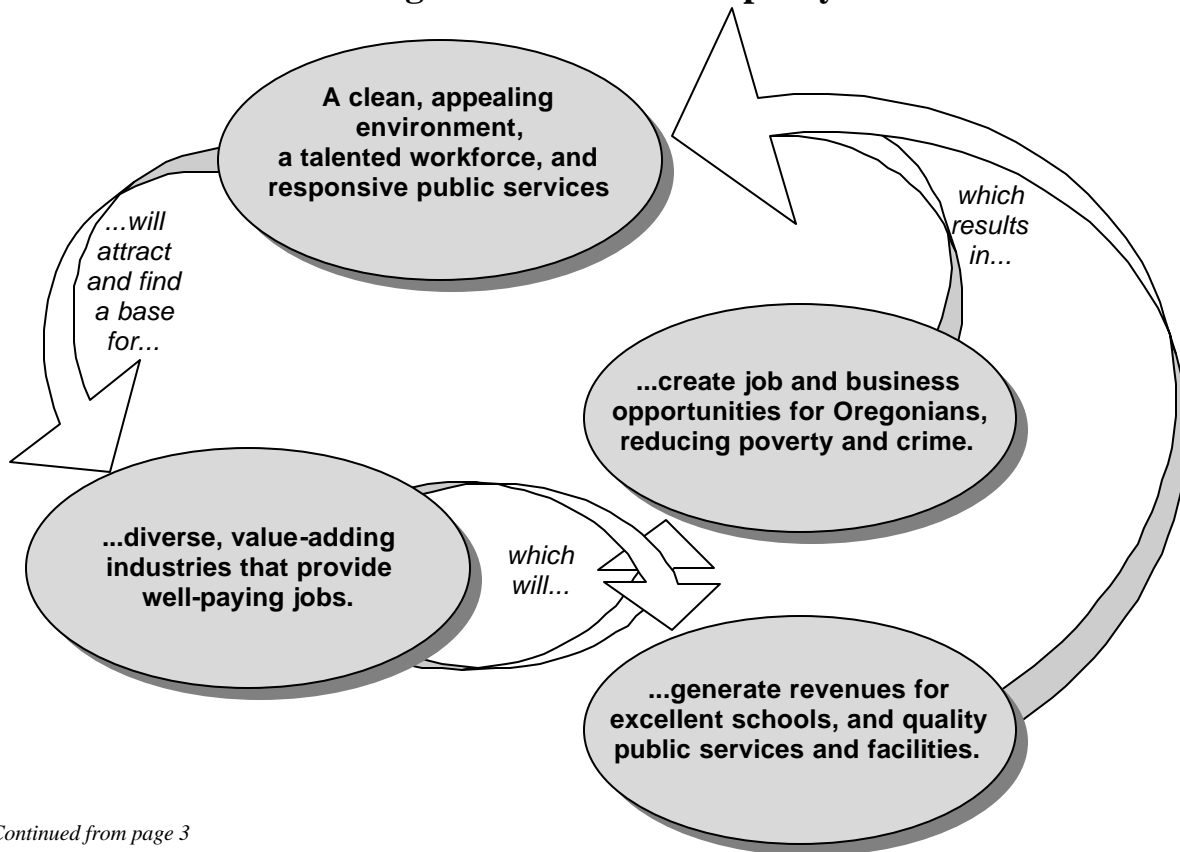


Figure 2. Circle of Prosperity

Continued from page 3

Although not perfect, this new set of benchmarks more accurately reflects the issues involved and makes use of better, more available and/or more comparable data. Where applicable, benchmark modifications are noted in italics in each write-up.

“Key” Benchmarks

The Oregon Progress Board selected 25 benchmarks (out of 90) as “key”. This report spotlights key benchmarks with full page write-ups in each chapter. Key benchmarks contribute considerably more weight to each category’s overall grade average.

Using This Report

Chapters 2-8 analyze Oregon’s progress for each of the seven benchmark categories: Economy, Education, Civic Engagement, Social Support, Public Safety, Community Development and Environment. (See bottom of Figure 1, opposite page.)

Each of the benchmark chapters includes:

- An Overview page, which provides a bird’s eye view of Oregon’s progress for the benchmarks in that section.
- A “New and Modified Benchmarks” table, which contains a brief rationale for changed benchmarks in that category.
- A one-page analysis of each key benchmark for that section (see bottom portion of Figure 1, facing page).
- A one-third page analysis for all other benchmarks.

To locate a specific benchmark, go to the Index of Benchmark Charts (page iv) where benchmarks are listed by category. For more detail, Appendix A provides a cross-walk between old and new benchmarks, including up-to-date data and new targets for the years 2005 and 2010.

Please note that the benchmark numbering system is for identification purposes only and does not imply order of priority.

Chapter 1

About the Grades

This report grades Oregon's progress towards its year 2000 targets.* Appendix B explains the grading system and calculates a grade (A-F) for all benchmarks that have a year 2000 target and adequate trend data. Unlike previous years, the grading formula now gives equal weight to 1) progress made since the base year and 2) progress made in recent years. 1998 and 2000 grades remain generally comparable, however, and can provide a good picture of how Oregon has progressed in the last two years.

The Push for Sustainability

In an Executive Order dated May 17, 2000, Governor Kitzhaber asked the Oregon Progress Board to assess whether Oregon's benchmarks could measure sustainability. The Governor defined sustainability as "using, developing, and protecting resources at a rate and in a manner that enables people to meet their current needs and also provides that future generations can meet their own needs."

Sustainability is a technical term describing the ability to achieve goals well into the future without sacrificing the ability to succeed in other goal areas. An example is the tradeoff between air quality and economic expansion. Both are valued aspects in Oregon's strategic plan. Yet economic expansion is often accompanied by increased population, more cars, and more pollution—all of which deplete air quality. Another example is the tradeoff between maintaining a healthy environment, sought after by many workers in the growing technology work force, and Oregon's traditional timber-based economy.

By focusing on the importance of sustainability in Oregon's strategic plan, stakeholders will address the needs of future generations. The quality of life of young Oregonians—and those yet to come—depend to a large extent on the choices we make now.

By asking, "How can we sustain the best possible situation in *all* these goal areas?" we are forcing ourselves to cross-evaluate the impact of one goal or objective on another, and on future generations as well as our own. Also, by focusing on the importance of sustainability in Oregon's strategic plan, stakeholders will address the needs of future generations. The quality of life of young Oregonians—and those yet to come—depend to a large extent on the choices we make now.

In response to the Governor's request, the Oregon Progress Board found that many of the elements outlined in widely accepted sustainability guidelines are contained in *Oregon Shines II*, the benchmarks and the *State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2000*.** However, several issues remain, including the need for: 1) the involvement of a broad cross-section of residents in developing Oregon's sustainability vision; 2) measures of inter-generational equity; 3) an accounting system that includes social and environmental costs/benefits; and 4) measures that demonstrate the inter-relationships between the three spheres of economic performance, community and environment.***

The Progress Board welcomes citizen input on possible new benchmarks and on ways to measure Oregon's level of sustainability. Please contact Jeffrey Tryens, Progress Board executive director, with any ideas or suggestions you might have.

* Next biennium's report will grade against new benchmark targets for the years 2005 and 2010 as shown in Appendix A.

** *Oregon Shines II and The State of the Environment Report (SOER) 2000* can be downloaded from the Oregon Progress Board web site at www.econ.state.or.us/opb.

*** A more detailed overview of this issue can be found in Appendix E, "Measuring Sustainability: The Role of the Oregon Benchmarks."