West Linn’s Waterfront Public Engagement Plan

Introduction

The City of West Linn is preparing to Master Plan the Willamette River waterfront area located generally south of I-205 and between the Willamette Neighborhood on the west and the Arch Bridge area on the east. This area is significant and historic, but does not fulfill its potential for new investment in public and private uses, opportunities for restoration and preservation, redesigned and better functioning transportation, and serving as a major focal point in which the community will benefit, find value and excitement, and have great civic pride.

To initiate the Master Plan process in 2016, the City reengaged property owners that participated in the draft Arch Bridge-Bolton Concept Plan in 2014. These discussions addressed regional planning interests, new development opportunities, and potential measures and alternatives to preserve property values consistent with the expanded, long-term Master Plan goals.

Late in 2016 the City staff also initiated a draft memorandum framing the approach to the Master Plan project, and building on previous planning efforts and knowledge. On December 19, 2016, the Council concurred on general scoping elements for the Master Plan. These core elements for future planning were approved:

- Plan for the entire waterfront area with redevelopment potential upstream from the I-205 Abernathy Bridge
- Plan in the context of the Willamette Falls area and the several focused groups and projects actively involved in significant enhancement of the area and programs surrounding the falls, including Oregon City’s Willamette Falls Legacy Project.
- Integrate more public spaces and experiences in the project designs and plans
- Work to create transportation systems which minimize negative impacts on the community and development potential of the area
- Work within a framework of financial feasibility based on market and financing realities
- Broadly engage the community in establishing project values and direction and in developing plans and programs.

The staff memorandum framing a proposed Master Plan approach will be brought to the Council for review in May. This public engagement Master Plan document is a key part of the planning process moving forward. It identifies the overall community engagement tools and processes which will be the underpinning of the planning work.

Engagement Plan Goals

- Broadly engage the community in establishing project values and direction and in developing plans and programs
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- Adopt and implement the Master Plan with broad community support, ownership, and commitment for moving forward to completion

Engagement Plan Objectives

- Create a strong sense of community ownership and support of the West Linn’s Waterfront Project plan and implementation
- Offer educational and meaningful input opportunities throughout the engagement and implementation processes
- Proactively engage citizens where they are, meaning attending community events, meetings, and other gatherings to provide information and gather input
- Provide opportunities for the community to come together to learn about the project, review its directions, and offer meaningful comment and direction
- Create the result of a positive adoption process

Engagement Plan Strategy

Engagement Participants

- Citizens
  - Engage where they are
  - Provide opportunities to engage in larger forums (workshops)
- Organizations
  - Neighborhood Associations
  - Community Organizations
  - Civic Organizations (Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, etc.)
  - Groups associated with the West Linn-Wilsonville School District
- Business Community
  - Property Owners
  - Business Owners
    - Notably West Linn Paper Mill, Portland General Electric (PGE), and others in planning area
- Residential Owners in the project area
- Partner Entities
  - Oregon City
  - Clackamas County
  - Metro
  - Oregon Department of Transportation
  - TriMet
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- Tualatin Valley Fire & Rescue (TVF&R)
- Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
- Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition
- Willamette Falls Legacy Project
- Willamette Falls Locks Commission
- Corp of Engineers

- City Boards and Commissions
  - Economic Development Committee
  - Planning Commission
  - Historic Review Board
  - Parks & Recreation Board
  - Committee for Citizen Involvement

Strategy

- Goal: Create meaningful input
  - Citizens have the information they need to make meaningful input
  - Decision makers receive meaningful input to help make good decisions
  - All input is recorded and tracked, with a response developed for all input, either individually or aggregately based on topics. This response document is widely available showing people how their input was used.
  - Levels of engagement and response are tracked with regular reports provided to a task force and/or Committee for Citizen Involvement (see discussion of task force below) for evaluation and making recommendations for adjustment to the engagement activities to improve performance.

The engagement strategy is based on City staff holding conversations with citizens throughout the community, individually, in groups, and in gatherings. Using this input, Staff will be responsible for providing information, answers, responses, and drafts of material to help both educate the public and to stimulate meaningful input. However, the key to the engagement strategy is to have Staff listen carefully, record the major points and ideas raised, and then to report to the community what was heard at each event, how the information was used, and answers to questions raised. This process will be nimble and adaptive, and will be efficient at broadly providing information and gathering input.

During the planning process, project- and topic-specific committees will be formed to work on specific issues (see final section below). And, as the Plan will eventually result in amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, and amendments to the Development Code and zoning map, the Planning Commission and City Council will go through the appropriate hearing and decision making process to formally adopt the proposals. One of the committees to be formed toward the end of the process may be a citizen committee to help finalize the Comprehensive Plan and Development Code changes in accordance with West Linn Development Code Chapter 98. Because the overall Master Plan scoping process is more broad and multidisciplinary in nature, and sometimes
complex, it is best left to a direct community engagement strategy rather than a more focused topic-specific committee structure.

The engagement strategy is broken into six elements which are described below, and illustrated on the timeline found at the end of this report. This strategy does not commit to specifically using all these tools or when they will be used, but rather identifies the tool box of engagement options to support the planning process. It is anticipated all tools in the box will be used, but the process needs to be nimble and adaptable to best meet the project and community goals. Therefore, it must adapt based on what is effective and what is not to help assure the highest level of meaningful public engagement. The elements are:

- **Electronic and Social Media**
- **Public Outreach – Early in the Project**
- **Community Engagement – direct contact tools and events**
- **Public Outreach – Later in the Project**
- **Media Relations**
- **Citizen topic-specific committees**

**Electronic and Social Media**

- Utilize existing and new social media platforms to promote information and events related to the core elements of the Project:
  - Project Website (note – this is under development at this time)
  - Project Facebook Page
  - City of West Linn Facebook page link to project page
  - City of West Linn Twitter
  - City of West Linn YouTube
  - West Linn Instagram
  - Nextdoor
- Create project emailed newsletter
  - Published no less than bi-weekly
  - Project updates
  - Upcoming events
  - Key stories
  - Human interest stories
  - Distribution list
    - Starts with current City email list
    - Active and persistent solicitation of new subscribers

**Public Outreach – Early in the Project**

- Make presentations with these three key elements:
  - Here is what we have learned
  - Here are potential options
  - What do you think?
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- Compile results and provide feedback to all groups participating in presentations
- Targeted Groups:
  - Neighborhood Associations
  - Civic Groups (Rotary, etc.)
  - School related groups
  - Others upon request
- **Timeline** – start in April and continue through September

**Community Engagement** – direct contact tools and events

- Hold open houses or workshops
- Focus on ideas and solutions
  - Traffic circulation
  - Land uses
  - Design
- Results in general consensus on solutions to the major issues
- Conduct site and project tours for groups and all-comers on a regular basis
- Provide copies of informational material to local groups, businesses
- Postcards, posters, print newsletter, newspaper advertisements, community board, utility bill

**Public Outreach** – Later in the Project

- Return to the groups participating in earlier presentations and open houses plus others as appropriate
- Make presentations with these two key elements:
  - Here is what the community has created so far
  - What do you think?
- Compile results and provide feedback to all groups participating in presentations

**Media Relations**

- Persistent activity throughout project
- Publicity gained via news outlets (The Tidings, The Oregonian, TV stations, etc.)
- Actions to earn publicity include:
  - Press releases
  - Encourage reporters to attend community and group events
  - Encourage reporters to subscribe to project accounts for email, twitter, etc.
  - Personal relationships and reliable responses to reporters

**Project- and Topic-Specific Committees**

Committees will be established at times to facilitate the planning process. For example, a transportation committee will be established early to work on critical infrastructure needs and opportunities, and alternative approaches or options to address the many
transportation challenges important to the broader Master Plan concepts that the community will eventually create for the larger waterfront area.

As the Master Plan elements come together, there will be other project- and topic-specific areas where citizen committees will work with staff to resolve issues, and create draft solutions and proposals for community review. For example, committee’s may address topics such as design standards, historic preservation, environmental restoration, and infrastructure financing. These will be set up by the Council, as needed and appropriate, based on the outcomes of the overall Master Plan process and the likely phasing of future development plans and projects for the larger waterfront area.

Chapter 98 of the Development Code calls for the creation of a legislative working group when there are legislative land use changes proposed for the Code. The working group helps draft the amendments. The Staff and Council can determine when a working group is necessary.

As the Master Plan will incorporate the larger waterfront area, currently proposed as three sub-districts, refined Comprehensive Plan policies and Development Code amendments will be created to support the Master Plan. These are legislative changes. It is recommended the Council form focus groups on these topics, as needed, when the specific legislative changes are being developed.