



WEST LINN  
**WATERFRONT**  
PROJECT

# **Appendix B**

## Existing Conditions Analysis

**Draft**

# OVERVIEW

The following pages present an overview of existing conditions, outlining key opportunities and constraints across the site.

Understanding current conditions is essential, as it lays the groundwork for developing a **Planning Framework** or blueprint for the future development of the Waterfront.

This analysis was conducted with a focus on balancing the protection of natural and cultural resources with the identification of ongoing initiatives and potential areas for new development along the Waterfront.



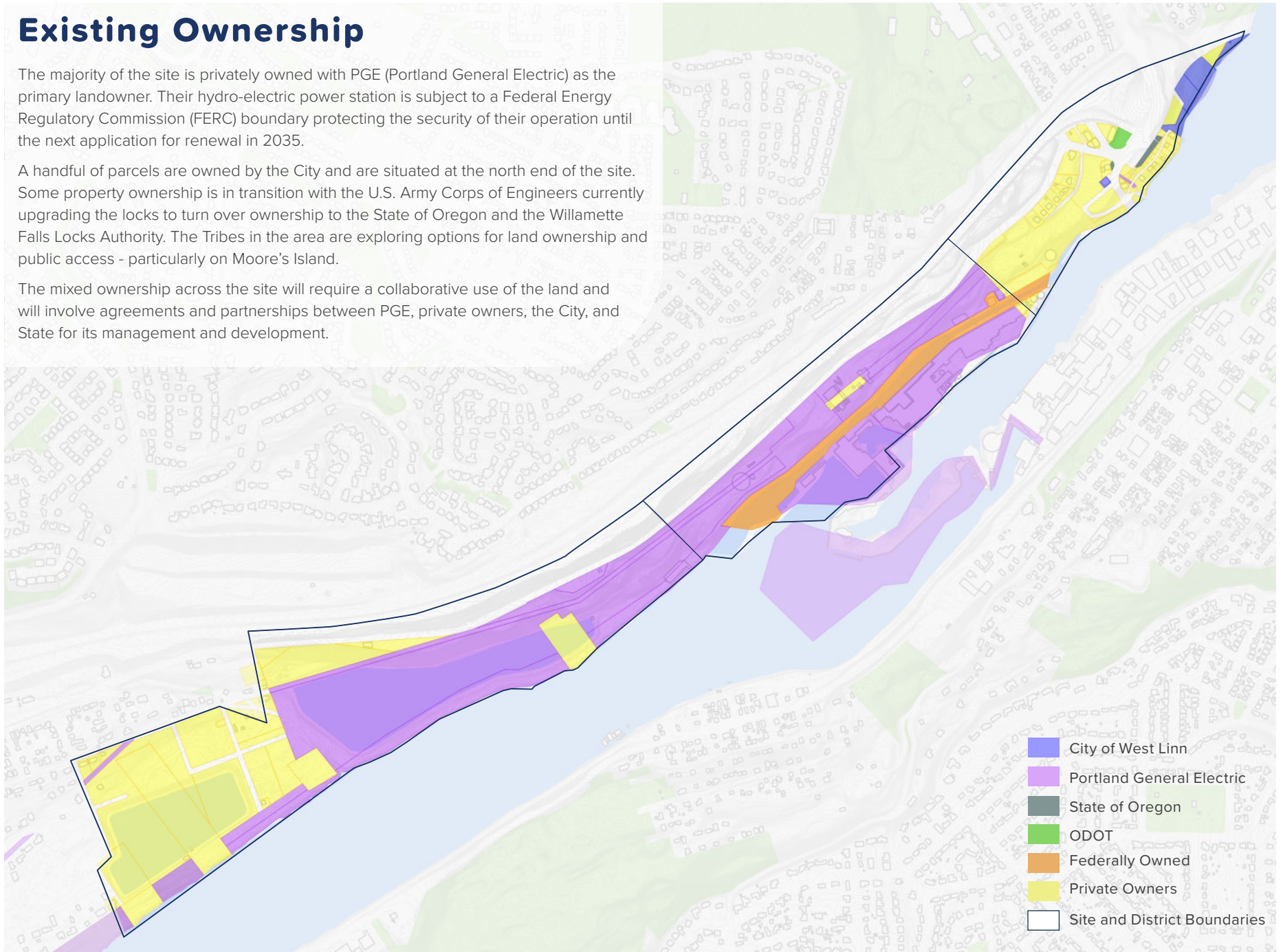


# Existing Ownership

The majority of the site is privately owned with PGE (Portland General Electric) as the primary landowner. Their hydro-electric power station is subject to a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) boundary protecting the security of their operation until the next application for renewal in 2035.

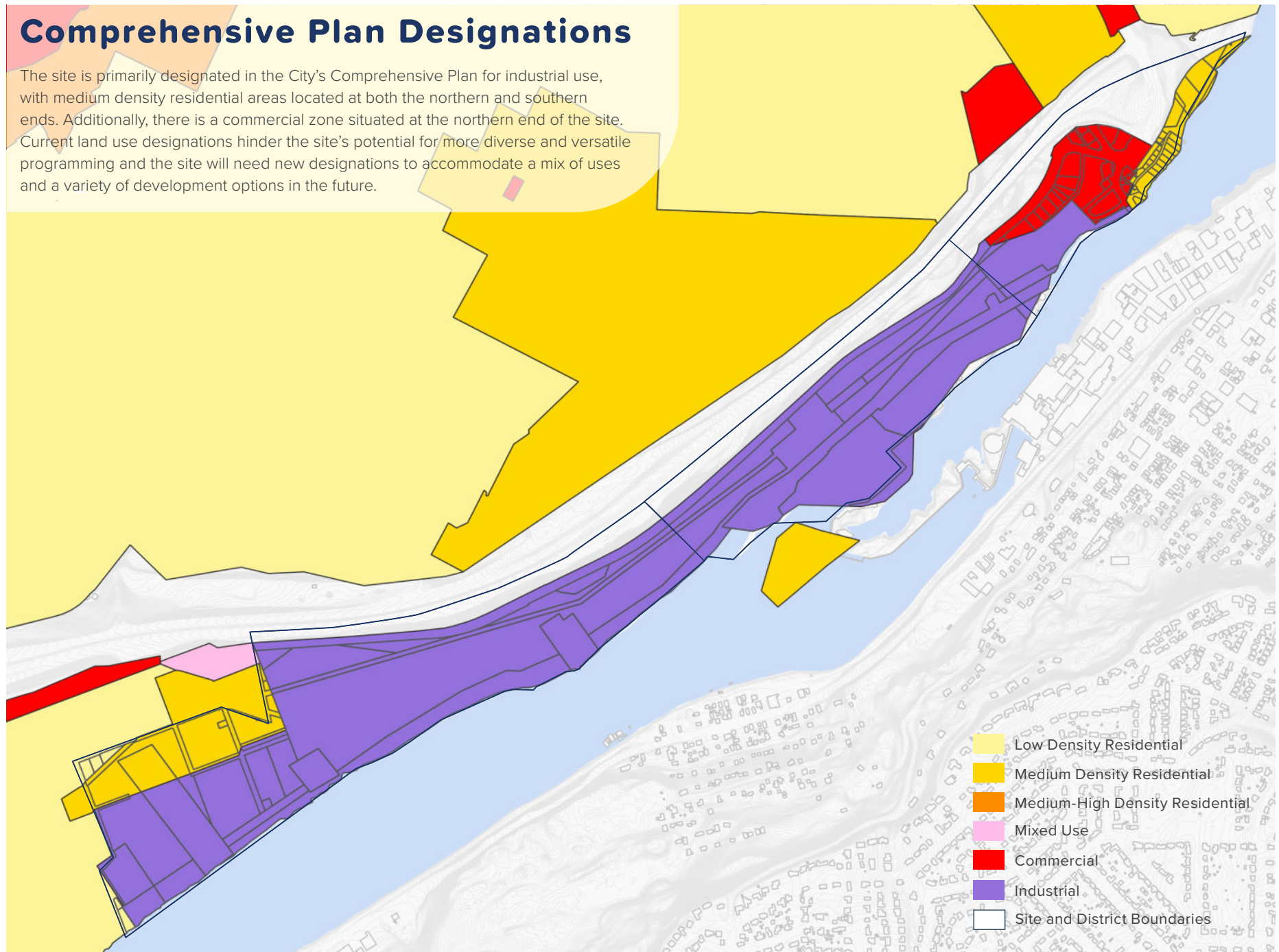
A handful of parcels are owned by the City and are situated at the north end of the site. Some property ownership is in transition with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers currently upgrading the locks to turn over ownership to the State of Oregon and the Willamette Falls Locks Authority. The Tribes in the area are exploring options for land ownership and public access - particularly on Moore's Island.

The mixed ownership across the site will require a collaborative use of the land and will involve agreements and partnerships between PGE, private owners, the City, and State for its management and development.



# Comprehensive Plan Designations

The site is primarily designated in the City's Comprehensive Plan for industrial use, with medium density residential areas located at both the northern and southern ends. Additionally, there is a commercial zone situated at the northern end of the site. Current land use designations hinder the site's potential for more diverse and versatile programming and the site will need new designations to accommodate a mix of uses and a variety of development options in the future.



# Flood Plain

## Challenges:

**Complexity and Cost:** Higher construction and insurance costs due to the need for flood-resistant building materials, foundation elevations, and flood insurance.

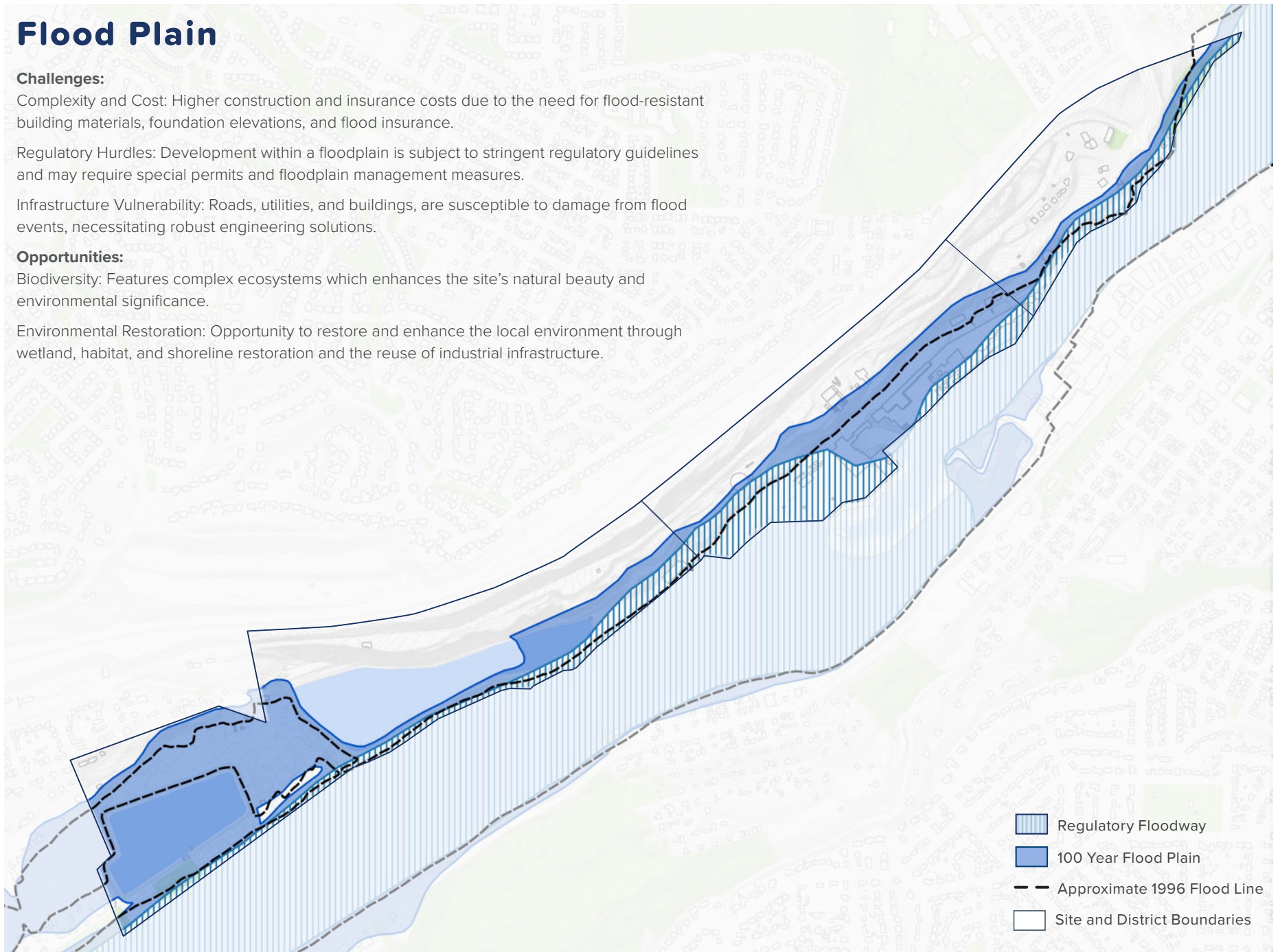
**Regulatory Hurdles:** Development within a floodplain is subject to stringent regulatory guidelines and may require special permits and floodplain management measures.

**Infrastructure Vulnerability:** Roads, utilities, and buildings, are susceptible to damage from flood events, necessitating robust engineering solutions.

## Opportunities:

**Biodiversity:** Features complex ecosystems which enhances the site's natural beauty and environmental significance.

**Environmental Restoration:** Opportunity to restore and enhance the local environment through wetland, habitat, and shoreline restoration and the reuse of industrial infrastructure.



# Steep Slopes

## Challenges:

Complexity and Cost: Extensive earthworks, and more complex engineering solutions are required. Excavation, foundation construction, and retaining wall installation will be expensive.

Erosion Risk: Increased risk of soil erosion can pose threats to property, safety, and water quality.

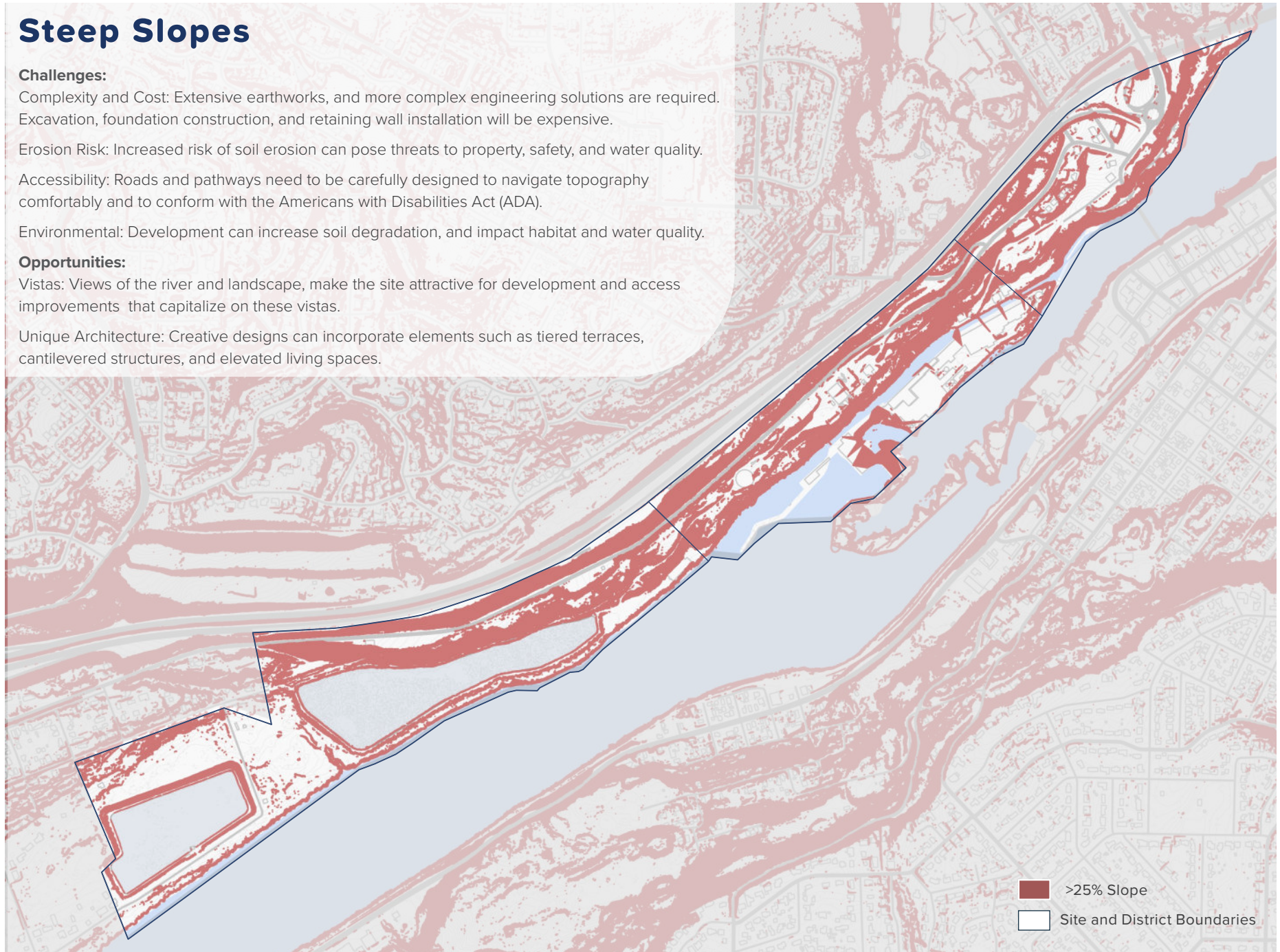
Accessibility: Roads and pathways need to be carefully designed to navigate topography comfortably and to conform with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Environmental: Development can increase soil degradation, and impact habitat and water quality.

## Opportunities:

Vistas: Views of the river and landscape, make the site attractive for development and access improvements that capitalize on these vistas.

Unique Architecture: Creative designs can incorporate elements such as tiered terraces, cantilevered structures, and elevated living spaces.





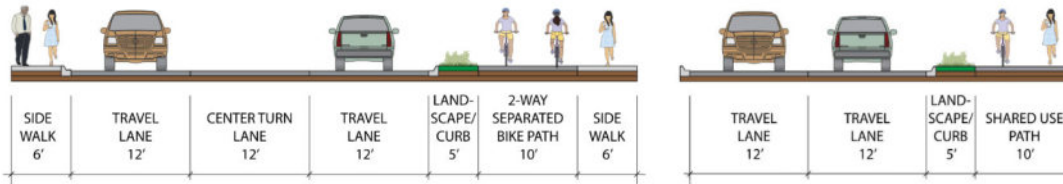
# Multimodal Greenway

Building on the Willamette Falls Drive Concept Plan and ODOT's I-205 Improvements Project, this multimodal greenway will establish connections between emerging waterfront developments, the Willamette and Bolton neighborhoods, and the rest of the city. Plans for new roundabouts in the Historic City Hall District will manage traffic flow on the Arch Bridge and I-205, while providing opportunities for new gateways to the waterfront.

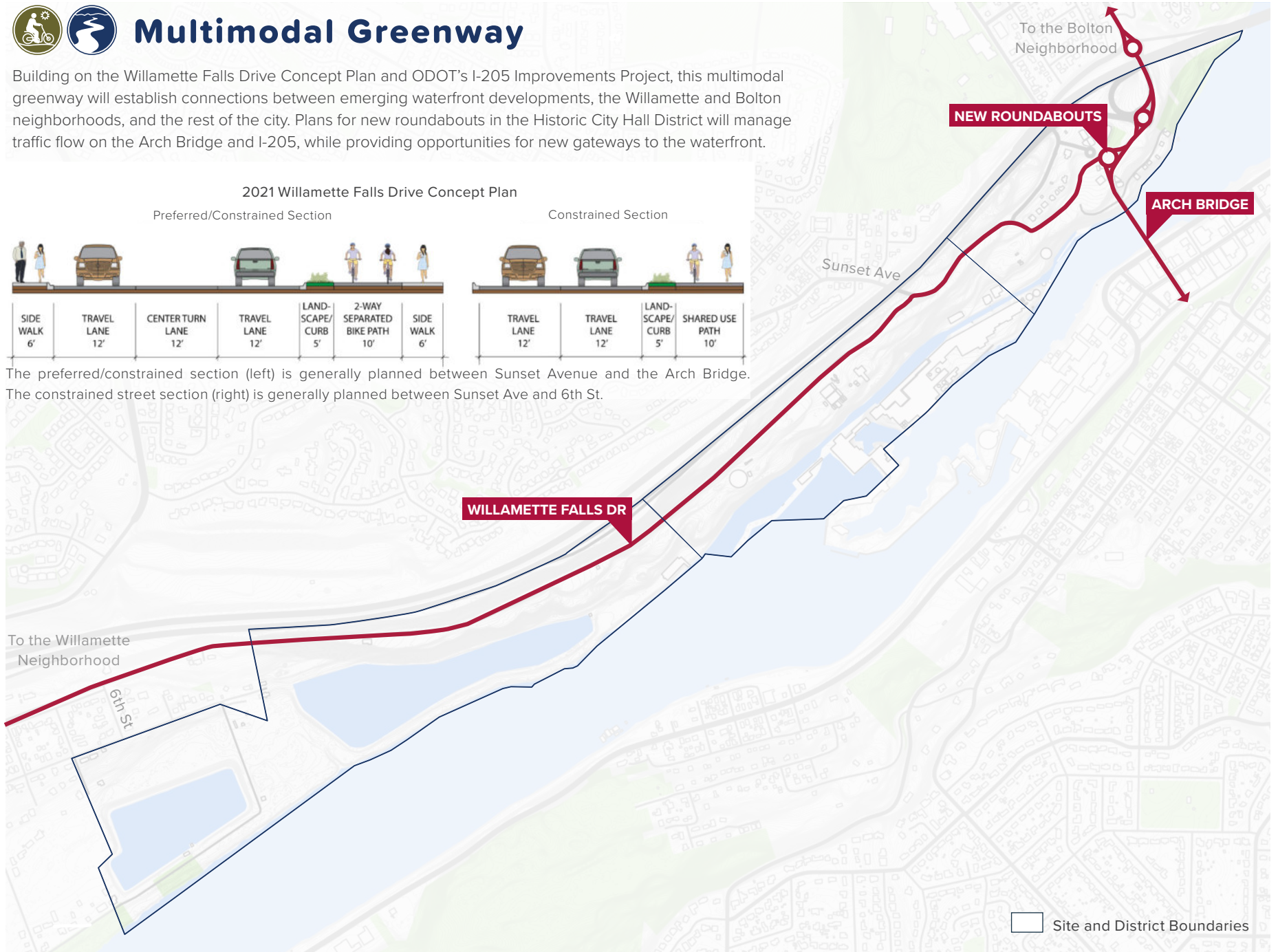
2021 Willamette Falls Drive Concept Plan

Preferred/Constrained Section

Constrained Section



The preferred/constrained section (left) is generally planned between Sunset Avenue and the Arch Bridge. The constrained street section (right) is generally planned between Sunset Ave and 6th St.

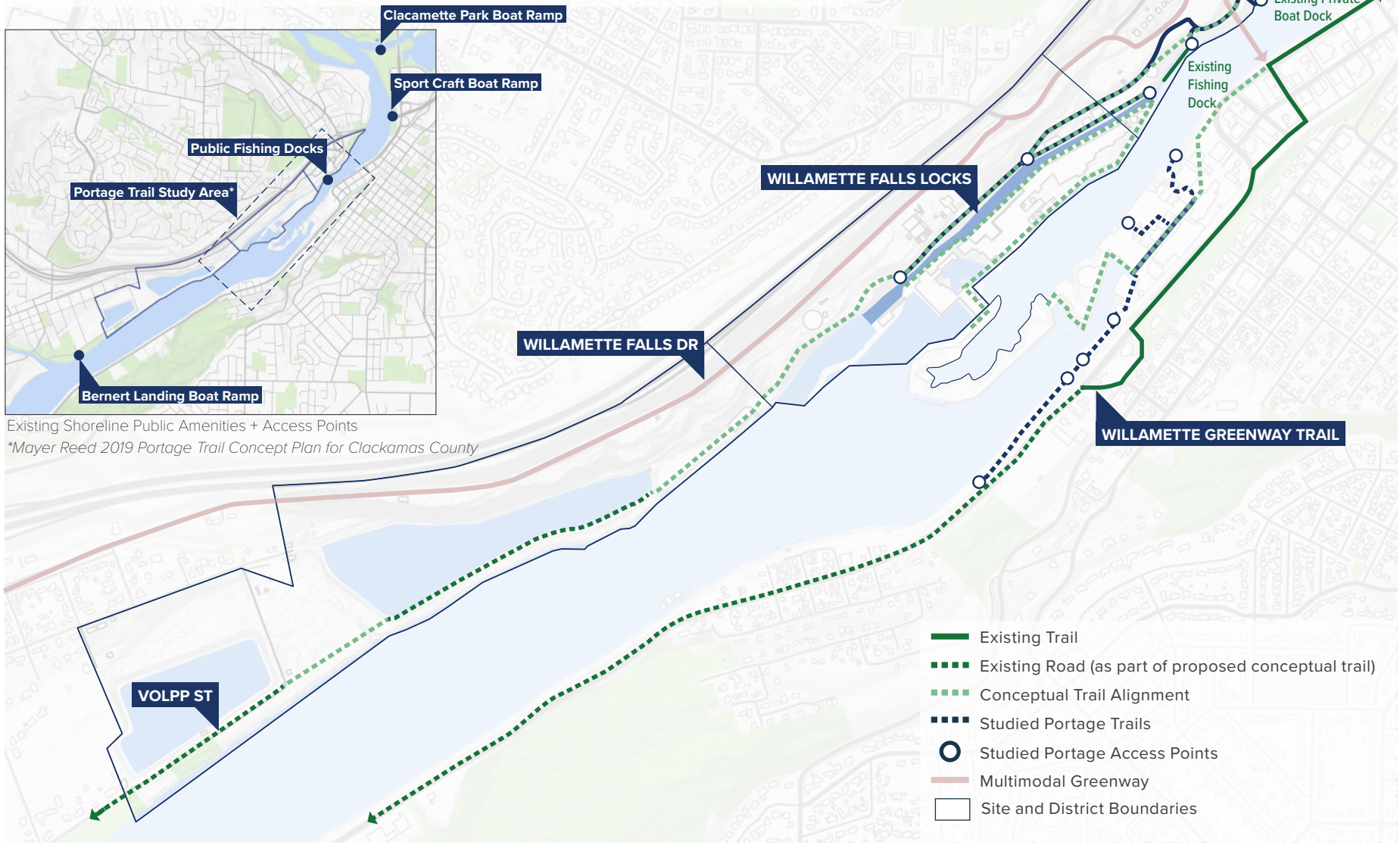






# Waterfront Trail

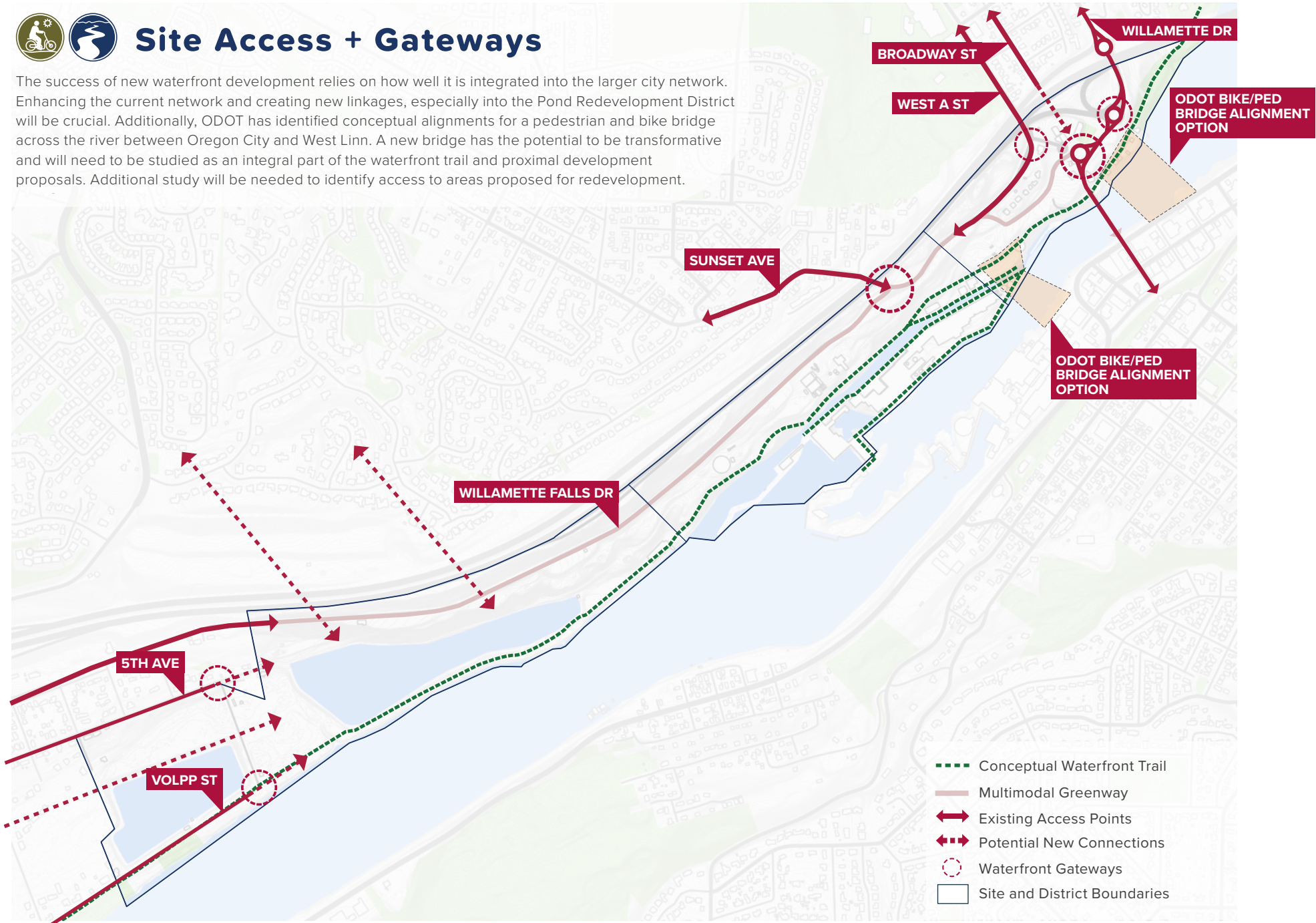
A continuous waterfront trail is imagined to ensure multiple access points to the river, including designated entry and exit points for boating, fishing, and wildlife observation areas, among others. The trail is also leveraged as a natural buffer zone serving as protective barriers against floodwaters while preserving ecological diversity. Clear and direct access to the trail in key locations from Willamette Falls Drive will help ensure a cohesive and accessible active transportation network for all users. Ultimate alignment will need to account for topography challenges across the site and in particular in the steep areas adjacent to the locks.





# Site Access + Gateways

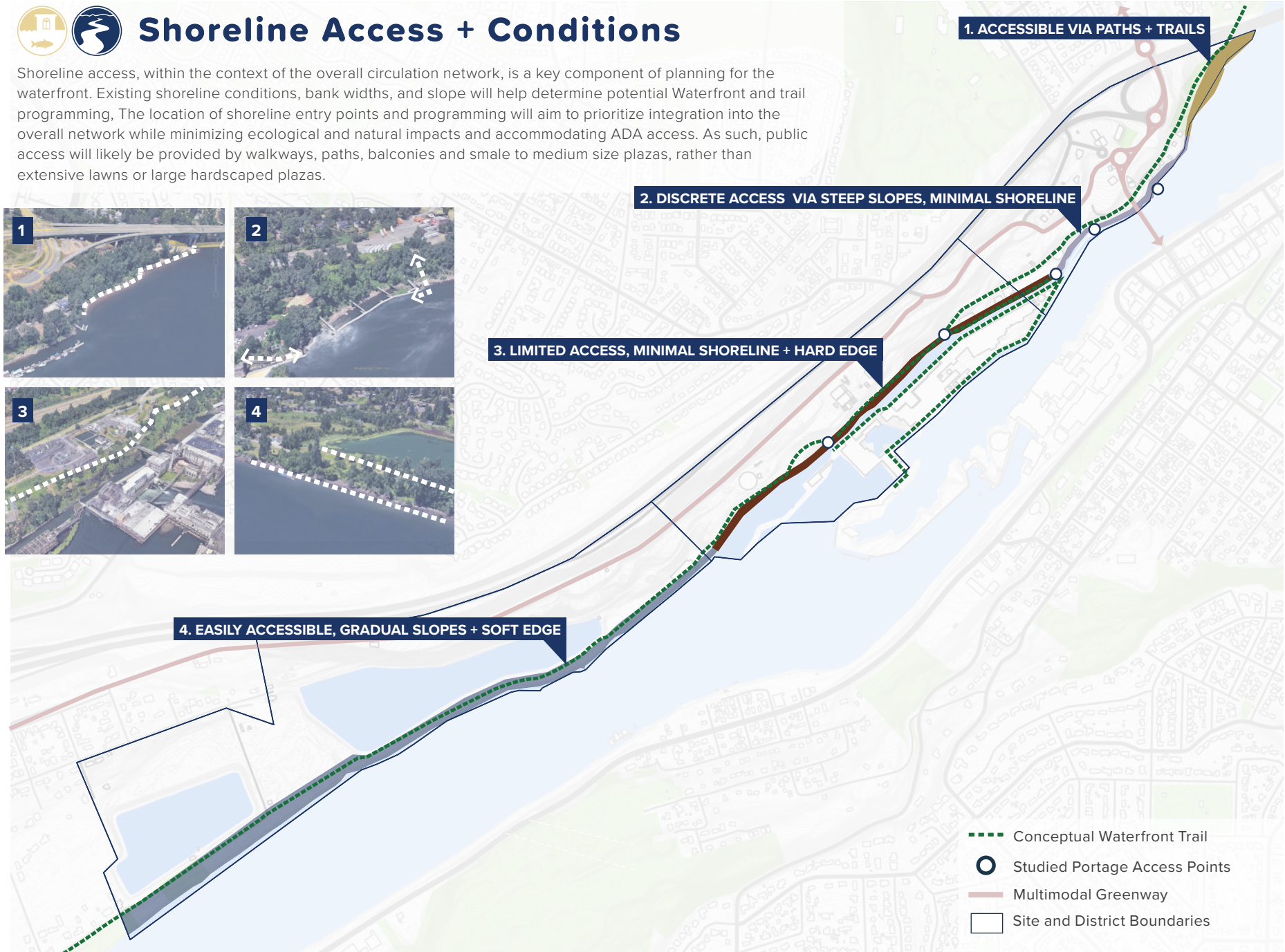
The success of new waterfront development relies on how well it is integrated into the larger city network. Enhancing the current network and creating new linkages, especially into the Pond Redevelopment District will be crucial. Additionally, ODOT has identified conceptual alignments for a pedestrian and bike bridge across the river between Oregon City and West Linn. A new bridge has the potential to be transformative and will need to be studied as an integral part of the waterfront trail and proximal development proposals. Additional study will be needed to identify access to areas proposed for redevelopment.





# Shoreline Access + Conditions

Shoreline access, within the context of the overall circulation network, is a key component of planning for the waterfront. Existing shoreline conditions, bank widths, and slope will help determine potential Waterfront and trail programming. The location of shoreline entry points and programming will aim to prioritize integration into the overall network while minimizing ecological and natural impacts and accommodating ADA access. As such, public access will likely be provided by walkways, paths, balconies and small to medium size plazas, rather than extensive lawns or large hardscaped plazas.





# Natural Assets

Areas with sensitive habitats or ecological significance should be identified and preserved, even in the presence of development. Preservation and restoration of wetlands and natural buffers within the floodplain can also help mitigate the environmental impact and protect against erosion.





## Cultural + Historic Infrastructure

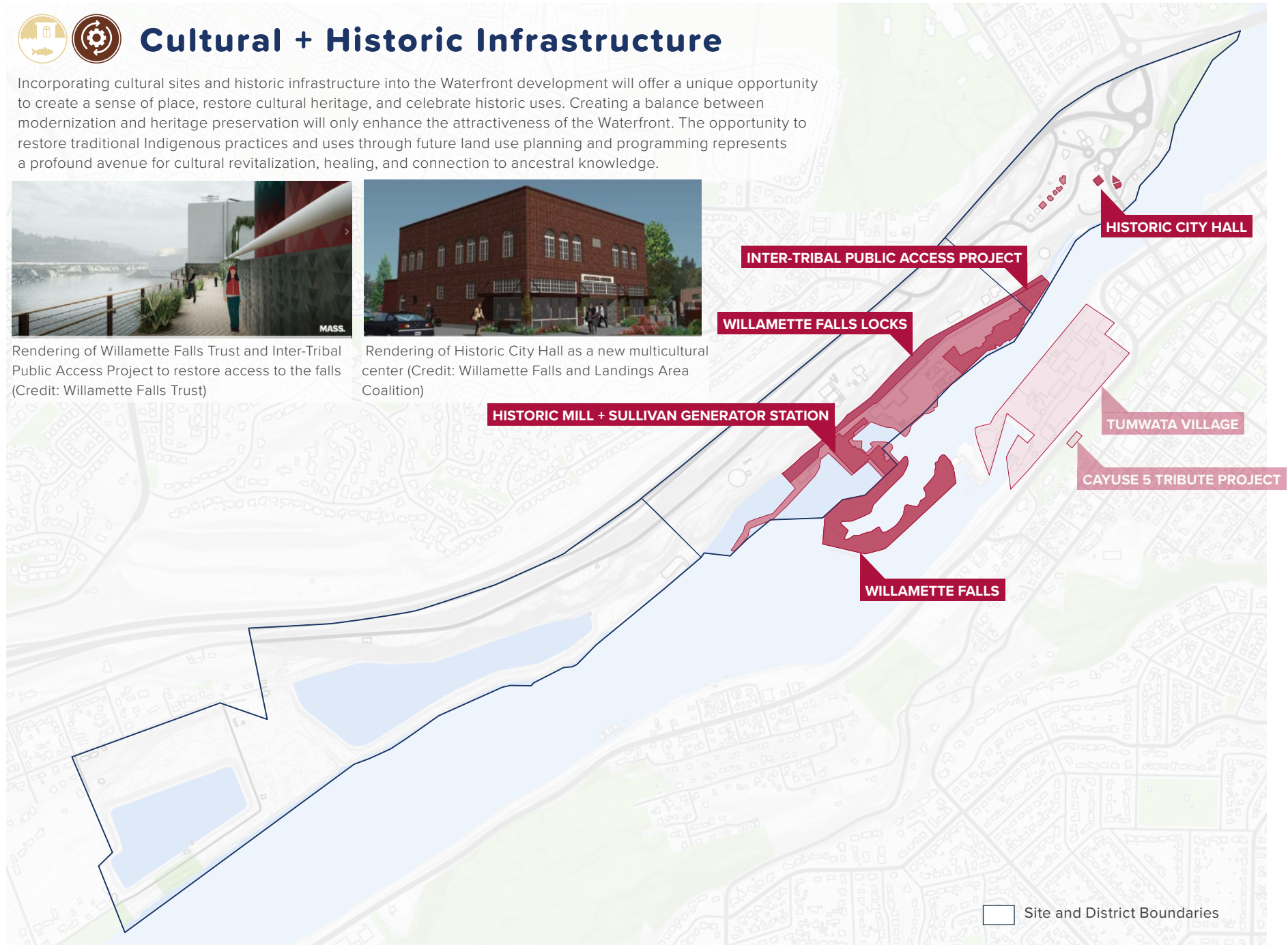
Incorporating cultural sites and historic infrastructure into the Waterfront development will offer a unique opportunity to create a sense of place, restore cultural heritage, and celebrate historic uses. Creating a balance between modernization and heritage preservation will only enhance the attractiveness of the Waterfront. The opportunity to restore traditional Indigenous practices and uses through future land use planning and programming represents a profound avenue for cultural revitalization, healing, and connection to ancestral knowledge.



Rendering of Willamette Falls Trust and Inter-Tribal Public Access Project to restore access to the falls (Credit: Willamette Falls Trust)



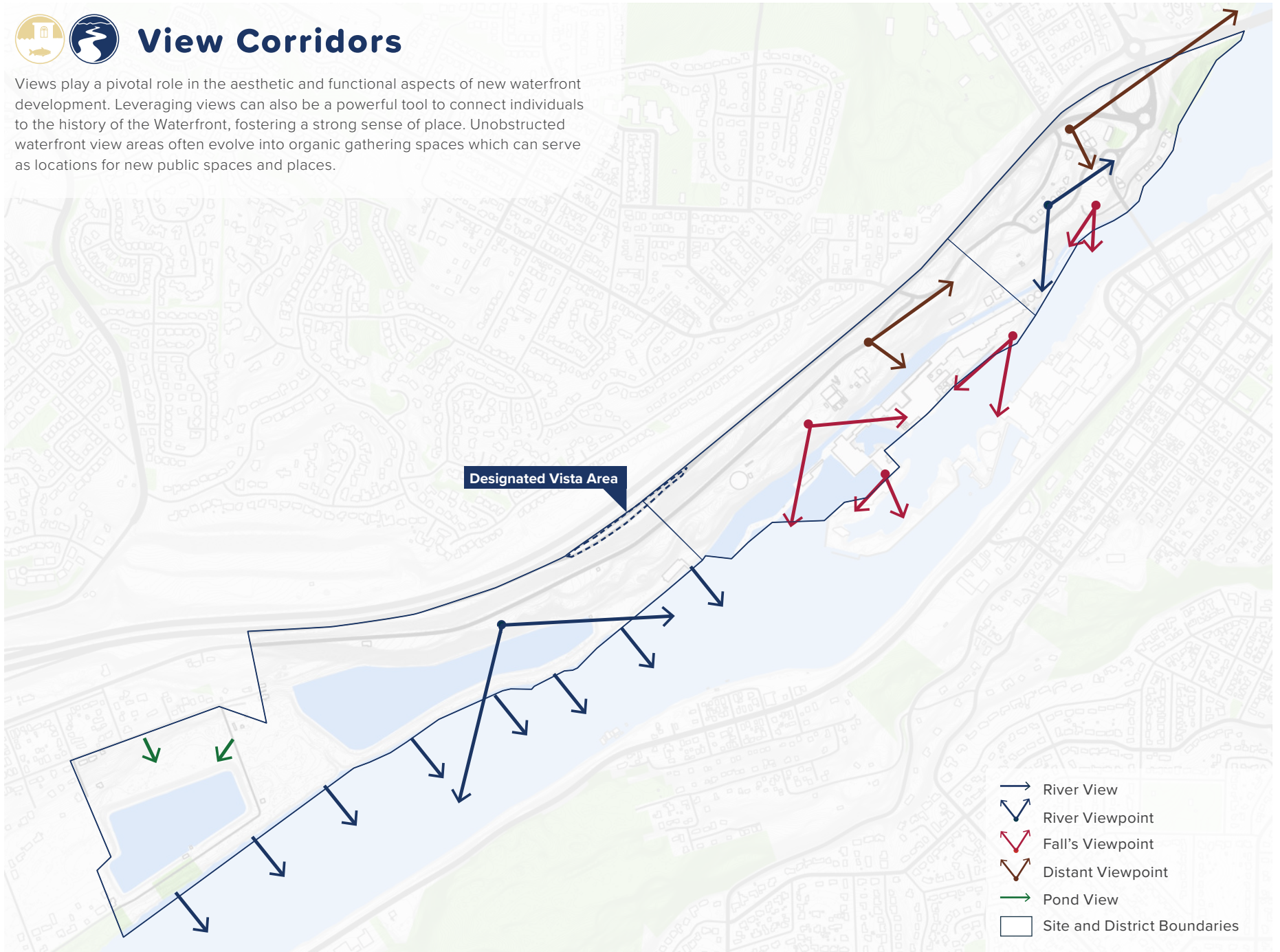
Rendering of Historic City Hall as a new multicultural center (Credit: Willamette Falls and Landings Area Coalition)





## View Corridors

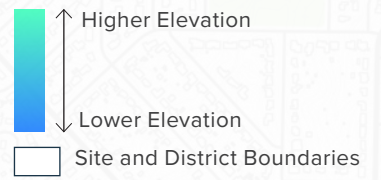
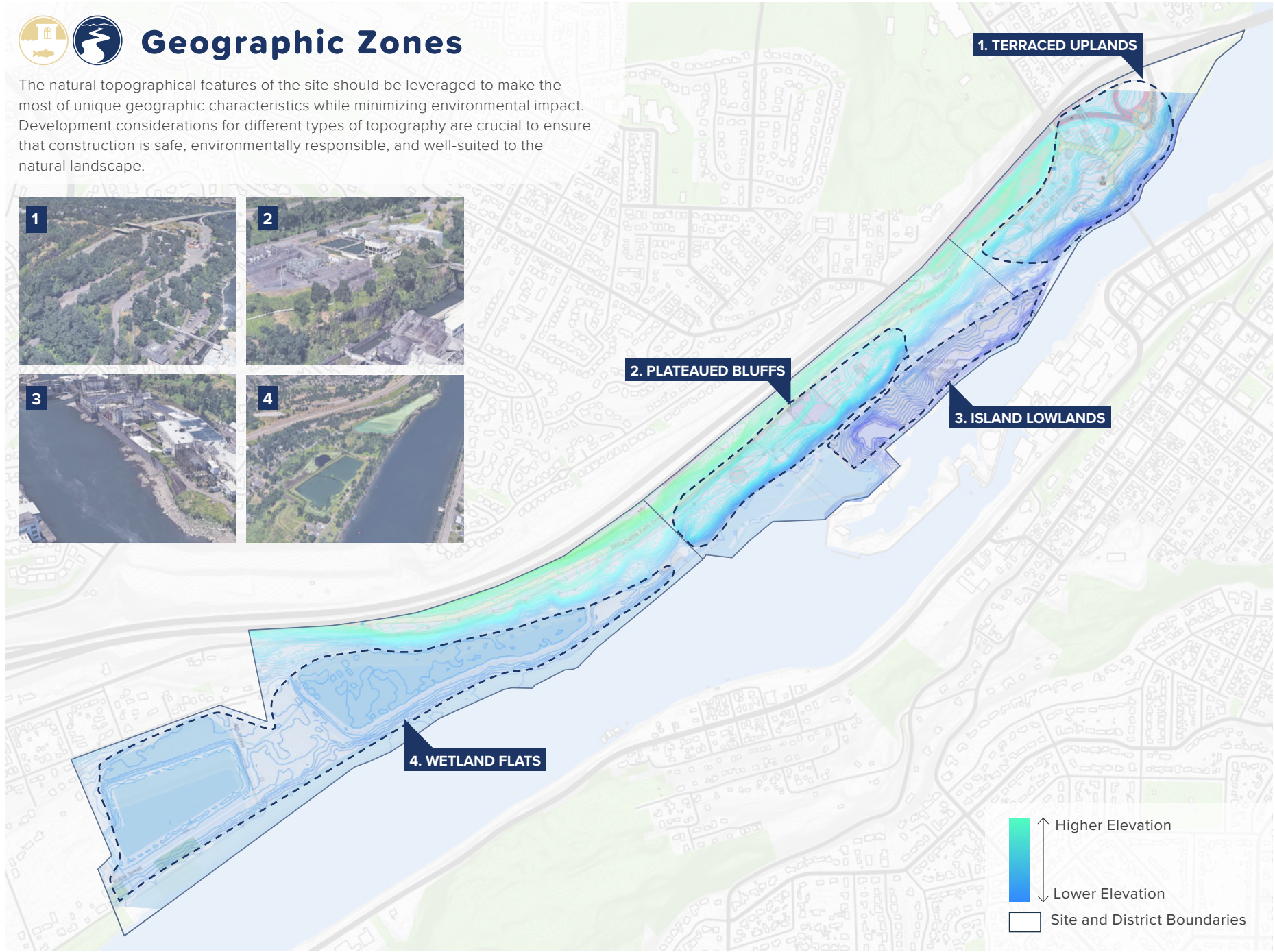
Views play a pivotal role in the aesthetic and functional aspects of new waterfront development. Leveraging views can also be a powerful tool to connect individuals to the history of the Waterfront, fostering a strong sense of place. Unobstructed waterfront view areas often evolve into organic gathering spaces which can serve as locations for new public spaces and places.





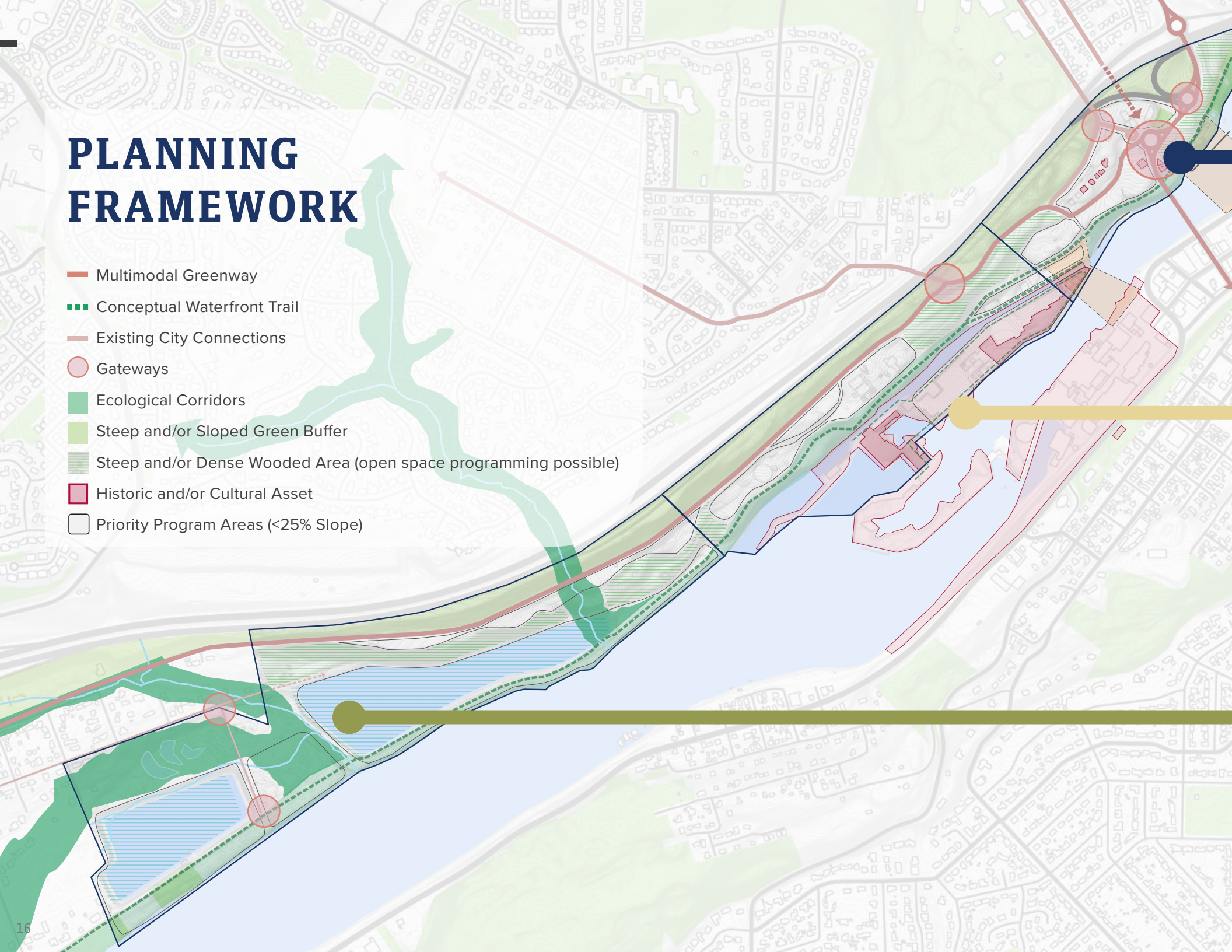
# Geographic Zones

The natural topographical features of the site should be leveraged to make the most of unique geographic characteristics while minimizing environmental impact. Development considerations for different types of topography are crucial to ensure that construction is safe, environmentally responsible, and well-suited to the natural landscape.



# PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- Multimodal Greenway
- Conceptual Waterfront Trail
- Existing City Connections
- Gateways
- Ecological Corridors
- Steep and/or Sloped Green Buffer
- Steep and/or Dense Wooded Area (open space programming possible)
- Historic and/or Cultural Asset
- Priority Program Areas (<25% Slope)





## KEY PLANNING ISSUES:

### Historic City Hall District:

- Highest elevation with terraced views of the river, falls, and larger region.
- Location of Historic City Hall and other historically designated buildings.
- Most connected with key entrances to the riverfront and connections to the Arch Bridge, I-205, and the Bolton Neighborhood.
- Location of proposed ODOT bike/pedestrian bridge.
- Existing structures are a mix of commercial and single-family residential.
- Existing waterfront access and activities with public fishing docks and a private boat dock.
- River access is available via steep slopes south of the bridge.
- West Bridge Park is on the north edge of the district and includes paths which lead to an accessible river edge.

### Cultural Heritage District:

- Steep slopes up from the river leveling out in several places on the upper bench closer to Willamette Falls Drive.
- Significant potential to repurpose existing infrastructure and commemorate the historic uses of the Hydroelectric Plant and the Willamette Falls Paper Company on Moore's Island.
- PGE will continue operating its hydroelectric plant through its current license and will seek relicensing in 2035.
- Provides the closest access and best views of Willamette Falls.
- Culturally significant site for a number of Indigenous Tribes.
- Potential to connect physically and programmatically to Tumwata Village across the river in Oregon City.
- Shoreline adjacent to the locks is defined by a hard edge with limited accessibility to the water.
- Potential connections to proposed ODOT bike/pedestrian bridge.

### Pond Redevelopment District:

- Lowest elevation and most of site is in the floodplain.
- Relatively flat compared to other districts.
- Shoreline is easily reachable, with soft edges, generally gradual slopes.
- Location of two ecological corridors and creeks.
- Includes two settling ponds that would need remediation to convert to other uses.
- Provides closest views of the river at the lowest elevation.
- District has limited access and entry points with no connections across I-205.



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