

West Linn Waterfront Community Vision Plan
Comments Received for Planning Commission Work Session
08.20.2025



Wyss, Darren

From: Jennifer La Follette <reelflygal007@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, August 16, 2025 5:37 PM
To: Planning Commission (Public)
Subject: Westlands Voice

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- To be clear, Friends of Willamette Wetlands and this household at 1360 10th St is not against denser housing development in appropriate locations in the Waterfront Vision Plan. But the critical habitat of the Willamette Wetlands, located inside the ecological corridor and 100-year floodplain is not an appropriate location for development

This plan MUST Align the Vision Plan to reflect the **overwhelming community feedback** to **preserve** the Pond District as a natural area.

- **Clearly delineate** West Linn's largest and most significant remaining wetland on the Pond District map.
- **Restore** the Environmental Stewardship guideline removed in the latest draft: ***"Do not over program districts and adversely impact natural areas and wildlife habitat."***
- **Remove** "Medium-Density Residential Currently in the Planning Stage" and "Potential Development Area" on the Pond District map next to the wetland and beaver habitat. This proposed housing development in critical habitat and the 100-year floodplain **directly conflicts** with the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#), 2019 [Parks & Rec Master Plan](#) and the [Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan](#).
- **Include** all map elements in the Pond District map key (e.g., 100-year floodplain, ecological corridor, and wetland delineation are all missing).
- **Fix the procedural flaws.** Past public comments were withheld and recent community surveys were designed to result in meaningless data that does not reflect real community feedback.

Together, we can make sure the Waterfront Vision Plan accurately reflects the values and voices of West Linn residents.

Tight Lines,
Jennifer La Follette

Royal Treatment Fly Fishing

Fly fishing is all about YOU controlling the fly line, not the fly line controlling you!

Wyss, Darren

From: Connie Johnson <onlycat@comcast.net>
Sent: Sunday, August 17, 2025 11:49 AM
To: Planning Commission (Public)
Subject: waterfront vision plan comment

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To West Linn Planning Commission:

I object to the current West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan that is being presented to the Planning Commission. I'm submitting my comments and concerns for consideration.

- The Pond District includes **West Linn's largest remaining wetland** and critical habitat for beavers, river otters, and over 130 bird species. The public survey was flawed and resulted in unreliable data. The use of "double-barreled" questions made it difficult to submit feedback that accurately reflects the community's valuable input. Why even ask for input?
- Were the public's comments for the Pond District to be "retained and enhanced as a natural area with minimal development even taken into consideration?"
- "Why was "Medium-Density Residential Currently in the Planning Stage" and "Potential Development Area" on the Pond District map next to the wetland and beaver habitat included in this plan when the majority has overwhelmingly objected to this type of development adjacent to the wetland? This type of development in critical habitat and the 100-year floodplain **directly conflicts** with the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#), 2019 [Parks & Rec Master Plan](#) and the [Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan](#).
- **80+ pages of public comment** submitted between December 2024 to May 2025 **were not shared** with the Waterfront Working Group. Not distributing public comments to Working Group members **violated** the [Working Group Guidelines](#).
- The **Final Review Survey** had a total of **only ~200 responses** out of 27,000 residents. In contrast, **more than 3,600 people** have already expressed their opposition to the proposed housing development in the wetlands.
- **I ask the commission to:**
- **Align** the Vision Plan to reflect the **overwhelming community feedback** to **preserve** the Pond District as a natural area.
- **Clearly delineate** West Linn's largest and most significant remaining wetland on the Pond District map.
- **Restore** the Environmental Stewardship guideline removed in the latest draft: ***"Do not over program districts and adversely impact natural areas and wildlife habitat."***
- **Remove** "Medium-Density Residential Currently in the Planning Stage" and "Potential Development Area" on the Pond District map next to the wetland and beaver habitat. This **directly conflicts** with the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#), 2019 [Parks & Rec Master Plan](#) and the [Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan](#).
- **Include** all map elements in the Pond District map key (e.g., 100-year floodplain, ecological corridor, and wetland delineation are all missing).
- **Fix the procedural flaws.** Past public comments were withheld and recent community surveys were designed to result in meaningless data that does not reflect real community feedback.

Thank you,

Connie Johnson

Concerned West Linn citizen
onlycat@comcast.net

Wyss, Darren

From: Karen Stowell <stowellk01@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, August 18, 2025 9:58 AM
To: Planning Commission (Public)
Subject: Re: undefined

[Some people who received this message don't often get email from stowellk01@gmail.com. Learn why this is important at <https://aka.ms/LearnAboutSenderIdentification>]

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Also, we have lived here for 35 years. 🥰. Have walked 4 dogs down along the street. We would be very sad if it went away due to \$\$\$\$ paid be someone who doesn't even live here!!

This message is being sent from my iPhone, please excuse any errors. Thank you!

Karen Stowell

> On Aug 18, 2025, at 9:55 AM, Karen Stowell <stowellk01@gmail.com> wrote:

>

> Plain and simple, my husband and I do NOT want a hotel or really anything being developed along Valopp st!! Thru is prime Bird, Beaver, River Otter and more habitat that should NOT be disturbed. Also I'm sure there will be a lot of Doug fir removal loosing more habitat for birds and other. West Linn is removing far too many Doug firs all over the city and it has to stop.

>

> Thank you.

>

> This message is being sent from my iPhone, please excuse any errors. Thank you!

>

> Karen Stowell

Date: August 19, 2025

To: West Linn Planning Commission Members

Re: Amendments to the Waterfront Vision Project – Pond District

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing to request amendments to the Waterfront Vision Project to ensure that the Pond District—the location of West Linn’s largest remaining wetland—is protected and managed consistent with community priorities and environmental stewardship.

The Pond District provides critical habitat for beavers, river otters, and over 130 bird species. Community members overwhelmingly asked for this area to be retained and enhanced as a natural area with minimal development. More than 3,600 people have already expressed opposition to housing development in the wetlands. Despite this, the current draft Vision Plan designates the area as “medium density housing” within critical habitat and the FEMA 100-year floodplain, putting our city at environmental, legal, and regulatory risk.

The planning process itself has been flawed. Over 80 pages of public comments submitted between December 2024 and May 2025 were not shared with the Waterfront Working Group, in violation of the Working Group Guidelines. In addition, the Final Review Survey used “double-barreled” questions, allowed multiple submissions per person, and yielded only ~200 responses in a city of 27,000. These flaws diminish the reliability of the survey results and fail to reflect the true voice of the community.

For these reasons, I urge the Planning Commission to:

1. **Align the Vision Plan with community feedback:** Preserve the Pond District as a natural area.
2. **Clearly delineate the wetland** on the Pond District map and include all missing map elements, including the 100-year floodplain and ecological corridors.
3. **Restore the Environmental Stewardship guideline** removed from the draft: “Do not over program districts and adversely impact natural areas and wildlife habitat.”
4. **Remove designations for “Medium-Density Residential Currently in the Planning Stage” and “Potential Development Area”** in the Pond District. Proposed housing in critical habitat and the floodplain directly conflicts with the City’s

Comprehensive Plan, the 2019 Parks & Recreation Master Plan, and the Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan.

5. **Correct procedural flaws** by including all public comments in the record and ensuring future surveys follow accepted best practices.
6. **Reconcile the Plan with FEMA's Model Floodplain Ordinance** to avoid conflicts with federal requirements and to reduce flood risks to our community.

The Waterfront Vision Plan should reflect both the will of the people and the responsibility we share to protect our most significant natural resources. I respectfully ask that you amend the Plan to show that West Linn's vision is to preserve the Pond District for future generations to enjoy.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Aberg
35-year resident

Wyss, Darren

From: Martin Heinemann <martin.heinemann@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 19, 2025 12:16 PM
To: Planning Commission (Public)
Subject: Waterfront Vision Project Amendments

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Good evening Commissioners,

My name is Martin Heinemann, and I'm here to ask that the Waterfront Vision Plan be amended to protect the Pond District—West Linn's largest remaining wetland.

This area is critical habitat for beavers, otters, and more than 130 bird species. The overwhelming majority of public comments have asked that it be preserved as a natural area with minimal development. Yet the current draft still designates "Potential Development Area" inside critical habitat and the FEMA 100-year floodplain. That is not only environmentally harmful, but it also conflicts with the City's Comprehensive Plan, the 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, and the Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan.

There were also serious process issues. Over 80 pages of public comments were withheld from the Waterfront Working Group. The Final Review Survey had design flaws, allowed multiple submissions, and collected only about 200 responses—hardly reflective of a community of 27,000. By contrast, more than 3,600 people have already voiced opposition to housing development in the wetlands.

I urge you to amend the Plan by:

- Preserving the Pond District as a natural area;
- Clearly mapping the wetland, floodplain, and ecological corridors;
- Restoring the Environmental Stewardship guideline; and
- Removing proposed housing and development designations next to the wetland.

The Waterfront Vision Plan should reflect community priorities and protect West Linn's most significant natural resource. I ask that you align it with the overwhelming public feedback and sound environmental stewardship.

Thank you

Martin Heinemann
36 -year resident

Clarifying Concerns about the Waterfront Vision Plan for Planning Commission Work Session - August 20, 2025

Dear Planning Commissioners,

I previously submitted written comments for the last work session held on July 16, 2025 and would like to take this opportunity to clarify my concerns and respond to comments provided by City Staff in the most recent memo for Waterfront Vision Plan, found in this meeting's agenda.

Concern 1: Procedural Flaws & Apathy with Soliciting Community Feedback

It has unfortunately become clearer and clearer to me that the process of engaging the community has simply become a “box to check” for the City. This has been demonstrated on multiple occasions. First, by providing a poorly written survey to the community that would result in meaningless data. Second, by withholding public comments in full from the Waterfront Working Group (violating the group's own guidelines). Third, by dismissing valid concerns about the format of the survey by claiming it was not supposed to be “scientifically valid”. As a community member, am I supposed to understand that the City intended for a scientifically *invalid* survey?

The Final Review Survey questions simply needed to be rewritten into two individual questions to better capture what aspects the community supported or did not support in the Vision Plan. It also could have provided an optional comment box so community members could clarify their responses. Instead, participants had to submit a separate email to express concerns, which was then withheld from the Waterfront Working Group.

I fully understand that you can't please everyone and at some point, decisions have to be made that may not be agreeable to some. But the policies and procedures for community engagement need to allow for objective data collection. Establish guidelines for survey questions and data collection – it's not that hard to Google examples of bad survey questions vs. good ones. Provide the community with surveys that are designed to actually result in clear, meaningful data. Acknowledge if there is a subset of people who are concerned or disagree with an aspect of a proposal. Anything would be better than the current process of poor survey design, admitting to

the suppression of feedback, shrugging shoulders and moving on. This current process is **diminishing the value** of community input. But it doesn't have to be this way.

If the City truly cares about the community's opinion, make a concerted effort to identify and acknowledge all perspectives. There needs to be a clear demonstration of intent not to repeat these same mistakes again in the future.

Concern 2: Conflicts with the Comprehensive Plan & City Policies

As mentioned before, the "Potential Development Area" outlined next to the wetlands in the Vision Plan is within the 100-year floodplain. This is a direct conflict with Comprehensive Plan Goal 2, Section 1, 7.b.:

*b. **Medium density** residential lands will meet all of the following criteria:*

- i) Areas that are not subject to development limitations such as topography, **flooding**, or poor drainage;*
- ii) Areas where the existing services and facilities have the capacity for additional development;*
- iii) Areas within one half mile of public transportation.*

Removing this "Potential Development Area" with medium density housing from the Pond District Map ensures that the Vision Plan is in compliance with the existing guidelines in the Comprehensive Plan. The next step will be to change this area's residential zoning, which is an error that does not comply with Goal 2, Section 1, 7.b.i. of the Comprehensive Plan stated above.

Additional City policies that conflict with this "Potential Development Area" include the Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan and the Parks and Rec Master Plan, which identified this area as a Planned Riverfront Park in 2019.

In the [Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan](#), GOAL 4 states that "By 2040, West Linn will be a more resilient community that has reduced its vulnerability to natural and human hazards," with a strategy to "reduce community vulnerability to natural hazards" by **reducing "the percentage of residents living in designated high risk areas"** (page 53/80).

In [West Linn's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan - Level of Property Vulnerability Map](#), the "Potential Development Area" next to the wetlands and 5th Avenue has been identified as having the **highest number** of natural hazards.

The new FEMA floodplain regulations, still pending adoption by the City, establish further mitigation policies to ensure no net loss of floodplain function. These updated guidelines will have a substantial impact on any proposed development in the floodplain, including the "Potential Development Area". Pushing for development in flood prone areas in this Vision Plan fails to recognize the bigger picture. Just because an area was at one point zoned for residential housing does not mean that it is feasible for building now.

Concern 3: Restore the Missing Environmental Stewardship Guideline from the Previous Draft

Hopefully this was a simple mistake, but it has come to my attention that one of the Environmental Stewardship Guidelines has been removed in the latest draft of the Vision Plan. The missing guideline: *"Do not over program districts and adversely impact natural areas and wildlife habitat"* had no reason to be removed and must be restored to the Vision Plan immediately. This guideline reflects both the community feedback and the policies for environmental preservation found in the Comprehensive Plan and Sustainable Strategic Plan.

Concern 4: Disregard for the Preservation of West Linn's Largest Remaining Wetland and Supporting Habitat

In the most recent memo to the Planning Commission, there is a comment response matrix provided for the July 16, 2025, PC Work Session. In this matrix, one of the repeated responses to community concerns for environmental preservation of West Linn's largest remaining wetland was "Development and environmental protection can co-exist." How could this possibly be true when any development in this area will, without a doubt, adversely impact the wetlands and supporting habitat?

Current code requires a 100 ft buffer from the boundary of a wetland delineation. In multiple locations, the distance from the edge of the wetland to 5th Avenue is roughly 100 ft. Development would shrink this buffer to almost zero in multiple sections of the "Potential Development Area".

Should development occur, it would lead to the elimination of critical supporting habitat for the wetland. This habitat would be replaced with construction noise and a large volume of homes, bringing noise and light pollution to an area that currently supports 130+ bird species, beavers, river otters and more. This will likely cause the existing wildlife to seek refuge elsewhere. Prioritizing short term gains from development in the wetlands **will** result in long term losses of critical habitat.

At this point, enough is enough. The Planning Commission has an opportunity to stop wasting time and money encouraging development in an area that will just become one big regulatory headache. There are other development locations in the Vision Plan that are more conducive to housing that can be prioritized. As one of the environmental stewardship guidelines in the Vision Plan states, we must “Safeguard natural and sensitive areas through wetland, habitat, and shoreline restoration.” This starts by protecting the Willamette Wetlands and its surrounding habitat as a whole by removing the threat of development.

The good news? There are about [3,700 people](#) who already support the preservation of the Willamette Wetlands and its supporting habitat. This is roughly 18 times more people than the number of responses in the Final Review Survey for the Waterfront Vision Plan (~200). So while there were “only 5 comments” at the last Planning Commission work session, these comments were intended to represent and acknowledge the substantial number of community members who want to see the Willamette Wetlands protected and preserved. The more times our comments are ignored and suppressed, the more times we will speak up to ensure we are heard.

Thank you for your time and consideration in reading these concerns. I hope that with the Planning Commission’s guidance, the Waterfront Vision Plan can be reworked to better represent the community’s aspirations for the area.

Nicole Jackson
West Linn Resident for 19+ years

Wyss, Darren

From: Dick Wros <dwros01@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, August 20, 2025 7:56 AM
To: Planning Commission (Public)
Subject: Proposed development in the wetlands of West Linn

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It obvious to me that a significant number of West Linn residents are opposed to the proposed development in the wetlands area that includes the old paper mill settling pond. I agree with and support the following- The city should:

- **Align** the Vision Plan to reflect the **overwhelming community feedback** to **preserve** the Pond District as a natural area.
- **Clearly delineate** West Linn's largest and most significant remaining wetland on the Pond District map.
- **Restore** the Environmental Stewardship guideline removed in the latest draft: ***"Do not over program districts and adversely impact natural areas and wildlife habitat."***
- **Remove** "Medium-Density Residential Currently in the Planning Stage" and "Potential Development Area" on the Pond District map next to the wetland and beaver habitat. This proposed housing development in critical habitat and the 100-year floodplain **directly conflicts** with the City's [Comprehensive Plan](#), 2019 [Parks & Rec Master Plan](#) and the [Sustainable West Linn Strategic Plan](#).
- **Include** all map elements in the Pond District map key (e.g., 100-year floodplain, ecological corridor, and wetland delineation are all missing).
- **Fix the procedural flaws.** Past public comments were withheld and recent community surveys were designed to result in meaningless data that does not reflect real community feedback.

In addition, the traffic impact on this areas narrow streets from the proposed development will be a serious safety issue that is not being adequately considered in this proposal.

I am firmly opposed to the proposed development as it stands at present.

Richard Wros

822 SW Schaeffer Road
West Linn Oregon

I am Jim Mattis. My wife and I live in Mary's Woods. However, prior to our move, West Linn was our home for over 20 years; our children and grandsons still live in West Linn. As a former Chair of this Commission, co-chair of the Historic Review Board and a short term on the Council, I have retained much interest in the city's doings.

I am a member, and the immediate Past President of the Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage. The Advocates, under different names over time, have worked over 40 years to help preserve some of the heritage of the Falls area. We have a 12-person Board and have been closely following the visioning work around the future use of Moore's Island (the Cultural Heritage District). And that District is the focus of my remarks. We especially appreciate that one of our members, Jim Edwards, is a member of the working group. As you probably know, Jim was the Project Director for the Vancouver Waterfront which has proven to be highly successful. Jim believes the Willamette Falls area has far more to offer than what Vancouver had to work with.

The Advocates applaud the effort that has brought the vision of the Cultural Heritage District this far. We are pleased to see that the vision includes room for the cultural presence of indigenous people who populated the Pacific Northwest for thousands of years before Euro-Americans pushed America's boundaries to the Pacific and displaced and decimated many tribal peoples.

The Falls area was also the birthplace of industry in the Oregon Country, Territory and State. And for West Linn, Moore's Island was the beginning of the future city (before the island was an island) and was the site of numerous Paper Mills beginning over 150 years ago.

The Advocates appreciate that the vision includes as a key component for the Cultural Heritage Area "the potential for site adaptation to commemorate the industrial heritage of Moore's Island." We do not, however, believe this is explicit enough to be clear that the vision includes **preservation, restoration and repurposing of some of the buildings on the Island.** There are some substantial buildings, some with iconic artifacts of paper mill heritage, that could be preserved, restored and repurposed for commercial, residential, light industrial and other uses. No buildings with artifacts were preserved on the old Blue Heron mill site in Oregon City. This will be the last opportunity in the Falls area to do so.

When this visioning process began, there was still an operating paper mill on Moore's Island but that is no longer true. The Mills provided the city its largest tax paying resource and they provided the most employment opportunities for city residents. To envision commemorating the Mills Heritage by preserving some of the structures is far more critical now.

Without doubt, Moore's Island provides the best awe-inspiring views of the Falls. And the vision appropriately acknowledges the deceptively simple notion that the Island, like all landscapes, holds clues to the cultural ideals and traditions of the people who created them. To borrow Bloody Mary's sentiment in South Pacific: If you don't have a vision, how are you going to get a vision to come true? How this vision translates into more concrete plans for development, open space, access to the Falls and space to commemorate heritage will come in time. For now, the Advocates believe, at least for the Cultural Heritage District, the vision will better square with what the cultural landscape provides if it were to highlight preservation more prominently.

My thanks to all who have worked and commented on this vision. And thank you Commissioners for volunteering your time to serve the community. There are many parts in play in the Falls areas. If many of these bear fruit, West Linn will be known as having a regional, state and national treasure for future generations.

Jim Mattis August 20, 2025