



PLANNING COMMISSION
Draft Meeting Notes August 20, 2025

Commissioners present: Jason Evans, Joel Metlen, David D. Jones, Kris Kachirisky, and Tom Watton
Commissioners absent: Gary Walvatne and Kathryn Schulte-Hillen
Staff present: Principal Planner Darren Wyss, Community Development Director Steve Koper, and Management Analyst Lynn Schroder
Public present: Jim Mattis, Nicole Jackson, Terence Schumaker, and Russ Axelrod

The meeting video is available on the [here](#).

1. Call To Order and Roll Call

Chair Metlen called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Principal Planner Wyss called the roll.

2. Public Comment related to Items not on the Agenda

None

3. Approval of Meeting Notes: 08.06.2025

Commissioners Jones requested a spelling correction. Commissioner Jones moved to approve the meeting notes for 08.06.25 as modified. Commissioner Evans seconded. Ayes: Kachirisky, Watton, Jones, Evans, and Metlen. Nays: None. Abstentions: None. The motion passed 6-0-0.

4. Work Session: West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan

Several members of the public commented on the West Linn Waterfront Plan. Jim Mattis, a former West Linn resident and member of the Advocates for the Willamette Falls Heritage, spoke in support of the City's visioning work for the Moore's Island/Cultural Heritage District. He emphasized the site's deep historical importance. He requested stronger, clearer commitments to preservation and adaptive reuse within the plan. Nicole Jackson, a West Linn resident, raised concerns about the transparency and accuracy of the community engagement process for the Waterfront Vision Plan. She highlighted conflicts between the vision plan and city policies, including the forthcoming FEMA flood regulations. She argued that development in the floodplain would be impractical and environmentally damaging and urged the Planning Commission to recommend preservation of the wetlands and Pond District and to ensure future decisions reflect genuine community input. Terrence Schumacher, a West Linn resident for eleven years, argued that the community survey to gauge community support was flawed and unscientific. Schumacher urged the City to redo the survey using valid methods. Russ Axelrod, a 34-year West Linn resident and former mayor, urged the Planning Commission to correct major flaws in the Waterfront Vision Plan process and to remove dense housing designations from the city's remaining wetlands. Axelrod criticized the planning manager's handling of public comments, saying many were not fully shared with the Waterfront Working Group. He asked the Commission to revise the draft plan to reflect community input, remove dense residential zoning from wetland areas.

Principal Planner Wyss summarized the community engagement history, noting efforts from 2016–2019 and again from 2024–2025 when the project was reinitiated. Regarding survey concerns, he acknowledged comments that the survey was not scientifically valid but emphasized that it was meant to gauge general community support, not to serve as a statistically representative poll. Results showed majority support for the overall vision and for each of the three districts. On policy consistency, Wyss said the policy and regulatory memo only recommends strengthening support for mixed-use zoning in the Historic City Hall District—no land

use or zoning changes are proposed for the Ponds District. The property at issue already carries a medium-density residential designation dating back to the 1980s, which the city has never proposed to change. Any development there would still need to comply with floodplain, water resource, and greenway regulations. Wyss addressed the floodplain boundary issue, noting inconsistencies between FEMA's mapped 100-year floodplain (shown at about 104 feet) and the actual flood elevation (around 75 feet, based on 1996 flood data). He suggested updating or disclaiming the map to reflect the more accurate elevation. On environmental concerns, Wyss said the Vision Plan acknowledges that remediation and DEQ oversight would be required before any development of the Blue Heron or PGE ponds could occur. The plan represents a broad community vision, not site-specific development approval. Wyss outlined recommended adjustments based on Commission and public comments:

- Update the floodplain map or add a disclaimer.
- Remove the phrase "in the planning phase" from the Ponds District medium-density area.
- Ensure map legends are complete and consistent.

Wyss concluded that these refinements would help clarify the document and address key public concerns before advancing the Vision Plan for adoption.

The Planning Commission discussed the Waterfront Vision Plan, focusing on revisions, environmental concerns, and next steps.

Key Discussion Points:

Context: Commissioners revisited issues raised previously, including floodplain management, ecological corridors, and environmental stewardship language.

Plan Revisions & Clarifications: The Environmental Stewardship section (page 20) was updated to emphasize "balanced development with opportunities to restore natural areas and wildlife habitat." Ecological corridors were added and clarified in plan maps (page 17), with a recommendation to correct missing legend symbols. The Comprehensive Plan already designates certain areas as medium-density residential; no zoning changes are proposed at this stage.

Floodplain & Climate Concerns: Commissioners expressed concern that FEMA flood maps (last updated 2008) may not reflect current climate conditions or increased flood risk. One member emphasized the need to protect future homeowners from worsening storms. Others noted the city cannot impose standards beyond federal or state regulations but agreed the issue should be considered in future planning phases. Staff clarified that the vision plan does not propose development in wetlands and that future projects must comply with all environmental and floodplain regulations.

Mapping Accuracy: Commissioners questioned why maps show potential development within the floodplain. Staff acknowledged inaccuracies — the map's flood elevation was set too high (104 ft instead of 75 ft). They recommended adjusting the map or adding disclaimers to better reflect real conditions.

Tribal & Historic Preservation Issues: Commissioners raised concerns about protecting tribal lands, artifacts, and historic structures. Staff explained Oregon law provides limited authority for such protections under current planning codes but noted that the Willamette Falls Trust and local tribes have been engaged in the process. No individual historic structures are identified yet; future project phases will determine which buildings merit preservation or reuse.

Historic Reuse & Industrial Heritage: The plan includes multiple references (pages 11, 18, 33–34) to

encouraging rehabilitation and reuse of historic and industrial structures, including the former mill site and surrounding areas.

Public Engagement: Staff summarized extensive community engagement since 2016, including surveys, transportation planning, and multiple public workshops. Guiding principles—reinvestment, transportation improvements, river access, and historic character—were established early and remain foundational.

Housing: Since 2019, messaging around medium-density residential in the Pond District has been consistent. The area’s zoning allows medium-density housing; city has not proposed higher density or mixed use there. Survey results reaffirmed preference for townhomes and single-family homes over low-rise apartments. Commissioners discussed whether evolving public sentiment could warrant future plan adjustments or lower density proposals. Wyss noted the commission may recommend changes, but warned of potential risks of downzoning.

Next Steps: Staff will refine the plan to address concerns raised, including map corrections, clarification of environmental language, and possible adjustments to floodplain depictions. Future project phases will address zoning, code updates, and historic preservation in greater detail.

Closing Comments: Commissioners emphasized clarity in future surveys and responsiveness to evolving feedback. Recognition that the vision plan is not a zoning change, but a framework guiding future development. Wyss confirmed revised maps and recommendations will be presented at the September 17 meeting for a formal recommendation to Council.

5. **Work Session: Metro Town Center Boundary Implementation (CFEC)**

Wyss presented the staff report for the Metro Town Center Boundary adoption, a requirement under Oregon’s Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) rules.

Presentation Overview: Wyss provided a brief overview and memo outlining the city’s obligation to formally adopt Metro 2040 Town Center boundaries by the end of 2025, as required by state administrative rule OAR 660-012-0012. Adoption is necessary for compliance and to remain eligible for regional investments in transportation, housing, and infrastructure.

Background and Purpose: Metro’s 2040 Growth Concept Map (established in the 1990s) designates regional centers, town centers, main streets, and station communities to focus compact, mixed-use development. West Linn contains two such centers: Bolton Town Center and Willamette Town Center. To comply with the new rules, West Linn must adopt boundaries for both centers into its Comprehensive Plan.

Proposed Boundary Adjustments: Bolton Town Center - Two minor modifications. Willamette Town Center - no changes proposed; boundaries to be adopted as shown on the 2040 map.

Discussion Points: Including White Oak Savannah Park within the Willamette Town Center raised one public inquiry. Wyss explained it was part of Metro’s original boundary and consistent with other town centers that include park space as community gathering areas. Wyss noted that adopting the boundaries would not immediately alter zoning but is a prerequisite for future assessments, planning, and eligibility for reduced mobility standards and non-single-occupancy vehicle targets under CFEC.

Next Steps: Planning Commission Public Hearing: October 15, 2025 and City Council Work Session: November 2025. Final Council Decision: December 2025. The Commission agreed a second September work session was not needed.

Outcome: The Commission received the presentation, expressed no objections to the proposed modifications, and supported proceeding to the October public hearing for formal recommendation.

6. Planning Commission Announcements

None.

7. Staff Announcements

Principal Planner Wyss reviewed the upcoming Planning Commission schedule.

8. Adjourn

Chair Metlen adjourned the meeting at approximately 7:46pm.

DRAFT



CITY OF
**West
Linn**

DRAFT

Planning Commission

Work Session

West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan

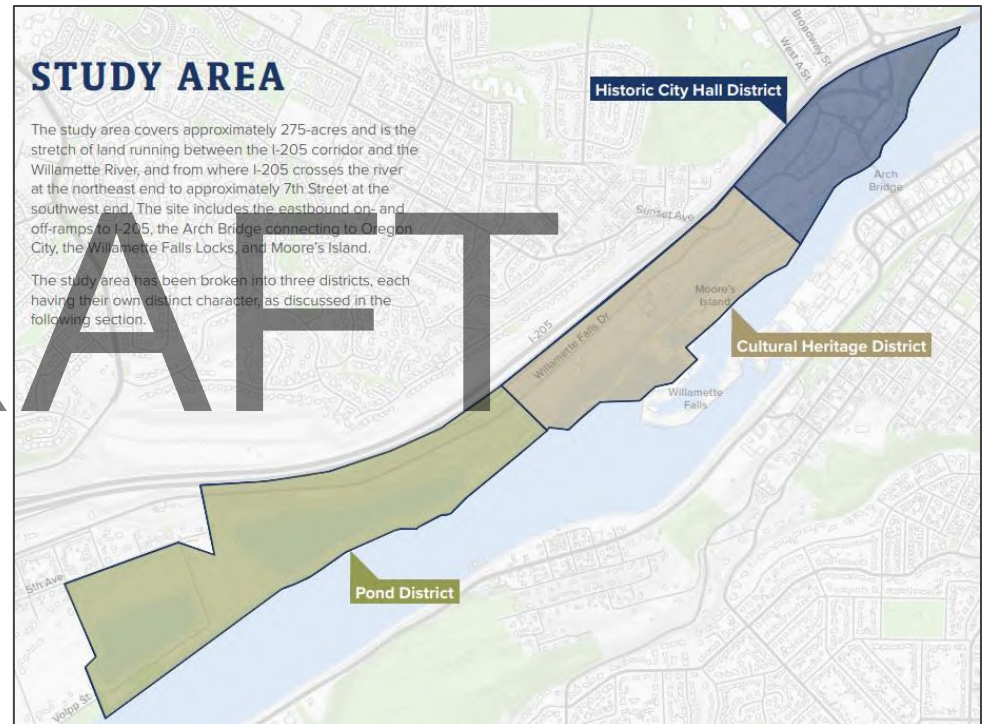
August 20, 2025

Work Session Materials



Memorandum

- Background
- Guiding Principles
- Survey Results
- Working Group Recommendation
- Link to Comments (Dec. 2024 to May 2025) & Response Matrix
- July 16, 2025 Work Session
 - Packet, Video, Notes, Comments
 - Primary Comment Topics
 - Response Matrix
- Aug. 20th Information
- Adoption Process



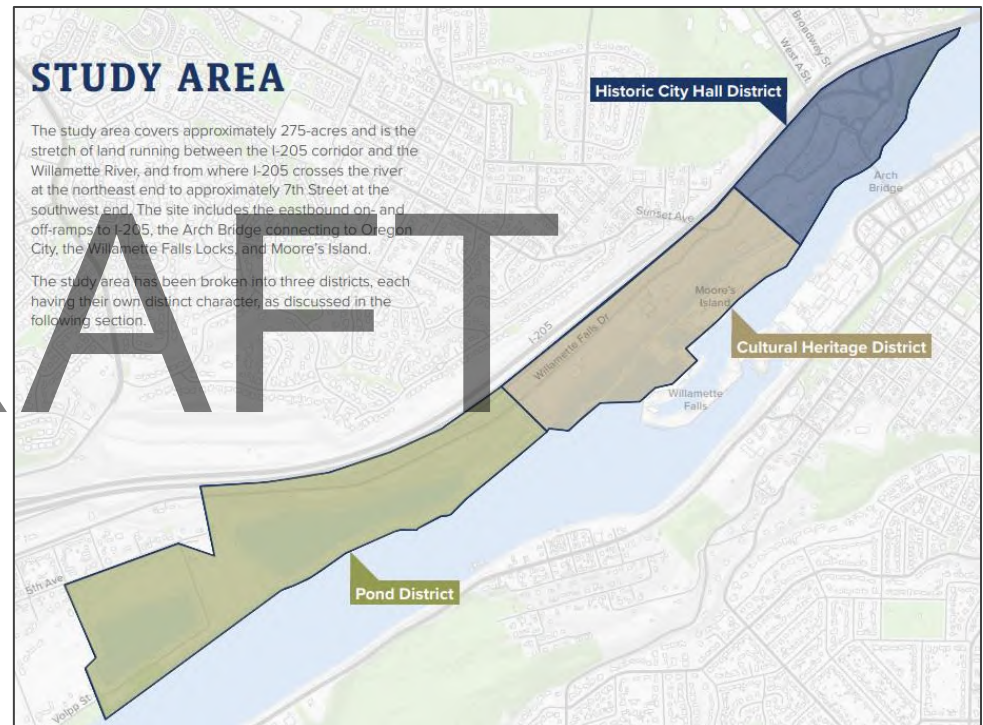
Work Session Materials



Memorandum

Attachments

- Comment Matrix 7/16 PC Mtng
- Comments 7/16 PC Mtng
- WLWF Vision Plan
- WLWF Vision Plan Appendix A
- WLWF Vision Plan Appendix B
- Comments (Dec. 24 to May 25)
- Comment Matrix
- Survey Results
- Policy/Regulatory Memo
- TSP Update Memo
- Implementation/Finance Memo
- 100-Year Floodplain Map
- Wetland Delineation Map





Work Session Presentation Topics

- 🍃 July 16th Work Session
 - Comments/Responses
- 🍃 August 20th Work Session
 - Comments/Responses
- 🍃 Engagement Efforts
 - 2016 to 2019
 - 2024 to 2025
- 🍃 Implementation Memos
 - Policy/Regulatory
 - TSP Needs
 - Implementation/Financing
- 🍃 Working Group Recommendation
- 🍃 Three Districts

DRAFT



July 16th Work Session Comments



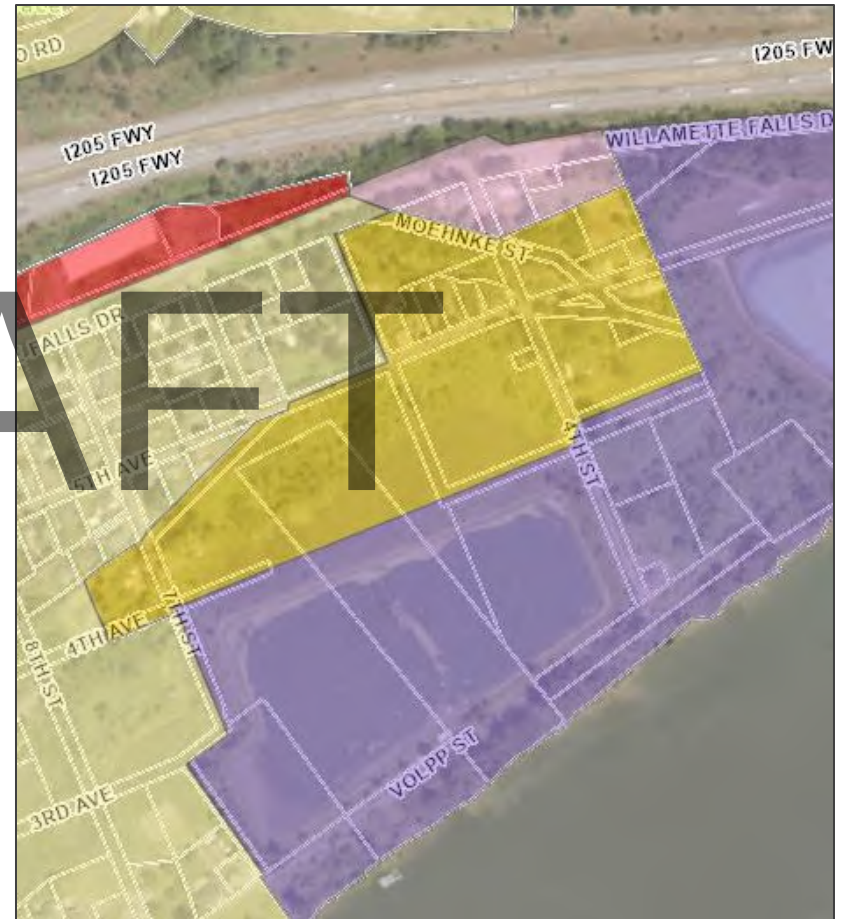
- Survey Conducted from Dec. 2024 to Jan. 2025
 - “Double Barreled”
 - Intent was to gauge community support
 - Self-selecting
 - Not intended to be scientifically valid
 - Showed majority of community agrees with the Vision Plan





Conflicts with West Linn Comprehensive Plan

- Policy/Regulatory Memo recommends updating language to provide stronger support for mixed-use zoning
- No proposed change to Ponds District existing medium-density residential area – been the consistent message since 2019
- Comp Plan criteria for designating residential uses
- Development proposals will need to comply with Floodplain, WRA, and WRG regulations

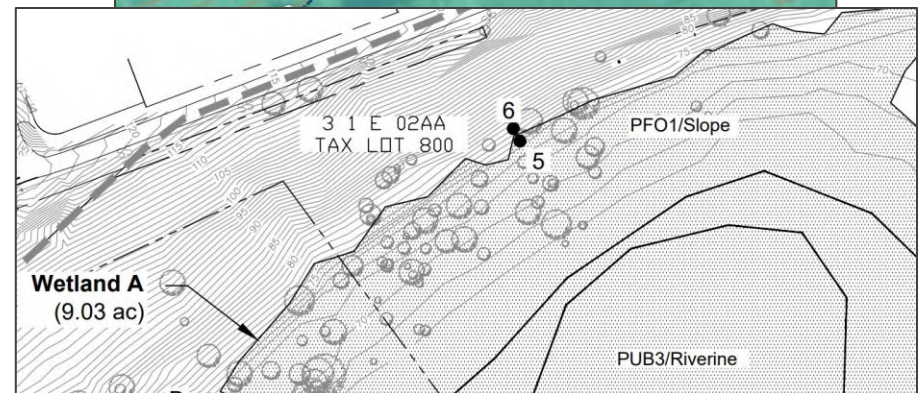


July 16th Work Session Comments



Contradictions in Vision Plan Related to Ponds District

- “Balance development with opportunities to restore natural areas and wildlife habitat”
- “Lower intensity of uses. Preservation and rehabilitation of natural areas with development that is appropriately scaled to the adjacent neighborhood and natural resources.”
- Residential development within the 100-year floodplain
- 100-year floodplain elevation (75-feet) and wetland boundary delineation (~75-feet)





Medium Density Residential in Ponds District

- No proposed change to Ponds District existing medium-density residential area – been the consistent message since 2019
- Development proposals will need to comply with Floodplain, WRA, and WRG regulations
- “Lower intensity of uses. Preservation and rehabilitation of natural areas with development that is appropriately scaled to the adjacent neighborhood and natural resources.”
- 100-year floodplain elevation (75-feet) and wetland boundary delineation (~75-feet)





Condition of Blue Heron Settling Pond

- “Environmental remediation or other protective measures and rezoning needed”
- DEQ oversees regulations and clean-up efforts for contaminated properties
- Any development of the pond will need to complete DEQ processes
- Vision Plan intends to represent preferred land uses, infrastructure, and resource protections. Individual site development must comply with Fed/State/Regional/Local rules.

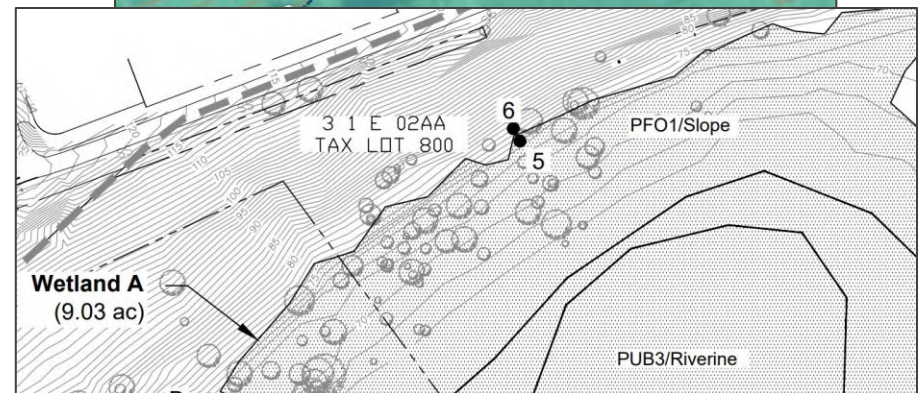


July 16th Work Session Comments



Planning Commission Comments/Potential Recommendations

- Use 1996 Flood Elevation on Map, include a disclaimer, or both
- Remove “in planning stages” from medium-density residential area in Ponds District
- Update map legends

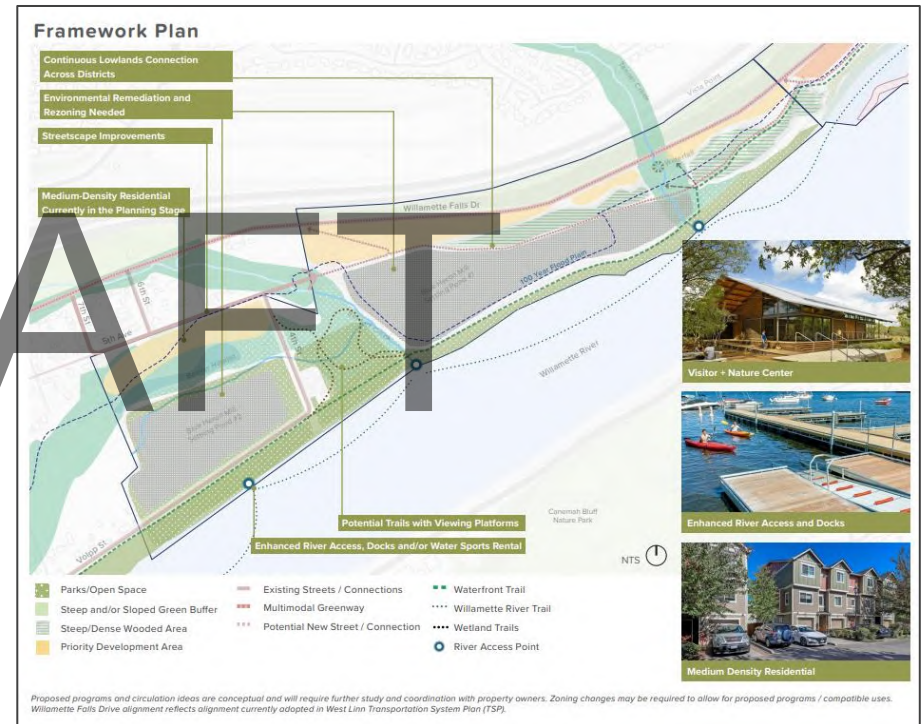


August 20th Work Session



Primary Comment Topics

- More explicit language to preserve, restore, and repurpose mill buildings
- Remove medium density residential area from Pond District
- Preserve Pond District as a natural area
- Fix procedural flaws (survey & comments)
- Restore Environmental Stewardship Guidelines
- Conflicts with Comp Plan and City Policies





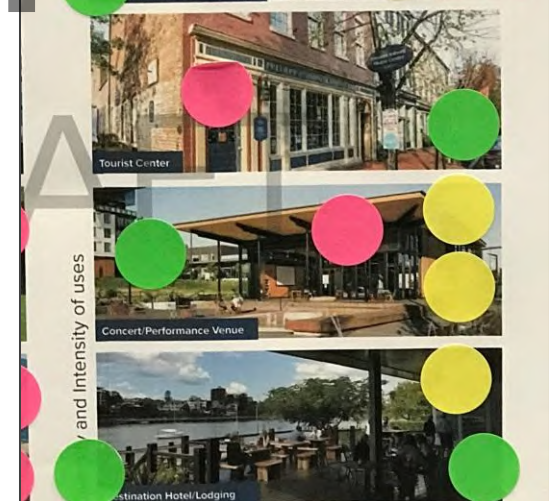
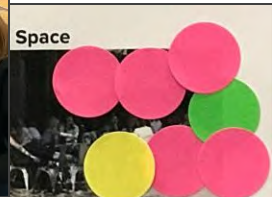
WLWF Project Community Engagement

Engagement 2016-2021

- Guiding Principles
- 3 Planning Districts
 - Historic City Hall
 - Cultural Heritage
 - Pond District
- Preferred Transportation Improvements
- Preferred Land Uses

WLWF Guiding Principles

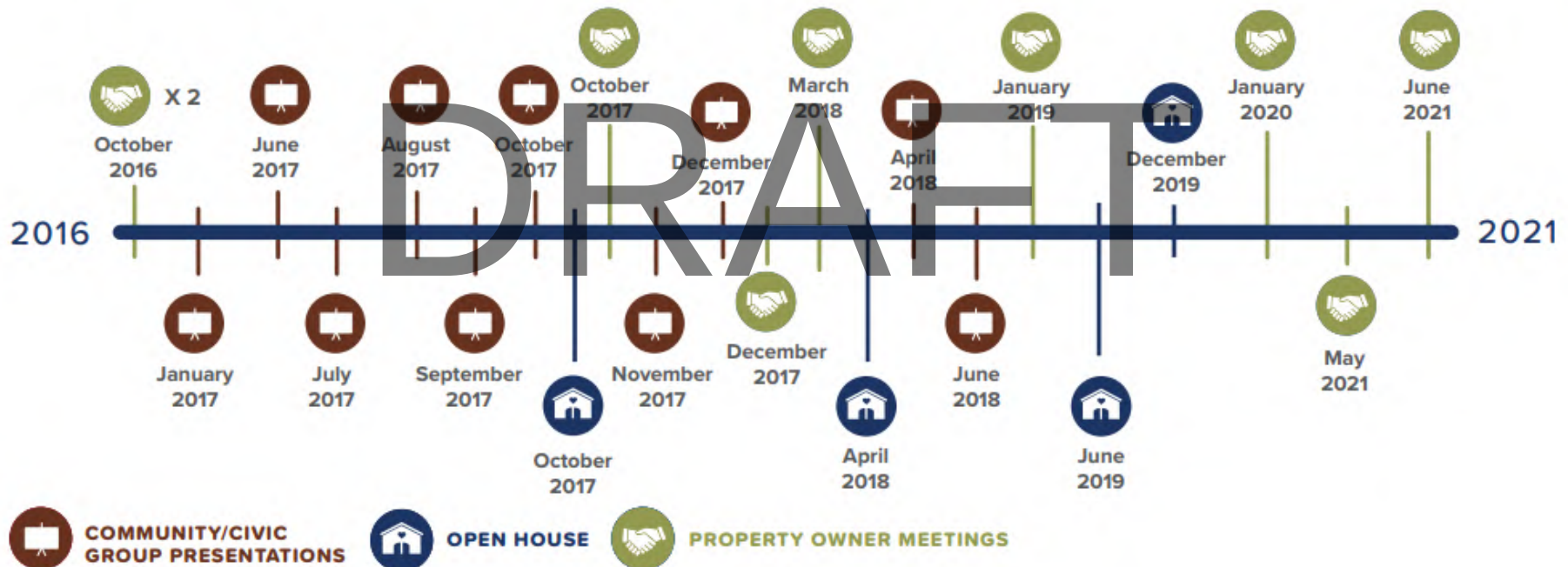
- Reinvestment Opportunities
- Transportation Improvements
- River Access
- Historic Character



WLWF Project Community Engagement



2016-2021 PRELIMINARY ENGAGEMENT





WLWF Project Community Engagement 2016 to 2021

Open Houses

- June 2017 (125 attendees)
- October 2017 (50 attendees)
- April 2018 (81 attendees)
- May & June 2019 (250 attendees)
- Dec. 2019 (48 attendees)



Property Owner Meetings (9)

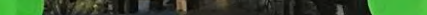
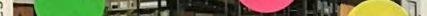
Presentations

- Nine NA visits (169 attendees)
- Wednesday Market x 2 (51 contacts)
- Civic Groups x 5 (160 attendees)

Space



Tourist Center



WLWF Project

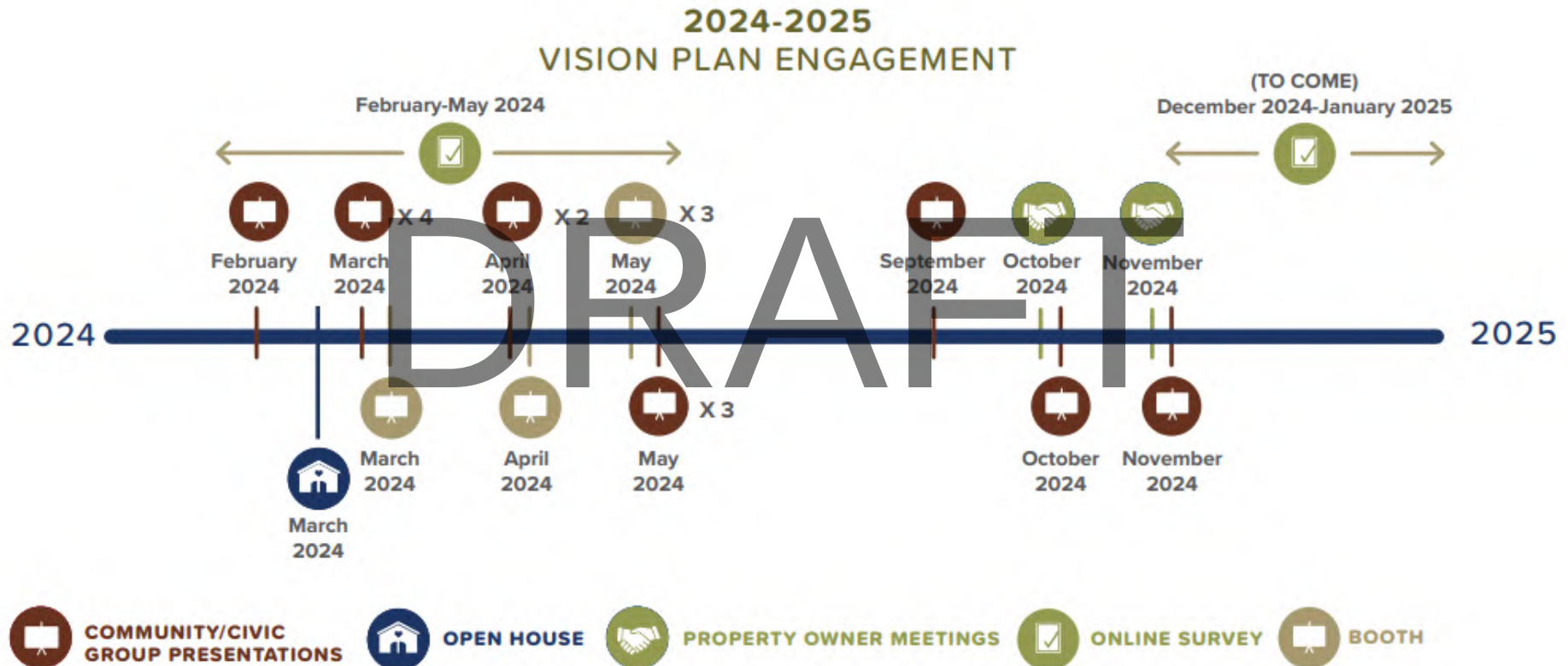


Engagement 2023-2025

- Draft Vision Plan (Jan. 2024)
 - Public Events
 - Civic Group Meetings
 - Online Survey
 - Working Group Meetings
- Updated Vision Plan (Sept. 2024)
 - Public Events
 - Civic Group Meetings
 - Stakeholder Interviews
 - Property Owner Feedback
 - Working Group Meeting
- Final Draft Vision Plan (Dec. 2024)
 - Online Survey
 - Civic Group Meetings
 - Working Group Meeting



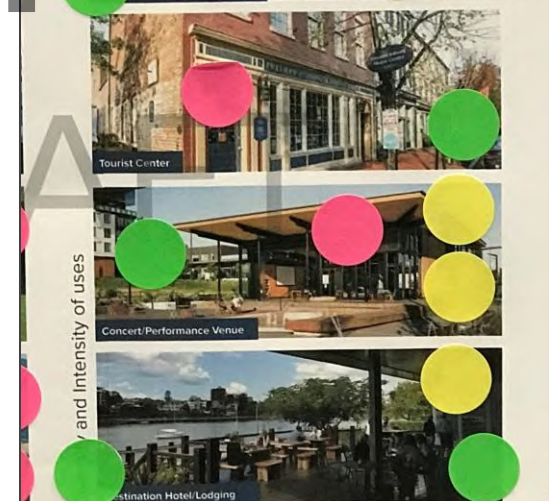
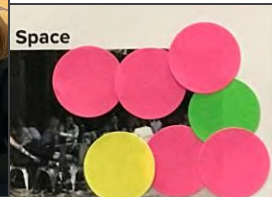
WLWF Project Community Engagement





WLWF Project Community Engagement 2024 to 2025

- 🍃 Open House March 2024
 - Draft Vision Plan
 - 100+ Attendees
- 🍃 Waterfront Website
 - 3,200 Visits (Jan-June 2024)
- 🍃 Online Survey
 - 573 Responses
 - 64% Not Engaged Previously
- 🍃 10 Presentations (Jan-June 2024)
- 🍃 Tabling Events (8)
- 🍃 Property Owner Meetings
- 🍃 Open Houses July 2025
 - Final Vision Plan
 - ~40 Attendees





WLWF Vision Plan Implementation Memos

Policy/Regulatory Memo

- Mixed-Use Comp Plan in Historic City Hall District
- Establish Waterfront District
- New Mixed-Use Zoning District
- Industrial Doesn't Permit Housing

TSP Update Needs

- Incorporate Growth – WLWF and V43
- Compliance with TPR and CFEC

Implementation/Financing

- Early Wins
- Getting Ready
- Fund and Build Priority Projects

Organizational Action Matrix

Action	Organization(s)	Timing
Adopt the Waterfront Vision Plan and elevate its importance as a City priority.	Lead: City of West Linn City Council, Mayor Support: City staff	ASAP
Initiate formal collaboration with PGE, WFT and other private landowners through an MOU	Lead: City of West Linn Support: PGE, WFT, others	Fall 2025 / Winter 2026
Undertake detailed planning in collaboration with MOU partners	Lead: City of West Linn and MOU partners	2026-2027
Negotiate development agreements that include infrastructure funding strategies and development terms and conditions	Lead: City of West Linn and private development partners (PGE, WFT, or others)	2027-ongoing
Horizontal infrastructure construction (roads, utilities, trails, etc.)	Lead: City of West Linn Support: Development partners	2027-ongoing
Vertical development (structures)	Lead: Development partners Support: City of West Linn	2028-ongoing



Working Group Recommendation – Move Forward to City Council

- Consider including affordable housing
- Consider including Smart Growth concepts
- Access is critical component of project
- Consider including stronger language for reuse of existing structures
- Provide additional time for more feedback
- WG Member Schultz objected – wants more certainty on future use of property
- WG Member Conf. Tribes of the Grand Ronde did not take a position

WHAT IS THIS VISION PLAN?

The goal of this Vision Plan is to present an inspired and achievable framework for the transformation of West Linn's Waterfront into a vibrant place that provides new opportunities for residents and visitors to access and experience the natural beauty and cultural richness of the area.

The complexity of the site provides challenges, but recent public investments, private property owner initiatives, and a groundswell of community support have marked a turning point in the City's renewal efforts.

To capitalize on this moment, the City of West Linn restarted a 2-year planning process that continues a transparent and collaborative community-driven effort that started prior to the pandemic. The Vision Plan puts the community's interests at the center of the process and incorporates their thoughts along with property owner interests and an analysis of the area's physical, economic, and regulatory issues to develop a plan for realizing the potential of the Waterfront.

WLWF Vision Plan

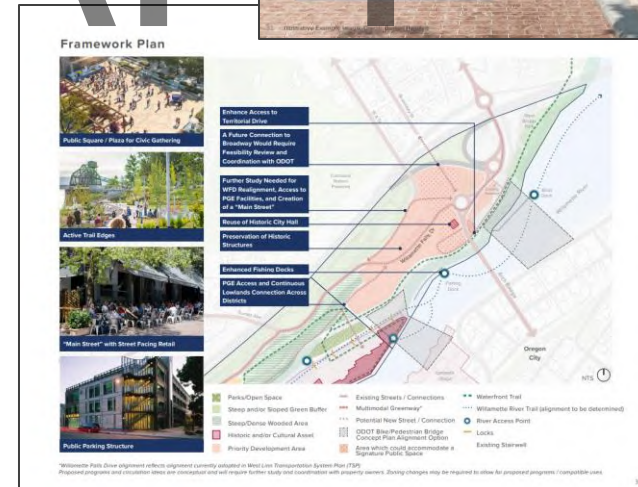


Tentative Adoption Schedule

- PC Work Sessions (July 16th and August 20th)
- PC Public Hearing (Sept. 17th)
- CC Work Sessions (Fall 2025)
- CC Public Hearing (Fall/Winter 2025)

Next Steps After Adoption

- Comp Plan/Zoning Amendments
- Development Code Amendments
- Community Engagement
- Working Group
- Transportation Analysis





DRAFT

QUESTIONS OF STAFF?

WLWF Vision Plan



- 🍃 Acknowledgements
- 🍃 Introduction
- 🍃 Goals

The goals of the Vision Plan are to:

GOALS

The Waterfront is a key piece in the economic development of West Linn. Building on decades of past planning efforts and public input, the desired outcome of the Waterfront Vision Plan is the creation of a revitalized area that provides a diverse mix of land uses, increases access to the river and recreational opportunities, and celebrates the Indigenous and industrial heritage of the site.

DRAFT

ENSURE
a community-driven
process.

CREATE
new opportunities
to access and enjoy
the Waterfront.

SUPPORT
cultural and
environmental
stewardship.

IMPROVE
site access
and multimodal
transportation.

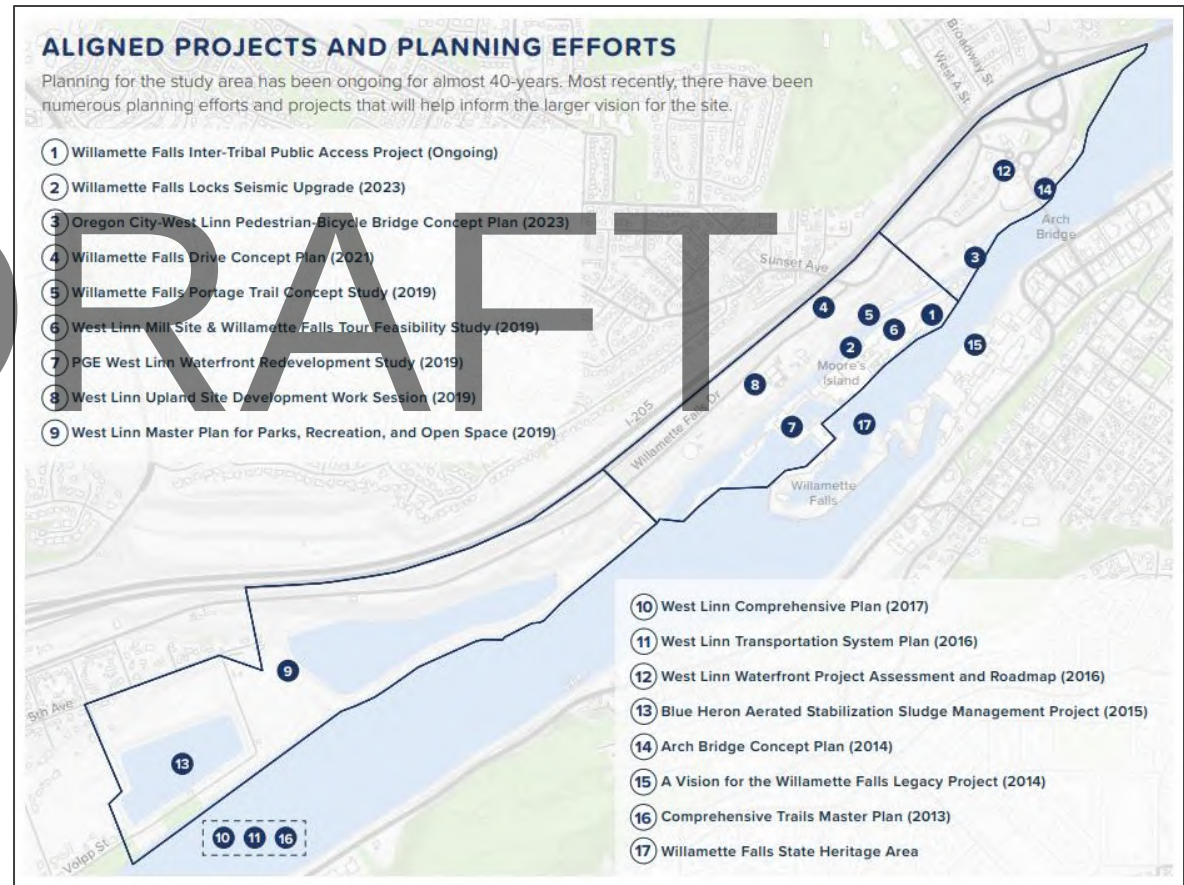
BUILD
public amenities
that attract private
investment.

WLWF Vision Plan



- Process
- Study Area
- Aligned Projects and Planning Efforts

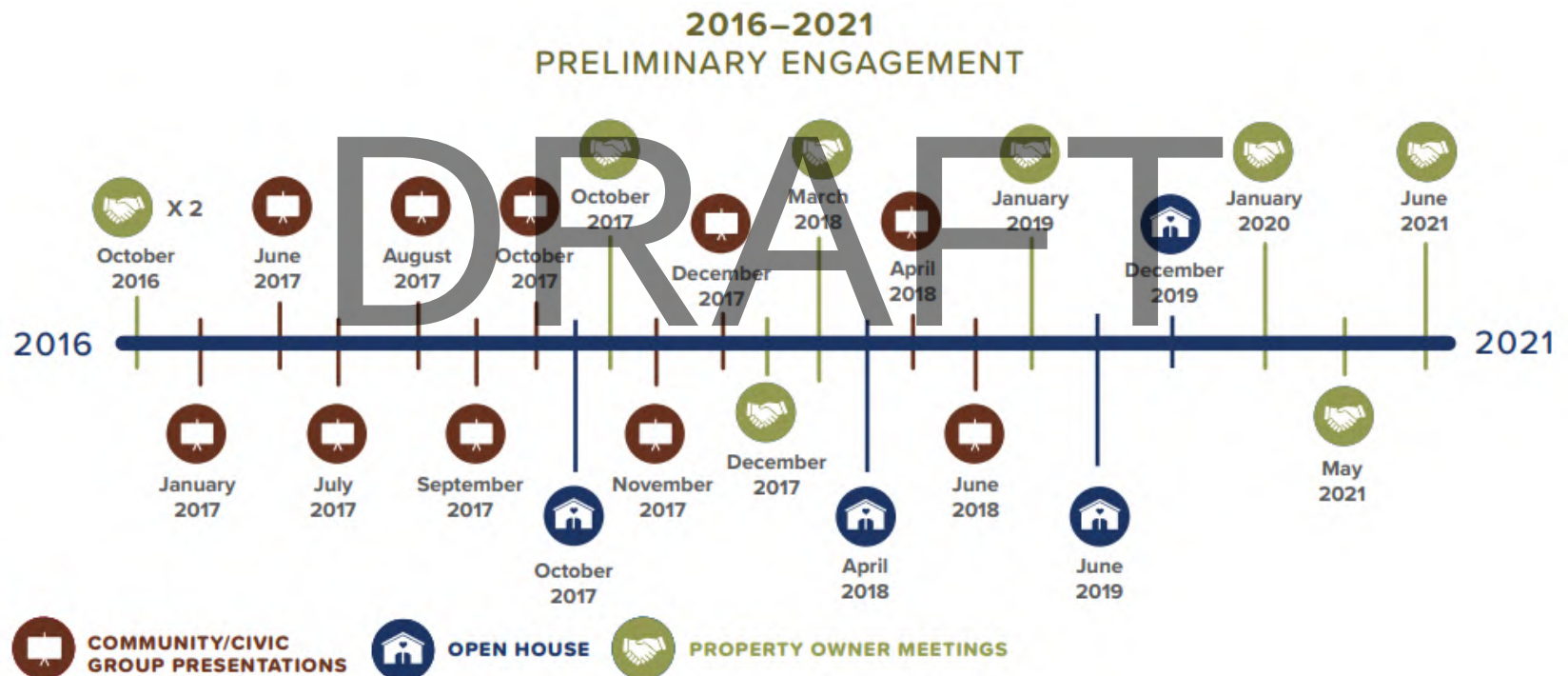
DRAFT



WLWF Vision Plan



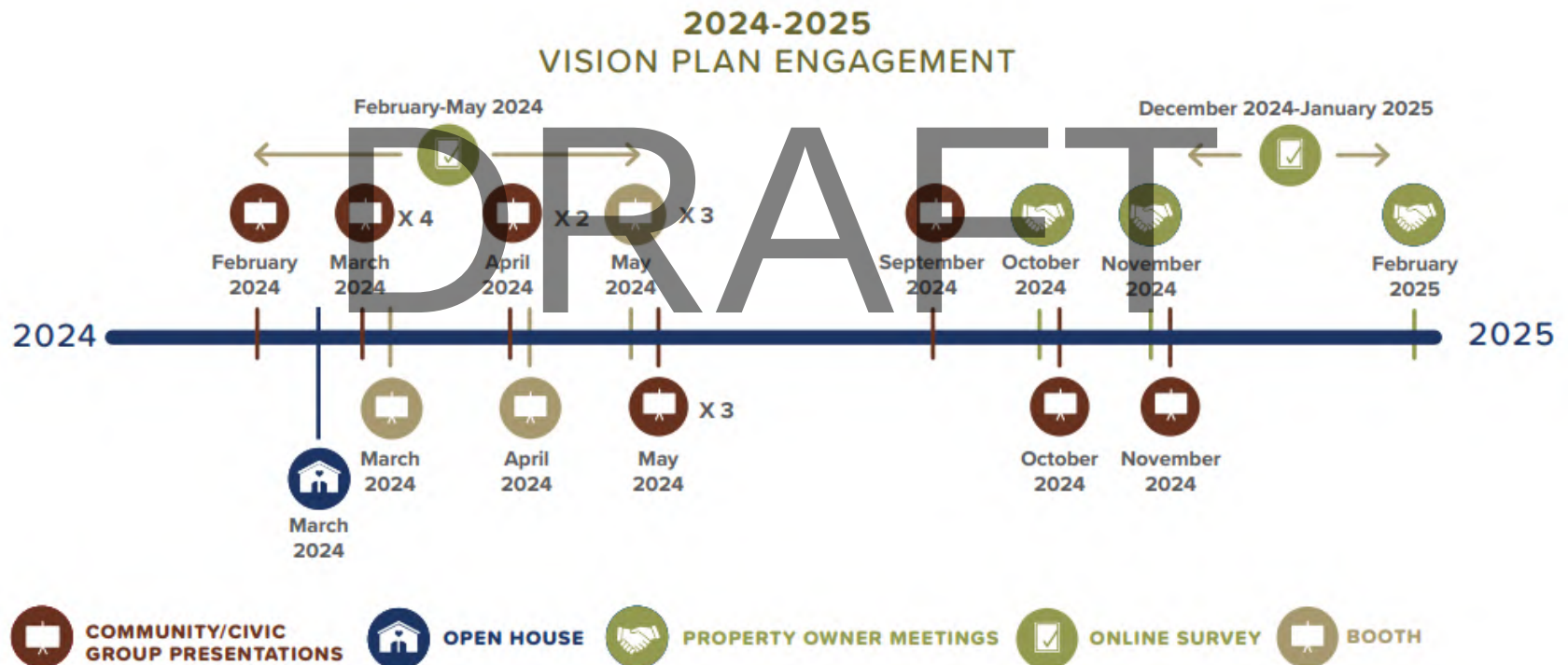
- Engagement (more information in Appendix A)



WLWF Vision Plan



- Engagement (more information in Appendix A)



WLWF Vision Plan



Guiding Principles

REINVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The area will maintain its long history as a working waterfront, while creating opportunities for reinvestment in the historic heart of the community.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Provide opportunities for reinvestment in the three planning districts.
- Accommodate access, parking, and security for Moore's Island and electric utility sites.
- Land use decisions support community vision and market principles.
- Set expectations and parameters through zoning and design guidelines.
- Encourage and enable private sector investment to build high quality places.
- Reuse of Historic City Hall as a gateway to the Waterfront area.
- Encourage rehabilitation and reuse of historic structures.
- Public and private owners work together on timing of land use transitions.

TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Through public and private investment, the Waterfront will safely accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and truck traffic through improved facilities and turning movements, while reducing conflicts and supporting land uses.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Coordinate land use, development, and transportation infrastructure needs.
- Livability and accessibility of nearby neighborhoods.
- Preserve access as needed to support commercial and power generation activities.
- Leverage public funds with private investment for safety and capacity improvements.
- Improved local access through the area.
- Creative solutions for multi-modal improvements including future consideration of regional transit corridors and river transportation.

RIVER ACCESS

The community and visitors will have enhanced visual and physical opportunities to enjoy the river and falls through trails, open spaces both natural and within the built environment, and aquatic recreation.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Public and private spaces woven together in a singular experience.
- Views of the Willamette River and Falls.
- Water quality and fish habitat protections.
- Continuous trail network.
- Physical access to the river's edge.
- Opportunities created by the reopening of the locks to river transportation.

HISTORIC CHARACTER

The community and visitors will experience a revitalized and vibrant waterfront, while experiencing and celebrating the working and historic industrial uses and important natural, historic, and cultural resources of the area.

KEY ELEMENTS

- Natural, historic, and cultural values are protected and embraced.
- Honor Native American Treaties and restore and respect Indigenous traditions along the Willamette River and Falls.
- Collaboration with other regional, state, and local efforts to recognize the history and heritage of the site.
- Collaboration with Willamette Falls Locks Authority to repair and reopen the Locks.
- Support business viability and vitality.
- Maximize economic connections to the Willamette Historic District.

WLWF Vision Plan



- 🍃 Planning Framework
- 🍃 Key Planning Issues
- 🍃 Design Principles
 - Placemaking and Form
 - Mobility and Access
 - Environmental Stewardship

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 area with key entrances to the riverfront and connections to the Arch Bridge, I-205, and the Bolton and Sunset Neighborhoods.
- Location of bike/pedestrian bridge alignments studied by ODOT.
- Existing structures are a mix of commercial and single-family residential.
- Existing waterfront access 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.
- This area experiences traffic congestion. Changes will need to consider impacts to I-205 and Arch Bridge traffic to/from Oregon City.

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 for site adaptation to commemorate the industrial heritage of 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 align with development and programming on the east side of the river.
- Shoreline adjacent to the locks has limited accessibility to the water.
- Potential connections to bike/pedestrian bridge alignments studied by ODOT.
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) boundary protects power generating resources and public safety. Public access changes require FERC and stakeholder approval.

Pond District:

- Lowest elevation and significant portions of the site are 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 or other protective measures to convert to other uses.
- Provides closest views of the river at the lowest elevation.
- District has limited access and entry points and the existing street network is narrow and lacking sidewalks in many places.
- Current industrial zoning is inconsistent with the local neighborhood and environmental resources.
- Significant funding would be required for property purchase and ecological restoration of settling ponds.

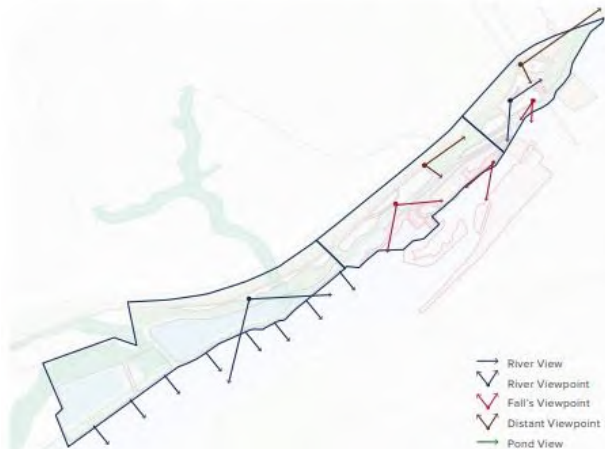
WLWF Vision Plan



Design Principles

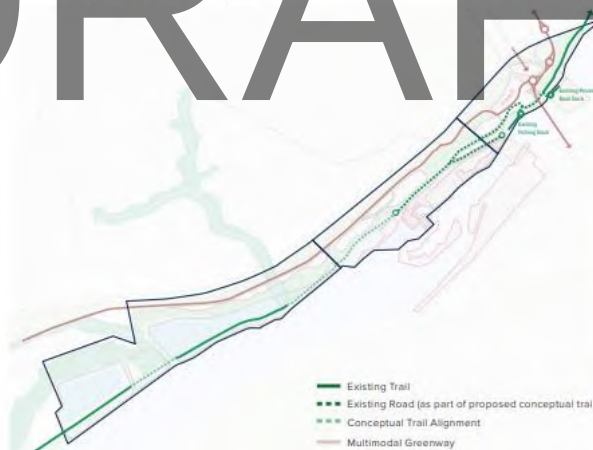
Placemaking and Form

- Ensure that public space appears public (this applies to streets, trails, and public spaces throughout).
- Preserve important sightlines to the river and falls and position new development and open spaces to maximize views. Establish clear gateways to create a sense of arrival and identity of a district or special place.
- Plan for a series of connected pathways and public open spaces that celebrate each district while connecting the Waterfront as a whole.
- Plan for new development on either side of Waterfront streets to be similar or complementary in design, function, and scale.



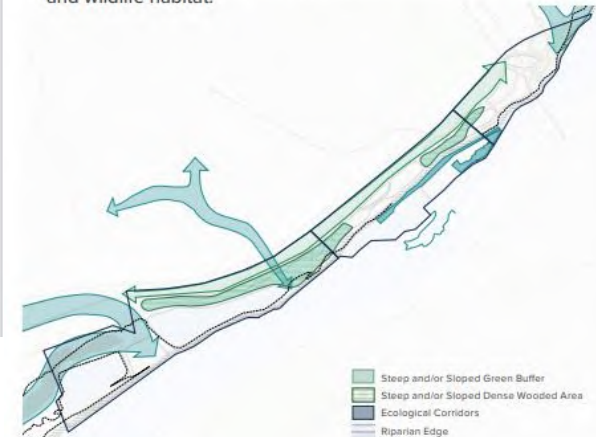
Mobility and Access

- Leverage the Willamette Falls Multimodal Greenway and the Waterfront Trail as the two primary circulation spines of the site upon which to build a larger circulation plan.
- Ensure the future street network allows access to critical functions and addresses regional and local traffic concerns.
- Establish shoreline access as integral to the overall circulation network.
- Utilize the opportunities created by the locks being reopened to allow travel up- and downstream of the falls.
- Provide transportation infrastructure that supports land use changes and development.



Environmental Stewardship

- Ensure resiliency with land uses that can withstand flooding and are appropriate within the 100-year flood plain.
- Design with topography to guide a strategy toward built form and avoid building in extremely steep areas.
- Safeguard natural and sensitive areas through wetland, habitat, and shoreline restoration and the reuse of materials where possible.
- Leverage the area between the trail and shoreline as a natural buffer zone to serve as a protective barrier and preserve ecological diversity.
- Balance development with opportunities to restore natural areas and wildlife habitat.





Market Analysis (Opportunities and Challenges)

- Housing
- Retail
- Office
- Industrial
- Civic/Institutional
- Hospitality

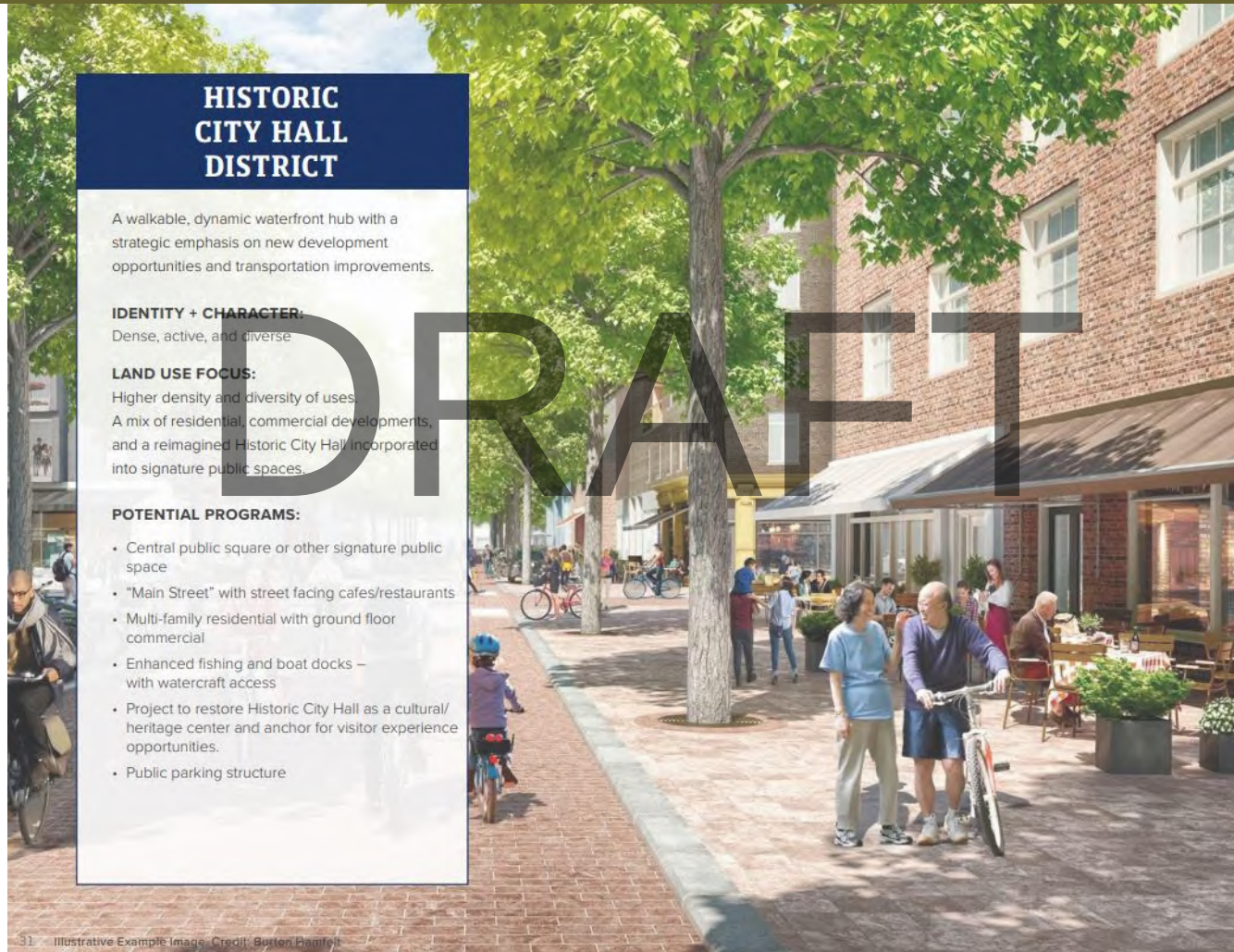
DRAFT

MARKET ANALYSIS (DISTRICT WIDE)

This analysis includes an assessment of the feasibility of various land uses given the current and near-term market conditions of West Linn, the surrounding area, and other Waterfront sites. Site considerations also inform the feasibility of land uses and are factored into the broader analysis.

AN ASSESSMENT
OF THE FEASIBILITY
OF PROGRAMMING
ELEMENTS GIVEN
THE CURRENT AND
NEAR-TERM MARKET
CONDITIONS.

WLWF Vision Plan – City Hall District Planning



WLWF Vision Plan – City Hall District Planning



Framework Plan



Public Square / Plaza for Civic Gathering



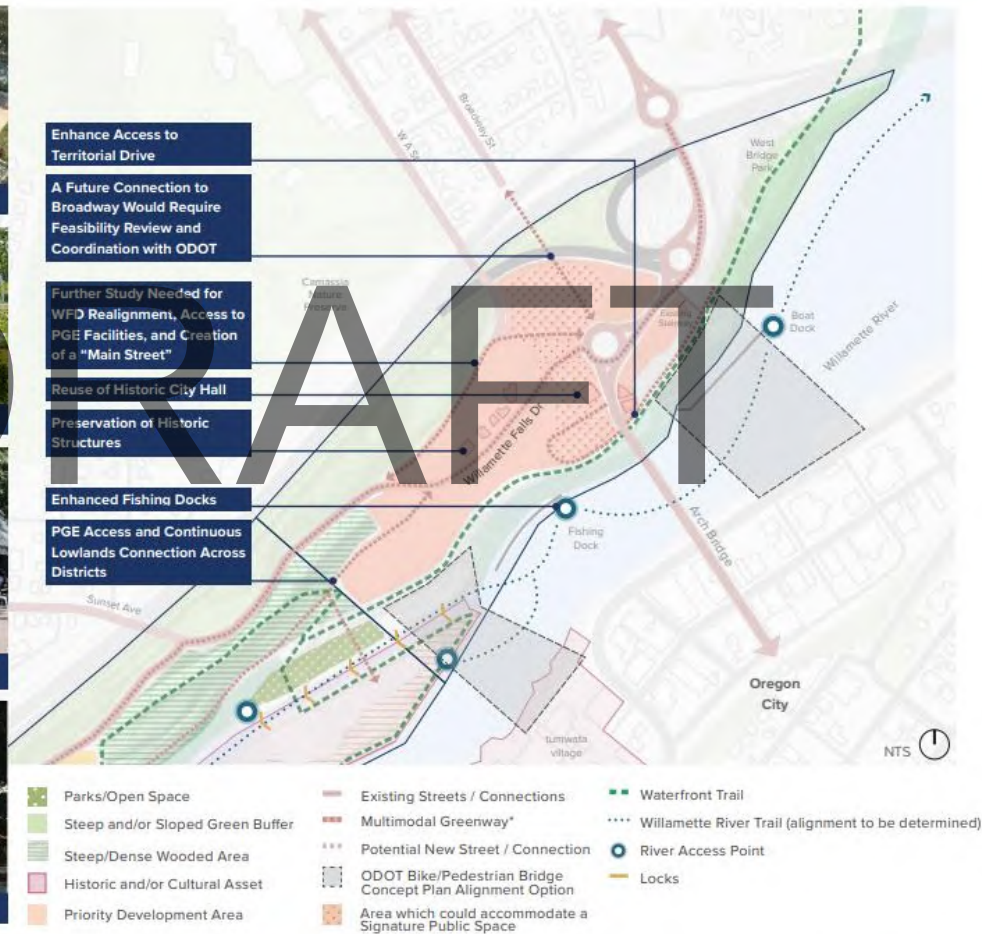
Active Trail Edges



"Main Street" with Street Facing Retail



Public Parking Structure



*Willamette Falls Drive alignment reflects alignment currently adopted in West Linn Transportation System Plan (TSP).
Proposed programs and circulation ideas are conceptual and will require further study and coordination with property owners. Zoning changes may be required to allow for proposed programs / compatible uses.



WLWF Vision Plan – Cultural Heritage District Planning

CULTURAL HERITAGE DISTRICT

Centered on the Falls, this district focuses on elevating Indigenous culture and celebration of the area's industrial heritage.

IDENTITY + CHARACTER:

Iconic and history-focused

LAND USE FOCUS:

Medium to high density and diversity of uses.

The Willamette Falls Inter-Tribal Public Access Project could provide an attraction for this district. Increased access and creative development techniques could unlock mixed use and light industrial uses on the Island, terraced along the lowlands slopes, and on the uplands.

POTENTIAL PROGRAMS:

- Inter-Tribal Public Access Project and associated Tribal specific spaces
- Site adaptation for a public market, light industrial, and/or event spaces
- Restored locks will allow boat movement upstream and downstream and unprecedented access to the Falls
- Potential bike/ped bridge from Historic City Hall District to Moore's Island to tumwata village
- Trails with viewing platforms to the river and falls
- Multi-family residential terracing the lowlands slope and in the uplands area
- Mix of field and structured parking

32 Rendering of Willamette Falls Trust and Inter-Tribal Public Access Project. Credit: Willamette Falls Trust

WLWF Vision Plan – Cultural Heritage District Planning



Framework Plan



*The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) sets a boundary to secure the power production functions of the T.W. Sullivan hydroelectric plant. There are restrictions on the access and uses allowed within the FERC boundary. Low-impact projects, such as trails, streets, and public access to the shoreline, may be acceptable; however, a more detailed assessment in consultation with FERC and PGE will be required.

**Willamette Falls Drive alignment reflects alignment currently adopted in West Linn Transportation System Plan (TSP).

Proposed programs and circulation ideas are conceptual and will require further study and coordination with property owners. Zoning changes may be required to allow for proposed programs / compatible uses.

WLWF Vision Plan – Pond District Planning



POND DISTRICT

The Pond District, with its lower elevation, easily reachable shoreline, and natural aquatic environments, will emphasize river access and the preservation of natural areas.

IDENTITY + CHARACTER:
Eco and community-focused

LAND USE FOCUS:
Lower intensity of uses. Preservation and rehabilitation of natural areas with development that is appropriately scaled to the adjacent neighborhood and natural resources. Collaborate with property owners to identify opportunities for ecological restoration alongside new development.

POTENTIAL PROGRAMS:

- Wetlands restoration
- Wetland trails
- Visitor or Nature Center
- Enhanced access to the river for paddling, swimming, fishing (low intensity)
- Single family or townhomes on far northwest end of the district
- Permeable surface/field parking
- Collaborate with property owners to identify opportunities for ecological restoration alongside new development
- Remediation or other protective measures and rezoning of ponds for non-industrial uses

35 Illustrative Example Image. Credit: MVVA Detroit Riverfront Park

WLWF Vision Plan – Pond District Planning



Framework Plan



*The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) sets a boundary to secure the power production functions of the T.W. Sullivan hydroelectric plant. There are restrictions on the access and uses allowed within the FERC boundary. Low-impact projects, such as trails, streets, and public access to the shoreline, may be acceptable; however, a more detailed assessment in consultation with FERC and PGE will be required.

**Willamette Falls Drive alignment reflects alignment currently adopted in West Linn Transportation System Plan (TSP).

Proposed programs and circulation ideas are conceptual and will require further study and coordination with property owners. Zoning changes may be required to allow for proposed programs / compatible uses.



WLWF Vision Plan – Housing Density + Parking

<10 UNITS PER NET ACRE

Typologies with densities below 10 units per acre result in an inefficient use of land, given the cost of development and are **likely not appropriate for the Waterfront**. These developments often require large areas of surface parking.



2124 Eleanor Road
Detached Single Family

City: West Linn
Units: 1
Acres: 0.17
Construction: Wood Frame
State: OR
Year Built: 1972 (2025)
Du/acre: 6
Stories: 2



19th and Graf Apartment Homes
Low-Rise Garden Apartments

City: Bozeman
Units: 195
Acres: 26.30
Construction: Wood Frame
State: MT
Year Built: 2023
Du/acre: 7
Stories: 3



Greenwood Avenue Cottages
Cottage Cluster

City: Shoreline
Units: 8
Acres: 0.78
Construction: Wood Frame
State: WA
Year Built: 2001
Du/acre: 10
Stories: 2

10-30 UNITS PER ACRE

Housing densities and typologies that can accommodate between 10-30 units per acre are well-suited for the **Pond District** and balance an efficient layout with the preservation of a strong residential character. Garage, tuck-under, and clustered surface parking are common for these development types.



Minnehaha Meadows
Low-Rise Townhomes

City: Vancouver
Units: 49
Acres: 4.24
Construction: Wood Frame
State: WA
Year Built: 2020
Du/acre: 12
Stories: 2



Meritage at Mill Creek
Garage-Parked Townhomes

City: Mill Creek
Units: 24
Acres: 0.86
Construction: Wood Frame
Parking: Garage (front)
State: WA
Year Built: 2009
Du/acre: 28
Stories: 3
Parking Ratio: 1/unit



Canemah Cottages
Cottage Cluster

City: Oregon City
Units: 7
Acres: 0.46
Construction: Wood Frame
State: OR
Year Built: 2023
Du/acre: 15
Stories: 2



WLWF Vision Plan – Housing Density + Parking

>30 UNITS PER ACRE

Housing densities and typologies that can accommodate over 30 units per acre are well-suited for the **Historic City Hall and Cultural Heritage District**, efficiently utilizing space while incorporating paired programming to support a mix of uses and residential development. Structured, tuck-under, and concealed parking courtyards may be appropriate for these development types.



Abernethy Flats
Mixed Use: Housing over Retail

City: Portland	State: OR
Units: 35	Year Built: 2019
Acres: 0.23	Du/acre: 152
Construction: Wood Frame	Stories: 4



1719 N 185th Street
Housing over Parking

City: Shoreline	State: WA
Units: 12	Year Built: 2021
Acres: 0.16	Du/acre: 75
Construction: Wood Frame	Stories: 3



SE 11th & Tenino Apartments
Low-Rise Apartments

City: Portland	State: OR
Units: 38	Year Built: 2023
Acres: 0.23	Du/acre: 165
Construction: Wood Frame	Stories: 3



Planning Commission Request to Speak

Any information provided may be considered a public record and subject to disclosure.
Each agenda item requires a separate testimony form.

☐ I request to speak during **General Public Comments** – (3 minutes). Please specify topic (*required*):

☒ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 4: [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☒ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☐ In Opposition

☐ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 5: [Metro Town Center Boundary Implementation \(CFEC\)](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☐ In Opposition

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: Jim Mattis

Name of Organization (if applicable): Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email (optional): Mattisj@comcast.net



CITY OF
West Linn

Planning Commission Request to Speak

**Any information provided may be considered a public record and subject to disclosure.
Each agenda item requires a separate testimony form.**

☐ I request to speak during **General Public Comments** – (3 minutes). Please specify topic (*required*):

☒ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 4: [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☒ In Opposition

☐ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 5: [Metro Town Center Boundary Implementation \(CFEC\)](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☐ In Opposition

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: Nicole Jackson

Name of Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: 5185 Linn Ln

City: West Linn State OR Zip 97068

Email (optional): _____



CITY OF
West Linn

Planning Commission Request to Speak

Any information provided may be considered a public record and subject to disclosure.
Each agenda item requires a separate testimony form.

☐ I request to speak during **General Public Comments** – (3 minutes). Please specify topic (*required*):

☒ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 4: [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☒ In Opposition

☐ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 5: [Metro Town Center Boundary Implementation \(CFEC\)](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☐ In Opposition

PLEASE PRINT:

Name: TERENCE SHOMAKER

Name of Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: 25430 SWIFTSHORE DR

City: WEST LINN

State: OR

Zip: 97068

Email (optional): ~~shomaker~~ shomaker20@gmail.com

**COMMENTS REGARDING THE WEST LINN WATERFRONT VISION PLAN
Planning Commission Meeting August 20, 2025**

Submitted by
Terence M. Shumaker
Shumanfly20@gmail.com

Tonight, I would like to focus on the nature of the Community Engagement Survey, specifically as it relates to the Scientific Method.

At the July 16 PC meeting, myself and other commenters, raised many issues regarding the deficiencies of the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan. As several of us testified, the issue of the use of double-barreled questions in the Vision Plan survey was most concerning. Darren Wyss countered the argument that the survey used double-barreled questions. His response was "The final survey was intended to gauge support for the Vision Plan, not be scientifically valid as it was self-selecting." Notice that he used the term "support for the Vision Plan," as if that was the only option.

First, let's look at his term "scientifically valid."

Gathering accurate input, or exact measurements, is the core of the scientific method. And if the goal of a survey is to get accurate input, then questions must be designed as such. A single question that requires an answer based on a single issue.

But a survey that is intended to gather data upon which important decisions are to be made, should be conducted in a manner designed to collect accurate measurements. Hence the need to use the scientific method.

The Nevada Center for Surveys, Evaluation and Statistics (CSES) states, "public comment surveys can benefit from using the scientific method as it helps ensure that the research is conducted in a fair, unbiased, and repeatable manner, allowing for valid conclusions to be drawn from the data collected. This approach minimizes observer bias and enhances the reliability of the findings."

And this from the University of Kentucky, Survey Research Center: "Scientific public opinion polling is the only way to truly understand your community's views, regardless of how big your community is or where it's located. When your group is proud of the scientific data, your community will trust the results."

Now let's look at "self-selecting."

In order to get the most input on a community survey, it is probably best to broadcast it to the entire community rather than conduct a random sample survey. Granted, a self-selecting

survey may contain bias, because those who respond are usually motivated and genuinely interested in the issue, as opposed to a random sample survey that may get responses from a representative group of the community who may not share the same interest.

But wouldn't the opinions of people genuinely interested or educated in an issue, be desired?

Community Engagement Summary

In spite of flawed survey methods, the public comment results were overwhelmingly in favor of creating Parks and Recreation Spaces. Please refer to Table 4, Ponds District Ranking of Preferences on P. 17 of the Community Engagement Summary of the WL Waterfront Vision Plan.

Yet the city's interpretation of the results was just the opposite and the area in question was labeled as medium-density residential. Why?

If the city is to regain any sense of professionalism in the area of planning, then it must conduct studies and surveys in a professional manner. If not, then the city will continue to be viewed as an entity that is dysfunctional and devoid of any sense of environmental and social stewardship.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of this body to ensure that all necessary data is collected properly, and that community input is valued as an important part of any planning process. I greatly appreciate your efforts in volunteering your time to ensure that not only the needs and desires of the community are met, but also that the regulations and codes of the city are upheld.



CITY OF

West Linn

Planning Commission Request to Speak

Any information provided may be considered a public record and subject to disclosure.
Each agenda item requires a separate testimony form.

☐ I request to speak during **General Public Comments** – (3 minutes). Please specify topic (*required*):

☒ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 4: [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☒ In Opposition

☐ I request to testify on **Agenda Item 5: [Metro Town Center Boundary Implementation \(CFEC\)](#)** (3 minutes for all speakers).

☐ In Support

☐ Neither for nor against

☐ In Opposition

*speaking about
opposition
elements but
want
revised plan to
move forward.*

PLEASE PRINT:

Name:

Russ Axelrod

Name of Organization (if applicable):

Address:

19648 Wildwood Drive

City:

West Linn

State

OR

Zip

97068

Email (optional):

rbaxelrod@yahoo.com

DRAFT

Testimony for Planning Commission Work Session – West Linn Draft Waterfront Vision Plan

To: Planning Commission (PC) Members

From: Russ Axelrod

Date: August 20, 2025

I've been traveling in Alaska the last few weeks with very limited time to prepare any comments for tonight's work session.

I'm here to stress the critically important role that each of you play as PC members for our community.

I understand this as I sat in your chair for @4 yrs before I spent 6 yrs as our Mayor.

I've not had the chance to read over the entire volume of materials that staff has stuffed into your agenda, but I must express my disappointment at the treatise of community comments displayed by our planning manager in his oversight role for the Working Group (WG) and in his distorted summation of some public comments in this plan development process.

As you know, many public comments submitted were not shared with WG members (in violation of the WG's own guidelines) and I know from personal discussion with some members that there was inadequate discussion and vetting of many issues, and no real consensus of the WG on the draft plan Mr. Wyss rushed to the PC.

I'm struck and disappointed by the treatise and belittling of issues summarized by Mr. Wyss – for example:

-- I raised the importance of explaining our City's and Coalition's joint National Heritage Area (NHA) goals for the Historic City Hall work and NHA region, and the response commented that because we are a State Heritage Area there's no need for clarifying language. Mr. Wyss should know that these are very different programs, goals, and issues, and it appears he does not know the differences or doesn't care to address them as simply requested?

-- I have repeatedly pointed out the direct conflict between the dense housing development the City prefers for the principal wetland in the Ponds District, and the environmental stewardship vision the community overwhelmingly desires that is reflected in the plan framework for the District. Mr. Wyss's response is that housing has always been in earlier development plans so the proposal is consistent with City plans so no need to change them – thus ignoring the very purpose of the community's vision plan for the future.

-- I commented that the plan should be clear about any future casino development for the waterfront area given the uncertainty of an important large waterfront area being committed to a newly visioned Columbia Basin Tribes organization (Willamette Falls Trust) where no actual project information or future plans have been provided or vetted in the community. Mr. Wyss dismissed the comment as being a state or federal matter, but that's at the root of my concern or point - that West Linn could lose control of our city planning if we don't have clear planning parameters established – something I believe is worth discussing and resolving.

-- I pointed out the direct conflict between the City's (dated) housing development plan for the wetland in the Ponds District and the environmental goals/vision for the District as well as the environmental protections codified in our Comprehensive Plan – all overwhelmingly supported by our community. Mr Wyss response is that housing in the wetland can be done and we have other codes to control things. For those like me that have been following such issues you would know that there are holes in our environmental code that staff

have taken advantage of to get around appropriate environmental protections – including code items on your PC docket that staff have not allowed the PC to address and correct. If these are not corrected, it remains possible for inappropriate development to bypass environmental protections the community overwhelmingly supports.

And the list goes on.....

I'm tired of this inappropriate treatment and dismissal of public comments, especially when they reflect the clear majority of community sentiment.

The waterfront plan is supposed to correct for this area past City planning maps and mistakes we have made the last 20-50 years - mistakes that destroyed a majority of our environmentally sensitive lands. We need to stop doing this and be better stewards of our environmental landscape and community interests!

As PC members your role is to ensure that our city's development and plans and this waterfront vision plan reflects the majority of our community members goals and aspirations, which are largely also detailed in our Comprehensive Plan.

The most critical remaining issue reflected in the current draft waterfront vision plan is the City's non-sensical depiction of dense housing as an acceptable land use to be placed in our City's most significant remaining wetland. If you do nothing else, take the dense housing depiction off the map and out of our waterfront plan! Thus, our housing developments should occur at other appropriate locations.

This is not only the overwhelming desire of the community reflected in the vision plan framework for the Ponds District, removing it is supported by clear criteria and direction outlined by the community in our Comprehensive Plan that is supposed to also guide your planning decisions as PC members – see for example the following:

Goal 5, Section 2 Natural Resources – Goals 1, 2, and 3, and Policy's 6, 10, 11, 12, 15 and 16.

Goal 6, Section 2 Water Resources – Principal Goal: to *"Maintain or improve the quality of West Linn's water resources."*

Goal 7, Areas Subject to Natural Disasters and Hazards - Principal Goal: to *"Protect life and property from flood, earthquake, other geological hazards, and terrorist threats or attacks,"* and Policy's 1, 6, 8 and 9.

Goal 8 – Urbanization - Principal Goal: to *"Promote an orderly growth pattern within the UGB to preserve and enhance the natural and developed character of West Linn."*

As PC members of our community, I urge you to show good faith stewardship in your decision-making. Take the time necessary to adjust the draft waterfront plan and uphold your duty to support our community development as community members have overwhelmingly requested.

Respectfully,

Russ Axelrod
Former PC Member, Mayor and 34-year resident
19648 Wildwood Drive
West Linn, OR 97068
(503) 312-8464

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



WEST LINN
WATERFRONT
PROJECT
DRAFT

Wyss, Darren

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

CAUTION: This email originated from an External source. Do not click links, open attachments, or follow instructions from this sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you are unsure, please contact the Help Desk immediately for further assistance.

- 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

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

DRAFT

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

CAUTION: This email originated from an External source. Do not click links, open attachments, or follow instructions from this sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you are unsure, please contact the Help Desk immediately for further assistance.

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

DRAFT

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>]

CAUTION: This email originated from an External source. Do not click links, open attachments, or follow instructions from this sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you are unsure, please contact the Help Desk immediately for further assistance.

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

DRAFT

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

Some people who received this message don't often get email from martin.heinemann@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from an External source. Do not click links, open attachments, or follow instructions from this sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you are unsure, please contact the Help Desk immediately for further assistance.

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

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dwros01@yahoo.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

CAUTION: This email originated from an External source. Do not click links, open attachments, or follow instructions from this sender unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe. If you are unsure, please contact the Help Desk immediately for further assistance.

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



CITY OF
**West
Linn**

DRAFT

Planning Commission

Work Session
Metro TC Boundary Adoption

August 20, 2025

Metro Town Center Boundary Adoption



PC Packet

- Memo
 - Background Information
 - CFEC Rules
 - Recommendation
- Attachments
 - Bolton TC Boundary
 - Bolton TC Boundary Addition (North)
 - Bolton TC Boundary Addition (South)
 - Willamette TC Boundary
 - Metro Memo
 - Vision43 Focus Area Maps



What is a Town Center?

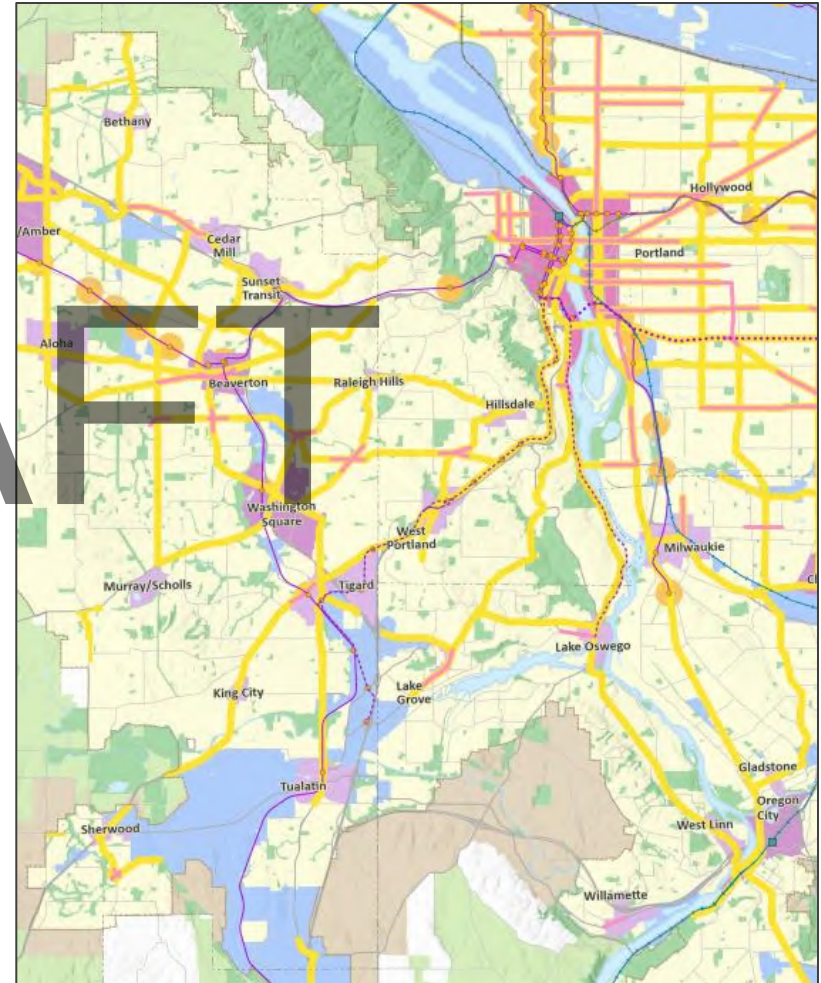


Metro 2040 Growth Concept Map

- Central City
- Regional Centers
- Town Centers
- Main Streets/Corridors
- Station Communities

Town Centers

- Eligible for Regional Investment
 - Adopt Boundary
 - Perform an Assessment
 - Adopt a Plan of Actions/Investments
- Lower Mobility Standards
 - Land use standards to allow mix and intensity of uses in UGMFP
 - Adopted plan to achieve non-SOV mode share





Why Adopt Town Center Boundaries?

CFEC Rules

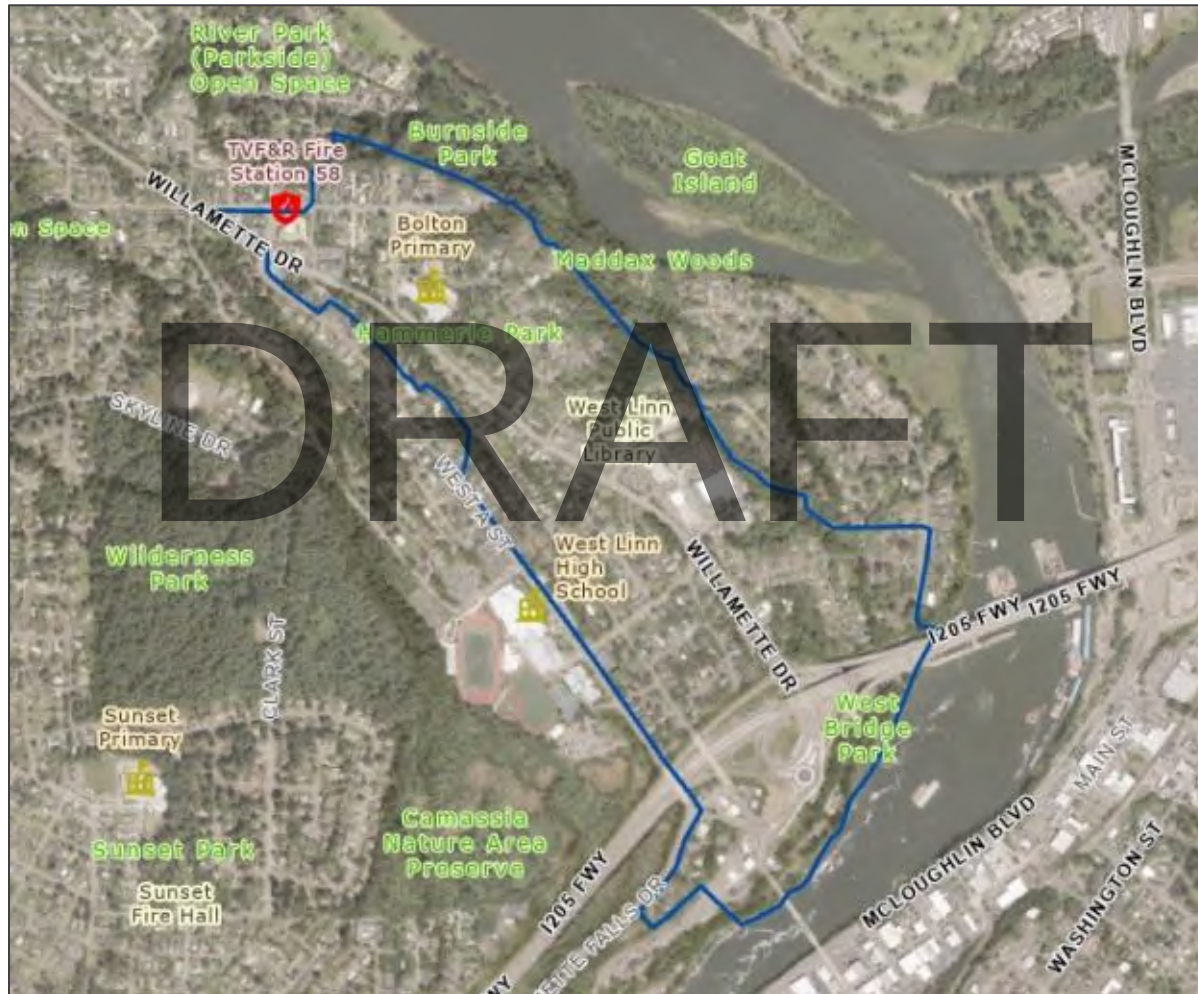
- OAR 660-012-0012
- Metro Adopt Adoption Rules
- Cities Adopt Boundaries by 2025

West Linn Town Centers

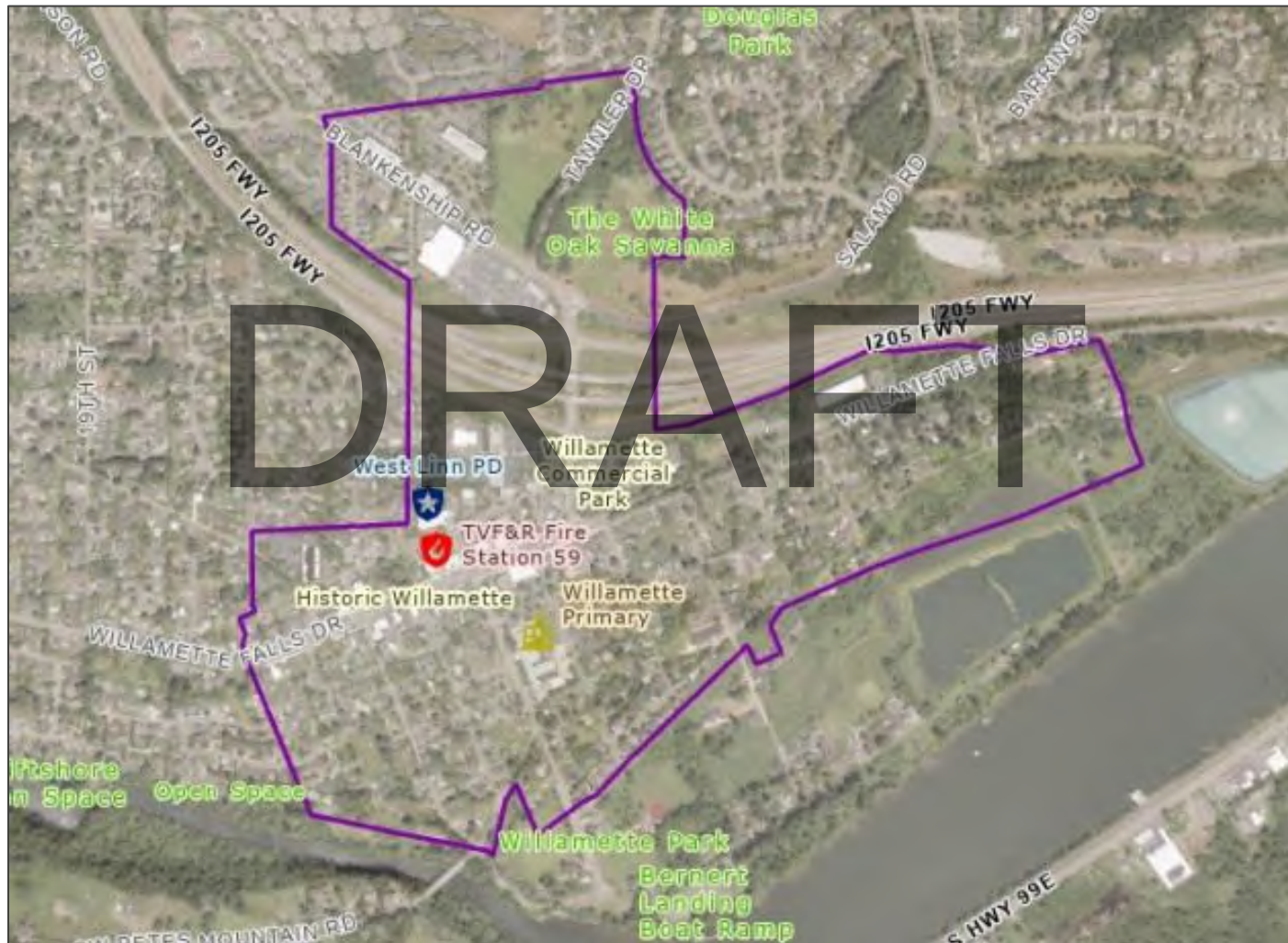
- Bolton Town Center
 - Small addition on north end to match Vision43 Focus Area
 - Small addition on south end to capture entire mill parking lot property within the WLWF Boundary
- Willamette Town Center
 - Adopt boundary as shown on 2040 Map
 - White Oak Savanna Property



Bolton Town Center Boundary



Willamette Town Center Boundary



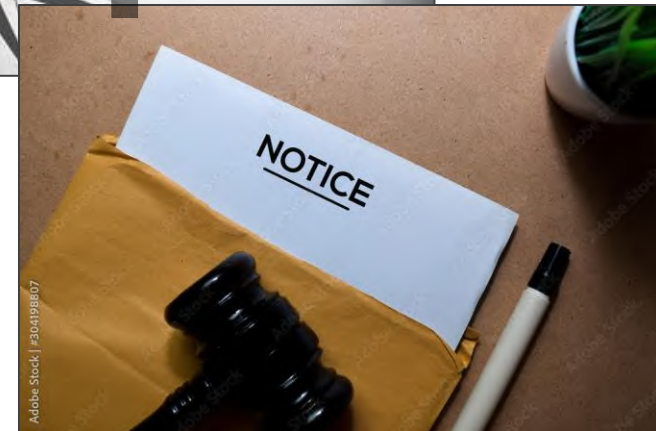
Bolton Town Center Boundary



Adoption Process



- ✦ PC Work Session
 - Sept. 3rd if needed
- ✦ PC Public Hearing (Oct 15th)
 - Recommendation to CC
- ✦ CC Work Session (Nov. 3rd)
 - Briefing on proposal and process
- ✦ CC Public Hearing (Dec. 8th)
 - Final Decision



Town Center Boundary Adoption



DRAFT

QUESTIONS OF STAFF?