

Memorandum

Date: September 2, 2025

To: West Linn Planning Commission

From: Darren Wyss, Principal Planner

Subject: West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan Work Session

At its September 17, 2025, meeting, the Planning Commission will hold a public hearing to consider the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan. After the public hearing, the Commission will make its recommendation regarding the adoption of the Vision Plan to the City Council. The Waterfront Working Group has already reached consensus to move the Vision Plan forward, with five recommendations, to City Council for adoption. This is not a land use action, so the final decision by City Council cannot be appealed.

Once the Vision Plan is adopted, the City will move into the next phase of the project, which includes evaluating potential Comprehensive Plan updates, Zoning Map amendments, and Development Code amendments. These actions will be critical in implementing the community vision for the Waterfront area.

Background & Discussion

The [West Linn Waterfront Project](#) will develop a preferred community vision plan for the lands along the Willamette River from I-205 to the Willamette Neighborhood and the framework to implement that vision. The goal is to find consensus on future land uses and activities along the river, as well as make any necessary changes to the transportation network, zoning, and development codes; and establish a financial plan to support investment in the area.

The first phase of the project was conducted from 2016 to 2019 through a series of community engagement events that resulted in dividing the planning area into three districts (Historic City Hall District, Cultural Heritage District, and Pond District), establishing [Guiding Principles](#) for the project, identifying the preferred transportation improvements at Willamette Falls Drive and Hwy 43 (adopted as part of the [Willamette Falls Drive Concept Plan in 2021](#)), and getting initial feedback on preferred land use in the districts. The engagement included:

- Seven (7) Open Houses (554 attendees)
- Nine (9) Property Owner Meetings
- Nine (9) Neighborhood Association Meetings (169 attendees)
- Wednesday Market Booth (51 contacts)
- Five (5) Civic Group Presentations (160 attendees)

Please see Appendix A linked below for more information on outreach efforts and feedback.

The West Linn Waterfront Project Guiding Principles:

1. Reinvestment Opportunities
2. Transportation Improvements
3. River Access
4. Historic Character

After a hiatus due to COVID, the project started back up with the City Council budgeting funds to hire a consultant team to assist with the project. The second phase began in 2023 when City Staff and Toole Design Group developed a Draft Community Vision Plan based on prior work. The project team then spent Spring 2024 presenting that plan to the community through a series of public events, meetings with civic groups, and conducting an online survey to glean feedback. The goal of the engagement was to confirm that the proposed vision plan is consistent with current community desires and included:

- Open House (100+ attendees)
- Project Website to Review Plan and Provide Comment (3,200 visits Jan to June 2024)
- Online Survey (573 responses, 65% not engaged previously)
- 10 Civic Group Presentations
- Eight (8) Tabling Events
- Property Owner Meetings

Please see Appendix A linked below for more information on outreach efforts and feedback.

The project team then spent Summer 2024 updating the Draft Community Vision Plan to align with the feedback from the engagement efforts. The City Council appointed Waterfront Working Group, tasked to review and propose revisions to draft documents and make final recommendations, discussed the Draft Community Vision Plan at a meeting in September 2024.

Staff and the consultant team completed final check-ins with stakeholders and property owners to get comments on the Draft Community Vision Plan as updated. Additional edits were made, and the document was posted for review from the community via an online survey asking for level of agreement that the plan accurately reflects the community vision. The survey was open from December 18, 2024 to January 31, 2025. Results of the survey showed:

	Strongly/Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Strongly/Somewhat Disagree
Overall Vision Plan	66.0	4.9	29.1
Historic City Hall District Vision	70.6	5.2	24.2
Historic City Hall District Map Visuals	66.4	9.3	24.3
Cultural Heritage District Vision	74.2	7.0	18.8
Cultural Heritage District Map Visuals	71.3	10.3	18.4
Pond District Vision	67.2	5.6	27.2
Pond District Map Visuals	61.3	9.2	29.5

Some final clean-up of the Community Vision Plan took place and responses to comments received during and after the final online survey were compiled.

The Working Group has met six times and has also reviewed the Market Trend Analysis, Community Engagement Summary, Land Use Policy and Regulatory Analysis, Implementation and Financing Plan, and Transportation Analysis. The group made a recommendation on the Vision Plan at its last meeting on July 10th.

West Linn Waterfront Working Group Recommendation

Move the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan forward to City Council with the following comments/recommendations:

1. Consider including recommendations for affordable housing in the project area.
2. Consider including recommendations for Smart Growth Development concepts across the project area.
3. Access to area is a critical component of the project.
4. Consider including stronger language in Plan for reuse of existing structures.
5. Provide additional time for more community feedback.
6. Working Group Member Bob Schultz objected to the Vision Plan – wants more certainty on the future use of his property.
7. Working Group Member Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde did not take a position on whether to move the Plan forward.

All Waterfront Working Group meeting materials, videos, and summary notes are linked from the [West Linn Waterfront Project webpage](#).

The project team brought the Vision Plan to the Planning Commission for review to get more input and a separate recommendation. Two work sessions were held with several community comments submitted.

Planning Commission Work Session 1 (July 16, 2025)

At its July 16, 2025, work session, the PC received five written comments and heard oral comments from three of the folks who submitted written comments. The PC requested staff to respond to the comments with additional information in preparation for the second work session.

[July 16th PC Meeting Packet](#)

[July 16th PC Meeting Video](#)

[July 16th PC Meeting Notes](#)

[July 16th Community Comments](#)

The primary topics of the comments were:

- Survey conducted from Dec. 2024 to Jan. 2025
- Conflicts with the West Linn Comprehensive Plan
- Contradictions in the Vision Plan

- Medium Density Residential in Ponds District
- Need to preserve the Ponds District
- Condition of the former Blue Heron Pond

Staff have created a [matrix of the comments with responses](#). PC member comments and questions are also included in the matrix.

Planning Commission Work Session 2 (August 20, 2025)

[August 20th PC Meeting Packet](#)

[August 20th PC Meeting Video](#)

[August 20th PC Community Written Comments](#)

At its August 20th work session, the PC revisited the 7/16 PC work session [comments](#) and associated [comment matrix](#) for final questions. Staff provided a floodplain boundary map and a wetland delineation report map for the property shown as medium-density residential in the Ponds District. The intent of the maps was to show how final surveying on a development proposal sets the resource boundaries. This level of detail is outside of the scope of the Vision Planning process, which is intended to represent potential future land uses, transportation improvements, trail connections, and natural resource protection areas.

The PC also reviewed the three implementation memos (Policy and Regulatory, Transportation, and Implementation and Financing – linked below as Appendix C) that were reviewed by the Working Group.

A few items were identified as potential recommendations to City Council:

1. Use the 1996 Flood Elevation on maps to better correspond to the 75-foot special flood hazard area elevation (100-year floodplain)
2. Remove “in planning stages” from the medium-density residential area in the Ponds District
3. Update map legends

The project team will bring the Final Draft Waterfront Community Vision Plan forward for adoption. The tentative schedule:

- Planning Commission Public Hearing – September 17, 2025
- City Council Work Sessions – October 2025
- City Council Public Hearing – Autumn/Winter 2025

After adoption of the Waterfront Community Vision Plan, staff will begin implementation work by analyzing appropriate zoning changes, development code amendments, and design standards for the West Linn Waterfront Project.

If you have any questions about the project or the materials, please reach out me at dwyss@westlinnoregon.gov or 503-742-6064.

Attachments

Resolution 2025-13

1. [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan](#) (attached)
2. [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan Appendix A](#) (link only)
3. [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan Appendix B](#) (link only)
4. [West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan Appendix C](#) (link only)

Important Links and Information

1. [Written Comment Submitted at 8/20 PC Meeting](#)
2. [Comment Response Matrix for 7/16 PC Meeting](#)
3. [Comments Received for 7/16 PC Meeting](#)
4. [Comments Received Dec. 2024 to May 2025](#)
5. [Comment Matrix](#)
6. [Vision Plan January 2025 Survey Results](#)

RESOLUTION 2025-13

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WEST LINN WATERFRONT VISION PLAN

WHEREAS, in 2016, City Council directed staff to begin working on the West Linn Waterfront Project and engage the community on the preferred future for the area; and

WHEREAS, City staff held a series of outreach events from 2016 to 2019 that included seven open houses (554 attendees), nine property owner meetings, nine neighborhood association meetings (169 attendees), Wednesday Market booth (51 contacts) and five civic group presentations (160 attendees); and

WHEREAS, the outreach resulted in the establishment of four Project Guiding Principles (Reinvestment Opportunities, Transportation Improvements, River Access, Historic Character), a preferred option to improve the Hwy 43 and Willamette Falls Drive intersection, and preferred land uses for the area; and

WHEREAS, the City Council appointed a working group in August 2023, which met six times to review project materials and to make a recommendation on a Waterfront Vision Plan; and

WHEREAS, City staff held a series of outreach events from 2024 to 2025 that included three open houses (~150 attendees), a project website (3,200 visits from January to June 2024), an online survey in Spring 2024 (573 responses, 65% not engaged previously), 10 civic group presentations, eight tabling events, and property owner meetings; and

WHEREAS, the working group found consensus in July 2025 to forward the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan to City Council with five recommendations; and

WHEREAS, the West Linn Planning Commission held two work sessions in July and August 2025 to discuss the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan; and

WHEREAS, the West Linn Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 17, 2025 and recommended adoption of the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan; and

WHEREAS, the West Linn City Council held two work sessions in October 2025 to discuss the West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan; and

WHEREAS, the West Linn City Council held a public hearing on November XX, 2025 to consider the recommendations, receive public testimony, and render a decision.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY OF WEST LINN RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. The West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan and Appendices, attached as Exhibit A, is hereby adopted.

This resolution was PASSED and ADOPTED this _____ day of _____, 2025, and takes effect upon passage.

RORY BIALOSTOSKY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

KATHY MOLLUSKY, CITY RECORDER

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

CITY ATTORNEY



Community Vision Plan

June 2025



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

City Council Members

Mayor Rory Bialostosky

Council President Mary Baumgardner

Councilor Leo (Lou) Groner

Councilor Carol Bryck

Councilor Kevin Bonnington

Planning Commission Members

John Carr

Joel Metlen

Jason Evans

Kathryn Schulte-Hillen

David D. Jones

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Project Management Team

Darren Wyss – City of West Linn, Planning

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CONTENTS

01

INTRODUCTION.....2

What is this Vision Plan?	3
Goals	5
Process	6
Study Area	7
Engagement	9
Guiding Principles	11

03

MARKET ANALYSIS.....22

Market Analysis (District Wide).....	23
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02

PLANNING FRAMEWORK..14

Towards a Planning Framework.....	15
Planning Framework.....	17
Design Principles.....	19

04

DISTRICT PLANNING.....28

District Planning Approach.....	29
Historic City Hall District.....	31
Cultural Heritage District.....	33
Pond District.....	35
Housing Density + Parking.....	37

APPENDICES

- A Community Engagement Summary
- B Existing Conditions Analysis





01

Introduction



A scenic view of a river with a small dam and a forested hill in the background. The river flows from the top left towards the bottom right, with a small dam structure in the middle. The background is a steep, forested hill with some buildings and power lines visible. The foreground shows the turbulent water of the river.

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.



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.

The goals of the Vision Plan are to:



PROCESS

This Vision Plan signifies the restart of the City's effort to reimagine the Waterfront, a process that began in 2016 but was delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Vision Plan was guided by a Project Working Group (PWG) that represents a diverse group of stakeholders whose input, advice, and feedback has helped shape the planning process. This Vision Plan document has undergone review and approval by the PWG.

Previous planning and community engagement were used to develop a Draft Vision Plan that was shared with the community in Spring 2024. Refinements were made based on community input and discussions with major property owners and key stakeholders to develop this Final Vision Plan. It includes a comprehensive vision for the site and each of its districts.

Subsequent phases, including Adoption, will identify the steps needed to materialize the plan, and update City policies to formally adopt the plan.

Fall/Winter 2023/24

- » Preliminary Vision Plan
- » Guiding Principles
- » Planning Framework
- » District Planning
- » Public Consultation
- » Option Testing

Plan Development

Summer/Fall 2024

- » Vision Plan Refinement
- » Option Refinement
- » Public Review
- » Final Vision Plan

Preferred Plan

Spring/Fall 2025

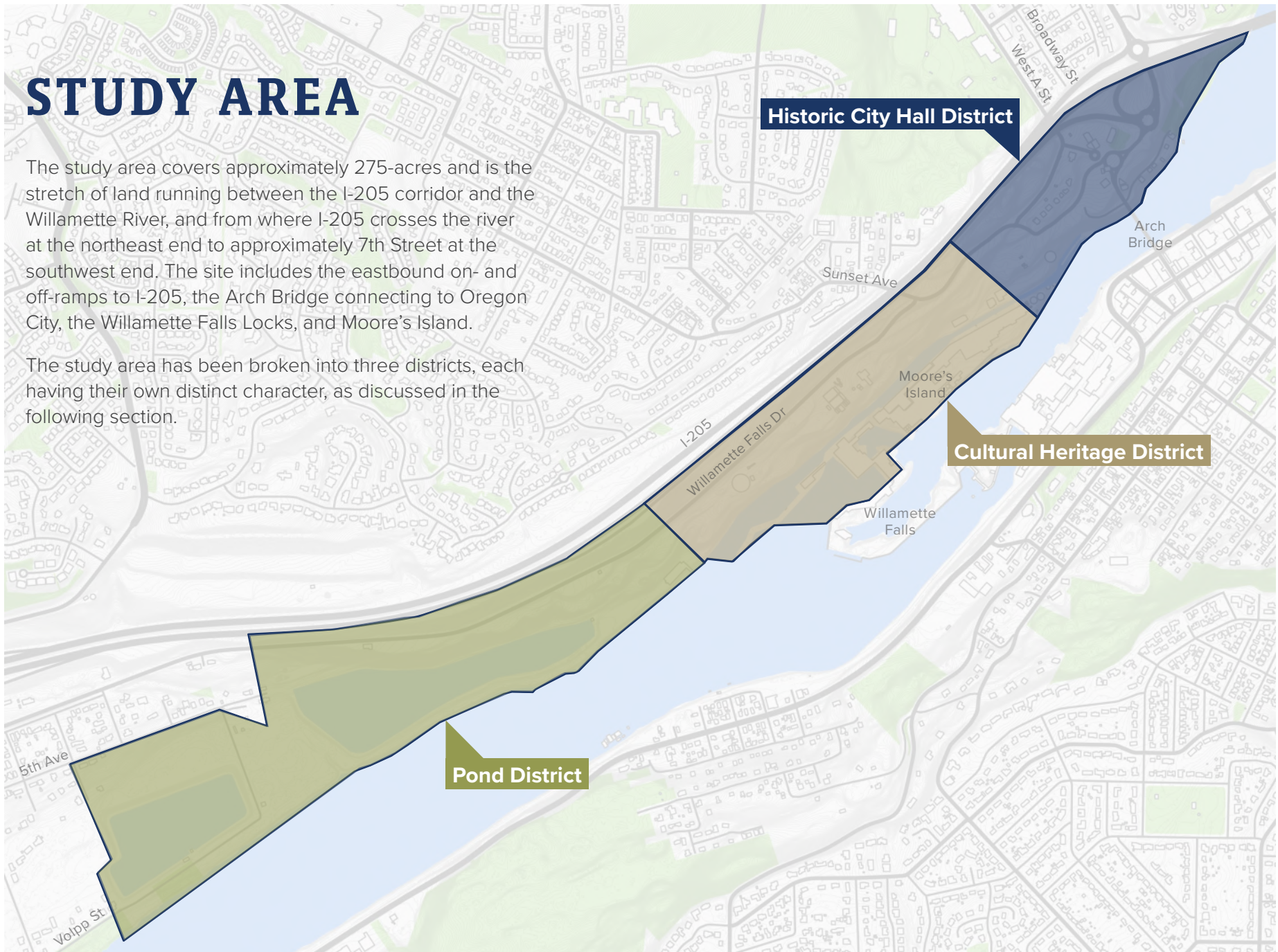
- » Policy / Regulatory Review
- » Implementation Strategies
- » Financing Plan
- » Public Review
- » Final Documentation

Adoption

STUDY AREA

The study area covers approximately 275-acres and is the stretch of land running between the I-205 corridor and the Willamette River, and from where I-205 crosses the river at the northeast end to approximately 7th Street at the southwest end. The site includes the eastbound on- and off-ramps to I-205, the Arch Bridge connecting to Oregon City, the Willamette Falls Locks, and Moore's Island.

The study area has been broken into three districts, each having their own distinct character, as discussed in the following section.



ALIGNED PROJECTS AND PLANNING EFFORTS

Planning for the study area has been ongoing for almost 40-years. Most recently, there have been numerous planning efforts and projects that will help inform the larger vision for the site.

-
- 1 Willamette Falls Inter-Tribal Public Access Project (Ongoing)
 - 2 Willamette Falls Locks Seismic Upgrade (2023)
 - 3 Oregon City-West Linn Pedestrian-Bicycle Bridge Concept Plan (2023)
 - 4 Willamette Falls Drive Concept Plan (2021)
 - 5 Willamette Falls Portage Trail Concept Study (2019)
 - 6 West Linn Mill Site & Willamette Falls Tour Feasibility Study (2019)
 - 7 PGE West Linn Waterfront Redevelopment Study (2019)
 - 8 West Linn Upland Site Development Work Session (2019)
 - 9 West Linn Master Plan for Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (2019)
 - 10 West Linn Comprehensive Plan (2017)
 - 11 West Linn Transportation System Plan (2016)
 - 12 West Linn Waterfront Project Assessment and Roadmap (2016)
 - 13 Blue Heron Aerated Stabilization Sludge Management Project (2015)
 - 14 Arch Bridge Concept Plan (2014)
 - 15 A Vision for the Willamette Falls Legacy Project (2014)
 - 16 Comprehensive Trails Master Plan (2013)
 - 17 Willamette Falls State Heritage Area

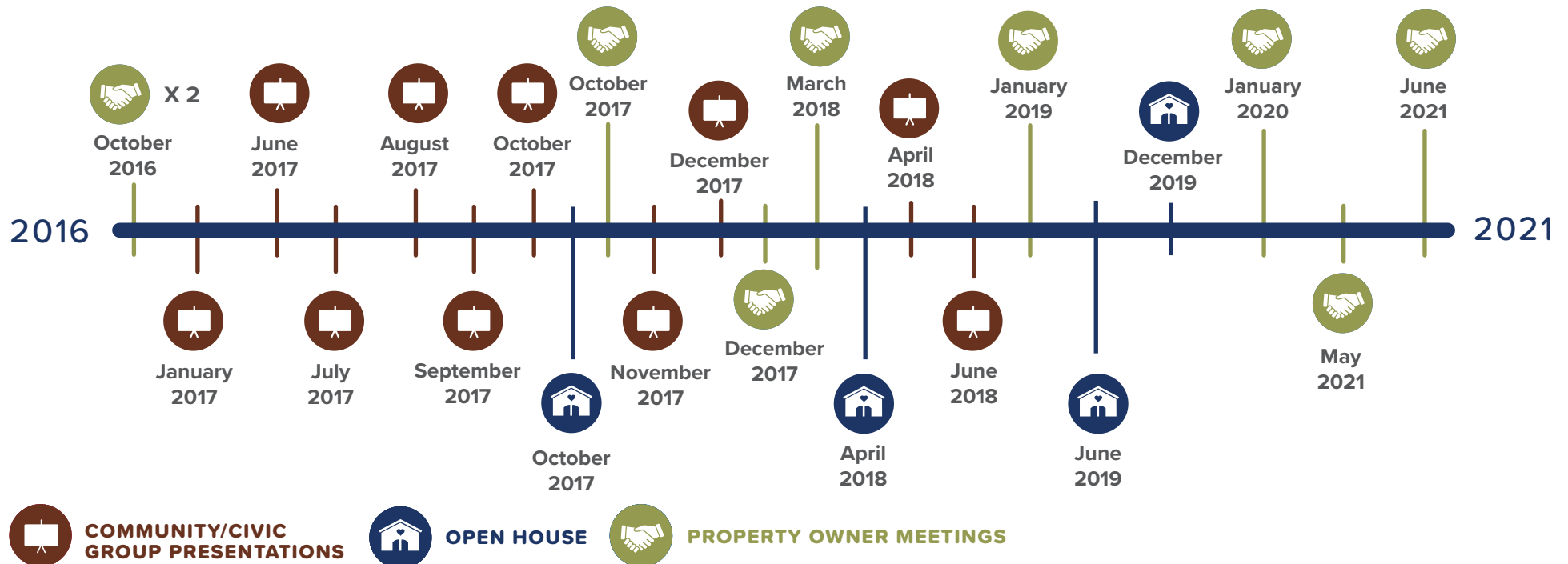
ENGAGEMENT

This Vision Plan builds on decades of thoughtful work conducted by City staff and the community to reimagine the Waterfront.

Planning conducted between 1986 and 2016 included several neighborhood and redevelopment plans within and nearby the project area. These were used by City staff to develop a set of preliminary guiding principles that were taken out to the public as part of the City's 2016 and 2021 engagement with the community.

Considerable community engagement – including open houses, community group presentations, and property owner meetings – resulted in refinements to the guiding principles and the preliminary identification of land uses and amenities that the community would like to see on the Waterfront. Out of the process, the City also developed a concept plan for Willamette Falls Drive that was adopted into the City's Transportation System Plan. Some of the key stakeholders and property owners have also conducted and are continuing to conduct their own planning to understand how they can best realize the potential for the Waterfront.

2016–2021 PRELIMINARY ENGAGEMENT



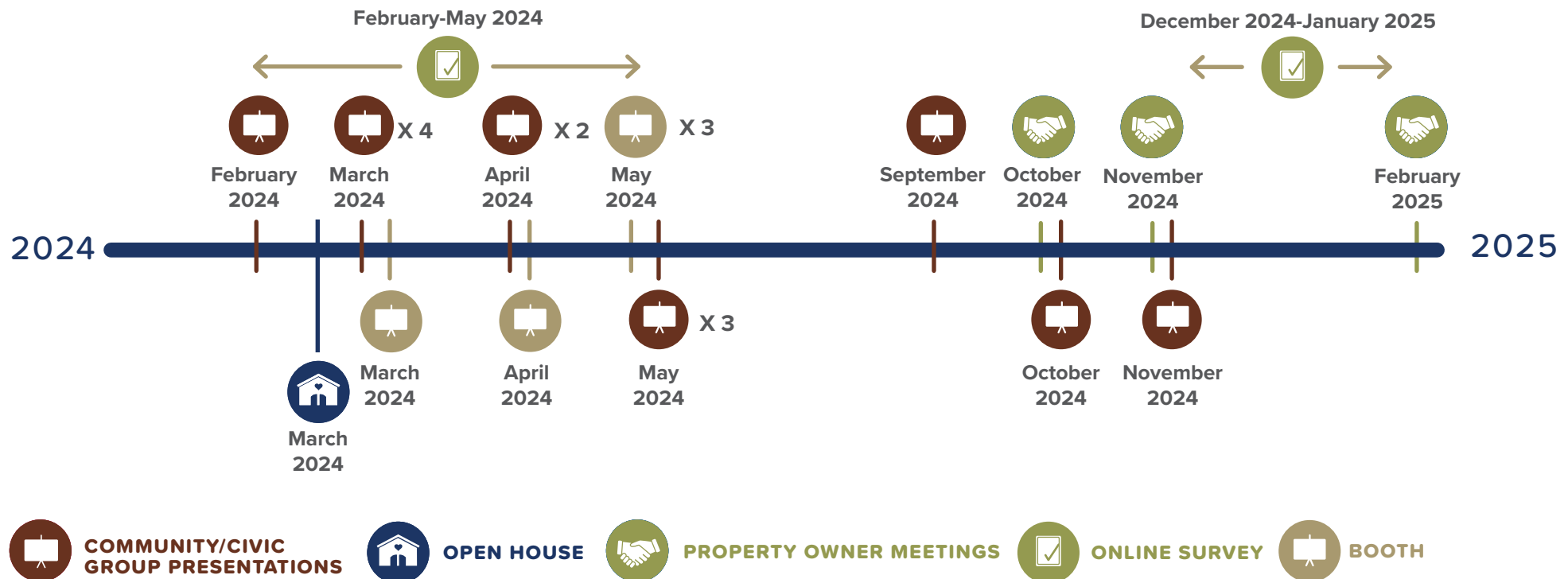
The launch of this Vision Plan led to the City's most recent 2024/2025 engagement efforts which obtained input on the Draft Vision Plan and confirmed the planning framework for each district. The input received was used to revise the final Vision Plan and will inform future phases of implementation including zoning, land use, transportation, and code development.

Public engagement included both virtual and in-person activities. Virtual engagement was facilitated through a project website, online surveys,

an interested parties sign-up link, social media, city newsletters, and a comment form. In-person engagement included a public open house, presentations to community organizations, and tabling events. Future community engagement will continue to provide opportunities for partners and the public to comment on the next stages of implementation.

For more information on the key outcomes and findings from recent engagement efforts, see Appendix A.

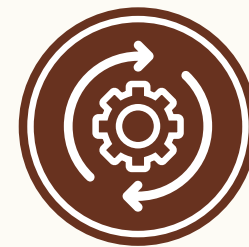
2024-2025 VISION PLAN ENGAGEMENT





GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Four guiding principles were developed from extensive public consultation. These represent the community's priorities for the West Linn Waterfront and were used to shape the design concepts presented in this Vision Plan.



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.





02

Planning Framework



TOWARDS A PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Planning Framework serves as a blueprint to safeguard natural and cultural resources while identifying ongoing work and potential new development areas along the Waterfront. It is grounded in a comprehensive physical analysis, covering floodplain areas, shoreline access and conditions, and steep slopes, among other overlays.

Appendix B includes a more detailed physical analysis that shaped the development of the Planning Framework.

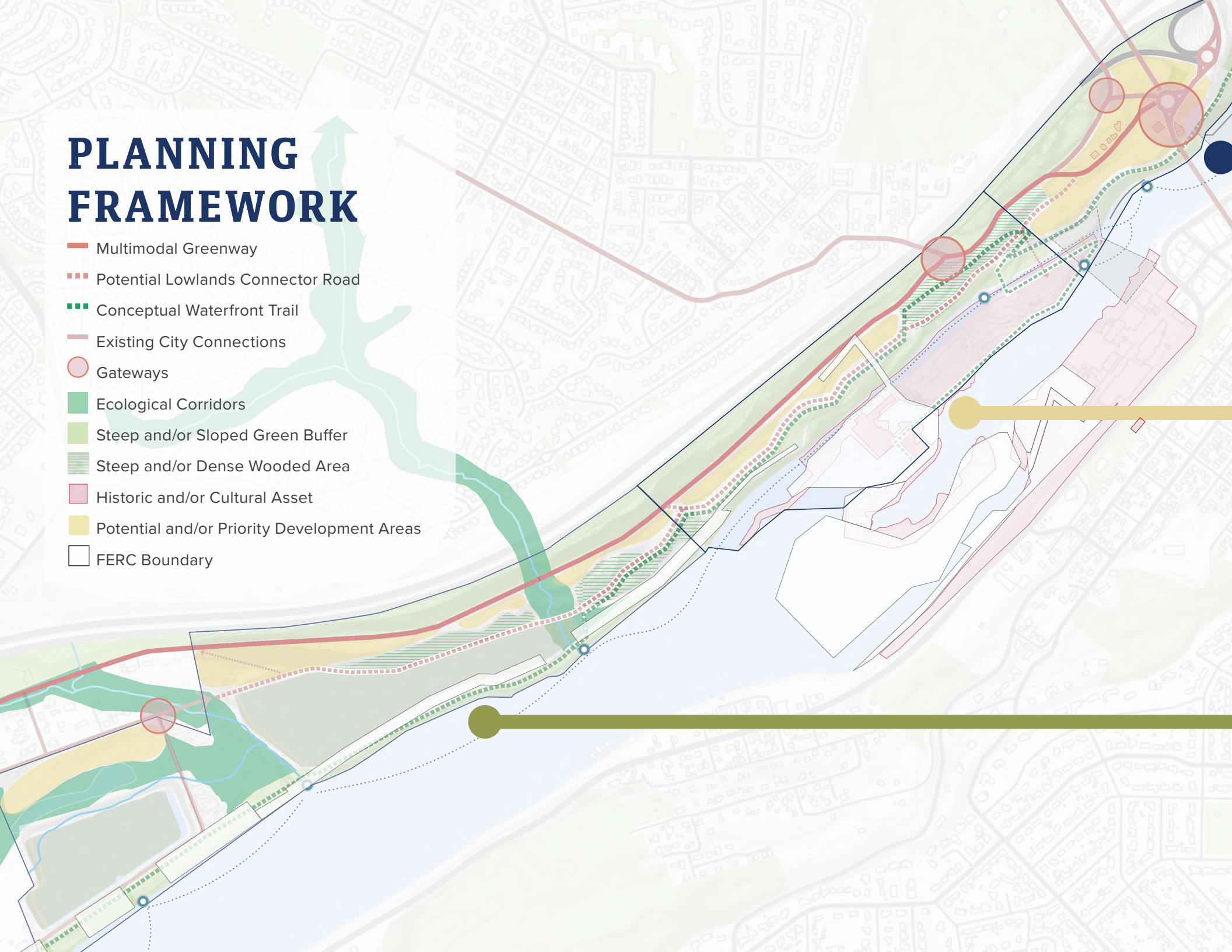
**THIS FRAMEWORK
PLACES THE NATURAL
AND CULTURAL ASSETS
OF THE SITE AT ITS
CORE.**





PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- Multimodal Greenway
- Potential Lowlands Connector Road
- Conceptual Waterfront Trail
- Existing City Connections
- Gateways
- Ecological Corridors
- Steep and/or Sloped Green Buffer
- Steep and/or Dense Wooded Area
- Historic and/or Cultural Asset
- Potential and/or Priority Development Areas
- FERC Boundary



KEY PLANNING ISSUES

Historic City Hall District:

- Highest elevation with terraced views of the river, falls, and larger region.
- Location of Historic City Hall and other historically designated buildings.
- Most connected 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.

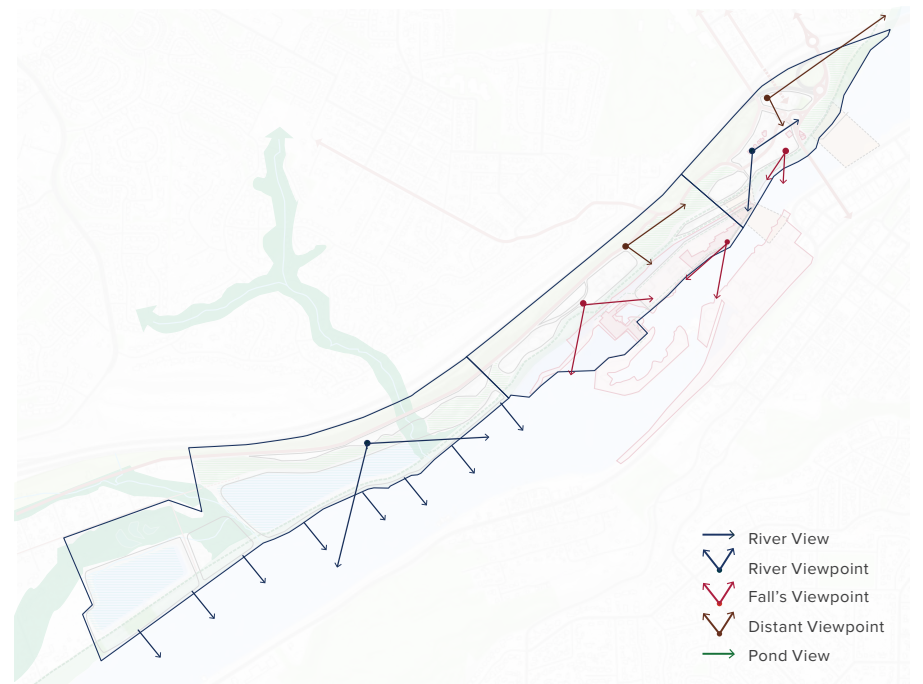
DESIGN PRINCIPLES

Aligned with the Planning Framework, the Design Principles aim to ensure design integrity and consistency throughout the development of the Waterfront. The Design Principles should inform design and planning decisions for the Waterfront and be used to evaluate the degree to which any future development proposal is consistent with Vision Plan.

These Design Principles build on the Vision Plan's Guiding Principles of Reinvestment Opportunities, Transportation Improvements, River Access, and Historic Character.

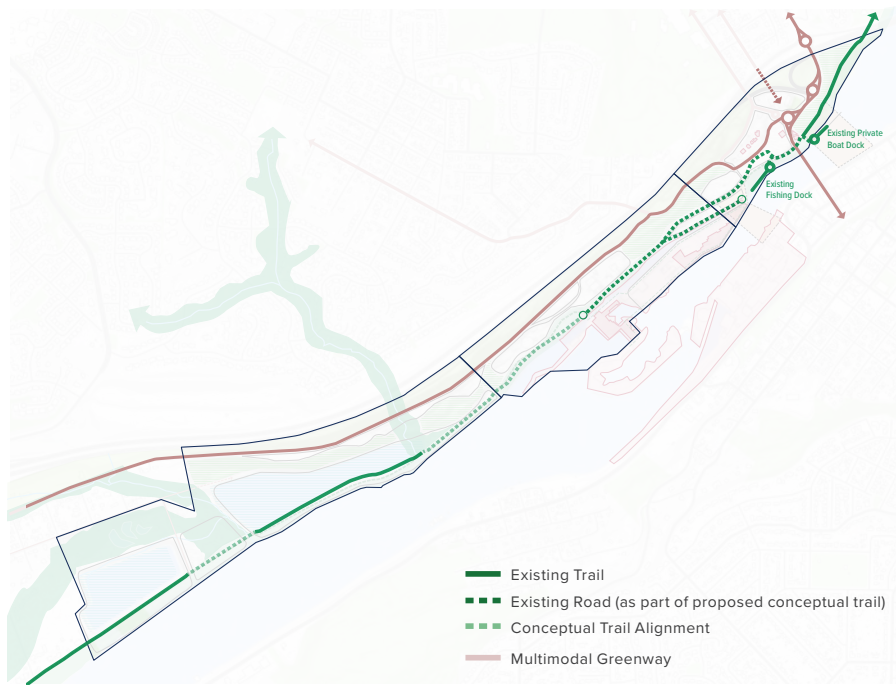
Placemaking and Form

- 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.







03

Market Analysis



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.**

HOUSING

Opportunities:

Multifamily housing is in high demand throughout the Portland Metro Area, including Clackamas County.

While Lake Oswego and Oregon City have built housing recently, West Linn has not seen new multifamily housing construction over the past decade, indicating unmet demand.

As the region's population continues to age, and older homeowners increasingly choose to downsize, there is an expectation of increased demand for senior housing. The Waterfront could be an ideal location for senior condos or apartments, care facilities, or multigenerational housing opportunities.

Rental vacancies are relatively low.

While floodplain challenges may not make parts of the Waterfront ideal for housing, housing combined with ground floor retail or parking in floodplain areas is likely feasible.

Though current high interest rates have suppressed construction in the entire housing market, multi-family housing is likely to remain a desirable development type as interest rates ease.

Unique location and views are a potential draw for tenants.

Challenges:

Construction of housing would have to be balanced with maintaining public access to the river as well as preserving valuable riparian and wetland habitats.

Access and lack of connectivity is a challenge/deterrent for potential tenants.

Financing affordable housing on land with substantial development expenses may be challenging.

RETAIL

Opportunities:

Small-format retail, such as restaurants or recreation-based businesses, that accentuate the site's natural and place-based features, such as riverfront and waterfall views, are likely feasible.

Public-facing light industrial that incorporates retail, such as a brew pub and restaurant that contains its brewery operations on-site, are likely feasible.

Annual rent per square foot in the Lake Oswego-West Linn submarket is significantly higher than the Portland Metro Area overall, and is expected to continue rising.

Other destination retail that could be feasible on-site are outdoor amphitheaters or other event venues.

The Waterfront is a destination location with the potential to bring a wide variety of visitors. Despite the lack of connectivity with other retail centers in the area, the Waterfront has potential to become a unique retail destination through experiential, multi-tenant offerings.

Challenges:

Retail is likely to be most feasible in conjunction with another use rather than as a standalone.

Retail is out of favor with the popularity of e-commerce and there is a lack of connectivity with other retail centers in West Linn.



Lake Oswego, OR - Windward, Multifamily + Ground Floor Retail



Hood River, OR - Pfriem Family Brewers

OFFICE

Opportunities:

Rent in the Lake Oswego-West Linn submarket is above the Portland Metro Area average and appears to have recovered since 2020.

Challenges:

Due to the COVID-19 evolution of work-from-home, new office construction is not likely within the next 5-10 years.

Rent is expected to flatten over the next few years.

INDUSTRIAL

Opportunities:

Light industrial (like breweries, wineries, distilleries, and coffee roasters) and/or maker space could add jobs while being compatible with other waterfront uses.

The vacancy rate is extremely low and is expected to stay low in the near term.

Rents have been growing substantially both in the market and submarket.

Improvements to connectivity with I-205.

Challenges:

Industrial may not be compatible with plans to bring people back to the river as a natural area.

Increased truck traffic could be a challenge given the constrained and steep street network.

Conventional industrial uses are not advisable due to the need for access through residential areas and the presence of steep streets.

CIVIC/INSTITUTIONAL

Opportunities:

Civic amenities like green space, parks, waterfront access, and event space can help strengthen community and catalyze commercial development.

Civic spaces that host events, festivals, and recreational activities can increase foot traffic and benefit new local businesses.

Developer requirements, incorporating offsite enhancements, have the potential to finance the creation of new civic spaces and public facilities.

Anchor tenants such as large trusts may be interested in financing the construction of larger civic spaces.

Challenges:

ADA access and integration into the larger site will be challenging given steep slopes and limited existing access. A collection of smaller civic and green spaces may be appropriate given steep topography and access issues.

HOSPITALITY

Opportunities:

Destination or experience-based hotel could be a major draw to the Waterfront.

With the potential for the Waterfront to develop into a premier destination, the feasibility will increase for boutique hospitality offerings with the possibility of a small-scale event venue that takes advantage of the unique waterfront location.

Travelers seek authentic, locally immersive experiences. Alternative lodging options that are combined with other experiential uses such as the Falls, natural areas, cultural attractions, a main street, concert venue or similar amenities may be feasible.

Easy access to I-205 helps to serve the area as a destination.

Challenges:

Many consumers seek unique and personalized experiences that may not be offered by traditional hotels.

Hospitality occupancy and average daily rates (ADR) are low in West Linn's surrounding areas.

The lack of a sizable business travel sector in the submarket makes traditional hotel difficult.



Vancouver, WA - Waterfront Park







04

District Planning



DISTRICT PLANNING APPROACH

Planning for each Waterfront District adopted a three-fold approach: the overlay of the Planning Framework and Design Principles, a market analysis that aligns development goals with economic viability, and integration of community identified interests and property owner considerations. This strategy is instrumental in identifying each district's overarching identity and character, laying the groundwork for land-use and program decisions.

Planning Framework + Design Principles

A comprehensive roadmap that defines site-wide opportunities while providing an understanding of the planning issues specific to each district.



Market Analysis

An assessment of the feasibility of programming elements and land uses given the current and near-term market conditions of West Linn.



Community Feedback

Identification of desired land uses and amenities for the Waterfront, based on public engagement from 2016-19 and feedback on the Draft Vision Plan in Spring 2024. Outreach was also conducted to major property owners to seek feedback on development and program opportunities and challenges on their sites.



DISTRICT APPROACH

A thorough understanding of the district's identity and character form the basis for context-sensitive planning and land-uses.

IDENTITY + CHARACTER

The unique qualities, attributes, and cultural significance of a district distinguishes it from other locations. These elements are essential in shaping how residents, visitors, and stakeholders perceive and connect with the place.

LAND USE FOCUS

Aligning the types of activities, developments, and amenities with the unique characteristics, needs, and aspirations of the district.

POTENTIAL PROGRAMS

Proposed programs align with the district's identity and land use focus while meeting community needs and contributing positively to the overall vision for the Waterfront.



HISTORIC CITY HALL DISTRICT

A walkable, dynamic waterfront hub with a strategic emphasis on new development opportunities and transportation improvements.

IDENTITY + CHARACTER:

Dense, active, and diverse

LAND USE FOCUS:

Higher density and diversity of uses.

A mix of residential, commercial developments, and a reimagined Historic City Hall incorporated into signature public spaces.

POTENTIAL PROGRAMS:

- Central public square or other signature public space
- “Main Street” with street facing cafes/restaurants
- Multi-family residential with ground floor commercial
- Enhanced fishing and boat docks – with watercraft access
- Project to restore Historic City Hall as a cultural/heritage center and anchor for visitor experience opportunities.
- Public parking structure



Framework Plan



Public Square / Plaza for Civic Gathering



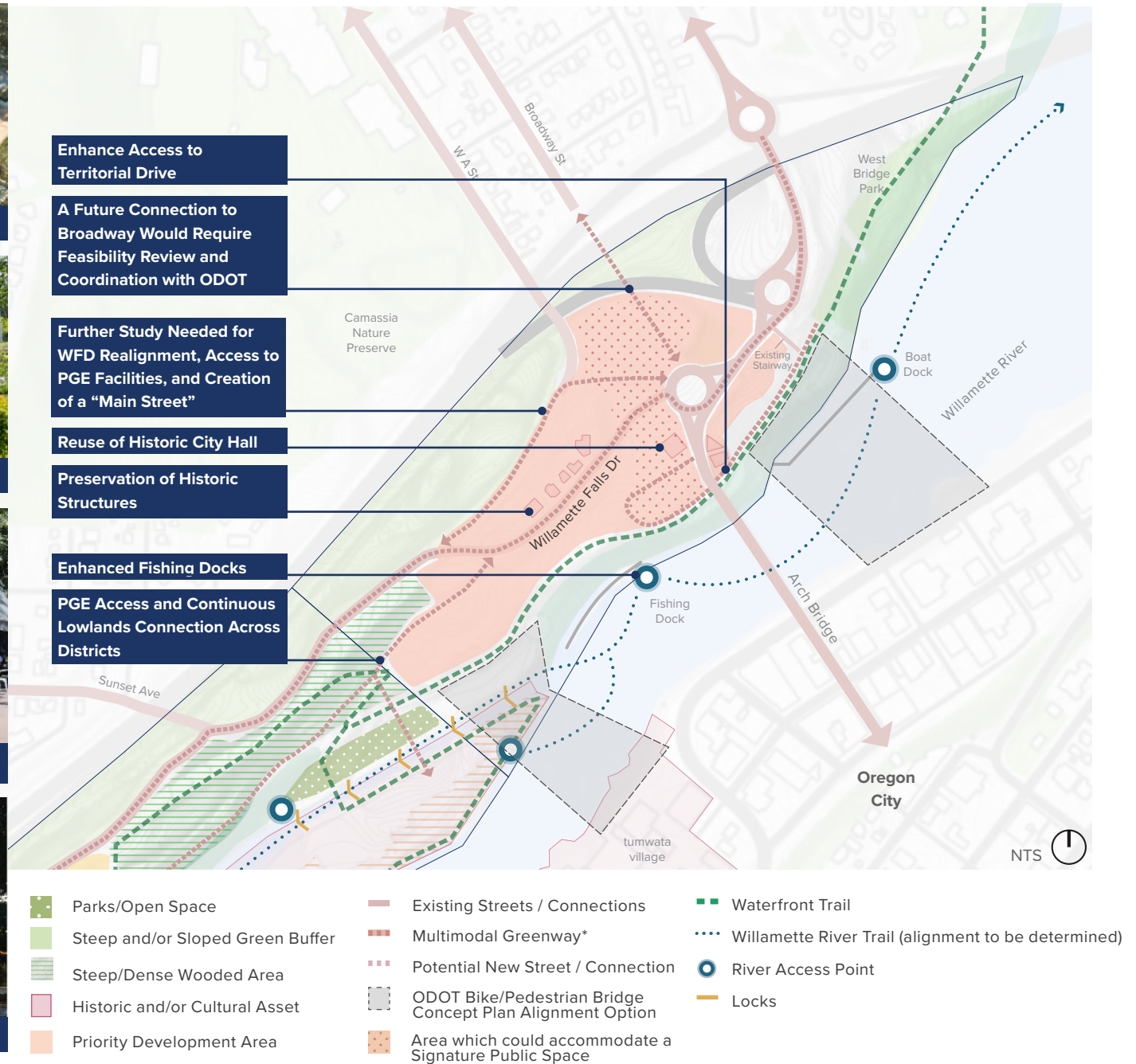
Active Trail Edges



"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.

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



Framework Plan



Tribal Specific Spaces



Trails with Viewing Platforms



Market / Maker Spaces



Terraced, Multi-Family Residential

Future Planning Studies to be Conducted by Property Owners to Determine Access and Development Feasibility

Continuous Lowlands Connection Across Districts

Further Study Needed to Determine Access to Moore's Island

River Trail Access through Locks

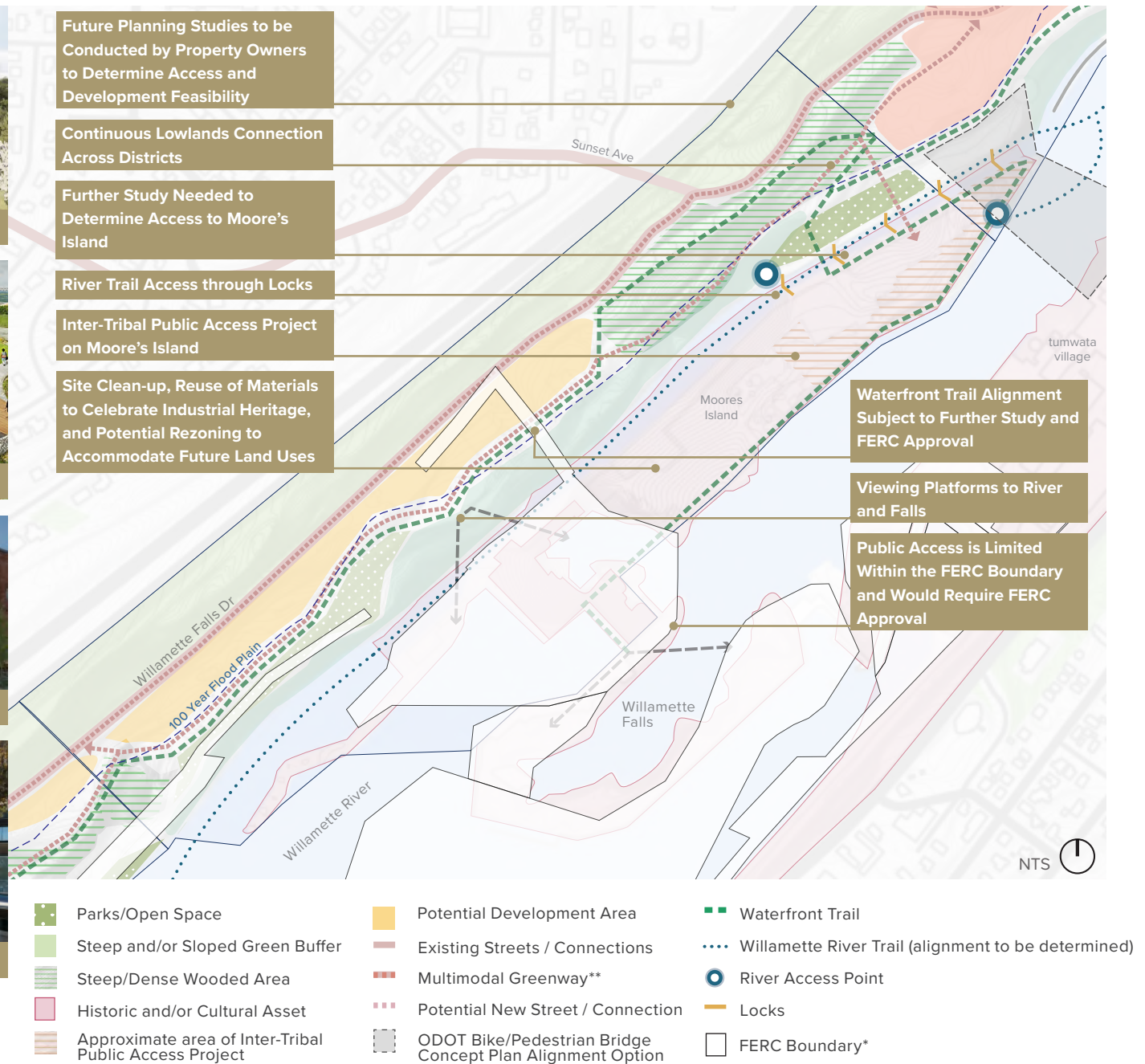
Inter-Tribal Public Access Project on Moore's Island

Site Clean-up, Reuse of Materials to Celebrate Industrial Heritage, and Potential Rezoning to Accommodate Future Land Uses

Waterfront Trail Alignment Subject to Further Study and FERC Approval

Viewing Platforms to River and Falls

Public Access is Limited Within the FERC Boundary and Would Require FERC Approval



*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.

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:

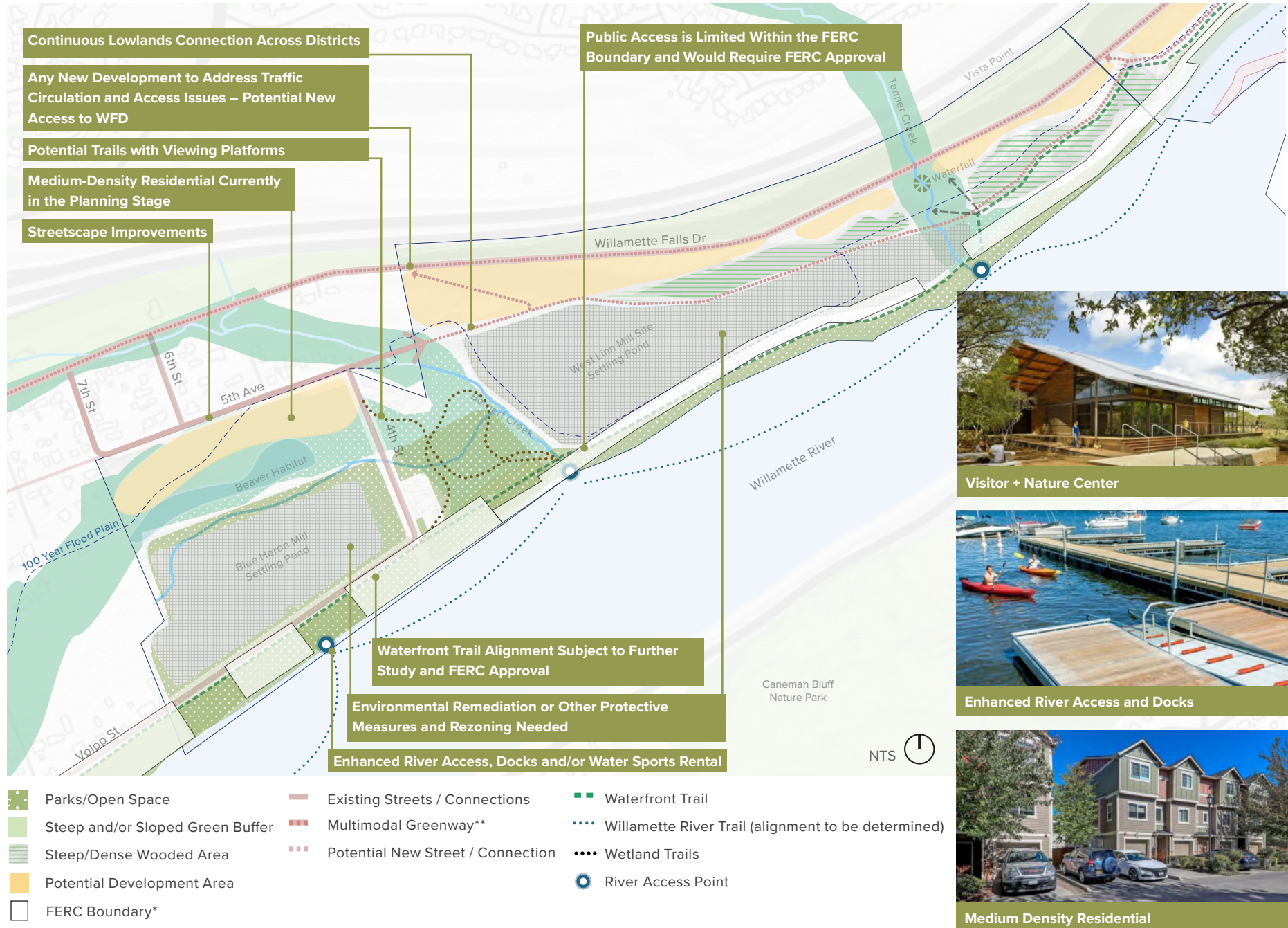
Lower intensity of uses. Preservation and rehabilitation of natural areas with development that is appropriately scaled to the adjacent neighborhood and natural resources. Collaborate with property owners to identify opportunities for ecological restoration alongside new development.

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



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.

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HOUSING DENSITY + PARKING

To better understand the potential for new residential development along the Waterfront, the following pages outline a range of options categorized by dwelling units per acre, a key metric for assessing residential density and corresponding housing typology options or configurations. This spectrum spans from lower-density, single-family options to higher-density, mixed-use or multi-family structures. The examples presented offer visual representations to illustrate how new residential development can align with the character, land use priorities, and potential programming within each Waterfront District.

The City of West Linn undertook a process to update it's parking policies to conform with the State's Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) requirements. The code amendments removed minimum parking mandates, maintained maximum parking numbers, and updated parking lot design standards. This will allow more flexible and efficient parking strategies in the Waterfront including allowing the market to drive parking demand.

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<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 State: OR
Units: 1 Year Built: U/C (2025)
Acres: 0.17 Du/acre: 6
Construction: Wood Frame Stories: 2



19th and Graf Apartment Homes
Low-Rise Garden Apartments
City: Bozeman State: MT
Units: 195 Year Built: 2023
Acres: 26.30 Du/acre: 7
Construction: Wood Frame Stories: 3



Greenwood Avenue Cottages
Cottage Cluster
City: Shoreline State: WA
Units: 8 Year Built: 2001
Acres: 0.78 Du/acre: 10
Construction: Wood Frame 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	State: WA
Units: 49	Year Built: 2020
Acres: 4.24	Du/acre: 12
Construction: Wood Frame	Stories: 2



Meritage at Mill Creek
Garage-Parked Townhomes

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



Canemah Cottages
Cottage Cluster

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

>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



WEST LINN
WATERFRONT
PROJECT