

IMPACT STATEMENT

Legislation title: Accept the Central City Potential Swimming Beach Sites Study (Resolution)

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Purpose of proposed legislation and background information:

The study addresses the public's increased desire to have access to and into the Willamette River for swimming and wading. Five Central City sites that have a naturally-occurring beach along with land side connections were evaluated to determine their potential to be safe, family-friendly public beaches. Each of these sites will require further study to consider specific improvements and amenities to meet demand for river-side recreation and swimming. City Council's acceptance of the Central City Potential Swimming Beach Sites Study would provide direction for future riverfront park planning efforts in the Central City.

The study is consistent with and implements the City Council-approved *Central City 2035 Southeast Quadrant Plan*, which includes Central-City-wide goals, policies and actions that are intended to increase access to and along the Willamette River, enhance the river's role for recreation and increase the community's enjoyment and direct experience with the river, and provide for safe and enjoyable water-based recreation for all users. Relevant Central City-wide policies from the *Central City 2035 Plan Proposed Draft* are: Willamette River Policy 41, Portland's Commons and Policy 46, Willamette River Recreation and Appreciation. Southeast Quadrant applicable policies are: Urban Design, Policy 1, Willamette River, Policy 1, Active River Recreation. Also, an action calls for studying the most feasible locations in the Central City for formal public beach access and swimming.

Financial and budgetary impacts:

Development of "pop-up" summer swimming beach at Poetry at the Beach, is a pilot program proposed for funding in the 2017/18 City budget at a cost of \$158,000. The funds would be used to provide a swimming area buoy line, signage, trash cans, bicycle parking, lifeguards and life vest/information booth. The swimming beach would be open to the public in July-September. No funding is identified beyond this trial "pop-up" river swimming beach program.

Future riverfront park planning will be needed to determine specific beach site design and compatibility in context with other desires such as habitat enhancement projects, needed access improvements and appropriate amenities, related costs, regulatory requirements, potential funding sources and timelines for implementation. Final costs would include both construction and soft costs (e.g. design fees, contractor costs, insurance, bonding, permit fees).

Community impacts and community involvement:

The study included a number of community involvement activities: stakeholder interviews, a survey and a public open house. A July 2014 held Central City 2035 Plan Southeast Quadrant river walk and a June 2015 held public agency charrette on the Eastbank Crescent area also provided public input into the final report.

An intercept survey targeting youth, families and underserved communities was conducted to gauge interest in a public beach in the Central City and to find out what conditions and amenities were important for a safe, desirable beach. Outreach was conducted at Matt Dishman and East Portland community centers in addition to Portland Community College and the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. Eighty-seven (87) percent of respondents supported the idea of a public beach in the Central City. The most important desired conditions cited were:

- Shallow, slow water for young children
- Clearly identified swimming area
- Access to public transportation
- Access to parking
- Restrooms and showers

This information, along with research into the factors affecting the success of river beaches in other Pacific Northwest cities, served as the basis for the criteria developed that were used to assess potential beach sites in the Central City.

A public open house held in June 2016 to share the study’s results, affirmed public support for increased recreational access into the Willamette River to swim. Future river recreation planning efforts would continue to engage the full community.

Throughout the planning study process updates on the project were communicated through the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability’s web site and Central City 2035 Plan and River Plan News electronic newsletters. PPR shared project information with potentially interested members of the public through their email contacts. These efforts increased the public’s awareness of the project and encouraged their participation. Future river swimming beach planning efforts will continue stakeholder and general public involvement through outreach, communications and public input opportunities.

Budgetary Impact Worksheet

Does this action change appropriations?

- YES:** Please complete the information below.
 NO: Skip this section

Fund	Fund Center	Commitment Item	Functional Area	Funded Program	Grant	Sponsored Program	Amount