

## Chapter 3: Urban Form

### What is this chapter about?

The goals and policies in this chapter convey the City's intent to:

- Foster an equitable system of compact mixed use and commercial centers across the city to increase access to community services and businesses, and create more low-carbon complete healthy connected neighborhoods.
- Improve Portland's major corridors so that they become vibrant urban places and key transportation connections.
- Enhance Portland's public realm, integrate nature into the city, and link people, places, and wildlife through active transportation facilities, green infrastructure investments, urban tree canopy, and habitat connections.
- Describe the city's overall development pattern and area character to inform and guide future plans, investments, and development.

### Why is this important?

Portland's identity now and in the future is significantly shaped by the design and physical structure of the city and its neighborhoods. How people live and get around is partly determined by the location of services and other destinations and the arrangement and design of buildings and connections provided by streets, trails, and other public spaces. Together these design characteristics help determine whether: (1) a community is walkable, (2) children have safe places to play, (3) people have places to gather, and (4) businesses are easy to access.

Where housing and services are built, where street networks are connected, and how all of this is designed provides a key opportunity to: (1) enable people to meet more of their daily needs locally, (2) strengthen neighborhoods, (3) improve equitable access to services, and (4) support healthy, active living.

This chapter includes policies that support enhancing centers and corridors across the city as anchors to complete neighborhoods, providing Portlanders convenient access to local services. Clustering destinations in centers makes access by transit, walking, wheelchair, and bicycle more practical and reduces the amount of driving needed to get to services. Focusing growth and investments in centers and along corridors can also make good use of existing infrastructure capacity and encourage efficiency in new infrastructure investments.

This network of well-functioning centers and corridors will be critical to achieve the Portland Plan goals to make it possible for most Portlanders (80 percent) to live in complete neighborhoods by 2035, and to meet goals for travel by transit, walking, and bicycling.

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## **Goals**

### **GOAL 3.A: A city designed for people**

Portland's built environment is designed to serve the needs and aspirations of all Portlanders, promoting prosperity, health, equity, and resiliency. New development, redevelopment, and public investments reduce disparities and encourage social interaction to create a healthy connected city.

### **GOAL 3.B: A climate and hazard resilient urban form**

Portland's compact urban form, sustainable building development practices, green infrastructure, and active transportation system reduce carbon emissions, reduce natural hazard risks and impacts, and improve resilience to the effects of climate change.

### **GOAL 3.C: Focused growth**

Household and employment growth is focused in the Central City and other centers, corridors, and transit station areas, creating compact urban development in areas with a high level of service and amenities, while allowing the relative stability of lower-density single-family residential areas.

### **GOAL 3.D: A system of centers and corridors**

Portland's interconnected system of centers and corridors provides diverse housing options and employment opportunities, robust multimodal transportation connections, access to local services and amenities, and supports low-carbon complete, healthy, and equitable communities.

### **GOAL 3.E: Connected public realm and open spaces**

A network of parks, streets, City Greenways, and other public spaces supports community interaction; connects neighborhoods, districts, and destinations; and improves air, water, land quality, and environmental health.

### **GOAL 3.F: Employment districts**

Portland supports job growth in a variety of employment districts to maintain a diverse economy.

### **GOAL 3.G: Nature in the city**

A system of habitat corridors weaves nature into the city, enhances habitat connectivity, and preserves natural resources and the ecosystem services they provide.

## Policies

### Citywide Design and Development

- Policy 3.1**     **Urban Design Framework.** Use the Urban Design Framework (UDF) as a guide to create inclusive and enduring places, while providing flexibility for implementation at the local scale to meet the needs of local communities. *See Figure 3.1 — Urban Design Framework.*
- Policy 3.2**     **Growth and stability.** Direct the majority of growth and change to centers, corridors, and transit station areas, allowing the continuation of the scale and characteristics of Portland’s residential neighborhoods.
- Policy 3.3**     **Equitable development.** Guide development, growth, and public facility investment to reduce disparities; encourage equitable access to opportunities, mitigate the impacts of development on income disparity, displacement and housing affordability; and produce positive outcomes for all Portlanders.
- 3.3.a.** Anticipate, avoid, reduce, and mitigate negative public facility and development impacts, especially where those impacts inequitably burden communities of color, under-served and under-represented communities, and other vulnerable populations.
- 3.3.b.** Make needed investments in areas that are deficient in public facilities to reduce disparities and increase equity. Accompany these investments with proactive measures to avoid displacement and increase affordable housing.
- 3.3.c.** Encourage use of plans, agreements, incentives, and other tools to promote equitable outcomes from development projects that benefit from public financial assistance.
- 3.3.d.** Incorporate requirements into the Zoning Code to provide public and community benefits as a condition for development projects to receive increased development allowances.
- 3.3.e.** When private property value is increased by public plans and investments, require development to address or mitigate displacement impacts and impacts on housing affordability, in ways that are related and roughly proportional to these impacts.
- 3.3.f.** Coordinate housing, economic development, and public facility plans and investments to create an integrated community development approach to restore communities impacted by past decisions. *See Policy 5.18.*

**3.3.g.** Encourage developers to engage directly with a broad range of impacted communities to identify potential impacts of private development projects, develop mitigation measures, and provide community benefits to address adverse impacts.

- Policy 3.4**     **All ages and abilities.** Strive for a built environment that provides a safe, healthful, and attractive environment for people of all ages and abilities.
- Policy 3.5**     **Energy and resource efficiency.** Support energy-efficient, resource-efficient, and sustainable development and transportation patterns through land use and transportation planning.
- Policy 3.6**     **Land efficiency.** Provide strategic investments and incentives to leverage infill, redevelopment, and promote intensification of scarce urban land while protecting environmental quality.
- Policy 3.7**     **Integrate nature.** Integrate nature and use green infrastructure throughout Portland.
- Policy 3.8**     **Leadership and innovation in design.** Encourage high-performance design and development that demonstrates Portland’s leadership in the design of the built environment, commitment to a more equitable city, and ability to experiment and generate innovative design solutions.
- Policy 3.9**     **Growth and development.** Evaluate the potential impacts of planning and investment decisions, significant new infrastructure, and significant new development on the physical characteristics of neighborhoods and their residents, particularly under-served and under-represented communities, with particular attention to displacement and affordability impacts. Identify and implement strategies to mitigate the anticipated impacts. *More detailed policies are in Chapter 5: Housing.*
- Policy 3.10**    **Rural, urbanizable, and urban land.** Preserve the rural character of rural land outside the Regional Urban Growth Boundary. Limit urban development of urbanizable land beyond the City Limits until it is annexed and full urban services are extended.

*Additional service provision and urbanization policies are found in Chapter 8: Public Facilities and Services.*

**Policy 3.11 Significant places.** Enhance and celebrate significant places throughout Portland with symbolic features or iconic structures that reinforce local identity, histories, and cultures and contribute to way-finding throughout the city. Consider these especially at:

- High-visibility intersections
- Attractions
- Schools, libraries, parks, and other civic places
- Bridges
- Rivers
- Viewpoints and view corridor locations
- Historically or culturally significant places
- Connections to volcanic buttes and other geologic and natural landscape features
- Neighborhood boundaries and transitions

### Centers

Centers are compact and pedestrian-oriented urban places. They are connected to public transit and active transportation networks. They anchor complete neighborhoods with retail stores and businesses (grocery stores, restaurants, markets, shops, etc.), civic amenities (libraries, schools, community centers, places of worship, etc.), housing options, health clinics, daycare centers, employment centers, plazas and parks, or other public gathering places.

Centers will be the primary areas for growth and change in Portland over the next 20 years. Focusing new growth in centers helps achieve goals of having more Portlanders live in complete neighborhoods, use public transit and active transportation — walking, biking, and rolling — to commute to work and complete errands, and it will help mitigate and prepare for the effects of climate change. Clustering destinations and housing within compact, walkable centers makes access by transit, walking, wheelchair, and bicycle more practical and reduces the amount of driving needed to access services, reducing the impact on roadways, reducing congestion, and helps in facilitating freight movement.

Centers range in scale from the Central City's downtown to small neighborhood centers, providing local access to services and allowing Portlanders across the city to live a healthy, active lifestyle. Neighborhood business districts and the commercial services they provide are the foundation of many centers, but centers, particularly larger centers, will also become a focus for public services, gathering places, and housing growth. In and around all centers, there will be change as areas urbanize and new services, shops and housing are developed.

The UDF identifies four types of centers that vary in size, scale, service area, local versus regional role, and density of residents and businesses. The specific boundaries of these centers are shown on the Comprehensive Plan Map.

The four types are:

1. Central City
2. Regional Center (Gateway)
3. Town Center
4. Neighborhood Center

*See Figure 3-3 — Centers.*

Policies in this section identify essential elements and functions of centers that will be enhanced over time. Additional policies provide more detailed direction for specific types of centers based on their scale.

**Policy 3.12 Role of centers.** Enhance centers as anchors of complete neighborhoods that include concentrations of commercial and public services, housing, employment, gathering places, and green spaces.

**Policy 3.13 Variety of centers.** Plan for a range of centers across the city to enhance local, equitable access to services, and expand housing opportunities.

**Policy 3.14 Housing in centers.** Provide housing capacity for enough population to support a broad range of commercial services, focusing higher-density housing within a half-mile of the center core.

**Policy 3.15 Investments in centers.** Encourage public and private investment in infrastructure, economic development, and community services in centers to ensure that all centers will support the populations they serve.

**Policy 3.16 Government services.** Encourage the placement of services in centers, including schools and colleges, health services, community centers, daycare, parks and plazas, library services, and justice services.

**Policy 3.17 Arts and culture.** Ensure that land use plans and infrastructure investments allow for and incorporate arts, culture, and performance arts as central components of centers.

**Policy 3.18 Accessibility.** Design centers to be compact, safe, attractive, and accessible places, where the street environment makes access by transit, walking, biking, and mobility devices such as wheelchairs, safe and attractive for people of all ages and abilities.

- Policy 3.19 Center connections.** Connect centers to each other and to other key local and regional destinations, such as schools, parks, and employment areas, by pedestrian trails and sidewalks, bicycle sharing, bicycle routes, frequent and convenient transit, and electric vehicle charging stations. Prepare and adopt future street plans for centers that currently have poor street connectivity, especially where large commercial parcels are planned to receive significant additional housing density.
- Policy 3.20 Green infrastructure in centers.** Integrate nature and green infrastructure into centers and enhance public views and connections to the surrounding natural features.

*Policies related to the design of centers are in Chapter 4: Design and Development. Policies related to housing in centers are in Chapter 5: Housing. Policies related to businesses and economic development in centers are located in Chapter 6: Economic Development. Additional policies related to transportation and access in centers are in Chapter 9: Transportation.*

### Central City

The Central City is a living laboratory for how the design and function of a dense urban center can concurrently provide benefits to human health, the natural environment, and the local economy. As Portland is the major center for jobs, transit, services, and civic and cultural institutions for the entire city and region. The Central City houses numerous attractions including Portland State University, the Oregon Convention Center, City Hall, Tom McCall Waterfront Park and the Willamette River, Pioneer Courthouse Square, and many museums and venues for artistic and cultural activities and professional sports. The Central City's ten unique districts include Downtown, the West End, Goose Hollow, Pearl, Old Town/Chinatown, Lower Albina, Lloyd, the Central Eastside, South Waterfront, and South Downtown/University. Together, these districts provide a diversity of opportunities for urban living, economic development, retail and entertainment.

- Policy 3.21 Role of the Central City.** Encourage continued growth and investment in the Central City, and recognize its unique role as the region's premier center for jobs, services, and civic and cultural institutions that support the entire city and region.
- Policy 3.22 Model Urban Center.** Promote the Central City as a living laboratory that demonstrates how the design and function of a dense urban center can concurrently provide equitable benefits to human health, the natural environment, and the local economy.
- Policy 3.23 Central City employment.** Encourage the growth of the Central City's regional share of employment and continue its growth as the region's unique center for innovation and exchange through commerce, employment, arts, culture, entertainment, tourism, education, and government.



- Policy 3.24 Central City housing.** Encourage the growth of the Central City as Portland’s and the region’s largest center with the highest concentrations of housing and with a diversity of housing options and services. *See also Policy 5.32.*
- Policy 3.25 Transportation hub.** Enhance the Central City as the region’s multimodal transportation hub and optimize regional access as well as the movement of people and goods among key destinations.
- Policy 3.26 Public places.** Promote public places and the Willamette River waterfront in the Central City as places of business and social activity and gathering for the people of its districts and the broader region.

### **Gateway Regional Center**

Gateway Regional Center is East Portland’s major center, providing the area and region with civic, employment, and community services. It includes the city’s largest transit hub outside of downtown and good freeway access to regional destinations such as Portland International Airport.

- Policy 3.27 Role of Gateway.** Encourage growth and investment in Gateway to enhance its role as East Portland’s center of employment, commercial, and public services.
- Policy 3.28 Housing.** Encourage housing in Gateway, to create East Portland’s largest concentration of high-density housing.
- Policy 3.29 Transportation.** Enhance Gateway’s role as a regional high-capacity transit hub that serves as an anchor for East Portland’s multimodal transportation system.
- Policy 3.30 Public places.** Enhance the public realm and public places in Gateway to provide a vibrant and attractive setting for business and social activity that serves East Portland residents and the region.

### **Town Centers**

Town Centers are located throughout Portland to serve broad parts of the city. They are typically anchored by employment centers or institutions, feature a wide range of commercial and community services, and have a wide range of housing options. Development in Town Centers is intended to be up to mid-rise in scale, with larger scale buildings primarily located close to high-capacity transit stations. Mid-rise development is typically as high as five to seven stories.

- Policy 3.31**    **Role of Town Centers.** Enhance Town Centers as successful places that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods as well as a wider area, and contain higher concentrations of employment, institutions, commercial and community services, and a wide range of housing options.
- Policy 3.32**    **Housing.** Provide for a wide range of housing types in Town Centers, which are intended to generally be larger in scale than the surrounding residential areas. There should be sufficient zoning capacity within a half-mile walking distance of a Town Center to accommodate 7,000 households.
- Policy 3.33**    **Transportation.** Improve Town Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that optimize access from the broad area of the city they serve and are linked to the region’s high-capacity transit system.
- Policy 3.34**    **Public places.** Provide parks or public squares within or near Town Centers to support their roles as places of focused business and social activity.

### Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood Centers are smaller, sometimes village-like centers that include a mixture of higher density commercial and residential buildings. Because these centers are smaller than Town Centers, there are many more of them citywide. Development in Neighborhood Centers is generally intended to be low-rise in scale, although larger scale can be appropriate in locations close to high-capacity transit stations or near the Central City. Low-rise development typically includes buildings up to four stories in height.

- Policy 3.35**    **Role of Neighborhood Centers.** Enhance Neighborhood Centers as successful places that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods. In Neighborhood Centers, provide for higher concentrations of development, employment, commercial and community services, and a wider range of housing options than the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Policy 3.36**    **Housing.** Provide for a wide range of housing types in Neighborhood Centers, which are intended to generally be larger in scale than the surrounding residential areas, but smaller than Town Centers. There should be sufficient zoning capacity within a half-mile walking distance of a Neighborhood Center to accommodate 3,500 households.
- Policy 3.37**    **Transportation.** Design Neighborhood Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that are served by frequent-service transit and optimize pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods.
- Policy 3.38**    **Public places.** Provide small parks or plazas within or near Neighborhood Centers to support their roles as places of local activity and gathering.

## Inner Ring Districts

The Inner Ring Districts include some of Portland’s oldest neighborhoods, with several historic districts and a broad diversity of housing types. These areas include distinct districts, such as Albina and Northwest Portland, that have multiple mixed-use corridors in proximity (*see the shaded areas in the Urban Design Framework*), allowing most residents to live within a quarter-mile distance of frequent-service transit and neighborhood businesses. The Inner Ring Districts are also served by a highly interconnected system of streets and sidewalks, and are within a three-mile biking distance of the Central City’s array of services, jobs, and amenities.

These policies acknowledge that growth in the Inner Ring Districts plays an important role in allowing more people to have access to their many opportunities, but also acknowledge that this growth should be integrated into these areas’ historic urban fabric. The Inner Ring Districts, especially along their corridors, play a similar role to Town Centers in accommodating growth.

- Policy 3.39 Growth.** Expand the range of housing and employment opportunities in the Inner Ring Districts. Emphasize growth that replaces gaps in the historic urban fabric, such as redevelopment of surface parking lots and 20th century auto-oriented development.
- Policy 3.40 Corridors.** Guide growth in corridors to transition to mid-rise scale close to the Central City, especially along Civic Corridors.
- Policy 3.41 Distinct identities.** Maintain and enhance the distinct identities of the Inner Ring Districts and their corridors. Use and expand existing historic preservation and design review tools to accommodate growth in ways that identify and preserve historic resources and enhance the distinctive characteristics of the Inner Ring Districts, especially in areas experiencing significant development.
- Policy 3.42 Diverse residential areas.** Provide a diversity of housing opportunities in the Inner Ring Districts’ residential areas. Encourage approaches that preserve or are compatible with existing historic properties in these areas. Acknowledge that these areas are historic assets and should retain their established characteristics and development patterns, even as Inner Ring centers and corridors grow. Apply base zones in a manner that takes historic character and adopted design guidelines into account.

**Policy 3.43 Active transportation.** Enhance the role of the Inner Ring Districts' extensive transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks in conjunction with land uses that optimize the ability for more people to utilize this network. Improve the safety of pedestrian and bike connections to the Central City. Strengthen transit connections between the Inner Ring Districts and to the Central City.

### Corridors

Corridors, like centers, are areas where Portland will grow and change much over the next 20 years. They are busy, active streets with redevelopment potential. They are close to neighborhoods and are places with transit, stores, housing, and employers. They need to be planned, designed, and improved to be places that benefit and become successful additions to surrounding neighborhoods. The largest places of focused activity and density along these corridors are designated as centers.

There are two types of street corridors:

1. Civic Corridors
2. Neighborhood Corridors

*See Figure 3-2 — Corridors.*

**Policy 3.44 Growth and mobility.** Coordinate transportation and land use strategies along corridors to accommodate growth and mobility needs for people of all ages and abilities.

**Policy 3.45 Connections.** Improve corridors as multimodal connections providing transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle access and that serve the freight needs of centers and neighborhood business districts.

**Policy 3.46 Design.** Encourage street design that balances the important transportation functions of corridors with their roles as the setting for commercial activity and residential living.

**Policy 3.47 Green infrastructure in corridors.** Enhance corridors with distinctive green infrastructure, including landscaped stormwater facilities, extensive tree plantings, and other landscaping that both provide environmental function and contribute to a quality pedestrian environment.

### Civic Corridors

Civic Corridors are the city's busiest, widest, and most prominent streets. They provide major connections among centers, the rest of the City, and the region. They support the movement of people and goods across the city, with high levels of traffic and pedestrian activity. Civic Corridors provide opportunities for growth and transit-supportive densities of housing, commerce, and employment. Development in Civic Corridors is intended to be up

to mid-rise in scale, with lower scale generally more appropriate in locations far from the Central City or transit stations. Mid-rise development typically ranges from five to seven stories.

Abundant trees and high-quality landscaping beautify Civic Corridors and offset the impacts of their large paved areas. These corridors exemplify the benefits of green infrastructure by cleaning and soaking up stormwater runoff and minimizing urban heat island effects, while also being enjoyable places to live, work, and gather. Civic corridors are safe for all types of transportation. Civic Corridors policies apply to the roadway, the public realm of the street, and the buildings that line the street.

**Policy 3.48 Integrated land use and mobility.** Enhance Civic Corridors as distinctive places that are models of ecological urban design, with transit-supportive densities of housing and employment, prominent street trees and other green features, and high-quality transit service and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

**Policy 3.49 Design great places.** Improve public streets and sidewalks along Civic Corridors to support the vitality of business districts, create distinctive places, provide a safe, healthy, and attractive pedestrian environment, and contribute to quality living environments for residents.

**Policy 3.50 Mobility corridors.** Improve Civic Corridors as key mobility corridors of citywide importance that accommodate all modes of transportation within their right-of-way or on nearby parallel routes.

**Policy 3.51 Freight.** Maintain freight mobility and access on Civic Corridors that are also Major or Priority Truck Streets.

## **Neighborhood Corridors**

Neighborhood Corridors are narrower main streets that connect neighborhoods with each other and to other parts of the city. They have transportation, land use, and design functions that are important at a neighborhood or district level. They support neighborhood business districts and provide housing opportunities close to local services, amenities, and transit lines. They are streets that include a mix of commercial and higher-density housing development. This policy is intended to balance the important transportation functions of Neighborhood Corridors with their roles in supporting the viability of business districts and residential livability.

**Policy 3.52 Neighborhood Corridors.** Enhance Neighborhood Corridors as important places that support vibrant neighborhood business districts with quality multi-family housing, while providing transportation connections that link neighborhoods.

### Transit station areas

Transit stations provide access to high-capacity transit, which currently consists of the region's light rail system, and in the future may also include bus rapid transit. These policies encourage housing and employment growth in transit station areas to maximize people's ability to benefit from the regional connections they provide and to increase transit access to employment. The policies support a range of transit station area types, with differing priorities for growth, depending on the station type and context.

Priority is given to growth in station areas located in centers since they provide more people with opportunities to be close to both transit and to commercial and public services. These stations have the highest potential for mixed use development. Center stations benefit from the concentration of local services and businesses as well as connections to other transit routes typically found on corridors. Mixed-use development with housing is not the priority for all transit station areas; some are locations for employment, or they serve major regional destinations such as the Oregon Zoo. *See Figure 3-4 — Transit Station Areas.*

**Policy 3.53 Transit-oriented development.** Encourage transit-oriented development and transit-supportive concentrations of housing and jobs, and multimodal connections at and adjacent to high-capacity transit stations.

**Policy 3.54 Community connections.** Integrate transit stations into surrounding communities and enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities (including bike sharing) to provide safe and accessible connections to key destinations beyond the station area.

**Policy 3.55 Transit station area safety.** Design transit areas to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and personal safety.

**Policy 3.56 Center stations.** Encourage transit stations in centers to provide high density concentrations of housing and commercial uses that maximize the ability of residents to live close to both high-quality transit and commercial services.

**Policy 3.57 Employment stations.** Encourage concentrations of jobs and employment-focused land uses in and around stations in employment-zoned areas.

**Policy 3.58 Transit neighborhood stations.** Encourage concentrations of mixed-income residential development and supportive commercial services close to transit neighborhood stations. Transit neighborhood stations serve mixed-use areas that are not in major centers.

**Policy 3.59 Destination stations.** Enhance connections between major destinations and transit facilities and strengthen the role of these station areas as places of focused activity.

## City Greenways

City Greenways are a system of distinctive pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly streets and trails, enhanced by lush tree canopy and landscaped stormwater facilities that support active living by expanding transportation and recreational opportunities and making it easier and more attractive to reach destinations across the city. As Portland continues to grow, the City Greenways system will strengthen connections to nature, weave green elements into neighborhoods, and enhance mobility and recreation.

City Greenways are a network that includes the following types of infrastructure:

1. Enhanced greenway corridors are distinctive streets with extensive tree canopy and landscaped stormwater facilities that provide connections between major centers, schools, parks, natural areas, and the rivers. Enhanced greenway corridors often involve improvements to existing streets, including wide planting strips and other features that provide space for large-canopy trees.
2. Trails are designated routes on land or water that provide public access for recreation or transportation purposes, such as walking and bicycling. They are often located along rivers, through natural areas, or along rail or highway rights-of-way, with connections to and through neighborhoods.
3. Heritage parkways are iconic streets or segments of streets with elements such as linear parkways, scenic views, and distinctive landscaping or street design.
4. Neighborhood greenways are an extensive network of streets with low volumes of motor vehicle traffic that are prioritized for bicycles and enhance the pedestrian environment, working in conjunction with the rest of the City Greenways system to extend the system into all neighborhoods.

*See Figure 3-5 – City Greenways.*

**Policy 3.60 Connections.** Create a network of distinctive and attractive City Greenways that link centers, parks, schools, rivers, natural areas, and other key community destinations.

**Policy 3.61 Integrated system.** Create an integrated City Greenways system that includes regional trails through natural areas and along Portland’s rivers, connected to neighborhood greenways, and heritage parkways.

**Policy 3.62 Multiple benefits.** Design City Greenways that provide multiple benefits that contribute to Portland’s pedestrian, bicycle, green infrastructure, and parks and open space systems.

**Policy 3.63 Design.** Use design options such as distinctive street design, motor vehicle diversion, landscaping, tree plantings, scenic views, and other appropriate design options, to create City Greenways that extend the experience of open spaces and nature into neighborhoods, while improving stormwater management and calming traffic.

*Additional policies related to City Greenways are provided in Chapter 9: Transportation-*

### Urban habitat corridors

Urban habitats are natural and built areas that provide safe, healthy places for resident and migratory fish and wildlife species that live in and move through the city. Maintaining diverse, connected habitat corridors will help fish and wildlife thrive in and adapt to continued human population growth, development, and climate change. Urban habitat corridors also benefit Portlanders by keeping air and water clean and cool, reducing the risks from landslides and flooding, and providing places for people to play, learn, and experience nature.

Urban habitats encompass the city's most valuable and distinctive natural features – the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, streams and sloughs, wetlands, and large forested areas, such as Tryon Creek State Park, Forest Park and the West Hills, Willamette Bluff, and the East Buttes. Other urban habitats are woven throughout the built environment and include street and yard trees, backyard plantings, parks, and bridges that provide opportunities for bird nesting. Enhancing or establishing new urban habitat corridors will involve preserving and restoring existing natural features, creating vegetated connections between tree canopy and greenspaces, and incorporating nature into the design of buildings and landscaping, streetscapes, parking lots, and infrastructure.

These policies support plans, regulations, and investments to restore and reconnect habitat in diverse areas within the city.

*See Figure 3-6 – Urban Habitat Corridors.*

**Policy 3.64 Urban habitat corridors.** Establish a system of connected, well-functioning, and diverse habitat corridors that link habitats in Portland and the region, facilitate safe fish and wildlife access and movement through and between habitat areas, enhance the quality and connectivity of existing habitat corridors, and establish new habitat corridors in developed areas.

**Policy 3.65 Habitat connection tools.** Improve habitat corridors using a mix of tools including natural resource protection, property acquisition, natural resource restoration, tree planting and landscaping with native plants, and ecological design integrated with new development.



**Policy 3.66 Connect habitat corridors.** Ensure that planned connections between habitat corridors, greenways, and trails are located and designed to support the functions of each element, and create positive interrelationships between the elements, while also protecting habitat functions, fish, and wildlife.

*Additional policies related to habitat corridors are provided in Chapter 7: Watershed Health and the Environment.*

## **Employment areas**

Portland is a major employment center in the region and the state. The diversity of the economy is spread evenly among four types of business sectors that thrive in different parts of the city: industrial, office, institutional, and retail/service. The city's employment geographies are:

**Central City:** The Central City is the region's high-density employment center. It is primarily an office district for professional and business services, finance, information, software, and government. It is also a key location for the entertainment, small industry, and education sectors.

**Industrial Districts:** Industrial districts are in the low, flat areas along Portland Harbor and the Columbia Corridor, Oregon's freight infrastructure hub. Manufacturing and distribution sectors concentrate here. They typically need one-story buildings, medium to large sites, and locations buffered from housing. There is also an industrial district in the Central Eastside and smaller industrial areas scattered around the city, mostly adjacent to major transportation hubs.

**Neighborhood Commercial:** Neighborhood Commercial areas are mainly home to the retail, personal service, and related sectors that serve customers on-site. These businesses locate amid their market areas, lining corridors across the city. They generally need ground-floor space along pedestrian or auto-oriented streets.

**Campus Institutions:** Institutions in the health care and education sectors are concentrated in large hospital and college campuses and dispersed smaller facilities. Major institutions are large employers with campuses that vary from pastoral expanses to more concentrated urban grounds. They are located throughout the city, often in or adjacent to residential areas.

Each of these sectors is growing, and each has different land use needs and offers different prosperity benefits. Traded sector (export) businesses bring income and jobs into the region and are mainly in the industrial and office sectors. Middle-wage jobs that require less college education and offer upward mobility are concentrated in the industrial sectors. Office jobs offer a wide variety of wages and are mainly concentrated in the Central City but are also distributed in neighborhood business districts.

## URBAN FORM

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Retail and service sector jobs are concentrated in the Central City and neighborhood business districts. They provide needed services to residents and include many locally-owned businesses; they do not typically offer higher-paying employment opportunities. The health care and education sectors are the leading job growth opportunities, most of which are located on major campuses. Healthcare is one of the city's fastest growing employment sectors.

**Regional Truck Corridors:** Maintaining the primary truck routes into and through the city supports Portland's role as an important West Coast hub and a gateway for international and domestic trade. These streets are integral to the growth of traded sector businesses such as manufacturing, warehousing and distribution industries.

*See Figure 3-7 – Employment Areas.*

**Policy 3.67 Employment area geographies.** Consider the land development and transportation needs of Portland's employment geographies when creating and amending land use plans and making infrastructure investments.

**Policy 3.68 Regional Truck Corridors.** Enhance designated streets to accommodate forecast freight growth and support intensified industrial use in nearby freight districts. *See Figure 3-7 – Employment Areas.* Designated regional truckways and priority truck streets (Transportation System Plan classifications are shown to illustrate this network).

*Policies for each of the employment areas are provided in Chapter 4: Economic Development. Policies related to the design of the Central City are provided in the Centers section of this chapter. Policies related to industrial areas are provided in Chapter 4: Economic Development, with some river-related policies located in the Rivers Pattern Area section of this chapter.*

*Policies related to the design of neighborhood commercial areas are provided in the Centers and Corridors sections of this chapter and in the Pattern Areas section of this chapter. Policies related to freight are provided in Chapter 4: Economic Development and in Chapter 9: Transportation.*

## Pattern Areas

Portland has five distinct Pattern Areas. The development patterns and characteristics of these areas are influenced by the natural landscape and how and when these parts of the city were developed.

1. Rivers
2. Central City
3. Inner Neighborhoods
4. Western Neighborhoods
5. Eastern Neighborhoods

Each Pattern Area has unique physical, social, cultural, and environmental qualities that differentiate them and create their sense of place. To maintain and enhance the positive qualities and sense of place in each pattern area, it is desirable to have policies and regulations that respond to each area's unique natural and built assets.

The following policies identify key positive characteristics of each of Portland's Pattern Areas that are relevant to decisions related to future development in these areas. Area and neighborhood plans should be consulted for more detailed guidance on design priorities in different parts of the city.

### **Rivers Pattern Area**

Human settlement began along and at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers because it offered Native Americans plentiful food, natural resources, and critically-important trade and transportation opportunities. After white immigrants began moving to the area, the settlement grew into the city of Portland. As the city's initial form-giving features, the two rivers have continued to shape the city.

Today, the Willamette and Columbia rivers continue to serve multiple functions and roles.

The rivers:

- Are features of significant historic and cultural significance to Native American tribes and others throughout the region.
- Serve as essential industrial transportation corridors that support the local and regional economy.
- Support recreational, subsistence, and commercial fisheries.
- Provide important habitat for resident and migratory fish and wildlife.
- Are important scenic, recreational, and transportation amenities for Portlanders and visitors.

*See Figure 3-8 – Pattern Areas.*

These policies foster development and land stewardship approaches that recognize, support, and balance the varied systems, uses, and activities along the Columbia and Willamette rivers, including: the Portland Harbor, Columbia Corridor, and other prime industrial lands; habitat areas and corridors; distinctive riverfront neighborhoods along the banks; and access to, along, and within the rivers.

**Policy 3.69 Historic and multi-cultural significance.** Recognize, restore, and protect the historic and multi-cultural significance of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, including current activities such as subsistence fishing of legally-permitted fish species.

**Policy 3.70 River transportation.** Recognize and enhance the roles of the Willamette and Columbia rivers as part of Portland's historic, current, and future

transportation infrastructure, including for freight, commerce, commuting, and other public and private transportation functions.

- Policy 3.71 Recreation.** Improve conditions along and within the Willamette and Columbia rivers to accommodate a diverse mix of recreational users and activities. Designate and invest in strategically-located sites along the length of Portland’s riverfronts for passive or active recreation activities that are compatible with nearby land uses, historically and culturally important sites, significant habitat areas, restoration sites, and native fish and wildlife usage.
- Policy 3.72 Industry and port facilities.** Enhance the regionally significant economic infrastructure that includes Oregon’s largest seaport and largest airport, unique multimodal freight, rail, and harbor access; the region’s critical energy hub; and proximity to anchor manufacturing and distribution facilities.
- Policy 3.73 Habitat.** Enhance the roles of the Willamette and Columbia rivers and their confluence as an ecological hub that provides locally and regionally significant habitat for fish and wildlife and habitat restoration opportunities.
- Policy 3.74 Commercial activities.** Enhance the roles of the Willamette and Columbia rivers in supporting local and regional business and commerce, including commercial fishing, tourism, recreation, and leisure.
- Policy 3.75 River neighborhoods.** Enhance the strong river orientation of residential areas that are located along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.
- Policy 3.76 River access.** Enhance and complete Portland’s system of river access points and riverside trails, including the Willamette Greenway Trail, and strengthen active transportation connections between neighborhoods and the rivers.
- Policy 3.77 River management and coordination.** Coordinate with federal, state, regional, special districts, and other agencies to address issues of mutual interest and concern, including economic development, recreation, water transportation, flood and floodplain management and protection, regulatory compliance, permitting, emergency management, endangered species recovery, climate change preparation, Portland Harbor Superfund, brownfield cleanup, and habitat restoration.
- Policy 3.78 Columbia River.** Enhance the role of the Columbia River for river dependent industry, fish and wildlife habitat, subsistence and commercial fisheries, floating- and land-based neighborhoods, recreational uses, and water transportation.

- Policy 3.79** **Willamette River North Reach.** Enhance the role of the Willamette River North Reach for river dependent industry, fish and wildlife habitat, and as an amenity for riverfront neighborhoods and recreational users.
- Policy 3.80** **Willamette River Central Reach.** Enhance the role of the Willamette River Central Reach as the Central City and region’s primary riverfront destination for recreation, history and culture, emergency response, water transportation, and as habitat for fish and wildlife.
- Policy 3.81** **Willamette River South Reach.** Enhance the role of the Willamette River South Reach as fish and wildlife habitat, a place to recreate, and as an amenity for riverfront neighborhoods and others.
- Policy 3.82** **Willamette River Greenway.** Maintain multi-objective plans and regulations to guide development, infrastructure investments, and natural resource protection and enhancement within and along the Willamette Greenway. *See Figure 3-9 — Willamette Greenway Boundaries.*

*Additional policies related to these topics can be found in Chapter 6: Economic Development, Chapter 7: Watershed Health and the Environment, and Chapter 4: Design and Development.*

### **Central City Pattern Area**

The Central City is home to Portland’s greatest concentrations of employment, and civic, cultural, and higher education institutions. Primary natural features include the Willamette River, large street trees, green streets and landscaping, and corridors of park blocks that further weave nature into the Central City. The area’s high-density mixed-use neighborhoods contribute to the distinct identities of different areas within the Central City. These policies highlight some key design priorities for the Central City related to its distinctive urban form. These policies encourage design in the Central City that enhances its role as the region’s center of innovation and exchange, in recognition that a healthy city must have a healthy core.

*Additional policies related to the design of the Central City are provided in the Centers section of this chapter.*

- Policy 3.83** **Central City districts.** Enhance the distinct identities of the Central City's districts.
- Policy 3.84** **Central City river orientation.** Enhance and strengthen access and orientation to the Willamette River in the Central City and increase river-focused activities.
- Policy 3.85** **Central City pedestrian system.** Maintain and expand the Central City’s highly interconnected pedestrian system.

**Policy 3.86 Central City bicycle system.** Expand and improve the Central City's bicycle system.

### **Inner Neighborhoods Pattern Area**

The Inner Neighborhoods were developed and shaped during the Streetcar Era of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Inner Neighborhoods are characterized by a regular pattern of neighborhood business districts located along former streetcar streets interspersed with residential areas. This Pattern Area has a small block pattern with an interconnected street grid that make transit, walking, and bicycling attractive options. Within this Pattern Area is an inner ring of neighborhoods that provide important opportunities for additional housing close to the Central City, but where future growth should be integrated into the existing and historic context. *See the Inner Ring Districts section in this chapter.* These policies express the overall design approach in Inner Neighborhoods.

**Policy 3.87 Inner Neighborhoods main streets.** Maintain and enhance the Streetcar Era pattern of street-oriented buildings along Civic and Neighborhood corridors.

**Policy 3.88 Inner Neighborhoods street patterns.** Preserve the area's urban fabric of compact blocks and its highly interconnected grid of streets.

**Policy 3.89 Inner Neighborhoods infill.** Fill gaps in the urban fabric through infill development on vacant and underutilized sites and in the reuse of historic buildings on adopted inventories.

**Policy 3.90 Inner Neighborhoods active transportation.** Use the extensive street, sidewalk, and bikeway system and multiple connections to the Central City as a key part of Portland's active transportation system

**Policy 3.91 Inner Neighborhoods residential areas.** Continue the patterns of small, connected blocks, regular lot patterns, and streets lined by planting strips and street trees in Inner Neighborhood residential areas.

### **Eastern Neighborhoods Pattern Area**

Portland's Eastern Neighborhoods feature a diverse range of urban and natural landscapes. Many structures in the Eastern Neighborhoods, which also include parts of Brentwood-Darlington and Cully, were developed after World War II. In addition, most of this area was annexed into the City of Portland after the 1980 Comprehensive Plan was completed. The policies for the Eastern Neighborhoods promote design that responds to and enhances the area's distinctive mix of urban patterns and natural features, such as groves of Douglas firs, the East Buttes, and streams. Some policies address the opportunities and challenges presented by the area's large blocks, deep lots, gaps in pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, and wide street corridors.

The Eastern Neighborhoods provide opportunities for new and distinctive approaches to the design of development and infrastructure that can enhance the area's positive characteristics and improve quality of life. It is important to continue the area's verdant character and provide a more livable environment, while reducing disparities and increasing access to services.

**Policy 3.92 Eastern Neighborhoods street, block, and lot pattern.** Guide the evolving street and block system in the Eastern Neighborhoods in ways that build on positive aspects of the area's large blocks, such as opportunities to continue mid-block open space patterns and create new connections through blocks that make it easier to access community destinations.

- A. **North-South Transit.** Support development of, access to, and service enhancement for North-South transit.
- B. **Alleyways.** Promote and guide the implementation of alley improvements that result in alleys that are safe, well maintained, and an asset for the community.

**Policy 3.93 Eastern Neighborhoods site development.** Require that land be aggregated into larger sites before land divisions and other redevelopment occurs. Require site plans which advance design and street connectivity goals.

**Policy 3.94 Eastern Neighborhoods trees and natural features.** Encourage development and right-of-way design that preserves and incorporates Douglas fir trees and groves, and that protects the area's streams, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, and buttes.

**Policy 3.95 Eastern Neighborhoods buttes.** Enhance public views of the area's skyline of buttes and stands of tall Douglas fir trees.

**Policy 3.96 Eastern Neighborhoods corridor landscaping.** Encourage landscaped building setbacks along residential corridors on major streets.

**Policy 3.97 Eastern Neighborhoods active transportation.** Enhance access to centers, employment areas, and other community destinations in Eastern Neighborhoods by ensuring that corridors have safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities and creating additional secondary connections that provide low-stress pedestrian and bicycle access.

### **Western Neighborhoods Pattern Area**

The Western Neighborhoods have been shaped by their location within the terrain of Portland's west hills. Much of this area was developed after World War II. These policies encourage design that responds to the area's prominent characteristics, such as its hilly topography, streams, ravines, and forested slopes, while cultivating a built environment

that expands mobility and accessibility for all people. These design approaches are intended to apply to a range of development types and locations.

**Policy 3.98 Western Neighborhoods village character.** Enhance the village character of the Western Neighborhoods' small commercial districts and increase opportunities for more people to live within walking distance of these neighborhood anchors.

- A. **Prioritize new sidewalk connections.** Prioritize adding sidewalks where there are none over expanding/ widening existing connections.
- B. **North-South transit.** Support development of, access to, and service enhancement for North-South transit.

**Policy 3.99 Western Neighborhoods active transportation.** Provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections, as well as off-street trail connections, to and from residential neighborhoods.

**Policy 3.100 Western Neighborhoods development.** Encourage new development and infrastructure to be designed to minimize impacts on the area's streams, ravines, and forested slopes.

**Policy 3.101 Western Neighborhoods habitat corridors.** Preserve, enhance, and connect the area's network of habitat areas and corridors, streams, parks, and tree canopy.

**Policy 3.102 Western Neighborhoods trails.** Develop pedestrian-oriented connections and enhance the Western Neighborhoods' distinctive system of trails to increase safety, expand mobility, access to nature, and active living opportunities in the area.

- A. **TDM strategies.** Explore and emphasize Transportation Demand Management strategies and tools, that function in spite of unique topographic conditions of the West Hills, to provide effective options for commuters while reducing carbon emissions, improving neighborhood livability and cycling safety, and protecting important natural resources.
- B. **Forest Park natural resources.** Protect the ecological quality and function of natural Forest Park's natural resources in the design and development of transportation projects in or near the park and avoid, minimize, then mitigate adverse impacts to wildlife, habitat, and riparian corridors.
- C. **Focus for active transportation.** Primarily focus sidewalk and bicycle route improvements in (and in close proximity to) the designated Centers and Corridors of the Comp Plan.



- D. **Filling gaps in connections.** Fill gaps in important access connections, including exploring traditional ROW acquisition and partnerships with other City bureaus.
- E. **Accessible routes.** Improve accessibility/create parallel routes in some cases (for motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, and/or both). Explore what existing facilities and connections most merit upgrades or secondary accessible routes.

# URBAN FORM

Figure 3-1. Urban Design Framework

Locations shown on the diagram are not exact boundaries. Detailed boundaries for centers, corridors, habitat areas, and all other items shown on the map will be defined in supporting plans or through future planning projects.

## URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

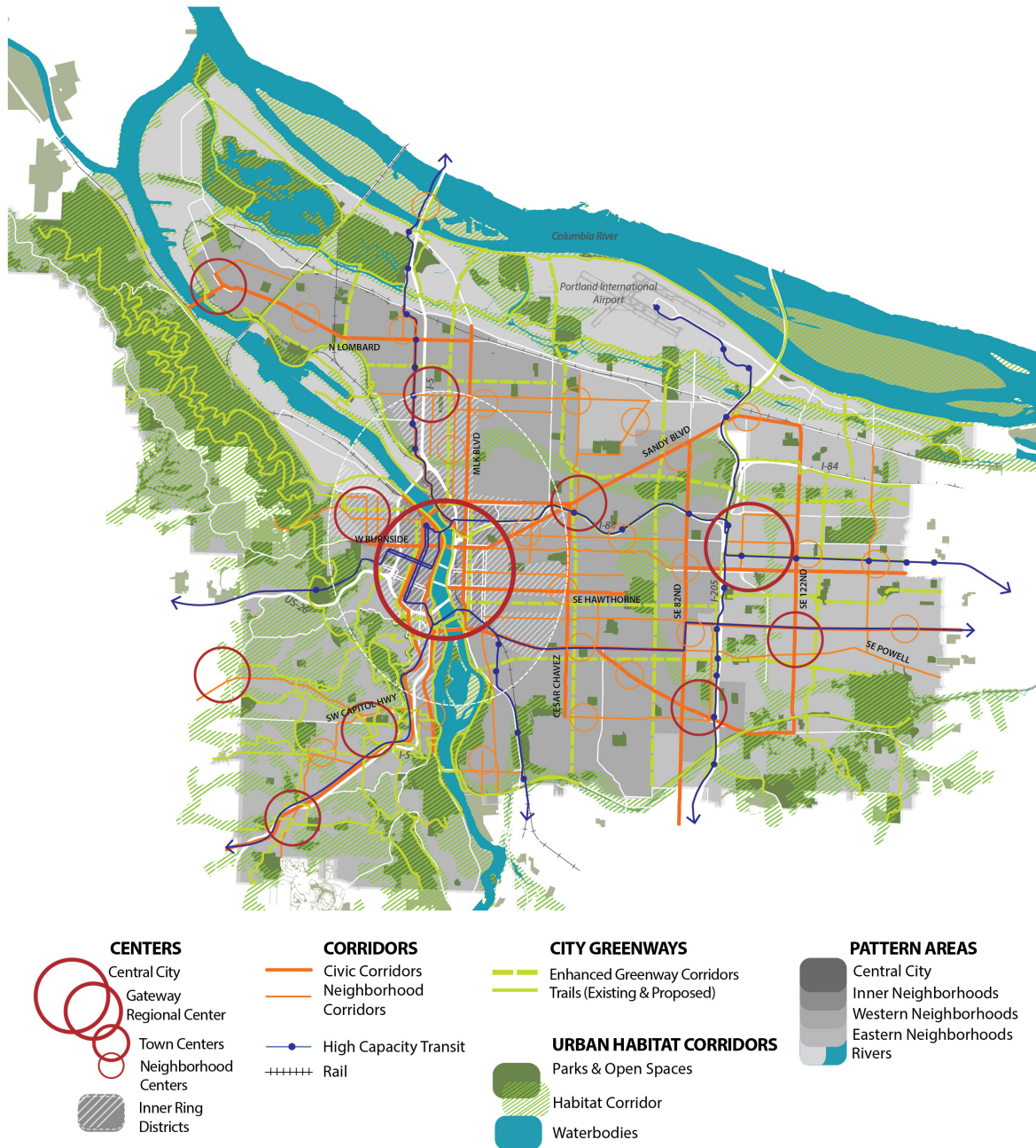




Figure 3-3. Centers

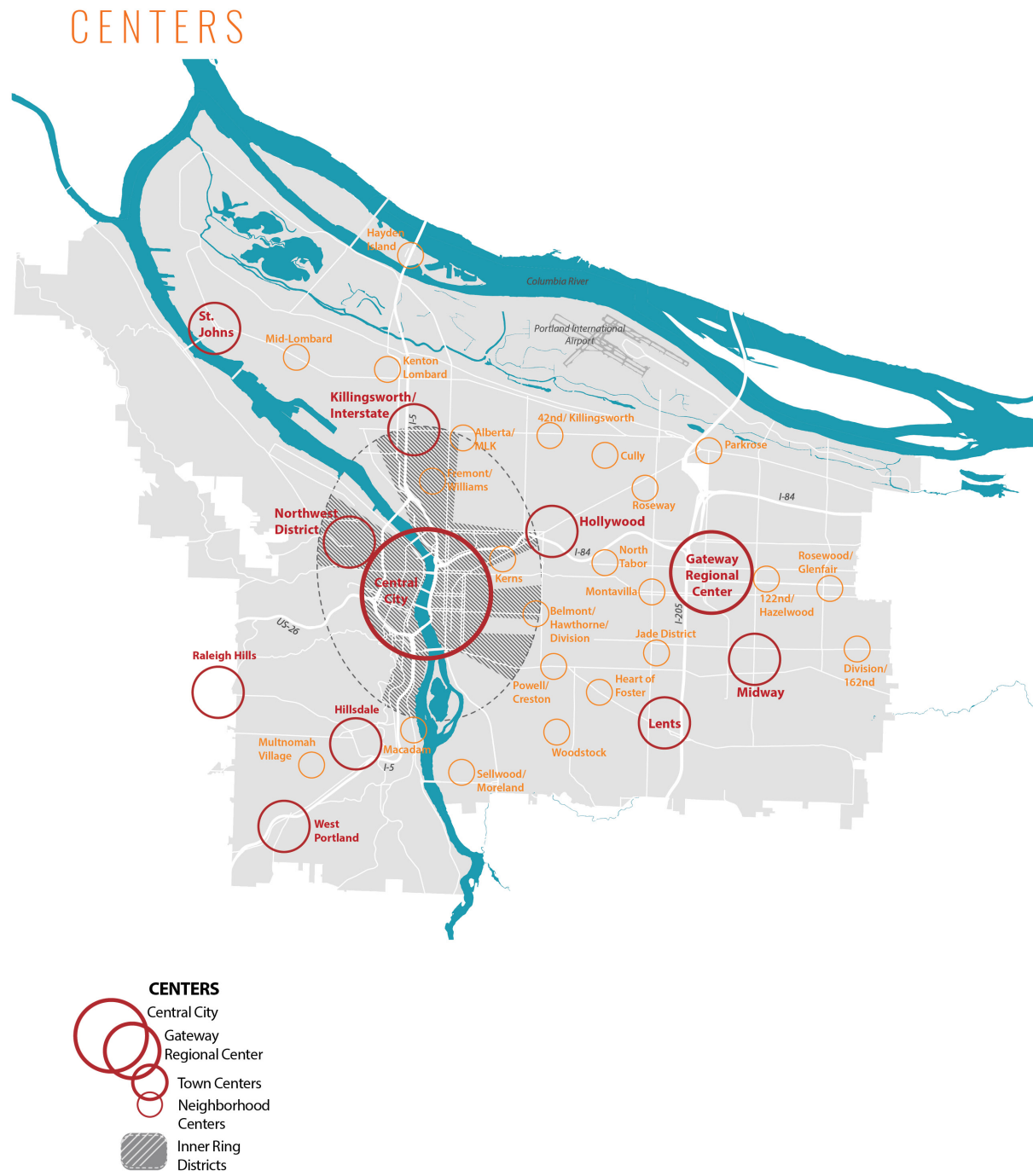
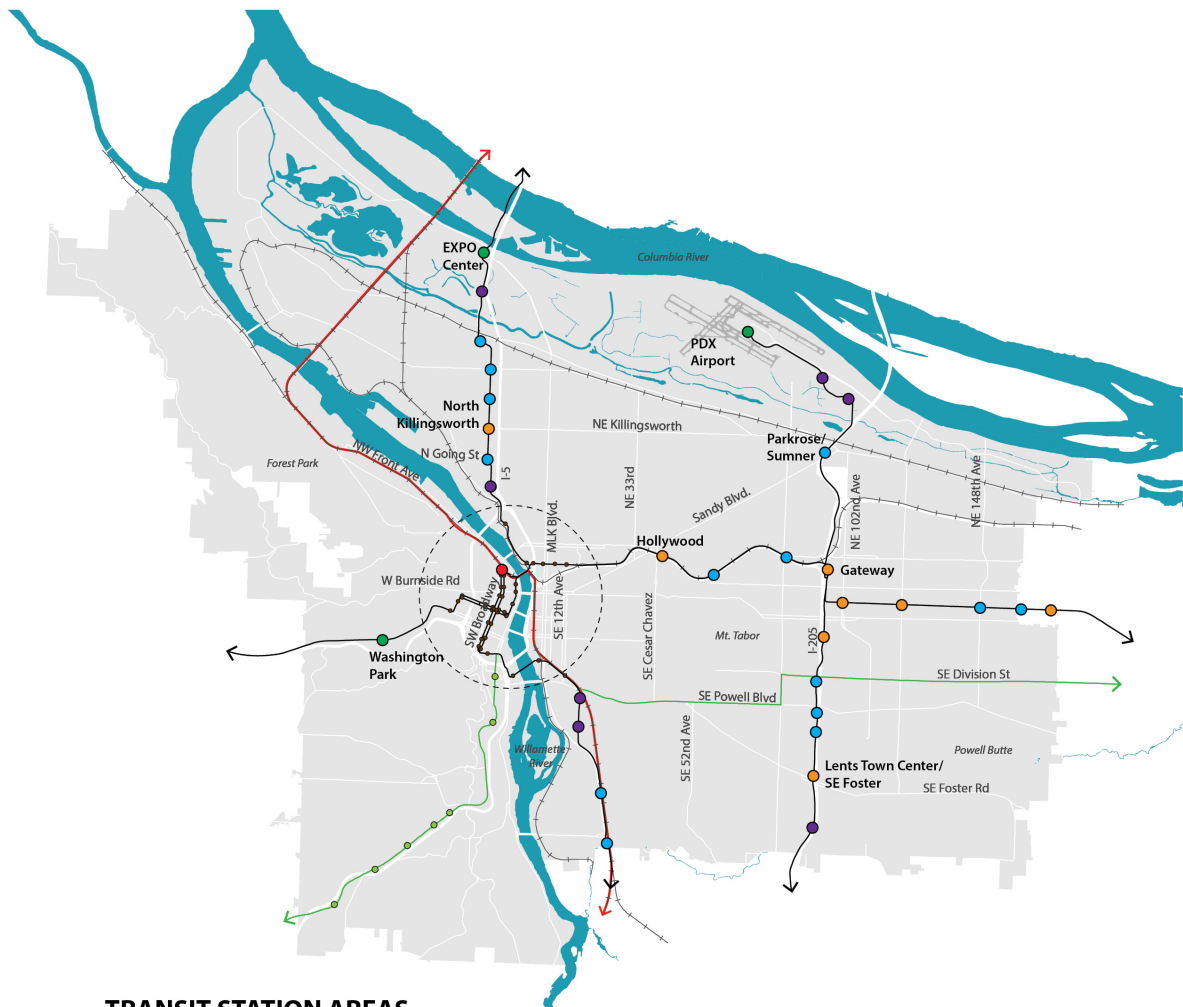


Figure 3-4. Transit Station Areas



**TRANSIT STATION AREAS**

- Center Stations
- Employment Stations
- Transit Neighborhood Stations
- Destination Stations
- Central City Stations
- Intercity passenger rail alignment
- Future transit alignment & potential station areas
- +++ Rail



Figure 3-5. City Greenways

# CITY GREENWAYS



## CITY GREENWAYS





-  Trails (Existing & Proposed)
-  Enhanced Greenway Corridors
-  Heritage Parkways
-  Parks & Open Spaces

Figure 3-6. Urban Habitat Corridors



**URBAN HABITAT CORRIDORS**






-  Existing / Enhanced Habitat Corridor
-  Future / Potential Habitat Corridor
-  Parks & Open Space
-  Waterbodies
-  Elevation over 300'

Figure 3-7. Employment Areas

# EMPLOYMENT AREAS

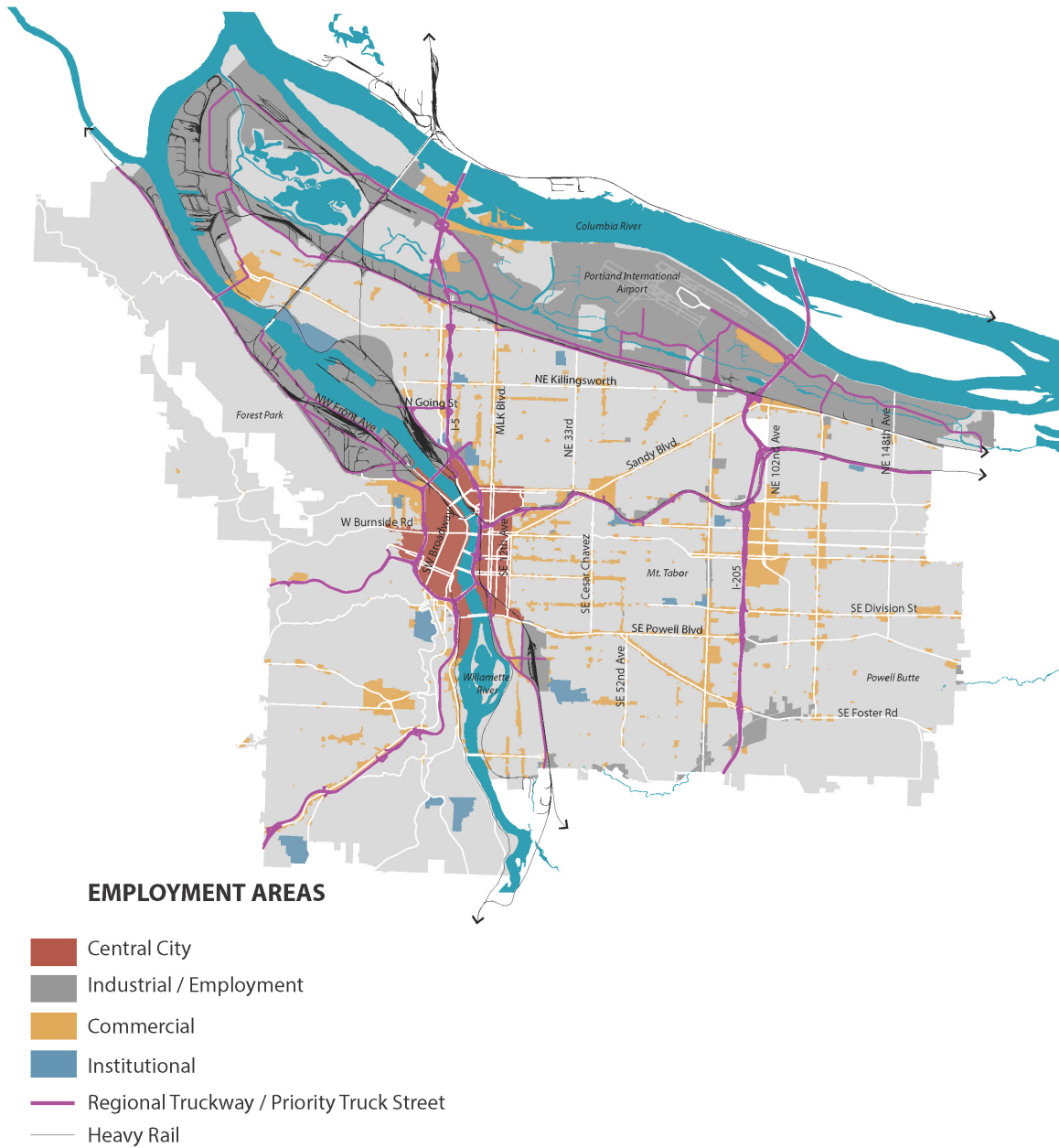




Figure 3-8. Pattern Areas

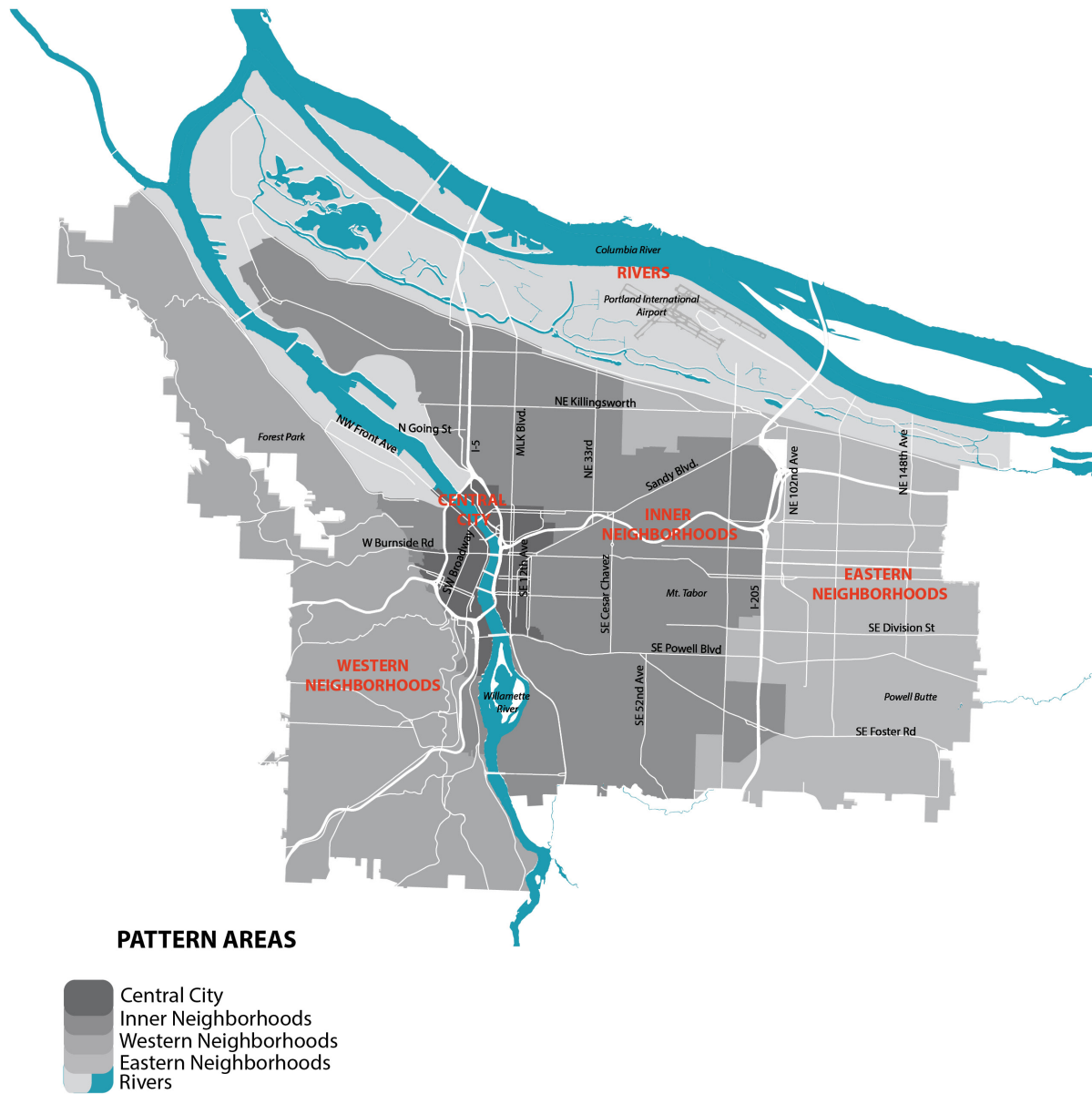


Figure 3-9. Willamette Greenway Boundaries

