



Multnomah County Drainage District #1
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Portland Planning and Sustainability Commission
 1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Suite 7100
 Portland, Oregon 97201

Subject: 2035 Comprehensive Plan Proposed Draft Goals and Policies

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the *2035 Comprehensive Plan Proposed Draft Goals and Policies*.

The Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts (the Districts), which includes Multnomah County Drainage District No. 1, Peninsula Drainage District No. 1, and Peninsula Drainage District No. 2 within the City of Portland, provides stormwater conveyance and flood protection for much of the Columbia Corridor. Within the Columbia Corridor lies a significant portion of Portland’s industrial land, the Portland International Airport, portions of two interstate freeways, and the City of Portland’s domestic water well field as well as regional recreation facilities and the Bridgeton and East Columbia residential neighborhoods. These developments represent much of the economic base of the City and critical elements in the regional transportation network. Therefore, operations and responsibilities of the Districts play a key role in the City’s systems planning effort.

The primary goal of the Districts is to protect lives and properties from both external flooding and internal flooding, by maintaining levees along the Columbia River and managing drainage ways and pumps stations. The Districts recognize that their facilities and operations are, by necessity, within areas that also hold other urban values such as recreation, environmental resources, and scenic values. This is reflected in our mission statement, which provides a balance of safety, recreation, and restoration through partnerships with public, non-profit, and private organizations:

Mission Statement of the Columbia Corridor Drainage Districts

Safety	Recreation	Restoration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent Flooding through management of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Levees ○ Pump stations ○ Drainage ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate the allowance of land and water trails within drainage district facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create habitat-friendly environment in drainage ways • Manage water levels in the Columbia Slough

The Districts have been following the City’s Comprehensive Plan update program for several years, providing testimony and information to Bureau of Planning and Sustainability staff that describes facilities and operations of the Districts, and suggesting modifications to better describe District activities or respond to our operational needs. We have developed a good working relationship

with staff, and they have been open and responsive to our input and many of our suggestions. As a result, we are generally supportive of the City's efforts, and our suggested modifications to the present draft goals and policies are relatively minor. Following are the goals and policies for which we recommend modification. Proposed additions are in ***bold underlined italics***. Each is followed by a brief comment describing the purpose of the modification. In addition, there are several recommendations for inclusion of the Districts' projects, programs, or activities in documents or plans referred to in goals and policies, and that are part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 1.5 Consistency with state and federal regulations. Ensure that the Comprehensive Plan is consistent with all applicable state and federal regulations, and that implementation measures for the Comprehensive Plan are well coordinated with other City and special service district activities that respond to state and federal regulations.

Comment: This addition recognizes that there are a number of special service districts throughout parts of the City that provide various services, many of which fall under state and federal regulatory networks. Consistency with state and federal regulations should not only be for City activities, but also those of special service districts in general and drainage districts in particular.

Policy 1.12 List of Significant Projects. Develop and maintain a List of Significant Projects based on the framework provided by the supporting Public Facilities Plan and capital improvement plans. Amendments to the List of Significant Projects must comply with the Comprehensive Plan. "Comply" means that, on the whole, the proposal strikes a reasonable balance among applicable goals and policies.

Comment: Over the past few months, through the Oregon Solutions process, public entities with jurisdiction over areas protected from flooding have acknowledged the importance of a continually federally accredited levee system along the Columbia River to the region. This acknowledgment included a financial contribution to complete the levee analysis and develop preliminary options for remediation during fiscal year 2014-15.

This contribution is in the form of a \$1.4 million low-interest loan provided by the Business Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority. Under an approved Intergovernmental Agreement between the City, Port of Portland, Metro, and Peninsula Drainage Districts Nos. 1 and 2, each entity has committed to repaying a portion of the loan over seven years beginning in 2017. Because of the significant impact to safety and economic prosperity to the City, the Districts suggest that the Columbia River Levee Repair project be included within this section.

Policy 3.66 River management and coordination. Coordinate with federal, state, regional, and other agencies, and with special service districts, to address issues of mutual interest and concern, including economic development, flood protection and control, regulatory compliance, permitting, emergency management, endangered species recovery, climate change preparation, and habitat restoration.

Comment: Drainage districts are not agencies like the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Army Corps of Engineers, although coordination with them for flood protection is vital, particularly with regard to regulatory compliance, permitting, and emergency management. The Districts implement many of the regulations set forth by regional, state, and federal agencies, so it is imperative that the City recognizes this and approaches the Districts directly on issues of mutual interest. This modification states the need to coordinate with drainage and other special service districts, as well as regulatory agencies.

As noted in the introduction, the primary goal of the Districts is to protect property from flooding. As defined in the glossary, “protect” is “to guard against loss, injury, or destruction.” Incorporation of this term into the policy better describes the role of the Districts.

Policy 4.64 Planning and disaster recovery. Facilitate effective disaster recovery by providing recommended updates to land use designations and development codes, as warranted, in preparation for natural disasters.

Comment: Weather-related disasters in the United States continue to increase in size, frequency and impact, and experience repeatedly demonstrates that communities are better prepared to withstand an emergency and recover more quickly when land use policies educate and communicate flooding risks to the community. As noted previously, the Columbia Corridor contains a significant portion of the City’s industrial base, an international airport, and parts of the major interstate highway system. The Districts suggest that the City discuss and incorporate into the Comprehensive Plan the appropriate level of flood protection for the Columbia Corridor. As an example, in 2009 California adopted regulations that require flood protection facilities protect against the 200-year flood event.

Goal 7.B: Healthy watersheds and environment. Ecological and ecosystem functions are maintained and enhanced, and watershed conditions have improved over time.

Comment: In order to improve watershed conditions, proactive actions such as enhancement should be encouraged in addition to ongoing maintenance.

Policy 7.30 Adaptive management. Evaluate trends in watershed and environmental health using current monitoring data and information to guide and support improvements in the effectiveness of City and special service district plans, regulations, and infrastructure investments.

Comment: A proactive approach through providing support for improvements, whether it is moral, regulatory, or budgetary, will help achieve environmental health improvements. Recognizing special service districts and their role in providing services, just as City service bureaus do, will provide continuity throughout the city

Policy 7.39 Flood protection coordination. Coordinate plans and investments with special service districts and agencies responsible for managing and maintaining certification of levees along the Columbia River.

Comment: This modification simply provides continuity.

Policy 7.52 Riparian corridors. Increase the width and quality of drainage ways and vegetated riparian buffers along Columbia Slough channels where practicable, while also managing the slough for flood control.

Comment: Drainage way modification is as important as the banks with regard to environmental health.

Policy 8.2 Service delivery. Provide and support the following public facilities and services within the City’s boundaries of incorporation:

- **Comprehensive planning.**
- **Public rights-of-way, including streets and public trails.**
- **Sanitary sewers and wastewater treatment.**
- **Stormwater management and conveyance.**
- **Flood protection and management.**

- Protection of the waterways of the state.
- Water supply.
- Police, fire, and emergency response.
- Parks, natural areas, and recreation.
- Solid waste regulation.

Comment: Support of public facilities in addition to provision of them by the City acknowledges the role of special service providers other than the city. The main goal of the Districts is to provide flood protection through levees, drainage ways, and pumping facilities. As defined in the glossary, “protect” is “to guard against loss, injury, or destruction.” Incorporation of this term into the policy better describes the role of the Districts.

Policy 8.3 Supporting facilities and systems. Maintain supporting facilities and systems, including public buildings, technology, fleet, and internal service infrastructure, to enable the provision of public facilities and services.

NEW Policy 8.3+ (new policy inserted between existing Policies 8.3 and 8.4) **Drainage Districts. Encourage and support facilities and systems, including ongoing maintenance, enhancement, and upgrading, of buildings, technology, and infrastructure including the drainage ways, pumping facilities, and levee systems, that are constructed, operated, and maintained by drainage districts for stormwater drainage and flood protection.**

Comment: This new policy acknowledges the existence of the drainage districts and the benefits they provide to the city.

Policy 8.4 Interagency coordination. Maintain interagency coordination agreements with neighboring jurisdictions and partner agencies that provide urban public facilities and services within the city of Portland to ensure effective and efficient service delivery. See Policy 8.2 for the list of services included. Such jurisdictions and agencies include, but may not be limited to:

- Multnomah County for transportation facilities, and public safety.
- State of Oregon for transportation and parks facilities and services.
- TriMet for public transit facilities and services.
- Port of Portland for air and marine facilities and services.
- Metro for regional parks and natural areas, and for solid waste, composting, and recycling facilities and transfer stations.
- Gresham, Milwaukie, Clackamas County Service District #1, and Clean Water Services for sanitary sewer conveyance and treatment.
- Multnomah County Drainage District No. 1, Peninsula Drainage District No. 1, and Peninsula Drainage District No. 2 for stormwater management and conveyance, and for flood **protection**, mitigation and control.
- Rockwood People’s Utility District; Sunrise Water Authority; and the Burlington, Tualatin Valley, Valley View, West Slope, Palatine Hill, Alto Park, and Clackamas River Water Districts for water distribution.
- Portland Public Schools and the David Douglas, Parkrose, Reynolds, Centennial, and Riverdale school districts for public education and recreational facilities.
- Private utilities for energy, technology, and communications facilities and services.

Comment: The main goal of the Districts is to provide flood protection through levees, drainage ways, and pumping facilities. As defined in the glossary, “protect” is “to guard against loss, injury, or destruction.” Incorporation of this term into the policy best describes the role of the Districts.

Policy 8.6 Public service coordination. Coordinate with the planning efforts of agencies providing public education, public health services, community centers, library services, justice services, stormwater conveyance, flood protection, energy, and technology and communications services, as appropriate.

Comment: In addition to flood protection, the Districts provide a stormwater conveyance system between the City infrastructure and the lower Columbia Slough through a system of drainage ways including the Upper Columbia Slough and a pumping system. This modification provides a more complete description of special service district functions.

Policy 8.21 Critical infrastructure. Increase the resilience of high-risk and critical infrastructure through monitoring, planning, investment, adaptive technology, ongoing maintenance and upgrading, and continuity planning.

Comment: The proposed addition provides an additional option for providing critical infrastructure support.

Policy 8.55 Green infrastructure. Promote the use of green infrastructure, such as natural areas, the urban forest, creeks and sloughs, and landscaped stormwater facilities, to manage stormwater.

Comment: Creeks, sloughs, and other natural waterways also provide stormwater drainage. This addition recognizes the difference between natural drainage ways and landscaped stormwater facilities such as engineered and dedicated managed drainage ways (stormwater facilities).

Policy 8.58 Stormwater partnerships. Provide stormwater management through coordination with drainage districts, coordinated public and private infrastructure, public-private partnerships, and community stewardship.

Comment: This addition acknowledges the role of the drainage districts' activities and operations in stormwater drainage and not just the need to coordinate physical infrastructure.

FLOOD PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Comment: The main goal of the Districts is to provide flood protection through levees, drainage ways, and pumping facilities. As defined in the glossary, "protect" is "to guard against loss, injury, or destruction." We believe incorporation of this term into the policy best describes the role of the Districts.

Portland's floodplain areas are primarily along the Columbia River, Willamette River, Columbia Slough, Johnson Creek, and low elevation areas along smaller tributary streams. In accordance with state and federal regulations, the City of Portland, Multnomah County Drainage District No.1, and Peninsula Drainage Districts No. 1 and No. 2 protect low-lying areas from flooding through levee systems, drainage ways and pumping facilities manage floodplains to reduce public safety risks, prevent property damage, support economic activity, and protect watershed health. These policies ensure proper floodplain management and compliance.

Comment: Land protected by the levee system isn't technically within a floodplain, so these additions distinguish between those protected areas and identified floodplains. The US Army Corps of Engineers programs are focused on flood protection and control facilities rather than management of flood plains, so we also recommend elimination of reference to floodplain management.

Policy 8.60 Floodplain compliance. Maintain compliance with federal and state flood protection and floodplain-related requirements.

Comment: Land protected by the levee system isn't technically within a floodplain, so these additions distinguish between those protected areas and identified floodplains. The main goal of the Districts is to provide flood protection through levees, drainage ways, and pumping facilities. As defined in the glossary, "protect" is "to guard against loss, injury, or destruction." We believe incorporation of this term into the policy best describes the role of the Districts.

NEW Policy 8.60+ (new policy inserted between existing Policies 8.60 and 8.61) **Planning activities coordination. Coordinate and confer with other drainage districts on any proposed development or activity that may impact floodplains and flood protection management, including potential encroachments on flood protection facilities and activities.**

Comment: This policy supports inclusion of drainage districts in the discussion about proposed development that may adversely impact the districts' ability to carry out its flood protection mandate.

NEW Policy 8.60++ (new policy inserted between existing Policies 8.60 and 8.61) **Flood protection and control program participation. Participate, cooperate, and partner with other local government entities and special service districts to ensure compliance with and active participation in federal and state flood protection and floodplain regulations and programs.**

Comment: This policy recognizes the benefits of coordinating development and provision of services, particularly that of flood protection, at an appropriate level.

NEW Policy 8.60+++ (new policy inserted between existing Policies 8.60 and 8.61) **Floodplains and flood control facility identification. Identify, designate, and regulate applicable areas as special floodplain and flood control facility zones.**

Comment: This policy allows identification of physical flood protection facilities such as levees, drainage ways, and pumping stations through a land use designation such as an overlay zone, to alert landowners of the need to consider impacts on these facilities when development is being proposed.

NEW Policy 8.60++++ (new policy inserted between existing Policies 8.60 and 8.61) **Floodplains and flood protection facility mapping. Identify and integrate floodplains and flood protection facilities into the City's internal and public mapping databases.**

Comment: This policy supports incorporation of identified floodplains into the City's mapping system. In addition, it will support identification of physical flood protection facilities such as levees, drainage ways, and pumping stations to alert landowners of the need to consider impacts on these facilities when development is being proposed.

NEW Policy 8.60+++++ (new policy inserted between existing Policies 8.60 and 8.61) **Enforcement. Address, including taking enforcement action against, unauthorized activity or development that constitutes encroachments on flood protection facilities and operations.**

Comment: Drainage districts have limited enforcement authority. This policy supports additional enforcement authority by the City to prevent adverse impacts on flood protection facilities and operations.

In conclusion, the Districts have a long history of providing flood protection while also serving as environmental stewards. We acknowledge our role and responsibility in maintaining environmental quality within the Districts, and are committed to fulfilling that responsibility while also preventing flood damage to existing property. We support the Comprehensive Plan update

process, and with these proposed modifications that clarify our role in flood protection throughout the Columbia Corridor, can give our full support to the proposed goals and policies.

The Districts very much appreciate the time and effort City staff has invested in working with us to explain the process, discuss issues, and accommodate our specific needs. We look forward to continuing this dialog throughout the full update process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Reed Wagner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Reed Wagner
Executive Director
Multnomah County Drainage District No. 1
Peninsula Drainage District No. 1
Peninsula Drainage District No. 2

