

# RIVER PLAN/SOUTH REACH

## Volume 1: Policies, Objectives and Recommendations

Recommended Draft,  
as Amended  
December 2020



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Innovation. Collaboration. Practical Solutions.

City of Portland, Oregon



THE RIVER PLAN

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And many thanks to all participants in the River Plan/South Reach planning process and whose contributions have helped shaped this draft plan.

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## **DEDICATION**

*To Commissioner Nick Fish,  
who championed the protection of Portland's rivers and streams and  
cared deeply about creating places for people to enjoy the outdoors.*

(September 30, 1958 - January 2, 2020)



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Volume 1. POLICIES, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Part 1. Overview

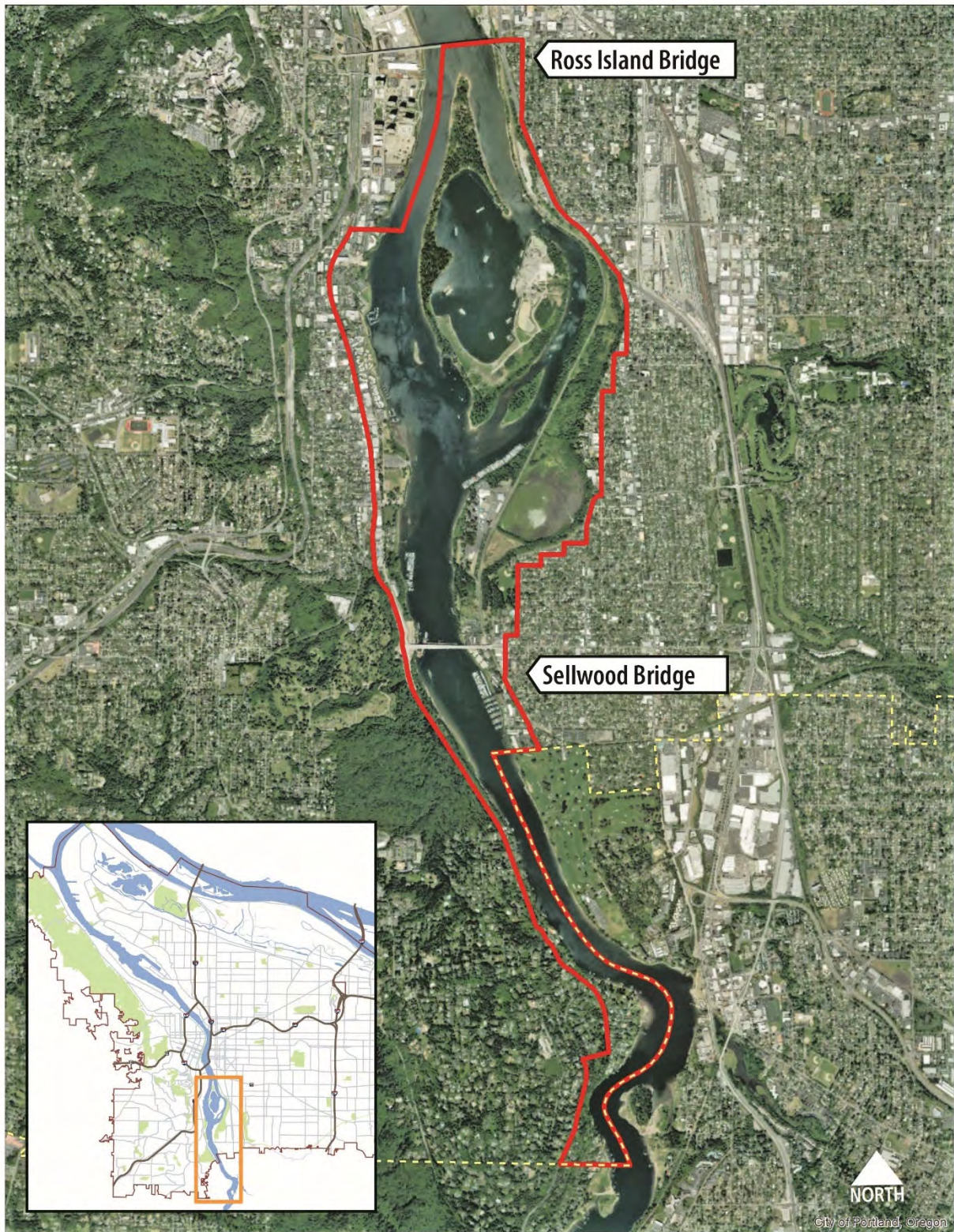
<b>Chapter I. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
A. Background	1
1. History of South Reach	2
2. Willamette River	4
3. Existing Conditions	5
B. Planning and Policy Context	10
1. State Law	10
2. Federal Law	11
3. Regional	12
4. City of Portland	12
C. Planning Process	14
1. City and Intergovernmental Coordination	14
2. Public Engagement	16
<b>Chapter II. Future of the South Reach</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Chapter III. Policies, Objectives, and Recommendations</b>	<b>30</b>
A. Introduction	30
B. Watershed Health and Resilience	31
1. Overview	31
2. Development and Natural Resources Management	31
3. Existing Natural Areas and Open Spaces	38
4. Watershed and Natural Areas Restoration	42
5. Floodplain Management and Climate Resilience	45
C. Recreation	50
1. Overview	50
2. Public Parks and Natural Areas	50
3. Riverfront Trails and Connections	54
4. Private Recreation	57
5. In-River Recreation	60
6. Scenic Resources	64
D. Tribal Engagement and Collaboration	67
1. Overview	67
2. Understanding, Protecting and Preserving Native American History and Culture	68
3. Culturally Significant Natural Resources	72

4. Parks, Recreation and Natural Areas	74
E. Riverfront Communities	76
1. Overview	76
2. Brooklyn	76
3. Sellwood	78
4. Southwest Portland	82
5. Riverdale / Dunthorpe	88
6. Floating Home Communities	88
7. Houseless Communities	89

**Part 2. Implementation Tools**

A. Comprehensive Plan Amendments	3
1. Comprehensive Plan Policy Amendments	3
B. Zoning Code and Map Amendments	7
1. Zoning Code Amendments	7
2. Base and Overlay Zone Map Amendments	243
South Reach Map Changes by Quarter Sections	248
Central City Scenic Overlay Map Changes by Quarter Sections	295
C. Amendments to Title 11, Trees	335
D. Establish a Macadam Civic Corridor Character Statement and Repeal the Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines	341
E. Action Plan	382
1. Watershed Health and Resilience	384
2. Recreation	402
3. Tribal Engagement and Collaboration	404
4. Riverfront Communities	

<b>Volume 2. SCENIC RESOURCES PROTECTION PLAN</b>	under separate cover
<b>Volume 3. NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION PLAN</b>	under separate cover
<b>Volume 4. BACKGROUND MATERIALS</b>	under separate cover



***The South Reach project boundary, in red above, extends from the Ross Island Bridge down to and including the unincorporated Multnomah County neighborhood of Riverdale/Dunthorpe. The boundary is aligned with SW Macadam Blvd to the west and generally follows the bluff to the east.***





# PART 1. OVERVIEW

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

### A. BACKGROUND

The Willamette River is a defining feature in the City of Portland and State of Oregon. Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 15, Willamette River Greenway, mandates jurisdictions along the Willamette River “protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River.” In 1987 the City of Portland adopted the *Willamette Greenway Plan* to manage the river and development along and adjacent to its shoreline, implementing the mandates set forth in the statewide planning goal.

Since then the City’s approach to planning for the Willamette River has evolved. After the development of a new vision and strategy for the entire river in *River Renaissance* (2001), the *River Concept* (2006) established a process by which the City would complete updates to the *Willamette Greenway Plan* for three individual reaches: North Reach, Central Reach and South Reach. This three-phase multi-objective approach allows for recognition of the unique character of each reach and ensures appropriate plans and regulations are developed to address those unique features. The South Reach is the most undisturbed of the three reaches, with its multitude of parks and open spaces, while also providing for a diversity of residential uses along the riverfront.

The River Plan / South Reach project will update the *Willamette Greenway Plan* for the City’s southern reach of the Willamette River for the next twenty years by:

- Establishing a renewed vision for the area.
- Updating existing policies and regulations.
- Identifying implementation actions.
- Identifying future South Reach investments.

The River Plan / South Reach study area stretches from the Ross Island Bridge down to just south of the Sellwood Bridge on the east side and includes the unincorporated area of Dunthorpe, for which the City has planning authority, on the westside.

## 1. HISTORY OF THE SOUTH REACH

The Willamette and Columbia rivers have played a central role in the daily lives of Native peoples from pre-European contact to today. The Willamette Valley was populated by various native peoples who camped, fished, hunted and gathered foods along the Willamette River. Other Native peoples from the Pacific Northwest, also traveled to, through, lived in and carried out customary activities in the Willamette Valley, including the South Reach area. The Willamette River was a primary transportation corridor since it was easier to navigate in canoes rather than traversing through dense forests. In the South Reach, Native peoples gathered wapato from the wetlands at Oaks Bottom and also hunted waterfowl and collected acorns, huckleberries and other plants along the riverfront for sustenance, as well as medicinal and cultural purposes.

Treaties between the tribes and U.S. government executed in the 1850s resulted in the resettlement of many tribes to remote reservations. Portland has a large population of Native Americans today. Some are descendants of NW tribes, others are affiliated with tribes from around the country.

The City of Portland was established in the 1840s because of its deep-water moorage, and link to the Pacific Ocean via the Columbia River. However, large sailing ships rarely ventured upriver of Portland because of their deep keels, the narrow river channels and winds. In its natural state, the river was a half-mile wide at the area that included the Ross Island and Hardtack Island complex of islands but only 9 feet deep. European American settlement in the Willamette River area in the 1800s and through today, have greatly altered the landscape. This includes clearing and degrading forests and uplands and diminishing river water quality with industrial, commercial and residential developments and activities.

A few distinct settler communities developed along the riverfront area in the region. The town of Oregon City was founded in 1844, the town of Milwaukie was founded in 1847, and the town of Sellwood was founded in 1893. On the west side across the river across from Sellwood, a boat landing was established in the 1850s where a wagon road from the Tualatin Valley ended.

At about the same time, a group of 38 rowers who attended colleges throughout the country brought the sport of rowing to Portland in 1879. Portland Rowing Club was incorporated in 1881 and teams worked out of docks on the westside of the Willamette River near Skidmore at Ash Street, then near the Hawthorne and Ross Island



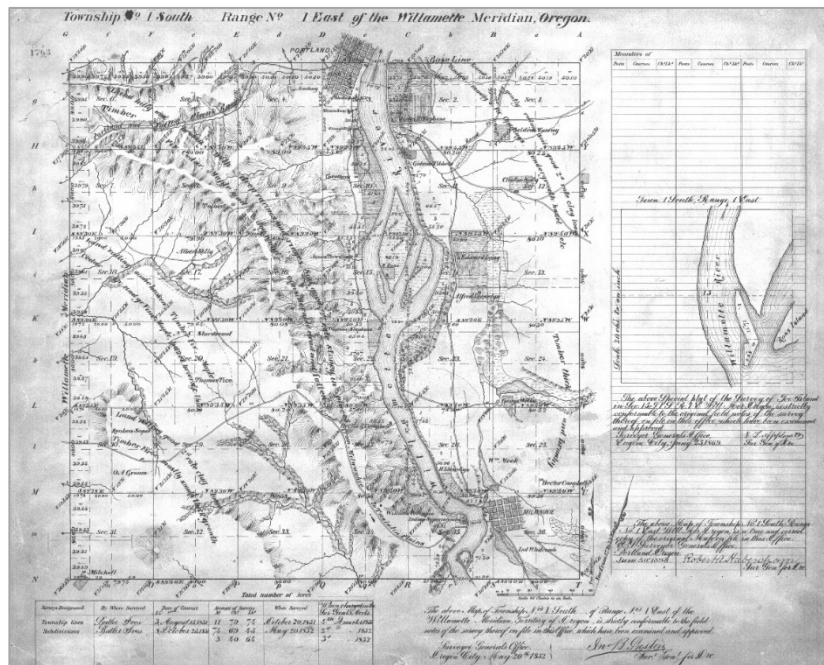
bridges. In the early 1920s it purchased two city blocks south of the Sellwood Bridge on the east side of the river where the Portland Rowing Club floating home community is now located. During the mid- and late-1800s ferries connected the two river banks in the South Reach. In 1908 a steel cable was stretched between the two shorelines to allow the donkey-powered Sellwood Ferry to run across the river, until 1926 when the original Sellwood Bridge was opened. The Ross Island Bridge and Sellwood Bridge were built the same year. Multnomah County replaced the Sellwood Bridge with a new structure that opened for public use in 2016.

In 1892 an interurban electric rail line began passenger and freight services between Portland, Sellwood, Milwaukie and Oregon City. Agricultural products were transported by trains to Portland along this route. The railroad line ceased passenger operations in the 1950s and freight service in the 1970s. The railroad right-of-way was purchased by a few public entities and became the Springwater Corridor Trail in the 1990s.

Many European American immigrants settled on the west side of the river north of the Sellwood Bridge when they came to Portland. This first multi-ethnic neighborhood was home to Italian, German, Irish and Jewish immigrants.

In the late 1800s the William Ladd family purchased considerable real estate along the Willamette River four miles south of downtown Portland (known as Rivera-Dunthorpe). The Ladd, Corbett and Failing families together developed the bucolic Riverview Cemetery in this location, a burial place for prominent European-American families of Portland.

In 1916 William Ladd filed a 125-acre plat near Riverview Cemetery for Upper Dunthorpe residential development. Property deed requirements for each plat ensured an exclusive character of the development – minimum cost requirements for home construction and prohibition on non-white property ownership. Peter Kerr was another early developer in the Dunthorpe area. He built an estate with formal gardens adjacent to the Elk Rock escarpment until his death in 1957. His family gave the estate to the Episcopal Diocese. The gardens are known today as the Garden at Elk Rock and are open to the public.



1852 survey that includes South Reach.

In 1887 a railroad line on the west bank of the Willamette riverfront and Macadam Road opened, encouraging industrialization of the floodplain. Factories, including the Fulton tannery, located in the riverfront area. Johns Landing was also developed with businesses. The area was named after B.P. John’s Furniture Company, located near SW Macadam Ave and SW Boundary St, which operated for 90 years before closing in 1977. Since that time, two developers, John Storrs and John Gray, transformed Johns Landing into a residential and commercial neighborhood.

By the 1880s the South Reach area was largely resettled with factories, houseboats and worker cottages. Along the river on the west side, some houseboats washed up on the riverbank in 1894 after a large flood. The houseboats remained after the river receded and became known as the Miles Place colony. These homes gradually become more permanent over time and created the small residential area that exists today. Early homes were also built on nine continuous blocks of residential lots between SW Nevada and SW Carolina

streets. In Sellwood, worker housing developed in part for families of individuals who worked at the nearby red brick electric car barns (terminal point for electric interurban railroad service).

The late 1800s and early 1900s brought the establishment of the Portland Rowing Club and Oaks Amusement Park; two significant recreation facilities on the Willamette River. Oaks Amusement Park, established in 1905, in the Sellwood riverfront area, is the last historic “trolley park” in the northwest, and one of the oldest continually operating (until COVID 19) amusement parks in the United States. In the early decades, of operation, visitors arrived via the streetcar and enjoyed exotic animals, nightly fireworks, a bath house and amusement rides.

Founded in 1879, the Portland Rowing Club is the oldest private rowing club west of the Mississippi River. The facility includes boat slips and floating home moorages in addition to boathouse facilities and boat storage for nonmotorized vessels. Adjacent to the study area on the southeastern boundary is the Waverly Country Club, a private golf club founded in 1896.

Ross Island was originally made up of four islands: Ross, Hardtack, East, and Toe. Sherry Ross settled on the approximately 400-acre collection of islands in 1850. Ownership changed to John Kierman in 1908. In 1912 and again in 1924, the island was proposed as a City park site. In 1926 the Ross Island Sand and Gravel company was formed and they operate on the island to this day. An earthen levee between Ross and Hardtack islands was constructed in 1926-27, creating the lagoon that remains today<sup>1</sup>. Ross Island Sand and Gravel donated a portion of Ross Island (45 acres) to the City of Portland in 2008.

## 2. THE WILLAMETTE RIVER

Regionally situated within the Lower Columbia River Basin, the Willamette River Basin is an 11,500 square mile watershed located between the Cascade Mountains to the east and the Coast Range to the west. The 187-mile long Willamette River flows north through 128 jurisdictions including Eugene, Corvallis, Salem and Portland, as well as eight counties. Nearly 70 percent of Oregon’s population lives in the Willamette River Basin along with a broad range of forestry, agriculture and urban uses.

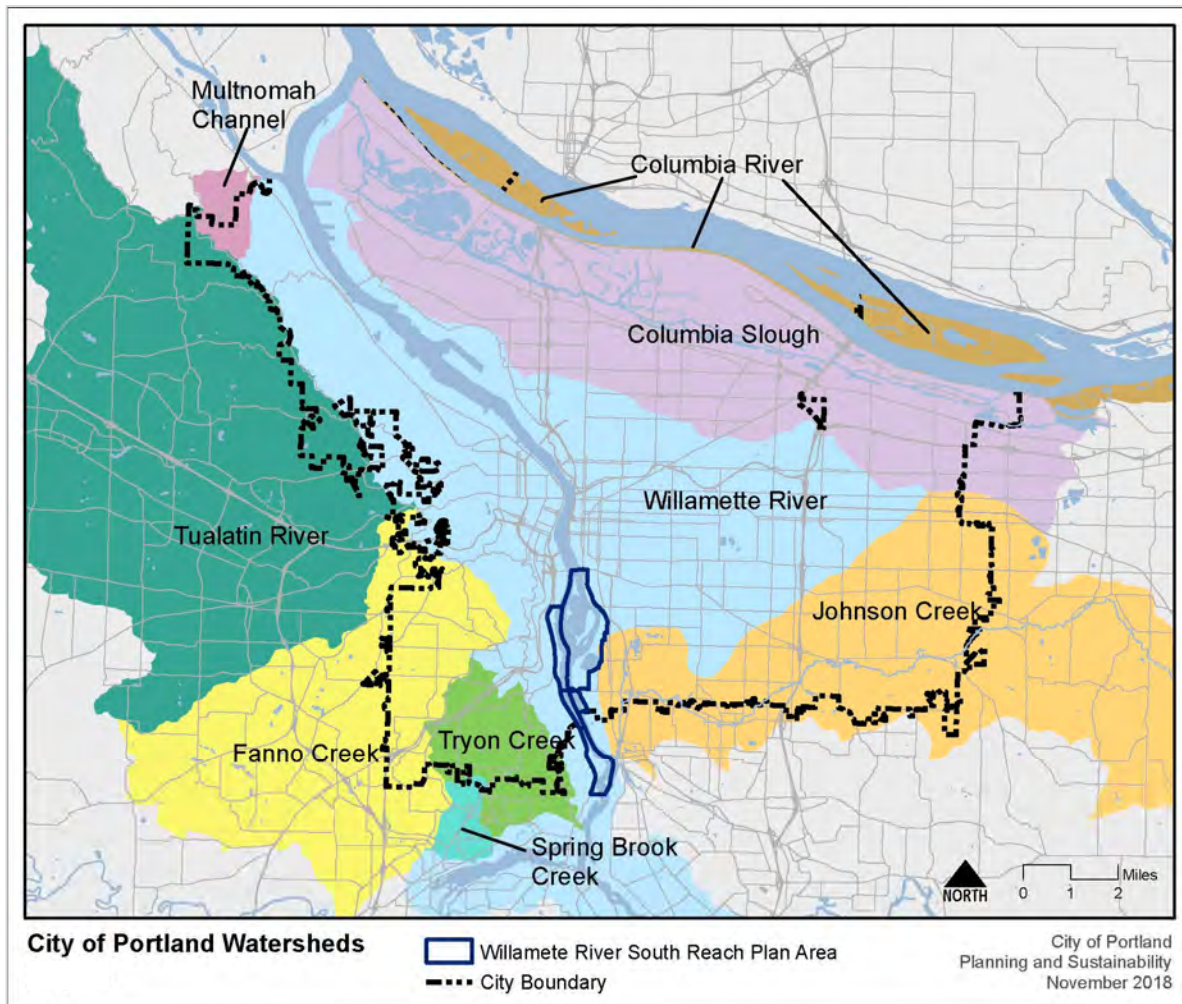
The 27 miles of river between Willamette Falls and the Columbia River are often referred to as the Lower Willamette River. This portion of the river is a tidal freshwater system governed by seasonally variable rainfall patterns, snowmelt in the Willamette Valley’s Coast and Cascade mountain ranges and the operation of dams on many of the major tributaries. The diurnal tides in the lower Willamette typically fluctuate on the order of two feet per day, but can increase up to eight feet depending on flow conditions in the Willamette and Columbia rivers. These fluctuations contribute to unique habitats that support a broad array of native flora and fauna, as well as migratory species. The lower Willamette River is federally designated as critical habitat for seven salmon and steelhead species. The stretch of the river is also part of the Pacific Flyway and provides important migratory and nesting habitat for a wide array of birds.

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<sup>1</sup> Ross and Hardtack islands continue to be connected by the levee constructed in the mid-1920’s. The land mass that is comprised of Ross and Hardtack islands is most commonly referred to as Ross Island. Therefore, in this plan the combined Ross/Hardtack island is referred to as Ross Island, except in situations where specifically calling out Hardtack Island is warranted.

The entire Portland Willamette River inventory study area (North, Central and South reaches combined) includes 19 miles of the Lower Willamette River from Elk Rock Island northward through Portland to its confluence with the Columbia River. This stretch of the Willamette is a key component of the larger regional ecosystem that includes Sauvie Island, Ridgefield and Shillapoo Wildlife Areas, Vancouver Lake, the Tualatin Mountains, Burlington and Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Smith and Bybee Wetlands, the Sandy River and estuarine islands in the Columbia River, as well as the Columbia River Estuary. The Lower Willamette River corridor provides connectivity for north/south and east/west wildlife movement.

The map below shows the various components of the Willamette Basin watershed.



### 3. EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Willamette River is the defining feature in the South Reach but there are other features and characteristics that enhance our understanding of the South Reach area. The project team completed a Draft Existing Conditions Report (May 2018) that is a compilation of existing data and information about this geographic area. The following bullets distill key information from the draft report.

### Demographics

- It's estimated that 1,905 people lived within the South Reach study area in 2015.
- 87% of the South Reach population was white. Asians comprised 6% of the population. Other racial and ethnic groups comprised less than 1% of the population. The percentages of communities of color in the reach are below the city (overall) percentages.
- Non-family households made up of individuals or non-relatives only comprised 60% of the population.
- Families with one or more children under 18 years of age represented 10% of the population, half the city percentage.
- People 65 years of age and older totaled 29% of the population, above the city percentage of 20%.
- People who lived below poverty level totaled 10%, significantly below the citywide percentage of 18%.

### Land Use, Zoning and Development

- The South Reach area totals almost 720 acres, with 305 acres identified as Recreation/Open Space use. Other existing land uses include: 140 acres of residential (a mix of houses, floating homes, apartments and condominiums), 136 acres of industry, 77 acres of commercial uses and 81 acres of vacant land.
- The *2035 Comprehensive Plan* (2018) applied land use designations to all sites in the City and the total acreage for South Reach land uses include: 414 acres of Open Space, 100 acres of Residential 20,000 and Residential Farm/Forest, 57 acres of Commercial Mixed Use 2, and 28 acres of Residential 5,000.
- Overlay zones apply in addition to the base zone designation. In the South Reach specific Willamette River Greenway overlay zones apply with the current breakdown: 511 acres of River Water Quality (q), 388 acres of River Natural (n), 306 acres of River General, and 92 acres of River Recreational (r). Other notable overlay zones are: 212 acres of Design and 54 acres of the Environmental – Conservation zone.
- The *Macadam Plan District* and *Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines* (1985) aim to achieve quality development along the riverfront and the SW Macadam transportation corridor, while providing visual and physical connections to the river.
- Buildable lands are estimated to include 84 acres (12%) of the South Reach area.
- Twelve (12) sites are identified by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality as having or suspected to have contamination. Of those, seven (7) have been determined to require no further action.

### Recreation, Public Access and Scenic Views

- There are eleven (11) public parks and natural areas in the South Reach, offering a variety of active and passive recreation on-land and in the river.
- There are three (3) public docks and other river recreation launch areas.
- Two major recreation/transportation trails parallel the river on the east and west sides; the Springwater Corridor Trail and the Willamette Greenway Trail, respectively.
- Private on-land and in-river recreation businesses and organizations are common in the reach; examples are Oaks Amusement Park, the Willamette Sailing Club and Portland Kayak Company.
- There are 16 City adopted public viewpoints and view corridors. The draft *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (2018) evaluated existing scenic resources and recommends an updated list of scenic resources.

- The popularity of the trails, parks and the river for recreation creates conflicts at times for different users and there can often be natural resource impacts from recreation activities (e.g. biking on non-paved trails and terrain in Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge).
- The Brooklyn neighborhood, located in inner southeast Portland, is in close proximity to the river but, due to barriers created by SE McLoughlin Blvd and steep slopes east of the Springwater Corridor Trail, providing direct access to the river is a significant challenge.

### Watershed Health

- The Lower Willamette River is designated critical habitat for a number of anadromous salmonids (i.e. those that migrate from the sea to freshwater to spawn) listed as Threatened and Endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act, including Chinook, Coho and Sockeye Salmon and Steelhead Trout.
- The Lower Willamette River is key migratory habitat for Pacific Lamprey, a federal species of concern. Coastal Cutthroat trout are also considered a species of concern.
- About 67 percent of the South Reach shoreline is characterized as beaches, followed by rip rap at about 13 percent and rocky shorelines comprise about 10 percent of the reach.
- Water depth varies substantially. North of the Sellwood Bridge is generally shallower compared to south of the Sellwood Bridge where water depth is deeper except for some shallow water areas along the shoreline. Shallow water areas can be found in the Holgate channel and along the western shoreline north of the Sellwood Bridge.
- Almost 60 percent of the vegetation in the South Reach is forest, followed by 16 percent woodlands, 14 percent herbaceous and 11 percent shrublands.
- Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, north of Sellwood Park is 141 acres and established in 1988 is Portland's first official urban wildlife refuge. It is part of a larger natural area known as the Oaks Bottom Complex that includes the Oaks Crossing Natural Area, the Holgate Channel and Ross Island, as well as East and Toe islands.
- The extensive floodplain in the South Reach, a large amount of which is located within the Oaks Bottom Complex, provides important area for floodwaters to enter, slow down and dissipate. This helps reduce flooding in developed areas and provides habitat for endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead during flood events.
- Approximately 1,320 acres of natural resource areas in the South Reach have been classified as either high- or medium-value resources, including 820 acres of the Willamette River which is defined as a high-value resource.

### Transportation

- There are three major streets that parallel the South Reach area: Oregon Highway 99E/McLoughlin Boulevard on the east side and SW Macadam Avenue, also known as Oregon Highway 43, and SW Riverside Drive on the west side of the river. Other key streets on the east side are: SE Milwaukie Avenue, SE 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE Tacoma Street.
- As mentioned above, two Willamette River Greenway trails provide bicycle and pedestrian north-south transportation options on both sides of the river.

- Trimet provides transit service with a number of buses that travel from downtown Portland through the South Reach and on to other destinations in SE and SW Portland and beyond. These bus lines - 19, 35, 36, 43, 70 and 99 - provide mostly weekday and commuter hour services. There are no frequent service buses that serve the South Reach area.
- Recent regional transportation planning identified possible options for future trail and transit facilities and services that would extend the Willamette River Greenway Trail to Lake Oswego as well as extend streetcar service from South Waterfront to Lake Oswego. No funding is allocated for these projects.
- There is no organized river transportation that serves the South Reach.

### Public Services and Facilities

- Portland Water Bureau provides potable water service in the South Reach area. On the west side, the Hannah Mason Pump Station at Willamette Park was constructed in 2017 to serve adjacent neighborhoods.
- The Portland Bureau of Environmental Services manages an extensive public sewer system in the South Reach area.
- Portland Fire and Rescue serves the neighborhoods within the city of Portland and the City of Lake Oswego Fire serves the Dunthorpe neighborhood of unincorporated Multnomah County.
- Portland Police Bureau and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office provide law enforcement services in the South Reach. The Sheriff's Office River Patrol conducts river patrols in partnership with the Oregon State Marine Board, the Port of Portland and the United States Coast Guard.
- In recent years there has been a rise in people living along the riverfront and on boats tied up off land and at public docks, due to socioeconomic factors. This has resulted in negative impacts to natural environment, public and private properties and recreational activities. The City and Multnomah County established the Joint Office of Homeless Services to oversee the delivery of services to people experiencing homelessness in Multnomah County. Other cooperative efforts are underway by the Oregon Department of State Lands to alleviate environmental impacts on the Willamette River in a humanitarian way.
- Llewellyn School is the only public school in the South Reach area with two other public schools located nearby: Winterhaven and Sellwood schools. The Riverdale School District serves the Dunthorpe neighborhood.

### **Key Issues in the South Reach**

- The width of the Willamette Greenway setback is inadequate to meet the Statewide Planning Goal 15 and plan aspirations.
- The South Reach includes a wealth and diversity of open spaces and natural areas that are not common elsewhere along the Willamette River in the city. These natural areas support a variety of fish and wildlife species within the urban fabric. Regulations applied in the area should protect and enhance these natural areas, while providing for context-sensitive site and building design.
- South Reach floodplains play a key role in managing flood waters and reducing impacts downstream, including downtown Portland, the region's economic and cultural hub. This flood management role will become increasingly critical with a changing climate. Floodplain development impacts Threatened and



Endangered fish species in the Willamette River. Development in the floodplain, especially close to the river, should be limited and, when allowed, improve and expand floodplain habitat. This will benefit fish and wildlife in the area and reduce flood risk for those living in the South Reach.

- There is inadequate funding for parks, natural area management plans for natural resources protection and enhancement, and for reducing recreational conflicts and providing recreational amenities in parks. Additionally, the Brooklyn neighborhood lacks safe access to the Springwater Corridor Trail and a riverfront park, long-standing desires as identified in the 1991 city adopted neighborhood plan.
- With the popularity of the South Reach as a recreation hub, conflicts are common between on-land recreationalists and in-river recreationalists and among in-river recreationalists. Resolution of these issues will require funding and creative partnerships between individuals, government agencies, public and private organizations.
- City government leaders and bureaus need to work with tribal governments and urban Native communities on issues and actions that matter to them; such as protecting fish and wildlife species and their habitat, first foods, and a location to store canoes for canoe family journeys.
- The area's scenic beauty is a unique asset within the city. Throughout the reach there are opportunities to view the river, Central City skyline, Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, the region's mountain ranges, bridges and its various environmental assets. Ensuring the identification and protection of locations to view and celebrate the area's scenic beauty is vital.
- There is a need to improve the multi-modal transportation system along and to the riverfront on both sides of the Willamette River. This includes improved transit services, the extension of paved trails such as to Lake Oswego, and making pedestrian connections to the riverfront from adjacent neighborhoods safer.

## B. PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

### 1. STATE LAW

#### State Policies

The update of the Willamette Greenway Plan must comply with Oregon’s Statewide Planning Goals. Key statewide planning goals that are relevant to the River Plan / South Reach include:

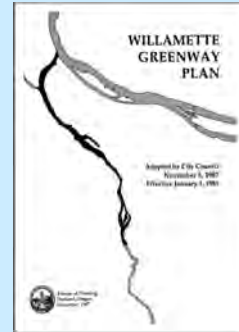
- Goal 1: Public Involvement
- Goal 2: Land Use Planning
- Goal 5: Natural Resources, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Open Spaces
- Goal 6: Air, Water and Land Resources Quality
- Goal 7: Areas Subject to Natural Hazards
- Goal 8: Recreational Needs
- Goal 12: Transportation
- Goal 14: Urbanization
- Goal 15: Willamette River Greenway

The primary goal that applies to the River Plan is Goal 15: Willamette River Greenway, but other goals also apply. The purpose of Goal 15 is “to protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River as the Willamette River Greenway.”

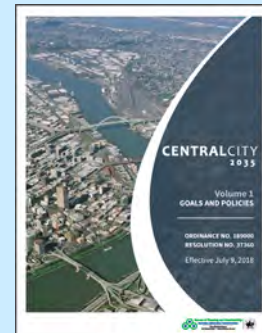
Specifically, Goal 15 calls for regulations related to:

- recreation,
- increased public access,
- protection of fish and wildlife habitat,
- preservation of scenic qualities and views,
- maintenance of public safety
- protection and enhancement of the vegetative fringe,
- locate development away from the river for all but water-related or water-dependent uses;

Goal 15 also calls for the development of an inventory and a list of areas that could be acquired to serve the purposes of the Greenway.



The 1987 Willamette Greenway Plan is currently implemented through the Greenway Overlay zones (33.440), the Willamette Greenway Design Guidelines, and the greenway trail designation for the North and South Reaches of the Willamette River.



The Central City 2035 Plan (adopted in 2018) updated the policy direction and regulations for the Central Reach in a new chapter (33.475). Once adopted, the River Plan / South Reach’s river overlay zone regulations will also be included in chapter 33.475.

## 2. FEDERAL LAW

The update of the Greenway plan must also be consistent with federal law. Key laws and regulations include the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Floodplain Regulations, among others.

### Endangered Species Act

In the late 1990’s after certain salmon species were listed as Threatened, the Portland City Council passed resolutions that declared the City’s intent to aid in salmon recovery and in the development of a salmon recovery plan (Resolutions 35715 and 35894). The ESA prohibits the “taking” (harming or harassing) of listed species and requires federal agencies to ensure their actions do not “jeopardize the continued existence of any [listed] species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of [critical] habitat.”

Plans addressing sensitive areas within the city, such as the South Reach, must include regulations and actions that ensure no take of listed species.

### Existing and Emerging Federal Floodplain Regulations

In 1968, Congress created the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to help provide a means for property owners to financially protect themselves from floods. Through the NFIP, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) offers federally-backed insurance to homeowners, renters, and business owners if their community (whichever agency issues land development permits) participates in the program. Flood insurance is required for all federally-backed mortgages. Federal flood insurance is available, regardless of risk—often at a lower cost than private insurance and it is available when private insurance is not.



1950 Aerial Photo in South Reach

Participation in the program is conditioned upon communities implementing FEMA requirements in the Special Flood Hazard Area, also known as the 100-year floodplain. Requirements include building and site development standards, as well as compliance with applicable federal laws, including the ESA.

NFIP-participating communities can help lower insurance rates through participation in FEMA’s voluntary Community Rating System program, which incentivizes community flood mitigation and preparation. Today, Portland’s mitigation and preparation programs yield a 20% discount for Portlanders. By expanding our preparation and mitigation programs the discount could increase. The maximum NFIP discount is 45 percent.

**Endangered Species Act Compliance Requirement** – In 2009, the Audubon Society of Portland, National Wildlife Federation, Northwest Environmental Defense Center and the Association of Northwest Steelheaders sued FEMA. The lawsuit claimed that implementation of the NFIP in Oregon jeopardizes the continued existence and recovery of Threatened and Endangered salmon and steelhead protected under the ESA. FEMA settled the

lawsuit and agreed to have National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), also known as NOAA Fisheries, assess the NFIP in Oregon.

In April 2016, NMFS determined FEMA's implementation of the NFIP in Oregon jeopardizes protected salmon and steelhead. Their findings direct FEMA to amend the requirements of jurisdictions participating in the NFIP to ensure the protection of floodplain habitat and flood storage, consistent with the ESA. FEMA's current deadline to implement the FEMA BiOp is October 5, 2021.

FEMA is working with Oregon jurisdictions to update NFIP requirements and programs to protect flood storage and floodplain habitat to improve conditions for salmon and steelhead. ESA-compliant development regulations along with restoration projects will help ensure Portlanders have on-going access to the Federally-backed flood insurance they rely upon to meet their mortgage requirements and recover from floods.

### 3. REGIONAL

Metro, the Portland metropolitan area's regional government, plays a key role in regional planning in the Portland area. Metro's Urban Growth Management Functional Plan (UGMFP) provides jurisdictions with tools to meet Metro's long-range growth management plan, the 2040 Growth Concept. The River Plan / South Reach will allow the City to maintain compliance with the UGMFP related to water quality (Title 3) and fish and wildlife habitat conservation (Title 13), among other titles. Metro also is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Portland region, carrying out regional transportation planning and setting regional priorities for infrastructure projects that are funded by federal, state and local funds. Trimet is the regional transit provider and provides bus services in the South Reach area.

### 4. CITY OF PORTLAND

While numerous City policy documents provide direction for the River Plan, most of that direction has recently been incorporated into the *2035 Comprehensive Plan*.

*2035 Comprehensive Plan (2018)* – The Comprehensive Plan is Portland's primary long-range plan to help the City prepare for and manage expected population and employment growth, as well as plan for and coordinate major public investments. After a four-year update process, the new *2035 Comprehensive Plan* was adopted on June 15, 2016. The plan became effective on May 24, 2018 after a package of Early Implementation projects that included changes to the Zoning Code and Zoning Map.



*Brainstorming at the South Reach kickoff event.*

The Comprehensive Plan includes five Guiding Principles to recognize that implementation of this Plan must be balanced, integrated and multi-disciplinary. All apply to the River Plan / South Reach.

1. **Economic Prosperity:** Support a low-carbon economy and foster employment growth, competitiveness and equitably distributed household prosperity.
2. **Human Health:** Avoid or minimize negative health impacts and improve opportunities for Portlanders to lead healthy, active lives.
3. **Environmental Health:** Weave nature into the city and foster a healthy environment that sustains people, neighborhoods, and fish and wildlife. Recognize the intrinsic value of nature and sustain the ecosystem services of Portland's air, water and land.
4. **Equity:** Promote equity and environmental justice by reducing disparities, minimizing burdens, extending community benefits, increasing the amount of affordable housing, affirmatively furthering fair housing, proactively fighting displacement, and improving socio-economic opportunities for under-served and under-represented populations. Intentionally engage under-served and underrepresented populations in decisions that affect them. Specifically recognize, address and prevent repetition of the injustices suffered by communities of color throughout Portland's history.
5. **Resilience:** Reduce risk and improve the ability of individuals, communities, economic systems, and the natural and built environments to withstand, recover from, and adapt to changes from natural hazards, human-made disasters, climate change, and economic shifts.

While there are many policies that are relevant to the River Plan / South Reach, the key policy which specifically addresses the South Reach is the following:

**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.



1919 map of part of the South Reach.

## C. PLANNING PROCESS

The River Plan / South Reach team conducted an in-depth planning process with public engagement that included early scoping, visioning, topic discussions and technical analyses. The follow section describes the various entities that have been part of this process, engagement activities and the next steps.

### 1. CITY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

#### Local Agencies

City Bureaus. A key early step in the planning project was to interview individually and bring together a group of technical advisors from the most relevant city bureaus. Staff convened an inter-bureau team that included the bureaus of Development Services, Environmental Services, Parks and Recreation, Transportation and others. The group met periodically to review and discuss the proposed process and draft documents and assisted project staff in conducting field work. These staff also helped planning staff prepare for, and then attended and participated at, public meetings and events. City Bureaus continue to play a key role in the South Reach and for that we are grateful.



*South Reach Workshop*

Multnomah County. Staff contacted Multnomah County staff early on because the South Reach includes part of unincorporated Multnomah County for which the City has planning authority, per Ordinance No. 176115 adopted in 2001 and amended in 2010. County planning staff participate as an inter-bureau team member. Planning staff briefed a County commissioner as a part of the Intergovernmental Review Draft. Once the River Plan / South Reach is adopted by the Portland City Council, staff will bring the plan to the Multnomah County Board of County Commissioners for approval.

Tribal Governments. In 2012, the Portland City Council adopted Resolution #36941 to formalize its intergovernmental relationship with tribal partners. The Resolution documented the City's policy to implement programs and activities to honor tribal treaty rights, federal tribal trust responsibilities and traditional native religious beliefs. It also affirmed the City's commitment to tribal government partners through economic, environmental and social improvements for the tribes. The resolution acknowledged that the protection of cultural and natural resources as well as "customary use" locations are critical to the preservation of treaty rights, cultural heritage and the pursuit of traditional lifeways for present and future generations.

Key tribal River Plan / South Reach outreach activities are listed below:

January 25, 2018	Affiliated Tribes of the NW Indians conference -Discussion
May 16, 2018	Conference call with Federal agency tribal liaisons -About engagement
September 28, 2018	Tribal Nation Summit- Presentation and Discussion
October 31, 2018	Columbia River Inter Tribal Fish Commission staff
May 23, 2019	Columbia River Inter Tribal Fish Commission
June 4, 2019	Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs staff meeting
July 24, 2019	Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla staff meeting (phone)
August 13, 2019	Willamette River South Reach Boat Tour
September 5-6, 2019	City delegation to the Confederated Tribe of the Yakama Nation
November 8, 2019	Tribal Nation Summit - Discussions

### **Federal Agencies**

FEMA and NOAA. City Staff have ongoing relationships with the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) because of its floodplain /endangered species related work program. While there was some discussion with these agencies during the South Reach process, staff also has relied on previous guidance provided by these agencies.

### **State Agencies**

Oregon Department of State Lands. The Department of State Lands (DSL) is the owner of submerged land underlying waterways like the Willamette River for the people of Oregon. Public can use the banks and beds of the river for boating, fishing, swimming, etc. DSL administers leases, licenses, easements and access agreements. DSL also requires removal – fill permits for activity in the river and wetlands, along with proprietary waterway authorizations for use of state-owned waterways.

Oregon State Marine Board. Staff conferred with Oregon State Marine Board staff several times to discuss boating related topics. The Oregon State Marine Board regulates boating rules for specific waterways or at specific locations through administrative rules. These rules protect public safety, property, water quality, fish and wildlife resources and reduce excessive congestion and conflict between users and promoting uniformity of laws for boating. There are statewide rules for boats operating on waterways and specific measures related to watercraft components and licensing, safety and education. The specific rules for boat operations in Multnomah County include a no wake zone regulation in the Holgate Channel on the east side of Ross Island.

Oregon Department of Transportation. The Oregon Department of Transportation has jurisdiction over two major roadways that run parallel to the Willamette River: Highway 99E, McLoughlin Boulevard, on the east side and Highway 43, Macadam Avenue, on the west side.

Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. City staff have an ongoing relationship with Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) staff. Staff discussed this project with DLCD during the South Reach process and also relied on previous guidance provided by the agency.

State Historic Preservation Office. The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) manages and administers programs for the protection of Oregon’s historic and cultural resources. SHPO staff provide education on cultural heritage issues, explain cultural resource laws and regulations and help resolve potential conflicts. They also work with local governments and others to promote historic preservation, provide matching

grants, complete a statewide survey and inventory historic and archaeological resources, among other programs.

## 2. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

One of the first tasks that staff undertook was to interview community stakeholders with knowledge and interest in the South Reach area to begin to understand relevant issues and opportunities. With that background as a starting point, staff began more extensive engagement with the broader public at a visioning event and a series of riverfront walks. Staff learned hands on by talking with people who live, work and play in the area. Engagement activities also included various information gathering and sharing events, topical meetings and an online visioning survey. In addition, project staff presented at local neighborhood association meetings and met with stakeholders, including environmental organizations, recreation groups, floating homeowners, the Human Access Project, the John's Landing Owners Association, tribal representatives and others. Project staff also tabled at community events like summer park concerts and Sellwood's Sundae in the Park to make people aware of the project and seek their input. Key City organized public engagement events are listed below.

### Summer 2018

June 9, 2018 – Visioning / Kickoff  
 June 7, 2018 – SW Willamette Riverfront Walk  
 July 26, 2018 – Sellwood Riverfront Walk  
 July 31, 2018 – Brooklyn Riverfront Walk  
 July 2018 – South Reach Visioning Online Survey

### Fall 2018

September 13, 2018 – Riverside Recreation Discussion  
 September 18, 2018 – River and Riverbank and Development Discussion  
 September 25, 2018 – River Recreation Discussion  
 September 28, 2018—Tribal Nations Summit  
 October 4, 2018 – River and Riverbank Restoration Discussion  
 October 25, 2018 – Westside Discussion  
 November 8, 2018 – Eastside Discussion  
 December 1, 2018 – Open House

### 2019

November 2, 2019 - Open House  
 November 21, 2019 - Native American Community Discussion  
 December 3, 2019 – Design Standards and Guidelines Discussion  
 December 4, 2019 – Riverdale Open House

### 2020

January 7, 2019 – South Portland Character Statement Discussion  
 February 4, 2020 – Central City Drop-in Session on Proposed Draft  
 February 13, 2020 – Westside Drop-in Session on Proposed Draft  
 February 18, 2020 – Eastside Drop-in session on Proposed Draft  
 June 4-18, 2020 – Online Survey on Macadam Character Statement  
 June 10, 2020 – Online Question and Answer Meeting on Macadam Character Statement



## Consultants

Archaeological. In early 2019, the City engaged an archeological consultant; Willamette Cultural Resources Associates LTD, to identify information about precontact human activity in the study area, the existence of any known archeological resources and the potential for future discovery of such resources. The consultant delivered a technical memorandum that summarized this work.

Overall, there are very few records and literature that inform precontact human activity in the South Reach. However, there is documentation that Native people used the Willamette River and its adjacent land area for traveling to and from Willamette Falls, hunting and gathering of plants for food and other cultural uses. The consultant developed a sensitivity model that was derived from one developed for the current industrial area downstream of downtown Portland to predict the probability of archaeological resources in the South Reach. This model is a guide for planning purposes and is primarily based on environmental features considered likely to have influenced precontact use or occupation by Native peoples. See Zoning Code Amendments in Part 2 of this volume for more information.

Facilitation. The City engaged Barney and Worth, a public involvement consultant to assist with the planning and facilitation of key public meetings. They assisted with several topical meetings in the Fall and the Open House on December 1, 2018.

## Communications and Products

In addition to the in-person outreach, staff distributed physical and electronic communications to South Reach interested property owners, community members and organizations. These included:

- Postcard mailings to all property owners in advance of the June 9 Visioning / Kickoff event and again before the December 1, 2018 Open House.
- Electronic mailings of River Plan News and BPS enews prior to many of the events.
- Distribution of hundreds of 2-page project summaries.
- Circulation of the South Reach *Existing Conditions Report* to interested public.
- Circulation of the *Natural Resource Inventory* to interested public.
- Mailings from Mayor Wheeler to tribal leaders in advance of the Intergovernmental Review Draft.

The media and neighborhood and community organizations have also publicized River Plan / South Reach public meetings and events.

Project staff have maintained a robust project web site with information about the planning process, all materials produced to date and summaries from public meetings and events:

<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/42548>.

## Public Hearings and Recommendations

A January 2020 River Plan / South Reach Proposed Draft was presented to the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) on February 25, 2020 at a hearing with public testimony received. The PSC held work sessions with staff on March 10, May 12 and May 26 to make changes to the draft plan. They also held a second public hearing on June 23, 2020 to hear public input on river recreation in the plan. On June 23, the PSC voted to accept changes to the draft plan and to forward their recommendations to City Council for another public hearing. This recommended draft is the result of the PSC's review and decision making.

The Design Commission similarly held a public hearing on River Plan / South Reach design recommendations on July 16, 2020. These recommendations specifically relate to the repeal of the Macadam Design Guidelines and replacement with the Design Overlay Zone Amendments’ Citywide Design Guidelines and a special Macadam area character statement to include as part of these guidelines. The Design Commission voted to forward these recommendations with an amended Macadam Character Statement to City Council on July 23. The Design Commission recommendations are incorporated in this draft plan.

**Next Steps/Schedule**

Recommended Draft:

Publication: October 2020

City Council Hearing: November 2020

