

## CHAPTER III. POLICIES, OBJECTIVES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an overview of the River Plan / South Reach proposal by topic:

- Watershed Health and Resilience.
- Recreation.
- Tribal Engagement and Collaboration.
- Riverfront Communities.

Each topical section includes the following:

- A brief introduction.
- Overview of the issues and opportunities.
- Comprehensive Plan policy guidance.
- Objectives to address the issues and opportunities consistent with the policy guidance. Proposed actions to implement the objectives. Actions may include proposed regulations, investments and/or programs that would be implemented by the City, other jurisdictions, the community, property owners or others. The full action plan can be found in Part 2 of this volume.

The issues and opportunities raised in the topic sections, Watershed Health and Resilience, Recreation and Riverfront Communities, are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, you may need to explore each section to understand the full range of recommendations related to a particular issue.

## B. WATERSHED HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

### 1. OVERVIEW

The Lower Willamette River is a defining feature of the City of Portland. It travels through the heart of the city and is held as a symbol of the deep relationship between people and the natural environment. The South Reach portion of the Lower Willamette River is truly unique within the city because of its beauty and abundant natural resources. A diverse mix of habitat types in the area support a variety of flora and fauna, including salmonid species listed under the federal ESA. The Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge and Ross Island Natural Area, among others, are unique features within the city that provide high quality habitat within close proximity to downtown. Land adjacent to the river plays a key role in flood storage and management for nearby and downstream development.

Historically, the Willamette River in the Portland area comprised an extensive, interconnected system of tidally-influenced channels, open slack waters, emergent wetlands, riparian forests, mid-channel islands and adjacent upland forests. Much of this system has been altered as a result of development and associated fill on the riverbanks. However, there are many areas within the South Reach, including Oaks Bottom wetland, Sellwood Riverfront Park and Powers Marine Park, that still provide valuable ecosystem functions and flood protection for areas downstream.



*Willamette Park Nature Sign.*

The South Reach is home to a wide variety of fish and wildlife species. The area is designated critical habitat for seven Threatened and Endangered salmon and steelhead trout species and other important species such as Pacific Lamprey. Due to its location along the Pacific Flyway, over 200 bird species have been observed in the South Reach, including both resident and migrant species. A variety of mammals, amphibians and invertebrates can also be found in the South Reach.

In addition to providing fish and wildlife habitat, the South Reach provides extensive flood management capacity due to its substantial amount of undeveloped, vegetated lands, which are able to absorb additional waters created during flood events. This flood capacity serves an important role in limiting the flow of water that is transferred downstream.

### 2. DEVELOPMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Development and associated activities often impact nearby natural resources if not managed properly. Currently, land uses within the South Reach are primarily made up of a mix of parks, natural areas, and

residential development. Aggregate mining and related industrial activities on Ross Island<sup>2</sup> from the 1920s until recent years has severely modified the island and associated habitat. There are also a few industrial uses along SE McLoughlin Boulevard and SW Macadam Boulevard. Commercial and office uses are largely focused along or near the commercial corridors in the Macadam district and Sellwood neighborhood. A majority of privately-owned properties within the South Reach are developed but future development is expected on a number of properties over the next 20 years. In addition to new development, building and site improvements and on-going maintenance, including replacement or pruning of vegetation, can significantly impact existing riverbank and upland habitat. A key purpose of the River Plan / South Reach project is to provide direction on where and how development activities can be conducted in the study area.

This section reviews some of the development-related issues and opportunities in the South Reach and identifies a number of actions to be taken to achieve the future vision discussed in Chapter 1 and the multiple objectives identified in the section.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

The City of Portland maintains a citywide *Natural Resources Inventory (NRI)*, which was updated as a part of the *2035 Comprehensive Plan*, and includes an inventory and ranking of all of the city's natural resources. Natural resources are ranked as high, medium and low value resources. The NRI also identifies "Special Habitat Areas," which contain or support special status fish or wildlife species, sensitive/unique plant populations, wetlands, native oak, and a number of other unique natural features.

Over 80 percent of the South Reach is ranked as high- or medium-value resource and approximately 75 percent of the land and water is designated as a Special Habitat Area, largely due to the presence of Threatened and Endangered salmon and steelhead trout, native oak habitat and unique plant populations. A large percentage of these important resources is in the river or the associated riverbank and floodplain.

Given the large amount of significant natural resources within the South Reach, an important consideration is how future development will be managed to ensure compatibility between development activities and natural resources. As directed by Statewide Planning Goal 15, Willamette River Greenway, development that is not river-dependent or river-related must be directed away from the river to meet the varied demands of the Willamette River Greenway. To achieve that goal, it is essential to set development back from the river to provide adequate space for natural, scenic, and historic resources, as well as recreational trails and associated infrastructure. The current river setback in much of the South Reach is 25 feet, while other properties must be set back a minimum of 50 feet (in the River Water Quality (q)



*Red-tailed hawk at Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge.*

<sup>2</sup> As noted in Chapter I, throughout this plan the combined Ross/Hardtack island is referred to as Ross Island, except in situations where specifically calling out Hardtack Island is warranted.

overlay). Metro’s Title 13 Nature in Neighborhoods Program and the City of Portland’s NRI determined that the absolute minimum width of a protected riparian corridor around rivers, streams and wetlands should be 50 feet. Ensuring that new development is set back at least 50 feet from the Willamette River is an important step for ensuring South Reach natural resources are protected and enhanced over time.

Within the river setback a key consideration will be planting and maintaining a diverse mix of native trees, shrubs and ground cover to provide habitat diversity that will allow for areas of nesting and foraging, increased bank stabilization and a variety of site-specific benefits, including shade to reduce water temperatures, adding nutrients back to the river and riverbank through leaf litter and as trees age and die, and others. The current Greenway Overlay Zones landscaping requirements do not provide adequate direction to achieve that habitat diversity on the Willamette River’s banks. The landscaping requirements of the River



*Family on a hike at Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge.*

General (g\*) chapter, currently applied in the Central Reach, defines three landscaping “subareas”, each with a different mix of vegetation required, to achieve habitat diversity and accommodate trails and related activities within the river setback. Within each of the subareas, options for meeting the requirement are available based on the size of trees planted. These different options provide flexibility for meeting the landscaping requirement while also achieving the habitat goals of the river setback. Applying the landscaping requirements of the River General overlay zone to the South Reach will improve ecological function and diversity of the riverbank when new development occurs. The landscaping requirements do not apply to existing development.

Site and building design can have a significant effect on the activities and reproduction of fish and wildlife. For example, bright lights can confuse and disorient birds and amphibians, making them more vulnerable to predators and may reduce reproductive success. Similarly, buildings with a high percentage of windows (also known as glazing) at the tree line or near vegetation can confuse birds as a result of the reflection of trees and the sky. Birds fly into buildings because they do not realize the buildings are there, causing bird strikes and, in many cases, death. Given the potential negative impacts of building and site design on South Reach wildlife, it is important to reduce the potential impacts of exterior lighting and building glazing on wildlife through updated regulations.

Recently, there has been a significant increase in new residential docks in the South Reach. Overwater structures, including docks and gangways, have been shown to impact fish as a result of increased predation and inferior habitat function beneath the structure. Given the importance of the South Reach for fish survival, with its comparatively-larger amount of shallow water habitat (when compared to other reaches), ensuring the

continued function of these shallow water areas is critical for Endangered and Threatened fish species, as well as Pacific Lamprey, as they migrate into upstream tributaries. The impacts of the increase in residential docks in the South Reach are both site-specific and cumulative, as an increasing percentage of the reach becomes covered with structures and the areas of respite provided by shallow areas are compromised. Additionally, docks and other related structures located in shallow water can modify natural flow and sedimentation patterns. It is common for sediment to collect under these structures, often requiring ongoing dredging to maintain clearance under the dock. This ongoing dredging results in additional significant impacts to shallow water habitat areas. To minimize these various impacts, it is important to avoid placing new floating boat docking structures in shallow water habitat areas. Limiting the total size of new docks and replacement docks would also decrease the potential for predation, regardless of where they are located.

Another issue that is often brought to the City's attention is the extensive pruning and removal of vegetation within the river setback in front of existing development. Even though the removal of native trees and plants is not allowed in the existing Greenway Overlay zones, native vegetation is often damaged or removed as a part of this pruning or removal. Pruning and removal is frequently done annually by adjacent property owners to keep riverbank vegetation from blocking views along the Greenway Trail and from adjacent development. Removing and severe pruning does not allow riverbank vegetation to grow to its full potential, limiting the habitat function and ecological benefits the vegetation can provide (described above). These efforts often aim to remove or reduce the prominence of invasive species along the riverfront but in many cases native species are not planted in their place and existing native plants are frequently removed as a part of the maintenance.

A number of these instances have resulted in violation citations for South Reach property owners. Currently, all environmental violations must be addressed through Greenway Review, which is a costly process when not associated with new development. Other environmental overlays in the City of Portland allow for environmental violations to be resolved through established standards or, if those standards cannot be met, review. Providing for the use of standards within the South Reach would expedite the resolution of environmental violations.

Establishing an improved process for ensuring that vegetation within the river setback is preserved, replaced with native species if removed and allowed to grow fully to provide habitat for birds, pollinators, and mammal species is an important consideration in the South Reach. This should be achieved while also providing public viewpoints so that everyone can enjoy City-designated scenic views throughout the South Reach.



*Black-tailed deer in Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge*

**Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**Policy 4.38 Light pollution.** Encourage lighting design and practices that reduce the negative impacts of light pollution, including sky glow, glare, energy waste, impacts to public health and safety, disruption of ecosystems, and hazards to wildlife.

**Policy 4.77 Hazards to wildlife.** Encourage building, lighting, site, and infrastructure design and practices that provide safe fish and wildlife passage, and reduce or mitigate hazards to birds, bats, and other wildlife.

**7.11.e. Vegetation in natural resource areas.** Require native trees and vegetation in significant natural resource areas.

**Policy 7.19 Natural resource protection.** Protect the quantity, quality, and function of significant natural resources identified in the City’s natural resource inventory, including:

- Rivers, streams, sloughs, and drainageways.
- Floodplains.
- Riparian corridors.
- Wetlands.
- Groundwater.
- Native and other beneficial vegetation species and communities.
- Aquatic and terrestrial habitats, including special habitats or habitats of concern, large anchor habitats, habitat complexes and corridors, rare and declining habitats such as wetlands, native oak, bottomland hardwood forest, grassland habitat, shallow water habitat, and habitats that support special-status or at-risk plant and wildlife species.
- Other resources identified in natural resource inventories.

**Policy 7.39 Riparian corridors.** Increase the width and quality of vegetated riparian buffers along the Willamette River.

**Objectives and Actions**

**OBJECTIVE #1:** Ensure that new development provides adequate protection for South Reach natural resources, while also protecting other important attributes, including scenic, historic and recreational resources.

*Actions*

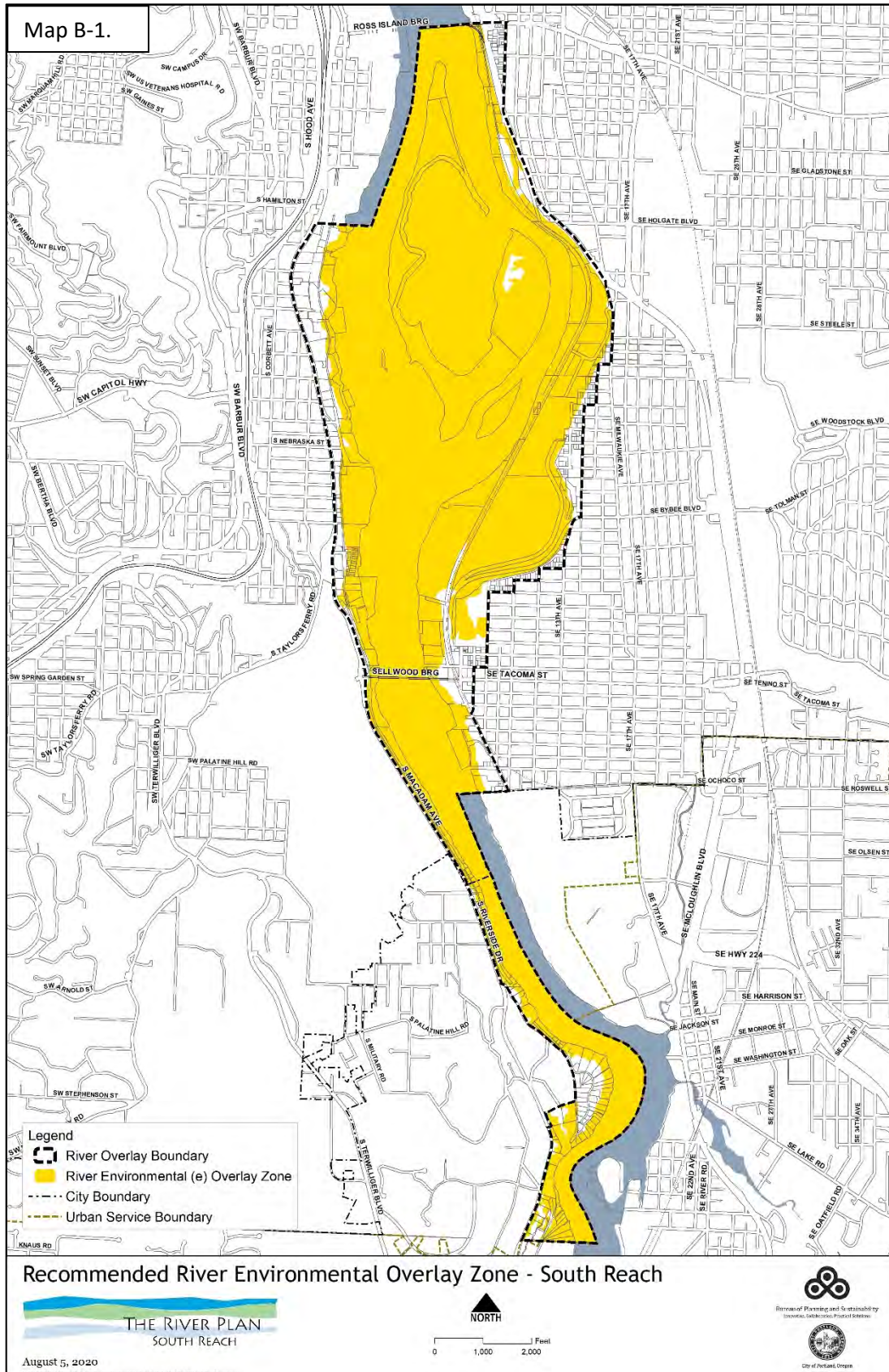
- Apply the River General (g\*) overlay zone to all properties in the established Willamette River Greenway. The River General overlay zone requires the following for development and redevelopment projects:
  - If not river-dependent or river-related, development must be located at least 50 feet from the top of bank.
  - Landscaping within the river setback to provide a diversity of native vegetation that stabilizes the riverbank and meets a variety of habitat objectives.
  - Exterior lighting is designed to limit impacts on fish, birds and other wildlife and their habitats by avoiding or minimize light glare via light fixtures that are shielded and meet specific specifications.

- If more than 30 percent of the building façade is windows, it must meet bird-safe glazing requirements for the first 60 feet in height and adjacent to ecoroofs.
- Allow the placement of new residential docks only in areas not defined as shallow water habitat and limit the allowable size of new and replacement docks to reduce the potential for predation of Threatened and Endangered salmon and steelhead trout species.
- Apply the River Environmental (e) overlay zone to all high- and medium-ranked riparian resources, all floodplains, including the FEMA 100-year floodplain and 1996 Flood Inundation Area, and all Special Habitat Areas (see Map B-1, Recommended River Environmental Overlay Zone, for proposed River Environmental overlay zone areas in the South Reach). The River Environmental overlay zone ensures development impacts are avoided to the extent possible in these important natural areas and, when impacts can't be avoided, mitigation is required. Any loss of features and/or function must be mitigated in the River Environmental overlay zone. Mitigation requirements within the River Environmental overlay zone are consistent with the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) Biological Opinion floodplain management guidance.
- Where adequate data exists, identify and adopt the location of top of bank for South Reach properties. This will provide property owners with clarity on the location of the river setback.
- Update the River Overlay Zones to allow for the creation of mitigation banks within the City of Portland to allow mitigation of impacts off-site when on-site mitigation is not feasible. Mitigation banks should be located as close to the project site as possible and should replace the functions and values lost through development.

**OBJECTIVE #2:** Removal of existing non-nuisance trees and vegetation on the riverbank should be avoided and, if necessary, minimized and mitigated to provide habitat and other ecosystem benefits at and adjacent to the river, while also creating connections to upland habitat areas.

*Actions*

- Apply the River Environmental (e) overlay zone to all land within 100 feet of top of bank (i.e., the river setback). The River Environmental overlay zone requires replacement of all trees greater than 1.5 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) removed within the river setback. Landward of the setback, removal of all trees greater than three inches dbh must be replaced.
- Exempt only the removal of nuisance trees within and riverward of the river setback and in the riparian buffer area. All other tree removal must meet standards or be approved through River Review.
- Strengthen code compliance with tree planting and mitigation requirements, as well as corrections to environmental violations, by expanding the monitoring period to ensure the long-term success of vegetation in the River Environmental overlay zone.
- Clarify and expedite the environmental violations process by allowing for the use of standards when specific criteria are met. Allowing the use of standards aims to expedite the resolution of these violations so that impacts can be reversed more quickly. Additionally, standards options reduce the cost of resolving environmental violations for applicants and the City by allowing for violations to be addressed without a land use review.





### 3. EXISTING NATURAL AREAS AND OPEN SPACES

As discussed above, the South Reach is home to a number of regionally-important natural areas and open spaces that support a variety of significant plant, fish and wildlife species. Ensuring that South Reach natural areas and open spaces are managed to maximize ecological function and to minimize the potential impact of adjacent and conflicting uses will be key to preserving the high value resources that exist within the study area, while also strengthening connections to surrounding natural areas and habitat corridors. This section provides background on some of the South Reach’s unique natural areas, describes the important issues and opportunities of those areas and identifies action items needed to achieve management objectives moving forward.

#### Key Issues and Opportunities

Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Ross Island Natural Area, Elk Rock Cliff and Powers Marine Park are all truly unique regional natural assets located in the South Reach. Each of these areas include distinctive habitats that are not easily found in other parts of the region and many support critical fish, wildlife and/or plant species. Smaller habitat areas, particularly on the river’s west bank, are also important local resources that should be protected and, where necessary, restored. Examples include Cottonwood Bay, Heron Pointe Wetland, the Stephens Creek confluence and the area former known as Butterfly Park within Willamette Moorage Park. The preservation and strengthening of the ecological function of these various areas of the South Reach is a key opportunity.



*View of Elk Rock from the Garden at Elk Rock.*

When discussing Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Ross Island and its two nearby islands (East Island and Toe Island) and the Holgate Channel, it is best to address them as a complex due to their close proximity and ecological interactions. Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, designated Portland’s first official urban wildlife refuge in 1988, is a complex of meadows, woodlands and wetlands and is the largest remaining natural area within the lower Willamette River floodplain. The refuge provides habitat for salmon species, an estimated 175 bird species (including almost 50 “special status” species) and native turtles. With only a few exceptions, this area contains natural or semi-natural banks along the length of the Willamette River and Holgate Channel, although some sections are fairly steep and eroded.

In 2018, the City’s Bureau of Environmental Services and Portland Parks and Recreation partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete a habitat enhancement project within the refuge. The project included the replacement of an existing narrow culvert with a larger natural-bottom arched culvert, the excavation of tidal slough channels and planting of native vegetation. The project improves hydrologic function and habitat conditions and enhances fish passage between the river and the refuge.

With the recent culvert replacement, the Oaks Bottom wetland is connected to the Willamette River (except at very low water levels) and functions as a backwater area. The beach and backwater area, combined with the shoreline willow growth, recruit substantial quantities of large wood. These large logs and root wads provide long-term cover, resting, and feeding areas for reptiles (most importantly, turtles), birds and small mammals.

Ross Island and its associated smaller islands include a diverse mix of habitat features, with riparian forest, forested wetland, scrub/shrub wetland, shallow water, beach, and a deep water lagoon. This island habitat mosaic is a unique feature in Portland; the only other area providing this degree of habitat diversity being West Hayden Island, which is located in the Columbia River just upstream of the Willamette River confluence. The islands support a high diversity of wildlife, including active heron rookeries, bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, osprey, songbirds and a variety of other species. Deer, coyote, river otter, beaver, moles and nutria have been observed in the area. The islands also provide key nesting, foraging and migratory stop-over habitat for the over 200 resident and migratory birds frequently observed in the area. The Ross Island/Oaks Bottom/Holgate Channel complex is designated as an “Important Bird Area” by the Audubon Society.

The Holgate Channel links Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge to the Ross Island habitat areas and its shorelines are preserved in a natural or semi-natural condition. In recent years, the banks of the slough have experienced significant erosion and there have been many landslides in the past decade. Still, this area provides excellent refuge for wildlife.

Although this complex sustains such a wide variety of fish and wildlife species – and there is a clear interdependence between Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Oaks Crossing Natural Area, the Holgate Channel and Ross Island Natural Area – there is no comprehensive management plan for the entire area. The development of a long-term plan that sets the course for management decisions with the entire complex in mind is a critical need for this area.

Elk Rock Cliff (also referred to as the Peter Kerr property), located in Unincorporated Multnomah County, represents a very unique habitat type within the South Reach. The cliff consists of both exposed shallow-soiled basalt outcrops and shaded vertical seeps over rock, both of which support populations of numerous plants species that are categorized from uncommon to rare. A total of 25 rare plant species have been identified in the area. A number of these species have received state designations due to their limited presence within the state as a whole. Additionally, rock habitats are identified as a specialized habitat in the *Oregon Conservation Strategy* (2016) due to the cliff-nesting birds, cliff-roosting bats, rare plants and other wildlife that utilize them. Nesting peregrine falcons have also been observed on the cliff.

The vegetation of the cliff face, as well as portions of the surrounding properties, are functionally unique and have been determined by Bureau of Environmental



*View to the east from the Garden at Elk Rock.*

Services staff to be irreplaceable within the region. Given its unique character, it is critically important to ensure that the area is managed to limit the establishment of invasive species that may compete with these rare plants and to minimize other potential impacts of adjacent uses.

Powers Marine Park, located east of SW Macadam Avenue (Hwy 43) and south of the Sellwood Bridge on the west side of the Willamette River, represents a third significant natural area within the South Reach. The park contains a nearly continuous forest canopy that extends to the water's edge, though it is bisected by railroad tracks running parallel with SW Macadam Avenue. Use of the upland portion of the park is via soft surface trails that provide beach access. The park is characterized by shallow water habitat along nearly all of its shoreline. There are seven intermittent and perennial streams that flow from the River View Natural Area from the west to the Willamette River through the park. As part of the construction of the new Sellwood Bridge (completed in 2017), two short segments of these streams and floodplain habitat at their confluence with the river were restored. The park's shallow water habitat combined with the cold water inputs from the streams provides high-quality resting and feeding habitat for juvenile salmon, a rarity in the Lower Willamette River. However, the culverts under SW Macadam Avenue of the seven streams represent a significant barrier for wildlife passage into and from the River View Natural Area.



*A Madrone tree along the riverfront.*

The amount of shallow water habitat in Powers Marine Park sets it apart from other areas in the South Reach. A continuous stretch of shallow water habitat, like that found in the park, provides valuable respite for juvenile salmon during out-migration, especially as they head to the Central and North reaches where there is little shallow water habitat available. Ensuring that the park is managed as a natural area with goals to protect and enhance the beach, streams and riparian habitats, while minimizing impacts from trail users, will be critical.

Within and beyond the natural areas described above, a significant issue in the South Reach has been the impact of houseless camping and live-aboard boaters on natural resources and the river. On land, houseless individuals often camp within the South Reach's sensitive habitat areas, including on the riverbank and the bluffs at the northern end of Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, along the Springwater Corridor and on beaches throughout the study area (including the former Staff Jennings site, Oaks Amusement Park, at the north end of the east shoreline, and elsewhere). This unauthorized camping often results in trampling or destroying of habitat, dumping of trash and other debris within natural areas and the river, fires as a result of camp fires left unattended or growing excessively large and human waste products strewn about. Similarly, live-aboard boaters commonly dock or anchor within the South Reach, creating significant impacts on the river. Frequently, these boats are not safe for usage on the water, do not have adequate facilities to store sewage, or are tied together,

creating a hazard for other river users. Dumping of on-board sewage and trash into the river is common in these boats, resulting in significant impacts on fish and wildlife, as well as other river users.

Addressing the causes of houselessness goes beyond the scope of the River Plan / South Reach. However, it is important that future action and enforcement related to this issue attempt to minimize the natural resource impacts of houseless camping and live-aboard boaters, wherever possible, within the context of providing resources and options to those houseless individuals.

### **Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**Policy 7.8 Biodiversity.** Strive to achieve and maintain self-sustaining populations of native species, including native plants, native resident and migratory fish and wildlife species, at-risk species, and beneficial insects (such as pollinators) through plans and investments.

**Policy 7.12 Invasive species.** Prevent or reduce the spread of invasive plants, remove infestations, and support efforts to reduce the impacts of invasive plants, animals, and insects, through plans, investments, and education.

**Policy 8.97 Natural resources.** Preserve, enhance, and manage City-owned natural areas and resources to protect and improve their ecological health, in accordance with both the natural area acquisition and restoration strategies, and to provide compatible public access.

### **Objectives and Actions**

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Protect existing natural areas and open spaces to minimize user impacts and the effects of adjacent development, including introduction of invasive species, off-trail impacts, erosion, houseless camping and live-aboard boaters and other issues. Ensure no loss of resources and functions in these areas over time.

#### *Actions*

- Prepare a coordinated management plan for the Ross Island Natural Area/Holgate Channel/Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge/Oaks Crossing Natural Area complex to identify ways to support ecological functions throughout the complex, improve habitat for fish and wildlife species – including a large number of resident and migrant bird species – that utilize the complex, and minimize impacts of users in this popular area.
- Continue to manage Elk Rock Cliff to minimize impacts on its various regionally-significant plant species and limit the establishment and spread of invasive species to reduce competition with these unique species.
- Identify and evaluate areas where riverbank erosion is occurring due to steep slopes, wakes created by boaters and other issues to determine appropriate stabilization techniques in key areas.
- Ensure adequate signage is provided along trails that direct users to stay on the trail to prevent erosion and other impacts.
- Support the work of the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) and strengthen coordination between JOHS, City bureaus and State agencies (e.g., DSL and OSMB) to minimize the impacts of live-aboard boaters and houseless camping on the Willamette River and adjacent natural areas and parks.

## 4. WATERSHED AND NATURAL AREAS RESTORATION

As is clear from the previous section, the South Reach has an abundance of existing natural resources that provide important ecological functions. However, there are still ample restoration opportunities to improve habitat quality within existing natural areas, make the Willamette River cleaner and safer for fish and human use and create greater connections to habitat corridors outside the South Reach. This section describes some of those opportunities and identifies action items for implementation.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

The Natural Resource Big Idea, presented in Chapter 2, identifies a number of target areas for future restoration efforts. A substantial focus of these efforts is the restoration of salmon habitat – specifically shallow water habitat – along the banks of the South Reach. The lower Willamette River is designated critical habitat for several anadromous species listed under the federal ESA, including Chinook, Coho and sockeye salmon, as well as Lower Columbia River and Upper Willamette River steelhead trout. The lower Willamette River is also key migratory habitat for Pacific lamprey, a federal species of concern and species with great cultural value to regional Native American tribes.

Habitat connectivity along the shoreline is crucial to the survival of salmon. As both juveniles and adults move along the shoreline, they seek refugia habitat that provides opportunities to feed, rest and hide from predators. Long periods of sustained swimming between these refugia deplete energy reserves. Fish with low energy resources migrating between refugia are more vulnerable to predation. The more “rest stops” a fish has the more likely they will complete their migrations in good health.

Areas of shallow water habitat include Ross Island, Holgate Channel, the Stephens Creek confluence, Powers Marine Park (discussed in the previous section) and the mudflat north of the Willamette Park boat ramp. The recently-completed culvert replacement project at Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge opens up the wetland as off-channel habitat for salmonids. The bank layback identified in the *Willamette Park Redevelopment and Phasing Plan* will, when funded and implemented, create new shallow water habitat and increase the function of the riparian corridor.

Substantial stretches of the Willamette River’s banks have been hardened with riprap, seawalls and docks, especially in the North and Central reaches. This lack of shallow water habitat and associated refugia in other Willamette River reaches amplifies the need to preserve and expand these areas in the South Reach. New shallow water habitat areas should be established on public and private lands. Increasing shallow water habitat along the mostly-private Riverdale/Dunthorpe riverbanks would add valuable “rest stops” for fish continuing further upstream.

In addition to shallow waters, maintaining cool water temperatures is another important characteristic of high-quality salmon and steelhead trout habitat. High in-stream temperatures in the Lower Willamette River, especially during the summer months, are a concern for migrating anadromous salmon. Tributary streams can have a mitigating influence on the water temperature in the Willamette River by providing cool water refugia.

One excellent opportunity to reconnect cold water tributary streams to the Willamette River is in Powers Marine Park. As described in the previous section, there are seven perennial and intermittent streams in the park. Segments of two of these streams were recently restored as a part of the Sellwood Bridge project. However, greater connectivity between the confluence and upland stretches of these streams through replacement of

existing culverts under SW Macadam Avenue would contribute to cool water refugia at Powers Marine Park and allow for improved movement of wildlife between the Willamette River and the contiguous habitat at River View Natural Area and beyond. Floodplain habitat restoration represents an additional opportunity for these streams.

Ross Island Lagoon is another key area that should be targeted for future restoration. As a result of the repeated occurrence of harmful algal blooms (HAB) in the lagoon, it was recently added to the DEQ listing of the state's imperiled waters. The Oregon Health Authority issued a summer warning to river users for the lagoon in four out of the last five years (2014-18). These warnings are generally given during periods of peak demand on the Willamette River. HABs are a result of increased temperatures combined with stagnant, nutrient-rich water and can cause illness in humans and animals if ingested. With higher summer temperatures as a result of climate change, HABs are expected to occur more frequently in the future. An effort to identify approaches and implementation mechanisms to address these HABs is needed.

Reclamation of the banks of Ross Island and the lagoon has been ongoing since the early 1980s to address the impacts of dredging conducted by Ross Island Sand and Gravel throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Dredging ceased in 2001 and the company continues to implement the applicable reclamation plan, originally established by the Oregon Department of State Lands in 1979 and most recently updated in 2002. Ross Island Sand and Gravel is required to continue to place fill along the banks and within the lagoon to meet the requirements of the reclamation plan. The reclamation plan requires the establishment of a diversity of habitats, including 118 acres of upland forest, 22 acres of riparian/emergent wetland habitat and 14 acres of shallow water habitat. The completion of this reclamation plan represents another important South Reach restoration opportunity.

Additional restoration of the City-owned portion of Ross Island and restoration opportunities beyond those required by Ross Island Sand and Gravel's Ross Island Reclamation Plan (most recently updated in 2002) should be pursued to continue to improve fish and wildlife habitat on and around Ross, East and Toe islands.

### **Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**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 3.73 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 7.9 Habitat and biological communities.** Improve, or support efforts to improve, fish and wildlife habitat and biological communities. Use plans and investments to enhance the diversity, quantity, and quality of habitats habitat corridors, and especially habitats that:

- Are rare or declining.
- Support at-risk plant and animal species and communities.
- Support recovery of species under the Endangered Species Act and prevent new listings.
- Provide culturally important food sources, including those associated with Native American
- fishing rights.

**Policy 7.18 Community stewardship.** Encourage voluntary cooperation between property owners, community organizations, and public agencies to restore or re-create habitat on their property, including removing invasive plants and planting native species.

**Policy 7.33 Fish habitat.** Provide adequate intervals of ecologically-functional shallow water habitat for native fish along the entire length of the Willamette River within the city, and at the confluences of its tributaries.

**Policy 7.34 Stream connectivity.** Improve stream connectivity between the Willamette River and its tributaries.

**Policy 7.38 Sensitive habitats.** Protect and enhance grasslands, beaches, floodplains, wetlands, remnant native oak, bottomland hardwood forest, and other key habitats for native wildlife including shorebirds, waterfowl, and species that migrate along the Pacific Flyway and the Willamette River corridor.

**Objectives and Actions**

**OBJECTIVE #4:** Restore the Willamette River and its riverbanks to improve and increase habitat for Threatened and Endangered salmon, steelhead trout and other fish and wildlife species, as well as upland areas to strengthen connections to surrounding habitat corridors.

*Actions*

- Implement restoration projects to expand shallow water habitat within the South Reach, including along the shorelines of Ross Island (including the lagoon), Willamette Park and in Holgate Slough.
- Restore the natural connection and functions of the seven perennial and intermittent streams that flow from River View Natural Area into Powers Marine Park to allow for fish and wildlife movement under Highway 43 through larger culverts or other methods.
- Fund the continued implementation of the *Willamette Park Redevelopment and Phasing Plan (2012)*, including the laying back of the bank south of the boat ramp to create more shallow water habitat and beach area.
- Continue to support efforts to obtain Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) funding for identified restoration projects in the South Reach. WRDA reauthorization is currently pending congressional approval. Consider the submittal of a second package that includes the Ross Island complex and lagoon as an identified restoration project.
- Investigate options for public-private partnerships and other tools to increase shallow water habitat and improve riverbank and upland habitat on private property, including riverfront property in the Riverdale/Dunthorpe neighborhood of Multnomah County.



*Southern end of the Holgate Slough.*

- Continue existing partnerships and pursue funding to develop new partnerships with individuals and conservation and community groups to support restoration and community science efforts throughout the South Reach.
- Continue efforts to replace invasive plant species throughout the reach with native species via the Bureau of Environmental Services Revegetation Program, the West and East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation Districts programs, Portland Parks and Recreation City Nature Division and others.

**OBJECTIVE #5:** Identify strategies to reduce or curtail harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the Ross Island Lagoon to address risks to human, fish and animal health created by the HABs.

#### *Action*

- Investigate potential strategies to address the summertime HABs in Ross Island Lagoon and identify potential partners and funding sources for implementing those strategies (including DSL and others). Evaluation of strategies should assess the potential for indirect effects on the surrounding area, including the Holgate Channel, its riverbanks and nearby floating homes. Strategies should be informed by and consistent with the Ross Island Natural Area/Holgate Channel/Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge/Oaks Crossing Natural Area coordinated management plan (see Objective #3), once it is in place.

## **5. FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

The City of Portland has long prioritized climate change preparation, beginning with the adoption of its *Global Warming Reduction Strategy* in 1993. This continued focus culminated most recently in the adoption of the *2015 Climate Action Plan* and associated *Climate Change Preparation Strategy*. The plan sets the framework for Portland's response to climate change over the next 30 years by identifying priorities and actions to reduce the City's climate impacts over time. More intense heat waves and heavier rainstorms, along with increased chance of droughts and floods, are expected in the Portland region. Additionally, the risk of wildfires and landslides is likely to increase and invasive species may become more common and difficult to manage.

Land use planning and development in the South Reach will need to effectively address these expected changes, especially related to future flood events. This section highlights some of the key climate change issues and opportunities and identifies a number of actions to be taken to reduce the impacts of climate change.

### **Key Issues and Opportunities**

The South Reach provides extensive flood management capacity due to a substantial amount of undeveloped, vegetated lands, as well as relatively low building coverage on many sites. FEMA uses the 100-year floodplain as its primary measurement of risk for development adjacent to waterways. The 100-year flood is a flood for which there is a one percent chance of occurrence in a given year. In addition to the 100-year floodplain, the City of Portland uses the 1996 Flood Inundation Area, which is a detailed map of the flood zone from Portland's 1996 flood, as a measure of flood risk. The 1996 Flood Inundation Area map was adopted by Metro Council as a part of its Title 3 efforts, which focused on ensuring effective water quality and flood management within the region.



The extent of the combined 100-year floodplain and 1996 Flood Inundation Area (“flood area”) is shown in Map B-2. As is demonstrated in the map, Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Sellwood Riverfront Park, Oaks Crossing Natural Area, Willamette Park and Powers Marine Park all provide valuable flood storage capacity for minimizing the impacts of an estimated 100-year flood for adjacent and downstream development. However, there are many areas where existing development is located within the 100-year floodplain, including both residential and commercial development. For example, industrial activities on Ross Island would be expected to be completely inundated in the case of a 100-year flood.

In 2016, in response to a legal settlement, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) issued a Biological Opinion on FEMA’s National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in Oregon. NMFS and the US Fish and Wildlife Service are the agencies responsible for ensuring that federal programs, such as the NFIP, comply with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). A “Biological Opinion” is the report the agencies issue after they have reviewed a program for ESA compliance.

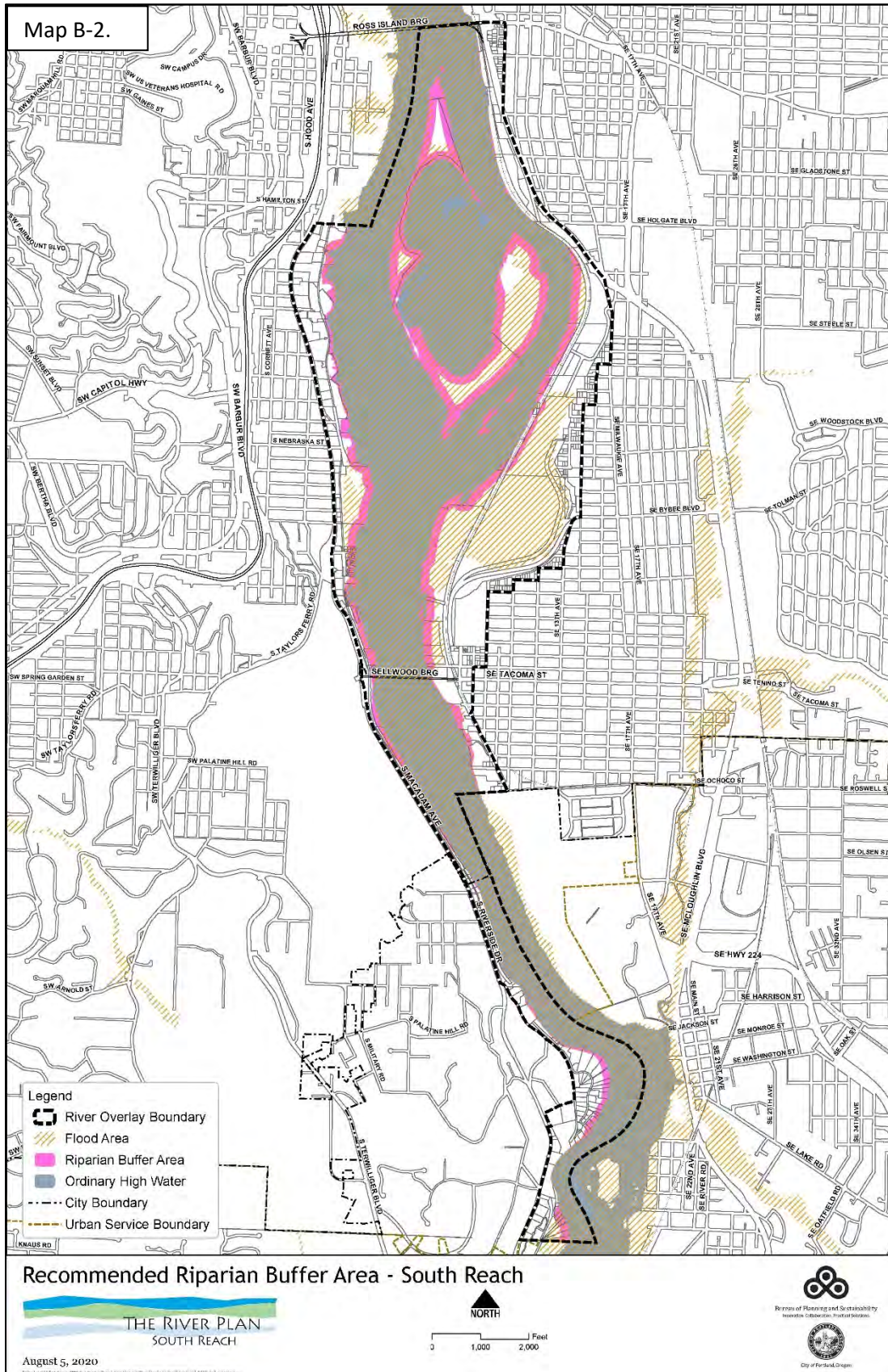
NMFS determined that the NFIP, as currently implemented in Oregon, violates the ESA by jeopardizing the health and habitat of 16 different protected salmon and steelhead trout species. In the Biological Opinion, NMFS directed FEMA to implement changes to the NFIP to stop the loss of natural floodplain functions and salmon and steelhead trout habitat in Oregon floodplains. Changes to the program will be both regulatory and map-based. Recommended regulatory changes focus on updating requirements to ensure adequate flood capacity associated with new development, establishing minimum tree replacement standards, managing stormwater more effectively and other strategies.

FEMA is currently working on updating guidance to local jurisdictions to comply with the NMFS directive. Once established, the City of Portland will be required to update floodplain development regulations citywide to be consistent with the revised NFIP guidance to maintain access to federally-backed flood insurance for residents and businesses. Given the time necessary to update City codes and regulations, City staff is already working to determine an approach to ensure compliance with the Biological Opinion and meet the City’s ESA obligations. This work is consistent with other established City goals and policies.

The expected changes to hydrology and resulting flood impacts climate change, as well as the ESA determination within the Biological Opinion, bring heightened urgency to better preparing for future flood events in the South Reach. To reduce future flood risk for South Reach developments, ensure compliance with the City’s ESA obligations and goals and begin the process of updating all of the City’s floodplain management regulations, updating floodplain management regulations in the South Reach is warranted. The approach should incorporate NMFS guidance provided in the Biological Opinion to the extent possible, while emphasizing meeting the City’s various established goals and policies.



*Powers Marine Park shoreline.*



The changes in the timing and intensity of rain events discussed above are expected to be coupled with hotter, drier summers. As result of these longer periods with little or no rain, wildfire risk is likely to increase significantly. Many properties along the Willamette River in the South Reach contain large stands of trees that will be drier in the summer, increasing the wildfire risk. Similarly, large expanses of tree canopy on adjacent properties, such as River View Natural Area, Riverview cemetery and the Garden at Elk Rock, will be at greater risk. Given the size of these stands, fires started on nearby development will be more likely to move quickly through these large densely-treed areas, increasing the potential for damage to other adjacent properties. The frequency of these fires may be a result of fires started due to illegal camping in natural areas and on nearby live-aboard boats. Proactive measures, such as fire breaks around existing development in these areas, engagement with the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management education and communication efforts, and others, should be taken to minimize the potential for wildfires in high risk areas of the South Reach.

A final climate consideration is the potential for more intense rain events to produce more landslides in landslide-prone areas of the South Reach. Landslide-prone properties are primarily located on the Sellwood bluff and on steeper hillsides in the west hills. An increase in landslide activity has been seen in Portland over the last five years and it will be important to direct new development away from landslide-prone areas, to the extent possible, and when these areas can't be avoided to ensure appropriate safety measures have been taken to reduce landslide risk. Additionally, appropriate tree and vegetation preservation and management on steep slopes is important to stabilize banks and reduce potential harm to people, structures and fish and wildlife habitat.

### **Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**Policy 4.79 Natural hazards and climate change risks and impacts.** Limit development in or near areas prone to natural hazards, using the most current hazard and climate change-related information and maps.

**Policy 4.81 Disaster-resilient development.** Encourage development and site management approaches that reduce the risks and impacts of natural disasters or other major disturbances and that improve the ability of people, wildlife, natural systems, and property to withstand and recover from such events.

**Policy 7.4 Climate change.** Update and implement strategies to reduce carbon emissions and impacts, and increase resilience through plans and investments and public education.

**Policy 7.14 Natural hazards.** Prevent development-related degradation of natural systems and associated increases in landslide, wildfire, flooding, and earthquake risks.

**Policy 8.76 Flood management.** Improve and maintain the functions of natural and managed drainageways, wetlands, and floodplains to protect health, safety, and property, provide water conveyance and storage, improve water quality, and maintain and enhance fish and wildlife habitat.

**Policy 8.77 Floodplain management.** Manage floodplains to protect and restore associated natural resources and functions and to minimize the risks to life and property from flooding.

### **Objectives and Actions**

**OBJECTIVE #6:** Strengthen development regulations within South Reach floodplains to ensure that new development is designed to minimize flood risk by improving stormwater management, increasing habitat and identifying opportunities to remove existing development out of the floodplain, when feasible.

### *Actions*

- Apply the River Environmental (e) to all land within the FEMA 100-year floodplain and 1996 Flood Inundation Area, whether the land is undeveloped or developed, to ensure that new development is designed to minimize flood risk and expand floodplain habitat. The River Environmental requires the replacement of all trees greater than 1.5 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) removed within the river setback. Landward of the setback, all trees greater than three inches dbh that are removed must be replaced. The River Environmental requires that any impacts within the floodplain also be mitigated within the floodplain. Mitigation can be completed either on the project site or off site.
- Incorporate a “riparian buffer area” adjacent to the river where development that is not river-dependent or river-related is required to achieve beneficial gain, defined as achieving no net loss in all habitat functions and significant improvement of at least one functional value.
- Consider incentives for reduction of existing impervious parking lots and other surfaces in the River Environmental overlay zone to improve stormwater management during flood events.
- Investigate the development of a program similar to the Bureau of Environmental Services Johnson Creek Willing Seller Program for properties along the Willamette River, including the South Reach.
- Develop additional programs and incentives as a part of the Floodplain Management Update Program to ensure development in the floodplain, including the setback, is reduced over time.

**OBJECTIVE #7:** Analyze and assess the extent of potential flood risk along the Willamette River under future climate scenarios to better prepare for climate change-related effects on precipitation patterns and sea level rise on the Willamette River.

### *Actions*

- Work with FEMA and/or other organizations to conduct modeling and analyses using existing data and trends to estimate potential changes in flood risk within the South Reach. Based on this estimate of future flood risk, update City flood maps and apply floodplain development regulations to the expanded floodplain.

**OBJECTIVE #8:** In addition to flood risk, prepare for other expected climate change effects within the South Reach resulting from warmer winters and associated intense rain events and hotter, drier summers. These effects may include increased wildfire risk for urban development adjacent to open spaces and greater potential for landslides as a result of soil saturation in landslide prone areas.

### *Actions*

- Determine the current and potential future risk of wildfire originating from development near and unauthorized campfires within River View Natural Area, Powers Marine Park and on Ross Island and implement strategies to reduce the likelihood of wildfire and their potential impacts on natural resources and nearby structures.
- Evaluate future landslide risk of South Reach properties located in landslide-prone areas, review the current development allowance on these properties to ensure the zoning and other development regulations address this future risk and determine any additional steps needed to reduce landslide risk for existing development.

## C. RECREATION

### 1. OVERVIEW

The South Reach of the Willamette River is a special place in Portland, with 400 acres of designated open space, and numerous opportunities to experience riverfront parks and natural areas. People can access the river for appreciation of its natural beauty and to recreate in, along and near it. The South Reach is the river recreation hub in Portland. People get in the river at a number of local locations or come from other places in the City and beyond



*West side of the South Reach.*

for boating, fishing and swimming. Residents of most adjacent neighborhoods have safe and convenient routes to get to the riverfront. Two major paved public trails parallel the riverfront and provide a nearly continuous connection to the riverfront via walking, running, rolling and bicycling. Soft surface trails in the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Oaks Crossing Natural Area and Powers Marine Park sites provide unique pedestrian experiences in natural areas. Riverfront and in-river access in the South Reach is not without its shortcomings; for example, the Brooklyn neighborhood does not have safe, direct access to the riverfront. Some households in South Portland and Sellwood-Moreland neighborhoods are located farther than ½ mile of a developed park. And most of the South Reach is served by a full-service community center. There are opportunities to improve recreation facilities and services for seniors and people with disabilities. More locations for in-river recreation in South Reach and better access at existing watercraft launching locations are desirable. Efforts to minimize conflicts between different recreational users in the river and on land are needed so that everyone has safe and enjoyable experiences.

This section will cover issues, opportunities and desires for the future and offer recommendations that have come from an understanding of current conditions and public input. Public engagement during the River Plan / South Reach planning process has yielded many informative comments. This plan is also guided by a planning policy framework that includes Portland's comprehensive plan goals and policies. The most relevant policies are highlighted under each recreation topic. Objectives and actions offered need to be consistent with the adopted policy framework.

### 2. PUBLIC PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS

There are eleven developed and undeveloped parks and natural areas in the South Reach for active and passive recreation: Willamette Park, Sellwood Riverfront Park, Sellwood Park, Multnomah County property (former Staff Jennings Marina), along with natural areas such as Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Oaks Crossing Natural Area, Toe Island City Park, Ross Island Natural Area, Willamette Moorage Park, Powers Marine Park and Cottonwood

Bay Park. The condition and recreational opportunities of these parks and natural areas varies. The following section will focus on the future of land-based recreation in the South Reach. In-river recreation is discussed afterwards. The Willamette Greenway and Springwater Corridor trails are linear parks that provide recreation along the riverfront and will also be covered separately after highlighting parks and natural areas.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

Today residents and visitors to South Reach parks and natural areas can enjoy picnicking, strolling, hiking, quiet appreciation and viewing of nature and wildlife and other recreation depending on amenities provided. For example, Sellwood Park has playgrounds, tennis courts and a swimming pool. However, the development status of parks and natural areas varies; for example, Willamette Park has a completed master plan for future buildout and restoration. Phase 1 implementation has been completed but the remainder of master plan implementation that includes additional recreation and habitat improvements is unfunded at this time. Sellwood Riverfront Park is a popular park especially in summer. It draws lots of people and dogs for in-river and landside recreation and the unfenced dog park. Given appropriate funding, Portland Parks and Recreation could lead a master planning effort to better accommodate the different users, reduce conflicts between users and address the flood plain impacts of the park's location. This planning for Sellwood Riverfront Park could be accomplished as part of a larger planning effort for South Reach parks, and natural areas that Portland Parks and Recreation would conduct tentatively called the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Complex Management Plan. Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge is one the closest natural areas to downtown Portland and inner southeast neighborhoods. The refuge has a developed soft surface trail system that includes a viewing area. It is an exceptional area to watch birds and other wildlife, and there is a paved trail section, though not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible.



*Elk Rock island.*

Natural areas are managed primarily for their natural resource functions and ecosystem services including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, wildlife corridors, floodplains and protection of sensitive, threatened and endangered species. There is an opportunity in the future to acquire additional land for restoration and natural area management on Ross Island. These areas, when publicly owned and operated, are made accessible for limited public use via soft or paved trails. Allowed uses are posted for each natural area. These areas provide passive recreation opportunities for birding and other wildlife viewing and hiking. Hikers and bicyclists who use natural areas can trample plants as well as leave garbage and other waste. Minimizing the impacts of passive recreation in natural areas is important.

There are also opportunities to create new recreational facilities on public property. *Brooklyn Neighborhood Plan* (1991) identifies such an area. It is called "Haig Park" and is along the river, south of SE Franklin Street right-of-way alignment and north of SE Haig Street right-of-way alignment. Another opportunity site is on land owned

by Multnomah County (formerly the Staff Jennings Boating Center and Marina) on the west shore, north of the Sellwood Bridge. This site was acquired for the Sellwood Bridge project for stormwater management and environmental mitigation but has opportunities to provide riverside and in-river recreation.

One other way that recreational users at certain parks can better be served is to allow a limited amount of retail uses in structures at a few parks. These retail uses would occupy a small building footprint, be located outside the river setback, would not interfere with recreation activities, and would only have businesses dedicated to park users such as small restaurants, boat and other recreational equipment rentals and the sale of sundries like sunscreen.

Demographics described previously in the Existing Conditions section of the plan can inform local recreation improvements and service delivery. In the South Reach, there is a significant population of seniors and people with disabilities. Providing ample benches and accessible walkways within parks and natural areas accommodates a broader spectrum of people. There are also opportunities to attract a broader demographic of Portlanders to South Reach parks to enjoy the plentiful riverfront recreation that the South Reach offers. Currently, there is limited programming at most parks (except for Sellwood Park). Given appropriate funding, Portland Parks and Recreation could offer specific programming that attracts diverse members of the community and promotes age, disability and culturally-specific programming in southeast and southwest Portland. Inclusive planning of park improvements can benefit the larger community. Transportation is often a barrier for people to access public facilities and services. See the Riverfront Communities section for related information about improving transit and transportation services.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Goal and Policies

**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.

**Goal 8.H: Parks, natural areas, and recreation**

All Portlanders have safe, convenient, and equitable access to high-quality parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational opportunities in their daily lives, which contribute to their health and well-being. The City manages its natural areas and urban forest to protect unique urban habitats and offer Portlanders an opportunity to connect with nature.

**Policy 8.95 Park planning.** Improve parks, recreational facilities, natural areas, and the urban forest in accordance with relevant master plans, management plans, or adopted strategies that reflect user group needs, development priorities, development and maintenance costs, program opportunities, financing strategies, and community input. Consider developing master or management plans for properties that lack guiding plans or strategies.



*Springwater Corridor trail.*

## Objectives and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #1:** Complete plans and implement physical and programmatic improvements for South Reach parks, natural areas and trails that maximize positive experiences for users of all ages and abilities and connect more people to the river with active and passive recreation.

### Actions

- Identify funding to complete implementation of the *Willamette Park Redevelopment and Phasing Plan* (2012).
- Plan for the future of Sellwood Riverfront Park as part of the Oaks Bottom Complex Management Plan; address issues identified by the public during South Reach planning including off-leash dog areas and reduction of user conflicts.
- Plan for the future of less impactful recreation in the natural areas on the east side by completing an Oaks Bottom Complex Management Plan that includes Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Oaks Crossing Natural Area, Ross Island Natural Area, Holgate Channel, and lands adjacent to the Springwater Corridor Trail.
- Allow a limited amount of park user-supportive retail services at Willamette Park, Sellwood Riverfront Park and the Multnomah County property (formerly known as Staff Jennings Marina Boating Center).
- Explore funding for the creation of a riverfront park in the Brooklyn neighborhood that was referenced in the *Brooklyn Neighborhood Plan* and establish a path forward for completion of a riverfront park.
- Identify funding to make public access and site improvements to the Powers Marine Park and Multnomah County (former Staff Jennings) sites for bicycling, walking and human powered boating.
- Continue to include the public engagement of seniors and people with disabilities in planning and development of recreation facilities South Reach park and natural areas.
- Identify funding to enhance Portland Parks and Recreation’s enforcement and compliance with rules in City-owned parks, natural areas and trails in the South Reach; internal education and training around equity; and tracking of enforcement. Monitor enforcement to ensure equitable enforcement of rules.
- Pursue funding to acquire, operate and maintain additional city-owned land on Ross Island.



*Park users at Sellwood Riverfront Park.*

**OBJECTIVE #2:** Develop culturally-specific programming and activities at South Reach parks, natural areas and in-river waters; and promote these programs and activities to a broader demographic citywide. (Note: The same objective and actions can be found in the NW Tribes and Native Peoples section, Objective #4.)



*Actions*

- Work with interested Native Americans, immigrants and communities of color to determine and plan for desired uses, activities and programming at South Reach parks and natural areas.
- Work with interested Native Americans, immigrants and communities of color to address barriers to successful parks and natural areas’ use in the South Reach.
- Identify funding to plan and promote citywide, culturally-specific uses, activities and programming in South Reach parks and natural areas.

**3. RIVERFRONT TRAILS AND CONNECTIONS**

The City Council-adopted *Willamette Greenway Plan* (1987) addresses access to and along the riverfront by designating a public trail alignment paralleling each side of the river. The Willamette River Greenway trail on the river’s west side, and the Springwater Corridor Trail on the river’s east side, have been built typically through redevelopment of private properties and public expenditures. Only a few small gaps in the trail system exist. The riverfront trails are part of a regional trail system that connects the South Reach to other areas, expanding the active transportation network. While the discussion of trails in this plan is included in the Recreation section, the Willamette Greenway trails are important transportation corridors for bicyclists and others. People use the trails to commute to/from work and make purposeful trips to destinations in the South Reach and beyond. Such use of trails reduces automobile traffic on roadways, helps reduce carbon impacts and promotes public health and well-being.

**Key Issues and Opportunities**

The Willamette River Greenway Trail is a recreation and transportation resource enjoyed by many, but there is room for improvement. Adequate signage to direct people to the trail is lacking in some locations, often on the west side through privately owned but publicly dedicated easements. On the east side, Brooklyn neighborhood residents are separated from the river by Oregon Highway 99E (McLoughlin Boulevard). These residents are challenged by the steep terrain down to the Springwater Corridor Trail and river and lack direct and safe riverfront access. Many residents must travel farther by bicycle, foot or car to reach the Springwater Corridor Trail. Nearly 25% of households in Brooklyn have children and almost 10% bicycle to work according to the most recent U.S. Census data. Creating a safer, closer-in bicycle/pedestrian connection to the Springwater Corridor Trail via the local street network would likely increase local bicycle and pedestrian usage of the Springwater Trail reducing carbon impacts. The *Brooklyn Neighborhood Plan* (1991) identifies an objective and actions that seek to “re-establish Brooklyn’s access and historic link to the Willamette River.” This objective is still an unmet priority to the community almost 30 years after completion of the *Brooklyn Neighborhood Plan*.



*Powers Marine Park.*

Public access ways and walkways from neighborhoods to local viewpoints and other public assets on the primary trail systems on both sides of the Willamette River are essential for full appreciation of this treasure that is the South Reach.

The popularity of the Willamette River Greenway Trail for transportation and recreation has increased over the years. It is anticipated that trail use will continue to grow over time as the trail network and



*Willamette Greenway Trail.*

connections to it expands, the City's population increases and more people desire to bicycle, walk and roll. Pinch points and sharp turns on the west side Willamette River Greenway Trail pose safety hazards to trail users, and design fixes are needed. For example, adding bulb-out areas for pedestrians and bicyclists to get out of the main trail corridor when stopping, improves safety for all. Also, much of the trail on the west side is maintained by private landowners who are responsible for the maintenance of the trail. The Bureau of Development Services is responsible for notifying the homeowners and/or the homeowner associations when maintenance is needed, and the property owners are required to do the repair work. Portland Parks and Recreation is responsible for trail maintenance where it is on public properties or when they hold a maintenance easement with the private property owner.

The Willamette River Greenway Trail is called the Springwater Corridor Trail on the east side of the river. It lacks trail user amenities such as benches, restrooms, and water fountains. There are long stretches of trail that can be problematic for some people who need these amenities. Community members have also expressed concerns about high-speed bicyclists on the straight, flat stretches of the Springwater Corridor Trail that they feel endanger pedestrians, seniors, people with disabilities, and slower bicyclists and families with children. Community members have suggested separating pedestrians and bicyclists on the trail. Again, design and operational solutions could improve safety and enjoyment for most users. Overall, trail design standards for the greenway trails need to meet typical regional multiuse path design guidelines, and include trail-related amenities to serve people of all abilities.

The Oregon Yacht Club floating home community adjacent to Oaks Amusement Park, has requested that the small section of major public trail alignment for the Springwater Corridor Trail riverfront loop that is identified on their property on the City's zoning map and in the *2035 Comprehensive Plan* be shifted off of their property to be located along the Oaks Amusement Park property. City staff field checked this request and spoke with representatives of Oaks Amusement Park.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies

**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 8.53 Public trails.** Establish, improve, and maintain a citywide system of local and regional public trails that provide transportation and/or recreation options and are a component of larger network of facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians, and recreational users.

**Policy 8.55 Trail coordination.** Coordinate planning, design, improvement, and maintenance of the trail system among City agencies, other public agencies, non-governmental partners, and adjacent landowners.

### Objectives and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Complete the remaining gaps in the Willamette River Greenway Trail network, connect riverfront trails to the greater regional trail system, and improve safety, comfort and convenience for all trail users.

#### Actions

- Identify funding to complete gaps in existing trail corridors when new development or redevelopment occurs or through grants.
- Realign the “stars” on the zoning map and in the *2035 Comprehensive Plan* to shift a small section of the Springwater Corridor Trail riverside loop alignment off of the Oregon Yacht Club property and on to the Oaks Amusement Park property.
- Identify funding to make improvements to the Springwater Corridor and the Willamette River Greenway trails to reduce conflicts and pinch points between users by meeting typical regional multiuse path design guidelines, and adding trail-related amenities to serve people of all abilities.
- Identify funding to expand riverfront public access trail maps, wayfinding and signage.
- Identify funding and partners to study and design options for trail extensions and connections to Lake Oswego and the larger trail system in SW and SE Portland. These connections include trails from the Willamette Greenway Trail to George Himes Park, SW Terwilliger Blvd. and the Red Electric Trail.
- Identify funding to map the location of existing motorized vehicle parking spaces near riverfront trails and increase public awareness of their availability.
- Seek funding and community support for planning, design, construction, repair and replacement of access ways and walkways from neighborhoods to local viewpoints and other public assets on the primary trail systems on both sides of the Willamette River.



*Paddlers in Willamette River.*

**OBJECTIVE #4:** Seek partnerships that plan, secure funds and develop safe and convenient riverfront access for the Brooklyn neighborhood.

#### *Actions*

- Work with community partners to seek funds for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of a Brooklyn neighborhood riverfront access (to the Springwater Corridor Trail) and riverfront park project.
- Work with community partners to seek funds and resources to study a new Brooklyn riverfront park.

## **4. PRIVATE RECREATION**

Private and not-for-profit organizations provide and support recreation and entertainment in the South Reach. Oaks Amusement Park, one of America's longest continually operating amusement parks (since 1905), is located on the east side of the Willamette River north of the Sellwood Bridge. The park offers a variety of rides and activities and hosts events and private parties. The Garden at Elk Rock is located south of the Sellwood Bridge in the Riverdale/Dunthorpe neighborhood, on the west side of the river on what was formerly property owned by Peter Kerr who developed English-style gardens in 1905. This passive activity park has pedestrian trails, curated plants and trees, and great views of Elk Rock Island, the river and downtown Milwaukie. There are also boating clubs in the South Reach such as a community boathouse at Oaks Amusement Park, the Willamette Sailing Club, and private marinas on both sides of the river. The Portland Kayak Company, located on SW Macadam Avenue, offers boating excursions from Willamette Park. American Waterways (the Portland Spirit) tourist boats and Willamette Jet Boat excursions often bring passengers upstream into the South Reach from Central City riverfront docks. Other companies in the Portland area offer motorized watercraft rentals.

### **Key Issues and Opportunities**

Private and non-profit entities have an important role in bringing people to the riverfront for in-river and riverside recreation in the South Reach. It is hoped that these businesses and organizations continue to flourish into the future. Oaks Amusement Park is contemplating its future by completing a master plan. While the focus of the master planning effort is on the amusement park's infrastructure, amusement park leadership is open to discussions with the City of Portland on a public-private partnership that could involve creating a public swimming beach. Oaks Amusement Park is also interested in the development of a dock at the park, as one previously existed until the 1980s and allowed park visitors to be brought to the park via boat excursions. A new dock would also serve the community boathouse that operates out of the park, serving four club programs including the Portland Kayak and Canoe Team.

Long-established Willamette River paddling and rowing clubs provide team opportunities to more than 3,000 Portlanders each year. Wasabi Paddling Club & Outriggers, DragonSports, Station L Rowing, Rose City Rowing and others are open to the public and also serve all ages and abilities.

University teams began rowing the Willamette in 1879 when a group of 38 Portland men who attended colleges throughout the country brought the sport to Portland. The teams met on the banks of the river at the foot of SW Ash Street, then moved to the west bank near where the Hawthorne Bridge is now. Eventually they purchased two city blocks south of the Sellwood Bridge. For 130 years, the crew boats have been a part of the Willamette River culture. Today, University of Portland, Lewis & Clark College and Portland State University practice year-round on the Willamette and compete nationally.

For the past 30 years, some 1,200 Portlanders from teens to Seniors practice and race between April and June on more than 80 Rose Festival Dragon Boat teams. Adaptive teams for all abilities -- Lethally Blind, Sound Waves, and Pink Phoenix teams – welcome sight and hearing-impaired members, cancer survivors, Seniors and others.

In recent years the Willamette Sailing Club, located on the west side of the Willamette River north of Willamette Park, improved their club facility and parking area. They are a significant sailing club in Portland that serves sailors of all ages. The Portland Kayak Company located on SW Macadam Avenue, sells and rents kayaks and offers kayak tours on the Willamette. Brinsfields Boat Basin on SE Tacoma Street, located near the Sellwood Bridge, sells and services pre-owned motorized boats. These are great examples of river-related businesses that connects people to the river for recreation, enjoyment and appreciation of this special resource.

Portland Parks and Recreation would like to provide limited opportunities for river-oriented businesses to locate at two riverfront parks that have boat access: Willamette and Sellwood Riverfront. These small businesses could rent or provide lessons or tours with different watercraft. They could also provide other services for park-goers depending on existing and future park uses and activities.

The Waverley Country Club, established in 1896, is the only riverfront country club with year-round golf in the Portland area. This 140-acre private club also provides tennis, swimming and other amenities for its members. The club has a riverfront lawn and a dock where members can come and go by boat and launch nonmotorized watercraft. The property has a Milwaukie address, is zoned by Clackamas County and is within the City of Portland's urban services boundary. The City provides water, sewer and stormwater service to the club.

Although the City of Portland has provided services to the property for quite some time, the property was only officially brought into the urban services boundary as a part of adoption of the *2035 Comprehensive Plan (2018)*. A Portland comprehensive plan map designation of Open Space was applied to the Waverley Country Club property at that time. Given the City's role with the property and its proximity to the City boundary, it could, at some time in the future, be annexed into the City of Portland. There's an opportunity for the City to look into different approaches and/or incentives for annexation of this property into the city.

The Waverley Country Club is fully contained within Clackamas County's Willamette River Greenway Boundary. A portion of the site is within the Special Flood Hazard Area (FEMA 100-year floodplain and floodway) and some of the property is defined as a Habitat Conservation Area. The property must comply with County regulations related to these designations.



*Dragon boaters in Willamette River.*

Should this property be annexed into the city in the future the River Plan/South Reach recommends the following:

- Incorporate the property into the City’s Willamette Greenway boundary.
- Apply an Open Space zoning designation.
- Apply the River General and River Environmental overlay zones to the property.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policy

**Policy 8.103 Public-private partnerships.** Encourage public-private partnerships to develop and operate publicly-accessible recreational facilities that meet identified public needs.

### Objectives and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #5:** Encourage private recreation and service providers in the South Reach to continue to provide and enhance recreational experiences along and in the Willamette River.

#### Actions

- Add a provision in the Zoning Code to allow a limited amount of retail sales and services development that supports and encourages recreation at Willamette and Sellwood Riverfront parks and the County site formerly known as the Staff Jennings Marine Boating Center.
- If the Waverley Country Club is annexed into the City of Portland, amend the Willamette Greenway Boundary to include this property, apply an Open Space zoning designation, along with the River General and River Environmental overlay zoning designations to the property.
- Investigate and pursue possible approaches and/or incentives for annexation of Waverley Country Club into the City of Portland.

**OBJECTIVE #6:** Support public-private partnerships in developing and/or expanding publicly accessible recreation experiences in the South Reach.

#### Actions

- Portland Parks & Recreation and Oaks Amusement Park explore a public-private partnership on creating a publicly accessible seasonal swimming beach at Oaks Amusement Park if this location is determined to be feasible per the South Reach swimming beach study discussed later in this document.
- Portland Parks & Recreation explores public-private partnerships that identify funding to help implement park master plans; design and construction of parks, recreation, and open space amenities; and life-cycle maintenance for the new amenities.



*A mature Beech tree at Oaks Amusement Park.*

## 5. IN-RIVER RECREATION

The South Reach is the hub for river recreation in the city. There is generally good access into the river from both sides via public parks and public and private boat launches and docks. People who enjoy paddling, fishing, swimming and power boating have remarked about the natural beauty of the South Reach. It is common for river recreationalists to spot birds (including bald eagles and great blue herons), fish and wildlife. People often paddle and motorboat from places like the Central Reach (Central City) and beyond to be in this special setting. River recreation in the South Reach is not without issues and desired changes to enhance river recreation experiences. There are conflicts between different in-river users, and between in-river and on-land recreationalists. All river recreationalists need to understand the rules of the river and how and where to be on the river, and be courteous to others, to minimize conflicts on the river. Additionally, careless recreationalists can impact the river's natural resources.

On a positive note, there are opportunities to improve existing in-river facilities, including public facilities, and to create new places to get in the river for in-river recreation including publicly accessible swimming beaches, and adding amenities like boat storage, loading and parking. There are also opportunities to address existing and potential conflicts between in-river recreationalists through education, enforcement and a variety of partnerships that promote education and public safety.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

There is no better place to be in the summer in Portland than on the Willamette River. On a sunny weekend afternoon, the South Reach is bustling with a variety of river users. One can find motorized boaters cruising the river or fishing, sailors, stand up paddleboarders, kayakers, canoeists, dragon boaters, swimmers and waders. Floating home residents sit on their decks, taking in all the activities, along with viewing fish and wildlife and the local scenic beauty. With all these different people engaging with the Willamette River, there are bound to be conflicts. While many river recreationalists find ways to share the river, sometimes the following happens:

- Different boat users are unaware of river etiquette and where to be on the river and cause conflicts with other boat users;
- Motorized boats are carelessly speeding past nonmotorized boats;
- At Sellwood Riverfront Park, boaters entering/exiting the river, swimmers, waders and dogs swimming in the river all at the same time;
- Live-aboard boats tie up near and often access Ross Island. Their mooring lines create problems for nonmotorized boaters in the area, and they negatively impact water quality and degrade natural areas;
- Paddlers and stand up paddleboarders sometimes impede the movement of other watercraft; and
- Wake boats, using wake enhancing devices for towed sports recreation, create more intense waves than other motorboats. At slow speeds, the wakes generated can disrupt and cause damage to other boats including incidences of crew boats being swamped or capsized, and can cause significant damage to floating homes and, potentially, shallow water habitat and riverbank areas.

Ongoing cooperative efforts by government agencies, private and nonprofit river recreation businesses and groups, and individual river recreationalists are needed to promote and address safety to reduce river-user conflicts. In response to public concerns, the Oregon State Marine Board convened a rule making committee in late 2019, made up of motorized and nonmotorized river recreationalists to address boater conflicts and improve safety for all in the Lower Willamette River, including the South Reach area. The Marine Board hopes

that the recommendations will be in place in fall 2020. The Multnomah County Sheriff's office is aware of the community's desire to increase river boating enforcement. One solution is to advocate for increased funding for the Multnomah County Sheriff's River Patrol Unit. This patrol can enforce river safety rules and monitor boating activities during peak times for different boat users. Another solution community members have been working toward is to expand the Boater Education Program to the Lower Willamette River. Educating river users about the river environment would also be beneficial, especially related to the need to minimize impacts to shallow water habitats important for salmon and other listed species.

In-river and on-land recreation can have impacts on natural resources. Recreational boat campers, live-aboard boaters and houseless campers have encroached on Ross Island; and have adversely impacted the environment through disturbing vegetation and dumping sewage and garbage in the river and on land. Wake action may cause erosion to the shoreline. The proliferation of private residential docks on the Willamette River can also negatively impact shallow water habitat, migrating juvenile fish, and reduce the area of publicly used waterway for river recreation. Overwater structures create conditions for predatory fish to prey on threatened and endangered fish species like Chinook, Coho and Sockeye salmon, and Steelhead Trout. There is a need to make sure new and reconstructed residential docks are limited in size and located outside of shallow water habitat and the navigational channel to limit their impacts. This plan provides the opportunity to create a Zoning Code development standard that addresses this issue. Overall, it is important to minimize negative effects of human activities since the South Reach has significant natural resources and threatened and endangered species. (See previous section on Watershed Health and Resilience for more on this topic.)

Despite the issues identified above, there are opportunities to make South Reach in-river recreation better and address the aforementioned issues. Planning for new facilities, river access and improving existing facilities for in-river recreation are envisioned to take place over the next 20 years. The River Plan/South Reach recommends the creation of public swimming beaches, by identifying the safest and most accessible family-friendly locations through a swimming study and then identifying funds to develop and operate a summer public swimming beach. Also, there is a proposed Zoning Code standard that allows the placement of temporary floating structures in the river that minimize impacts on endangered fish and shallow water habitats.

Additional boat launches and other river-related recreation improvements for motorized and nonmotorized boating are also part of this plan. Public fishing in the South Reach is supported by learning more about culturally-specific desires for fishing and looking for ways to improve access and awareness of public fishing in the South Reach. Upgrading existing boating facilities and creating new ones on each side of the river such as a non-motorized boat launch at Willamette Park and a boat launch at the end of SE Spokane Street, are desirable but need funding.



*Kayakers in the Willamette River.*



And with increased river recreation use, ideas, programs and activities for minimizing current and future in-river recreation conflicts need partnerships among State, County and local governments, recreation providers, recreationalists and river homeowners. See below in-river recreation objectives and actions.

**Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**Policy 3.72 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.



*Sailing in South Reach*

**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.

**Objectives and Actions**

**OBJECTIVE #7:** Study potential public swimming opportunities with amenities for families in the South Reach.

*Actions*

- Identify funding to support a study that would explore the physical, environmental, and social characteristics of a potential swimming beach in the South Reach.
- If feasible per the South Reach swimming beach study, identify funds to design, construct, operate, program, and maintain a future public swimming beach and associated amenities.
- Partner with Oaks Amusement Park to develop a public swimming beach if this location is determined to be feasible per the South Reach swimming beach study.

**OBJECTIVE #8:** Support public fishing opportunities in the South Reach.

*Actions*

- Confirm culturally-specific public fishing desires in the South Reach and develop a list of improvements that can be implemented with other parks expenditures or independently, given available funding.
- If feasible, provide fishing access at the former Staff Jennings site when recreational improvements are made.
- Promote citywide public fishing opportunities in the South Reach, where appropriate.

**OBJECTIVE #9:** Upgrade existing boating facilities and create new boating facilities to make motorized and nonmotorized boating in the South Reach more accessible.

*Actions*

- Identify funding to study re-establishing and making improvements to the boat launch at the river's edge on SE Spokane Street including area parking and loading.
- Identify funding to implement phase 2 of the *Willamette Park Redevelopment and Phasing Plan (2012)* that creates a non-motorized boat launch at the park.
- Identify funding to plan and construct improvements to the former Staff Jennings site with nonmotorized boating access and other open space amenities.
- Identify funding to repair or replace motorized boating facility at Sellwood Riverfront Park.
- Seek opportunities to provide boat storage for nonmotorized watercraft at parks and open spaces with boat launches.
- Seek partnerships for funding to help maintain existing boating facilities.
- Explore a potential location(s) for a motorboat fueling station and/or a boat pump out station when there is funding identified for planning, design, and construction and an ongoing funding source commitment to operate and maintain the new facility through its life cycle, including facility replacement.
- Identify funding for recreational boating facility development, replacement or improvements to be implemented, operated, and maintained by Portland Parks and Recreation or by another entity with guaranteed public access in perpetuity.

**OBJECTIVE #10:** Minimize the impacts of in-river boating and other recreation facilities on fish and wildlife habitat through facility design, improvements and public education.

*Actions*

- Ensure that new docks and launches are designed to not harm endangered and threatened fish in the Willamette River, including the adoption of a residential dock development standard in the Zoning Code.
- Coordinate with State, County and local officials on addressing live-aboard boaters in the South Reach to minimize conflicts with river recreationalists and reduce impacts to the environment.



*Children wading at Sellwood Riverfront Park*

**OBJECTIVE #11:** Develop and expand partnerships that promote and address boater education and safety and reduce conflicts between different watercraft and minimize the impacts of watercraft on shallow water habitat, riverbank erosion and floating structures (e.g. floating homes).

### Actions

- Identify funding to work with Oregon State Marine Board, local boating organizations, commercial boating sales and rental companies and others to promote boater education and safety. Implement programs at State and local levels that target boater education and safety.
- Advocate for the Oregon State Marine Board and others to continue to work to identify and minimize the impacts of watercraft on shallow water habitat, riverbank erosion and floating structures.
- Advocate for Multnomah County to increase funding for the Multnomah County Sheriff’s River Patrol Unit to support, patrol and enforce activities, including in the Lower Willamette/South Reach area in 2020.
- The City of Portland, will monitor the implementation of the Oregon State Marine Board’s rules for the South Reach, participate in the Board’s evaluation process, and report to City Council in 2024 with recommendations, if any, for further action.

## 6. SCENIC RESOURCES

Statewide Planning Goal 15, Willamette River Greenway, seeks to protect, enhance, and maintain special values of the Willamette River Greenway, including scenic resources for public appreciation and enjoyment. A scenic resource is any structure, feature, or element (natural or built) that is valued for its aesthetic appearance. The “scenic” part of the resource is the focal feature or features, such as Mt Hood, the Central City skyline or the Willamette River, which have broadly appealing scenic qualities. Scenic resources in the South Reach have been identified and protected through a number of planning decisions since the 1980s. Scenic resources were determined as a part of the following efforts:

- A. *Macadam Corridor Study and Design Guidelines* and the Macadam Plan District zoning regulations (1985) – Eight view corridors from streets to the riverfront.
- B. *Willamette Greenway Plan* (1988) – Implements Statewide Planning Goal 15 through adoption of numerous public viewpoints, view corridors and scenic drives along the river.
- C. *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (1991) – Consolidated previous efforts and identified additional scenic resources. Implementation of the plan included application of a Scenic Resources (s) overlay zone and Zoning Code requirements related to scenic resources.
- D. *River Renaissance Vision, Strategy and Atlas* (2001-04) – This multi-part high-level planning initiative calls for connecting neighborhoods to and across the river by a number of means including view corridors. The atlas mapped previously identified view corridors and viewpoints and categorized them as developed or undeveloped.
- E. *2035 Comprehensive Plan* (2018) – This long-range plan for the city provides policy direction for scenic resources. The *draft River Plan/South Reach Scenic Resources Protection Plan* found in Volume 2, implements policy direction and updates the above previously adopted scenic resources plans.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

The River Plan/South Reach is an opportunity to review and update scenic resources in the South Reach. Staff solicited ideas from the public for potential scenic resource amenities. Staff then conducted an in-field inventory and evaluation of existing and proposed scenic resources and evaluated these resources. Since many of these resources were established over 25 years ago, the physical conditions of the viewpoint and the quality of the view may have changed over



*Oaks Bottom Wetland.*

time, potentially affecting the public value of some existing scenic resources. At the same time, new opportunities for public views may have arisen during this time too. Volume 2 of this plan includes the evaluation of existing and proposed scenic resources and offers recommendations on scenic resources to be protected into the future in the South Reach.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies

#### **Goal 4.A: Context-sensitive design and development**

New development is designed to respond to and enhance the distinctive physical, historic, and cultural qualities of its location, while accommodating growth and change.

#### **Policies: Scenic resources**

Portland's signature views of Mt Hood and other mountain peaks, bridges, and rivers are important to the city's identity. These views strengthen connections to the local and regional landscape. The policies below encourage the recognition, enhancement, and protection of public views and significant scenic resources, as designated in the Scenic Resources Inventory and Protection Plans.

**Policy 4.40 Scenic resources.** Enhance and celebrate Portland's scenic resources to reinforce local identity, histories, and cultures and contribute toward way-finding throughout the city. Consider views of mountains, hills, buttes, rivers, streams, wetlands, parks, bridges, the Central City skyline, buildings, roads, art, landmarks, or other elements valued for their aesthetic appearance or symbolism.

**Policy 4.41 Scenic resource protection.** Protect and manage designated significant scenic resources by maintaining scenic resource inventories, protection plans, regulations, and other tools.

**Policy 4.42 Vegetation management.** Maintain regulations and other tools for managing vegetation in a manner that preserves or enhances designated significant scenic resources.

**Policy 4.43 Building placement, height, and massing.** Maintain regulations and other tools related to building placement, height, and massing in order to preserve designated significant scenic resources.

**Policy 4.44 Future development.** Encourage new public and private development to create new public viewpoints providing views of Portland’s rivers, bridges, surrounding mountains, hills and buttes, the Central City skyline, and other landmark features.

**OBJECTIVE #12:** Identify new Willamette River Greenway viewpoints to increase the community’s visual connection to and appreciation of the Willamette River, while ensuring protection and habitat function of nearby natural resources.

*Action*

- Evaluate present viewpoints and, where necessary, identify new scenic viewpoints in the *River Plan / South Reach Scenic Resources Protection Plan* for public enjoyment and appreciation of the Willamette River.
- Apply the Scenic (s) overlay to designated viewpoints throughout the study area to allow for maintenance of vegetation at designated viewpoints to preserve views.

**OBJECTIVE #13:** Retire existing Willamette River Greenway viewpoints and Macadam Plan District view corridors that do not provide high-quality, public scenic views and strategically improve scenic viewpoints with signage, benches and landscape maintenance to enhance the community’s viewing experience.

*Actions*

- Retire existing scenic viewpoints in the *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* that no longer provide high-quality public scenic views.
- As a part of a future Macadam Plan District update project, remove the SW Richardson Street and SW Miles Street view corridors from Zoning Code Map 550-1.
- Whenever possible, add amenities (e.g. benches, signage) at designated viewpoints along trails and other key locations.
- Work with PBOT Community Uses of the Right-of-Way team to determine ways to improve the SE Linn St. viewpoint to make it safer for public enjoyment.

## D. TRIBAL ENGAGEMENT AND COLLABORATION

### 1. OVERVIEW

Native American tribes are sovereign governments with an interest in the preservation and protection of their treaty rights, cultural heritage and ways of life. There are a number of Pacific Northwest tribes that have treaty rights or political interests in the Willamette River South Reach area. This is a place where tribal history, culture and practices continue to be important to help understand the past. The City of Portland has a robust Native American community of roughly 40,000 that represent over 300 tribes from the region and around the country. This section lays out some key issues and opportunities related to a commitment to improving outreach and engagement with tribal nations and the Portland urban native community in relation to cultural resources, natural resources and culturally relevant activities.

#### City of Portland's Relationship with Tribal Governments

In 2012 the Portland City Council adopted Resolution No. 36941 to formalize its intergovernmental relationship with tribal nations, particularly government-to-government engagement and collaboration. The resolution acknowledges 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 continuity of traditional lifeways for present and future generations.

This resolution led to the hiring of a City Tribal Relations Director to implement the components of the 2012 resolution. The Tribal Relations Director has contributed significantly to Bureau of Planning and Sustainability's efforts on the River Plan / South Reach. These efforts included engagement at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians conference and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, as well as with the federal agency tribal liaisons. Also, many City of Portland bureau directors met with leaders from area tribes at the 2018 Tribal Nation Summit. At this session, the BPS' Interim Director presented the River Plan / South Reach project because that plan covers an area important for cultural and natural resources and customary use by the tribes.



*Tribal leaders meet with Portland officials at Tribal Nations Summit. Photo by Ken Rumbaugh*

## 2. UNDERSTANDING, PROTECTING AND PRESERVING NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

The South Reach area has been part of numerous northwest tribes' lifeways for thousands of years. Native peoples have camped, fished, hunted and gathered first foods like salmon, lamprey, deer, camas, wapato, acorns and huckleberries in the South Reach area. Tribes continue such traditional practices to this day, including traveling to Willamette Falls for fishing.

The River Plan / South Reach aims to support the restoration of these cultural practices in the South Reach.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

Implementing Resolution #36941 in the South Reach involves engaging interested tribal representatives and community members to:

- Protect and preserve traditionally used customary places.
- Protect and restore the natural environment for the long-term ecological viability of culturally important fish, wildlife and native plants.
- Provide the means for culturally relevant activities such as canoe family practices.

### Archaeological and Historical Analysis

The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability engaged Willamette Cultural Resources Associates to conduct archaeological-related research for the River Plan / South Reach. This research helped lay the groundwork for regulations that will help protect and preserve artifacts and deposits that represent Native American history and culture of the area. Sharing this research is also a way to educate the non-Native community about the South Reach area.

The consultant used archaeological, historical and environmental information and the Portland Harbor Superfund archaeological model to develop a "sensitivity model" for the South Reach. This model helps predict the likelihood of discovering precontact archaeological resources. One of the historical accounts was a Catholic missionary in 1841<sup>3</sup> who mentioned Native people gathering Wapato in the area now known as the Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge. The consultant did not interview tribal representatives nor seek tribal records for this report.

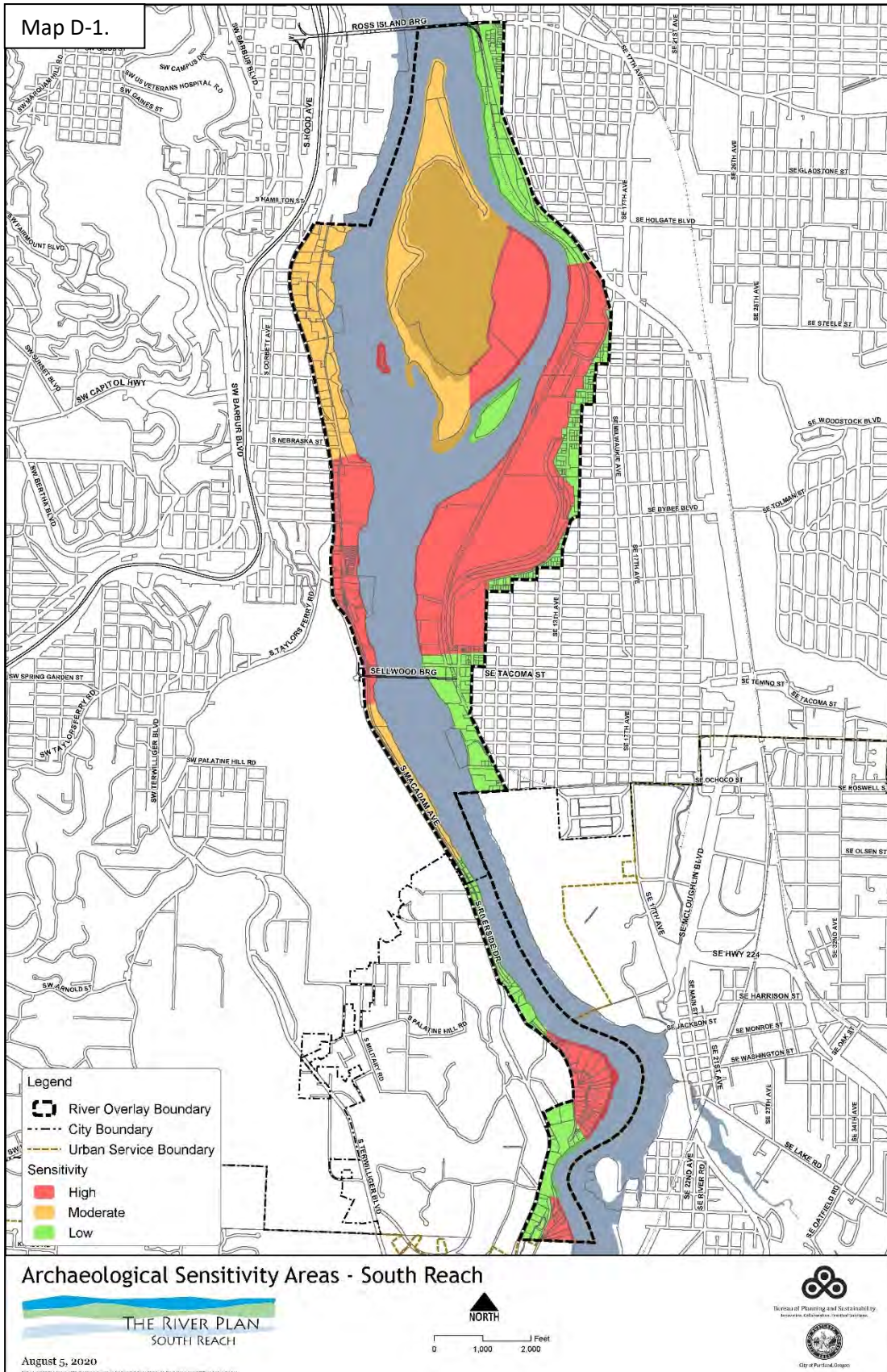
See Map D-1 for the location of high, moderate and low sensitivity areas in the South Reach. Since release of the Discussion Draft in October 2019, planning staff worked with the consultant to refine the high sensitivity area in areas with steep slopes. Map D-1 reflects these changes.

This model informed the proposed South Reach regulations and actions described below. It also helps implement Comprehensive Plan policies such as Policy 3.69, Historic and multi-cultural significance, that calls for recognizing, restoring and protecting the history and culture of Native Americans.

This plan includes an action calling for the City of Portland and other public property owners in the South Reach to partner with the appropriate tribes to conduct archaeological survey work or other cultural activities on public property.

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<sup>3</sup> Bagley, Clarence B. (editor) 1932 *Early Catholic Missions in Old Oregon*, 2 volumes, Lowman and Hartford Co., Seattle





### Tribal Nations Summit

In September 2018, the City of Portland hosted a Tribal Nations Summit attended by elected leaders from seven area tribes: Cowlitz, Nez Perce, Grand Ronde, Siletz, Umatilla, Warm Springs and Yakama. The summit included lunchtime presentations about tribes reviving first foods (such as wapato, camas, acorns and huckleberries) practices of planting and gathering varieties that were and are traditionally part of daily life.

While there may currently be a limited amount of first foods in the South Reach, there is an opportunity for the City of Portland to work with tribal nations and the urban native community on a project to reintroduce native plants like wapato into the South Reach. In addition to a discussion and recommendations below, see the Watershed Health and Resilience chapter for more on conserving and restoring critical fish and wildlife habitat and native plants.

The Tribal Nations Summit also helped City officials and staff understand the importance of canoe family culture. Canoe families exchange language and culture while navigating waterways. There may be an opportunity in the South Reach to further canoe family culture by providing boat storage, boat launching and/or public art and displays that support and provide education about this traditional way of life. Further engagement with native peoples on projects and programs for the South Reach could yield other opportunities such as creating a traditional fishing pier in the South Reach. In addition to the discussion and recommendations below, see the Recreation chapter

In 2019 the City of Portland hosted the second annual Tribal nations Summit. Again, tribal leaders from around the region participated. They toured restoration sites, met with City leaders and discussed topics including Climate Action Collaboration, Supporting Consultation & Trust Responsibility, Natural and Cultural Resource Protection and Land Acknowledgements.



*2018 Tribal Summit.*

### 2035 Comprehensive Plan

The *2035 Comprehensive Plan*, adopted by Portland City Council in 2016 and amended in 2018, guides growth and development in Portland for the next twenty years. After reviewing relevant comprehensive plan policies for this project, staff has identified two policies that could be amended to better include tribal nations coordination with the City government. Several other policies need amending to use the preferred term *tribal nations* rather than *sovereign tribes*.

### **Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**Policy 2.1.g. Partnerships and Coordination.** Maintain partnerships and coordinate land use engagement with institutions, governments, and Sovereign tribes.

**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

**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.

**Goal 4.B: Historic and cultural resources** Historic and cultural resources are identified, protected, and rehabilitated as integral parts of an urban environment that continues to evolve.

**Policy 4.58 Archaeological resources.** Protect and preserve archaeological resources, especially those sites and objects associated with Native American cultures. Work in partnership with Sovereign tribes, Native American communities, and the state to protect against disturbance to Native American archaeological resources.

### **Objectives and Actions**

OBJECTIVE #1: Improve government to government relations with tribal nations and use consistent terminology.

*Actions:*

- Update the *2035 Comprehensive Plan* to further recognize tribal nations and use consistent terminology. (See Vol I, Part 2, Section D).

**OBJECTIVE #2:** Engage interested tribal nations and urban native communities in ongoing discussions, programs and projects to support tribal customs, traditions and cultures in the South Reach.

*Actions*

- Work with tribal representatives to generate ideas for the development of projects and programs that honor Native American cultures and history and educate the public.
- Seek funds and collaborate on the implementation of desired Native American tribal and community projects and programs in the South Reach.
- Coordinate with tribal nations and urban native communities to implement a first foods project in the South Reach.

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Seek ways to better understand the history and culture of Native Americans in the South Reach by identifying, protecting and conserving archaeological and historic resources, and educating the public.

*Actions*

- Amend the Portland Zoning Code to require archaeological surveys to be completed as part of development projects in high sensitivity areas.
- Develop and distribute information about Inadvertent Discovery Plans (IDP) to the public and to property owners who are developing in moderate and low sensitivity areas.
- Partner with tribal nations to complete archaeological survey work on public property and for other projects that support Native American history and culture.

### 3. CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES

For thousands of years Native Americans have lived in and traveled through the Willamette Valley. There is a long-standing connection between tribal nations in the region and the Willamette River. European immigrant settlement in the Portland region disrupted those connections in a variety of ways. The following describes a number of issues and opportunities in the South Reach and includes action items to identify and support culturally-significant areas and natural resources.

#### Key Issues and Opportunities

The South Reach of the Willamette River is, and has long been, a critical waterway for native people who have fished, hunted and gathered in the area. Salmon and lamprey that travel up and down the Willamette River are a cultural foundation. First foods, such as deer, camas, wapato, acorns and huckleberries are also valued and continue to be harvested in the area.

Tribal nations rely on the preservation and restoration of their unique cultural heritage. Most tribal governments have cultural and natural resources staff who share tribal history and help protect critical resources. The aim of many Northwest tribes is to ensure the long-term protection and abundance of culturally-significant resources, such as salmon, steelhead and lamprey, as well as other first foods. To support the success of these culturally-significant species, it is important to ensure the preservation and restoration of their habitats, both in water and on land, as well as to ensure improvements in water quality and other characteristics of the South Reach. In these aims, the City and the tribes are aligned.

Given these shared goals, the River Plan / South Reach supports collaboration and coordination among the City of Portland, tribal nations and other agencies and organizations to identify culturally-significant areas, recognize

historic uses, improve conditions for Willamette River salmon, steelhead and lamprey and restore other culturally-significant plant species, such as wapato and camas.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies

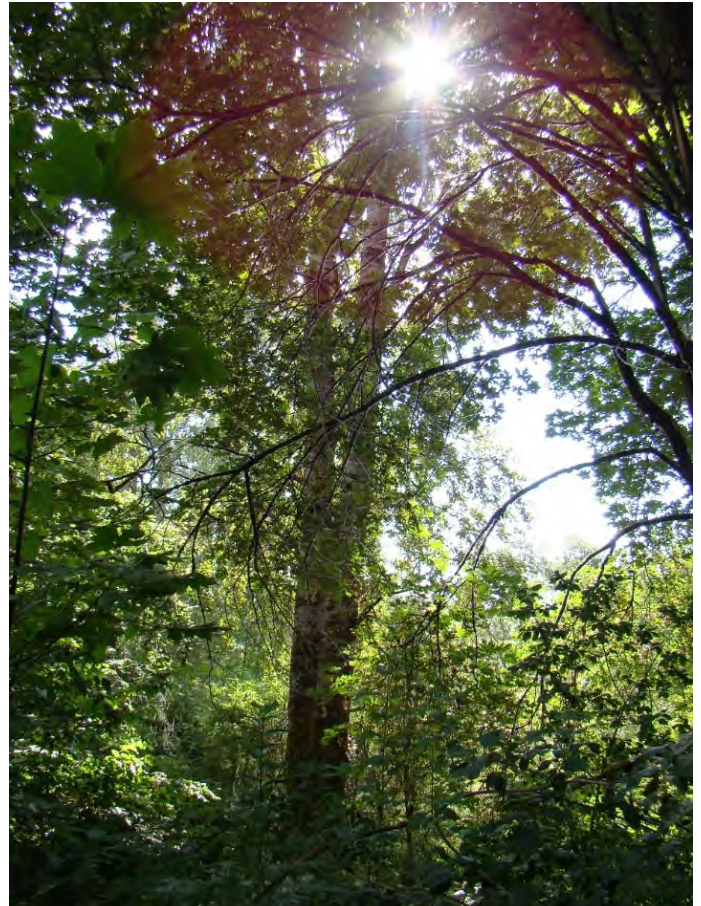
**Policy 2.1.g. Partnerships and Coordination.** Maintain partnerships and coordinate land use engagement with institutions, governments, and Sovereign tribes.

**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

### 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.



*Riparian vegetation near southwest Portland riverfront*

**Goal 4.B: Historic and cultural resources** Historic and cultural resources are identified, protected, and rehabilitated as integral parts of an urban environment that continues to evolve.

### Objectives and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #4:** Engage interested tribal nations and urban native communities to identify and understand culturally-significant locations and natural resources and develop programs and projects to celebrate and honor tribal customs, traditions and culture in the South Reach.

#### *Actions*

- Work collaboratively with tribal nations and urban native communities to enhance South Reach natural areas, to increase the viability of culturally and ecologically important fish, wildlife and native plants. This effort should identify key future restoration areas and projects to reestablish important first foods species.

- Explore the development of a citywide tribal cultural resources harvesting program in areas where tribes historically harvested first foods and other resources.

#### 4. PARKS, RECREATION AND NATURAL AREAS

There are eleven developed and undeveloped public parks and natural areas in the South Reach for active and passive recreation: Willamette Park, Sellwood Riverfront Park, Sellwood Park, Multnomah County property (former Staff Jennings Marina), along with natural areas such as Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge, Oaks Crossing Natural Area, Toe Island City Park, Ross Island Natural Area, Willamette Moorage Park, Powers Marine Park and Cottonwood Bay Park. The condition and potential use of these parks and natural areas varies. Most of these parks and natural areas have a direct relationship with the Willamette River, which is the primary natural and recreational feature in the South Reach. This section focuses on the use of public lands by tribal nations and other Native American community members.

##### Key Issues and Opportunities

Today visitors to South Reach parks and natural areas can enjoy picnicking, strolling, hiking, wildlife viewing and other activities. For Native Americans, desired use of these public spaces often includes carrying out cultural traditions such as the popular powwow that occurs annually in North Portland's Delta Park. Another tradition is canoe families who travel by waterways to destinations for gatherings in hand carved and crafted canoes. One other example is the planting, tending and gathering of first foods.

Portland Parks and Recreation staff are working with Native American community members and organizations to identify and establish potential locations for the planting and harvesting of first foods. Through a community stewardship program, city staff are engaged in work parties to clear invasive plants and revegetate with first foods at sites like Oaks Bottom and Ross Island. It is important to note that natural areas are managed primarily for their natural resource functions and ecosystem services including fish and wildlife habitat, water quality, wildlife corridors, floodplains and protection of sensitive, threatened and endangered species. Natural areas are made accessible for limited public use via soft or paved trails.

Currently, there is limited programming at most parks (except for Sellwood Park). Given appropriate funding, Portland Parks and Recreation could offer specific programming that attracts diverse community members. Transportation is one barrier for people to access public facilities and services. See the Riverfront neighborhoods section for related information about improving transit and transportation services.



*Portland All Nations Canoe Family canoe on the Willamette River. Photo by Laura R. Campos*

**Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Goal and Policies**

**Policy 3.72 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.



*2019 Salmon Festival*

**Goal 8.H: Parks, natural areas, and recreation**

All Portlanders have safe, convenient, and equitable access to high-quality parks, natural areas, trails, and recreational opportunities in their daily lives, which contribute to their health and well-being. The City manages its natural areas and urban forest to protect unique urban habitats and offer Portlanders an opportunity to connect with nature.

**Policy 8.95 Park planning.** Improve parks, recreational facilities, natural areas, and the urban forest in accordance with relevant master plans, management plans, or adopted strategies that reflect user group needs, development priorities, development and maintenance costs, program opportunities, financing strategies, and community input. Consider developing master or management plans for properties that lack guiding plans or strategies.

**Objectives and Actions**

**OBJECTIVE #5:** Develop culturally-specific programming and activities at South Reach parks, natural areas and in-river waters; and promote these programs and activities to a broader demographic citywide.

*Actions*

- Work with interested underrepresented or underserved communities to identify and plan for desired uses, activities and programming at South Reach parks and natural areas.
- Work with interested Native Americans, immigrants and communities of color to address barriers to successful parks and natural areas’ use in the South Reach.
- Identify funding to plan and promote citywide, culturally-specific uses, activities and programming in South Reach parks and natural areas.

## **E. RIVERFRONT COMMUNITIES**

### **1. OVERVIEW**

Riverfront communities make the most of their proximity to waterways for transportation, employment, natural resources and sustenance from its fish, and recreation. In particular, Native peoples hold a special relationship with riverine areas; coming from cultural traditions and practices that have carried through generations and will continue with future generations. This riverfront area is of importance to numerous NW tribes who have canoed the river, hunted and gathered, camped and traveled on adjacent lands. The future of riverfront communities in the South Reach depends on maintaining and improving community members' relationship to the Willamette River area; its existing natural resources, places and infrastructure.

The Brooklyn, Sellwood, Southwest Portland and Riverdale/Dunthorpe riverfront neighborhoods developed in the mid-to-late 1800s and into the 1900s. The construction of rail lines that parallel both sides of the river, the Sellwood Ferry and later the Sellwood Bridge, connected the east and west sides of the river and facilitated urban development. Houseboats/floating home communities developed in the South Reach for the area's natural beauty, river lifestyle and proximity to downtown. There is also a houseless community presence on the river and along the riverfront. This plan can build upon different community desires that have been shaped by the past and present and aspirations for the future.

This section outlines the key issues and opportunities for each riverfront community, generally focusing on land use, zoning and transportation; and recommends a suite of objectives and actions to respond to them. The objectives and actions are guided by the City's adopted policy framework, community input through the River Plan /South Reach planning process and the 20-year urban design concept for the South Reach. The most relevant goals and policies are highlighted in each subsection. Actions may include proposed regulations, investments and/or programs that would be implemented by the City and other jurisdictions, the community, property owners or other organizations. A complete list of plan actions can be found under Part 2. Implementation Tools, C. Action Plan.

### **2. BROOKLYN**

Brooklyn began as a working-class community of European American immigrants in an industrial part of inner east side Portland and is one of Portland's oldest inner-city neighborhoods. Its riverfront area starts at SE Powell Boulevard to the north and goes to SE Holgate Boulevard to the south. This community appreciates its proximity to the Willamette River but has issues getting to the riverfront. Oregon Highway 99, McLoughlin Boulevard, is a high-volume transportation corridor that creates a formidable barrier for people to safely cross the highway to reach the riverfront. Then there are steep slopes that lead down to the river's edge from the highway. See Recreation section for more discussion.

Ross Island Sand and Gravel is a prominent industrial business that has existed along the riverfront and at Ross Island since the 1920s. Ross Island Sand and Gravel mined aggregate on Ross Island until 2001, and, until recently processed concrete at its riverfront property, transporting it by semi-trailer truck. Now they only process aggregate on the island that is shipped in and out of the island by barge. Ross Island Sand and Gravel company officials have stated that they are in the process of restructuring their business model but acknowledge their business will be viable for the next twenty years in the South Reach. See the Fish and Wildlife Habitat section for more information on habitat restoration efforts on Ross Island.

## Key Issues and Opportunities

As mentioned above, the Brooklyn neighborhood has been advocating for better bicycle and pedestrian access to the river for decades. The 1991 neighborhood plan highlights this community desire. A previously completed access study describes three possible alignment alternatives, but funding and implementation of riverfront access has not occurred. Residents would like to see safe bicycle and pedestrian routes on streets leading to the riverfront, safe crossing of McLoughlin Boulevard and convenient access down the steep slope to the Springwater Corridor Trail. One of the alignment options involves obtaining an easement from Ross Island Sand and Gravel to have a trail access next to the private road that Ross Island Sand and Gravel uses from its main facility down to its dock area that crosses the Springwater Corridor Trail. To date, the company is not interested in this idea and is concerned about conflicts between trail users and company operations.

Additionally, the public would like to see a riverfront park along the trail like “Haig Park” referenced in the neighborhood plan and the ability to enter the river for recreation. Implementation of this neighborhood riverfront access will be costly, require cooperation among government jurisdictions and private entities to identify funding and a design concept and be prioritized to happen in the near term to address this longstanding goal of the Brooklyn community.

This section will address the transportation system needs for the Brooklyn neighborhood focused on neighborhood access to the riverfront from the street system and the Recreation section will address connectivity to the Springwater Corridor Trail and the planning and development of a neighborhood riverside park. Overall, this project would likely be planned under one project, but implementation could be accomplished in phases. The *Portland 2035 Transportation System Plan* identifies a study to be completed by the Portland Bureau of Transportation called the *Brooklyn Neighborhood River Access Project*. This project is not funded.

## Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies

**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.

## Objectives and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #1:** Ensure that all South Reach neighborhoods have safe and convenient ways to get to the Willamette riverfront; prioritize completing Brooklyn neighborhood’s access to the riverfront in the SE Holgate area.

### *Actions*

- Seek funds and resources to prepare a Brooklyn Neighborhood River Access Project study to consider the best route(s) and alignment, design and costs for pedestrian and bicyclist improvements to access the Willamette River area.
- Seek funds to implement the riverfront access project in Brooklyn.



### 3. SELLWOOD

The Sellwood portion of the Sellwood-Moreland neighborhood is an established mixed-use neighborhood that was incorporated as a town in 1883 and a decade later in 1893 was annexed into the City of Portland. The Sellwood riverfront area starts at SE Holgate Boulevard to the north and goes to the Portland city limits south of the Sellwood Bridge. The riverfront area was initially used for industry and transportation. A rail line paralleling the river was used in 1870 to transport farm products and other goods to and from Portland. It was later used to provide passenger rail service. The Sellwood ferry brought passengers across the Willamette River to Johns Landing on the west side where the Sellwood Bridge replaced it in 1925 and was rebuilt in 2016. The Sellwood Bridge continues to provide transportation access for Portland residents and for travelers between Clackamas and Multnomah and Washington counties via Portland local streets.

The Sellwood community includes a mix of houses, multi-dwelling developments, retail services, institutional, entertainment and civic uses, all generally centered along a few major streets: SE Tacoma Street, and SE 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Avenues. It is a fairly walkable and bikeable neighborhood with a local street system that has many sidewalk and trail facilities. It has some transit services along SE Tacoma Street and SE 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue near the riverfront. The community also has great physical and visual access to the Willamette River via the Sellwood Riverfront Park, Oaks Amusement Park, the Springwater Corridor Trail and the Sellwood Bridge. The Portland Rowing Club and the Oregon Yacht Club are two historic floating homes communities located on the river. Despite all of the neighborhood amenities described above, there are present issues and opportunities that could improve the community's relationship to the river.

#### Key Issues and Opportunities

The Sellwood Bridgehead is a strategically important area on the east side of the river that serves as a major river crossing between SE and SW Portland and is gateway into Sellwood-Moreland neighborhood and surrounding area. The Sellwood Bridgehead area is generally bounded by four full blocks from SE Spokane Street to the north and SE Tenino Street to the south (or, six full blocks south to SE Umatilla), following the upper side of the ridgeline diagonally from SE Grand Street and SE 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the west and SE 7<sup>th</sup> Ave to the east. The Sellwood Bridgehead is a "significant place" (See Policy 3.11 below) as it includes the following attributes: a high-visibility intersection, a bridge, proximity to the Willamette River, viewpoints and/or view corridor location(s) and an important eastside gateway to the Sellwood-Moreland neighborhood and surrounding area. It is also a place where businesses that have a relationship to river activities like Brinsfields Boat Basin, a consignment boat sales brokerage firm, can locate. Community members have expressed the desire for more businesses along SE Tacoma Street that serve river side park, trail and in-river recreationalists.

The Bridgehead area could also be improved to reinforce the connection to the river and to local history. And, last but not least, additional transportation infrastructure is needed to improve the safe crossing of SE Tacoma Street for pedestrians and bicyclists.



*View of downtown from SE Sellwood Blvd.*

While the discussion of Sellwood Riverfront Park, Oaks Amusement Park, the Springwater Corridor Trail on the Willamette Trail as recreation areas, can all be found in the previous section, there are transportation-related issues surrounding these recreational destinations. As many locals know, during the summer many people take advantage of activities and events at Sellwood Riverfront Park and Oaks Amusement Park which increases traffic and parking problems in the vicinity. The traffic congestion begins with motor vehicles traveling to these parks from SE Tacoma Street and local service streets. There is a pinch-point at intersection of the Springwater Corridor Trail, SE Spokane Street and Oaks Parkway, where the movement patterns of bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists exacerbates the congestion. This intersection requires traffic safety improvements to safely and efficiently move all transportation modes. Transportation improvements on SE Spokane Street at the river's edge are also needed to accommodate the creation of a boat launch area, including the loading/unloading and parking of nonmotorized boats and vehicles and fixing the ramp into the river. See Recreation section for more information.

Parking on neighborhood streets is in high demand when people seek out park and recreational activities and events in the riverfront area. For example, when Sellwood Riverfront Park's parking lot is full people park on local streets and drive through the neighborhood looking for parking causing traffic congestion. Oaks Amusement Park has ample parking accommodations, but large events at Oaks Amusement Park can also impact parking on local streets. Creative solutions such as shared parking agreements, shuttle parking, or free transit passes need to be considered to alleviate these parking concerns at peak event and activity times.

Increased transit service such as the increased frequency of existing buses during the day, evenings and on weekends is another tool to reduce traffic and parking congestion in the Sellwood riverfront area. The current transit service along SE Tacoma Street is bus #99, which only runs on during weekday rush hour at intervals of approximately every 20-30 minutes. The current transit service along SE 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue is bus #70, which runs at approximately 30 – 40-minute intervals on weekdays and at approximately 20-30 minute intervals on weekends. Oaks Amusement Park staff have expressed the desire for more frequent and late evening bus service to meet the transportation needs of employees and visitors.

Oaks Amusement Park would like to develop a dock to serve visitors to the park. This dock or a location somewhere else in the Sellwood Bridgehead area could become a future river transit stop. Regional river transit is under study by an organization called Frog Ferry, along with governmental and business partners, for possible river commuter transportation from Vancouver, Washington to downtown Portland. Subsequent river transit studies will evaluate river transit stops for commuter and visitor travel to downtown Portland and other locations and the Sellwood area makes sense to be evaluated for river transportation.

There are two land and zoning issues and opportunities in the Sellwood riverfront area. Both are minor and similar in nature. One is for the Portland Rowing Club that is located south of the bridge on the river's east side. This longtime floating home community and marina development is primarily zoned Commercial Mixed Use 1 (CM1) with a sliver of Residential Multi-Dwelling 4 (RM4) zoning and a Multi-Dwelling Urban Center (MU-U) Comprehensive Plan Map designation at the north end of the site. The RM4 zoned area is part of a previously vacated right-of-way. Split zoning on tax lots is challenging for property owners and development review staff, so it is generally discouraged in the City. Removing the RM4 zoning and replacing it with the CM1 zoning and associated Comprehensive Plan map designation of Mixed Use Dispersed (MU-D) would address this issue. Similarly, a short distance south of this property is the Waverly Landing condominiums. This property is primarily zoned CM1 but also has a small area of RM4 zoning and a MU-U Comprehensive Plan Map designation on the

property's northeast edge that is next to the formerly vacated SE Marion Street. The plan recommends rezoning the RM4 area to CM1 and amending the Comprehensive Plan Map designation to Mixed Use – Dispersed (MU-D) for similar reasons to the previously discussed rezoning.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies

**Policy 1.5 Zoning Map.** Maintain a Zoning Map that identifies the boundaries of various zones, districts, uses, and development types.

**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

**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 3.75 River neighborhoods.** Enhance the strong river orientation of residential areas that are located along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.

**Policy 9.22 Public transportation.** Coordinate with public transit agencies to create conditions that make transit the preferred mode of travel for trips that are not made by walking or bicycling.

**Policy 9.55 Parking management.** Reduce parking demand and manage supply to improve pedestrian, bicycle and transit mode share, neighborhood livability, safety, business district vitality, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction, and air quality. Implement strategies that reduce demand for new parking and private vehicle ownership, and that help maintain optimal parking occupancy and availability.

### Objectives and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #2:** Enhance the Sellwood Bridgehead area as a major gateway into Sellwood that reflects the local character, history and relationship to the river.

### Actions

- Develop a Sellwood Bridgehead Development Concept that implements the communities' vision, identity, history and use of the river by Native Americans, as a ferry terminal, and at Oaks Amusement Park. The concept would:
  - Address local and regional traffic using SE Tacoma Street and the Sellwood Bridge with improved transit service and incorporate Transportation Demand Management solutions.
  - Respect the historic character of the Sellwood neighborhood by encouraging development that both responds to the bridgehead as a significant place but is balanced in keeping with the urban design motif of the neighborhood.
  - Enhance bicycling, walking, rolling and running with improved wayfinding, connectivity with the Springwater Corridor Trail, and access to the Willamette River.
  - Incorporate viewpoints and/or view corridor(s) that provide scenic views of/from the bridgehead area.
- Implement the *Portland 2035 Transportation System Plan* Tacoma Main Street Improvements project study recommendations.
- Rezone a sliver of the Portland Rowing Club property from Residential Multi-Dwelling 4 (RM4) with a Mixed Use Urban Center (MU-U) Comprehensive Plan Map designation to Commercial Mixed Use 1 (CM1) zoning with a Mixed Use Dispersed (MU-D) Comprehensive Plan Map designation to eliminate split-zoning on this property.
- Rezone a small area of Waverly Landing condominium property from Residential Multi-Dwelling 4 (RM4) with a Mixed Use Urban Center (MU-U) Comprehensive Plan Map designation to Commercial Mixed Use 1 (CM1) zoning with a Mixed Use Dispersed (MU-D) Comprehensive Plan Map designation to eliminate split-zoning on this property.

**OBJECTIVE #3:** Improve the Sellwood transportation system by the riverfront for all modes of travel to safely accommodate residents and visitors to the area.

### Actions

- Explore funding and a study to improve the SE Spokane Street/SE Oaks Park Way and Springwater Corridor Trail intersection to increase safety and access for all modes
- Explore funding to develop parking management strategies to address congestion during peak use of area facilities in the vicinity of SE Spokane Street/SE Oaks Park Way and the Springwater Corridor Trail.
- Work with TriMet to implement the recommendations for improved bus services on Line 99 along with other recommendations from the TriMet *Southeast Service Enhancement Plan* (2016).
- Consider Oaks Amusement Park or another location near the Sellwood Bridgehead as a potential future river transit stop and evaluate it as part of river transit planning.

#### 4. SOUTHWEST PORTLAND

The Southwest Portland riverfront area was settled by European Americans in the mid to late 1800s. Merchants took advantage of river commerce around Taylor’s Ferry area, and early developers built worker cottages, more stately residences like that in the Riverdale/Dunthorpe area, and the Riverview Cemetery (where many prominent early Portland family members were buried).

Like the east side of the river, a railroad line on the west bank of the Willamette opened in late 1800s and sparked industrialization. Houseboats existed in the vicinity of SW Miles Place and transitioned to landward homes over time after river flooding washed houseboats in 1894. SW Macadam Avenue became a key north-south corridor for land uses and transportation as the mixed-use neighborhood developed. City planning in the 1980s resulted in the creation of the Macadam Plan District, which includes special development standards along with design guidelines that represented the SW Macadam corridor area as generally suburban-scale and auto-oriented. These provisions remain in effect today.



*Willamette Moorage and Sellwood Bridge.*

Condominiums, apartments, houses and floating homes (Macadam Bay Moorage) line the riverfront with housing. A mix of commercial uses are located along SW Macadam Avenue.

Regional transportation will be covered first then the community-related issues and opportunities: SW Macadam Avenue Civic Corridor, Base Zone Amendments, Design Guidelines and Standards, Miles Place, and the unincorporated Multnomah County Riverdale/Dunthorpe neighborhood. Southwest Portlanders have had a longstanding visual relationship to the river. Scenic resources are covered in Volume 2, *River Plan/South Reach Scenic Resources Protection Plan*.

#### Key Issues and Opportunities

##### *Regional Transportation*

Greater SW Portland including the surrounding unincorporated areas has been the discussed through regional transportation planning in recent years. The City of Portland along with Metro, ODOT and TriMet formed a Willamette Shoreline Consortium and completed transit planning work with local jurisdictions, to investigate transit service improvements in the Lake Oswego corridor between Portland and Lake Oswego. The work began in the 2000s and ended in 2012 after a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was developed. The DEIS recommended a streetcar alternative instead of expanded bus service and a no build scenario. Different streetcar alignment designs were considered including the Willamette Shoreline corridor along the riverfront, SW Macadam Avenue, SW Riverwood Road and a Union Pacific railroad right-of-way corridor and Foothills design options in Lake Oswego.

Overall conclusions were that streetcar was a preferred option to limit impacts on area residents. However, the recommendations got mixed reviews from some local governments and residents, and the consortium did not move forward on implementation of an expanded streetcar service from Portland to Lake Oswego. There is a SW Streetcar project in Metro’s *Regional Transportation Plan* and Portland’s *Transportation System Plan*, but it is not prioritized for funding.

Another future regional transportation project is to extend the Willamette River Greenway Trail from Portland to Lake Oswego. Discussions on this topic have included future use of the existing rail line and having the trail parallel Oregon Highway 43.

**Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policy**

**Policy 9.23 Transportation to job centers.** Promote and enhance transit to be more convenient and economical than the automobile for people travelling more than three miles to and from the Central City and Gateway. Enhance regional access to the Central City and access from Portland to other regional job centers.

**Objectives and Actions**

Objective #4: Address regional transportation issues and improvements on the west side of the Willamette River in the South Reach and beyond to reduce reliance on the automobile for commuter and other transportation trips to and through the South Reach.

*Actions*

- Work with ODOT and other governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to seek support and funding to implement the Johns Landing Streetcar Extension project listed in the TSP.
- Work with Metro, the City of Lake Oswego and others to seek support and funding to implement the Lake Oswego to Portland Trail listed in the TSP.



*Residences along the Willamette Greenway Trail.*

SW Macadam Civic Corridor

SW Macadam Avenue is a busy north-south route that connects downtown Portland with the Sellwood Bridge and points south, including Lake Oswego. This corridor is the only *Portland 2035 Transportation System Plan* (TSP) designated Pedestrian District in the South Reach area. It has high volume fast-moving traffic making it difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the street or access the riverfront at certain locations. The *SW in Motion* (SWIM) project prioritizes pedestrian and bicycle access improvements for all of the SW Portland community. There are no specific SWIM recommendations for the South Reach, however there are recommendations that may facilitate increased safe access to the riverfront for pedestrians and bicyclists from greater SW Portland. As mentioned in the Recreation section, the popular Willamette Greenway Trail has user conflicts at times due to trail design, pinch points and number of users. Future consideration of a parallel route along the Willamette Shoreline trolley right-of-way and

nearby street rights-of-way north of SW Taylors Ferry Road, might help reduce conflicts by offering an alternative route especially for fast bicyclists.

Transit services are inadequate to serve the South Portland community and visitors to the riverfront. The primary bus line that runs along SW Macadam Avenue is Bus #35, which runs every day but does not provide frequent service. Two other lines traverse SW Macadam Avenue: Bus #36, which only runs weekdays during peak commute hours, and Bus #99, which crosses the Sellwood Bridge and heads south down OR Highway 99, which only provides weekday and peak commuter hours' service.

Public motor vehicle parking is at a premium for people who want to drive to enjoy the Willamette River Greenway Trail and other riverfront parks and natural areas. There are many private parking areas for developments along the riverfront. Public parking spaces are available at certain locations close to and along the riverfront, such as in the Miles Place area and at Macadam Bay Moorage. Additional signage at parking locations, wayfinding, and sharing with the public mapped information on the location of public spaces could increase knowledge and use of available parking spaces.

### Base Zone Amendments

Existing zoning designations in the South Reach area were reviewed as part of the planning process to ensure that the current zoning reflected existing and future desired uses. There are two instances on the river's west side in the South Portland neighborhood area where project staff propose zoning and comprehensive plan map changes to better align these designations with existing and aspired land uses. One is the City of Portland owned site that includes the Macadam Bay Moorage floating home community of 25 homes north of the Sellwood Bridge. The City recently executed a long-term lease with the floating home community. The zoning is Commercial Employment (CE), which is intended for sites along corridors that allow truck traffic and a mix of commercial and employment uses, but residential uses are also allowed. Adjacent zoning is Open Space, Residential 5,000 (R5) and Commercial Mixed Use 2 (CM2). Staff recommends that this property be rezoned to CM2, a more appropriate zone that allows a mix of commercial and residential uses and is consistent with the zoning along SW Macadam Avenue. Staff does not anticipate this site ever becoming an employment use and development.

The second site area staff recommends for rezoning is property primarily owned by Multnomah County, just north of the Sellwood Bridge that was formerly the Staff Jennings Boating Center along with a small strip of land owned by Metro and ODOT adjacent to west of the County property. This site was purchased by Multnomah County to provide stormwater management, mitigation for habitat impacts and trail access for the new Sellwood Bridge that opened in 2016. The property was formerly a privately-owned boating center, fueling station, marina, dock and parking area. It is zoned Commercial Employment (CE) and the property surrounding this site is zoned Open Space (OS). The recent Sellwood Bridge construction project left this site with constrained automobile access and parking limitations due to construction of a trail section and accessway to the Sellwood Bridge. The property is also in the floodplain and new regulations are being proposed that would limit development activity. Multnomah County and the City of Portland have discussed entering into an agreement where Portland Parks and Recreation would provide recreation uses on the site in the future. The intent of the CE zone is described above and based on how this property may be realistically used in the future, re-designating the property to Open Space (OS) to allow park uses makes the most sense.

### Design Guidelines and Standards

Currently, new development in South Portland’s Macadam Plan District area must meet special design guidelines or standards that were established in the 1980s, in addition to plan district and other applicable Zoning Code requirements. Since the guidelines were adopted, the Zoning Code was improved with base zone and other development standards that better reflect desired pedestrian-oriented development and other characteristics. Also, the *Willamette Greenway Plan* (1987) addresses public views, scenic resources, landscaping and natural resources protection along the riverfront. This plan is revising the 1987 greenway plan.

Now is an opportune time to evaluate the relevancy of the *Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines*. City staff are updating the citywide design guidelines and design standards to be consistent with and implement the 2035 *Comprehensive Plan* (2018) including addressing the River Pattern Area. The project is called Design Overlay Zone Amendments (DOZA). The design recommendations will cover: the citywide urban design framework (e.g. Macadam Avenue as a Neighborhood Center and Civic Corridor), character and local identity, positive relationships and on-site features and opportunities. There are recommendations for street-level experience and pedestrian-oriented amenities that relate to the public realm. While City staff recommends updating the Macadam Plan District Zoning Code regulations in a future community planning effort, there is an opportunity with River Plan/South Reach to repeal the *Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines* and replace them with the DOZA project citywide design guidelines and standards. A new character statement for the Macadam Civic Corridor and Riverfront area is recommended to be added to the Citywide Design Guidelines, to provide specific area context for development projects that would be reviewed using the guidelines. These recommendations will go into effect after DOZA is adopted by City Council. This will result in the most up-to-date design provisions for the Macadam area. It will provide for quality, contextual, and pedestrian-oriented development that responds to the river as a special place. See Part 2.C. under Implementation Tools for more information and the recommendation to repeal the *Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines* and the Macadam Civic Corridor and Riverfront Character Statement.

### **Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policies**

**Policy 1.5 Zoning Map.** Maintain a Zoning Map that identifies the boundaries of various zones, districts, uses, and development types.

**Policy 4.1 Pattern areas.** Encourage building and site designs that respect the unique built, natural historic, and cultural characteristics of Portland’s five pattern areas described in Chapter 3: Urban Form.

**Policy 4.3 Site and context.** Encourage development that responds to and enhances the positive qualities of site and context – the neighborhood, the block, the public realm, and natural features.

**Policy 9.19 Pedestrian safety and accessibility.** Improve pedestrian safety, accessibility, and convenience for people of all ages and abilities.

**Policy 9.21 Accessible bicycle system.** Create a bicycle transportation system that is safe, comfortable, and accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

**Policy 9.22 Public transportation.** Coordinate with public transit agencies to create conditions that make transit the preferred mode of travel for trips that are not made by walking or bicycling.



## Objectives and Actions

**Objective #5:** Improve the SW Macadam Avenue corridor area for safer and more convenient pedestrian, bicyclist and transit user access to and from the riverfront and along the corridor.

### Actions

- Collaborate with ODOT to better understand what the Special Transportation Area classification means for SW Macadam Avenue between SW Bancroft Street and SW Miles Court (already designated), and if the classification can be used to transform SW Macadam Avenue into a more pedestrian and bike-friendly street.
- Work with TriMet to add more bus service on lines that serve the South Reach, especially lines 19, 35 and 99 along with other recommendations from the TriMet southeast and southwest service enhancement plans completed in 2016.
- To address bicycle and pedestrian conflicts on the Willamette Greenway Trail, look for an alternative north-south bike connection within the Macadam Corridor area.

**Objective #6:** Determine and apply the most appropriate zoning designations and design guidelines and standards to achieve plan goals for uses and development along the Willamette riverfront.

### Actions

- Rezone City of Portland Parks and Recreation owned property that includes Macadam Bay Moorage from Commercial Employment (CE) to Commercial Mixed-Use Two (CM2) to reflect the residential and mixed-use nature of the area.
- Rezone Multnomah County and other adjacent publicly owned properties north of the Sellwood Bridge from Commercial Employment (CE) to Open Space (OS) to reflect existing and future desired use of these properties for recreation and natural areas.
- Repeal the *Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines* (1985) and apply the Citywide Design Guidelines and design standards that are adopted through the Design Overlay and Zone Amendments (DOZA) project, and in effect prior to adoption of the River Plan/South Reach. As part of this action, adopt a Macadam Corridor Character Statement in the Citywide Design Guidelines, to be used in design review for development projects in the Macadam Corridor area.
- Conduct a community planning process to update the Macadam Plan District to reflect current and future community desires and to be consistent with the *2035 Comprehensive Plan, River Plan/South Reach* and *Citywide Design Guidelines*.

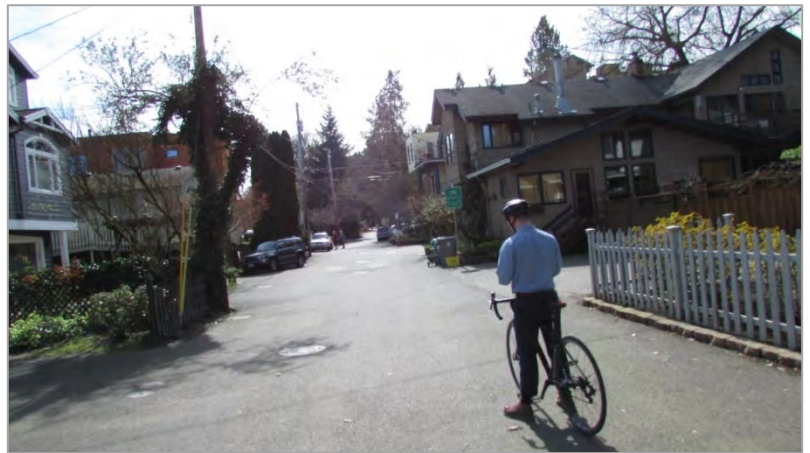
## Miles Place Residential Area

Miles Place is located just south of Willamette Park in the Macadam area. This quaint residential area contains approximately 25 developed or developable tax lots in a two-block area just south of Willamette Park. The history of this residential area was covered in the South Portland summary at the beginning of this section. Most of these homes pre-date the 1987 *Willamette Greenway Plan* and are primarily built within the 50' greenway water quality (q) setback, and many are within the floodplain. Due to this, most are considered non-conforming as they do not meet existing development standards.

On April 19, 2011, the Bureau of Development Services issued a memorandum at the direction of then Commissioner Dan Saltzman modifying how the rules would be interpreted for the homes in Miles Place. In that memo he stated that:

- Interior remodels both within and outside of the Greenway setback area that do not extend beyond the existing building footprint are allowed by right.
- Vertical additions both within and outside of the greenways back area are allowed by right if the entire addition remains within the existing building footprint. Expansions of the building footprint outside of the greenway setback area are allowed by right.
- Any additions within the Greenway setback area that extend beyond the existing building footprint are subject to Greenway goal exception and Greenway review requirements.

The intent of the River Plan / South Reach is to continue to allow these modifications due to the complicated nature of the regulations as applied to this particular development pattern. The provision would apply only to houses and not any other nonconforming development types in the South Reach, limiting the extent to which this provision would be allowed. The provision also applies in the North Reach of the Willamette on properties in the River Water Quality (q) overlay zone.



*Photo looking south on Miles Place.*

**Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policy**

**Policy 1.4 Zoning Code.** Maintain a Zoning Code that establishes regulations that apply to various zones, districts, and other special features.

**Objectives and Actions**

Objective #7: Acknowledge the constraints of the Miles Place single family residential area and allow maintenance and upgrades to these developments.

*Action*

- Continue the Zoning Code provision to allow houses in the South Reach that are nonconforming within the river setback to make improvements and expand development within the existing building coverage.

## 5. RIVERDALE / DUNTHORPE

Riverdale/Dunthorpe is a leafy residential neighborhood of stately houses, many with riverfront access, nestled into the hillside overlooking the Willamette River in unincorporated Multnomah County. The neighborhood was established when a prominent European American settler William Ladd platted 125 acres of the Riverdale/Dunthorpe area for residential development in 1916. Peter Kerr was another early developer in the area. Kerr's estate included formal gardens with great riverfront views. The estate and gardens have been preserved for public access and enjoyment and is known as Elk Rock Garden.



*Waterfront homes in Riverdale/Dunthorpe.*

Riverdale/Dunthorpe is included in this plan based on an agreement between Multnomah County and the City of Portland. The agreement grants the City planning and zoning authority for urban pockets of unincorporated County adjacent to city limits.

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policy

**Policy 8.5 Planning service delivery.** Provide planning, zoning, building, and subdivision control services within the boundaries of incorporation, and as otherwise provided by intergovernmental agreement within the City's Urban Services Boundary.

## 6. FLOATING HOME COMMUNITIES

There are three floating home communities with 99 individual homes in the South Reach: Oregon Yacht Club and Portland Rowing Club on the east side and Macadam Bay Moorage on the west side. These on-river residences offer a unique lifestyle and perspective that center on the river and riverfront natural areas for their beauty, abundant fish and wildlife and recreation.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

The South Reach floating home communities were established many years ago, prior to the State's passage of Statewide Planning Goal 15: Willamette River Greenway, and the City's subsequent adoption of the *Willamette Greenway Plan* in 1987. The policies and regulations for the Willamette River include defining river-dependent and river-related uses and development. This is a strict definition that originates from Statewide Planning Goal 15 and is part of the Portland Zoning Code. It limits uses and development to that which is dependent upon the river for waterborne transportation or recreation or provides goods or services that if not located adjacent to the river would result in a public loss of quality in the goods and services offered. Residential uses and development are not allowed under these definitions, even floating homes. Residences do not need to/are dependent upon locating on or close to the river. The City has a requirement that non-river dependent and river-related development be set back from the river and applies this regulation to residential uses and

development. The Portland Zoning Code also states that no new floating homes or structures are allowed on the Willamette River without a Greenway Goal exception. A Greenway Goal exception requires a special land use review and approval for locating non-river-dependent and river-related development uses and development within the required river setback. Meeting the approval criteria for a Greenway Goal exception is very challenging. Development activity related to floating homes is regulated by Title 28 Floating Structures and applicable building and Zoning Code provisions.

In recent years, South Reach floating home communities are dealing with the physical, structural and other impacts posed by motorboats with wake enhancement devices that use the river in summer months. This issue is addressed in the Recreation section.



*Floating homes in the South Reach.*

Existing floating home residents can continue to live on the Willamette River into the future. Floating home community members have a strong sense of stewardship and spend a lot of time observing the river/riverfront area and recreating on the river. They have a great knowledge and appreciation for the South Reach's robust natural setting and enjoy recreation along and in the river. Residents have partnered with the City of Portland and others to maintain and improve the natural environment around their moorage sites and elsewhere. Residents would like to keep conflicts to a minimum between all users on the river.

## 7. HOUSELESS COMMUNITIES

People experiencing homelessness have existed in Portland since the City's incorporation in 1851<sup>1</sup>. In recent years the number has risen sharply. The County estimates that in 2017 there were 4,177 houseless individuals in the Multnomah County<sup>2</sup>. It is important to get people into permanent affordable housing as a humanitarian effort. These individuals also often need companion services such as mental health and addiction services.

### Key Issues and Opportunities

In the South Reach homeless people routinely camp along both sides of the river on public and private lands. People also live aboard live-aboard boats that are often in fair to poor operating condition. These boats dock on the outer banks of the river, drop anchor in open water, and are found at places such as the Sellwood Riverfront Park dock and near the shores of Ross Island.

Live-aboard camping along and on the river can add to the environmental degradation of both the upland and riverine environments. Live-aboard campers sometimes clear large areas of vegetation near the river, contributing to excessive sedimentation while also leaving trash and other waste<sup>4</sup>. Regularly serviced portable bathrooms and trash bins along the river could reduce resource degradation and environmental. However, funding for these improvements would need to be identified. However, concerns have been raised about that if these services are provided more houseless people will flock to the area.

<sup>4</sup> Clean up of abandoned camping sites on public lands is triggered by a call to One Point at (503)-823-4000.

Human waste has been dumped in the river and non-functional boats or other structures have been abandoned. Waste and excessive sedimentation in the river harm wildlife and have impacts on recreational users. Removal and clean-up of just one live-aboard boat can cost in the thousands of dollars. However, in rare cases one boat removal can reach anywhere from \$20,000 to \$60,000<sup>3</sup>. The State of Oregon is coordinating with Multnomah County and the City of Portland to address this issue, but more funds are needed to make a significant impact. Ideas generated by the public include providing mobile marine sanitary pump out services for live-aboard boats or a floating porta potty on the river near Ross Island.

As part of the Joint Office of Homeless Services, the City of Portland and Multnomah County are working on the homelessness crisis. Both are continuing to add shelter space, supportive housing, addiction and mental health services, and job training to help get people into permanent housing. Outreach by non-profit organizations such as JOIN, A Home for Everyone, and Central City Concern along with enforcement can also provide options and encouragement to help battle obstacles to permanent housing. Overall, this issue is much larger than the River Plan / South Reach. Hopefully the ongoing efforts of State, County and City governments along with nonprofit organizations will bring about a reduction in homelessness and improve the quality of life for houseless residents and the broader community. See Watershed Health and Resilience section for more information.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.portlandmercury.com/feature/2016/03/16/17757826/the-birthplace-of-homelessness>

<sup>2</sup> <https://multco.us/file/63263/download>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.kgw.com/article/news/local/state-will-seize-transient-boats-dumping-sewage-in-willamette-river/283-552074134>

### Relevant 2035 Comprehensive Plan Policy

**Policy 5.44 Regional cooperation.** Facilitate opportunities for greater regional cooperation in addressing housing needs in the Portland metropolitan area, especially for the homeless, low- and moderate-income households, and historically under-served and under-represented communities.

### Objective and Actions

**OBJECTIVE #8:** Community members in the South Reach understand the seriousness of the houseless issue and contribute positively with others to address this humanitarian condition.

#### *Action*

- Support the work of the Joint Office of Homeless Services (JOHS) and strengthen coordination between JOHS, City bureaus (e.g., Police, Parks and Recreation) and State agencies (e.g., DSL and OSMB) to minimize the impacts of live-aboard boaters and houseless camping on the Willamette River and adjacent natural areas, open spaces and parks.

