



THE BUREAU OF **PLANNING  
& SUSTAINABILITY**

October 25, 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Mayor Wheeler and City Council members

FROM: Bill Cunningham, Joan Frederiksen, BPS Project Staff

COPY: Donnie Oliveira, Director; Patricia Diefenderfer, Chief Planner

SUBJECT: West Portland Town Center Plan Amendments for Consideration on October 27, 2022

On October 27 at 3:30 p.m. time certain, Council will continue their deliberations on the West Portland Town Center Plan Recommended Draft and will discuss and vote on amendments. The session is expected to include the following:

**I. Staff presentation providing responses to Commissioners' questions and overview of minor amendments requested by City Commissioners**

**II. Discussion and vote on amendments**

The following pages of this memorandum serve as a guide to the draft amendments requested as of today. The only amendments requested are of a minor or technical nature, identified by staff. They clarify or correcting text in the proposed West Portland Zoning Code amendments or in the Citywide Design Guidelines document. A list of the requested amendments is attached, along with the actual amendments language.

Staff will return to City Council in November, on a date to be determined, with the amended Recommended Draft and ordinance, incorporating outcomes from the amendment votes, along with revised findings.

# West Portland Town Center Plan – Amendments Guide

October 27, 3:30 pm time certain

## WPTC Plan Amendments Table

#	Amendment	Description	Page	Vote
1	<b>33.595.130</b> Minor change to Required Ground Floor Active Use regulation	Minor amendment to clarify that this requirement for non-residential ground floor active uses only applies in the commercial/mixed use zones.	3	
2	<b>33.595.230.C.3.</b> Code reference correction	Reference to the Daycare or Community Service FAR bonus corrected to 33.595. <u>220</u> .B.2.	4	
3	<b>Citywide Design Guidelines</b> Add Table of Contents appendix references	Amend the Table of Contents (Page 4) to indicate location of document's Character Statements in the Citywide Design Guidelines Appendix section.	5	
4	<b>Citywide Design Guidelines</b> Amend explanatory text on the "A Guide to the Document" page	Amend the "A Guide to the Document" page regarding the Character Statement pages to revise the following explanatory text: "Quotes - Reminder of the community voices which helped shape this document <del>and highlights one of their main concerns.</del> "	7	

## Full Amendment Text

Note regarding replacement code or text: amended text is highlighted in yellow to provide clarity regarding the changes, but this shading will not be included in the final version of the code amendments.

### Proposed Amendments to Recommended Draft Zoning Code Chapter 33.595

#### 1. 33.595.130

##### Minor change to Required Ground Floor Active Use regulation

**Sponsored by:** Commissioner Rubio

**Explanation:** This minor amendment clarifies that this requirement for non-residential ground floor active uses only applies in the commercial/mixed use zones. There are a small number of multi-dwelling zone sites on the mapped commercial corridors where this regulation will apply, for which this regulation will not be practical and which were not intended to be subject to this regulation.

##### Replacement Code:

##### 33.595.130 Required Ground Floor Active Use

**A. Where this regulation applies.** This regulation applies in commercial/mixed use zones.

**B. Required ground floor active use.** On sites that abut a commercial corridor shown on Map 595-3, and on sites that abut any street in the Barbur Transit Center shown on Map 595-3, 25 percent of any ground level floor area located within 100 feet of the lot line that abuts the corridor or street shown on Map 595-3 must be in one of the following active uses.

Only uses allowed in the base zone may be chosen:

1. Retail Sales and Service;
2. Office;
3. Industrial Service;
4. Manufacturing and Production;
5. Community Service;
6. Daycare;
7. Religious Institutions;
8. Schools;
9. Colleges. If a College use is provided to meet this regulation, the floor area must be in one or more of the following functions: lobby; library; food service; theatre; meeting area; or
10. Medical Centers. If a Medical Center use is provided to meet this regulation, the floor area must be in one or more of the following functions: lobby; waiting room; food service; out-patient clinic.

## 2. 33.595.230.C.3. Bonus Height

### Code reference correction

**Sponsored by:** Commissioner Rubio

**Explanation:** This technical amendment corrects an incorrect code reference. Reference to the Daycare or Community Service FAR bonus should be 33.595.220.B.2. This cross reference is currently incorrectly stated as 33.595.210.B.2.

### Replacement Code:

#### 33.595.230 Bonus Height

A.-B. [No change to Recommended Draft]

C. **Bonus height.** An increment of 10 feet of additional building height above the base height limits of the base zone is allowed in all commercial/mixed use zones in the plan district for each of the following. Base height is shown in Table 130-2 and Table 595-3. The 10-foot height increments allowed by this standard can be combined to provide multiple increments of 10 feet of additional height. The maximum overall height with bonus is shown in Table 595-3. When a height bonus option listed below is used to increase the base height, the step-down height limits do not increase. Adjustments are prohibited.

1.-2. [No change to Recommended Draft]

3. Proposals utilizing the FAR bonus for Daycare or Community Services uses described in **33.595.220.B.2**. If the proposal includes residential uses, the proposal must comply with the inclusionary housing standards of 33.245.040 and 33.245.050 in order to qualify for this height bonus.

4.-5. [No change to Recommended Draft]

## Proposed Amendments to Portland Citywide Design Guidelines Document

### 3. Citywide Design Guidelines

#### **Add Table of Contents appendix references**

**Sponsored by:** Commissioner Rubio

**Explanation:** Amend the Portland Citywide Design Guidelines, Table of Contents (Page 4) to indicate the location of document’s design district Character Statements. The WPTC Plan is adding a character statement for West Portland, but the document’s Table of Contents includes no reference to the contents of the appendix section, which includes the Character Statements for each design district. This amendment does not change any design guideline and will not change any design review requirements, but is being added to assist users of the document.

#### **Revised Citywide Design Guidelines Table of Contents Page** *(see next page)*

**Note:** This page is not currently included in the West Portland Town Center Plan and will need to be added to Volume 2, Section 6 (West Portland Town Center Character Statement). New Table of Contents text is underlined and shown in a yellow box.

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#### 4. Citywide Design Guidelines

##### **Amend explanatory text on the proposed “A Guide to the Document” page related to design district Character Statements**

**Sponsored by:** Commissioner Rubio

**Explanation:** In Volume 2 of the Recommended Draft, on page 3 of Section 6 (West Portland Town Center Character Statement), amend the “A Guide to the Document” page explanatory text to revise an explanation regarding community quotes as follows: “Quotes - Reminder of the community voices which helped shape this document ~~and highlights one of their main concerns.~~” This minor edit is being made because community quotes used in the Character Statements are not only about concerns. This amendment does not change any design guideline and will not change any design review requirements, but is an edit to explanatory text.

##### **Revised “A Guide to the Document” page *(see next page)***

**Note:** The text to be removed is shown as crossed out text, highlighted in yellow, under the heading “Quotes” on the following page, included on Page 3 of Section 6 (West Portland Town Center Character Statement) in West Portland Town Center Plan Volume 2. The crossed out text and yellow highlighting will not be included in the final version of the plan.



# A GUIDE TO THE DOCUMENT

Each character statement addresses an area's history and future desired character and has the same structural components.

## THE CHARACTER STATEMENT PAGES:

- **Title** serves to inform on statement area location and designation
- **Diagrammatic Map** serves to complement the text by diagramming an area's current and future defining features (i.e. connections, landmarks, natural resources, etc.)

**CHARACTER STATEMENT: MACADAM CIVIC CORRIDOR & RIVERFRONT NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER**

**BACKGROUND**

**HISTORY & EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Located between Portland's West Hills and the Willamette River, the Macadam area is shaped by its proximity to the river, abundant natural resources and the Central City. For centuries, Native Americans, primarily the talapuya peoples, lived and thrived here. The Willamette River was a primary transportation corridor and the riverfront area that is now Willamette Park was part of a large network of wetlands and a popular camping location during the salmon runs. Native Americans also hunted and collected berries, nuts and plants along the riverfront for sustenance and medicinal and cultural purposes. These activities remain central to Native cultures, but development has degraded vital resources and adversely affected Tribal customs, wildlife habitat and watershed health. Buildings have been located too close to the river, vegetation has been removed and the use of impermeable building materials has been unchecked.

From the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, European Americans settled along the north-south S Macadam Avenue and constructed a parallel railroad line. During Portland's early growth much of the land between the Willamette River and S Macadam Avenue was occupied by industries that benefited from easy access to the river and the railroad. Commercial businesses emerged along the west side of S Macadam Avenue to support the industrial uses and residential neighborhoods developed to the west of the commercial corridor—in the hills with views of the river. As a result, the east side of S Macadam Avenue has large, irregular shaped lots and the west side has a traditional, well-connected block pattern.

Following World War II, much of the industry in the Macadam area relocated as technology improved and demand declined. Building boomed in the flat land between S Macadam Avenue and the river, as it was being downsized and other close-in residential neighborhoods. In the 1970s and 1980s former industrial sites were transformed into multi-dwelling residential buildings, commercial office spaces and small shopping centers. These large sites focused their attention on the river and very few provided east-west connections that improve the district's riverfront access.

Planning policies of the period emphasized new residential and commercial uses and encouraged auto-oriented, "carvous like" environments with many trees, deep street setbacks and parking access to and along the river. This led to the creation of several significant waterfront residential developments, the gateway trail and Willamette Park, but it also resulted in buildings oriented toward large surface parking lots rather than the street and an unsafe, unwelcoming pedestrian environment.

**CURRENT POLICY FRAMEWORK**

The 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2018) identifies the Macadam area as a Neighborhood Center and part of the River Pattern Area, and S Macadam Avenue as a Civic Corridor. These designations recognize the area's opportunities for growth, redevelopment, a safe and attractive pedestrian environment, and strong riverfront access.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following resources offer more background information on the history of the district:

- Willamette Greenway Plan (1987)
- Macadam Corridor Design Guidelines (1982)
- East Side South Riverfront Adapted Plan
- East Side South Riverfront Draft Existing Conditions Report (May 2018)

These resources help preserve and protect the natural environment of this district.

**Community Character**

The riverfront sections align with and are derived from content in the Portland Citywide Design Guidelines, specifically Guideline 01. They will each focus on characteristics specific to the neighborhood center.

The riverfront is culturally significant to the region. Tribal Nations and the local Native community and nearby residents are vibrant along the nearly two miles of accessible Willamette River shoreline with an accessible greenway trail, Willamette Park, Heiron Pointe Wetlands and the O'Connell-Kelly natural area. New development should acknowledge and enhance the cultural, social, ecological and recreational value of the riverfront.

South Portland provides residents and the city with a great gateway to downtown. It's topography and proximity to the river creates three distinct geographic areas: 1) western S Macadam Avenue, 2) southern S Macadam Avenue (south of S Boundary) and 3) the Willamette Greenway. Future development needs to respond to each area's distinct topography, scale, lot size, density, heights and uses. The northern section is a dissected hillside, providing a transition from the high-rise South Waterfront. It is characterized by multi-family residential and office commercial buildings. In contrast, the southern section emphasizes a more main street character with small-scale residential uses and houses. This area is constrained by steep hills to the west, and the river. New development here should be designed to limit scale impacts to the residential community to the west.

S Macadam Avenue, along with the train tracks, surface parking areas and large irregular lots have created road-wash barriers to the river. New development should improve both the quality and quantity of public connections—both physical and visual—through various points should be based on the typical Portland block pattern of 200 feet and should align with streets on the west side of S Macadam Avenue. Alignment will provide unimpeded visibility from public drivers and improve the riverfront and ensure it is accessible to everyone in the district.

**Architecture - Urban Design Character**

Past City policies envisioned S Macadam Avenue as a tree-lined landmark with safe routes for both pedestrians and cars. Existing development—a mixture of river-oriented businesses, suburban-style shopping centers, office parks, and apartment buildings—does not support a public realm focused on the comfort and safety of pedestrians and cyclists. Future site and building design should be responsive to this vision for S Macadam Avenue and the context of the Willamette Riverfront. On S Macadam Avenue, a few buildings from the area's industrial past have been renovated with high quality, suitable materials, such as masonry or stone. New buildings should use texture, color, scale and proportion to complement this existing fabric. Features such as simple glazing, covered entries and integrated landscaping are appropriate to this environment. When used at corner sites, they strengthen and solidify the connections across S Macadam Avenue, and down to the river.

Successful landscaping is particularly important along identified public view corridors where rights of way have limited planting areas. Along the Willamette Riverfront, existing development has traditionally used balconies, terraces and communal open spaces to promote safety and create visual interest along the gateway and river. To enrich the experience of all residents, new development should incorporate these elements along the riverfront and throughout the district, reinforcing public views to the greenway's wide and the river. Locate significant outdoor spaces contiguous with the greenway trail. Transition buildings away from the river setback, using step downs and step backs to create building mass to preserve access to light and air along sidewalks and the trail and create a pleasant pedestrian experience. Design and orient buildings to facilitate east-west connections to the riverfront and promote its accessibility within the district.

**Natural Resources + Scenic Resources**

The Willamette River's location along the Willamette River's South Reach is a key factor in the continued health of endangered and threatened fish, wildlife and plants. This riverfront corridor is part of the Pacific Flyway for migratory and nesting birds. Future development along the river and trails should both activate the river frontage and manage impacts from noise and lighting on the trail and wildlife habitat, include climate-responsible plantings to enhance wildlife habitat, soften building edges, and screen parking areas.

Natural features along the riverfront are valuable community assets, central to the cultural practices of local Tribal Communities and with lush vegetation and views of the riverfront. Hills and views from the riverfront to landscaping within the river setback and provide natural areas by preserving and planting trees near the Willamette River. Development should capitalize on this unique location by incorporating environmentally friendly building practices and techniques to preserve natural resources and views.

Adaptive reuse of Water Tower building as a commercial business center.

Step back development here greenway to preserve resources and views.

### Background & Additional Resources

Provide a summary of the area's history and future policies to inform the character sections. Resources in the grey box are intended provide applicants easier access to information, prompt more research (and outreach) during the project's development and to better understand how current conditions were created in hopes to begin to address past harms and harness the area's most valued assets for all residents.

### Quotes

Reminder of the community voices which helped shape this document and highlights one of their main concerns.

### Photos

Supports each character section by illustrating existing context and design approaches.

### Character Sections

Highlight an area's distinct and unique qualities, including community concerns or issues. They provide ways to address them to meet Guideline 01. These approaches focus as an extension of the Guidelines and are not intended to be used as a checklist of recommended solutions. Other approaches not listed may also be used.