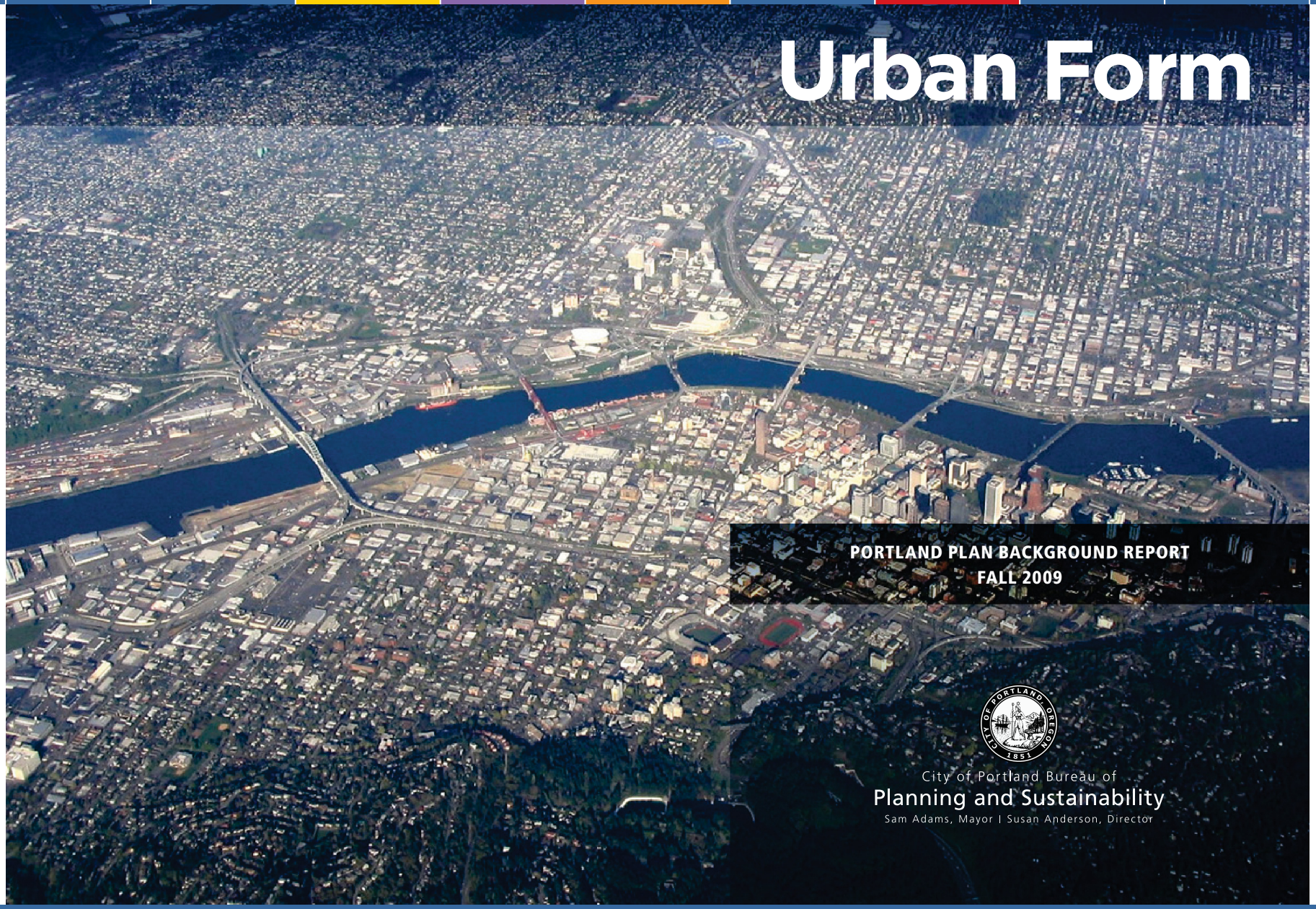
PORTLAND PLAN

Urban Form



PORTLAND PLAN BACKGROUND REPORT
FALL 2009

City of Portland Bureau of
Planning and Sustainability
Sam Adams, Mayor | Susan Anderson, Director

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HUMAN HEALTH, FOOD AND PUBLIC SAFETY

QUALITY OF LIFE, CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND EQUITY

ARTS, CULTURE AND INNOVATION

PORTLAND PLAN

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Summary

This report is one of a series of background reports for the Portland Plan. It focuses on the qualities of place, which are not readily expressed in numbers, but which are often at the heart of Portlanders' concerns about and hopes for the future of their city. The report describes Portland's existing urban form — the physical, on the ground reality of "what is here now" — as a reference document and starting point for community discussion of aspirations, options and goals for Portland's future urban form. The report also identifies challenges and opportunities related to the continuing evolution of Portland's urban form, and suggests possible approaches to how we might plan that evolution.

The Urban Form report is organized around four topics, each addressed in individual chapters:

- **Places —** the prominent places, landmarks and features that shape the form, structure and identity of Portland at the citywide scale. These include both natural and built elements - hills and bridges, rivers and roads, open spaces and commercial districts. Examples of Portland's prominent places and landmarks include natural features such as the Willamette River, Powell Butte and the West Hills; built icons such as Portland's bridges and the Downtown skyline; commercial districts such as Gateway and Hawthorne Boulevard; and signature open spaces such as Pioneer Courthouse Square and Forest Park. This chapter describes the types of Places that are memorable parts of Portland and which together help give our City its unique character.
- **Patterns —** the urban "fabric" of Portland's neighborhoods and districts that these Places fit into and that provides their context. Variations in street and block configurations, natural features, building types and architecture across Portland contribute to the distinct character of the city's neighborhoods and districts. Whether a neighborhood's streets are straight and lined by porches, or curve through forested hills, their physical characteristics are fundamental to their sense of place.

  This chapter identifies three basic patterns or neighborhood typologies: the Inner Neighborhoods, with their main street commercial districts and compact street grid; the Western Neighborhoods, whose urban form is shaped by hilly terrain, streams and other natural features; and the Eastern Neighborhoods, whose diverse mix of urban and more rural forms is set against a backdrop of Douglas firs and buttes. Beyond these three neighborhood urban forms are two other Portland patterns: those of the Central City neighborhoods, Portland's most intensely urbanized area; and the industrial districts, with their own distinct urban form characteristics.
- **Public Realm —** the parts of our city that are owned by all of us together - the streets, public parks, plazas and other open spaces where public life in the city is experienced. In Portland, public streets and parks occupy nearly 30% of the city's land area. They include the grid of narrow streets in the inner neighborhoods, the trails in western areas, the wide variety of city parks and the multiplicity of ever-changing community gathering spots.

  This chapter provides basic information about the various kinds of public spaces, including different types of streets, and introduces ideas for the future of the public realm and how streets, especially, might fulfill a broader range of community purposes over time.
- **Private Realm —** the development that takes place mostly on private property, but that affects all of us, producing the buildings that shape and bring activity to our streets and that are part of the continuing evolution of neighborhoods.

  This chapter summarizes some of the frequent results of private development, and the changes they are bringing to Portland's residential areas, main streets and urban forest.

Ideas for Future Consideration

Investigating the above topic areas brought up a number of issues and ideas that would benefit from future consideration, analysis and discussion as the Portland Plan is developed. It is hoped that community members will add their own ideas as to how growth might be guided in ways that preserve or enhance community values or that foster new places that can be assets to the community. The following are "ideas for future consideration" — four possible new approaches that together address key issues relating to the topic areas:

1. **Places:** *Portland needs a guiding, citywide urban form concept diagram to clearly describe where and how the city intends to grow.*

   The concept diagram would illustrate the intended spatial organization of the city and the key places, features and connections the community intends to continue or foster over time.

2. **Patterns:** *"One size does not fit all" in terms of neighborhood character.*

   There are at least three fundamental patterns or types of Portland neighborhoods (Inner, Eastern and Western), each with its own distinct characteristics, patterns and urban form aspirations. Specific policies and implementation tools could be crafted that are responsive to the differing community characteristics.

3. **Public Realm:** *Consider how Portland's streets might best serve the community as a key part of the city's system of public spaces.*

   It is critical to determine how both existing and new streets can complement the broader system of public spaces — not only as conduits for transportation, but as places for community interaction, environmental benefit, open space and other purposes. New strategies for street functions, design and operations are needed to manage the competing demands for streets as part of the public realm.

4. **Private Realm:** *Take a more intentional and targeted approach to guiding development.*

   Portland could be more intentional in guiding private development to achieve particular urban form outcomes, such as street environments, development patterns, open space or urban forest characteristics that are desired by the community. A more intentional approach to Portland's future form could help ensure that new development contributes to creating the kinds of places Portlanders want.

As part of the next steps for the Portland Plan, this report should be considered in relation to the broader body of information found in the Portland Plan background reports, which present the interrelated economic, environmental, housing infrastructure and other contextual issues.

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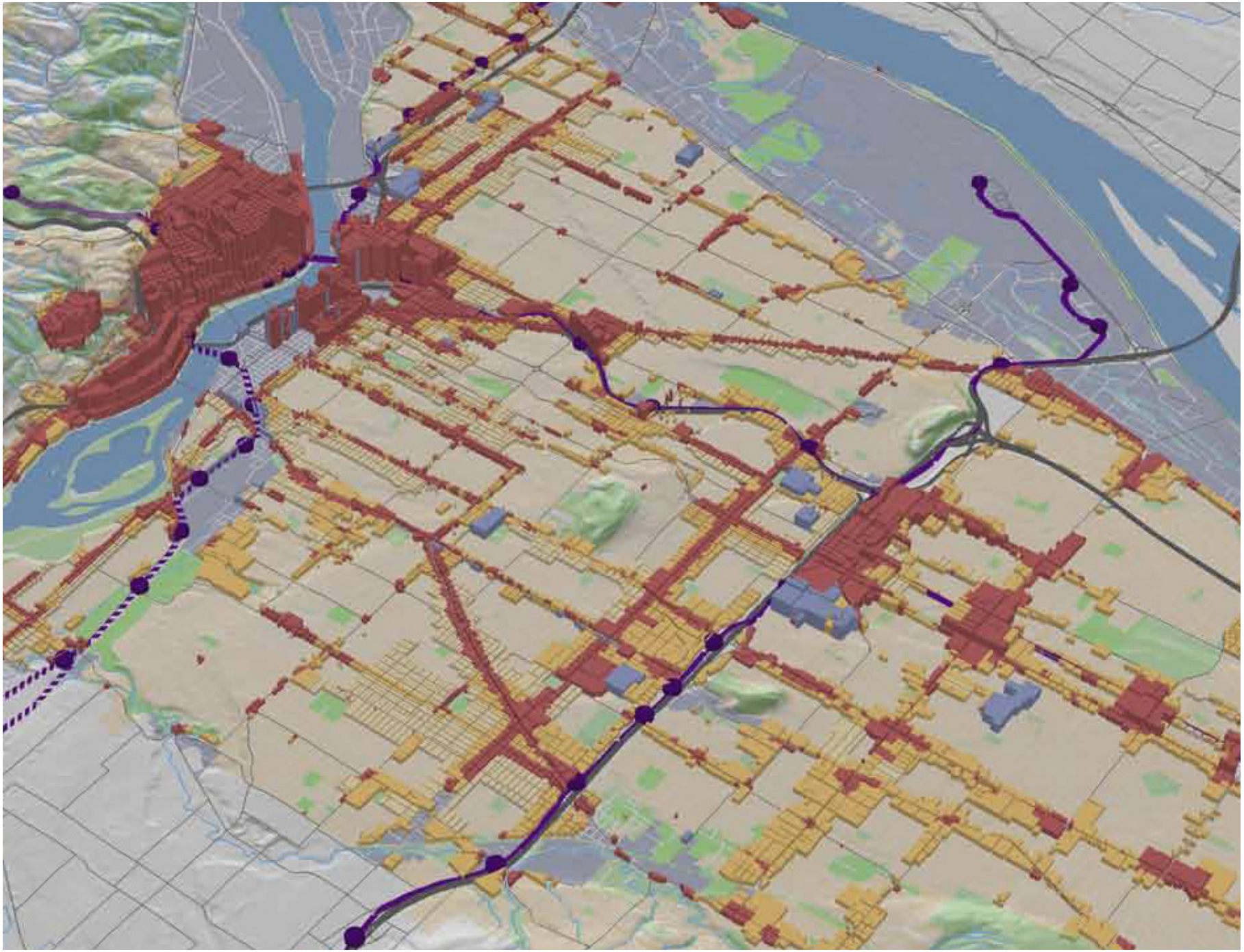


Portland's intended urban form as expressed through a graphic depiction of Zoning Code allowances for building heights and mixed-uses (in red).

Introduction

Portlanders care deeply about the quality of their city's distinctive places and the character of their neighborhoods. This is reflected in policies of the 1980 Comprehensive Plan, in Portland's many neighborhood and community plans and most recently in the community values identified through VisionPDX. Past planning processes have indicated that Portlanders cherish places that nurture community life and identity. They want urban growth guided in ways that enhance these places, contribute to walkable streets, respect neighborhood character and keep nature in the city. That said, existing policy guidance is often unclear about what specific places and community characteristics are especially valued, what are the desired outcomes and how this varies across the city. This makes it difficult to asses if existing trends are contributing to the kinds of places Portlanders want.

Metro population projections indicate that a million more people will likely be living in the Portland area by the year 2030. With this growth comes change. Community members have expressed concern that this growth and change might diminish what they like about their community and the places they value. This report is intended to help initiate community discussion on identifying what places and qualities of place are especially valued and should be continued into the future.

At the same time, the community can take strategic actions that will change how Portland evolves and functions in the future to better meet anticipated challenges and needs. A central challenge will be to find ways to hold onto what is cherished while accommodating future needs, in ways that nurture current and future Portlanders' pride for and identification with their city, neighborhoods and places.

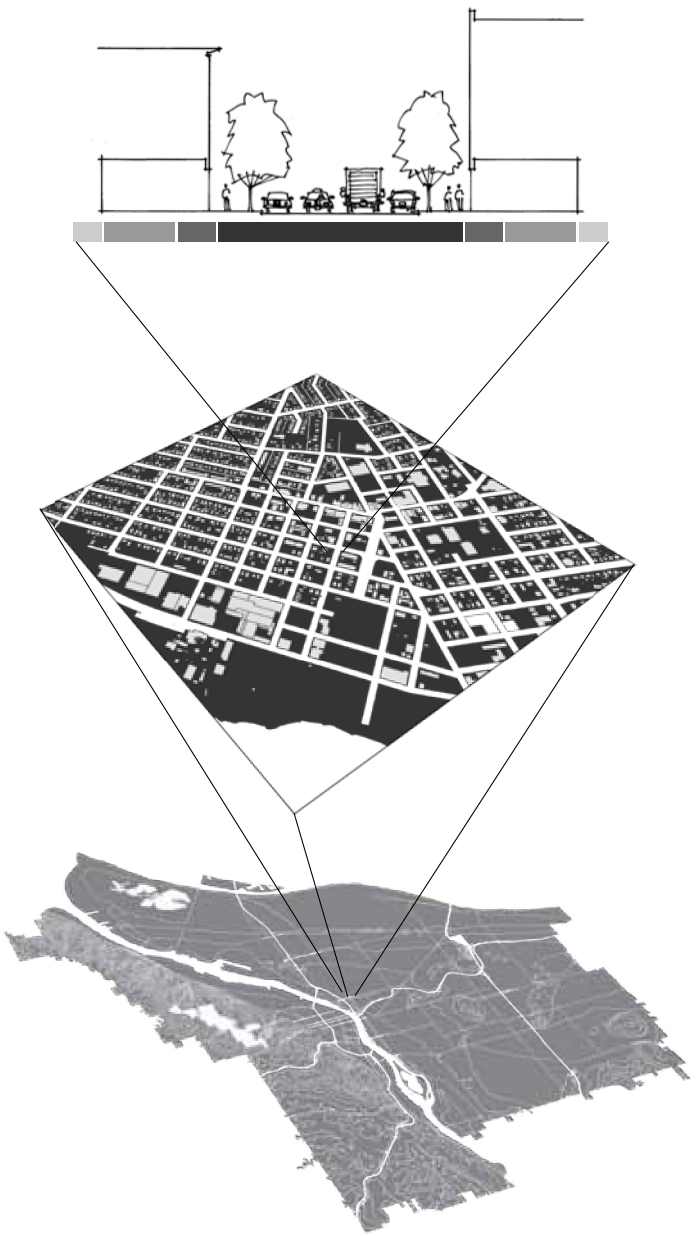
In order to support community discussion on these place-related issues, the Urban Form Background Report focuses on the physical form and environment of Portland's places, streets and neighborhoods and the overall urban form and structure of the city. This dialogue will inform consideration of how the Comprehensive Plan might be updated to acknowledge these key places and characteristics. In this consideration, growth can be guided in ways that enhance what is valued or contribute to the creation of new places that can be assets to the community.

Background

There are three main forces driving the creation of the Urban Form Background Report:

- **State-mandated Periodic Review.** In 2007 the state of Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development informed the City of Portland that it must update components of the Comprehensive Plan's economic development, infrastructure, housing and transportation and urbanization goals. The Urban Form Report will be used as reference document by the public and staff during the completion of required Periodic Review tasks. However, analyzing the city's existing built form is not a direct Periodic Review requirement.
- **Staff-identified Policy Gaps.** In 2006, the Bureau of Planning's Regulatory Rethink Advisory Council of Experts (ACE) evaluated the City's approach to regulating development. Their principle recommendation was to address the city's physical form and implement citywide design concepts through the creation of an urban form plan, which would provide clarity regarding the intended physical form of the city, its places and its street environments. Additionally, the Infill Design Project (2005), the Land Division Code Monitoring Report (2007) and the Citywide Tree Project (current) all identified significant gaps in Portland's existing urban form-related policies and implementing regulations.
- **Community Concerns.** Over the past few years, Portlanders have expressed concern that new development sometimes does not respect or continue the established characteristics, patterns or scale of their neighborhoods. Community members have also been concerned about the loss of sunlight, informal places and trees as growth continues to change their neighborhoods. In eastern and western Portland, residents are concerned that the development and improvement of local streets and sidewalks is not synchronized with development. There has also been emerging community interest in fostering "20-minute neighborhoods," where people can walk to services, amenities and community gathering places. Many of the concerns expressed by residents and community leaders through VisionPDX, in the 2005 Infill Design Project Report, at the March 17, 2007 Infill Development Discussions, in the 2007 East Portland Review, at a October 2007 Planning Commission retreat and as part of the on-going work of the City's district liaison planners, have revolved around how the City and the community addresses, preserves, promotes and changes Portland's shape and structure. **(See Appendix entitled "Community Concerns" on page 162 for more details on these reports, discussions and engagements.)**

Together, these three forces compelled the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability to take a systematic look at the city's existing urban form.



Approach and Structure

There are myriad lenses through which to view and understand a city's urban form. To begin to systematize the discussion of Portland's existing urban form, this report breaks the analysis of the city's shape and structure into the following topics and corresponding chapters: places, patterns, public realm and private realm. A brief description of each topic is provided below:

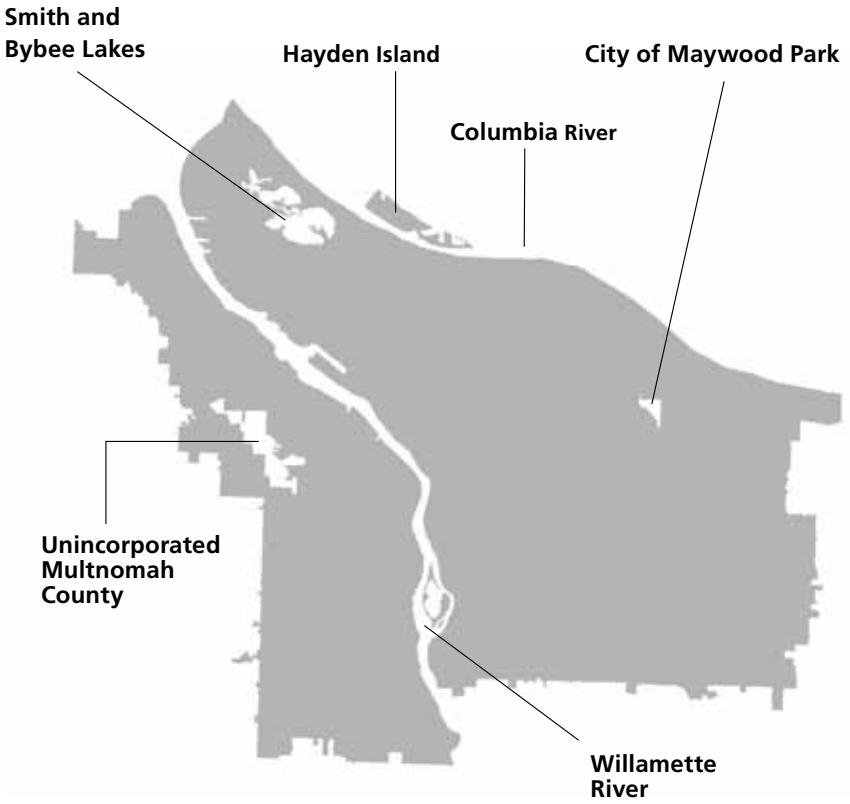
- **Places.** The places chapter focuses on identifying places and landmarks of citywide prominence that provide orientation, community identity or are hubs of community activity. They include natural and built landmarks, such as topographical features, bridges or major streets that help community members navigate and identify their place in the city. They also include commercial districts and other places of concentrated activity where Portlanders and visitors come together and that help define Portland's sense of place, as well as significant natural areas and key connections. Mapping of these prominent places and features will be used to support community identification of what places are especially valued, what should be enhanced and what new or emerging places should be fostered.
- **Patterns.** The patterns chapter focuses on identifying the basic physical characteristics of Portland's residential areas, mixed-use centers and industrial districts. This information is intended to support community discussion on what community characteristics are valued and should be continued into the future.
- **Public realm.** The public realm chapter focuses on the city's shared spaces — streets and sidewalks, trails, paths and parks. It is intended to support community discussion on the future of Portland's streets, which occupy over 16,000 acres of land, and to consider how this vast resource might function as part of the broader system of public spaces (the "public realm") that includes both streets and parks.
- **Private realm.** The private realm chapter begins to explore the range of development outcomes that take place mostly on private property but that interfaces with and shapes the public realm and are part of the continuing evolution of neighborhood patterns and characteristics.

Together, these topics look at the city from a sequence of scales. These scales range from the citywide, where only the most prominent features and places are apparent; to the urban fabric of the blocks, streets and building patterns of neighborhoods; to the street-level environment experienced by people on a daily basis.

While the focus of the Urban Form Report is on describing what currently exists, it concludes with a chapter on Ideas for Future Consideration. To support further community discussion on the report's topics, this concluding chapter identifies some possible new approaches to guiding Portland's future urban form, with ideas drawn from broader themes overlapping the topic areas.

Notes on Mapping Conventions

This report relies heavily on simplified maps to convey key ideas. Underlying each of these maps is the Portland city boundary, which merits some preliminary explanation here. Several features universally appear as white against the grey background: water bodies, Maywood Park and a chunk of unincorporated Multnomah County near Forest Park. On select maps in some portions of the document, additional features such as topography and freeways also appear in white.



What is Urban Form? Why is it Important?

Urban form is the physical shape and structure of the city. The form of a city is shaped by natural features (such as rivers and hills) and by the myriad economic, transportation, housing, environmental, social and aesthetic choices made by a city's residents — past and present.

Urban form is important because it influences your everyday life. Whether you live in an urban area like the Pearl District, a lush and hilly neighborhood like Ash Creek, a neighborhood with ranch houses and tall Douglas Firs like Mill Park, or in a neighborhood with closely-knit houses and active commercial streets like SE Belmont Street, urban form influences whether you walk or drive to the store, whether you take transit or whether you bike or drive to work. It also influences how far local farmers must travel to reach neighborhood markets and how long it takes to leave the city to explore wilderness areas.

A city's form not only impacts residents' daily lives and individual economic choices; it affects citywide policy and financial decisions as well. A city's urban form is important because it influences how quickly a community can adapt to changing environmental, economic and social conditions. For example, a city with a very large and diffuse structure and without concentrations of development might find it more difficult to adapt to a prolonged rise in fuel costs and the need to increase transportation options. A city with a limited tree canopy and little open space would find adapting to increased rainfall and stormwater runoff more challenging and more costly than a city with ample tree canopy and green spaces.

Urban form is important to think about because Portlanders can make choices about how to guide and shape the city's future form. The shape, structure and organization of a city — its urban form — reflect a society's values, needs, opportunities and constraints. Portland's urban form is the cumulative physical result of numerous related and unrelated human decisions over time. Portland's existing urban form is an imprint on the natural landscape that tells us about our past and present values and needs. Decisions made through the upcoming Comprehensive Plan process will affect Portland for generations.

Regional Context

Portland can be defined in relation to the geographic features in its immediate vicinity, as well as those at some distance from it. Frequently labeled a "river city", Portland sits near the mouth of the Columbia River Basin, the massive watershed that feeds the West Coast's most significant river. It flows for more than 1,200 miles, from the base of the Canadian Rockies in southeastern British Columbia to where it meets the Pacific Ocean at Astoria. Positioned approximately 60 miles inland from the Pacific Ocean, Portland is between the Cascade Mountain Range to the east and the Oregon Coast Range to the west.

Portland boasts a distinctive location at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Both waterways served as the life-blood for the city's early development as a powerful West Coast distribution center and industrial hub, and both continue to provide important shipping channels today.

Inextricably connected to the image of Portland are the two prominent mountains visible from many different parts of the city, Mt. Hood and Mt. St. Helens. While both mountains are approximately 50 miles from the city, both represent powerful symbols of Portland's strong connections to the surrounding geography, the great outdoors and the region's considerable natural resources. Mt. Hood in particular serves as an iconic landmark for Portland, although its location will not be found on any map of the city.

While the mountains are arguably more identified with Portland, the rivers and other important topographic forms played much more critical roles in the siting of the city. Portland was established along the banks of the Willamette River at the furthest point upriver that was attainable by deep draft ships of the mid- to late-19th Century. This location was also the closest port to the northern edge of the very fertile Willamette Valley, a vast and critical agricultural resource to this day. In addition, the confluence of multiple rail lines at the city's location meant that the transfer of goods between rail and maritime transportation modes would be the most efficient.

Perspective view of the Portland region, derived from satellite imagery (NASA).

Oaks Bottom, with the Downtown skyline and OHSU in the background.

Distinctive Citywide **Places**

From Powell Butte to Powell's Books, Portland is full of significant and distinctive places. Places where people like to walk, meet, play and eat. Places that help people find their way around town: Mt. Tabor, Big Pink and the St. Johns Bridge. This chapter focuses on the key places, major landmarks and other features that shape the form, structure and identity of Portland at the citywide scale.

Places are both functionally and psychologically important for cities. On a functional level, places are landmarks that tell you where you are in the city; they help residents and visitors orient themselves to navigate the city. On a psychological level, places are important because they contribute to the city's identity — by physically representing the city's history and aspirations and by providing places to meet and interact with other people. They are part of what makes Portland Portland.

While individual citywide places serve as landmarks and focal points irrespective of their relationship to other citywide places, good connections to and among Portland's distinctive places give the city a spatial organization that improves both the functional role of places and creates a more cohesive city identity.

As Portland evolves, it will be important to understand Portland's places of citywide prominence: What are they? Where are they? What story do they tell? Understanding Portland's existing citywide places will help Portlanders agree which places to protect, which to enhance; and will inform discussion on what new citywide places might be created to address the evolving needs and aspirations of Portlanders.

The places and landmarks identified in this chapter are not intended to be an exhaustive listing of Portland's prominent places. Rather, they are intended to be a starting point for community discussion on the future of the city's prominent and distinctive places, to which community members will add their own ideas as to what places are especially valued, should be enhanced, or created. While the ability to change places and landmarks varies (hills and rivers will not be moved), there are opportunities to foster development and connections that acknowledge or capitalize on these key places.

Framework for Places

Portland's places could be organized and categorized in nearly limitless ways. To provide structure to this discussion of Portland's places, this report separates places into the following seven categories:

- **Topographical Features**
- **Signature Open Spaces**
- **Built Icons**
- **Attractions**
- **Street Corridors**
- **Centers and High Capacity Transit**
- **Freeways and Interchanges**

The seven place categories listed above are based on the physical characteristics and functions of these places. Note that many of Portland's places could belong to more than one of these place categories.

For information on Portland's historic landmarks and resources, see the Historic Resources Background Report.

Topographic Features

Many of Portland's natural features speak to the area's natural history and a time long before it was urbanized into its current form. Much of the land area on which the city is built was once under water and part of a much larger confluence of the Willamette and Columbia Rivers. Over time, the land forms shifted, gave way, receded or hardened into the area's current distinctive palette of a western edge of hills, a chain of eastern buttes, a large plateau and the confluence of two major rivers.

Portland's prominent topographical elements define much of Portland's skyline, serving as key landmarks and orientation features. These topographical features, as well as the rivers, have played a fundamental role in shaping Portland's urban form, constraining where and how streets, railways and urban development could be built.

Many of Portland's topographical features have major open space facilities associated with them. For example, Mt. Tabor is not only one of the most visually dominant central elements in the city, but also offers a wide variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. Washington Park is within the West Hills and features, among many other amenities, the Japanese Garden, the Rose Test Gardens and direct access to Forest Park's 5,000-plus acres. These features not only serve as prominent visual wayfinding elements across the city, but provide places for public gatherings and interaction.

Portland's low-lying riverside areas are also a distinct component of the city's geography. They are places where land and water meet and mix, and where the city's port facilities and industry are concentrated.

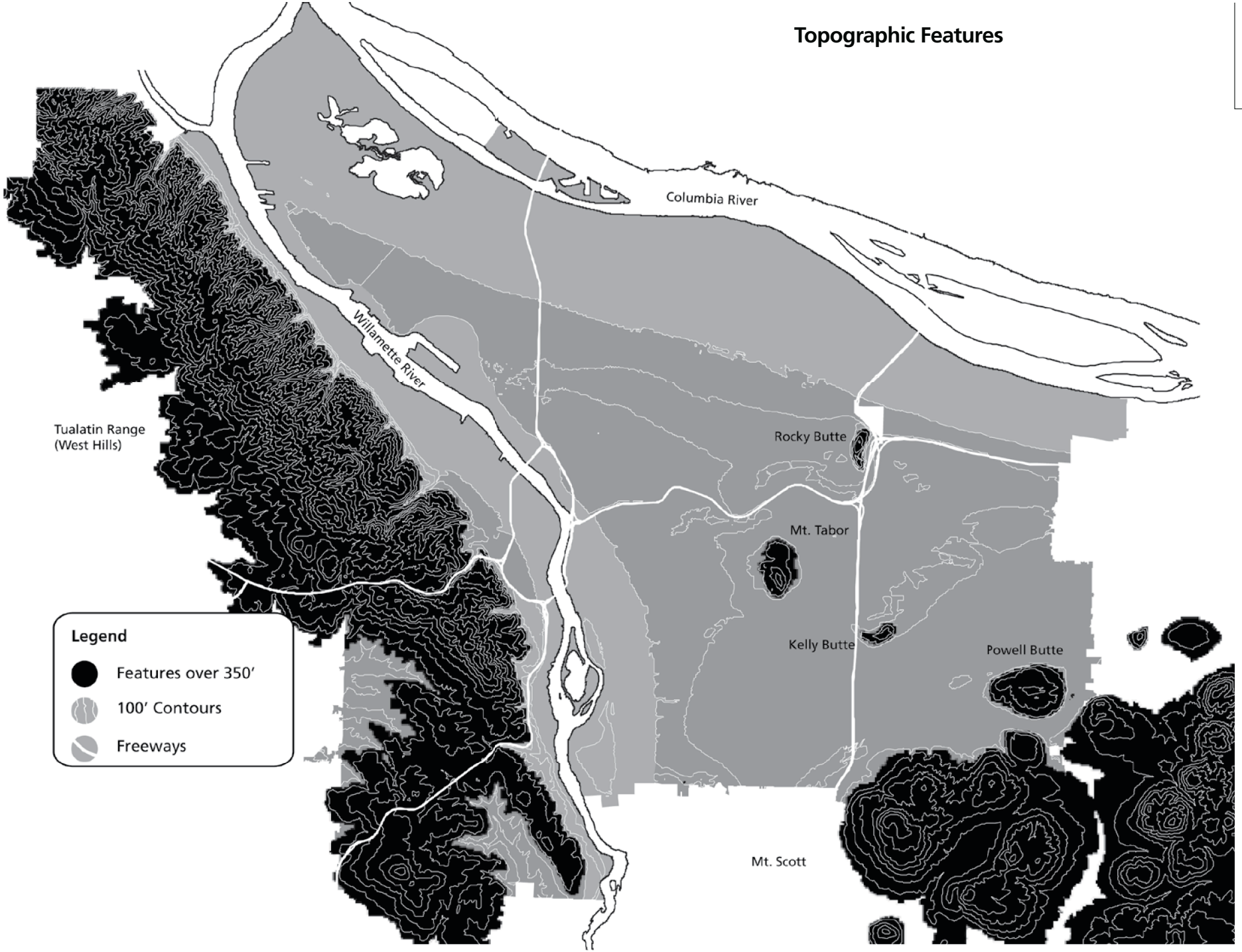
Criteria for Topographic Features

- **Prominent landscape features over 350' in height**
- **Significant waterways and waterbodies**
- **Lowlands**

These natural elements help to frame Portland's urban development and provide some of the city's most visible wayfinding and orienting forms. Lower lying waterways or bodies, like Smith/Bybee Lakes, are equally significant form-givers if not as visible as the more vertical hills and buttes

The Willamette River and the West Hills

Topographic Features



Signature Open Spaces

Portland's signature open spaces, such as the Willamette River Greenway, Smith and Bybee Lakes and the Springwater Corridor, offer multi-faceted waterfront open space experiences, opportunities to experience natural habitat areas and regional pedestrian and bicycle connections, respectively. These extensive open spaces, together with topographically-prominent parks, such as Forest Park, Mt. Tabor and Powell Butte, keep nature close-at-hand in the city. The broader system of open spaces also includes neighborhood parks scattered throughout Portland.

While these open spaces may not be visually prominent from all parts of the city, they are significant organizing features of the city and offer unique and varied open space experiences. The idea of an interconnected system of open spaces, originating with the Olmsted Plan of 1903, has been one of Portland's most enduring urban form concepts. This concept continues and has been partially realized today with the "40-Mile Loop," whose completed segments include the Springwater Corridor, the Wildwood Trail through Forest Park and trail segments along the Columbia River. Most of these open space connections are located through the West Hills or along water bodies. Less green space connectivity has been achieved within the urban grid of the city.

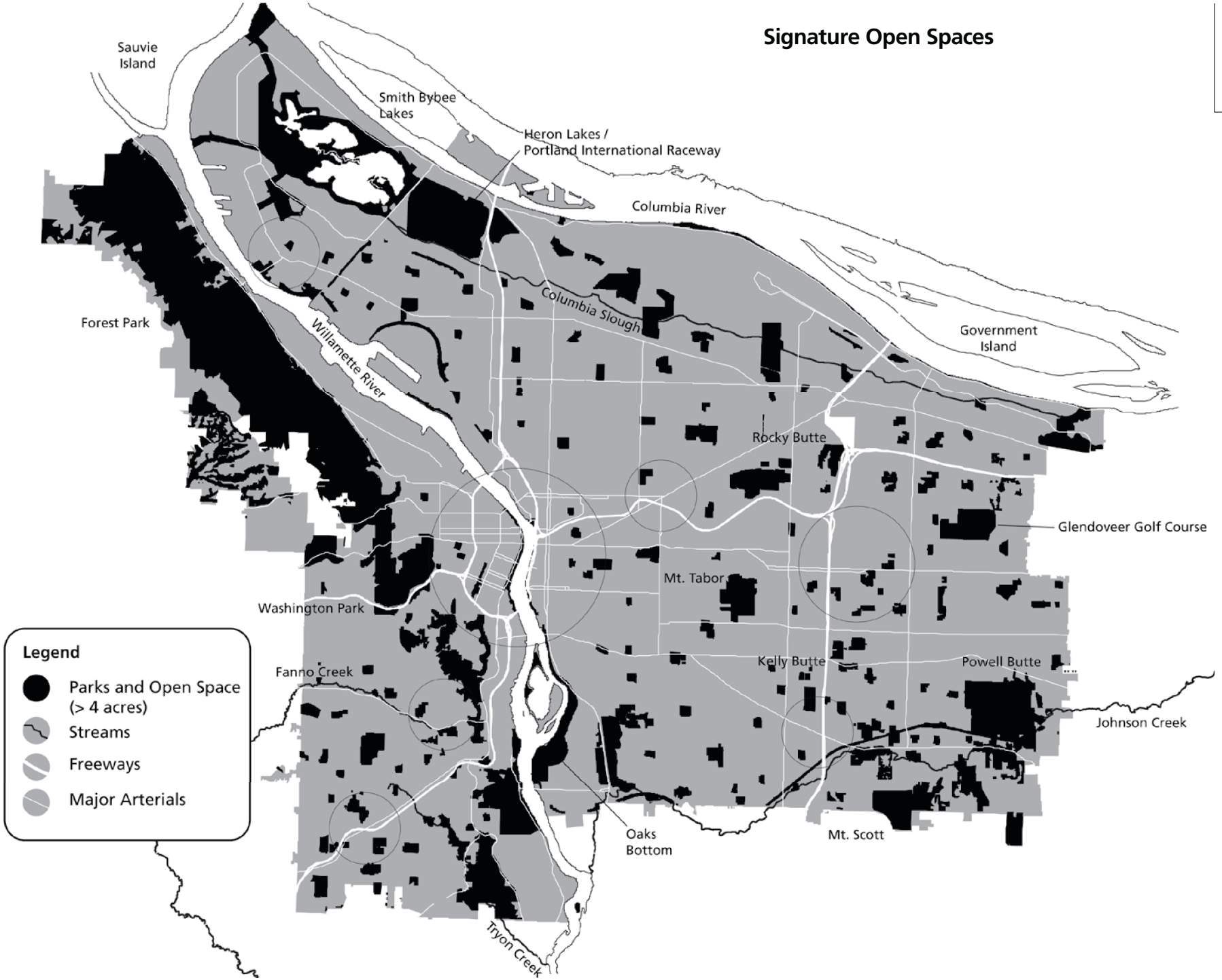
Springwater Corridor (upper), Columbia Slough (right) and Waterfront Park (left)

Criteria for Signature Open Spaces

- **Parks and other public open spaces greater than 4 acres in area**
- **Major streams and trails**

These parks and natural areas offer the widest variety of open space and recreational opportunities. Many serve as local and community focal points for the surrounding communities. Major streams are significant environmental and natural features, some of which are adjacent to major pedestrian and bicycle trails, such as the Springwater Trail.

Signature Open Spaces



Built Icons

Built icons serve as visual markers throughout the city. Like natural topographical features they help Portlanders orient themselves in the city.

The bridges of Portland, ranging from the Sellwood to Burnside to St. Johns and Glen Jackson, represent a broad period of bridge design and engineering and have become some of the most important icons of the city. They enable multiple important connections across the water bodies that define the city. Their inherently varied yet functional forms, from the graceful suspension approach of the St. Johns, to the through-arch of the Fremont, to the intensely complex telescoping-truss design of the Steel, serve as some of the city's most enduring and visible landmarks.

Portland's built icons also include buildings and groupings of buildings. Downtown Portland's cluster of high-rise buildings combine to serve as the most prominent built element of the city's skyline. This skyline is punctuated by a small number of buildings, such as the US Bancorp Tower on W Burnside, that stand apart in their visual prominence. Other built structures, such as the Veterans' Administration Hospital on Marquam Hill, offer a similar visual presence across a wide geography. These buildings, due to both their scale and locations, help identify the city center. They create clear focal points that provide orientation and distinguish Central Portland within the broader city and region.

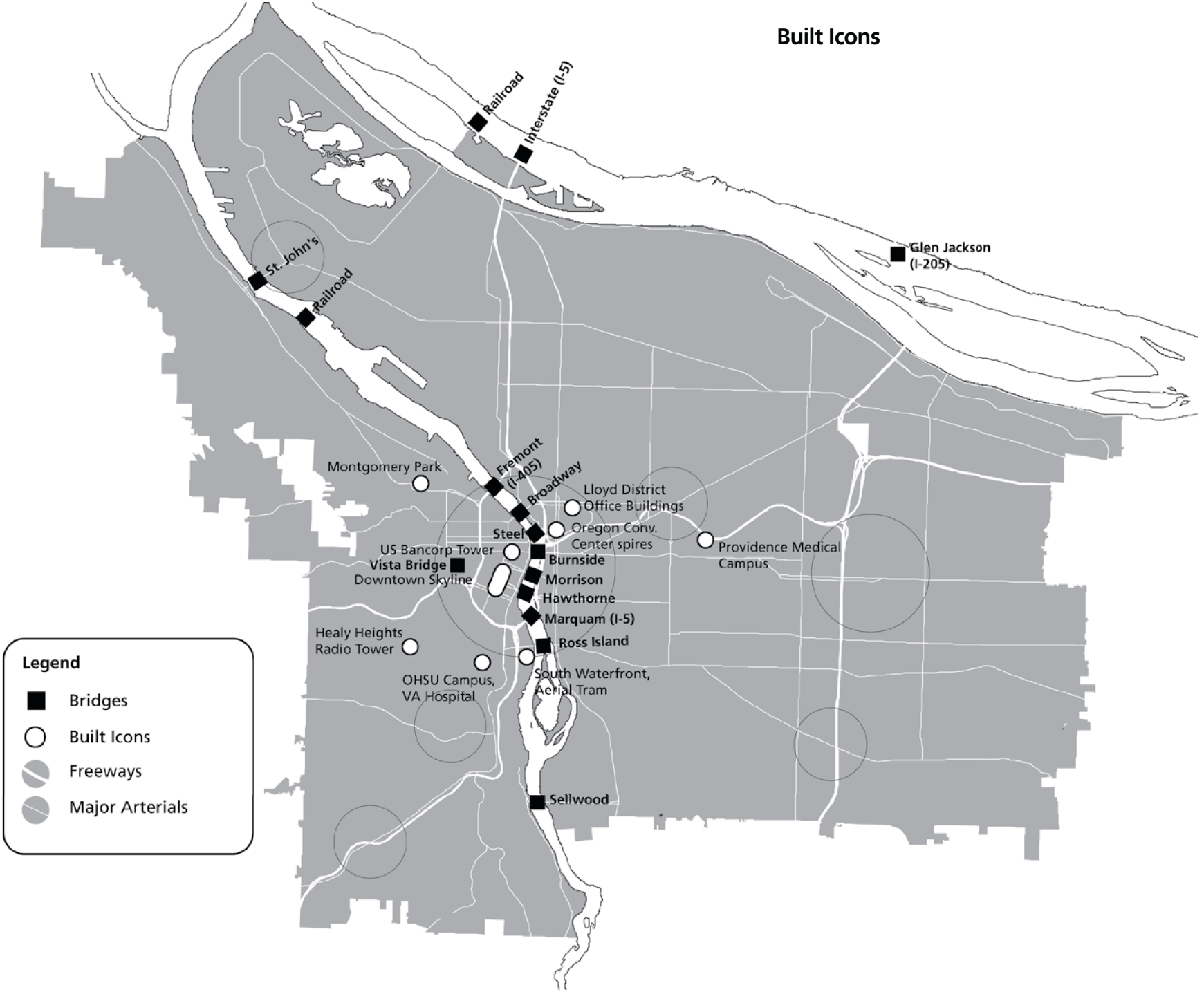
Criteria for Built Icons

- **Portland Bridges**
- **Significant buildings and structures taller than 125'**

These are human-created or built structures that are local icons for the city and its residents. The city has some 15 bridges spanning either the Willamette or Columbia Rivers, a concentration of the tallest buildings in the central area and a few outlying larger structures.

St. Johns Bridge (upper) and Downtown skyline (lower)

Built Icons


Railroad
Interstate (I-5)
St. John's
Railroad
Glen Jackson
(I-205)
Montgomery Park
Fremont
(I-405)
Broadway
Lloyd District
Office Buildings
Steel
Oregon Conv.
Center spires
US Bancorp Tower
Vista Bridge
Downtown Skyline
Burnside
Morrison
Hawthorne
Marquam (I-5)
Providence Medical
Campus
Healy Heights
Radio Tower
Ross Island
OHSU Campus,
VA Hospital
South Waterfront,
Aerial Tram
Sellwood
Legend
Bridges
Built Icons
Freeways
Major Arterials

Attractions

Attractions are single buildings, building complexes or facilities that draw thousands of residents and visitors every year. Many are civic facilities like museums, libraries or theaters. Some commercial streets around the city function as attractions to which people come from all over the region to shop, dine and gather.

Many of Portland's major attractions are located in or around Central Portland. The Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI), the Portland Art Museum, The Oregon Zoo and the Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA) are all located downtown or nearby. These attractions offer people experiences they cannot easily find elsewhere in the city — like large theater and dance performances and world-class art and significant historic artifacts. Some of these attractions are clustered, or co-located around each other, into small 'districts' of multiple facilities, creating unique places of concentrated activity.

Many commercial streets or corridors in the city are also attractions in their own right. These are notable because a large part of their attractiveness is in the character of their physical forms. NW 23rd Avenue is a reinvigorated Streetcar Era commercial corridor that has become a regional attraction due to its characteristically dense blend of mixed use, multi-story and pedestrian-oriented buildings fronting a relatively narrow but active street. 82nd Avenue offers a distinctly different commercial street form, one that is much more spread out and oriented to the automobile, but one that also attracts large numbers of people.

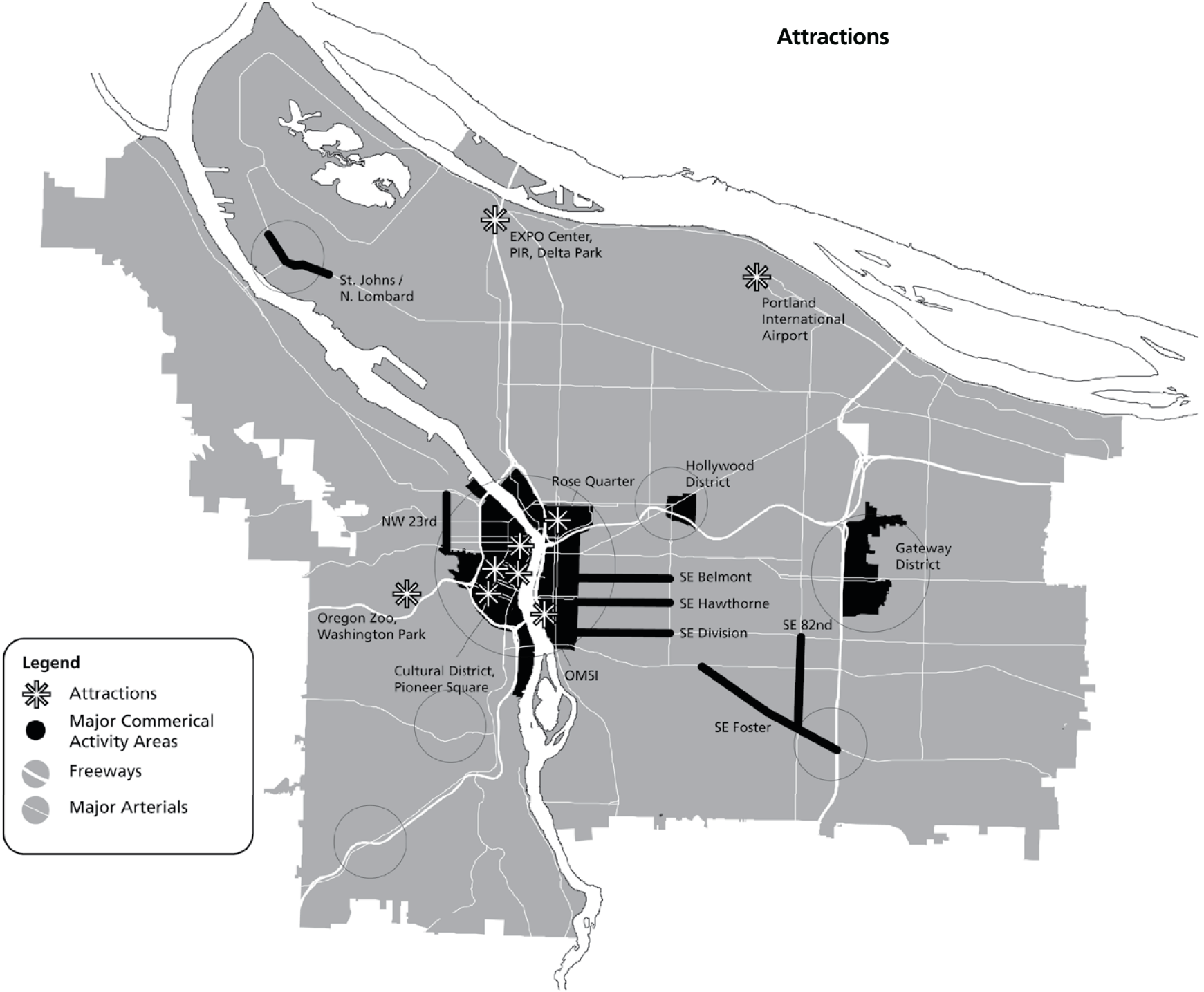
Criteria for Attractions

- **Commercial districts with over $100 million estimated annual retail, food and drink sales (as an indicator of activity)**
- **Major tourist attractions identified by the Portland Oregon Visitor's Association (POVA)**

These are regional attractions that draw thousands of residents, workers and visitors every year. Tourist attractions like the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI) often play multiple roles as educational institutions, while the commercial districts also provide necessary neighborhood-serving goods and services for local workers and residents.

Rose Garden Arena (upper left), Portland Art Museum (upper right) and NW 23rd Avenue (lower)

Attractions



Street Corridors

Corridors are the biggest and busiest streets in the city, moving thousands of people between residences, jobs and services every day. While many of these radiate out from Central Portland, others run outside the core of the city, making other connections between centers and other destinations within the region. Many of these corridors run between prominent attractions, topographical features and landmarks.

The traffic volume alone on some of these corridors makes them distinctive urban features that are known and seen daily by large numbers of people. SE McLoughlin, running between Portland's Central Eastside Industrial District and Milwaukie, is one of the city's busiest corridors, accommodating some 60,000 vehicles daily. Much of the street's broad and loose form is defined by the need to move large amounts of cars quickly. Other busy streets, like W Burnside in downtown Portland, must also deal with large numbers of cars but in a much smaller space. Burnside's form is as much about the buildings that enclose it as it is about the number and direction of the cars along it.

Other corridors are distinctive due to their "off the grid" alignments or unique right-of-way designs. NE Sandy and SE Foster are notable due to their diagonal paths in an otherwise fairly consistent orthogonal street network system. Others, such as NE Martin Luther King Jr. or SE Powell have medians, adding additional green tree canopy to these streets. The designs of these streets, their traffic volumes and configurations, strengthen their abilities to provide local and visitor wayfinding functions in addition to their specialized transportation services.

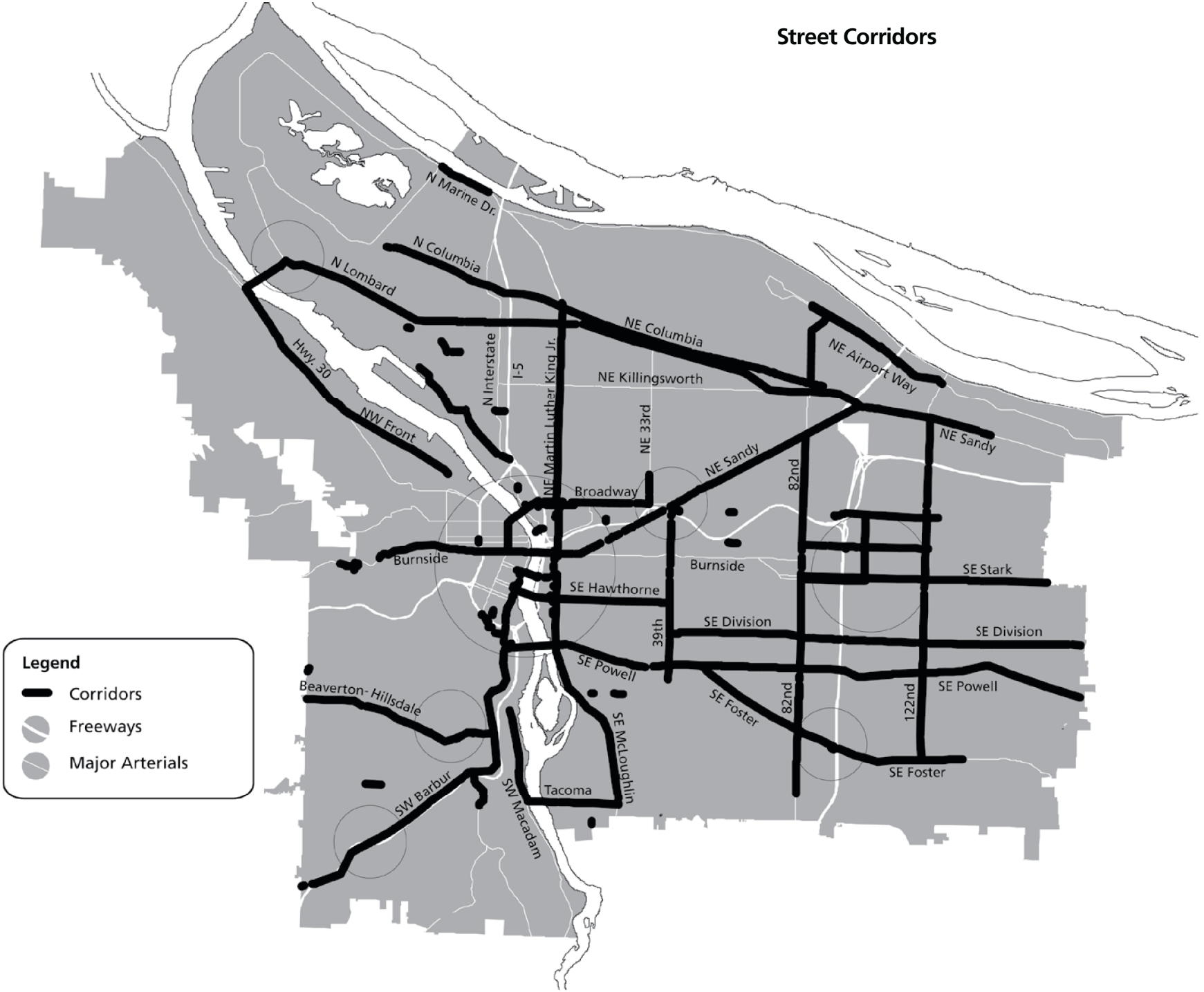
Criteria for Street Corridors

- **Arterials with greater than 20,000 average daily vehicle trips (ADT)**
- **Frequent service transit routes identified in the Primary Transit Index (PTI)**

These corridors are the city's busiest, most visible streets that serve as wayfinding features for adjacent neighborhoods. They serve many different modes of transportation: automobile, transit, pedestrian and bicycles.

E Burnside (upper), SE Hawthorne (right) and SE Powell (left)

Street Corridors



Centers and High-Capacity Transit

Portland's system of mixed-use centers and light rail lines are intended to play a key role in Portland's future urban development and its evolving urban form. As designated in the Metro 2040 Growth Concept, Portland's mixed-use centers include the Central City, the Gateway Regional Center and the town centers of Hollywood, St. Johns, Lents, Hillsdale and West Portland. Portland's greatest concentrations of residential and commercial development are intended to take place in and around these centers, as well as in the broader system of light rail station communities. The centers, in particular, are intended to be places that are hubs of activity for the surrounding community, and, in the case of the Central City, for the entire region.

As the centers and light rail station communities continue to develop into relatively intensely urbanized places, it is anticipated that they will increasingly stand out in their urban form from the surrounding urban fabric. However, the actual amount and scale of development that has occurred up to now in the centers and station communities varies greatly.

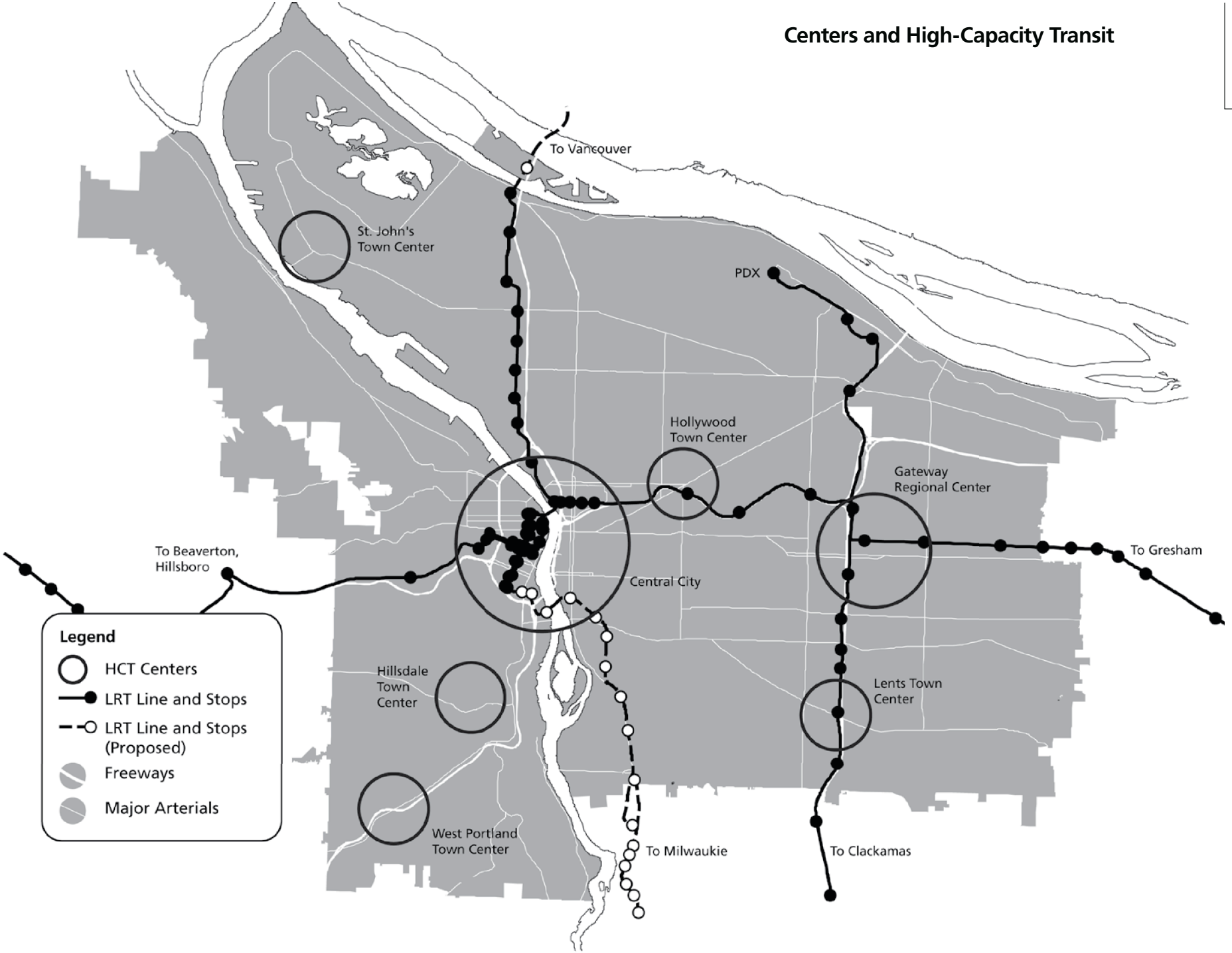
Criteria for Centers and High-Capacity Transit

- **Metro-designated centers per the 1995 Metro Region 2040 Growth Concept**
- **High capacity transit corridors and stations (currently MAX light rail)**

Centers are the parts of the city that are anticipated to accommodate the most growth and experience the most change as the city and the region's populations increase. Station areas along high capacity transit corridors are locations of higher density, mixed use development patterns that provide a variety of services and uses for the surrounding communities.

Light rail in Downtown (upper) and on Interstate (right), Centers Commons at the 60th Avenue light rail station

Centers and High-Capacity Transit



Freeways and Interchanges

Freeways carry hundreds of thousands of people into, out of and through Portland every day. These key transportation throughways serve residents, workers and visitors alike. They have had a major influence on the imageability of the city, as they offer numerous unique and signature views of the city and regional landmarks. Views east to Mt. Hood from the Interstate 84 freeway, near its interchange with Interstate 205, are a signature part of the eastbound freeway traveler's experience. The obstruction of views from US 26 across downtown Portland to Mt. Hood became an issue in the early 1980s with the construction of the high-rise KOIN Center tower.

Freeway access points have played a role in urban form by attracting concentrations of commercial development and are sometimes among the transportation facilities that serve mixed-use centers, as is the case with Gateway and the Hollywood District. As physical elements in the urban landscape, the impacts of freeways have a more mixed reputation. They function as physical barriers separating one area from another and have significant visual impacts. Nearby residents also suffer from vehicle noise and the air-quality impacts from vehicle emissions. Freeways consume large amounts of space and their roadway, access ramps, landscaped buffers and other interstitial areas have created swaths of natural and artificial topography across the urban landscape.

Some of the freeways or highways have integrated pedestrian and bicycle trail components within their envelopes. Most notable is Interstate 205, which includes a trail that connects the Springwater Corridor northward and across the Columbia River to Vancouver, Washington's riverfront trail system.

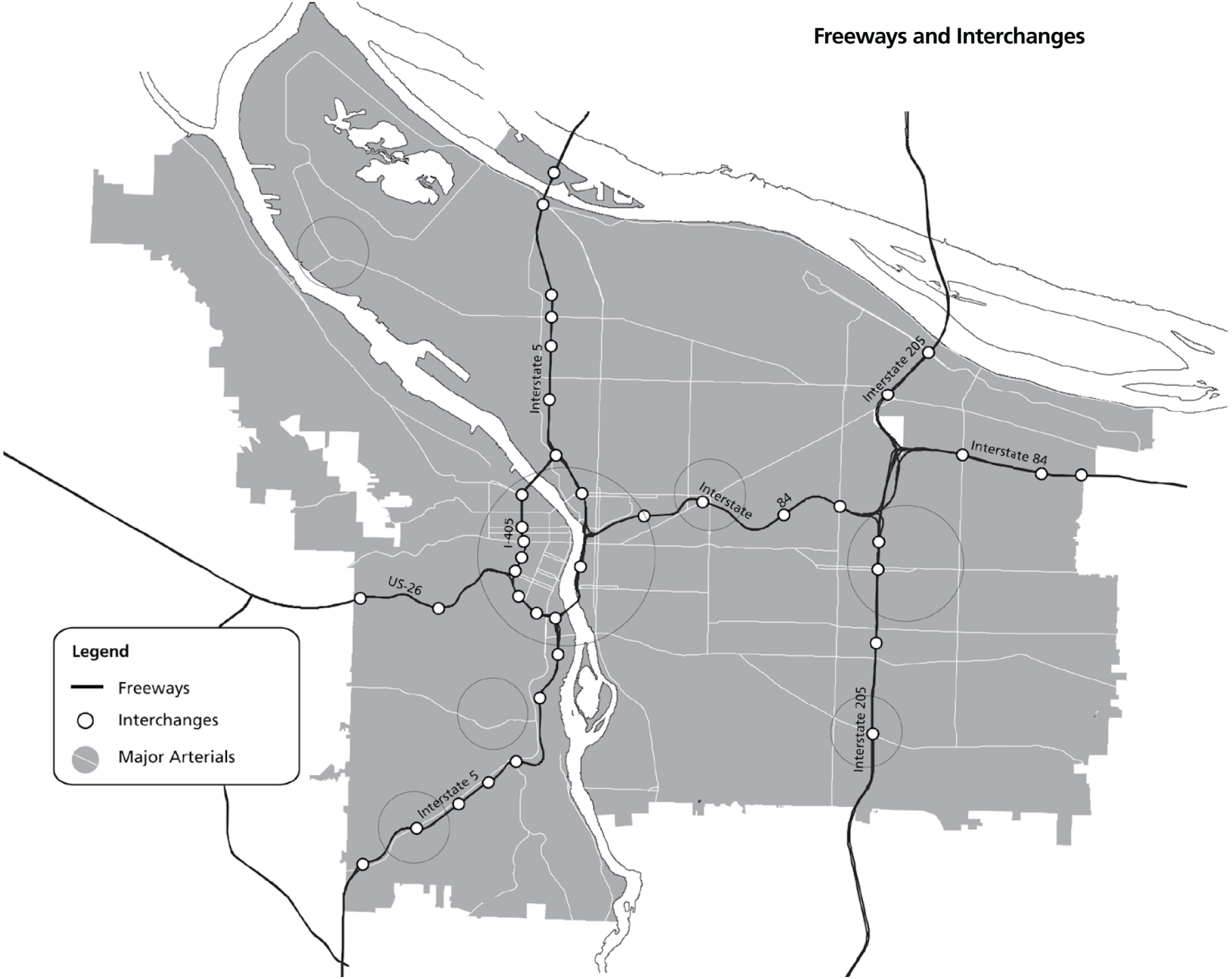
Criteria for Freeways and Interchanges

- **Limited-access freeways**
- **Locations of freeway entrance and exit points**

Freeways and their access points have played major roles in shaping the form and experience of the city. Besides their pivotal transportation roles, they influence the location of commercial development, divide neighborhoods, provide or obstruct views, serve as edges and landmarks and sometimes incorporate trails.

Junction of I-5 and I-84 (upper), over and under I-405 (lower)

Freeways and Interchanges



Challenges and Opportunities

The primary purpose of this chapter has been to identify existing places and landmarks of citywide prominence to support community discussion regarding the city's future urban form. Also intended to support this community discussion, this section identifies some challenges and opportunities related to the Places topic, and raises some preliminary ideas for future approaches to enhancing Portland's key places and their role in the city's urban structure.

1. Lack of a citywide urban design concept or strategy. Portland does not have an overall framework for approaching design in the city and lacks a citywide approach to identifying the city's important places. Instead, Portland has tended to consider and implement design policies and guidelines on a neighborhood- or district-scale. A more intentional, citywide urban design framework could enhance the ability of Portland to prioritize, improve and create places of civic importance. A diagrammatic, citywide urban design concept could clarify and augment Portland's current text-based approach to its citywide urban design policies.

2. Need for better open space connections. Compared to other similarly-sized cities, Portland features numerous parks and a diverse network of open spaces. This open space system includes an extensive scheme of pedestrian and bicycle trails that connect many of the parks and open spaces together, primarily around the periphery of the city. Many of the city's most distinctive parks and open spaces are located on some of the city's most visible topographic landmarks, such as Mt. Tabor, Washington Park in the West Hills or Rocky Butte, to name only a few. While some opportunities exist to emphasize powerful connections between these open space destinations, Downtown and other higher-density areas, few connections have been realized. Also, despite the key roles of Portland's rivers in the city's form and identity, few neighborhoods are oriented on or have strong connections to the rivers.

Creating or strengthening connections between different open space amenities and high density parts of the city (with a recreational or green emphasis, or other enhanced design treatments) achieves multiple objectives. At the citywide scale, developing strong connections along Foster/Powell, for example, between the West Hills/Downtown and Kelley Butte strengthens the importance of the city's natural topography and provides strong anchors at either end of the corridor. At the neighborhood scale, safe and distinctive connections among open spaces that offer different recreational experiences (team sports, natural habitat, children's playground, etc.) make more efficient use of public infrastructure and reduces the need to travel outside of the community to find open space opportunities.

3. Lack of a place-making hierarchy for Portland's major streets or clear guidance for adjacent development. Portland has over 100 miles of major street corridors serving thousands of residents, workers and visitors every day. These are the busiest and most visible vehicular corridors in the city, featuring space for automobiles, trucks, buses, bikes as well as pedestrians. Despite their additional width (the majority of these are at least 80'-wide) and the fact that many have "boulevard" in their name, few have been developed as distinctive, iconic or unique streets that would reflect their significance to the city. Most of these major corridors have not been developed at urban densities that could contribute to their achieving identities as distinctive urban places, besides just functioning as through routes, although they could potentially serve important roles in accommodating growth.

Prominent boulevards with unique streetscapes exist in many other cities. Developing a hierarchy that describes the different roles and intended characteristics of these corridors would help to organize the city as well as prioritize the expenditure of public funds for improvements. A descriptive hierarchy would illustrate special street designs for these streets, potentially strengthening their roles in placemaking and wayfinding, and could prioritize them as places for concentrated development and commerce.

4. More strategic development at activity hubs. Portland has numerous distinctive activity hubs throughout the city. The forms of these hubs vary widely, and they include the Central Portland area, local commercial districts along busy streets and some transit center areas, among others. Some of these are regional attractions, drawing people from all over the region to live, work, shop and gather. Other activity hubs play important roles that are more local in nature, serving as places of focused activity for surrounding neighborhoods.

Over time, and as different neighborhoods have evolved, some activity areas have grown in areas where they were anticipated, others have occurred where they were not intended and some have seen only minimal development. Most notably, development in many of the city's identified "centers" has lagged behind other less-targeted parts of the city. A more strategic approach to the designation and development of activity hubs could better focus density and accompanying activity where it is most appropriate.

A Note on Chapter Structure

This chapter is divided into several sections. The initial pages of this chapter provide background information on:

- Portland's urban form geography of five **primary pattern areas**;
- The **urban form building blocks** used in this report to describe Portland's urban patterns; and
- The **historic urban development eras** that shaped the city's urban form.

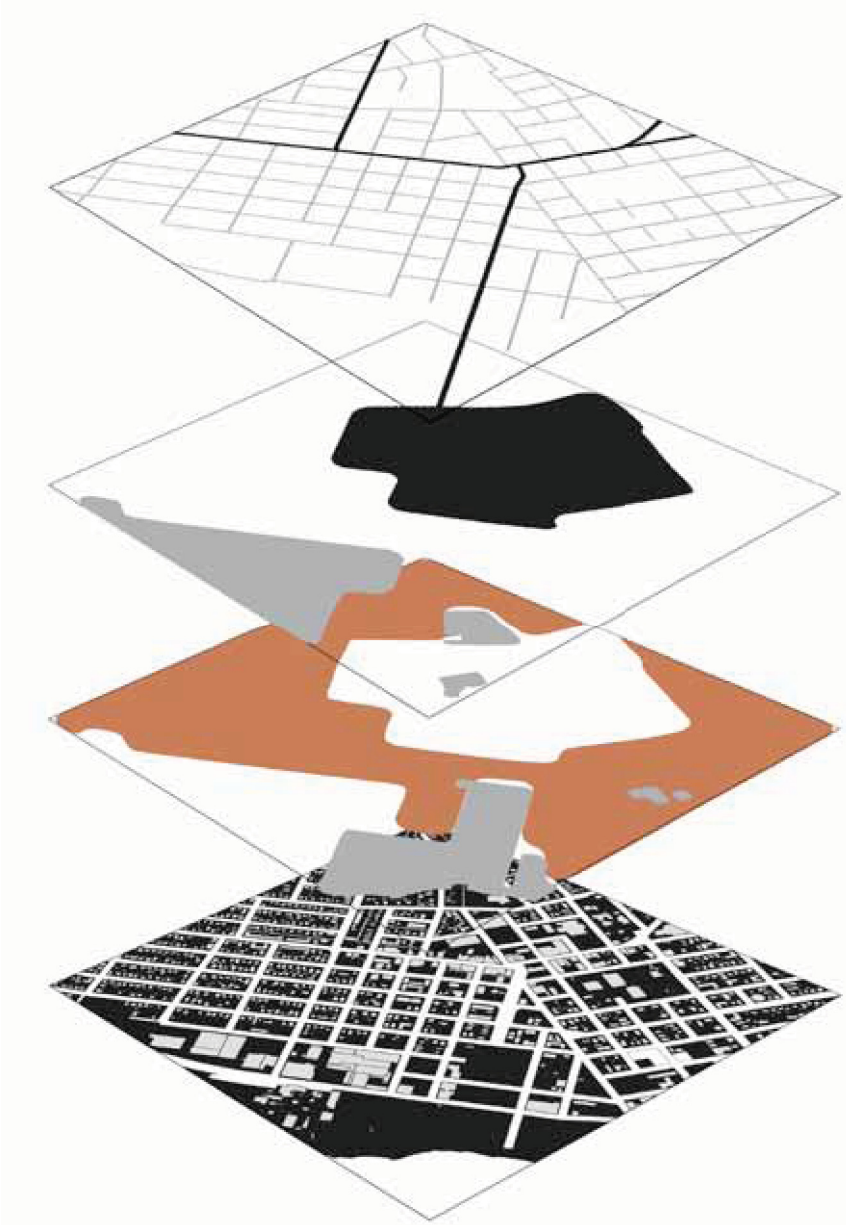
Following the background items, the core of this chapter consists of four distinct sections:

Section 1. **Residential area typologies** describing the urban fabric of neighborhood residential areas;

Section 2. **Mixed-use centers**, including the Central City, the Gateway regional center and Portland's five designated town centers;

Section 3. Industrial districts; and

Section 4. Major streets typologies describing the various kinds of major streets found throughout the city.



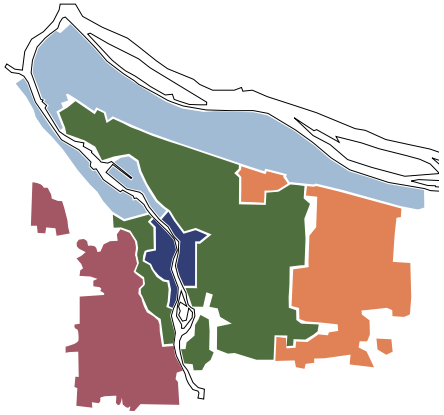
Urban **Patterns** and Neighborhood Typologies

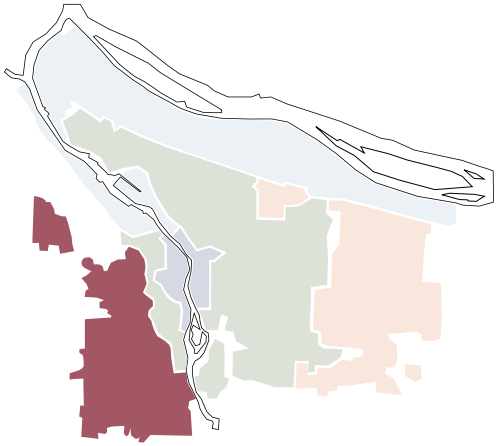
Portlanders value the distinct character of their neighborhoods and districts, but existing plans and policy documents often lack clarity about what contributes to this character and what aspects are especially valued. While most adopted neighborhood plans call for new development in existing residential areas to be "compatible" with existing neighborhood character, most areas are subject to the same zoning code regulations, despite the differing characteristics and aspirations of neighborhoods.

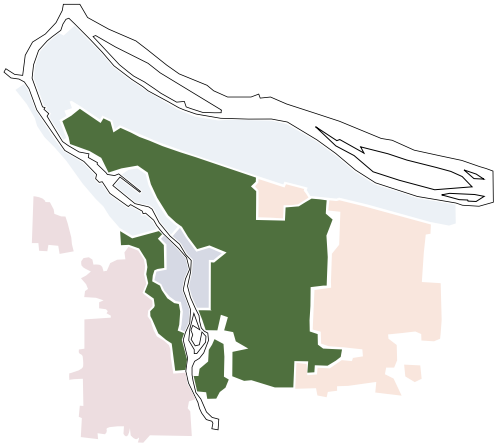
This section focuses on identifying the physical characteristics of Portland's residential areas, mixed-use centers, industrial districts and major streets. This information is intended to be used to support community discussion on what characteristics are valued and should be continued into the future, as well as to help identify what opportunities there might be to manage change in ways that enhance community identity. The descriptions in this chapter also identify urban patterns (such as block and lot structure) that set a framework for the form of future development and briefly describe how this framework has tended to shape new development. While community aspirations for established neighborhood residential areas have often emphasized continuity, aspirations for places that are intended to be a focus of growth and change, such as mixed-use centers, have typically placed a priority on fostering a desired future character.

Ultimately, this chapter is intended to inform the development of policies, investments and regulations responsive to the distinctive characteristics of Portland's neighborhoods, urban centers and districts.

Primary Pattern Areas







Portland can be characterized as having three fundamental neighborhood geographies, or "pattern areas," each with its own distinct patterns and characteristics. The concept of these three neighborhood pattern areas — Inner, Western and Eastern — emerged during community discussions regarding the design of infill development, in relation to the idea that different design approaches were needed to honor and continue the distinct character of different areas of Portland. The physical form of each of these pattern areas is composed of both natural features, such as topography and streams and built elements, such as block patterns and street systems. Some of these natural and built characteristics will continue to shape future development for decades to come, while others have futures that are less certain. Description of these characteristics is intended to help identify issues, constraints and opportunities related to the current and future physical environment of Portland's neighborhood areas.

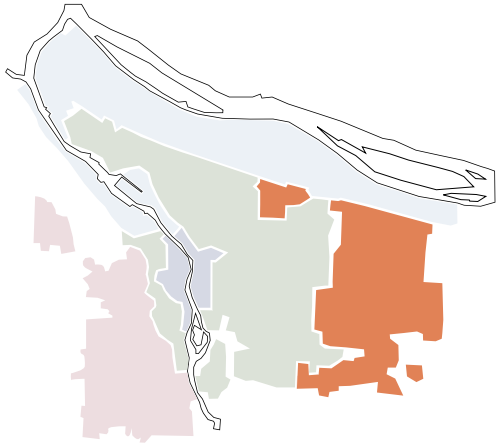
To provide a more complete description of the city, the Central City neighborhoods and Portland's large industrial districts, which have urban patterns distinct from the residential neighborhood areas, are included here as two additional pattern areas. The three neighborhood pattern areas are delineated into six "residential area typologies" that focus specifically on the urban fabric of residential areas (see pages 34–52).

Western Neighborhoods

- Development patterns shaped by the area's hilly terrain and other natural features.
- Small number of major streets or highways, which wind through the area following topography.
- Only a few commercial areas, mostly located on multi-lane highways.
- Residential streets are often curvilinear, following hill contours, with poor connectivity in many areas.
- Most residential streets lack sidewalks, and a relatively large number of streets are not paved.
- Trees and lush vegetation are often more prominent than buildings in residential areas.
- Large amount of natural area park land.
- Parks, streams and preserved natural areas provide a network of green that courses through the pattern area.

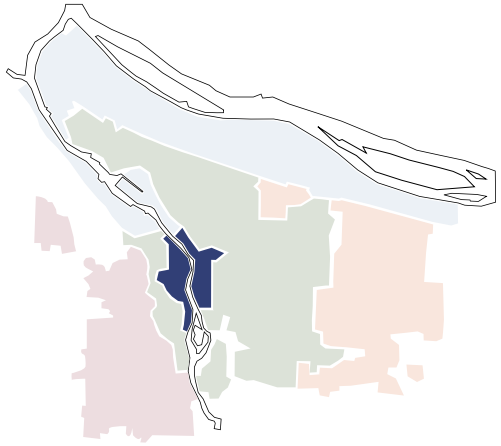
Inner Neighborhoods

- Urban form shaped during the Streetcar Era.
- Consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks.
- Highly interconnected street system with mostly fully-improved streets.
- Extensive system of Streetcar Era main street commercial districts.
- Fine-grain pattern of development on small lots, with buildings oriented to the street.
- Dispersed system of neighborhood parks, typically intensely landscaped, located on major streets and rectilinear in form to fit into the area's urban grid.
- Occasional areas and streets break from the grid pattern, creating distinctive places.



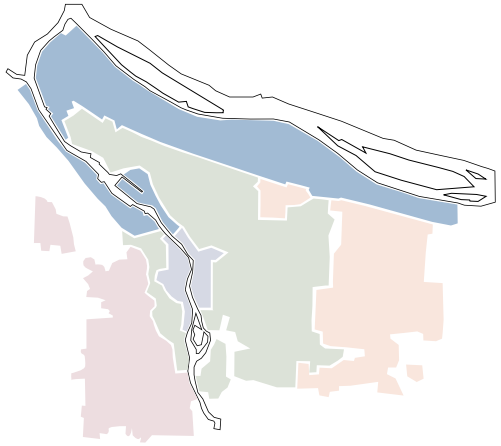
Eastern Neighborhoods

- Diverse range of urban patterns, reflecting incremental development.
- Poor street connectivity in many areas, with vehicles dependent on a small number of major streets for through connections.
- Commercial areas are in the form of automobile-oriented strip commercial areas located on multi-lane streets.
- Most residential streets, and some major streets, lack sidewalks.
- Large, deep lots common in many areas, subject to much recent infill development.
- Trees and other vegetation, rather than consistency in built patterns, serve as character-giving aspects of many residential areas.
- Neighborhood parks are usually located in the middle of superblock areas surrounded by single-family houses.
- Buttes and Douglas Firs a distinctive characteristic of the area's skyline



Central City

- Portland's most intensely urbanized area with its largest concentration of tall buildings and high-density residential development.
- Building types reflect its role as the region's center for finance, commerce, government and culture.
- 200' by 200' block structure and highly-interconnected street system.
- Predominance of full-block building coverage contrasts with the fine-grain pattern of detached structures in surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Extensive system of urban parks.
- Downtown's location between the Willamette River and West Hills provides a strong sense of orientation, boundaries and transition.



Industrial Districts

- Concentrated in low-lying riverfront areas.
- Variety of industrial districts with distinct urban forms.
- Inner areas share Central City's pattern of small blocks.
- Large-block industrial districts shaped by industrial needs and functions.
- Block structure and building forms in some areas shaped by railroads, rail spurs and harbor facilities.
- Columbia Slough, levee and greenery course through the Columbia Corridor districts.

Note: *The descriptions and boundaries of the pattern areas and the subsequent residential area typologies should be considered to be generalizations. These descriptions are of common characteristics within the pattern areas, and are not intended to capture all the variations and exceptions that exist. The pattern areas as shown on these diagrams are not intended to represent strict boundaries, as in reality there is often a gradual transition in prevalent characteristics.*

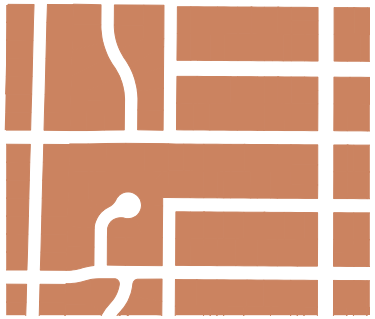
Urban Form Building Blocks

The urban environment is composed of several "building blocks" that together give the city's districts and neighborhoods their shape and built character. These include: block structure and street patterns, street design, lot patterns and building placement, building forms and landscaping, vegetation and natural features. Each of these building blocks contributes to shaping the urban environment that is experienced by people on a daily basis.

- **Block structure and street patterns** provide the urban framework, or "bones," of the city.
- **Street design,** the configuration of elements within the street right of way, such as roadway, sidewalks, street trees and landscaping, plays a key role in how places are seen and experienced.
- **Lot patterns and building placement** play a significant role in defining the physical character of a place, whether it is a main street lined by continuous rows of buildings located next to the sidewalk, or a street lined by houses and a green edge of front gardens.
- **Building forms and types,** including the scale of buildings and architectural characteristics, can provide places with distinct identities.
- **Vegetation, landscaping and natural features,** whether they include front gardens, rolling hills, stream corridors or skylines defined by towering Douglas Firs, greatly influence the feel and character of neighborhoods.

These urban environment building blocks provide both a simple way to describe and understand the physical city and they comprise the set of analytical lenses used to develop the neighborhood pattern areas and typologies in this report. For the residential area typologies, staff used two additional categories to provide additional layers of information:

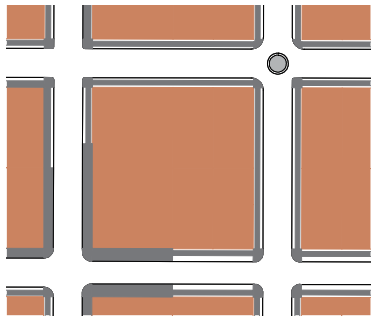
- **Distinctive place elements,** such as public stairways in the West Hills and curbside horse rings in inner neighborhoods; and
- **Intensification,** which summarizes how existing patterns have shaped new development, highlighting how community patterns and characteristics are not only about what exists now, but about how they shape the future.



Block Structure and Street Patterns

Block structure, sometimes called the DNA of a city, is the fundamental framework for the form of the city and the initial lens in which to examine urban patterns. Street pattern and block structure are heavily interrelated (in fact inseparable), as one dictates the configuration of the other.

Block structures may be defined by a tight grid of rectilinear streets, by a loose network of curvilinear streets, by large superblocks with fewer streets, or may dissolve into a more rural pattern of winding rural roads. Block and street systems may also include alleys, pedestrian pathways, stairways and other secondary circulation networks. An area's block structure and street patterns influence the shape and location of development, define how people move about and influence which travel modes are most effective in a given place. For example, in an area with small blocks and many intersecting streets, walking may be an efficient and enjoyable travel mode, but in an area with large blocks and few pedestrian connections, traveling by car may be most practical. The block and street structure also influences how places are experienced. Rectilinear blocks and streets can provide a sense of urban order and consistency, while winding curvilinear streets can contribute to a more picturesque or naturalistic sense of place.



Street Characteristics

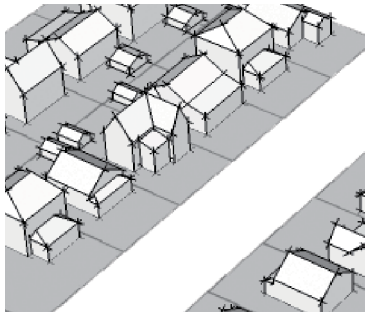
Sidewalks and curbs, roadway width, pavement and surface materials, street trees, landscaping and medians are among the many physical elements that may contribute to a street's physical environment. While these street elements provide essential transportation system functions and influence how the street space is used, they can also contribute to the character and sense of place of the broader neighborhood or district. The presence of sidewalks and street trees can be a significant part of the character of more urban neighborhoods, where in some areas street trees are a major component of the urban forest. In other areas, the lack of sidewalks can impart a more rural sense of place. Street characteristics are also sometimes a reflection of other characteristics of a place, such as hillside streets that are narrow to fit into the constraints of steep topography.

This report uses street characteristics as one way of describing and classifying Portland's neighborhoods. The descriptions of street characteristics are not intended to indicate whether or not these street characteristics are desirable or to suggest that their role in shaping community character should override transportation considerations or the needs of pedestrians.

Lot Patterns and Building Placement

Lot configurations vary widely across the city and are largely determined by the block structure in which they are contained. Compact, rectilinear blocks often have regular patterns of small lots with closely-set structures arrayed along the street frontages. Areas with large blocks may have correspondingly larger lots on which unbuilt and often vegetated space predominates, or which have provided opportunities for new development. The size and shape of lots and building placement patterns establish the "grain" of the urban fabric and the "rhythm" of development along the street.

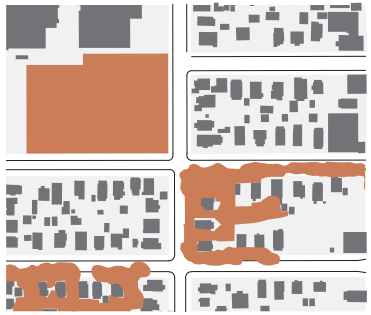
How buildings relate to the street can be a key aspect of the physical environment of streets and how it is experienced by people. Considerations used in this analysis include building setback patterns along the street and the orientation of structures on their lots. Differences in lot patterns and building placement manifest themselves in the contrasts between the built environments of main streets characterized by a "hard edge" of a continuous wall of buildings located close to the street, which contrasts with nearby residential streets lined by a green edge of landscaped front setbacks and by street-oriented houses and their front porches. This in turn contrasts with other areas where street frontages are lined by trees and vegetation, with houses set far back. This analysis also considers the setbacks between buildings and patterns of backyard, mid-block open spaces.



Building Forms and Types

In addition to how structures are placed on their lots, the scale and architectural characteristics of buildings contribute to the physical environment of neighborhoods and districts. An example of the relationship of building scale and form to neighborhood character is the contrast between areas in which closely set, vertically-oriented Victorian buildings emphasize architecture as a defining element of the street environment, in comparison to other areas where low-lying houses with deep front setbacks emphasize landscaping and trees as the visually dominant elements. Differing characteristics such as these can apply even in areas with similar development densities.

In any given area, architectural styles are often more variable than building forms and types. Some areas, however, are characterized by predominant architectural styles and building forms, reflective of the building practices and architectural trends of the historical periods when they were originally developed. This analysis notes some architectural styles that are especially common in certain geographies, but is not intended to serve as a comprehensive assessment. Note that building forms, scale and architectural characteristics tend to be subject to more frequent change and evolution than the other urban form building blocks.



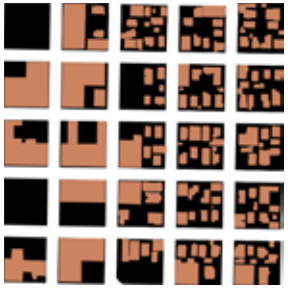
Vegetation, Landscaping, Natural Features and Open Spaces

Landscape characteristics can also be a distinguishing factor for discerning neighborhood patterns and characteristics. This analysis considers, at a very basic level, a variety of cultivated landscape and natural features in its identification of area characteristics. These include front setback landscaping patterns and street trees, and the forested hillsides, stream corridors, ravines and treed skylines that are prominent elements in some areas. Although broad areas of the city can be described according to the prominence or recurrence of these characteristics, the specifics of vegetation, landscaping and natural features vary widely, often block-by-block.

The pattern area and typology descriptions also briefly note park and open space characteristics. These range from extensive natural parks to small neighborhood parks, and are influenced by topography and block structure. Open spaces can be contained by the rectangular grid or course through a network of streams and hillsides. Note that the physical form of natural features, such as stream corridors, riverfronts and hillsides, reflects the development practices of the historic periods during which urbanization occurred. Corresponding to changes in development practices, some urban development patterns ignore topographical constraints or streams, while others are shaped by them. This highlights the interplay between the various urban form building blocks.

Beyond the 200 x 200: Portland's Various Block Structures

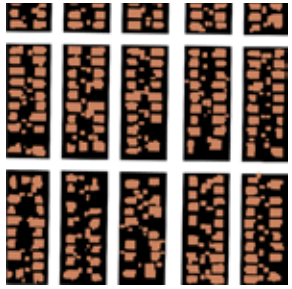
A city's structure of streets and blocks serves as its urban DNA, shaping its development long into the future. While Downtown Portland's system of compact 200' by 200' blocks is sometimes seen as Portland's fundamental pattern, Portland includes a diverse and varied range of urban patterns. These examples highlight the wide range of block structures found in Portland (they are not intended to represent what is typical or most common).



Original Square

Average Size:
200' x 200'

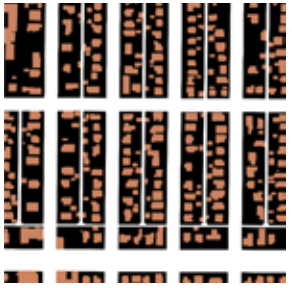
Dominant Location:
City Center, Central Eastside



Rectangular

Average Size:
200' x 350'–600'

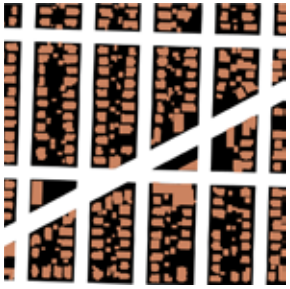
Dominant Location:
Streetcar Era Neighborhoods



Rectangular with Alleys

Average Size:
210'– 220' x 350'–600'

Dominant Location:
North, Northeast



Rectangular with Simple Diagonal

Average Size:
200' x 350'–600',
Symmetrical Triangles

Dominant Location:
Streetcar Era Neighborhoods

Large Rectangular with Simple Diagonal

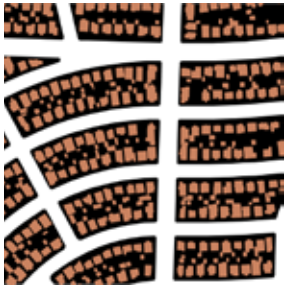
Average Size: Various,
270'–350' x 300'–800'

Dominant Location:
Cully, East Portland

Right Triangular, 45 Degree Tilt

Average Size:
200'–400' x
Various x Various

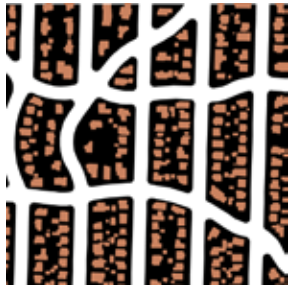
Dominant Location:
Woodlawn, Random Areas



Uniform Curvilinear Modified Rectangular

Average Size:
200' x 400'–700'

Dominant Location:
Laurelhurst



Organic-like Modified Rectangular

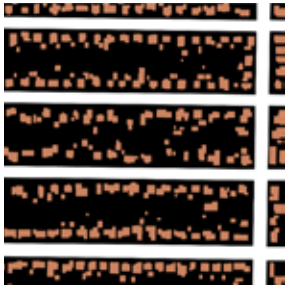
Average Size:
200'–300' x 400'–500'

Dominant Location:
Eastmoreland

Curve Modified Large Rectangular

Average Size:
270'–350' x 600'–800'+

Dominant Location:
Mixed Era, Outer East



Large Rectangular

Average Size:
270'–350' x 300'–600'
(up to 1,200')

Dominant Location:
Streetcar Era
Neighborhoods

Mega-Blocks with Developed Perimeter

Average Size:
Various, 600'–700' x
1,000'–1,200'

Dominant Location:
Mixed Era and Outer East

Mega-Blocks with Frequent Development Intrusions

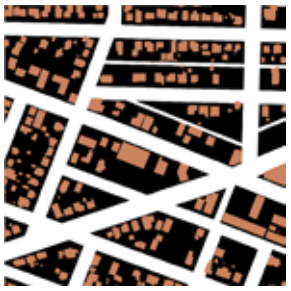
Average Size:
Various, 600'–700' x
1,000'–1,200'

Dominant Location:
Outer East Portland

Symmetrical Diagonals with Alleys, Ornamental

Average Size:
210' x 115'–820' x
Various

Dominant Location:
Ladd's Addition



Sharp Triangular, Multiple Grid Orientations

Average Size:
Extremely Various

Dominant Location:
St. Johns Area

Topographically Influenced Curvilinear Diagonals

Average Size:
250'–300' x Various

Dominant Location:
Southwest
Neighborhoods

Disconnected Suburban Curvilinear

Average Size: Various

Dominant Location:
Southwest, Outer East,
Edges

Curvilinear Modified Rectangular with Cul-de-sacs

Average Size:
200'–300' x Various

Dominant Location:
Southwest, Outer East

Topographically Defined Curvilinear

Average Size:
Extremely Various

Dominant Location:
Western Hill
Neighborhoods

Historic Urban Development Eras

Portland's built form, including the location of its major roads, commercial and industrial districts and the varying characteristics of its neighborhoods, is the result of development that occurred over a range of eras. Each era has left its own distinct mark on the city, introducing change that, in combination, makes Portland what it is today.

The fundamental forces that shaped Portland's urban form involved the evolution of transportation technology. In turn, river transportation, trails, railroads, streetcars, the automobile and light rail have all played key roles in shaping Portland. The way people travel determines where they can live and work.

Across the urban fabric of the city, different development eras produced differing block and street arrangements, usually in response to transportation technologies or topography, but also sometimes due to changing ideas about the design of communities. The locations of major streets also often follow original pioneer farm property survey boundaries. Related as they are to street, block and lot patterns, the property ownership system and land divisions establish urban patterns that are not easily undone. Each era of development also saw changes in building types and left Portland with a legacy of a diverse range of architectural styles reflective of their development periods.

From Trails to Early Streetcars

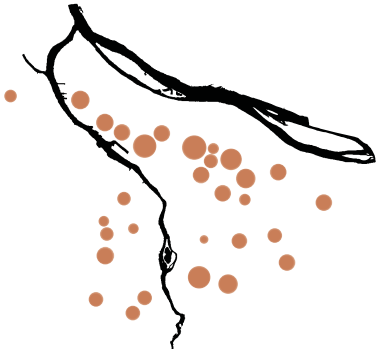
1846–1904/1905–1914
Population in 1900: 90,426

Early European American settlers come to Portland by water and establish settlements along the Willamette River. Thomas Brown plats the first town site in 1845 in what is now Downtown Portland using a grid of 200-foot square blocks that establish Portland's urban development pattern for the next 150 years. Commerce and industry is concentrated along the Willamette riverfront. Trails used by native peoples and later as farm-to-market routes by early settlers develop into major roads (including Foster, Sandy, West Burnside and Canyon Road). Bridges cross the Willamette River (first the Morrison in 1887) and open Portland's eastside to development, which follows an expanding streetcar system that reaches its peak in 1912. The building boom from 1905–1913 coincides with the popularity of bungalows and foursquare or "Old Portland" style houses. Small-scale builders construct houses a few lots at a time, so that streets feature a variety of houses. Once independent towns (including Albina, East Portland, Sellwood, St. Johns, Lents and Montavilla) are absorbed into Portland as it expands in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, leaving their mark in the form of neighborhoods and commercial districts that continue to the present day.

Streetcar Suburbs

1915–1928
Population in 1920: 258,228

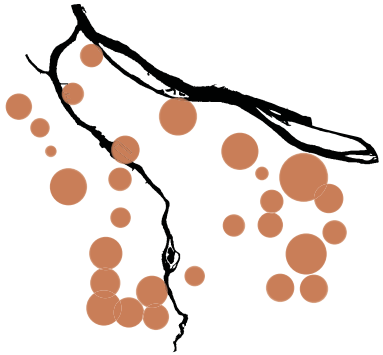
Eastside neighborhoods fill in with new housing on the grid of blocks near streetcar lines, along which develop main streets lined by small storefronts. Streetcar lines make the eastside accessible to downtown workers, and thousands of houses are built on the eastside's rectilinear blocks within 3–6 miles of Downtown. Most people walk to reach their destinations or catch the streetcar. The West Hills initially limit expansion westward, but interurban rail lines reaching east and west create pockets of development further out. After World War I, automobile ownership proliferates, providing access to formerly remote areas during a building boom that lasts from 1922–1928. Beginning in 1926, major streets such as Sandy Boulevard are improved to accommodate cars. Portland's first zoning ordinance is adopted in 1924 (dividing the city into four zones: single family, single and multifamily, business and manufacturing and unrestricted), which is followed by expansion of apartment, commercial and industrial development. Houses increasingly include detached garages for cars. Popular residential architectural styles include Craftsman, Colonial and Period Revival styles such as Tudor, English Cottage and Mediterranean.



Great Depression/ Early Automobile Suburbs

1929–1945
Population in 1940: 305,394

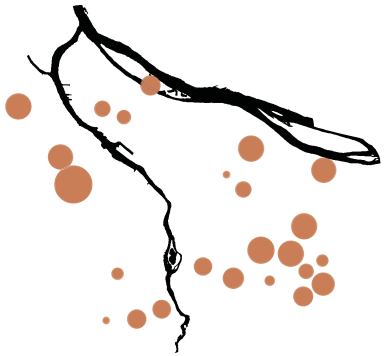
By the end of the 1930s, private automobiles eclipse the streetcar as the dominant form of transportation. Burnside is widened in 1931. Barbur Boulevard opens as a motorway in 1933 and once rural roads, such as 82nd Avenue, become paved highways. Blocks near streetcar lines continue to fill with new houses, but the popularity of the car encourages development at the city's fringes. Forest Park is established, neighborhood parks are developed and a series of picturesque boulevards are created. Housing construction stagnates during the Great Depression. World War II brings 54,000 people to Portland, providing labor for the war effort. To meet demand for housing, apartments are built near industrial areas, large houses are converted to multi-tenant housing and simple one-story houses are built on empty lots. Historic Period Revival architectural styles, such as Tudor and English Cottage, continue to be popular during the 1930s, but by the 1940s Colonial styles predominate. Portland architects introduce the Northwest Regional variant of Modernist architecture to the West Hills. Increasingly, buildings cater to the automobile: houses typically include attached garages and commercial buildings now often include parking lots.



Postwar Suburbanization

1946–1965
Population in 1960: 372,676

After World War II, veterans and Federal Housing Administration (FHA) programs fuel a single-family housing construction boom at and beyond the edges of the city, turning farmland into subdivisions. FHA guidelines promote housing construction standardization and economies of scale. Guidelines promote picturesque community design, emphasize open space, deep front yards and curvilinear streets. The automobile is pivotal in shaping urban expansion: the Sunset Highway is completed in 1949, the last streetcar stops service in 1950; and the Banfield Expressway, Oregon's first freeway, opens in 1955. Housing development takes off in Southwest Portland, much of which Portland annexes between the 1940s and 1970s. Large multi-block subdivisions become common in areas beyond the Streetcar Era grid. Car access allows larger lots and streets without sidewalks. New subdivisions are self-contained and include cul-de-sacs to provide quiet environments free of cut-through traffic. Shopping centers with large parking lots become the predominant commercial development type. New parks and elementary schools are located at the center of neighborhood residential areas. In the Postwar period, small, one-story houses, often in the Cape Cod style predominate. Ranch-style houses become more popular in the 1950s, followed by larger split-level houses.



Modern Suburbs and Contemporary Infill

1966–1985/1986–present
Population in 2000: 529,121

The car continues to shape urban form: the I-5 freeway is completed in 1966, facilitating development far from central Portland, and I-205 is completed in 1982. However, Portlanders reject the Mt. Hood freeway through Southeast Portland in favor of the Eastside light rail line, which opens in 1986. In the 1980s and 1990s, annexations expand Portland's boundaries to include much of East Portland, where the Mid-County Sewer Project extends sewer service and facilitates increased urbanization. In the early 1990s, renewed interest in urban living and community planning efforts spur residential infill development in close-in neighborhoods. House lots are smaller than in the Postwar period and houses are often two-stories in height. Rowhouses and "skinny houses" become common housing types. The Metro 2040 Growth Concept Plan (1995) calls for concentrating growth Downtown, in mixed-use centers and along main streets and transit corridors. In the late 1990s, the Pearl District emerges as a new downtown neighborhood on former railyards. In the 2000s, renewed construction of mixed-use buildings takes place along the old main streets and the high-rise South Waterfront neighborhood begins to take shape. Increased awareness of nature's important role elevates the prominence of the rivers and streams as key elements in the city's form.

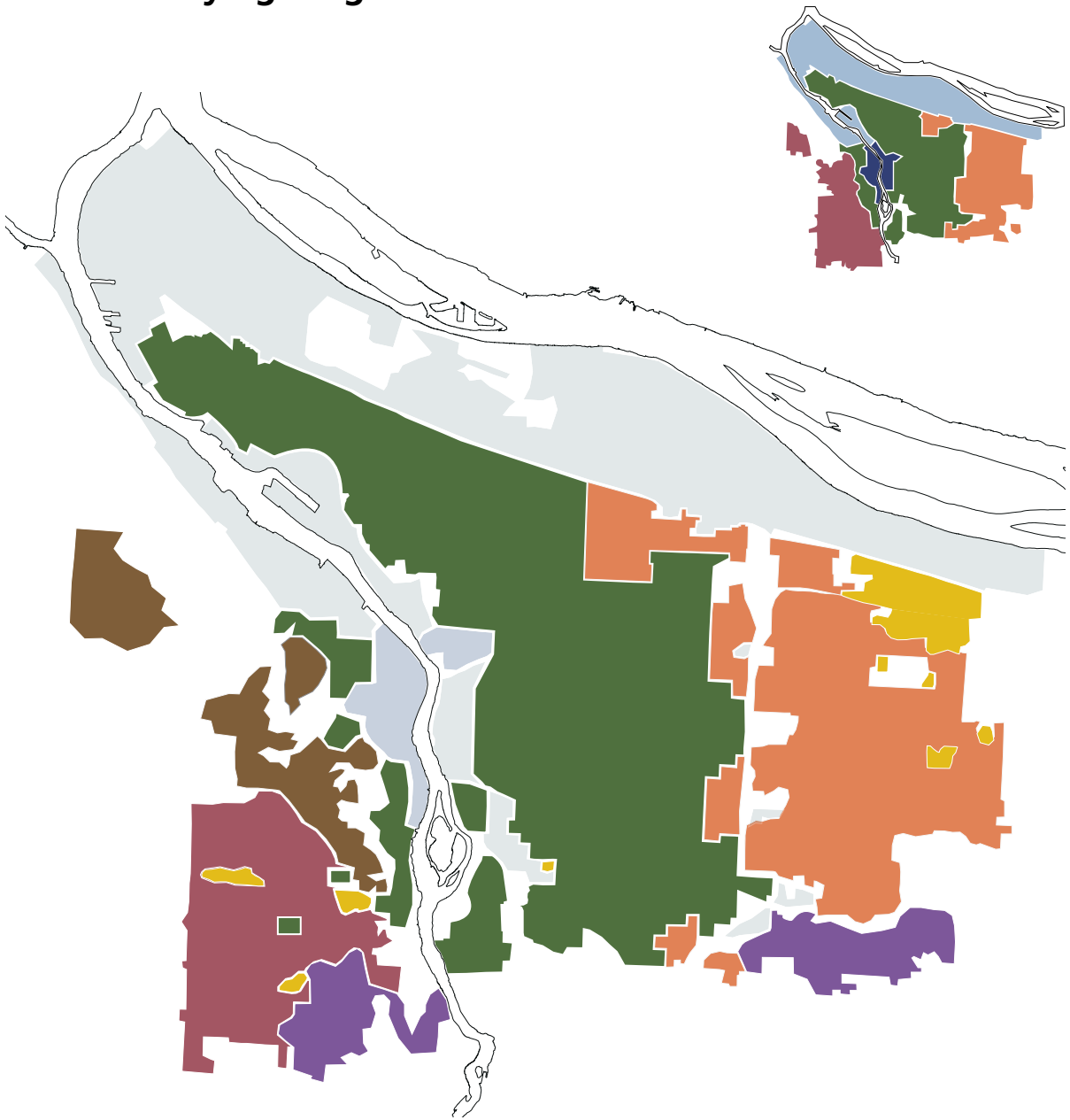
1. Residential Area Typologies

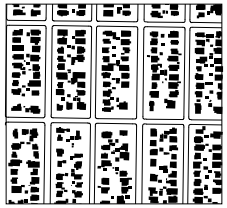
A Systematic Grouping of Portland's Underlying Neighborhood Fabric

The residential area typologies described in the following pages focus on the urban patterns and characteristics of neighborhood residential areas. Analysis of Portland's residential areas, based on the characteristics of the urban form elements shown on pages 28 to 29, yielded identification of six distinct neighborhood types. While generally falling within the parameters of the three general neighborhood pattern areas described previously, the more focused residential area typologies analysis resulted in division of the broad geographies into a greater number of residential area types, some of which occur across more than one of the broader geographies.

A great amount of attention was paid to the residential areas in acknowledgement of the consistent emphasis of most neighborhood plans on the desirability of continuing neighborhood character, especially in established residential areas; and to explore the possibility of providing clarity in the citywide Comprehensive Plan as to what neighborhood characteristics are especially important to continue or enhance into the future, in the midst of ongoing change.

The range of characteristics identified in the typology descriptions is not intended to indicate that they are all valued and should be continued. Rather, their inclusion is intended to aid community discussion in identifying which of these characteristics are especially valued; and to encourage community members to consider if there might be other valued characteristics that might not have been identified, but should be.



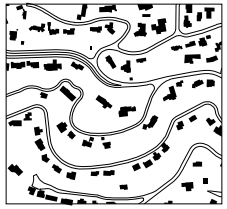

Inner-Ring Streetcar Era

- Consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks, (typically 200'-deep)
- Streets with sidewalks, planting strips, street trees
- Fine-grain pattern of development, based on lots commonly 50' x 100'
- Street-oriented buildings
- Green-edge of front setbacks



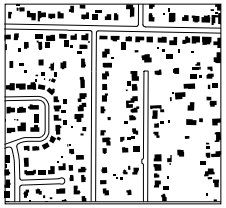
Mixed-Form Hillside

- Gently rolling hills and occasional stream corridors
- Mix of rectilinear and curvilinear block types
- Block and street structure often defies topography
- Unimproved street segments sometimes include trail connections
- Abundant trees and vegetation


Mountainside

- Dramatic topography and views
- Curvilinear streets follow hill contours
- Trails and stairways cut through blocks
- Narrow streets, moderate connectivity
- Building orientation and forms vary with terrain

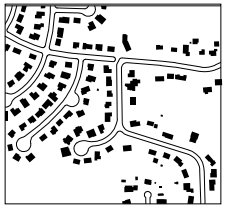

Mixed Era "Mosaic"

- Highly variable urban patterns reflective of a range of development eras
- Residential streets typically lack sidewalks
- Poor street connectivity in many areas
- Low-lying houses predominate
- Douglas firs a unifying aspect of the skyline



Postwar Uniform Suburban

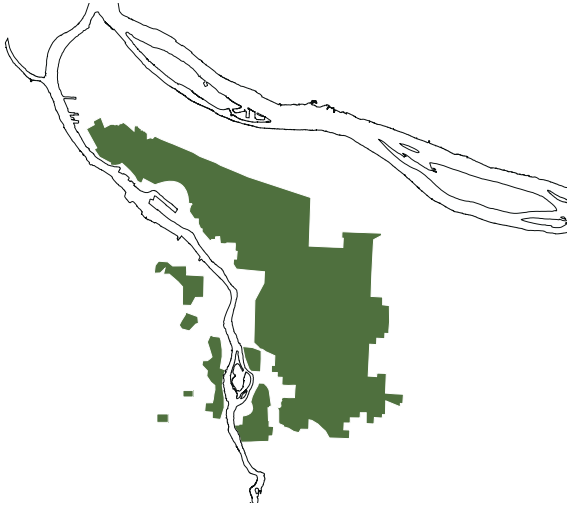
- Consistent pattern of curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs
- Regular pattern of wide lots
- Uniform, deep front setbacks and generous side yards
- Low-lying houses: 1-story ranches, split levels
- Lawns, ornamental landscaping, occasional Douglas Firs


Clustered Topographical

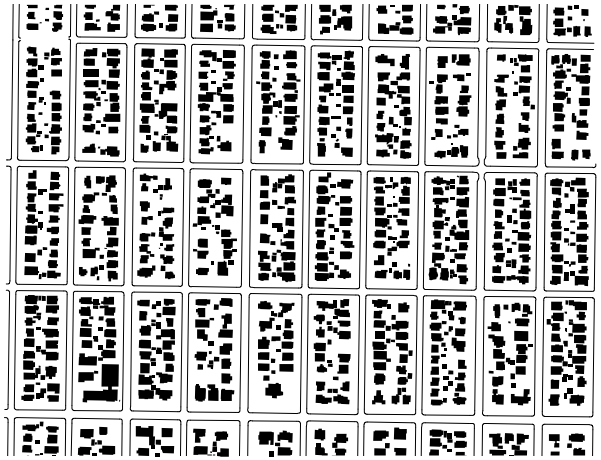
- Curvilinear "rural" roads follow topography
- Streams, forested slopes, natural areas course through the area
- Lacks an urban block structure
- Houses set apart on large lots or clustered in cul-de-sacs
- Topography, trees and vegetation dominate, rather than buildings

1a. Inner-Ring Streetcar Era



- **Consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks, typically 200'-deep**
- **Streets with sidewalks, planting strips, street trees**
- **Fine-grain pattern of development, based on lots commonly 50' x 100'**
- **Street-oriented buildings**
- **Green-edge of front setbacks**

The urban form of Portland's inner residential neighborhoods reflect their Streetcar Era origins. Portland's most geographically extensive neighborhood typology, these areas were originally platted in conjunction with the late 19th- and early 20th Century expansion of the streetcar system. Streets where streetcar lines were located sometimes include "main street" business districts, where streets are lined by clusters of storefront buildings directly abutting the sidewalks, in contrast to the landscaped building setbacks typical of surrounding residential areas. Most of the urban fabric of the inner neighborhoods is characterized by a consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks, with residential lots approximately 50'-wide by 100'-deep (blocks with narrower lots and closely-set houses are common in the innermost neighborhoods that originally developed during the Victorian era). This original platting provides a fine-grain pattern of relatively small-scale buildings, the majority of which are detached houses. Multifamily structures are most frequently found along or near the former streetcar lines or in neighborhoods close to Downtown, and were often built on individual residential lots, continuing the established development pattern.



Block Structure and Street Patterns

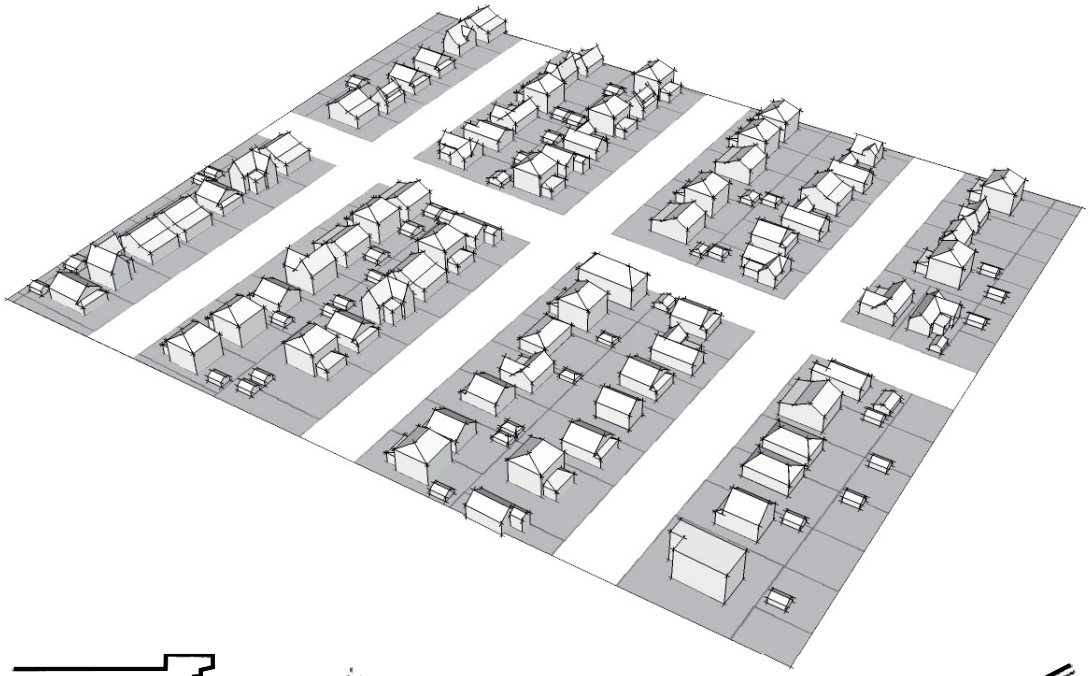
The street system is typically rectilinear, with blocks predominantly around 200'-deep. The oldest, closest-in neighborhoods feature a continuation of Downtown Portland's 200' by 200' block system. The majority of the Inner Neighborhoods, however, are characterized by elongated blocks that continue the 200'-width in only one dimension, with the longer dimension of variable length, most frequently between 400' and 600'. This fine-grain pattern of blocks provides a highly interconnected street system with frequent intersections. The inner neighborhoods are the only typology area in Portland that includes mid-block alleys, although they appear in only a minority of the area's neighborhoods (there are notable concentrations of blocks with alleys in North Portland, Concordia, Ladd's Addition, Montavilla and in the Foster-Powell and Mt. Scott-Arleta neighborhoods). Where alleys exist, they are typically narrow (from 11'- to 16'-wide) and in varying levels of improvement (some are unimproved and do not provide vehicle access).

Street Characteristics

Residential street right-of-way is usually 50'- or 60'-wide, with paved roadway flanked on both sides with concrete curbs, planting strips with street trees and sidewalks. While a high degree of consistency in paved streets with sidewalks is characteristic of this typology, some areas toward the edges of the typology area (particularly toward the south and north) include street segments that are not fully improved.

Lot Patterns and Building Placement

Houses and other residential structures are most commonly located on lots approximately 50'-wide by 100'-deep, providing a consistent rhythm of development along most street frontages. Houses are typically detached and located toward the front of their lots, providing for modest backyards. Small accessory structures, most commonly detached garages, are often located in this backyard area. Houses on lots narrower than 50' are common in close-in neighborhoods originally developed during the Victorian Era (such as the Northwest District, Lair Hill, Buckman and Eliot), where houses on lots as narrow as 25' are often closely set with minimal side setbacks. Side setbacks are more generous in most other areas (around 5' from side property lines, and wider where driveways are located to provide access to rear garages). Other building setbacks also vary according to location and development era. Front setbacks are shallow (approximately 5'-deep) in the close-in Victorian neighborhoods. In neighborhoods developed in the early 20th Century, front setbacks are more typically around 10'. Deeper front setbacks (around 25'-deep) are typical in areas originally developed as affluent neighborhoods (Irvington, Alameda, Laurelhurst, Eastmoreland, etc.) and in outer portions of this typology area (developed in the 1930s onward).



Variation in setback patterns and architecture: from closely-set Victorians in the inner-most neighborhoods to successively deeper setbacks along streets developed in the 1910s, then 1920s and finally low-lying 1940s houses in outlying areas with generous front yards

Building Forms and Types

Detached houses predominate in most residential areas. Buildings are typically oriented toward the street, with prominent entry elements such as porches or stoops, common in most areas. Building scale varies from one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half stories in close areas, to lower-scale houses of one to one-and-a-half stories in outer areas. Common architectural styles and forms include various Victorian styles, Craftsman, Colonial and English and other 1920s eclectic styles in close-in areas, with bungalow and foursquare forms (often termed "Old Portland" style) especially common in many neighborhoods. Cape Cods and Ranch houses are more common in outer areas.

Vegetation, Landscaping, and Natural Features

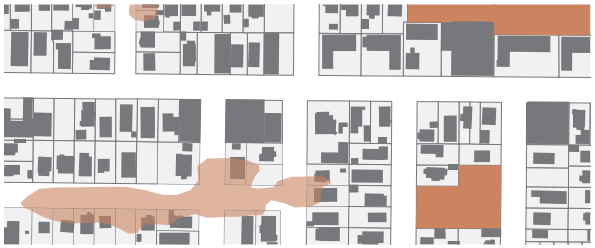
Residential streets are typically characterized by a "green edge" of landscaped front setbacks, which — in combination with planting strips and street trees — clearly differentiate residential streets from the hardscape of the typology area's commercial main streets. Raised lots are common in many areas. Abundant neighborhood parks, typically planted with trees and other vegetation, reinforce the green character of neighborhood residential areas.

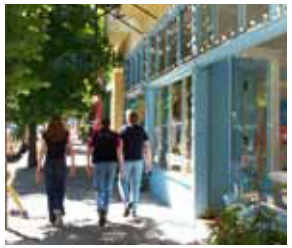
Other Distinctive Place Elements

Inner areas, developed during the early 20th Century, feature horse rings imbedded in street curbs. Inner residential areas also sometimes feature occasional "corner store" type structures, located up against sidewalks at corner locations (only a minority of which still function as commercial uses).

Intensification

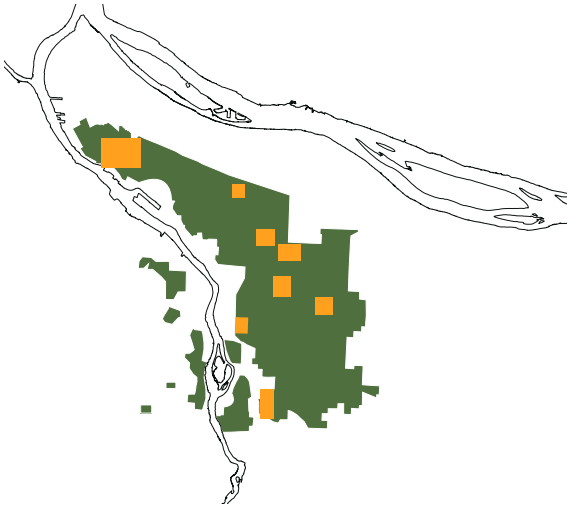
Development intensification in this typology area has typically occurred on blocks originally platted for detached houses. Up through the middle of the 20th Century, the fine-grain pattern of development established by this platting was typically continued in the massing of multifamily structures, which were often built individually on standard lots. Larger structures, often built on double lots that had been occupied by large houses, also typically continued street frontage patterns by being divided into building wings separated by courtyards. Apartment development from the 1960s–1970s was characterized by greater discontinuity from existing patterns, often occupying larger sites and featuring front surface parking areas. The largest concentrations of multifamily structures are located in neighborhoods close to Downtown (such as the Northwest District) and along and near major streets that originally served as streetcar lines. More recent infill development has included rowhouses as well as detached houses on 25'-wide lots (the latter often built in areas originally platted in increments of 25'-wide lots, but which had originally been developed with houses on combined lots).





Streetcar Era characteristics and details. From left: graphic shows common pattern of canopy created by street trees spanning the street space and parks located within the block structure, street trees in Northeast Portland, former corner store (now housing), horse ring and main street storefronts in Northwest.

Notable Pattern Variations of the Streetcar Era Typology



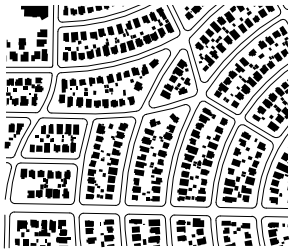
The following are examples of variations from the usual block structure of the Streetcar Era typology. Despite their differences, they generally continue the typology's characteristic right-of-way elements, building types and its 200'-deep blocks lined by 50'-wide lots.

Ladd's Addition

Ladd's Addition was platted in the late 19th Century in a distinctive geometric pattern that is unique in Portland. With a formal symmetry echoing Renaissance cites and gardens, it is organized into a series of diagonal and right-angled streets that radiate out from a circular central park, with four secondary diamond-shaped parks planted with roses. Blocks are wider (ranging from 250' to 270') than is typical in the inner neighborhoods, and include narrow mid-block alleys that are 14'-wide and paved in concrete.

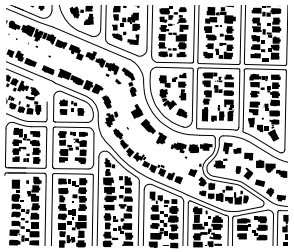
St. John's and Woodlawn

The street grids of the St. Johns and Woodlawn areas stand out in contrast to the usual north–south compass orientation of the inner neighborhoods block structure. Woodlawn's grid is canted at a 45 degree angle from the surrounding grid, reflecting its original orientation to the railway around which it was laid out. The St. Johns area has no less than five different street grid orientations, four of which reflect early land claims that were oriented to different segments of the Willamette River. Junctions between these different grids create irregularly-shaped blocks, wedge-shaped lots and buildings and bends in the street system that provide unusually varied streetscapes.



Laurelhurst and Eastmoreland

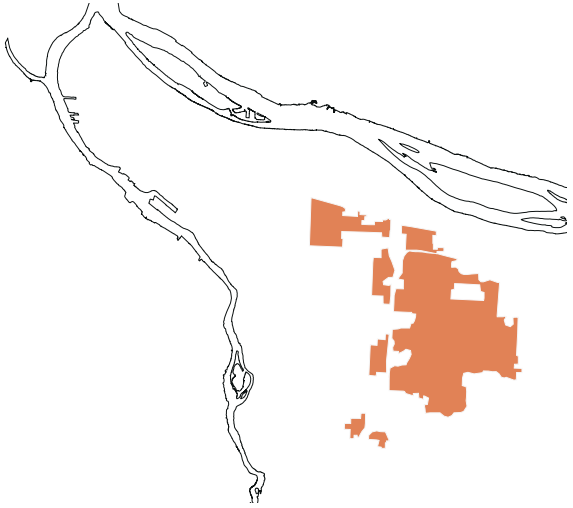
Blocks in the Laurelhurst and Eastmoreland neighborhoods generally have the 200' width typical in the inner neighborhoods, but depart from the strict rectilinear grid that predominates elsewhere. Instead, streets are curvilinear, following Olmstedian principles calling for winding streets with sweeping curves that provide a picturesque streetscape. These areas's deep front yards (typically at least 20'-deep) and broad planting strips with large street trees, contribute to a park-like environment.



Alameda Ridge and Mt. Tabor

Areas along the Alameda Ridge and near Mt. Tabor include streets that depart from the Inner Neighborhood grid in response to topography. Appearing from the air as wrinkles in the urban fabric, some of these streets are curvilinear, following hill contours. Along Alameda Ridge, other streets are rectilinear but are oriented along the direction of the ridge. On some streets along steep slopes, houses are located close to the street with minimal front setbacks, and sometimes have only small setbacks from adjacent houses.

1b. Mixed Era "Mosaic"



- **Highly variable urban patterns reflective of a range of development eras**
- **Residential streets typically lack sidewalks**
- **Poor street connectivity in many areas**
- **Low-lying houses predominate**
- **Douglas firs a unifying aspect of the skyline**

The urban form of the majority of the residential areas of Eastern Portland (primarily east of Interstate 205, but also including the Cully neighborhood) is highly variable, reflective of incremental development that occurred in different development eras, each period leaving its own distinct imprint on the area's street, block and lot structure. These areas were largely outside the city boundaries until the 1980s, before which development was often not provided with urban infrastructure such as sidewalks and sewers. The major streets in this typology area began as rural roads, between which agricultural holdings were urbanized in a patchwork manner over time, sometimes with only limited connectivity between different developments. The area remains dependent on the widely-spaced, once rural roads for through-street connections. The area includes some clusters of blocks that are continuations of the 200'-deep block structure of the inner neighborhoods. During the Streetcar Era, the Springwater interurban line near Johnson Creek provided access that resulted in the creation of large "junior acre" lots (sometimes as deep as 400'), often built with modest bungalows. These large lots continue to provide opportunities for new infill development. Much of the area's former farmland, particularly in the north, was developed incrementally in the Postwar Period with a mix of rectilinear and curvilinear street patterns and blocks, typically developed with single-family lots larger than was typical in the Inner Neighborhoods.

Block Structure and Street Patterns

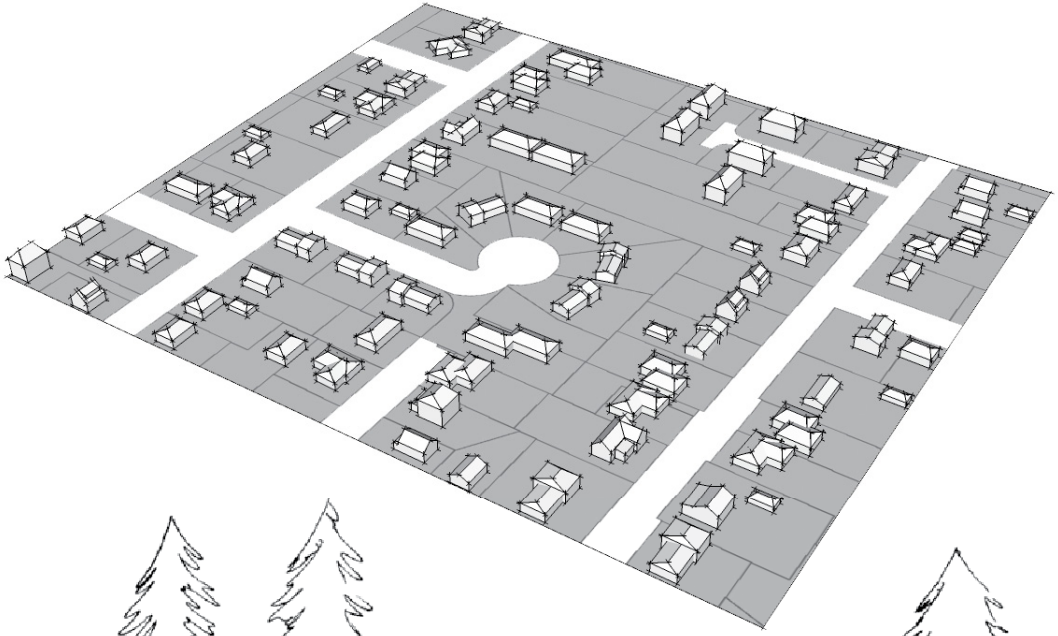
The area includes a diverse patchwork of block structures and street patterns. It includes a few scattered areas, primarily toward the west, with rectilinear blocks following the Streetcar Era pattern (200'-deep). Other areas have oversized rectilinear blocks (larger in dimension than the Streetcar Era blocks, with block widths ranging from around 270' to 400'), curvilinear street systems with cul-de-sacs or consist of superblocks (sometimes more than 600'-deep) — often with inserted subdivisions accessed by dead-end streets. The discontinuity of the block and street system, with some blocks over 1,000' in length (and occasionally up to 2,500' long), results in a low-level of street connectivity in large parts of this typology area.

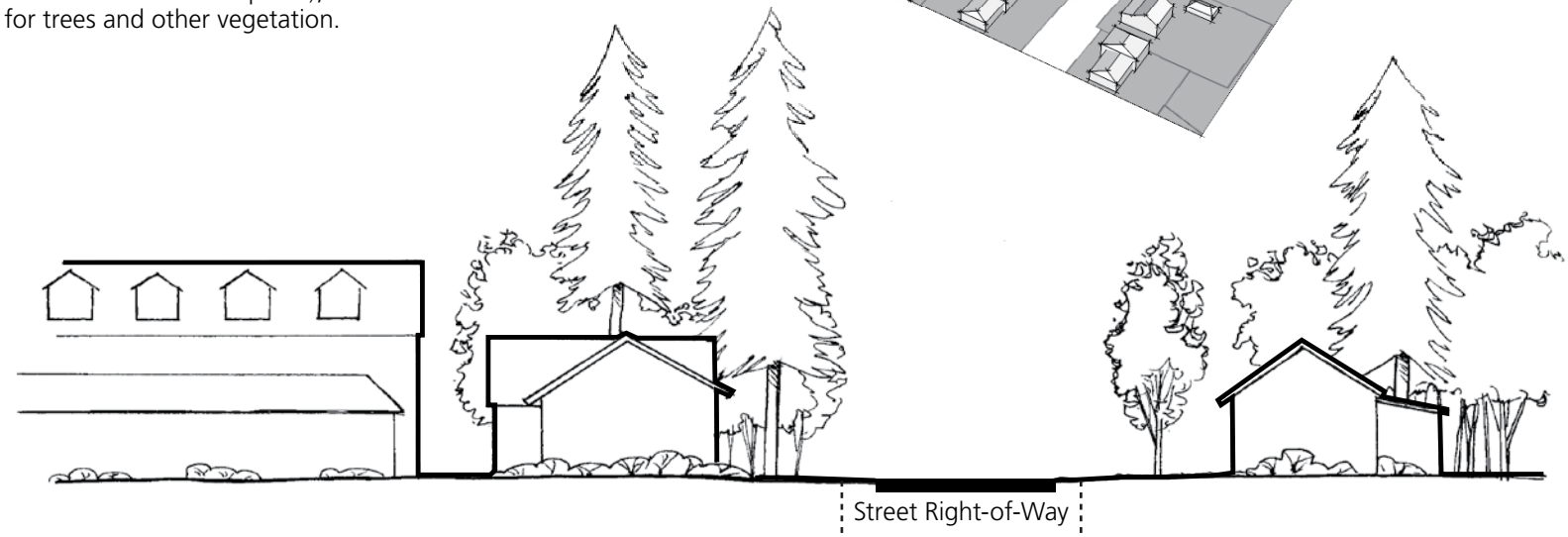
Street Characteristics

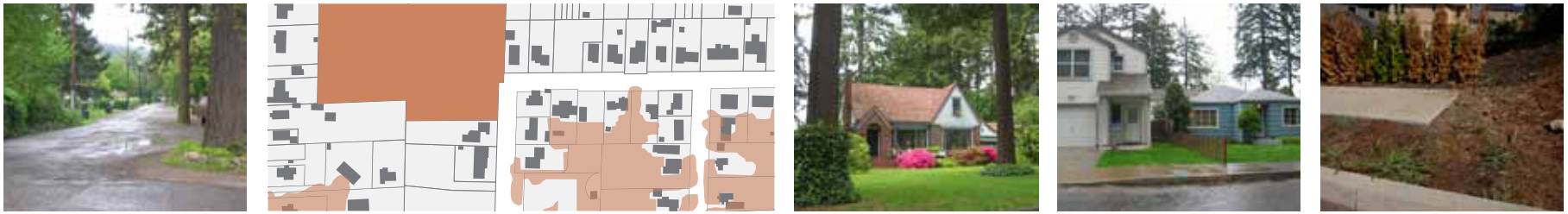
Most residential streets are paved, but lack sidewalks. Right-of-way width of residential streets is typically 50'-wide, and less frequently 60'. Many areas lack curbs, and feature gravel shoulders or have residential yards extending into the street right-of-way, blurring distinctions between private property and street space. Because the area lacks planting strips, street trees are uncommon, except in front of new development with sidewalks (the area's trees are therefore mostly located in yards or in parks).

Lot Patterns and Building Placement

Lot sizes and configurations are highly variable. Modest residential lots are common, although they are typically wider and larger than the inner neighborhood pattern. Also common, in areas with large blocks, are very deep lots that can range from around 200' to even 400' in depth (these large lots were needed to accommodate on-site septic systems, which were necessary before sewers were extended to the area in the 1980s and 1990s). Flag lots and other irregularly-shaped lots are widespread, particularly in areas with large blocks and deep lots. Houses are typically located toward the front of lots, leaving space for relatively large back yards, except where flag lots and other mid-block development has occurred. Front setbacks vary by area and block, but are often at least 20'-deep (and may be 50' or more in areas with deep lots), leaving ample room for trees and other vegetation.







From left: Unpaved street with Douglas Firs located within the street right-of-way, graphic showing common pattern of trees in mid-block areas, 1920s house set among Douglas Firs, newer infill house and discontinuous sidewalk.

Building Forms and Types

Detached houses predominate, and are typically low-lying in form (often one to one-and-a-half stories, although recent development is often two stories in height). Postwar architectural styles and forms, such as Cape Cod, ranches and split-level houses, are most common; although bungalows and other early-20th Century house types are found in some areas. Front garages are common, but the wide lots allow most street frontage to be landscaped and for houses to include front doors and windows that provide an orientation to the street. Flag lots and other mid-block development result in many buildings that do not face the public street.

Vegetation, Landscaping, and Natural Features

Ample trees and other vegetation are often the most visually prominent elements along residential streets, due to the frequently wide lots, deep setbacks and low-lying houses. Groves of Douglas Fir, often spanning multiple properties, are a defining feature of the area's skyline (the David Douglas School District, located in this typology area, honors the Scottish botanist for whom the Douglas Fir was named, highlighting the importance of these trees to the area's identity).

Other Distinctive Place Elements

Several buttes (including Kelly, Powell and Clatsop buttes and Mt. Scott) serve as prominent landmarks, whose trees also help reinforce the area's green skyline.

Intensification

This typology area has been the location of a large portion of Portland's residential infill development, due to opportunities provided by the area's relatively large, deep lots after sewers became available in the 1990s, after annexation. Much of this development intensification has occurred in mid-block areas, sometimes replacing clusters of trees. Frequently, this new development preserves existing houses toward the front of sites, with new structures inserted into the middle of the block, sometimes on flag lots. Dead-end streets or private drives provide access to these mid-block buildings, sometimes occupying large portions of site area. Higher-density residential development is concentrated along or near major streets, sometimes in the form of clusters of low-rise buildings on large sites.

From left: Kelly Butte, ranch house and firs, infill development brings contrast and a mid-block grove of Douglas Firs

1c. Mixed-Form Hillside

- **Gently rolling hills and occasional stream corridors**
- **Mix of rectilinear and curvilinear block types**
- **Block and street structure often defies topography**
- **Unimproved street segments sometimes include trail connections**
- **Abundant trees and vegetation**

This typology area covers a large portion of Southwest Portland, to the west of the steep slopes of the West Hills. Much of this area consists of gently rolling hills, with occasional forested stream corridors. Primarily residential, most of the area was developed with houses on modest lots during the Postwar period, made possible by the expanded access provided by widespread automobile ownership, although some of its urban fabric dates from the Streetcar Era. Characteristic of the urban form of this area is a mix of rectilinear and curvilinear block types, whose streets often defy topographical limitations. Much of this variability is the result of the many small subdivisions created when small farms urbanized in the 1930s–1950s. The area includes a considerable amount of unimproved streets, some of which provide trail connects between streets or through natural areas.

Block Structure and Street Patterns

This typology includes a few areas that were platted near interurban rail lines during the Streetcar Era, with the 200'-deep block structure typical of the period. Most of the area, however, is characterized by a mix of block types. The area has a fairly even mix and distribution of large rectilinear blocks (which are often 280'-deep and sometimes 300'- or 400'-deep) and curvilinear blocks. The area's block and street structure is occasionally interrupted by streams. Blocks are often relatively lengthy, providing only a moderate level of street connectivity.
Street and block patterns in the area often do not correspond to topography. Curvilinear blocks are frequently located in relatively flat areas, while rectilinear street grids sometimes march up hillsides; the latter sometimes results in straight, steep streets with expansive views and a vertical dynamic.

Street Characteristics

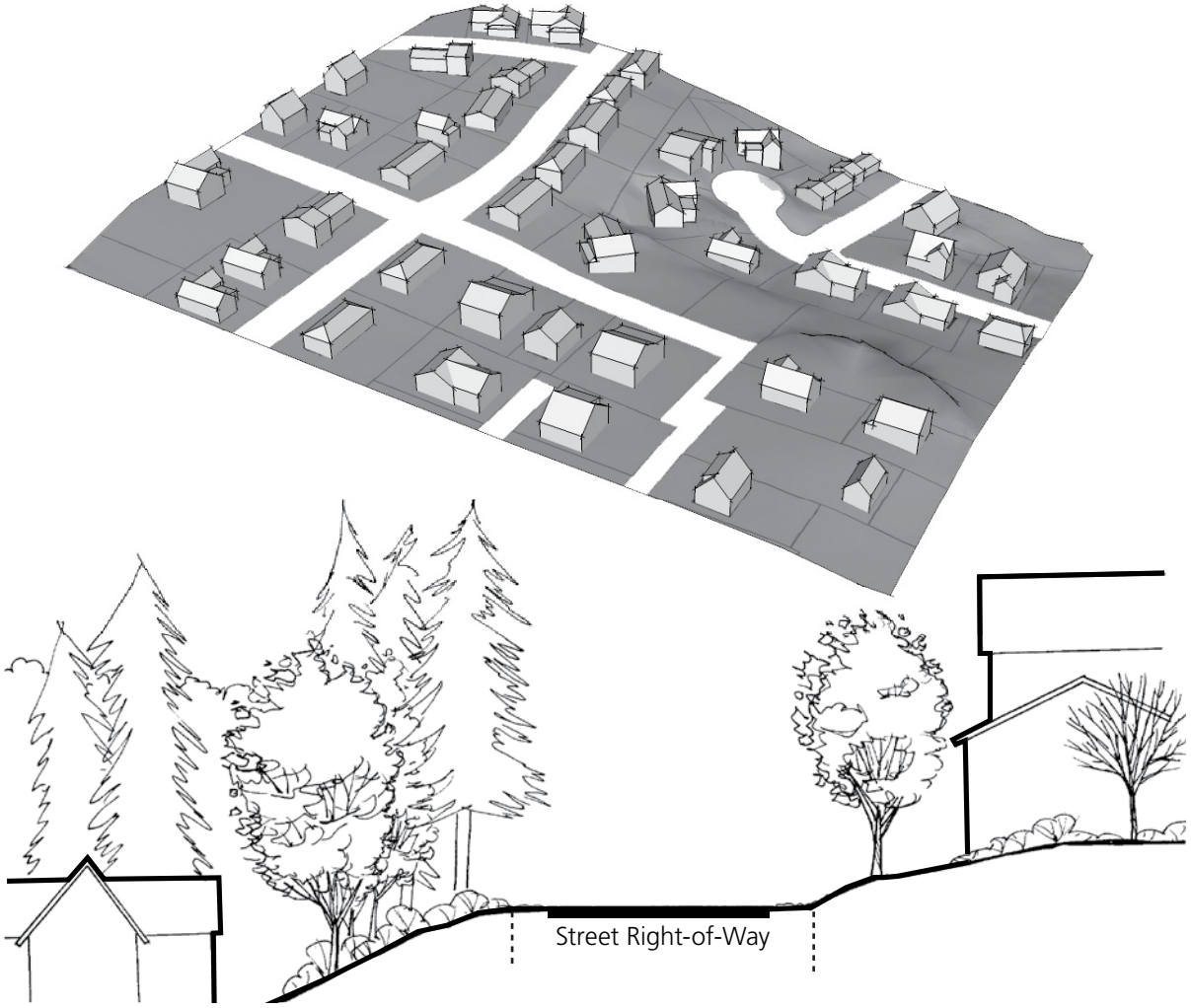
The area's streets typically do not have sidewalks and usually lack curbs. Right-of-way width of residential streets is typically 50', although widths of 40' or 60' are also common in some areas. Paved areas are usually narrower than the right-of-way, into which lawns and vegetation extend from adjacent properties. The connectivity of the area's street grid is interrupted by a large number of street segments that are not paved, sometimes providing no through connection for vehicles. Some of these unimproved street segments have trail connections, providing additional connectivity for pedestrians and access to parks and natural areas.

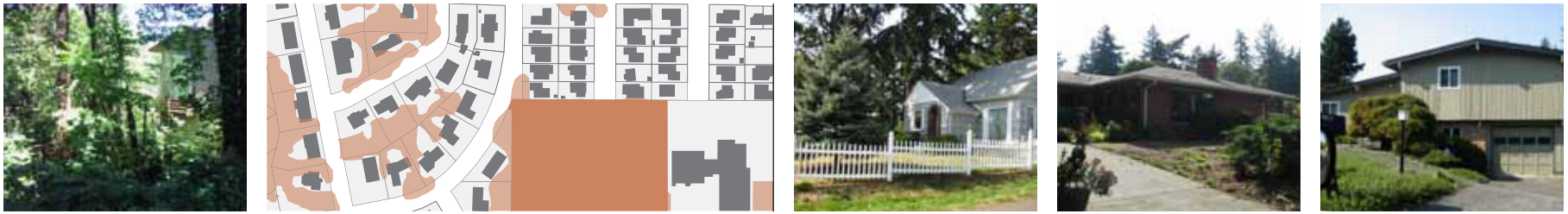
Lot Patterns and Building Placement

Lot patterns and shapes vary according to block type, but are usually of moderate size (commonly ranging from 7,000 to 10,000 square feet) and relatively wide. Houses are typically located toward the front of their lots, leaving room for backyards. Front setbacks vary by area, but are usually at least 20'-deep. Houses are separated from side property lines by setbacks that are usually at least 5'-deep. Most houses are located along streets, although there are also occasional flag lots.

Building Forms and Types

Detached houses predominate and are often low-lying in form (frequently one to one-and-a-half stories, although more recent construction is typically two stories). Postwar architectural styles and forms, such as Cape Cods, ranches and split-levels are common, as are more contemporary styles. These houses are often oriented with their longer dimensions facing the street and include attached front garages. Also found in some areas are bungalows, English Cottage and other early 20th Century house types.





These images capture some of the diversity of housing in the mixed-form hillside typology. Left image shows a house along a creek ravine. The diagram shows common block structure and open space characteristics, such as tree canopy that is mostly within private property due to the lack of street trees.

Vegetation, Landscaping, and Natural Features

The area is characterized by rolling hills with abundant vegetation, a context provided by groves of Douglas Firs and other trees, together with occasional stream corridors and ravines. Along residential streets, relatively wide lots and deep front setbacks provide ample opportunity for a green street edge of front lawns and gardens. While few streets have planting strips with street trees, some major streets are lined by a dense tunnel of trees and other vegetation.

Other Distinctive Place Elements

A network of urban trails and pedestrian connections, sometimes using unimproved right-of-way, are a distinct feature of the area, highlighting this area's integration of nature into the urban grid of streets and blocks.

Intensification

Most of the area is platted into modest lots with single-family houses, a pattern that is largely supported by the area's predominantly single-dwelling zoning. Multifamily housing exists primarily in the form of complexes of low-rise apartment buildings on large sites, located along or near major streets or highways. Where development intensification has occurred on sites within the urban fabric of residential streets, it has been in the form of the development of infill houses on oversized or vacant lots, replacement of modest houses with larger structures, occasional flat lot development on deep sites, or rowhouse or duplex development on small sites near commercial areas.

These images include a variety of street views typical of neighborhoods in this typology area and show the impact of hilly typology on the streetscape

1d. Postwar Uniform Suburban

- **Consistent pattern of curvilinear streets, cul-de-sacs**
- **Regular pattern of wide lots**
- **Uniform, deep front setbacks and generous side yards**
- **Low-lying houses: 1-story ranches, split levels**
- **Lawns, ornamental landscaping, occasional Douglas Firs**

This typology includes areas in both Eastern and Western Portland that were developed as cohesively planned communities during the Postwar period and onward. At this time, automobile ownership was becoming more widespread, so development could continue in areas distant from Downtown and transit lines. These communities reflect Federal Housing Administration guidelines that recommended curvilinear street patterns and generous, landscaped setbacks. Houses typically include attached garages, and this typology's relatively wide lots, separation of single-family areas from commercial districts, and lack of sidewalks in some areas reflect their development during a period in which access by private automobile was prioritized. Reflecting their origins as planned communities, some areas within this typology include systems of open spaces and recreational walkways.

Block Structure and Street Patterns

The areas within this typology are characterized by curvilinear streets with relatively infrequent intersections, organically-shaped blocks of variable dimensions, and occasional cul-de-sacs. Some areas, notably in the Argay neighborhood, include networks of mid-block green spaces with walkways.

Street Characteristics

Streets are paved and feature concrete curbs. Residential street right-of-way is usually 50', and sometimes 60'. Presence of sidewalks varies by neighborhood. Some streets include narrow planting strips, which are usually planted in grass and have few trees. A relatively high portion of the right-of-way is occupied by paved roadway, providing the appearance of broad, sweeping streets.

Lot Patterns and Building Placement

Residential lots follow a consistent pattern of relatively wide lots, typically ranging from 7,000 to 9,000 square feet in size. Uniformly deep front setbacks and generous side setbacks and backyards are reflected in the Glendoveer Plan District regulations, which require lots to be at least 70'-wide with 30'-front setbacks and 10'-side setbacks.

Building Forms and Types

Detached houses predominate, and are typically low-lying in form (often one to one-and-a-half stories, although recent development is often two stories in height). Mid-20th Century architectural styles and forms, particularly ranches and split-level houses, predominate. Front garages are common, but the wide lots allow most street frontage to be landscaped and for houses to include front door and windows that provide an orientation to the street.

Vegetation, Landscaping, and Natural Features

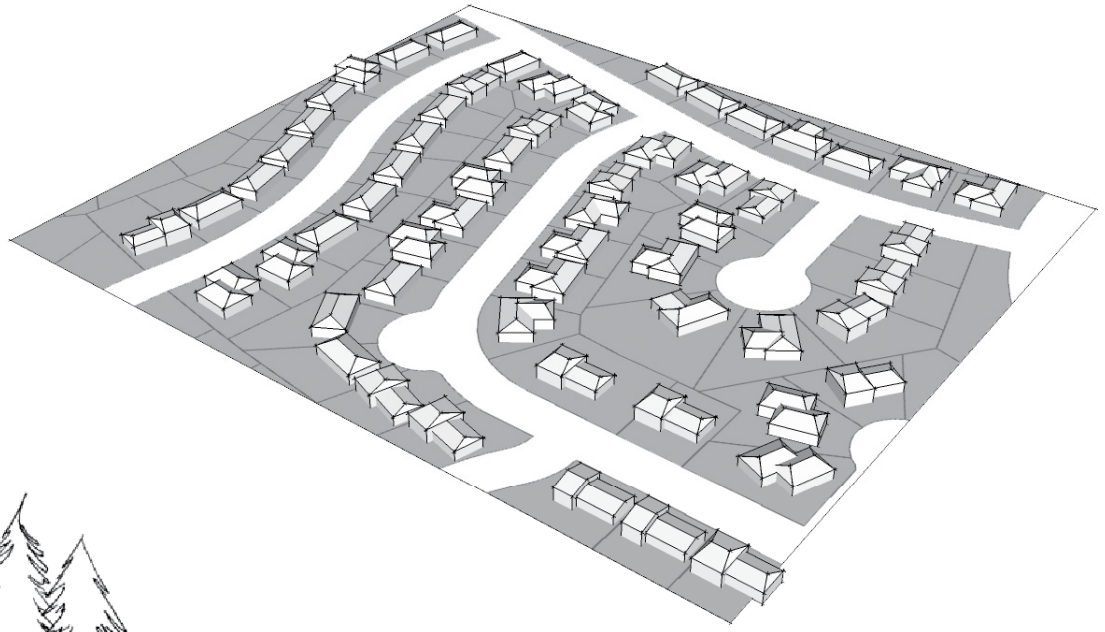
Lawns and ornamental landscaping are predominant features along street frontages. Combined with the deep front setbacks, low-lying houses, residential driveways and lack of street trees, this provides a very open streetscape. Street layout and lot grading sometimes emphasizes a setting of gently-rolling hills.

Other Distinctive Place Elements

"Atomic-age" architectural details in mail boxes, railings and fences are recurring features. Occasional Douglas Firs and other evergreen trees provide vertical elements in the skyline.

Intensification

Relatively little infill development has occurred within these areas, because of their uniform platting into modest residential lots and due to zoning that typically supports continuation of the existing patterns. Multifamily housing exists in clusters or "pods" of garden apartments on large sites, typically adjacent to major streets or highways, and is not typically found on blocks platted for single-family housing.

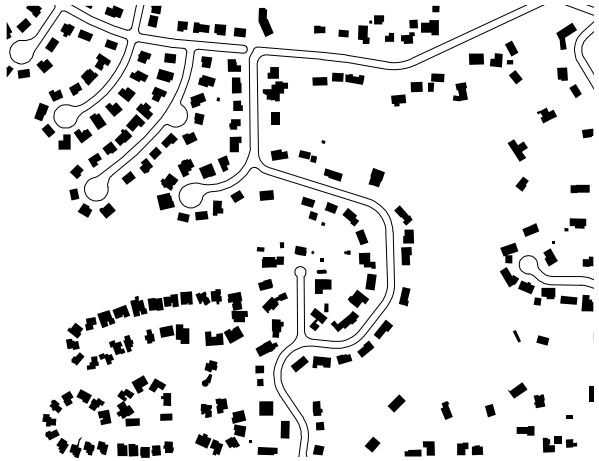


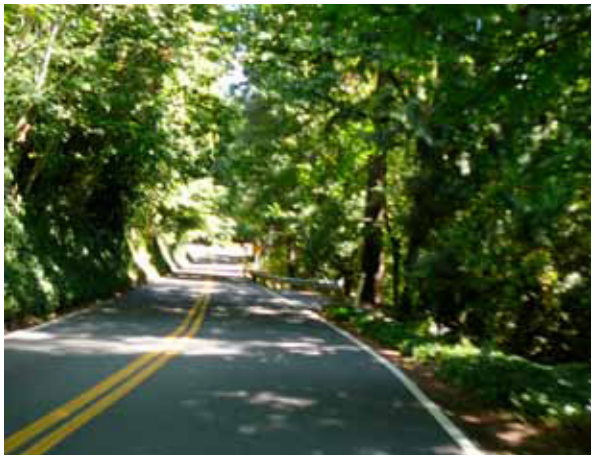
From left: Curvilinear streets, carefully-planned street and open space systems, ornamental landscaping and mid-century architectural details (shown on a school) are common in the postwar uniform suburban typology areas.

1e. Clustered Topographical

- **Curvilinear "rural" roads follow topography**
- **Streams, forested slopes, natural areas course through the area**
- **Lacks an urban block structure**
- **Houses set apart on large lots or clustered in cul-de-sacs**
- **Topography, trees and vegetation dominate, rather than buildings**

This typology includes southern portions of Portland's West Hills (Tualatin Mountains) as well as parts of the Pleasant Valley area of Eastern Portland. Characteristic of these areas are hilly, forested terrain with a rural character. They include frequent, large patches of lushly-vegetated hillsides and stream corridors. Residential development is typically in the form of houses on large, forested lots or clusters of houses on cul-de-sacs. Winding "rural" roads provide transportation connections in these areas, which generally lack an interconnected urban block structure or sidewalks, but have a rich network of forested natural areas and corridors. Street environments in these areas are typically defined by trees and lush vegetation, rather than buildings.





Block Structure and Street Patterns

The areas within the Clustered Topographical typology generally do not have an urban block structure of interconnected streets. Instead, winding rural roads provide access to houses on large lots or to groupings of houses on cul-de-sacs, clustered to minimize environmental impacts (housing developments often include conservation tracts set aside to preserve natural areas).

Street Characteristics

Streets are typically curvilinear in response to topography, streams or other natural features. Most streets are paved but typically do not have curbs or sidewalks. Sidewalks, often curb-tight, exist primarily in the newer cul-de-sac developments. Residential street right-of-way is usually 50', and sometimes 60'. Lawn and vegetation often extends from private property into the right-of-way. In southwestern areas, trails complement the street system, providing connections through and between natural areas.

Lot Patterns and Building Placement

Houses set among trees on large lots are characteristic of this typology. These houses often have deep, heavily vegetated front setbacks and frequently have little orientation to the street. Recent development typically consists of houses clustered on modest lots arranged around cul-de-sacs, often set into natural areas. These clustered houses are typically large, with high lot coverage and often relatively small building setbacks.

Building Forms and Types

The area's detached houses include a wide variety of forms and architectural styles, predominantly from the second half of the 20th Century. These include ranches, split-levels, rustic and International modern examples and large contemporary houses; ranging in scale from one to two-and-a-half stories.

Vegetation, Landscaping, and Natural Features

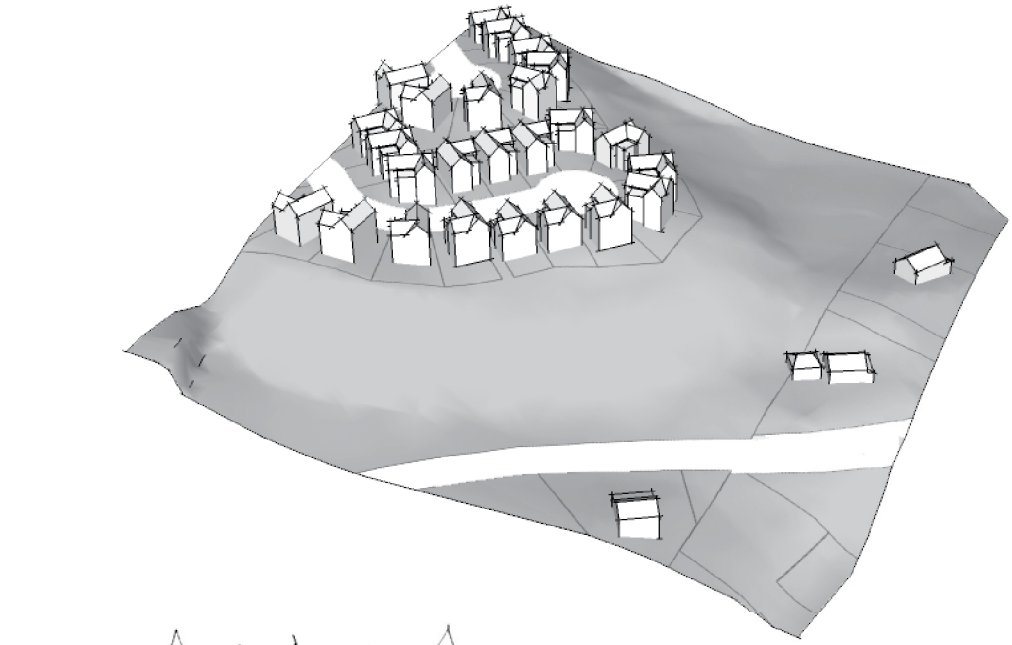
Stream corridors (including Tryon, Arnold and Johnson creeks) and forested hillsides define the form and character of the areas within this typology. Houses or clusters of houses are set within forest, providing a context in which trees, rather than buildings, predominate.

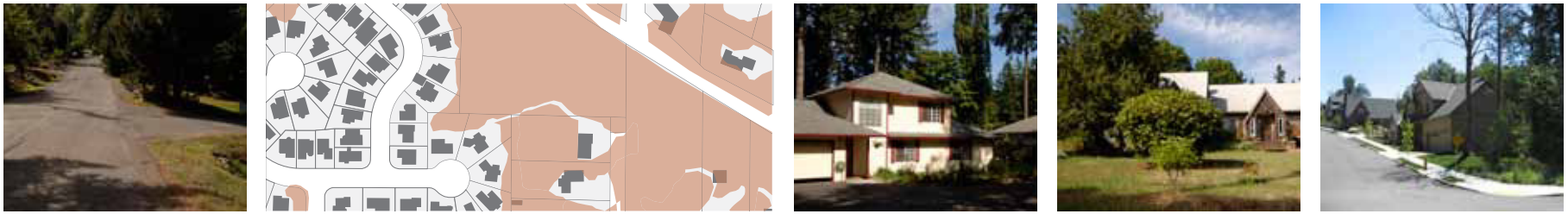
Other Distinctive Place Elements

The trees, lush vegetation and winding roads combine to provide a setting that is more rural than urban.

Intensification

Development intensification typically consists of compact clusters of houses oriented around cul-de-sacs, often edged by preserved natural areas. Although this clustered development is distinct in form from the area's older houses on large lots, they share the characteristic of being placed within a natural setting. The low-density zoning and the environmental overlay zones that apply to stream corridors in the areas within this typology foster a continuation of these characteristics (the clustered developments were typically created as planned communities, or "PUDs," and regulations continue to encourage clustering of development outside of sensitive areas).



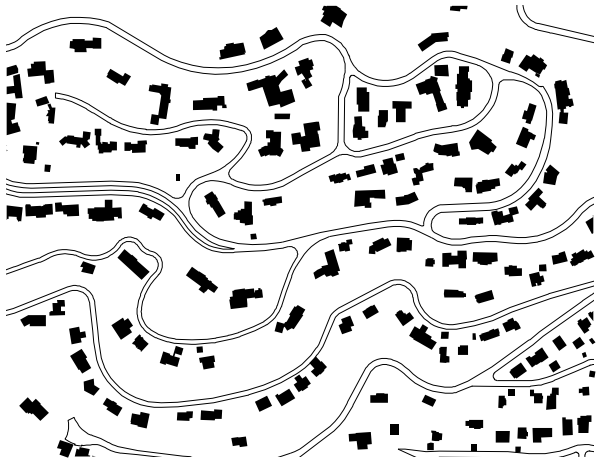


These images show some of the contrast common in neighborhoods with clustered topographical characteristics, such as tight clusters of newer houses adjacent to forested natural areas, low-lying older houses set among trees and the very different scale of much larger newer houses.

1f. Mountainside

- **Dramatic topography and views**
- **Curvilinear streets follow hill contours**
- **Trails and stairways cut through blocks**
- **Narrow streets, moderate connectivity**
- **Building orientation and forms vary with terrain**

This typology is located in portions of the West Hills (Tualatin Mountains) located close to Central Portland. The steep topography of the West Hills shapes the form of the built environment of this area, which is characterized by narrow, curvilinear streets that follow hill contours; houses whose form and placement is shaped by hillside conditions and view opportunities; and by stairways and trails that provide pedestrian connections where street connectivity was not practical. Incremental development and redevelopment from the early part of the 20th Century through today provides a great diversity of residential architecture, including notable houses designed by Portland's most prominent architects. The area's forested hillsides provide a background of green for the Central Portland neighborhoods below.



Block Structure and Street Patterns

The area's street system is shaped by the topography of the West Hills. Streets are curvilinear, following contours of the hills. Stairways and trail connections provide additional pedestrian access up steep slopes and through blocks. Most of the area does not have a rigid system of urban blocks, but the winding streets are arranged in relatively tight clusters, providing a moderate level of street connectivity.

Street Characteristics

Streets are typically paved, but many streets lack curbs or sidewalks. Sidewalks exist in some areas, usually in older neighborhoods in eastern portions of the typology area. Streets are often narrow (40'- and 30'-wide right-of-way are common), reflecting constraints of the steep slopes. Where sidewalks do exist, they are often curb tight, without planting strips or street trees or exist on only one side of the street.

Lot Patterns and Building Placement

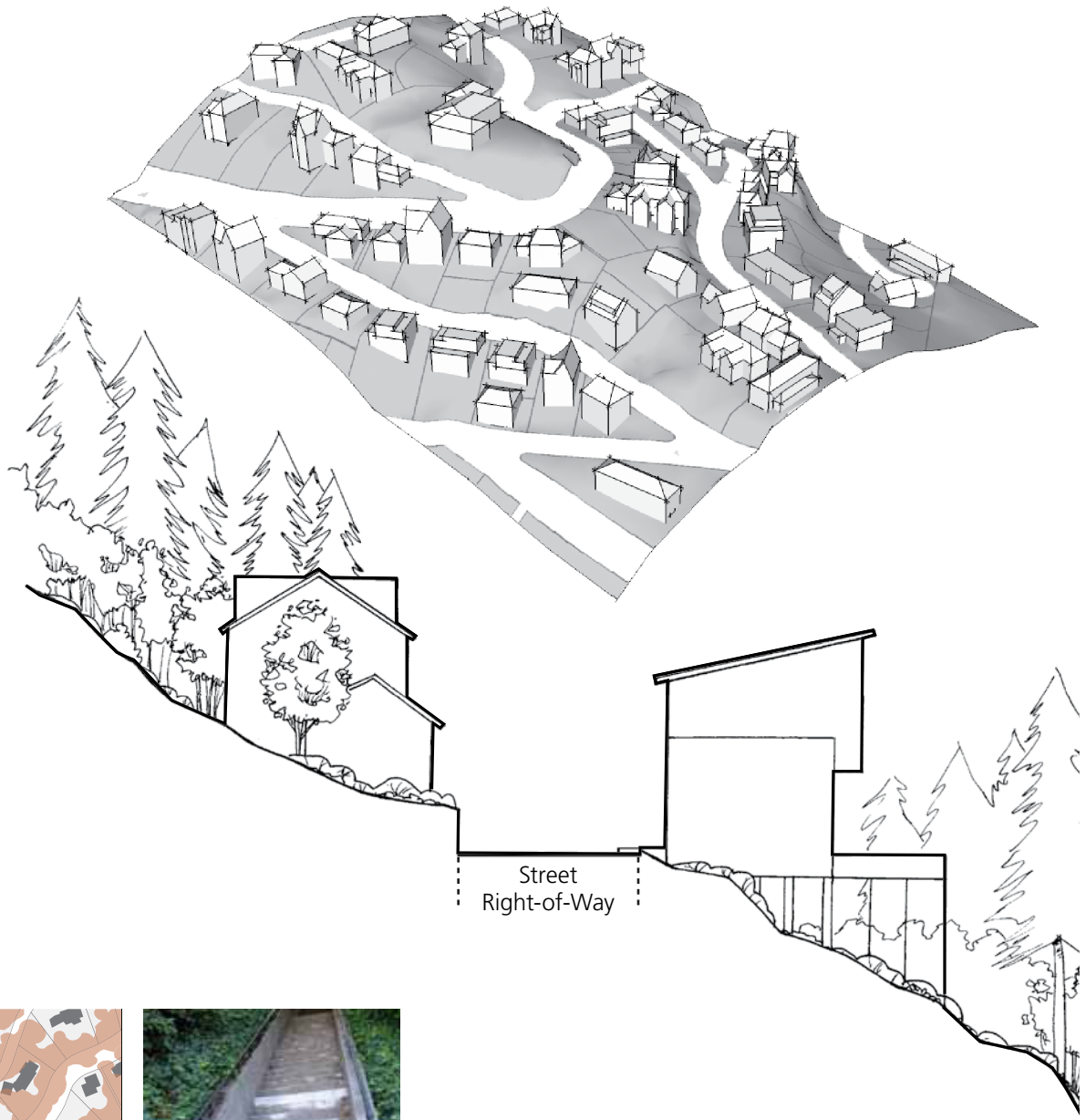
Residential lots are usually moderate in size, and are often wedge- or irregularly-shaped, rather than rectilinear. Building placement, orientation and setbacks vary according to topography. On lots that slope downward from the street frontage, houses are frequently located close to the street with minimal front setbacks. On lots that slope upward from the street, houses are sometimes set high up and away from the street. In many areas, houses are closely-set, with narrow side setbacks. Backyards are sometimes minimal, or are steeply-sloped with little useable or accessible area.

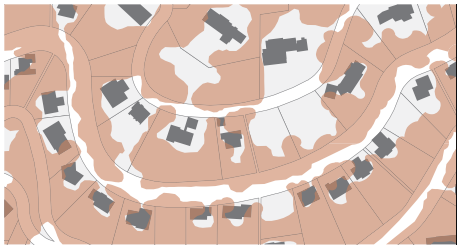
Building Forms and Types

Detached houses predominate, but vary significantly in their form in response to topography. Houses on lots that slope downward from street frontages often appear as modest one-to-two story houses along the street, but can be up to four stories at their rear elevations. Conversely, houses on lots that slope upward from streets may tower high over the street, but have a single level up against slopes to their rear. Many houses are set up on stilts, extending over downward portions of slopes. This typology area includes a great diversity of architectural styles, ranging from Craftsman, Colonial and Tudor and other Period Revival styles built in the first decades of the 20th Century to Northwest Regional and other modern housing styles from more recent decades. Houses from the earlier periods typically have a strong street orientation, with prominent main entrances and windows facing the street. More modern houses are often oriented toward views with carports or garages serving as primary features along the street

Vegetation, Landscaping, and Natural Features

This typology area is very much defined by its steep topography, forested hillsides and networks of parks and forested open space. Along residential streets, gardens and ornamental landscaping are common, particularly in older neighborhoods.





From left: steep hillsides with sweeping views; narrow, winding streets; occasional stairway connections; and hillsides covered with trees are characteristic of the mountainside typology areas.

Other Distinctive Place Elements

Other distinctive aspects include dramatic views, mossy stone retaining walls (sometimes with garages set into them) and streetscapes defined by tightly-curved streets.

Intensification

Slopes closest to Downtown include some multifamily structures or attached housing on relatively small sites. As with the area's houses, the form and orientation of these structures are highly variable, in response to topography and view opportunities. A unique example of intensification on the area's narrow, tightly-curved streets is found in the Northwestern corner of King's Hill, where multifamily structures are located up against narrow, winding streets only 25'-wide, providing streetscape characteristics evocative of Italian hill towns.

Houses set close to the street (upper) and a narrow lane on King's Hill

1g. Riverfront Communities and other Anomalous Areas

Not all of Portland's residential areas are imbedded within the neighborhood typologies described in this section. Among these are a diverse variety of riverfront communities scattered along different parts of the Willamette and Columbia rivers (including the Sellwood waterfront, John's Landing area, Bridgeton and Hayden Island). They include house boat communities, clusters of waterfront apartment or condominium buildings and riverside manufactured home complexes. These areas generally do not have an urban block structure or street orientation. Instead, they are oriented to the waterfront (or, in the case of houseboats, are on the water) and generally accessed by private streets or drives. Apartment or condominium buildings in these areas are typically arranged in complexes on large waterfront sites, sometimes adjacent to marinas.

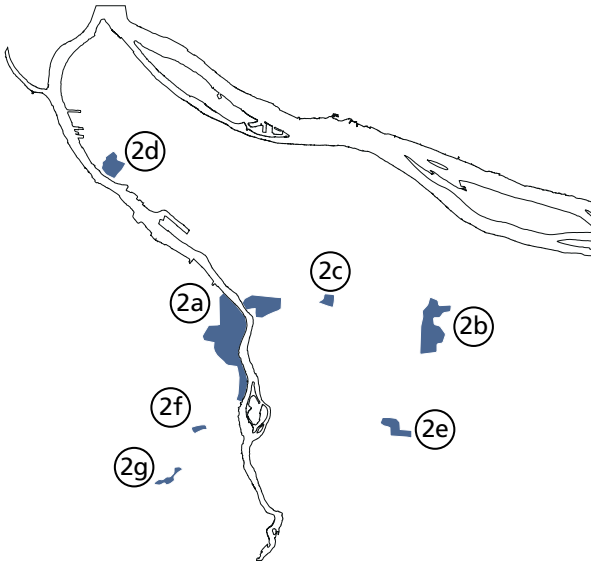
Housing on Hayden Island (left) and a waterfront community in Bridgeton

2. Mixed Use Centers

Central City and Other Centers

The mixed-use centers described in the following pages are relatively intensely-urbanized areas of the city that stand apart in their form from surrounding residential areas. These pages provide summary descriptions of the basic urban form characteristics of Portland's mixed use centers, including the Central City, the Gateway regional center and its five town centers (this does not include the Raleigh Hills town center, only a small portion of which is in Portland). All these centers are intended to be transit- and pedestrian-oriented places where commercial services, housing, employment and community amenities are concentrated.

Typically located at major transportation crossroads, the urban form of many of the centers reflects their roles as transportation hubs and places of concentrated commercial activity. Outside of the Central City, Gateway and Hollywood allow buildings significantly taller (more than 100'-high) than what is allowed in nearby commercial corridors and residential areas. The other centers are intended to have low- to mid-rise buildings (mostly limited to 45' in height) similar in scale to that allowed in mixed-use main streets and corridors. A broader, less linear geographic coverage and larger areas zoned for multidwelling housing, differentiates most of the centers from the mixed-use main streets and corridors. The following pages briefly describe their basic urban form characteristics as they currently exist, as well as their intended future forms. Most of the centers have been the focus of community plans, which can be referenced for more detailed information.



Regional Hierarchy of Centers:

Central City

Portland's most intensely urbanized area. Serves the entire region as its most prominent center for finance, commerce, government and culture.

Regional Centers

Intended to serve an area of hundreds of thousands of people.

Town Centers

Intended to provide localized services to tens of thousands of people in surrounding neighborhoods within a two- to three-mile radius.

2a. Central City

2b. Gateway

2c. Hollywood

2d. St. Johns

2e. Lents

2f. Hillsdale

2g. West Portland

2a. Central City

Portland's Central City is the region's most highly urbanized area. Its characteristics are complex and are a focus of the Central Portland Plan and previous planning documents, which should be referenced for more information. The descriptions below summarize basic elements of the Central City's urban fabric that differentiate it from the rest of the city. In turn, this provides a comprehensive perspective of Portland's overall urban form, of which the Central City is a part, and provides information on how the form of the Central City and the surrounding neighborhoods interrelate.

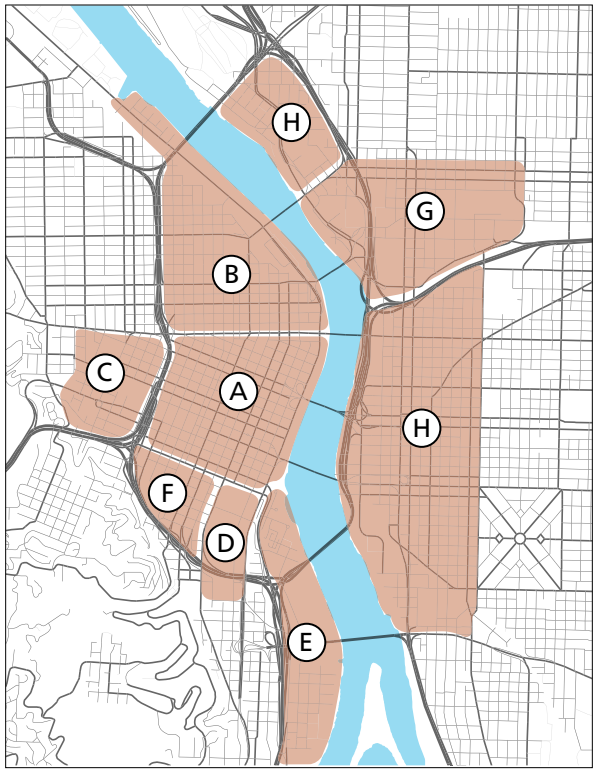
A fundamental characteristic of the Central City is its 200' by 200' block structure and corresponding highly interconnected street system. Multi-story buildings typically occupy most of each block, with little or no setback from sidewalks. This full-block building coverage, and the sense of urban enclosure it provides, contrasts with the patterns of detached structures prevalent in surrounding neighborhoods. Streets are fully improved with roadway, curbs, tree wells and sidewalks.

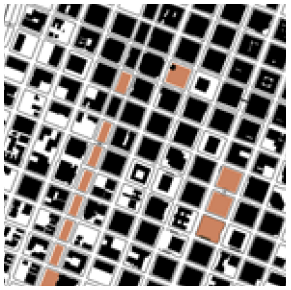
The Downtown core of the Central City is distinct from the surrounding neighborhoods not only in its scale and urban patterns, but it is also separated by geographic boundaries: to the east, the Willamette River, across which bridges provide a limited number of entry points into Downtown; westward, the West Hills provide a very different boundary as well as a green backdrop for Downtown. The limited number of major roads that come into the Central City from the west (including W Burnside, Highway 26, Terwilliger and Barbur) are flanked by forest through the West Hills, providing the effect of a green belt around Downtown and reinforcing a sense of transition and entry. Some of the variation within the Central City is summarized in the following descriptions.

Central City Pattern Areas

The Central City is composed of numerous smaller areas that each have their own urban form characteristics. Each are explored here:

A. Downtown Core
B. River District
C. Goose Hollow
D. South Auditorium
E. South Waterfront
F. University District
G. Lloyd District and Coliseum Area
H. Lower Albina and Central Eastside





A. Downtown Core

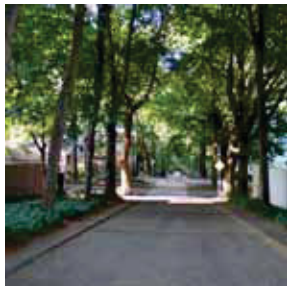
- Includes Portland's primary concentration of high-rise buildings.
- Has less of a hierarchy of major and minor streets compared to other parts of the city due to a relatively consistent pattern of street widths. The right-of-way of Downtown's east-west streets is typically 60'-wide, while most north-south streets in the Downtown core are 80'-wide.
- Streets prominent due to their size and distinctive role in the Central City's street system include Burnside and Naito Parkway, while the transit mall on Fifth and Sixth avenues serves as the transit spine for Downtown and the River District.
- Downtown's street grid is oriented to the river's alignment, which is particularly apparent where this grid meets the north-south oriented grid in the River District that begins at Burnside, resulting in triangular blocks and buildings.
- Other prominent features include the public spaces of the Willamette Riverfront, Pioneer Courthouse Square, the South Park Blocks with their concentration of cultural institutions and churches and the Lownsdale Square area to which City Hall and other civic buildings are oriented.
- Downtown's pattern of full-block building coverage becomes less consistent in the West End sub-area.

B. River District

- Includes the Pearl District with its full-block, warehouse-scale buildings, industrial loading docks on 13th Avenue, newer buildings with mid-block courtyards and emerging series of park blocks (including Jamison Square and Tanner Springs Park).
- Also includes the Old Town area, with its finer-grain pattern of smaller, historic partial-block buildings.

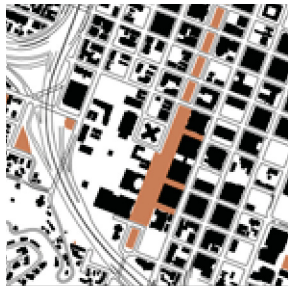
C. Goose Hollow

- Provides a transition from the full-block building coverage of the Downtown Core to the finer-grain pattern of surrounding neighborhoods; partial-block building massing, detached structures and landscaped setbacks become more prevalent in Goose Hollow's western areas.
- A distinguishing characteristic is its topography, which slopes upward into the West Hills.
- Includes large superblocks occupied by Lincoln High School and PGE (Civic) Park stadium.



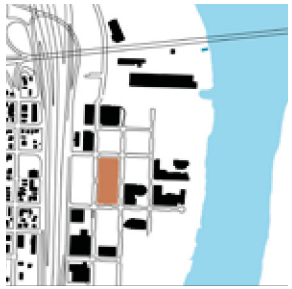
D. South Auditorium

- Features a network of pedestrianized streets that largely continue the street grid.
- The pedestrian ways connect a series of parks distributed in a north-south axis through the center of the district.
- Buildings are set back behind front landscaping, and include a combination of mid-20th Century residential towers and horizontally-oriented commercial buildings.
- The district's major streets (Lincoln, Harrison and First Avenue) are boulevards with treed and vegetated center medians and planting strips. This, combined with the landscaped setbacks, park vegetation and rows of trees along the pedestrian ways, provide the district with a lushly green environment that contrasts with the hardscape of the Downtown core.



E. University District

- The location of Portland State University, oriented around the southern end of the South Park Blocks. The streets flanking the South Park Blocks in this district have mostly been pedestrianized, providing a strong interface between the park space and adjacent buildings that is unusual in Portland.
- The Central City block structure is continued, but with most streets in its western portion pedestrianized. These pedestrian ways incorporate landscaping and small plazas in what was once street area.



F. South Waterfront

- This emerging district is characterized by narrow high-rise towers, typically set atop low-rise podiums.
- Features a distinctive hierarchy of rights-of-way, with a series of streets extending from the riverfront that have a landscaped character with limited vehicle access.
- The aerial tram and its supporting towers serve as an iconic feature.
- Buildings along the river are oriented to the greenway.

G. Lloyd District and Coliseum Area

- Distinguished from the rest of the Central City by its many superblocks, sometimes the size of multiple standard Central City blocks and correspondingly larger buildings.
- The largest superblocks are occupied by the Lloyd Center shopping mall (mostly separated from surrounding streets by structured parking), the Oregon Convention Center and the Rose Quarter sports complex.
- Most blocks include a low-level of building coverage, with surface parking lots a common feature.

H. Central Eastside and Lower Albina

- Primarily small-block industrial districts (see Industrial Districts typology).
- The Grand & Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard corridor serves as the Central Eastside's north/south commercial spine.
- Lower Albina includes the Russell Street Conservation District, a small main street cluster of mostly small commercial buildings that is a remnant of the historic downtown of the City of Albina. It also includes some a large-block heavy industrial area near the riverfront.

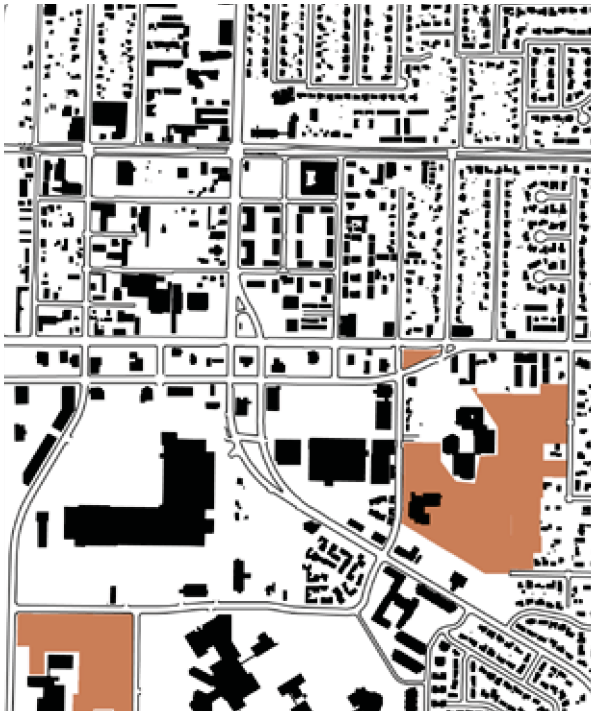
2b. Gateway Regional Center

Existing

- Located at the junction of the I-84 and I-205 freeways, and served by three light rail lines, Gateway occupies a key transportation crossroads.
- Anchored at north and south ends by "big box" retail centers with large areas of surface parking.
- Large blocks predominate, providing relatively infrequent street connectivity.
- Several multi-lane streets provide connectivity through Gateway. Many secondary streets lack sidewalks.
- Between the north and south retail areas is a highly-parcelized, mixed residential and industrial area.
- Low-rise buildings predominate, including single-level retail with large surface parking lots, an area of small storefront buildings along NE Halsey, light industrial sites, small office buildings, clusters of older low-rise multifamily buildings, newer mid-rise housing and low-lying single-family houses at its edges.
- Gateway's southern end includes a medical center, schools and senior housing situated in landscaped, campus-like settings.
- Public open spaces are concentrated in the center's southeast corner and include the East Portland Community Center, the adjacent Floyd Light Middle School and a nearby pocket park at the junction of Stark and Washington streets.

Future

The Gateway Regional Center is Portland's only designated regional center. The area is envisioned to redevelop into a highly-urbanized, pedestrian- and transit-oriented center, with an overall built size and scale second only to Portland's Central City. Reflective of this intention, buildings are allowed up to 150' in height in parts of Gateway's core. The district's public realm is intended to feature improved pedestrian facilities and connections and additional public plazas and parks.



2c. Hollywood Town Center

Existing

- Features relatively large commercial buildings adjacent to sidewalks, clustered along and north of Sandy Boulevard.
- Includes large areas occupied by surface parking lots.
- The center's grid of rectangular blocks is cut through by Sandy Boulevard (80'-wide, 5 lanes), creating triangular street corners and buildings.
- A light rail station is located at its southern edge.
- Located adjacent to I-84, which provides direct freeway connections, but freeway access courses through the district and — combined with the Sandy Boulevard diagonal — complicates circulation, wayfinding and compromises the pedestrian environment.
- Residential blocks with typical Streetcar Era development patterns at edges.
- Public spaces include the light rail station area, Harold Kelley plaza (a converted street segment) and several triangular public properties — some of which feature stormwater gardens. The weekly Hollywood Farmers Market occupies a portion of a surface parking lot and public street space when open.

Future

Plans for the Hollywood Town Center call for Hollywood to become the location of a concentration of commercial and residential uses in multi-story buildings, with the tallest buildings (up to 120'-high) focused near the light rail station and a future public plaza. The center's commercial core would continue to be located along and north of Sandy Boulevard. Buildings should transition in height to the surrounding residential areas. Building design and orientation is intended to foster a pedestrian-oriented environment, complemented by additional pedestrian amenities and urban green spaces.

2d. St. Johns Town Center

Existing

- Owes its existence and some of its civic buildings to its origins as the downtown of the once independent City of St. Johns.
- Located at the confluence of several street grids with contrasting orientations, providing a distinctively varied block and street structure.
- Commercial uses are clustered along the Lombard main street spine, which is lined by small storefront buildings (mostly one or two stories tall).
- The center's larger or attached buildings and surface parking lots set it apart from the form of the surrounding residential areas, which feature typical Streetcar Era development patterns.
- Features the iconic St. John's Bridge toward the west and views of the West Hills.
- An added visual dynamic is created by the slope downward toward the river.
- Public spaces include Cathedral Park, a small corner plaza at the center of the Lombard main street area, a landscaped triangular "gateway" island at the eastern end of the Lombard main street and school grounds.

Future

Plans for the St. Johns Town Center call for additional commercial and residential development to be accommodated in ways that enhance St. John's identity as a "small town within a city." Buildings in the town center are generally limited to 45'. The Lombard main street is intended to be reinforced as the focus of the area's commercial activity, new development should respect community scale and patterns, and the pedestrian environment and public places should be enhanced. Toward the west, the area's hillside character and connections to the river should be fostered.

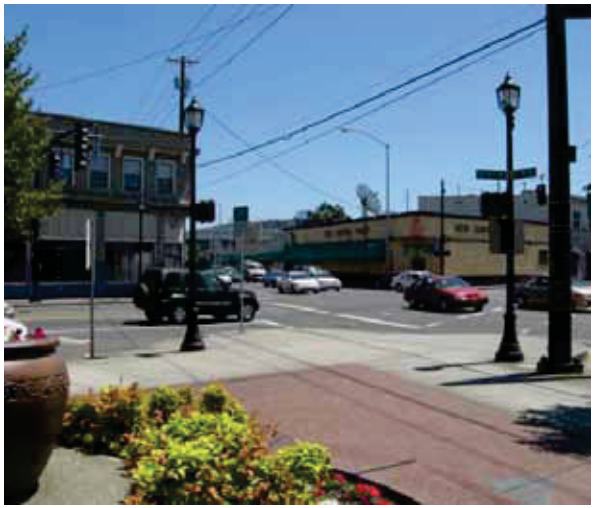
2e. Lents Town Center

Existing

- Anchored by a small commercial core, which includes storefront commercial remnants (along SE 92nd) from its origins as a Streetcar Era commercial district.
- Lents' commercial core is dwarfed in size by the nearby 82nd Avenue commercial corridor.
- Buildings are primarily one to two stories, with a few newer multi-story buildings.
- Large areas are occupied by surface parking lots.
- I-205 and access ramps cut through the center, providing convenient freeway access but compromising the pedestrian environment.
- Future light rail station to open along I-205.
- Large undeveloped industrially-zoned area ("Freeway Lands") toward the southeast.
- Residential blocks with typical Streetcar Era development patterns at edges.
- Public spaces include a small corner plaza at 92nd and Foster, where the Lents International Farmers Market is held, and Lents Park is nearby to the north.

Future

The Lents Town Center is intended to become the location of a concentration of commercial, residential and employment uses, with new development and street amenities designed to support a pedestrian-oriented environment. Buildings in portions of the core of the town center can be up to 65'-high.



2f. Hillsdale Town Center

Existing

- Focused on a small commercial core of single-level retail buildings with surface parking lots along SW Capitol Highway.
- School grounds (Wilson High School, Rieke Elementary) occupy a large portion of the center's core.
- Includes a few large sites with clusters of low-rise multifamily buildings near the core toward the west.
- Residential blocks with a typical variety of "Mixed Form Hillside" block types and development patterns are located at the center's edges (including rectilinear blocks with a variety of compass orientations and areas with curvilinear streets).
- Fanno Creek and other streams course through parts of the town center.
- Public spaces include large school grounds and the nearby Terwilliger Boulevard green spaces. A school parking lot is used for the weekly Hillsdale Farmers Market.

Future

Plans for the Hillsdale Center call for its enhancement as a pedestrian-oriented vibrant hub for the community with additional amenities and services and a concentration of housing. Buildings in the center's core are limited to 45' in height and are intended to be compatible with Hillsdale's scale and character. Policies place an emphasis on preserving and enhancing the Hillsdale area's natural setting, its greenery, trees and parks.

2g. West Portland Town Center

Existing

- Located at the heavily-trafficked crossroads of three multi-lane highways (the I-5 freeway, Barbur Boulevard, Capitol Highway).
- Low-rise commercial buildings with large surface parking lots are scattered along Barbur Boulevard, separated by the intersecting highways.
- The center is part of, and not clearly differentiated in its form from, the Barbur Boulevard commercial corridor.
- Includes a park-and-ride transit center with a large area of surface parking located on a site near the middle of the center.
- Low-rise apartment building complexes with surface parking lots are clustered toward the center's southwestern end.
- Residential blocks with single-family houses predominate at the center's edges.
- The center area includes two creeks (Woods and Falling).
- Public spaces include the forested Woods Memorial Park to the north and the nearby Jackson Middle School and Markham Elementary school grounds.

Future

The West Portland Town Center does not have policies specific to its future. Policies applicable generally for town centers in Southwest Portland call for them to accommodate the area's highest density of residential and employment uses, provide commercial vitality, evolve into transit- and pedestrian-oriented places, provide transitions to the scale and character of adjacent neighborhoods, and protect creeks and waterways. Development allowances in the town center limit building heights to 45', the same as applies to the rest of the Barbur Boulevard commercial corridor.

A Note on Other Commercial Areas

Other large commercial districts include Cascade Station, Jantzen Beach and Delta Park. These areas are large-format retail centers anchored by "big box" retail and feature large surface parking lots. Unlike the mixed-use centers, main streets and corridors, these retail centers are not closely integrated into urban neighborhoods, but instead, they stand apart from the urban fabric and serve a primarily regional retail function.

3. Industrial Districts

The Urban Pattern of Portland's Working Districts

Portland's industrial districts have their own distinctive urban patterns and characteristics, which the Comprehensive Plan calls for continuing. Some industrial areas include natural resource features, such as riverbanks and other wetlands, whose continuation and enhancement are a focus of existing policies and regulations. There is less clarity as to what, if any, characteristics of the built environment of industrial districts should be continued or fostered in the future. Continuation of industrial district characteristics has tended to become a priority only after a district transitions to other uses, such as in the case of the formerly industrial Pearl District. This is due, in part, to the importance of providing flexibility to accommodate the functional needs of industrial uses; although it may be possible to also continue some urban form characteristics that may be particularly valued by the community.

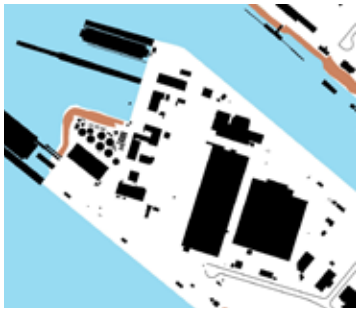
While each industrial district includes a great degree of variability in its physical characteristics, reflective of the functional needs of a wide range of industrial activities, this section classifies districts according to some basic, shared characteristics. The industrial districts referred to in this section correspond to those described in the Industrial Districts Atlas. This section focuses on the larger industrial districts in the inner city and the Columbia corridor, and does not address the small industrial areas scattered in other areas of Portland.

- **Concentrated in low-lying riverfront areas.**
- **Variety of industrial districts with distinct urban forms.**
- **Inner areas share Central City's pattern of small blocks.**
- **Large-block industrial districts shaped by industrial needs and functions.**
- **Block structure and building forms in some areas shaped by railroads and rail spurs.**
- **Columbia slough and greenery courses through the Columbia Corridor districts**

3a. Small-Block Urban Industrial

These industrial districts, Portland's oldest, are located in, or close to, the Central City. These districts share the Central City's pattern of small, 200' by 200' blocks. Most streets include sidewalks, and sometimes include street trees. However, streets that include (or formerly included) railway tracks typically do not have sidewalks, and instead feature raised loading docks. Buildings typically occupy most of each block, and are built up to the sidewalk with no setbacks, providing a sense of urban enclosure to the street environment. Building scale ranges from single-level to multi-story.

The Small-Block Urban Industrial Districts include the Inner Eastside, southern portions of the Northwest Industrial District and Lower Albina. Much of the Pearl District, now a mixed use area, shares their urban form characteristics. These districts are generally located in close proximity to non-industrial areas, to which their street systems are sometimes closely integrated.



3b. Large-Block Industrial

These industrial districts are characterized by large blocks, with a mix of large-footprint industrial buildings (warehouses, manufacturing facilities, etc.) and large paved areas. Riverfront areas include marine loading and moorage facilities, while northern portions of the Northwest Industrial District are occupied by petroleum storage tanks. They also include large areas devoted to rail yards, and rail spurs course through these districts in curvilinear alignments. Most of these districts consist of a hardscape of buildings and paved site area, although some riverbank areas are vegetated and the streets in some areas, especially in Swan Island, are edged by landscaping and rows of trees.

The Large-Block Industrial Districts include most of the Northwest Industrial District and the Swan Island area. These districts are located in low-lying areas along the Willamette River, separated topographically from nearby residential areas located on the bluffs above.

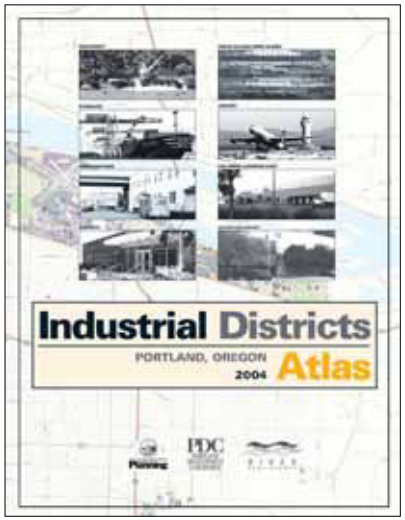
3c. Columbia Corridor Industrial

These districts share some characteristics with the Large-Block Industrial Districts, but are distinguished by their juxtaposition with the natural areas that course through them and by other green, vegetated features. These natural areas include the Columbia Slough, Smith and Bybee Lakes, Kelley Point Park and other preserved green spaces. The green, vegetated context of these districts is reinforced in some areas by campus-type layouts, especially toward the east, where buildings and paved areas are set among landscaping (large paved, open-air facilities are more predominant in western areas). Also contributing to this context in some areas are curving streets lined by trees and landscaping, levees and the river views provided by Marine Drive.

The Columbia Corridor Industrial Districts include the Airport, Columbia Corridor East and Rivergate districts. These districts are generally separated from residential areas by Columbia Boulevard, although there are also a number of commercial and residential areas set within the Columbia Corridor.

Relationship to Industrial Districts Atlas

The Industrial Districts Atlas uses a typology that classifies districts based on industrial function, rather than by their urban form characteristics as described in this section. Specifically, the Atlas classifies districts as either "Freight Hub Districts" or as "Mixed Industrial/Employment Districts". The classifications used in this section of the Urban Form Report are not intended to minimize the importance of a functional classification, but are intended to complement this information by bringing attention to the industrial districts' urban form characteristics. The Industrial Districts Atlas should be referred to for more comprehensive information on Portland's industrial areas.



4. Major Street Typologies

A Systematic Grouping of Portland's Major Streets

Portland's major streets and the development that lines them are among the city's most prominent and most frequently seen built features. Some major streets, such as main streets and other commercial corridors, serve as a major focus of activity for surrounding neighborhoods, while others are heavily-trafficked thoroughfares that are barriers to pedestrians and divide neighborhoods. Major streets also include corridors that are primarily residential or that pass through forest or other natural areas. All these differing functions express themselves in distinct ways in the physical form and environment of streets. These major streets tend to stand out in their physical form from the urban fabric of surrounding neighborhood residential areas.

The Metro 2040 Growth Concept Plan classifies most major streets as either "main streets" or "corridors." Main streets are intended to be pedestrian- and transit-oriented places that provide retail and other services to neighborhoods, while corridors are intended to be well-served by transit and have transit-supportive densities. Portland's designated main streets include a wide variety of streets, including traditional main streets such as SE Belmont, auto-oriented strip commercial areas such as 82nd, as well as some streets that are (and are zoned) primarily residential. Similarly, designation of streets as corridors does not provide much guidance as to their existing or intended future function or built form, as corridors include commercially zoned streets as well as purely residential streets, and some segments that are flanked by forested slopes and other natural features.

In order to support community discussion regarding the future of the Portland's major streets and what should be preserved or fostered, this section describes their characteristics, focusing on the development types, forms or natural features that line them, containing and defining the street environment. These descriptions are grouped by the predominant types of zones that apply to the major streets and that, to a large extent, correspond to their general characteristics (see sidebar). This analysis focuses on major streets, as the characteristics of other streets are described in the Neighborhood Residential Area Typologies and the other Patterns sections of this report.

This analysis includes:

- All segments identified in the 2040 Growth Concept Map as main streets or corridors.
- Other streets included in the Commercial Districts Corridors Study.
- Other streets classified in the Transportation Element as regional or major city traffic streets.
- Additional, less major streets that have a distinctive "greenway" character.

Summary of Major Street Types

This section focuses on major streets outside the Central City (the latter is described in the Mixed-Use Centers section). With the exception of the Greenway Streets, the street descriptions are grouped in correspondence with the predominant zoning classifications that apply along major streets.

Storefront Commercial Streets

Includes the majority of Portland's Streetcar Era main streets and other streets intended to become pedestrian-oriented commercial districts.

General Commercial Streets

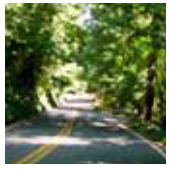
These streets are generally more auto-oriented than the CS-zoned streets, with large amounts of surface parking.

Multi-Dwelling Streets

These streets are intended for multi-dwelling residential development and typically include a mix of houses and multi-dwelling structures, with a more vegetated street edge than the commercial zones.

Single-Dwelling Streets

While most major streets are intended to have commercial or multi-dwelling residential development, there are also many segments that are zoned for single-dwelling houses.



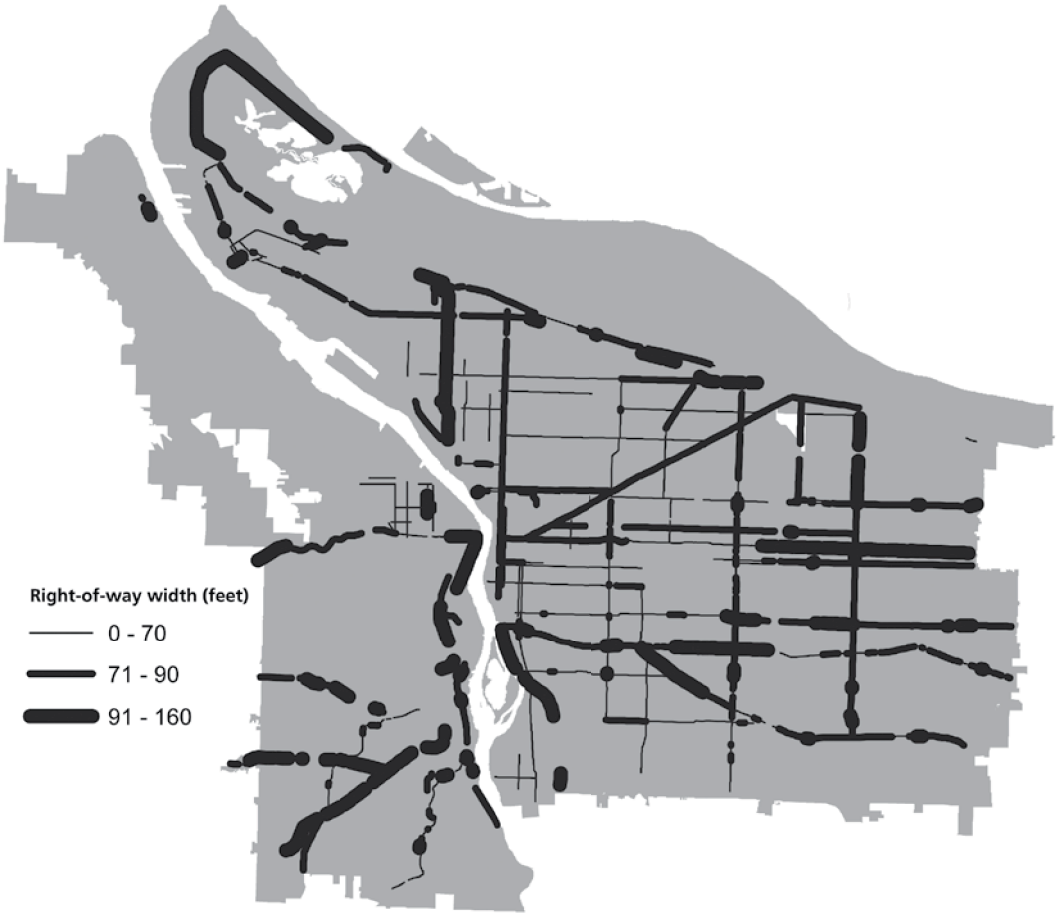
Greenway Streets

Not necessarily major streets, these are distinctive streets lined by forested areas or other natural open space or that have center medians with trees.


SANDY
HALSEY
BURNSIDE
STARK
POWELL
FOSTER
122ND
WEIDLER
DIVISION
NE 102ND
GLISAN
82ND
PRESCOTT
HALSEY
POWELL
FOSTER
WOODSTOCK
60TH
57TH
SANDY
BURNSIDE
50TH
52ND
KILLINGSWORTH
42ND
FREMONT
39TH
BELMONT
HAWTHORNE
DIVISION
POWELL
HOLGATE
MCLOUGHLIN
MILWAUKIE
ALBERTA
BROADWAY
MLK
17TH
13TH
COLUMBIA
LOMBARD
ALBINA
WILLIAMS
GRAND
MACADAM
INTERSTATE
GREELEY
NW 14TH
NAITO
4TH
BARBUR
BOONES FERRY
21ST
23RD
THURMAN
CAPITOL
BARBUR
N PORTLAND RD
LOMBARD
N MARINE DR
FESSENDEN
CENTRAL
BEAVERTON HILLSDALE
MULTNOMAH
49TH
N LOMBARD ST
ST HELENS

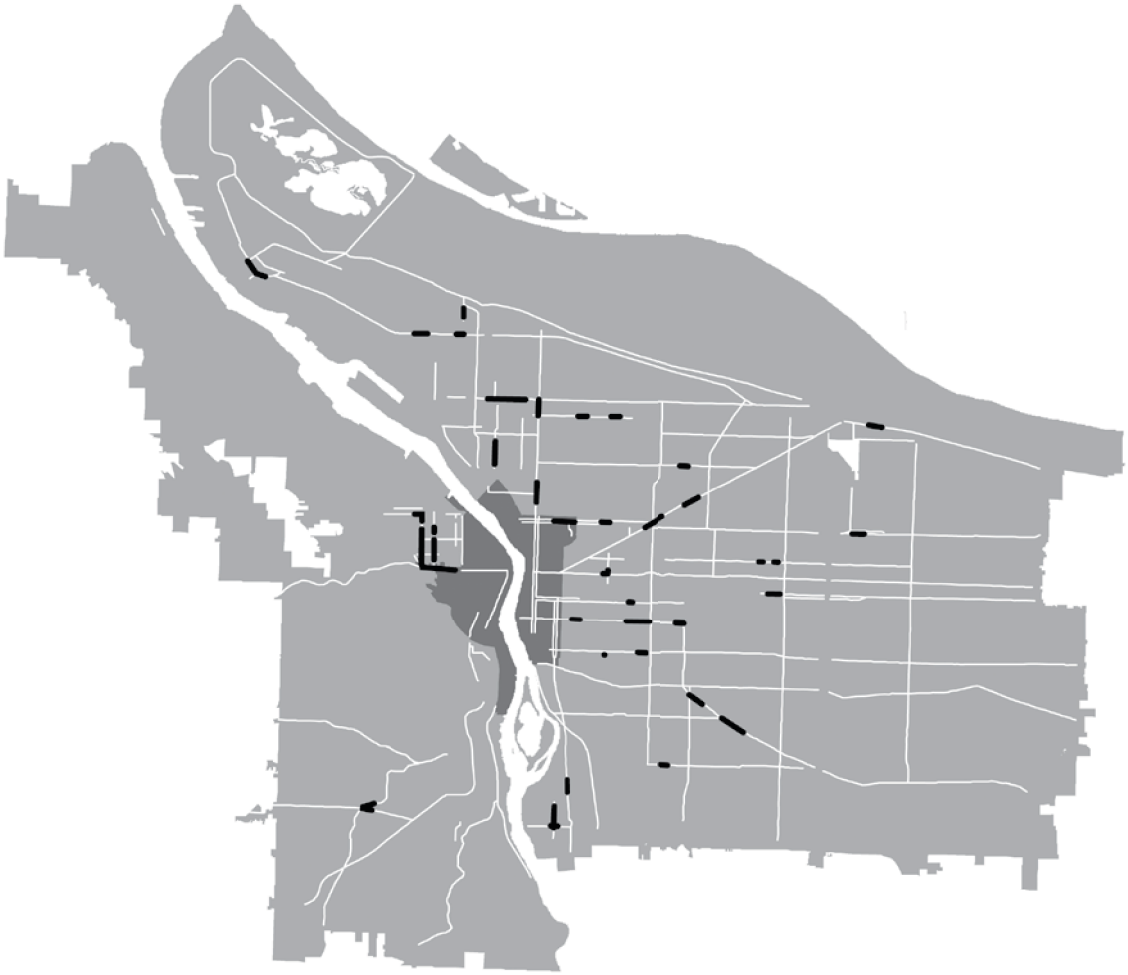
Wide Rights-of-Way

This diagram identifies streets according to their right-of-way width (which includes sidewalks as well as roadway and other street elements). Wide streets may present opportunities for larger buildings due to urban design and solar access considerations. Streets with wide rights-of-way may also allow additional street features, such as enhanced pedestrian, bicycle or stormwater management facilities, especially in the case of streets not intended to accommodate high traffic volumes and that may have excess right-of-way area that is not needed for vehicle circulation. Such streets may be appropriate candidates for improvement as "green connectors," if they serve as routes between significant parks or natural areas.



Clusters of Direct Street Frontage

This diagram identifies locations with concentrations of storefront buildings or other building types that are located adjacent to sidewalks with minimal front setbacks, a pattern associated with traditional main streets. The diagram identifies those street segments where the majority of buildings are located adjacent to the sidewalk along at least two contiguous blocks or 400'. These segments provide a more urban street edge and clearly defined street space than is typical elsewhere, and often serve as the cores of main street commercial districts.



Storefront Commercial Streets (CS Zone)

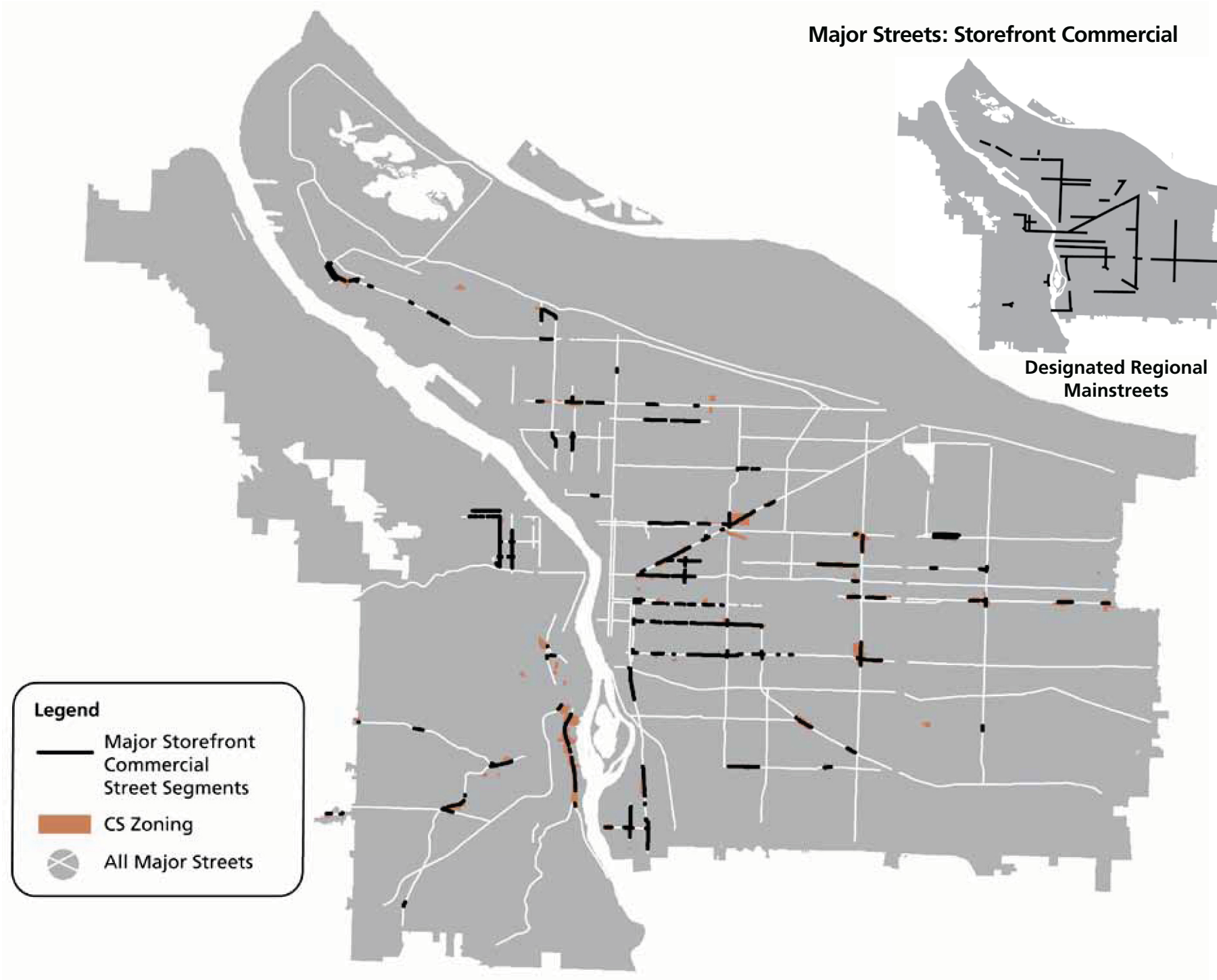
Streets with CS (Storefront Commercial) zoning include the majority of Portland's Inner Neighborhood commercial "main streets," most of which originally developed along streetcar lines. CS zoning also applies in more auto-oriented corridors, primarily at major intersections that are, or are intended to become, commercial hubs. Existing buildings typically range from one to three stories high. Only a portion of street segments with CS zoning have the classic main street configuration of continuous rows of storefront buildings located up against sidewalks. Many street segments typically include a mix of:

- Storefront buildings located adjacent to sidewalks
- Houses or apartment buildings with landscaped setbacks
- Buildings set behind or alongside surface parking lots

Street segments with concentrations of storefront commercial buildings are shown on page 69. These segments serve as the cores of bustling main street business districts, such as Hawthorne, NW 23rd, Belmont and Mississippi, that have become a focus of community life and identify. Most streets segments are fully improved with sidewalks and lined with street trees. CS zoning typically applies to only a narrow band that commonly extends one-lot deep (often just 100') from the street frontage, and frequently directly abuts residentially-zoned properties. Most Storefront Commercial Streets are designated in the 2040 Growth Concept as Main Streets, with some notable exceptions (including SE 13th in Sellwood and NE 28th north of Burnside). However, not all designated Main Street segments have CS zoning, but may instead have the more auto-oriented General Commercial zoning or residential zoning.

Intended future characteristics

Policies and zoning regulations encourage streets with CS zoning to be developed with a continuous street wall of storefront buildings located adjacent to sidewalks, continuing the Streetcar Era storefront commercial pattern and fostering a pedestrian-oriented street environment and a sense of urban enclosure. While commercial buildings are required to include storefront windows, this does not apply to residential development. Development is generally allowed to be up to 45'-high (four stories), taller than most existing buildings.


Major Streets: Storefront Commercial
Designated Regional Mainstreets
Legend
Major Storefront Commercial Street Segments
CS Zoning
All Major Streets

General Commercial Streets (CG Zone)

Streets with CG (General Commercial) zoning are Portland's most geographically widespread commercial street type. They are not only the primary commercial street type in outer neighborhoods that developed in the Postwar period, but are predominant along wide commercial streets in inner neighborhoods, including Sandy, Powell and Foster. General Commercial Streets are generally more auto-oriented, with larger areas devoted to surface parking, than the Storefront Commercial Streets, and typically have a wide right-of-way with multiple vehicle lanes. Single-story buildings are common, which — in combination with the wide streets — provides little sense of urban enclosure. Most General Commercial Streets do not have a high degree of consistency in their built form, but typically include a mix of:

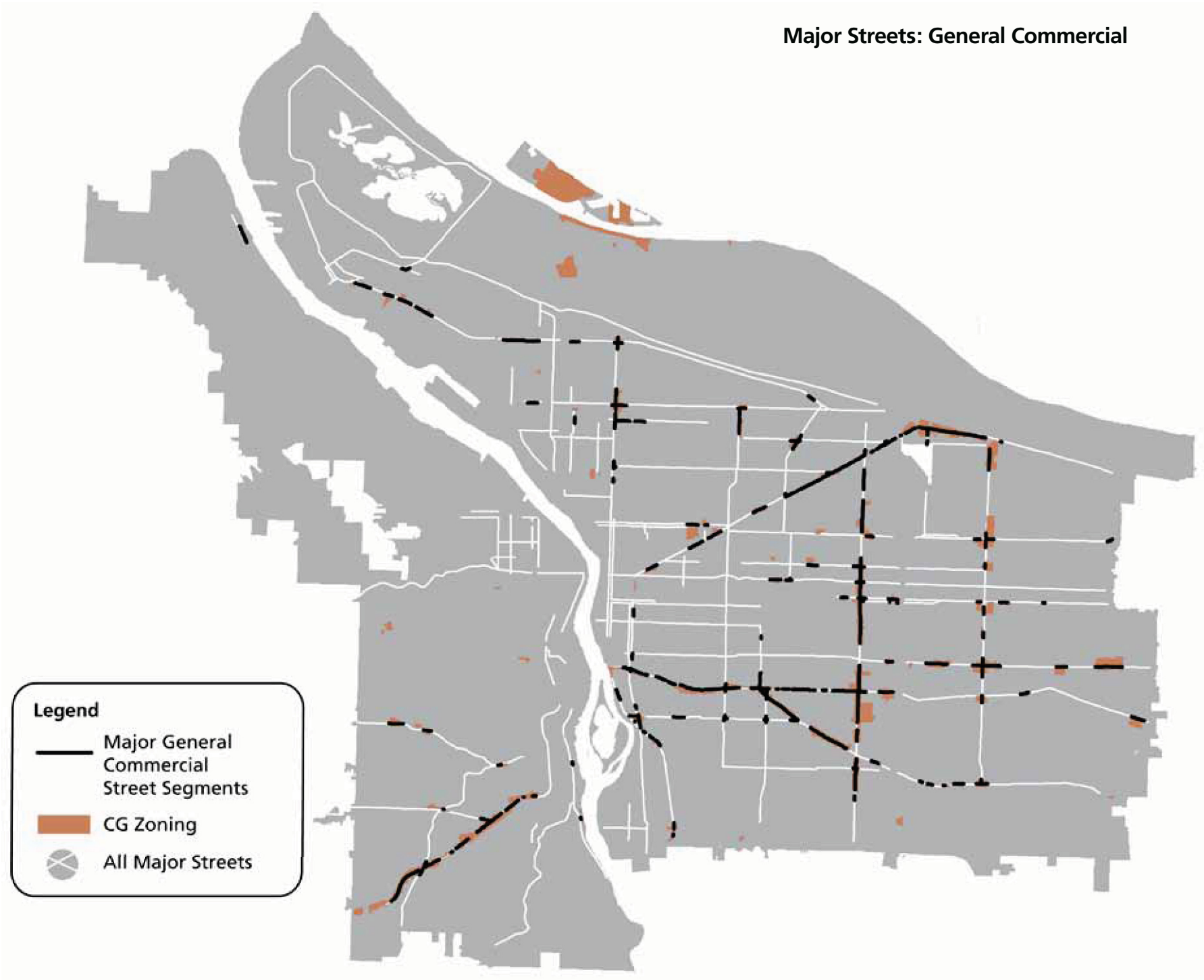
- Buildings set behind surface parking lots
- Buildings located up to sidewalks (usually alongside surface parking)
- Occasional low-rise multifamily buildings or house-type structures

Some General Commercial Streets, especially in close-in areas, are fully improved with sidewalks and street trees, but many streets in outer neighborhood areas have curb-tight sidewalks, or may have segments that entirely lack sidewalks. An example of a street with General Commercial characteristics for which a distinct street treatment has been fostered is SW Macadam Avenue, where treed center medians, planting strips and landscaped building setbacks provide a greener, more vegetated street environment than is typical on Portland's commercial streets. In the 2040 Growth Concept, General Commercial Streets are classified variously as Main Streets (including 82nd Avenue and Sandy Boulevard) or as Corridors (including Powell and Barbur boulevards). These CG-zoned streets typically feature larger sites than is typical for the CS-zoned streets, and include areas that rival or exceed some designated town centers in terms of existing commercial activity or the amount of land zoned for mixed-use development.

Intended future characteristics

Policies and zoning regulations foster a continuation of the existing street frontage mix of storefront buildings and parking lots, and do not require the continuous street wall of buildings that is the intended outcome of the CS zone. Purely residential buildings, with no commercial component, are also allowed and are a common development outcome on these streets. Buildings are generally limited to 45' in height (four stories).

Major Streets: General Commercial



Residential Streets (Multi-Dwelling)

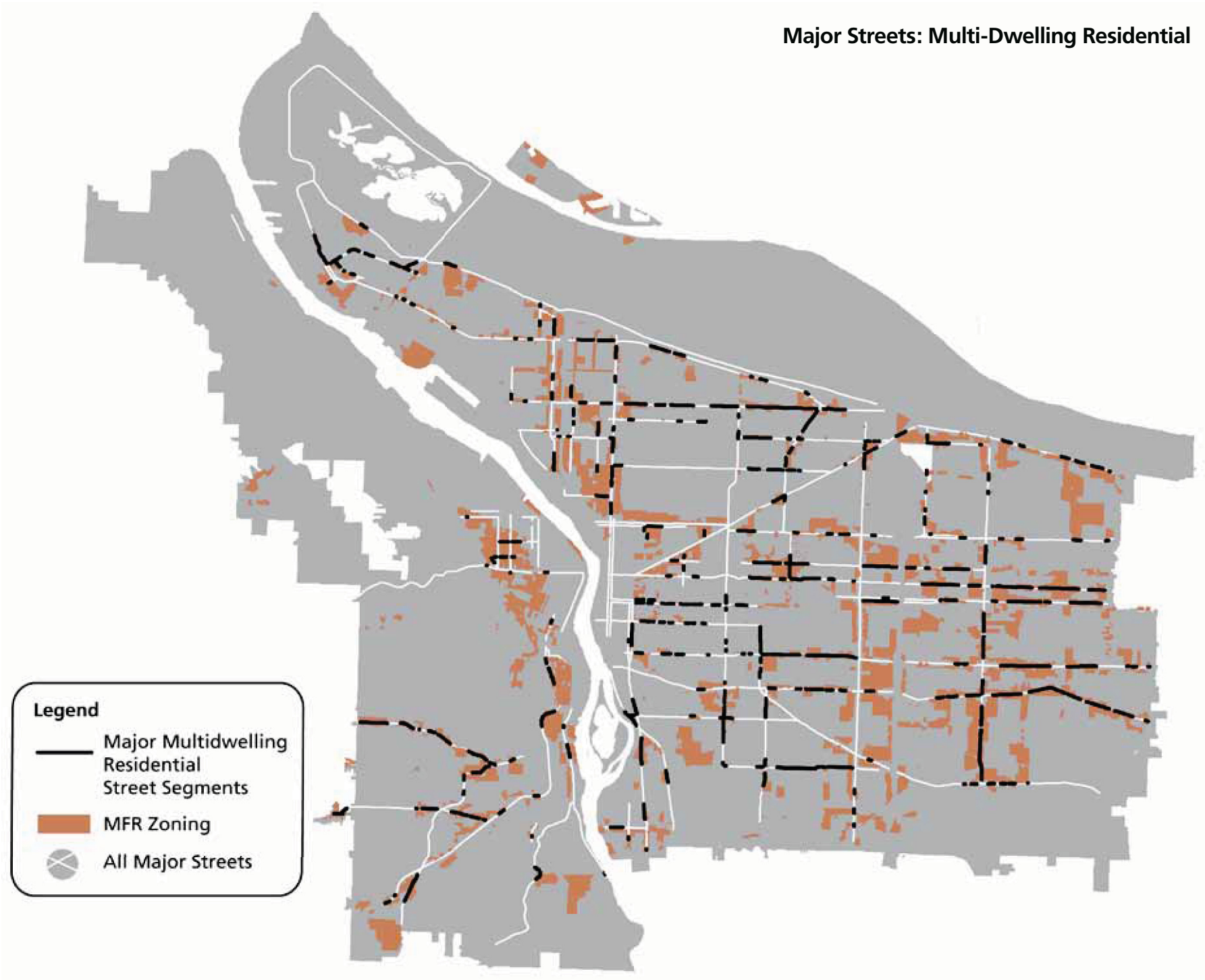
A large portion of Portland's major streets are zoned for multi-dwelling development. These streets are typically lined with residential structures with landscaped setbacks, although some multi-dwelling structures are located adjacent to sidewalks, while others are separated from the street right-of-way by surface parking lots. Detached houses, typically with landscaped front setbacks, are also common and remain predominant along many major streets with multi-dwelling zoning. An issue related to residential buildings located on major streets are the negative impacts from high-levels of vehicle traffic.

Most the Multi-Dwelling Residential Streets are classified in the 2040 Growth Concept as Corridors, although some lengthy segments are also classified as Main Streets.

Intended future characteristics

Some multi-dwelling residential zones require a continuation of prevalent patterns of landscaped front setbacks. However, the higher-density multi-dwelling zones common along many major streets (R1 and RH) allow buildings to be built close to sidewalks, while also allowing deeper setbacks. This range of allowances provides little predictability regarding the future character of the street frontages that will emerge along these residential streets as redevelopment occurs. The predominant multi-dwelling zoning on these major streets are the medium-density R1 and R2 zones, which allow buildings up to four stories tall, which could potentially contribute to a strong street edge of buildings (most construction, however, has been two- to three-stories tall). City street design classifications do not differentiate between residentially-zoned and commercially-zoned major streets. Currently, there is little policy or design guidance regarding the intended built form of Portland's multi-dwelling zoned corridors.

Major Streets: Multi-Dwelling Residential



Residential Streets (Single-Dwelling)

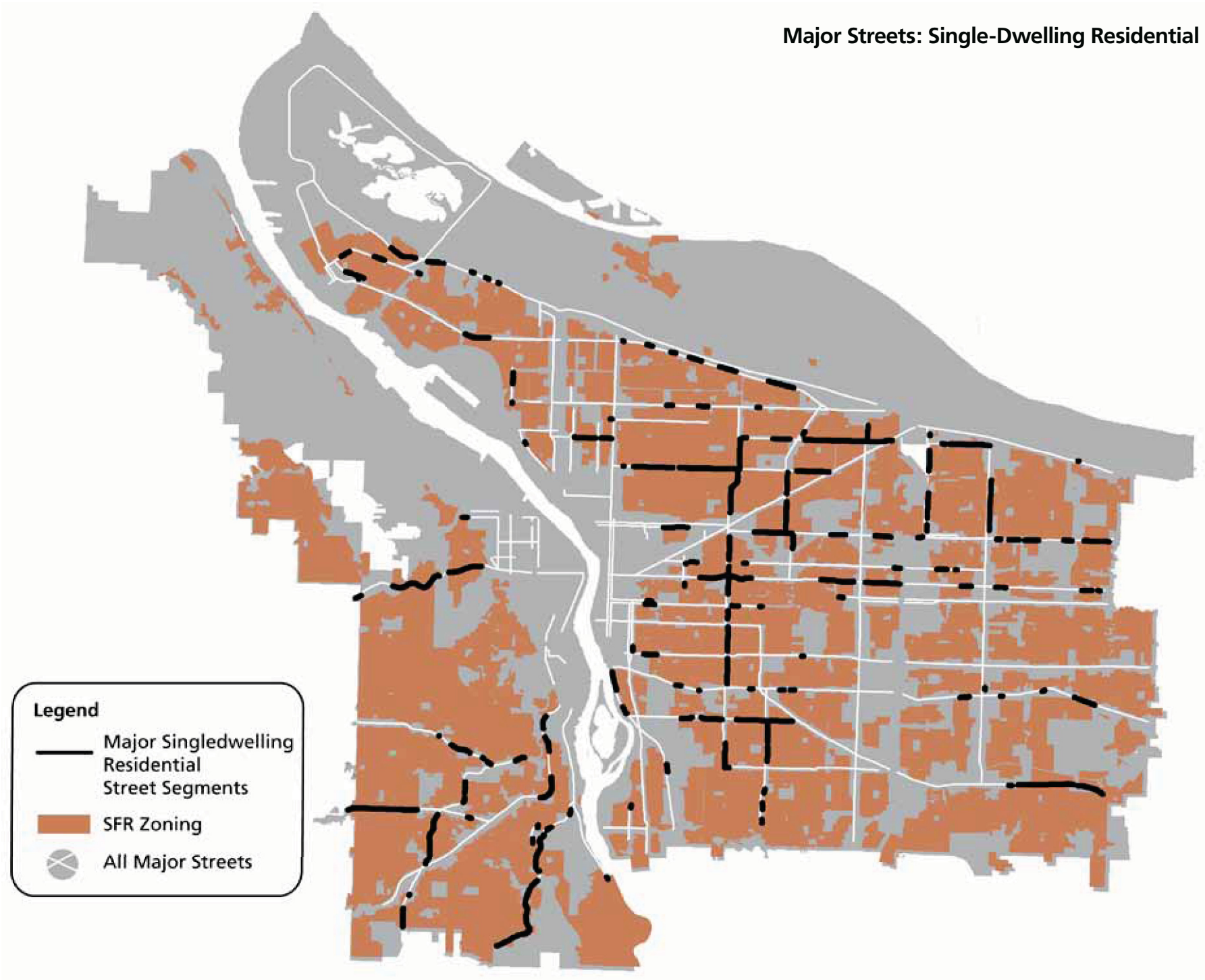
Many segments of major streets are zoned for single-dwelling housing. Development patterns and street frontage characteristics along these segments are typically similar to those of the contiguous neighborhood residential areas (see the Residential Area Typologies section) and usually feature landscaped front setbacks. In the Western Neighborhoods, however, houses are usually set back further from major streets than is typically on other streets, and are often further separated by steep slopes or thick vegetation.

Most of these major streets with single-dwelling residential zoning are designated as Corridors in the 2040 Growth Concept.

Intended future characteristics

The intended future characteristics of these major streets is the same as generally applies to the single-dwelling zones.

Major Streets: Single-Dwelling Residential



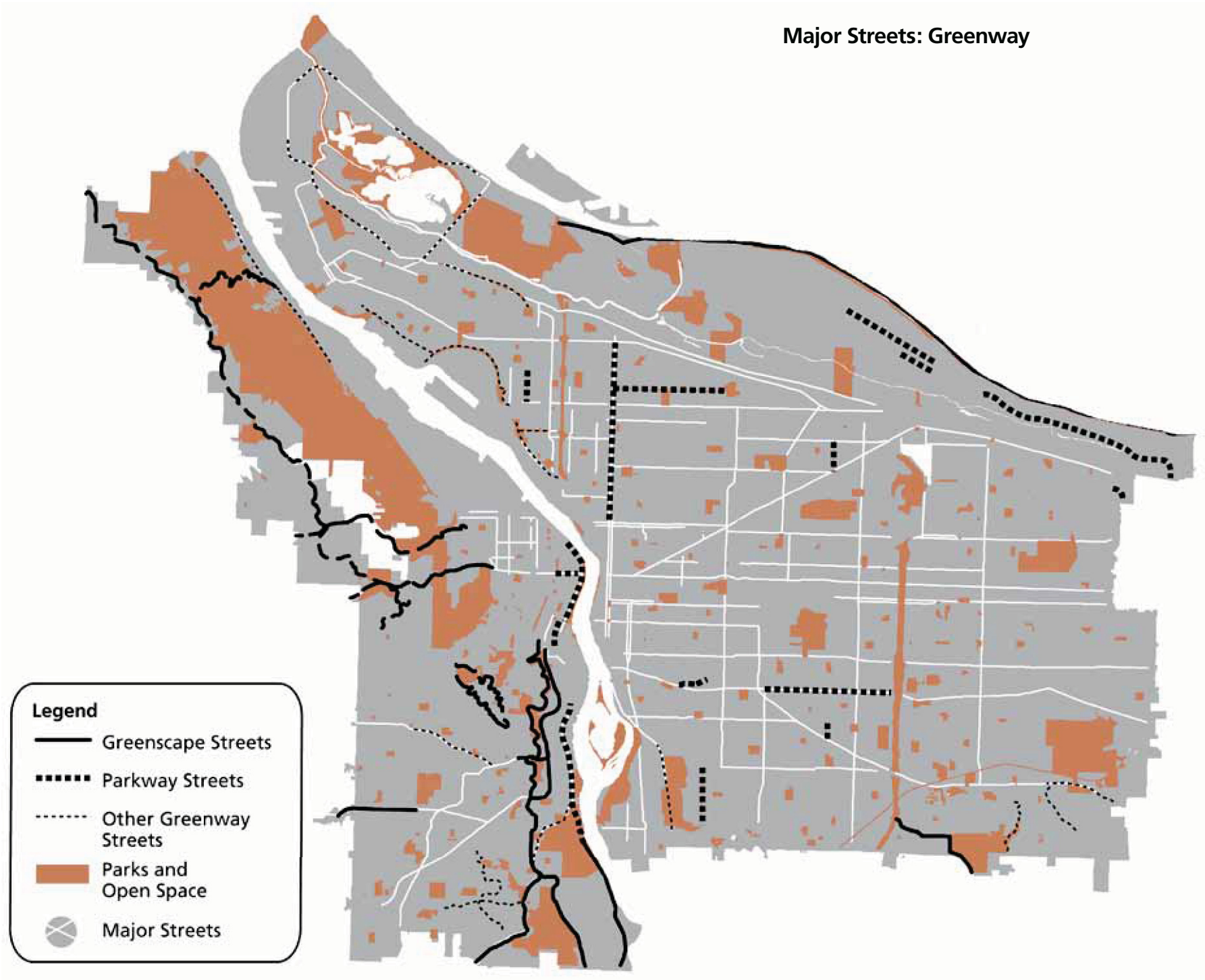
Greenway Streets

Greenway Streets are those streets that have a distinctly green, vegetated character that sets them apart from other street types. These streets include:

1. Greenscape Streets, as designated in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan, which are arterials lined by natural areas and other forested or landscaped settings.
2. Parkways, which are streets with center medians planted with trees.
3. Other greenscape-type streets, that have similar green edge features to Greenscape Streets, but are not designed as such in the Transportation Element

Some Greenway Streets, such as Cornell, Burnside, Terwilliger, Barbur and Macadam, provide the sense of a green belt around the western approaches to the Central City, enhancing a sense of transition and entry and of a city surrounded by nature. Some Greenway Streets are adjacent to creeks, so that the vegetation also serves an important environmental function. Some more minor streets are notable as intensely-vegetated "tree tunnels," more natural than urban, such as SW Lancaster and Arnold and SE Deardorff and Barbara Welch roads. Parkways such as Reed College Place and Ainsworth serve as distinctive linear green features through more urban neighborhoods, and could potentially become part of a system of green connectors through the city. Other streets, such as Willamette Boulevard, offer unique opportunities for open space and views, as well as providing possibilities for important recreational connections.

Many of the streets identified here, such as the Parkways and designated Greenscape Streets (the latter primarily located in the Western Neighborhoods), have supporting policies and implementation; others do not.


Major Streets: Greenway
Legend
Greenscape Streets
Parkway Streets
Other Greenway Streets
Parks and Open Space
Major Streets

Challenges and Opportunities

Residential Areas

1. Compatibility. Existing community plans call for new development in residential areas to be compatible with and respect existing neighborhood characteristics. Is this compatibility with existing characteristics still a priority for community members?

a. If so, what characteristics are especially valued by community members? What should be continued into the future?

b. The current citywide Comprehensive Plan document does not provide guidance regarding aspirations for the future built form and character of neighborhoods. This topic is left to the City's many community and neighborhood plans. Should an updated citywide Comprehensive Plan provide some guidance on how desired neighborhood characteristics vary across the city?

c. Despite significant differences in neighborhood characteristics and neighborhood aspirations, regulations that guide the form of new development usually apply the same way across the city. Should more be done to ensure that our implementation tools result in outcomes that respond to the distinct character of different parts of the city?

d. Design-related development standards now focus largely on the public street frontages of buildings. In most residential areas, the mid-block realm of backyards is a characteristic feature. Should a greater priority be placed in continuing these patterns of mid-block open spaces?

2. Balance between compatibility, sustainability and other priorities. What relationship is there between priorities for new development to continue existing characteristics and community interest in fostering sustainable development practices? Are there conflicts that need to be resolved or relative priorities that need to be discussed? (For example, a topic that has been raised is that past development practices and the urban patterns that have emerged have not been responsive to solar access needs, and that new development, as part of an emphasis on sustainable development practices, should be designed around solar access, departing from existing patterns if need be.) How should priorities for community-responsive design be balanced with priorities for housing affordability, accomplishment of density objectivities, design innovation, etc.?

3. Role of street standards in responding to community characteristics. The same residential street standards, based on inner neighborhood street characteristics, apply citywide. Are there opportunities to foster additional street design approaches that are more responsive to the distinct characteristics, built and natural, of different areas of the city — accommodating, for example, the treed or vegetated street edge arrangements common in some Western and Eastern neighborhoods, or the constraints on street width that result from the steep slopes of the West Hills?

4. Future possibilities for Eastern Portland's block structure. In Eastern Portland, larger blocks and ongoing redevelopment provide an opportunity for fostering block structures that can accommodate a broader range of uses (open space, secondary or alley access, variety of development types, etc.) than are possible on the smaller 200' by 200' blocks of central Portland. The area's longer blocks, with fewer vehicular intersections (and fewer vehicle conflicts with pedestrians and bicycles) than in central Portland, could also provide benefits. An in-depth analysis could identify new approaches for the future of Eastern Portland's large blocks and street system. This could include an analysis of international block types, in comparison to Portland's, to gain insight on block structure models that could inform consideration of opportunities for Eastern Portland.

Mixed-Use Centers

1. Designated centers in the right places. Should there be a reconsideration of the geographic distribution of designated centers to address gaps in the areas of the city to which they provide services?

2. Relationship between centers and corridors. What is the relationship between the major street corridors and adjacent designated town centers, such as Lents and West Portland? The Interstate Avenue Corridor and its sequence of light rail station areas is a corridor which has assumed a prominent role in Portland's urban form and growth, and whose intended development scale and concentration of uses dwarfs many designated centers. Some centers are relatively undifferentiated in their allowed scale of development from the broader commercial corridors of which they are a part (e.g., the West Portland Town Center and Barbur Boulevard). Should more be done to prioritize development in the centers?

Industrial Districts

1. Hardscape character and sustainability. Are there ways to respect the "hardscape" character of the small-block urban industrial districts, while accommodating prioritization of vegetated stormwater management approaches?

2. Role of street standards. What is the role of the City's street design standards in fostering the continuation or enhancement of the distinct urban form characteristics of the industrial districts?

Major Streets

1. Clarity regarding Main Streets and Corridors. The current 2040 Growth Concept designations for major streets, typically designated as either "Main Streets" or "Corridors," do not provide clear guidance as to their intended future urban form or land uses, particularly when considered in combination with their Portland Comprehensive Plan map designations. Should more be done to provide clarity regarding the future intended urban form of Portland's major streets, especially given that there is often a significant gap between the scale of existing development and allowed development capacity?

2. Reconsideration of role of major corridors. Given their development potential, large sites, commercial uses and key transportation functions, some major street corridors have enormous potential for a key role in the form and function of the city. Some of these corridors, moreover, are under consideration for future streetcar alignments. Currently, there is little clear guidance regarding the future urban form and street environment characteristics of these key corridors, although there has been emerging community interest in cultivating these areas as more pedestrian-oriented, community-supportive places. The most prominent corridors that lack a clear vision are the East 82nd Avenue/I-205 corridor (where light rail is now located), Southeast Powell/Foster and Southwest Barbur. Should a priority be placed on examining the future of major street and corridors such as these? Can these corridors assume a greater role in uniting and knitting together the city, in ways that focus on their potential as places and focused activity rather than serving primarily just as transportation through routes?

3. Differentiation between commercial and residential corridors. Existing street frontage development standards and right-of-way standards often apply similarly to both commercially- and residentially-zoned major streets. Should more be done to cultivate different street environments and building-to-street relationships for these types of streets, given their different functions and needs? Should the "Corridors" designation be divided into commercial and residential classifications to clarify fundamental differences in their intended futures?

4. Taller buildings on wider streets. Should consideration be given to allowing or fostering taller buildings on wider streets? This could take advantage of efficiencies provided by their typically greater transportation capacity and the solar access and urban design opportunities their greater width provides. Currently, the same scale of development is allowed along streets regardless of street characteristics.

5. Form-based design along Storefront Commercial Streets. Should more be done to provide predictability that development along Storefront Commercial Streets is designed to accommodate retail or commercial activity, contributing to a storefront commercial street environment? Currently, development can be designed to be purely residential, with no accommodation for the possibility of future commercial uses.

6. Greenscape streets. Should consideration be given to fostering green, vegetated edges along some major streets, subject to community interest and urban design considerations? Current citywide regulations tend to encourage a hard edge of buildings located up to sidewalks along transit streets zoned for commercial or higher-density residential development. Vegetated street design elements, such as planting strips, medians or landscaped building setbacks, could respond to neighborhood characteristics or contribute to Portland's network of designated "Greenscape" streets, without necessarily precluding density or a quality pedestrian environment. Related to this is the opportunity of additions to the system of Greenscape Streets that are currently designated in the Transportation Element of the Comprehensive Plan. These additions could be used to expand the system beyond their primary focus on streets located in the West Hills, acknowledging and fostering greenscape characteristics where they exist and are valued elsewhere in the city.

SE Belmont Street at 34th Ave. The street is used by people young and old, to get from one place to another, hang out or just be. Bicycles share the road with cars, even in the parking bay.

Public Realm

The public realm is the system of public spaces, streets as well as parks and other open spaces, along with the public frontage of buildings and other edge features that together form the physical environment in which public life is experienced in the city. Besides publicly-owned spaces, the public realm also includes privately-owned spaces that are used or allowed to be used by the general public.

In this analysis, the public realm includes:

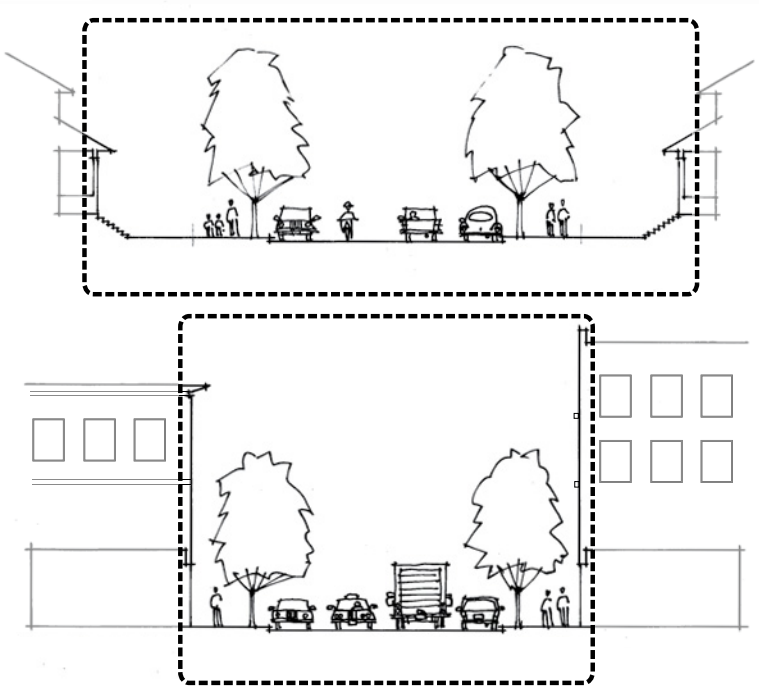
- Streets
- Sidewalks
- Parks
- Squares
- Plazas
- Alleys
- Trails

These public realm spaces do not exist in isolation. They are framed and shaped by, and interface with, adjacent development on private property – the "private realm" that is the focus of the next chapter in this report. The arrangement and configuration of buildings in the private realm help to delineate the edges of the public realm, providing shape to its spaces. The public and private realms act in concert to form the physical environment of Portland's places.

The public realm is where placemaking traditionally happens. The public realm of streets and parks represents a large amount, nearly 30%, of Portland's land area. Choices regarding the public realm's future use, design and expansion therefore provide the community with key opportunities for directly shaping Portland's future. This chapter provides basic information about the public realm as it currently exists and introduces ideas for how these public spaces, particularly streets, might fulfill a broader range of community purposes over time.

The public realm is the public- and semi-public spaces that "belongs to everyone and yet no one in particular."

— Peter Rowe, *Civic Realism*



Portland's Public Realm Considered

This section is a preliminary and broad-brush assessment of Portland's public realm, including the public realm in the neighborhoods beyond Downtown. It describes the varying characteristics of the public realm in different parts of the city as it is in 2009.

This chapter's main purpose is to provide basic information about the public realm and to spark conversation about how the collection of public spaces, publicly- or privately-owned, might evolve or be transformed — or not — in the upcoming decades. Given existing conditions and projected increasing population in different parts of the city, how might the public realm be modified, transformed and managed over time to meet the needs of the additional residents and allow a wider range of activities?

This assessment looks at streets, sidewalks and other public spaces predominantly used for movement. The linear form of these types of public spaces suggests movement or moving through the space. Streets and sidewalks, though, can also be used as space for staying, as one would at a sidewalk café or while interacting with neighbors at a street fair or block party. This sub-section also takes a brief look at alleys and trails.

It is followed by a section that focuses on parks — a part of the public realm that is characteristically non-linear space and that covers a broad area. The type's form suggests a space for staying, sitting or just being. This sub-section also takes a closer look at the range of publicly- and privately-owned public spaces, including parks, squares and plazas.

The last sub-section looks at the future challenges and opportunities — based on existing achievements here and elsewhere — to improving and expanding the public realm in different parts of the city. It offers some ideas on how the public realm might be re-imagined or re-purposed in strategic locations throughout of the city. It looks at how the city might enhance streets to improve their physical space and function, both for people and for nature. This includes the possibility of "green connectors" that help improve movement and safety for pedestrians and bicyclists while helping to manage stormwater and connect more of the city to parks, natural areas and schools. The section also takes a look at how more urban plazas could be created as public community gathering places in areas that are a focus of community activity.

As the city's population grows, not only can these ideas help improve travel options and safety between meaningful places within the city's neighborhoods, but it can also help address climate change, air and water quality and health issues. Improving the overall experience in the public realm for walkers and bicyclists can help in reducing sole reliance on the automobile. While driving will likely remain a preferred mode of transportation for longer distances (three miles or greater), walking and bicycling can increasingly become the preferred way of getting around town for shorter distances, which constitute the majority of trips. City policies, regulations and actions that increase attractive opportunities for a variety of travel options and reduce automobile travel can, in the long run, result in less pollution and healthier, more active citizens.

In the right places at the right time, a high-quality public realm can also foster increased social and economic interactions, exchanges which are vital for good living, no matter what part of the city. Overall, appropriate investments in the public realm in a few key locations can make a big difference in improving how Portlanders' experience day-to-day life in the city and in their neighborhoods.

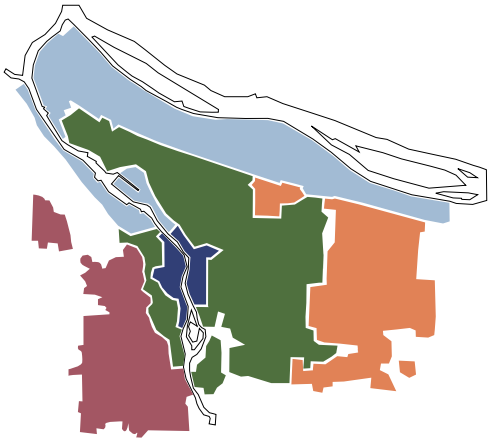
How might the public realm be modified, transformed and managed over time to allow a wider range of activities?

Downtown/Central City

East Portland

Southwest

Close-in North/Northeast



Recall the Pattern Areas

The Patterns section of this report introduced the concept of five primary pattern areas, or geographies, in Portland; each with its own distinct urban form characteristics that continue to shape the way development occurs. The neighborhood pattern areas include:

- Inner neighborhoods, with a consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks;
- Eastern neighborhoods, where irregular blocks and large, often deep, lots are common; and the
- Western neighborhoods, whose form is shaped by hilly terrain, streams and other natural features.

Different patterns of development across the city, creating differences in the public realm environment of streets and in the other open spaces between buildings.

Facts About Portland's Public Realm

1. **Portland has a diverse and expansive public realm.** Presented here are its various components:
   - **Streets** make up most of the city's public realm: **16,000 acres**, about **18% of the city's land area** are in streets. About **120 miles are unimproved**.
   - **Sidewalks** are an extension of the street, its edge. About **2,400 miles** of sidewalk — but of varying quality and distribution — contribute to the city's public realm. Older, closer-in Portland neighborhoods have more completed sidewalk systems. Over 70% of streets have sidewalks on both sides. East Portland and Southwest neighborhoods have far fewer completed sidewalk systems. In East Portland, about 20% to 30% of streets have sidewalks on both sides of the street; in Southwest neighborhoods, just over 10%. In some cases, sidewalks are on at least one side of the street. Much of the sidewalk system in East and Southwest Portland is discontinuous.
   - **Parks** are the next major part of the city's public realm: about **10,000 acres**, occupying **11% of the city's land area**. Parks are used for a variety of purposes, ranging from passive uses to more active recreation. Parks and schoolyards often work in conjunction with one another (albeit under different property owners) to serve the local community with playgrounds and green open space.
   - **Squares and Plazas** are most prominent downtown: including **10-plus whole-block squares** (Pioneer Courthouse Square, Keller Fountain and Jamison Square among others), the multi-block Park Blocks and numerous privately-owned plazas at the entryways of buildings. Fewer smaller-scaled squares and plazas are located in neighborhoods, including Harold Kelley Plaza in the Hollywood District (publicly-owned) and the courtyard at Mississippi Commons (privately-owned). Other notable plazas include community-enhanced intersections, including Sunnyside Piazza near SE Belmont and Sherrett Square in Sellwood.
   - **Parking Lots** (privately-owned) abound in the city and sometimes function as extensions of the public realm. Some transform into farmer's markets a few hours a week (Ecotrust Building/Pearl Farmers Market , Alberta Food Co-op/Northeast Farmers Market). Some even function as a de-facto public square or plaza in the form of a food court (e.g., the food-cart cluster at SE 12th and Hawthorne). And some have even been re-purposed completely into a bona-fide square or plaza (Pioneer Courthouse Square).
   - **Alleys** make up over **100 miles** of the public realm. Often underutilized, they may provide opportunities for new pedestrian and bicycle connections or new ways of using the public realm beyond trash collection or rear driveway or garage access.
   - **Trails** provide over **100 miles** of walking- and bicycling-specific recreation or connection opportunities. Most notable include the Springwater Trail, Eastside Esplanade, Columbia Slough Trail, Wildwood Trail and Marine Drive trail, all of which are part of the larger regional 40-mile loop.
2. **Portland has prioritized its planning toward supporting publicly-owned public spaces and toward fostering buildings that complement and interface with this public realm, which is a key Portland design value.** Portland regulates against gated streets, limits the use of private streets and encourages building fronts to face the public realm.
3. **Portland has concentrated on moving toward a multi-functional public realm, with some notable successes.** The city has transformed some of its public realm into "great places", most of which are concentrated in Downtown — Pioneer Square, Jamison Square, Keller Fountain, the Esplanade, the transit mall. Beyond the Central City, however, Portland has fewer examples of remarkable public spaces or grand boulevards. Within the closer-in neighborhoods, the city has produced some multi-functioning residential neighborhood streets, but the city's major streets are still primarily for vehicle traffic. Major streets' typical right-of-way width, 60'- to 80'-wide, leaves little room for boulevard treatments or other amenities found in the world's great streets.
4. **Placemaking traditionally occurs in the public realm.** Given the city's multitude of streets, the best chances to foster remaking parts of the city into more remarkable places lie in pursuing opportunities to rethink and reprioritize the use of the space of city streets. This could include a shift away from primarily transportation-only, automobile-dominated uses towards a more multi-modal use of the right-of-way.
5. **The characteristics of the public realm play a key part in defining the form of different neighborhood types.** Differences between the Western, Inner and Eastern neighborhoods are evident in the general patterns of streets (see map opposite page) and related issues regarding street connectivity and the availability of sidewalks. As described in the neighborhood typologies section of the Patterns chapter, these differences also express themselves in the detailed aspects of the public realm, such as whether or not planting strips and street trees are part of the street environment. Also as noted in the Patterns chapter, there are opportunities to design future improvements to streets and other parts of the public realm in ways that acknowledge valued community characteristics.

Portland's Public Realm

Two Basic Types of Space

The public realm can be categorized into two very basic types of space:

- **Movement Space = Streets + Sidewalks + Alleys + Trails**
- **Staying Space = Parks + Squares + Plazas**

Sidewalk Downtown

Sidewalk adjacent to cafe in Southeast

Movement Space

Streets and sidewalks are the most common "movement spaces." Movement spaces tend to be linear in form. They are pathways that connect together destinations: places or buildings to where people want to get. Although the linear nature of theses spaces invite movement through space, they can often be used as place for lingering, sitting or standing, such as sidewalk cafés. In this assessment, alleys and trails are also viewed as movement spaces.

Pioneer Square

Strolling through the South Park Blocks

Staying Space

This classification includes parks, squares and civic and commercial plazas. Most are publicly-owned. These spaces tend to encourage people to sit, stand, linger, gather and other forms staying activities. This type of space is also used for movement such as walking or other movement type activities.

Movement Space = Streets + Sidewalks + Alleys + Trails

Streets and **sidewalks** are the lifeblood of a city. They enable people to get from one destination to another — and back again. They are the most frequently used form of public space. They also make up the majority of the public realm. Portland streets cover approximately 16,000 acres of land.

But not all streets and sidewalks are created equal. In more densely-populated parts of the city, streets are often narrow. Sidewalks are wide and tree-lined. Buildings are built right up to the edge of the sidewalk or property line.

Beyond the inner neighborhoods, most major streets are relatively wide. **Major streets** in many cases are four or more lanes wide, including a center turn lane. Conversely, sidewalks tend to be narrower or even non-existent, especially in outer East Portland and Southwest. They are often "curb tight," or have minimal buffering from adjacent traffic. Streets and sidewalks in these less urban areas of the city are more often oriented towards ease of travel for cars and trucks than they are for pedestrians or bicyclists. **Minor streets** in residential areas also sometimes serve as places where neighbors interact and children play, particularly where traffic is low.

Alleys and **trails** are also movement spaces. Like streets and sidewalks, alleys in Portland vary in function, design and use depending on location in the city. Notable clusters of alleys can be found in the North, Northeast and Southeast, including Ladd's Addition. Trails make up a smaller part of the movement spaces, but provide vital space for recreation and pedestrian-oriented "green connections."

Variation in the Streetscape

In Portland, the streetscape varies widely. In Downtown Portland and close-in neighborhoods, the streetscape is clearly defined by streets with sidewalks on both sides and buildings set closely to the property's edge. As previously described in the Neighborhood Typologies section, this urban form is rooted in the dominant modes of transportation when they were created: walking and streetcar. Slower speed was the norm. Thus, clusters of places to live, work and conduct other daily business were built much closer together.

Beyond the inner neighborhoods, in less urban and lower-density areas, the streetscape arcs more toward automobile-oriented features and scale. These are parts of the city that were developed or platted with the car specifically in mind. After the Second World War, buoyed by a cultural ethos that embraced the automobile (it provided new found mobility and freedom), decades of development followed that required more space for cars and trucks. Freeways, highways, arterials, turn lanes, driveways, drive-throughs and parking lots became the norm. The prevailing streetscape in these then-newly urbanizing areas tended to be framed by low-lying buildings with wide parking lots between them and the street. And sidewalks — places for pedestrians — were often not built. The pattern and style of development still persists today.

Notably in East and Southwest Portland, sidewalks are still few and far between. Where there are sidewalks, they are often narrow, "curb tight" and frequently discontinuous. Literally and figuratively, these areas are where the sidewalk (system) ends.

"Streetscape" Defined

The **streetscape**, in its simplest form, is defined by the street frontage: the ensemble of the street, sidewalks and surrounding buildings defining the edge. It is what the street looks like in cross-section from edge to edge (building-edge to building-edge). The character of the streetscape varies from more urban Downtown and close-in neighborhoods to less urban edge neighborhoods (parts of the North, Northeast and Southeast districts and much of East and Southwest Portland).

MORE URBAN

Downtown/Close-in

Downtown/Close-in


Close-in neighborhood


Edge neighborhood


Edge neighborhood

LESS URBAN

Major Streets

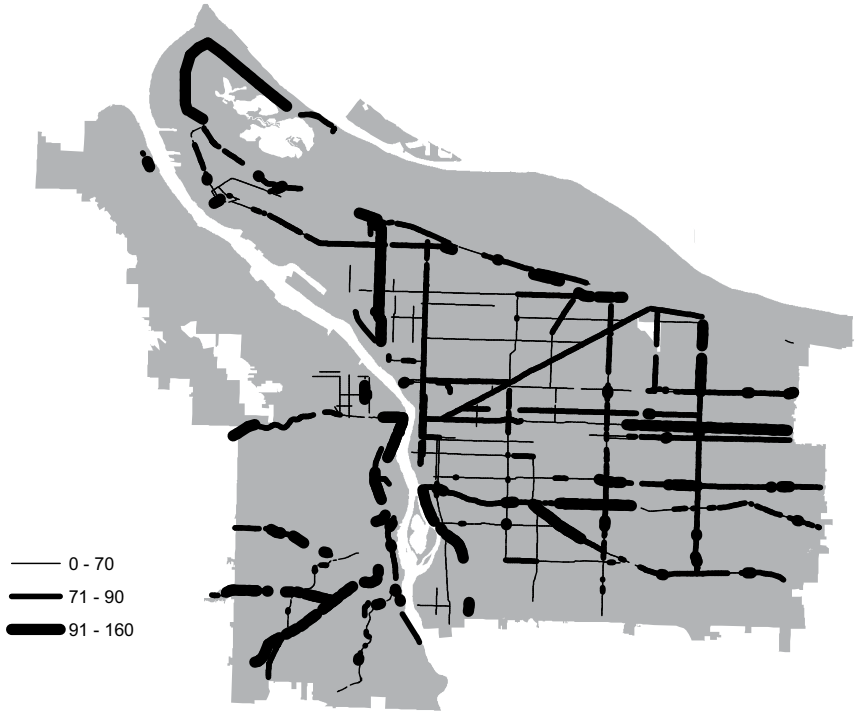
Portland's major streets serve as throughways for traffic but also as settings for commercial districts and for higher-density residential development. The public realm environment of major streets is distinct from that of surrounding neighborhood areas and is highly variable among the different types of major streets. As described in the Patterns chapter, these streets include traditional main streets, auto-oriented commercial corridors and residential corridors.

The public realm of commercial streets, such as main streets lined with storefronts, have often been the area in neighborhoods where pedestrian activity is most concentrated, providing opportunities for community interaction and often serving as the focus for public life in neighborhoods. Traditional main streets, with storefronts immediately adjacent to sidewalks, provide a strong interface between the activities inside and outside the buildings. Outdoor café and restaurant seating, when located on or adjacent to sidewalks, also helps activate the public realm, strongly integrating the street with its edges.

"Strip commercial" streets developed in the post-WWII period were designed primarily for traffic movement and have a poorly-defined public realm which is typically dominated by multiple lanes of traffic. Rather than sidewalks with adjacent storefronts, buildings are often separated from sidewalks (which sometimes do not even exist) by parking lots, thus lacking an active interface with the public realm.

Major streets that go through residential areas present different public realm issues. Their design and the extent to which this mitigates traffic impacts has significant impacts on the livability of adjacent residences. These streets also serve as the public space and setting for adjacent housing, which is often multifamily with limited outdoor spaces.

Major Street ROW Width



Streetcar Era main street: strong interface between café and street activity.

Auto-oriented commercial street: little cross-activity between street and buildings.

Major Streets

Minor Streets and Sidewalks

Minor streets (primarily residential and not intended for major through traffic) make up most of Portland's streets. As described in the Patterns section, the characteristics of residential streets vary in different parts of the city. In closer-in neighborhoods, primarily built or platted before the 1930s, most of the residential streets have sidewalks, planting strips and street trees on both sides of the street. In contrast, in much of Eastern and Western Portland the sidewalk system is discontinuous and fragmented.

The notable rise of development in these parts of the city, mostly during the post-war period of auto-oriented suburbanization, began when these areas were still outside the City's jurisdiction. Sidewalks were not required in these areas before they were annexed to Portland. As a result, many streets do not have sidewalks. Where there are sidewalks, many end abruptly or front only the edge of a single property. In some cases, a sidewalk may be on one side of the street but not the other.

The public realm of residential streets is often where neighbors most frequently interact on a casual basis. Children play on sidewalks as well as in the roadway of quiet streets, and play activity often takes place across sidewalks and front yards. In older neighborhoods, this public realm area of interaction also includes the porches and stoops of residences. Planting strips are sometimes extensions of front gardens, or are used to grow vegetables, blurring distinctions between the publicly- and privately-owned parts of the public realm.

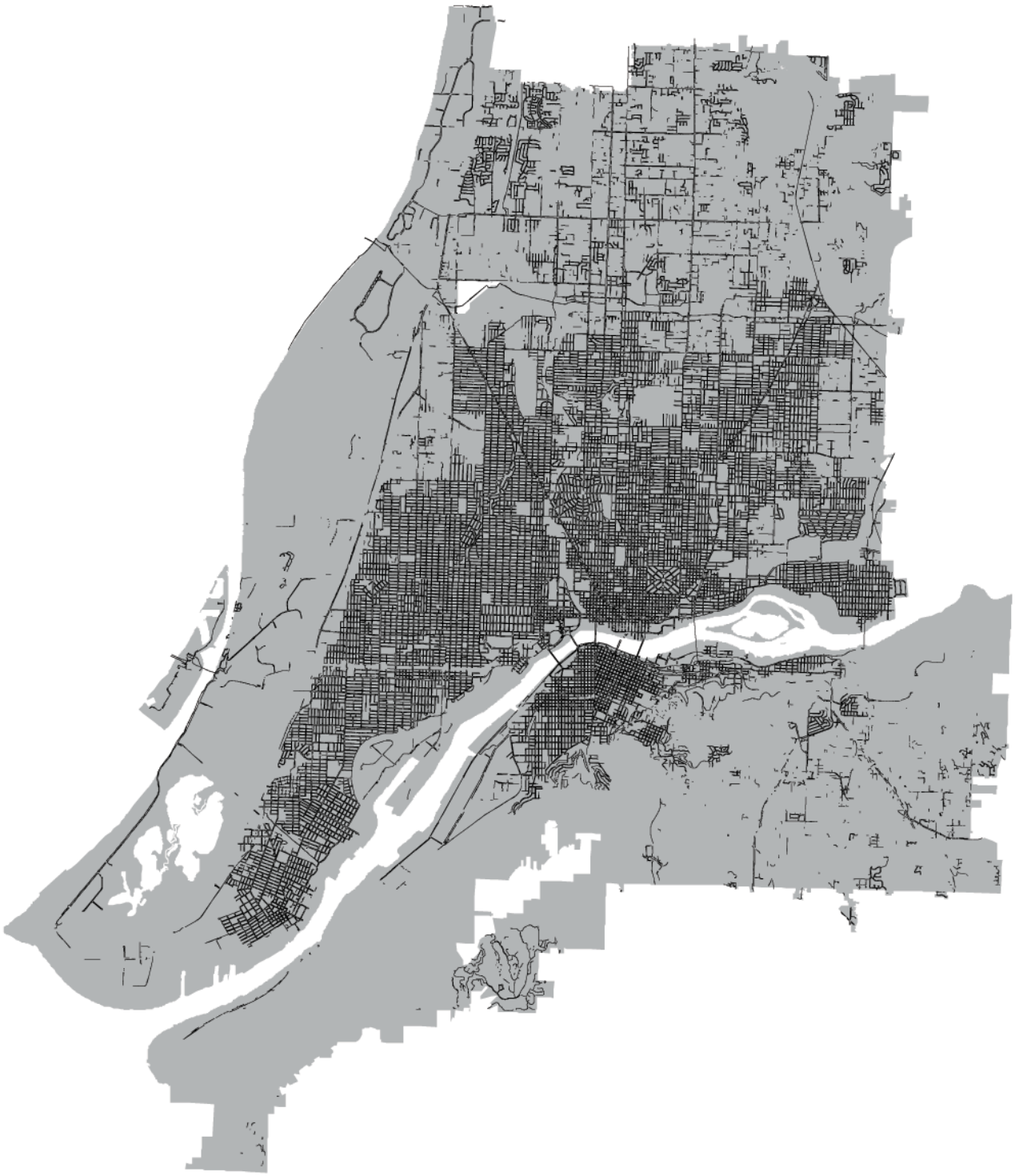
Minor Streets

Street in Northeast. Complete street with sidewalks on both sides of the street. A row of on-street parking, street trees and a planter strip buffer pedestrians from traffic.

Street in East. Incomplete street; no sidewalks on either side of the street. Are sidewalks necessary, given the relatively low-density development pattern in the area?

Street in Southwest. Sidewalk ends abruptly. Current regulations require new developments to include sidewalk improvements in the R.O.W. abutting the property.

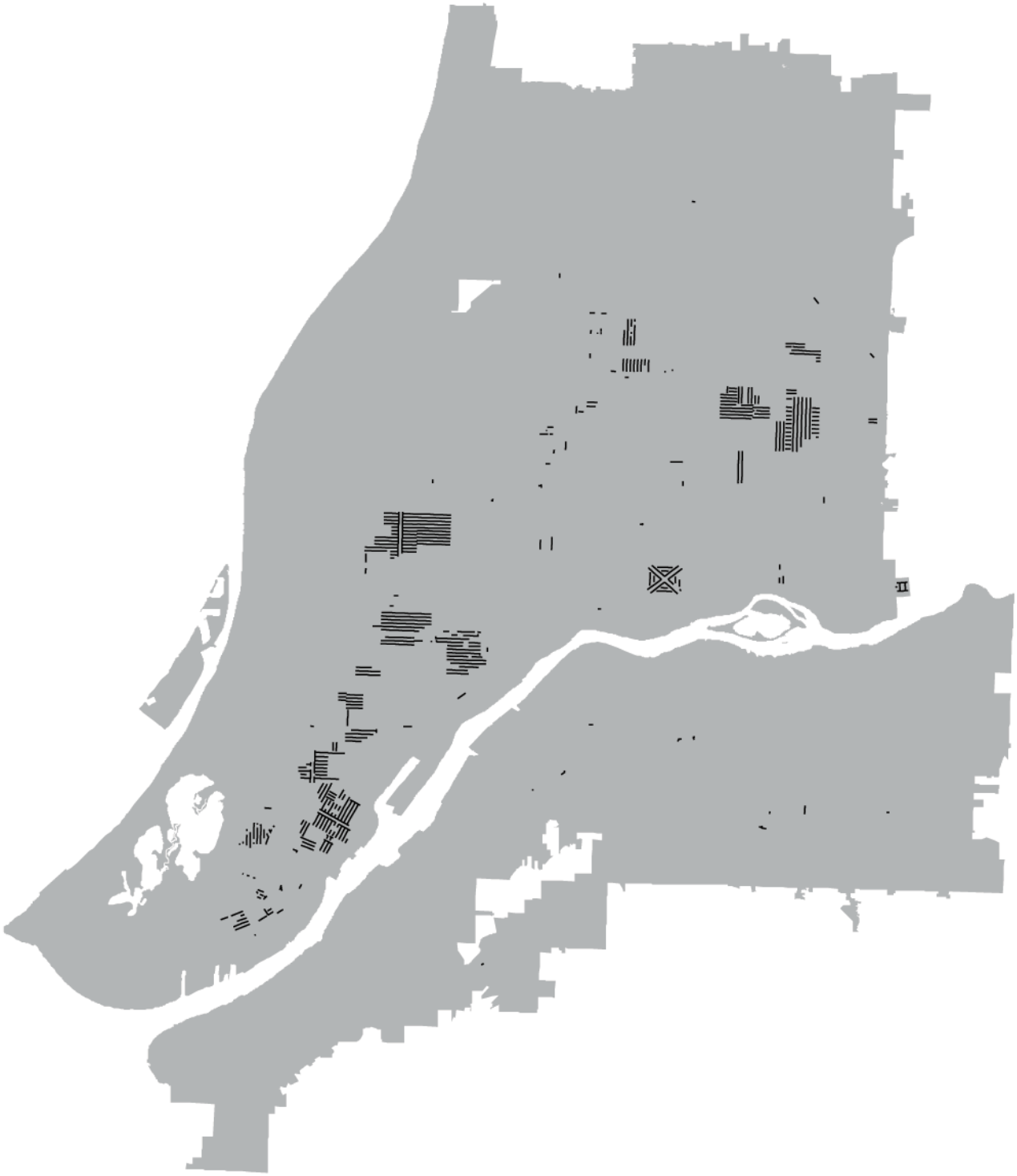
Sidewalks



Alleys

Not unlike streets and sidewalks, **alleys** in Portland vary in function, design and use depending on location within the city. In older, more established parts of the city, the alleys in these areas (especially in Ladd's Addition) are often paved and maintained. They function not only as access ways to rear garages but as utility lanes (for garbage collection) and unintentional alternative pedestrian connections as well. Most other alleys, notably ones located in the Northeast and the deep Southeast areas of Portland, are often unpaved and rarely used other than for garage access.

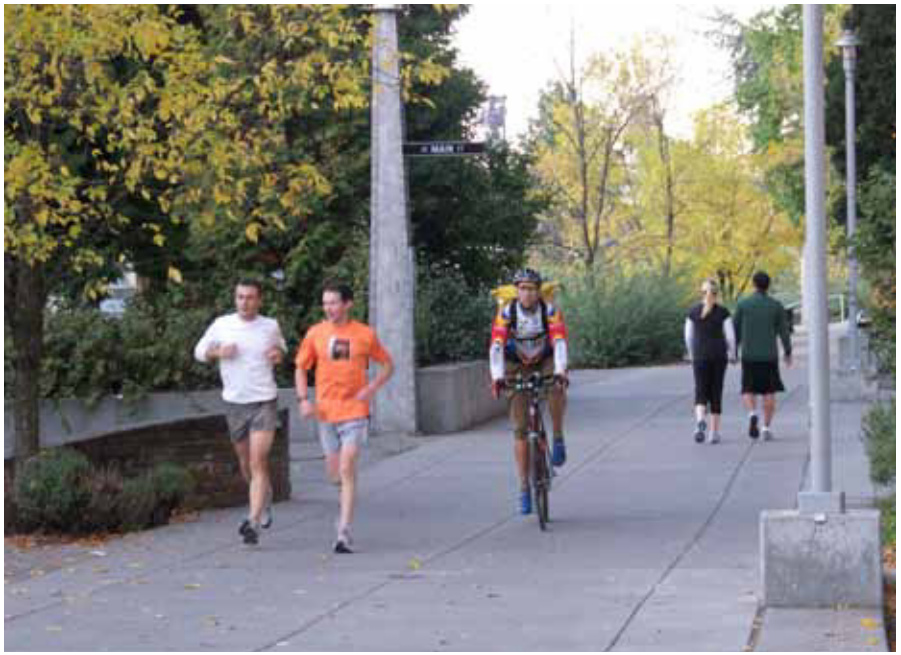
Alleys



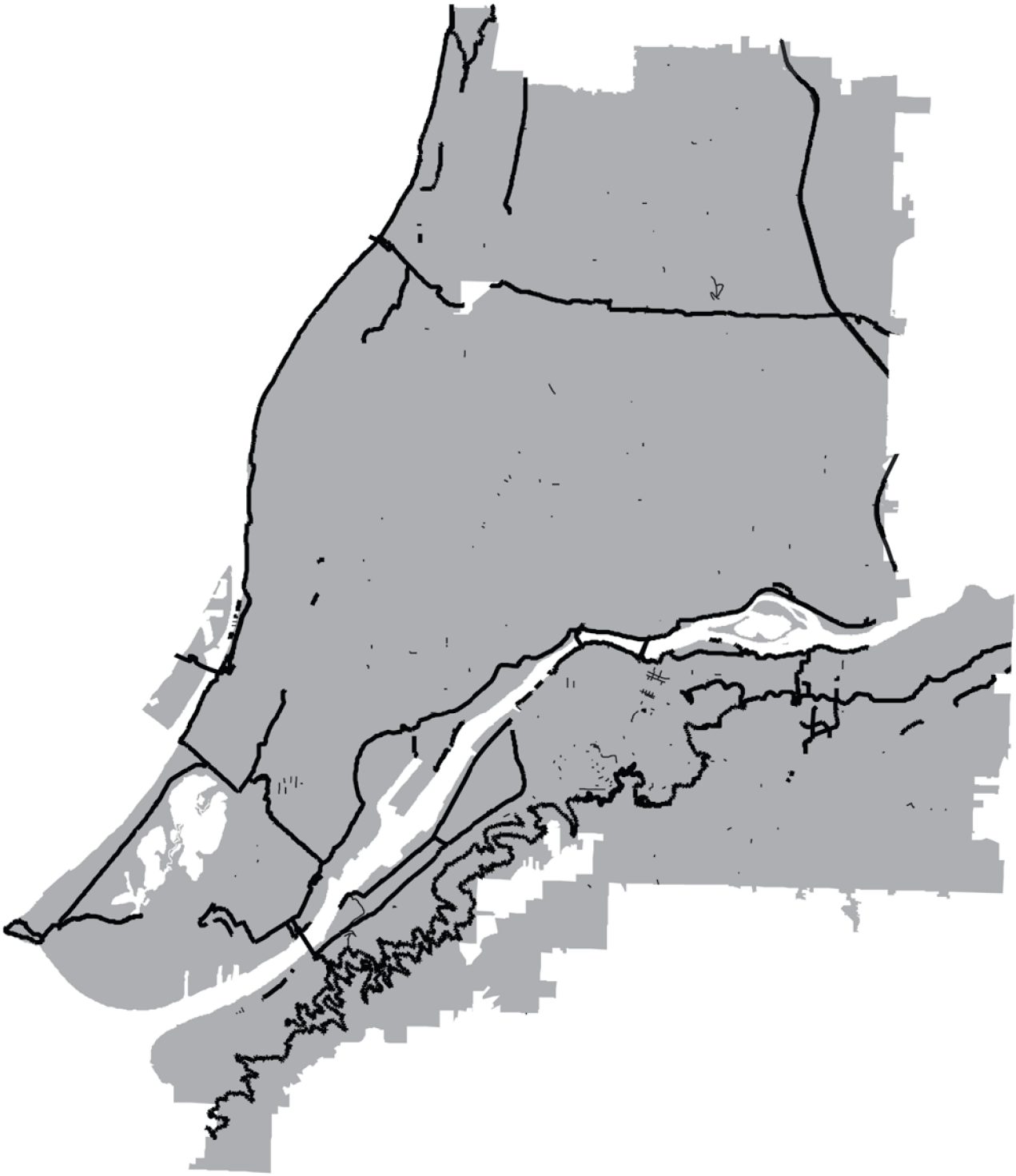
Trails

Trails provide over 100 miles of walking- and bicycling-oriented pathways throughout Portland. They range from paved trails to gravel to dirt. Most often trails are used for recreation — walking, hiking, bicycling — but are increasingly used for commuting, as is the Springwater Corridor from Sellwood to the Central City.

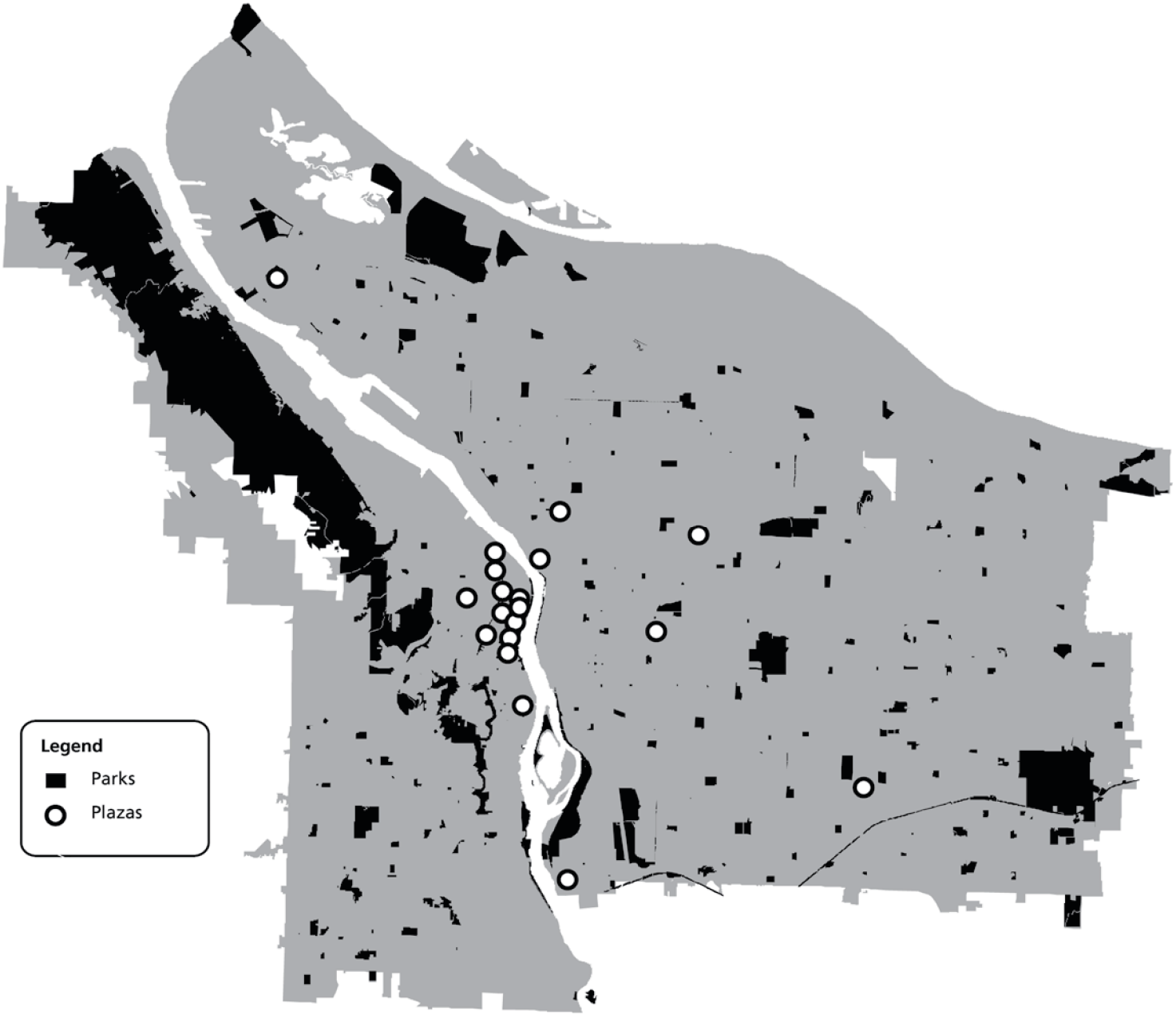
In Southwest Portland, an urban trail system and stairways provide walking and hiking opportunities, sometimes using unimproved street right-of-way. It also helps with making difficult pedestrians connections. The trail and way-finding system helps make safer and quicker connections to otherwise disconnected streets in hilly terrain, often without sidewalks.



Trails



Staying Space = Parks + Squares + Plazas







Staying spaces — parks, squares and plazas — typically cover a broad expanse. They are less linear in form than movement space. Staying spaces can still be used for moving through (walking through a square or park) and often times for recreation.

Generally, these include parks (the largest staying type in Portland), squares and plazas, either publicly- or privately-owned. These are places where the general public can commonly "just be." It is where strangers meet and mingle with one another.

Staying spaces characteristics vary by geography. In downtown Portland, squares and civic or commercial plazas are often the common staying places. Thus, it is no surprise that most of the city's recognizable squares and publicly-used plazas are located in the central part of the city. Beyond Downtown, public spaces for staying or gathering tend to be parks and commercial plazas (courtyards and common areas). In a few neighborhoods, low-traffic intersections have been artfully painted over by the local residents and public space advocates (City Repair). They have turned a few intersections into small, but notable neighborhood plazas.

The following pages discuss in more detail the variety of public- and semi-public spaces typically used for staying activities.

Parks

Urban-type park: Tanner Springs in the Pearl District

After streets, **parks** make up the second-largest type of the city's public realm. They range in character from urban to neighborhood to natural.

- **Urban-type parks** — city squares for the most part — typically have a balanced mix of hardscape and manicured greenspace. Couch Park in Northwest and Tanner Springs Park in the Pearl are good examples. Another example is the Park Blocks, a unique type of park that functions as a broad green pathway connecting a series of staying places from the University District to the Pearl. Sections of the Park Blocks can be used for sitting and relaxing, eating, for farmers markets and even recreation or sport (lawn bowling and basketball in the North Park Blocks).
- **Neighborhood-type parks** consist mostly of greenspace with much less hardscape. A typical neighborhood park contains a mix of the following: a playground for children, a broad lawn area that often doubles as a sports field, trees large and small, walking paths and picnic tables and benches. Prototypical examples include Raymond Park in East Portland, Oregon Park in Northeast (Kerns Neighborhood) and Custer Park in Southwest. Examples of larger versions of these parks that serve the broader community include Pier, Mt. Tabor and Gabriel parks.

  Some neighborhood parks abut schools and often function in tandem with **schoolyards**. The combination provides a larger park for the community when school is not in session and a larger playground for students when in session. Examples include Albina Park and Harriet Tubman Middle School in Albina, Wellington Park and Harvey Scott in Northeast, Gilbert Heights Park and School in East Portland and Sunnyside School Park in Southeast. Some schoolyards even function as de-facto neighborhood parks or playgrounds; examples include Alameda School, Sellwood Middle School, Rigler School in Cully and Duniway School in Eastmoreland.
- **Natural-type parks** consist predominantly of large expanses of natural or wooded areas. Some serve primarily as wildlife refuges. Notably, these parks usually do not have playgrounds or ball fields; more often they have trails. Examples include Kelly Butte Natural Area, Powell Butte Park, Marquam Nature Park, Maricara Natural Area and Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge.

Natural-type park: Forest Park

Neighborhood-type park: Sunnyside School Park

Parks

City squares are generally perceived as the archetypical urban public space. Pioneer Courthouse Square is the quintessential example. In Portland, city squares are mostly hardscape with less space devoted to landscaping, and they often include a water feature. Squares in the Central City include Jamison Square and Tanner Springs Park in the Pearl; Lovejoy and Keller Fountains in the South Auditorium area; and Chapman and Lownsdale squares in the civic center, adjacent to nearby major civic buildings and institutions. The Park Blocks string together a number of whole-blocks that serve on their own as de-facto squares, especially adjacent to major institutions, the University, museums and churches.

Squares are typically located in the Central City area where the density of potential users is highest and where people who live and work have little access to personal private outdoor space. These large public squares or urban parks provide access to outdoor space — and a respite from being indoors — to many Downtown residents and employees.

South Park Blocks

Keller Fountain

Semi-public plaza at Mississippi Commons

Sunnyside Piazza

Plazas are similar to city squares but are smaller scale. They are most often on private property, but the general public is commonly allowed to access this semi-public open space. Some of these semi-public spaces are located on decks or rooftops of buildings. These types of plazas are often referred to as POPOS — **P**rivately-**O**wned **P**ublic **O**pen **S**pace.

The typical plaza is located at the entryway, or serves as the courtyard, to prominent buildings or commercial complexes. Successful plaza spaces are often associated with business or activity dependent on foot-traffic, like coffee shops, restaurants, convenience stores and transit stops.

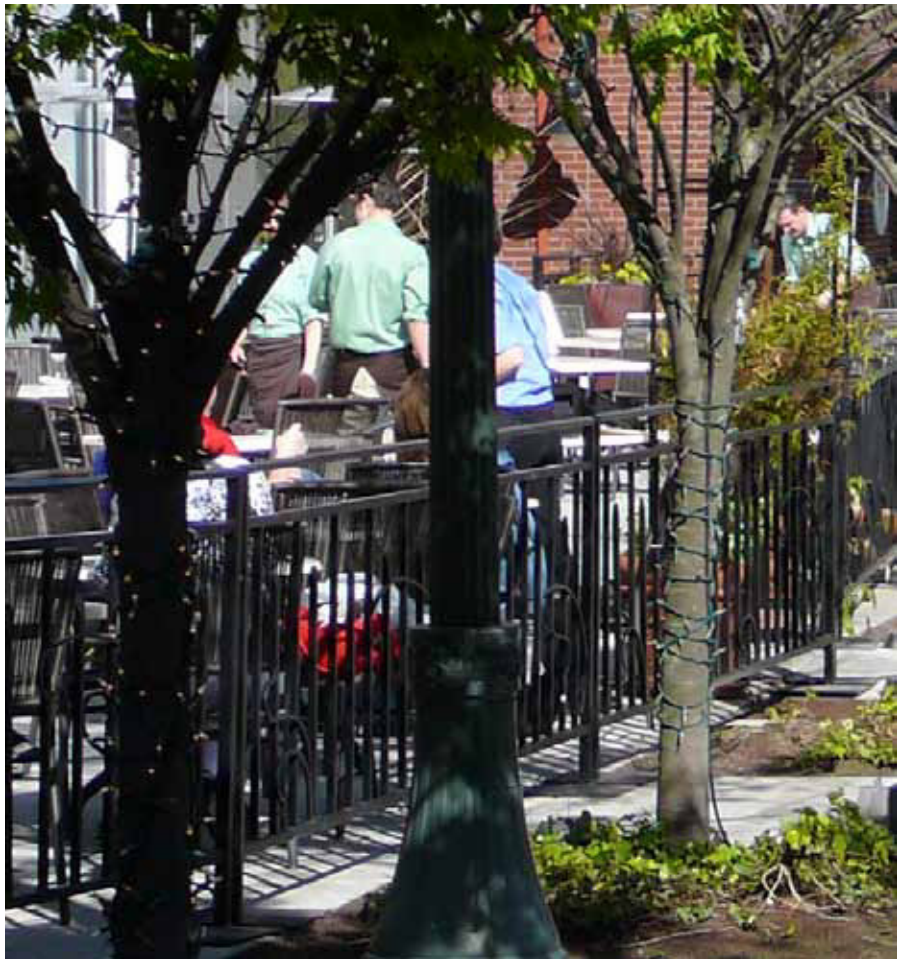
Notable examples in Downtown include the entry plazas at 200 SW Market Street, the Urban Center at Portland State University and the World Trade Center Building at SW Salmon and 1st Avenue. Beyond Downtown, notable privately-owned commercial plazas include the courtyard at Mississippi Commons in the North district and the entry plaza at People's Co-op in close-in Southeast.

Small-scale, publicly-owned plazas are few in number in the neighborhoods. Harold Kelley Plaza in the Hollywood District, built on surplus street space, is one of the more recognizable.

Other publicly-owned spaces include Sunnyside Piazza in the Sunnyside Neighborhood and Sherrett Square in Sellwood, both in Southeast Portland. These spaces were created by neighborhood activists and citizen volunteers through a grassroots effort coordinated by City Repair, a local ecologically-oriented placemaking advocacy group. They transformed these low-traffic volume intersections into neighborhood public squares.

Challenges and Opportunities

The Portland Plan provides a key opportunity for the community to consider choices for the future of both the existing public realm and additions to the public realm. However, the challenges of meeting community objectives for improvements and expansions to the public realm of streets and parks are many. Also problematic is the task of balancing and prioritizing competing demands on the use of the public realm.



Challenges

The lack of sidewalks and street connectivity in eastern and western parts of the city compromise Portland's ability to foster walking as an attractive option in these areas. Public resources are insufficient to address these shortcomings, while current dependence on property owners and new development for additional sidewalks and street connections has made little progress. Community members have been concerned that the creation of new open space amenities have not kept up with growth and the open space needs of new residents, but funds generated by the parks system development charges and other funding have been insufficient to make much progress toward meeting City objectives for having park facilities within a half mile of all residents or for creating urban parks in Portland's mixed-use centers. These challenges suggest that new approaches are needed for meeting Portland's public realm needs.

Opportunities

Given that a large portion of the city is already part of the public realm, one overall approach to meeting these challenges is to explore how the existing public realm might be used to serve a broader range of community needs. The range of choices for the future of the public realm varies. With 16,000 acres of the city devoted to streets, some of the best opportunities may involve the streets the public already owns. New approaches are limited for streets that are major through-routes for traffic and for streets that are already fully improved. Opportunities to enhance the design and expand the function of streets tend to be greater for substandard or unimproved streets or in areas where the street network is still emerging. Opportunities also lie where excess street segments are not needed for connectivity and in areas of concentrated community activity such as main streets and centers.

The following concepts and examples are meant to stimulate ideas. They are for discussion purposes only and are not proposals. They are meant to facilitate thinking about potential future improvements to the public realm appropriate for different areas and places in the city.

The pages that follow begin with:

1. A summary of issues and opportunities as they vary geographically, followed by;
2. A series of pages on new approaches to the use and design of the public realm.

Pearl District adjacent to Jamison Square. A portion of street grid turned over to a pedestrian pathway with plenty of room for walking, sitting and standing.

1. Pattern Area Issues and Opportunities

Inner Neighborhoods

Inner neighborhoods have a highly-developed grid of streets typically featuring sidewalks, planting strips and street trees. These neighborhoods include several commercial main streets and concentrations of higher-density housing (such as the Northwest District) with limited access to outdoor space.

Opportunities:

- Some inner neighborhood areas have up to 40% of land area devoted to street rights-of-way, with street connections every 200'. This could provide opportunities for closing portions or segments of streets to vehicle through-traffic to enhance opportunities for community functions, while preserving connectivity for pedestrians and bicycles. The large amount of street area could provide opportunities for turning surplus street area to non-transportation functions, such as pocket parks or community gardens, particularly in higher-density areas where outdoor amenities are scarce.
- Because streets are typically fully improved, major changes to the design of most existing residential streets are not likely. Some unimproved street segments, in areas such as the Woodstock neighborhood, provide greater opportunities for new approaches to street use and design.
- Improvements to the pedestrian environments of commercial main streets have been, and remain, key community priorities.

Eastern Neighborhoods

Eastern neighborhoods typically lack sidewalks along residential streets and have relatively poor street connectivity. The street system continues to evolve with new development bringing extensions to the street system.

Opportunities:

- The incremental construction of streets, in conjunction with new development, provides opportunities for new approaches to street design. Current street standards call for continuation of street design elements common in inner neighborhoods (variants on the roadway/curb/planting strip/sidewalk sequence), but there may be possibilities for new green street design approaches more responsive to the distinct character of eastern neighborhoods that also manage stormwater.
- New development and the large size of existing blocks provides opportunities for more strategic extension of the street system and possibilities for the introduction of alleys or other secondary circulation systems. Street system expansion is currently happening in an opportunistic way, without clarity as to the future of the area's street and block structure.

Western Neighborhoods

The street system of the Western neighborhoods is often shaped by the hilly terrain and networks of streams and other natural features, with many streets unusually narrow (30'- to 40'-wide, compared the more usual 50' to 60' dimensions) to fit into the constraints of the topography. Large portions of the street network lack sidewalks and do not meet connectivity standards. There is a relatively large amount of right-of-way that is not paved, sometimes providing no transportation function.

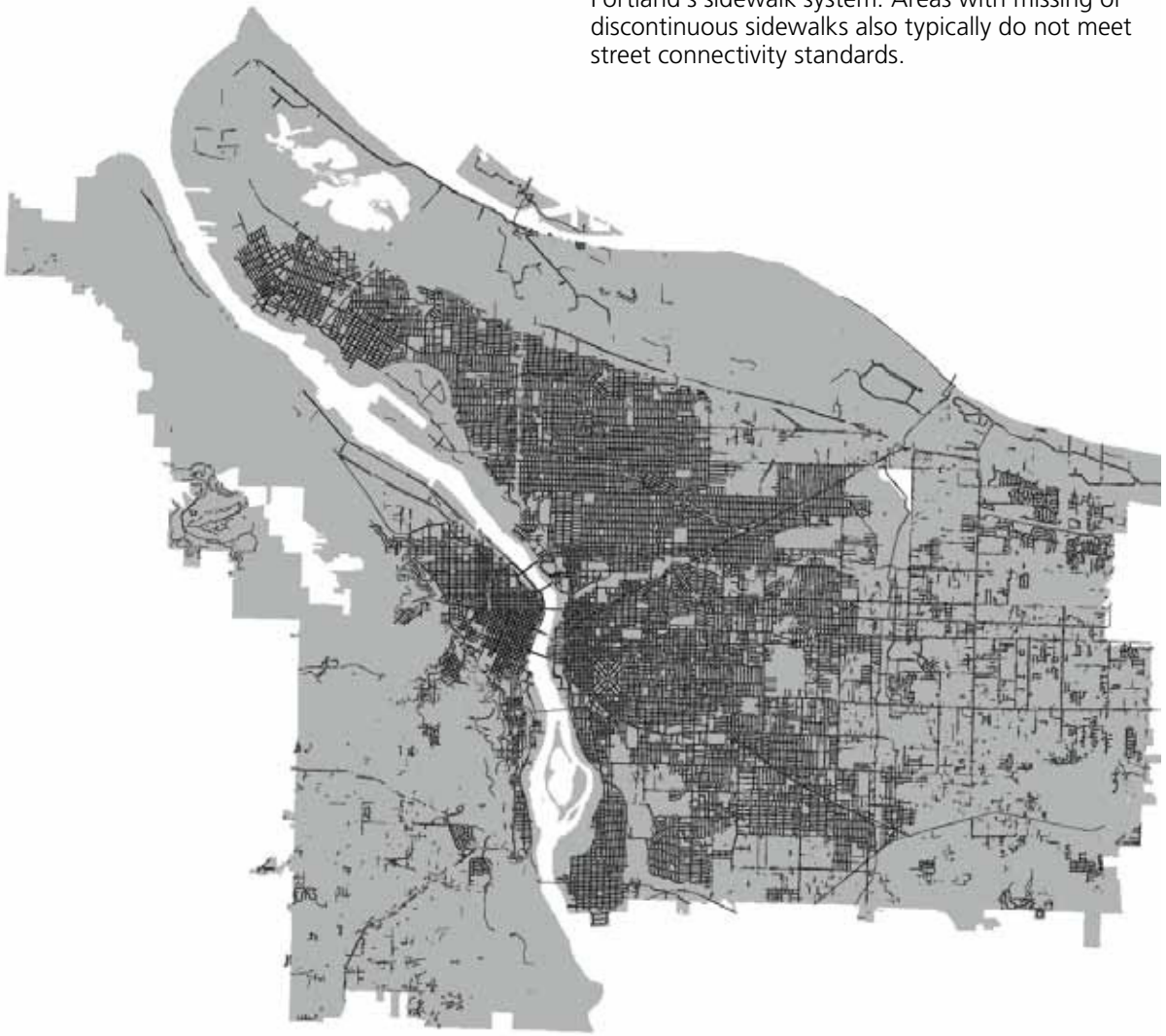
Opportunities:

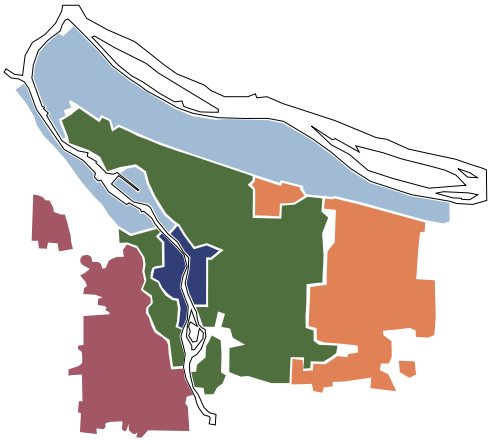
- Improvement of existing street deficiencies provides opportunities for new street design approaches responsive to the characteristics of the area.
- A distinctive characteristic of this area are the unimproved right-of-ways used for trail connections. The City could do more to prioritize and facilitate more trails and connections within unimproved street right-of-ways and through natural areas.
- This area has relatively poor street connectivity but good natural system connectivity. This could present an opportunity to foster street connectivity goals that differ from other areas, perhaps prioritizing trail system and natural area connectivity, over connectivity for vehicles.

Low volume street with no sidewalks in East Portland. Alternative street standards could apply to this street as infill development occurs incrementally over time. Instead of building out the sidewalk system property-by-property, allowing planting of trees, placement of stormwater management features or more prominent demarcation of pedestrian space would help to improve the public realm.

Connectivity

Portland's sidewalk system. Areas with missing or discontinuous sidewalks also typically do not meet street connectivity standards.



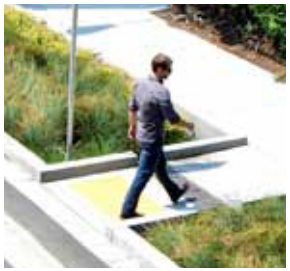


Recall the Pattern Areas

The Patterns section of this report introduced the concept of five primary pattern areas, or geographies, in Portland; each with its own distinct urban form characteristics that continue to shape the way development occurs. The neighborhood pattern areas include:

- Inner neighborhoods, with a consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks;
- Eastern neighborhoods, where irregular blocks and large, often deep, lots are common; and the
- Western neighborhoods, whose form is shaped by hilly terrain, streams and other natural features.

2. New Options for the Public Realm






Portlanders have been interested in creating more public gathering places and green places that bring more natural elements into the urban environment, but public resources for creating new parks to serve these functions are limited. Publicly-owned streets occupy large amounts of land throughout Portland that could provide opportunities to help meet these demands and other place-making objectives. They have historically served multiple community functions. A key consideration is to determine how both existing and new streets might complement the broader system of public spaces, not only as conduits for transportation, but as places for community interaction, environmental function, open space and other purposes.

Streets already have multiple, sometimes competing, demands placed on them. Trucks, cars, bicycle lanes, pedestrians, vehicle parking, bicycle parking, street trees, stormwater facilities, café tables and public art are among the many things already competing for space within the limited right-of-way of streets. Determining where and when to accommodate or prioritize other community uses, together with these functions, will be a challenge and may require new approaches to how streets are designed and managed.

The following pages illustrate various ways that streets and other spaces might be used to help meet a broader range of community needs.

A. Green Connectors and Urban Trails

With the concept of sustainability at the forefront of integrated city infrastructure improvements, "green connectors" provide combined opportunities for increased safety, connectivity, stormwater drainage functions, identity and overall citizen neighborhood satisfaction. These could range from simple retrofitting to include tree plantings and stormwater enhancements, to full corridor enhancements to link together parks, schools, the waterfront and other urban amenities.

In Southwest neighborhoods, their Urban Trails Plan aims "to increase pedestrian access … for recreation and transportation." The proposed urban trails network would improve linkages for pedestrian to schools, parks, transit, shopping and recreation. This could be achieved by continuing to incrementally improve select public roads, sidewalks, stairs, trails and walkways along with way-finding signage. The proposed network primarily utilizes unimproved public right-of-ways and traces across parks and schools.

"Custer Steps" connect Taylors Ferry Rd. to Kelly Street. It offers a safer and quicker walking connection in an area with few sidewalks and hilly terrain. Signage marks the trail, helping with wayfinding.

B. Pedestrian-Priority Shared Streets

Some streets could be considered for public realm improvements that create public space or help to increase identity in a neighborhood or district. Streets with low-volume of traffic close to civic institutions like schools or libraries could double as neighborhood plazas by closing off streets on occasion. Taking inspiration from the shared-street in Chinatown (above right), North Commercial Street at Killingsworth (below) might be a good candidate for such a treatment. Over time, it could potentially transform into permanent urban plaza or public open space.

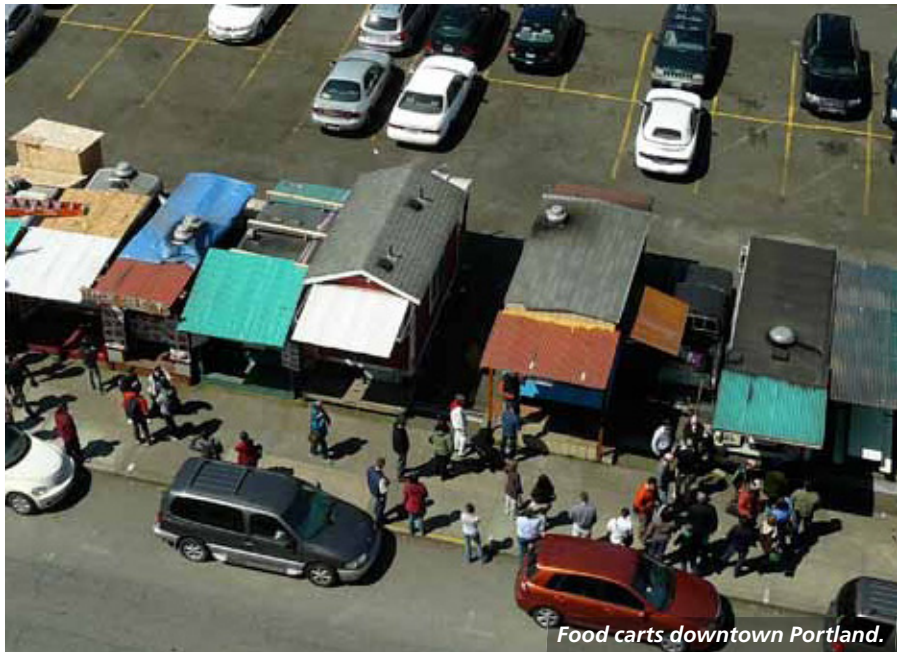
C. Temporary Use of Parking Lots

Parking lots, both publicly- and privately-owned, abound in Portland. Their potential use as public space is often overlooked but is increasingly being tapped by entrepreneurial foodies. Increasingly, a number of parking lots double their utility by allowing other activities to occur beyond just parking cars. The most common and popular alternative is allowing for food-cart service. In Downtown, over a dozen parking lots are locations for food carts.

A critical mass of carts locating in one parking lot injects the adjacent public realm with active street life. Some parking lots have completely transitioned into a food court-only use. The food carts at SE 12th and Hawthorne have corralled a parking lot that turns into a bustling evening food court.

Parking lots also often provide space for farmers markets. The temporary use of the parking lot as an urban plaza gives local residents an opportunity to access fresh food, rub shoulders with other members of their community and experience the vibrant public life.

Other times, parking lots are simply used impromptu by the public. They self-define how to use the space (see skateboarder below).



Food carts downtown Portland.

12th & Hawthorne. Food cart cluster corralling the parking lot.

D. Parks, Park Blocks and Neighborhood Plazas

Focal points in high-traffic areas could be incorporated into the urban fabric through major public investments related to surrounding higher-density redevelopment. Consider the potential to integrate park blocks to connect the northern and southern ends of the Gateway district, similar to the park blocks in downtown Portland.

Gateway. NE 102nd Avenue (left), Downtown. South Park Blocks (right)

Additional opportunities for neighborhood squares or plazas could be created in collaboration with private property owners. Using incentives, developers could set aside a portion of their private property for semi-public urban plazas that can be used for sitting, eating and drinking or sometimes even farmer's markets. These spaces are particularly successful when carefully designed and combined with surrounding commercial activities.

Mississippi Commons. A well-used semi-public urban plaza or courtyard along the Mississippi Avenue commercial main street. Once a loading dock, this space now includes a stormwater planter as its centerpiece in addition to the outdoor seating.

Neighborhood Plaza Opportunities

This map, from the Neighborhood Plazas report, highlights the wide range of possibilities for neighborhood plazas. To realize them will require prioritization of limited funding and/or new, creative approaches.

Priority Level*

- **High**
- **Medium**
- **Low**

*Priority level is based on a quick assessment of readiness, political and community support, and other factors. The priority level associated with the opportunities on this map is not intended to express the result of a detailed analysis or decision-making process.

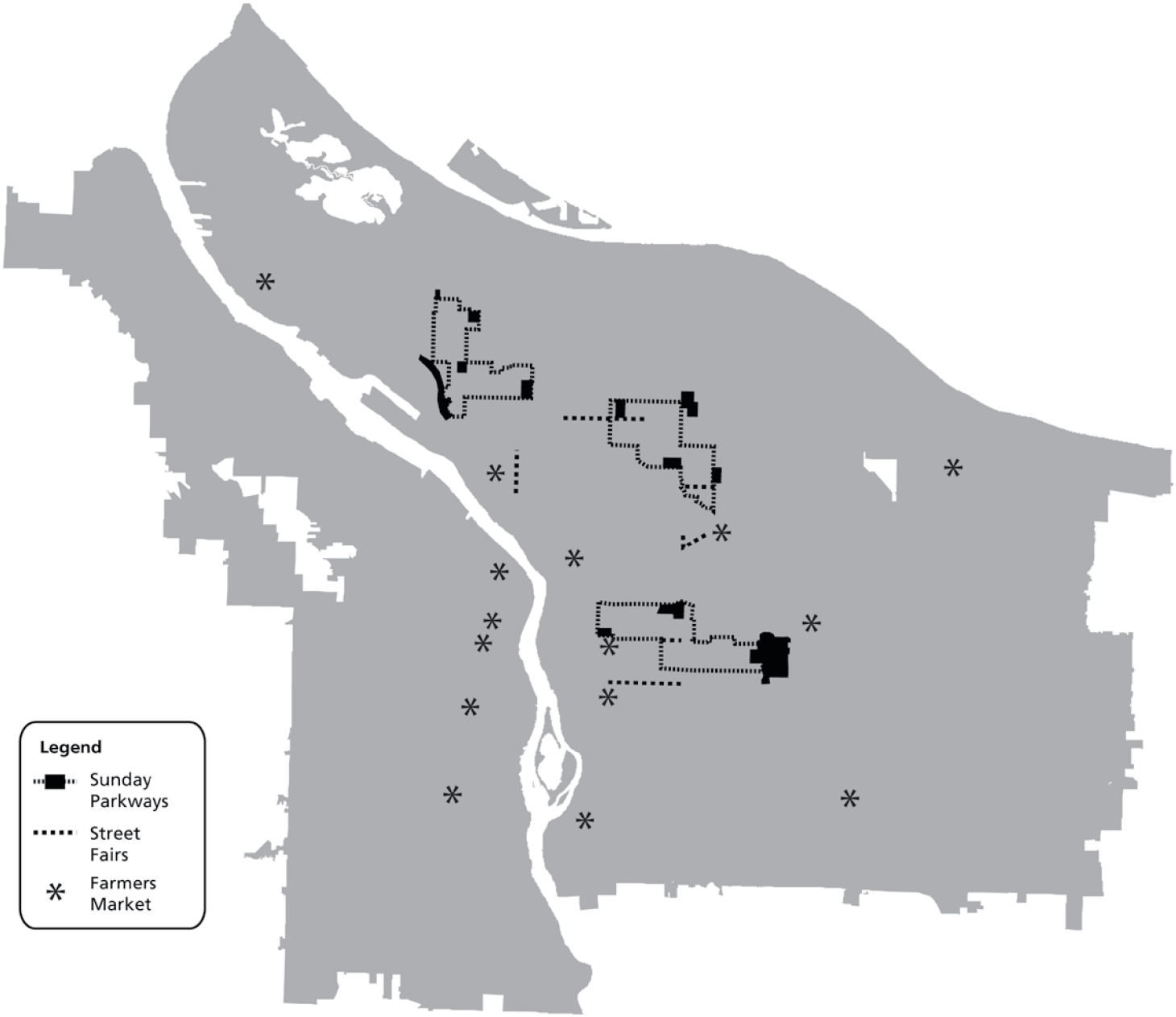
E. Flexible Event Streets

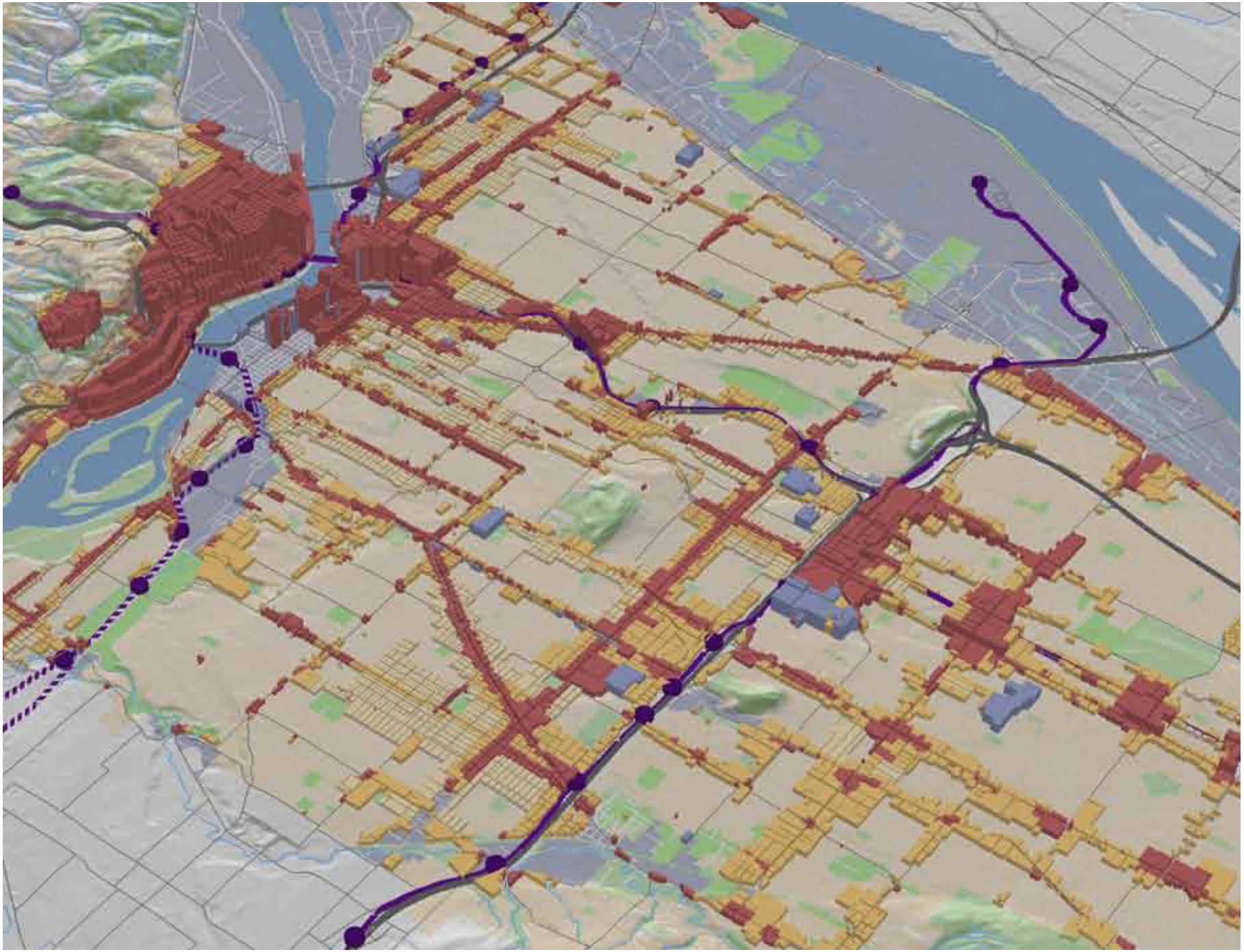
Streets might also be used more flexibly as occasional event or recreational space. Expanding access to parks and open space and gathering place opportunities throughout the city (per goals in Parks and Recreation Vision 2020) could be achieved by regular street openings for non-motorized means of transportation only. Examples of the occasional use of streets for community use include events such as Last Thursday on Alberta Street, Sunday Parkways, farmers markets, various street fairs, parades and block parties.

Expanding these kinds of opportunities to more neighborhoods and districts throughout the city would be an effective way to share streets and public space, and to use them for more than just motorized mobility.

See www.streetfilms.org/archives/portlands-sunday-parkways.

Sunday Parkways, Farmers Markets and Street Fairs





Portland's "default" urban form, showing what building heights and mixed-use areas (red) would result if all properties were to be developed to the maximum allowances of the Zoning Code.

Private Realm

This Private Realm chapter begins to explore the range of development outcomes that take place mostly on private property, but that interface with and shape the public realm and are part of the continuing evolution of neighborhood patterns and characteristics. Ultimately, private development shapes the many places, such as main streets and mixed-use centers, that are often a key part of community identity.

This chapter is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of development trends, but it provides some examples that highlight the range and variability of what is being built, it reviews the unpredictability of development outcomes and it provides information on where additional development and change can be expected. These outcomes have implications for the future of Portland's places, its neighborhood characteristics and the quality of its public realm. A key purpose of this chapter is to provide information to support initial community consideration of issues related to development outcomes and change, especially as these relate to the future form and character of Portland. The focus here is on areas outside the Central City as detailed information on the latter is the focus of the Central Portland Plan. This chapter includes:

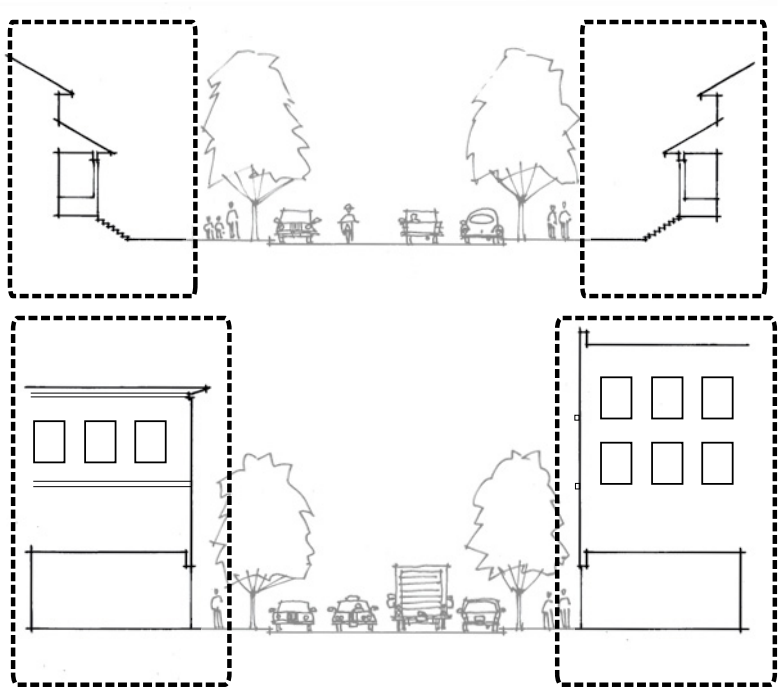
- Summary information on zoning and the development capacity provided by zoning allowances;
- A brief discussion on the general types of changes that Portlanders should expect to see in the coming years; and
- Examples of the range and variability of development outcomes.

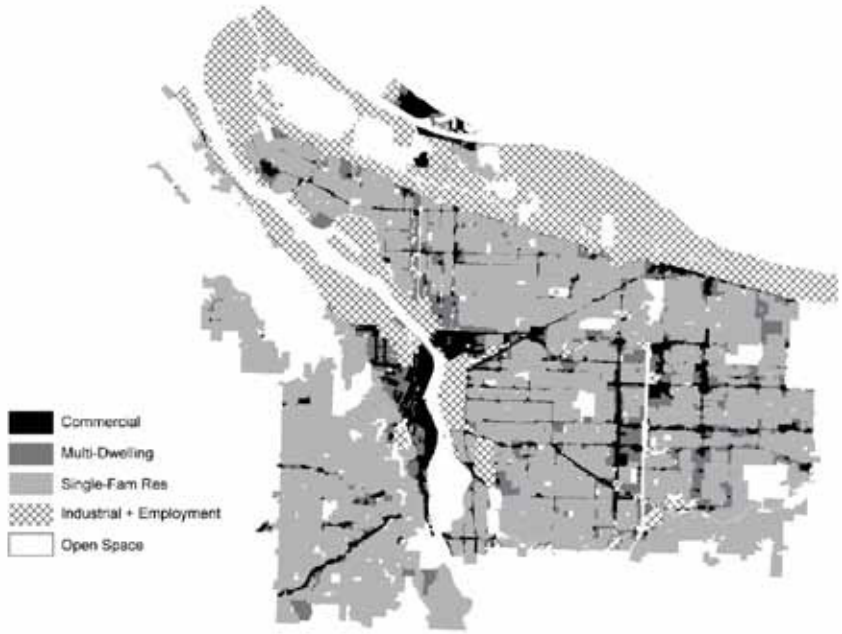
The private realm information provided in this chapter is one part of a larger discussion about the shape and structure of the city. In order to develop a more robust understanding of Portland's existing conditions and of the effects changes identified in this section may have on Portland's built environment, the reader should consider this discussion in context with discussions about patterns, places and public realm included in other sections of this report. Bearing in mind development outcomes in the context of these other topics will help the community members consider what types of changes they would like to encourage or discourage.

What is the role of the private realm?

The private realm topic is about the development that takes place on private property. Changes within the private realm, however, do not occur in isolation. Changes on one piece of property may affect views, sunlight and shade on multiple adjacent properties. Changes on a few properties in a strategic location may bring the density needed to support local services and bring benefits to the broader community. The buildings in the private realm — their shape, massing, locations and relationships — are some of the primary building blocks, along with street and block structure, of urban form.

Much of the focus of the Urban Form Report has been on presenting information to support community discussion on its aspirations for the future of Portland's key places, its neighborhood and district characteristics and the public realm. By looking at development outcomes, this chapter begins to provide answers to the question of: "What does the evolution of Portland's urban form look like today and where are we headed?"





Generalized Zoning

The generalized zoning map shows where different types of uses are permitted across the city. Typically, Portland permits larger buildings and a mix of commercial and other uses along major streets, such as Interstate Avenue, Powell Boulevard and Sandy Boulevard; and in mixed-use centers such as Gateway, Lents and Hollywood. Zoning guides the tallest buildings and most intense development to Downtown, and to a lesser extent to some of the centers and light rail corridors. The city's industrial areas are generally located near the Willamette and Columbia rivers and next to rail yards and major transportation thoroughfares. Employment areas are typically adjacent to industrial and mixed-use areas. Zoning for apartments and other multidwelling housing is located throughout the city, primarily along transit corridors, with notable concentrations in Northwest Portland and in areas east of I-205. Single-dwelling zoning, intended for houses and sometimes duplexes, is Portland's most widespread type of zoning and applies to large areas of the city between major streets.

Development Capacity

The development capacity map shows areas of Portland where existing development is less intense than current policies and regulations permit. This map was prepared to meet specific Department of Land Conservation and Development standards for Periodic Review (please see other the Portland Plan background materials specifically related to growth and population forecasts for information on the methodology used to develop the development capacity map). The purpose of including this map here is to identify areas where greater development intensity is allowed and where change might be expected to occur over time. It is not intended to predict the actual feasibility or likelihood of redevelopment, or to suggest that all properties shown as having development capacity should be developed to their maximum permitted size.

Changes are Happening

As many Portlanders know, significant changes are happening across the city. East of I-205, single-dwelling houses on large lots are becoming subdivisions and townhouses. On streets like SE Belmont and SE Hawthorne, new four-story mixed-use buildings are sprouting where one- and two-story buildings once stood, and apartment buildings are appearing adjacent to light rail stations on Interstate Avenue and Burnside Street. Some of this change is bringing renewed commercial vitality to main streets and is making it easier for residents to walk to local shops and services. However, some of these changes are significantly altering neighborhood character, sometimes replacing trees or green spaces and making Portlanders wonder about the future of cherished local landmarks. As Portland grows and changes, it is important for residents to have open conversations about the types of changes they desire and the types of changes they would like to avoid. Portlanders need to direct change in ways that benefit the community, the environment and the economy.

Together, the generalized zoning and development capacity maps provide a snapshot of where development is both permitted and likely given Portland's current regulatory structure. Depending on the zoning regulations, the areas shown on the development capacity map indicate where there is potential to locate new jobs and housing, expand businesses and generally accommodate new Portlanders.

Portland's zoning code includes development standards that set general parameters regarding the allowed form and scale of development. For most zones, these parameters allow a wide variety of development forms, so that it is not possible to assess with any degree of confidence what building forms, development patterns or street environments will ultimately result. Besides the role of zoning and other regulations, development outcomes are shaped by a multitude of factors, including the intended functions of buildings; site conditions; development economics; building technologies; the needs and preferences of residents or tenants; and an array of choices and prioritizations made by owners, builders, developers, designers and lenders.

Provided on the following pages are short descriptions and examples of some of the range and types of changes that have been taking place in Portland, from development on small infill sites to the incremental transformation of main streets. These examples are not a complete listing of the possible changes, but the examples provide a snapshot of some of the changes that are occurring and may continue to incrementally change Portland.

While this chapter focuses on the forms that development is taking in the context of the future of Portland's places and community characteristics, it is important to also take into account other community priorities. Decisions regarding the form and design of development can have impacts on things such as the affordability of new housing, the ability to accommodate growth and economic development and the flexibility for development to respond efficiently to current and future needs. Development outcomes and the changes they bring should thus be considered in the context of the great challenges Portland will continue to face, such as climate change, accommodating population growth and maintaining a thriving economy.

Change has been part of the ongoing evolution of Portland's neighborhoods, whether Northwest Portland in the early 20th Century or Mississippi Avenue in 2009.

Development Outcomes

These pages provide brief descriptions of some of the common development outcomes that are bringing changes to Portland's built environment. They focus on areas that are part of the typical mix of neighborhoods: areas of single-family houses, medium-density areas with multidwelling housing, main streets and other commercial corridors and the urban forest that spans these areas.

Single-Family Areas

Single-family zoning is the predominant type of residential zoning in Portland's neighborhoods. As most areas with this zoning have a fairly close match between existing and allowed densities, development capacity mapping indicates relatively little potential for additional growth in most of these areas. Changes, however, have been happening, even in areas not zoned for additional density. Common examples of changes in single-family areas include:

- Additions to existing houses, including second-floor additions, sometimes to accommodate growing families.
- New houses built on vacant or oversized lots which exist in scattered locations across the city.
- Replacement of small houses with sometimes much larger houses, especially in high-value locations. Some community members, especially in Southwest, have been concerned that this brings a loss of affordable housing options. In areas where most existing housing is low-scale (one to one-and-a-half story houses are common in many neighborhoods), community members have also been concerned about the scale contrasts between existing houses and new, larger houses — which can be up to three-stories in height and are sometimes perceived as "towering" and incompatible in scale by neighbors.
- Narrow-lot houses, typically 15' in width built on 25'-wide lots, have become a predominant infill development type in inner neighborhood areas that were originally platted out in 25'-wide increments (most of these areas have R5 zoning generally intended for 50'-wide lots, but have entitlements related to their original platting).
- Rowhouses, duplexes, narrow-lot houses and flag lot development are built in some areas with R2.5 zoning, typically located near commercial streets. This infill housing is often built on typical residential lots, often as two units on a 5000 square foot lot. This new housing is sometimes designed in ways that continue existing patterns, such as by including two units in a single house-like building form; but it can also introduce new patterns, such as the lengthier stretches of continuous building frontage brought by rowhouses, the more divided development patterns and vertical proportions of narrow-lot houses and the addition of houses into back yard areas through flag lot development.
- Portions of the Eastern and Western neighborhoods include areas with large lots that can be further subdivided. Larger sites typically involve the creation of new streets. A common outcome in Western neighborhoods, with their many stream corridors, involves the clustering of housing on a portion of the site with sensitive environmental areas set aside in preservation tracts. In Eastern neighborhoods, small two-to-four lot subdivisions and flag-lots in mid-block areas are common outcomes on the area's narrow, deep lots.

Multidwelling Residential Areas

Residential areas with multidwelling zoning are typically located along or near transit corridors or at the edges of mixed-use centers, providing opportunities for development that can help meet housing needs and can contribute to vibrant communities. As single-family houses are dominant in most of these areas, there is often a large gap between existing and allowed density and the potential for change that can be considerable. In some such areas, the multidwelling zoning may have been in place for decades, but higher-density development has only become economically-feasible more recently. This dynamic will likely extend in the future to more areas, bringing change even when no changes are made to zoning. Changes that can be expected include:

- **Changes in scale and massing from existing patterns,** as the new higher-density development is typically taller and occupies more lot area (often extending into what had previously been back yard). As in other areas where change occurs, neighbors are often concerned with the impacts larger structures have on solar access, privacy and neighborhood character.
- **Variability of building form.** Development in multidwelling zones can take many forms, including rowhouses, narrow-lot houses, tight clusters of detached houses, plexes, courtyard housing and block-shaped apartment buildings. This infill development often takes place on standard residential lots, especially in inner neighborhoods. In outer neighborhoods, new development also takes place on larger sites, sometimes in the form of building complexes and large areas of surface parking, or it may involve the creation of new streets.
- **Changes to street edges.** Development in multidwelling zones can bring significant changes to neighborhood street environments. Front building setbacks may be as little as 3', but can be much deeper, and may or may not be consistent with existing patterns or other new buildings. Some housing types, such as rowhouses and narrow-lot houses, may result in multiple front garages and driveways, providing additional unpredictability regarding what street edge environments will emerge in these areas as they continue to change.
- **Variable open space characteristics.** The predominant multidwelling zones limit building coverage to 50% to 60% to provide opportunities for outdoor space. The characteristics of this unbuilt space can vary considerably. It can be grouped into a landscaped courtyard, divided into small setbacks between buildings or devoted largely to surface parking or driveways. This space may or may not provide room for larger trees. On the deep lots of Eastern Portland, the majority of contiguous unbuilt space is typically devoted to paved vehicle and fire access.

Main Streets and Other Commercial Corridors

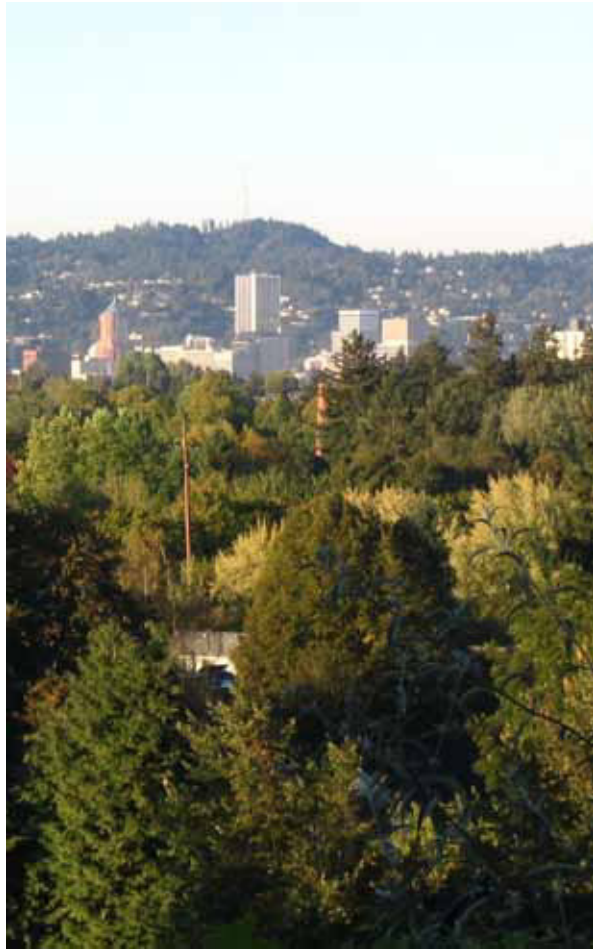
Portland's main streets and other commercial streets have become places of change, as once vacant lots are developed and small buildings are replaced by larger, mixed-use buildings. These commercial main streets provide residents with access to services within walking or biking distance from their homes, and the residents allow small, local business the patronage they need to flourish. They are also places where growth is intended to be concentrated. However, the evolution of main streets to more vibrant commercial and community places also brings challenges. There is considerable potential for change in these areas, since existing development is often low scale (often one to two stories), and zoning typically allows four-story buildings. This change often involves:

- Mixed-use development of residential over ground-floor commercial, often four-stories tall, has become a common development type along close-in main streets. This increase in scale and additional housing helps accommodate growth and provides a sense of enclosure to the street, but some community members have been concerned about scale contrasts with nearby lower-scale buildings. Contributing to this issue is that commercial zoning along most neighborhood commercial streets directly abuts single-family residential areas and adjacent houses are often low-scale.
- Along other commercial corridors, such as those with General Commercial zoning that have fewer requirements for pedestrian-oriented development configurations, development outcomes can be highly unpredictable. On streets such as 82nd Avenue, Powell Boulevard and Barbur Boulevard, while mixed-use buildings are sometimes built, other common outcomes include single-level commercial development with large areas of surface parking as well as purely residential projects. This unpredictability is sometimes a concern for community members who have hopes for these corridors to develop into key places for the community — for example in situations where residential development takes place on a commercially-zoned site in areas with few other opportunities for commercial development.

The Urban Forest

Trees provide multiple, valuable environmental functions and are also often a cherished part of community character. Inner neighborhoods have seen increases in the urban forest canopy due in large part to the growth of established trees and the planting of new trees in planting strips within the street right-of-way. Outer neighborhoods provide fewer opportunities for street trees, as these streets typically lack planting strips or sidewalks, thus making them more dependent on what happens on private property for the future of their urban forest. Along with new developments have come community concerns about the loss of trees. Trees and green spaces are often lost when subdivisions are platted and built, new housing is added to lots or additions are constructed. Examples of issues related to the impacts of development on the urban forest include the following:

- Community concern about the loss of trees has been greatest in areas experiencing residential development such as Southwest and Eastern Portland. An ongoing issue in Eastern Portland has been the removal of remnant stands of Douglas Fir to make room for infill development.
- While proposals for land divisions require a tree preservation review process, multidwelling and other development has no such review requirement.
- There has been a tendency to remove large tree species and to replace them with smaller species that will not provide the same canopy coverage. New development, especially at higher-densities, often does not provide sufficient space to accommodate large-canopy tree species.



Examples of Development Outcomes

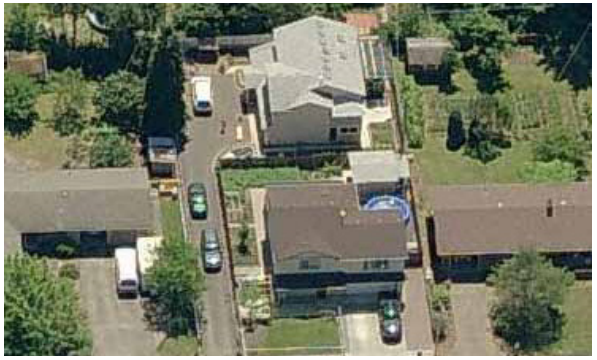
A. Development Variability

These examples highlight some of the variability and unpredictability of development outcomes that can occur within the same type of zone. The commercial examples, for instance, illustrate projects that have all been built in the General Commercial zone, but take very different forms and do not all even include commercial uses. Are some outcomes more desirable than others?

Residential Infill Examples

Duplex or semi-detached houses

Narrow-lot houses



Flag lot

Multifamily Development Examples

Apartments oriented around courtyard

Apartments oriented around parking

Clustered detatched units

Commercial Development Examples

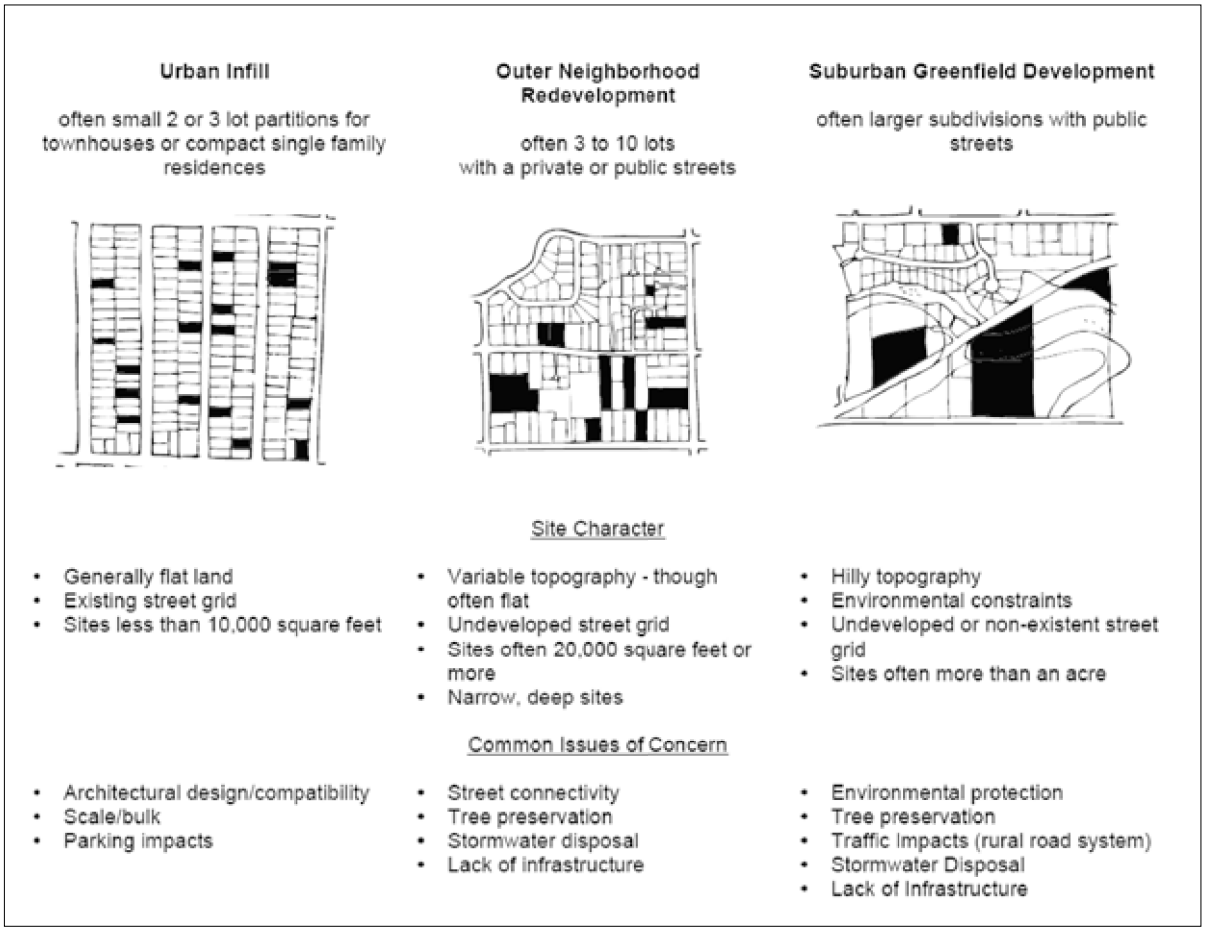
Mixed-use building, providing an urban street edge

Commercial development with prominent surface parking

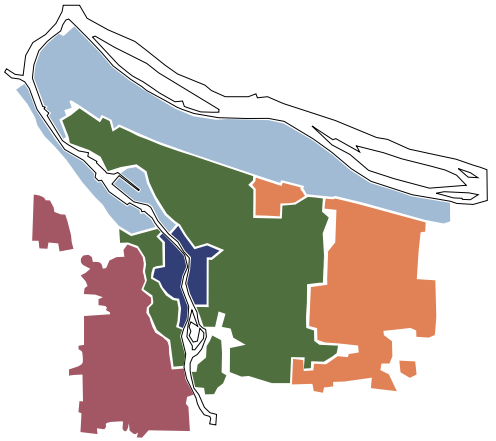
Residential development in a commercial zone

B. Geographic Variability

These examples highlight how development outcomes vary geographically. Even though the zoning may be the same, differences in existing lot and block patterns and natural features often result in very different outcomes. These examples highlight common differences between residential development outcomes in Inner, Eastern and Western neighborhoods. The varying issues and outcomes associated with these areas were documented in the 2007 *Land Division Code Monitoring Report,* from which the inset graphic, below, and the caption text are taken.



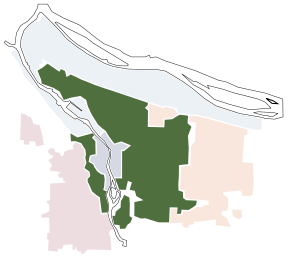
From the Land Division Code Monitoring Report *(2007)*



Recall the Pattern Areas

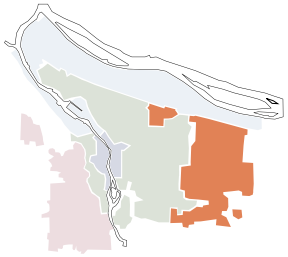
The Patterns section of this report introduced the concept of five primary pattern areas, or geographies, in Portland; each with its own distinct urban form characteristics that continue to shape the way development occurs. The neighborhood pattern areas include:

- Inner neighborhoods, with a consistent pattern of rectilinear blocks;
- Eastern neighborhoods, where irregular blocks and large, often deep, lots are common; and the
- Western neighborhoods, whose form is shaped by hilly terrain, streams and other natural features.



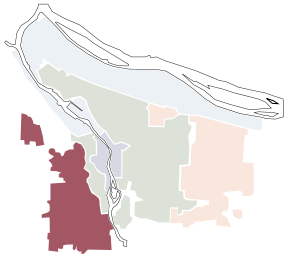
Inner

Small sites within existing block structure. Issues include compatibility of scale and design, parking impacts.



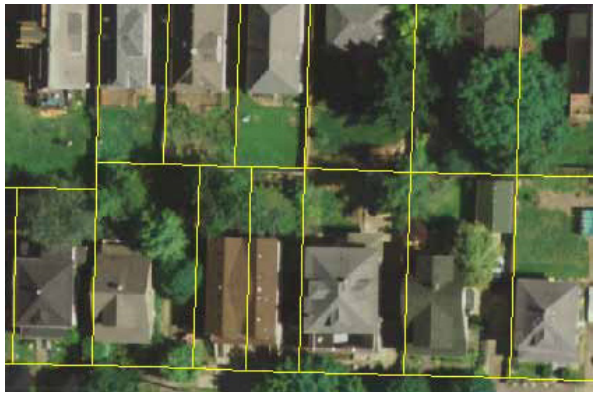
Eastern

Narrow, deep sites, often resulting in backyard infill. Issues include street connectivity, lack of existing infrastructure, tree preservation.



Western

Clustered subdivisions on large sites, often with environmental protection tracts (represent a transition from previously predominant patterns of individual houses on large forested lots). Issues include topography, streams, tree/habitat protection, lack of infrastructure, traffic impacts on rural road systems.



C. Types of Change

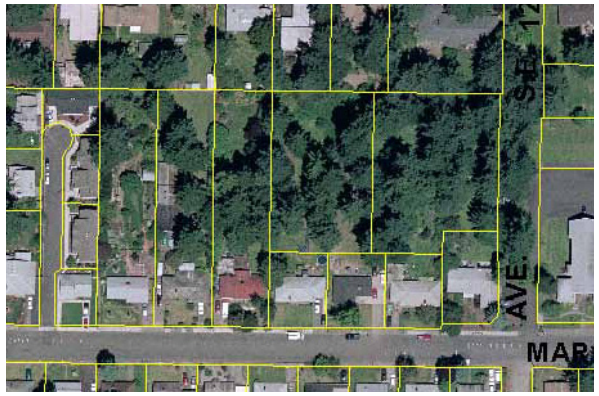
The speed and amount of change, and the contrast with what was once familiar to neighbors, can be an issue with development. These examples show the impacts development can have on neighborhood patterns, the public realm and the urban forest.

2000

2007

Narrow house infill in North Portland

2000



2007

Mid-block forest replaced by housing in Eastern Portland

D. Main Streets

Mixed-use development, often of three- or four-story buildings, have become a common development type along Portland's close-in main streets. These projects bring additional services, amenities and residents to neighborhoods, contributing to more vibrant main streets. They have also generated community concern about scale contrasts with the houses that typically are adjacent to main street commercial zones, as well as concerns that their design is sometimes not compatible with the character of existing architecture.

Main Street Infill in Southeast Portland

Potential evolution of SE Foster Boulevard. *As with other main streets, zoning along Foster allows a more urban level of development than currently exists, in keeping with policies that call for main streets to become vibrant, pedestrian-oriented places where growth and commercial services are concentrated.*

Challenges and Opportunities

This chapter is intended to be only a brief introduction to issues related to development in the private realm. More detailed analysis of trends, issues and opportunities will take place in later phases of the Portland Plan. This section identifies some initial conceptual approaches that may merit early consideration regarding future approaches for guiding development in the private realm.

1. **Greater clarity regarding the zoning code development allowances.** Residents are often surprised by the type and scale of development that takes place in their neighborhoods, even in areas that have long been zoned for commercial or multidwelling development. Those more familiar with zoning and development, such as builders, are also sometimes uncertain about the intended development outcomes of Portland's zoning. Currently, the Comprehensive Plan map and zoning maps are the primary ways Portland conveys development allowances as they apply across the city, but viewing these maps does not provide a clear picture of the intended scale or form of development. An idea to consider is the possibility of using more graphically-communicative tools, such as three-dimensional diagrams or online resources, that can more clearly and intuitively communicate the scale and form of development allowed by the zoning code.
2. **More intentional development outcomes.** Zoning regulations allow a broad range of development forms and configurations within most zones, creating uncertainty about the form and characteristics that development will take. This can compromise the ability to implement community aspirations for the future built environment of neighborhoods and streets. A possibility to consider is whether Portland should be more intentional in guiding development to achieve particular outcomes that are desired by the community. A recommendation of the Regulatory Rethink Advisory Council of Experts, which in 2006 evaluated Portland's approach to regulating development, was that Portland should provide greater clarity regarding desired outcomes. This council also advised that the City should provide implementation tools that would state intentions for different types of places and streets, showing intended development intensities, building massing and the relationship of development to the street.


DEAD
END

Ideas for Future Consideration

This report has focused on describing Portland's existing urban form ("what is here now") to provide a starting point for community discussion on the future of our key places, neighborhood patterns and characteristics and public realm. As a conclusion to this report and a beginning to the "next steps" for the Portland Plan, this chapter identifies potential new approaches to addressing key issues in each topic area.

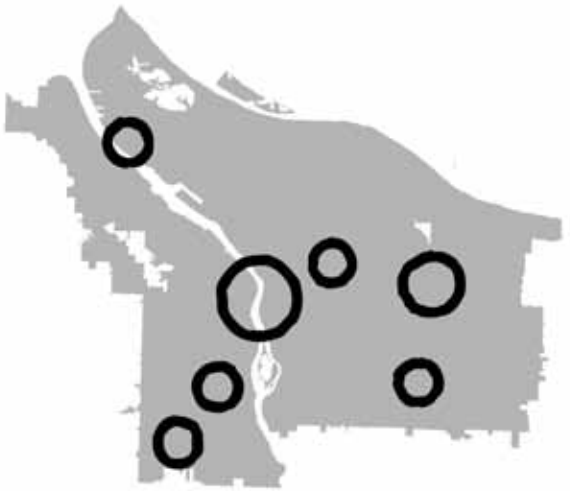
Places

A Guiding, Citywide Urban Form Concept Diagram.

While the City has taken a very specific and methodical approach to its zoning pattern (effectively established with the 1980 Comprehensive Plan), an accompanying, more general and more aspirational urban form concept plan has not been developed. Concept diagrams are important as they illustrate a plan's major components and highlight intended outcomes.

Because the Comprehensive Plan includes no concept diagram, the "big picture" of the Comprehensive Plan and its major organizing themes and ideas regarding the future form of the city were never made clear. In addition, the Comprehensive Plan also lacks extensive three-dimensional imagery that would illustrate for the community the intended or potential physical forms of its zoning designations.

Idea for new approach: create a guiding, citywide urban form concept plan diagram to clearly convey where and how the city intends to grow, identifying the key places, features and connections that should be continued or fostered over time. The diagram could illustrate intentions for different levels of new development, based on priorities for the city's designated major corridors, transit centers, open spaces and other important city facilities.



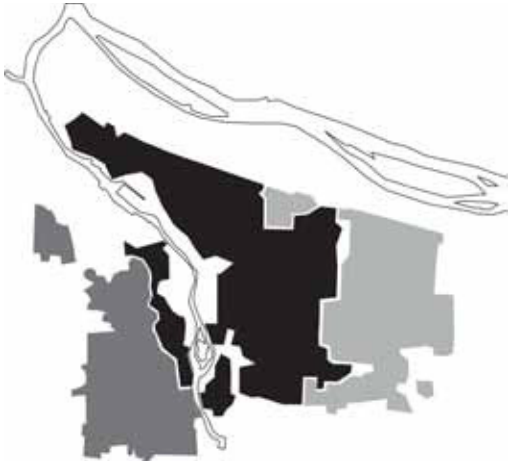
Patterns

Three Neighborhood Pattern Areas, because "One size does not fit all."

Although there are at least three fundamental types of Portland neighborhoods (Inner, Eastern and Western) with distinct urban form characteristics and differing aspirations, existing development regulations tend to follow a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

This mismatch occurs at the regional level, as the Metro 2040 Design Concept identifies all of Portland's neighborhood residential areas as "Inner Neighborhoods," providing no sense of their fundamentally different existing or desired characteristics. And at the city's neighborhood planning level, while Portland has over 40 adopted neighborhood or area plans, each with its own urban design policies and visions, creating development standards specific to each of these has not been practical.

Idea for new approach: Create policies and implementation tools that acknowledge the distinct characteristics and urban form aspirations of the three Portland neighborhood geographies. Providing such a policy framework could also open up opportunities for the City to target improvements, such as street improvements, in ways that are designed to respect the distinct built and natural characteristics of the pattern areas.



Public Realm

Public Streets as Part of the Public Realm.

The public realm of streets and parks represents a large amount, nearly 30%, of Portland's land area. Choices regarding the future use, design and expansion of these public spaces therefore provides the community with key opportunities for directly shaping Portland's urban form. While streets are the largest component of the public realm and have historically served multiple community functions, they have been treated and managed by the City primarily for transportation. Portland lacks clear policy guidance on the role of streets as part of the broader public realm. Portlanders have been interested in creating more public gathering places and green places that bring more natural elements into the city, but public resources for creating new parks to serve these functions are limited. Streets could provide opportunities to help meet such needs.

Idea for new approach: determine how streets might complement the broader system of public spaces, not only as conduits for transportation, but also as places for community interaction, environmental benefit, open space and other purposes.

Private Realm

More Intentional and Targeted Development Outcomes.

Zoning regulations allow a broad range of development forms and configurations within most zones, creating uncertainty about the form and characteristics that development will take. This can compromise the ability to implement community aspirations for the future built environment of neighborhoods and streets.

Idea for new approach: take a more intentional and targeted approach to guiding private development to achieve particular urban form outcomes, such as street environments, development patterns, open space or urban forest characteristics that are desired by the community. A more intentional approach to Portland's future form could help ensure that new development contributes to creating the kinds of places Portlanders want.

Significant Citywide Plans

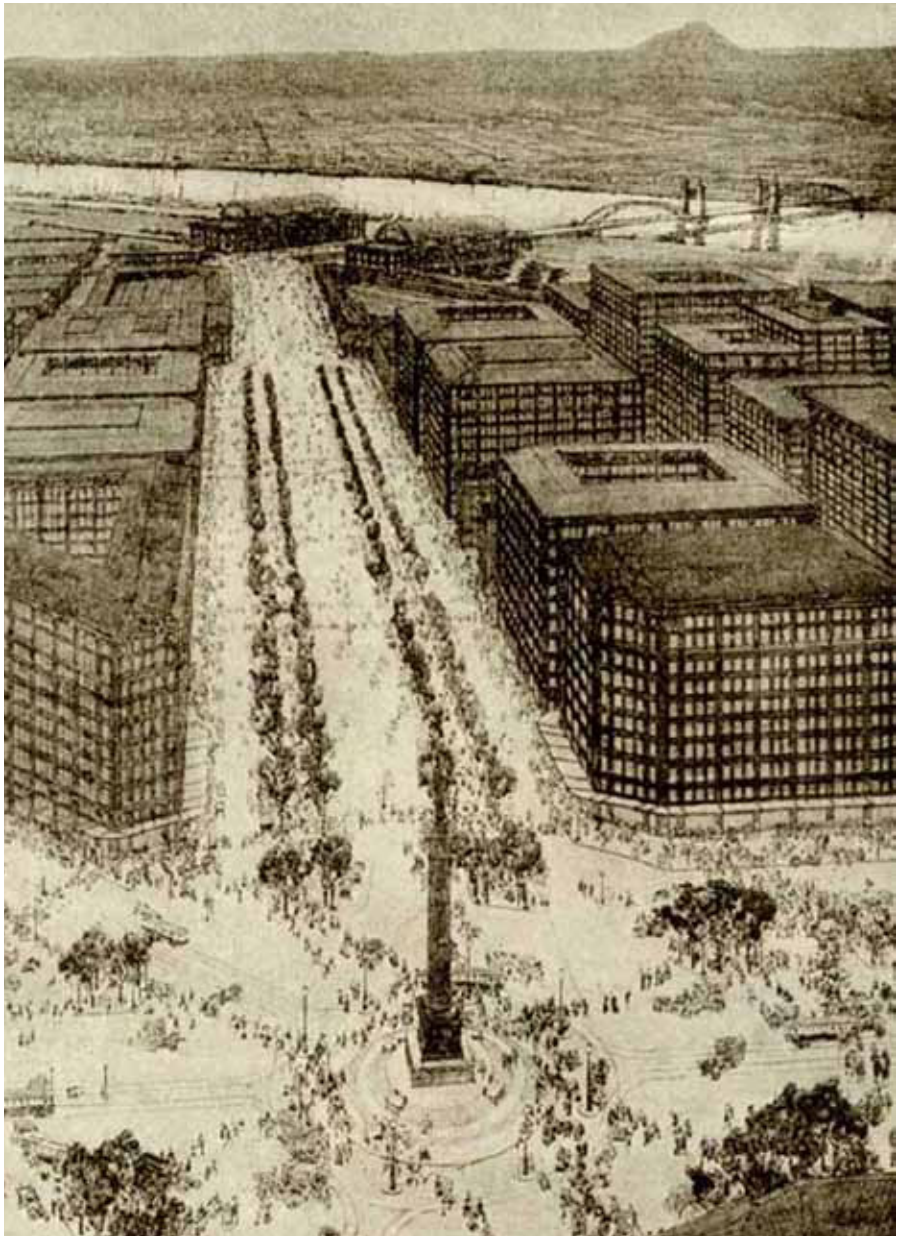
Over a Century of Big Ideas and their Influence on Urban Form

Portland has a long history of city planning. This appendix analyzes the urban form impacts of the City's most significant urban plans. Each of these plans sought to address current issues while also considering possibilities for Portland's future, contributing elements to its infrastructure that have cumulatively made up many of its enduring places. These plans addressed urban form and transportation at a variety of scales in accordance with the popular planning trends of the day — from City Beautiful to Modernism. The Olmsted Brothers' parkways, Bennett's Parisian style grand boulevards and Robert Moses' network of expressways reflect the thinking and resultant infrastructure improvements occurring in other North American cities during their time. To plan for both the present and our future, it is important to understand the basis for these places. Many of the underlying concerns for these plans underscore issues that remain relevant today.

Readers should note that each of these plans are linked in a cumulative way, where implementation occurred through several iterations of plans. These plans featured ideas for features such as large natural parks, a freeway loop and additional bridges that exist today and were essential to Portland's growth. Most of these ideas, however, were not manifested until planning phases beyond their initial conception.

The plan elements are represented in a common graphic format for better comparison and understanding of key points. Also, this analysis of Portland's past and relatively recent plans is simplified in order to highlight essential elements that have influenced the city's urban form over time. The maps presented are intended to be diagrammatic and highly generalized. Note that the "Immediately Implemented" diagrams identify only those elements from each plan that were implemented prior to subsequent plans, and do not identify other ideas that may have persisted but were implemented much later.

The chapter is divided into two main sections: historic plans and contemporary plans. Historic plans largely occurred the before 1970s, the decade that revolutionized Portland planning with creation of Senate Bill 100, the 1972 Downtown Plan, the establishment of the Urban Growth Boundary and the highly symbolic removal of Harbor Drive. All of these have had a tremendous effect on Portland's urban form. The second section highlights contemporary plans, those that directly influence decision making today at the regional, citywide and neighborhood scales.



Historic Plans

Olmsted Plan, 1903

Greater Portland Plan, 1912

Major Traffic Street Plan Boulevard and Park System, 1921

Proposed System of Major Streets and Development of Waterfront, 1932

Portland Improvement, 1943

Comprehensive Plan (Not Adopted), 1966

Contemporary Plans

Comprehensive Plan, 1980.

Metro Region 2040 Growth Concept, 1995

Community, Neighborhood and Area Plans, 1972–Present

Olmsted Plan

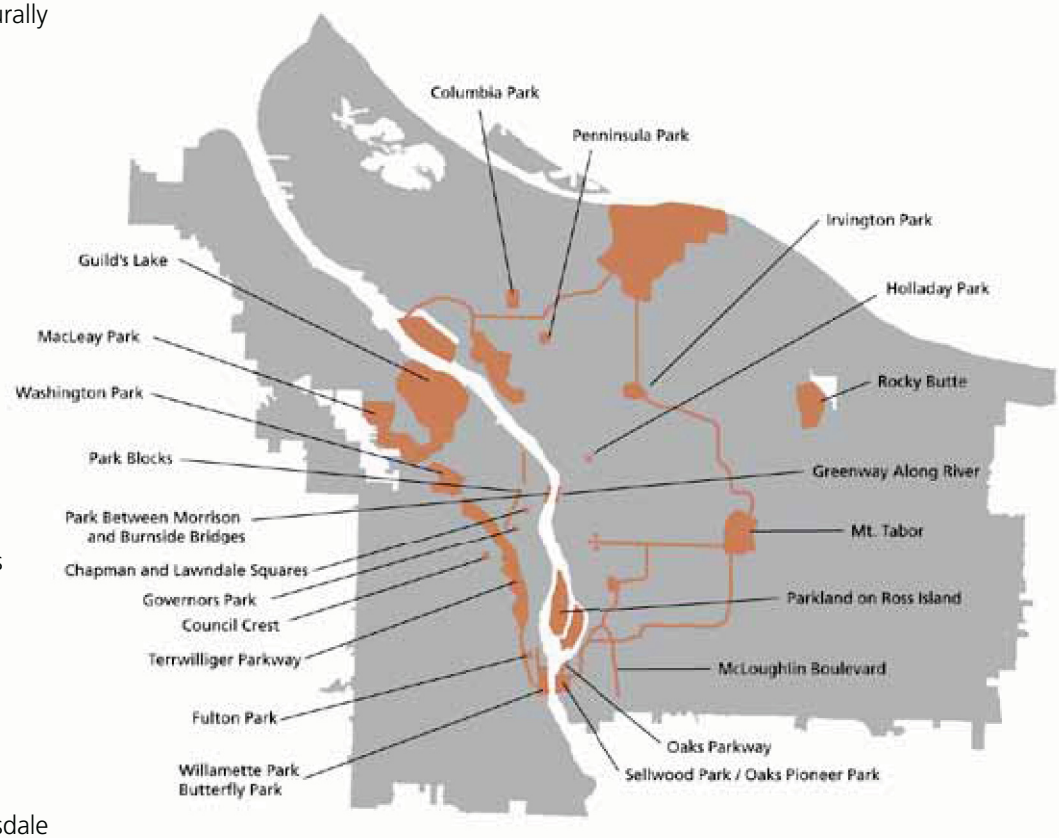
John Charles and Frederick Law Olmsted, 1903

At the turn of the 20th Century, civic and business leaders were working to solidify Portland's leading position among Northwest cities (a position then being rapidly eroded by Seattle). The spirit of boosterism was evident in the 1905 Lewis and Clark Exposition and also in Portland's first city plan completed in 1903. City leaders turned to the emerging city planning profession to guide expansion on the East Side and reshape development on the West Side. Influenced by the City Beautiful Movement, which emphasized stately parks, grand boulevards and plazas, they wanted a plan that would inspire civic loyalty and bring Portland to par aesthetically and culturally with other American and European cities.

"A good park system is a manifestation of the intelligence, degree of civilization and progressiveness of the citizens."

Learning from examples set by other cities, Portland leaders recognized the importance of establishing public facilities, including parks, schools and government offices, before large scale population growth occurred. Private investment, it was believed, would be shaped by intentionally planned public infrastructure, a central tenet that continues to underlie planning efforts in Portland and across the nation.

The first step to creating a City Beautiful out of Portland was a parks system. In 1903, the Park Board of Commissioners hired John Olmsted to plan a park system for the city. The result was a comprehensive system of parks and parkways that form the core of Portland's modern park system. When the plan was written, Portland already had a number of large public parks, many of which Olmsted incorporated in the plan with directions for improvement and preservation. These included the North and South Park Blocks, Macleay Park, the Plaza Blocks (Chapman and Lownsdale Squares), Governor's Park, Washington Park and Columbia Park. While not all of the parks recommended in the plan were built, many were, including Sellwood Park, Mt. Tabor Park, Terwilliger Parkway and Peninsula Park.

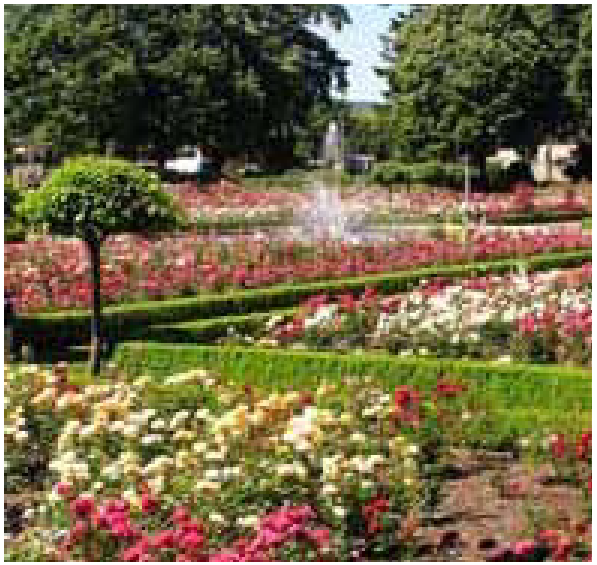


The Olmsted Plan emphasized topography, views and connections. Its main concept, a connected system of parks and parkways throughout the city, has continued to be a guiding principal and has been featured in one form or another in every subsequent city plan. This is evident in the parks identified in the Olmsted plan but not built until years later, including Forest Park, the Columbia Slough, Rocky Butte and Willamette Park, as well as the region's "40-Mile-Loop" system of trails and open spaces. In addition to parks, the system included parkways where service vehicles were allowed as well as more formal scenic boulevards.

"Parks not only add to the beauty of a city and to the pleasure of living in it, but are exceedingly important factors in developing the healthfulness, morality, intelligence and business prosperity."

Immediately Implemented

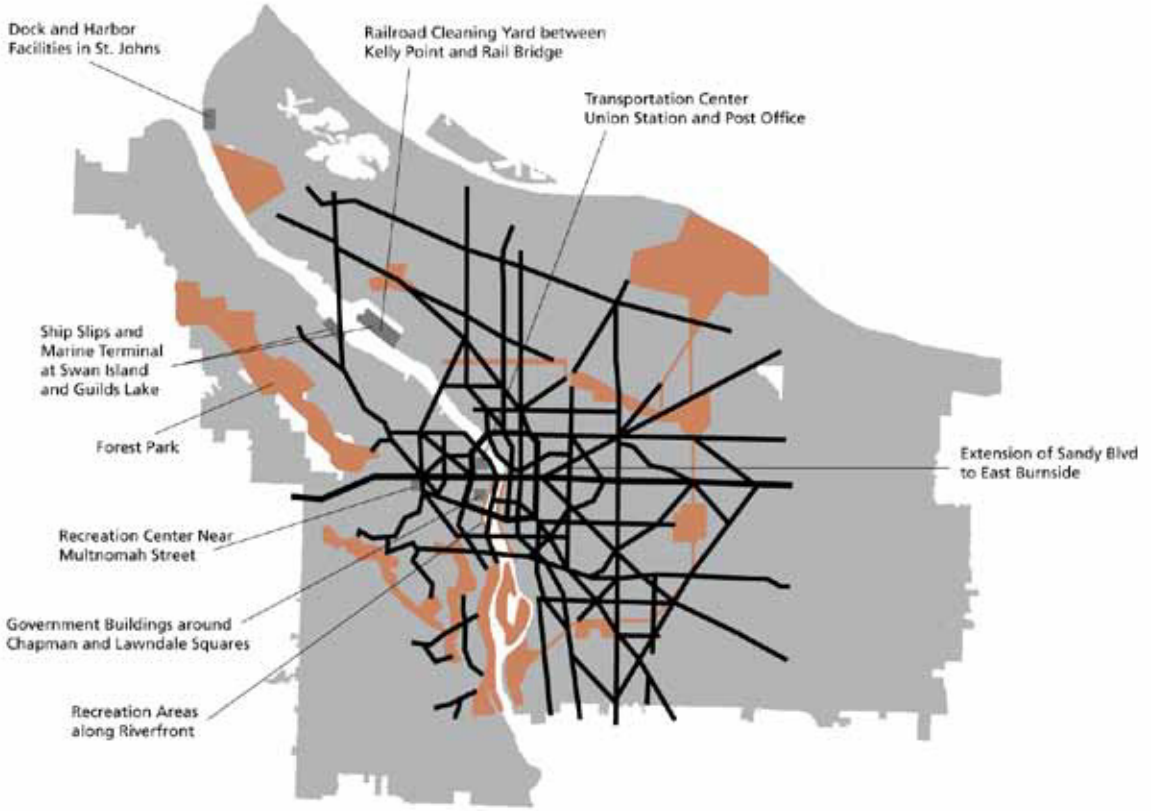
- Park improvements
- New parks
- McLoughlin Blvd. parkway



The Greater Portland Plan

Edward H. Bennett, 1912

In 1912, the year Edward Bennett released The Greater Portland Plan, the city was experiencing large-scale population growth, a real estate boom and changing land patterns. Early Portland's open meadows and forests continued their historical transformation — first to squared, surveyed farms, then to unevenly developed subdivisions and city lots and eventually to contiguous, dense urban/suburban neighborhoods. Envisioning continuous growth, Bennett wrote an ambitious plan for a city of two million residents (the population was then about 210,000) that would enhance the city's natural beauty. Bennett's plan was more comprehensive than Olmsted's, addressing circulation, civic centers, parks and rail and water terminals, with an emphasis on the separation of functions for greater efficiency. The plan used an "Organic City" analogy, with the central business district acting as the heart, the streets as the arteries and the parks as the lungs.



Traffic circulation was addressed with a spider web design of traffic circuits, including wide diagonal boulevards that shortened the distance between nodes and connected to a radial suburban highway system. Grand boulevards were designed with viewpoints and street vistas. Several of the main streets identified for improvement in the Plan remain major streets today, including Foster Road, E Burnside, Union Avenue (now Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard) and Sandy Boulevard.

Bennett planned to bolster civic identity and pride with civic spaces at key intersections and an expanded park system. Three municipal centers were planned as anchors for the central business district. While the plans were not realized in full, the existing concentration of government offices around Lownsdale and Chapman squares; transportation facilities centered around Union Station; and Civic Stadium/ PGE Park were envisioned by the plan. For the park system, in addition to expanding the Park Blocks, Bennett recommended adding neighborhood parks, forest reserves and a hilltop vista on Council Crest.

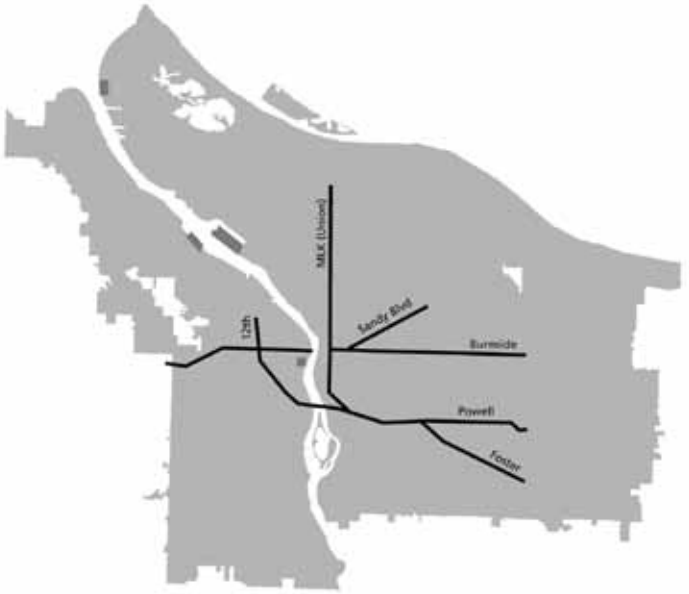
Bennett recommended a number of waterfront changes to benefit industry, anticipating an increase in marine business resulting from the completion of the Panama Canal. St. Johns and Linnton were chosen to site dock and harbor facilities for wholesale and light industry, while Guild's Lake and Swan Island were identified as good locations for ship slips and a deep water harbor. A railroad clearing yard at Kelley Point would link water and rail freight to complete the transportation system. The central waterfront would be used for

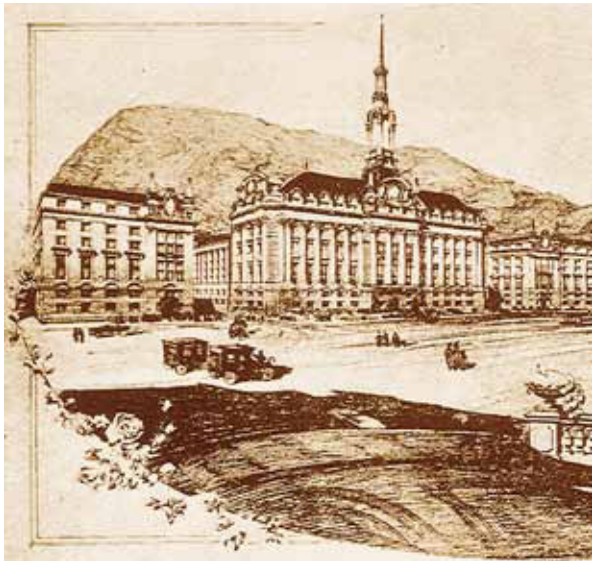
freight wagons and railroads serving downtown wholesalers and Burnside would act as the divider between the retail and the wholesale districts. Bennett's plan for the waterfront happened gradually, but it was not until the naval shipyards were built during WWII that the plan was fully realized. It would be more than 30 years before the riverside park and pathways were realized with the completion of Waterfront Park in 1978 and the East Bank Esplanade in 1998.

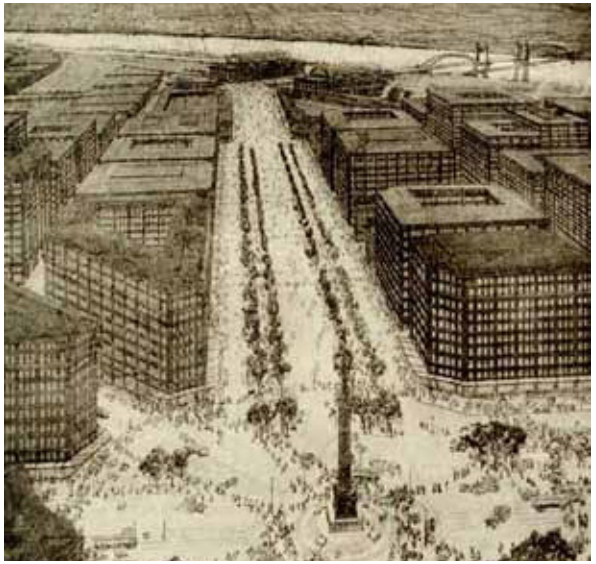
"The idea is the organic city with its parts and activities closely related and well defined, but not conflicting; wisely and economically built, not a cluster of villages, each with its center, and with boundaries accidentally merged."

Immediately Implemented

- Port facilities
- Major street improvements







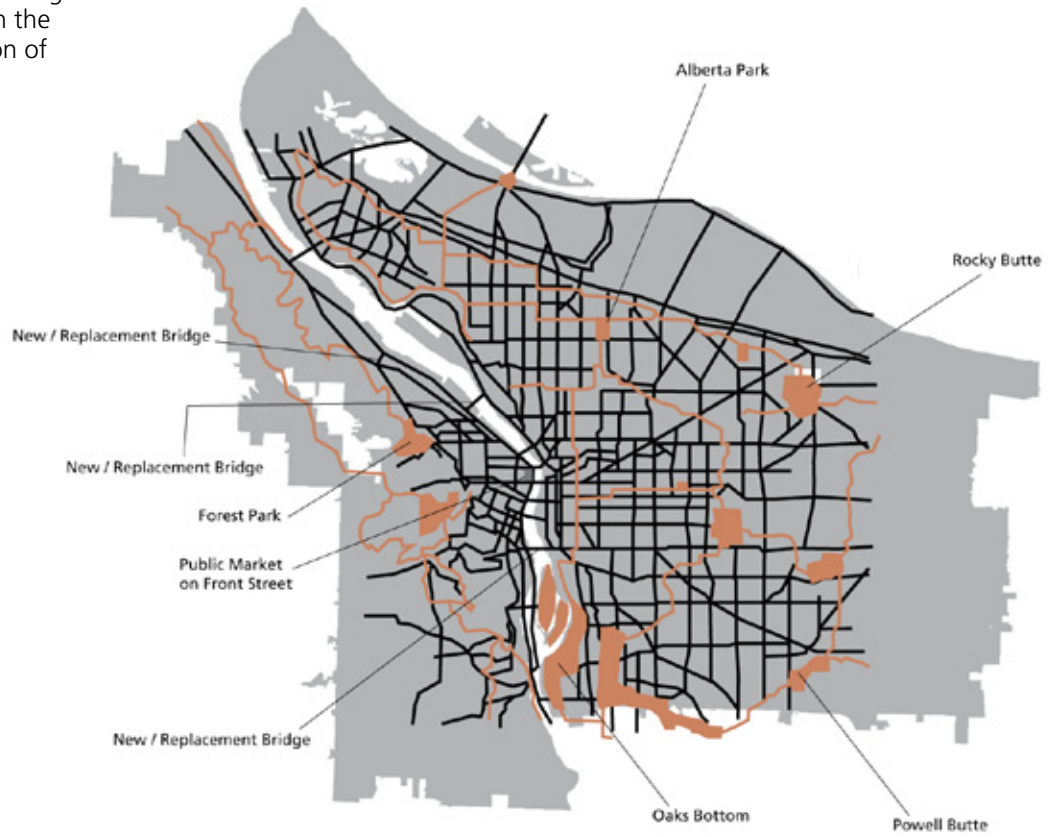
Major Traffic Street Plan Boulevard and Park System for Portland, Oregon

Charles H. Cheney, 1921

The shipbuilding boom Portland experienced during WWI fueled the creation of more than 30,000 jobs in less than two years. The resulting population growth led to a housing shortage. At the same time, automobile ownership increased significantly, causing congestion and safety problems.

Cheney gave special attention to the Central Business District (CBD). In order to relieve congestion while strengthening connections to outlying areas, Cheney designed a system of major traffic streets that formed the backbone of the city's arterial highway system and drained other traffic streets leading onto them. A diverting traffic loop designed to alleviate congestion in the CBD was included in the Plan, later realized with the construction of I-405 in 1969. To improve traffic flow, Cheney recommended a number of new and rebuilt bridges and elevated approaches. Improvements to the central waterfront were proposed to remove "dilapidated" older commercial buildings that posed a fire hazard, along with a seawall for flood protection. These actions would later be realized.

Cheney recognized the need to protect housing quality while maintaining stable neighborhoods. Believing that a poor mixture of land uses led to blight, he undertook a comprehensive survey of housing needs and proposed a zoning code intended to control land use, building height and open space around buildings. Recommendations were made for industrial development, economic use and regulation of the subdivision of land, housing, transportation, power, water and sewer and parks, boulevards and tourism. Due to strong opposition from the real estate sector, the zoning code was not adopted. However, the City's first zoning code would be adopted by a popular vote a few years later in 1924. Zoning has remained as an important tool in land use planning in the city through today.

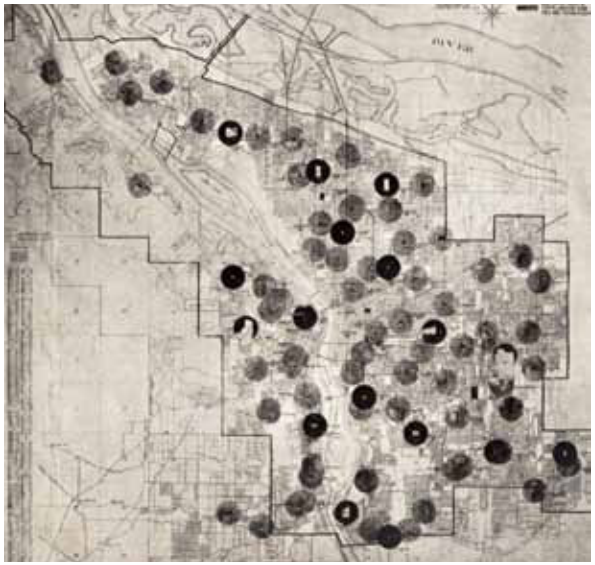


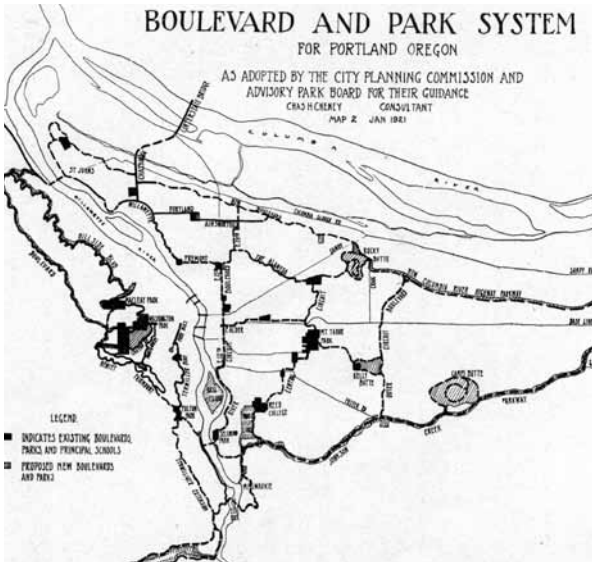
The plan also addressed the park system. A ten-year program of playground and park acquisition included definitions of park types and an acquisition schedule. In a move away from traditional concepts of pleasantly landscaped areas for passive recreation, Cheney's plan focused attention on natural parks. The plan recommended four large wild parks at the corners of the city. This concept exists today as Powell Butte, Forest Park, Rocky Butte and Oaks Bottom. Cheney's vision of mountain parks along the Columbia River with auto camping grounds for tourists has also been realized through the extensive state park system in the Columbia Gorge.

"The skyscraper is the stepbrother of the vacant lot . . . it is unhealthy and uneconomic."

Immediately Implemented

- New/replacement bridges (Sellwood, Burnside and St. Johns)





Report on the Proposed System of Major Streets and Development of Waterfront

Harland Bartholomew and Associates, 1932

By the end of the 1920s, automobile use was effecting the way planners thought about the physical form of Portland. Rapidly increasing traffic congestion and an expanding urban form were changing the way people moved around the city and were presenting new challenges for infrastructure and service provision. Bartholomew's plan was tailored to the interests of economic growth and real estate development, emphasizing improved traffic flow and waterfront development. It provided a comprehensive analysis of the city and its region with detailed data. By this time, Portland's policy makers had new planning tools available to them including the City Planning Commission established in 1918, the 1924 zoning code and Oregon's 1919 City Planning Law authorizing local comprehensive planning, which withstood legal challenge in 1924.

In Bartholomew's plan, the Willamette River waterfront was the city's "front door," and it called for rehabilitation of blighted areas (the original commercial section of Portland, including today's Skidmore/Old Town and Yamhill Historic Districts). Recreation areas were planned to improve the appearance of the waterfront but were not realized until Waterfront Park and the Eastbank Esplanade were built in the last quarter of the 20th Century.

Recognizing that accessibility is the key to a strong Central Business District, Bartholomew recommended a number of changes to improve traffic flow. A new transit plan for the Central Business District, which would be expanded to the waterfront, recommended moving rail lines and changing routes so that only alternating streets would be used for transit. Several rapid transit routes were recommended, including one between Union Station and Sullivan's Gulch. This concept would later be realized by the Blue and Red Max light rail lines. A diverting traffic loop designed to alleviate congestion in the Central City was included in the Plan and finally realized in 1969 with the construction of I-405.

The Bartholomew Plan was not well-received by the general public or City politicians and bureaucrats, in part because it lacked support from real estate interests and was long, cumbersome and overly detailed. The City Council refused to publish the plan. However, the City did subsequently focus attention on the West Side waterfront section of Portland, particularly in the need to widen Front Street.

"The lack of a well defined and integrated main thoroughfares has resulted in tremendous economic waste, not only from delays and inconvenience but also from the shifting of property values. Cities have learned the costly lesson that there can be no stability without a definite and complete plan to control urban development."

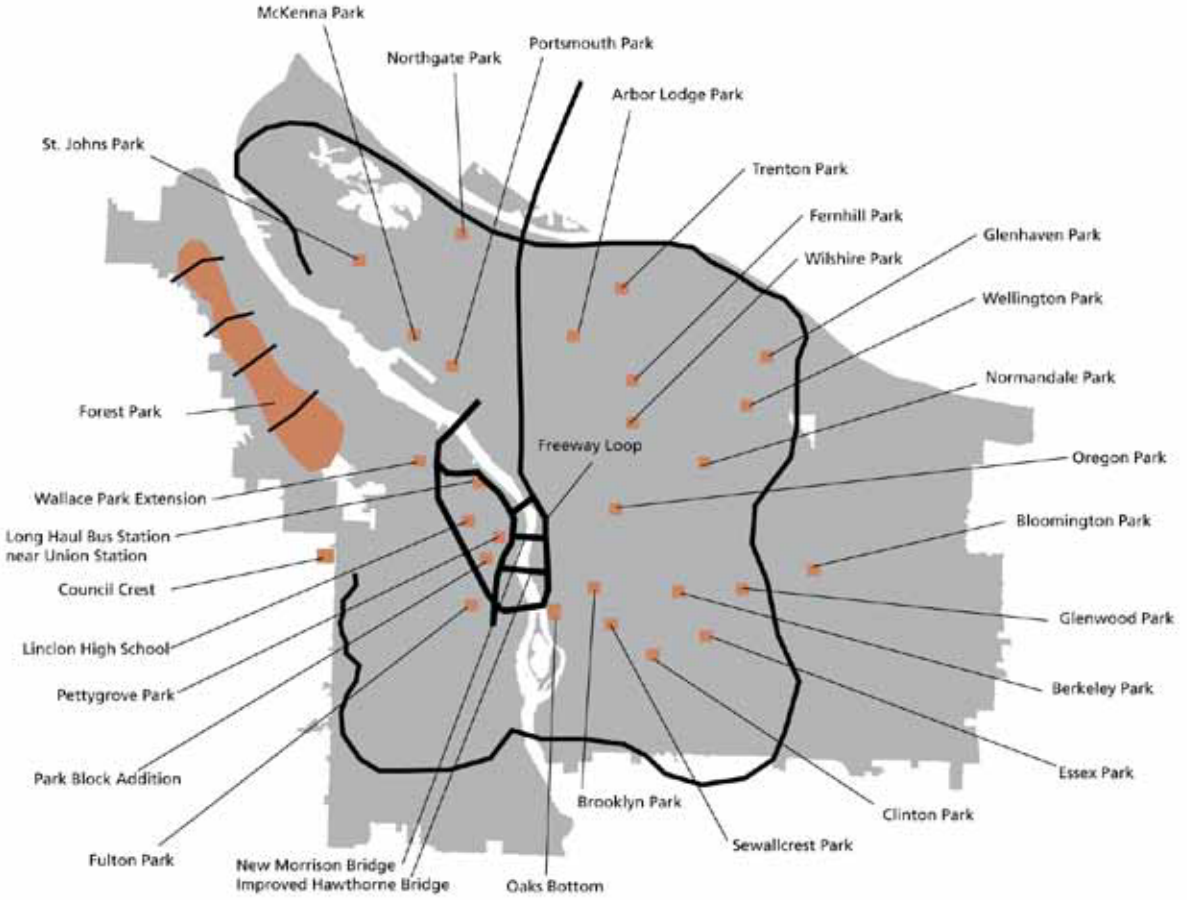
Immediately Implemented

- Industrial waterfront improvements
- Downtown expansion to waterfront
- West side approach to Steele Bridge

Portland Improvement
Robert Moses, 1943

Anticipating both an economic boom and a housing shortage after the war, Portland hired Robert Moses to create a new city plan in 1943. "Portland Improvement" emphasized upgrading infrastructure to carry Portland into the modern era. It called for an arterial program consisting of throughways elevated at grade and below grade, along with other major municipal improvements including sewers, schools, a civic center, railroad, bus and truck facilities, fire stations, water, airport and port upgrades.

"The community which meets the problem early, squarely and with no ducking, dodging and buck-passing and, on the other hand no false pride which scorns state and federal aid, will somehow find the answer."



Although it had been included in Portland city plans for more than 30 years, it was not until after Portland Improvement was implemented that the diverting traffic loop around Downtown (I-405) was built. The final piece of the loop was completed in 1973 with the opening of the Fremont Bridge. In addition to the traffic loop, the plan also called for strengthened connections between Portland and the Lake Oswego Highway (Macadam Avenue) and improvements to Pacific Highway West (Barbur Boulevard/99W), Tualatin Valley Highway, Oregon Route 10 (Beaverton Hillsdale Highway) and the Columbia River Highway. It called for an extension of Harbor Drive as a throughway from its existing southern terminus at Caruthers Street to a connection with the Ross Island Bridge. The decision in 1974 to remove Harbor Drive to make way for Waterfront Park would be an important step in the urban renaissance that the city has since experienced.

Several improvements to existing bridges were made as a result of the Moses plan including new elevated ramps to the Burnside and the Hawthorne bridges. Elevated approaches were also included on the new Morrison Bridge.

Portland Improvement included detailed descriptions of the location and proposed use of nearly 40 new parks. While not all were built, many were and are part of today's park system, including Forest Park, Oaks Bottom, numerous neighborhood parks, Council Crest and the Park Block at SW College. Land for several parks in North Portland would be cleared through the removal of temporary war housing. The Moses plan also included recommendations for schools, including a new location for Lincoln High School in Goose Hollow.

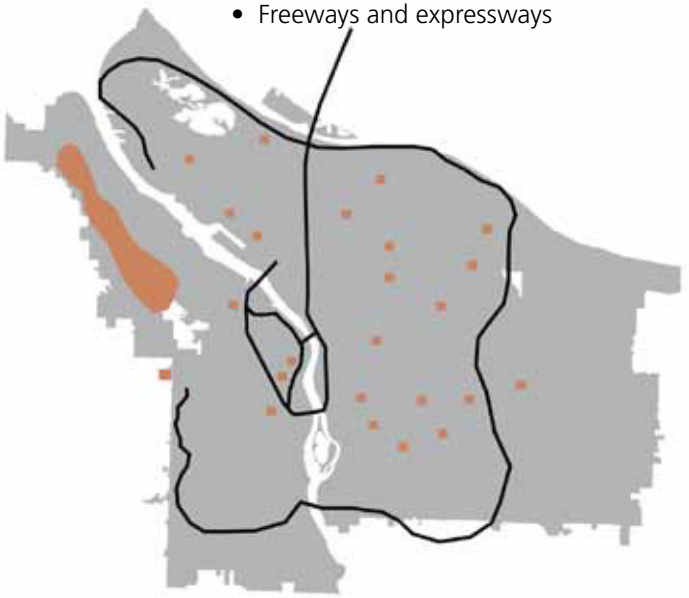
The Moses plan was applauded by The *Oregonian*, the *Oregon Journal* and the City Club of Portland. Commissioner of Public Works, William Bowes, wrote to Moses there was "a real disposition on the part of the agencies to make full use of the recommendations."

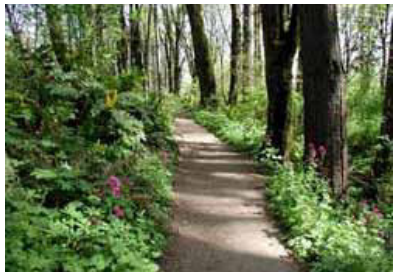
Portland Improvement was an early local exemplar of large-scale, freeway-oriented, major infrastructure planning that came to the fore in post-war America, epitomized by the mega-projects championed by Moses and Ed Logue in the Northeast. The concurrent "Great Projects" era of urban renewal was characterized by an analogous top-down, large-scale, land-clearing approach. Examples in Portland include the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Area (URA), which leveled much of the poor, densely-populated, immigrant neighborhood of South Portland by 1963 and the Emanuel URA of the early 1970s that had devastating effects on the African-American community and landscape of Eliot. In the 1960s and 1970s, citizen activists — and eventually planners and politicians — increasingly came to reject the heavy-handed and disruptive paradigm of the freeway construction/urban renewal approach. Many subsequent Portland planning efforts have struggled to undo some of the legacies of the Modernist era, from tearing out Harbor Drive for a park, to the still dreamed of relocation of the Eastbank Freeway and the continuing effort to create more inclusive and equitable planning and development processes. Recently, urban designers and historians revisiting this period have encouraged a more nuanced understanding of Modernist cityscapes. Some of the Portland examples, for instance the Lawrence Halprin designed landscapes of the South Auditorium area, have been a part of that reevaluation.

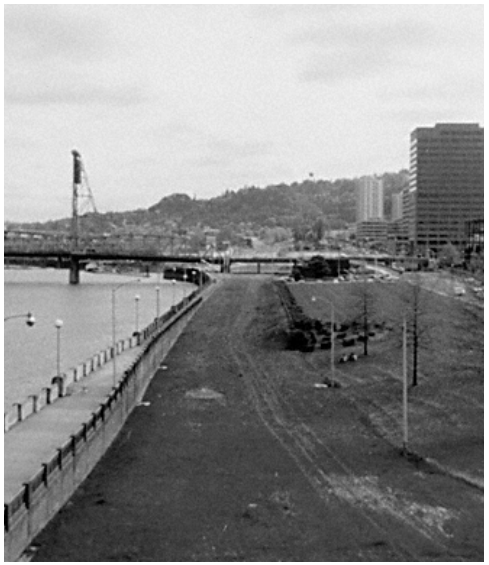
"We ought to invent something which spells unified effort to improve the community, something which will arouse enthusiasm, something with which the worker will be proud to be connected. At the moment I can think of nothing better then the words "Portland Improvement."

Immediately Implemented

- Numerous neighborhood parks
- Forest Park
- Freeways and expressways







Comprehensive Plan (Not Adopted)

City of Portland, 1966

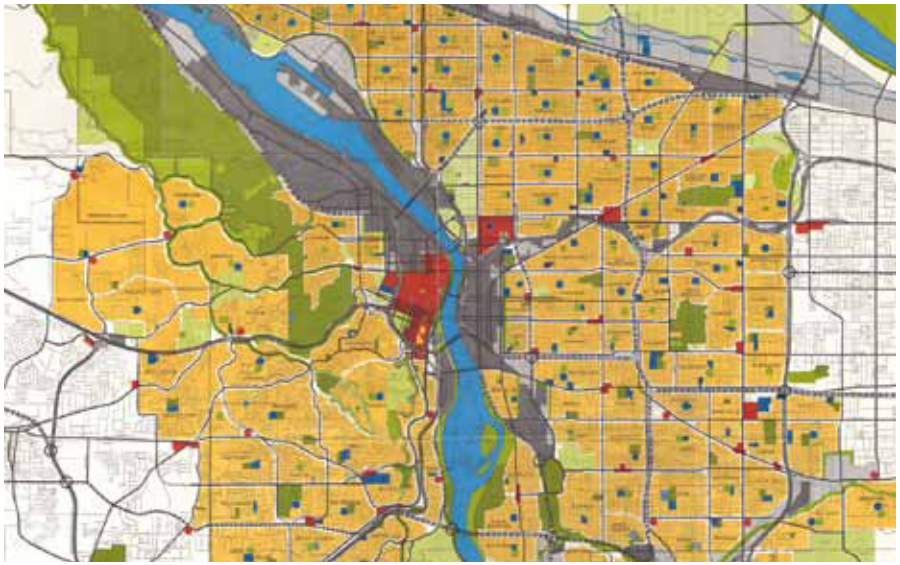
By 1958, the Portland Development Commission (PDC) had been formed to help implement Federal Housing Act mandates with tools that included urban renewal strategies. Following the completion of the South Auditorium Project, the 1966 Plan was developed by the City on short notice to underscore desired relationships between housing, commercial activity, education, open space and transportation. The 1966 Plan was the first time neighborhoods were talked about as clearly defined units. The city was divided into different neighborhoods where commercial space was designated if it did not already exist. New schools were recommended in some neighborhoods, and in others, it was recommended that existing schools be moved to new buildings. Each neighborhood was also intended to have its own park. The plan also included an extensive system of freeways or expressways. Other proposals included extending Forest Park to Skyline Boulevard. The downtown core was also expanded; industrial uses on Swan Island were reinforced; and a public and a semi-public area were proposed for the Rose Quarter in Northeast Portland.

This plan was neither widely promoted nor adopted by the City, but it is notable for reflecting the "Neighborhood Unit" planning paradigm which emphasized inward-oriented, cellular residential neighborhood forms, each centered around a school/park, sheltered from incompatible uses and traffic, with limited vehicular access, yet interconnected by a rationalized arterial network bounding the units. Examples of this approach are evident in several post-war Portland areas such as Argay in Outer East Portland. In addition, aspects of neighborhood unit planning are still influential, such as park planning objectives for every neighborhood to be served by an easily-accessible park with active recreation facilities and playgrounds.

The 1966 Comprehensive Development Plan was "directed toward restructuring our residential sections into secluded units protected from the encroachment of conflicting urban uses."

(Planning Commission President Harry Sroufe)

Immediately Implemented



Comprehensive Plan
City of Portland, 1980

The Comprehensive Development Plan of 1980 was a major departure from previous plans in two ways: transportation and public involvement. Previous plans were designed to accommodate and promote automobile use and did not include community involvement. The 1980 plan, however, focused on public transit and non-motorized transportation and included the goal of improving citizen participation in the ongoing land use decision-making process, including review, implementation and amendment of the adopted Comprehensive Plan.

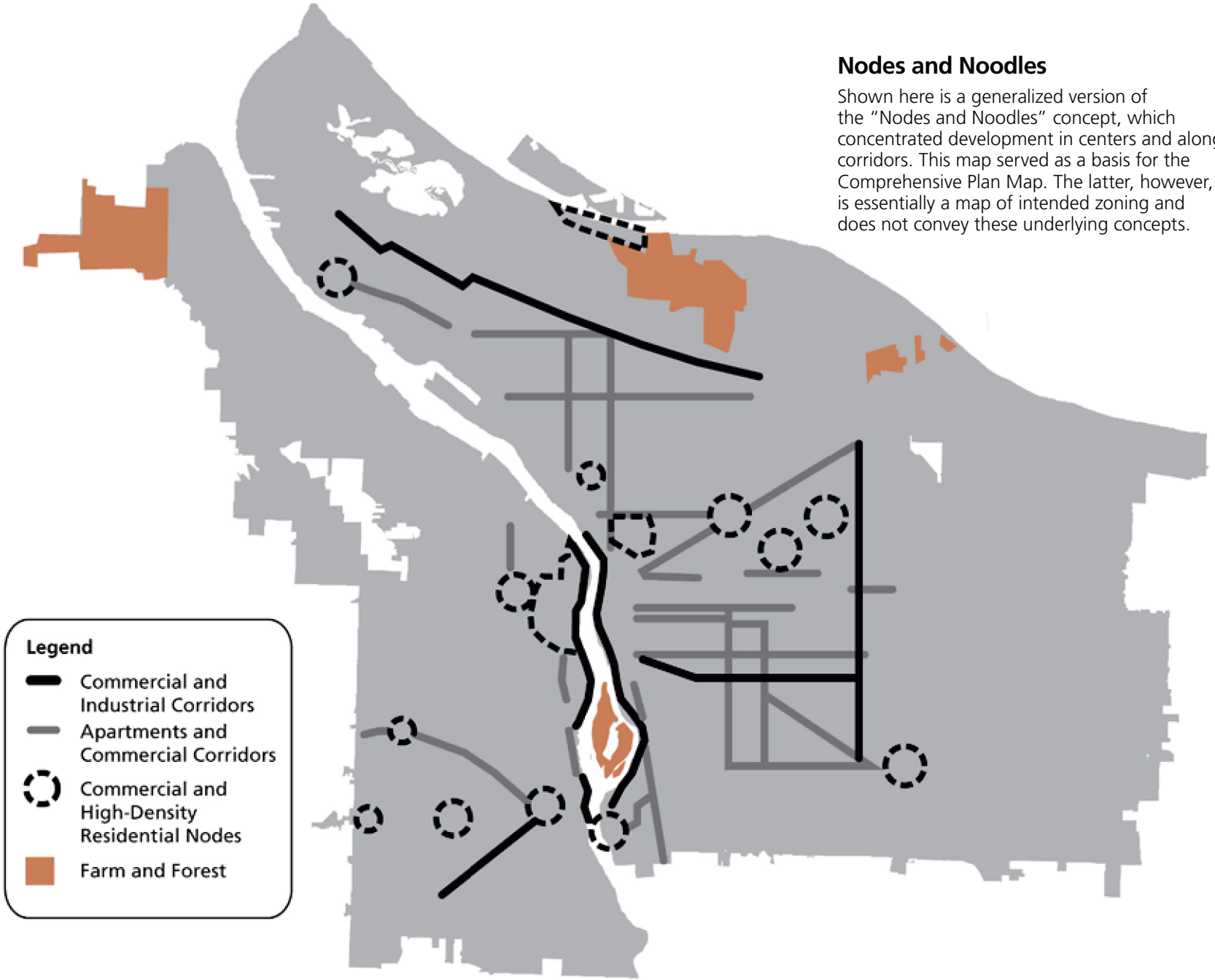
The Plan had four key objectives: to "promote a range of living and employment opportunities for Portland residents in order to attract and retain a stable and diversified population; improve and protect the city's residential neighborhoods while allowing for increased density; reinforce the Downtown's position as the principal commercial, service, cultural and high density housing center in the city and region; and provide a mixture of activities along major transit routes."

Subsequently, high density and mixed use development along the waterfront and near mass transit have provided new and expanded living and employment opportunities. Union Station continues to serve as a multimodal transportation hub, the primary passenger rail and intercity bus terminal in the Portland metropolitan area. The MAX Green Line completes the link between intercity and local transit, as provided by light rail, the streetcar and city buses.

Improved access and safety for bicycle transportation was realized under the plan through the development of more bike routes across bridges and to a variety of destinations, including Downtown, the river and parks. The Plan also included a system of trails, realized partly through the 40-Mile Loop and the Willamette River Greenway. In architectural developments, the construction of the Portland Building in 1982 helped "to complete an informal civil center in the location specified by planners since the time of Edward Bennett."

Nodes and Noodles

Shown here is a generalized version of the "Nodes and Noodles" concept, which concentrated development in centers and along corridors. This map served as a basis for the Comprehensive Plan Map. The latter, however, is essentially a map of intended zoning and does not convey these underlying concepts.



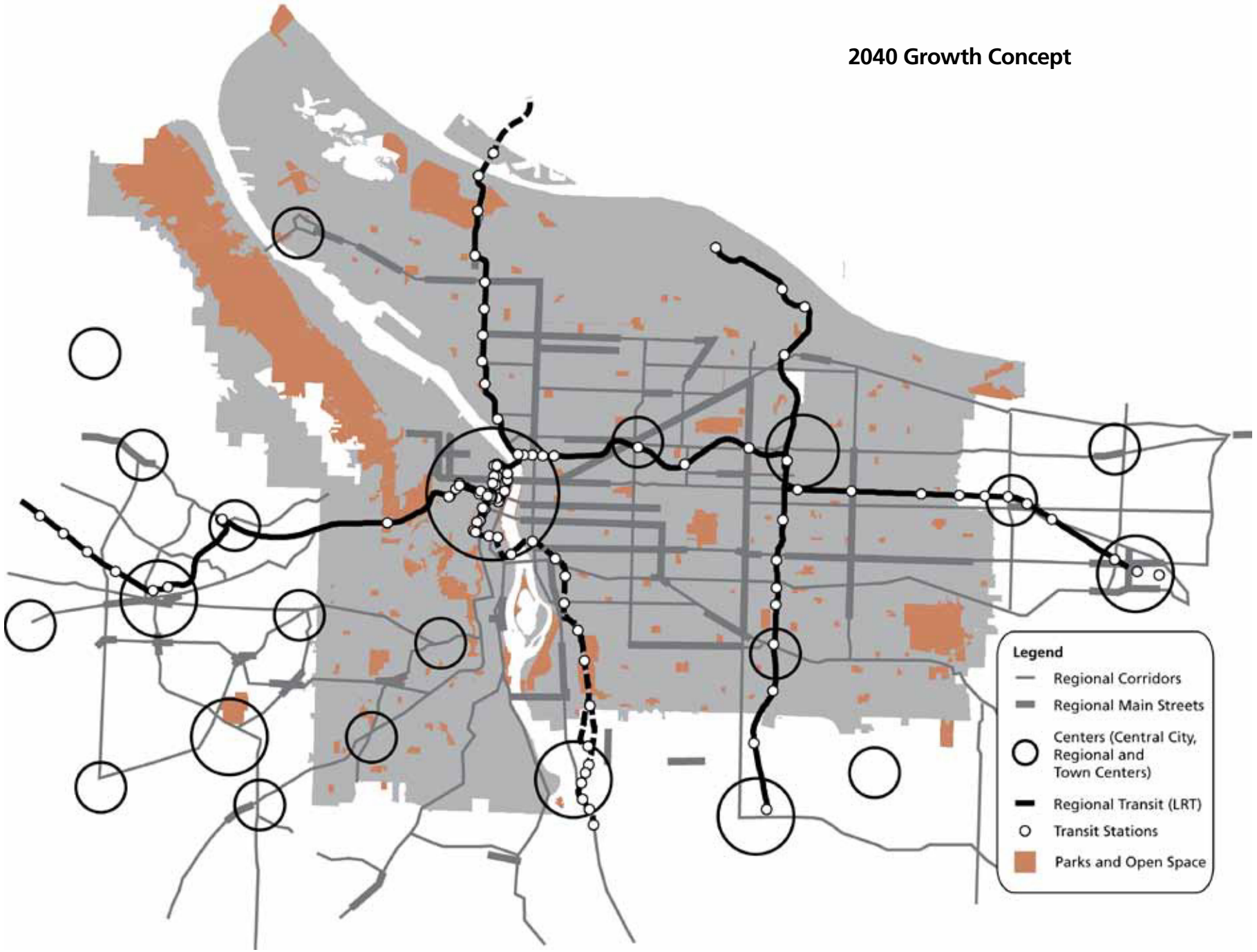
2040 Growth Concept
Metro, 1995

The 2040 Growth Concept establishes a long-range growth management strategy for the Portland metropolitan region. It provides guidance that includes an emphasis on identifying where growth should be concentrated, based on goals for making efficient use of land, protecting natural areas and farm land and promoting a multi-modal transportation system. In Portland, the 2040 Growth Concept calls for concentrating residential and commercial development in and around mixed-use areas that include the Central City, the Gateway Regional Center, six town centers (Hollywood, St. Johns, Lents, Hillsdale, West Portland and Raleigh Hills), main streets, corridors and in light rail station communities.

As part of Portland's efforts to implement the 2040 Growth Concept, centers and light rail station communities have been a primary focus of several recent major planning projects. Since adoption of the growth concept in 1995, compact, often mixed-use development in these centers and light rail station communities has contributed to the continuing evolution of Portland's urban form. This growth has been directed both to places that have long served as commercial centers as well as to areas along light rail lines where higher-density development is a new phenomenon. The amount, and rate, of growth and change has varied considerably among Portland's mixed-use centers, main streets, corridors and light rail station communities.

The 2040 Growth Concept functions in conjunction with Portland's Comprehensive Plan Map to provide guidance on where growth should be concentrated, and it has provided the additional benefit of a nomenclature and hierarchy of places that provides greater clarity regarding Portland's future urban form than is provided by the Comprehensive Plan Map's more technical, zoning-based designations.

2040 Growth Concept



Various Community, Neighborhood and Area Plans

1980s and 1990s

Portland has relied on community, neighborhood and other area plans to provide guidance regarding Portland's urban form. While Portland does not have a citywide urban design concept diagram that identifies the city's key places and urban form, most of these plans include urban design concept diagrams for their specific portions of the city.

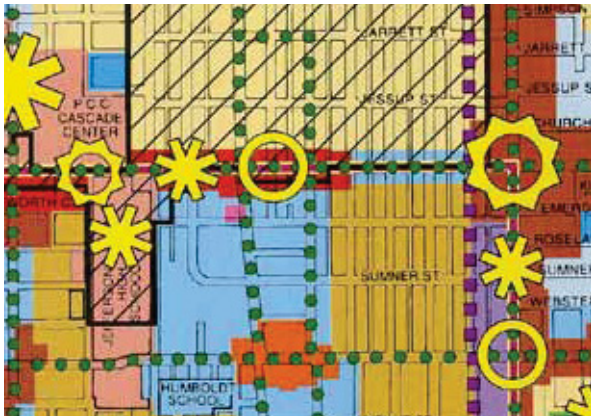
Subsequent to adoption of the 1980 Comprehensive Plan, the Portland's Community and Neighborhood Planning Program was intended to provide area-specific refinement of the Comprehensive Plan using a series of eight community plans, each accompanied by various neighborhood plans. The 1988 Central City Plan and the 1993 Albina Community Plan were to be used as models for other community plans, with all eight intended to be complete by 2005. As of today, four of the eight Community Plan Areas have not undertaken the Community Plan process (Inner Southeast Portland, Peninsula Area, Northeast Portland and Northwest Portland), while the Southwest Community Plan did not include component neighborhood plans or an urban design concept. Since 2000, most planning has occurred at the neighborhood, center, transit corridor or other smaller or focused scales, rather than at the community plan scale. Examples include the Hollywood and Sandy Plan, the Northwest District Plan, the St. Johns and Lombard Plan and the Interstate Corridor Plan.

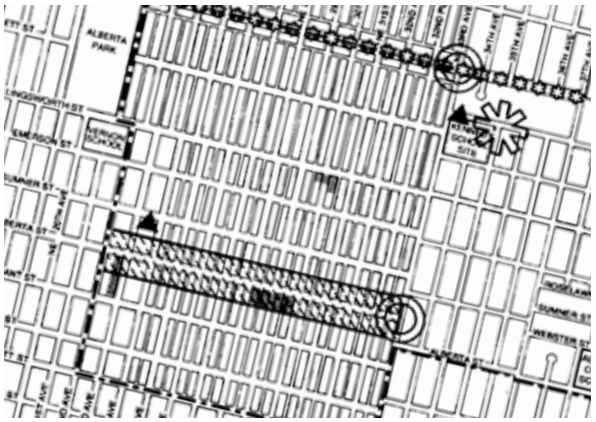
In addition to the vision, goals, policies, objectives and actions contained within community plans, neighborhood and area plans often include recommendations on land use mapping changes and historic district designations, and were intended to encourage citizen involvement.

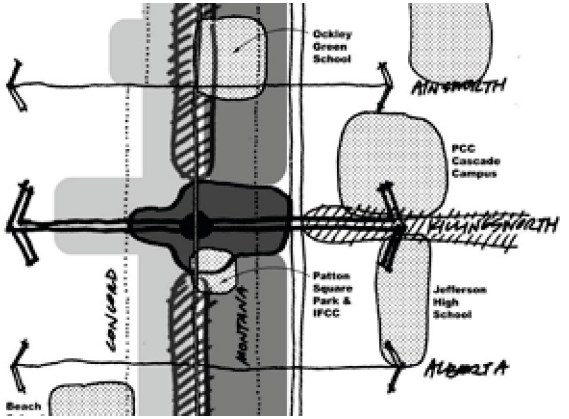
Many of these community and neighborhood plans include urban design concept diagrams intended to provide guidance regarding key places (such as attractions, focal points and gateways), corridors and other community features that should be enhanced or fostered. The map shown on the opposite page is a consolidation of the urban design concept diagrams from adopted community, neighborhood and other area plans.

This consolidated map generalizes the urban design symbols from each map to arrive at a common graphic language. For example, all major and minor focal points were consolidated, nodes were derived from various sources and symbols (which are defined in different ways among the plans) and major and minor corridors were established based on attention given to these within the plans.

The consolidated map clearly illustrates the gaps in community, neighborhood and area planning throughout the city, especially from a citizen-involved urban design perspective. It also highlights the incomplete consideration of urban form and design across the city and the lack of citywide urban form guidance.

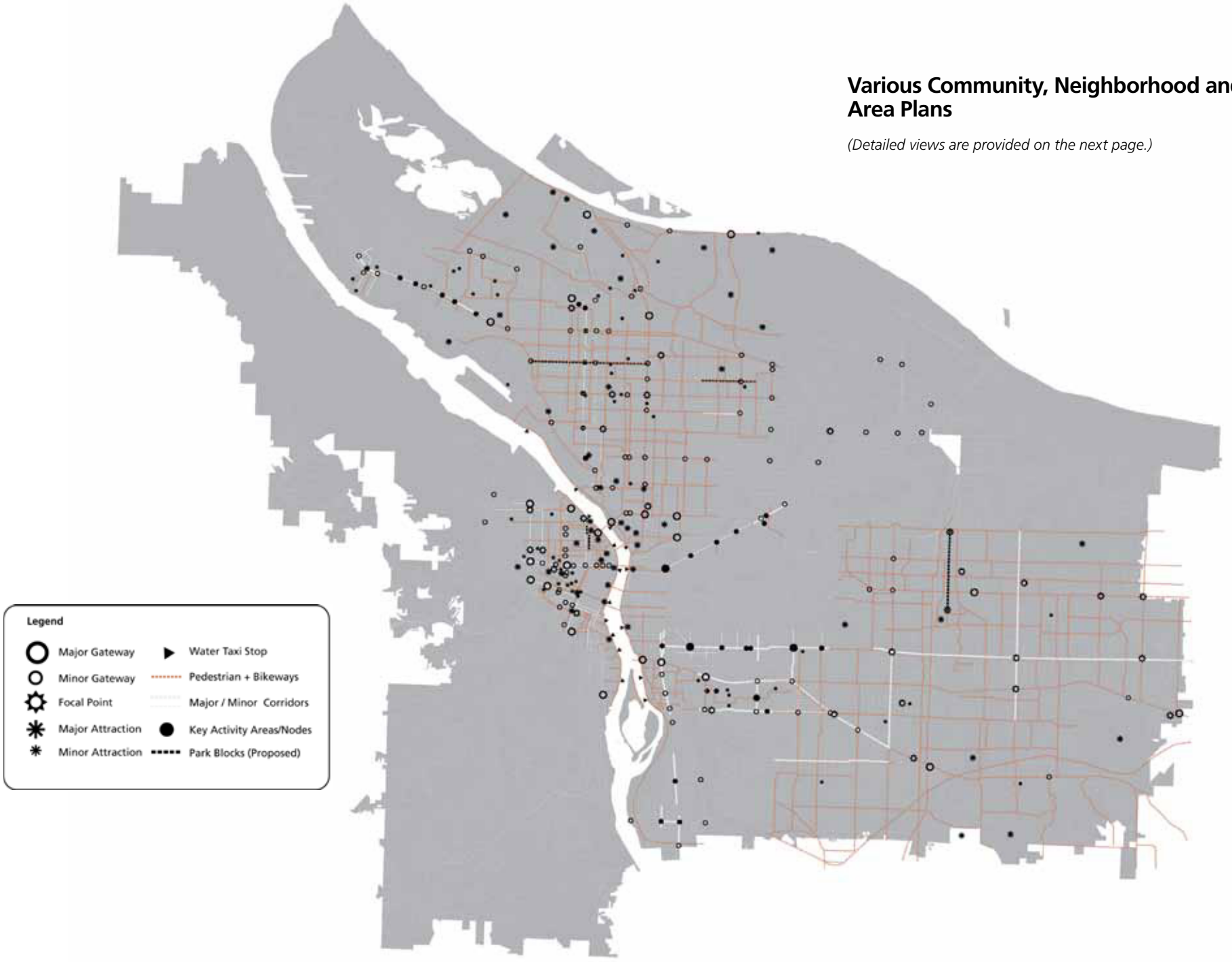




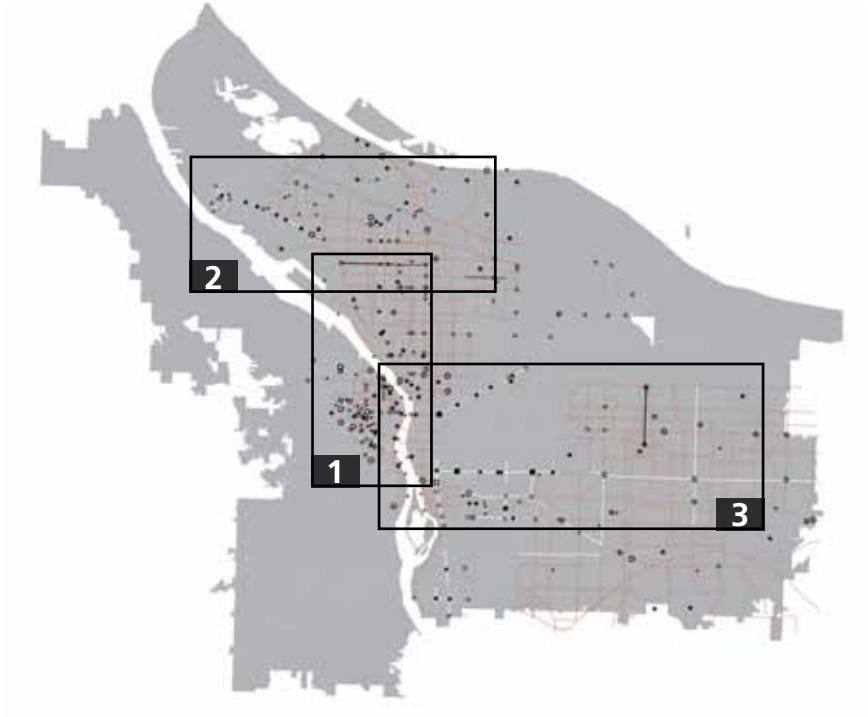


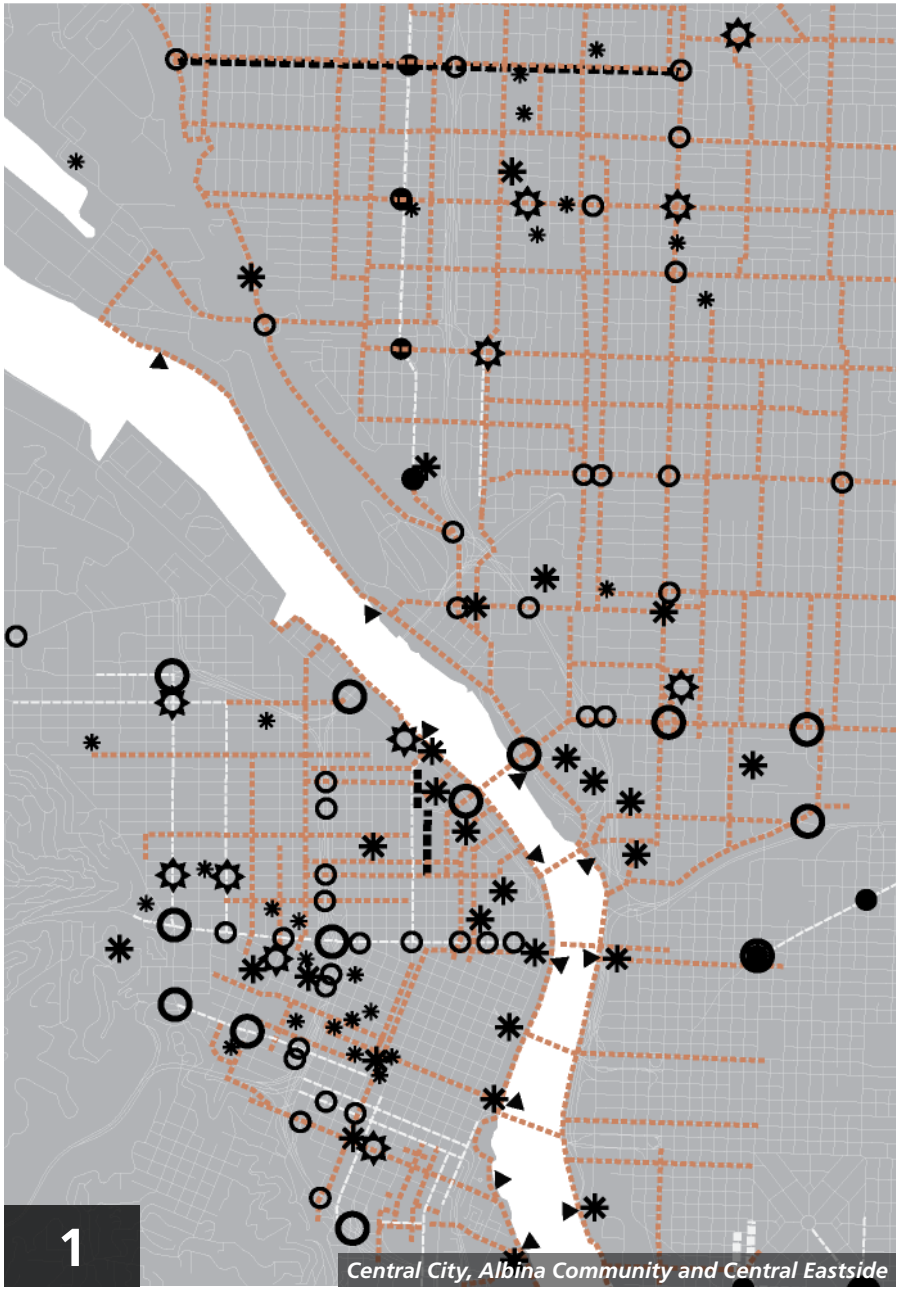
Various Community, Neighborhood and Area Plans

(Detailed views are provided on the next page.)



Various Community, Neighborhood and Area Plans
(Map Details)





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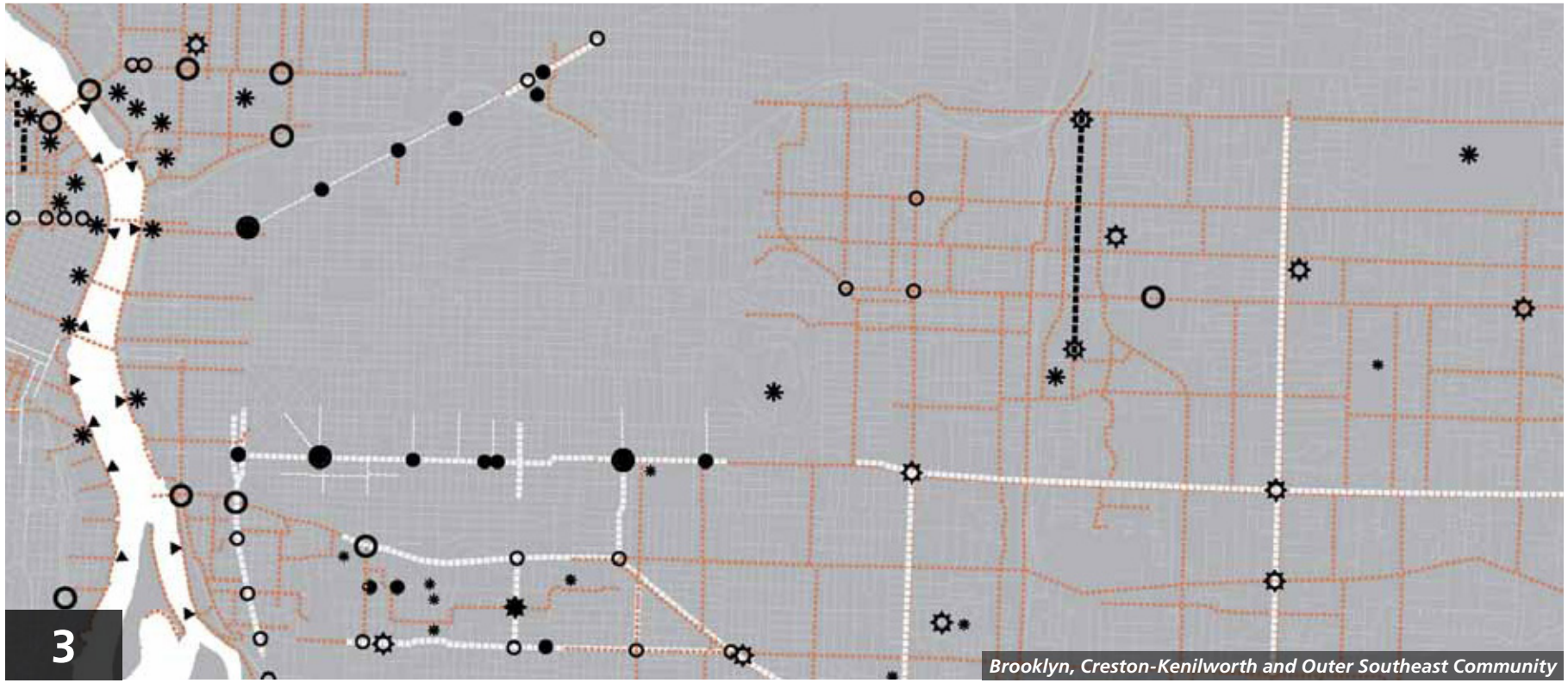
Northern Albina and St. Johns/Lombard



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Brooklyn, Creston-Kenilworth and Outer Southeast Community

City Comparisons

Seeing Portland in the Context of Other Cities

This section provides comparative information on the land area and population of various cities to provide a global perspective regarding Portland's size and density. A city's density can be a key factor in determining the nature and character of its urban form. Many of the development challenges facing a city today are related to the ways in which that city will accommodate future density. In some cases, a city's density as expressed in its urban form can be consistent, while in others, the predominant character can be somewhat variable.

Paris, France, is an example of a city with relatively consistent urban form and density. Paris is composed of a compact system of winding streets lined with a very consistent pattern of five- to eight-story buildings. Its significant population density generates a high-level of pedestrian activity on its streets, in its parks and open spaces and at its corner grocery stores and cafés. In contrast to Paris's consistent form, Portland's older, higher-density neighborhoods, such as Northwest Portland or areas around SE Hawthorne Boulevard, feature a highly-diverse collection of building types, scales, styles and forms. On a broader scale, many of Vancouver, British Columbia's neighborhoods feature a similarly eclectic mix of architectural forms, scales and styles, but with a particularly high concentration of population and tall buildings on its downtown peninsula. Vancouver's population density is more than three times Portland's; it has roughly the same population as Portland in one third the area. Los Angeles, California, has a higher population than Portland across a larger area, accommodating much of its higher density in the form of low-rise, multi-family buildings spread broadly across the city.

The figures on the following pages are approximate and should be used for general comparative purposes only. The population figures are for residential population within city boundaries.

Portland, OR
City Area
85,760 Acres
134 Sq. Miles
Population
536,000
Population Density
6 Persons/Acre

Denver, CO

City Area
98,560 Acres
154 Sq. Miles
Population
598,000
Population Density
6 Persons/Acre

Austin, TX

City Area
189,440 Acres
296 Sq. Miles
Population
743,000
Population Density
4 Persons/Acre

Sacramento, CA

City Area
63,360 Acres
99 Sq. Miles
Population
475,000
Population Density
7 Persons/Acre

Seattle, WA

City Area
53,760 Acres
84 Sq. Miles
Population
592,000
Population Density
11 Persons/Acre

Los Angeles, CA

City Area
318,720 Acres
798 Sq. Miles
Population
3,800,000
Population Density
12 Persons/Acre

Vancouver, BC

City Area
28,160 Acres
44 Sq. Miles
Population
575,000
Population Density
20 Persons/Acre

Paris, France

City Area
23,680 Acres
37 Sq. Miles
Population
2,200,000
Population Density
93 Persons/Acre

Mexico City, Mexico

City Area
366,720 Acres
573 Sq. Miles
Population
8,800,000
Population Density
24 Persons/Acre

Summaries of Community Concerns

Urban Form Issues Identified in Recent Planning Projects

Infill Design Project Report (2005)

The Infill Design Project engaged the community in assessing design issues related to infill development in neighborhoods outside the Central City. The 2005 Infill Design Project Report summarized this assessment. The report indicated community concern that the design of new higher-density residential development often did not respect or continue the established characteristics, patterns or scale of neighborhood residential areas. While "compatibility" was a frequently recurring policy objective for residential infill development, City policies and design regulations lacked clear guidance as to what neighborhood characteristics were important to continue, or how design priorities should vary in differing areas.

Based on recommendations by the project's community advisory committee, the report recommended the "creation of a hierarchy of design principles highlighting how design approaches should differ between areas intended to be places of change, such as mixed-use centers and main streets and areas intended to be places of relative stability, such as neighborhood residential areas." The report also suggested that "the City needs to help counteract the prevalent "one-size-fits-all" approach to infill design by emphasizing how design responses should differ for infill projects in Streetcar Era neighborhoods with urban street grids, versus design on curvilinear streets in Southwest Portland and in other areas where a greener neighborhood character predominates and is valued." The report suggested the creation of a street and urban area typology, identifying what building types and design responses are appropriate for each.

Other recommendations from the Infill Design Project Report related to the Urban Form Plan were suggestions for:

- Targeting new park development in areas with large amounts of multi-dwelling zoning to accommodate the needs of families and other residents living in apartment buildings, which typically lack private yards and frequently provide little usable outdoor space.
- Exploring possibilities for designing major streets to be supportive of adjacent multi-dwelling zoning, such as by including on-street parking, trees and landscaping to foster a quality residential environment.
- Policy and regulatory recognition of the importance of trees as cherished aspects of neighborhood character, especially in areas in East and Southwest Portland, where the predominance of trees play a greater role than the architectural consistency in defining the physical environment of some neighborhoods.

Community Concerns Identified by District Liaisons

In 2004, the Bureau of Planning began developing the existing District Liaison program. Through this program, Planning assigns a planner to one of six areas of the city, called districts. Each planner acts as the Bureau's primary contact between communities, city agencies and nonprofit groups on planning and development matters in the district. The liaisons are the Bureau's lead on issues that address district livability and vitality such as economics, development, design and long-range planning. As a result, the District Liaisons are in constant contact with neighbors in order to begin to understand some of the more prominent neighborhood concerns. Portland Plan staff asked the District Liaisons questions about some of the more common neighborhood concerns. Many of the concerns the District Liaisons reported to Portland Plan staff revolve around the size, shape and mass of development. Key neighborhood concerns forwarded by the District Liaison staff include: lack of predictability with respect to what can be developed in the R5 zone; difficult and abrupt transitions between commercial streets and neighborhoods; and a lack of commercial opportunities in certain parts of the city.

Regulatory Rethink (2006)

In 2006, the City completed the Regulatory Rethink White Paper. The Bureau of Planning initiated the Regulatory Rethink project to implement a 2002 City Council mandate to "update and improve City building and land use regulations that hinder desirable development." In the Regulatory Rethink White Paper, the Bureau of Planning's consultants evaluated the City's approach to regulating development and recommended new approaches to promote higher-quality development, while continuing to implement City plans and policies and meet state and federal mandates. The consultants' principle recommendation was to address the city's physical form and implement citywide design concepts through the creation of an urban form plan. The report stated that:

> The Urban Form Plan would expand on Metro's concepts for mixed-use centers, provide clarity about what the city's future physical form should be, and include a street typology with links to transit and bike systems, prototypical street cross-sections for each street type identified in the plan and an urban vocabulary for these places and street types, showing intensities, massing (building height and bulk), pedestrian systems and the relationship of development to the street.

Another key component of the Urban Form Plan will be concepts and standards for the design of public open spaces, the "community living rooms" of the city. It is crucial to go beyond traditional concepts of parks and begin laying out a system of public open spaces, designed at a variety of scales and sizes and arranged to form a significant spatial hierarchy and sequence. The walls that enclose these public outdoor rooms are formed by the exterior facades of the surrounding buildings. The zoning will then serve to implement the creation of these spaces.

Community Forum on Infill Development (2007)

On March 17, 2007, community leaders and city staff held a forum to discuss neighborhood change and character, neighborhood engagement, gentrification, equity and inclusiveness, natural area protection and business development issues. In addition to concerns about engaging more people in the planning process, a critical concern was the need to effectively communicate what can or cannot happen through infill development and to develop clear ideas about the roles of infill development and what the community expects it to achieve.

Land Division Code Monitoring Report (2007)

In May 2007, the Bureau of Development Services produced an assessment of the as-built result of land divisions approved by the City after the adoption of the revised land division zoning code regulations of 2002. The Land Division Code Monitoring report identified some trouble spots within the Zoning Code and other issues that could be ameliorated by improved coordination between policies and bureaus. Some of the significant issues include poor relationships between buildings on adjacent properties, particularly on flag lots; use of flexible development standards to gerrymander lot lines to create lots that meet the minimum lot areas, but that also create remnant lot portions that are often unusable; inconsistency between the land development tree preservation requirements and the urban forestry regulations; and unpredictability about whether a connecting street will be required or if a private street will be permitted.

VisionPDX (2007)

Through the visionPDX process, community members shared aspirations for the future of Portland. Community connectiveness and distinctiveness were identified as top community values, reflective of community members' appreciation for "public spaces where neighbors interact" and the "varied neighborhoods that make Portland a special place." The visionPDX Report called for a future Portland in which historic architecture is preserved alongside new buildings with creative design, neighborhoods that are well-connected by public transportation, dense development that takes place in centers and along retail corridors, neighborhoods that have goods and services within walking distance and communities that have many pocket parks, community gardens, natural areas and other green spaces.

Planning Commission Retreat (2007)

On October 30, 2007, the Planning Commission and staff from both the Bureau of Planning and the Mayor's office met to discuss a host of issues ranging from the Comprehensive Plan to Planning's three-year work plan and development of the upcoming budget submittal. While the conversation topics were diverse, the retreat minutes indicate that a significant amount of time was dedicated to discussing the current state of Portland and ways to approach the development of the Portland Plan. One key direction was to be bold in the pursuit of major ideas and to be more intentional regarding Portland's identity and future development. Another major concern was that new pressures are threatening Portland's way of life, but that it is not clear whether community members are aware of the pressures or what resources will be needed in the future. Planning Commission members also talked about the need to foster quality design and to engage the community in making choices about what development is appropriate. They also discussed the idea of recognizing the different characteristics of Portland's neighborhoods and the importance of planning with nature.

East Portland Review (2007)

The East Portland Review (November 2007) identified a broad list of issues and concerns for this part of the city, generally located east of 82nd Avenue. A few of the major overarching issues include infrastructure that is disjointed and incomplete, incompatible infill housing development and limited commercial development. The report indicated that, as this fast-growing area continues to evolve, the challenges will be to complete and provide street and sidewalk connections; encourage new development that offers housing choices for different types of households while at the same time fitting into the context of existing neighborhoods; and to cultivate districts with a "sense of place" that offer residents more options to locally carry out daily activities, whether it is to work, eat, shop or play.

This report related that development issues in East Portland differed significantly from inner Portland areas, where planning efforts reinforce the existing community structure by mostly focusing development in established centers and main streets. In East Portland, however, planning for higher-intensity development introduces an essentially new, more urban form into areas that are relatively low-scale and spread out. The report relates that reconciling existing community character with the change brought about by new development has therefore been a major issue in East Portland.

Citywide Tree Project (in process)

The Citywide Tree Project has identified numerous community concerns regarding the future of the urban forest, especially in relationship to the loss of trees accompanying new development. The project has found that:

- Community concern about the loss of trees has been greatest in areas experiencing residential development, such as Southwest and Eastern Portland. An ongoing issue in Eastern Portland has been the removal of remnant stands of Douglas Fir to make room for infill development.
- While proposals for land divisions require a tree preservation review process, multidwelling and other development has no such review requirement.
- There has been tendency to remove large tree species and to replace them with smaller species that will not provide the same canopy coverage. New development, especially at higher-densities, often does not provide sufficient space to accommodate large-canopy tree species.