

# Willamette River Recreation Strategy

## Recreation Framework and Public Facilities

Jointly produced by staff from the Office of Healthy Working Rivers and Parks and Recreation, the *Willamette River Recreation Strategy* articulates a river recreation vision and proposes a program for achieving it.

### *Willamette River Recreation Vision and Goals*

*A clean and healthy Willamette River is the pride of Portlanders who fish, paddle, sail, pleasure-boat, swim, experience nature, and sightsee on its waters.*

- *Increase Portlanders' enjoyment of, and direct experience with, the Willamette River.*
- *Bring people closer to the river to foster an improved understanding of river history, economy, and ecology.*
- *Manage recreation in concert with other City priorities to secure a net improvement in river health by reducing or eliminating historic hazards for threatened fish and wildlife, and protecting high-value habitat.*
- *Provide for safe, enjoyable, and valuable on-water recreational experiences for all users.*

### The Strategy:

- is based on the 2006 *Water Recreation Report* developed by PPR and BPS;
- updates our understanding of river recreation demand;
- establishes a partnership-based framework for addressing recreational needs, *while focusing first on boating and City-owned facilities*; and,
- targets action priorities for the next 15 years.

### The Strategy was developed with extensive outreach:

- 3 on-line surveys, with 1,800-plus respondents who left over 2,500 comments
- 2 public workshops
- careful coordination with other city bureaus and agencies such as the Oregon State Marine Board, National Marine Fisheries Service, and Portland's Streamlining Team.

### Findings

- The River, cleaner than it's been in 150 years, is a defining asset for Portland—and the region.
- Portlanders care deeply about the River; their use of it is increasing and diversifying.
- While experiencing nature is a foundational value for river users, they also desire active riverfront destinations for dining, and socializing;
- Recreation and river stewardship can and should be mutually beneficial;
- Facilities need to be managed as an integrated system of assets.
- Implementing the strategy will require deepened and expanded partnerships—among City bureaus; within the region; and between public and private sectors; and creative funding.

### Top-Priority Actions:

- First, take care of existing public facilities—specifically at Swan Island, Cathedral Park, Willamette Park, and Sellwood Riverfront Park.
- Meet increasing demand with new or expanded facilities—replace Ankeny Dock downtown; site a new dock in the South Waterfront District; develop a light watercraft facility at the Sellwood Bridge's east end; develop a multi-use water-access at the former Staff Jennings site; improve Central City beach access.
- Assure new in-water facilities comply with Strategy's detailed guidelines to protect, improve habitat;
- Develop an asset management plan for City-owned river facilities;
- Collaborate to resolve conflict and safety issues through enhanced education and enforcement;
- Acquire more data on: river uses, especially non-motorized; economic impacts of river recreation; best practices for environmentally-sensitive siting of in-water structures;
- Establish a committee of diverse river experts to advise on recreation needs.

### Take-Aways:

- Overall, the Strategy provides a clear and articulate position for river recreation in larger city planning processes.
- Implementation will be through a suite of efforts, including CC2035, the River Plan; Park master plans and designs; the City's Capital Improvement Program; and continued collaboration among Bureaus and partners.
- This is a modest set of priorities that reflects fiscal realities and city capacities.
- The Strategy presents priorities, but does not obligate or guarantee funds.