

The North Reach extends roughly from the confluence with the Columbia River to the Broadway and Fremont Bridges.



Photo Credit: Gunderson

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Visit the project website to find out more information and sign up for our monthly electronic newsletter, River Plan News.

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City of Portland Bureau of
Planning and Sustainability

Sam Adams, Mayor | Susan Anderson, Director

THE RIVER PLAN

NORTH REACH

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The River Plan is the first update to the Willamette Greenway Plan in more than twenty years. The Plan will guide, inspire, and facilitate actions and investments along the Willamette River, building on previous work outlined in the River Renaissance Vision (2001), River Renaissance Strategy (2004), and River Concept (2006).

The River Plan is being carried out in phases, each focusing on a different stretch of the Willamette River: the North Reach, the Central Reach and the South Reach. The reaches are interrelated but distinct, and phasing allows planning to focus on the unique issues facing each reach. The North Reach is the first to receive detailed planning and is expected to be complete in 2009. Planning for the Central and South Reaches is just getting underway.

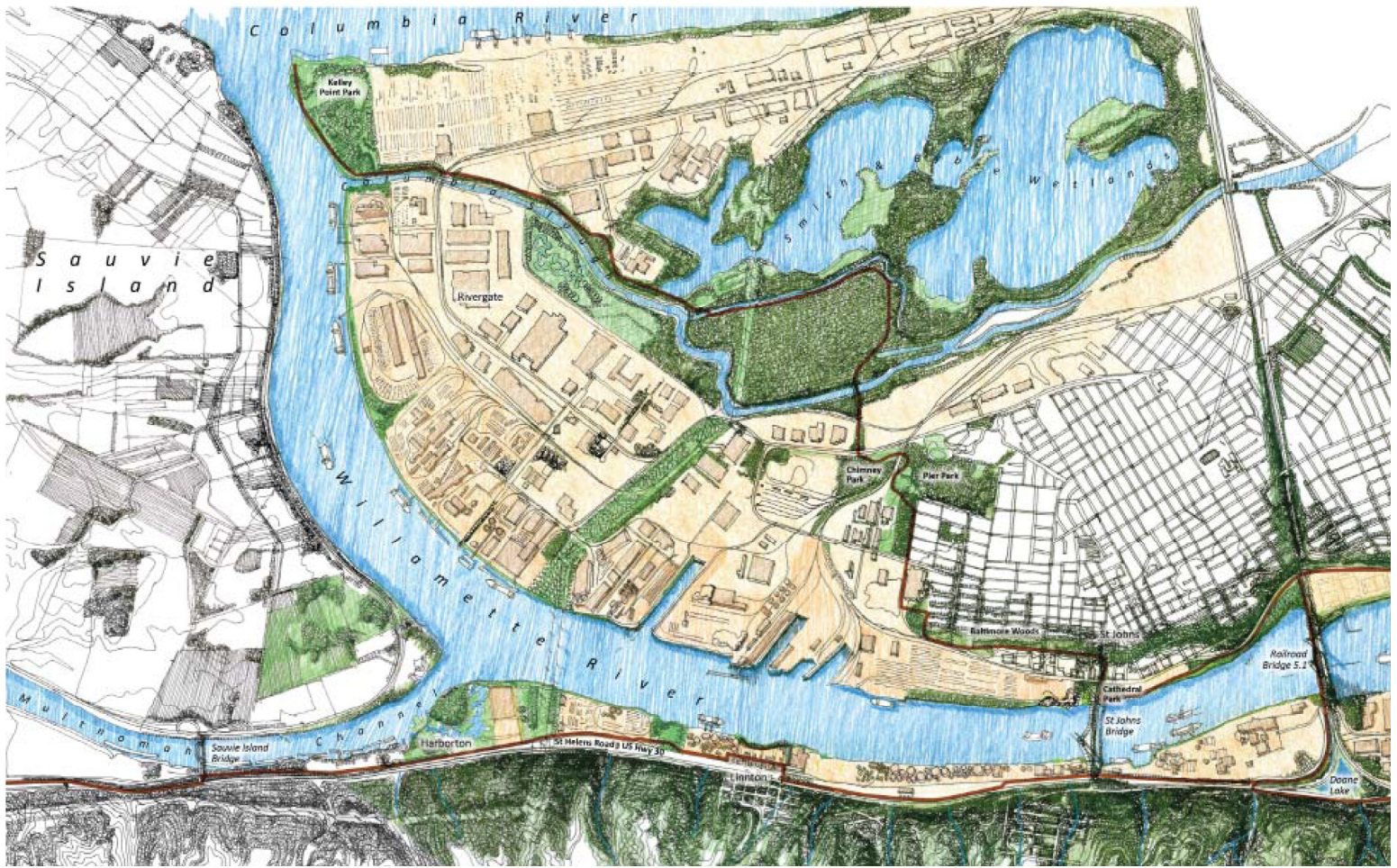
The River Concept, endorsed by City Council in 2006, characterizes the future for the North Reach as follows:

The North Reach will continue to provide Oregon with access to global markets and support the region's economy as a West Coast distribution hub and a heavy industrial area. Environmental cleanup, recreational access, and watershed health actions will contribute to the harbor's long-term vitality.

River Plan staff have engaged property owners, members of interest groups, agency representatives, and the general public in the North Reach planning process for over three years. A River Plan / North Reach Draft was released for public review and comment on October 28, 2008. The draft presents new and revised zoning code regulations, and proposes a suite of new programs and public investments to support objectives in five topic areas:

- Economic Prosperity
- Watershed Health
- Access
- Riverfront Communities
- Working with our Partners

Planning Commission voted to forward the Draft to City Council on June 23, 2009. The Recommended Draft will be released in November 2009. Please see inside pages for key elements.



NORTH REACH

Key Elements

Economic Prosperity

- Protect prime industrial land in the North Reach by prohibiting quasi-judicial Comprehensive Plan Map amendments.
- Retain the i-overlay as a tool to reserve riverfront land for those uses that are river-dependent or river-related.
- Refine the definition of river-related uses to allow more flexibility for industries that switch between primary reliance on river and rail transportation.
- In the i-overlay, eliminate the greenway setback that currently applies to all development that is not river-dependent or river-related.
- Adopt standards to provide more streamlined permitting for certain industrial activities, including bulkheads, cargo conveyors, rail lines, utility lines and stormwater outfalls.
- Invest in public infrastructure and land development to fuel private reinvestment and create jobs in the working harbor.
- Allow North Reach property owners to conduct off-site mitigation for impacts to natural resources and to pay a fee in-lieu of balanced cut and fill.
- Do not apply river environmental zoning to areas that are ranked low in the Natural Resources Inventory.
- Develop a restoration/mitigation program that includes the identification of sites that optimize efforts to improve fish and wildlife habitat in the North Reach.
- Require mitigation for unavoidable impacts to natural resources.
- Require every property in the North Reach to vegetate 15% of their site and provide an incentive to vegetate areas close to the river. Allow a property owner to pay a fee in-lieu as an alternative.

Watershed Health

- Adopt an updated Natural Resource Inventory for the North Reach.
- Adopt a new river environmental overlay zone along the river to strategically protect and conserve natural resources.
- Adopt refined conservation and protection overlay zone boundaries to protect and conserve natural resources outside of the river overlay zones.
- Retain the City's regulatory jurisdiction below ordinary high water and develop a more coordinated process for the federal, state and city review of activities and development in the water.



Access

- Adopt a refined regulatory greenway trail alignment along both sides of the Willamette River. The trail will either be an off-street path or along an existing street or railway.
- Develop additional viewpoints that facilitate greater appreciation of the natural landscape and working waterfront.
- Establish an evaluation procedure to ensure that any trail related exaction is roughly proportional to the impacts of the proposed development before the exaction is required.
- Complete the North Portland Greenway Master Plan. Include a bicycle/pedestrian connection between Swan Island and the Lower Albina industrial area in the planning.

Riverfront Communities

- Adopt a suite of measures to reduce conflicts between industrial and residential development in the St. Johns / Cathedral Park area, including a requirement for additional noise insulation in new residential structures and a recommendation to encourage the establishment of a whistle-free zone.
- Improve the vitality of the Linnton neighborhood by rezoning a portion of St. Helens Road from CG to CS to encourage main street reinvestment.
- Work with the Linnton community to identify actions that will revitalize the neighborhood within the context of the August 2006 City Council decision on the Linnton Village Plan.
- Revitalize a long-vacant riverfront parcel adjacent to the University of Portland by rezoning it for university uses.

Working with our Partners

- Implement process improvements to enhance permit coordination and reduce potential conflicts among City, state and federal agencies in their decision-making.
- Provide clear guidance for contaminated site cleanup and develop materials and strategies to help applicants through the cleanup process.
- Improve communication between the City and our tribal partners.
- Establish a mitigation bank certified by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Division of State Lands.
- Submit the River Plan to the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Environmental Quality to be evaluated as Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARs) and To Be Considered (TBC) material for the Portland Harbor Superfund cleanup.



The proposed river environmental overlay zone will conserve natural resources.



Portlanders take advantage of recreational opportunities in and along the river.



The Portland Harbor is a west coast distribution hub and heavy industrial area.

RIVER PLAN / NORTH REACH ORGANIZATION

The River Plan / North Reach is organized into seven documents, as listed below. Volume 1 is available in printed form. The other volumes are available on CD or in print by special request.

Volume 1: River Plan / North Reach Recommended Draft

Volume 1A: Policies, Objectives, and Recommendations

Volume 1B: Code Amendments and Zoning Maps

Volume 2: Economic Prosperity Background Information

Volume 3: Watershed Health Background Information

Volume 3A: Natural Resources Inventory:

Riparian Corridors and Wildlife Habitat

Volume 3B: Natural Resources Inventory:

Riparian Corridors and Wildlife Habitat – Appendices

Volume 3C: Economic, Social, Environmental and Energy

Analysis and Recommendations for Riparian Corridors and Wildlife Habitat

Volume 4: Access Background Information

RIVER PLAN / NORTH REACH SCHEDULE

A River Plan / North Reach Draft was released for public review on October 28, 2008. Planning Commission voted to forward the Draft to City Council on June 23rd, 2009, after eight months of working extensively with staff and the community to review and modify the draft plan to address public comment.

Upcoming Events (All dates subject to change)

November 2009

River Plan / North Reach Recommended Draft document release

November 24, 2009
12:30 PM

Planning Commission Briefing

December 16, 2009
6:30 PM

City Council Hearing

All Planning Commission Meetings will be held at 1900 SW Fourth Avenue, Room 2500 A. All City Council Meetings will be held at City Hall, 1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Council Chambers. ■