



2020 - 2040 Town Center Plan

Resolution No. 2531 — Adopted: May 11, 2022



CORRIDOR H - DOWNTOWN/URA CONNECTIONS

This corridor is loosely defined geographically. It calls for two likely locations for future access considerations that would directly link Downtown with The Confluence site within the Urban Renewal Area. The two most likely connection possibilities include:

- A bike/ped bridge that begins at the intersection of Harlow Avenue and Historic Columbia River Highway, spans over the rear parking area and railroad tracks, and ends in the Confluence site; potentially on the top floor of a parking structure or an elevator shaft.
- A vehicular connection that extends Kibling Avenue over the existing driveway to the rear parking area and crosses the railroad tracks at-grade and continues into The Confluence site.

Both corridor improvements are expected to be owned and maintained by the City of Troutdale, with coordination required from Multnomah County (for connecting with Historic Columbia River Highway) and Union Pacific Railroad, as they will impact the railway's right-of-way.

A vehicular bridge that extends Kibling Avenue northward could be achieved through engineering, though would appear to be unlikely for several reasons. First, it would be expected to be cost prohibitive for public or private investments. Second, it would require a reconfiguration of the rear parking area, and third, it would likely take up significant land on The Confluence site in order to return the roadway to an at-grade level, given the terrain differential between Downtown and the site.



The Town Center Committee concurred that having both connections would be most optimal solution for ensuring that The Confluence site is well integrated with Downtown. The lack of any direct connection apart from the planned riverfront trail would be harmful to both areas and lead to disjointed or competitive growth that would jeopardize the District as a whole.

The at-grade railroad crossing will be a difficult proposition due to permitting standards with Union Pacific Railroad. Although similar permits would be required for the bridge, that connection will be easier to come by from an approval standpoint but is limited in allowing for full mobility choice without allowing cars on the span. The City would need to prepare for the likelihood that securing this access could take years and that approval is not guaranteed. Lastly, development proposals for The Confluence site should not be singularly reliant on a direct vehicular connection from Downtown.



Above: The location of a bike/ped bridge landing connecting from Downtown over the rear parking area and railroad tracks to a hypothetical connection point in The Confluence site.

Below: The location of an extension of Kibling Avenue to cross the railroad tracks into the site.



URBAN RENEWAL AREA / THE CONFLUENCE SITE

The Troutdale **Urban Renewal Area** (URA)—also known as the Troutdale Riverfront Renewal Area in other plans—is a 48-acre collection of properties of primarily north of the Union Pacific railroad tracks within the Town Center District. It includes the Columbia Gorge Outlets, a railroad-owned siding lot, and Depot Park (Opportunity Site 1 as identified in this Plan).

Also contained within the URA are roughly 20 acres of city-owned properties that have become known as **The Confluence at Troutdale**, also known as **The Confluence site**. For the purposes of this Plan, most of the analysis and ideas for future development will focus on The Confluence site, though several development concepts and resulting impacts will affect the entire URA.

The **Troutdale Urban Renewal Agency** (“the Agency”) is a separate legal authority that was established to oversee future planning and public expenditures. The Agency is led by a Board, which is the same body of people as the Troutdale City Council. City Staff provide technical support to the Agency.

HOW URBAN RENEWAL WORKS

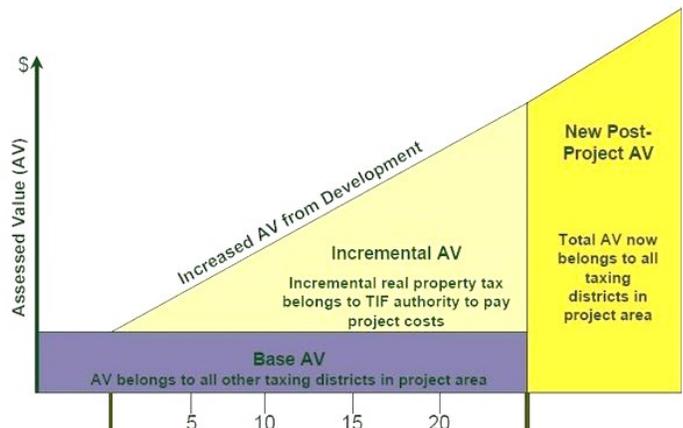
Voters within a jurisdiction formally establish an urban renewal area in a certain geographic area. To oversee the future development and financial responsibilities of the URA, a separate legal authority is also established by the City.

Portions of a city that are designated as URA are considered blighted and/or underdeveloped and are targeted for private redevelopment. An **urban renewal plan** is adopted by a City to establish goals and objectives, list potential projects, and highlight ways of using tax increment financing for future capital projects to serve development.

Within the boundaries of the URA, a **tax-increment financing** (TIF) district is established. TIF consists of using annual tax increment revenues collected by the Agency to make payments on debt incurred by the Agency, usually in the form of tax increment bonds. The proceeds of the bonds are used to pay for the urban renewal projects authorized in the urban renewal plan. Debt, including bonds, may be both long-term and short-term, and does not require voter approval.

Tax increment revenues equal most of the annual property taxes imposed on the cumulative increase in the total assessed value within the URA over the total assessed value at the time an urban renewal plan is adopted.

Upon the conclusion of an urban renewal plan’s tenure, the total assessed value is returned to eligibility for all taxing districts as it was prior to the establishment of the URA.





Above: A map showing the boundaries of the Troutdale Urban Renewal Area (URA)

Below: The Bissinger & Co. Wool Pullery was once a major employer in Troutdale and was located on site. The site fell into disrepair after the company left, making it eligible as a URA site. (Image: Hu Nhu)



PREVIOUS PLANNING & PREPARATORY EFFORTS

In 2006, the City of Troutdale adopted an urban renewal plan (The Troutdale Riverfront Renewal Plan). The original plan had a duration of 10 years, meaning no new debt was to be incurred. However, that was amended in 2014 by the Agency and 2015 by the City Council to extend an additional 10 years, thus a total duration of 20 years. The maximum amount of indebtedness (the amount of TIF for projects and programs) that may be issued for the Renewal Plan is seven million dollars (\$7,000,000).

The goals that were established by the Renewal Plan help set the parameters for concepts outlined in the Town Center Plan. Future development in the URA should:

- promote the redevelopment of the area for a mix of retail, office, residential and public uses.
- provide a greater level of goods and services for Troutdale.
- increase the awareness of the development community of the opportunities within the area.
- create employment opportunities for Troutdale residents.
- improve transportation linkages.
- improve access to and enjoyment of the Sandy riverfront.
- provide public spaces for events and other uses by Troutdale residents, patrons of area businesses and tenants and residents within the area.
- preserve and enhance Troutdale's natural, cultural, and historic resources.

In the first ten years of the Renewal Plan, there were several development concepts that had emerged, but economic instability, political differences, and changing priorities on public expenditures had resulted in no significant advancement of future development. One exception was the commissioning of a concept plan for a future linear park and trail along the riverfront that was adopted in 2014.

Property Acquisition & Clean-Up

In 2018, following an unsuccessful effort to coordinate development tasks in support of a development scheme proposed by Eastwinds Development, the Agency purchased an additional 7.72 acres of land from the company. This land would complement 11.87 acres of already-owned public property to create nearly 20-acre site for redevelopment, which has since become known as The Confluence site.

In late 2018, the Agency contracted to have the site be largely cleared of all previous development; much of which was in decrepit condition. This site cleanup also removed contaminated material and soils and sought certification from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) that the site could be redeveloped for commercial and residential uses. The work was completed in 2020 with DEQ certification expected in early 2021.

The Agency has also commissioned surveyors to establish separation of The Confluence site between a 16.1-acre parcel to be sold for private development purposes, with remaining acreage for the future park and trail as envisioned in the 2014 concept plan.



Top: The Confluence site looking north in April 2018, shortly before cleanup of the site began.

Bottom: The Confluence site looking south in October 2020 with a temporary disc golf course placed on the site, six months after cleanup was completed (both photos: Chris Damgen)



THE CONFLUENCE SITE

The Confluence site is a collection of Agency-owned parcels within the Urban Renewal Area. The site provides Troutdale with the most exciting and challenging opportunity site of all; a once-in-a-lifetime chance to transform roughly 20 acres adjacent to Downtown and along the banks of the Sandy River into someplace special.

To the south across the railroad tracks is Downtown Troutdale, which sits roughly 30 to 35 feet higher than the prevailing elevation of the site, which is generally flat. This could allow for taller development that could attract a higher caliber of investment potential through mixed-use opportunities.

To the east is the Sandy River, of which the City has long planned to have a riverfront park and trail along the embankment to connect Downtown with the larger recreational trail networks in the Portland region and the Columbia River Gorge.

To the north is Interstate 84, providing excellent freeway frontage and visibility for future development. And to the west is the Columbia Gorge Outlets, which provide commercial services adjacent to the site along with future redevelopment ideas and possibilities for future expansion or cohesion.

The site is strategically situated to take advantage of its surroundings, though is also hamstrung in some cases by them in terms of access restriction. The major public amenity will be a four-acre linear park along the embankment of the Sandy River, with a multi-use trail connecting the site to Downtown and regional trails to the north and east.

Expectations for Development

Beyond the difficulties of access considerations and cost, perhaps the main community concern remains that this location should complement Downtown, rather than compete with it. As a result, the Committee established certain development expectations that it hopes will be considered as the Urban Renewal Agency engages in solicitation and prospective developers create proposals.

- The **street grid** should be carried over from downtown as an organizing principle
- The **water tower** should be retained as an iconic feature of the site and future development
- The **exchange of property** with the ownership of the outlets should be allowed to provide more direct access to/from the west
- A centralized **parking facility/garage** should be considered
- A direct connection with downtown via a **pedestrian bridge** should be built
- A direct **vehicular connection** with downtown should be studied and pursued
- A consistent and specific **architectural style** should be established
- Building heights should be limited to 55 feet but may go as high as 75 feet but should be **stepped-back** or terraced to lessen visual impact from adjacent public spaces and streets
- Residential development should prioritize **home ownership opportunities**



Above: The Confluence site, shortly after site cleanup was completed in 2020 (Image: Marv Woidyla)

Below: The Confluence site at the southeast corner, looking upstream at the Union Pacific trestle. While most of the site is situated on a bluff, this area is low-lying and susceptible to flooding.



Developing an Initial Concept

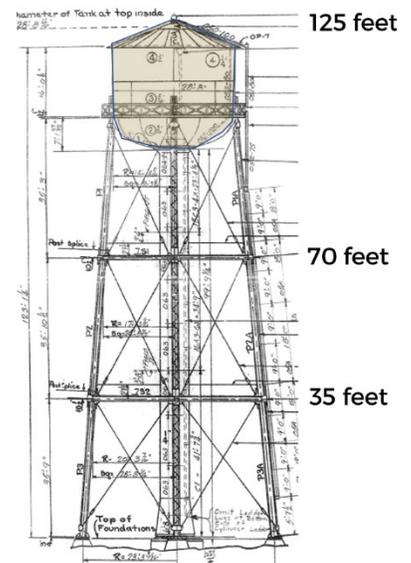
As with the 12 opportunity sites elsewhere in the Town Center District, the Committee sought to establish preferred land uses to The Confluence site, but added an additional exercise to help articulate development expectations and better understand the uniqueness of this site.

An **initial concept** can be used as a starting point for prospective development to consider future development patterns and opportunities that already received a level of community endorsement. It can also lead to additional concepts that can be created and studied from a numbers perspective, as it provides a calculation on available square footage for residential and commercial land uses in determining the economic feasibility of a project.

The **preferred land uses** that were established included mixed-use development as a first preference, followed by commercial service uses and parks & open space. Other major factors that influenced the creation of the initial concept was a desire to improve access points to the site, consider taller height allowances for buildings, and provide options for a centralized parking structure to benefit the site and Downtown. The initial concept addresses all these items (see upper-right image on the next page).

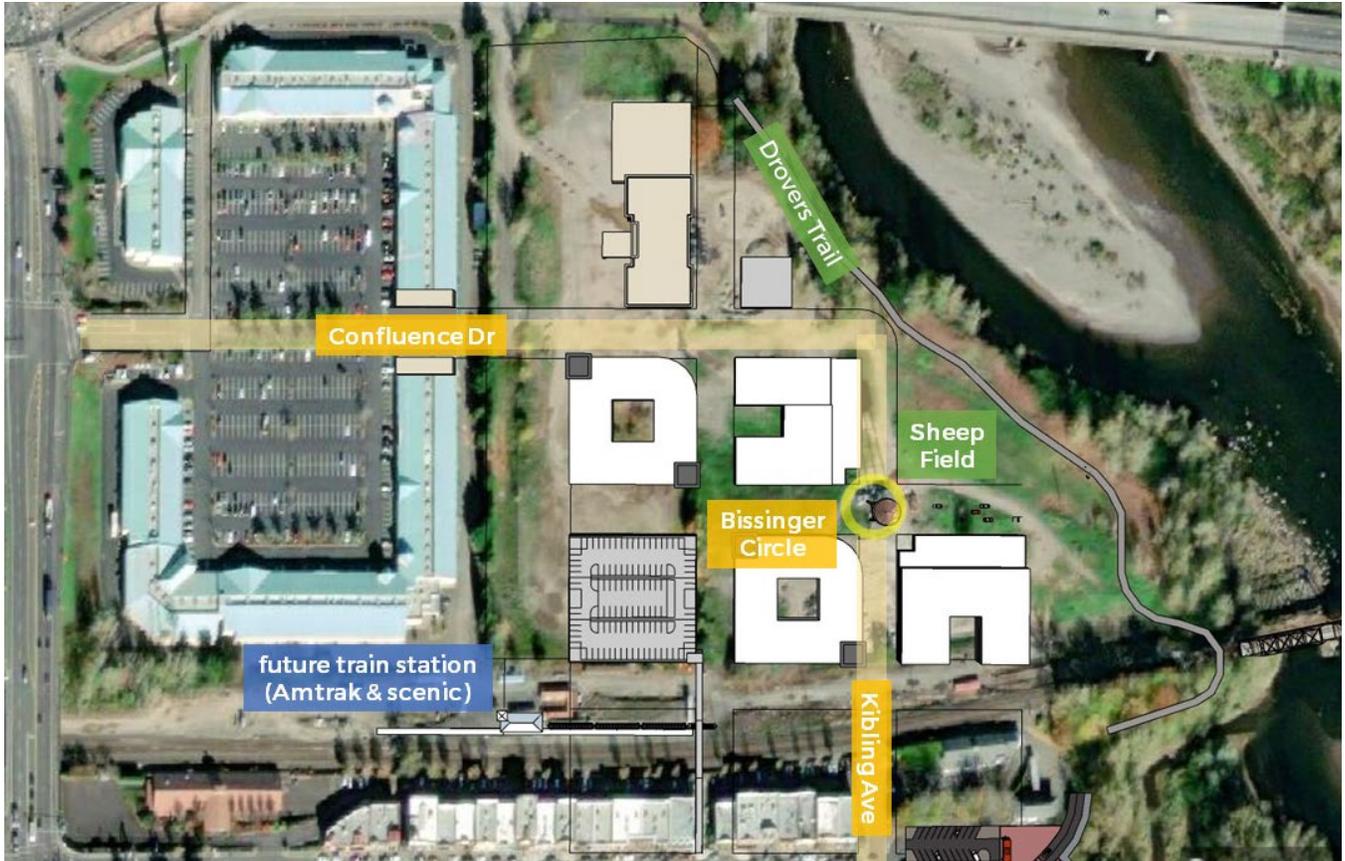
An idea to secure **enhanced access** from the west suggests a property exchange between the outlet mall property owner and the Agency. In exchange for direct access, a portion of property could be exchanged with mall ownership to develop additional commercial property, such as a hotel (which is shown on the concept). It also allows for creating endcap units within the existing layouts of the mall, which may be conducive to enhanced dining options at the facility.

Due in part to the size and positioning of The Confluence site, development can be at **higher densities** and structural heights than what would be appropriate for Downtown or other areas of the District. Site visits to the site by the Committee were conducted in 2018 to help bring these ideas to visual context. The water tower provided a useful “ruler in the sky” in that its features provided a good mark for scale of building heights.



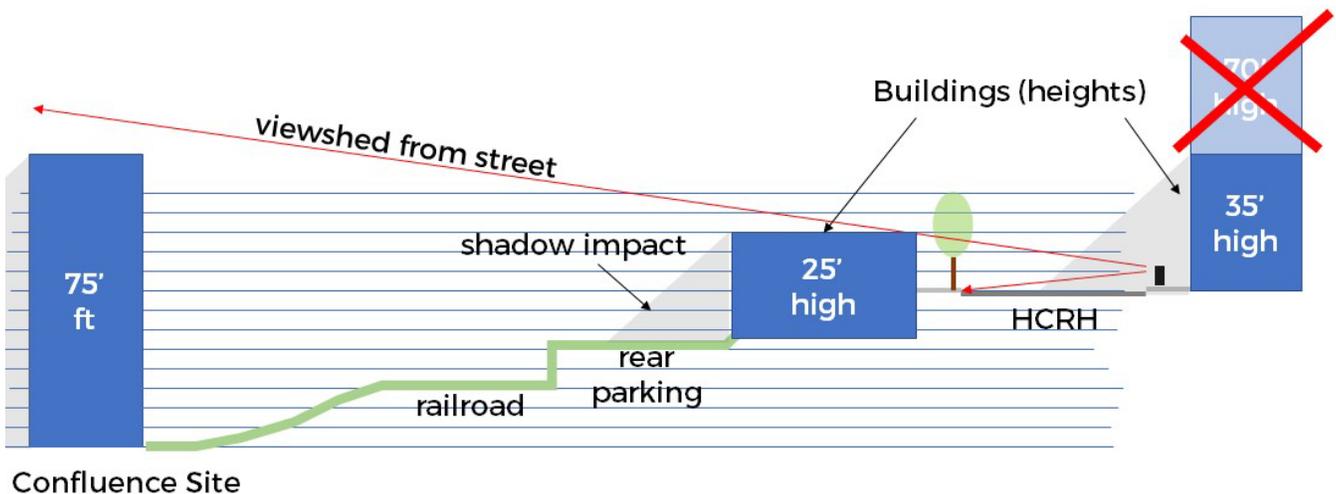
The Committee agreed that it could be appropriate for taller buildings on this site, which are often required for mixed-use projects to be financially successful. This also provides an “out-of-sight but not out-of-mind” approach to increasing residential density near Downtown while allowing Downtown to maintain a small-town feel through the built environment (see lower-right image on the next page).

The **parking** solution offered would consider a centralized parking garage that could directly connect with a bike/ped bridge crossing to Downtown, allowing the Confluence site and Downtown to benefit, in addition to the Outlets which would see through traffic going to and from the garage. It could also tie into a future train station for intercity or scenic rail purposes, increasing visitor traffic and commercial engagements on both sides of the tracks.



Above: An initial concept developed by the Town Center to determine scale and capacity for the site. Actual proposals from development interest could utilize this concept as a starting point.

Below: A scaled profile view looking east shows the terrain differentiation between the Confluence site (left) and downtown (right). The graphic shows that taller structures are not desirable in Downtown due to negative scale and shadow impacts. By using terrain and placement as an advantage in allowing buildings to be taller in the Confluence site, a significant increase in residential density can be achieved without visually disrupting the streetscape in Downtown, thus preserving a small-town feel.



Riverfront Park & Trail

The 2006 Renewal Plan called for continuous public access along the Sandy riverfront, ideally integrated with proposed development on the lot to be sold to private development interests.

In 2014, the City of Troutdale approved the **Sandy River Access Plan** (“Access Plan”), a park and trail concept plan prepared by consultants and funded by a Metro grant as part of the agency’s Nature in Neighborhoods program. The program seeks to improve access to nature, particularly for underserved communities to connect people to their watershed.

The Access Plan had several public outreach efforts through charrette workshops in 2013 to determine specific interests from the public. A multi-use trail was of chief interest, along with play areas and gathering spaces for social activities.

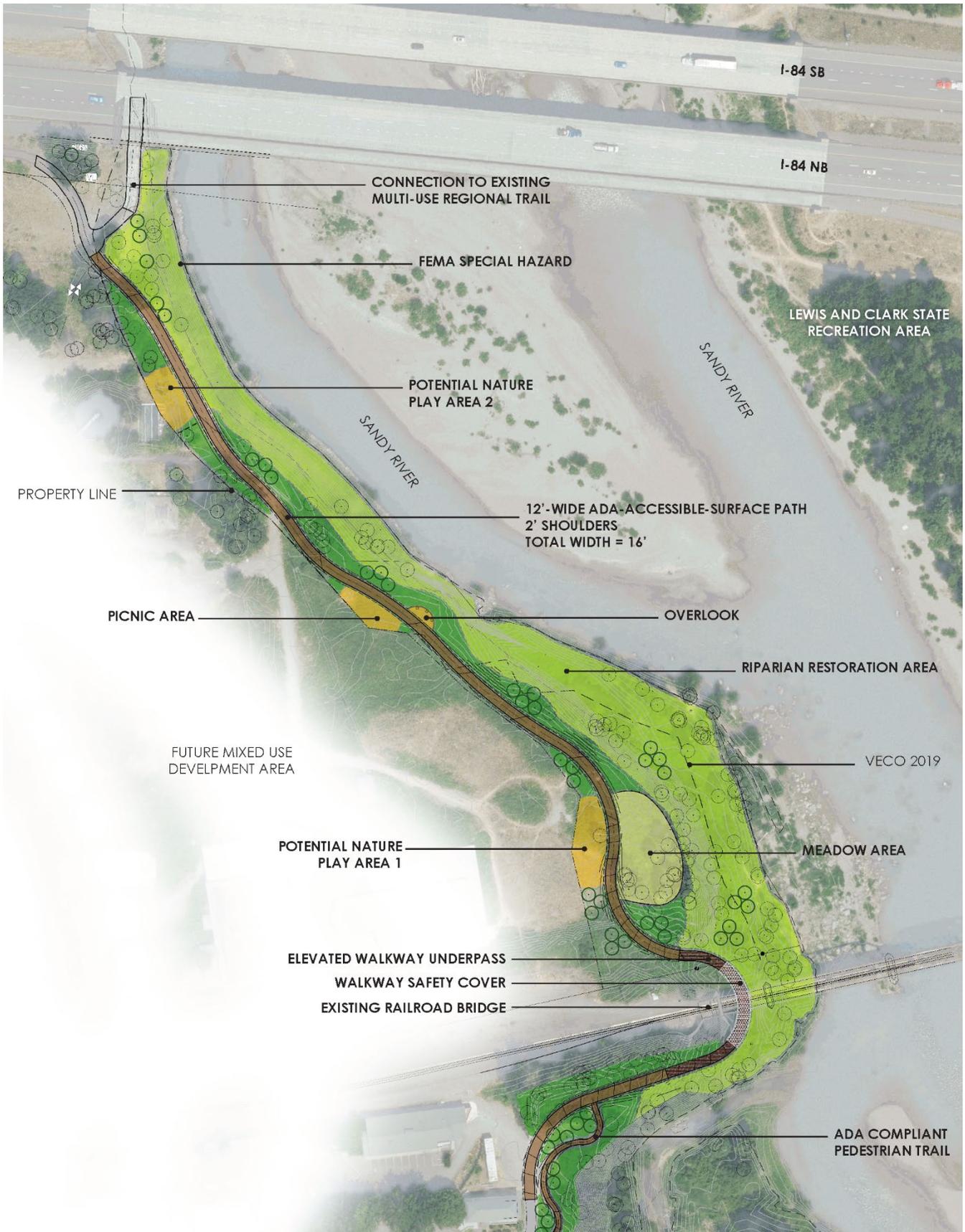
The Access Plan called for a significant riparian shoreline restoration plan and the establishment of a multi-use trail that would be an essential component of the regional 40-Mile Loop trail system. The Access Plan also called for certain park embellishments, including the possibility of a cantilevered overlook for park users to enjoy the surroundings of the area and to add flourish to the site.

Upon the acquisition of the Eastwinds properties and the passage of the Metro Parks and Nature bond in 2018, the City—along with its consultant team for this project—began work to fulfill the general scope of the Access Plan and began moving towards finalizing a fully engineered design for future construction. This would allow the City to be in a formidable position to compete for competitive grant funding from the Metro bond as well as other public, private, or nonprofit funding sources.

The first stage of planning for construction involved obtaining “**30 percent plan**” (shown on the right). An additional round of public engagement occurred with the Town Center Committee and the Parks Advisory Committee in 2019 to further refine ideas and details from the Access Plan. Along with additional engineering and surveying, this design respects the original intentions of the Access Plan and provides an updated trail layout and further design inspiration for park features (shown below).

As of 2020, the City is in pursuit of “**60 percent plan**” design for the project, which will further solidify plans and add engineered drawings to the undercrossing of the Union Pacific Railroad, which requires an elevated pathway component to achieve slope standards and limit flood zone impacts. It is expected that the City will have full construction plans by 2022 when competitive grant applications are to be applied for from a regional bond program and other potential sources.





E. URBAN RENEWAL ACTIONS

Listed below are the urban renewal actions identified:

- Prepare **additional development concepts** that can be tested for site suitability, economic feasibility, and community embracement.
- Establish a **new zoning district and land use designation for the URA** that is better geared to match development opportunity with community expectations.
- Allow for TCAB the ability to hold public meetings and **make recommendations of development proposals** at The Confluence site to the Urban Renewal Agency or its successors.
- Finish plans and construct the **Sandy Riverfront Park** and trail connection.
- Study options for a more **direct connection** between The Confluence site with Downtown.
- Study the viability of constructing a **parking facility** and securing partnerships for cost-sharing.
- Engage with the Governor's Regional Solutions Team and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to consider future **rail service** for intercity and Gorge tourism purposes.

Further details of each action can be found on the subsequent pages.



E.1 PREPARE ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS THAT CAN BE TESTED FOR SITE SUITABILITY, ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY, AND COMMUNITY EMBRACEMENT.**Description**

This “action planning” effort will enlist the support of a consultant to interview stakeholders and prospective master developers, create additional development concepts, and provide economic analysis on the feasibility of development options.

Fiscal Impact

Up to \$50,000

Responsible Entity

- Urban Renewal Agency Board

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Consultants
- Community Development Department (consultant coordination)

E.2 ESTABLISH A NEW ZONING DISTRICT AND LAND USE DESIGNATION FOR THE URA.**Description**

Troutdale’s existing zoning districts do not sufficiently allow for the scale and impact of development that could occur on the site based on the Committee discussions. Changing the standards of existing zoning districts could have unintended consequences in other locations in the Town Center or the city in general. Establishing a new zoning district and land use designation is seen as a preferred option that is better geared to match development opportunity with community expectations

Fiscal Impact

Minimal costs that are typically built within the Community Development’s Planning Division budget for advertising and mailing of application notices.

Responsible Entity

- Planning Commission (review and recommendation)
- City Council (adoption)

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Urban Renewal Agency Board (authorization to agree to an application)
- Community Development Department (preparation)
- TCAB (review)
- Regional (Metro) and State (DLCD) agencies (review)

E.3 ALLOW FOR TCAB THE ABILITY TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETINGS AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS AT THE CONFLUENCE SITE TO THE URBAN RENEWAL AGENCY OR ITS SUCCESSORS.**Description**

As the expected successor organization to the Town Center Committee, it is important that TCAB can adequately review and take comment on development proposals on the Confluence site.

Fiscal Impact

Minimal costs that are typically built within the Community Development's Planning Division budget for advertising and mailing of application notices.

Responsible Entity

- TCAB (review and conduct meeting(s))

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Urban Renewal Agency Board (referral acknowledgment)
- Community Development Department (preparation)

E.4 FINISH PLANS AND CONSTRUCT THE SANDY RIVERFRONT PARK AND TRAIL CONNECTION.**Description**

As of 2020, the Sandy Riverfront Park and associated trail connection has obtained 30 percent design. This item would seek to complete design work on the trail and park, with considerable attention towards a required elevated walkway component in a segment under the Union Pacific trestle.

Fiscal Impact

Up to \$5,000,000 is anticipated to complete design work and construct the trail and basic park installations. A mixture of city, regional, urban renewal, SDC, and nonprofit/charitable funding support is anticipated.

Responsible Entity

- City Council and Urban Renewal Agency Board (budget oversight and authorization)

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Consultants (design)
- Contractors (construction)
- Community Development Department (support and permitting)
- Metro and other state agencies (funding support)
- Union Pacific Railroad (permitting)

E.5 STUDY OPTIONS FOR A MORE DIRECT CONNECTION BETWEEN THE CONFLUENCE SITE WITH DOWNTOWN.**Description**

This would create a feasibility plan to begin studying at-grade and above-grade (bridging) options to better connect Downtown to The Confluence site. This effort could lead to initial design options and costing estimates to determine future costs to construct and build the improvements.

Fiscal Impact

Up to \$100,000, which can be funded by urban renewal, SDC, and other funding options. Some of these funds could be offset by grant funding from public or nonprofit sources.

Responsible Entity

- Urban Renewal Agency Board (authorization)

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Consultant (analysis)
- Community Development Department (consultant coordination)
- Public Works Department (consultant coordination)

E.6 STUDY THE VIABILITY OF CONSTRUCTING A PARKING FACILITY AND SECURING PARTNERSHIPS FOR COST-SHARING.**Description**

Parking was listed as a major drawback and future concern by the public for the Town Center. A structured parking facility built at The Confluence site may provide relief. This could also benefit other stakeholders, particularly the State of Oregon which may seek to have long-term travel demand management issues within the Columbia River Gorge and might support such a facility.

Fiscal Impact

Up to \$25,000 which can be funded by urban renewal or other funding options. If state involvement can be secured, there could be cost sharing options available.

Responsible Entity

- Community Development Department (consultant coordination)

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Consultant (analysis)
- Urban Renewal Agency Board (review)
- Other agencies, particularly Oregon Department of Transportation (engagement)

E.7 ENGAGE WITH THE GOVERNOR’S REGIONAL SOLUTIONS TEAM AND THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (ODOT) TO CONSIDER FUTURE RAIL SERVICE FOR INTERCITY AND GORGE TOURISM PURPOSES.

Description

Long-term traffic congestion in the Columbia River Gorge has become an increasingly urgent issue that the State of Oregon is seeking to solve. Troutdale’s position at the “Gateway to the Gorge” along the Union Pacific Railroad may provide a solution by allowing for future rail tourism options. This would be further supported by Troutdale being highlighted in an Oregon Department of Transportation study as a potential intercity rail service stop if regular passenger rail service between Portland, eastern Oregon, and Boise, Idaho is reinstated.

Fiscal Impact

Up to \$25,000 to study and develop service concepts, which can be presumably cost shared with the state and further supplemented through grant funding from public or nonprofit sources.

Responsible Entity

- Community Development Department (consultant coordination)

Other Stakeholders Involved

- Consultant (analysis)
- Urban Renewal Agency Board (review)
- State agencies, particularly Oregon Department of Transportation (engagement)
- Union Pacific Railroad

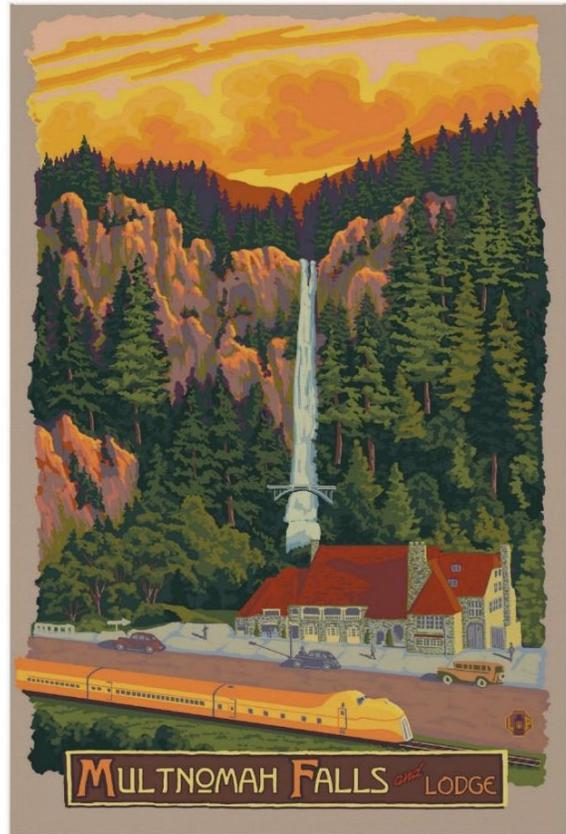


Image: Vintage Poster by LanternPress

MAPS

