

A G E N D A
ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION

<i>Astoria City Hall Council Chambers, 1095 Duane Street, Astoria</i>

Tuesday, October 22, 2013

Immediately Following the Traffic Safety Committee Meeting at 7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. MINUTES
 - a. September 24, 2013
4. REPORT OF OFFICERS
5. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Work Session on Riverfront Vision Plan Implementation – Development of Code and Comprehensive Plan Language for the Civic Greenway Plan Area.
 - b. Receipt of Public Comment on Riverfront Vision Plan Implementation – Development of Code and Comprehensive Plan Language for the Civic Greenway Plan Area.
 - c. Upcoming Planning Commission Meeting Schedule – Special meetings are needed to meet the terms of the State grant for the Riverfront Vision Plan implementation. The meeting schedule is:

Tuesday	November 26
Tuesday	December 3
Tuesday	January 7
Tuesday	January 28
6. ADJOURNMENT

ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Astoria City Hall
September 24, 2013

CALL TO ORDER - ITEM 1:

President Innes called the meeting to order at 7:46 p.m.

ROLL CALL - ITEM 2:

Commissioners Present: President McLaren Innes, Vice-President Mark Cary, David Pearson, and Al Tollefson (via telephone).

Commissioners Excused: Zetty Nemowill, Thor Norgaard, and Kera Huber.

Staff Present: Planner Rosemary Johnson. The meeting is recorded and will be transcribed by ABC Transcription Services, Inc.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - ITEM 3(a): August 27, 2013 meeting

Vice-President Cary moved to approve the minutes of August 27, 2013 as presented; seconded by Commissioner Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

President Innes explained the procedures governing the conduct of public hearings to the audience and advised that handouts of the substantive review criteria were available from Staff.

ITEM 4(a):

CU13-05 Conditional Use CU13-05 by Luke Colvin for River Barrel Brewing to locate an eating and drinking establishment, indoor family entertainment of brewery tours, tourist oriented retail sales, and brewery in an existing commercial building at 1 8th Street, AKA 2 7th Street, in the A-2, Aquatic Two Development zone.

(This item reviewed and discussed at the same time as Variance V13-15.)

Vice President Cary moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Conditional Use CU13-05 by Luke Colvin for River Barrel Brewing; seconded by Commissioner Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.

President Innes read the rules of appeal into the record.

ITEM 4(b):

V13-15 Parking Variance V13-15 by David Kroening for River Barrel Brewing from the required 26 off-street parking spaces to provide 8 on-site and 4 leased spaces for a variance of 14 off-street spaces to locate a brewery/restaurant in an existing commercial building at 1 8th Street, AKA 2 7th Street, in the A-2, Aquatic Two Development zone.

(This item reviewed and discussed at the same time as Conditional Use CU13-05.)

President Innes asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission to hear this matter at this time. There were no objections. President Innes asked if any member of the Planning Commission had a conflict of interest or any ex parte contacts to declare. Vice President Cary declared that he owns a pizza restaurant, but could make a fair and unbiased decision. Commissioner Pearson declared that he had heard the Applicant give a presentation at the Astoria Rotary meeting. The presentation included the same information

contained in the Staff report with no additional information given. Commissioner Pearson stated he could make an unbiased and fair decision.

Planner Johnson reviewed the written Staff reports of both applications. Citizens submitted inquiries, which have all been addressed. No written correspondence has been received on either application, other than the ODOT letter submitted by the Applicant. Staff recommends approval of both the Conditional Use and Variance requests, with conditions.

- The parking variance may be affected by the Transportation System Plan (TSP) update, which requires both Code and Comprehensive Plan amendments. A recommended Code amendment would extend the downtown area to 7th Street. Typically, there are no off-street parking requirements in downtown areas because of the way these areas are constructed encompassing the entire lot with building. Staff is recommending no required off-street parking within the downtown area be extended to 7th Street. However, parking must be considered when reviewing conditional use permits, regardless of requirements. Therefore, should the Code change, Staff recommends that the Applicant be required to maintain the eight on-site parking spaces or apply for a variance.
- The TSP update should be complete in January or February of 2014. Staff's recommendation regarding parking on 7th Street will be part of the TSP.

President Innes opened the public hearing on both applications and called for testimony from the Applicant.

David Kroening, 721 14th Street # 4, Astoria, said that Planner Johnson did an excellent job presenting the application and offered to answer any questions.

Vice President Cary asked how long the lease agreement was in effect for the parking lot at the Fisher Brothers' Building at 42 7th Street. Mr. Kroening said the Bornstein family owns 42 7th Street, including the parking lot. He was unaware of the parking agreement. He confirmed that Fisher Brothers' Building businesses operated mainly during the day, while the brewery would be operating mainly at night. Some employees may be working during the day but the brewery will not begin taking restaurant applications until January or February 2014.

Planner Johnson clarified that the 12 parking spots on 7th Street would be striped and open to the public. These spaces cannot be signed as brewery parking only, but those spaces are available on the street for customers to that use and for general public parking. The four spaces on the former railroad are on City-owned property and must be leased to be reserved for the brewery.

President Innes noted that no members of the public were present and closed the public hearing. She called for Commissioner comment and deliberation.

Vice President Cary moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Conditional Use CU13-05 by Luke Colvin for River Barrel Brewing; seconded by Commissioner Pearson. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pearson moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report and approve Parking Variance V13-15 by David Kroening for River Barrel Brewing; seconded by Vice President Cary. Motion passed unanimously.

President Innes read the rules of appeal into the record.

ITEM 4(c):

A13-04

Amendment A13-04 by Brett Estes, Community Development Director, to amend the Development Code by the addition of Article 16 concerning solar energy. The code establishes regulations and the permit review process for installation of solar energy facilities. The draft ordinance is available on the City website at www.astoria.or.us under Community Development Projects. In addition, Section 9.010 and 9.020 Administrative Procedures and Section 6.050 Historic Design Review permits to be amended to include reference to solar energy permits, City Wide. The City Council meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 21, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. in City Hall Council Chambers.

President Innes asked if anyone objected to the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission to hear this matter at this time. There were no objections. President Innes asked if any member of the Planning Commission had a conflict of interest or any ex parte contacts to declare. There were none.

Planner Johnson reviewed the written Staff report. No correspondence has been received regarding tonight's proposed ordinance and Staff recommends that the Planning Commission forward the proposed amendment to City Council for adoption.

President Innes opened the public hearing and called for testimony in favor of, impartial or opposed to the application. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing and called for Commissioner comment.

Commissioner Pearson moved that the Astoria Planning Commission adopt the Findings and Conclusions contained in the Staff report for Amendment Request A13-04 by the Community Development Director and recommend that the Astoria City Council adopt the Amendment request; seconded by Vice President Cary. Motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS- ITEM 5: No reports.

ADJOURNMENT- ITEM 6:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

Secretary

Planner

Memorandum

Date: October 17, 2013
To: City of Astoria Planning Commission
cc: Brett Estes and Rosemary Johnson, City of Astoria Community Development Department
From: Matt Hastie, Shayna Rehberg, and Cathy Corliss
Re: Planning Commission Review Draft Evaluation Report (Task 1.1) ¹

A. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program promotes principles that enable communities to meet transportation needs while retaining their livability and economic vitality. These principles include: integrating land use and transportation planning; making efficient use of land and resources; designing human-scaled, walkable communities; assuring good connections between local destinations; and promoting pedestrian, bicycle and transit-oriented development. In support of these principles, the City of Astoria requested and received a TGM Code Assistance grant to develop and write updated comprehensive plan language, development code text, and map amendments to implement policies and recommendations in the City's adopted Riverfront Vision Plan for the Civic Greenway Plan Area (Phase 1) and Bridge Vista Plan Area (Phase 2).

The 2009 Riverfront Vision Plan describes a future vision and specific recommended implementation measures related to open space, land use, and transportation plans along the Columbia River waterfront. For purposes of the Riverfront Vision Plan, City's riverfront was divided into four plan areas: Bridge Vista, Urban Core, Civic Greenway, and Neighborhood Greenway. This analysis is focused on the Civic Greenway Plan Area, which is shown in Figure 1. The Civic Greenway Plan Area includes a significant amount of publicly owned land and represents a number of opportunities for implementing Riverfront Vision Plan recommendations that will help protect valuable viewpoints and other community resources. Figure 2 shows the existing zoning within the study area. Amendments to the City's Development Code and Comprehensive Plan will be needed to implement the overall objectives of Riverfront Vision Plan and a number of the specific recommendations for the Civic Greenway and other areas. These implementation measures will need to be coordinated and consistent with implementation of the Astor-East Urban Renewal Area, which overlaps with part of the Civic Greenway study area as shown in Figure 3.

¹ This project is partially funded by a grant from the Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) Program, a joint program of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. This TGM grant is financed, in part, by federal Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), local government, and State of Oregon funds. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect views or policies of the State of Oregon.

This code evaluation is intended to identify issues and approaches related to implementation of specific Plan recommendations, and to help determine a preferred approach for each of them that will accomplish the City's goals for the comprehensive plan, code, and map amendments. A previous draft of this memo was reviewed at the first meeting of the Project Management Team (PMT) for the project in early October, 2013 and subsequently updated to reflect recommendations from that group. The PMT consists of City of Astoria and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) staff, as well as the consultant team project manager (Matt Hastie). The code evaluation addresses the following Civic Greenway Area land use issues identified in the Riverfront Vision Plan Area:

1. Access to water and open space
2. Preservation of views
3. Design standards or review
4. Residential zoning change and development standards
5. Landscaping

Discussion about making amendments within the City's zoning framework is presented for each of these land uses issues in the following sections of this report.

Figure 1: Civic Greenway Study Area

- CIVIC GREENWAY**
Land Use and Development Objectives
- Create and enhance open spaces which provide views of the Columbia River
 - Create a modestly-scaled residential and mixed use neighborhood in an area east of Mill Pond
 - Enhance connections to the Civic Greenway area from adjacent neighborhoods

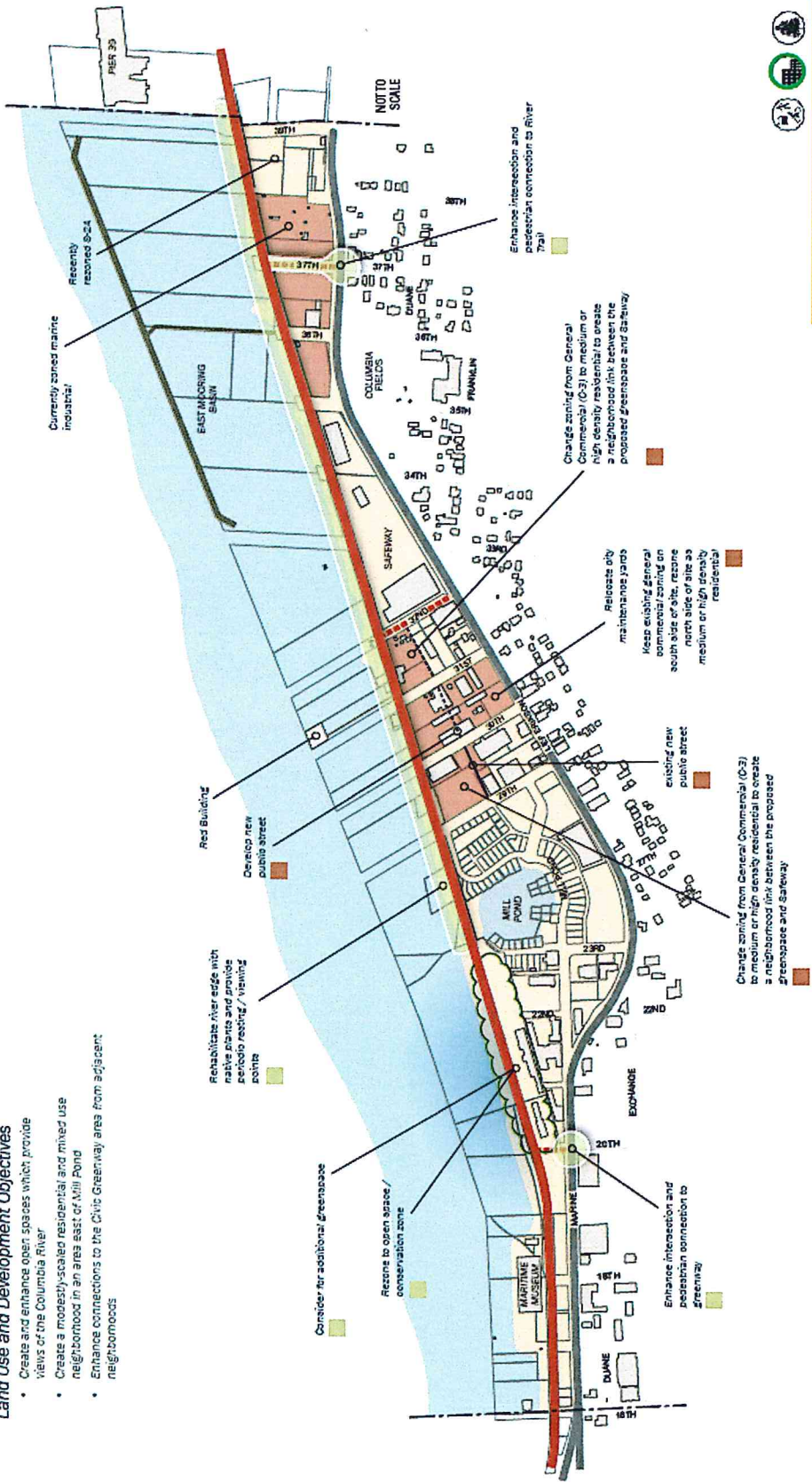
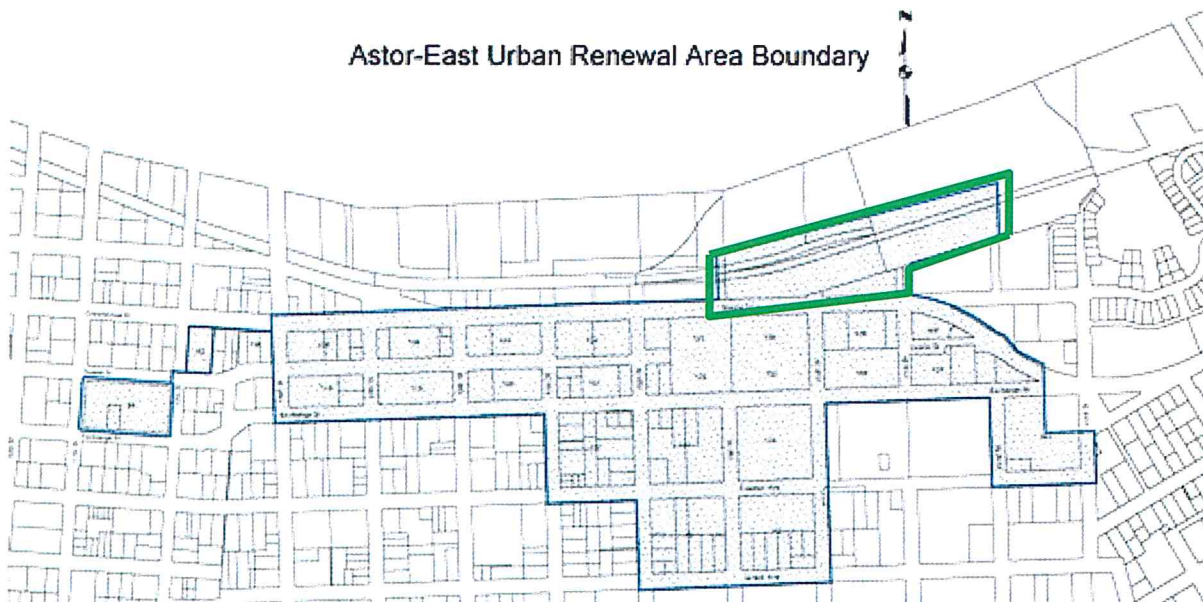


Figure 2: Zoning in the Civic Greenway Study Area**Figure 3: Civic Greenway Study Area in Astor-East Urban Renewal Area**

B. ANALYSIS BY LAND USE ISSUE

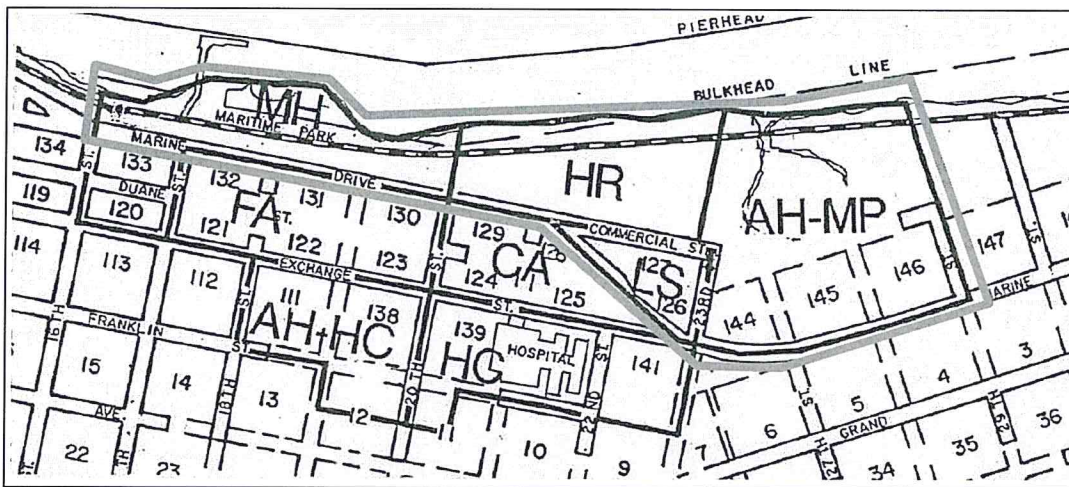
1. Access to Water and Open Space

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to incorporate site design and development provisions that require or provide incentives for setbacks, stepbacks, or provision of public open space (either over water or on land) in exchange for funding public improvements such as those that improve visual or physical access to the water. This section addresses physical access to the water and open space; visual access to the water is addressed in Section 2.

As shown in Figure 2, existing zoning in the Civic Greenway includes:

- On land – Predominantly General Commercial (C-3), Hospitality/Recreation (HR), Attached Housing-Mill Pond (AH-MP), and Marine Industrial (S-1); with small amounts of Local Service (LS), Maritime Heritage (MH), and High Density Residential (R-3). Gateway Overlay (GO) zoning also is applied to the area from the western boundary of the study area to 29th Street, and from Marine Drive to shoreline in the AH-MP and HR zones (Figure 4).
- Overwater – Predominantly Aquatic One Development (A-1) with some Aquatic Two Development (A-2) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Civic Greenway Study Area in Gateway Overlay Zone



Currently there are no citywide site design requirements or review procedures in the code. There are adopted building and site design guidelines and standards for the Gateway Overlay Zone, but these do not address water and open space access. General site design guidelines and standards regarding open space and landscaping are suggested in the Astor-East Urban Renewal Area Plan (1980), but these have not yet been developed or adopted as code language.²

Pedestrian and bicycle access and circulation standards are being developed through the TSP update that is currently in progress. However, the access standards to be considered for the Civic Greenway would be specialized standards for the waterfront and could be applied to the area along the river throughout the Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan area, not just within the Civic Greenway study area.

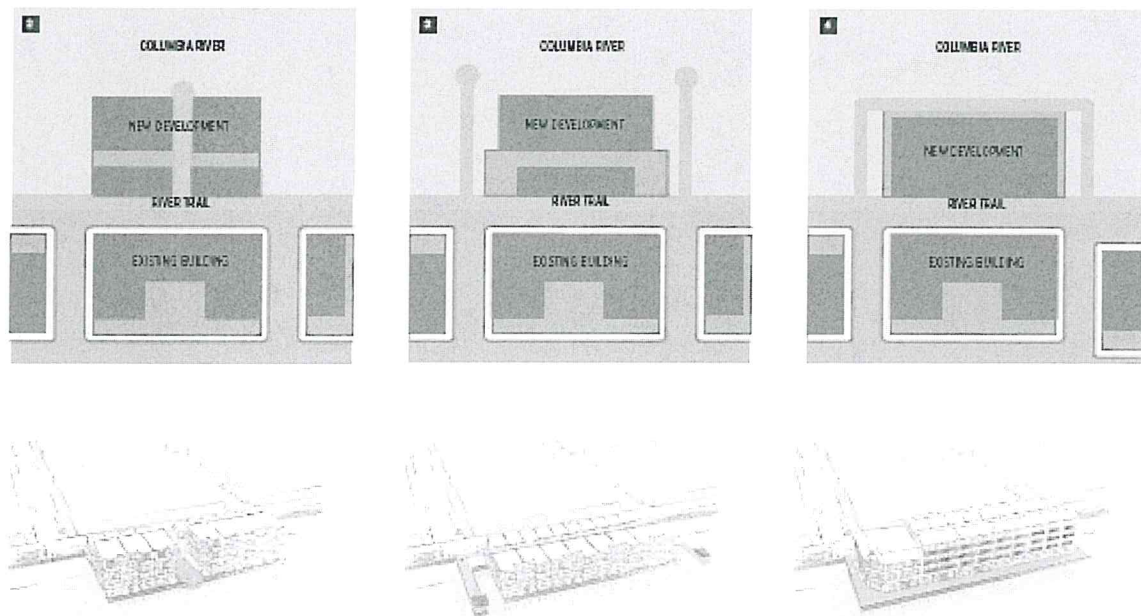
The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies three options to ensure the public continues to have direct visual and physical access to the river in areas where overwater development may be approved in the future. These options include: mid-site access, viewpoints, and trail extension and are shown below in Figure 5 (from the Riverfront Vision Plan).

² The Astor-East Urban Renewal Plan includes the following projects that address waterfront area access, to be "undertaken on behalf of the City by the Astoria Development Commission."

20th Street extension – Extend 20th Street approximately 200 feet north of Marine Drive to a plaza.

Walkway to museum – Construct a public walkway between 19th and 17th Streets in cooperation with the Columbia River Maritime Museum.

Riverfront public access – Construct new pedestrian overlooks and walkways and public spaces at locations along the Columbia River between the extension of the 19th Street right-of-way and the 22nd Street right-of-way.

Figure 5: Options for Public Access to the River

The options are described as follows in the Vision Plan, relying on mechanisms such as dedications, easements, and improvements in public right-of-way:

- Access through the middle of the site – A 24-foot wide public easement and pier through the middle of the site would be dedicated to help break up the massing of the development and provide access to the water.
- Viewpoints – A 12-foot wide pier improvement is constructed within the public right-of-way on both sides of the development. The pier extends 10 feet beyond the new development to provide visual access along the waterfront. If new development occurs on both sides of the public right-of-way, the pier would include a wider 24-foot wide pier improvement. Standards for the development of such piers also would be needed. Where there is not public right-of-way, right-of-way would need to be dedicated or an easement would need to be created.
- River Trail extension – A 20-foot wide River Trail pier improvement is constructed along the waterfront side of the development. The extension would connect to the existing River Trail with 12-foot wide pedestrian connections on both sides of the development.

The City's Development Code could be amended to include this or similar language. These provisions likely would apply to new overwater development over a specified size and/or of a specified type throughout the Riverfront Vision Plan area, rather than just within the Civic Greenway sub-area. It also could apply to redevelopment of overwater structures that do not currently provide the type of access described above. These requirements could be incorporated in several different elements of the code. Preliminary options include:

1. Creating a new section in Article 3 (Additional Use and Development Standards) for this type of river access and including references to this new section in the base zone chapters;
2. Adding these standards to an existing section on public access in the Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards (Section 4.140 – Public Access to the Estuary and Its Shoreline) and including references to the article and section in existing base zones; and
3. Creating a new riverfront overlay zone and including these standards in the new zone.

At this time, working new standards into the existing section on public access (Option 2) is recommended by the consulting team and staff. This recommendation will be reviewed and potentially revised in discussions with members of the Planning Commission.

The Riverfront Vision Plan indicates that the City should consider requiring or providing incentives for ensuring access to the river. Typically incentives for meeting land use or other goals (e.g., providing extra open space or other amenities) include height, density, or lot coverage bonuses, or possibly a waiver of specific development standards. Reduced parking standards are another typical developer incentive. However, these types of incentives may not be appropriate in this case, in part because virtually all of them would impact views of the river, which is also an important concern for Astorians. One approach identified in the Bridge Vista study area would be to use some type of transfer of development rights mechanism whereby developers would receive density or height bonuses that could be transferred to other areas of the city where protection of view or impacts of higher buildings are less significant.

For Discussion:

- What would trigger these requirements? One option would be to use the same thresholds that are used in the City's Gateway District (section 14.020), which City staff note have generally worked well for requiring other types of improvements. Those thresholds are related to the value of improvements as a percentage of overall improvement value.
- Is Chapter 4 (Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards) the most appropriate location in the code for these requirements?
- What types of incentives, if any, should be considered in exchange for providing waterfront open space? Should a transfer of development rights mechanism be considered further?

2. Preservation of Views

During the Riverfront Vision planning process, the community noted that important view corridors to the river exist from Uppertown, along intersecting streets, from the highway, and along the River Trail. To preserve these views, development regulations over land and water should be addressed.

Preserving Views on Land

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to address building height and building mass or lot coverage, particularly in areas where there are no current requirements and/or where the Vision Plan recommends relatively less dense or more modestly sized development. Table 1 presents existing requirements regarding building height, setbacks, and lot coverage in zones in the study area.

Table 1: Development Standards in Zones within the Civic Greenway Study Area

Zone	Maximum Height	Setbacks	Maximum Lot Coverage	Notes
A-1	None	None listed	None listed	Columbia River Estuary Shoreland and Aquatic Area Use and Activity Standards (Article 4)*
A-2	28' Except 45' above grade of adjacent shoreland between extended 15th-21st St. right-of-way	Buildings sited no closer than 25' to a line extending from intersection of City right-of-way and shoreline to the pierhead line Buildings sited as close to bankline as practical	None listed	Columbia River Estuary Shoreland and Aquatic Area Use and Activity Standards (Article 4)* Buildings should relate to or connect with adjacent street ends or public access points
AH-MP	35' Except structures on lots with frontage on Marine Dr. & Lot 47 in Mill Pond Village with frontage on 29 th & Waterfront St – 45'	None	None Except minimum 20% of zone and 10% of total area of lots with frontage on Marine Dr. and of Lot 47 to be landscaped open area	Public view corridor, minimum width of 25', recommended 75', between Marine Dr. and river
C-3	45'	None listed Except 5-foot "buffer" when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone	90% (Minimum 10% landscaped open area)	Astor-East Urban Renewal District Plan**
HR	45' Hotels – 60'	None listed	90% (Minimum 10% landscaped open area)	Additional standards in Astor-East Urban Renewal District Plan** and Gateway Overlay Zone
LS	35'	None listed	80% (Minimum 20% landscaped open area)	Additional standards in Gateway Overlay Zone
MH	45'	None listed	90% (Minimum 10% landscaped open area)	Additional standards in Astor-East Urban Renewal District Plan** and Gateway Overlay Zone
R-3	35'	Front yard – 20' minimum Side yard – 5' minimum, except corner lots 15' Rear yard – 15' minimum, except corner lots 5'	50%	Astor-East Urban Renewal District Plan**
S-1	None	None listed	None listed	Columbia River Estuary

Zone	Maximum Height	Setbacks	Maximum Lot Coverage	Notes
				Shoreland and Aquatic Area Use and Activity Standards (Article 4)* Columbia River Estuary Shoreland Overlay District***
S-2A	28' Except 45' above grade of adjacent shoreland between extended 15th-21st St. right-of-way	None listed	None listed	Columbia River Estuary Shoreland and Aquatic Area Use and Activity Standards (Article 4)* Columbia River Estuary Shoreland Overlay District***
Gateway Overlay (GO) Zone	24' minimum (Street trees 15' minimum height)	None listed	Minimum floor area ratio 1:1	

Notes

* *Columbia River Estuary Shoreland and Aquatic Area Use and Activity Standards in Article 4 do not provide additional height, setback, and lot coverage standards for zones and uses in the study area. The standards address issues like access, vegetation, and parking.*

** *The Astor-East Urban Renewal District Plan suggests general site and building design guidelines but these have not been developed or adopted into code language.*

*** *Columbia River Estuary Shoreland Overlay (CRESO) zoning applies to S-1, S-2, S-2A, S-3, and S-4 zones, and refers to Columbia River Estuary Shoreland and Aquatic Area Use and Activity Standards (Article 4) for development standards; it does not include any additional development standards.*

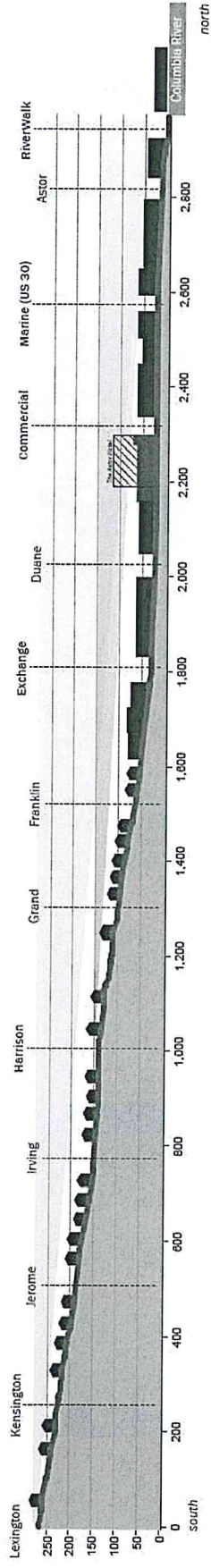
Views on land from above the river can potentially be addressed through building height limits, and views from intersecting streets can potentially be addressed through building setbacks, stepbacks, and lot coverage. Views from the River Trail are not in need of regulation in the Civic Greenway study area for the following reasons:

- The angle of the shoreline and trail through the study area supports cross-river and down-river views;
- Existing development does not pose significant barriers to views; and
- Areas where overwater views are a concern will be addressed further by a potential “Blueway” overlay zone, as discussed in the next section.

Thus the following subsections discuss strategies for views from above and views from intersecting streets.

Height Limits

Within the Civic Greenway and other portions of the Riverfront Vision Plan area, any further limits on building height would be intended to help protect views from above the river. The 10th Street View Corridor Study from the Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan provides photo views and cross-section diagram from hillside locations in Uppertown to the river. The cross-section diagram, provided in Figure 6, shows how development built to a maximum height of 45 feet does not necessarily intrude into the view corridors from either Lexington or Harrison on the hillside.

Figure 6: View Corridors from Lexington and Harrison

As shown in Table 1, most of the on-land zones in the study area already have height limits of 45 feet or less. It is only the S-1 zone that currently has no height restrictions and the HR zone that generally limits building heights to 45 feet but allows hotels up to 60 feet. A 60-foot hotel may intrude only minimally into the view corridors from Lexington and Harrison, but would intrude more significantly into the view corridors of the two streets below Harrison in the lower part of Uppertown. One preliminary staff recommendation is to consider eliminating the HR zone, which only applies to one area and is no longer necessarily appropriate for that area.

In considering reducing building heights, the City will need to determine how and where to apply the limits within the development code. They could be applied within a base zone throughout the city or just applied within the Riverfront Vision Plan area. A third option would be to apply them within the Gateway Overlay zone. Our preliminary recommendation would be to apply the new limits only within the Riverfront Vision Plan area through new requirements in each applicable base zone. For the Civic Greenway area, the preliminary recommendation would be to establish a base height limitation of 28 feet for all uses, with the ability to increase heights to 45 feet as an incentive in exchange for meeting other planning objectives (e.g., providing additional open space, limiting building footprints, creating building setbacks, etc.).

Setbacks and Stepbacks

Building setbacks and stepbacks would be intended to help preserve river views from intersecting streets. As shown in Table 1, none of the on-land zones have setback requirements except for the residential R-3 zone in the study area, and the C-3 zone to a minimal degree. Correspondingly substantial lot coverage is allowed, and in the GO zone, a minimum floor area ratio (FAR) of 1:1 is required. None of the zones currently have setback requirements per se; the AH-MP zone requires a view corridor of at least 25 feet (75 feet recommended) from Marine Drive to the Columbia River but does not translate this requirement into setback or stepback standards.

One building massing study done for the Vision Plan was conducted in the Urban Core study area, looking west from 2nd Street on the waterfront. The study compared building heights of 24 feet, 45 feet, and 60 feet with and without setbacks. The study shows how only the 60-foot building, with and without a setback, clearly interferes with downriver and bridge views from the Urban Core waterfront. This differs from the perspective being addressed by potential regulations for views from intersecting streets in the Civic Greenway. However, similar to the findings from the 10th Street View Corridor Study, a maximum building height of 45 feet could be a potential threshold for views corridors, depending on what type of view is being considered (e.g., view of the Washington State shoreline, view of passing ships, view of a substantial portion of the river, etc.). This potential threshold could be worked with in establishing effective setbacks and stepbacks for views from intersecting streets. For example, as recommended in the Vision Plan in the Bridge Vista study area, building width and mass may be traded for height, while establishing a maximum for this height “bonus” that does not exacerbate the issue of obstructing views from hillside areas as described in the previous section.

The 3rd edition of the State’s Model Development Code for Small Cities (“Model Code”) suggests stepbacks as an approach to maintain a consistent building scale as viewed from the street, to allow for more light, and to provide a transition between zones, particularly non-residential and residential and/or higher density and lower density zones. The Model Code offers an example of stepbacks of at least four feet from the front plane of the building on the street side where the building height exceeds 35 feet. This language and examples of stepback diagrams are provided in Attachment A. However, given existing and potential future height limitations in the Riverfront Vision Plan area, the City may want to consider a lower height for an initial building stepback.

Further assessment of potential stepbacks and their effect on views of the river and surrounding landscape will be needed to identify specific stepback measurements.

As noted in the previous section, the Riverfront Vision Plan indicates that the City should consider requiring or providing incentives for ensuring access to the river. For the most part, new provisions related to the preservation of views would represent further restrictions on development and reductions in development potential. These would not provide or be consistent with the idea of providing incentives for preserving views. In considering these requirements, the City should consider potential trade-offs among these standards to create opportunities for incentives. For example, it may be possible to create incentives for larger setbacks and stepbacks by providing height bonuses for portions of a building (e.g., if a 28-foot height limit is established, offer a bonus up to a 45-foot maximum height, with the ability to obtain a variance for a taller height for a portion of the building). This may potentially affect views from higher elevations but those impacts would be mitigated by wider setbacks and stepbacks and the overall impacts may be reduced. Reductions in minimum off-street parking requirements also may be considered as a potential incentive.

For Discussion:

- Given existing zoning requirements, in which zones within the Civic Greenway or other sub-areas are further height limits most appropriate? Should new limits be applied via base zone requirements or through existing or new overlay zones?
- What information is needed to establish a defensible foundation for setback and stepback requirements to protect views of the river from intersecting streets?

- How should proposed height, setback, and stepback requirements be reconciled with existing minimum FAR requirements in the GO zone? One option is to allow for a reduced FAR as an incentive if other conditions or objectives are met.
- How can provisions related to setbacks, stepbacks, building heights and lot coverage best work together to ensure that proposed requirements are not overly restrictive and provide opportunities for incentives for property owners or developers to preserve views of the river?

Preserving Views Overwater with a “Blueway” Zone

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to preserve views by addressing overwater development using tools such as:

- Establish a new zone (“Blueway” zone);
- Pursue City lease of properties with public or private first rights of refusal (emphasis on properties under City control); and
- Explore possible partnerships with private property owners who have leases or first rights of refusal on possible priority properties for visual access.

The discussion below relates to the creation of a Blueway zone. Tools related to City leasing and partnerships are important to implementation, but do not require code amendments.

According to the Vision Plan, a substantial portion of the water area within the Civic Greenway study area is under public control. Figure 7 illustrates (in darker blue) where privately controlled overwater development could occur in the Civic Greenway and Neighborhood Greenway study areas. The privately controlled areas in the Civic Greenway are zoned Aquatic One Development (A-1).

A Blueway zone needs to address objectives from the Vision Plan including creating a “blueway” of open space and allowing for existing and future modest-scaled marine uses in these development opportunity areas in the Civic Greenway. It is suggested that a Blueway zone include regulations for overwater uses and overwater building heights. Overwater uses in the Blueway zone could be limited to water-dependent uses, and overwater heights could be limited to bank height or only so many feet above bank height (e.g., up to the equivalent of a single story or less). In addition, development could be limited to a percentage of the width of the parcel, as measured along the river. This would essentially result in virtually unobstructed views of the River from the bank in the majority of the Blueway zone area.

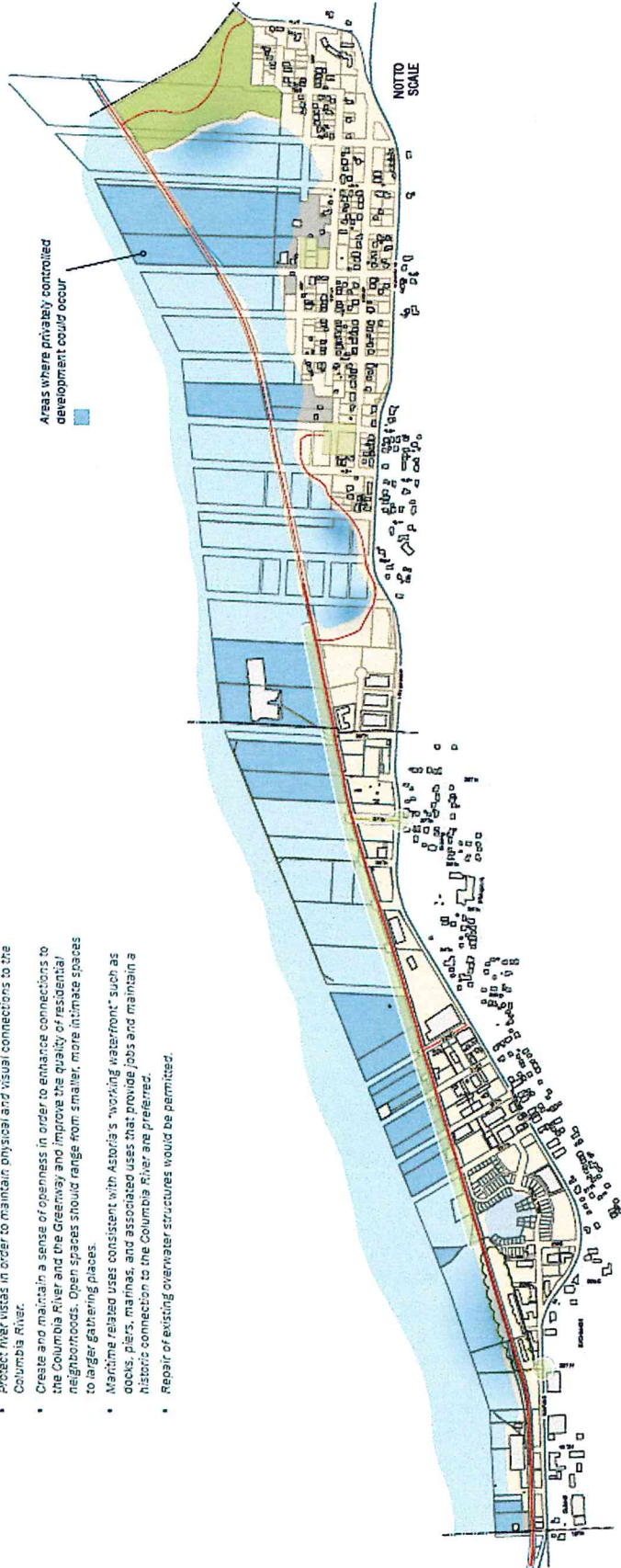
The Civic Greenway area in particular was identified as a candidate for this approach because applying significantly limiting or prohibiting overwater development would be more politically feasible or palatable in areas where upland properties are owned by public entities that do not have plans or a desire to construct overwater development. For upland properties under private ownership, upland owners with a “first right of refusal” to propose are more likely to want to keep the option of overwater development open and may be more opposed to establishing a blueway zone. However, the Riverfront Vision Plan recommends that the City work with private upland

Figure 7: Opportunities for Overwater Development

PRIVATE FIRST RIGHT OF REFUSALS

Overwater development within these areas should consider the following:

- Protect river vistas in order to maintain physical and visual connections to the Columbia River.
- Create and maintain a sense of openness in order to enhance connections to the Columbia River and the Greenway and improve the quality of residential neighborhoods. Open spaces should range from smaller, more intimate spaces to larger gathering places.
- Maritime related uses consistent with Astoria's "working waterfront" such as docks, piers, marinas, and associated uses that provide jobs and maintain a historic connection to the Columbia River are preferred.
- Repair of existing overwater structures would be permitted.



ASTORIA RIVERFRONT VISION PLAN
LAND USE AND URBAN DESIGN IDEAS
29 MAY 2009

CIVIC GREENWAY

NEIGHBORHOOD GREENWAY

owners to implement a Blueway zone within the Civic Greenway. That zone could cover all or a portion of the overwater areas in this sub-area.

If the City or other upland owners in the Civic Greenway do not have any plans to construct overwater development, it could be argued that a Blueway zone is not needed to restrict overwater development and protect views of the river in this area. However, some community members participating in the Riverfront Vision process noted that establishing a Blueway zone would provide more certainty and community confidence that these views would be protected over the long term, particularly if City-owned property is sold in the future.

For Discussion:

- If a Blueway zone is established, preliminary staff and consultant recommendations would be to limit overwater uses in the zone to marine dependent uses such as docks, marinas, fishing piers, or boat ramps, along with small-scale associated uses (e.g., bait shops, snack bars, or restaurants), which are secondary in size to the water-dependent use. Should any other uses be allowed?
- Should there be size limits for individual non-water dependent uses or structures (e.g., 3,000 – 5,000 square feet)?
- Should heights in the Blueway zone be limited to the height of the river bank or to some nominally higher height or elevation (e.g., approximately one-story or less)?
- Should overwater development be limited to a portion of the parcel measured as a percentage of the width of the parcel along the riverfront? Preliminary staff and consultant recommendations would be to impose a limit of 25-40%.
- Should the Blueway zone be applied only to areas where the City has upland ownership or should the City actively work with other upland owners as part of this process to expand the Blueway to apply to non-City owned areas? Preliminary staff and consultant recommendations are to apply the zone to all parcels.

3. Design Standards or Review

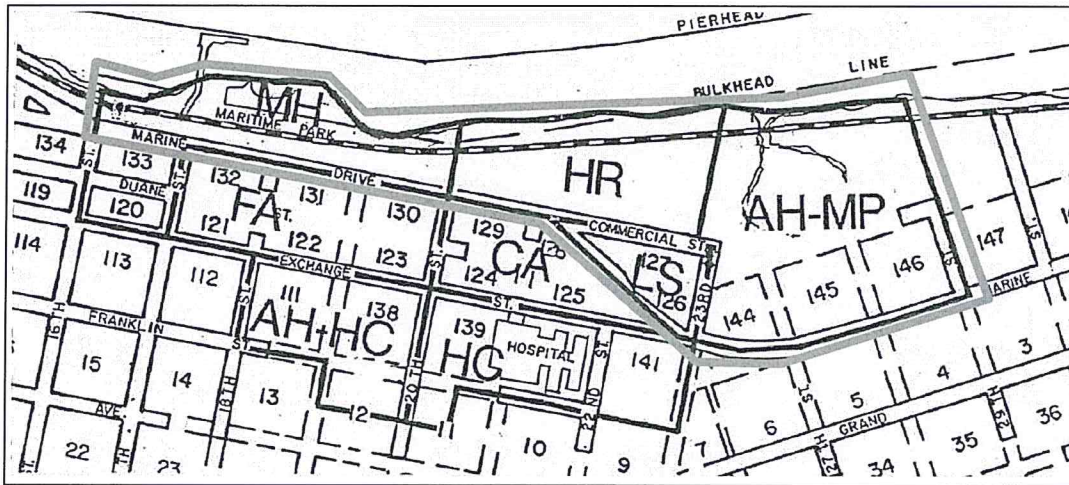
The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to develop architectural design requirements or a design review process to help ensure compatibility with historical or existing architectural character, encourage or require use of certain materials, ensure variation in building facades (articulation) and govern other aspects of building and site design.

As shown in Figure 8, the western portion of the study area is within the City's existing Gateway Overlay Zone (Article 14). The overlay zone requires design review and adherence to architectural guidelines that encourage styles characteristic of Astoria's Uppertown and the working waterfront for commercial, industrial, and residential development.

With the exception of the minimum building height of 24 feet and minimum FAR of 1:1, which may conflict with the height and setback requirements needed to ensure view preservation, these guidelines could be used throughout the Civic Greenway to help maintain historic development styles. Amendments to Article 14 and the zoning map would be necessary to expand the coverage of this overlay zone. In addition, because these are guidelines and the City is required to provide

clear and objective standards for development of “needed housing,” some additional standards would likely be needed to supplement the guidelines if they are applied elsewhere.

Figure 8: Civic Greenway Study Area in Gateway Overlay Zone



The Astor-East Urban Renewal Area Plan calls for plan and design review requirements addressing location and layout of buildings and open spaces, building architectural design, landscaping, accessways, parking and loading, and compatibility with surrounding development. However, these types of provisions have not yet been developed or adopted into code language. As noted above, additional code language likely would be needed.

For Discussion:

- If the procedural requirements and guidelines in the Gateway Overlay are applied as a starting point to new residential uses in other parts of the Civic Greenway area, what changes should be considered?
- Do the desired building forms in the eastern portion of the Civic Greenway study area differ from those in the Gateway Overlay? If yes, how might the architectural guidelines differ?

4. Residential Zone Change and Development Standards

The Riverfront Vision Plan recommends a change in zoning from General Commercial (C-3) to medium density residential for several parcels in a proposed new neighborhood between the Mill Pond neighborhood and Safeway. These parcels between 29th and 32nd Streets are shown as Sites 1, 2, and 3 in Figure 9.

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to develop standards for any new residential development that may occur in this new neighborhood in order to achieve the community’s vision for that area. For example, such requirements may address separation/setback from the River Trail, modest sized buildings, housing for moderate income residents (workforce housing), and open space (e.g., housing units located around common areas or courtyards with physical and visual pathways to the riverfront).

- Separation and setbacks – Previous sections of this report discuss setbacks and setbacks in the study area.
- Modest scale – This element can be addressed through building setbacks, setbacks, and heights. “Modest” building heights could include up to two or three stories.
- Workforce housing – Affordable family-oriented types of housing such as smaller single-family detached and attached housing can be emphasized. The City could consider providing incentives for producing this type of housing.
- Open space – Allowing for “cottage clusters” can be a way to address smaller housing oriented around a common open space. Cottage clusters typically consist of houses of less than 1,000 square feet where the units are owned in fee simple or condominium arrangements.

The City’s existing residential zones include one low density (R-1), medium density (R-2), and high density (R-3) zone. The R-2 zone permits single-family and two-family dwellings outright and multi-family and cluster development conditionally. Minimum lot size requirements for single-family and two-family dwellings are 5,000 square feet and 7,500 square feet respectively. Lot coverage is limited to 50% and building heights to 35 feet. Existing cluster development provisions (Section 11.160) allow for reductions of lot size and yard requirements so long as overall lot coverage, open space, and density requirements are met. The provisions specify that structures may be in single ownership, individual ownership, or condominium ownership. In these ways, the R-2 zone appears to generally serve the objectives of the Vision Plan in rezoning this area. However, City staff notes that a new zone may be needed to allow for a full range of housing structures desired in this new zone, including allowing cottage clusters as an outright permitted use rather than a conditional use. Staff also notes that requirements for lot coverage or open space should be modified to ensure that individual detached housing units do not cover the entire parcel or a large part of it, particularly in areas where more open space or preservation of views is desired. Other potential standards could include allowing for shared parking areas, reduced minimum off-street parking requirements, and a requirement to develop a mix of housing types.

In considering whether and how to move forward with this rezoning recommendation, the City also will need to consider the impact of zoning this land from commercial to residential use in light of its overall long-term supply of commercially zoned land. The City’s recently adopted Economic Development Opportunities Analysis (2011) indicates that the City has a relatively limited supply of commercially zoned land. Vacant and redevelopable parcels include the area being considered for rezoning. Before rezoning this land, the City will want to be sure that it will continue to have an adequate supply of land that can meet future retail and commercial needs. This may be accomplished in part by assuming future redevelopment of portions of the City’s existing public works shops to commercial uses for the portion of this area along Marine Drive (which would continue to be zoned for commercial use).

Figure 9: Sites of Potential Zone Change



For Discussion:

- While the R-2 zone allows for multi-family housing conditionally and group housing outright and conditionally, staff recommend creating a new residential zone to allow for cottage cluster housing and other housing types outright in this area. Is this an appropriate recommendation?
- Are any other additional or alternative standards needed in the proposed rezoning area, including those suggested on page 17 of this memo?

5. Landscaping Requirements

Objectives in the Vision Plan for the Civic Greenway include enhancing the River Trail with plantings and landscaping that beautify the area, frame river views, and restore the riverfront's natural character. Planting with native vegetation and other appropriate vegetation is to be emphasized, particularly along the river side of the River Trail.

The City of Astoria 2013-2033 Trails Master Plan includes survey findings in which 40% of the respondents ranked protection of native plant species (and management of invasive species) as one of the most important elements of trails, but the plan does not recommend trail landscaping standards or guidelines, nor has it yet resulted in code amendments to that effect. The City's existing landscaping standards (Sections 3.105-3.120) are basic standards that focus on parking lot landscaping. The Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards (Article 4) address vegetation in terms of stabilization of the shoreline and cases in which aquatic and riparian vegetation can and cannot be disturbed.³

When considering enhanced landscaping standards in the study area, the river side of the River Trail and the land side of the River Trail will be addressed separately.

River Side

On the river side of the River Trail, enhanced landscaping requirements would focus on restoring natural conditions. Another purpose is to "soften the edge" between the River Trail and the water. The enhanced requirements could work in conjunction with existing vegetative stabilization provisions in the Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards. In preparing this evaluation, APG reviewed landscaping standards for riverfront areas in a number of other Oregon communities. Among these examples, the most helpful model for our purposes includes standards that address triggers for compliance; minimum amounts of trees, shrubs, and ground cover; clustering; and exceptions. Those standards refer to the Willamette Greenway Plan for guidance on using native vegetation; the types of native vegetation to be prioritized (e.g., native to the river, native to the Northwest, or introduced plants common to the Northwest); and criteria for determining appropriate vegetation in

³ The Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards state the following regarding vegetative stabilization: *Plant species utilized for vegetative stabilization shall be selected on the basis of potential sediment containment and fish and wildlife habitat values. Trees, shrubs and grasses native to the region should be considered for vegetative stabilization; however, plant species and vegetation stabilization techniques approved by the Soil Conservation Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other participating Federal and State resource agencies are also appropriate. Stabilization of dike slopes must not include vegetation (particularly trees) which jeopardize the dike. (Section 4.060.9)*

general. These examples of riverside landscaping standards and guidelines are provided in Attachment A. In addition to these types of standards, City staff note that standards should address plant density and size to ensure that plantings do not become too tall or “bushy” and that taller vegetation is space far enough apart to avoid obstructing views of the river.

Land Side

On the land side of the River Trail, where there is less interaction between the river itself and the landscaping, the focus can be different. Here landscaping can potentially serve purposes of beautifying and buffering. There are options to require minimum tree and shrub coverage as a buffer between development and the trail, and to specify types of vegetation and other trail-oriented amenities that provide a consistent element and theme through the study area and perhaps into other areas of the riverfront. As identified in Section 1, incentives for providing open space and amenities on the land side can be discussed. City staff notes that it is also important to update landscaping standards to allow public art or other amenities to count towards meeting landscaping requirements.

In applying updated or new landscaping standards, the City will need to determine how best to integrate them into the development code, including whether they should be incorporated in the City’s existing landscaping standards (Sections 3.105-3.120), Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards for shoreline stabilization (Section 4.060.9), or elsewhere. As an alternative, standards could be included in a new overlay zone. However, our preliminary recommendation would be to include the standards in Article 3 (Additional Use and Development Standards), in part because standards in Chapter 4 only apply within 50 feet of the river.

Similar to possible new provisions associated with providing access to the river, the City will need to determine whether to apply the standards only to new development or also to the expansion or redevelopment of existing uses. If standards will apply to expansion or redevelopment, the City will want to define an appropriate set of triggers or thresholds for their application. For example, in the example shown in Attachment A, site alterations of a specified dollar amount trigger compliance with the landscaping standards. Another option would be to use a threshold based on the value of exterior improvements as a percentage of total improvement value.

For Discussion:

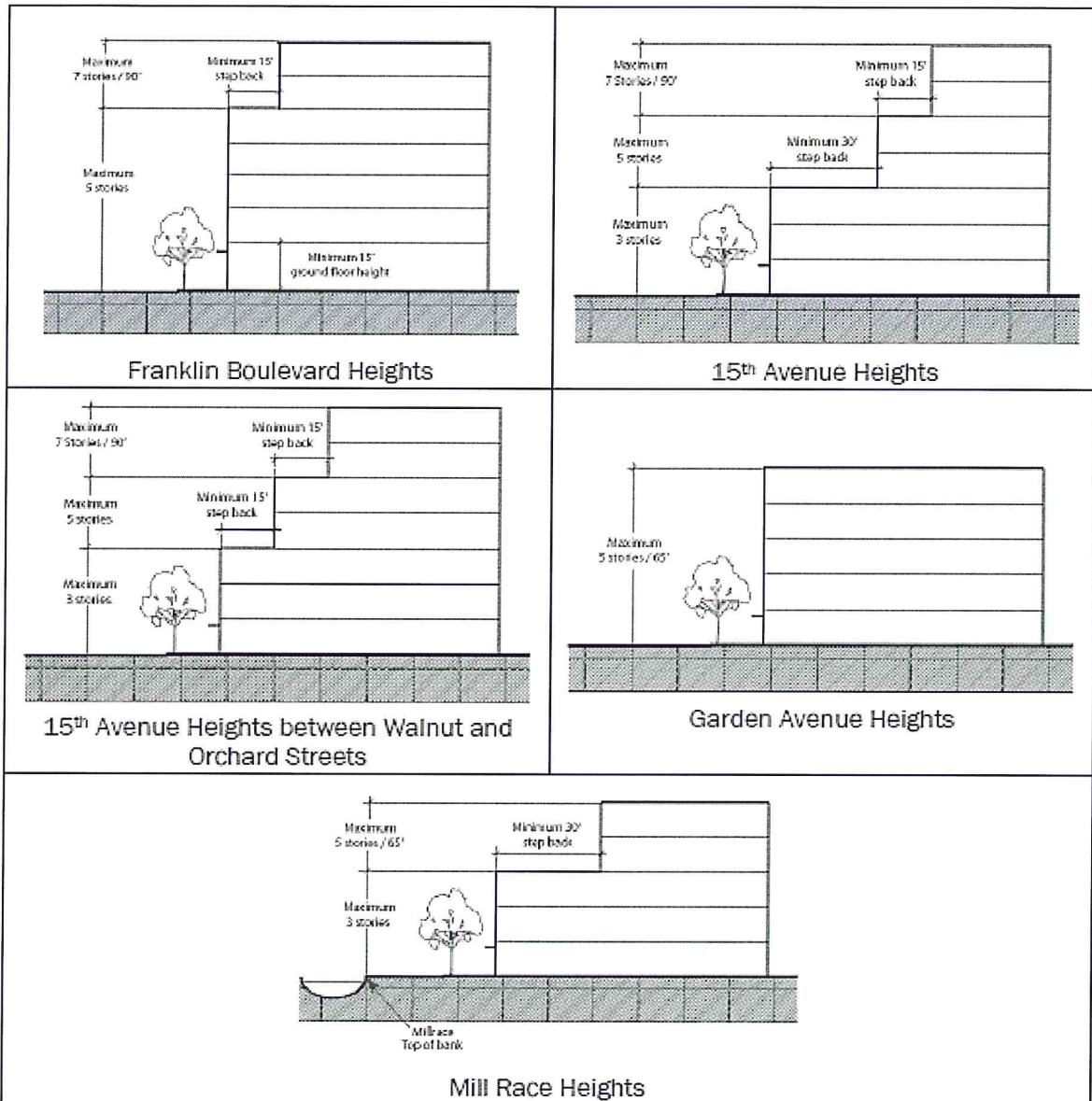
- What additional standards are needed to achieve the goals of the Riverfront Vision Plan for the river side of the River Trail (e.g., plant density and size standards)?
- Does the initial recommendation to include enhanced standards for landscaping on the river side of the trail in Chapter 4 (Columbia River Estuary and Shoreland Regional Standards) make sense? Similarly, should standards for landscaping on the land side of the trail be included in Chapter 3 (Additional Use and Development Standards)?
- If new landscaping standards are applied to redevelopment or expansion of existing uses, what triggers or thresholds should be used?
- Should enhanced landscaping standards for the river side and/or land side of the River Trail apply to just the Civic Greenway area or potentially to other Vision Plan study areas as well?

ATTACHMENT A: SAMPLE CODE LANGUAGE

This attachment includes sample language regarding stepbacks and landscaping as referred to earlier in this report. The samples addressing stepbacks provide examples of both language and diagrams that could be incorporated into the code. The samples addressing landscaping provide examples of language from a greenway overlay zone and greenway plan. These examples of language and diagrams can be discussed and modified to suit the needs in Astoria.

A. STEPBACKS**Transportation Growth Management Program****Model Development Code for Small Cities, 3rd Edition****Section 3.2 – Building Orientation and Design / Non-Residential Buildings**

- J. Upper Story Step-Back. The purpose of the height step-back is to maintain a consistent building scale as viewed from the street, to provide for compatibility between development in the [Downtown/Main Street] zone and residential [Residential Low Density] districts, and to provide for solar gain and light filtering down to the street. Upper-story step-back surfaces designed balconies, rooftop gardens or other private open spaces in mixed-use developments, may be used to satisfy the multifamily open space standards in Section 2.3.70.
- I. [Downtown/Main Street] zone: Where the height of a proposed building or building addition in the [Downtown/Main Street] zone exceeds [35-45] feet, that portion of the building exceeding [35-45] feet in height shall step-back at least [4] feet from the front plane of the subject building that is closest to the street; a similar step-back is required where the subject site abuts or is on the opposite side of the same street from a RL zone.

City of Eugene**Walnut Station Form-Based Code Assistance Final Report (February 2010)****Prepared by Angelo Planning Group and SERA Architects**

C. Native plants. All landscaping must comply with the native plant requirement of the Willamette Greenway Plan. *[Note: See plan excerpt below.]*

D. Exception for sites with an existing nonconforming use, allowed use, limited use, or conditional use. The regulations of this subsection apply to sites with an existing nonconforming use, an allowed use, a limited use, or a conditional use.

When alterations are made to a site that does not meet the standards of this section, and the alterations are over the threshold of Paragraph D.1, below, the site must be brought into conformance with the development standards listed in Subsections A, B, and C, above. The value of the alterations is based on the entire project, not individual building permits. The cost of the upgrades required by this chapter may be counted toward the cost of upgrades required by Subsection 33.258.070.D. However, the upgrades required by this chapter must be completed first.

1. Thresholds triggering compliance. The standards of Subsections A, B, and C must be met when the value of the proposed alterations on the site, as determined by BDS, is more than \$145,200. Alterations and improvements stated in 33.258.070.D.2.a do not count toward the threshold.

2. Area of required improvements. Except as provided in 33.258.070.D.2.c(2), Exception for Sites With Ground Leases, required improvements must be made to the entire site.

3. Timing and cost of required improvements. The timing and cost of the required improvements is specified in 33.258.070.D.2.d. However, where 33.258.070.D.2.d refers to the standards listed in Subparagraph 33.258.070.D.2.b, the standards of Subsections A, B, and C, above, are also included.

Willamette Greenway Plan (1988)

IV. Land Use Controls

C. Landscaping

The intent is to ensure quality landscape treatments along the river that are sensitive to human and wildlife use, and enhance the scenic quality of lands along the Willamette River.

Native Plants. The Plan encourages the use of native plants when landscape plans are being developed. Where several plants meet the site's landscaping needs and one of them is native, the native plant is preferred. If, however, a native plant does not meet the criteria, then other plants may be used.

The order for selecting a plant is: plants native to the lower Willamette River, first; native to the Pacific Northwest, second; introduced plants common to the Pacific Northwest, third; and other plants, fourth.

There are a number of native plants that are very appropriate in more formal, urban landscape treatments. The use of native plants will enhance the natural riparian environment and the wildlife habitat potential along the river, preserve Portland's individual natural environmental identity, and enhance the scenic and natural qualities of lands along the Willamette River.

Landscape review. A review of landscape plans within the Greenway is required. The following criteria are to be considered when reviewing the plan to determine whether appropriate plants, including native plants, have been used.

The criteria to be considered are:

1. Topography, soils, and site constraints

2. Erosion control

3. Importance for wildlife habitat - The plants should provide cover for nesting, shading, and escape from the elements and predators, facilitating movement to and along the river, food, and diversity of structure, including providing different food types and shelter.

4. Aesthetics - Site design may require certain shapes, textures, colors, or height of plants, particularly in association with buildings.
5. Maintenance - Plants chosen should consider watering, moving, and pruning requirements, and resistance to pests. Sunlight requirements should also be considered.
6. Resilience under human use - Many plants are not suitable to be planted in areas of intense human use, due to their low tolerance to disturbance.
7. Compatibility with human use - There are many plants which are unsuitable for areas of intense human use due to harmful or obnoxious qualities of the plants.
8. Shading and energy conservation considerations - Buildings designed for energy conservation may require year-round or summer shading or windblocks.

Recognition of the variation in human use and interaction along the river should be factored into the review as well. In areas that rated highly in the wildlife habitat inventory, such as Oaks Bottom, Harborton, and on the islands, wildlife habitat values should be the most important factors. In areas of high human use, such as Tom McCall Waterfront Park, compatibility with human use should be of higher importance. In other areas where the interaction is more varied, such as Powers Marine Park or Kelley Point Park, the importance of wildlife habitat and compatibility with human use should be balanced.