



AGENDA

ASTORIA PLANNING COMMISSION

August 7, 2018

6:30 p.m.

2nd Floor Council Chambers

1095 Duane Street • Astoria OR 97103

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. ROLL CALL
3. MINUTES
 - a. There are no new minutes to approve
4. Work Session
 - a. Riverfront Vision Urban Core
5. REPORT OF OFFICERS
6. STAFF/STATUS REPORTS
7. PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda Items)
8. ADJOURNMENT

<p>THIS MEETING IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE DISABLED. AN INTERPRETER FOR THE HEARING IMPAIRED MAY BE REQUESTED UNDER THE TERMS OF ORS 192.630 BY CONTACTING COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, 503-338-5183.</p>



MEMORANDUM

Project Summary and Code Evaluation

Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan Code Amendments – Urban Core

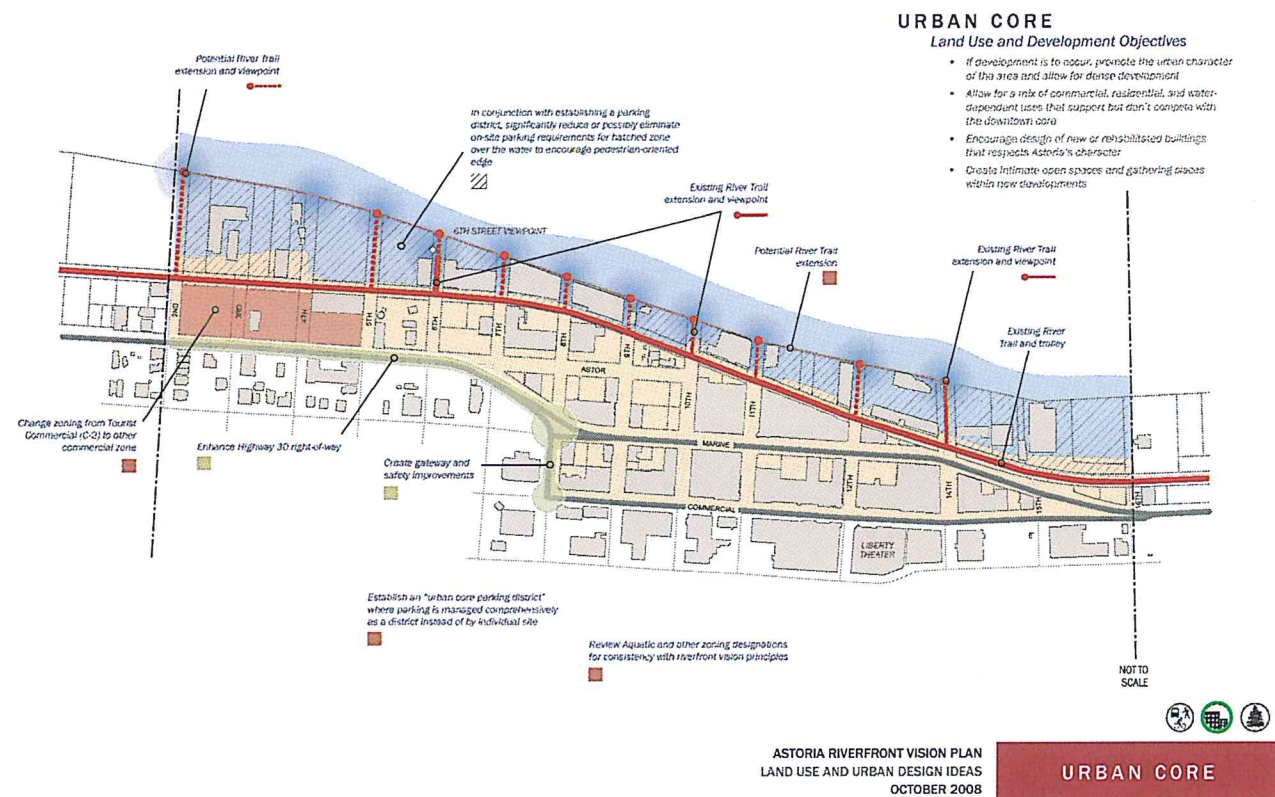
DATE July 25, 2018
TO Brett Estes and Rosemary Johnson, City of Astoria Community Development Department
FROM Matt Hastie and Kate Rogers

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW, OBJECTIVES & OUTCOMES

The Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan was adopted in 2009 and 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, the city's riverfront was divided into four sub-areas: Bridge Vista, Urban Core, Civic Greenway, and Neighborhood Greenway. The City of Astoria has already adopted implementation measures for three of the four sub-areas of the larger Riverfront area. The Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista Plan Area implementation projects were completed in August 2014 and June 2015, respectively, and Neighborhood Greenway Plan Area was completed in November 2015. The current project focuses on the remaining plan area—the Urban Core (shown in Figure 1). The intent of the project is to implement policies and recommendations identified in the Vision Plan—both general objectives and specific recommendations for the Urban Core—with updated development code text, comprehensive plan language, and map amendments.

This report is intended to provide a summary of issues related to potential Urban Core code amendments. It reviews the Riverfront Vision Plan's policies and recommendations, summarizes the approach used for code amendments in other riverfront sub-areas, and considers land use, development, and other issues specific to the Urban Core area. The report also describes types of code provisions expected to be drafted for the Urban Core area, along with examples of draft standards to illustrate potential planning tools or concepts. Lastly, it outlines the project schedule and identifies next steps.

Figure 1: Urban Core Plan Area



B. RIVERFRONT VISION PLAN POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Guiding Principles

The Riverfront Vision Plan is built around five core principles, which serve as a framework for the Plan's policies and recommendations. These guiding principles should provide the overall policy direction for any code amendments within the Urban Core.

1. *Promote physical and visual access to the river.*
2. *Encourage a mix of uses that supports Astoria's "working waterfront" and the City's economy.*
3. *Support new development that respects Astoria's historic character.*
4. *Protect the health of the river and adjacent natural areas.*
5. *Enhance the River Trail*

Urban Core Policies & Recommendations

The Urban Core area extends from 2nd Street to approximately 16th Street, from the pierhead line to Marine Drive, and to Commercial Street between 8th and 16th Streets. The Vision Plan calls for this area to retain its urban character with the highest levels of development density among the four riverfront sub-areas. The Plan also identifies opportunities for gathering places with various amenities that engage visitors, and for maintaining visual and physical access to the Columbia River. Policies and recommendations specific to the Urban Core are organized into three categories: Natural Features, Land Use and Urban Design, and Transportation and Other Public Improvements.

Natural Features

Policies and recommendations around natural features in the Urban Core focus on creating gathering places and maintaining access to the river.

- Provide opportunities for "people places" which accommodate human scale activities while allowing managed views of the river through building corridors.
- Create an urban edge to the riverfront as an extension of the River Trail around new development.
- Complement working urban core with benches, lighting and railing within the character of the existing riverfront.

Land Use and Urban Design

Land use and urban design recommendations for the Urban Core area focus on retaining and enhancing the area's urban character, while still promoting riverfront access. The Plan notes that "this area is and will continue to be characterized by a more dense level of development." It further states that "this area will allow for a mix of commercial, residential and water-dependent uses that support, but should not compete with downtown development." The Plan identifies the following land use policies:

- If development is to occur, promote the urban character of the area and allow for dense development.
- Allow for a mix of commercial, residential and water dependent uses that supports but does not compete with the downtown core.
- Encourage design of new or rehabilitated buildings that respects Astoria's character.
- Create intimate open spaces and gathering places within new developments.
- Use setbacks, stepbacks and other measures to ensure an open feel and continued visual access to the river.
- Work with property owners, including those with existing leases to maximize open areas over the water.

Transportation and Other Public Improvements

The plan proposes a number of transportation and other public improvements for the Urban Core area:

- Improved bicycle and pedestrian facilities and streetscaping along Marine Drive.
- Improved pedestrian connection across Marine Drive at 6th Street
- Safety and gateway treatments to the 8th Street and Marine Drive intersection
- Streetscaping along Commercial Street between 8th and 16th Streets
- Wayfinding and other pedestrian amenities along 12th Street between Duane Street and the river
- Safety and gateway treatments to the 15th Street and Marine Drive intersection
- Create and manage a new parking district in the riverfront area

C. CURRENT ZONING

Figure 3 provides a map of the current zoning within the vicinity of the Urban Core. The Urban Core itself includes six zoning designations:

- Overwater: Aquatic Development zones (A-2 and A-2A).
- On-land: Tourist Commercial Zone (C-2), General Commercial (C-3), Central Commercial (C-4), and Tourist-oriented Shorelands (S-2A).

The allowed uses for each of these zones are summarized below. The key development standards are summarized in Table 1 at the end of this section.

A-2 – Aquatic Two Development Zone

The Aquatic Two Development (A-2) zone occupies much of the over-water area within the Urban Core. Per the Astoria Development Code, the purpose of the A-2 zone is to enhance the unique character of the Downtown Waterfront and Maritime Museum subareas by providing for their redevelopment as mixed-use areas. Any redevelopment should be compatible with, and give priority to, water-dependent uses.

Some of the permitted uses within the A-2 zone include water-dependent commercial and industrial uses, boat building and repair, water-dependent facilities, public piers, and water-related commercial uses such as boat sales and fish or shellfish sales. Conditional uses include various uses that provide significant visual access to the waterfront, include eating and drinking establishments, hotels, and tourist-oriented retail sales. Office, personal service, and residential uses are permitted conditionally when they are part of a mixed-use development that also includes tourist-oriented uses.

A-2A – Aquatic Two-A Development Zone

The Aquatic Two-A Development (A-2A) zone occupies a portion the over-water area on the east end of the Urban Core. The purpose of the A-2A zone is to provide for its redevelopment as a mixed-use area while permitting exclusive office use on piling supported structures.

Permitted and Conditional uses in the A-2A zone are very similar to the A-2 zone. However, the A-2A zone also conditionally allows office uses without the same restrictions that apply to the A-2 zone. Residential uses are permitted conditionally when they are part of a mixed-use development that also includes tourist-oriented uses.

C-2 – Tourist Commercial Zone

The Tourist Commercial (C-2) zone occupies roughly three blocks of the Urban Core, between 2nd and 5th Streets and between Marine Drive and the railroad. The purpose of the C-2 zone is primarily to provide suitable locations for tourist commercial facilities and certain tourist related establishments. The uses allowed in the C-2 zone are more limited than those permitted in the other commercial (C-3 or C-4) zones.

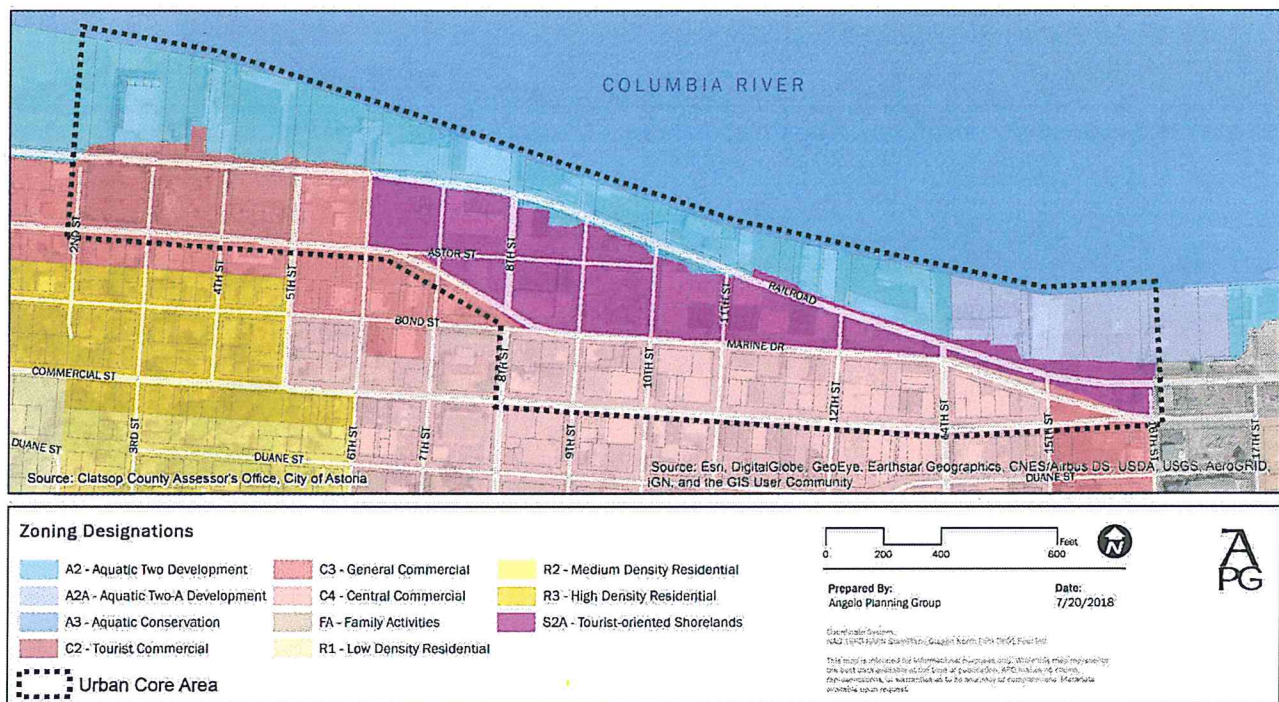
Some of the permitted uses include eating and drinking establishments, hotels, and tourist-oriented retail. Conditional uses include residential dwellings as accessory uses to another use, indoor family entertainment. Non-tourist retail and office uses are permitted conditionally when they are a part of a mixed-use development.

C-3 – General Commercial Zone

The General Commercial (C-3) zone occupies just one block of the Urban Core, to the east of the C-2 zone between 5th and 6th Streets and between Marine Drive and the railroad. The C-3 zone is primarily intended to accommodate a wide range of commercial businesses, particularly those requiring a high degree of accessibility to vehicular traffic.

A variety of commercial uses are permitted in the C-3 zone, including eating and drinking establishments, hotels, personal and business services, repair services, retail sales, and indoor family recreation. In addition, the C-3 zone permits multi-family dwellings, and single- or two-family dwellings that are above, below, or behind commercial facilities. Conditional uses include gas stations, hospitals, light manufacturing, and wholesale trade.

Figure 2. Zoning Map



C-4 – Central Commercial Zone

The Central Commercial (C-4) zone covers roughly six blocks of the Urban Core, between 8th and 15th Streets and between Commercial Street and Marine Drive. This zone is intended to be the commercial center of the Astoria urban area. It is designed to serve as the focal point for retail trade, services, professional, financial, and governmental activities. The uses permitted are intended to be compatible with the locale's pedestrian orientation and, as a result, off-street parking is not required.

The list of permitted and conditional uses in the C-4 zone is fairly similar to the C-3 zone. A few key differences are that hotels and indoor recreation are conditional uses in the C-4 zone. Also, multi-family dwellings are permitted conditionally, but must be located above commercial uses on the first floor. In addition, the C-4 zone does not allow the more intense construction offices and auto related uses such as automotive sales and service and gas stations.

S-2A – Tourist-oriented Shorelands Zone

The Tourist-oriented Shorelands (S-2A) zone accounts for a good portion of the on-land area of the Urban Core and sits between the C-3/C-4 zones to the south and the A-2 zone to the north. The purpose of the S-2A zone is to provide for mixed-use tourist-oriented development that retains and takes advantage of the working waterfront character of the area. The uses permitted are intended to be compatible with pedestrian orientation. The emphasis is on the rehabilitation and reuse of existing structures.

Some key permitted uses in the S-2A zone include tourist-oriented retail, eating and drinking establishments, specialized food stores (such as seafood markets), hotels, boat repair and sales, and indoor family recreation. Conditional uses include non-tourist oriented retail, multi-family dwellings, offices, and repair services.

Table 1: Development Standards in Zones within the Urban Core Area

Zone	Maximum Height	Setbacks	Maximum Lot Coverage	Notes
A-2	28' Except 45' above grade of adjacent shoreland between extended 15th-21st St. right-of-way, and between 6th Street and the Astoria-Megler Bridge	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	[See Note 1] Buildings should relate to or connect with adjacent street ends or public access points
A-2A	28'	None listed	None listed	[See Note 1]

Zone	Maximum Height	Setbacks	Maximum Lot Coverage	Notes
C-2	45'	None listed Except 5-foot "buffer" when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone	90% (Minimum 10% landscaped open area)	Commercial and recreational facilities subject to Design Review Standards (Section 2.375.10) [See Note 3]
C-3	45'	None listed Except 5-foot "buffer" when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone	90% (Minimum 10% landscaped open area)	[See Note 2] [See Note 3]
C-4	45'	None listed Except 5-foot "buffer" when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone	None listed	No minimum off-street parking required
S-2A	28' Except 45' above grade of adjacent shoreland between extended 15th-21st St. right-of-way	None listed	None listed	No off-street parking required between 8 th and 14 th Streets Certain uses subject additional design/development standards in Section 2.715 [See Note 1] [See Note 3]

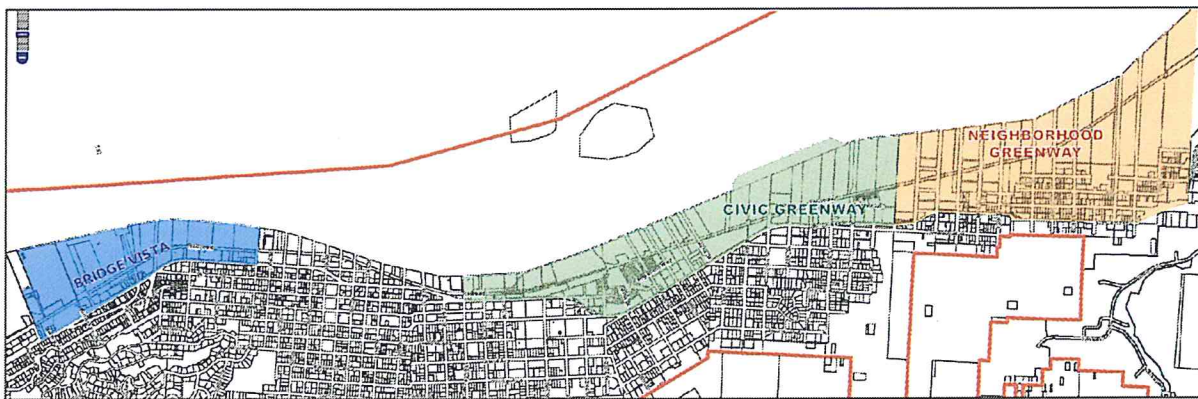
Notes

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Columbia River Estuary Shoreland Overlay (CRESO) zoning applies to S-1, S-2, S-2A, S-3, and S-4 zones, and areas with 50' of the shoreline, 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.

D. APPROACH USED IN OTHER SUB-AREAS

The City of Astoria has already adopted implementation measures for the other three sub-areas of the Riverfront Vision Plan. These measures included updated comprehensive plan language, map amendments, and the creation of three new overlay zones, depicted in Figure 4: the Civic Greenway Overlay Zone (CGO), the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone (BVO), and the Neighborhood Greenway Overlay Zone (NGO). These overlays are regulated by Article 14 of the Development Code; specifically, Sections 14.035-14.075 (CGO), Sections 14.085-14.125 (BVO), and Sections 14.130-138 (NGO).

Figure 3: Existing Overlay Zones



It is likely that a similar approach will be taken with the Urban Core, and that the City will adopt a new overlay zone that includes many similarities to the other overlays. Some of the key aspects of those overlay zones are summarized below.

Use Standards

Each of the overlay zoning districts modifies the allowed uses applicable to the base zones—but the way in which they are modified varies for each overlay. Generally speaking, the overlays apply additional use limitations for overwater development. The overlays also modify, to some extent, the list of permitted or conditional uses within the base zones. In some areas, additional uses are permitted on-land that would not be permitted (or would be conditional uses) in the base zones. In addition, the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone includes a subdistrict—the Pedestrian-Oriented District—to which additional use and development standards apply.

Development Standards

Each of the overlay zones apply additional development standards beyond what the base zones require. Generally, these standards are intended to preserve views and access to the river and to promote pedestrian-oriented development where applicable. Each of the overlays apply separate standards to overwater and on-land development, respecting the different urban form, uses, and level of regulation necessary to achieve the desired outcomes in these areas. The key overwater standards include:

Additional standards are found in the following categories:

- **Building Dimensions**
 - Maximum building height is reduced in both overwater and on-land areas, though the amount varies by zone and by specific area. The most restrictive standards require overwater buildings to be no higher than the top of the adjacent riverbank in a number of specific areas, with the intent of maintaining unobstructed views of the river within a large portion of the Riverfront Vision planning area.
 - Maximum floor area is limited in some places, in order to limit the overall size of buildings.
 - Maximum width of overwater structures is limited, based on the percentage of the parcel width.
- **View Corridors** – Minimum separation between overwater buildings applies in the BVO zone.
- **Setbacks & Stepbacks**
 - Minimum setbacks are required for on-land development along north-south rights-of-way in the BVO and CGO zones, to provide a minimum view corridor width.
 - Setbacks and Stepbacks are also required in the BVO zone adjacent to the River Trail.
- **River Access** – River access is required in the form of piers or walkways for overwater development within the BVO and CGO zones.

Design Standards

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

Each of the three overlay zones incorporates design standards and/or guidelines that are not applicable to development in the base zoning districts. Each overlay takes a different approach to these design requirements, as outlined below. Generally speaking, development within these areas is subject to requirements related to building forms, windows, doors, wall treatments, roof forms or elements, signs, doors. Development in certain areas may also be subject to requirements for lighting, landscaping, and awnings.

Civic Greenway Overlay Zone

Residential development applications within the CGO have two options for design review: they may pursue administrative review, subject to the Design Review *Standards* outlined in Section 14.065 of the CGO chapter; or they may go through the public design review process, subject to the Design Review *Guidelines* outlined in Section 14.025. Those guidelines were originally adopted for the Gateway Overlay Zone in 1998. The boundaries for the more recently-adopted CGO and the Gateway Overlay are very similar.

Non-residential and mixed-use development in the CGO must be reviewed through the public design review process, using the Design Review Guidelines.

Bridge Vista Overlay Zone

All development applications within the BVO must be reviewed through the public design review process and are subject to a combination of both design standards and design guidelines specific to the BVO (Section 14.115). Standards and guidelines in this section fall into the broad categories of building style and form, roof form and materials, doors, windows, siding and wall treatment, awnings, lighting, signs, and landscaping.

Neighborhood Greenway Overlay Zone

As in the CGO, residential development applications in the NGO have two options for design review: administrative review, using Design Review Standards specific to the NGO (found in Section 14.134), or public design review, using NGO-specific Design Review Guidelines (found in Section 14.135). Non-residential and mixed-use development applications must be reviewed through the public design review process and must follow the design guidelines.

OTHER ISSUES TO CONSIDER

Nine years have passed since the Riverfront Vision Plan was adopted in 2009, and some conditions in Astoria have changed and issues have arisen that could shape implementation measures within the Urban Core. The City can also evaluate the preliminary success of the overlay zones already adopted for the three other sub-areas and may wish to make adjustments in the Urban Core based on lessons learned. City staff has identified a few key issues that should be considered in developing code amendments for the Urban Core:

1. Intensity of Development

Staff conveyed that some community members believe the Riverfront Vision Plan calls for too much development in the Urban Core, particularly along the riverfront. There is a particular concern about the riverfront area competing with Astoria's Downtown. It should be noted that the Riverfront Vision calls for development in the Urban Core area to support, but not compete with, Downtown development. Staff also pointed out that the uses and intensity of development that the Plan calls for in the Urban Core are more restrictive than what the code currently allows. However, these community concerns should be considered when crafting land use regulations and development standards for the Urban Core.

2. Design Review

Staff also identified the need for additional clarity with any design guidelines or standards that are adopted in the Urban Core. In administering the design guidelines for a development in the Bridge Vista Overlay area, users found that the guidelines allowed too much discretion. Staff suggested that guidelines and/or standards for the Urban Core should be crafted with more

specific language that provides less room for interpretation. Staff also suggested that guidelines should be sticter in its requirements around building modulation and massing to avoid a monotonous design and to ensure desired design outcomes for this area.

E. TYPES OF CODE PROVISIONS EXPECTED TO BE APPLICABLE IN THE URBAN CORE

This section provides a summary of standards from earlier code update efforts that are likely to be considered for application in the Urban Core. Since the Neighborhood Greenway Overlay zone is less applicable to conditions in the Urban Core, the summary will focus primarily on the Bridge Vista Overlay and Civic Greenway Overlay zones.

1. Land Uses

The Riverfront Vision Plan recommends reviewing the Aquatic and other zoning designations for consistency with Riverfront Vision principles.

Overwater Land Uses

The two aquatic base zones (A-2 and A-2A) found in the Urban Core area specify permitted and conditional uses or use categories within each zone. The Civic Greenway Overlay zone modifies these lists by specifying which uses are permitted outright or conditionally within the overlay zone. Notably, the list of conditional uses in the CGO does not include eating and drinking establishments, retail uses, or hotels, each of which is allowed conditionally in the A-2 and A-2A zones if they provide significant visual access to the waterfront.

Alternatively, the Bridge Vista Overlay zone modifies the list of permitted over-water uses by *prohibiting* certain uses otherwise allowable in the base zones. Similar to the CGO, the BVO prohibits eating and drinking establishments, retail uses, and hotels. The Neighborhood Greenway Overlay zone makes few modifications to permitted overwater uses in the applicable base zone.

The City will need to consider whether the Urban Core should follow the BVO and CGO in restricting overwater development of restaurants, retail, and hotels (along with other uses). It will also need to determine which mechanism is used to limit uses in a potential Urban Core overlay—either listing permitted/conditional uses or specifying prohibited uses.

On-land Uses

The BVO establishes a Pedestrian-Oriented sub-district in which the list of on-land permitted uses is modified to encourage uses that would enhance—and prohibit uses that would detract from—the pedestrian realm. Modifications to the base zones include allowing light manufacturing uses with a retail component (such as breweries with a taproom), and residential dwellings above commercial uses on the ground floor. Prohibited uses in the Pedestrian-Oriented District include auto-related businesses and drive-through facilities.

The City should consider whether a similar pedestrian-oriented subdistrict should be established in the Urban Core. This subdistrict could not only have special use regulations, but could also have special development standards (as is the case in the BVO) to enhance the pedestrian environment. Given the intention of continuing to allow a relatively intensive mix of urban uses in this area, it may be appropriate to be less restrictive about the range of commercial uses in this area. However, this will need to be balanced with the policy of minimizing competition with the Downtown.

Recommended Zone Change

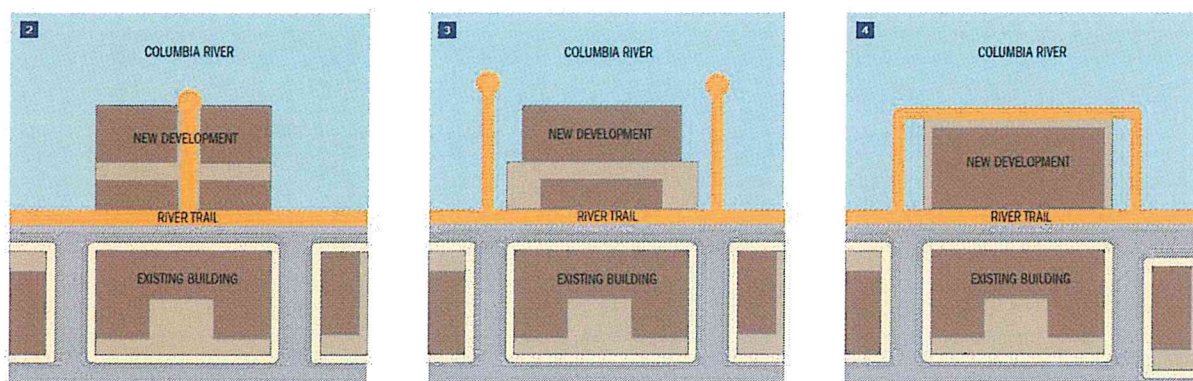
The Riverfront Vision Plan recommends a change in zoning for three blocks at the west end of the Urban Core from Tourist Commercial (C-2) to another commercial zone (see Figure 3). As noted above, the uses allowed in the C-2 zone are more limited than those permitted in the other commercial (C-3 or C-4) zones. Rezoning to C-3 or C-4 in the Urban Core may help implement the Vision Plan's policy of allowing a mix of commercial, residential and water dependent uses. However, the Vision Plan also states that the Urban Core should not compete with Downtown. It may be that the C-3 and C-4 zones allow development intensities or uses that could compete with Downtown, thereby not meeting the community's vision for the Urban Core. Further discussion is needed to determine appropriate zoning for these three blocks.

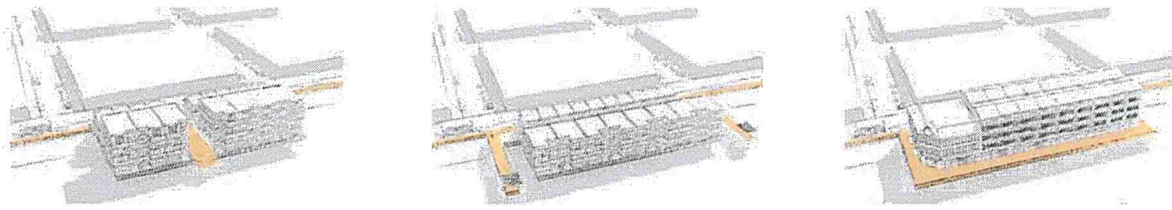
2. Access to Water and Open Space

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to incorporate site design and development provisions within the Urban Core that require or provide incentives for setbacks, stepbacks, or provision of public open space (either over water or on land) 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 3.

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies four 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).

Figure 4: Options for Public Access to the River





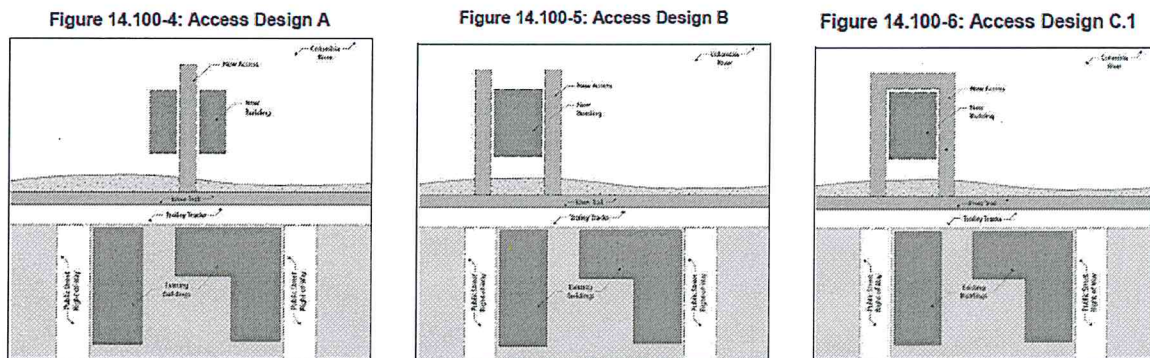
The options are described as follows in the Vision Plan, relying on mechanisms such as dedications, easements, and improvements in public right-of-way:

- Access through the middle of the site – A 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 pier improvement is constructed within the public right-of-way on both sides of the development. 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 River Trail pier improvement is constructed along the waterfront side of the development. The extension would connect to the existing River Trail with pedestrian connections on both sides of the development.

These options for waterfront access were implemented directly in the Bridge Vista and Civic Greenway overlay zones, with code language and graphics adapted from the Vision Plan. The code graphics for the three access options from the BVO zone (Section 14.100) are provided in Figure 6. The overlays also include standards for pier and walkway width and length.

Similar riverfront access standards are likely to be considered for the Urban Core overlay as well, given similar goals of ensuring direct access to the river in this area.

Figure 5: Riverfront Access Options from BVO Zone



3. Preservation of Views

The Riverfront Vision Plan calls for the preservation of views to the Columbia River through the use of setbacks, stepbacks, maximum building height, and other measures in the Urban Core. The Plan

suggests that building height trade-offs—reducing height in some areas while allowing taller buildings in other areas—may be desirable as long as a maximum height is enforced.

Building Height

Building height standards within each of the three existing overlay zones area summarized in Table 2 below. The approach to maximum height is different within each zone, and for overwater versus on-land development.

Table 2: Building Height Standards in Overlay Zones

	Overwater	On-land
CGO	Top of riverbank 35 th to 41 st Street exception: Buildings >500' from shoreline allowed up to 28'; must have min. 75' wide view corridor separation between buildings	28' Up to 35' permitted if stories above 28' stepped back 10'
BVO	Limitation areas: top of riverbank Others: 35'	35' Up to 45' permitted if stories above 24' stepped back 10'
NGO	Top of riverbank	

As outlined in Table 1, the maximum height in the base zones within the Urban Core area generally ranges from 28 feet for the aquatic zones to 45 feet for the on-land zones. The approach for overwater development within the Bridge Vista area is to strictly limit height within certain “limitation areas” while allowing taller buildings in other areas. The City may decide to take a similar approach within the Urban Core. The City may also choose to keep the 45-foot height limit in on-land areas, but to require setbacks for stories above a certain height—similar to the setback provisions in the CGO and BVO zones (discussed below).

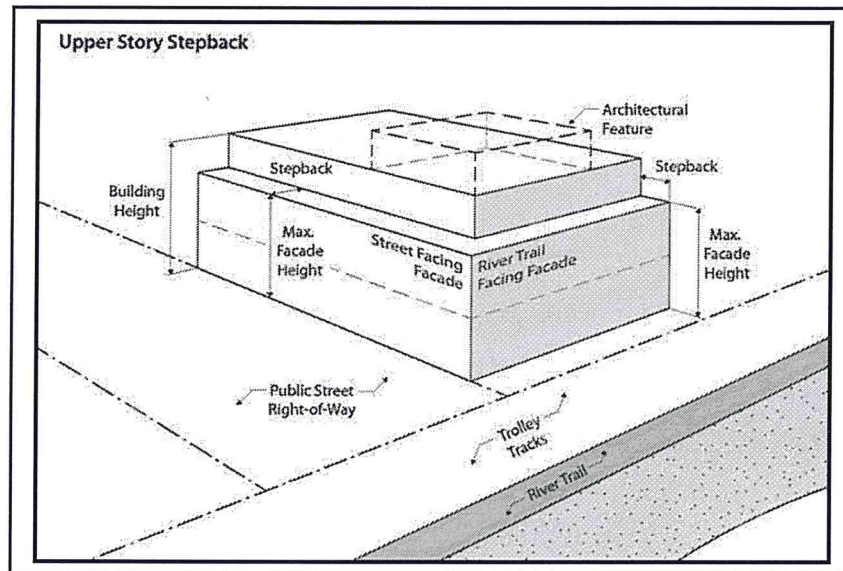
Setbacks, Stepbacks and View Corridors

The Riverfront Vision Plan calls for setbacks, stepbacks, and view corridors in the Urban Core to protect views toward the river and along the River Trail, as well as to create a sense of openness and to preserve sunlight. Figure 7 is a graphic from the Vision Plan that illustrates potential setbacks along the River Trail.

Figure 6: Riverfront Trail Development Setbacks

In the CGO and BVO zones, **setbacks** are required for on-land development along north-south rights-of-way to preserve a minimum view corridor width of 70 feet. Overwater development in the BVO zone must provide a minimum 40 foot wide view corridor separation between buildings. Adjacent to the River Trail, the minimum setback is 10 feet on the south side and 20 feet on the north side. Conversely, a maximum setback of 5 feet is established in the BVO zone for development fronting Marine Drive and all parallel rights-of-way. This may be extended to 20 feet for up to 50% of the building facade if the setback is used for a walkway, plaza, courtyard, or other pedestrian-oriented amenity or public gathering space. Similar setback standards may be considered for the Urban Core. Establishing similar maximum setbacks along certain streets would help promote the urban character and pedestrian orientation called for by the Vision Plan, while also encouraging the creation of plazas and gathering spaces.

Stepbacks are required in the CGO and BVO zones adjacent to the River Trail when buildings exceed a certain height. In the BVO zone, portions of the building above 24 feet must be stepped back by at least 10 feet; in the CGO zone, the specified height is 28 feet. Accordingly, building stories above the second floor will be stepped back. This is illustrated in Figure 8. A similar requirement is likely for Urban Core development along the River Trail. It should be noted that Figure 7, above (from the Vision Plan), illustrates building stepbacks above the ground floor, rather than above the second floor. Some discussion is needed to determine whether stepbacks in the Urban Core should follow the precedents established by the other overlay zones, or if they should more closely follow the Vision Plan's guidance.

Figure 7: Building Stepbacks in the BVO Zone

Other standards identified for preserving views in the BVO and CGO zones include **maximum width** for overwater structures, based on the percentage of the parcel width, and **maximum floor area** to limit the overall size of buildings. For overwater development in the BVO zone, building widths are limited to 60% of the parcel width (or 150 feet, whichever is greater), and within Limitation Areas, building floor area is limited to 4,000 square feet.

4. Design Standards or Review

The Riverfront Vision Plan indicates that a design review process and/or new design review standards should be used to ensure that new development in the Urban Core respects Astoria's historic character. The Plan states that standards should be flexible to allow for diversity in building design. Although as noted above, there should be a balance between flexibility and clarity, so that standards and/or guidelines can be easily and consistently administered. It should be noted that most of the Urban Core is within a National Register Historic District which also requires historic design review.

As mentioned above, the Civic Greenway Overlay zone provides two possible review tracks for development applications: an administrative track using design standards specific to the CGO, and a discretionary track using design guidelines originally developed for the Gateway Overlay district. Residential development may choose either the administrative or discretionary track, while non-residential and mixed-use development must go through the discretionary public design review process. The Bridge Vista Overlay zone provides only one review process: public design review using a combination of design standards and guidelines specific to the BVO.

For the Urban Core, the City may wish to consider establishing a customized set of design standards and/or guidelines that are specific to urban design patterns seen in this part of the city. Because the City is required to provide clear and objective standards for development of "needed housing,"

design standards would need to be established for residential development. These standards could be adapted from those created for the CGO and/or BVO zones. As in the other overlays, design standards and guidelines in the Urban Core are likely to address some or all of the following: building style and form, roof form and materials, doors, windows, siding and wall treatment, awnings, lighting, signs, and landscaping.

NEXT STEPS AND SCHEDULE

Over the next 10 to 12 months, the consultant team will work with City staff to develop amendments to the City's zoning code, zoning maps, and comprehensive plan policies associated with the Urban Core Area. The process will involve one public Town Hall meeting; four Planning Commission work sessions and one public hearing; and one City Council work session and one public hearing; as well as several meetings with the staff Project Management Team.

Project Timeline (tentative)

	2018						2019				
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Prepare Code Evaluation Summary											
APC Work Session #1		8/7									
Town Hall Meeting			9/12								
Prepare Draft #1 of Amendments											
APC Work Session #2				10/23							
APC Work Session #3					11/27						
Prepare Draft #2 of Amendments											
APC Work Session #4							1/8				
City Council Work Session								2/4			
Prepare Draft #3 of Amendments											
APC Public Hearing									3/26		
Prepare Draft #4 of Amendments											
City Council Public Hearing 1st reading										4/22	
Prepare Final Amendments											
City Council Public Hearing 2nd reading and adoption											5/6

Detailed Project Summary

Task 1. Project Startup (Jul-Aug 2018)

- Project Management Team (PMT) Meeting #1 – Review Code Evaluation Memo
- Planning Commission Work Session #1 – Receive confirmation of the overall approach to code provisions to implement the Riverfront Vision Plan, as well as specific comments on issues to be addressed in the Urban Core area.

Task 2. Public Review & Outreach (Aug-Sep 2018)

- Town Hall Meeting – Discuss the approach to the project, the types of code amendments envisioned, and comments, concerns or code issues identified by community residents, business and property owners, and workers.

Task 3. Draft Code Amendments #1 (Sep-Nov 2018)

- Prepare Draft Urban Core Amendments #1 to City development and zoning code, zoning maps, comprehensive plan policies, and other relevant urban land use regulations for the Urban Core Area.
- PMT Meeting #2 – Discuss draft Urban Core amendments
- Planning Commission work sessions #2 and #3 – to review and discuss the draft code amendments

Task 4. Planning Commission Work Session, Public Meeting and City Council Work Session (Dec 2018-Feb 2019)

- PMT Meeting #3 – Review updated draft code amendments
- Prepare Draft Urban Core Amendments #2 to reflect direction from PMT
- Planning Commission work session #4 – Review and discuss the revised draft code amendments
- City Council work session – Brief City Council on the draft code amendments, key issues and comments from Planning Commission, and community feedback from the Town Hall meeting

Task 5. Planning Commission and City Council Public Hearings (Feb-May 2019)

- PMT Meeting #4
- Draft Urban Core Amendments #3 to reflect direction from the PMT, Planning Commission and City Council
- Planning Commission public hearing – Review and discuss the revised draft code amendments proposed for adoption
- Draft Urban Core Amendments #4
- City Council public hearing – Review and discuss the revised draft code amendments proposed for adoption

Task 6. Final Products (May 2019)

- Final Urban Core Amendments



ASTORIA RIVERFRONT VISION PLAN

CODE AMENDMENTS FOR THE URBAN CORE

Project Overview

The City of Astoria is considering potential changes to the City's Development Code aimed at implementing recommendations in the *Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan*. This planning effort will focus on recommendations for the "Urban Core" area located approximately between 2nd Street and 16th Street, from the pierhead line to Marine Drive, and to Commercial Street between 8th and 16th Streets.

The *Riverfront Vision Plan*, adopted in 2009, includes a variety of recommendations related to land use and development, transportation improvements, and parks and open space facilities along the Columbia riverfront. The Plan identifies four different sub-areas along the riverfront (depicted below) and identifies both customized policies for each area and general recommendations for the entire riverfront.



Riverfront Vision Plan Sub-areas

The City adopted implementing Comprehensive Plan policies and Zoning Ordinance provisions for the Civic Greenway, Bridge Vista, and Neighborhood Greenway Plan Areas between 2014 to 2015. The City is now focusing on the remaining plan area—the Urban Core. The intent of the project is to implement policies and recommendations identified in the *Vision Plan* with updated development code text, comprehensive plan language, and map amendments.

Riverfront Vision Plan Principles

Code amendments within the Urban Core will be guided by five core principles identified in the Riverfront Vision Plan:

- (1) *Promote physical and visual access to the river;*
- (2) *Encourage a mix of uses that supports Astoria's "working waterfront" and the City's economy;*
- (3) *Support new development that respects Astoria's historic character;*
- (4) *Protect the health of the river and adjacent natural areas; and*
- (5) *Enhance the River Trail.*



Urban Core Area

Urban Core Policies and Recommendations

In addition to the guiding principles, the *Vision Plan* also identifies specific policies and recommendations for the Urban Core around land use and urban design, natural features, and transportation. Policies relevant to the development code update project focus on retaining and enhancing the area's urban character, promoting riverfront access, designing buildings that respect Astoria's character, creating intimate gathering places, and ensure continued visual access to the river. Development code updates may address requirements associated with types of land uses allowed in different areas, building heights, building siting and design, landscaping, and requirements for access to the river, as well as retaining views of the river and surrounding areas.

Project Process and Timeline

Between now and spring/summer 2019, City of Astoria staff will work with the community and a team of consultants to develop amendments to the City's development code, zoning maps, and comprehensive plan policies associated with the Urban Core Area. The community will have the opportunity to learn more about the project and weigh in at a Town Hall meeting planned for September 13, 2018, and at several Planning Commission and City Council meetings. A tentative schedule is provided below.

	2018						2019				
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
Background Research											
Town Hall Meeting			◆								
Prepare, Review & Revise Draft Amendments											
Planning Commission Hearing									◆		
City Council Public Hearing										◆	
Adopt Final Amendments											◆

For more information about the project, please contact Brett Estes, City of Astoria Community Development Director, at (503) 338-5183 or bestes@astoria.or.us, or Project Manager Rosemary Johnson at rosemaryjcurt@gmail.com.