

River Plan / South Reach Summary

Adopted Dec 16, 2020, Effective March 1, 2021

I. BACKGROUND

The River Plan / South Reach updates and establishes the vision, regulations, actions and future investments for the South Reach of the Willamette River. The plan roughly covers the area from the Ross Island Bridge to the Sellwood Bridge and includes the unincorporated area of Dunthorpe, for which the City has planning authority, on the westside (see attached map). The area includes four riverfront neighborhoods: South Portland (south of South Waterfront), Dunthorpe, Brooklyn and Sellwood. The plan builds on previous planning efforts focused on the North and Central reaches.

The South Reach, with its proximity to downtown and the Central City, is a unique environmental asset within the city. The 2035 Comprehensive Plan states that the “The South Reach will provide unique fish and wildlife habitat, parks, and trails in the center of the city, easily reached from established neighborhoods.”

II. PLANNING PROCESS

Planning began in 2018 and included a wide range of opportunities for public involvement including public walks, focused in-person meetings, open houses, boat tours and on-line meetings. A unique component of the project was the development of an Intergovernmental Review Draft to allow tribal governments and other interested governmental entities input into the plan prior to the release of the first public Discussion Draft. Staff kept in touch via the River Plan News email newsletter and other mechanisms throughout the process.

III. COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

The River Plan / South Reach is comprised of four volumes, including:

- Volume 1, Policies, Objectives and Recommendations
- Volume 2, Scenic Resources Protection Plan
- Volume 3, Natural Resources Protection Plan
- Volume 4, Background Materials

The scenic resources and natural resources protection plans inventory and then evaluate different levels of protection for the identified resources and make recommendations for the appropriate protection level. These recommendations result in relevant overlay zone(s) amendments.

The project also included an update to the Willamette River Greenway Inventory to incorporate River Plan/ South Reach and other updates that have occurred since the most recent update in 2014.



IV. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Key recommendations include:

- Establishes a new 20-year vision (also known as an urban design concept)
- Replaces existing Greenway overlay zones with River overlay zones, which include:
 - A new River Recreational overlay zone (r*)
 - A minimum 50-foot river setback for development that is not river-dependent or river-related
 - Application of the River Environmental overlay zone to (at least) all land within 100 feet of the top of the riverbank
 - Narrows tree and other vegetation removal exemption allowances and increases timetable for monitoring of required planting and mitigation areas.
 - Modifications to streamline the setback landscaping standards
 - New residential dock, bird-safe glazing and exterior lighting requirements
 - Options for use of off-site mitigation banks to offset development impacts
- Updates to floodplain development regulations to be consistent with the National Flood Insurance Program Biological Opinion, which include:
 - River Environmental overlay zone applied to all floodplains (both developed and undeveloped)
 - A new “riparian buffer area” (RBA), defined as the area 170 feet landward of ordinary high water, where improvements to one of three defined floodplain functions must be achieved to increase salmon and steelhead habitat over time.
 - Increased tree replacement ratios for trees between six and 12 inches in diameter (dbh).
- Establishes an archaeological resources protection requirement, where a survey is required prior to development in areas identified as most likely to contain archaeological resources.
- Protects a variety of scenic viewpoints, view streets and scenic corridors
- Repeals Macadam Corridor Guidelines and replaces them with a Macadam District Character Statement and application of the Citywide Design Guidelines. River-related design standards will be incorporated into the Design Overlay Zone Amendment (DOZA) project, which is expected to be adopted in 2021.

For more information: <https://www.portland.gov/bps/river-plan/south-reach>

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