# CENTRAL CITY SCENIC RESOURCES PROTECTION PLAN VOLUME 2: SCENIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

DISCUSSION DRAFT | FEBRUARY 2016







# Acknowledgments

### **City Council**

Charlie Hales, Mayor and Commissioner in Charge Nick Fish, Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Commissioner Steve Novick, Commissioner Dan Saltzman, Commissioner

### **Planning & Sustainability Commission**

Kathryn Schultz, Chair
Andre Baugh, Vice Chair
Chris Smith, Vice Chair
Jeff Bachrach
Mike Houck
Katie Larsell
Gary Oxman
Michelle Rudd
Eli Spevak
Teresa St Martin
Margaret Tallmadge

### **Bureau of Planning and Sustainability**

Susan Anderson, Director
Joe Zehnder, Chief Planner
Sallie Edmunds, Central City River and Environmental
Planning Manager

### **Scenic Resources Project Team**

Mindy Brooks, City Planner Emily Meharg, Community Service Aide Carmen Piekarski, GIS Analyst

### **Contributors**

Allan Schmidt, Portland Parks and Recreation Colleen Mitchell, Bureau of Environmental Services Grant Morehead, Bureau of Transportation

### **Project Consultants**

### Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.

Lauren Schmitt, Principal-in-Charge Dean Apostol, Project Manager Ryan Mottau, Senior Planner Rob Ribe, Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture, University of Oregon

### **Expert Reviewers**

Brad Cownover Jurgen Hess Lloyd Lindley Paul Morris Kate Schwarzler Ethan Seltzer



### **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	i
Chapter 1. Introduction	
1.a Report Purpose, Organization and Uses	1
1.b Definitions	2
1.c Inventory Area	3
1.d Regulatory Context	6
1.e Case Studies	9
Chapter 2. Project Approach	13
Chapter 3. Scenic Views and Viewpoints	
3.a Approach and Methodology	17
3.b Scenic Views and Viewpoints Results	30
3.b.1 Analysis of Results	30
3.b.2 Results for Northwest	36
3.b.3 Results for North	86
3.b.4 Results for Northeast	114
3.b.5 Results for Southwest	138
3.b.6 Results for Southeast	290
Chapter 4. View Streets and River Access Ways	
4.a View Streets Approach and Methodology	357
4.b River Access Ways Approach and Methodology	360
4.c View Streets and River Access Ways Results	363
Chapter 5. Scenic Corridors	
5.a Approach and Methodology	383
5.b Scenic Corridors Results	386
Chapter 6. Visual Focal Points	
6.a Approach and Methodology	395
6.b Visual Focal Points Results	396
Chapter 7. Scenic Sites	
7.a Approach and Methodology	425
7.b Scenic Sites Results	427
Supporting Resources	435
Appendices	
Appendix A: Case Studies	
Appendix B: Views and Viewpoints Statistical Analysis	
Appendix C: Scenic Resources Code Index	
Appendix D: Line of Sight Analysis	
Appendix E: Relocated, Re-designated and Retired Viewpoints	

# Appendix F: Relocated, Re-designated and Retired View Streets and Gateways

## Maps, Tables and Figures

Maps		
	Map 1: Central City Scenic Resources Inventory Area	5
	Map 2: Scenic Views and Viewpoints	31
	Map 3: Scenic Views – Line of Sight Intersection Density	34
	Map 4: Scenic Views – Line of Sight Line Density	35
	Map 5: Scenic Views and Viewpoints – Northwest Quadrant	37
	Map 6: Scenic Views and Viewpoints – North Quadrant	87
	Map 7: Scenic Views and Viewpoints – Northeast Quadrant	115
	Map 8: Scenic Views and Viewpoints – Southwest Quadrant	139
	Map 9: Scenic Views and Viewpoints – Southeast Quadrant	291
	Map 10: View Streets	364
	Map 11: Scenic Corridors	387
	Map 12: Visual Focal Points	398
	Map 13: Scenic Sites	428
Tables		
	Table 1: Scenic Resources Nomenclature in City Plans	8
Figures		
J	Figure 1: Scenic View Study Report Layout, Cincinnati, OH	11

# **Executive Summary**

Portland's Central City has some of the most iconic views in the region. These views have been formally designated and catalogued by the City of Portland over the past 30 years through the development of several plans (e.g., *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (1991), *Willamette Greenway Plan* (1987)). This Scenic Resources Inventory is the first update to the view inventories in these plans. The inventory is being done as part of the broader Central City 2035 project, which will update the goals, policies and zoning code for the Central City.

### **Report Purpose and Uses**

The purpose of the *Central City Scenic Resources Inventory* (CCSRI) is to provide useful, current and accessible information on the location and quality of existing public scenic resources in and around Portland's Central City. The CCSRI includes descriptions, evaluations, photographs and maps of public views and viewpoints, scenic corridors, view streets, visual focal points and scenic sites in the Central City.

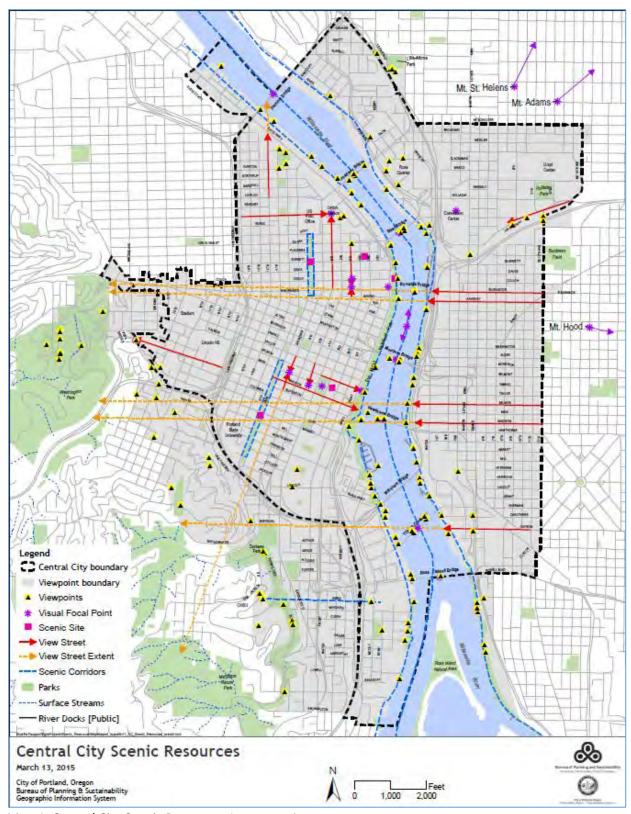
The CCSRI is intended to inform and support a broad array of City and community activities related to the Central City. Such activities include long-range planning, implementing and updating city programs to protect scenic resources, and identifying priorities for the maintenance and enhancement of scenic resources.

Specifically, the CCSRI will form the basis for an updated Economic, Social, Environmental and Energy Analysis (ESEE), which is required by Oregon State Land Use Goal 5: Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources. The ESEE will recommend which of the inventoried scenic resources should be protected and managed.

# **Inventory Area**

The CCSRI is an update of scenic resource information for the Central City only. The following map includes two boundaries:

- 1) Central City 2035
- 2) Viewpoints



Map 1. Central City Scenic Resources Inventory Area

The CCSRI includes public scenic views and viewpoints, view streets, scenic corridors, visual focal points and scenic sites within the Central City 2035 boundary. There are also viewpoints located outside of the Central City 2035 boundary that include scenic views of or across the Central City. Those scenic views that could be affected by development or vegetation management within the Central City are also included in the inventory (shown in the Viewpoint Boundary on the above map). Viewpoints located farther away or high enough that development or vegetation management within the Central City would not affect the view are not included in this inventory update and remain protected under the previous plans.

### **Inventory Process**

To learn about current best practices for documenting and evaluating scenic resources, staff reviewed case studies of scenic resource conservation methods from a variety of jurisdictions around the nation, Canada, Europe and New Zealand. The case studies provided a broad array of methods and approaches that were relevant and potentially applicable to Portland's inventory and helped staff develop a consistent and objective approach and methodology.

To produce the CCSRI, staff began by mapping scenic resources that were inventoried in previous plans, including the *Terwilliger Parkway Corridor Plan* (1983), *Willamette Greenway Plan* (1987), *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* (1989), *Scenic Resource Inventory Map* (1989), *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (1991), *Central City Plan District* (1992), *South Waterfront Public Views and Visual Permeability Assessment* (2006) and *South Waterfront Plan* (2002). Next, potential new scenic resources were added to the inventory via one of four mechanisms:

- 1) Central City staff identified potential new scenic resources based on input received as CC2035 advisory committees and public open house events.
- 2) An inter-bureau technical committee consisting of staff from Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Portland Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Environmental Services and Bureau of Transportation was formed and identified potential new scenic resources.
- 3) The public nominated potential new views and viewpoints via an open call for nominations nominations were accepted through an online survey, email, phone call or written letter.
- 4) Staff documented potential new scenic resources during field visits while inventorying existing and potential scenic resources.

Staff conducted field visits to each existing and potential new scenic resource. Staff recorded a standard set of feature information and took a standard set of photographs. All existing and potential public scenic resources were evaluated using consistent approaches and criteria. A slightly different methodology was used to evaluate each type of scenic resource.

# **Methodology and Results**

Below is a summary of the methodology used to identify and designate each type of scenic resource and the number of scenic resources that are included in the CCSRI. The methodology represents accepted standards/best practices in the field.

### **Views and Viewpoints**

A view is an aesthetically pleasing landscape or scene comprised of one or more visual features. A view may be narrow or panoramic, may include natural and/or manmade features, and may be of a faraway object (e.g., a mountain) or of a nearby object (e.g., a city bridge). A viewpoint is the location from which one enjoys the view. It may be a generalized location, such as a butte, and include several vantage points where the view may be seen to best advantage, or it could be a single observation point. A viewpoint may be developed with benches, signs and/or lighting. Or it may simply be a publicly accessible point from which one can take in a view.



The CCSRI includes 152 views from 144 viewpoints; some viewpoints have multiple views. The views were evaluated by experts in the fields of landscape architecture, urban design, or cultural or natural resources. The experts scored the quality and characteristics of the upland and river views separately. This is because research has shown that the presence of water alone is a very strong factor in influencing scenic quality and, thus, river views tend to be rated higher than upland views. This is indeed what the evaluation found:

Nearly all of the river views were ranked high to medium for scenic quality.

The viewpoints themselves were evaluated by project staff based on three factors:

- 1) Whether or not the viewpoint was developed as a viewpoint.
- 2) The accessibility of the viewpoint.
- 3) The amount of use the viewpoint receives as a viewpoint (as opposed to use in general).

The results of the evaluations were combined:

- Upland views were ranked as Tier I, II or III, with Tier I including the highest ranked upland views.
- River views were ranked as Group A, B or C, with Group A including the highest ranked river views. It should be noted that, because river views tended to receive higher scores than upland views, Group C river views are still of a high quality although not as high as the Group A and B river views.

Examples of Upland Tier I views include views of Mt Hood from the Washington Park International Rose Test Garden and views of Mt Hood and Mt St Helens from SW Terwilliger Boulevard. Examples of River Group A views include views of the Willamette River and Fremont Bridge from the Broadway Bridge and views of the Willamette River, Hawthorne Bridge and downtown skyline from the Eastbank Esplanade.



#### **View Streets**

A view street is defined as a linear stretch that is enclosed or bordered on both sides by buildings or vegetation and leads to a visual focal point that serves as the terminus of the view and contributes an aesthetic quality to the view. View streets must have a focal terminus that:

- 1) Is either a public park, river, mountain, butte, bridge, building (prominent private buildings were included if they represent the Central City skyline), artwork, sculpture, fountain, or historic or iconic landmark.
- 2) Can be seen from at least two blocks away.
- 3) Can be seen from the sidewalk or a crosswalk.



A view street may also include a background focal point (e.g., the West Hills) such that the full extent of the view extends beyond the street grid. The CCSRI includes 15 view streets. Examples of view streets include a view of Salmon Street Springs looking down SW Salmon Street from SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue or a view of Union Station looking north on NW 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue starting at W Burnside Street.

### **Scenic Corridors**

A scenic corridor is a linear transportation feature including, but not limited to, a road, rail, trail or waterway valued for its aesthetic qualities and accessed by car, bike, train, foot, wheelchair or boat. A scenic corridor must be at least 0.5 miles in length and include multiple views, viewpoints, visual focal points or scenic sites that may be interspersed with vegetation, built structures or other obstructing features of the surrounding environment. There may be pullouts or designated viewpoints along the travel way where travelers can safely stop to enjoy a



particularly nice view. To be included in the CCSRI, a scenic corridor must be publicly owned or accessible to the general public and located within the Central City 2035 boundary. The CCSRI includes six scenic corridors: North Park Blocks, South Park Blocks, Greenway Trail (west), Greenway Trail (east), Portland Aerial Tram and Willamette River.

### Visual Focal Points



A visual focal point is a feature or element of the natural or built environment that serves as an aesthetically pleasing or interesting object of a view. Visual focal points must be publicly owned or on public land and visible from a distance of at least two city blocks. With the exception of the three major mountains in the area (Mt Hood, Mt Adams and Mt St Helens), all visual focal points designated in the CCSRI are located within the Central City 2035 boundary. The CCSRI includes 22 visual focal points. Examples of visual focal points include the Chinatown

Gate, Mt Hood, the Fremont Bridge and the White Stag sign.

#### **Scenic Sites**

A scenic site is a single geographic destination that is valued for its aesthetic qualities and provides or relates to a pleasing or beautiful view of natural or built scenery; the pleasing view can be either internal

or external to the site. The site may be made up primarily of natural vegetated cover and water, or include structures and manmade landscaping. Scenic sites may include scenic views and viewpoints, but do not necessarily do so. Scenic sites must be publicly owned or on public land. All five scenic sites designated in the CCSRI are located within the Central City 2035 boundary: North Park Blocks, South Park Blocks, Lan Su Chinese Garden, Japanese American Historical Plaza and Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse 8<sup>th</sup> floor rooftop terrace.



### Conclusion

The CCSRI includes a mix of scenic resources: 152 views from 144 viewpoints, 15 view streets, six scenic corridors, 22 visual focal points and five scenic sites. Roughly half of the scenic resources included in the CCSRI are newly identified while the other half were identified in previous plans and inventories. A few scenic resources were retired because the view is now blocked by development.

The CCSRI does not include recommendations about future protection of, management of or enforcement measures related to scenic resources. The next phase of the project will include an indepth analysis of the trade-offs involved in protecting, or not protecting, each scenic resource. Staff will consider the effect of building height and massing on significant views as well as alternatives for vegetation management to maintain or enhance scenic resources. The results of the analysis will inform updates to the CC2035 Plan including changes to zoning regulations and maps.