

# 1. Introduction

## 1.a Report Purpose, Organization and Uses

The purpose of this inventory report is to provide useful, current and accessible information on the location and quality of existing scenic resources in and around the Portland's Central City. The report includes descriptions, evaluations, photos and maps of views and viewpoints, scenic corridors, view streets, visual focal points and scenic sites.

This inventory is an update of scenic resource information for the Central City. Over the past 30 years, scenic resources have been protected through multiple plans, including the 1983 *Terwilliger Parkway Corridor Plan*, the 1987 *Willamette Greenway Plan* and the 1991 *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*. Those plans include scenic resources located in the Central City as well as scenic resources located outside of the Central City but still within Portland.

This report is organized into seven chapters that provide the introduction and methodology for the inventory, the results and appendices. The following is a brief summary of the material contained in each volume of the document:

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** A summary of the inventory purpose, inventory area, definitions, regulatory context and uses

**Chapter 2: Project Approach.** The project approach for how views and viewpoints, scenic corridors, view streets, visual focal points and scenic sites were inventoried is described. The methodology includes how the scenic resources were identified and evaluated for scenic qualities.

The project approach is followed by chapters for each type of scenic resource. The chapters begin with an explanation of the screen criteria and, in some cases, the evaluation criteria, followed by the inventory results.

**Chapter 3: Scenic Views and Viewpoints** – Methodology and results. The results are further divided by quadrant based on the city's street grid.

**Chapter 4: View Streets** – Methodology and results

**Chapter 5: Scenic Corridors** – Methodology and results

**Chapter 6: Visual Focal Points**– Methodology and results

**Chapter 7: Scenic Sites** – Methodology and results

**Appendices.** There are six appendices included in this report:

- Appendix A – A summary of the case studies, which helped inform development of the methodology
- Appendix B – A summary of the statistical analysis of view and viewpoint rankings by the experts
- Appendix C – A list of all the viewpoints with the previous viewpoint code numbers and the current viewpoint code numbers. This list provides a crosswalk between the updated Scenic Resources Inventory and the previous protection plans.
- Appendix D – A summary of the line of sight methodology
- Appendix E – A description of each viewpoint that has been retired, relocated or re-designated as a different type of scenic resource. Each includes a photo and description.
- Appendix F – A list of view corridors (now called view streets) that were included in the 1989 Scenic Resources Inventory but not in this update. Also included are additional view streets initially documented as part of this process and then removed because they did not meet the criteria for inclusion. A description of each view street is included.

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

## 1.b Definitions

**Scenic resource:** A scenic resource is defined as any structure, feature, or element, natural or built, that is valued for its aesthetic appearance. Scenic resources include views, viewpoints, scenic corridors, view streets, visual focal points and scenic sites.

**View:** A view is an aesthetically pleasing landscape or scene comprised of one or more visual features. A view may be framed, wide angle or panoramic and may include natural and/or manmade structures and activities. A view may be from a stationary viewpoint or be seen as one travels along a roadway, waterway or path. A view may be to a faraway object, such as a mountain, or of a nearby object, such as a city bridge.

**Viewpoint:** A viewpoint is a location from which to enjoy a scenic view. A viewpoint may be a generalized location, such as a butte, and include several vantage points where the view may be seen to best advantage, or a single observation point. A viewpoint may be developed with features such as benches, signs and lighting or may simply be a publicly accessible point from which to take in a view.

**View street:** A view street is a linear scenic resource that is enclosed or bordered on both sides (e.g., by buildings or trees) and leads to a visual focal feature that has an aesthetically pleasing, scenic quality and serves as the terminus of the view.

**Visual focal point:** 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. Views may have one or more primary visual focal points and one or more secondary or contributing visual focal points.

**Scenic site:** A scenic site is an area valued for its aesthetic qualities. The area may be made up primarily of natural vegetated cover and water, or include structures and manmade landscaping. Scenic sites may include scenic viewpoints but do not necessarily do so.

**Scenic corridor:** 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 includes 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.

## 1.c Inventory Area

Views, viewpoints, view streets, scenic corridors, visual focal points and scenic sites located within the CC2035 boundary are part of this inventory update.

There are also views from viewpoints located outside of the CC2035 boundary that include views of or across the Central City. Some of these views could be affected by development or vegetation management within the Central City and were, therefore, included.

A view from a viewpoint outside of the Central City was included in this inventory if the zoning and building height regulations within the CC2035 boundary could result in development that would partially block a primary visual feature of the view, such as Mt Hood. This was determined by analyzing the existing and proposed views along with the Central City zoning and building height limitations, including base height and maximum height that could be achieved through bonuses. The elevation of the viewpoint, plus the elevation of the land within the Central City, allowed staff to estimate if future development could partially block a view of a primary visual feature.

It is important to note that a changing skyline does not equal partially blocking the view. For example, from the viewpoint at the top of Rocky Butte one can see the downtown skyline. Development within the Central City will change how that view looks; however, new buildings of any height located in the Central City could not block the view of downtown from Rocky Butte.

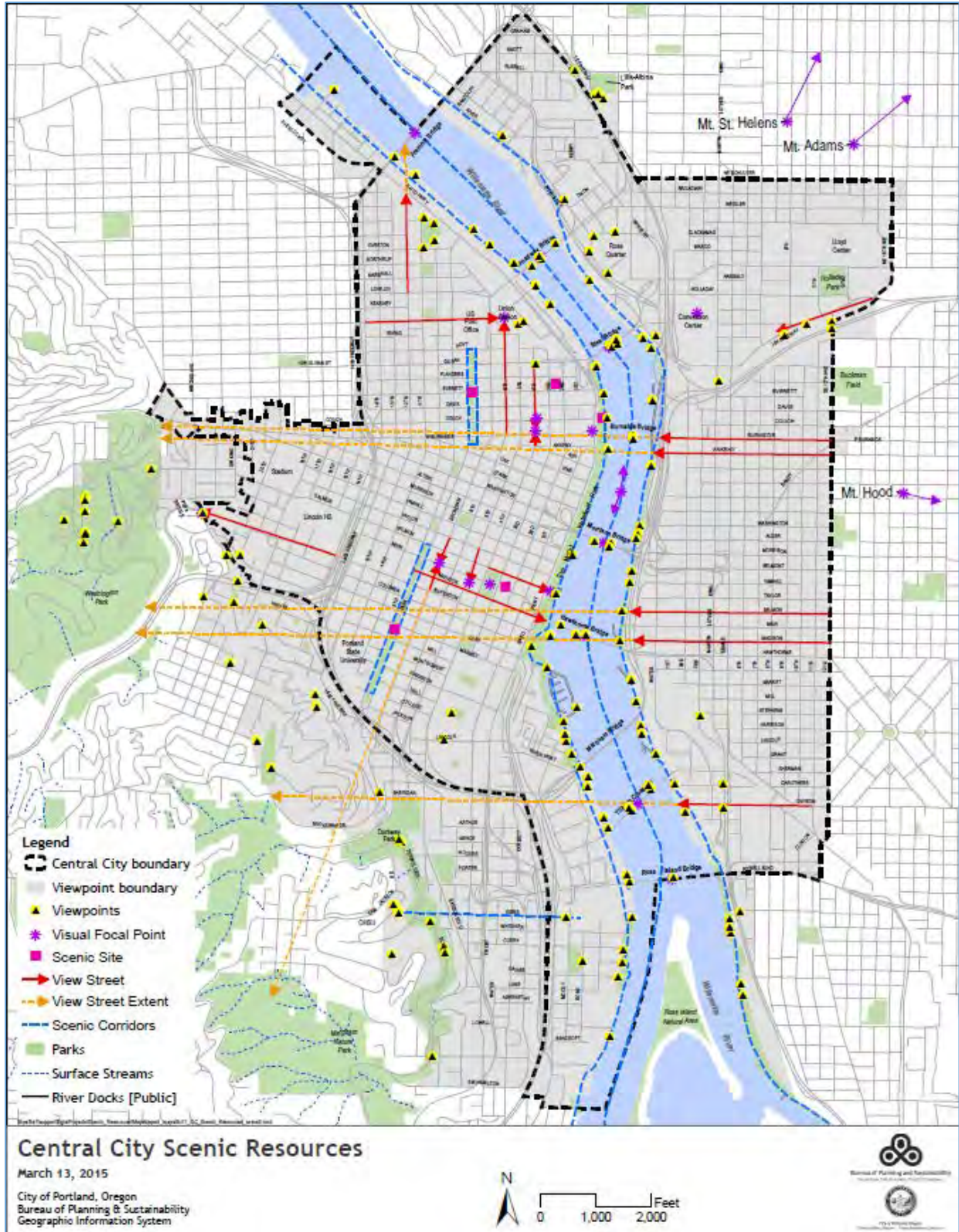
Like development, trees and other vegetation can also block a view. A view was included in this inventory if vegetation located within the CC2035 boundary could grow and partially block a primary visual feature of the view. Staff considered the elevation of the viewpoint and the elevation of the land within the Central City. Using the average height of the tallest native tree (the Douglas fir with an average mature height of 120 to 240 feet (EMSWCD 2013)), staff could estimate if vegetation, at maturity, would partially block the view.

There are views of the Central City from places like Pittock Mansion or Mt Tabor. These views can be affected by vegetation or development near that viewpoint. Without management of the vegetation or,

in some cases, management of development, those views of the Central City could be partially or completely blocked. However, those views would not be affected by development or vegetation management within the Central City boundary and, therefore, are not included in this inventory update. Views of the Central City not included in this inventory update are:

- Pittock Mansion
- Rocky Butte
- Mt Tabor
- Sellwood Boulevard
- Skidmore Bluffs (aka, Mocks Crest Property)
- Willamette National Cemetery
- Council Crest Park
- Hoyt Arboretum
- Oregon Zoo
- Washington Park archery range

Map 1 shows the study area for the Scenic Resource Inventory Update for the Central City and the viewpoints, view streets, scenic corridors, scenic sites and visual focal points that were included in this inventory.



Map 1: Central City Scenic Resources Inventory Area

## 1.d Regulatory Context

### State Land Use Planning Program

Comprehensive land use planning was mandated by the 1973 Oregon Legislature, primarily in response to population growth pressures on valuable farm and forest lands. Since 1975, cities and counties in Oregon have been required to comply with Statewide Planning goals. Today there are 19 goals that Oregon cities and counties must comply with through adoption and maintenance of local comprehensive plans. Portland adopted its first comprehensive plan in 1980 to satisfy the requirements of the state planning program.

Multiple state planning goals apply to the inventory area; however, only those goals most directly related to scenic resources — Goals 5, 8 and 15 — are addressed in this section. Other goals, including Goal 9: Economy of the State and Goal 12: Transportation, are addressed in separate planning documents.

Oregon State Land Use Goal 5, Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources, establishes a process in which scenic resources are inventoried and evaluated for significance. If a resource is found to be significant, the local government must evaluate the consequences of three policy choices: protecting the resource, allowing proposed uses that conflict with the resource, or establishing a balance between protecting and allowing uses that conflict with the resource. The local government must then adopt a program based on the results of this evaluation.

The City of Portland has been in compliance with Goal 5 for scenic resources since 1991, with the adoption of the *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*. This inventory is an update for a portion of the scenic resources contained in the *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*, specifically, the scenic resources for the Central City.

Oregon State Land Use Goal 8, Recreational Needs, requires jurisdictions to satisfy the recreational needs of citizens. Local jurisdictions are responsible for creating and maintaining recreational areas, facilities and opportunities to meet the current and future needs. Recreational areas, facilities and opportunities are defined to include scenic landscapes, scenic roads and travel ways as well as passive activities, such as sightseeing. The 1991 *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* provided a framework for protection and enhancement of scenic resources.

Oregon State Land Use Goal 15, Willamette Greenway, is intended to protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities of the land along the Willamette River. Goal 15 requires an inventory of existing conditions including significant scenic areas. The 1988 *Willamette Greenway Plan* identified scenic resources along the Willamette River.

### Central City 2035

The City of Portland is updating its comprehensive plan for the Central City. Central City 2035 (CC2035) will be a new plan with policies, actions and updates to land use regulations. Currently there are

designated views, viewpoints, view streets, scenic corridors, visual focal points and scenic sites in and around the Central City. Some of the views from designated viewpoints are protected using a scenic resources overlay zone and associated height limits. Other views are not within a scenic resources overlay zone, but are protected by building height limitations as defined in the zoning code. In some portions of the Central City, the CC2035 plan is proposing to make changes to building height allowance to facilitate new development or to preserve or change the character of land uses. Those changes could affect views. There are also view streets within the Central City that have design guidelines applied to them.

This inventory will inform the next steps in the Goal 5 process of determining significant resources and forwarding those on to be evaluated for potential protection under the plans listed below. The results of the analysis will inform discussions about building height allowances and/or design guidelines in the Central City. The results may also inform discussions about vegetation management to maintain or enhance a view.

## **Scenic Resources Protection Plans**

There are three major documents that relate to scenic resource protection across Portland:

- 1) *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* (1989)
- 2) *Scenic Resource Inventory Map* (1989)
- 3) *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (1991)

The *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* report identified views, scenic sites and scenic drives. The *Scenic Resource Inventory Map* identified views, viewpoints, scenic sites, scenic drives, view corridors, scenic waterways, and gateways and focal points. The *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (SRPP) adopted in 1991 was based on the *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* report and *Scenic Resource Inventory Map*. The SRPP resulted in new policy language and zoning regulations to guide protection, maintenance and enhancement of scenic resources. The plan extended the new regulations to specific scenic resources identified on the City's official zoning map.

The nomenclature used in the 1989 *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory*, 1989 *Scenic Resource Inventory Map* and 1991 SRPP is not consistent across documents. For example, what the SRPP calls *view corridors* includes *scenic views* and *viewpoints* from the 1989 inventories. What the 1989 SRI map called *view corridors* were not identified in the 1989 *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* report nor were they protected through the SRPP. *Focal points* and *gateways* identified in the 1989 map are not mentioned in the 1989 inventory report nor are they protected through the SRPP. In addition to the differences in nomenclature, there are often no corresponding definitions of the terms or consistent criteria for designating the resources. This has created some confusion.

Therefore, a more standardized nomenclature, including definitions of terms and criteria for inclusion, was developed for this inventory update. Table 1 provides a cross-walk between the different plans and naming of the scenic resources.

<b>Table 1: Scenic Resources Nomenclature in City Plans</b>			
<b>1989 Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory</b>	<b>1989 Scenic Resource Inventory Map</b>	<b>1991 Scenic Resources Protection Plan</b>	<b>2015 Scenic Resources Inventory</b>
Scenic Views	Views	View Corridors (w/ height restrictions) Scenic Viewpoints (no special height restrictions)	Views and Viewpoints
N/A	Viewpoints	N/A	Views and Viewpoints
N/A	View Corridors	N/A	View Streets
N/A	Gateways and Focal Points	N/A	View Streets
N/A	View Corridors	N/A	View Streets
Scenic Drives (includes Willamette River)	Scenic Drives and Scenic Waterways	Scenic Corridors	Scenic Corridors
N/A	N/A	N/A	Visual Focal Points
Scenic Sites	Scenic Sites	Scenic Sites	Scenic Sites

This inventory updates the Central City portions of the 1989 inventories and 1991 SRPP. Scenic resources that are designated in the SRPP but not included in this inventory update remain protected through the 1991 SRPP. This inventory does not remove views, viewpoints, view corridors, scenic corridors, visual focal points or scenic sites that are located outside of the Central City Scenic Resources Inventory boundary.

## **Other City Plans**

There are multiple City of Portland plans that address scenic resources in and around the Central City. Below is a brief description of each of those plans. This inventory updates portions of each of the following plans.

### 1983 Terwilliger Parkway Corridor Plan

Terwilliger Parkway is designated as a scenic drive. It is located outside of the Central City; however, there are some designated viewpoints along Terwilliger Parkway that are of or across the Central City. The scenic drive and viewpoints were included and updated through adoption of the 1991 *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*.

### 1988 Willamette Greenway Plan

The *Willamette Greenway Plan* resulted in the designation of numerous viewpoints along the Willamette River where views of the river and river-related resources are possible. The Portland zoning code requires that public viewpoints be developed at these locations when greenway improvements are triggered by new development. These viewpoints were included and updated through adoption of the 1991 *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*. The *Willamette Greenway Plan* also designated greenway view corridors where it is possible to see the Willamette River or Tom McCall Waterfront Park from approaching streets and rights-of-way. Some, but not all, of the Willamette Greenway view corridors are also included in the *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*.



### 1988 Central City Plan

The comprehensive plan for the Central City was last updated in 1988 and includes designation of scenic resources. All of the scenic resources in the *Central City Plan* were included and updated with the adoption of the 1991 *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*.

### 1992 Central City Plan District

With the adoption of the *Central City Plan District* in 1992, public viewpoints were updated on the City's official zoning map. Most of the updates were located along the Willamette River or within the public right-of-way or City-owned parks. This inventory includes an update to all of the scenic resources identified in the 1992 *Central City Plan District*.

### 2000 Union Station Clock Tower-related FAR and Height Limitations Study

This study analyzed the area with a 75-foot maximum height limit as set by the 1988 *Central City Plan* to protect views of Union Station and the historic resources of the neighborhood. The result of the study was to increase the floor area ratios (FAR) in specific areas and to allow bonuses to be used to increase the maximum height limits.

### 2002 South Waterfront Plan & 2006 Public Views and Visual Permeability Assessment

The *South Waterfront Plan* included a study of view streets and the impact of building heights, placement, massing and widths and street setbacks to preserve visual permeability from the district to the Willamette River and Ross Island and from across the river to the West Hills. The 2006 assessment further looked at specific viewpoints around South Waterfront that could be negatively affected by development within the district. Three viewpoints were designated along Terwilliger Parkway and two along the Springwater Corridor Trail. Four of the five points are included in this inventory update; the fifth is outside of the Central City boundary.

Scenic resources that are designated in other protection plans but not included in this inventory update remain protected through previous plans. This inventory does not remove views, viewpoints, view streets, view corridors, scenic corridors, visual focal points, or scenic sites from the other protection plans. This inventory only updates the information for views, viewpoints, view streets, scenic corridors, visual focal points and scenic sites located in the Central City inventory area.

## **1.e Case Studies**

Producing an inventory of scenic resources requires consistency and objectivity. Staff must “translate” a subjective scenic resource into a specific set of elements that qualify that resource as “scenic.” This allows all resources to be evaluated consistently using the same criteria. This objectivity ensures the same principles apply to all scenic resources.

To learn current best practices in conducting such analyses, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability looked at similar recent efforts around the world. This section summarizes case studies of scenic resource conservation methods from a variety of jurisdictions around the nation, Canada, Europe and

New Zealand. The full case study report is found in Appendix A. The case studies below do not represent all the examples that exist; but they provide a broad survey of methods and approaches that are relevant and potentially applicable to Portland's inventory. The case studies helped staff develop a consistent and objective approach and methodology.

The project consultant, MIG, identified 15 case studies because these offer approaches most similar to Portland's goals:

1. Ithaca, New York
2. London, United Kingdom
3. National Park Service Scenery Conservation
4. Cincinnati, Ohio
5. Vancouver, British Columbia
6. Seattle, Washington
7. Edinburgh, Scotland
8. Valencia, Spain
9. San Francisco, California
10. Denver, Colorado
11. Napa County, California
12. Austin, Texas
13. Honolulu, Hawaii
14. Auckland, New Zealand
15. Mississippi National River Park and Recreation Area

Most inventories of scenic resources used a numeric scoring system to rank views and viewpoints. However, the criteria that were used to score the view or viewpoint varied greatly. In addition, the evaluation of the views based on the criteria was performed by different people in the different cases, including experts, universities, city or agency staff or the public. But in nearly all cases the scores were used to determine which views were significant enough to warrant some level of protection.

The *Central City Scenic Resources Inventory* draws on a number of criteria used in the case studies:

- **Use and accessibility.** The number of people who enjoy the view from the specific viewpoint can be an indicator of how important the view is to the community. Integral to the amount of use is how accessible the viewpoint is to a diverse range of users, i.e. ADA access, transit, bike lanes, parking.
- **Investment.** The type and quality of viewpoint amenities (e.g., platforms, benches, telescopes) and maintenance of the view (e.g., pruning vegetation) represents the level of public investment in keeping the view open and enjoyable for users.
- **Imageability.** Does the view include prominent focal features that are distinctive and contribute to the identity of the neighborhood, city or region?
- **Quality.** The quality of the view depends on: whether the view is intact and pristine; it includes clear ridge lines or valley vistas and natural features; and the extent of detractors.

- Prominence.** Prominent focal features enhance the quality of the view. Prominence is tied to sky space, which is the open space around a focal feature that makes the feature stand out in the view. Prominence is different from a focal feature that dominates a view in that prominence affects the aesthetic quality of the feature.

In addition to the specific criteria used to evaluate each view, the case studies presented results of the inventories in different layouts. Overall, the most user-friendly presentation of information was the inventory from Cincinnati, OH. The report included a location map, photos, descriptions and evaluation scores for each viewpoint.

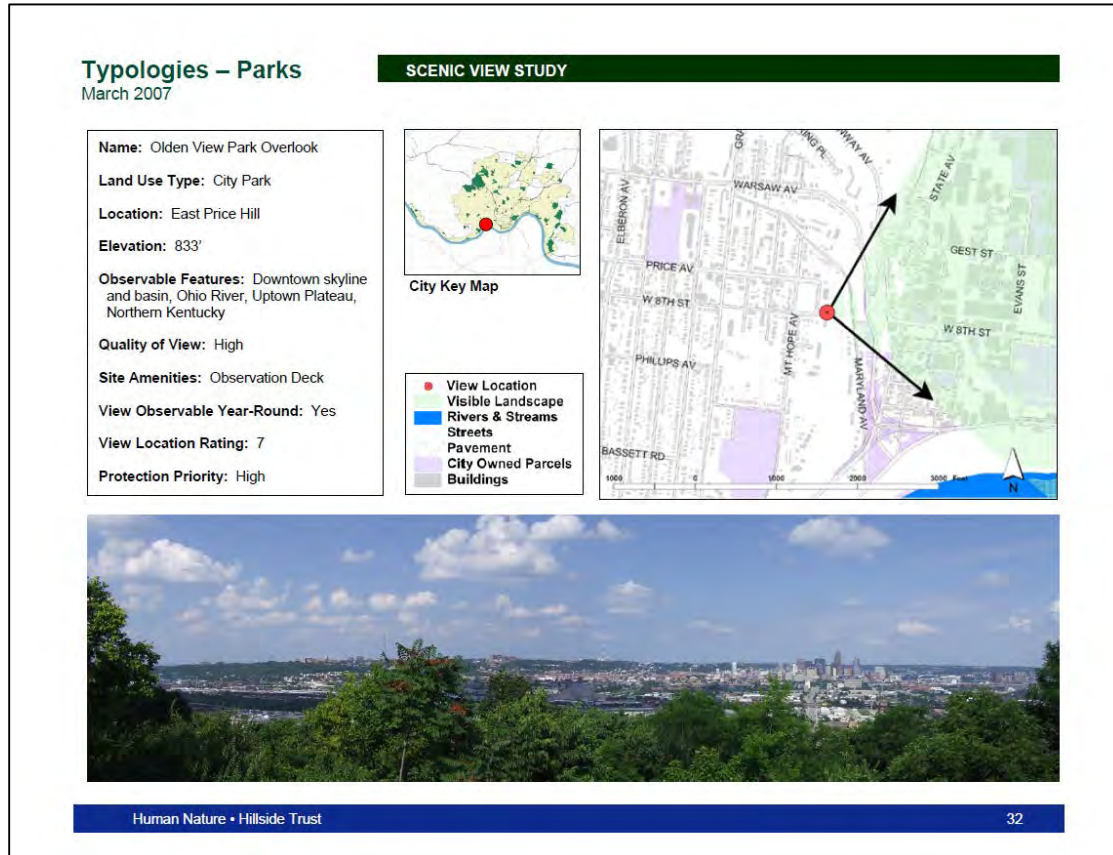


Figure 1: Scenic View Study Report Layout, Cincinnati, OH



*Downtown Portland from the NE 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue overpass over I-84 circa 1988.*

## 2. Project Approach

Below is a summary of the general steps the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability took to produce an updated inventory of *Central City Scenic Resources Inventory* (CCSRI). The following chapters provide the detailed inventory methodology for views and viewpoints, view streets, scenic corridors, visual focal points and scenic sites.

The general inventory steps were:

1. Determine eligibility
2. Map existing inventoried scenic resources
3. Identify new scenic resources
4. Document scenic resources
5. Evaluate scenic resources
6. Produce a report

**Determine eligibility.** The CCSRI includes public views and other public scenic resources located within the inventory area. *Public* views and scenic resources means the resource is in public ownership or is accessible to the general public. Views from private buildings or structures are not included because access to the building or structure may be restricted and limited to just residents, employees or clientele, and general public access is restricted. Private buildings or structures, in and of themselves, generally are not included in this inventory as scenic resources, with the following exceptions:

- Buildings or structures that are protected as a historic or other landmark may be included as a visual focal point or scenic site. Additional designations, historic or landmark, provide some assurances that the resource is permanent.
- Buildings or structures that are part of the skyline as a whole and are prominent focal features of the view are identified but not designated as a scenic resource.

**Map existing inventoried scenic resources.** Staff began with scenic resources that were inventoried in the *Terwilliger Parkway Corridor Plan*, *Willamette Greenway Plan*, *Scenic Resources Protection Plan*, *Central City Plan District* and *South Waterfront Plan*. All scenic resources within the Central City 2035 boundary were included. Staff then researched the location and elevation of scenic resources located outside the Central City boundary and the building height allowances within the Central City. Scenic resources that could potentially be affected by development within the Central City were initially included. Staff also considered if vegetation within the Central City could grow and affect views. Staff visited potential scenic resources to determine if the resources should remain in the inventory. Views that could potentially be affected by development or vegetation management within the CC2035 boundary were included in the inventory for further evaluation.

**Identify new scenic resources.** There were four mechanisms through which new scenic resources were added to the inventory:

1. Central City staff identified potential new scenic resources based on input received at CC2035 advisory committees and public open house events. While the focus of these events was not

scenic resources, views were often discussed and staff took notes regarding potential scenic resources not already included in previous inventories.

2. An inter bureau technical committee was formed and identified potential new scenic resources. The committee included staff from Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Portland Parks and Recreation, Bureau of Environmental Services and Bureau of Transportation.
3. The public nominated potential new views and viewpoints. Staff developed an online survey, and the public was invited to nominate new views and viewpoints during the summer of 2014. All nominations were cataloged; however, only those that met the requirements for inclusion in the Central City inventory area were included for further evaluation.
4. Staff documented potential new scenic resources during field visits, inspecting all existing and potential scenic resources. During the course of these site visits, staff identified additional scenic resources that were not already included in the study.

**Document scenic resources.** Field visits were conducted at all existing and potential scenic resources. Staff recorded a standard set of feature information, and took a standard set of photographs for every existing and potential scenic resource. If a view/viewpoint met the criteria for inclusion it was forwarded on for evaluation. Other scenic resources (view streets, scenic corridors, visual focal points and scenic sites) were all included, without additional evaluation, if the resources met the criteria for inclusion in the inventory.

**Evaluate scenic resources.** All existing and potential scenic resources were evaluated using consistent approaches and criteria. A slightly different methodology was used to evaluate each type of scenic resource. Below is a brief summary of each methodology. Chapters 3 through 7 include a detailed explanation of the methodologies and the results for each type of scenic resource.

Chapter 3: Scenic Views and Viewpoints – Experts in the fields of landscape architecture, urban design, natural resources and cultural resources were asked to score all existing and potential views based on a number of factors such as universal scenic quality and primary focal elements. The project consultant performed statistical analysis of the experts' results for the views and viewpoints. Each view and its corresponding viewpoint were then ranked based on statistical analysis.

Chapter 4: View Streets – Staff reviewed existing and potential view streets using a standard set of screening criteria. The criteria require that the view street be at least two blocks in length and end in a prominent focal terminus such as a river, bridge, landmark or art/sculpture. All view streets that met the criteria are included in this inventory. Staff documented many streets that did not meet the criteria for inclusion; those streets are included in Appendix F.

Chapter 5: Scenic Corridors – Staff reviewed existing and potential scenic corridors using a standard set of criteria. Scenic corridors must be at least a half mile in length and have a combination of scenic resources, such as views or focal points, located along the corridor. After scenic corridors were screened for inclusion in the inventory, staff evaluated the corridors for scenic qualities, uniqueness and focal feature predominance. Scenic corridors that met all three evaluation criteria are included in the inventory.

Chapter 6: Visual Focal Points – During the experts’ review of views and viewpoints, the experts identified the primary and secondary visual features of the view. Staff used a standard set of criteria to evaluate the identified visual features and existing visual focal points for inclusion in the inventory. The visual focal point must be publically owned or on public land and can be seen from another scenic resources, such as a viewpoint or view street, and from a distance of at least two blocks. All visual focal points that met the criteria are included in the inventory.

Chapter 7: Scenic Sites – Scenic sites are single, geographic destinations that are valued for their aesthetic qualities. Staff used a standard set of criteria to determine if a site should be included in the inventory. The site must contain an assortment of dominant visual elements that relate to the surrounding scenery or provide a mix of visual focal features, vegetation, unique architecture or art and sculptures.

**Produce a report.** Finally, all of the results were compiled into a report that includes location maps, photos, and descriptions of all scenic resources as well as scores/ranks for views and viewpoints that were rated.



*View of Mt Hood from the Rose Garden circa 1988.*