

## 5. Scenic Corridors

### 5.a. Approach and Methodology

A scenic corridor is a linear transportation feature, including but not limited to a road, rail, trail or waterway that is valued for its aesthetic qualities and accessed by car, bus, bike, train, foot, wheelchair or boat. A scenic corridor is differentiated from other transportation infrastructure by the presence of multiple views, viewpoints, visual focal points or scenic sites located along the corridor. The views may be interspersed with vegetation, built structures, or other obstructing features of the surrounding environment. There may be pull-outs, pedestrian refuges or designated viewpoints along the corridor where travelers can safely stop and move out of the travel lanes to enjoy a particularly nice view.

In the 1989 *Scenic Resource Inventory Map*, scenic drives (roads) and scenic waterways were identified. The 1991 *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* grouped scenic drives and waterways and called them scenic corridors. This inventory expands scenic corridors to include those two subsets as well as other forms of travel.

In order to produce an inventory of scenic corridors, the following approach was followed:

1. **Map existing inventoried scenic corridors**
2. **Identify other scenic corridors**
3. **Document scenic corridors**
4. **Designate scenic corridors**

Unlike views and viewpoints, where even those with a very low evaluation score remained in the inventory, scenic corridors underwent two screenings to determine if the corridor should be included in this inventory.

#### 1. Map Existing Scenic Corridors

The *Scenic Resource Inventory Map* (1989) and *Scenic Resources Protection Plan* (1991) identified one scenic drive and one scenic waterway that have visual relationship to the Central City: SW Terwilliger Boulevard and the Willamette River.

SW Terwilliger Boulevard extends from SW Barbur Boulevard in the south to SW Sam Jackson Park Road in the north. There are multiple viewpoints along the scenic drive that are of, or across the Central City; however, the drive itself is not within the Central City. Therefore, this inventory does not include the SW Terwilliger Boulevard scenic drive itself; however, it does include the viewpoints located along the scenic drive that are of or across the Central City.

The Willamette River is a scenic waterway. A portion of that scenic waterway, from the Ross Island Bridge in the south to the Fremont Bridge in the north is within the Central City and included in this inventory.

## 2. Identify other Scenic Corridors

Staff identified potential scenic corridors. Linear transportation features that met all of the following criteria were included for documentation and further evaluation for inclusion in the inventory:

1. The corridor is publically owned and accessible to the general public either by car, bus, train, bike, foot, wheelchair or boat;
2. The corridor is at least 0.5 mile in length within the Central City (it may extend beyond the Central City boundaries);
3. There is at least one previously-documented scenic viewpoint that is developed with features that allow travelers to move out of traffic to enjoy the view, such features include an automobile pull-out, a pedestrian refuge or a bump-out; and
4. There is a combination of three or more of the following previously-documented scenic resources located along the corridor:
  - a. Developed viewpoints,
  - b. Visual focal points that are located immediately adjacent to the corridor, or
  - c. Scenic sites that are located immediately adjacent to the corridor.

It should be noted that this inventory update focused only on *scenic* corridors. Many travel corridors may serve as corridors for other reasons (e.g., pedestrian access, way finding, commercial corridors) and have many elements along the corridor that are visually interesting. However, that alone does not mean they are *scenic* corridors. To be a *scenic* corridor, the corridor must meet all of the above criteria.

## 3. Document Scenic Corridors

Staff took the approach of documenting all existing and potential scenic corridors in the Central City. The approach was chosen because the previous scenic resource plan didn't use a standard set of criteria for inclusion in the inventory and staff were not able to determine if any potential scenic corridors were missed.

### Data Collection

Staff drove, walked, biked or navigated nearly all existing and potential scenic corridors. The field assessment elements that were documented included:

- Type of corridor: road, rail, trail, path, river, stream
- Types of transportation modes corridor accommodates
- One-way or two-way direction of travel

- Location of start and terminus of the scenic corridor within the Central City. Some scenic corridors may extend beyond the boundaries of the Central City; those portions of the corridor will need to be updated during subsequent plan projects.
- Approximate length of scenic corridor within the Central City. Again, some scenic corridors may extend beyond the boundaries of the Central City; those portions of the corridors will need to be updated during subsequent plan projects.
- Types and description of the scenic resources located along the corridor that qualify it for inclusion in this inventory

### Photographs

Photographs were taken along with the field assessment elements. All photographs were taken on a Nikon D7000 camera with a Nikon AF-S DX NIKKOR 18-105mm f/3.5-5.6G ED VR lens using the raw NEF format. The camera was set to the landscape scene function. A standard setting of 35mm was used. Due to safety concerns, it was not always feasible for staff to set up the tripod and take a standardized set of photographs for scenic corridors. Instead, photos were taken from safe locations where staff could get out of traffic or when it was possible for the passenger to take a photo from within a vehicle or boat. Because it was not always possible to take pictures while travelling (especially by bike), staff supplemented the photographs with Google Earth images and indicated as such in a footnote.

## 4. Designate Scenic Corridors

All scenic corridors that met the first screen were documented and photographs were taken. The photographs were then used to evaluate each scenic corridor to determine which would remain in this inventory. This evaluation was performed by city staff and verified by the project consultant.

### Evaluation Criteria

1. Scenic Qualities - There are visual features, besides the formal viewpoints or scenic sites that add to the scenic quality of the corridor. Landscaping or natural vegetation lines portions of the corridor; open water is visible from the corridor; or historic buildings or cultural resources are located along the corridor.
2. Uniqueness – The scenic corridor is unique in Portland or within the neighborhood or district. There are views and features present along the corridor that can only be seen in this location. The scenic resources located along the corridor create an identity that helps define the neighborhood or district.
3. Predominance – There are a predominance of scenic resources and visual features that contribute to the scenic quality of the corridor. This is a subjective evaluation. It is based on whether most of the corridor appears scenic to the viewer or if the viewer is just traveling to a particular viewpoint or scenic site.

## **5.b. Scenic Corridors Results**

There are six scenic corridors in the Central City. Some of the scenic corridors extend beyond the Central City; however those areas are not included in this inventory. Map 11 shows each scenic corridor.

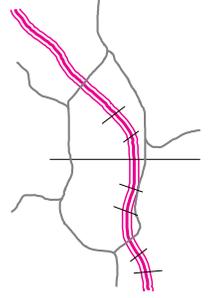


## WILLAMETTE RIVER

### *Scenic Waterway*

#### **Description**

The Willamette River runs through the entirety of the City of Portland, from Powers Marine Park in the south to Kelley Point Park in the north. The Central Reach of the Willamette River (the section passing through Central City) stretches from the northern tip of Ross Island in the south to the Fremont Bridge in the north. Many types of boating activities take place in the Willamette River including cruises, motor boating, canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and dragon boating. Paddle boarding and swimming are also becoming popular activities. All of these ways of traveling along the Willamette River afford a series of scenic views of bridges, public parks, skylines, the riverbank, and distant hills.



#### **Management Considerations**

- During the expert panel review, experts remarked that much of the riverbank in the Central Reach lacks natural vegetation and that, if present, natural vegetation could contribute to the overall scenic quality. This is partially due to the presence of the mile-long seawall on the west bank and close proximity of Interstate 5 on the east bank. Both the seawall and I-5 constrain the river and detract from the scenic quality.

**Ownership:** 56% public; 44% private

**Transportation Modes:** Boating, swimming, paddle boarding



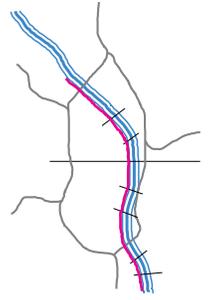
The Willamette River - view from the Steel Bridge

## GREENWAY TRAIL WEST

### *Scenic Trail/Path*

#### **Description**

The Greenway Trail along the west bank of the Willamette River includes the Willamette River Greenway Trail, Waterfront Park Trail, and South Waterfront Greenway Trail. Currently, there are some gaps in the trail; however, a complete Greenway Trail is outlined in the Willamette Greenway Plan and future development projects along the riverbank will fill in the gaps. The Greenway Trail is a multi-use trail for bicyclists and pedestrians. Skateboarding, roller skating, running, and traveling by personal transporter (e.g., Segway) also occur. The Greenway Trail is ADA accessible from multiple locations. Traveling along the Greenway Trail affords views of the Willamette River, riverbank vegetation, public parks, bridges, skylines, public art, and distant mountains and hills.



#### **Management Considerations**

- Currently, there are gaps in the Greenway Trail between downtown and South Waterfront as well as downtown and the northern section of the Greenway Trail.
- Much of the trail through downtown is along the seawall with no riparian vegetation.

**Ownership:** Portland Parks & Recreation

**Transportation Modes:** Biking, walking, running, skating, personal transporter, wheelchair



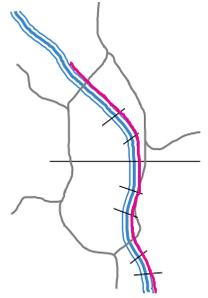
The Greenway Trail (west) through Waterfront Park- view from the Steel Bridge

## GREENWAY TRAIL EAST/EASTBANK ESPLANADE

### *Scenic Trail/Path*

#### **Description**

The Greenway Trail along the east bank of the Willamette River includes the Willamette River Greenway Trail, Eastbank Esplanade, and Springwater Corridor on the Willamette. Currently, there are some gaps in the trail; however, a complete Greenway Trail is outlined in the Willamette Greenway Plan and future development projects along the riverbank will fill in the gaps. The Greenway Trail is a multi-use trail for bicyclists and pedestrians. Skateboarding, roller skating, running, and traveling by personal transporter (e.g., Segway) also occur. The Greenway Trail is ADA accessible from multiple locations. Traveling along the Greenway Trail affords views of the Willamette River, riverbank vegetation, public parks, bridges, skylines, public art, and distant mountains and hills.



#### **Management Considerations**

- It's difficult to access the Eastbank Esplanade between the Steel Bridge and SE Salmon Street due to the presence of I-5.
- The current trail does not extend north of the Steel Bridge.
- There are gaps in the Greenway Trail (east) between SE Caruthers Street and the Springwater Corridor.

**Ownership:** Portland Parks & Recreation

**Transportation Modes:** Biking, walking, running, skating, personal transporter, wheelchair



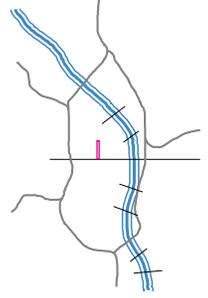
The Greenway Trail (east)/Eastbank Esplanade- view from the Morrison Bridge

## NORTH PARK BLOCKS

### *Scenic Trail/Path*

#### **Description**

The North Park Blocks are bounded between NW Park Avenue and NW 8th Avenue and extend along a five-block stretch from W Burnside Street in the south to NW Glisan Street in the north. Large American elms line the street edge of the North Park Blocks along with rows of bigleaf maples and black locusts. Park amenities include multiple pieces of artwork, a basketball court, a bocce court, and a playground as well as numerous benches, ornamental light fixtures, and water fountains. The North Park Blocks contain an inner path for pedestrians within the park blocks themselves. Automobiles can travel along the length of the North Park Blocks on the outer edge, with one-way traffic heading north on NW Park Avenue and south on NW 8th Avenue.



#### **Management Considerations**

- Adding additional mid-block crosswalks in line with the inner pedestrian trails or other pedestrian-oriented intersection treatments could improve the pedestrian experience.

**Ownership:** City of Portland

**Transportation Modes:** Walking, biking, automobile



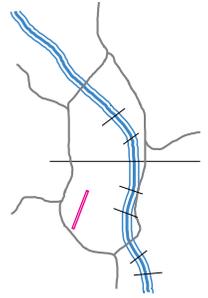
The North Park Blocks

## SOUTH PARK BLOCKS

### *Scenic Trail/Path*

#### **Description**

The South Park Blocks extend along a twelve-block stretch of SW Park Avenue from SW Salmon Street in the north to SW Jackson Street in the south. The southern half of the South Park Blocks are located within the PSU campus area. The Park Blocks are lined with trees; a majority are large elms which provide a tree canopy over the blocks. Other trees include northern red oaks, sugar maples, lindens, European beeches, hawthorns, honey locusts, Oregon white oaks, ashes, a sycamore, and an ailanthus. The South Park Blocks are also home to two Heritage Trees, a London planetree at SW Main Street and a European beech in front of the PSU Library. Park amenities include multiple statues and fountains as well as numerous benches, ornamental light fixtures, water fountains, and a playground. The South Park Blocks have an inner pedestrian path as well as a sidewalk on the outer edge.



#### **Management Considerations**

- Adding additional mid-block crosswalks in line with the inner pedestrian trails or other pedestrian-oriented intersection treatments could improve the pedestrian experience.

**Ownership:** City of Portland

**Transportation Modes:** Walking, biking, automobile



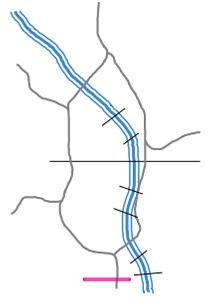
The South Park Blocks

## PORTLAND AERIAL TRAM

### *Scenic Aerial Tram*

#### **Description**

The Portland Aerial Tram connects the South Waterfront to Marquam Hill; the lower terminal is located at SW Moody Avenue and SW Gibbs Street while the upper terminal is located on the Oregon Health & Science University campus. Traveling 3,300 linear feet at 22 miles per hour, the tram ride takes approximately four minutes each way and rises for a total elevation gain of 500 feet. The ride offers unbeatable views of Portland's many bridges, downtown skyline, Willamette River, and buttes as well as magnificent views of Mt St Helens, Mt Adams, Mt Hood and the eastern foothills.



#### **Management Considerations**

- The Portland Aerial Tram costs \$4.35 round-trip and operates on a load-n-go principle; trams typically depart every 6 minutes.

**Ownership:** City of Portland

**Transportation Modes:** Tram



View from the Portland Aerial Tram

