

7. Scenic Sites

7.a. Approach and Methodology

A scenic site is a single geographic destination that is valued for its aesthetic qualities. A scenic site provides or relates to a pleasing or beautiful view of natural or built scenery. Trails, roads and bridges are excluded from the definition of a scenic site.

1. **Identify scenic sites**
2. **Document scenic sites**

1. Identify Scenic Sites

The 1989 *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* included 10 scenic sites: Leach Botanical Garden, Bishop's Close, Berry Botanical Garden, The Grotto, Reed College, Johnson Lake, Beggar's Tick Marsh, Water Tower at NE Rose Parkway, Open Space at NE 148th and NE Halsey, and Shriner's Hospital. However, none of these 10 sites are within the Central City boundary nor are any positioned such that they have views of the Central City that could be blocked by development or vegetation within the Central City.

With the exception of Leach Botanical Garden, the scenic sites inventory conducted for the *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* excluded parks and open spaces currently designated at Open Space (OS) or County Community Service (CS) for parks, cemeteries, or golf courses. In addition, the *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* contained both publicly and privately owned scenic sites, though, because of the nature of their use, all were subject to some kind of land use review. Other than the above guidelines, the *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory* did not include a clear definition of scenic sites or a set of clear, specific criteria used for selecting scenic sites.

Since the 1989 *Scenic Views, Sites and Drives Inventory*, new development has occurred in the Central City and surrounding area. Some of these new developments might be considered as scenic sites. Other scenic sites may have been overlooked in or excluded from the original inventories.

Considering the above factors, staff identified a set of potential scenic sites, drawing from both the previously designated scenic sites as well as new development. Staff used the following criteria to produce a list of potential scenic sites.

Criteria for Inclusion

1. The site must be located on public property, within a right-of-way or on property that is accessible to the general public.
2. The site must serve as a destination for the public to enjoy unique and high quality scenery, natural or manmade.

3. The site must contain an assortment of dominant elements that either:
 - a. Relate to the surrounding scenery by providing multiple views and viewpoints; or
 - b. Provide within the site scenery such as a mix of visual focal features, natural or landscaped vegetation, unique architecture or art and sculptures.
4. The site must lead the viewer to expect more if her/his vantage point is changed; there is a sense of diversity and mystery that leads the viewer to move around the site to view different aesthetic elements; and
5. The site must be located within the Central City.

City parks, in whole or part, may be included if a portion of the park is maintained for its scenic qualities. For example, Rocky Butte includes multiple maintained viewpoints, where vegetation is managed to protect views of visual focal features. Another example, the Lan Su Chinese Garden is a landscape maintained for visual enjoyment, but does not include views of the surrounding scenery. There are many other parks that include visually pleasing scenery but are not specifically maintained to preserve the visual qualities; those are not included as scenic sites.

2. Document Scenic Sites – Field Visits

Data Collection

The field assessment elements that were documented included:

- Address or location of scenic site
- Character of the scenic site (natural, manmade)
- Discordant elements

Additional elements were documented back in the office. These included:

- Ownership of scenic site
- Status on other lists (ex. protected open space)

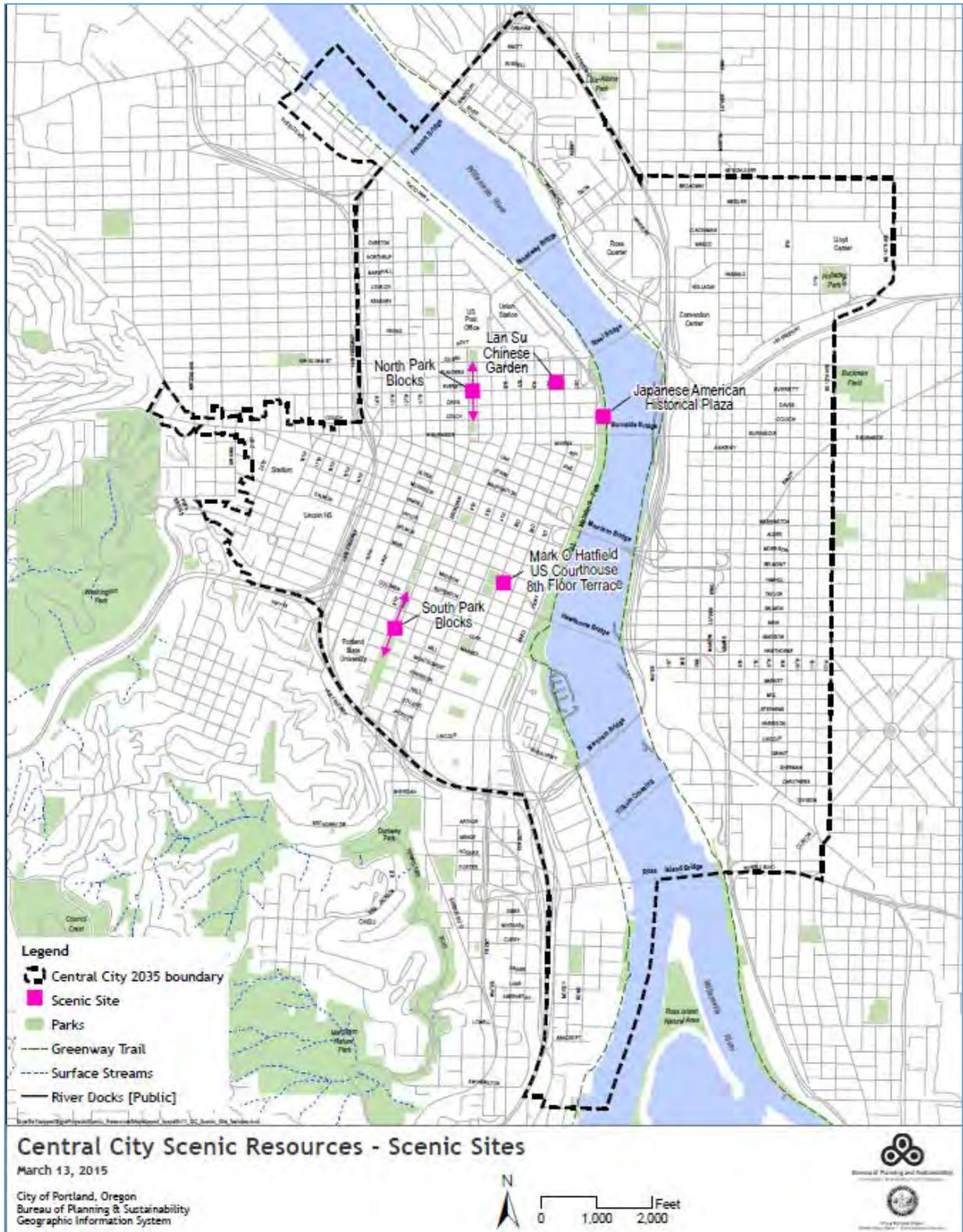
Photographs

A minimum of one photograph of the scenic site was taken using the same methodology as was used for viewpoints. The photograph was taken such that the general feel of the scenic site was captured. If necessary, additional photos were taken to better capture the scenic site from multiple vantage points.

7.b. Scenic Sites Results

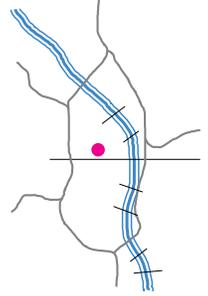
There are five scenic sites in the Central City:

1. North Park Blocks
-
-
4. Mark O Hatfield US Courthouse 8th Floor Rooftop Terrace
5. South Park Blocks



Map 13: Scenic Sites

NORTH PARK BLOCKS



Description

The North Park Blocks extend along a five-block stretch between NW Park Avenue and NW 8th Avenue 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.

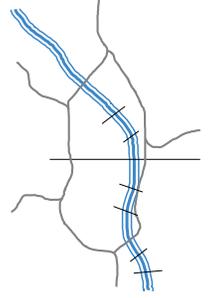
Management Considerations

- The large elm trees will eventually die and a decision will have to be made as to what to replace them with.
- Additional artwork and landscaped gardens could contribute to the scenic quality of the site.

Ownership: City of Portland

Status on other lists:

LAN SU CHINESE GARDEN



Description

The Lan Su Chinese Garden is located in Portland’s historic Old Town Chinatown neighborhood and is bounded by NW Everett Street, NW Flanders Street, NW 3rd Ave, and NW 2nd Ave. Built by Chinese artisans from Portland’s sister city Suzhou (home of China’s famous ancient gardens), it’s among the most authentic Chinese gardens outside of China. The garden contains hundreds of plant species native to China, more than fifty specimen trees, many rare and unusual shrubs and perennials, and curated collections of Magnolia, Peony, Camellia, Rhododendron, Osmanthus, and bamboo. In addition to being a beautiful botanical garden, the garden also includes several sculptural limestone Tai Hu rocks, decorative wooden reliefs, Chinese-style architecture, an 8,000 square foot lake, and 51 leak windows which allow visitors to see the view “leaking” through as they meander through the garden.

Management Considerations

- An entrance fee is required (\$9.50 for adults).

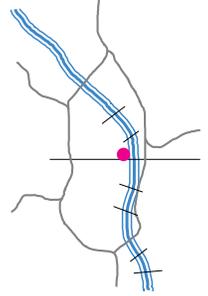
Ownership: City of Portland (contracts with Lan Su Chinese Garden non-profit to operate and maintain garden)

Status on other lists:



Lan Su Chinese Garden (Image Credit: InSapphoWeTrust)

JAPANESE AMERICAN HISTORICAL PLAZA



Description

The Japanese American Historical Plaza is located at the northern end of Tom McCall Waterfront Park, spanning from north of the Burnside Bridge to south of the Steel Bridge. Designed by the late Robert Murase, the plaza is lined with 100 ornamental cherry trees and includes multiple bronze columns that tell the story of the Japanese American experience. The cherry trees (*sakura*) were planted in 1990 to commemorate the Japanese Americans that were deported to inland internment camps during World War II. The plaza also includes twelve granite stones with poetry and a sculpture on the north end that commemorates the Sister City relationship between Sapporo, Japan and Portland. The Japanese American Historical Plaza has become the go-to destination to view cherry blossoms in Portland.

Management Considerations

- Cherry blossoms are extremely seasonal, with the blooming period generally lasting only a couple weeks.

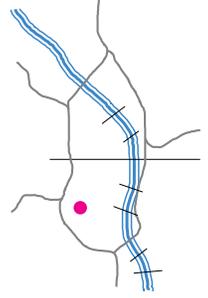
Ownership: City of Portland

Status on other lists: Located in National Register of Historic Places Skidmore/Old Town Historic District



Japanese American Historical Plaza

SOUTH PARK BLOCKS



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, one sycamore, and one 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.

Management Considerations

- The large elm trees will eventually die and a decision will have to be made as to what to replace them with.

Ownership: City of Portland

Status on other lists: Two trees on Heritage Tree list; National Register of Historic Places (pending)

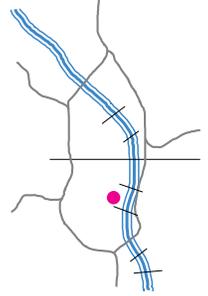


South Park Blocks

SCENIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

SCENIC SITE

MARK O. HATFIELD U.S. COURTHOUSE 8 STORY ROOFTOP TERRACE SCULPTURE GARDEN



Description

Located on the block bounded by SW Salmon Street, SW Main Street, SW 2nd Avenue and SW 3rd Avenue, the Mark O. Hatfield U.S. Courthouse includes a two-level rooftop terrace that houses a collection of sculptures by Tom Otterness. These sculptures were commissioned as part of the General Services Administration's Arts in Architecture program. The terrace also includes landscaped areas with benches and paperbark maples planted in rows. The terrace overlooks Lownsdale and Chapman Square Parks, with views of various downtown buildings and the Willamette River as well. The terrace is open to the public but there are no signs indicating the presence or location of the terrace and all visitors must go through security screening upon entering the building; thus, the site is not easily accessible.

Management Considerations

- Photo identification is required to enter the building and cameras must be checked at the front desk, though cell phone cameras are allowed.
- Elevator and ADA access are from the 9th floor.

Ownership: United States Government

Status on other lists:

Image not currently available



Downtown Portland from the Greenway Trail (east) circa 1988.