

BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING) RESOLUTION NO. 96-2340
A REFINEMENT PLAN FOR)
WILLAMETTE COVE TARGET AREA) Introduced by Mike Burton
AS OUTLINED IN THE OPEN SPACE) Executive Officer
IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN)

WHEREAS, in July 1992, Metro completed the Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan which identified a desired system of natural areas interconnected with greenways and trails; and

WHEREAS, at the election held on May 16, 1995, the electors of Metro approved Ballot Measure 26-26 which authorizes Metro to issue \$135.6 million in general obligation bonds to finance land acquisition and capital improvements pursuant to Metro's Open Spaces Program; and

WHEREAS, Willamette Cove was designated as a greenspace of regional significance in the Greenspaces Master Plan and identified as a regional target area in the Open Space, Parks and Streams Bond Measure; and


WHEREAS, in November 1995, the Metro Council adopted the Open Space Implementation Work Plan, which calls for a public "refinement" process whereby Metro adopts a Refinement Plan including objectives and a confidential tax-lot-specific map identifying priority properties for acquisition; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 95-2228^A authorizes the Executive Officer to purchase property with accepted acquisition guidelines as outlined in the Open Space Implementation Work Plan, now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED,

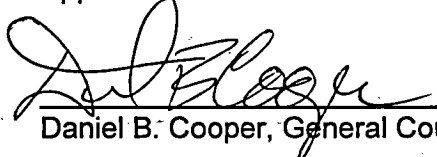
That the Metro Council adopts the Willamette Cove Refinement Plan, consisting of objectives and a confidential tax-lot-specific map identifying priority properties for acquisition, authorizing the Executive Officer to begin the acquisition of property and property rights as detailed in the Open Space Implementation Work Plan adopted in November, 1995 and in Resolution No. 95-2228^A.

ADOPTED by Metro Council this 13th day of June, 1996.



Jon Kvistad, Presiding Officer

Approved as to Form:



Daniel B. Cooper, General Counsel

Staff Report

CONSIDERATION OF RESOLUTION NO. 96-2340 FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING A REFINEMENT PLAN FOR THE WILLAMETTE COVE TARGET AREA AS OUTLINED IN THE OPEN SPACES IMPLEMENTATION WORK PLAN

Date: May 23, 1996

Presented by:

**Charlie Ciecko
Jim Desmond**

PROPOSED ACTION

Resolution No. 96-2340 requests approval of a refinement plan and adoption of target area boundaries and objectives for the Willamette Cove Target Area. These boundaries and objectives will be used to guide Metro in the implementation of the Open Space Bond Measure.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

The target area description in the Bond Measure Fact Sheet (authorized by Council Resolutions 95-2113, 94-2050 and 94-2029B) is as follows:

Portland, Willamette Cove. Acquire 27 acres along the east bank of the Willamette River between the St. Johns Bridge and the railroad bridge in North Portland.

Target Area Description:

Willamette Cove is located on the east side of the Willamette River, below and south of the steep bluff adjacent to Willamette Boulevard and west of the Burlington/Northern railroad bridge which crosses the Willamette River. The site is accessible from Edgewater Drive, a public right-of-way connecting to Willamette Boulevard. It was previously used for industrial purposes (housing a barrel plant and lumber/plywood mill) and as Portland's first dry dock facility through the 1940s. Remnants of buildings, docks, piers and other structures remain on the site. Since its abandonment as an industrial use property, it has regained some of its natural condition, although it is highly degraded from a wildlife habitat standpoint due to former industrial activities, the presence of invasive vegetation and relative isolation from wildlife corridors. Approximately 20% to 30% of the site is covered by trees, primarily young cottonwoods with scattered cherry, birch and madrone. Shrubs are dominated by invasive plant species of blackberry and scotch broom. A number of trails paralleling the river also are present.

The site is bordered on the east and north by active railroad lines. Between 25 and 40 trains per day cross the Burlington Northern railroad bridge on the eastern border, while four trains per day (two in each direction) currently run on the Union Pacific line along the property's northern edge. Union Pacific plans to increase traffic to six trains per day (three in each direction) in the near future. Traffic on the bridge could decrease slightly if Union Pacific and Southern Pacific merge, or increase if this becomes the high-speed passenger rail corridor between Portland and Seattle.

The Property directly to the east of the site (on the other side of the Burlington/Northern railway line), was formerly a creosote production facility owned by the McCormick & Baxter Company. It is now a federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) superfund site. The EPA and

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recently issued a record of decision, specifying cleanup and mitigation plans for the site and recommending that future use be limited to industrial or recreational activities. A local group, Willamette Associates for Kindness to the Environment in University Park (WAKEUP), provided technical assistance and review of the mitigation plan. The cleanup process is expected to take up to 15 years (to complete groundwater remediation). The property to the east of the McCormick & Baxter site, formerly owned by Reidel, Inc., was recently purchased for residential use. The University of Portland campus is located adjacent to the former Reidel property on the bluff overlooking the river.

A steel fabricating and storage facility is located due west of Willamette Cove. Lampros Steel leases the property, which was recently purchased by Schnitzer Steel. Due west of Lampros Steel is a Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) water testing facility (under construction). Cathedral Park, located directly underneath the St. Johns Bridge, with picnic facilities and a boat ramp, is adjacent to this property to the west. The Willamette Greenway designation overlays all properties along the river, including the BES and Schnitzer Steel properties and Willamette Cove. An easement has been granted and a paved trail will be constructed, adjacent to the river, on the BES property. No easement has been granted on the Schnitzer Steel property.

The Peninsula Crossing Trail will run between Willamette Boulevard (just north of Willamette Cove) and Marine Drive and provide connections to Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Refuge and the Columbia River. Design of the trail is underway and construction is planned to begin in 1997. The Portland Bureau of Planning is scheduled to undertake a community plan for the St. Johns area in 1998. Potential land use changes for the McCormick & Baxter and Reidel sites likely will be a subject of the plan. In addition, a group of North Portland residents are advocating a master planning process for the "North Beach" area which encompasses the waterfront between the Swan Island Lagoon and Cathedral Park.

Refinement Process

The Open Spaces Implementation Work Plan adopted by the Metro Council in November 1995, requires that a refinement plan be submitted to the Council for approval for each target area. The Refinement Plan will contain objectives and a confidential tax-lot-specific map identifying priority properties for acquisition, enabling Metro to acquire priority property and property rights as detailed in the Open Space Implementation Work Plan and in Resolution No. 95-2228. Resolution No. 95-2228 "authorizes the Executive Officer to acquire real property and property interests subject to the requirements of the *Acquisition Parameters* and *Due Diligence* guidelines of the Open Spaces Implementation Work Plan." Twenty-seven acres at Willamette Cove have been already acquired under this authority.

In developing the Willamette Cove Refinement Plan, Metro staff and consultants (Cogan Owens Cogan) visited the site; reviewed and analyzed relevant maps, planning, tax assessment and other documents, and conducted other research related to the site. Seventeen individuals representing governmental agencies, adjacent property owners, natural resource experts and neighborhood, nonprofit and other groups were interviewed; their comments are summarized in Appendix A.

Metro staff and consultants conducted a public workshop on May 6, 1996 at the University of Portland in North Portland to discuss the proposed refinement plan recommendations.

Approximately 24 people attended and their comments are summarized in Appendix B. A biological report by David Smith, an independent consultant with Wildlife Dynamics, is attached as Appendix C.

Findings:

- The site is well-situated near a number of parks, natural areas and other community facilities. Cathedral Park is located approximately one-quarter mile west of the western edge of the Willamette Cove site on the Willamette River (with a Willamette Greenway designation running between it and Willamette Cove). Forest Park is directly across the river from Cathedral Park and can be reached via the St. Johns Bridge. The southern terminus of the Peninsula Crossing Trail, which will provide access to Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Refuge and the Columbia River, will be located above the site on the other side of Willamette Boulevard. Other potential linkage opportunities exist going south as far as Mock's Crest.
- Stakeholders strongly support future linkages to Cathedral Park and the Peninsula Crossing Trail, as well as south to at least Mock's Crest and perhaps beyond.
- The University of Portland is located approximately three-quarters of a mile east of Willamette Cove. Stakeholders support future linkages to the University and the adjacent McCormick & Baxter and Reidel sites, particularly if they are developed for residential use.
- A number of conditions may constrain more intensive park development or use of the site. A swimming beach is not feasible at the cove, in at least the near term, due to contamination from the McCormick & Baxter site. Train traffic presents a potential safety hazard and it is recommended that Metro work with the Burlington Northern and the Union Pacific railroads to address this issue. Though most stakeholders support river access to the site for nonmotorized boats, some say that potential conflicts with heavy river traffic to port facilities may limit such use.
- The site currently provides moderate wildlife habitat value in an area that has been significantly impacted by development. A summary of its assets and limitations is provided in the aforementioned Appendix C.
- Invasive plant species -- blackberry and scotch broom -- dominate the shrub layer and will present a challenge for enhancement of the site.

Regional Parks and Greenspaces Advisory Committee

A presentation of the staff report was given by Metro staff at a public meeting at the Metro Regional Center on May 21, 1996. This analysis and the resulting objectives were adopted by unanimous vote of the Regional Parks and Greenspaces Advisory Committee.

- Work with the University of Portland to establish linkage between future trail and the campus.
- Work with the Burlington Northern Railroad to investigate possibility of access to the Peninsula Crossing Trail from their right-of-way (the trench).
- Work with City of Portland Parks and Recreation Bureau regarding stabilization and future master planning of Willamette Cove site for possible public recreation use.

Executive Officer's Recommendation

The Executive Officer recommends passage of Resolution No. 96-2340.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recently issued a record of decision, specifying cleanup and mitigation plans for the site and recommending that future use be limited to industrial or recreational activities. A local group, Willamette Associates for Kindness to the Environment in University Park (WAKEUP), provided technical assistance and review of the mitigation plan. The cleanup process is expected to take up to 15 years (to complete groundwater remediation). The property to the east of the McCormick & Baxter site, formerly owned by Reidel, Inc., was recently purchased for residential use. The University of Portland campus is located adjacent to the former Reidel property on the bluff overlooking the river.

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Refinement Process

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Metro staff and consultants conducted a public workshop on May 6, 1996 at the University of Portland in North Portland to discuss the proposed refinement plan recommendations.

GOAL

Acquire a 27-acre anchor site along the east bank of the Willamette River in North Portland and establish continuous public access along or near the river, from Cathedral Park south to the University of Portland.

OBJECTIVES

Tier I Objectives

- Establish linkage between the Willamette Cove site and Cathedral Park through property acquisition, easement or other public access.
- Develop a safe and convenient linkage from Peninsula Crossing Trail to Willamette Cove using existing right-of-way.
- In cooperation with WAKEUP or other partners, acquire foreclosed properties along the bluff from Multnomah County.

Tier II Objectives

- Establish linkage through McCormick & Baxter and Reidel sites from Willamette Cove site to University of Portland and Mock's Crest.
- Provide access to Willamette Cove site through Open Meadow Learning Center for environmental education activities.

Partnership Recommendations

- Work with DEQ, WAKEUP and others to define connections to and future uses of McCormick & Baxter site.
- Work with property owner and others to define connections to Reidel site.
- Work with City of Portland Bureau of Planning to define future uses of adjacent sites, with goal of public access along the river from Cathedral Park to the University of Portland, preferably along the riverfront.
- Work with Port of Portland and Burlington Northern Railroad to address railroad safety and access issues.
- Work with the City of Portland, other agencies and neighborhood and interest groups to improve connections from Cathedral Park to Forest Park across the St. Johns Bridge.
- Coordinate with adjacent public and private property owners to maintain and improve native landscape and visual backdrops.

- Work with the University of Portland to establish linkage between future trail and the campus.
- Work with the Burlington Northern Railroad to investigate possibility of access to the Peninsula Crossing Trail from their right-of-way (the trench).
- Work with City of Portland Parks and Recreation Bureau regarding stabilization and future master planning of Willamette Cove site for possible public recreation use.

Executive Officer's Recommendation

The Executive Officer recommends passage of Resolution No. 96-2350.

APPENDIX A

Willamette Cove

Summary of Comments from Stakeholder Interviews

General Consensus

- Maintain the site in a natural to semi-natural state
- Passive (dispersed) recreation with access to river
- Site needs extensive remediation; Metro should plant native vegetation to restore riparian areas
- No motorized boat use or marina (due, in part, to proximity to Cathedral Park boat ramp)
- Connect to Cathedral Park with trail along river
- Connect to Peninsula Crossing Trail and 40-Mile Loop Trail system
- If possible, connect to future trail or park going south (upriver) to McCormick and Baxter site, Reidel site and Swan Island
- Improve connection across St. Johns Bridge to Forest Park
- Vehicle access should end at a gate next to the Edgewater Condominium entrance; parking could be provided on the site of the abandoned filling station on Willamette Blvd.

Other Viewpoints/ Additional Issues

- Trail to Cathedral Park should be parallel to railroad right-of-way
- No boat use of any type should be permitted -- potential conflict with commercial navigation
- Pollution from McCormick & Baxter, existing structures and rail traffic present safety hazards
- Site needs an attraction like a museum
- Keeping site in natural state will attract homeless and undesirable behavior
- University of Portland traffic could be routed through tunnel around to Terminal 4; track along site could be abandoned
- Road from near Cathedral Park (two lanes with sidewalks, bike path, lights and plantings) should provide access to Willamette Cove, McCormick & Baxter and Reidel sites

- Site, with McCormick & Baxter and Reidel properties, could help accommodate future regional need for residential development.

Stakeholders Interviewed

Pam Arden, Kenton Neighborhood Association

Bowen Blair and Pam Wiley, The Trust for Public Land

Laurel Buhnan, University Park Neighborhood Association

Jim Desmond, Metro Open Spaces Program

Michael Harrison, City of Portland, Bureau of Planning

Mike Houck, Audubon Society

Tom Kloster, Neighborhood Resident, Metro Transportation Planner

Lee Poe, Portsmouth Neighborhood Association

Dave Soloos, University Park Neighborhood Association

Ruth Tuttle, Adjacent Property Owner

Ed Washington, Metro Councilor

Clarice White, Ron and Emily Hernandez, Cathedral Park Neighborhood Association

APPENDIX B
Willamette Cove Public Workshop
Comments and Questions

Monday, May 6, 1996 **Attended by approximately 20 persons**

The following comments were made by citizens:

1. Find out who owns the property between University of Portland and the Union Pacific rail line, and partner with that owner to allow the de facto trail that exists in an old public street right-of-way on the side of the bluff.
2. Any trail connecting Willamette Cove to Cathedral Park must go along the river's edge, and not the Union Pacific rail line. The businesses between Willamette Cove and Cathedral Park cross the rail line thousands of times each day with loaders, trucks and fork lifts, creating a hazard to pedestrians.
3. Edgewater Street should be reserved from industrial use. The concern is that the McCormick and Baxter and Reidel sites will redevelop into industrial sites and use Edgewater for access to Willamette Boulevard. Metro should discuss this with Portland Department of Transportation.
4. Why not a riverfront trail and a rail side trail at Willamette Cove? Metro should consider a loop trail at Willamette Cove - the trail would go along the rail line, and return via the riverside.
5. A residential developer recently purchased the Reidel site, and is planning a large development. Developer is trying to get Union Pacific to abandon the railroad. Port of Portland representative, Katie Tobie, said there is little chance of an abandonment occurring.
6. Concern was stated about pedestrians and bicyclists crossing Willamette Boulevard to reach Edgewater Street. A partnership with Burlington Northern Railroad was proposed to develop the de-facto trail that currently runs down from the Peninsula Crossing trail into the railroad cut, under Willamette Boulevard, exiting near the southern property line at Willamette Cove. Such a trail would totally avoid the Willamette Boulevard crossing.
7. Tier II connections that should be pursued exist between Willamette Cove and Mocks Crest, connecting the university via an unused City of Portland street right-of-way running down the bluff.
8. Richmond Avenue should be connected to the Willamette Cove site from the north (legal access exists now).
9. There are "bad characters" down in the cove on a regular basis now. Hopefully public awareness, a gate, and increased passive public use will make Willamette Cove less attractive to the negative element.
10. PDOT has tentatively approved the installation of a gate on Edgewater near the entrance to the Condominium project (will help address ATV trespass issue).
11. Metro should pursue the opportunity to connect Willamette Cove to Portland's 40-mile loop trail system, via the Peninsula Crossing Trail, the St. Johns Bridge, and beyond.
12. The gas station property at Willamette and Edgewater could be a useful addition to Willamette Cove, if complemented by a crosswalk and crossing light.

Appendix C
Willamette Cove Biological Resources Overview
April 24, 1996

A 27-acre parcel on the north bank of the Willamette River known as the Willamette Cove was purchased by Metro as part of the open spaces land acquisition program. Wildlife Dynamics, Inc., (WDI) conducted a reconnaissance-level investigation on the site to briefly describe the biological resources. A detailed evaluation of the site is not required at this stage of the Open Spaces Program. In the future, a management plan will be completed for the area and biological resources and enhancement goals will be identified.

The site was used as a dry dock through World War II and likely had miscellaneous industrial uses for some time after that. The site appears to have been "abandoned" for many years, although relic infrastructure--e.g., pilings, paved surfaced, and concrete walls--remain on the site. Natural revegetation of the site has occurred since disturbances have been reduced.

The study site is bordered to the south by the railroad bridge and McCormick & Baxter parcel (Superfund site), the Lampros Steel site to the north, low and medium density residential housing to the east, and the Willamette River to the west. The study site is somewhat isolated because of topography and the past and current land uses along this portion of the Willamette River. The site is buffered from adjacent residential uses by the vegetated, steep bluff that runs from just north of the site to the west to the University of Portland to near Swan Island. This slope is the only contiguous vegetated corridor linking the study site to other open space areas such as the bank of the river near the Swan Island industrial terminal (Port of Portland).

The site is currently providing moderate wildlife habitat value in an area that has been significantly impacted by development. The most important habitat features at this time are its relatively large size and connection to the river and the vegetated bluff. Aerial photographs reveal that approximately 20 to 30 percent of the site is covered with trees, particularly along the river and the southern portion of the parcel. Dominate trees are young cottonwoods with scattered willow, cherry, birch and madrone. The establishment of trees will be limited on many portions of the site because of fill, debris and pavement. Invasive species--blackberry and scotch broom--dominant the shrub layer and will present a challenge for enhancement of the site. The herbaceous layer is well established in most areas, although non-native species are the most prevalent. Special habitat features, such as downed logs, snags, older trees, and diverse native vegetation important for many species of wildlife, are lacking on the site, thus reducing its overall wildlife habitat value.

