

# OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS



*There are here three falls on a line of rocks extending across the river, which forms the bed of the upper channel. The water is precipitated through deep abraded gorges, and falls perhaps forty feet at an angle of about twenty degrees. It was a beautiful sight when viewed from a distance, but it became grand and almost sublime as we approached it nearer. I mounted the rocks and stood over the highest fall, and although the roar of the cataract was almost deafening, and the rays of the bright sun reflected from the white and glittering foam threatened to deprive me of sight, yet I became so absorbed in the contemplation of the scene, and the reflections which were involuntarily excited, as to forget every thing else for the time...*

John Kirk Townsend (1835)





## Opportunities + Constraints Analysis for the Willamette Falls Legacy Project

The Willamette Falls Legacy Project is an opportunity to establish a vision and framework master plan for the former Blue Heron Mill site in downtown Oregon City. The project is fascinating and complex. The master planning team for the project has spent the past 2 months reviewing previous detailed research on the site prepared by a wide range of consultants and public agencies. The team has also walked the site extensively and toured every building as well as surrounding neighborhoods and open spaces. The goal is a thorough understanding of the site's physical, economic and community context that creates a basis for future planning and design.

This research and site investigation has been summarized in a set of photos, maps and diagrams that constitute the Existing Conditions report. Within this report we have distilled the essential conditions that will most inform subsequent planning work into a series of Opportunities and Constraints diagrams.

These diagrams are organized according to the project's 4 Core Values.

- **Public Access:** ensure access to the falls and places for people to gather
- **Economic Redevelopment:** provide jobs and prosperity
- **Healthy Habitat:** maintain, restore and protect the unique ecosystem of fish, wildlife and plants along the river
- **Historic and Cultural Interpretation:** provide opportunities to connect to heritage and history as well as current cultural practices related to the falls

In this project's context, a Constraint is considered as a characteristic of the site's condition that limits or represents a challenge to the site's rehabilitation and redevelopment. These challenges are not insurmountable, but they will require special attention and creativity to overcome. Opportunities are positive elements that can and should inform and shape subsequent physical planning and placemaking efforts. *(The two categories are not always exclusive, as some may consider a Constraint to be an Opportunity and vice versa.)*


The information presented in these diagrams will serve to inform and direct the vision for the Willamette Falls Legacy Project. Initial scenarios guided by these Opportunities and Constraints will be refined into a series of master plan alternatives which will then be blended into one preferred plan, which will serve as the vision for the site and will influence the drafting of a land use plan and implementation strategy.

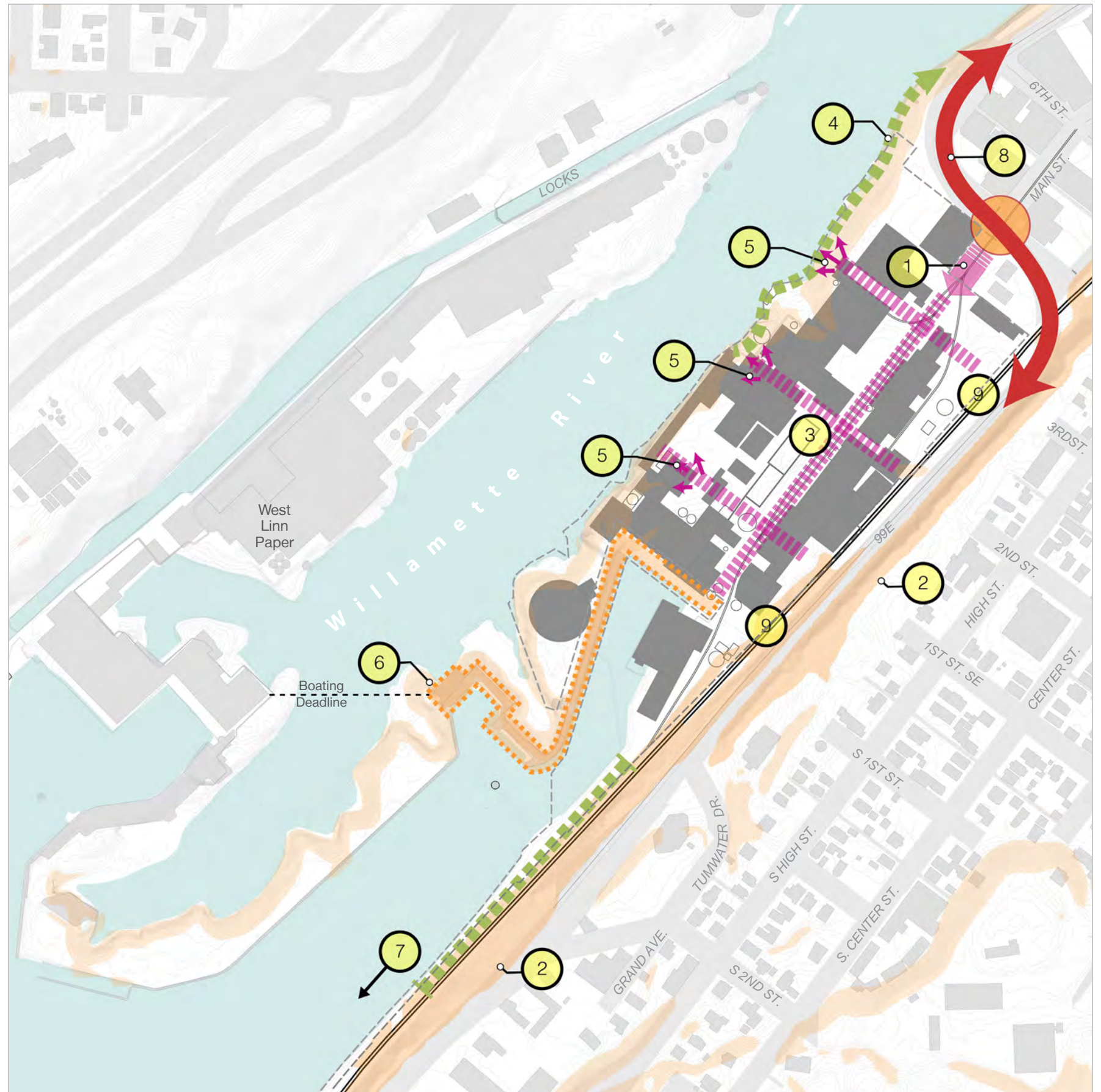
# PUBLIC ACCESS: CONSTRAINTS

## VEHICULAR CONSTRAINTS

- 1** Single Access Point to Site and Challenging Turns off HWY 99
- 2** Bluff Isolates Site from Adjacent Community and Street Grid
- 3** Mill Development Eliminated Original Street Grid

## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE CONSTRAINTS

- 4** Waterfront Access Challenging with Highly-Modified River's Edge
  - 5** Existing Mill Development Obstructs Views and Connections to Willamette River
  - 6** Dam and Falls Public Access Limited due to Ongoing Management and Maintenance
  - 7** Potential Trail to Canemah must Cross UPRR
  - 8** High Speed Traffic on HWY 99
  - 9** Union Pacific Railroad Physical Barrier to Site
-  Steep Slopes



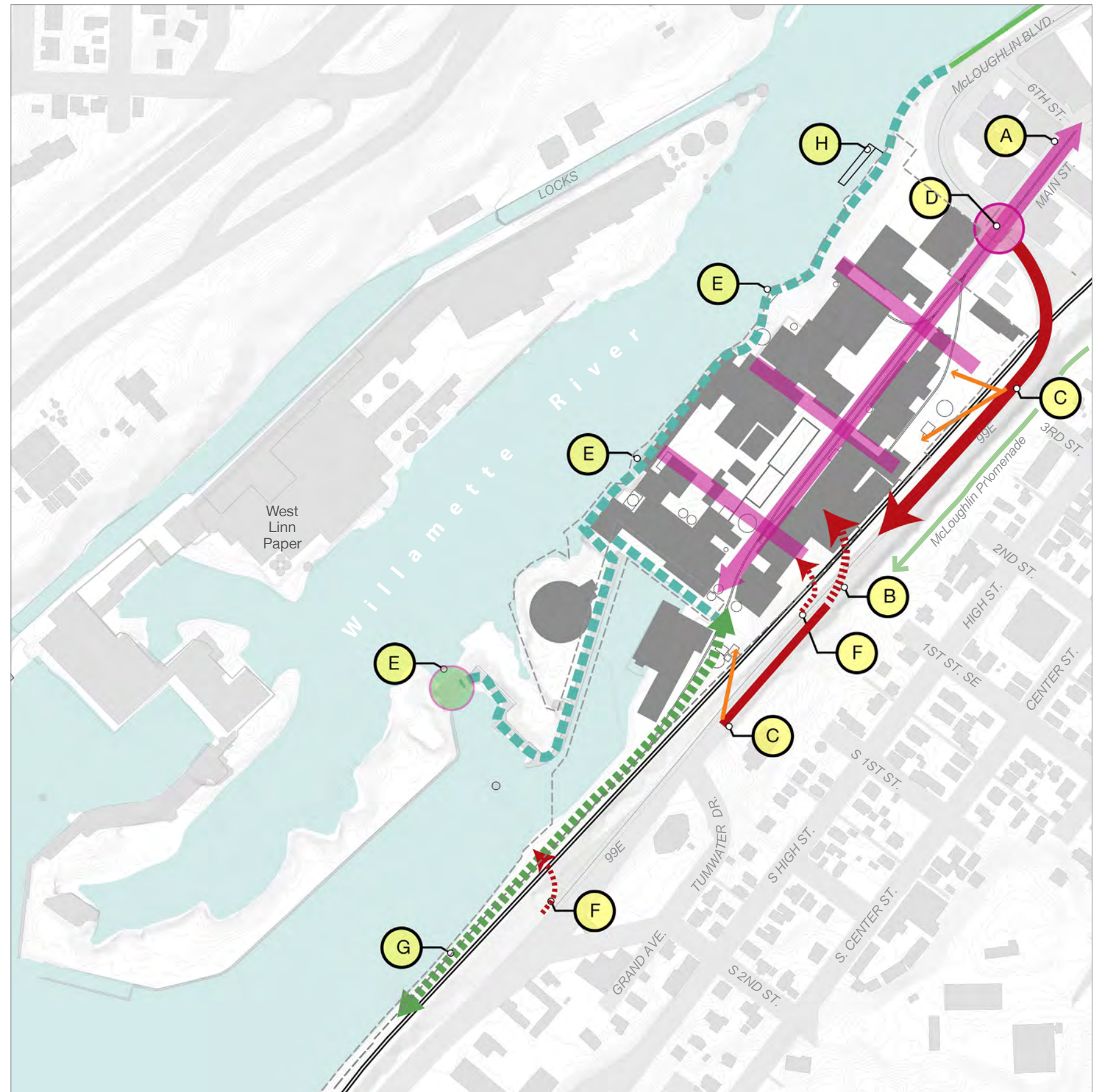
# PUBLIC ACCESS: OPPORTUNITIES

## VEHICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

- A** Extend Main Street into Site and Re-Establish Original Street Grid
- B** Utilize Grade Change between HWY 99 and Site for Potential Elevated Access
- C** HWY 99 Provides Good Visibility of Site and Future Development
- D** Improve Intersection for Site Access

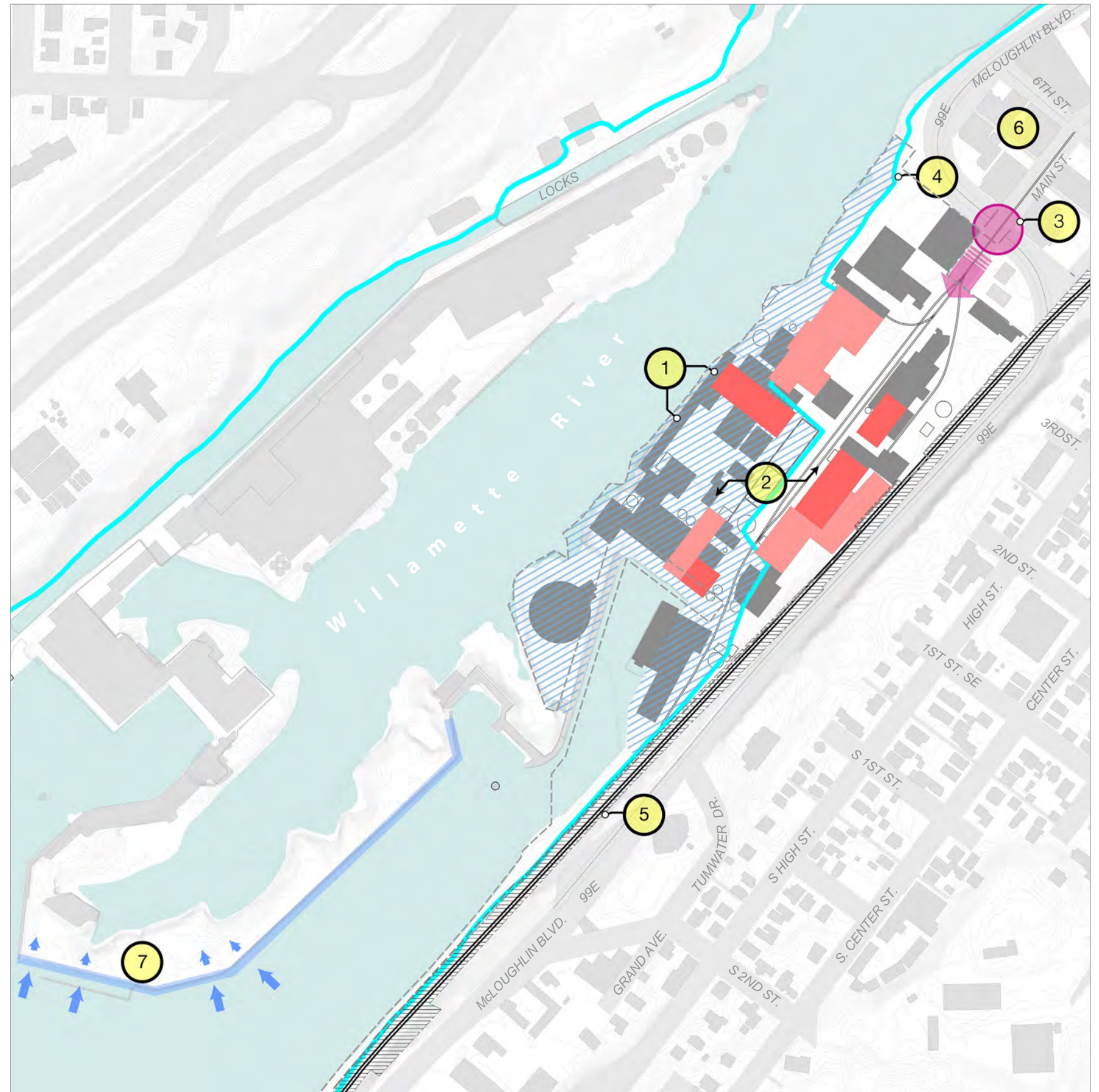
## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE OPPORTUNITIES

- E** River's Edge Offers Exciting Experience
- F** Possible Pedestrian/Bike Bridge over Railroad Corridor
- G** Opportunity for Trail to Canemah
- H** Possibility to Reuse Boat Docks at Site






# ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT: CONSTRAINTS

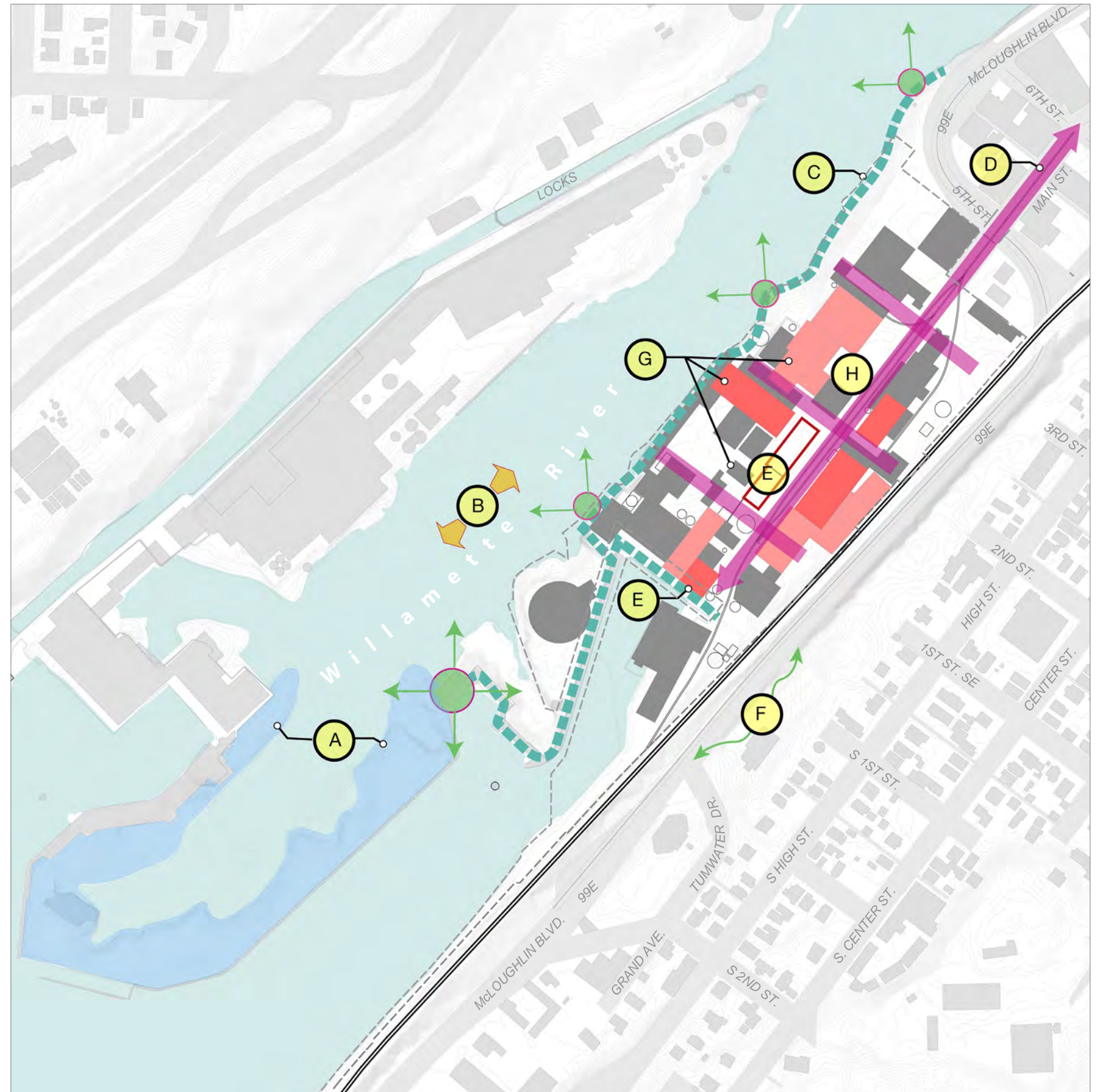
- 1** Existing Building Foundations & Structure are Complicated and Require Upgrades for Future Use
- 2** Infrastructure Challenges:
  - Bedrock is Difficult to Adjust
  - Site Under-served by Utilities
- 3** Single Point of Access
- 4** +/- 12 Acres in Floodplain
- 5** UPRR: Noise, Vibration, Ownership
- 6** Market Limitations of Oregon City
- 7** In Summer High Tourist Season, Falls at Lowest Flow




# ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITIES

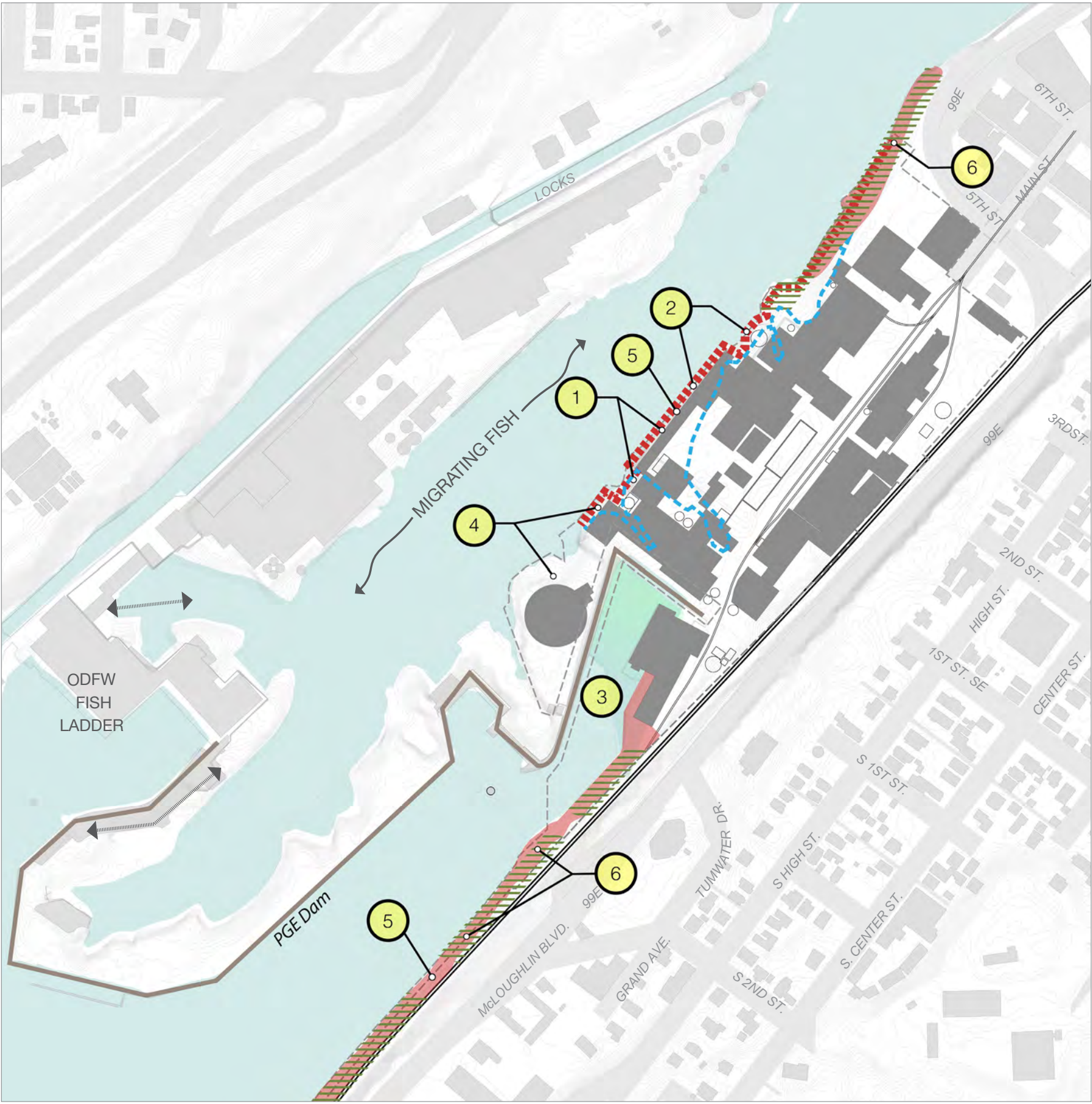
- A** Falls Have a Legacy of Human History and Culture. Potential to become a Significant Tourist Destination
- B** Dramatic Setting can Drive Development Value Beyond Current Market
- C** Complex Shoreline can Provide Dramatic Views and Opportunities to Interact with River
- D** Re-Establish Historic Main Street and Street Grid and Contribute to Oregon City Downtown Vibrancy
- E** Re-Use of Historic Structures can Build Authentic Sense of Place
- F** Adjacent Topography Allows for Site Views. Bluff along HWY 99 Helps Buffer Residential Area from New, Larger Site Buildings
- G** Opportunity for New Employment in this Regional Center
- H** Potential to Develop Innovative, Sustainable Infrastructure and Buildings

-  Existing Historic Buildings with High Potential for Rehabilitation and Reuse
-  Existing Clusters of Buildings with Some Potential for Re-Use
-  Existing Buildings with Limited Value for Re-Use



# HEALTHY HABITAT: CONSTRAINTS

- 1** Minimal Riparian Soil Limits Vegetated Habitat
  - 2** Highly Altered River's Edge Caused by Filling and Building over Natural Shoreline
  - 3** Lack of Lagoon Water Circulation
  - 4** Unique Plant Communities and Basalt Outcroppings Impacted by Encroaching Buildings
  - 5** Gaps in Habitat
  - 6** Invasive Vegetation
-  Historic Shoreline

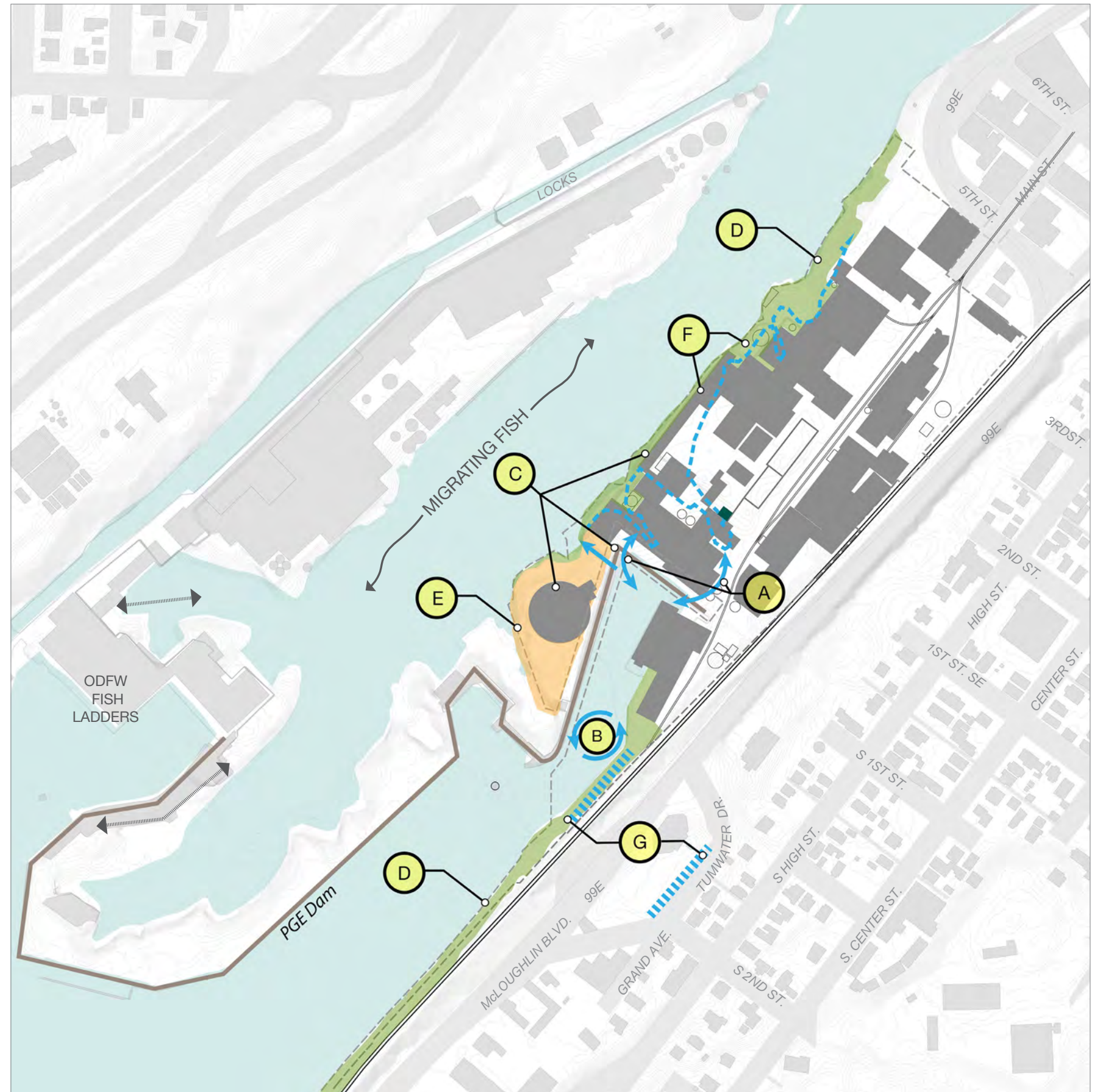




# HEALTHY HABITAT: OPPORTUNITIES

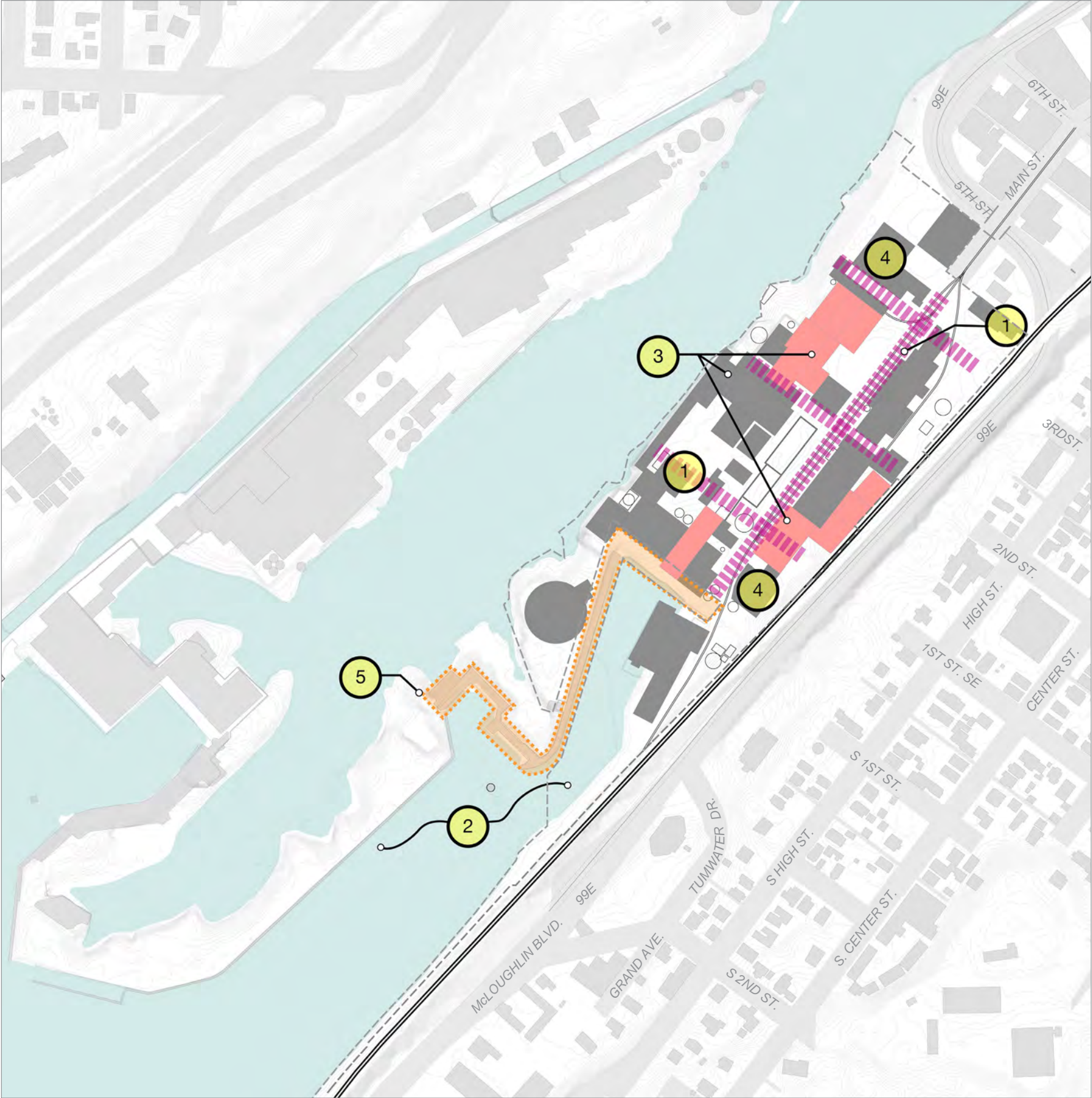
- A** Restore Water Flow to Help Flush Lagoon
- B** Provide Circulation of Lagoon Water to Prevent Overgrowth of Algae and Invasive Vegetation
- C** Remove Some Waterfront Structures for Habitat Restoration
- D** Restore Shoreline Habitat and Plant Native Vegetation. Remove Industrial Debris, Riprap and Invasive Plant Species
- E** Restore Unique Plant Communities and Basalt Rock Outcroppings
- F** Provide Additional Roughness at River's Edge to Create Fish Habitat
- G** Treat Stormwater from Neighborhoods and HWY 99 Prior to Discharge into Willamette River

 Historic Shoreline






# HISTORIC & CULTURAL INTERPRETATION: CONSTRAINTS

- 1** Development has Eliminated Street Grid, Obstructing River View Corridors
- 2** Dam and Industry Have Changed Historic Hydrology
- 3** Buildings Significantly Altered through Incremental Industrial Development
- 4** Certain Buildings' Functions Make Reuse Difficult
- 5** PGE Ownership and Operation of Dam will Require Public Access Easements and Coordination



# HISTORIC & CULTURAL INTERPRETATION: OPPORTUNITIES

- A** Dramatic Visibility of Falls Provides Opportunity for Cultural Interpretation and Education of Native History
- B** West Linn Paper Co Demonstrates Site's Industrial Character
- C** Remnants of Mill Infrastructure Provide Opportunity to Interpret Site's Industrial Legacy
- D** Opportunity to Re-Introduce Historical Street Grid and Energize Main Street through Extension into Site
- E** Selective Restoration of Historic Structures can Directly Link New Development to Site's Industrial History

-  Existing Historic Buildings with High Potential for Rehabilitation and Reuse
-  Existing Clusters of Buildings with Some Potential for Re-Use
-  Existing Buildings with Limited Value for Re-Use

