



City of Oregon City

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Staff Report

File Number: 13-368

Agenda Date: 6/5/2013

Status: Agenda Ready

To: City Commission

Agenda #: 3b.

From: Community Development Director Tony Konkol

File Type: Presentation

SUBJECT:

Willamette Falls Legacy Project - Walker Macy Presentation

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

No action requested.

BACKGROUND:

Walker Macy, a leader in landscape architecture, urban design and planning has been selected to lead the Willamette Falls Legacy Project visioning and master planning process for the City of Oregon City and our partners. Walker Macy was the unanimous choice of a multi-jurisdictional, stakeholder and interest group selection committee and was agreed to by the Bankruptcy Trustee and the Community Development Director. The proposed contract for the project is anticipated to be considered by the City Commission at the June 19th, 2013 meeting.

Walker Macy, a Portland-based firm, emerged from the competitive process that drew talent from the region and beyond and they bring a very strong group of professionals that not only understand the unique nature of the project, they also share our passion for this special place. The planning process marks the next step for the property at the south end of downtown Oregon City, where paper was manufactured for more than 100 years. The resulting vision is expected to reconnect Oregonians with North America's second largest waterfall by volume, as well as an important cultural site for native tribes and wildlife habitat along the Willamette River. The process will also support Oregon City's vision for the future and reinvigorate the downtown as a hub of employment, shopping, business, tourism and housing.

In early 2011, Blue Heron Paper Company permanently closed operations, laying off 175 employees and the property was subsequently put up for sale under the management of the Bankruptcy Trustee. As the leader of the new master planning and visioning process, Oregon City has entered into a collaborative planning agreement with the Bankruptcy Trustee to complete this project. The public partners hope planning for the property will create an opportunity to allow visitors to experience the power of Willamette Falls, offer cultural and historical interpretation, and restore habitat along the Willamette River. Meanwhile, by eliminating uncertainty, this work will prepare the rest of the site for private investment and economic redevelopment. The partnership remains committed to being a catalyst for the property's transformation, working toward four core values: economic redevelopment, public access, historic and cultural interpretation and habitat restoration.

