



Legislation Text

File #: PC 17-157, **Version:** 1

Willamette Falls Riverwalk Master Plan

RECOMMENDED ACTION (Motion):

No action is required.

BACKGROUND:

Metro and Oregon City staff will present an overview of the Willamette Falls Riverwalk Master Plan and respond to questions from the Commission.

Willamette Falls is one of the nation's most beautiful and historic natural wonders and is the second largest waterfall by volume in North America. It has long been an important cultural and gathering place for Native American Tribes. Industrial development, beginning in the 1830s, blocked the falls from access and greatly modified the riverbank with manmade industrial structures. With the closure of the Blue Heron Paper Company in February of 2011, the opportunity arose to bring public access to the east bank of Willamette Falls for the first time in over 150 years.

The riverwalk master plan further refines the overall plan for the Willamette Falls Legacy Project and is a result of a two-year design process developed in collaboration with the City of Oregon City, Metro, Clackamas County, the State of Oregon, PGE, Falls Legacy LLC, confederated tribes and thousands of community members. Other engagement included conversations with agencies to understand the complexities and science of the site, and meetings with focus groups and state partners.

The master plan provides a long-term vision and implementation strategy to guide future public use and development of the riverwalk. This master plan document establishes project goals and objectives, key public uses, outlines site resources and conditions, and summarizes the planning process. It also lays out a framework for implementation, including phasing, future maintenance and operational needs, and funding.

The overall riverwalk concept design is an aspirational plan that anticipates future funding commitments, grants and fundraising efforts. It is anticipated that the design of the riverwalk will be built in phases as funding becomes available and each phase will submit for individual land use approval. Goals for Phase 1 include providing a prominent view of the falls, safe and secure interim access and some building demolition that will prepare the site for future phases of the riverwalk and reduce barriers for redevelopment. Phase 1 will include habitat restoration work, historic and cultural interpretive elements and provide a viewing area in the Mill H building and Boiler Plant complex.

As the primary agency whom funded the draft master plan, the Metro Council preliminary reviewed the plan at a work session on November 21, 2017 and is accepting public comments until December 13, 2017. Metro Council anticipates adoption of the master plan by resolution in January of 2018.

Within a few months, a Resolution will be presented to the Oregon City, City Commission for review. The Resolution memorializes the master planning process and is an important next step to making a reality of the vision that thousands of Oregonians have helped to create. Later in 2018, the project team will submit a land use application to the Oregon City Planning Division for review.