ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Columbia River Maritime Museum cover photo by Michael Mathers.
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Appendices are available in a separate document upon request to the City of Astoria, Community Development Department.
Due to its beautiful location along the Columbia River, burgeoning artist community, unique civic character and strategic investment, the City of Astoria is a growing and vital community. Astoria’s riverfront and downtown have seen new development and redevelopment projects and proposals in recent years. Projects include the Liberty Theater, Hotel Elliott, Red Building, Pier 39, Cannery Pier Hotel, and new residential development. While such projects have helped transform and revitalize Astoria’s economy, the pace of change has caused concern that the community’s quality could be affected.

Some of the concerns stem from changes to the physical or built environment. Others stem from how these projects could affect the diversity of the local population, including increases in the City’s seasonal residents. Key concerns relate to the height, size and appearance of new buildings; physical and visual access to the Columbia River; impacts to the historic nature of the riverfront; the extent of potential additional overwater development; a desire to maintain and create new open spaces within the riverfront area; and the goal of continuing to plan the future of Astoria for Astorians.

To address these issues, the City has worked with the community to establish a comprehensive riverfront vision, ensuring equitable riverfront growth by balancing development, and both public and private investment in the area with the desire to preserve Astoria’s quality of life and connection to its unique history. The Draft Vision Plan is a culmination of the work completed from spring 2008 through summer 2009 through an intensive community involvement process. Over this time, hundreds of Astorians participated in steering committee meetings, stakeholder interviews and surveys, four community-wide forums, three open houses and additional community meetings. During this time key elements of the Draft Astoria Riverfront Vision were on display throughout the City, including displays related to core vision principles, land use and urban design recommendations, natural features, parks and open spaces and transportation and other public improvements.

This Vision Plan attempts to balance a variety of sometimes competing viewpoints and objectives among Astoria’s citizens. It addresses issues and goals related to natural resource and scenic values, community character, private property rights, transportation mobility, historic preservation, and a variety of other topics. The Plan is built around the following core principles:

- Promote physical and visual access to the river.
- Encourage a mix of uses that supports Astoria’s “working waterfront” and the City’s economy.
- Support new development that respects Astoria’s historic character.
- Protect the health of the river and adjacent natural areas.
- Enhance the River Trail.

More specific strategies for achieving these principles are described in the following sections of this Plan.
Creating and articulating a vision for an area as large and diverse as the Astoria riverfront is challenging. The Plan area is approximately four miles long and home to a very diverse set of landscapes, homes, businesses, people and viewpoints. To facilitate and organize the vision, the project team developed a four-area concept that recognizes the traditional makeup of the area and some distinct differences between subareas within the riverfront planning area. The four areas include the Bridge Vista, Urban Core, Civic Greenway and Neighborhood Greenway areas which are illustrated and described on the map on the following page.

Some of the Plan’s key recommendations include the following:

- Plan for lower scale and reduced future overwater development, particularly in the Civic Greenway and Neighborhood Greenway areas to maintain views of the river and a sense of open space and connection to the natural landscape along the riverfront.
- Development should maintain a sense of openness along the River Trail by setting buildings back from the trail, stepping back the upper stories of buildings and creating opportunities for passageways, courtyards and other open areas within new developments.
- Create a design review process and/or new design review standards to ensure that new development respects the community’s unique character.
- Create opportunities for a modest scale residential neighborhood on land between Mill Pond and Safeway that is set back from the River Trail, incorporates open areas, is characterized by a modest scale of development and is targeted to working families and other full-time Astoria residents.
- Continue to improve the River Trail.
**Four-Area Map**

- **Bridge Vista Area**: Provide opportunities for viewing slopes, with accessible viewpoints and the Riverwalk, which allow for an optimal view of the river’s edge. Enhance the river’s edge with plantings that frame views and create a linear park along the edge of the river and lagoon. Highlight the river’s natural edge by framing views and creating path/trail systems that reflect the river’s movement. Use plantings and landscaping that provide riverbank restoration and increase habitat.
- **Urban Core Area**: Provide opportunities for urban design, with accessible viewpoints and the Riverwalk, which allow for an optimal view of the river’s edge. Enhance the river’s edge with plantings that frame views and create a linear park along the edge of the river and lagoon. Highlight the river’s natural edge by framing views and creating path/trail systems that reflect the river’s movement.
- **Civic Greenway Area**: In most cases, enhancements to the river’s edge include open space and topography, which allows for the development of civic elements such as a promenade, Riverwalk, and other amenities.
- **Neighborhood Greenway Area**: Note: The photographs on this map are examples of waterfront treatments from other communities.

**Source**: Clatsop County, City of Astoria, Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development.

Funding provided in part by the State of Oregon.

**December 2009**