

# WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY PLAN

CITY OF SALEM  
September 10, 1979

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Legislature provided for establishment of the Willamette River Greenway Program in 1973 by enactment of Oregon Revised Statutes 390.310-390.368. The Greenway legislation was unique in that it mandated development and maintenance of the Greenway through the cooperative efforts of State agencies and local governments. Actual coordination of such efforts rests with the Oregon Department of Transportation (DOT). DOT was directed to prepare a plan for the Greenway in cooperation with units of local governments. The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) has the responsibility to approve, reject or modify the DOT Greenway Plan and to respond to violations of the Greenway Law and Goal. Local government is required to do the following:

- A. Recommend revised Greenway boundaries within its jurisdiction.
- B. Incorporate portions of the approved DOT Greenway Plan into the Comprehensive Plan.
- C. Prepare Greenway implementing ordinances and measures based on approved Greenway policies.

## II. PURPOSE

This document presents Salem's Willamette River Greenway Plan which is an element of the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan. The Greenway Plan includes portions of the Greenway approved by DOT within the Salem city limits. In addition to complying with State law, the purpose of the Salem Greenway Plan is to achieve the following objectives:

- A. To protect and enhance the natural, scenic, recreational, historical and economic resources of the Willamette River corridor.
- B. To make the natural, scenic, recreational, historical and economic resources available for the proper use and enjoyment of the Salem urban area resident.
- C. To balance the needs and demands of commerce, industry and people for access to the unique resources of the river.
- D. To allow for use and development consistent with the Greenway concept and the Salem Area Comprehensive Plan policies.
- E. To allow and encourage a variety of recreational developments and types of public access to and along the river while preserving, protecting and enhancing the scenic qualities of the river and the riparian environment.

### III. THE WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY PLAN

The Salem Greenway Plan is a design plan and administrative review procedure that must be adopted and approved by DOT and LCDC. Any land owner located within the Greenway boundary who desires to change or intensify the use of his property must, before taking any action, apply for a Conditional Use Permit. The Salem Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on the permit. The Greenway Plan is to be implemented through Chapter 120 of Salem Revised Statutes.

The following segments are considered elements of the Salem Greenway Plan.

#### A. Salem Area Comprehensive Plan Goals and Policies.

##### Willamette River Greenway:

**GOAL:** To protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River.

##### **POLICIES:**

1. Regulations shall be adopted to control the use of land and the intensity of uses within the Willamette River Greenway Boundary.
2. Riparian vegetation and wildlife within the Greenway Boundary shall be conserved. Conservation shall include protecting and managing riverbanks, sloughs, wildlife and vegetation.
3. Scenic easements shall be used where practical to preserve and enhance the character of the river within the Greenway Boundary.
4. Where private property is adjacent to public use areas, measures shall be taken to minimize disturbance to the private property.
5. Development and redevelopment within the Greenway Boundary should include provisions for public access to and along the river.
6. Existing parks within the Greenway Boundary shall be preserved and maintained. Additional sites for recreation and scenic views and access to the Willamette River should be acquired.
7. New development and changes of land uses which are compatible with the Greenway concept as defined in the State Land Use Goal may be permitted along the Willamette River.
8. The review of proposed land use changes shall include the establishment of an appropriate setback from the Willamette River.
9. Aggregate extraction may be permitted within the river channel and on lands adjacent, when determined to be compatible with the purpose of the Greenway. Proposed extraction activities shall be designed to minimize the adverse effects of water quality, fish and wildlife, vegetation, bank stabilization, stream flow, visual quality noise and potential land use.

10. The harvest of timber will be conducted in a manner which will ensure that the natural scenic qualities of the Greenway will be maintained to the greatest extent practicable or restored within a brief period of time.
11. The continued dredging of the Willamette River shall be encouraged for the purpose of channel maintenance, bank stabilization, and to facilitate commercial river traffic and recreational boating. Dredging operations should minimize the adverse impact on existing fish and wildlife habitat, riverbank vegetation and public and private property.

River-Oriented Mixed Uses Area:

GOAL: To increase riverfront development opportunities for a combination of urban uses that take advantage of the scenic, natural and recreational qualities of the riverfront.

POLICIES:

1. Visual access should be provided to the riverfront from buildings through the provision of such design features as: waterfront orientation of building layout, windows, balconies and lanais.
2. Visual access and a sense of openness should be provided by maximizing the open space between buildings and between buildings and the river.
3. The development of uses relating to the river for recreation and scenic enjoyment should be encouraged.
4. Conservation of mature ground cover and trees, wildlife habitats and the natural contours and exposure of the riverbank shall be assured through the careful placement of buildings and related site improvements such as parking areas.
5. Transition of the waterfront to a mixture of commercial, office and high density residential uses shall be encouraged, while allowing for the continuation of existing industries. Expansion of existing industries may be permitted only if such expansion is necessary to ensure continuation, or to comply with federal or state requirements.
6. New development should be designed in a manner that does not encroach upon the continued operation of adjoining higher intensity uses and is compatible with adjacent residential neighborhoods.

B. Plan Designations

There are two plan designations within the Greenway Plan:

1. Greenway Public Recreation District

2. Greenway Development District

1. Greenway Public Recreation District delineates areas of publicly owned park land along the Willamette River within Salem city limits. Descriptions of these parks are provided in the inventory segment of this document. Any public agency which proposes a change, or an intensification of a land use within the Recreation District, shall provide findings that:
  - a. The proposal is for uses directly related to recreation;
  - b. Proposed non-water-related recreational developments maximize, to the greatest extent possible, the retention of riparian vegetation between the activity and the river. This provision shall not apply to water-related or water-dependent recreational uses;
  - c. Developments within 150 feet of the Willamette River or Slough shall give due consideration to the provision of public access.
2. The Greenway Development District delineates an area wherein lands are committed to urban uses.

In this district there are a variety of uses, primarily commercial and industrial. These lands which are committed to urban uses shall be permitted to continue as such.

Review criteria regarding a change, or an intensification of a land use within the Development District, are contained in Chapter 120 of Salem Revised Statutes.

IV. LAND USE INVENTORY AND BACKGROUND DATA

A detailed inventory was made of lands along the river to use in developing Salem's Willamette River Greenway Plan. The results of that inventory are contained in the following report:

Salem Urban Area Plan Update, Willamette River  
Greenway Plan, Inventories and Data, July, 1976,  
prepared by the Department of Community Development,  
Planning Division, City of Salem.

A summary of the inventory data follows.

1. Agricultural Lands - There are no agricultural lands within the Salem Greenway Boundaries.
2. Aggregate Excavation and Processing Sites - Two general locations within the Greenway area are considered as potential sources of gravel - bar and channel areas of the Willamette River and present floodplain areas.

3. Public Recreation Sites, including public access points to the river - Within the Greenway area, there are two regional parks and three urban parks: Minto Island Park, Wallace Marine Park, Marion Square Park, Fairmont Overlook Park and River Road Park.
4. Historical and Archaeological Areas - There is one historic building, the Gilbert House, within the Greenway boundaries. There are no identified archeological sites within the boundaries.
5. Timber Resources - There are no identified forest lands within Salem's Greenway Boundaries.
6. Significant Natural and Scenic Areas, and Vegetative Cover - The riparian vegetation located on Minto Island, the floodplain of West Salem, and the east bank of the Willamette River are considered valuable natural resources. These resources are not considered unique or significant in the sense of unusual vegetation.
7. Fish and Wildlife Habitats - The principal fishery habitat in the Greenway area is the Willamette River.

The principal wildlife habitats are found in the forest and riparian vegetation areas of Minto Island and in certain segments of the West Salem floodplain. The natural vegetation of the east bank provides a limited habitat suitable for small mammals and many birds. The habitat increases in suitability as distance increases away from the city center, especially along the Willamette Slough where the Burlington Northern Railway creates a distinct boundary between urban and non-urban environments.

8. Areas of Annual Flooding and Floodplains - Much of the Greenway area is situated within the 100 year floodplain.
9. Land Currently Committed to Industrial, Commercial and Residential Uses - Land uses within the Willamette Greenway can be differentiated into three geographically separate areas; each has distinct patterns. In West Salem, the Greenway is predominantly occupied by parks and open space, the bridge ramps, street right-of-way, linear park and vacant land.

Minto Island is exclusively designated for park and open space. An agricultural field and a peach orchard are temporarily leased until a full development of the area as a regional park takes place.

The existing land uses within the Greenway on the east bank of the Willamette River are extremely varied. The diversity of uses includes a portion of the Central Business District, industrial uses and established residential areas in North Salem.

10. Ownership of Property - The Willamette River Greenway covers approximately 569 acres on both sides of the river and Minto Island. Approximately 473 acres or 83 percent is in public ownership, the remaining 96 acres or 17 percent is privately owned.

11. Hydrological Conditions - The principal surface waters in the Greenway area are the following:
  - a. The portion of the Willamette River in the Salem area;
  - b. The Willamette Slough;
  - c. The lower parts of Pringle Creek and Mill Creek;
  - d. The pools and channels in the West Salem floodplain.

Flood control reservoirs are operated to even out the flow of water in the Willamette River. Large runoffs are stored to reduce flooding and are later released to maintain minimum flows during periods of low runoff.

12. Ecologically Fragile Areas - The Minto-Brown Island Wildlife Refuge is considered a valuable biological area for the preservation and enhancement of waterfowl habitat.

In addition to being a waterfowl habitat, Minto Island supports a large population of songbirds, both resident and migrant.

Even though the island does not contain habitat critical to the survival of blacktail deer, it does support unknown numbers along with other mammals that are found mainly on Minto-Brown Island.

13. Recreational Needs As Set Forth in Goal 8 - The recreational needs for the entire Salem Urban Area have been identified as set forth in the LCDC Goal 8 through two studies: Regional Parks and Recreation Facilities Plan, Needs and Opportunities; and Park and Recreation Technical Study.

14. Other Uses of Land and Water in or near the Greenway - In addition to the residential, commercial and industrial activities, several other uses are located within the Greenway. A substantial portion of the Greenway area is devoted for public uses. Nearly 473 acres or 83 percent of the entire Greenway is publicly owned and used or planned to be used for public facilities. These uses include the following:

- a. On the west bank of the river: Wallace Marine Park, bridges, ramps and approaches, a linear park along Edgewater Street between Wallace Road and Rosemont Avenue and street rights-of-way.
- b. On the east bank of the river: River Road Park, Marion Square Park, Fairmont Overlook Park, Minto Island Park and street rights-of-way.

The use of Willamette River within the Greenway for recreational activities is concentrated on water-oriented activities at Wallace Marine Park.

One water-oriented commercial use exists within the Greenway.

Bridges Marine is located on Water Street at Chemeketa Street.

15. Publicly-Owned Access Locations - Residents of the Salem Area have access to the river and the Greenway at the following locations:
  - a. Wallace Marine Park on the west side of the river, and at Minto Island Park and River Road Park on the east side.
  - b. Mouth of Mill Creek - The City owns a small parcel immediately south of Truitt Brothers' property. It is too small and isolated to be developed into a neighborhood park, but it can serve as an access point to the river.
  - c. West of Front Street between Court and Marion Streets - The Salem Urban Renewal Agency has acquired all but one acre of the area for redevelopment. Part of the area is planned for public use and park for both active and passive enjoyment of the river.

V. DESCRIPTION OF THE SALEM WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY BOUNDARY (This is the overall Greenway Boundary established pursuant to LCDC Goal 15 and ORS 390.318. See Section VI for the Greenway Compatibility Review Boundary for purposes of SRC Chapter 125).

West Bank, in Polk County

From the northeast corner of Wallace Marine Park along the common boundary of the City limits and Wallace Marine Park to the railroad tracks; then

Along the northwest side of Musgrave Street, including approaches to the bridges and the access to Wallace Marine Park, to Wallace Road; then

From Wallace Road along the southwest side of Edgewater Street to its intersection with the off-ramp from the Salem-Dallas highway near Capitol Manor; then east along the south side of that highway right-of-way to its intersection with the Willamette River.

East Bank, in Marion County

From the north City limits at Stark Street south along the west side of Willamette Drive N to and including all of River Road Park, then

From River Road Park southern boundary along the west side of Island View Drive and continuing south along a line which is about 150 feet from the ordinary low water line to Columbia Street; then

East along the south side of Columbia Street to the west side of Front Street; then

South along the west side of Front Street to the north side of River Street; then

West along the north side of River Street to the alley; then

South along the west side of the alley to the south side of South Street; then

West to a point which is about 150 feet from the ordinary low water line of the Willamette River; then

South along the 150-foot line to a point which is approximately the south boundary of the Truitt Brothers' Cannery; then

East to the west side of Front Street; then

South to the south side of Division Street; then

West to the alley; then

South to the south side of Union Street; then

East to the west side of Commercial Street; then

South to the south side of Marion Street; then

West to the west side of the new right-of-way of Front Street; then

South to the south side of Court Street; then

West to a point which is approximately 150 feet from the ordinary low water line; then

South along the approximate 150-foot line and the east side of the railroad tracks to Mission Street; then

South along the east side of the railroad right-of-way to Owens Street; then

South along the east side of River Road to and including Fairmont Park; and

Including Minto Island Park.

The above description is based on the boundary of the Willamette Greenway as shown on the aerial photo prints prepared by the Oregon State Highway Division, Department of Transportation, sheets 42 to 47 of 107, Marion-Polk Counties. Approximate scale: 1" = 400', aerial photography of January, 1974.

These photo prints can be referred to for the location of the Greenway Boundary where the Boundary does not follow a clearly defined physical feature.

Where there are differences between the boundary description and the line shown on the photo prints, the description should be used. The Greenway Boundary approved by the Salem City Council and the State Land Conservation and Development Commission revised the originally proposed boundary to include:

1. Additional land between Marion and Court Streets;
2. Fairmont Part;
3. All of Minto Island Park.

The photo prints are available for reference in the Salem Planning Division office.



VI. DESCRIPTION OF WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY COMPATIBILITY REVIEW BOUNDARY  
(This is the compatibility review boundary within which development, intensification or change of use must comply with and be reviewed under SRC Chapter 125.)

The compatibility review boundary is identical to the overall Greenway Boundary described in Section V of this Plan save and except for the exclusion of the following described property:

Parcel 1. Beginning at the Southeast corner of Lot 8, Block 1, Mill Addition to the City of Salem, Marion County, Oregon, thence South 19 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 85.0 feet to the true point of beginning; thence North 70 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 200.0 feet; thence North 19 degrees 30 minutes East a distance of 100.0 feet; thence South 70 degrees 30 minutes East a distance of 200.0 feet; thence South 19 degrees 30 minutes West a distance of 100.0 feet to the true point of beginning. Said parcel containing 0.46 acres, more or less.

