



Regional Investments for Smart Communities:

Harnessing Transit + Technology
to strengthen the Economy and connect the McLoughlin Corridor

Willamette Plaza Reconnecting with our river

FINAL REPORT

YPP Workshop results
53rd Annual ISOCARP/OAPA Congress
October 2017

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

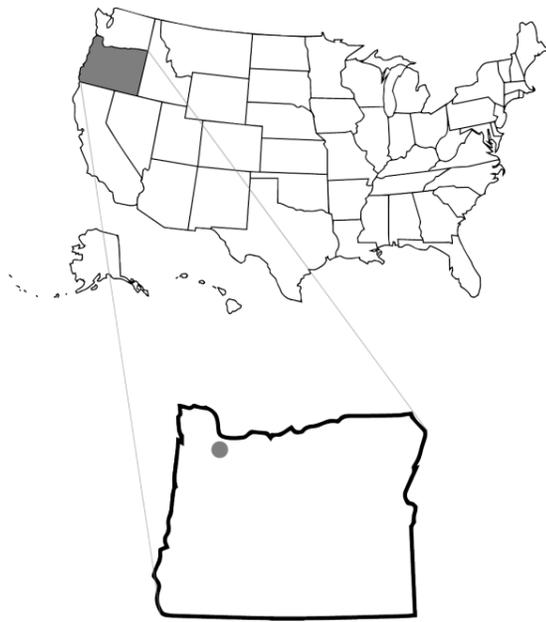
“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody”

Jane Jacobs

The City of Oregon City, Clackamas County, Metro and the State of Oregon have partnered together with local businesses, residents, and other stakeholders to create the Willamette Falls Legacy Project. The public master planning process for the Willamette Falls riverwalk started in early 2015 and the final master plan aims to provide a long-term vision that will guide future development and public use of the riverwalk. As a catalyst for the redevelopment of the site and for economic improvement in Oregon City and neighboring community West Linn, the Willamette Falls Legacy project will have a significant impact on the residents' lives and will bring economic prosperity.

This relevant and exciting context provides a real opportunity to explore the connection between Downtown Oregon City and the future public access, which was the task for the Young Professional Planners (YPP) at the 53rd ISOCARP's YPP Workshop that took place in October 2017. Through site visits, extensive research from previous literature and planning studies, and ISOCARP coordinators and City's staff' recommendations, the Willamette Plaza project team members conducted a site analysis together with urban diagnosis and produced a conceptual architectural proposal, along with strategic urban policy recommendations to bring downtown Oregon City closer to its potential. The proposal aims to create an attractive public site where residents can live, work and play, by providing affordable mixed-use housing, mitigating vehicular traffic impacts, and incorporating Oregon City's heritage.

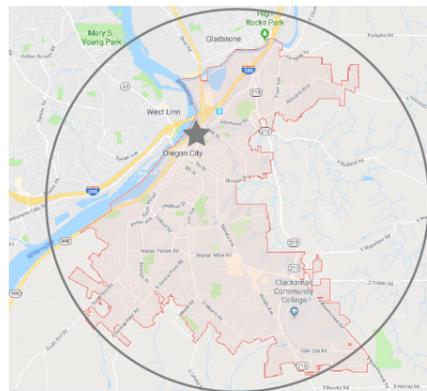
Site information and Analysis



Geography

The City of Oregon City, Oregon is a community located in the northwestern Clackamas county. Interstate 205 and McLoughlin Boulevard run north and south through the west side of the City. Both roads are high-volume highways that provide state-wide connections and are major goods and travel corridors. Another important asset located in the City is the Willamette River, which runs in parallel to McLoughlin Boulevard and the City's Main street, where the project site is located.

The City-owned site is located in south of 12th street between McLoughlin boulevard and Main street. The estimated acreage of the site is 0.33 and borders commercial retail businesses to the east, west and south in the City's central business district. The site is attractive to potential developers who are looking for location opportunities due to its proximity to the Willamette Falls Legacy Project, which primarily consists of retailers and service centers on the south end of Main street. This project is the first step to a new Riverwalk that connects historic downtown Oregon City to Willamette Falls, the largest waterfall in the American Pacific Northwest by volume, and the seventeenth widest in the world.



Above: site location in the context of country, state and within the city (marked with a star)



Above: pictures of the site of interest



Above: pictures of the Willamette Falls site with its potentials

Growth Patterns and Economic Profile

Oregon City is a distinct, vibrant location where community members feel a strong sense of ownership and belonging. The City marks the last stop on the Oregon Trail and has retained its strong native, pioneer and industrial heritage. For this report, ESRI Business Analyst 2017 software was utilized to understand the demography and local economy. The population is well-balanced, with a mix of income levels, education, and family type.

2016 American Community Survey Census Estimates indicate an approximately 35,057 total population, which is a 12% increase of population since the 2010 Census. The City's 1.9% annual growth rate, indicates that over the last years, has a considerable high population increase which is also paired up with a strong and varied

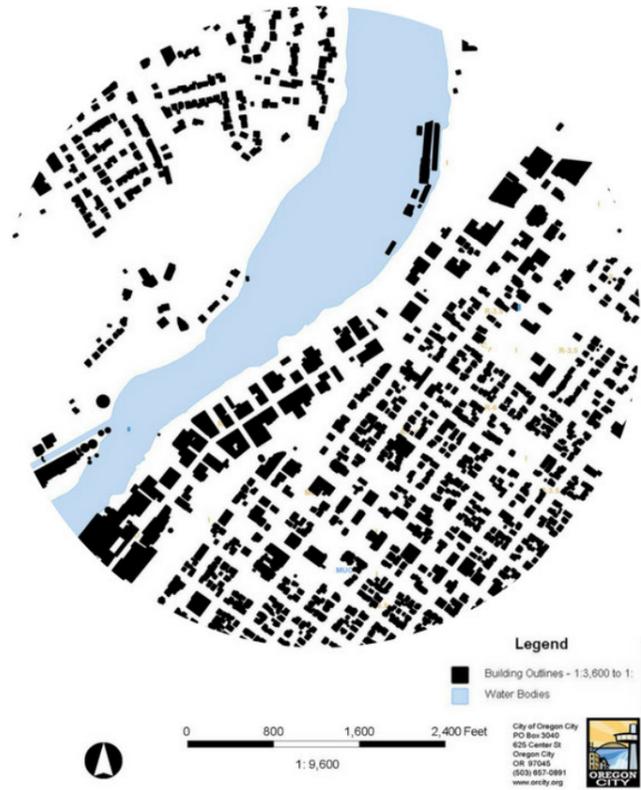
local economy. Oregon's City is also the County seat of Clackamas County, which means that a significant number of public employees commute every day to the City. Additionally, the City's proximity to Portland, Oregon's largest city which also has one of the fastest growing economies of the country, has a strong influence in the local economy as well as the Willamette River, creating significant recreational opportunities.

Oregon City's main NAICS industry sectors according to U.S. Census Bureau are: Public Administration, Health Care and Social Assistance, and retail trade.



An infographic showing statistical data about the area

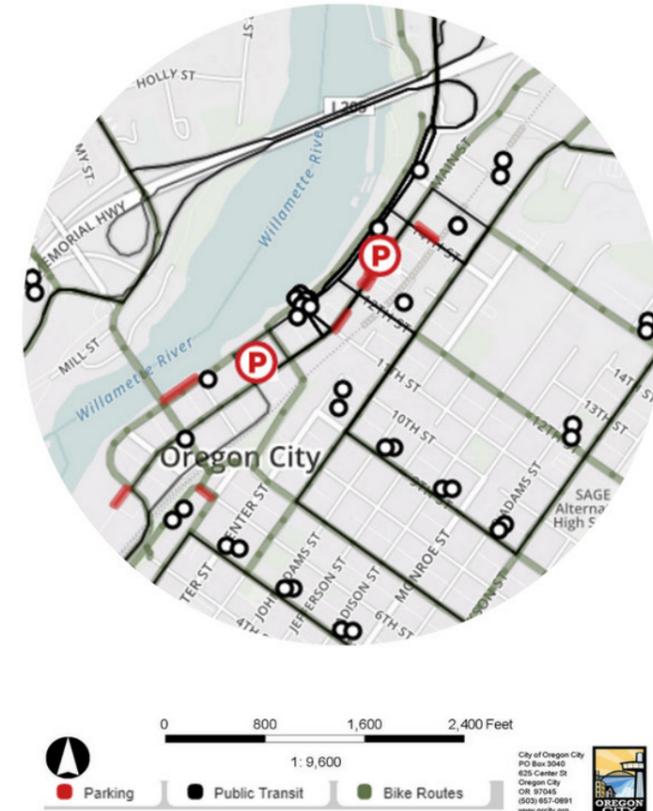
CONTEXT MAP



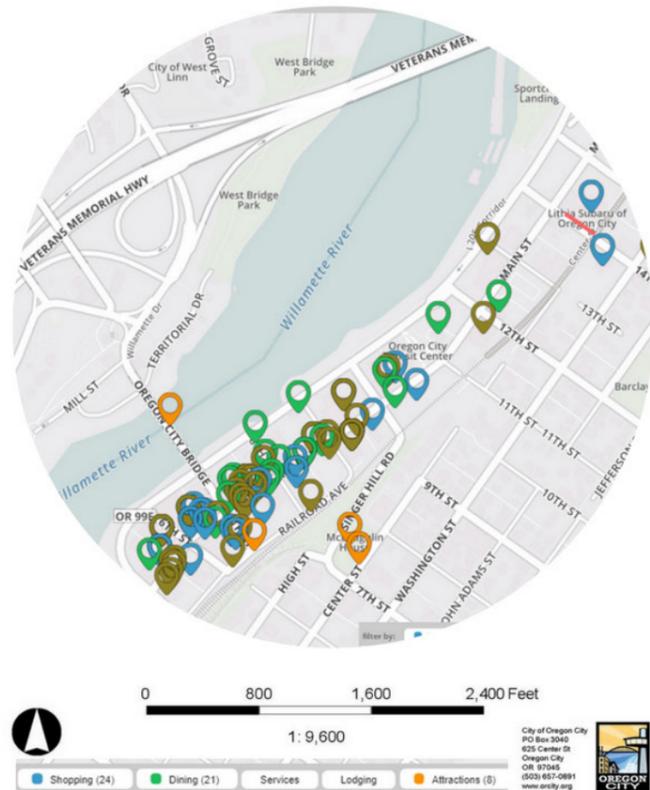
ROAD HIERARCHY



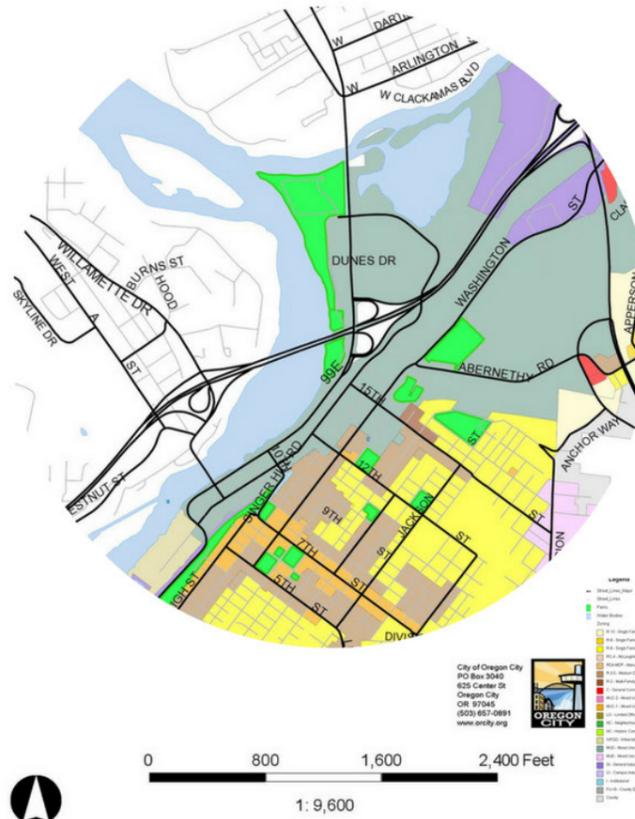
PARKING & ROUTES



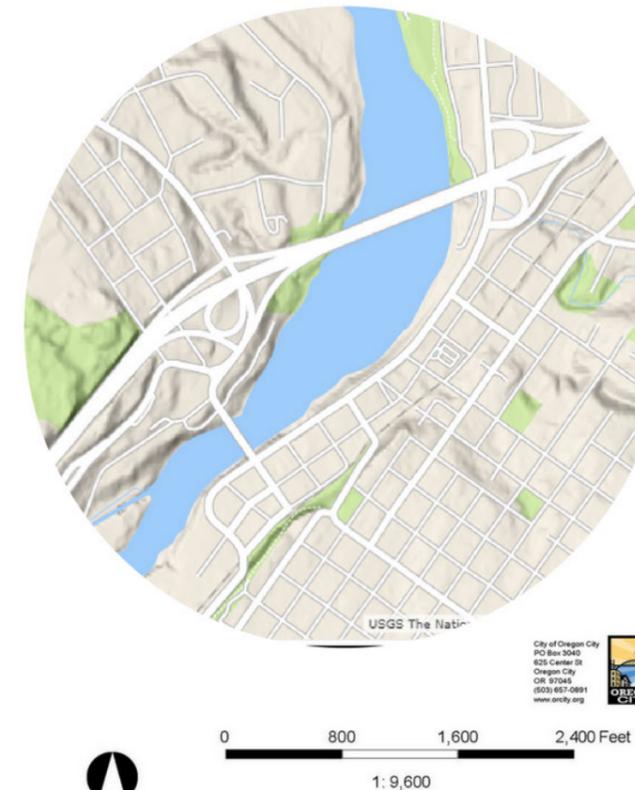
COMMUNITY SITES & SERVICES



LAND USE ZONING



TOPOGRAPHY



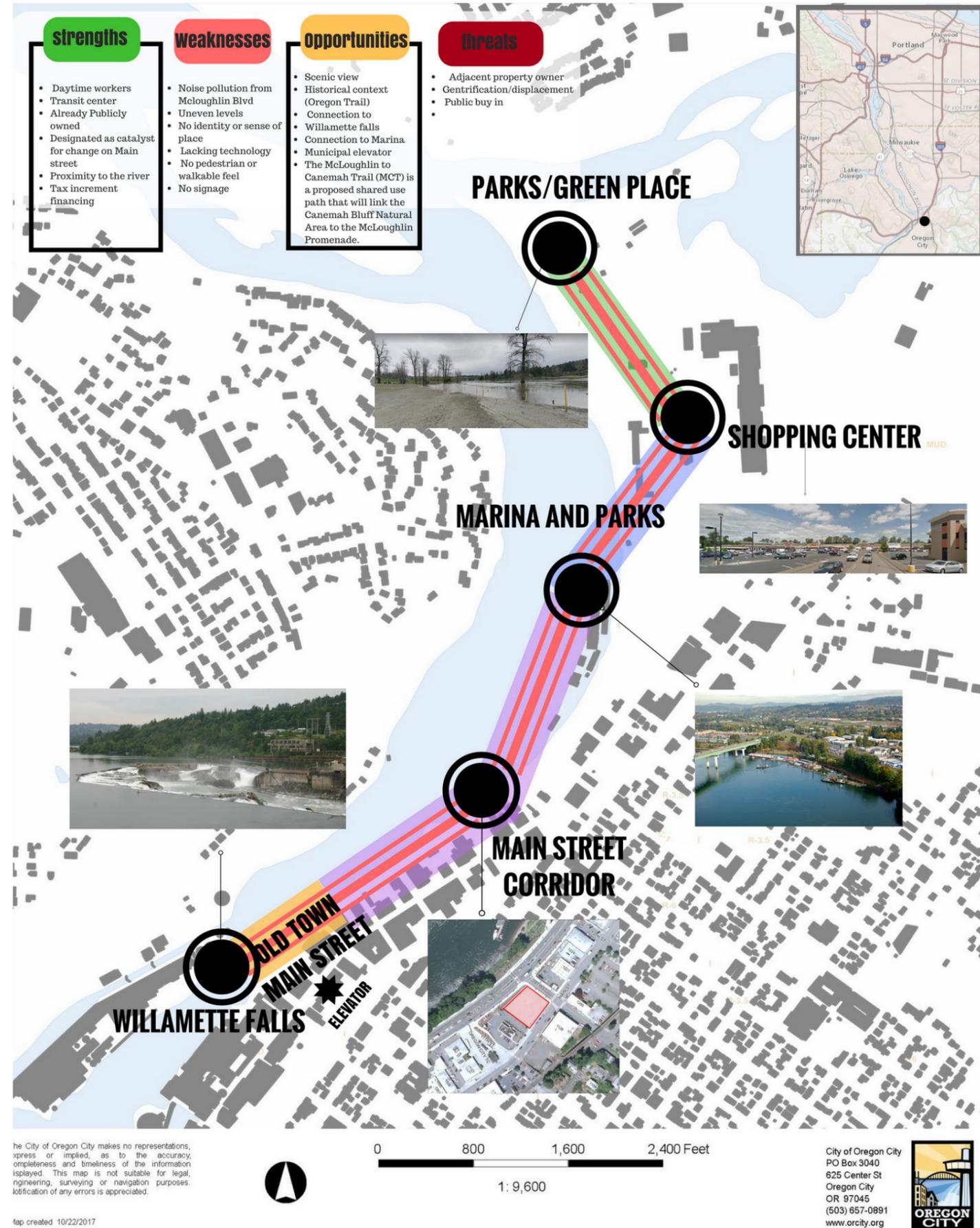
Site analysis maps showing context information on different levels

Purpose

Provide urban design recommendations for a mixed-use building site in downtown Oregon City that has the capability to produce a positive return of investment. The design includes pedestrian and vehicular access and connect to existing and future assets, including riverfront walkways and neighboring development projects.

The Project Site suffers from noise pollution caused by McLoughlin Boulevard, it lacks pedestrian, walkable areas and sense of place and identity. However, the Project Site strengths relate to its role as a transit center, to existing service infrastructure and parking areas, dynamic daytime workers and small retailers. Because of these characteristic features, the main purpose of the Project is to provide urban design recommendations for a mixed-use building site in downtown Oregon City that has the capability to produce a positive return of investment. Our design includes pedestrian and vehicular access and connect to existing and future assets, including riverfront

walkways and neighboring development projects. Main Street has key importance for Oregon City and Portland 2040 Growth Concept Plan. Therefore, the other purpose of the Project is to create a strong connection between the corridor through the increased attractiveness of the Main Street by reason of Main Street's opportunities like the scenic view, historical context, connection to marina, parks and Willamette Falls.



The City of Oregon City makes no representations, express or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness and timeliness of the information displayed. This map is not suitable for legal, engineering, surveying or navigation purposes. Notification of any errors is appreciated.

Map created 10/22/2017

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SWOT analysis with its graphical representation

Methodology

Willamette Falls project has been a part of the YPP (Young Professional Planners) workshop, which took place before the jointed OAPA and ISOCARP conference, October 2017. It involved 7 participants who are engaged in the planning field across the world. The group had a representative of each continent. This granted an uncommon approach to the site, with different views and skills of each YPP. This value allowed the group to have a creative and fresh idea while forming the proposed solution.

The workshop incorporated meetings with the Oregon City representatives who gave a local insight about the problems which the developed area faces. Their input allowed the group to see the issues from the perspective of the future site users who shared their opinions and provided the group with the necessary knowledge of the context in which the site is placed.

The workshop was filled with discussions and brainstorming sessions. All the results were represented graphically in the analysis and the vision proposal phase. Further, lessons learned from meetings with the community representatives, were enriched with theoretical knowledge about the good design practices within sustainable planning, connectivity and pedestrian thinking as well as local heritage culture.

Such approach allowed the group to develop the design principles, which guided the further design development. It was also enriched with inspiration search of the feeling the group wanted to achieve in their proposal.

The result is shown further in the booklet. It represents the effort in addressing the needs of the local community as well as shows the creative approach of the multicultural planning group.

Vision

The project envisions a catalyst for enhancement of the whole Main street area. This site as a key connection between Main street, the riverfront area, and the Willamette Falls Legacy Project. The goal is to create an increased sense of place that references the intangible heritage value associated with Oregon City's rich story. This project will signify a new chapter of development in Oregon City and build upon the enormous effort that has been achieved on Main street, drawing development opportunities further north along the Main street corridor. This project will be inclusive of the existing community, providing new job opportunities, downtown housing, and uniting the key attractions of Oregon City. The outcome of the vision sketch created during the workshop is shown in the next pages (p.14-15) and a simple diagram highlighting the essence of the vision is shown to the right.

Other objectives for this project are:

- Catalyst for regeneration of downtown area
- Connection between river and Main street
- Inclusive of existing community
- Incorporate Oregon City's heritage
- Provide downtown housing

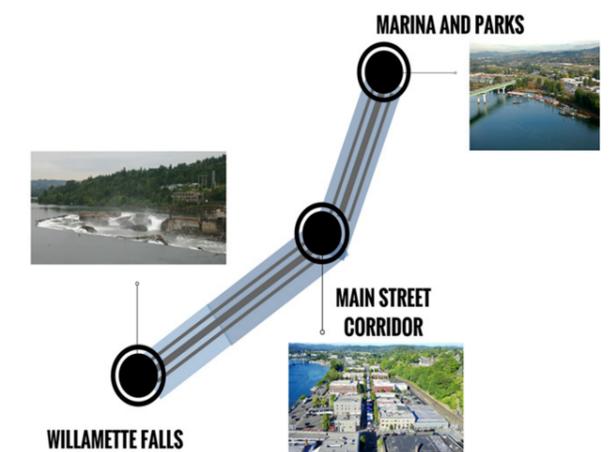
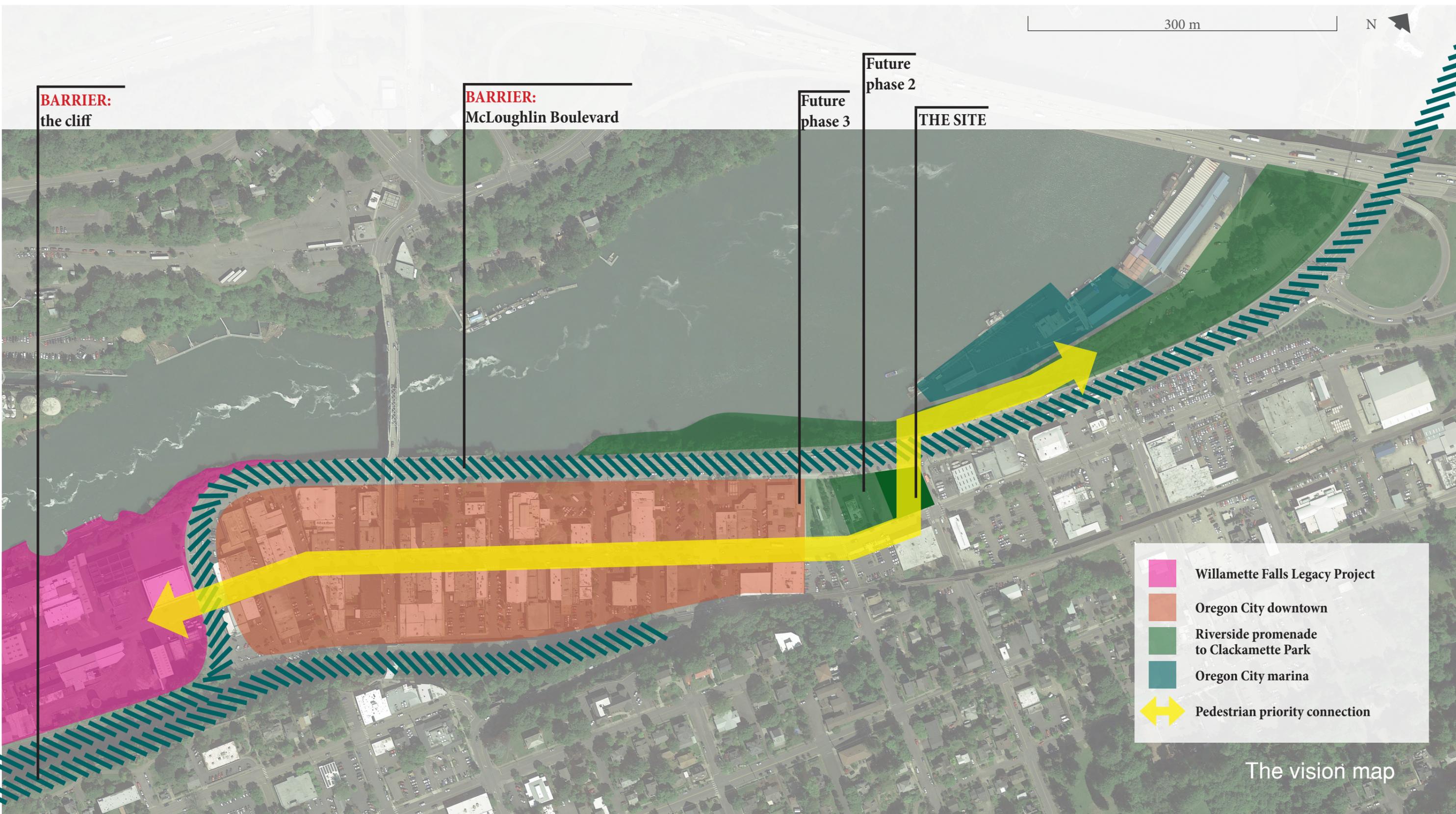


Diagram showing the vision of connecting the 3 points of interest



BARRIER:
the cliff

BARRIER:
McLoughlin Boulevard

Future
phase 3

Future
phase 2

THE SITE

300 m



- Willamette Falls Legacy Project
- Oregon City downtown
- Riverside promenade to Clackamette Park
- Oregon City marina
- Pedestrian priority connection

The vision map

The map created during the workshops as a response to the gained knowledge about the site

Design Principles

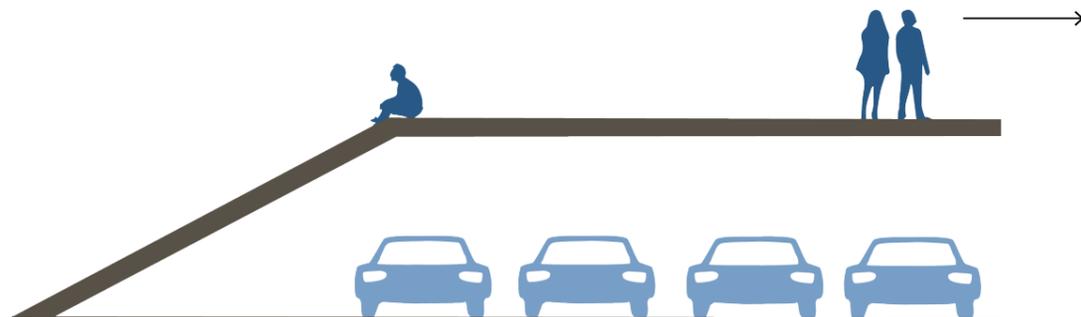
Walkability

Issues:

1. McLoughlin Boulevard is an impermeable barrier to pedestrian movement between Willamette river and Main street
2. The key roads surrounding the site are high traffic areas and limited walkability and create noise pollution
3. The Main street shopping corridor ends around 10th, and pedestrians are not encouraged to keep walking northbound Main street.

Solution:

Platform over McLoughlin to ensure continuous, uninterrupted pedestrian flow from the Main Street to the riverside promenade and across the project site via an outdoor, covered, amphitheater. The platform has a potential to be a destination on its own as an elevated lookoutpoint for the Willamette river landscape.



Design Principles

Gathering Space

Issues:

1. Lack of communal spaces where people can meet, socialize, and relax
2. In need of a covered central area
3. Need a place to set up temporary community uses such as farmer's markets

Solution:

Amphitheater and public plaza: this will serve as a meeting point for community members and families as well as a place to relax or hang out. Will include steps to sit on as well as outdoor seating for restaurants, or a space for community activities (Saturday market, art exhibition, performances)



Design Principles

Sense of Place

Issues:

1. Lack of interpretation of the distinctive native, pioneer and industrial history in public spaces.
2. The city lacks a distinctive urban form or marker of arrival

Solution:

Artwork featuring heritage: amphitheater can include local artwork or sculptures that celebrate the broad history of the area. Including native, pioneer, and industrial history. The platform over McLoughlin and the buildings will reflect the site's importance as a gateway into Oregon City as well as provide river views and connect the city with the riverwalk.



Design Principles

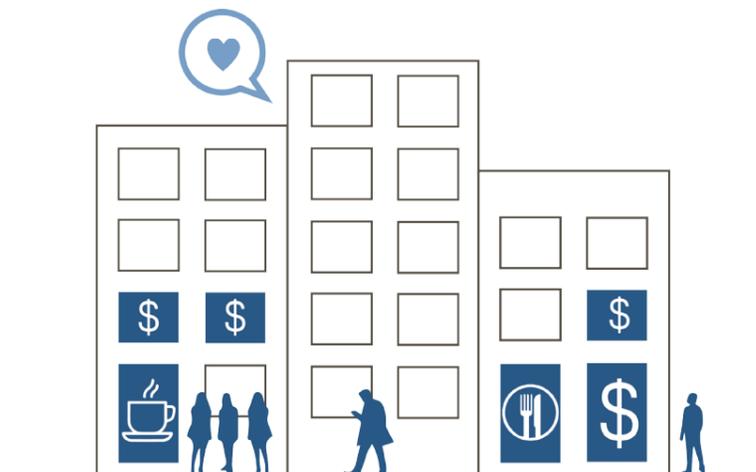
Diverse Downtown

Issues:

1. There is a lack of housing in the downtown area.
2. Imbalance between residential and business, transitory population during working hours
3. Tourist population, numerous attractions are geared towards tourists rather than residents

Solution:

Mix-use buildings: Retail or office space on the ground floor, and apartment space on the upper floors. Includes a variety of housing stock and a target 25% affordable housing. 6 stories to take advantage of river views.



Design Principles

Green Spaces

Issues:

- 1. There is a need for stormwater management
- 2. The area lacks trees and green areas
- 3. The development should meet sustainability standards

Solution:

Build low impact development such as rain gardens to manage storm runoff, and incorporate green shrubbery into the bridge over McLoughlin to enhance its visual appeal. Additionally, buildings can be LEED certified. Increased urban canopy on surrounding streets with mature plantings.



Final Design



Design Description

The window free facades shall be covered with native folk culture interpretation or art following the Oregon Trail theme. In the proposal the wall is covered with a mural celebrating the native heritage.

The fountain installation aims to provide vibrancy to the designed space. It is an element of a performative design where urban elements invite their users to play and enjoy their surroundings. The fountain aims to attract especially children and provide a mist in the warm, sunny days.

Plantings on the plaza ensure the storm water treatment allowing it to sink. The tree plantings along the street add to the green thinking about the public space and highlight the connection between the city and its nature.

Main focus of the site is dedicated to the urban amphitheatre with its scene in form of a plaza for public activity. It serves not only as a hub for a wide range of events, but also as a hang out place for the nearby workers, inviting them to take away their food, come and sit down while having their break and observe others. It may also serve as a meet up point for young people, where they can study, talk and enjoy other social activities. The local community decides about the



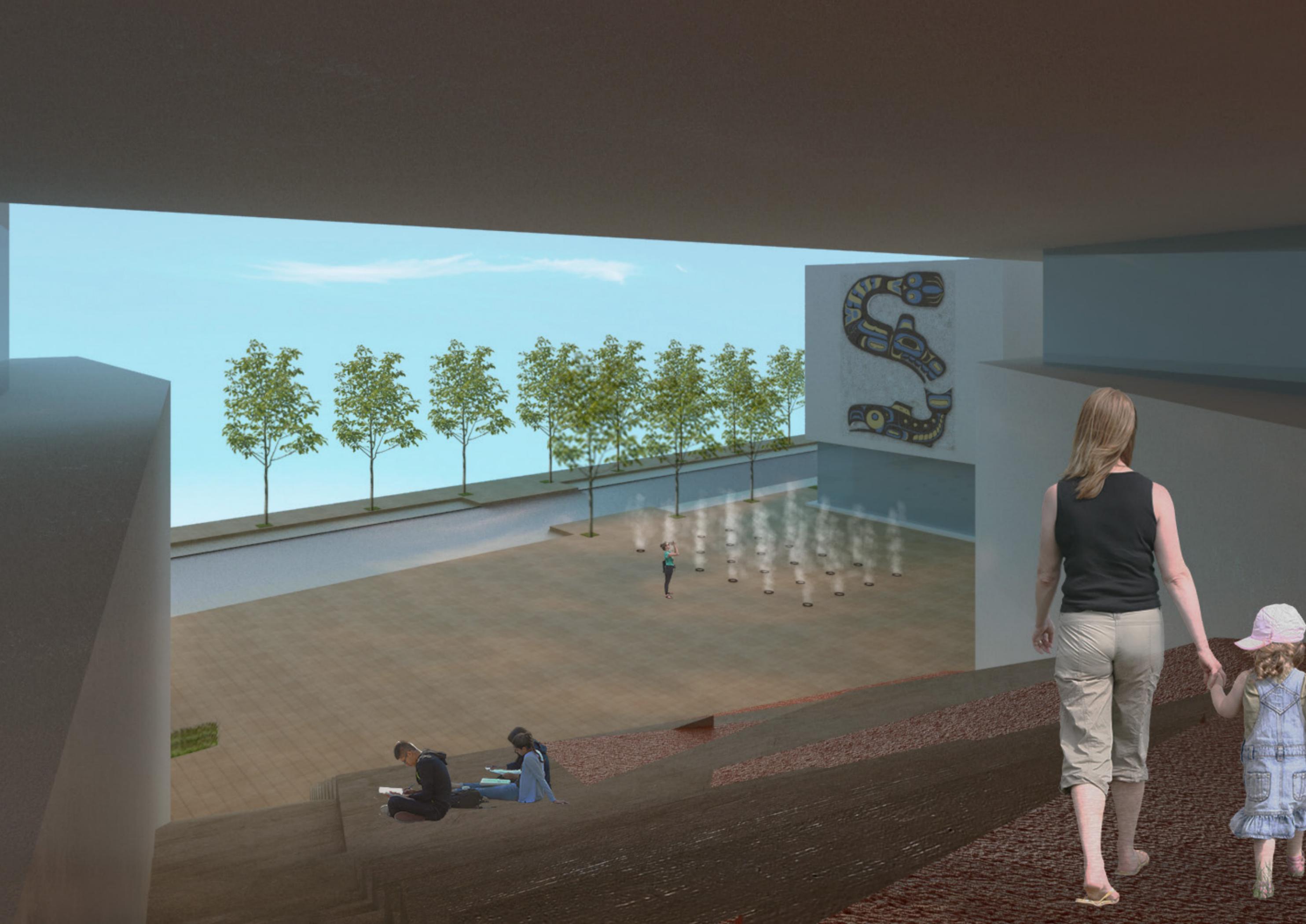
role of the plaza. Being on the pedestrian priority connection between The Willamette Falls Legacy Project and the Marina together with the Riverside Promenade to Clackamette Park, the plaza serves as a point to relax and slow down. Using its position in the Downtown Oregon City, it serves as a magnet for the local community gatherings.

The stairs are the main feature of this public space. Accessible for all, with the ramp for disadvantaged users, they serve as the amphitheatre seats. In case of bad weather conditions the stairs provide a shelter as they are covered with the above housing and surrounded with the office-retail function. The stairs also hold a recreation function as they lead to a view point over the river with a place to stop and enjoy the view. The view point has a connective function as it is constructed in a form

The above floors are proposed to hold a housing offer targeted at different space needs. The apartments are elevated from the McLoughlin Boulevard side to ensure an acoustic barrier. The offer shall include a 25 percentage of affordable housing to ensure a mixed community. The height limit of the proposal is 6 storeys to enrich the housing offer with the river view, hence panoramic windows are encouraged.

Ground floor of the proposal, together with the first floor where the stairs lead, is devoted to a mixed use office and retail c. The long, see-through facades allow the passers by to have a peak and invite them to step in and join the social life. The banners advertising the facilities have a space over the doors and shall not dominate the building with their design to grant a uniform space design.

of a ramp over the Main Street providing a safe and smooth travel for the pedestrians willing to overtake this infrastructural barrier. The ramp also marks the entrance to the Oregon City, hence an art feature on it is encouraged.



Design Description

At the top of the stairs users may find more mixed use space, ready for new usage and inviting with large, glass facades. Their access is also possible from the view platform.

The plaza, seen from above, an element of the pedestrian priority connection between, serves as a public square with a function of becoming an amphitheatre for special events.

The stairs serve a multipurpose function. Perfect place to sit down and study, read a book or meet with friends to spend time together. They shall attract a wide range of users, not only during the common days but also during special events, when they can hold a big audience observing performances taking place in the plaza level.



The belt, highlighted with an orange color, cutting through all steps serves as a ramp. It ensures that the viewing point is accessible by a variety of users. It is designed to have the smallest angle possible to provide comfort while using the ramp. It also serves as a decorative accent in the space, giving it an identity, like an unfolding ribbon, inviting the plaza users to climb up to see the view over the Willamette river.

Standing on top of the stairs and turning away from the river view, the user may discover a vibrant public space. The fountains inviting children to play, can be also illuminated at night to act on the space perception with their performance. The plaza has enough space for the small businesses to have their outside gardens for users willing to sit outside and keep their eyes on the street. Mature street plantings put a green accent, highlighting the importance of nature over traffic. Public plaza is paved, for

Empty walls are encouraged to become canvases for local artists. The only condition for the art is to show the local history and culture with its interpretations

All users are welcome to enjoy the new development. Including affordable housing in the project, together with its prime location by the river, it shall attract a healthy variety of new inhabitants. Mixed use in the designated lower levels welcomes activity to the area, hence also acts on the safety - keeping more attention to the plaza and the streets.

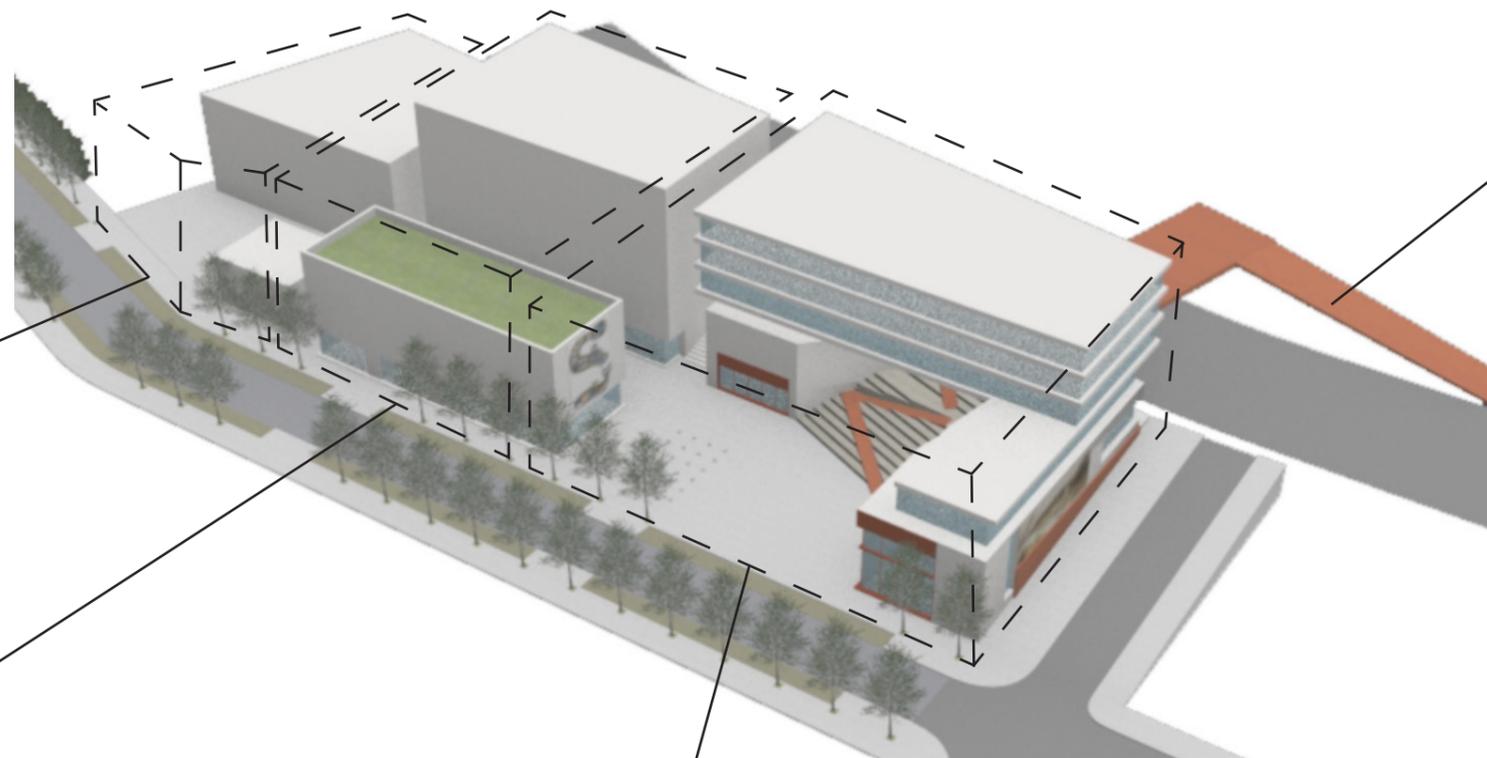
the convenience of usage, with an endurable material, however, it is perforated with green areas to take in the rain water. These water gardens help to maintain a good microclimate around the plaza and help with water retention during rainfall.

Design Phasing

Final stage of development (future phase 3) proposes a bus terminal in form of a building, incorporating the bus stops inside. Such solution creates perfect conditions for a transfer hub, giving the place recognition on a city level, which is lacking at present point of state. The terminal is accessible from the Main Street as in the current configuration. There has also been a corner store added, which marks the entrance to the built complex behind the terminal.

The next development site (future phase 2) proposes two mixed use buildings. The one by McLoughlin Boulevard shall be predominantly dominated by office use to serve as an acoustic barrier for the housing function in the lower building by the Main Street. It is also equipped in a rooftop garden to increase water retention. The buildings are cut with a pedestrian passage leading towards the plaza.

First stage of development includes the plaza development with accompanying buildings of mixed use: housing and service with retail use.



The view point is connected with a ramp to the river promenade below. It provides a safe pedestrian crossing over the McLoughlin Boulevard.

The design proposal expands from the initially proposed area. The reason for this is to ensure a steady improvement along the Main street and to prevent stagnation of the designed quarter. To accomplish a steady development, the group has chosen to stretch the proposal over additional two phases. The new development shall act as a magnet for investments that can take place down the Main Street improving the quality of pedestrian access and retail activity.

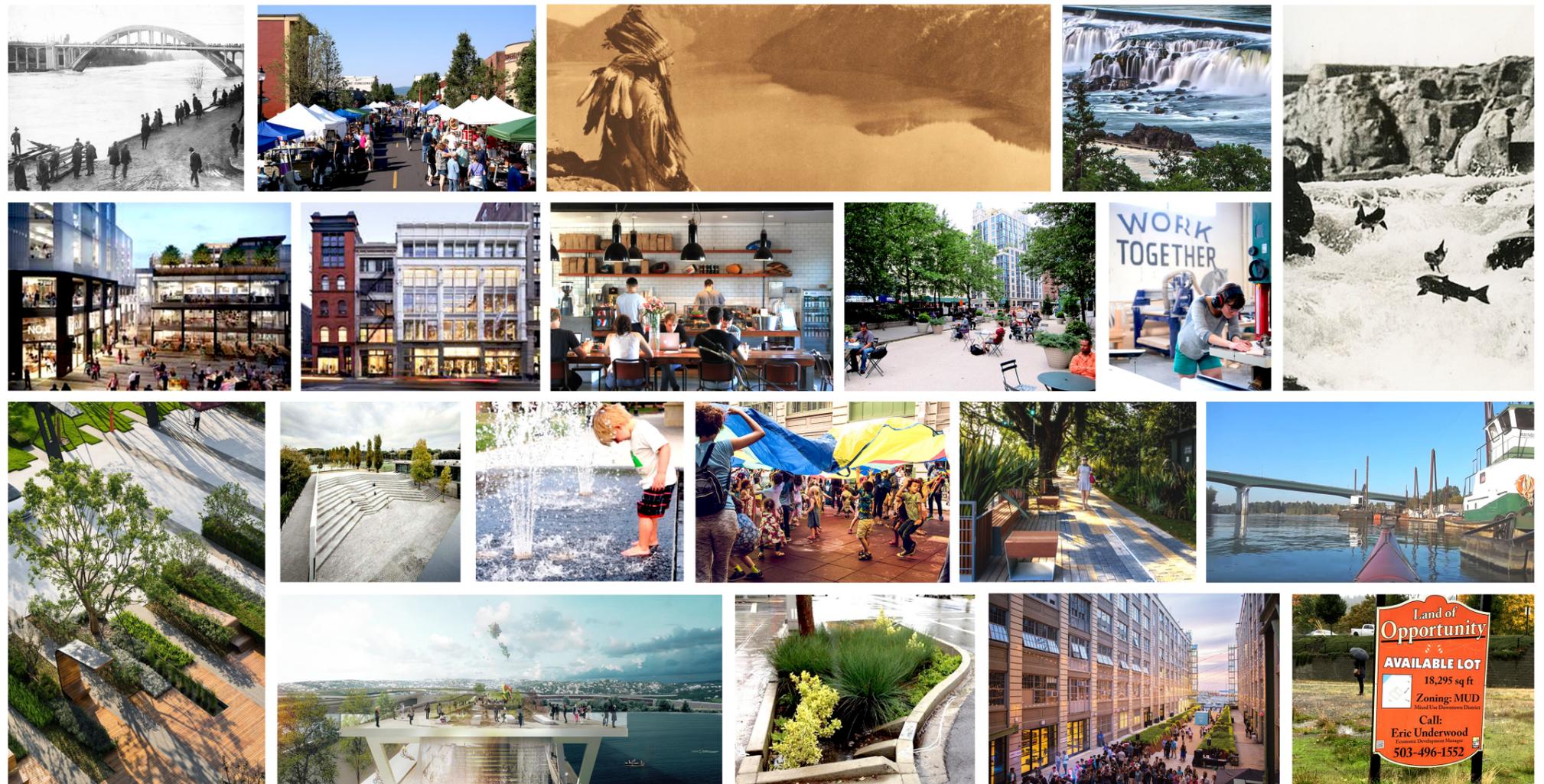
Site Description

The Willamette Plaza will have an activated retail and commercial area that will accommodate a strong anchor tenant such as a fresh foods grocery store.

The ground floor will include storefronts that will face Main street, a new central laneway and a public plaza. There will be a mix of office spaces to provide opportunities for shared working arrangements and innovative start-ups. The new town plaza will incorporate an amphitheater, performance area and large temporary use space. A central fountain will be a focal point for a playful public realm. Restaurants will provide outdoor seating.

Housing will be provided on site through a mix of housing stock, with top floor apartments incorporating views of Willamette River. Other housing options will include units with a goal of 20% affordable housing.

Mixed use



Community and heritage

Community and heritage

Nature

Four-Step Traffic Treatment Plan

We propose a number of traffic and streetscape treatments around our site to enhance the walkability and pedestrian amenity of our site. 12th street will be decreased to one lane to reduce the flow of traffic around the plaza. There will be reduced outlets from McLoughlin Boulevard to Main Street and signage will direct traffic to centralized parking lots, enabling people to park and walk.



1. 12th street

One lane outlet onto McLoughlin blvd. Widen the sidewalk next to the site and plant mature trees.

2. 11th street

New pedestrian laneway from existing bus terminal through site to plaza

3. McLoughlin boulevard

Decrease outlets onto Main street Redirect traffic to consolidated parking to periphery of downtown

4. Main street

Two lanes of traffic inclusive of transit Encourage development north of project area

Main Street Configuration

Main street: two lanes of traffic that are inclusive of transit and street parking. Re-introduce trolley down Main street.

Continue enhancement of Main street improvements through 15th street. Includes mature tree plantings, enhanced crosswalks, and pavement treatments to signify pedestrian priority.

12th street: one lane outlet onto McLoughlin blvd. Widen the sidewalk next to the site and plant

mature trees.

11th street: new pedestrian laneway from existing bus terminal through site to plaza.

Willamette legacy falls project: improved pedestrian connections through Main street up to the site.



Conclusions

The YPP team was presented with an unencumbered brief from the client and encouraged to eschew customary development codes and planning guidelines governing the site. This enabled us to combine our multi-disciplinary skills and diverse professional and cultural backgrounds to avoid a 'business as usual' approach and develop a bold concept that was unique to Oregon City. Our premise was to create a modern live, work, and play center that provides a variety of housing, commercial and public spaces and become a gateway landmark for the region.

Our concept builds on the town's existing assets by providing walkable connections to transit, the Willamette River and Main Street. We sought to overcome a lack of functional public space in Oregon City by providing an attractive urban plaza to encourage outdoor dining, informal and formal performance and a playful public realm. The development is well placed to capitalize on enhanced transit connections along McLoughlin Boulevard and encourage active transport in the city.

Our design showcases Oregon City's rich indigenous, colonial and industrial heritage and compliments the fantastic Willamette Falls Legacy Project. We see our project as a catalyst to attract business investment and spur urban development and regeneration north along Main street. Willamette Plaza will be a key step in helping Oregon City meet its goals of becoming a regional city.