



The Confederated Tribes of **GRAND RONDE** Community of Oregon

Visioning for Blue Heron

March 2021

GBD Architects | Walker | Macy

This document is intended for review by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, their Tribal Council, the Authority Having Jurisdiction, potential development partners, and potential community partners.

Table of Contents

4	<i>tumwata – Coming Home</i>	18	<i>Need for Healing</i>
6	<i>Site Context</i>	20	<i>Lifeways Inspiration</i>
8	<i>Site History</i>	22	<i>Site Uses and Program</i>
10	<i>Blue Heron Site Today</i>	24	<i>Site Analysis</i>
12	<i>What Will Success Look Like?</i>	26	<i>Site Concepts</i>
14	<i>Opportunity to Heal</i>	28	<i>Vision</i>
16	<i>Landscape of Falls</i>	32	<i>Views</i>



walamt *Willamette River, Oregon*

tumwata *Willamette Falls*

Coming Home

“On August 15, 2019, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde purchased a 23-acre property at Willamette Falls known as Blue Heron.

The property is located within the Tribe’s ancestral homelands land and holds significant historical and cultural importance for the Tribe.

The lands were once home to the village of the Clowewalla (Willamette band of Tumwaters) and the Kosh-huk-shix Village of Clackamas people. They were ceded to the United States Government under the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty, tribal members were forcibly removed from Willamette Falls and relocated to Grand Ronde.

The Blue Heron property is a significant purchase for the Tribe. The acquisition ensures that the Grand Ronde Tribe has the opportunity to provide the cultural context of the Falls’ importance to all its neighbors and partners. The purchase allows the Tribe to reclaim a culturally important part of that homeland, allows the Tribe to tell the story of Willamette Falls accurately, and assures that tribal members will always be able to access Willamette Falls for cultural purposes.

The ownership of this property allows the Tribe to return to the role of stewards, and caretakers, of these lands all while rebuilding this special piece of the Tribe’s homelands in the Tribe’s vision.”¹

¹ <https://www.grandronde.org/project-updates/blue-heron-project/>

² <https://www.smokesignals.org/articles/2019/08/15/tribe-buys-blue-heron-paper-mill-site/>

³ <https://www.smokesignals.org/articles/2019/09/12/tribe-blesses-blue-heron-paper-mill-site-in-oregon-city/>

“This is a historic day for the Grand Ronde Tribe and our people...Since 1855, the government has worked to disconnect our people from our homelands. Today, we’re reclaiming a piece of those lands and resurrecting our role as caretakers to Willamette Falls – a responsibility left to us by our ancestors.”

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy ²

“We have returned to our lands here... We will look to our ancestors as we develop this area. The gathering of the people today makes it so special. It’s a very emotional day and shows how important this is, caring for the land and the water here again.”

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George ³

“We have always been the caretakers of this area, I’m looking forward to continuing this work for the next generations.”

Tribal Councilman Michael Langley

“The healing of the falls, returning them to its people, walking on the rocks that our ancestors walked on - is all beyond words”

Tribal Councilwoman Kathleen George

CITY SITE RIVER FALLS

The 23-acre site is centered between the city of Oregon City, the walamt *Willamette River*, and tumwata *Willamette Falls*. During the era of industry, the site, the river, and the falls were broadly inaccessible to the public. With the purchase of the property, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have the opportunity to return public access and provide economic development to a historically important area for sustenance, commerce and culture.



From Time Immemorial

Site History

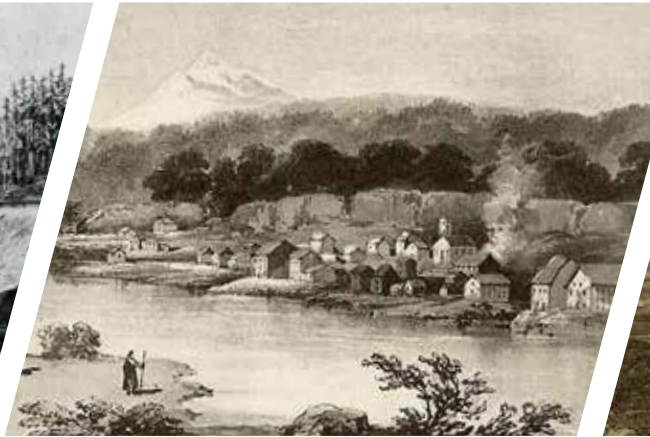
The connection for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to tumwata *Willamette Falls* goes back to time immemorial. Their people have been above and below the falls for centuries. In the early 19th century, the incursion of this and many locations took place. Euro-American settlement expanded and the site became grounds for heavy industry; it would remain in that state until the 21st century. In 2019, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde purchased the property.



Ikanum
The Storied Time



Lifeways
Life and Use Prior to 1820



Early Incursion
Contact Window: 1820 - 1840/45



Removal
1840/45 - 1860

The Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855 provided for the removal of tribal people from the area of Willamette Falls and beyond to the Grande Ronde Indian Reservation. The federal government removed people from of Clackamas, Tumwater band of Clowwewalla, Molalla, and Kalapuya.



Survival and Devastation
1860- 2011

Tribal members return to tumwata *Willamette Falls* to Fish. Industrialization and contamination of the site spreads. The Western Oregon Indian Termination Act of 1954 was passed, severing the trust relationship between the federal government and the Tribe.



Healing
2019

Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde purchase property. Efforts continue for river cleanup, fish restoration and overall Restoration of the site.

¹ <https://www.grandronde.org/history-culture/history/our-story/>

Images from Old Oregon Photos; Oregon Historical Society; Henry James Warre (1819-1898) - Schwantes, Carlos Arnaldo, Long Day's Journey -- The Steamboat & Stagecoach Era in the Northern West, University of Washington Press 1999 ISBN 0-295-97691-8

Blue Heron

Today



What is Here?

By the late 1800s, manufacturing industry was thriving at this site. The former landscape was slowly being filled in as large industrial buildings grew in size and in number. Over this time period, Oregon's largest waterfall by volume diminished in its footprint and the industrial complex we know today began to take shape. The Blue Heron Paper Mill closed its doors in 2011 leaving behind the remnants of industry.

Today the Blue Heron site is a sprawling former industrial complex, comprised of dozens of buildings and structures. The site and land has suffered from decades of industrial use requiring environmental remediation. The existing buildings and structures were built for industrial purposes to a variety of building codes and construction methods. Some of the buildings and structures can be adapted and re-purposed cost effectively; however, many of the buildings would require environmental remediation, seismic upgrades and/or reconfiguration costs that would very likely exceed their financial value.

Water and Land

The importance of the walamt *Willamette River* to the Tribe is immeasurable. Yet, over 100 years of industrial use have left a site with severe environmental challenges including degraded native habitats, polluted soils and hazardous building materials, and limited shoreline resting places for migrating native fish. The lack of water flow in the upper lagoon has impacted water quality in the lagoon, and the hardening and filling of the shoreline has altered all native habitats with the exception of a few remaining native basalt outcroppings. Riparian habitat, migrating fish habitat, and water quality would all be improved through environmental rehabilitation of the site. The health of the walamt *Willamette River*, and its path to healing are inextricably linked to the Tribe's core duty of Stewardship. This connection highlights the eternal responsibility for the Tribe to care for the river and this place.

What will Success Look Like at Blue Heron?

Elements of Success are Embodied in the Community Comments Below

We must restore the integrity and power of the place.

Honor and get back to our cultural history.

Tell the story of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Enhance economic viability of the area and to bring people there, this will further allow education of the culture/people.

Healing is all interconnected, healing the place where we are from is healing ourselves.

It's always been an economic hub, and so it can continue to be that way here again.

Economic development to help future of little ones.

...we are tying our history to our today and to our future. We want to tell the story of that place, but through the Tribal lens.

Caretakers of this area.

Sovereignty for us and for future generations. A return to the rocks and the river. Same place we walked and fished. Fish is integral to us and our lives. For the people to have fished there, it has affected and impacted their lives. Our lives will be in balance as Oregonians with return to the river.

Access the falls. Feel the mist.

Return.

Clean water, safe salmon passage.

Green, and sustainable buildings. Integrate solar energy.

[Success is] joy of wildlife at this site. And ancestral memories of these same wildlife: osprey, sea lion, ducks...

The Process to Create Goals

The design team facilitated four workshops with the Tribal Council from July to October 2020. A dominant discussion topic throughout the workshops was the central idea of Healing – the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde people, spirit, the prosperity of the people and the place at tumwata *Willamette Falls*. The idea of Healing became the primary design direction for the team in considering the site's landscape and potential for redevelopment. Restoration of the falls and the creation of a new place founded on a healed relationship to the river's edge will increase property value, build market demand, and drive new economic development for current and future generations.

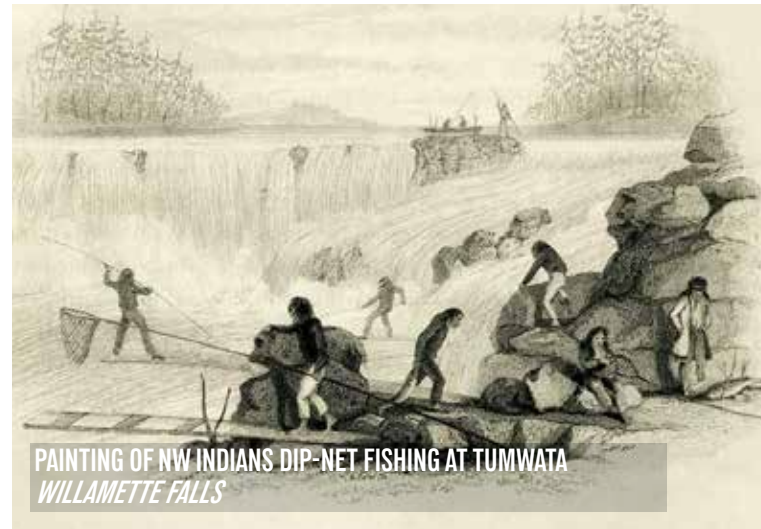


Opportunity to Heal

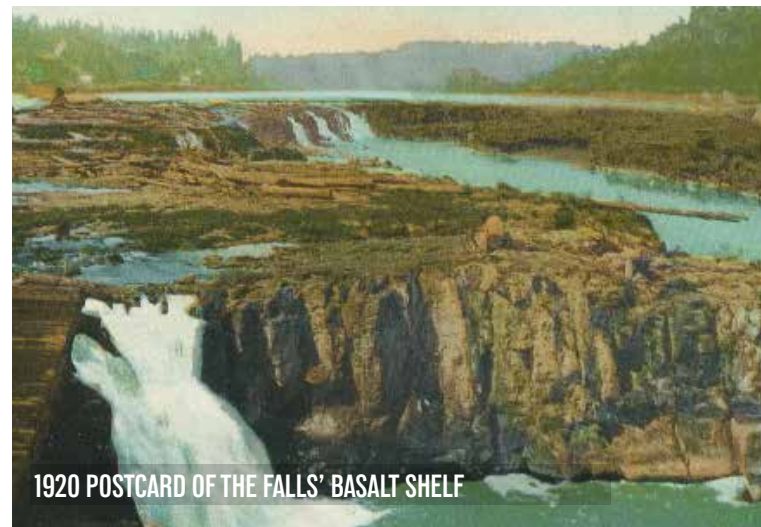
Site History

Developing a vision for the rehabilitation and healing of the site starts with understanding the site's ecology and physical characteristics and determining which elements could be most effectively restored. tumwata *Willamette Falls* is important in the Tribe's Ikanum, which tell of the formation of the falls when Meadowlark and Coyote stretched a rope made of hazel shoots across the River. The falls that ran over the basalt cliffs created a place that was astoundingly rich in sustenance, with Pacific lamprey and many species of salmon migrating past the falls and native plants growing along the River's edge.

The Clackamas and Clowewalla people were year-round residents at the falls. They were recognized as the stewards of this place and responsible for its management. Other Tribes came from throughout the region and were invited to fish, trade, and interact with the falls. The Tribe's reinvestment in their ancestral homeland represents a cultural healing with the opportunity to tell the story of their ancestors at the falls and connect current and future generations to tumwata *Willamette Falls* and *walamt Willamette River*.



PAINTING OF NW INDIANS DIP-NET FISHING AT TUMWATA
WILLAMETTE FALLS



1920 POSTCARD OF THE FALLS' BASALT SHELF



EXISTING BASALT CLIFFS ON WEST LINN SIDE OF WALAMT *WILLAMETTE RIVER*

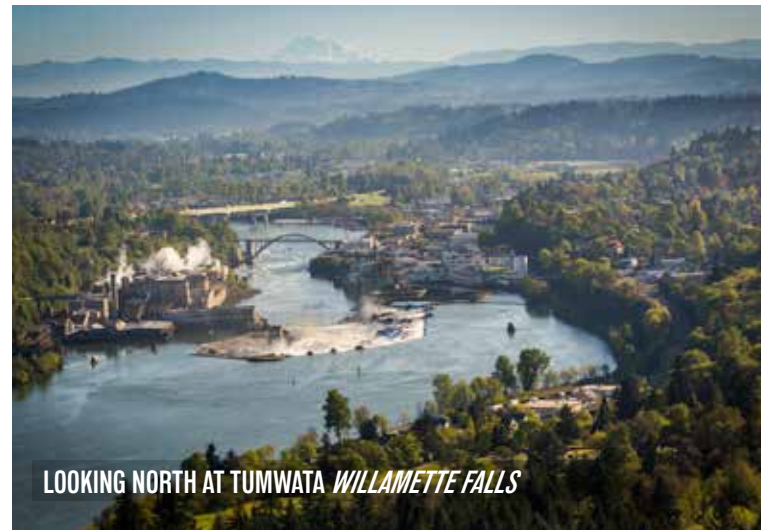
Landscape of the Falls

Restoring Site Character

As told in the *ikanum*, the horse-shoe shaped basalt shelf that creates *tumwata*, more widely known today as Willamette Falls, once stretched, unencumbered from one side of the river to the other. The main flow spilled over the center of the falls, with seasonal spills during the winter months across the other portions of the falls including on the Blue Heron site. The importance of the falls has stood since its creation by Coyote and Meadowlark in the *ikanum* times. Euro-American settlement of the region chose to capitalize on the immense power of *walamt Willamette River*. Through harnessing the falling water to feed the mechanical and industrial needs of subsequent waves of settlers at the cost of forcibly removing tribal members from their ancestral homeland.

Over subsequent decades, the settlers re-directed water flows to power mills, covered the basalt cliffs with businesses, industrial buildings and residences, and obscured large portions of the original landscape from sight. Street alignments, slope and in some cases building location have all been influenced by the flow of above and below surface water across the site. Even with much of the native basalt clad with pavement, buildings and fill, there is still evidence of water and native stone remaining on the site today. For example, there are places underneath buildings and near the old Woolen Mill foundations where water and native basalt are still visible.

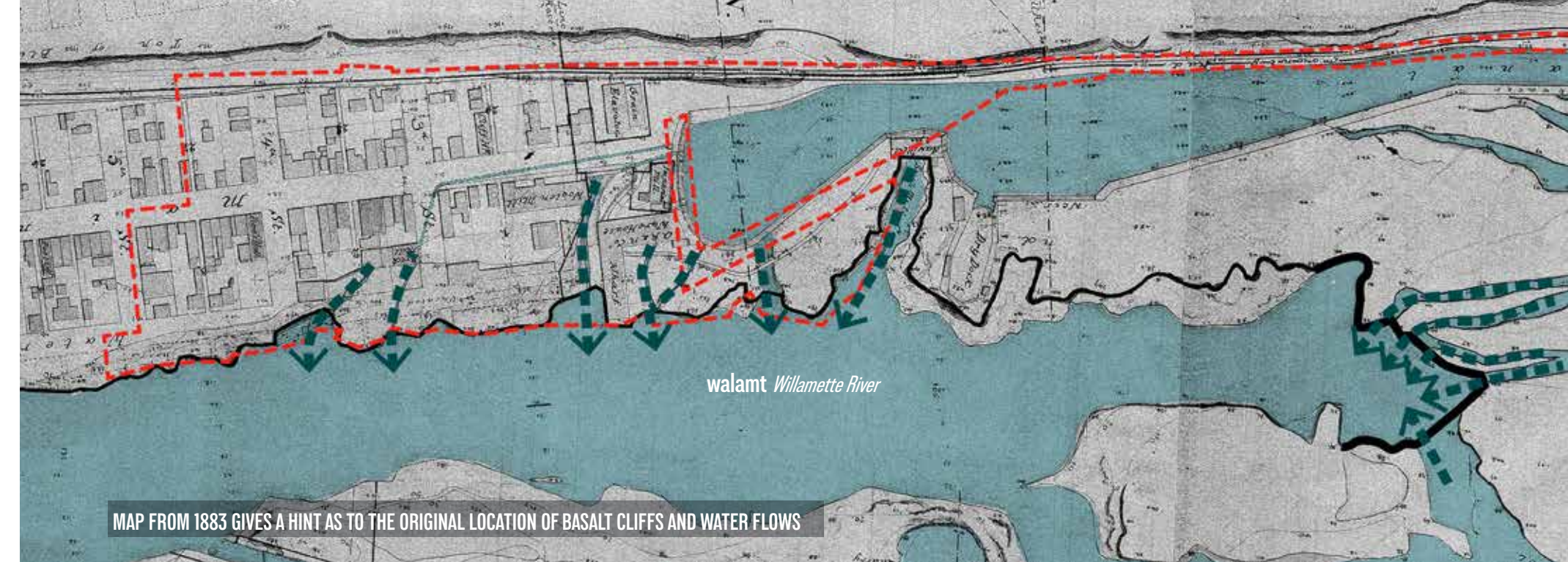
Superimposing an understanding of the site's physical history on the conditions (building, drainages, etc.) observed today provides some guidance as to where and how restoration of the site's natural qualities will be successful. By observing accessible basalt bedrock, an impression of original channels and avenues of water flow remain in place under existing buildings and imported fill. Here there is great potential to uncover and restore the basalt landscape, to reintroduce the presence of water on the site and to re-establish native plantings. In the northern portion of the site, closer to downtown Oregon City and above the flood zone, there is relatively modest benefit of landscape restoration. This area appears to have good potential for mixed use development that can visually and physically connect to restore landscape areas along the river.



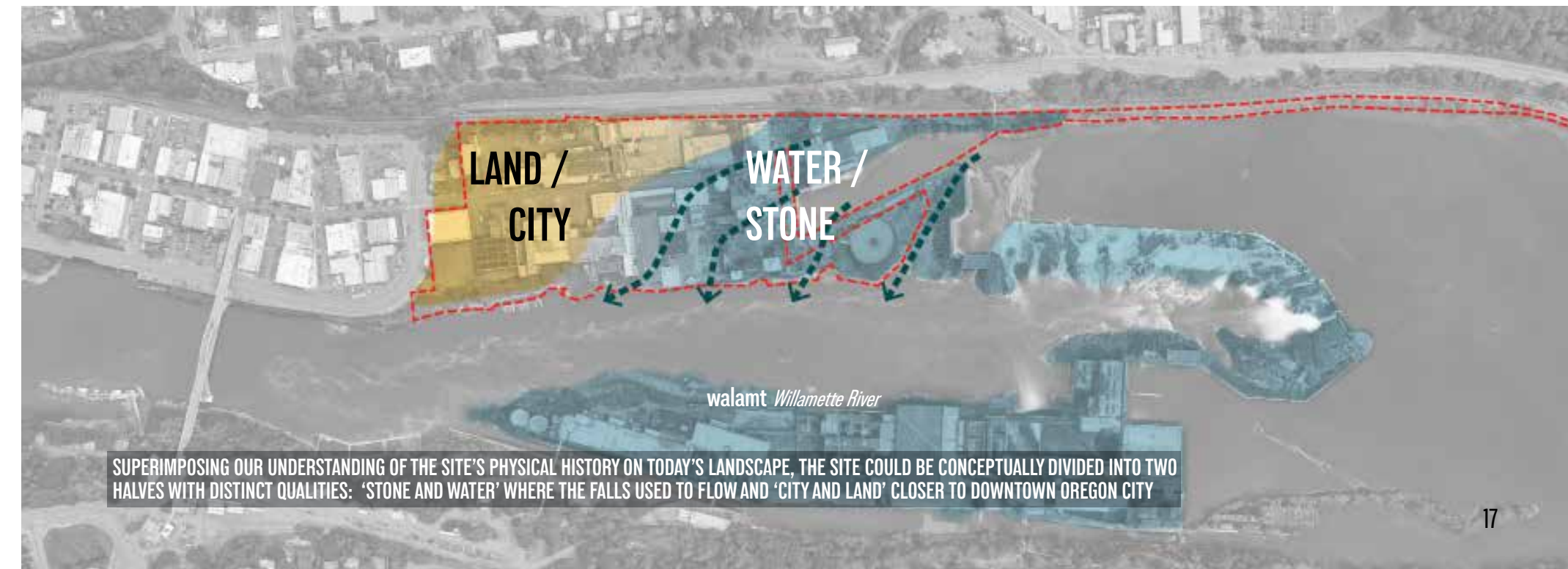
LOOKING NORTH AT TUMWATA WILLAMETTE FALLS



VISIBLE WATER NEXT TO THE WOOLEN MILL FOUNDATIONS IS EVIDENCE OF THE EXISTENCE OF WATER AND STONE BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE SITE



MAP FROM 1883 GIVES A HINT AS TO THE ORIGINAL LOCATION OF BASALT CLIFFS AND WATER FLOWS



SUPERIMPOSING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITE'S PHYSICAL HISTORY ON TODAY'S LANDSCAPE, THE SITE COULD BE CONCEPTUALLY DIVIDED INTO TWO HALVES WITH DISTINCT QUALITIES: 'STONE AND WATER' WHERE THE FALLS USED TO FLOW AND 'CITY AND LAND' CLOSER TO DOWNTOWN OREGON CITY

Need for Healing

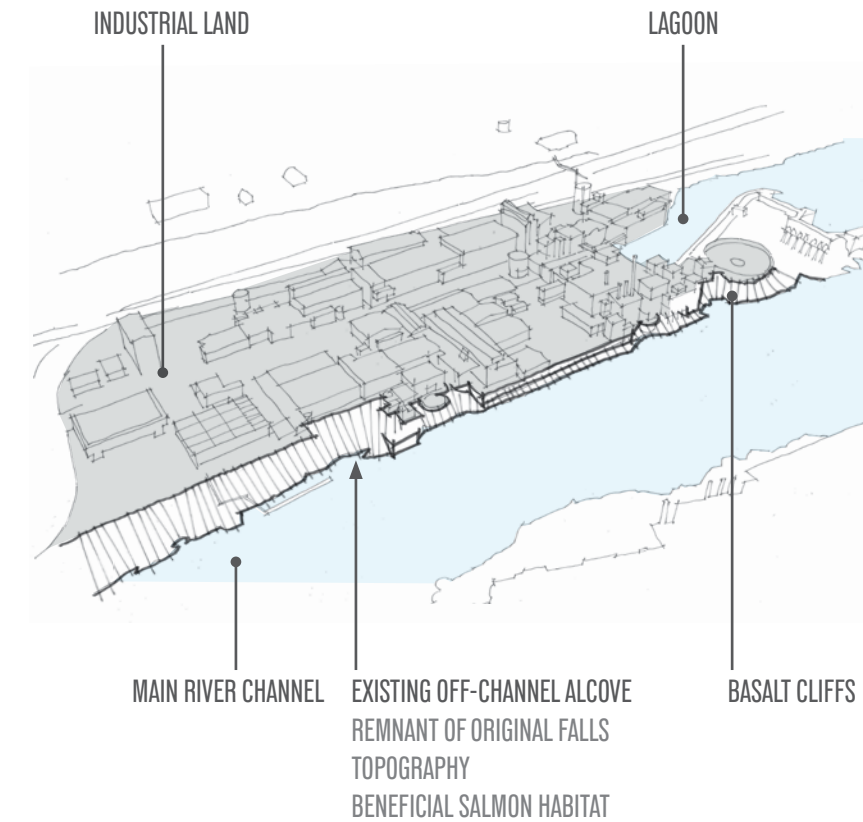
Site Ecology

With Healing as a guiding principle to this vision concept, restoration of the site environment and ecology is central to the vision for Blue Heron. Years of heavy industrial use have left the land disconnected from walamt *Willamette River*, harming the environmental quality. Peeling away the industrial layers that have covered the basalt cliffs and channels of the falls will restore portions of the site's former topography and provide multiple benefits to the ecosystem through its restoration.

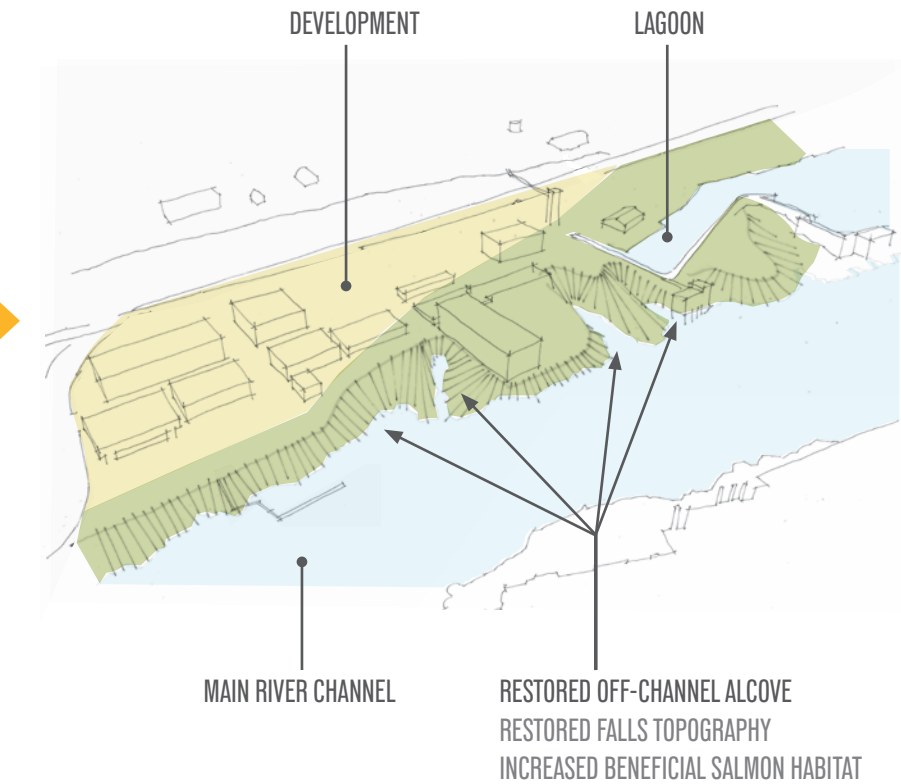
Currently there are very few places for native salmon to stop and rest outside of the main river channel given the hardened river's edge of the site. Re-establishing the undulating character to the river's edge and exposing the basalt channels that lie beneath the existing buildings

and pavements will provide multiple off-channel alcoves and create quiet resting places for migrating salmon and lamprey. The restored basalt channels will also provide opportunities for restoration of the unique riparian basalt habitats and riparian vegetation that are important for the health of native fish, bird, amphibians, and mammals. Ideally, some of these channels could eventually be connected to future water flows through the lagoon and dam, restoring the water flow through the site and improving the water quality in the lagoon.

Current Conditions



Restorative Conditions



Concept Diagram describing the reclamation of industrial land (shown in grey) at Blue Heron. Development is envisioned to occur in both a more urban, city like setting (shown in beige) as well as in a more natural, restored environment (shown in green) oriented around the river's edge and the restored topography of the falls.

Lifeways Inspiration

Site Character

This place provides significant opportunity for telling the Tribe's story and increasing the tribal community's connection to its ancestral home at the falls. The site's redevelopment will provide a great canvas for presenting the history and living identity of the Tribe. Through the use of materials, patterns, colors and symbolic elements drawn from the layered and rich artistic traditions of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, both the landscape and the buildings can physically demonstrate the Tribe's identity and character. In addition, through incorporating elements that demonstrate resiliency and self-sufficiency throughout the site, like green streetscapes that could improve water quality and sustainable building technologies that generate energy, the redevelopment can demonstrate values consistent with Tribal culture and identity.





HOSPITALITY



RIVERWALK



HOSTING

Site Uses and Program

Tell The Tribe's Story

Through Healing and Restoration, the Economic Value of Site Increases

Today, the site is a sprawling former industrial complex. Tomorrow, it could offer a signature restored riverbank incorporating several former falls channels, native species of vegetation and new spaces for gatherings, ceremonies and events. After Restoration, a new place focused on the walamt *Willamette River* and tumwata *Willamette Falls* will create new demand in the market for space at the site attracting uses such as offices, hotels or institutional/education to lease space in buildings at the falls. Other uses could include:

RESTORATION

- Riverbank Restoration
- Growing Native Plantings
- Habitat Restoration
- Scientific Study & Research

CTGR USES

- Hosting
- River Access
- Gathering Spaces
- Tribal Spaces

PUBLIC

- Riverwalk
- Education
- Hotel/Event Space
- Restaurants/Brew-Pub
- Retail/Shopping
- River Access

PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

- Office
- Research
- Higher Education Facility
- Non-Profit Org Offices
- Housing

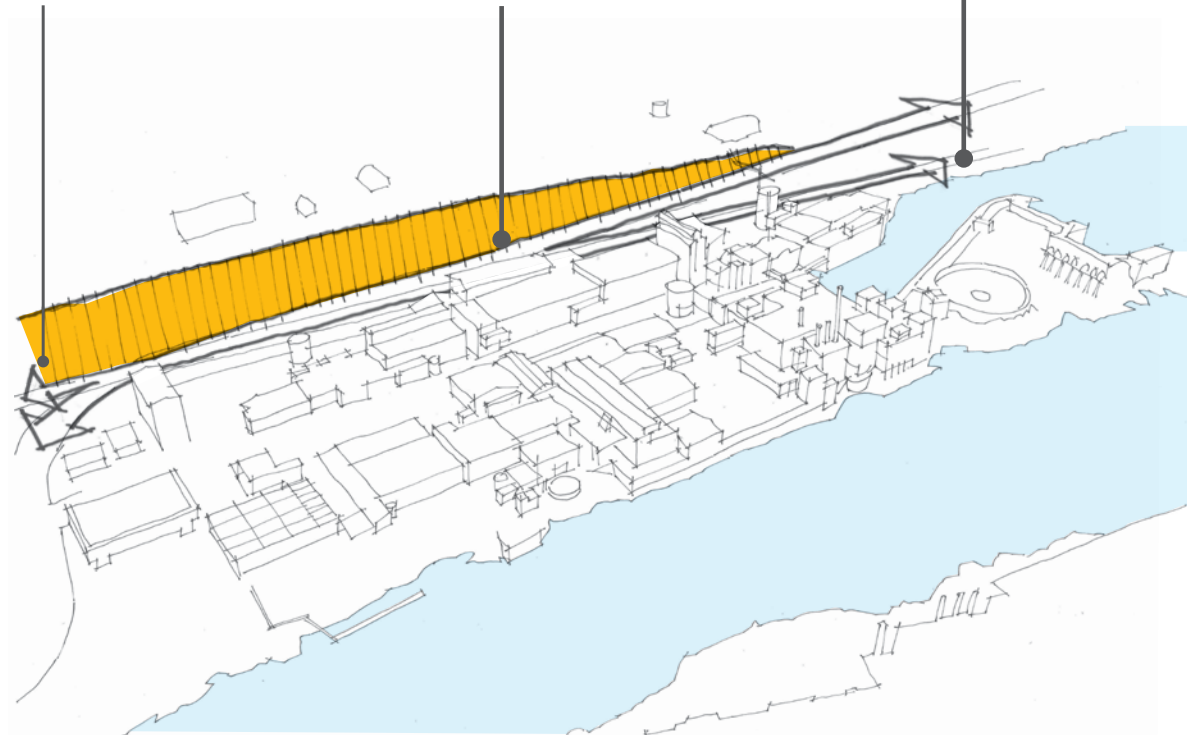
Site Analysis

Existing

Bluff is a Physical Barrier, Visual Barrier, and Reverberates Sound

99E/McLoughlin Blvd is a Barrier, Introduces Sound, and High Speed Traffic

Rail Line is a Barrier, Introduces Sound



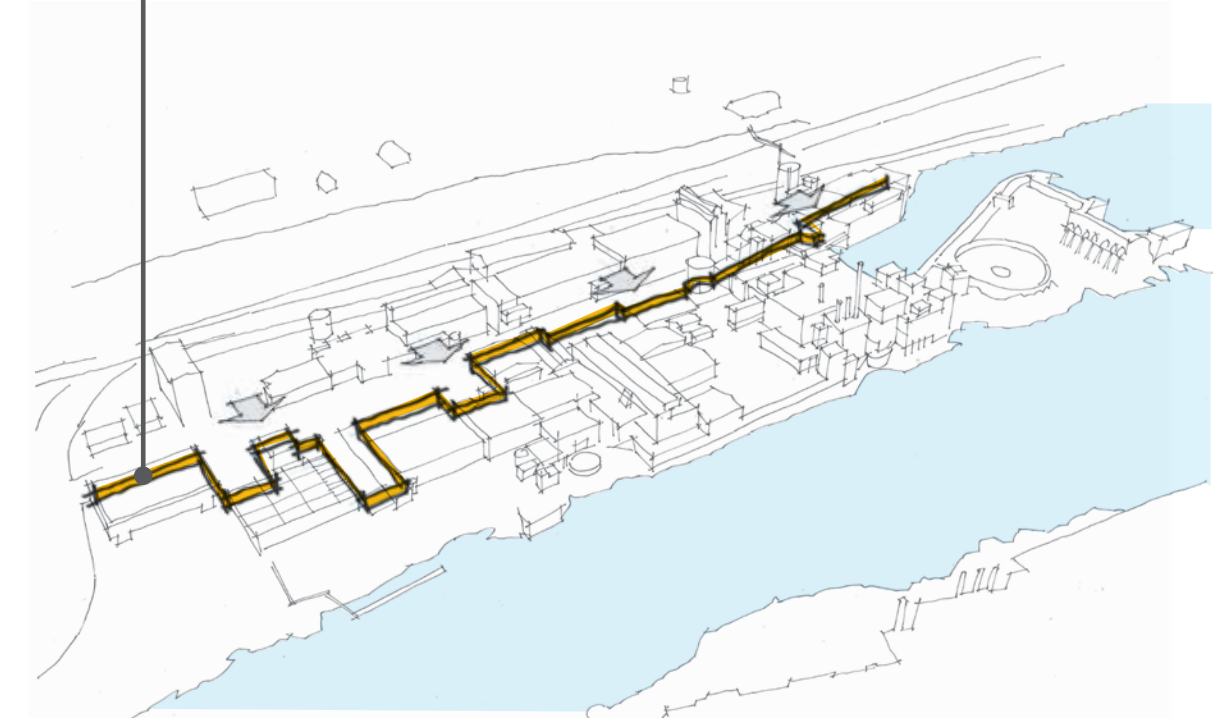
Loud with Traffic

Existing Natural Areas are Inaccessible



Limited Access to Nature

Existing Buildings Block Connection with *Willamette River*



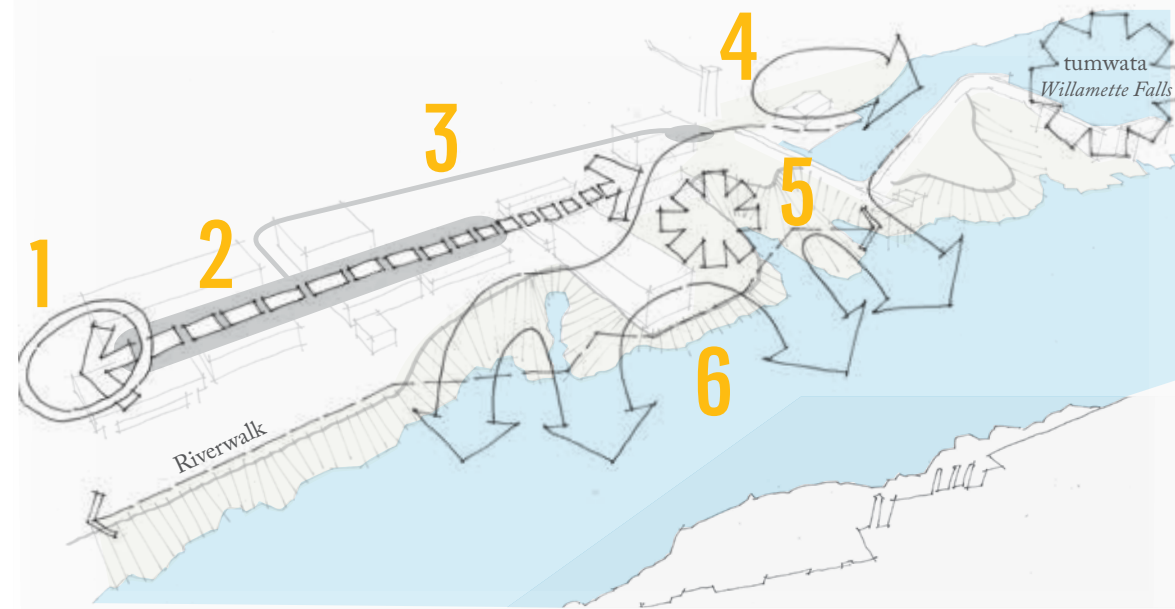
No Visual Connection

Site Concepts

Potential

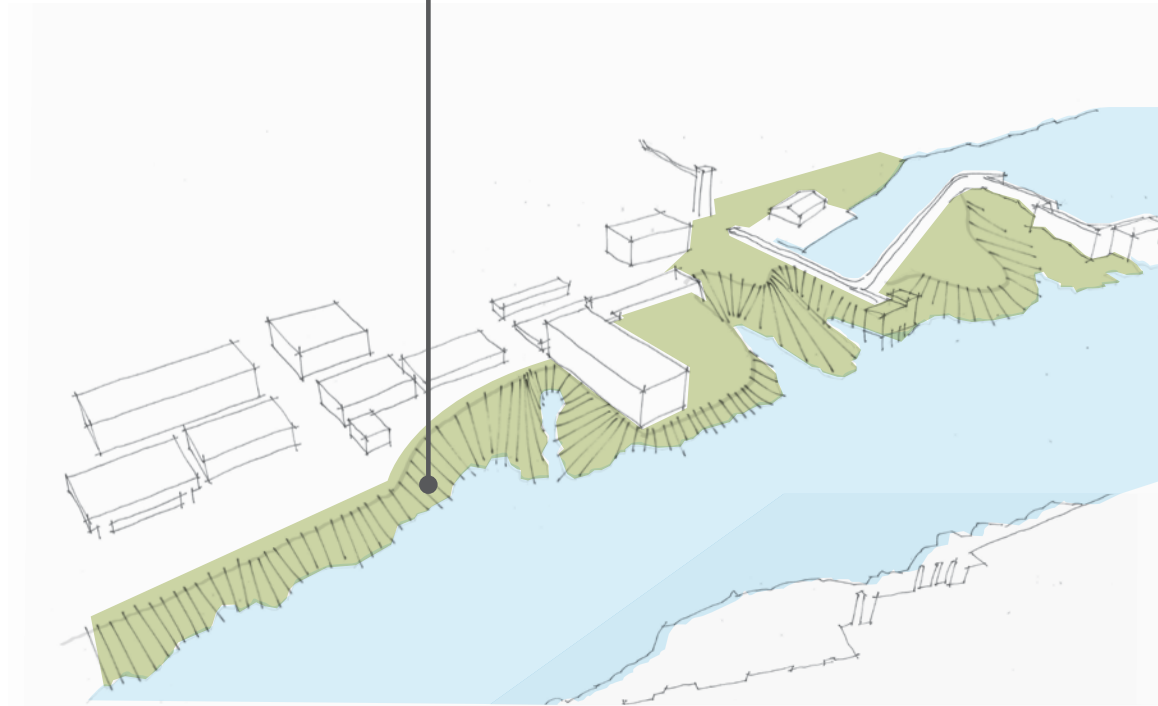
Major Proposed Design Moves

1. GATEWAY: Mark the entry to indicate a new district.
2. COMMERCIAL SPINE: Develop a new streetscape and design new buildings to activate the space.
3. VEHICULAR ACCESS: Create Railroad Ave as service road for access down the Site.
4. CULTURAL GATHERING AREA: Create an area close to tumwata *Willamette Falls* for Tribal functions and ceremony.
5. CENTRAL GATHERING SPACE: Create a large new riverfront open space for events, socializing and celebrations.
6. RESTORATION: Improve the ecology of the river and reintroduce the riverbank's natural forms.



Site Concept Diagram

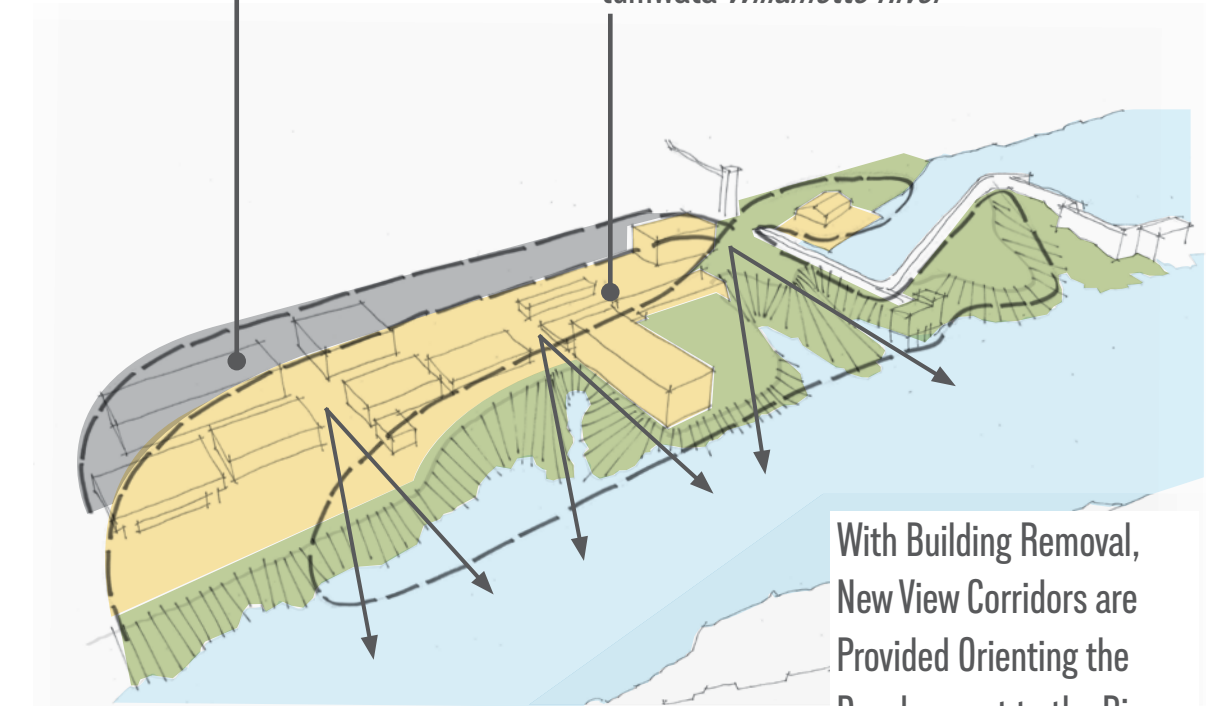
Green Indicates Areas with Potential for Ecological Restoration



Potential Ecological Restoration

Edge near Rail Line Suitable for Cars, Parking and Utilities

Property Value Increases as More Parcels Front the Restored Riverbank and tumwata *Willamette River*



Economic Value Increases as Riverbank is Restored

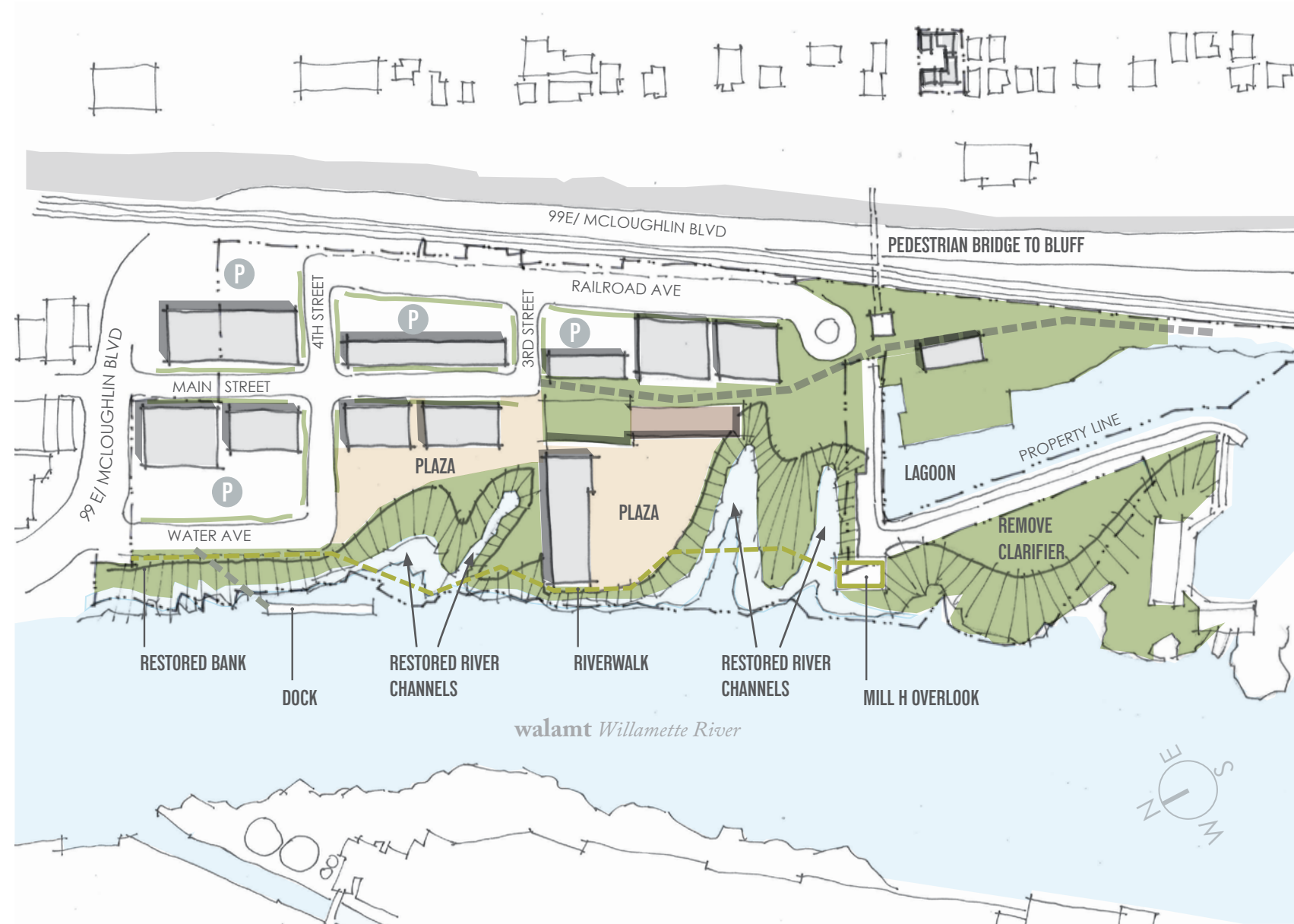


Demonstration Plan A

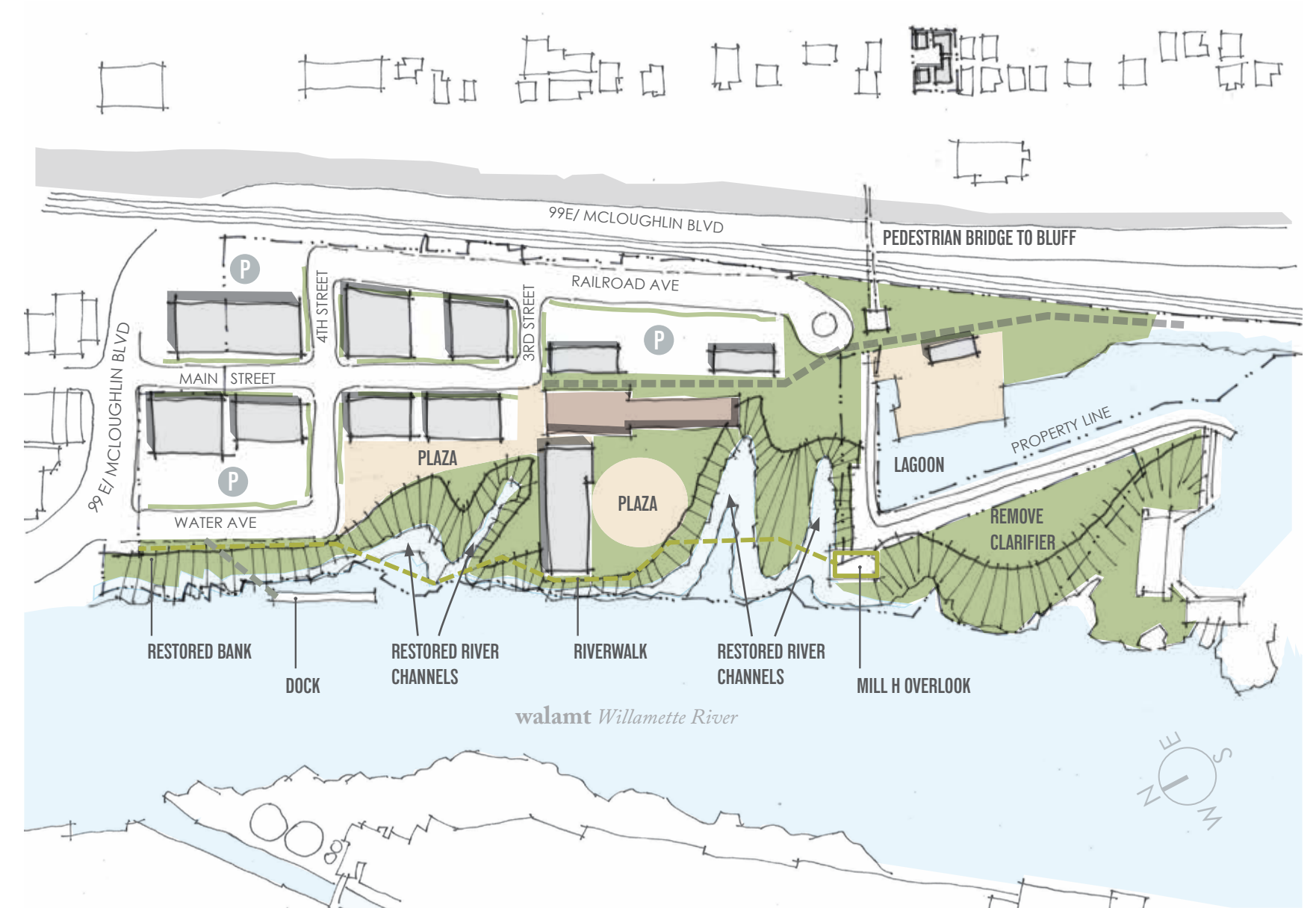
Redevelopment of Blue Heron will be focused around an enhanced riverbank featuring a series of restored channels reflecting the historic pathways of water from the falls. New open spaces will be created adjacent to the channels -- smaller spaces at the northern end of the site and a large gathering space south of the former Mill O site. The site will offer space for 250,000- 300,000 square feet of new buildings, ranging in size from one to five stories and able to accommodate uses including office, retail, residential, institutional or hotel. Main Street is extended from downtown Oregon City into the site, gradually evolving from vehicle access at 3rd Street to pedestrian and bicycle oriented as one progresses south toward tumwata *Willamette Falls* and the trail to Canemah. The plan makes space for a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the railroad and 99E, linking the site directly to other properties on the bluff.



Demonstration Plan B



Demonstration Plan C

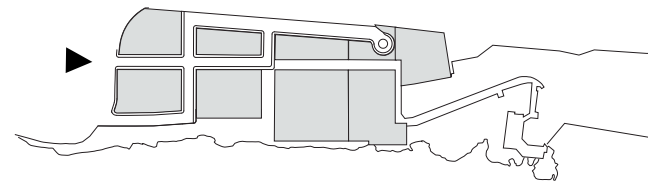


View Looking at the Gateway



Above. Existing condition. View looking south from 99E and Main Street

At Right. Perspective sketch demonstrating a redeveloped Main Street looking south.

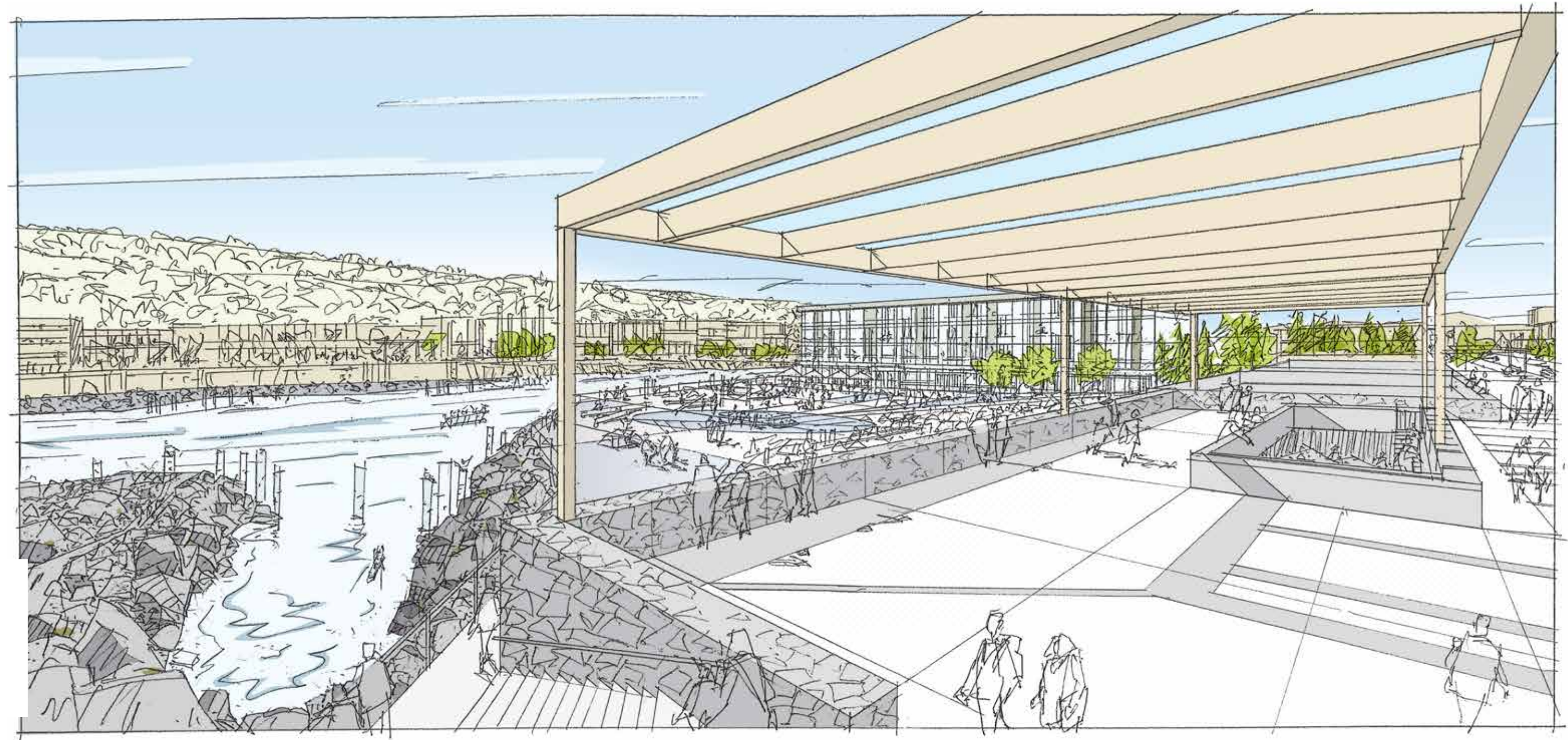
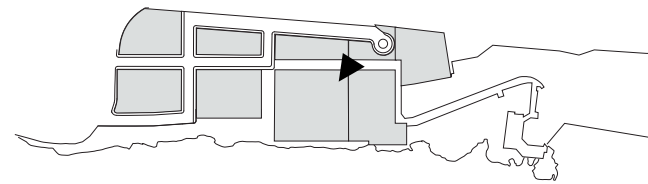


View from Woolen Mills Foundation



Above. Existing condition. View looking north from Woolen Mills Foundation

At Right. Perspective sketch demonstrating a restored channel of the falls, re-use of the Woolen Mill overlook, and public gathering space.

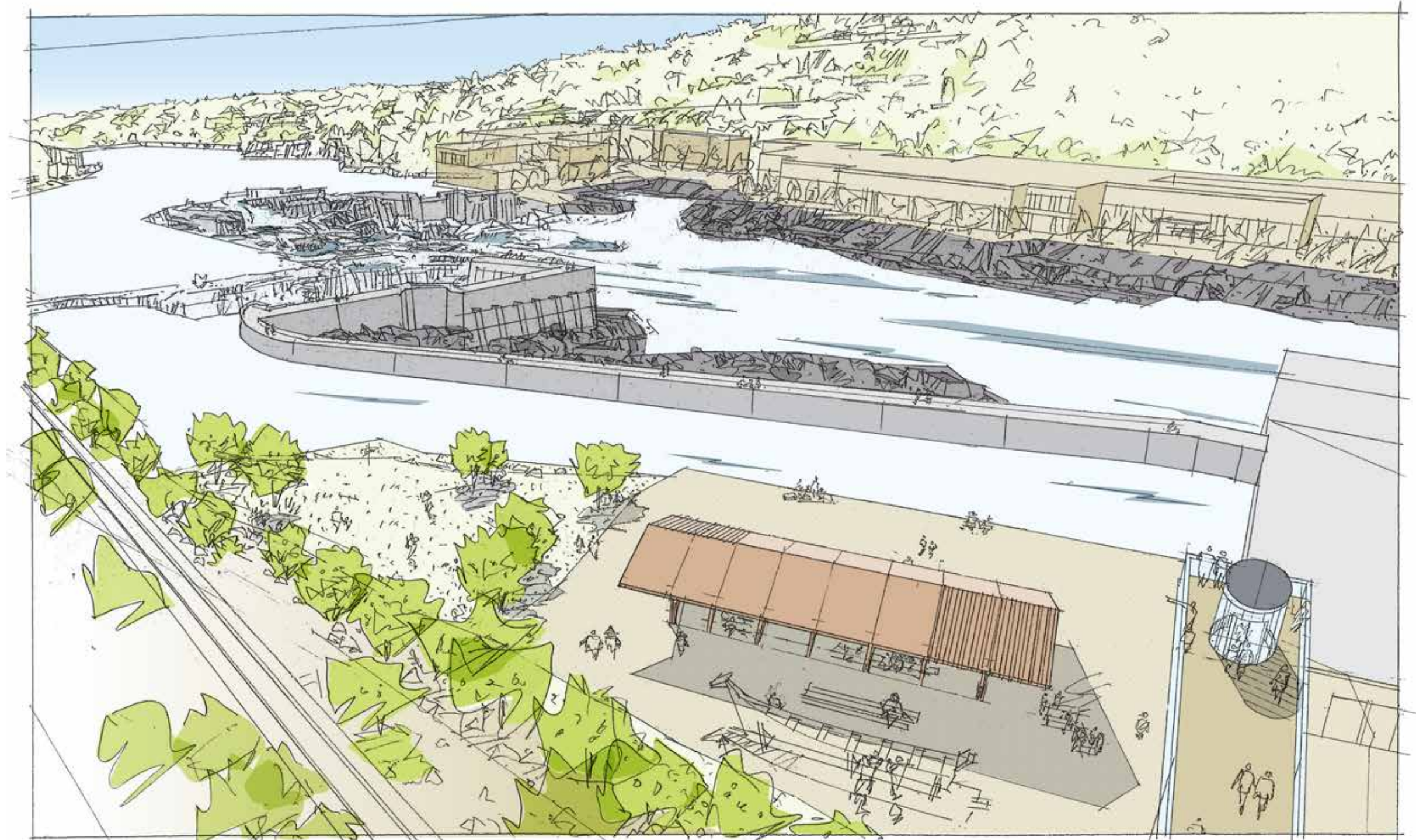
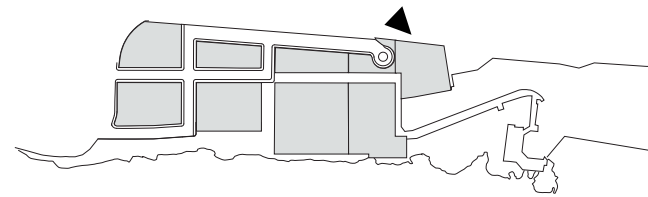


View Looking south towards tumwata *Willamette Falls*

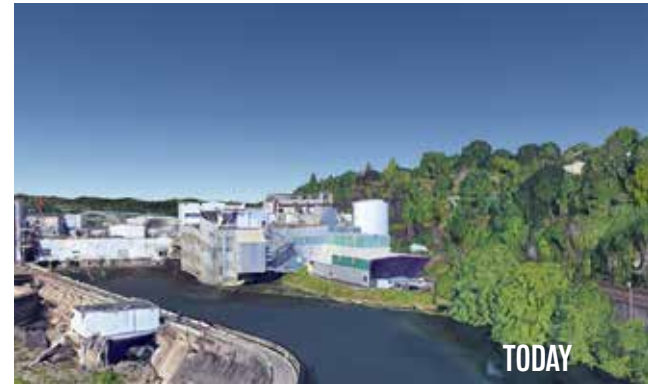


Above. Existing condition. View looking south from above towards tumwata *Willamette Falls*.

At Right. Perspective sketch from above looking south towards tumwata *Willamette Falls*.



View Looking north from Lagoon



Above. Existing condition. View looking north lagoon towards site.

At Right. Perspective sketch from lagoon looking north.

