

Memorandum

To: Eugene City Council
Cc: Gabe Flock, Senior Planner
From: Colin McArthur, AICP
Date: June 28, 2013
Subject: **EWEB Downtown Riverfront
Council Bill 5095; CA 12-4, MA 12-1, RA 12-1, Z 12-6 and WG 12-4
Response to Opposition Testimony and Councilor Inquiries**

OVERVIEW

The Applicant is aware of two (2) sets of written testimony submitted into the record following the public hearing and prior to the close of the record at 5:00PM on Friday, June 21, 2013:

- Comments from Ward Beck dated June 21, 2013 (Beck)
- Comments from Anita Van Asperdt dated June 21, 2013 (Van Asperdt)

At the June 17 public hearing, David Sonnichsen provided oral testimony in opposition to the proposal (Sonnichsen). This memorandum includes rebuttal information in response to comments by Beck and Sonnichsen on the proposed ordinance. The testimony from Van Asperdt is in support of the application. The Applicant, in general, concurs with her testimony, and a response is not required. In addition, this memorandum includes information in response to councilor inquires during the June 12 Council work session on the EWEB Riverfront Master Plan.

Comments are organized by source and are summarized by topic. Topics are shown in **bold**, indented text with responses in plain text below.

BECK COMMENTS

The Plan is prescriptive.

Beck recommends “[keeping] the public/Willamette River protection portion” but states that the “rest of the plan [should] be a recommendation.” The Eugene Code and the *Eugene Downtown Plan* call for a master plan for the EWEB riverfront site prior to any redevelopment. In 2007, EWEB and the City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that directed the development of a Master Plan for the subject property. The approved Master Plan represents the community’s vision for the redevelopment of the Downtown Riverfront. The Master Plan is a framework that builds certainty about the vision for the subject property, while being flexible enough to allow the vision to be realized in different ways. The MOU requires that EWEB implement the “Land Use Planning Components of the Master Plan, [c]onsistent with the approved Master Plan.” The proposed ordinance implements said land use components and satisfies EWEB’s responsibilities in accordance with the MOU. The MOU does not call for a recommendation; it calls for the implementation of a “mixed-use development with open space along with other elements.” As noted above, the implementation tools are a framework and are therefore not prescriptive by nature.

Beck states that the Plan is “very prescriptive” which is “especially true of road locations.” The S-DR Zone (Exhibit 4, S-DR Downtown Riverfront Special Area Zone) transportation system standards (Exhibit 4, EC 9.3160) are designed to implement the street hierarchy and circulation framework in Figure 4-13 Street Pattern and Circulation in the *Downtown Riverfront Specific Area Plan* (Exhibit 2) and the “Great Street” concept in the *Eugene Downtown Plan*. The “Great Street” concept extends into the site at 5th Avenue and 8th Avenue creating a “Great Loop” that is enhanced by the arc of the proposed street as it swings away from the river, north to south. Secondary streets are aligned with existing utility easements proposed to remain, and provide redundant access that allow the primary street to be closed to traffic for festivals and events. Proposed streets extend the block structure of the city where possible, and introduce developable blocks along the riverfront. Proposed street locations also respond to the desire to retain and reuse existing buildings, specifically the EWEB Headquarters, Operations/Building Warehouse, and Steam Plant. The proposed primary street is planned to extend between existing structures and to avoid impacts to those structures.

Recognizing the need for flexibility in street locations in order to respond to alternative proposals, variation to S-DR Zone transportation system standards specifying the location of streets, alleys, and accessways is allowed subject to Design Review approval (Exhibit 4, EC 9.3160(7)). As proposed, the Type II Design Review process utilizes existing Downtown Plan Area criteria at EC 9.8030(16) and infrastructure policies in the *Downtown Riverfront Specific Area Plan* as the approval criteria for Design Review. This approach ensures that alternatives approved are consistent with both the *Eugene Downtown Plan* and the *Downtown Riverfront Specific Area Plan*.

No economic analysis was done as part of the plan.

This statement is not accurate. Economic analysis was conducted as part of the development of the Master Plan by Leland Consulting Group and is included as project memorandum in the Master Plan Appendix, as detailed below:

- *Economic Sustainability Project Memorandum*. EWEB Riverfront Master Plan. Leland Consulting Group. August 10, 2009. (File Item No. 15.B.iv.d.)
- *Preliminary Development Program Project Memorandum*. EWEB Riverfront Master Plan. Leland Consulting Group. September 21, 2009. (File Item No. 15.B.iv.e.)
- *Implementation Options Project Memorandum*. EWEB Riverfront Master Plan. Leland Consulting Group. March 22, 2010. (File Item No. 15.B.iv.f.)

The Applicant’s *Implementation Options Memo* discusses several disposition options and development processes. The memo details local, state, and federal funding tools available to finance redevelopment. In 2010, EWEB and the City entered into a new MOU to “continue to collaborate with respect to redevelopment of the Riverfront Property.” Item No. 2 in the MOU addresses the provision of infrastructure and site improvements, as provided below:

“Basic infrastructure and site improvements, such as public streets and sidewalks, storm water facilities, sanitary sewers, and public park/open space improvements, will be necessary to convert the Riverfront Property from its present industrial condition to a viable mixed use district implementing the overall development concept represented in the Riverfront Master Plan. The City agrees to identify potential funding streams that may be available to future developers to support basic infrastructure and site improvements.”

The applicable approval criteria and standards do not require that the Applicant conduct an economic analysis or to demonstrate that site development is imminent in order to approve the plan amendments and zone change.

The 5-year City “first right of refusal” option must be eliminated in order to attract developers.

The City’s first right of refusal is addressed in the 2010 MOU between EWEB and the City as Item No. 1, excerpts below:

“ * * * the City intends to release its EC 2.196 right of first refusal to all portions of the site not identified for public park space in the City’s final land use approvals. This release of the City’s EC 2.196 right will be provided to EWEB in writing immediately following a City approval of EWEB’s application and EWEB’s written notice to the City that EWEB desires to sell the property.”

This agreement demonstrates that the right of first refusal will be resolved prior to or concurrent with a request by EWEB to sell portions of the property and will not be an impediment to future redevelopment.

The height restrictions for the EWEB property west of the viaduct need to be removed.

As shown on Figure EC 9.3155(2) (Exhibit 4, S-DR Zone), the area west of the viaduct is subject to height standard “B” which limits buildings to 78 feet or a maximum of 500 feet above sea level, consistent with EC 9.6715(3) Skinner Butte Height Limitation. The 78-foot height limit corresponds to the average elevation on the EWEB property of 422 feet south of 4th Avenue and east of High Street.

Maximum building height standards were a major topic of community discussion during the Master Plan process. The maximum building height of 120 feet allowed under height standard “D”, the area located directly east of the viaduct, is consistent with the maximum building height in the C-2 Commercial Zone (EC 9.2170). Maximum building height standards are designed to concentrate the tallest buildings in the center of the site and step down in height as buildings approach the Willamette River to the east and residential and downtown neighborhoods to the west.

The purpose and intent of the Skinner Butte Height Limitation area standard is to protect views to and from certain geographical landmarks that are of value to the community as a whole (EC 9.6715(1)). The standards at EC 9.6715 apply within all Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Zones and the Whiteaker Special Area Zone. In order to establish consistency with other zones and the neighboring Whiteaker Zone, and to protect views to and from geographical landmarks, the standards at EC 9.6715 are intentionally applied to the property and should be retained.

SONNICHSEN COMMENTS

The proposal will result in privatization of the riverfront.

The *2006 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Project and Priority Plan* identifies the riverfront portion of the site as a proposed Metropolitan Park site for acquisition. The plan assigns the acquisition project a “Priority 1” level and allocates \$1,500,000 in capital funds to “*acquire land to provide significant public open space within [the] courthouse/cannery neighborhood.*” The inclusion of the project in the PROS Plan demonstrates that public funding for the acquisition of the riverfront park portion, at a minimum, is planned.

As noted in the Beck response above, the 2010 MOU between EWEB and the City requires the City to “specifically identify those portions of the Riverfront Property that are planned and regulated to

serve municipal purposes” in order to “release some of the Riverfront Property from real or perceived encumbrances that could impede the redevelopment process.”

The proposal involves a zone change, which is dependent upon approval of a Metro Plan diagram amendment, to re-zone (16) parcels from I-2 Light Medium Industrial, I-3 Heavy Industrial, and PL Public Land to the S-DR Downtown Riverfront Special Area Zone, which is established under the concurrent amendments to the land use code. The special area zone establishes two land use sub-districts; a mixed-use sub-district (S-DR/MU) and a cultural landscape and open space sub-district (S-DR/CL). The proposed S-DR/CL sub-district comprises approximately 7.74 acres of land adjacent to the Willamette River and includes existing landscape areas, open space, and vegetation. Permitted and prohibited uses are consistent with those allowed in the PRO Zone. Proposed development standards are based on existing established development standards in the PRO, NR, and PL Zones, and are designed to achieve equal or higher performance in landscape and open space site protection, restoration, and enhancement and to ensure public access to the Riverfront. The 2010 MOU between EWEB and the City coupled with the City’s EC 2.196 right of first refusal gives the City the ability to acquire all or a portion of the S-DR/CL zoned land as a public park.

The subject site is 27.06 acres and the redevelopment framework allocates 7.74 acres for landscape and open space use, 5.55 acres for public rights-of-way, and 13.76 acres for development (File Item No. 13.C.vii. Plan Set, Sheet C1). The list of permitted uses in the S-DR Zone (Exhibit 4, EC 9.3145) does not differentiate between public and private uses.

The supplemental findings above demonstrate that approximately half the subject site (13.29 acres, the combination of landscape and open space areas and rights-of-way) is planned to remain in public ownership (EWEB or the City) and that the remainder of the site (13.76 acres) may be redeveloped by public or private entities, as envisioned by the *Eugene Downtown Plan*.

The proposal locates a road with the Greenway.

Approximately 19.75 acres of the subject site are within the boundaries of the Willamette River Greenway (Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 15). Section C.3.j. of Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 15 states:

“Development shall be directed away from the river to the greatest possible degree; provided, however, lands committed to urban uses within the Greenway shall be permitted to continue as urban uses * * * -” (emphasis added).

The subject site has been committed to urban uses since the original acquisition of the riverfront property in 1908. The proposal retains urban uses while providing approximately 8 acres of parks and open space between redevelopment areas and the river. The words “the greatest possible degree” are intended to require a balancing of factors so that each of the identified Willamette Greenway criteria is met to the greatest extent possible without precluding the requested use (emphasis added).

The Willamette River Greenway statute (OAR 660-015-005) contains two components: the Greenway boundary (C.2.) and the Greenway setback (C.3.k.). The boundary includes all lands situated within 150 feet from the ordinary low water line on each side of the channel of the Willamette River (ORS 390.318(1)). The setback is intended to keep structures separated from the river and shall not apply to water-related or water-dependent uses.

The subject property does not have an established Willamette Greenway setback line. As illustrated on Sheets L1 and L2 Site Plan (Exhibit G Plan Set), the applicant proposes the establishment of a Willamette Greenway setback line to keep structures separated from the river

and to protect, maintain, preserve, and enhance the natural, scenic, historic, and recreational qualities of the Willamette Greenway. The proposed setback line is site specific, context sensitive, and responds to existing conditions and the redevelopment vision.

In total the proposed Willamette Greenway Setback will protect 3.19 acres of the subject site. Adoption of the setback ensures that no new buildings will be constructed between the setback and the river, that adequate public access is provided along the river frontage, that existing habitat is preserved, and that the remaining natural vegetative fringe is protected. In order to establish the greenway setback line and associated protections, facilitate redevelopment in accordance with the Master Plan vision, and promote the adaptive reuse of existing structures within the subject site, the Applicant proposes the following condition of approval:

Proposed Condition of Approval

1. A Willamette Greenway Setback line is established on the subject site through the provisions of Section 9.3147 of the Downtown Riverfront Special Area Zone (Exhibit B) to keep structures separated from the river in order to protect, maintain, preserve and enhance the natural, scenic, historic, and recreational qualities of the Willamette River Greenway, as identified in Greenway Inventories. The setback line shall not apply to water-related or water-dependent uses.

The proposed “Riverfront Parkway” – the main loop road through the site – is proposed within the Greenway Boundary but is located outside the proposed Greenway Setback, although roads that provide access to water bodies are generally considered water-related use. Eugene contains several pre-existing examples of roads and highways located within both the Greenway Boundary and established Greenway Setbacks. These include, but are not limited to, portions of: Leo Harris Parkway, Ferry Street Bridge, Goodpasture Island Road, etc.

The supplemental findings above demonstrate that the proposal is consistent with Goal 15 and that roads are permitted development within the Greenway boundary.

COUNCILOR INQUIRIES

Open Space Framework and Willamette Greenway Setback.

During the June 12 work session, Councilor Zelenka requested a map that combines the Open Space Framework Diagram from the Master Plan (File Item No. 15.A.vii.c, Page 129) with the Regulatory Plan (File Item No. 13.C.vii, Plan Set Sheet R1) showing the new Willamette Greenway setback. Establishment of the proposed Willamette Greenway setback is discussed in the response to Sonnichsen above. Figure 1 below includes the Open Space Framework Diagram and existing and proposed regulatory boundaries.

Figure 1: Master Plan Open Space Framework and Regulatory Boundaries



LEGEND

- WGS — Proposed Willamette Greenway Setback Boundary
- - - Existing Water Resources Conservation Setback Boundary

Social Equity.

During the June 12 work session, Councilor Syrett requested additional information about the social equity component of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Analysis. The attached memorandum from Rowell Brokaw Architects (Exhibit 1) addresses social equity and TBL.

Rowell Brokaw Architects



MEMORANDUM

From: Kaarin Knudson, Rowell Brokaw Architects

To: Colin McArthur, Cameron McCarthy Landscape Architecture & Planning

RE: EWEB Riverfront Master Plan – Triple-Bottom Line Analysis – Social Equity

Date: June 28, 2013

Triple-Bottom Line Analysis - Riverfront Principles + Concepts

At the highest level, the EWEB Riverfront Master Plan and Public Involvement Process was based upon the understanding that our community's social, ecological, economic and sustainable concerns are interdependent. The redevelopment of EWEB's riverfront property offers the unique opportunity to advance these interests simultaneously for the benefit of all Eugene, and to redevelop our Downtown Riverfront into a place that participates actively and graciously with the whole community that surrounds it.

Consistent with triple-bottom-line accounting, the master plan supports social equity, economic prosperity, and environmental health by establishing a community-supported framework to redevelop and re-inhabit EWEB's 27-acre, downtown utility yard. The property can make a meaningful contribution to objectives set by the City's Climate & Energy Action Plan, Growth Management policies, and "Eugene Counts" framework, among others--specifically, the City's goals to create a Safe Community, support Sustainable Development, maintain Accessible and Thriving Culture and Recreation opportunities, and contribute to Fair, Stable, and Adequate Financial Resources.

Community-Developed Design

While the diversity of characteristics that make our community "Uniquely Eugene" may be innumerable, few would argue that our city is best-known for its creative spirit, beautiful milieu, and quality of life. The master planning for the EWEB riverfront property focused on strengthening and supporting these shared values. The plan modeled innovative community-design process and sets the stage for balanced, environmentally conscious, economically viable redevelopment.

Before the design phase began, the Community Advisory Team also worked to describe a set of shared values that elaborated on the four Riverfront Criteria in the Downtown Plan and outlined how this project could contribute to Eugene's economic, environmental and social health. These Guiding Principles and their supporting elements include:

SUSTAINABLE URBANISM

- Demonstrates Eugene's commitment to sustainability
- Applies urban design principles to promote a pedestrian-oriented, livable downtown
- Integrates urban, ecological and architectural considerations

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- Incorporates “green” building and design principles
- Increases density near the heart of the city
- Provides shared infrastructure that advances the potential for sustainable development (e.g., renewable energy, landscaped stormwater treatment, water conservation, waste mitigation, urban agriculture)
- Creates a place that is socially and economically diverse

BALANCE OF USES

- Includes a diverse mix of public and private spaces
- Balances and integrates the natural and built environments
- Incorporates a diversity of housing options that bring vitality to the site
- Contributes to a resurgence of Downtown living opportunities
- Develops public amenities that offer cultural, educational, recreational, artistic and social benefits

ECOLOGY

- Protects and enhances complex river ecology
- Aligns riparian restoration with river and site hydrology
- Enhances the community’s ecological awareness
- Protects habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species on and near the site
- Recognizes this property as part of the Willamette River watershed

IDENTITY

- Captures Eugene’s unique identity
- Recognizes this place as Eugene’s Downtown Riverfront
- Redevelops a multi-use, active, livable community
- Honors Eugene’s industrial history and EWEB’s history of providing and conserving energy and water
- Integrates the layers of Eugene’s history imbedded in the site
- Seeks a distinctive, beautiful aesthetic
- Creates a welcoming place for all

CONNECTION

- Connects the river to the city and the city to the river
- Maintains a public river edge and continuous riverbank trail
- Seeks collaboration and compatibility with neighbors
- Creates view corridors to the river
- Improves access to and from the site for all modes of transportation
- Is pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented
- Is accessible and safe for everyone

ECONOMICS

- Is economically viable, vibrant and resilient
- Generates a financial return to EWEB to benefit ratepayers
- Contributes to economic vitality through taxes and employment
- Contributes to community value through infrastructure enhancements

FEASIBILITY

- Generates political and community support for the redevelopment of the downtown riverfront
- Is flexible to allow for adaptation and unforeseen opportunities
- Cultivates local capacities and expertise
- Delivers tangible, immediate benefits for long-term investments
- Contributes to the vitality of Eugene
- Creates a master plan framework that is economically feasible

Public Process + Inclusive Outreach

The EWEB Riverfront Master Plan included a robust and meaningful public involvement process consistent with the Core Values of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). This required a high-quality process and the integrated design of public involvement with the technical design process and overall project management. The integration of outreach efforts with key design decisions generated trust within the community and led to increasing involvement over the course of the project. Over a 12-month design process, more than 1,000 people directly participated with this planning process.

Under-represented Communities

While large public meetings played a key role in the public design process, the design team also worked to address the under-representation of youth, the accessibility community, and communities of color through targeted outreach and inclusive strategies.

Youth

Approximately 98 middle- and high-school students and 30 University of Oregon and Lane Community College students actively participated in project activities or events. Seventeen University of Oregon students participated in the RBA/AIA design charrette and one Portland high-school student mentored with the design team project manager for the duration of the master planning process.

Design materials developed for the RBA/AIA design charrette were later utilized for class projects at North Eugene High School and the Village School. In both cases, students toured the EWEB site, and then worked in teams to design a master plan and present their final work to the class. At North Eugene, a member of the Community Advisory Team introduced the project to the class and returned to provide feedback on final presentations.

Accessibility

Outreach to the accessibility community focused on how the EWEB Riverfront Master Plan can embody universal design principles. In the early days of the project, the public involvement team consulted with Human Rights Accessibility Committee staff on the best way to remove participation barriers. Suggestions included:

- Braille translated materials delivered early to participants for review, utilizing the Eugene Public Library Braille Translator
- Promotion and provision of assisted listening devices
- Provision of American Sign Language interpreters upon request
- Hold any public meeting in a location that is accessible to every level of functional mobility

During the master planning process, the design team met twice with the Human Rights Accessibility Committee; once, to receive input and, months later, to show how the committee input had influenced the plan. An additional meeting was organized with accessibility experts to work through specific design issues related to the river edge, bike and pedestrian areas. This input had significant impact on the development of the design.

Communities of Color

A bilingual member of the public involvement team conducted outreach in Latino communities. Latino student organizations at the University of Oregon and Lane Community College, Latina women's groups, and a farming organization were the focus of this outreach. Presentations regarding the master plan that included the opportunity for questions and input were done in small meetings. Simultaneous Spanish translation was available at all large public meetings.

Outreach to the African-American community included 10 individual interviews, a presentation at Blacks in Government, outreach at a hair salon, a church, outreach work at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration, and multiple conversations with local African-American historians and community leaders. Participation and historical documents provided by members of the African-American community and researchers affiliated with the University of Oregon helped to develop the master plan's representation of the recent cultural history along the riverfront site.

Site Tours

In addition to the site tours for the hundreds of community members who attended the public events or AIA charrette, the design team led a series of site tours for community leaders, EWEB neighbors, members of the media, and small groups of interested parties. These tours helped to orient people to the site's existing conditions and provided the opportunity for in-depth discussions regarding the design or specific areas of interest.

Public Engagement: Outreach Beyond Public Meetings

The design team utilized a variety of involvement strategies to collect meaningful input from the community at key points in the design process. The Community Advisory Team, EWEB and City staff, and the design team went to the following events with displays about the project:

- Eugene Celebration / People's Choice
- Run to Stay Warm
- Holiday Market
- MLK Jr. Day Celebration
- Walk & Bike Summit
- Asian Celebration
- Peterson Barn Family Night
- Earth Day

During the master planning and land-use process, Rowell Brokaw Architects made more than a dozen presentations local organizations to inform community members about the master plan and solicit input. In doing so, several hundred *additional* community members were informed of the project and asked for input.

Presentations were made to the following organizations:

- Neighborhood Leaders Council
- Human Rights Accessibility Committee (2x)
- Downtown Neighborhood Association (2x)
- North Eugene High School
- EWEB Employees (2x)
- Delta Rotary
- Downtown Rotary
- Chamber of Commerce Local Government Affairs Council
- Inns of the Court
- Blacks in Government
- Harlow Neighborhood Association
- Chamber of Commerce Greeters
- HOPES EcoDesign Arts Conference
- Environmental Law Conference

Riverfront Open Space + Public Access

Riverfront Open Space: A Cultural Landscape

Eugene's Downtown Riverfront is a place that we share, making it an ideal vessel for community education and lessons from history. Every member of the community has a connection to the layers of civic, ecological and cultural history embedded in this site. Eugene was founded along these banks, families and friends have lived along them, industries have come and gone, and the water and energy provided by EWEB have supported Eugene for nearly 100 years. The lessons this landscape can teach are poignant and inspiring.

The variety of open space types in the master plan support a wide range of program opportunities on the EWEB site and welcome a diversity of people to the site. These open space types include community gardens, naturalized habitat zones supporting various ecosystems, bioswales, adventure and discovery play areas, naturalized park spaces, green streets, and animated boardwalk and public gathering areas that might include restaurants and kiosks. All of these spaces further the vision of the downtown riverfront as a vibrant, mixed-use, sustainable, highly walkable community.

The overarching open space proposal is for a Cultural Landscape along the river—a community trove of green space, interpretive sites, public art, vistas and historic structures that teach about the history and culture embedded along the riverfront site. These installations could be as small as a single inscribed tile or a plank in a boardwalk, or as large as a building or an entire ecological zone. The intention is to use the full riverfront landscape to teach and inspire inquiry into our community's history, in a variety of ways and at a variety of scales.

In addition to EWEB's industrial history on the site and the ecology of this place, some recommended topics for interpretation of the riverfront site's social and cultural history are included below. This does not constitute a comprehensive list of interpretive opportunities, but captures public input and project research.

Wiley Griffon's House

Wiley Griffon is widely considered to be Eugene's first African-American resident. Well-known and popular, Griffon was the driver and de facto operator of a mule-driven streetcar service that carried early residents from West Eugene to the University of Oregon campus. A Sanborn map from 1912 shows Griffon's house to be located near the intersection of 4th and Mill Street, on the riverfront property near to the present-day EWEB Employee's Credit Union. On Eugene Skinner's first plat, Griffon's residence is located on Block 10, Lot 4.

Born in 1867, Griffon came to Eugene from Texas in 1891 with Henry W. Holden, the railway entrepreneur who employed him. Wiley died in Eugene in 1913, at age 46, and was buried in the Masonic Cemetery among Eugene's other pioneer citizens. The location of his grave in the Masonic, and the fact that the local Elks paid for his funeral, says a great deal about the respect Griffon earned during his 22 years as a member of Eugene's community. By all accounts, he was a well-liked, respected man who made recognized contributions to the daily lives of others. He worked for many businesses during his time in Eugene, and purchased his small home overlooking the Millrace in 1909. It is a simple story of a popular man made remarkable by that fact that Griffon lived in Eugene at a time when Oregon laws still barred African-Americans from residing in the state.

At the time Griffon lived on the EWEB property, Oregon could hardly have been a welcoming place for African-Americans. In 1844, the Territory government had banned slavery but made it illegal for African-Americans to live within its bounds. Oregon reaffirmed its exclusion laws when the state constitution was ratified in 1857. In 1859, Oregon was the only state in the union that still had exclusionary laws on its books. These laws weren't repealed until 1926, and it wasn't until 1959 that Oregon ratified the 15th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, almost 90 years after it was approved by the Federal Government.

As the first recorded of many African-American pioneers in Eugene, and as the city's first known public-transit provider, Wiley Griffon's is an important story to share through the design of this interpretive landscape. Griffon's house also operates as a connecting point between two adjacent sites of historic significance to the African-American community: the Mims House and Ferry Street Community site.

Ferry Street Community

More African-Americans came to Eugene, despite the discriminatory laws and ethic, in the 1930s-1950s, with the Southern Pacific Railroad. In the 1940s, some of these new residents came together in a small community along the northern banks of the Willamette River, near the Ferry Street Bridge and just beyond Eugene's city limits.

The Ferry Street Community was Eugene's first African-American neighborhood. It was located near the foot of the DeFazio Footbridge, on the north side of the river. The houses are remembered as being square in plan, wood-framed, and with simple roofs made from solid materials or canvas. The homes were constructed primarily from scavenged materials.

Today, no physical evidence of the settlement exists. In July 1949, a Lane County Court ordered that the Ferry Street Settlement be razed and residents evicted. Newspaper articles reported that some families did not even have an opportunity to remove their belongings before the small structures were bulldozed. At that time, the community was reported to include 101 people, 65 of whom were "colored," 36 of whom were white, and most of whom were poor. In a 2006 interview conducted by Chrisanne Beckner, Mattie Reynolds, who lived on the site with her husband and children, recalled the names of eight families who lived on the site in 1948: Johnson, Mims, Nettles, Lester, Garrets, Holt and Henry, and Frenchwell. Newspaper articles from 1949 also reference at least three white families named Barber, Walker and Owens.

Following demolition, Eugene's African-American community was dispersed to three separate areas of town: West Eugene, High Street and Glenwood. The land where several families relocated in West Eugene was without water or sewer service, and marked by seasonal flooding. Lyllye Reynolds Parker was among the children who were forced to move when the Ferry Street Community was demolished. Sam Reynolds Street in West Eugene is named for her father. Views to the area once occupied by the Ferry Street Community are afforded from the northern edge of the EWEB property, presenting an opportune location for historic interpretation and commemoration.

Rivers + Hydrology

On a calm day, the Willamette River exudes a bucolic character that belies its power and area of influence. On average, this waterway carries 32,000 cubic feet of water per second (cfs); during the 1996 flood, that rate was 460,000 cfs, or 14 times its average flow. The Willamette watershed encompasses nearly 12,000 square miles and the river itself is 187 miles long, flowing north from the southern end of the Willamette Valley to its confluence with the Columbia River in Portland. Life teams in its waters, and along its banks: more than 70% of Oregon's population lives within this watershed. River overlooks provide the opportunity for interpretative sites addressing hydrology, river systems and water quality.

Historic Infrastructure

The EWEB property is literally filled with industrial relics, and there are numerous opportunities to repurpose these items. Most notably, the Steam Plant sits near the southern terminus of the riverfront open space, forming a historic backdrop to the riverfront property. Completed in 1931, the Steam Plant is historically significant for its use as a power plant. The structure is a highly recommended candidate for renovation and adaptive reuse.

Natural Systems + Habitat

Stormwater runoff poses a major threat to the health of rivers, and loss of habitat in urban areas threatens pollinator

species and songbirds. The master plan proposes new habitat but also recommends interpretive sites along the Millpond Swale and atop the Pollinator Knoll to share this knowledge and present action-item solutions to community members.

Skinner's Mudhole + Ferry Crossing

The riverfront property is part of our city's earliest history and a river overlook is an ideal location to share this history lesson.