Willamette Falls is one of the nation’s most beautiful and historic natural wonders. As the second largest waterfall by volume in the North America, this has long been an important cultural and gathering place for Native American Tribes. The Falls sit at the end of the Oregon Trail, and throughout the late 1800s were the heart of a thriving frontier city. This became the site of energy generation for Oregon’s early industries, including the state’s first paper mill and the world’s first long distance electrical power transmission line from Oregon City to Downtown Portland.

How did we get here?
The Blue Heron Paper Company, which closed its doors in 2011, was the last in a succession of businesses that contributed to a strong working waterfront in Oregon City. Its departure left a gap to be filled in the city’s historic downtown and in the local economy. The 22 acre site formerly occupied by the mill was purchased in May 2014. Oregonians now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-imagine Willamette Falls and its surroundings.

In cooperation with the new owners, Oregon City, Metro, Clackamas County, and the State of Oregon are concluding a yearlong master plan and visioning process that will rezone the site to provide needed flexibility and certainty for a new generation of investors while reducing and removing barriers to redevelopment. A vision also emerged during the master planning process. The public process articulated a future for the site that provides public access to the Falls, restores habitat, redevelops the property to honor the site’s past, and re-connects to Oregon City’s historic downtown. This place will feel like an extension of downtown, not a separate campus, and will include generous spaces for the public to experience the site and reconnect to the Willamette River.
Thousands of Oregonians came together over this last year to shape the future of Willamette Falls. They imagined a project that would do justice to the beauty of this place; that would honor the past and speak to the future.

The Blue Heron site, despite its stunning location on the Willamette Falls and its historical importance as the founding place of Oregon, also presents significant challenges to attracting private investment. The combination of market conditions, inadequate infrastructure, and challenging site conditions are all barriers to private development. We hope that the approach taken in the upcoming Master Plan balances these two forces and creates a future development program that aims high but provides a fair amount of flexibility for market implementation.

The Framework Master Plan will solidify the community’s and owner’s vision, and clear barriers to redevelopment. It will give the owner flexibility to build everything from hotels to health clubs, museums to markets, offices to light industrial buildings. The Plan will ensure that development reflects and respects the site’s natural setting and industrial history, makes it easy to walk and bike, and blends in with downtown Oregon City, while creating a unique sense of place in the new waterfront district. It also ensures healthy habitat along the Willamette River and preservation of key historic structures when it’s feasible—and when it’s not, incorporation of artifacts into the design.

The new site owner, George Heidgerken and his team at Falls Legacy LLC, are working closely with staff to move forward with the Master Plan. The Master Plan and corresponding Zone Change was submitted in mid-July with public hearings starting in September (see last page for schedule). Additional information on the application materials will be updated on www.rediscoverthefalls.com in the coming weeks.

Guided by four core values
Project partners agree on four guiding values for public efforts on the site.

Public Access: The public will get a front-row seat to experience Willamette Falls and connect with the river.

Economic redevelopment: The Willamette Falls site will reinvigorate downtown as a hub of employment, shopping, business and tourism.

Healthy Habitat: Protecting the site provides an opportunity to reestablish native plant communities, enhancing this ecologically diverse stretch of the Willamette River.

Historic and cultural interpretation: Future visitors will learn about the rich history of Willamette Falls, which served as an important cultural site for native tribes and as the birthplace of Oregon.

What’s the Plan?
The Master Framework Plan outlines how development will generally occur, identifying key areas for public access, open space and development. It re-establishes the Main Street grid and creates connections for people to view majestic Willamette Falls. The site will also change zoning, from industrial to a new mixed use zone that will allow commercial, residential and employment uses. A key element of the plan is the Riverwalk, a walkway that creates continuous public access to view the river. It links a series of overlooks and docks along the river’s edge and connects to the street grid and future open spaces. Historic and cultural elements, benches and viewing platforms create a memorable gateway to Willamette Falls and beyond. The project partners are working to put together a funding package to first plan and design the Riverwalk, then to construct it. The design project will be a robust public process, so keep an eye out for ways to get involved in the Riverwalk project in the future!
The areas identified in green fall within the 1996 flood inundation area. These areas are more suitable for open space and harder to redevelop. The numbered areas in yellow are mostly out of the flood area and are considered easier to develop. These areas will form new City blocks in downtown Oregon City. The light yellow and hatched areas contain structures that have opportunity for rehabilitation but are within the flood area. These parts of the site will need further refinement and may be a mix of open space and development. The historic street grid is proposed to be reintroduced to the site. Five historic structures outlined in black are required to be utilized in redevelopment through adaptive re-use or rehabilitation of some form. The remaining buildings on site may be retained, but are not required to remain.

How can I participate?
Public hearings to adopt the plan will begin in early Fall and will be held at City Hall – see the schedule below. You can attend a hearing and give public testimony, or you can send comments by mail or email to 221 Molalla Ave Oregon City, OR 97045 or wflp-publiccomments@orcity.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Type</th>
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<td>September 8, 2014</td>
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In the meantime, you can follow us on Facebook and Twitter, check out our website for great site photos and videos, and sign up for a tour! Learn more at www.rediscoverthefalls.com.