

**Oregon City  
Historic Review Program  
Historic Survey & Update Project**



*Prepared for*  
**Oregon City Community Development Division &  
the Oregon City Historic Review Board**

*Prepared by*  
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Note that corrections to information on any property surveyed for this report may be made by contacting Christina Robertson-Gardiner at (503) 722-3789 or [crobertson@orcify.org](mailto:crobertson@orcify.org).

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OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM  
HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

## Table of Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Purpose of project</i> <i>Scope of work</i> <i>Team qualifications</i>	
<b>2. Oregon City Landmarks Update .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Purpose</i> <i>Methodology and scope</i> <i>Registration criteria</i> <i>Findings</i> <i>Recommendations</i>	
<b>3. City-wide Reconnaissance Survey .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>Purpose</i> <i>Methodology and scope</i> <i>Registration criteria</i> <i>Findings</i> <i>Recommendations</i>	
<b>4. Historic Context Statement.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Rivercrest Historic Context Statement</i> <i>Oregon City's Mid-Century Architectural Styles</i> <i>Frequently Asked Questions - Why Mid-century Resources?</i>	
<b>5. Review of Policies and Procedures .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<i>Oregon City's Historic Review Program</i> <i>Recommendations for Future Preservation Activities</i>	
<b>6. References .....</b>	<b>48</b>

## Appendices

- Appendix A: Oregon City Landmarks Update*  
*Appendix B: Oregon City Reconnaissance Survey Map*  
*Appendix C: Oregon City Reconnaissance Survey Report*

OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM  
HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

**Figures**

*Figure 1* - Summary of Landmark changes

*Figure 2* - Oregon City Landmark, the Charmon-Mack House, 1875

*Figure 3* - Summary of survey property eligibility

*Figure 4* - Construction date of survey properties

*Figure 5* - Architectural styles of survey properties

*Figure 6* - River Crest Addition, 1940

*Figure 7* - River Crest Central Addition, 1946

*Figure 8* - Rivercrest Neighborhood Surveyed Lots and Areas of Future Consideration

*Figure 9* - This aerial of the wooded Rivercrest neighborhood was published in the 1950 Clackamas County Pictorial Review

*Figure 10* - Judge Holman house at the entry of the Rivercrest subdivision

*Figure 11* - Rivercrest's smaller lots became popular directly after World War II

*Figure 12* - How can I use my survey?

*Figure 13* - Using survey to provide direction for preservation strategies

*Figure 14* - What is a CLG required to do?

*Figure 15* - Oregon City, 1961

# OREGON CITY HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

## 1. Introduction

### PURPOSE OF PROJECT

The Oregon City Historic Review Program historic survey and update project is made up of several components to address various aspects of the city's preservation program. In general the project can be characterized as an update of the entire Historic Review Program as it applies to the areas outside the Oregon City Historic Downtown, the Canemah Historic District, and the McLoughlin Conservation District.<sup>1</sup> This project updates surveys for properties listed on the local historic register that are located outside existing districts;<sup>2</sup> surveys properties that have not been surveyed in the past, with a special focus on properties that were developed in the 1940s through 1960; provides a historic context for a representative mid-century neighborhood and an overview of Oregon City at mid-century; and makes recommendations for possible improvements to the Historic Review Program, based on the surveys and field observations, and a review of the city's historic preservation policies and regulations. This report, which summarizes our findings and recommendations, will help guide the city in their stewardship of the Historic Preservation Program, with a special focus on the outlying neighborhoods and mid-century resources.

### SCOPE OF WORK

The Scope of Work for this Phase I update of Oregon City's Historic Review Program<sup>3</sup> involves intensive survey work, reconnaissance survey work, the development of historic contexts, and a review of the City's Historic Review Program. Details are as follows.

- Update and re-evaluate 87 properties listed on Oregon City's local historic register to assess integrity and make recommendations on their continued listing.
- Conduct a reconnaissance-level survey of approximately 1750 properties over 50 years in age in the outlying areas of Oregon City and make recommendations as to their eligibility for listing on the historic register.
- Develop three brief context statements on neighborhoods that appear to have good integrity and may be eligible for listing as local historic districts. Note that because there was not a high level of integrity or a concentration of properties with high integrity found during the reconnaissance survey, we decided, in consultation with the city, to focus on the older portions of the Rivercrest neighborhood exclusively. The older portion of this neighborhood is a good example of a mid-century suburban development, and may warrant additional survey work in the future. An accompanying historic context statement provides a larger context for mid-century development in Oregon City, with information

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<sup>1</sup> Note that the Oregon City Historic Downtown was re-surveyed in 2000, the Main Street area was surveyed in 2009, and the McLoughlin neighborhood was re-surveyed in 2002. The Canemah neighborhood was nominated to the National Register in 1977 and updated in 2008.

<sup>2</sup> One exception is the update for the Petzold Building at 714 Main Street, which was re-surveyed as part of this project.

<sup>3</sup> Note that Phase II will occur in June – August and involves creating local register nominations for three buildings.

- on regional trends, and a profile of mid-century residential styles in Oregon City.
- Review and comment on Oregon City’s Historic Review Program, including policies, regulations, and design guidelines, in light of findings from the survey work and a review of other Oregon City public information documents. Include recommendations for future public education and public involvement activities to raise the profile of historic preservation in Oregon City, particularly preservation of mid-century resources.

### **TEAM QUALIFICATIONS**

**Diana Painter** of Painter Preservation & Planning authored this report and undertook, along with Chrisanne Beckner, the survey and evaluation of historic and architectural resources for this project. Ms. Painter is a qualified architectural historian as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61, and has 30 years of professional experience in historic preservation and urban design. She holds a PhD in Architecture from the University of Sheffield, UK and an MUP in Urban Planning and Certificate in Urban Design from the University of Washington. Her undergraduate degree is in interdisciplinary design. She founded her historic preservation firm of Painter Preservation and Planning in 2002. Ms. Painter is listed as an architectural historian on the roster of consultants on file with the Oregon’s State Historic Preservation Office in Salem, Oregon.

**Chrisanne Beckner**, a qualified architectural historian as defined in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61, assisted in the survey and evaluation of Oregon City’s historic resources, took the lead on preparation of the historic context for the Rivercrest neighborhood and participated in preparation of this report. Ms. Beckner holds a Masters in Historic Preservation from the University of Oregon, an MA in English from San Francisco State University, and a BA in English from California State University, Sacramento. She has worked as an independent architectural historian in Oregon and Washington since 2009.

OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM  
HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

## 2. Oregon City Landmarks Update

### PURPOSE

The first phase of Oregon City's 2011 Historic Review Program update involved a re-survey of 87 individually listed historic resources that are, for the most part, in areas outside the Oregon City Historic Downtown, the Canemah Historic District, and the McLoughlin Conservation District.<sup>4</sup> These resources were been surveyed and listed on the local historic register twenty or more years ago. Several are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The goal of this phase of the project was to determine what, if any, changes had taken place to the buildings and/or properties, and whether the properties were still eligible for local listing. One outcome of this re-survey is the preparation of recommendations for the administration of Oregon City's local registration program that will help ensure the protection of these resources in the future.

### METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The re-survey of Oregon City's 87 listed properties outside existing historic districts took place in January and February of 2011. The following steps were undertaken:

- Confirm the properties that would be surveyed and updated and gather survey records and existing photographs.
- Create a record for each property in the State's electronic database from data gathered during earlier intensive level surveys. This data provided a baseline for each property so that current integrity could be accurately assessed.
- Visit each property, photographing its current condition and making notes as to changes and integrity.
- Update the property record in the database with information noted under the date of January 25, 2011; attach current photograph.
- Evaluate each property with consistent criteria, noting its current condition, new materials, alterations and additions.

Note that previous survey descriptions of the properties were not updated or corrected; this was beyond the scope of this update. Remarks from the January 2011 site visit were entered. If the record was missing, a new record with a contemporary description was created. Note also that if no survey or local nomination form was found for a property, it was assumed to be previously classified as "EC" or Eligible/contributing, as presumably it was considered an eligible building when it was nominated to the local register. If the property was listed on the National Register but a local nomination form was missing, it was assumed that the property was classified as "ES" or Eligible/significant.

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<sup>4</sup> An exception was the Pedzold Building at 714 Main Street, which is in the Historic Downtown.

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## REGISTRATION CRITERIA

The existing Oregon City landmarks that were re-surveyed for this report had typically undergone a variety of changes since they were surveyed in the mid-1980s and 1990. Some properties had suffered from neglect. Some had been altered or redeveloped, which affected their integrity. Changes for a few had been reviewed by the Historic Review Board; others may not have undergone public review. For the most part, however, surveyors did not know what type of permitting process the properties had undergone prior to the survey.

Additional factors affected the evaluation of previously listed resources. One was that standards for nomination and evaluation change over time. For the most part, standards for nominating properties are higher today than twenty years ago, so information available from existing survey/nomination forms was sometimes inadequate. Sometimes it was not clear when changes to the property had taken place. If, however, we had reason to believe that the property was previously listed with existing changes in place, we supported that nomination. Also, if changes to the property had undergone recent review and been approved by the Historic Review Board, we supported the listing. Properties that had been so significantly altered that they no longer conveyed their significance were recommended for de-listing. Properties that were demolished were recommended for de-listing. Below is a summary of results from this survey. A table listing each property and its associated recommendation follows. Recommendations for possible improvements to the local register program are at the end of this chapter. For a complete discussion of recommendations for each property, please see Appendix A or the State of Oregon's Historic Site Database.

## FINDINGS

A list of surveyed properties for this intensive survey update is located on the following pages. A summary of the changes follows.

The 2011 survey of Oregon City's 87 listed properties outside designated historic districts found that, in general, implementation of Oregon City's Historic Review Program appears to have been variable. A few listed buildings have been demolished (note that it is not known whether these actions were reviewed by the Historic Review Board) and some have been altered in ways that do not meet the Secretary of Interior's Standards, in this author's opinion. On a positive note, two buildings were upgraded from merely contributing to being considered individually significant (note that buildings may become more important over time due to their relative rarity and other factors that increase their importance).

Of the 87 surveyed properties (note that one property on the list merely had a change of address), changes in status were noted for nineteen (19) properties, or approximately 23% of the listed properties. The changes can be categorized as follows:

<b>Rationale</b>	<b>No. of properties</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Downgraded due to lack of integrity	12	14%
Demolished	4	5%
Upgraded to 'individually significant'	2	2%
De-listed at owner's request	1	1%
Total	19	

**Figure 3 - Summary of Landmark changes**

The remaining buildings are categorized as follows:

- Listed on National Register – 4
- Considered an “Eligible/contributing” landmark – 59
- Considered an “Eligible/significant” landmark – 12



**Figure 4 - Oregon City Landmark, the Charmon-Mack House, 1875**

**OREGON CITY INTENSIVE SURVEY SUMMARY DATA**

<b>FID</b>	<b>Street number</b>	<b>Street name</b>	<b>Historic name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Style</b>	<b>Previous code</b>	<b>Current code</b>
1	1506	10th St	Turnshek, John, House	ca 1918	Craftsman	EC	EC
2	212	14th St	Harris, Mary, House	ca 1904	Colonial Revival	ES	ES
3	216	14th St	Clark, George, House	ca 1867	Vernacular	ES	ES
4	220	14th St	Healy, Catherine, House	ca 1900	Craftsman	ES	ES
5	1101	14th St	Jones, Jacob & Henrietta, House	1887	Vernacular	EC	EC
6	1902	14th St	Hauck, Jacob, House	ca 1920	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
7	819	15th St	Naterlin, John, House	ca 1913	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
8	1308	15th St	Powers, Augusta, House	ca 1907	Vernacular	EC	NC
9	1520	15th St	French, Lee E & Sarah, House	ca 1914	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
10	1301/1303	16th St	Atkinson, George H, House	1876	Gothic Revival	EC	EC
11	1318	16th St	Mulligan, Thomas; Versaw, Felix, House	ca 1919	Vernacular	EC	NC
12	1319	16th St	Nefzger, Claudia Hart, House	1900	Queen Anne	EC	EC
13	1508	16th St	Hisel, G H, House; Charriere, Jack, House	ca 1912	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
14	309	17th St	Wood, W H, House	1889	Queen Anne	EC	EC
15	1302	17th St	Weismandel, Casper, House	ca 1900	Vernacular	EC	EC
16	1602	17th St	Hardenbrook, Dr Mabel, House	ca 1915	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
17	18598	Aladdin Way	McCarver, Morton M., House; Locust Farm	ca 1850	Vernacular	ES	ES
18	15896	S Apperson Blvd	First Congregational Church Of Park Place	1871	Vernacular	EC	NC
19	15921	S Apperson Blvd	Holmes, William & Cora House	1900	Vernacular	EC	EC
20	16130	S Apperson Blvd	Preuhoff, Frank, House	1900	Vernacular	EC	EC
21	16170	S Apperson Blvd	Brunner, Joseph, House	1900	Vernacular	EC	EC
22	16322	S Apperson Blvd	Kent, John, House	1891	Vernacular	EC	XD
23	14125	S Beemer Way		1880	Vernacular	EC	EC
24	14140	S Beemer Way		1890	Gothic Revival	EC	EC
25	1018	Brighton Ave	Williams, C. O. T., House	1866	Vernacular	EC	EC

26	304	Caufield St	Surman, Chandler, House	ca	1911	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>EC</b>
27	13014	Clackamas River Dr		ca	1880	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
28	13030	Clackamas River Dr	Straight, Hiram House		1858	Classical Revival: other	ES	<b>ES</b>
29	13251	S Clackamas River Dr	Ratke, Gustav House	ca	1920	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>NC</b>
30	13285	S Clackamas River Dr	Fisher, Albert F, House	ca	1921	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>EC</b>
31	13291	Clackamas River Dr	Mayer, Samuel, House	ca	1890	Vernacular	EC	<b>NC</b>
32	13889	S Cleveland St	Hill, A D, House	ca	1890	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
33	426	Dimick St	Welsh, George & Francis, House		1891	Vernacular	EC	<b>NC</b>
34	426	Division St	Elliott, Ernst P, House		1890	Italianate	EC	<b>EC</b>
35	516	Division St	May, W S & Lillie B, House		1916	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>NC</b>
36	541	Division St	Randall, Noble W, House		1875	Gothic Revival	EC	<b>EC</b>
37	381	Elmwood Ct	Hartke, Ludwig, Farmhouse		1908	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
38	225	Eluria St	Kelly, Mary, House		1903	Vernacular	EC	<b>NC</b>
39	16393	Front Ave	Rittenhouse, Wilson & Claude, House		1905	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
40	16409	Front Ave	NA		2007	NA	EC	<b>XD</b>
41	16422	S Front Ave	Tucker, Albert, House		1890	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
42	15824	S Harley Ave	Smith, William H & Louisa, House		1870	Vernacular	EC	<b>XD</b>
43	15831	S Harley Ave	Tollefson, Knute, House	ca	1870	Queen Anne	EC	<b>ES</b>
44	722	Harrison St	Amrine, Mahlon, House		1922	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>EC</b>
45	824	Harrison St	Fuge, Clark S, House #2		1905	Queen Anne	EC	<b>EC</b>
46	1008	Harrison St	Caufield, Mary R, House		1898	Queen Anne	EC	<b>EC</b>
47	1718	Harrison St	Hart, Delbert, House		1895	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>EC</b>
48	16427	S Hiram St	Rittenhouse, Clarence, House	ca	1915	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
49	16430	S Hiram St		ca	1890	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
50	534	Holmes Ln	Address change; see 536 Holmes Ln			NA	NA	<b>NA</b>
51	536	Holmes Ln	Holmes, William L, House; Rose	ca	1848	Classical Revival	ES	<b>ES</b>

			Farm					
52	538	Holmes Ln	Pace, O A & Rilance, House	ca	1930	Vernacular	EC	EC
53	567	Holmes Ln	Stafford, W B, House		1898	Queen Anne	EC	EC
54	1414	Jackson St	Wilson, Andrew J & Rebecca, House		1908	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
55	1506	Jackson St	Simmons, Alex & Ellen, House	ca	1890	Queen Anne	EC	EC
56	1616	Jackson St	Vonderahe, Henry E House	ca	1895	Vernacular	EC	EC
57	103	Jersey Ave	Beattie, R S, House		1890	Vernacular	EC	EC
58	1504	JQ Adams St	Mouton, Alphonso & Pauline, House		1895	Queen Anne	EC	EC
59	901	Linn Ave	Charman, T L & Mack, J G, House		1875	Gothic Revival	EC	EC
60	412	Logus St	Rasmussen-Hadley House		1914	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
61	417	Logus St	Bluhm, Christ, House		1893	Vernacular	EC	EC
62	19130	Lot Whitcomb Dr	Ainsworth, Capt. John C., House	ca	1852	Colonial Revival	ES	ES
63	1422	Madison Ave	Naterlin, Anton, House		1913	Bungalow (Type)	EC	NC
64	714	Main St	Petzold, Richard B, Building		1905	Commercial (Type)	ES	ES
65	404	May St	Moran, Charles, House #2		1895	Vernacular	EC	EC
66	144	Molalla Ave	Johnson, S, House		1899	Vernacular	EC	NC
67	151	Molalla Ave	Rasmussen-Buol House		1911	Bungalow (Type)	EC	EC
68	1018	Molalla Ave	Moran, Charles, House		1895	Queen Anne	EC	EC
69	307	Pearl St	Fisher, Alfred, House		1905	Queen Anne	EC	EC
70	311	Pearl St	Taylor, John & Catherine, House		1896	Queen Anne	EC	NC
71	904	Pierce St	White, Arthur & Maria, House		1890	Vernacular	EC	EC
72	910	Pierce St	Storey, George Lincoln, House	ca	1891	Queen Anne	ES	ES
73	724	Polk St	Fuge, Clark S, House		1907	Vernacular	EC	EC
74	915	Polk St	West, Ida, House		1910	Vernacular	EC	EC
75	908	Prospect St	Hass, Adam, House		1893	Queen Anne	EC	EC
76	912	Prospect St	Weidner, Margaret, House		1895	Vernacular	EC	EC
77	1038	Prospect St	Kleinsmith, Alvin, House		1905	Queen Anne	EC	XD
78	13600	S Redland Rd	Dement, W C, House	ca	1890	Vernacular	EC	EC
79	401	Roosevelt St	Shattuck, Ira, House	ca	1900	Queen Anne	EC	EC
80	409	Roosevelt St	Hankins, T B & Elizabeth, House		1892	Queen Anne	EC	EC

81	442	Roosevelt St	Dix, House		1913	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>EC</b>
82	860	South End Rd	Telford, Maxwell, House	ca	1904	Colonial Revival	EC	<b>ES</b>
83	805	Taylor St	Randall, Mary and George, House	ca	1905	Queen Anne	EC	<b>NC</b>
84	902	Taylor St	Taylor, Helen M, House		1895	Queen Anne	EC	<b>EC</b>
85	1014	Taylor St	Prindle, Isaac & Sarah, House		1890	Vernacular	EC	<b>EC</b>
86	14001	Taylor Ln	Ryan, Thomas, House	ca	1920	Colonial Revival	EC	<b>EC</b>
87	15721	S Washington	Pope, Ezra L & Blance B, House	ca	1910	Bungalow (Type)	EC	<b>EC</b>
88	413	Willamette St	Martin, Edward, House		1892	Queen Anne	EC	<b>NC</b>

**KEY**

- ES - Eligible/significant
- EC - Eligible/contributing
- NC - Not eligible/non-contributing
- NP - Not eligible/out of period
- UN - Undetermined/lack of information
- XD - Demolished

## RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted above, implementation of Oregon City’s Historic Review Program appears to have been variable over time. This can be due to a number of factors, including changes in staffing; changes in the make-up of the Historic Review Board; lack of political or public support; economic pressure (whether due to economic upturns or downturns); a lack of clear procedures and guidelines; and/or lack of understanding on the part of city staff and/or the public. Among the measures that the city and/or the Historic Review Board can take to remedy these potential issues are:

- Review Historic Review Program procedures and guidelines to ensure that they are clear, complete, and provide adequate guidance.
- Ensure that city codes, such as the Building Code and Zoning Code, do not contradict Historic Program procedures and guidelines.
- Support guidelines with standards and regulations where possible to ensure their implementation.
- Provide adequate training for planning and building staff, commissioners and board members, elected officials, and the public on best practices in historic preservation, as well as Oregon City practices.

For additional discussion of the Oregon City Historic Review Program see Chapter 5 – Review of Policies and Procedures.

OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM  
HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

### 3. City-wide Reconnaissance Survey

#### PURPOSE

The second phase of Oregon City's 2011 Historic Review Program update involved conducting a "lite" reconnaissance survey of over 1700 properties outside the existing historic districts, which are the Historic Downtown area, the Canemah Historic District and the McLoughlin Conservation District. The purpose of this survey was to capture basic information about these properties, most of which had not been previously surveyed. Information gathered and recorded included the property address, building height, construction year, primary materials, architectural style and the property's eligibility, a determination that was based solely on its physical appearance and perceived integrity. Eligibility was categorized as: ES – eligible/significant; EC – eligible/contributing; NC – not eligible/non-contributing; NP – not eligible/out of period; UN – undetermined/lack of information; or XD – demolished; per Oregon Office of Historic Preservation guidelines.

The goal of this phase of the Oregon City Historic Review Program project was to identify properties that are eligible for listing as historic resources, and areas where a concentration of properties with architectural integrity (rated "ES" or "EC") may lead to a more comprehensive survey in the future, and possibly the designation of a historic district. The survey also identified and recorded properties that had not been surveyed before, with a special focus on mid-century (generally dated 1940 to 1960) properties, to gain a better understanding of Oregon City's mid-century resources. This was an important period of development in Oregon City, where suburban expansion and new development patterns led to significant changes in the community and a permanent alteration of the larger landscape. It is essential, as these properties reach the 50-year-old mark, to gain an understanding of characteristic buildings, land uses, and development patterns.

#### METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE

The survey of Oregon City's outlying properties took place between January and March 2011. The database for the survey was created in January, and survey took place largely in late February through mid-March. Data analysis continued through May 2011. The steps included the following:

- Meet with city staff and obtain GIS data and maps for the survey properties.
- Create a record for each property in the State's electronic database with the address and construction date from the city's GIS data.
- Visit each property, making note of the characteristics listed above, making a determination of eligibility, and photographing it.
- Update the property record in the database and label each photograph according to the State's conventions (note that the Oregon City staff has volunteered to attach the photographs to the database record, the last step in this process).

This data was transferred to city staff, which created two sets of maps. One set noted the dates of development in the survey area by decade, to create an understanding of development periods and the architectural character of individual neighborhoods. The second set of maps noted the eligibility status of

the properties. This map was designed to target areas of high integrity that might become the subject of comprehensive surveys in the future and/or nominations for historic districts.

Note that the character and age of surveyed buildings differed from area to area. Survey subjects were located in older, developed areas, newer suburban neighborhoods, and rural areas. Sometimes the survey subject was an isolated property, such as a farmstead. Sometimes the survey subjects were in older residential neighborhoods, representing individual properties that had not been surveyed in the past. In the suburban neighborhoods that dated from about 1940 to 1960, every property constructed prior to 1961 and had not been previously surveyed was recorded. As a result, newer suburbs with a mix of construction dates, for example 1950 to 1969, were not comprehensively surveyed. Only a few areas or neighborhoods were surveyed comprehensively.<sup>5</sup>

## REGISTRATION CRITERIA

The reconnaissance survey for the 1700 properties was a “lite” survey, which involved recording just basic information about the subject properties. Criteria were developed to make consistent decisions about the property’s eligibility. In essence, if the property retained excellent integrity, it was categorized as “ES – eligible/significant.” It was also called out as significant if it was a particularly unusual property and retained good integrity. A property was categorized “EC – eligible/contributing” if it retained good integrity. It was labeled “NC – eligible/non-contributing” under the following conditions. If the property displayed two or more conditions that were considered a serious threat to its integrity, it was labeled non-contributing. Undermining conditions included replacement siding, replacement windows, an addition that would not meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards, or the cumulative effect of minor alterations. *If the building had replacement vinyl windows with plastic grids, this factor alone rendered the building non-contributing. The number of buildings in Oregon City that display replacement windows (typically aluminum or vinyl windows) and replacement siding (typically aluminum, vinyl, pressed board or Hardiboard (cement fiber siding) had a direct effect on the outcome of the survey. This factor contributed significantly to the percentage of non-eligible buildings in the survey area.*

## FINDINGS

The results of the survey are summarized in the following graphs and on the following pages.<sup>6</sup> The results of the survey of modern resources are discussed further in Chapter 3 - Historic Contexts.

### *Integrity*

The chart and graph below shows that the percentage of contributing buildings, or buildings displaying good architectural integrity, is about one-third of the surveyed properties, whereas those properties displaying poor architectural integrity equal to about two-thirds of the surveyed properties.<sup>7</sup>

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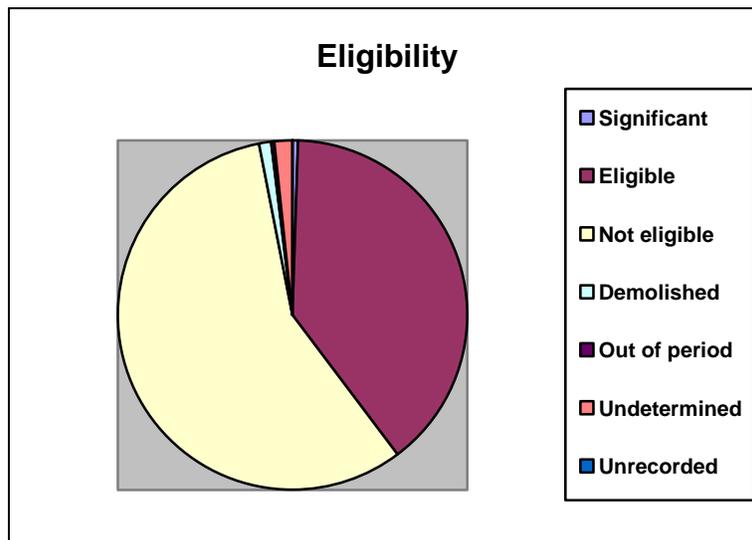
<sup>5</sup> Note that the typical survey process in a city often involves conducting a focused or ‘scattered’ survey of properties of interest followed by a comprehensive survey of a targeted area that may result in a nomination if the level of integrity among the individual properties is sufficient. Cities in Oregon are taking a slightly different approach with this type of reconnaissance survey.

<sup>6</sup> Note that these results are preliminary. Final numbers may vary slightly from those presented here. The full survey can be seen on the Oregon State Office of Historic Preservation’s website at <http://heritagedata.prd.state.or.us/historic/>

<sup>7</sup> Note that these properties encompass the entire survey area, which includes the entire city.

EVALUATION	QUANTITY	% OF TOTAL
Eligible/significant	10	1%
Eligible/contributing	668	39%
Not eligible/non-contributing	983	57%
Demolished	17	1%
Not eligible/out of period	5	0%
Undetermined	26	2%
Unrecorded	2	9%

Figure 5 - Summary of survey property eligible



**Construction dates**

The construction dates for the survey area were variable, but most of the properties were developed in the twentieth century, with the largest number of properties being constructed in the 1920s, the 1940s, and the 1950s.

DECADE	QUANTITY	% OF TOTAL
Unrecorded	108	6%
1870s	1	0%
1880s	2	0%
1890s	2	0%
1900s	158	9%
1910s	206	12%
1920s	284	17%
1930s	190	11%
1940s	357	21%
1950s	351	20%
1960	50	3%

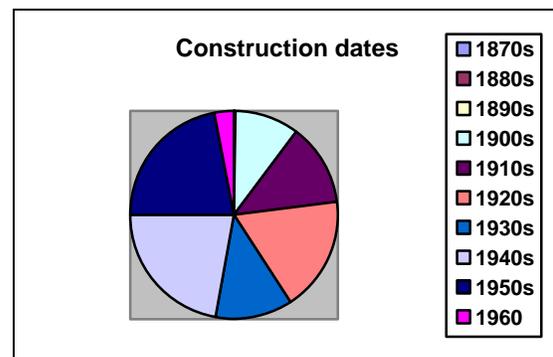


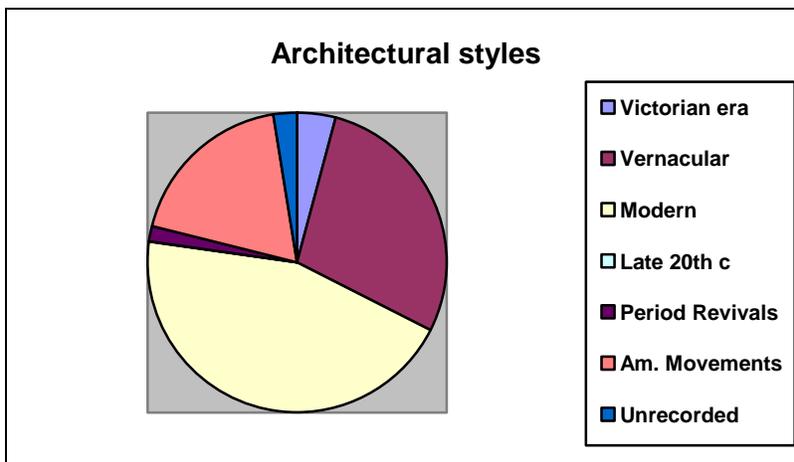
Figure 6 - Construction dates

**Architectural styles**

The building styles for the survey area were largely consistent with the construction dates (note that the survey focused mostly on residential properties). Most of the buildings were constructed in the mid-twentieth century and exhibit mid-twentieth century styles. These include both the Minimal Traditional style and the Ranch style, consistent with the focus of this survey on mid-century architecture. The second largest number of buildings was classified as vernacular buildings. These can date to any period, although the Oregon City Vernacular Farmhouse, a specific building type, dates from the late 1800s.<sup>8</sup> The third largest style category was the styles dating from what is categorized by the National Park Service as “Late nineteenth century/early twentieth century American Movements.” This included the bungalow (a form type) and the Craftsman style, a style from the Arts and Crafts Movement that is often applied to bungalows.

STYLE CATEGORIES	QUANTITY	% OF TOTAL
Victorian era	69	4%
Other (including Vernacular)	486	28%
Modern Period	764	45%
- Minimal Traditional	228	
- Ranch	460	
Late 20 <sup>th</sup> century	2	0%
Late 19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> c. Period Revivals	29	2%
Late 19 <sup>th</sup> /20 <sup>th</sup> c. American Movements	320	19%
- Bungalow	93	
- Craftsman	205	
Unrecorded	41	2%

**Figure 7 - Architectural styles of survey properties**



**RECOMMENDATIONS**

There were a number of buildings in the survey area that displayed excellent integrity or were very good examples of unusual or particularly striking architectural styles or types. These properties are recommended for listing on the local register. They are as follows:

<sup>8</sup> See *Oregon City Historic Districts, Guidelines for New Construction* for further information on this building type.

16562 Apperson Blvd.  
19000 S. Central Point Road  
156 Ella Street  
185 Harding Blvd.  
13907 Holcomb Blvd.  
206 Lawton Road  
604 Lawton Road  
19059 Leland Road  
308 Park Drive  
11866 Partlow Road.

There are additionally many properties in the survey area with good integrity or that were good representations of their styles or types. More work will be necessary to make recommendations on whether any of these buildings should be added to the local register. There were not large concentrations of these properties, however. With the exception of the two early Rivercrest subdivisions, there were not sufficient concentrations of properties with good integrity to recommend more comprehensive surveys or possible historic districts or conservation districts at this time.

A second recommendation resulting from this study is for more public education on the types of changes that affect the integrity of a property or affect the integrity of certain types of properties. The city has a good webpage with resource materials on subjects such as how to rehabilitate historic wood windows and where to find contractors and retailers that sell historically appropriate materials and architectural elements. The Oregon Office of Historic Preservation also has many resources at hand and sponsors workshops on topical subjects. They also have very good information on effective and efficient energy-savings measures. Further recommendations for activities that Oregon City might undertake to improve awareness of good rehabilitation practices, particularly as they apply to mid-century modern resources, are made here in Chapter 5 – Review of Policies and Procedures.

OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM  
HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

#### **4. Historic Context Statement**

##### **RIVERCREST HISTORIC CONTEXT STATEMENT**

###### *Purpose*

One of the overriding goals of the larger Oregon City survey was to identify neighborhoods with the potential to be listed as local (or state or national) historic districts. In other words, we sought to identify geographic areas united by historic or architectural themes that also retained sufficient integrity to be considered historic districts. Because there was a particular emphasis on mid-century modern resources in this project, there was also interest in any mid-century neighborhoods that might qualify as a district. There was also a stated interest on the part of Oregon City to learn more about its mid-century resources which had not, to date, been the subject of survey activities in the city. The Rivercrest neighborhood, within which two subdivisions were surveyed for this project, was chosen as the subject for a brief context statement to learn more about Oregon City at mid-century, and to explore the potential for this neighborhood to be considered for listing in the future.

###### *Methodology*

Through consultation with the City, the Rivercrest neighborhood was chosen as a cohesive, mid-century neighborhood that could potentially qualify for listing as a local historic district. A context was developed to help record the neighborhood's history and identify its key historic resources. Research for the Rivercrest Context Statement took place through a focused reconnaissance survey and subsequent site visits in March and April of 2011. Research materials including city directories, aerial photos and pictorial reviews were reviewed at the Clackamas County Family History Society, located in the Museum of the Oregon Territory. Research material was also found in the newspaper archives located at the Oregon City public library, in histories prepared for Oregon City, and in deeds and records gathered from the Records Management office of the Clerk of Clackamas County. Special thanks go to Linda Lord, a local neighborhood historian who was interviewed on the development history of the Rivercrest neighborhood and who provided valuable historic records regarding Pioneer Trust and the Rivercrest Development Company.

###### *Background*

Mid-century modern neighborhoods in Oregon City, as in other west coast cities, have a direct relationship to what occurred in the larger Portland metropolitan region during World War II. Industrial and military expansion in the build-up to World War II and during the war itself was unprecedented. Major shipbuilding contracts were let by the US Maritime Commission, the Defense Plant Corporation made large investments in aluminum processing plants, and major military installations were constructed in the Portland region. As expressed by historian Gerald

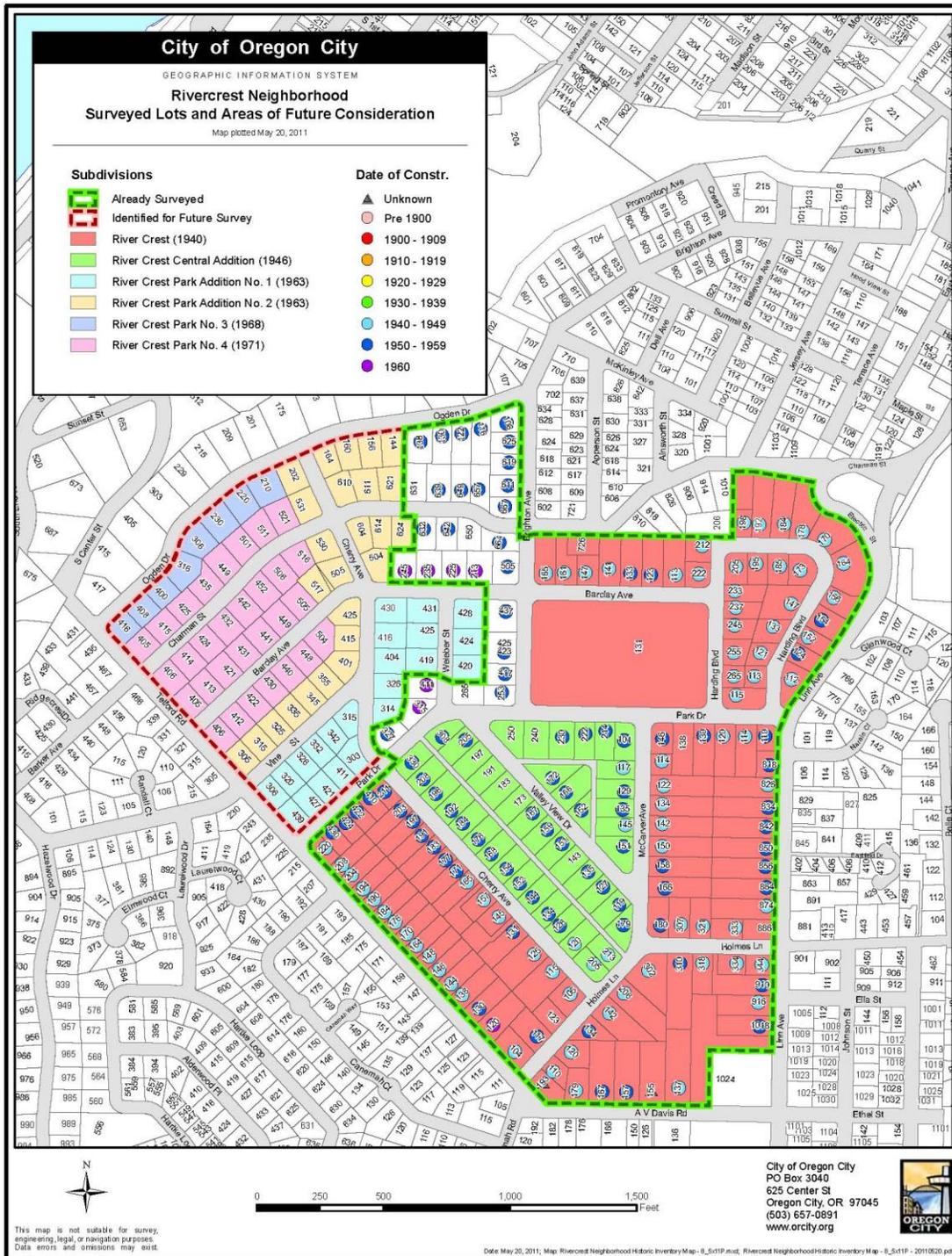


Figure 8 - Rivercrest Neighborhood Surveyed Lots and Areas of Future Consideration

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Nash, “Ships, aluminum, and power were the three main ingredients that transformed Oregon’s economy during wartime, diversifying its hitherto largely agricultural and natural resource economy.”<sup>9</sup>

Portland gained 160,000 in population during the war. Collectively Troutdale, where Alcoa developed a new plant, Oregon City, Vanport and Vancouver gained 100,000 workers. Vanport, one of industrialist Henry J. Kaiser’s largest facilities, transformed from vacant fields in 1940 to a city with 10,000 housing units and a population of 40,000 in three years.<sup>10</sup> Corvallis saw an 93% increase in population during the war, due to the Camp Adair military installation, which was Oregon’s second largest city in the war years.

These boom times put an unprecedented strain on housing that was already in short supply as a result the lack of building during the Great Depression. Some public and private housing was constructed during the war to meet this demand, but much of it was temporary.<sup>11</sup> During the war materials and labor were reserved for the war effort, as little building occurred that was not directly related to defense. As a result, there was a long standing need for housing after the war and renewal of communities. In addition to returning servicemen (and women) who wanted to settle down and start families, many who were stationed in west coast cities either stayed or returned to places like Portland, Seattle and the Bay Area after the war. This placed further strain on housing and communities.

Among the areas in Oregon City that were annexed and developed to meet this demand were the Rivercrest Additions, particularly the early additions profiled here, which were developed on land that had been annexed to the city in 1940. The Hedges Addition area and Lawton Heights were annexed to the city directly after the war, in 1946. In this survey approximately 750 mid-century residential homes were recorded. While this represents a substantial number of properties, it does not fully represent the development that occurred at this time. Further work needs to be undertaken to fully document this period in Oregon City’s history.

### ***The Rivercrest Neighborhood***

The Rivercrest neighborhood is a prime example of a cohesive mid-century residential development. The areas of the Rivercrest neighborhood that were surveyed include the River Crest Addition to Oregon City (1940) and the River Crest Central Addition (1946), both pictured below. The River Crest addition is bounded by Linn Ave to the east, Holmes Lane and Telford Road to the south, Park Drive and Brighton Avenue to the west and Charman Street to the north. The central addition, added in 1946, fit into a triangular section at the center of the River Crest

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<sup>9</sup> Nash, 1985:75.

<sup>10</sup> Nash, 1985:76. Vanport was later destroyed by floods.

<sup>11</sup> Note that Clackamas Heights, Oregon’s oldest public housing project dating from the war years (1942) is scheduled for demolition.

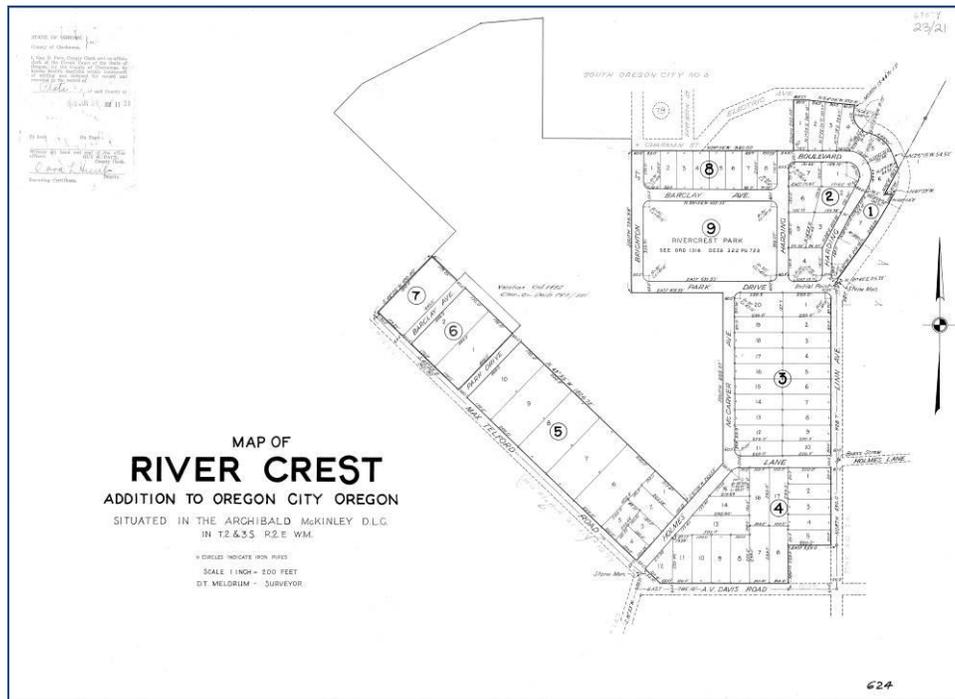
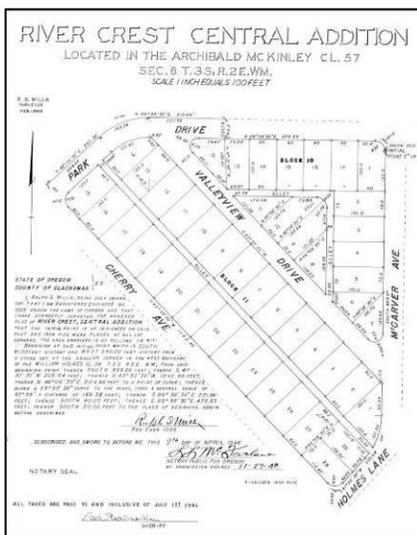


Figure 9 - River Crest Addition, 1940

addition. It is bounded by McCarver Avenue on the east, Cherry Avenue to the south and Park Drive to the northwest. The lots in these two plats were sold and developed individually. While the original River Crest addition included lots as large as 200 x 400 square feet, the 1946 addition added more modest lots. The majority were 80 x 150 square feet. In the early development, some of Rivercrest’s largest lots were subdivided. The resulting development includes a few lots that are still as deep as 260 square feet, but most are between 150 and 250 feet deep. The period of significance is defined as 1940 to 1960, when the majority of the homes in this neighborhood were built.



The neighborhood was designed so that homes clustered around a six-acre wooded park block that was left in its natural state until it was donated to the city pre-1950 and then landscaped. The park now includes tennis and basketball courts, picnic shelters and a spray park. Oregon City’s website refers to the park as “one of the most beautiful and heavily used park in Oregon City.”<sup>12</sup>

The neighborhood is characterized by a number of urban design features. Roads are wide, generally include room for on-street parking and are defined by rolled curbs in some locations. The neighborhood does not have sidewalks. Mature trees, including Douglas Firs that date from before the development, grace many of the earliest yards, and some landscaping features, including stone walls and

Figure 10 - River Crest Central Addition, 1946

<sup>12</sup> “Rivercrest Park,” <http://www.oregoncity.org/parksandrecreation/rivercrest-park>.

stone rings surrounding trees, are found in the park and on the surrounding lots. Housing types are consistent with other mid-century neighborhoods in Oregon. As most homes were built in the 1940s and 1950s, they include primarily Minimal Traditional and Ranch houses, with a small number of World War II-Era Cottages and some earlier styles as well, including bungalows and Colonial Revival homes. There are also a very small number of split-level Ranch houses. Since 1960, the neighborhood has absorbed four different subdivisions. These later additions to the north of the original neighborhood include houses built beginning in the 1960s. This survey examined historic resources built before 1961 and did not, therefore, include the subdivisions to the north. However, these resources may be worthy of examination in future city surveys.



**Figure 11 -This aerial of the wooded Rivercrest neighborhood was published in the 1950 Clackamas County Pictorial Review**

### *History*

The Rivercrest neighborhood, sometimes spelled “River Crest,” sits atop the highest of Oregon City’s three bluffs. The nearby falls drew the first white settlers to this spot along the Willamette River in the 1830s, and Oregon City, the first incorporated city west of the Rockies, has been recognized as the terminus of the Oregon Trail. The third and highest bluff of the city was the last to be developed, but also one of the sites of earliest habitation. The site was known to Native Americans for many thousands of years. A well-worn footpath from the bluffs down to the waterfalls is now known as Linn Avenue, which forms the eastern boundary of the Rivercrest neighborhood. Before it was developed, the site was wooded and close to the border of pasture

lands. Oregon City, though an early industrial leader, did not grow at the same pace as Portland or other urban hubs and its southern lands were primarily populated by farms before the 1940s.

The 1940 and 1946 Rivercrest plats were described in a publication produced for Clackamas County in 1950. The developers defined the neighborhood as follows:

*“River Crest addition of Oregon City, Oregon consists of 68 acres situated on the heights above and southwest of the city, is part of the original Archibald McKinley donation land claim. It was purchased for development in 1939. Sixty-eight acres was platted in 1940 making 120 building lots with a 6 ½ acre park donated to the city. 60 ft. streets were graded and graveled to 30 ft. Lots are for residential purposes only except a few business lots on Holmes Lane. There are restrictions as to minimum size and set back lines. All city services and utilities are available. This beautifully wooded and scenic tract lies to the west of Linn Ave., bordered on the south by A. V. Davis road and the Max Telford road on southwest. The unplatted area extends northwest to the crest of the bluff and includes over 1200 ft. of bluff property. It is two miles from Main St. to the entrance at Park Drive via Linn Ave. The Mt. Pleasant school is less than one-quarter mile away. Beautiful views of snowcapped mountains, valleys and hills are to be had from many points in the addition. In April 1946, 46 lots were platted in the central part of the addition south of Holmes Lane. Lots there are 80 ft. wide and 150 ft. deep. Over 23 acres of unplatted land have been left for future development.”<sup>13</sup>*

As a neighborhood, Rivercrest developed in two distinct phases. In 1940, the Rivercrest Development Company envisioned a middle class to high-end neighborhood that incorporated many of the large trees that defined the wooded bluff. Winding roads surrounded a naturally maintained park and the land was divided into deep lots with rolled curbs and naturalistic landscaping. Variations in topography were integrated into the neighborhood with retaining walls and small landscaped medians. This emphasis on landscape design in suburbs outside city centers had been common since the City Beautiful Movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, City Beautiful principles and the growth of the city planning field made for well-designed, cohesive neighborhoods.

Rivercrest’s developers controlled the look and feel of the neighborhood with detailed deed restrictions. They were following well-established national practices for controlling the look and feel of a neighborhood to protect its property values and to protect against industrial or other non-residential uses. The Rivercrest regulations limited building height to two and a half stories, limited garages to two cars, and defined setbacks as no less than 20 feet. Homes on some lots were to exceed \$3,500 and others were to exceed \$2,000 in construction cost. Members of the development company also reserved the right to review and approve or deny every building plan.

Rivercrest was platted and built during an era of great change in the housing market. The Great Depression had led to record foreclosures in the early 1930s, which brought on a re-examination of housing and lending practices. In 1934, the Federal Housing Administration was founded to broaden the possibilities of home ownership by offering federal insurance for private loans. As World War II ended, new federal programs were designed to help developers provide new housing opportunities and to help returning servicemen purchase homes. These new federal

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<sup>13</sup> Production Surveys, Inc. Clackamas County Pictorial Review Mid-Century Edition (Oregon City: 1950), 137.

programs enforced regulations that began to shape the style, size and availability of homes and neighborhoods in the early 1940s, and Rivercrest adheres to these regulations, which emphasized green space, protective deed restrictions, safety and careful planning of streets and lots.

In Rivercrest, the idyllic neighborhood envisioned by the Rivercrest Development Company evolved slowly. While homes near the park were built as early as 1940, many others were not built until the later 1940s and the 1950s. In 1946, the development was bought by H. Hale Yeaple of Pioneer Trust who saw the coming need for more modest housing and divided the southwest section of the neighborhood into smaller lots, which became attractive to buyers at the end of the war. These smaller lots incorporate fewer trees and are not as elaborately landscaped, though a series of non-gridded streets have led to corner gardens and other attractive amenities. These two phases of development led to subtle differences in neighborhood design, but architectural style and street layout unite the neighborhood.

### ***Post-War Development***

Like much of the Pacific Northwest after the war, Clackamas County itself experienced a mid-century population boom, growing from 57,130 people in 1940 to 86,574 by 1950, an increase of more than fifty percent. Oregon City was the county seat. Its location near waterfalls had led to early industrial success. By 1950, local boosters were claiming that Oregon City was also booming as a retail center even as its primary employers continued to be industrial. A pictorial review of the county claimed that, “Five large manufacturing plants employ the bulk of Oregon City’s labor force.”<sup>14</sup> Those five plants included Publishers Paper Company, the Crown Zellerbach Mill and the Oregon Woolen Mills, the Globe Union Battery Company, and the J. M. Smucker Company. After the war, the timber industry also recovered, as noted by Oregon City historian Michelle Dennis:

*“World War II brought an end to the Great Depression and ushered in a fully modern period. Although growth and development was slowed during the war, the period following the war was one of substantial expansion in Oregon City, as it was in most communities around the country.*

*The timber and wood industry recovered from the Great Depression slump and was restored to its position as the state’s leading industry with the building boom that followed the war. New residential neighborhoods expanded eastward to the third terrace above the river as newfound prosperity allowed many to buy their own homes. Schools followed and churches that had been located downtown for years migrated to the bluff as well.”<sup>15</sup>*

This expansion brought great benefit to the building industries. “Several factors -- the lack of new housing, continued population growth, and six million returning veterans eager to start families -- combined to produce the largest building boom in the Nation’s history, almost all of it concentrated in the suburbs.”<sup>16</sup> In the mid-century, realtors were noting a move away from city centers and onto larger semi-rural lots. This trend was responsible for the development of numerous subdivisions around the country, but was also noted by professionals in Oregon City,

<sup>14</sup> *Clackamas County Pictorial Review Mid-Century Edition*, 1950:39.

<sup>15</sup> Dennis, <http://www.orcity.org/planning/brief-history-oregon-city>.

<sup>16</sup> Ames, 2002.

who defined the primary trends for the mid-century development as: “the movement of populations from large crowded urban areas of adjoining counties to semi-rural and acreage tracts and the demand of real estate purchasers for increasingly larger home lots.”<sup>17</sup>

The housing boom was driven not only by the number of returning veterans eager to start families, but also by the fact that very little housing had been developed during the Depression and during the war years. “After 16 years of depression and war shortages,” claimed the Pictorial Review, “an unprecedented building boom hit Clackamas County beginning in 1946. Public, industrial and residential construction figures reached new heights each succeeding year.”<sup>18</sup> This put the early Rivercrest neighborhood at the very center of an Oregon City expansion in the 1940s and 50s, though the neighborhood expanded and continued to grow throughout the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



**Figure 12 - Judge Holman house at the entry of the Rivercrest subdivision**

The Rivercrest neighborhood developed in a time when cars were integrated into the lives of most homeowners. When the earliest homes were built in the northern section of the neighborhood, garages were placed on the lots, but could still be found detached or set back toward the rear of the lot. By the 1950s, garages were regularly integrated into Ranch style homes, the predominate mid-century style in Oregon City and much of the west. As the design of homes grew more expansive, with a pronounced horizontal emphasis in windows and treatments, the garage became a more integrated feature. In Rivercrest, most if not all homes have either detached or attached garages or carports.

As a neighborhood, Rivercrest is defined by a graceful entrance from Linn Avenue where a Rivercrest sign and a heavily ornamented historic home take up a large lot on Park Drive. This house originally belonged to Judge Holman in the 1940s and has been expanded multiple times since then. Similar to other larger homes built in the 1940s, it includes multiple stories and a very large yard.

<sup>17</sup> *Clackamas County Pictorial Review Mid-Century Edition* (Oregon City, 1950:131).

<sup>18</sup> *Clackamas County Pictorial Review Mid-Century Edition* (Oregon City, 1950:131).

Newer homes were built south of Park Drive and further from the park. As shown below, these homes are more modest and built on smaller lots, yet still show many of the hallmarks of mid-century development. The rolled curbs are absent, but these lots are also facing wide streets without sidewalks and with generous setbacks.



Figure 13 – Rivercrest’s smaller lots became popular directly after World War II

### *Current Condition*

The Rivercrest neighborhood retains much of the charm for which it has always been known. Homes and yards are well maintained, as is the park that is central to the neighborhood and the site of many local gatherings. However, as in many mid-century neighborhoods, historic materials have been replaced and alterations to windows and siding have begun to erode the historic integrity of the neighborhood.

The current survey reviewed 145 properties in Rivercrest built before 1961. Seventy-eight were built between 1940 and 1949 and 67 were built between 1950 and 1959. Eighty of these properties were noted as having lost too much integrity to be considered for local listing or for designation as a contributing property to a potential historic district. Their windows had been replaced with vinyl windows, the siding had been replaced, or the form of the building had been changed by alterations and/or additions.

After 1960, four subdivisions were added to the Rivercrest neighborhood. These lots, north and west of the original subdivisions, include excellent examples of mid-century homes but were outside the scope of this survey. It is recommended that these later resources be considered for future research.

## **OREGON CITY’S MID-CENTURY RESIDENTIAL STYLES**

In surveying Oregon City’s mid-century resources, the project team identified a number of key styles. The Minimal Traditional house, the World War II-era cottage and two primary variations on the Ranch house, referred to here as “Early Ranch” and “Ranch” styles, were found to be the most common. Some mid-century residences had been greatly altered and are now more accurately referred to as “vernacular,” as their primary character defining features have been lost or altered.

Mid-century resources are referred to as those that date from just before World War II, during the war, and the post-war period. By the 1940s Revival styles, including the small Tudor Revival cottage and the bungalow were falling out of favor. The Depression had led to stylistic changes that included a reliance on fewer materials; simpler features, such as a smaller porches; narrow or non-existent eaves; and simpler plans and building forms. Varied exterior materials sometimes provide visual interest on these small, simple buildings. Standard plans for the “Basic” or Minimal house were responsive to the new economic realities associated with the Great Depression. As building resumed in the post-war era, the new homes retained these practical, efficient qualities, but a new aesthetic emerged. Early Ranch homes, built in the immediate post-war era, reflected the lingering effects of the war years with material shortages and the fact that many new families were just starting out after the war. As time went on, increasing prosperity led to the long, low Ranch houses that we associate with the post-war era today.

In the post-war era, federally sponsored highway projects and the prevalence of car ownership enabled developers to move further from the city center, where land was cheap and easy to develop. The streetcar suburb pattern of development, with narrow, deep lots in first ring suburbs, was replaced by subdivisions with wide, shallow lots. Homes built here nearly filled the lots from side to side, and were set relatively close to the front lot line, allowing for generous rear yards for family recreation and privacy. The Ranch house that typified these developments is generally one story in height with shallow pitched hip or gable roofs and deep eaves, to give them a “ground-hugging” appearance. The strong horizontal lines of these homes are often emphasized with horizontal board cladding and windows with a horizontal emphasis, typically placed high under the eaves, reiterating the overall lines of the houses.

A brief discussion of war-time and post-war architectural styles found in Oregon City follows.



***World War II-era Styles:  
The World War II-era Cottage***

The World War II-era cottage is a compact building with a nearly square floor plan reflecting the Basic or Minimal house plan type.

**Character Defining Features**

A World War II-era cottage often has a shallow-sloped hip roof, no eaves, and a recessed entry. It can display a variety of window types, but steel casement or double-hung wood-frame windows with horizontally-oriented lights are often seen. Window type is one of the most unique features of many World War II era cottages. These homes may be found with wrapped corner windows on the primary façade, with round or octagonal windows near the entry, and with large square focal windows. Large chimneys are also common.





***World War II-era Styles:  
The Minimal Traditional House***

The Basic or Minimal house refers to a plan type that came out of studies sponsored by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and controlled through the FHA regulations of the 1930s. It refers to a plan type(s) that minimizes circulation space and maximizes multi-use spaces, such as kitchen-dining or dining-living spaces in the interest of economic efficiency.



**Character Defining Features**

Typical characteristics of the Minimal Traditional house include a gable or hip roof, narrow or non-existent eaves, a square or slightly rectangular plan, and ‘traditional’ windows such as paired or single double-hung windows with multiple lights and shutters, although this era also saw emergence of the picture window.



Visual interest is often provided by cladding materials, such as clapboard with brick accents or shingle siding. Minimal Traditional homes were generally built without porches but often include small concrete stoops covered by gables, as seen in the Oregon City examples to the left. Minimal traditional houses are generally one story in height.



***Post World War II Styles:  
The Early Ranch House***

The Ranch house was popular throughout the United States and assumed many forms and style variations, although the most common Ranch houses in Oregon City are the Early Ranch and the well-known Ranch style house. The Early Ranch house has a simple rectangular footprint and does not display the variations seen in the later Ranch house.



**Character defining features**

The Ranch house has an open floor plan in the public areas, where the dining and living rooms or kitchen and dining rooms may be combined. The kitchen is typically a small galley kitchen, often with a “pass-through” to the dining area. Bedrooms are often aligned along a hallway, rather than centered on a small vestibule, as in World War II-era houses. This was the era in which the family room made an appearance as well. The single car garage or a carport was typically integrated with the house, but could be separated from it by a breezeway.





***Post World War II Styles:  
The Ranch House***

The origins of the Ranch house lie in its rustic, southern California and American southwest roots. But the Ranch house of post-war America could take many forms. Form types include L-shaped houses, U-shaped houses, houses arranged around a courtyard, split-level houses, which are one-and-two-stories, and split-entry houses, which are two stories. There are Traditional Ranch houses, which display rustic details, and Contemporary Ranch houses, which have clean, modern lines. Character Ranch houses take on the architectural details of other styles, such as Colonial Revival. The long, low rambling Ranch is often referred to as a Rambler. All share a long, low profile and an overall horizontal aspect.

\*



**Character Defining Features**

The primary feature that distinguishes the Ranch house from World War II-era home is its horizontal aspect. After cars replaced streetcars as the primary mode of transportation, developers were able to move further from the city center, where land was cheap and easy to develop. Small city lots with compact houses were replaced by larger homes with wide facades that extended from side lot line to side lot line. The back yard was thus preserved for privacy and family recreation.



The resulting Ranch house is generally one story with projecting eaves that give them a “ground-hugging” appearance. Strong horizontal lines are further emphasized by shallow-pitched, side gable and hip roofs with deep overhangs, horizontal board cladding, and horizontally-oriented windows, often with narrow Roman brick cladding underneath.

Characteristics of a Traditional Ranch include a long, narrow, open porch, a reference to the corridor of the traditional hacienda, and rustic finishes including variegated brick and board-and-batten, and wood shingle roofs. Oregon City Ranch houses tend to be relatively straight forward in design, but variations are seen, including a few Contemporary Ranch houses. Split-level and split-entry Ranch houses are common in Oregon City, but most were built in the 1960s beyond the time frame for this survey.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – WHY MID-CENTURY RESOURCES?

The following section responds to what we believe to be some of the most important considerations for why mid-century buildings and neighborhoods should be recognized and preserved, and the steps to achieving this.

This survey identified a number of mid-century properties throughout Oregon City that deserve recognition. These buildings retain excellent integrity. They've maintained their historic windows and siding, have retained their form, and remain good examples of their architectural styles. In many cases, these properties date from after World War II. The question is often raised: Why survey mid-century properties? What is the value of mid-century neighborhoods? Why promote their preservation?

Oregon City recognizes that survey is the foundation of good preservation planning. By surveying all buildings built before 1961, the city has taken the first step in prioritizing which resources deserve the greatest protection. This survey has assessed the integrity of buildings throughout the city and identified neighborhoods where mid-century buildings best communicate the ideals of their period. Survey data will help contribute to sound, informed decision making by providing a snapshot of how the city's mid-century resources have fared over the last fifty to seventy years. With this data, Oregon City can identify potential historic districts, target properties that may be eligible for individual listing on local, state or national registers, and craft public education efforts to enlist residents' help in maintaining the character defining features that make mid-century neighborhoods attractive places to live.

### *How can Oregon City use its mid-century survey?*

The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office prepared the following graphic to show some of the many ways that cities can use historic resource surveys. Though mid-century surveys can clearly provide data for potential historic districts, nominations, and design guidelines, some of their other uses may be less obvious, including those listed below:

**Disaster planning:** With the help of mid-century survey data, disaster plans can be designed to avoid sacrificing historic mid-century properties in times of crisis, be it fire, flood or other natural disasters. This information is also valuable for streamlining the permit process on a day-to-day basis, as information on the eligibility of properties is on file and does not need to be generated for every permit application.

**Transportation planning:** Historic resources are often impacted by transportation plans as cities grow. The expansion of the federal highway system destroyed countless historic homes in the middle of the 20th century. Survey data that identifies excellent mid-century neighborhoods can help avoid negative impacts to sensitive historic resources as transportation plans change to accommodate population growth.

**Affordable housing planning:** Survey data helps cities identify underutilized buildings that might be eligible for federal and state tax incentives as well as low-income housing programs. It also helps in the siting and designing of appropriate infill housing. One of the character-defining features of mid-century neighborhoods is that they are fairly low density and sometimes feature large lots. Mid-century neighborhoods can be targeted for inappropriate infill that undermines some of the very reasons for their significance. At the same time, it should be recognized that mid-century neighborhoods, particularly those with smaller homes, can provide affordable



**Figure 14 - How can I use my survey?**  
*Courtesy of Oregon State Historic Preservation Office*

housing.

**Community development:** As stated eloquently by the Oregon SHPO, “When people are proud of their history and where they live, this helps to maintain and increase property values. When resources are identified for their potential eligibility, this opens the door for future economic incentive programs; and when a neighborhood or commercial center is preserved, maintained, and people are proud to live there, this improves the quality of life for your residences.”<sup>19</sup>

**Heritage tourism:** Mid-century modernism is a growing area of interest. Oregon City has the opportunity to use current survey data to develop promotional materials for mid-century historic neighborhoods and buildings, to create walking tours, and to promote the protection of neighborhood character in mid-century neighborhoods like Rivercrest.

**Livability considerations:** Mid-century neighborhoods are attractive now for many of the reasons they were attractive when they were developed. The houses are very livable and convenient. The at-grade entries and lack of stairs make them desirable homes for seniors and those with small children. Smaller houses, like Early Ranch and Minimal Traditional homes, can be good options for those that are down-sizing or otherwise in need of a smaller residence. The neighborhoods are very walkable and feature mature landscaping. And as our cities have

<sup>19</sup> Cara Kaser, Oregon State Historic Preservation Office.

evolved, the suburban neighborhoods in which mid-century homes are often conveniently located close to services.

***Why should mid-century resources be surveyed on a regular basis?***

While survey data provides a real time snapshot of the city’s historic resources, it does not say how or why properties lose or retain integrity. Future surveys must be compared with the 2011 survey to identify common threats to mid-century resources as they age. More properties hit the 50-year mark every year. Without an on-going survey program, the youngest and most vulnerable mid-century historic properties receive no analysis and the public receives no guidance on maintaining historic integrity.



**Figure 15 - Using survey to provide direction for preservation strategies**  
*Courtesy of Oregon State Historic Preservation Office*

***Why is it so important to preserve Oregon City’s mid-century resources?***

The answer is the same for all historic buildings: These buildings provide a tangible link to the history of Oregon City and its people. Preserving mid-century resources preserves local history. Previous Oregon City surveys occurred before mid-century buildings were old enough to be included. In the intervening years, mid-century dwellings have been recognized as historic records of a particular time and place in history defined by World War II. The evolution of building styles during this period provides proof of how our cultural habits and ideals changed during and after the war. If the buildings of this era are not recognized for their history, character and integrity, they are likely to be lost, to demolition, to alteration, or to inappropriate updates that destroy historic materials. A city’s youngest historic resources are often its most threatened.

The preservation of mid-century resources also makes sense economically. Homes and districts that gain local, state or national recognition for their architectural character are likely to increase in value. This has been proven in numerous cities around the country. A list of reports and resources on the economics of historic preservation can be found at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website: <http://www.achp.gov/economic-general.html>.

***How does preserving mid-century resources contribute to a city's sustainability goals?***

The greenest building is the one that's already standing. Preserving and repairing historic materials keeps them out of landfills, preserves the high-quality materials used in mid-century construction, and reduces the amount of energy needed to produce and transport new materials. While energy efficiency is often cited as the reason for replacing historic materials, even in mid-century buildings, there are local, well-trained craftspeople that can help in the maintenance and retention of historic materials like windows while increasing energy efficiency. Repair and retention provides work for local craftspeople, preserves original historic material and decreases our dependence on fossil fuels by limiting transportation miles associated with new materials.

***How should Oregon City educate its residents on the benefits of mid-century development?***

The first step is to educate property owners on the historic significance of their buildings. Once owners recognize that their own homes are pieces of Oregon City history, they will be more likely to protect the character-defining features that distinguish them. Please see Chapter 5 for examples of how Oregon City can more successfully integrate mid-century construction into its existing preservation program.

***Are mid-century more threatened than other historic resources?***

Mid-century resources are more threatened than other resources. Their historic value is often not recognized; they are considered too new to be historic! Oregon City has taken the first step in recognizing the value of their mid-century resources by conducting this survey and sponsoring the preparation of this report. The next step is protecting the integrity of these resources and providing for their preservation.

***What are the greatest threats to mid-century buildings and neighborhoods?***

Many properties are altered over time. They are enlarged, their windows are replaced, their garages are converted into dens, and their roofs are permanently altered by the addition of skylights, second stories or dormers. These alterations impact a property's integrity. To be considered historically significant, a property is evaluated with respect to the Secretary of the Interior's seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Alterations that lessen a building's integrity in these key areas should be avoided if a building is to retain its historic character.

Historic windows and siding should be retained. They are integral to a building's design, embody historic materials and workmanship and contribute to a building's sense of age, its "feeling". Functional spaces like garages, carports and porches should be maintained, and incompatible alterations including large additions and ornament common to other architectural periods should be avoided, as they clash with the historic design and feeling of the building. Also, a building should retain its original location and orientation.

Neighborhoods that developed at mid-century are threatened by commercial encroachment, by insensitive transportation improvements, by new planning models that don't recognize the value of these neighborhoods, and by neglect and lack of investment, among other reasons. Conducting this survey is a first step to recognizing and placing value on these neighborhoods.

OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM  
HISTORIC SURVEY & UPDATE PROJECT

## 5. Review of Policies and Procedures

### OREGON CITY'S HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM

This review of Oregon City's Historic Review Program is based on its adopted plans, regulations and guidelines and its policies and practices as outlined on the city's website. A more complete review would involve observing the city's public information, public review and public hearing processes over time and interviewing key stakeholders and participants, including city staff, elected officials, commissioners and board members, members of the public who own historic structures, the general public, and others involved or having an interest in historic preservation. This work, however, was outside the scope of this review. The following comments are divided into four sections, addressing the city's preservation policies, zoning code, design guidelines, and public information documents.

Oregon City has been a Certified Local Government (CLG) since 1986 and has had a Historic Review Program in place since the early 1980s. The CLG program is a National Park Service program administered by the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The program provides funding for surveys and other historic preservation activities for qualified cities and counties. It also establishes requirements for participants, such as having a dedicated Historic Review Board and established procedures for the program. A short outline of CLG requirements is provided by the National Park Service and can be seen below and also on their webpage.<sup>20</sup>

***What is a CLG required to do?***

A community must address the following minimum goals to demonstrate to the State and NPS that they are committed to historic preservation.

- Establish a qualified historic preservation commission.
- Enforce appropriate State or local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties. In most cases this is done in the form of a local ordinance.
- Maintain a system for the survey and inventory of local historic resources.
- Provide for public participation in the local historic preservation program, including participation in the National Register process.
- Follow any additional requirements as outlined in the State's Procedures for Certification.

**Figure 16 - What is a CLG required to do?**

*Courtesy National Park Service*

<sup>20</sup> "Certified Local Government Program," [http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/CLG/become\\_clg.html](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/CLG/become_clg.html).

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Oregon City has the appropriate regulatory framework in place to administer its historic preservation program. The Oregon City Comprehensive Plan has policies to guide preservation activities and the municipal code has regulations to implement these policies. The city also has created and adopted design guidelines to help the Historic Review Board administer the program and to provide information to buildings owners or prospective building owners on how to rehabilitate their buildings or design compatible new buildings in Oregon City’s historic districts. The city also provides excellent public information on their website in support of the Historic Preservation Program.<sup>21</sup> The following is a brief review of Oregon City’s regulatory and public information resources. Comments and recommendations are included.

**Preservation policies.** The main goal of Oregon City’s preservation program, according to the Comprehensive Plan, is to: “Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of homes and other buildings of historic or architectural significance in Oregon City.”<sup>22</sup> The city has adopted eight policies that encompass the wide range of activities that support the historic preservation program. They provide the policy basis for current and future activities that may be necessary to administer a successful program in this historically significant city. This section of the Comprehensive Plan also provides a narrative overview of the program and a critique of some aspects of the program. A strong statement of intent is embodied in the following: “An appropriate, well-constructed historic preservation plan will provide for identification and establishment of safeguards . . . which are important to the quality of Oregon City as a whole and to the identity of the Northwest.”<sup>23</sup>

**Comment:** The policy basis for Oregon City’s Historic Preservation Program appears to be comprehensive and adequate to provide the framework for other regulatory activities.

**Recommendation:** None

**Preservation regulations.** The city’s Zoning Code includes a number of important tools for promoting and maintaining its historic preservation program. It regulates the make-up of its Historic Review Board, a requirement of its CLG status. It provides for a Historic Overlay District designation, designed to protect and promote preservation in the historic and conservation districts, for individual landmarks, and historic corridors. And it provides for the HC Historic Commercial zone, adopted in 2009, to assist in maintaining appropriate uses and development in the historic downtown area. The city’s Zoning Code also includes demolition regulations designed to prevent demolition by neglect of historic properties. Thus Oregon City has a comprehensive scope of regulations to help implement their historic preservation program. Individual sections of the code, however, could be made more effective.

**Comment, section 17.40.060, “Exterior alteration and new construction.”** This section of the Zoning Code provides regulations that address a broad range of activities, from the Certificate of Appropriateness process to archaeological monitoring to design review. It lists the Historic Review Board’s criteria for reviewing a project, which references regulatory, historic, aesthetic, social, economic, environmental and energy criteria. This is very broad and does not provide adequate guidance to the Historic Review Board or the public. Predictability is an important factor in any public review process, and can help ensure its success and support. Statements like

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<sup>21</sup> *General Historic Information*, <http://www.orcity.org/planning/historic-preservation-grant>.

<sup>22</sup> *Oregon City Comprehensive Plan*, June 2004:39.

<sup>23</sup> *Oregon City Comprehensive Plan*, 2004:33.

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the fact that a project proposal may be subject to “pertinent aesthetic factors as designated by the board” (17.40.060(E)(7)) can lead to uncertainty on the part of the applicant and may even cause an applicant to try to circumvent the process.

**Recommendations:** It is recommended that this portion of the Zoning Code be limited to references to the design criteria by which the Historic Review Board will review a project, with a caveat as to other considerations such as economic hardship and compatibility with other codes where necessary. Currently there are three provisions directed toward design criteria. They regulate:

6. The general compatibility of exterior design, arrangement, proportion, detail, scale, color, texture and materials proposed to be used with the historic site.
7. Pertinent aesthetic factors as designated by the board.
9. Design guidelines adopted by the historic review board.

It is recommended that the three statements on design criteria be resolved or clarified. It is recommended that this section be consistent among historic resource types and districts where possible. See “Design Guidelines,” below, for additional suggestions.

**Comment, section 17.40.065, “Historic preservation incentives.”** This section is primarily devoted to one incentive, relief from zoning requirements for setbacks.

**Recommendation.** It may be appropriate to expand this section to refer to other incentives available in the city, or to incorporate this section in the above section 17.40.060.

**Comment, section 17.40.070 , “Demolition and Moving.”** This section appears to address similar topics as Section 15.25, “Demolition by Neglect.”

**Recommendation.** It may be appropriate to combine this section with the Zoning Code with section 15.25, “Demolition by Neglect,” or at minimum make reference to that section in this section.

**Comment.** It is essential that zoning regulations and design guidelines are consistent, for both legal reasons and to ensure that decision makers and the public are provided the best possible information and guidance.

**Recommendation.** Further guidance for resolving differences between zoning codes and design guidelines for historic districts may be found in *Zoning and Historic Preservation* by Stephen A. Morris, available on the National Park Service’s website at: <http://www.nps.gov/hps/pad/partnership/Zoning699.pdf>.

**Historic design guidelines.** The city has a number of guidelines documents and historic review policies for various purposes. They include the following.

- **Guidelines for New Construction, Oregon City Historic Districts, 2006.**  
These guidelines apply to new construction in the McLoughlin Historic Conservation District and the Canemah National Historic District and to Landmark properties outside the districts where new construction is proposed through the addition of infill buildings or through subdivision.

- **Design Guidelines, Alterations – Additions, n.d.**  
These guidelines provide general guidance for additions and alterations to historic structures. They also provide for “Recommended” and “Not Recommended” treatments with respect to various building materials and architectural features. While this document does not provide the illustrations of the above document provides, it is sufficiently general to respond to most situations.
- **Historic Review Board Policies, 1986-1991.**  
This list of policies, most adopted by the HRB in 1986, responds to specific issues, presumably issues that came up over the course of time and were not addressed in other documents, such as treatment of siding, roof materials, gutters, storm windows, and fences.

**Comment.** The Oregon City Zoning Code provision 17.40.060.A states that new construction refers to any change that affects 30% or more of the building area. The *Guidelines for New Construction*, however, state that they do not apply to building additions, which could easily be 30% or more of the building area.

**Recommendation.** This should be resolved or clarified.

**Comments.** Each of these documents have very different formats, different applications, and provide differing levels of information. The *Guidelines for New Construction* provides guidelines that apply to all new construction in historic districts or adjacent to historic properties, although many of the concepts could also apply to alterations and additions. The *Design Guidelines, Alterations - Additions* do not provide the rich array of visual information and examples that the *Guidelines for New Construction* document provides, but it is more clear because the guidelines are written to be general and do not supply the same information in several different formats. They apply to all historic resources. The *Historic Review Board Policies* are also brief, applying as they do to very specific conditions.

**Recommendations.** Recognizing that any review captures a moment in time, it appears that there is almost too much information supplied in the *Design Guidelines for New Construction*, and not enough in the *Design Guidelines for Alterations and Additions*. The *Review Board Policies* are also important and should be incorporated in the design guideline documents. Some of the information about procedures that are contained in the *Frequently Asked Questions – Historic* could also be incorporated in the design guideline documents. Ideally, the city would have overarching design guidelines that apply to all historic resources, based on the Secretary of Interior’s Standards, and for each historic district with guidance specific to the administration and design character of that district. The guideline document(s) would be consistent in format, adequately illustrated, and contain information about the review process for alterations, additions, and new construction.

**Comments.** Most local governments in the country, as well as other public agencies, have adopted the Secretary of Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as the basis of their historic design review programs and guidelines. Oregon City adopted the Secretary of Interior’s Standards as part of their design review program in 2001. Properties that are listed on the National Register, including districts, sites and individual buildings and structures, are also subject to these guidelines. The Standards provide for various levels of treatment for historic properties, including preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. Rehabilitation is

the most widely used set of standards, as it provides for the greatest flexibility, particularly when adapting historic properties to new uses.

#### **SECRETARY OF INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

The National Park Service provides guidelines for each of these treatments that address a broad range of issues, with “Recommended” and “Not Recommended” policies, similar to the “Good Example” and “Not Allowed” in the *Design Guidelines for New Construction*. The standards and guidelines place an emphasis on retaining and preserving historic materials and features, protecting and maintaining materials and features, and repairing them. The option of last resort is replacing materials and features when necessary. Specific guidance is included that is applicable to various conditions. These provisions make the priorities in historic preservation very clear, which are to retain historic fabric and building features and provide for adequate maintenance. This is not only good historic preservation policy, but is also a responsible choice in terms of energy efficiency and sustainability practices.

It is the intention of the National Park Service that design guidelines be prepared at the local level to implement the Secretary of Interior’s Standards and to provide additional guidelines and information specific to local conditions. Basing design guidelines on the Secretary of Interior’s Standards ensures consistency between guidelines, and also compliance with National Park Service standards for properties listed on the National Register or subject to Federal review. The Secretary of Interior’s Standards represent our nation’s “best practices” for historic preservation. The standards have been utilized throughout the country, under many different conditions and circumstances, and are revised by top professionals in the field on an on-going basis.<sup>24</sup> Adopting guidelines that implement and complement these standards is one way to ensure that local guidelines build on the experience and success of other communities and organizations. While Oregon City has adopted the Secretary of Interior’s Standards, they are not yet strongly reflected in their guidelines. It is recommended here that they be incorporated in the guidelines when possible.



**Figure 17 - Oregon City, 1961**

*Source: Ben Maxwell Collection*

<sup>24</sup> That is, interpretations that apply to specific conditions, such as cultural landscapes, are undertaken on an on-going basis. For example, the National Park Service just released *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

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**Public information documents.** The City does a very good job of helping residents, business people and visitors learn more about Oregon City’s historic resources, programs, and other relevant and interesting information through its website<sup>25</sup>. The subjects under which this information falls may be categorized as: general historic information about Oregon City; information on Oregon City’s historic properties and districts; guidance documents for applicants (“Historic Review & Policies”); incentive programs; and resources.

**Comment.** There is an abundance of information on the city’s website and it is an excellent resource. However, it appears that the organization of the website has evolved over time. Sometimes information is repeated in different areas, and sometimes it appears in areas that do not seem the most appropriate. If information is confusing or difficult to find, it can result in not reaching the right audience at the right time.

**Recommendation.** The following is our recommendations on organizing and simplifying the website, based on the existing site.

***Historic Oregon City***

- Brief History of Oregon City
- Main Street Oregon City
- Historic Places and Museums
- Sanborn Maps
- Oregon City Historic Photos (PDF)
- Grande Ronde History.

***Information for Historic Review Applicants***

- Frequently Asked Questions (a link to the “Historic Oregon City” brochure might also be included here)
- Applying for Historic Review Board Approval (“HRB Approval Process”)
- Design Guidelines for Alterations/Additions
- Design Guidelines for New Construction
- Historic Review Board Policies
- Historic Application Checklist.

***Oregon City Historic Districts and Buildings*** (includes “Inventory Forms” in appropriate area)

- Canemah National Register District
- McLoughlin Conservation District
- Downtown Historic Resources
- Designated Landmarks Outside Historic Districts.

***Historic Preservation Incentives***

- Historic Preservation Grant
- Ruth McBride-Powers Preservation Award

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<sup>25</sup> This information can be found at <http://www.orcity.org/planning/general-historic-information>.

- (It would be beneficial here to include information about, or links to, the Oregon tax benefit program and the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive program), as well as façade easement programs and anything else that Oregon City may have access to.

### ***Resources and Publications***

This section would include the information on:

- window rehabilitation and other technical issues;
- resources such as contractors, retailers, and other who supply relevant goods and services;
- links to other agencies and organizations; and
- links to relevant publications.

## **OREGON CITY’S SURVEY PROGRAM**

***What a survey program achieves.*** An on-going survey program is essential to the preservation planning process. Surveys identify a city’s historic resources for preservation and broader planning and community involvement purposes. As explained by the National Park Service, the purpose of a survey is, “to gather the information needed to plan for the wise use of a community’s resources.”<sup>26</sup> Planning for the wise use of a community’s historic resources is beneficial on a number of levels. It affects the quality of life for a community’s residents and business people; historic districts improve neighborhood stability and increase land values; historic preservation supports good paying, local jobs; and historic preservation complements the sustainability practices of a community.

The task of completing a reconnaissance survey of Oregon City’s resources that had not, to date, been inventoried was a large undertaking and the city is to be commended for bringing their surveys up to the present (that is, up to 50 years ago!). Although the reconnaissance survey was not detailed, it is hoped that the work will help inform the city’s future planning and survey efforts. A recommendation that resulted from this survey is to inventory the neighborhoods that developed in the 1960s in the future. There may be sufficient integrity demonstrated in the Rivercrest neighborhood to consider a comprehensive survey at a later date. This survey and any future surveys can raise awareness and foster an appreciation for this period in Oregon City’s history, which will complement the fact that these are, as a whole, very desirable neighborhoods that help maintain the city’s quality of life.

The re-survey of individual landmarks outside existing Oregon City historic districts revealed that the Historic Review Program has not been consistent at preventing the loss of these resources, which have been affected by demolition, neglect, or inappropriate alterations that do not meet the Secretary of Interior’s Standards. This inconsistency in the program in the past may have been due to a lack of political support, community support or leadership, an economic downturn or economic development pressures, or a lack of information about or understanding of good preservation practices. These days, with so many alternative materials available, buildings may be inappropriately altered because owners do not understand the downside of using some of these materials, and may be under the mistaken impression that the new features, such as vinyl windows or vinyl siding, may result in energy efficiencies or lower maintenance costs, whereas they can actually increase costs in the long term.

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<sup>26</sup> Parker, 1985:4.

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In the past, Oregon City's Main Street (2009) and larger Historic Downtown (2000) has been re-surveyed as well, as has the McLoughlin District (2002), which indicates that a loss of integrity has occurred in the central city areas as well as the outlying areas. Regardless of the reasons, it is a fact that re-surveying properties to assess their current status requires time and money that would be more productively spent in preserving and enjoying those resources, and reaping the benefits of a historic downtown and neighborhoods that attract visitors, business people and residents that value the historic character of the community. There are additional benefits to maintaining the historic fabric of the community. Owners of properties that are individually listed on the National Register or are contributing properties in National Register district can apply for Federal tax credits for the rehabilitation of their income-producing properties, which represents an investment in the community. The State of Oregon also has a tax benefit program, and the city has a small grant program as well.

***Recommendations for future surveys.*** The surveys conducted for this Historic Review Program update -- both the intensive survey of existing landmarks and the reconnaissance-level survey -- did not find significant concentrations of properties that displayed good integrity. Rather, there were properties displaying all levels of integrity throughout the city, encompassing 19<sup>th</sup> century properties through mid-twentieth century properties. As a result, there were not significant areas that displayed a consistent level of integrity that might be considered for future historic districts. An exception may be the Rivercrest neighborhood. When considered as a whole -- that is, when considering properties that were developed before and after the 50-year mark of 1961, it may be that this neighborhood qualifies as a conservation district.

Post-World War II suburbs, in particular, represent a distinctive and widespread development model not seen before this era, and one which makes up a large percentage of our residential neighborhoods today. This was due to changes in transportation planning; new standards for subdivision design, including the development of streets, blocks, and individual lots; new development practices that emphasized community planning and large scale master planning; and equally as important, a new type of home that promoted and reflected modern values and lifestyles. Mortgage lending practices had an equal, if unseen, effect on the new physical environment, as did government subsidies to developers and property owners.

The National Park Service encourages looking at residential suburbs -- of all ages -- as a totality. They encourage looking at the development patterns and cultural landscape features displayed by the neighborhoods, as well as their historic associations. It is possible that a future comprehensive survey of Rivercrest or other neighborhoods may reveal that these features are significantly intact and important in a way that increases the overall historic significance of the neighborhood.

Factors to take into account include how the neighborhood is organized -- is it organized around a park, a school, or an important landscape feature? The neighborhood's characteristic block and street pattern and streetscape features, including landscaping, can be important. Lot design and site design can be important and characteristic of the time in which homes were built. Landscape design may be an equally important hallmark of the time. Lastly, the form and massing of a buildings and how they related to other features, such as the street, topographic features, or the view, may be important. In other words, there are more factors to consider in individual neighborhoods than just the integrity of the buildings, although this is usually the deciding factor when considering a conservation or historic district. A comprehensive survey and context

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statement will help communities assess their historic resources and decide whether to pursue conservation or historic district designations.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES**

It is clear from this review of Oregon City's historic preservation policies, regulations, and public information documents that the city has a comprehensive set of guidelines and procedures with which to administer its program. Despite a few areas where regulations, for example, might be improved, Oregon City's regulatory framework represents best practices at the local government level in historic preservation. It is also clear that Oregon City has an impressive building stock and that it is historically one of the most important cities on the west coast. But the city is not living up to its potential in terms of historic preservation on the ground. What are the issues and how might they be addressed?

First of all, this review is not comprehensive. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, a comprehensive review would include interviewing affected parties and more observation of the city's preservation-oriented activities. This is beyond the scope of this update. Nonetheless, a few suggestions are offered here, based on the assumption that, although the city has an active historic preservation program, information and guidance is not always getting to the property owner. Suggestions are as follows.

- Ensure that any building and zoning permit applications for listed landmarks are referred to the Historic Review Program.
- Consider having a tiered review of applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness, whereby certain applications can be reviewed administratively, thereby streamlining the review process.
- Conduct workshops and hands-on programs for repairing and retrofitting historic windows and other maintenance issues for historic home owners.
- Make public information available about energy efficiency measures for historic buildings.
- Make public information available about the downsides of such things as painting brick, applying vinyl siding over wood siding, and installing vinyl windows.
- Provide more information on preservation incentives, including state and federal programs.
- Consider creating a preservation plan for the city and use it to involve the public in historic preservation activities and decision-making for the city. More information about this planning process is provided at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/pad/LocalPresPlan/intro.html>.

**Summary.** The broad array of suggestions have been offered here, based on the findings of the intensive survey of landmarks, the reconnaissance survey of city properties, the context statements that were developed for the city, and this review of policies and procedures. Suggestions have also been made based on our observations and experience with the historic preservation programs in other cities and counties. These suggestions are made with the knowledge that any program must to be tailored to the specific needs of a community, and with involvement from the citizens of that community.

OREGON CITY  
HISTORIC REVIEW PROGRAM UPDATE  
FINAL REPORT

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