

Willamette Falls

◦ LEGACY PROJECT ◦

PARTNERS GROUP MEETING MINUTES

December 6, 2017

Metro Regional Center, Council Chambers

600 NE Grand Ave.

Portland, OR 97232

1:15 – 3 P.M.

Partner Attendees

Oregon City: Mayor Dan Holladay, Commissioner Renate Mengelberg, City Manager Tony Konkol

Metro: Council President Tom Hughes, Councilor Carlotta Collette, Metro COO Martha Bennett

County: Commissioner Paul Savas, Commissioner Martha Schrader

State: Representative Mark Meek, Metro Regional Solutions Coordinator Raihana Ansary

Absent: Senator Alan Olsen
State Parks Deputy Director M.G. Devereux
County Administrator Don Krupp

Staff: Brian Moore, Hope Whitney, Melanie Reinert, Carrie Belding, Alex Gilbertson, Brian Vaughn, Lisa Goorjian (Metro); Laura Terway, Phil Lewis, Christina Robertson-Gardiner, Eric Underwood (Oregon City)

Public: Shelly Parini, David Judd, Kent Ziegler (Rediscover the Falls Friends Group), Betsy Heidgerken (Falls Legacy LLC), Mini Sharma (PGE), other unnamed members of the public

The Q4 2017 Partners meeting followed a Partners executive session and was called to order by meeting chair, Representative Mark Meek, at 1:31 p.m.

- The Partners introduced themselves.
- Metro Council President Tom Hughes thanked Councilor Carlotta Collette for her years of service and work on behalf of the Willamette Falls Legacy Project and presented her with a photograph of Willamette Falls on behalf of the group and project teams.
 - Councilor Collette will retire in January 2018.

Brian Moore introduced an excerpt of an Oregon Field Guide episode focusing on Willamette Falls, which was produced in summer 2017 and aired in November 2017. (1:37 p.m.)

The Partners Group reported updates around the table. (1:47 p.m.)

- Tony Konkol met with representatives from West Linn regarding the paper mill closure.

- They are talking about processes to get their plans to where Willamette Falls Legacy Project is in the process, and further conversations are expected.
- Mayor Holladay was told that the manager of West Linn Paper Company may have a preliminary plan to reopen the mill after the bankruptcy process is completed.
- Related to West Linn's plans, there is also ongoing discussion regarding potential plans for the Willamette Falls Locks.
 - Martha Bennett shared that on November 29, Mayor Russ Axelrod and the Willamette Falls Locks group discussed the economic benefits of reopening the Locks.
 - Projected economic transportation benefits could be \$7.3M to \$30M.
 - The Locks group is moving forward to try and get a state commission assembled.
 - Councilor Collette shared that she is also on the Locks committee.
 - The study mentioned is a draft and also shows that tourism benefits could outweigh transportation benefits.
 - If operating full time, the Locks could have \$12M in costs with benefits of \$13M to \$53M.
 - Raihana Ansary shared that she is drafting a memo regarding the Willamette Falls Locks Commission for the governor to review with compiled applications to that commission.
 - Some on the project hope to participate, so they are hoping to move through a formal state process for meetings of the commission in January/February at the latest.
- Raihana Ansary provided an update on state funding approval from the DOJ.

Brian Moore provided an update on the project budget.

- The budget is set for a two-year basis.
- The original budget was \$2.9M for two-year period actuals at \$2.2M.
- The project is under budget by \$600k, some of which Oregon City had earmarked for internal staffing in parks, but has not filled the position.
- The budget needs to clearly reflect the project's complex funding sources.
 - Allocation and restrictions for funds are complex, and Brian is evaluating revisions to the budget format and categorization to bring the document into line with a traditional capital project.
- Brian opened the floor to Partners questions.
- Councilor Collette asked if Brian needed approval from the Partners Group to proceed with reformatting the budget, and Brian indicated this would be appreciated.
 - The Partners moved to approve revising the budget format: Mayor Holladay first, Councilor Collette second, and Representative Meek noted that the motion carried.
- Tony Konkol asked if there were any hidden big expenditure coming.
- The project should be comfortable working within the budget we have moving forward.

Brian Moore moved discussion to the Willamette Falls Master Plan, introducing presenter Alex Gilbertson and providing some background on the project. (1:59 p.m.)

- Brian noted that the Partners Group approval of the master plan document is an important step for the project.
- Alex Gilbertson and Brian's document overview is summarized in highlights below:
 - In 2011, the Partners got together for the Willamette Falls Legacy Project and to secure public access to Willamette Falls.
 - Four core values were defined in 2012.
 - In 2014 a framework master plan was created.

- A summary of the 22-acre site of the former Blue Heron Paper mill, showing boundaries of private property and donated easement was shared.
- PGE owns the dam and also granted an easement option for public access to the dam.
- The site features reflect past heavy industrial use.
- There was a planning process milestone in winter 2015 and the team held five large scale community events, as well as numerous presentations, community conversations and an online check in to gather community input.
- Site tours were held during this process and are still offered.
- Project outreach conversations with stakeholder and other agencies, focus groups, state partners, scientists and tribal communities spanned the planning process.
- Based on feedback, the project design incorporated interactions with nature, views of Willamette Falls, respect for existing site character, gathering spaces for community use, covered areas providing shade protection from rain, and interpretation of cultural ties and site history.
- The riverwalk design focuses on Partner goals and core values, providing more than a walkway and incorporating gathering spaces, pathways, and a Falls view.
- Alex went over a summary of the areas of the riverwalk and their potential uses based on the concept design.
- She noted that the overall design is aspirational and anticipates future funding.
 - The riverwalk will be phased as funding is available.
 - Early goals for the first phase are a prominent view, safe, secure access, habitat restoration and preparation of the site for future phases.
- The Master Plan draft was presented at a Metro Council work session in November and is posted for a public comment period.
 - Next week the team will present the draft at an Oregon City Commission work session.
 - The team anticipates Metro Council adoption by resolution in early January with Oregon City adoption after that.
 - The concept plan will be updated as the project moves forward.
- Alex Gilbertson asked the Partners Group for comments, questions or concerns.
- Kent Ziegler of Rediscover the Falls and the Oregon City Business Association asked to speak.
 - Kent was asked by George Heidgerken and Jon Potter of Falls Legacy to attend the meeting and comment.
 - The OCBA board received a letter from Falls Legacy regarding requests of the Partners Group regarding the riverwalk:
 - The owner is supportive of the riverwalk.
 - The owner needs review of the hotel open space, rights to build hotel with viewing platform on top, review of riparian forest view screen, further discussion of subsequent phases, and adaptive reuse of Mill O above the flood plain.
 - The owner asked the OCBA to assist with mediation and resolution of negotiations/compromise, and Kent offered any help or resources they have at the meeting.
 - There were no questions or comments on Mr. Ziegler's remarks.
- There were no further comments on the riverwalk master plan.
- Councilor Collette asked for clarification on how each jurisdiction would approve the plan.
 - The team doesn't require an official approval from the Partners Group, but would appreciate the show of support for riverwalk as designed.
 - Tony Konkol explained that there are various methods of adoption depending on jurisdiction processes.

- Representative Meek indicated that the Partners Group feels the team is approved to proceed with presentations of the Master Plan to partner jurisdictions.

ACTION:

- **The Financial/Budget Oversight Committee will require a meeting to address the reformatting of the budget.**
- **The Project Team will continue with presentations of the draft Master Plan to jurisdictions for adoption.**

Chair Representative Meek adjourned the meeting at 2:18 p.m.