



MEMORANDUM

Draft Urban Core Code Amendments #1 (Task 3)

Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan Code Amendments – Urban Core

DATE October 16, 2018
TO Brett Estes and Rosemary Johnson, City of Astoria Community Development Department
FROM Matt Hastie and Kate Rogers

A. INTRODUCTION/OVERVIEW

The Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan was adopted in 2009 and describes a future vision and specific recommended implementation measures related to land use, open space, and transportation plans along the Columbia River waterfront. For purposes of the Riverfront Vision Plan, the city’s riverfront was divided into four sub-areas: Bridge Vista, Urban Core, Civic Greenway, and Neighborhood Greenway. Between 2014-2015, the City of Astoria adopted implementation measures for three of the four sub-areas. The current project focuses on the remaining sub-area—the Urban Core (shown in Figure 1; current zoning is shown in Figure 2). The intent of the project is to implement policies and recommendations identified in the Vision Plan—both general objectives and specific recommendations for the Urban Core—with updated development code text, comprehensive plan language, and map amendments.

In preparation for this memorandum, the project consultants reviewed Comprehensive Plan and Development Code implementation issues identified in the Riverfront Vision Plan for the Urban Core area with City staff. The Vision Plan’s land use and urban design recommendations for the Urban Core area focus on retaining and enhancing the area’s urban character while still promoting riverfront access. The Plan notes that “this area is and will continue to be characterized by a more dense level of development.” It further states that “this area will allow for a mix of commercial, residential and water-dependent uses that support, but should not compete with downtown development.” The Plan identifies the following land use policies:

- If development is to occur, promote the urban character of the area and allow for dense development.
- Allow for a mix of commercial, residential and water dependent uses that supports but does not compete with the downtown core.
- Encourage design of new or rehabilitated buildings that respects Astoria’s character.

- Create intimate open spaces and gathering places within new developments.
- Use setbacks, stepbacks and other measures to ensure an open feel and continued visual access to the river.
- Work with property owners, including those with existing leases to maximize open areas over the water.

The project team has agreed to organize these issues into three sets of draft policy and code amendments in order to allow for manageable and adequate review of the draft amendments with the Planning Commission and public. Following is a short summary of the three sets of policy and code amendment topics, with brief overviews of related issues and approaches that will be considered. Additional recommendations related to Comprehensive Plan policies may be provided at a later date, as needed. Concepts explored for the Urban Core area are similar to those developed for the other Riverfront sub-areas, but tailored to the Urban Core's specific context, goals, and objectives.

Set A

- Visual and physical access to the Columbia River (overwater development)
 - Protect views of the river through application of overwater development standards that limit development or limit the height or size of buildings.
 - Consider physical access measures similar to those adopted other sub-areas.
- View-related development standards (on-land development)
 - Consider height, setback, and stepback measures that ensure upland views toward the river are preserved. Focus these measures along the River Trail and north-south streets.

Set B

- Permitted uses
 - Allow for a mix of commercial, residential and water dependent uses that supports but does not compete with the downtown core. Consider prohibiting or limiting overwater uses that are currently permitted in base zones, or potentially allowing additional uses not currently permitted.
 - Consider on-land uses that would enhance, and not detract from, the pedestrian realm.
 - Explore development standards, such as floor area limits, that assist in complementing uses in the downtown core.
 - Add and/or clarify definitions of uses as needed.
- Modifications of C-2 (Tourist Commercial) zoning
 - Consider re-zoning land at the west end of the Urban Core from C-2 to another commercial zone to allow for more varied uses (see Figure 2).

Set C

- Design guidelines and standards

- Develop design guidelines and standards that ensure that new development in the Urban Core respects Astoria's historic character while also allowing for diversity in building design. Establish a balance between flexibility and clarity, so that standards and/or guidelines can be easily and consistently administered.
- Landscaping
 - Consider standards for river side and land side landscaping

This memorandum presents the first draft of the Set A package of recommended code amendments for the Urban Core area. The amendments are organized as follows:

- Visual and Physical Access to the River (Overwater Development)
 - Visual Access
 - Physical Access
- View-Related Development Standards (On-Land Development)
 - Height
 - Setbacks
 - Stepbacks
- Applicability and Implementation

In each section of the memorandum, the project team has proposed specific language for the Urban Core area. The proposed language is being presented for consideration and discussion by the Astoria Planning Commission (APC). In several cases, optional approaches are presented, with or in some cases without, a preliminary staff recommendation.

New or amended code provisions can be implemented by integrating them into existing articles of the City of Astoria Development Code or by including them in a new overlay zone developed for the Urban Core area, similar to the approach taken in the Bridge Vista, Civic Greenway, and Neighborhood Greenway areas. These alternatives are addressed in the final section of this memorandum and will be further discussed and determined once all of the amendment packages for the Urban Core area are developed.

Figure 1: Urban Core Area

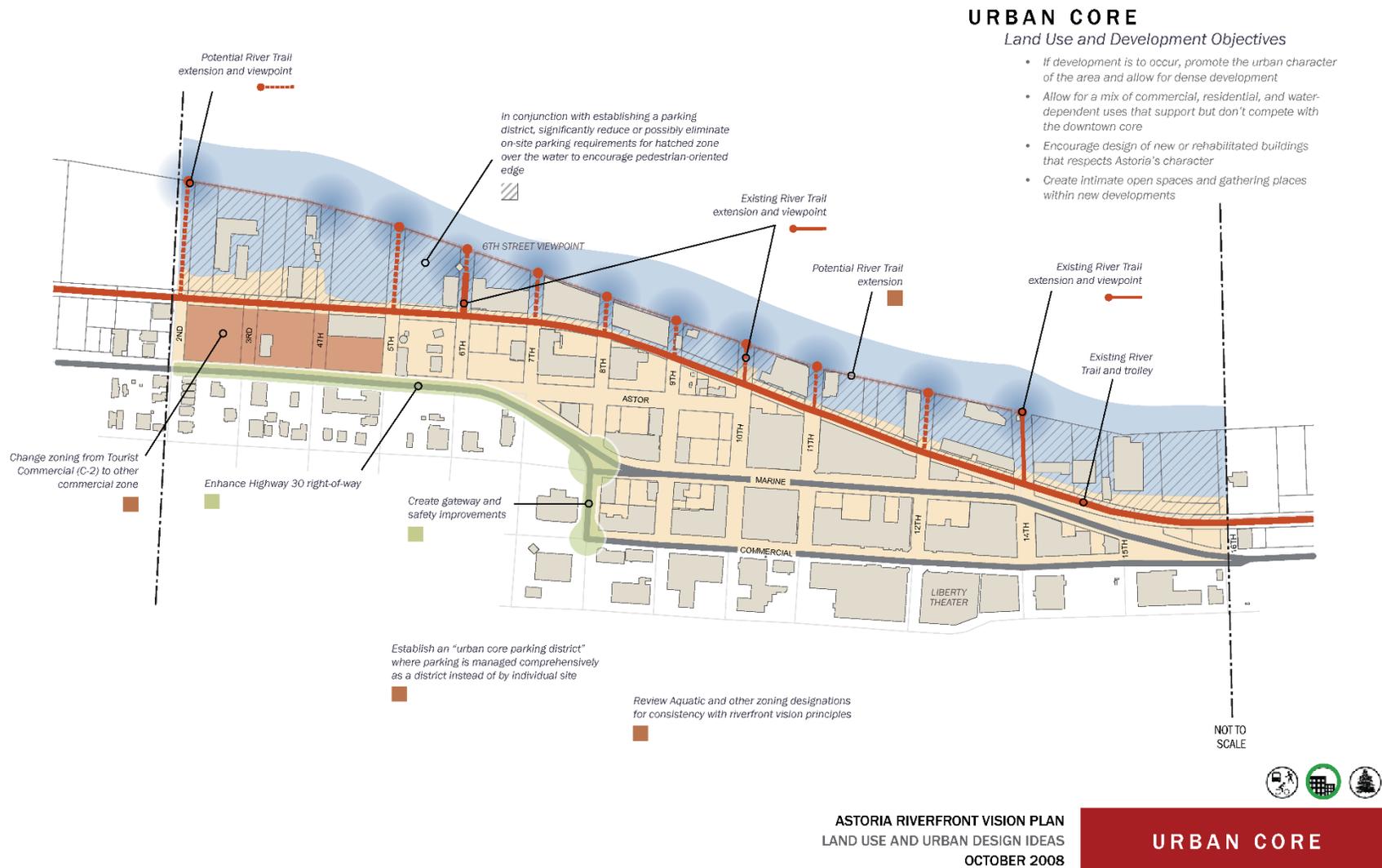
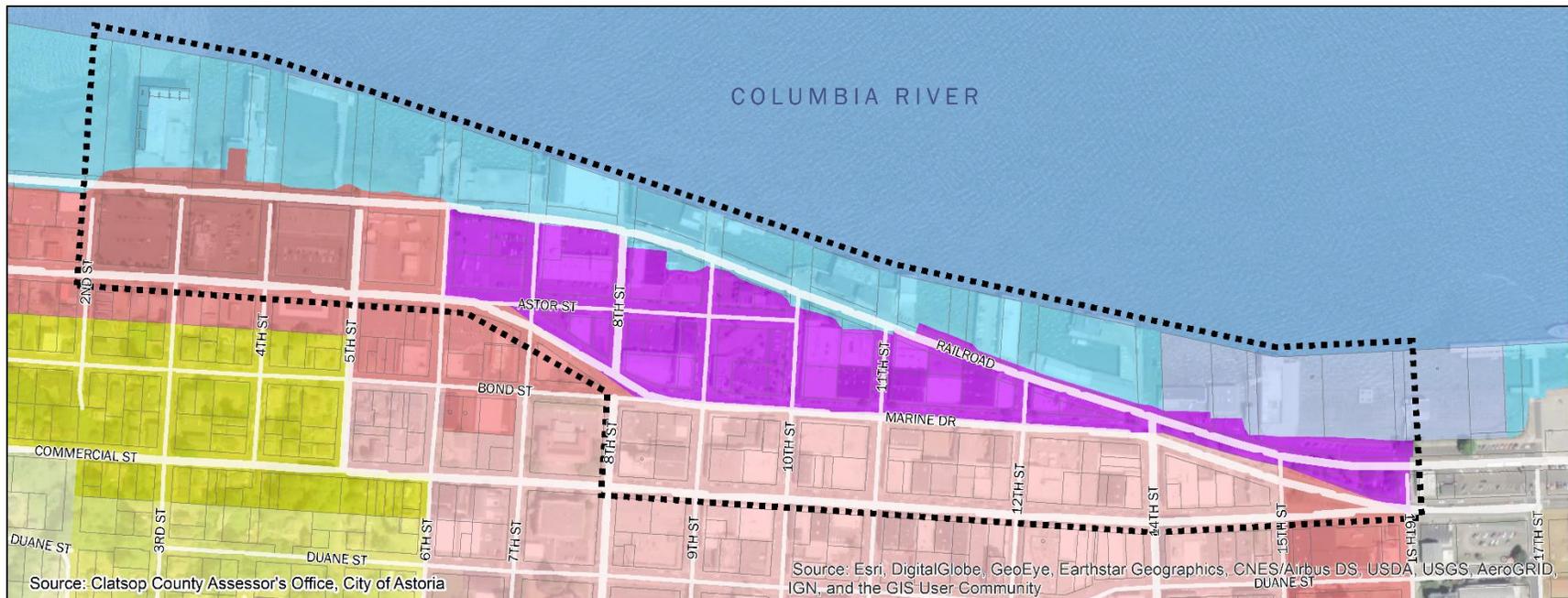


Figure 2: Zoning in the Urban Core Area



Zoning Designations					
<p> A2 - Aquatic Two Development</p> <p> A2A - Aquatic Two-A Development</p> <p> A3 - Aquatic Conservation</p> <p> C2 - Tourist Commercial</p>	<p> C3 - General Commercial</p> <p> C4 - Central Commercial</p> <p> FA - Family Activities</p> <p> R1 - Low Density Residential</p>	<p> R2 - Medium Density Residential</p> <p> R3 - High Density Residential</p> <p> S2A - Tourist-oriented Shorelands</p>			
<p> Urban Core Area</p>			<p>Prepared By: Angelo Planning Group</p> <p>Date: 7/20/2018</p> <p><small>Coordinate System: NAD 1983 HARN StatePlane Oregon North FIPS 3601 Feet Intl</small></p> <p><small>This map is intended for informational purposes only. While this map represents the best data available at the time of publication, APG makes no claims, representations, or warranties as to its accuracy or completeness. Metadata available upon request.</small></p>		

B. VISUAL AND PHYSICAL ACCESS TO THE RIVER (OVERWATER DEVELOPMENT)

As stated in the Riverfront Vision Plan, the Urban Core area is characterized by a more intense level of development than other Riverfront sub-areas. While the Vision Plan calls for this more urban character to be maintained if new development or redevelopment should occur, the Plan also identifies the need to ensure an open feel and to maximize open areas over the water. The Plan calls for site design and development provisions to ensure continued visual and physical access to the river.

The following sections address means of protecting visual and physical access to the river. They identify options and make several preliminary recommendations for amendments and standards to apply to overwater development in the Urban Core area. In some cases, the options identified for one topic may affect the options considered for another topic. For example, if the City chooses to prohibit any new development over the water in the Urban Core, then potential code provisions related to building heights, widths, setbacks and stepbacks over the water would not need to be considered. This memo does not pre-suppose a certain set of outcomes but attempts to provide a range of options to consider based on direction in the Astoria Riverfront Vision Plan, results of earlier Riverfront code update processes, and community feedback provided to date.

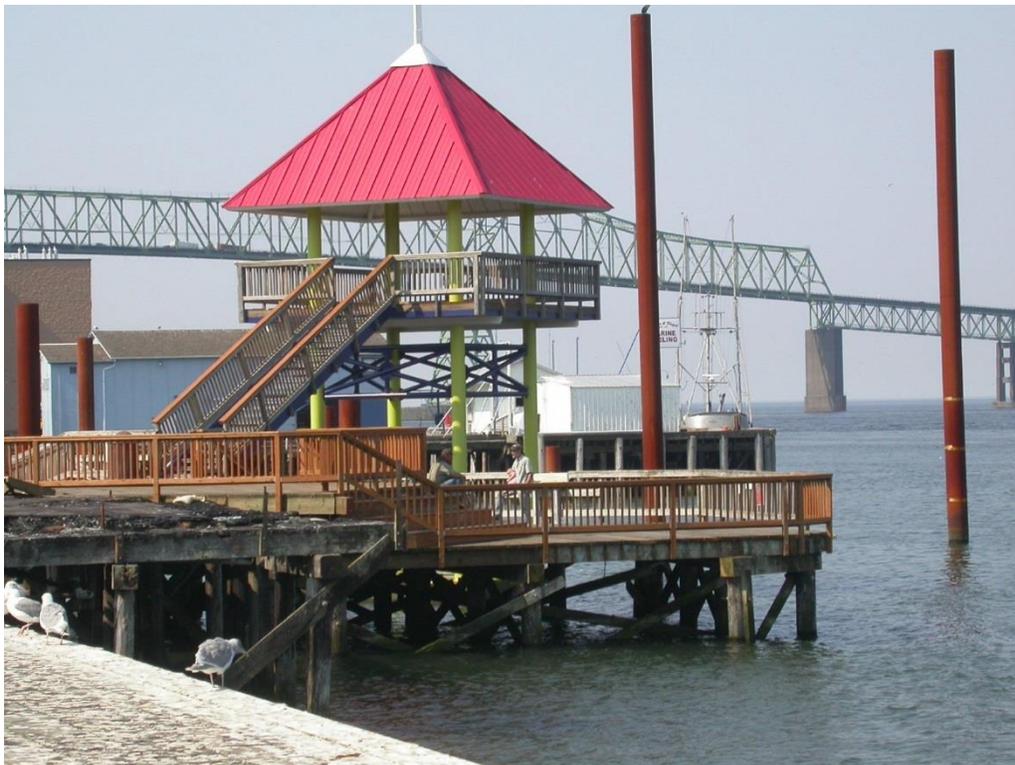
1. Visual Access

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies the need to maintain visual access to the Columbia River, as well as to ensure an open feel and to maximize open areas over the water in the Urban Core. A few existing overwater views within the Urban Core are depicted in the photographs in Figure 3 and Figure 4.

Figure 3: Looking east from Pier 12 (near 12th Street)



Figure 4: Looking west toward 6th Street Park Viewing Tower and Astoria-Megler Bridge



Most of the overwater area in the Urban Core (including areas represented in these images) is zoned A-2 (Aquatic Two Development), while a small portion at the east end is zoned A-2A (Aquatic Two-A Development), as shown in Figure 2. Those zones allow for a wide range of uses, with relatively few limitations on the size or height of over-water structures in those areas. Table 1 presents existing height and development standards for the A-2 and A-2A zones.

Table 1: Existing Overwater Development Standards in the Urban Core Area

Zone	Maximum Height	Minimum Setback	Distance from Shore
A-2	28' (above grade of adjacent Shoreland). 45' for area between extended 6th Street right-of-way and the Astoria-Megler Bridge.	25' from the extended right-of-way over the water. Required setback areas shall include open space, publicly accessible walkways, plazas or landscaped areas, where feasible. Parking and storage are prohibited in the setback area.	Buildings shall be located as close to the bankline as practical, except where necessary to provide loading or parking, or to provide an aesthetic feature such as an open water area adjacent to the shore.
A-2A	28'	None listed	None listed

The following approaches can be considered in seeking to protect views of the river in the Urban Core area:

1. Restrict Development on Undeveloped Sites – Strictly limit new development on overwater sites that are not currently developed. These areas will become “Limitation Areas,” similar to the Bridge Vista Overlay zones. Allow redevelopment of existing sites that are currently developed, but apply development limitations including structure height, size, width, and/or spacing.
2. Uniform Overwater Standards – Apply the same standards limiting development to all overwater development in the Urban Core. Limitations could include structure height, size, width, and/or spacing.

The Bridge Vista Overlay Zone can serve as a general model, in terms of the overwater development standards addressed in the zone, and the way that the section is organized. The Bridge Vista Overlay includes “Limitation Areas” in which development is strictly limited—structures can be no taller than the height of the adjacent bankline, and they are limited to a maximum gross floor area of 4,000 square feet. Structures in Limitation Areas are also subject to the building width and spacing standards for all overwater development in the Bridge Vista area. Similar limitations could be placed on parcels in the Urban Core area that are currently undeveloped, in order to preserve existing views in these open overwater areas of the Urban Core.

However, the Riverfront Vision Plan’s intent for the Bridge Vista area was somewhat different from the Urban Core. The Plan’s intent there was to preserve “sweeping open vistas” and protect specific prominent views, such as the Astoria-Megler Bridge and the portion of the river near the 2nd Street viewpoint. The overwater area in the Urban Core, on the other hand, is more built-up, with most of the parcels already having structures or an existing lease. Further, the Urban Core does not have the same type of priority views as the Bridge Vista area. Therefore, it may be more appropriate to apply the same level of view protection to all overwater sites in the Urban Core. In that case, the project team would propose similar overwater development standards to those applied to areas outside of the Limitation Areas in the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone, with the exception of two proposed changes: (1) reducing the maximum building height to 28 feet, and (2) adding a minimum view corridor/setback standard for north-south rights-of-way to match on-land areas.

These two options—restricting development in limitation areas and uniform standards—are presented below for consideration by the APC, as are a few potential modifications to be considered. As a starting point, the numeric height, width, and spacing standards are based on numeric standards in the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone, for the sake of consistency. However, the APC may suggest modifications to these standards to suit the conditions of the Urban Core, if appropriate. Potential Development Code language is presented below.

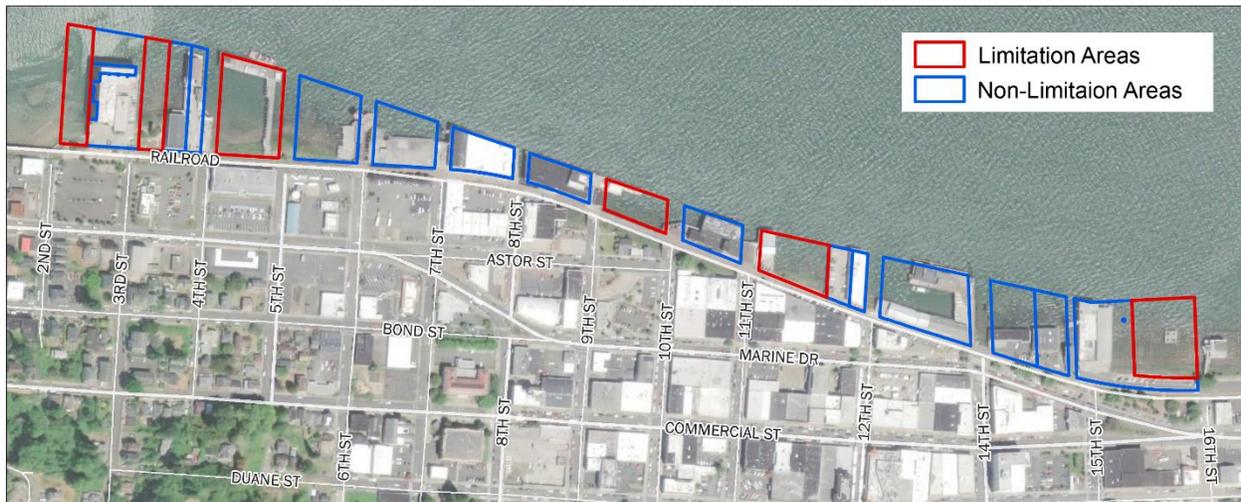
Option 1: Restrict Development on Undeveloped Sites

____. *STANDARDS FOR OVERWATER DEVELOPMENT.*

The following development standards apply to overwater development in the [Urban Core Overlay Zone]. The Overwater Development standards shall also apply to on-land development north of the River Trail / 50’ wide railroad line property in areas shown in Figure __. In the event of a conflict between this Section and other Sections of the Astoria Development Code, this Section shall control.

Maintenance, repair, or restoration of buildings existing prior to 2019 shall be exempt from the standards of this Section _____. Additions and/or new construction on these buildings shall be subject to these standards.

Figure 5: Potential Limitation Areas in the Urban Core

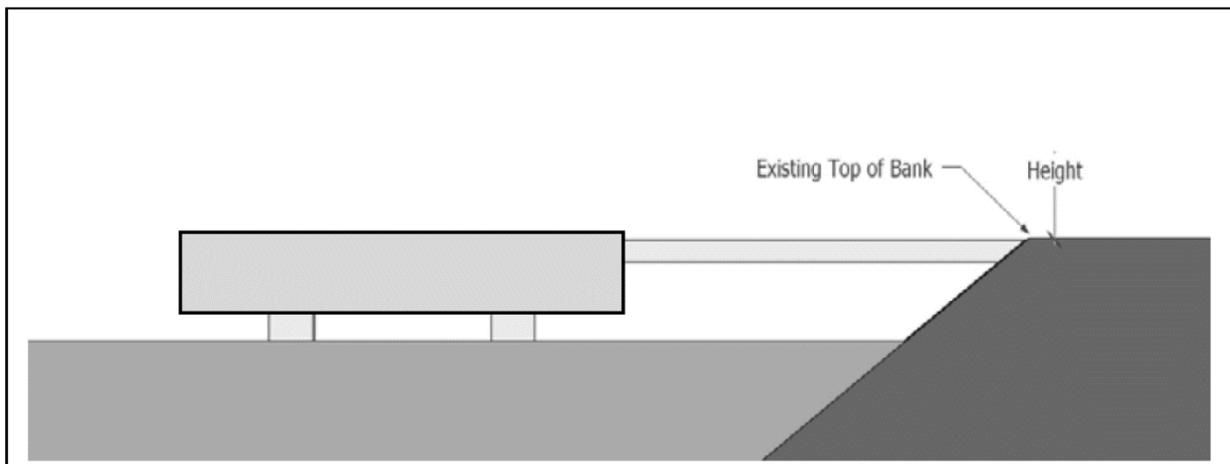


A. Maximum Height.

1. *Structures within Designated Limitation Areas (Figure __)*

Maximum building height, except hand rails, shall be the top of the existing adjacent riverbank. No variance may be granted for an exception to this height limitation.

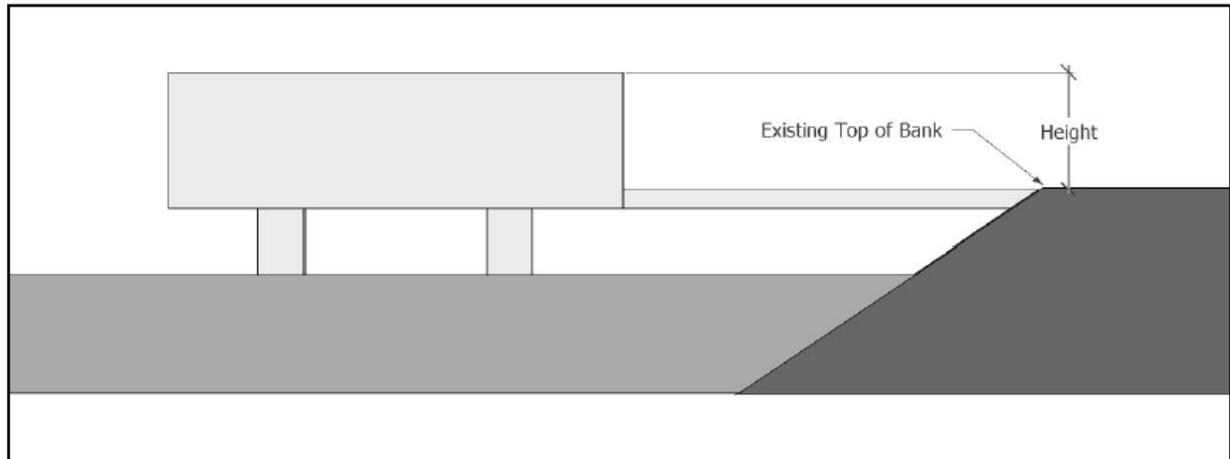
Figure 6: Maximum Building Height within Overwater Development Limitation Areas



2. *Structures outside of Designated Limitation Areas (Figure __)*

The maximum height shall be 28 feet from the top of the existing adjacent riverbank. No variance may be granted for an exception to this height limitation.

Figure 7: Maximum Building Height Outside of Overwater Development Limitation Areas



[Note: Figure 6 and Figure 7 are placeholder graphics that could be replaced in a subsequent draft of the memo, if needed.]

B. Size.

1. *Structures within Designated Limitation Areas (Figure __)*

The maximum gross floor area of enclosed structures is 4,000 square feet.

2. *Structures outside of Designated Limitation Areas (Figure __)*

There shall be no maximum gross floor area for buildings located in these areas.

C. Width and Spacing.

The following standards apply to all overwater development in the [Urban Core Overlay Zone].

1. *The maximum width of an individual overwater building shall be a maximum 60% of the total parcel width (measured along the parcel frontage adjacent to the Columbia River shoreline) or 150', whichever is less.*

2. *The maximum width of all overwater buildings located on a contiguous set of parcels under the same ownership shall be a maximum of 60% of the total width of the combined parcels (measured along the parcel frontage adjacent to the Columbia River shoreline).*

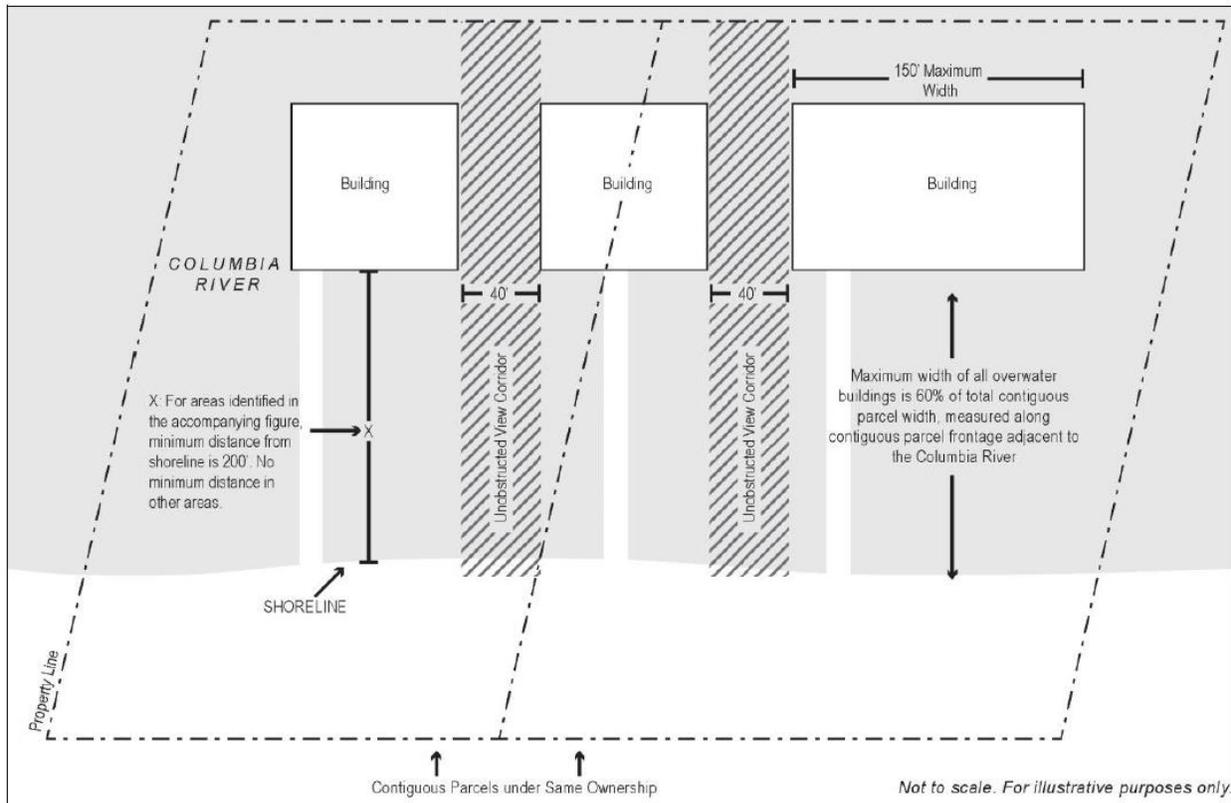
3. *There shall be a minimum 40' wide, unobstructed view corridor separation between buildings.*

D. Setbacks

The following standard applies to all overwater development in the [Urban Core Overlay Zone].

A minimum view corridor width of 70 feet, centered on the extension of the right-of-way centerline over the water, shall be provided on extended north-south overwater rights-of-way. Buildings shall be set back in order to achieve the 70-foot view corridor.

Figure 8: Maximum Building Width



[Note: Figure 8 is a placeholder graphic that would be modified and replaced in a subsequent draft of the memo.]

Option 2: Uniform Overwater Standards

____. **STANDARDS FOR OVERWATER DEVELOPMENT.**

[...]

A. Maximum Height.

The maximum height shall be 28 feet from the top of the existing adjacent riverbank. No variance may be granted for an exception to this height limitation.

[Note: The graphic in Figure 7 would be included here.]

B. Width and Spacing.

1. *The maximum width of an individual overwater building shall be a maximum 60% of the total parcel width (measured along the parcel frontage adjacent to the Columbia River shoreline) or 150', whichever is less.*
2. *The maximum width of all overwater buildings located on a contiguous set of parcels under the same ownership shall be a maximum of 60% of the total width of the combined parcels (measured along the parcel frontage adjacent to the Columbia River shoreline).*
3. *There shall be a minimum 40' wide, unobstructed view corridor separation between buildings.*

C. Setbacks

A minimum view corridor width of 70 feet, centered on the extension of the right-of-way centerline over the water, shall be provided on extended north-south overwater rights-of-way. Buildings shall be set back in order to achieve the 70-foot view corridor.

[Note: A graphic similar to Figure 8 would be included here.]

Optional Modifications:

In addition to the two options presented above, the APC may consider the following potential modifications to these standards, in order to limit overwater development in the Urban Core area:

- **Modification 1: Limit building heights closer to the shoreline.**
 - This approach could be used to modify Option 2: Uniform Overwater Standards, in order to provide a higher level of view protection for all overwater parcels.
 - Example standard: Structures more than 100 feet from the shoreline have a maximum height of 28 feet, while structures within 100 feet of the shoreline are limited to either bank height or one story.
 - Note: Buildings in the adjacent Bridge Vista Overlay Zone may be constructed up to 35 feet throughout the Non-Limitation Areas. However, several public commenters have expressed a desire to establish stricter height limits for the Urban Core.
- **Modification 2: Allow full building height if building width is further limited.**
 - This is another potential approach for modifying Option 2, if there are concerns that the combination of building height and width in Option 2 allows too much overwater development.
 - Example standard:

- Base maximum height: 28 feet
- Base width/spacing standards: 60% of parcel width or 150', whichever is less; minimum 40' view corridor width
- Additional height option: up to 35 feet
- Additional height permitted if width limited to 40% of parcel width or 100', whichever is less; minimum 40' view corridor width

2. Physical Access

The Riverfront Vision Plan calls for “periodic physical access to the River” and includes design concepts for providing physical access to the river. These concepts were translated into Development Code amendments as part of the Civic Greenway Overlay Zone and Bridge Vista Overlay Zone implementation projects. The Development Code amendments address the following elements of physical access to the river.

- Design options
- Pier and walkway width
- Pier and walkway length
- Hours of access
- Maintenance responsibility

The project team recommends that the code provisions for physical access to the Columbia River that were established through the Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista implementation projects be applied to the Urban Core area as well. These are basic provisions that are applicable to various scales and intensities of development. The physical access code provisions from the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone are presented in Figure 9 through Figure 12, and in the following proposed Development Code text.

____. *STANDARDS FOR OVERWATER DEVELOPMENT.*

[...]

D. Access to the Columbia River.

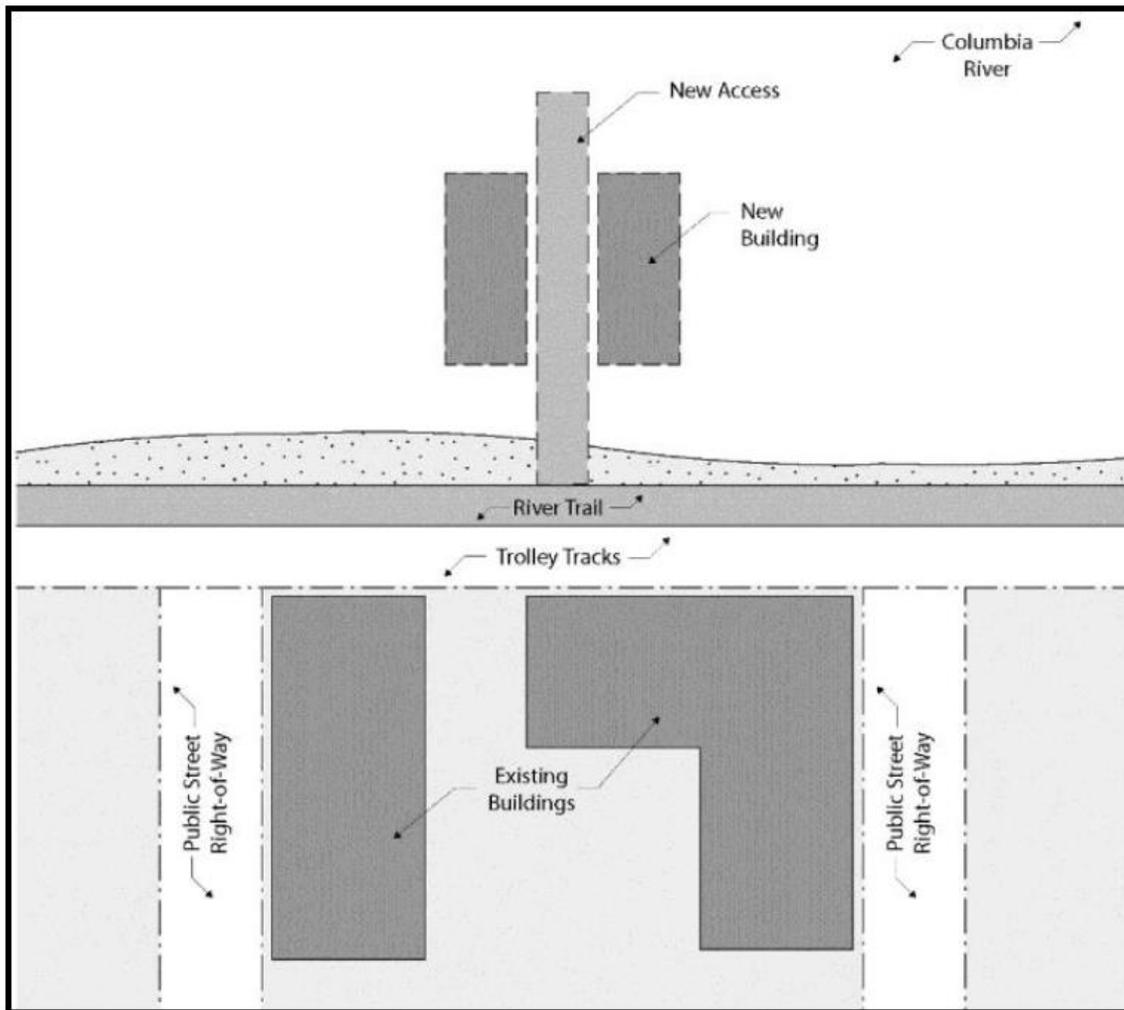
Access to the River shall be provided using piers and/or walkways as part of new construction and major renovations to structures constructed after the year 2019, where major renovation is defined as construction and alterations only to building exteriors valued at 75% or more of the assessed value of the existing structure.

Piers and walkways shall be constructed in accordance with Access Design A, Access Design B, or Access Design C, as shown and described below.

1. *Access Design A - "Mid-Site Access".*

This access design shall be provided in a public access easement provided through the middle of the development or structure.

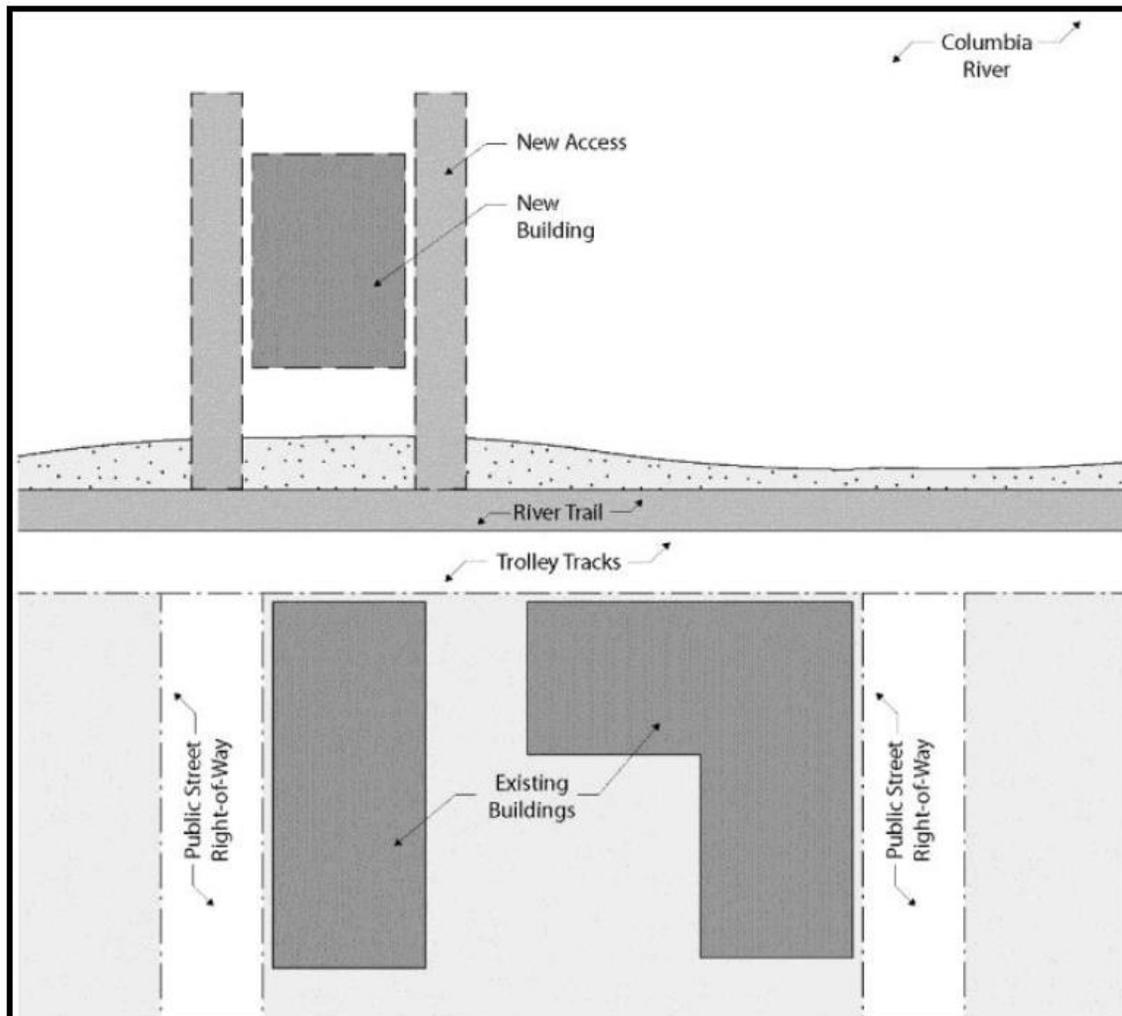
Figure 9: Access Design A



2. *Access Design B - "Viewpoints".*

This access design shall be provided through either existing right-of-way, right-of-way that is created and dedicated to the City, or a public access easement.

Figure 10: Access Design B



3. *Access Design C – “Trail Extension”.*

This access design serves as an extension of the River Trail and shall be provided through either existing right-of-way, right-of-way that is created and dedicated to the City, or easements for the piers on the east and west sides of the development. The boardwalk along the north side of the development shall be provided in a public access easement. [Note: Two possible scenarios are illustrated in the following figures for this option.]

Figure 11: Access Design C.1

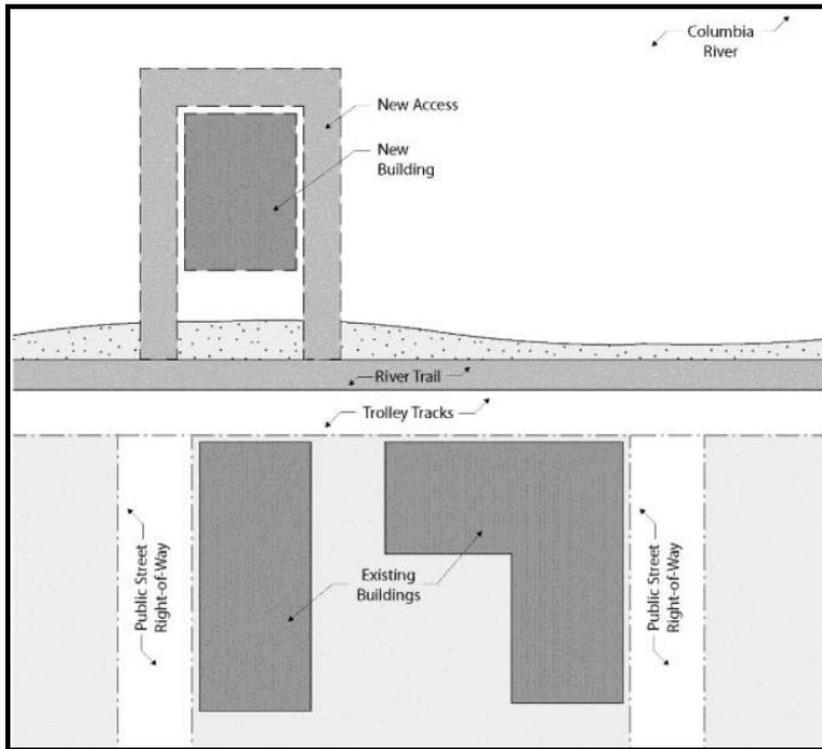
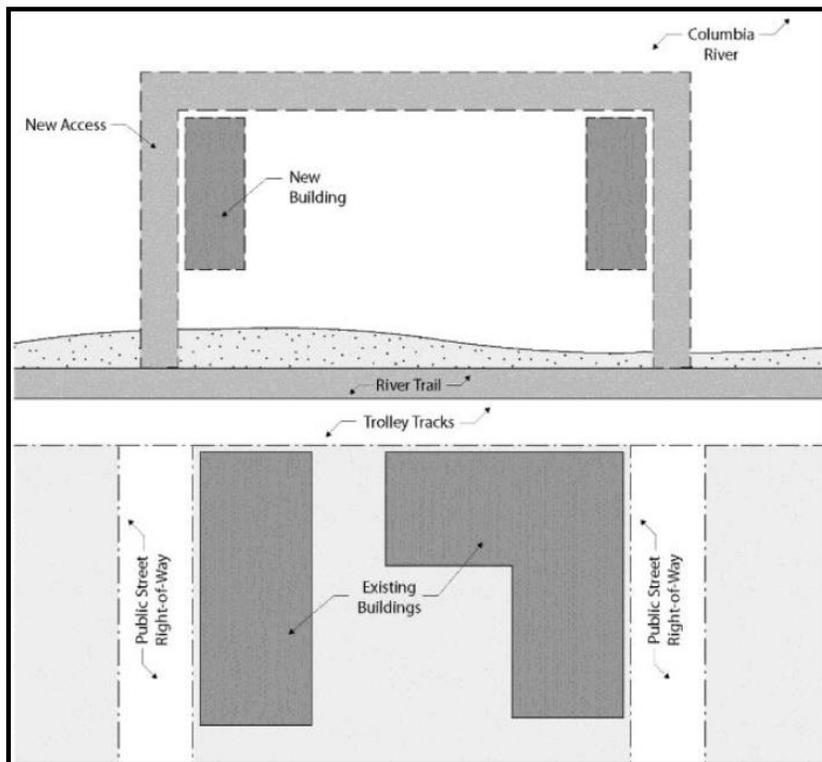


Figure 12: Access Design C.2



[Note: Figure 9 through Figure 12 are placeholder graphics that could be replaced in a subsequent draft of the memo, if needed.]

4. *Pier and Walkway Width.*

Minimum pier and walkway width is 10 feet if one side of the pier or walkway is developed with overwater structures. Minimum pier and walkway width is 14 feet if both sides of the pier or walkway are developed with overwater structures.

5. *Pier and Walkway Length.*

Piers and walkways shall extend beyond the north face of the overwater development a minimum length of 10 feet to ensure that the river is visible beyond the adjacent structure(s).

6. *Hours of Access.*

Access on overwater piers and walkways may be restricted during hours specified in City Code Section 5.926 to 5.928.

7. *Maintenance Responsibility.*

Responsibility for maintenance of the piers and walkway shall be established through a recorded maintenance agreement acceptable to the City.

C. VIEW-RELATED DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS (ON-LAND DEVELOPMENT)

This section relates to on-land development that affects views of the Columbia River, particularly from vantage points along the River Trail. Recommended code provisions will address objectives to “improve and celebrate the River Trail,” to “ensure an open feel and continued visual access to the river,” and to “create a sense of openness and preserve sunlight and views along the River Trail.” Code provisions associated with overwater development, recommended in the previous sections, will also contribute to meeting these objectives.

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies concepts for potential code provisions for protecting views and complementing the River Trail in the Urban Core area, such as setbacks and stepbacks from the River Trail and from public rights-of-way. In addition, the Plan also proposes ideas about trading building height for width (mass) in some instances, and setting maximum height limits on the order of one story above the base height. These view-related development standards for on-land development have been implemented in the Bridge Vista and Civic Greenway Overlay Zones and are addressed in the following sections.

1. Height

Existing height regulations in the Urban Core area are found in the base zones. As shown in Figure 2, on-land zoning in this area includes the C-2 (Tourist Commercial), C-3 (General Commercial), C-4 (Central Commercial), and S-2A (Tourist-oriented Shorelands) Zones. On-land zoning is largely C-4 and S-2A, with smaller areas of C-2 and C-3. Maximum height provisions for these zones are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Existing On-Land Height Regulations in the Urban Core Area

Zone	Maximum Height
C-2 Tourist Commercial	45'
C-3 General Commercial	45'
C-4 Central Commercial	45'
S-2A Tourist-oriented Shorelands	28' Except 45' above grade of adjacent shoreland between extended 15th-21st Street right-of-way

Existing height provisions can be modified in the Urban Core area to improve conditions for providing openness and views. Modifications can include requiring buildings to be stepped back along streets and the River Trail (see the Stepbacks section in this memorandum). This modification was made in the Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista areas; however, for the Urban Core the project team proposes requiring stepbacks above the first story rather than the second story. The project team also proposes a new provision that buildings near the River Trail have a lower height maximum than buildings farther south. The APC may also suggest other modifications to these standards to suit the conditions of the Urban Core, if appropriate. Potential Development Code language is presented below.

____. *STANDARDS FOR ON-LAND DEVELOPMENT.*

The following development standards apply to on-land development in the [Urban Core Overlay Zone]. In the event of a conflict between this Section and other Sections of the Astoria Development Code, this Section shall control.

A. *Height.*

Height standards apply to on-land development south of the River Trail / 50' wide railroad line property.

1. *Maximum building height within 100 feet of the River Trail is 28 feet.*

2. *Maximum building height in other areas is 45 feet.*
3. *Building stories above 15 feet or one story, whichever is less, must be stepped back from all building planes facing a street and/or the River Trail by least 10 feet in accordance with Section ____ [stepback section].*
4. *Exceptions to building height restrictions may be granted through provisions in Section 3.075.*

Optional Modifications:

1. No stepbacks required.
2. Stepbacks only required along the River Trail, not along streets.

2. Setbacks

Similar to building height, existing setback regulations for on-land development are found in the base zones. However, the base zones in the Urban Core area do not have setback requirements (aside from residential buffers), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Existing On-Land Setback Regulations in the Urban Core Area

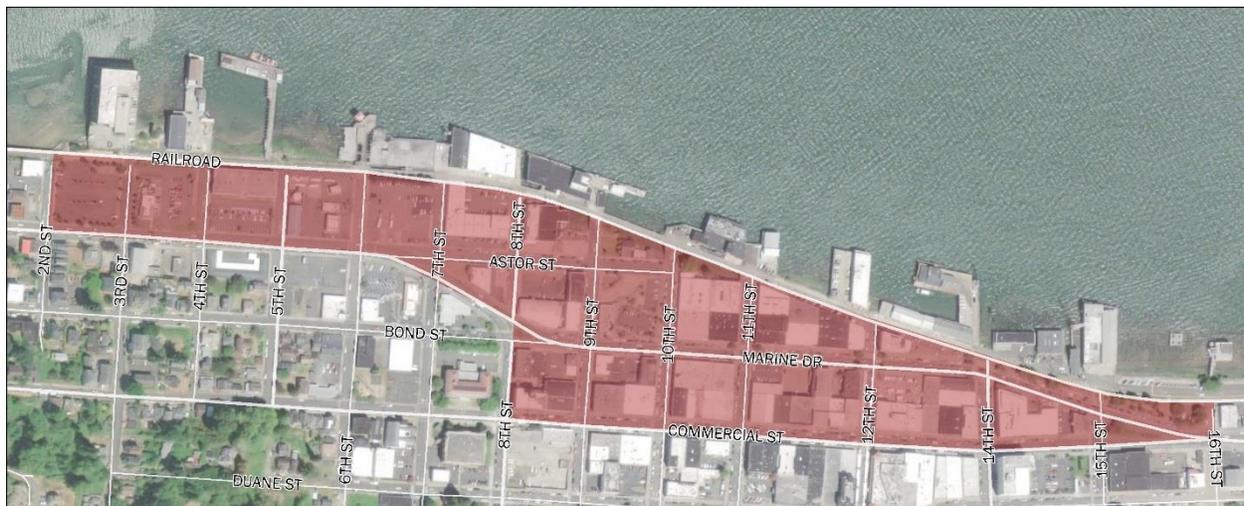
Zone	Setbacks
C-2	None Except 5-foot “buffer” when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone
C-3	None Except 5-foot “buffer” when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone
C-4	None Except 5-foot “buffer” when adjacent to a lot in a residential zone
S-2A	None

The Riverfront Vision Plan identifies setbacks as a strategy to preserve openness along the River Trail, and to establish view corridors along other rights-of-way in the Urban Core area. In the Bridge Vista Overlay Zone, minimum setbacks are required on both sides of the River Trail. Also, a minimum view corridor width is established for north-south rights-of-way between Marine Drive and the Columbia River, where building setbacks must be provided as part of achieving the minimum width.

The Vision Plan includes images and concepts of setbacks for on-land development along the River Trail in the Urban Core area. The Plan suggests that vegetation be provided “where possible in the form of planters or other landscaping along the River Trail or streets and within courtyards or plazas.” The Plan also suggests that “Benches, lighting, railing and public art should be considered along the River Trail.”

Setback provisions similar to the Bridge Vista Overlay are proposed for on-land development in the Urban Core area. In order to maintain consistency between the two areas along the River Trail, the same setbacks are proposed for the Urban Core as were establish for the Bridge Vista area. Similar minimum view corridor widths are also proposed for north-south rights-of-way from the River Trail to Marine Drive, and to Commercial Street between 8th and 16th Streets, as depicted in Figure 13. Setback standards along the River Trail should also establish amenities (landscaping, seating, etc.) to be provided within the setback. Proposed Development Code language is provided below. A caveat was added to restrict the standards’ applicability only to new development, so that existing downtown buildings do not become nonconforming to setback standards. The APC may suggest modifications to these standards to suit the conditions of the Urban Core, if appropriate.

Figure 13: Areas in the Urban Core Where North-South Setbacks Apply



_____ **STANDARDS FOR ON-LAND DEVELOPMENT.**

[...]

B. Setbacks.

Setback standards apply only to new development approved as of [July 2019] or additions to existing buildings. Setback standards apply to on-land development south of the River Trail / 50’ wide railroad line property, as well as to property lines abutting and parallel to the north side of the River Trail.

1. *A minimum view corridor width of 70 feet, centered on the right-of-way centerline, shall be provided on north-south rights-of-way in the areas shown in Figure ____ . Buildings shall be set back in order to achieve the 70-foot view corridor.*
2. *Setbacks Adjacent to the River Trail.*
 - a. *The minimum setback adjacent to the River Trail shall be 10 feet on the south side of the trail and 20 feet on the north side of the trail.*
 - b. *The setback area shall be landscaped or shall include a combination of landscaping and pedestrian-oriented amenities such as walkways, seating, and plaza space.*

3. Stepbacks

Stepbacks are a final code-related strategy identified in the Riverfront Vision Plan for protecting views and enhancing the River Trail. They are required in both the Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista Overlay Zones. The following definition of stepbacks was incorporated into the Development Code as part of those processes.

Building stepbacks are stepped or progressive recessions in a building's face as the building rises higher. Stepbacks are designed to reduce building mass to allow views around the building from above and/or from a distance, to allow more light down to the adjacent rights-of-way, and to improve the aesthetic experience of the building from adjacent rights-of-way.

Both the Civic Greenway and Bridge Vista Overlay Zones specify 10-foot building stepbacks along building faces that front streets or the River Trail.

Building stepback provisions similar to the Bridge Vista Overlay are proposed; however, for the Urban Core the project team proposes requiring stepbacks above the first building story rather than the second story, in order to be more in line with the Riverfront Vision Plan recommendations, and to address recent issues applying the Bridge Vista stepback standards. The team also suggests including balconies as part of the stepback so that they do not block views created by the stepback. The APC may also consider whether it is more appropriate for the level of density called for in on-land areas of the Urban Core not to require stepbacks along street rights-of-way. As such, two options for sample Development Code language are presented below for consideration by the APC: one that requires stepbacks along both the River Trail and along street frontages, and one that only requires stepbacks along the River Trail. Depending on which option is recommended, refinements to the stepback requirements associated with building height limits noted previously may be required.

Option 1: Stepbacks Along the River Trail and Streets

_____ STANDARDS FOR ON-LAND DEVELOPMENT.

[...]

C. Stepbacks.

Stepback standards apply to on-land development south of the River Trail / 50' wide railroad line property, as well as to property lines abutting and parallel to the north side of the River Trail.

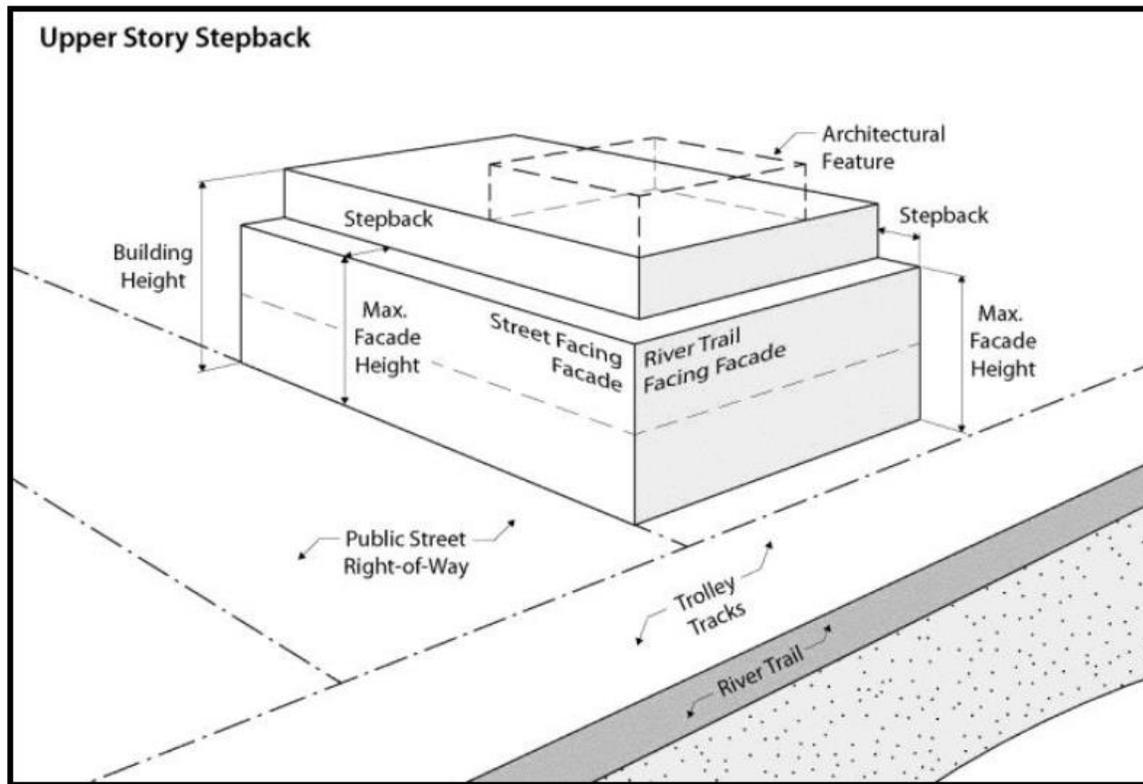
1. *Purpose.*

The purpose of a stepback is to allow for less obstructed views from above the building and to create a less imposing building scale as viewed from the street or parallel/adjacent trail. A stepback is also designed to allow more light down to the adjacent or fronting street, sidewalk, or trail.

2. *Additional Building Height.*

Where the height of a building or building addition is proposed to exceed 15 feet, at least that portion of the building exceeding 15 feet or one story, whichever is less, shall provide a stepback of at least 10 feet from the front plane of the proposed building or building addition that faces the street and/or the River Trail. Balconies shall not encroach into the required 10-foot stepback area; buildings must be stepped back further in order to accommodate balconies.

Figure 14: Building Stepbacks



[Note: Figure 14 is a placeholder graphic that will be replaced in a subsequent draft of the memo, to illustrate stepbacks above the first story.]

Option 2: Stepbacks Only Along the River Trail

_____ STANDARDS FOR ON-LAND DEVELOPMENT.

[...]

C. Stepbacks.

Stepback standards apply to development abutting the River Trail / 50' wide railroad line property.

1. *Purpose.*

The purpose of a stepback is to allow for less obstructed views from above the building and to create a less imposing building scale as viewed from the street or parallel/adjacent trail. A stepback is also designed to allow more light down to the adjacent or fronting street, sidewalk, or trail.

2. *Additional Building Height.*

Where the height of a building or building addition is proposed to exceed 15 feet, at least that portion of the building exceeding 15 feet or one story, whichever is less, shall provide a setback of at least 10 feet from the front plane of the proposed building or building addition that faces the River Trail. Balconies shall not encroach into the required 10-foot setback area; buildings must be stepped back further in order to accommodate balconies.

[Note: A graphic similar to Figure 14, but modified to only illustrate setbacks along the River Trail would be inserted here.]

D. APPLICABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The standards proposed in this memorandum could potentially be implemented through changes to base zones that are found in the Urban Core area. This could be done in a way that establishes the standards only for the Urban Core area so as not to apply to the zones citywide. However, as was determined in the Civic Greenway, Bridge Vista, and Neighborhood Greenway areas, it can be easier to organize and administer new and targeted development standards through an overlay zone. The overlay zone does not have to be extensive; rather it can include just a few sections of standards as needed.

The project team recommends that standards being considered for the Urban Core area be part of a new overlay zone for the Urban Core—tentatively labeled the “Urban Core Overlay Zone.” However, a final decision about how new proposed standards will be implemented in the Urban Core can be suspended until all three sets of potential amendments for the area are developed and initially vetted.