GOVERNOR TOM MCCALL'S
WILLAMETTE RIVER

PROPOSAL

Portland
Salem
Eugene

March 1967
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE ON THE WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY

March 1, 1967

TO THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT, TO THE HONORABLE SPEAKER, AND MEMBERS OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In my Inaugural Address I said: "On or about March 1, I will send you recommendations for implementing the Willamette Recreational Greenway, suggested by State Treasurer Straub, and endorsed by me."

Today I am proud to report that this dramatic project is not only possible, but is achievable with a minimum of legislation and with no General Fund requirement this session.

I commend the Task Force of specialists in outdoor recreation from private business, city government, county government, and the State Highway Department, for the outstanding work performed during this intensive two-month study. As a result of their recommendations, I have created, by Executive Order, the Willamette River Greenway Committee, and appointed its 11 members.

This now-functioning committee includes residents of every county bordering the Willamette, from Eugene to the Columbia. This policy and implementation group has the mission of working in coordination with the State Highway Commission in developing the plan for this exciting project and then carrying it out.

Oregon is indeed fortunate in securing citizens of the stature and dedication of members of these two groups. I think you will agree after scanning the report that this program has been soundly launched. Your support and assistance toward the full realization of this meaningful recreational development are invited and will be deeply appreciated.

Sincerely,

Governor

[Signature]
GOVERNOR'S WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY COMMITTEE

C. Howard Lane (Chairman), Multnomah County
Glenn Jackson, Oregon State Highway Commission
Morris Majors, County Commissioner, Yamhill County
Dr. Vern Miller, Mayor, Salem, Marion County

PUBLIC MEMBERS

Dr. Karl Onthank, Lane County
Wade Newbegin, Multnomah County
Wilfred Jossy, Clackamas County
James Goode, Linn County
Mrs. Fred Burgess, Benton County
James Mount, Clackamas County
Glen Hardman, Polk County

WILLAMETTE RIVER GREENWAY TASK FORCE

Charles S. Collins (Chairman), Douglas County
Laurance V. Espey, Pacific Power & Light Company, Medford
Paul R. Beistel, Lane County
Mervyn L. Filipponi, Oregon State University
Tony N. Kom, University of Oregon
Orval Etter (Counsel), Eugene
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND DIRECTED that the Governor's Willamette River Greenway Committee is created for the purpose of developing a comprehensive plan for preservation, public access, use and permanent recreation enjoyment of the Willamette River corridor from Dexter Reservoir to the Columbia River. The Committee shall submit reports and recommendations to the Governor at his request.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DIRECTED that the membership of the Committee shall include:

★ Six citizen members;

★ The chairman of the State Highway Commission;

★ A county official from a county bordering the Willamette River, to be recommended by the Association of Oregon Counties;

★ A city official from a city bordering the Willamette River, to be recommended by the League of Oregon Cities;

★ Such other members as might be required, in the judgment of the Governor, to give representation to, and to gain cooperation among, varied interests along the River.

The Governor shall designate the chairman of the committee. The members appointed by the Governor shall serve at his pleasure. The members of the committee shall receive no compensation for their services, but are entitled to reimbursement for their actual and necessary travel and other expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Members shall meet at the call of the chairman.
IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DIRECTED that the committee shall recommend the boundaries for the Willamette River Greenway, legislation and appropriations needed to carry out the purposes of the committee, and priorities and means for acquisition of undeveloped lands and easements through lands. These activities of the committee shall be carried out in consultation with, and in cooperation with, local, state, and federal government agencies, including recommendations for the apportionment of financial responsibility.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DIRECTED that the State Highway Commission shall administer, implement, and carry out the policies, plans and programs of the committee, or as provided by law.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DIRECTED that the necessary secretarial and staff services for the committee shall be performed by the Parks and Recreation Division of the State Highway Department. Expenses of the committee shall be paid by the Parks and Recreation Division, subject to the availability of funds.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED AND DIRECTED that the Willamette River Greenway Committee shall be dissolved and discontinued on February 3, 1969.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my name and caused to be affixed the great seal of the State of Oregon. Done at Salem, the capital, this 2nd day of February, A.D., 1967.

Governor

By the Governor:

Secretary of State
Objectives of the Governor's Willamette River Greenway Committee:

The basic objective is the preservation and enhancement of the river's natural environment while at the same time developing the widest possible recreational opportunities in a manner that injures no one and benefits all.

Through imaginative yet wise planning and with the cooperation of both citizenry and government, this can be done without harm to the legitimate needs of industry or agriculture, or to local and private interests.

We must be astute enough to see that preservation is far easier than correction, perceptive enough to realize that in the Willamette River we still have more to preserve than to correct, and bold enough to act accordingly.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations by Task Force:

- The project is feasible.

- Almost all existing land uses along the river are compatible with the Greenway concept. A major share of the prime lands necessary for the project are marginal lands subject to varying degrees of flooding.

- Local governments along the river have for many years not only recognized the need for preservation of the river banks for public enjoyment, but many have made considerable progress and are now planning for or pursuing active programs of river bank preservation.

- The program should be carried out by the units of local government along the river. The Greenway should not be exclusively a state project.
• Local government will need financial assistance to secure necessary property rights. Utilizing state and federal grants-in-aid, local governmental units would only need to pay 25-50% of the property rights costs.

• To co-ordinate individual local efforts, a central agency (the State Highway Commission) should co-ordinate and supervise the administration of the program.

• An effective Greenway program will require a system of co-ordinated planning by a multitude of existing local, state, and federal agencies. This needed co-ordination can be achieved by the Governor's Greenway Committee in conjunction with the Highway Commission.

• The State Highway Commission and the Governor's Willamette River Greenway Committee will work in a co-ordinated fashion in determining distribution of funds for the implementation of this project.

• Existing statutes affecting both state and local agencies are generally sufficient to enable existing agencies to carry out the program.

• An effective Greenway program will require broad public support. The development of this support will be a central purpose of the Governor's Committee.

• Through the use of scenic easements, gifts, possible tax offsets for gifts or easements, etc., major progress can be made without excessive withdrawal of private lands from the tax rolls.
The Proposed Greenway Project WILL NOT:

- Be a massive state program. It is a co-ordinated state planning and assistance program to enable the numerous units of local government to implement their existing and planned projects.

- Eliminate existing land uses along the river. Much of the proposed greenway area consists of marginal flood lands, suitable only for seasonal agricultural use. It is proposed to continue these uses, and where feasible, protect scenic values along the river and provide public access.

- Disrupt existing land uses such as residential, commercial, or agricultural. In the case of the proposed trail system it is recognized that trails will be feasible along undeveloped sections of the river, and where necessary, circumvent existing land uses where public use would represent an infringement on existing private rights. It is not proposed to run a public trail in front of the many permanent and summer homes which now front on the river.

- Remove vast acreages from the tax rolls. Many areas along the river are already in public ownership and only in special situations, will additional lands be purchased in fee title.
The Illustrative Plan:

An illustrative plan was prepared as a means of testing the feasibility of the concept. Utilizing aerial photographs, the task force delineated areas proposed for access points, recreational areas, areas suitable for preservation of scenic river values, trails, etc. Based on these judgments, a preliminary analysis of costs was prepared for lands and rights in land which totaled $15,600,000, with as much as half of this sum perhaps available from federal grant-in-aid programs. It is recognized that the illustrative plan represents only a general or preliminary proposal and will no doubt be subject to considerable change as the program gets under way. The State Highway Commission has agreed to finance both the administration and the grants-in-aid to local government for the first biennium up to an amount to not exceed one million dollars.

A Six-Point Program for Public Enjoyment:

1. A River Camp System

   A system of river recreation camps where the boater may disembark and enjoy camping, picnicking, and other recreational experiences. River recreation camps would be situated at convenient intervals along the entire length of the river, and some would be accessible only from the river or from trails.

2. A River Access System

   River recreation areas and boat-launching sites to permit non-boaters to picnic and enjoy other recreational pursuits along the river and to permit boaters maximum opportunity to launch and retrieve their craft. These sites would vary in size from large multipurpose recreation areas to smaller sites designed primarily for boat launching.

3. A Recreation Trail System

   Recreation trails would be developed along the river to permit hiking, cycling, and riding activities. At places the trail will diverge
from the river bank to follow old river channels or other interesting landscape features, or on roadways or subdivision streets where it will be necessary to circumvent existing developments. Within and imme- diately adjacent to existing developments, recreation trails could be developed to tie in with other trails and parkways.

4. A Scenic Drive System

A system of existing parkways and public roads would be identified which extend along portions of the Willamette River and from which a scenic view of the river may be enjoyed on pleasure drives. Protective measures would be undertaken to preserve the scenic values of the roadways.

5. A Recreation Tract System

Acquisition of recreation tracts of varying sizes for the following purposes is proposed:

a. Sites for multipurpose regional parks in urban and rural areas for intensive development for a wide range of recreational and historical attractions.

b. Scenic areas such as the 7000-acre Forest Park in northwest Portland to preserve a scenic hillside behind the river and to provide dramatic viewpoints of the riverscape.

c. Large tracts of undeveloped lands in the river’s flood plain which could be retained in a natural state for wildlife reserva- tions or for future recreational developments.

6. A Scenic Conservation Easement System

Easements would provide for the protection of scenic qualities along the river bank in numerous places where land is not needed for recreational development, but protection of its visual qualities is nec- essary. This would permit the continuance of other compatible uses without diminishing the greenway concept.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Governor and the Advisory Committee wish to gratefully acknowledge the special assistance provided by the University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Pacific Power & Light, Douglas County, Lane County, State Highway Commission, The Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the numerous county extension agents, as well as the many public officials from the cities and counties along the river, for their full cooperation and assistance in the preparation of the Task Force Report.

The future success of the Willamette River Greenway project will depend on the continued support of all groups, both public and private in the Willamette Valley.

Governor McCall and the Committee respectfully request that all public or private agencies whose decisions might affect the furtherance of this program, co-ordinate their plans with the Willamette River Greenway Committee.