



**Eugene Mayor's Office**  
Lucy Vinis

May 7, 2021

Co-Chairs Senator Girod and Representative Holvey  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Capital Construction Subcommittee  
Oregon Legislature  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Good afternoon Co chairs Holvey and Girod, and members of the committee, for the record, I am Lucy Vinis, Mayor of Eugene, here today speaking on behalf of the City of Eugene.

A transformation is underway on Eugene's Downtown Riverfront, fulfilling a long-held goal of turning a vacant, contaminated brownfield riverfront property into a vibrant, active, and accessible riverfront district and community destination. The renovation of this former 16-acre utility operations hub will create new opportunities for Eugene –everything from affordable housing to simply enjoying the views of the Willamette River in the new world-class riverfront park and plaza.

As the prospectus that has been shared with you showcases, this project has strong connection to economic development efforts, environmental remediation and habitat improvement, and a celebration of our local culture and homage to our history.

The associated new development will address an important need for housing in Eugene's downtown. We are in the process of working with a developer to build between 400 and 1200 market rate units and at least 75 units of affordable housing. Additionally, the site will include commercial businesses, restaurants, and a lively mixed-use center in the adaptively re-purposed historical Steam Plant.

The project that I am here to speak with you today is the Riverfront Park and Plaza, which is nestled along the banks of the Willamette River and will be the heart of the greater riverfront development. Broad river views, new bicycle and pedestrian paths, seating and overlooks highlight the park design. Integrated art pieces will in turn help tell the stories about the ecology, industry and community both past and present.

We are very proud of the work acknowledging the diverse history of Eugene by naming the three new streets for this development to honor pioneering African Americans and the native Kalapuya tribe. Skin in the Game is always a requirement for a strong viable project. As you can see on the back page of the prospectus, the City of Eugene has secured \$18.5 million dollars so far from local sources, with an identified gap of \$5 million. Which is why we are seeking \$5 million in lottery bond funding from the legislature to complete the second phase of this project.

Currently, we are full steam ahead on phase 1 of the project. Site prep work began in the summer of 2019 and in early 2020 we planted over 24,000 trees, bulbs, and shrubs along the riverbank. Street and park development construction started in the spring of 2020 and Phase 1 of the park project will be substantially complete by mid-summer this year.

Importantly, this project has helped employ hundreds of people locally and regionally throughout the COVID pandemic, whether they are on-site construction workers, on-site inspectors, consultant team members, or fabrication specialists. We can assure the continuation of this important role the Riverfront Park has played in our economy as we move into the design and construction of phase 2, expected for completion in 2024.

This area will also play host to the community festival for the upcoming 2022 World Championships, where we will be able to showcase the beauty of our river, the vision of our future, and the connection to our downtown and the University of Oregon.

Thank you for your time. Eugene asks for your support on this once in a lifetime redevelopment opportunity that will link our downtown to the Willamette River and in the process provide work, live, and play opportunities for our growing community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lucy Vinis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Lucy" on top and "Vinis" below it, both starting with a capital letter.

Lucy Vinis, Mayor

## Eugene's 2022 Legacy

A new world-class Hayward Field will host the competition, but away from the track, the Downtown Riverfront will host an interactive festival for visiting fans and local community members. The festival will be an opportunity to showcase our state, local innovative industries and businesses, and our diverse and talented local arts communities to the world. With the thousands of visitors to Eugene, the Riverfront Park is sure to be a centerpiece of the festival and a community legacy beyond 2022.



## Project Status

The first phase of park development is substantially complete and projected to open in July 2021. This includes ecological restoration along the river bank, paths, furniture, new landscapes and overlooks.

Phase 2 will include a central plaza with a fully inclusive play area, interactive water feature, and a community event space. Phase 2 construction is anticipated to begin in 2022.

## Capital Funding Plan

With \$18.5 million secured, the City of Eugene is looking to close the final gap of \$5 million through State of Oregon funding.

<b>City of Eugene Urban Renewal Agency</b>	\$12 million
<b>City of Eugene Capital Funding</b>	\$6 million
<b>City of Eugene Parks and Recreation Bond</b>	\$.5 million
<b>Remaining Need</b>	\$5 million
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$23.5 million

# Eugene's Riverfront Park Reconnecting to the River

River path and overlook



For more information contact:

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[eugene-or.gov/riverfrontpark](http://eugene-or.gov/riverfrontpark)

*Connecting:*

**Economic Opportunities**

**Environmental Corridors**

**Local Culture**

**Eugene's 2022 Legacy**

A transformation is underway on Eugene's riverfront, fulfilling a long-held goal of turning a former utility operations yard and brownfield site into a vibrant, active, and accessible riverfront park and neighborhood that will connect downtown to the river and serve as a regional destination.



# The Downtown Riverfront Park Vision

Having broke ground in 2020, the Downtown Riverfront Park sits along the bank of the Willamette River and in the heart of Eugene's greater riverfront development project. The design concept calls for a 4-acre riverfront park that's fundamentally urban in character balanced by riverbank and habitat enhancements. Broad river views, new bicycle and pedestrian paths, seating, and overlooks highlight the park's design, which will be complemented by a new mixture of uses on the adjacent redevelopment site. Integrated art pieces will share stories about the land, industry, and diverse community both past and present, creating a park experience that's truly all about Eugene.



## Connecting: Economic Opportunities

The Riverfront Park will anchor the new Downtown Riverfront—a 16-acre development that addresses an important need for housing in downtown and links together several economic and educational hubs. With **hundreds of market-rate and affordable housing options, commercial businesses, restaurants, and a lively mixed-use center** in the planned Steam Plant redevelopment, the new park and neighborhood will bring residents and daytime workers to the edge of downtown and create demand for retail goods and services. By creating a **vibrant mixed-use neighborhood** that is centrally located and physically connects the University of Oregon to Eugene's downtown, Eugene is strengthening our region's ability to build an **economy that will prosper throughout the 21st century**.

Construction on the first buildings is projected to start in early 2022.

## Connecting: Environmental Corridors

In the process of turning this neglected industrial land into an active, urban park, the City of Eugene has undertaken significant riverbank and habitat work to enhance one of our proudest assets. Ecological restoration work has included **remediation of contaminated soil**, removal of invasive species and replanting of more than 24,000 native plants along the riverbank.

In addition to creating an uninterrupted habitat corridor, this site brings much needed **recreation access to the river** in the form of **accessible viewing areas and personal paddle craft access**. This is part of a broader effort to improve recreational access to 12 miles of pathway along the Willamette River such as boating, fishing, wading and viewing for a community that desires a stronger relationship to its river.

## Connecting: Local Culture

During the design process, the City clearly heard from the community how important it is that the new Riverfront Park ensures **accessibility for all** and **reflects the area's diverse history**. Shoreline enhancements and new amenities will significantly improve public access for the estimated **1,000-2,000 daily visitors** who wish to enjoy the Willamette River—whether coming from downtown or nearby neighborhoods. The Park will include a **fully-inclusive play area with an interactive water feature** and have **programmable space for events and celebrations year-round**. Street names and integrated art pieces will **honor Native American and African American communities** in the Riverfront Development, like the recently adopted "Annie Mims Lane, Wiley Griffon Way, and Nak-nak Avenue."



Downtown Riverfront mixed use development



Willamette River recreation



Concept for central plaza, phase 2 park construction