Urban Form (Comp Plan Chapter 3)

Urban Form Goals

# **A city designed for people**

Portland’s built environment is designed to serve the needs and aspirations of all Portlanders, promoting prosperity, health, equity, and resiliency. New development, redevelopment, and public investments reduce disparities and encourage social interaction to create a healthy connected city. (CP Goal 3.A)

# **A climate and hazard resilient urban form**

Portland’s compact urban form, sustainable building development practices, green infrastructure, and active transportation system reduce carbon emissions, reduce natural hazard risks and impacts, and improve resilience to the effects of climate change. (CP Goal 3.B)

# **Focused growth**

Household and employment growth is focused in the Central City and other centers, corridors, and transit station areas, creating compact urban development in areas with a high level of service and amenities, while allowing the relative stability of lower-density single-family residential areas. (CP Goal 3.C)

# A system of centers and corridors

Portland’s interconnected system of centers and corridors provides diverse housing options and employment opportunities, robust multimodal transportation connections, access to local services and amenities, and supports low-carbon complete, healthy, and equitable communities.(CP Goal 3.D)

# Connected public realm and open spaces

A network of parks, streets, City Greenways, and other public spaces supports community interaction; connects neighborhoods, districts, and destinations; and improves air, water, land quality, and environmental health.(CP Goal 3.E)

Urban Form Policies

# Citywide Design and Development Policies

**All ages and abilities**: Strive for a built environment that provides a safe, healthful, and attractive environment for people of all ages and abilities. (CP Policy 3.4)

# Centers Policies

**Investments in centers:** Encourage public and private investment in infrastructure, economic development, and community services in centers to ensure that all centers will support the populations they serve. (CP Policy 3.15)

**Accessibility:** Design centers to be compact, safe, attractive, and accessible places, where the street environment makes access by transit, walking, biking, and mobility devices such as wheelchairs, safe and attractive for people of all ages and abilities. (CP Policy 3.18)

**Center connections:** Connect centers to each other and to other key local and regional destinations, such as schools, parks, and employment areas, by pedestrian trails and sidewalks, bicycle sharing, bicycle routes, frequent and convenient transit, and electric vehicle charging stations. Prepare and adopt future street plans for centers that currently have poor street connectivity, especially where large commercial parcels are planned to receive significant additional housing density. (CP Policy 3.19)

**Green infrastructure in centers:** Integrate nature and green infrastructure into centers and enhance public views and connections to the surrounding natural features. (CP Policy 3.20)

# Central City Policies

**Transportation hub:** Enhance the Central City as the region’s multimodal transportation hub and optimize regional access as well as the movement of people and goods among key destinations. (CP Policy 3.25)

# Gateway Regional Center Policies

**Transportation:** Enhance Gateway’s role as a regional high-capacity transit hub that serves as an anchor for East Portland’s multimodal transportation system. (CP Policy 3.29)

# Town Centers Policies

**Transportation:** Improve Town Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that optimize access from the broad area of the city they serve and are linked to the region’s high-capacity transit system. (CP Policy 3.33)

# Neighborhood Centers Policies

**Transportation:** Design Neighborhood Centers as multimodal transportation hubs that are served by frequent-service transit and optimize pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods. (CP Policy 3.37)

# Inner Ring Districts Policies

**Corridors:** Guide growth in corridors to transition to mid-rise scale close to the Central City, especially along Civic Corridors. (CP Policy 3.40)

**Active transportation:** Enhance the role of the Inner Ring Districts’ extensive transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks in conjunction with land uses that optimize the ability for more people to utilize this network. Improve the safety of pedestrian and bike connections to the Central City. Strengthen transit connections between the Inner Ring Districts and to the Central City. (CP Policy 3.43)

# Corridors Policies

**Growth and mobility:** Coordinate transportation and land use strategies along corridors to accommodate growth and mobility needs for people of all ages and abilities. (CP Policy 3.44)

**Connections:** Improve corridors as multimodal connections providing transit, pedestrian, bicycle, and motor vehicle access and that serve the freight needs of centers and neighborhood business districts. (CP Policy 3.45)

**Design:** Encourage street design that balances the important transportation functions of corridors with their roles as the setting for commercial activity and residential living. (CP Policy 3.46)

**Green infrastructure in corridors:** Enhance corridors with distinctive green infrastructure, including landscaped stormwater facilities, extensive tree plantings, and other landscaping that both provide environmental function and contribute to a quality pedestrian environment. (CP Policy 3.47)

# Civic Corridors Policies

**Integrated land use and mobility:** Enhance Civic Corridors as distinctive places that are models of ecological urban design, with transit-supportive densities of housing and employment, prominent street trees and other green features, and high-quality transit service and pedestrian and bicycle facilities. (CP Policy 3.48)

**Design great places:** Improve public streets and sidewalks along Civic Corridors to support the vitality of business districts, create distinctive places, provide a safe, healthy, and attractive pedestrian environment, and contribute to quality living environments for residents. (CP Policy 3.49)

**Mobility corridors:** Improve Civic Corridors as key mobility corridors of citywide importance that accommodate all modes of transportation within their right-of-way or on nearby parallel routes. (CP Policy 3.50)

**Freight:** Maintain freight mobility and access on Civic Corridors that are also Major or Priority Truck Streets. (CP Policy 3.51)

# Neighborhood Corridors Policies

**Neighborhood Corridors:** Enhance Neighborhood Corridors as important places that support vibrant neighborhood business districts with quality multi-family housing, while providing transportation connections that link neighborhoods. (CP Policy 3.52)

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# Transit Station Area Policies

**Transit-oriented development:** Encourage transit-oriented development and transit-supportive concentrations of housing and jobs, and multimodal connections at and adjacent to high-capacity transit stations. (CP Policy 3.53)

**Community connections:** Integrate transit stations into surrounding communities and enhance pedestrian and bicycle facilities (including bike sharing) to provide safe and accessible connections to key destinations beyond the station area. (CP Policy 3.54)

**Transit station area safety:** Design transit areas to improve pedestrian, bicycle, and personal safety. (CP Policy 3.55)

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# CIty Greenways Policies

**Connections:** Create a network of distinctive and attractive City Greenways that link centers, parks, schools, rivers, natural areas, and other key community destinations. (CP Policy 3.60)

**Integrated system:** Create an integrated City Greenways system that includes regional trails through natural areas and along Portland’s rivers, connected to neighborhood greenways, and heritage parkways. (CP Policy 3.61)

**Multiple benefits:** Design City Greenways that provide multiple benefits that contribute to Portland’s pedestrian, bicycle, green infrastructure, and parks and open space systems. (CP Policy 3.62)

**Design:** Use design options such as distinctive street design, motor vehicle diversion, landscaping, tree plantings, scenic views, and other appropriate design options, to create City Greenways that extend the experience of open spaces and nature into neighborhoods, while improving stormwater management and calming traffic. (CP Policy 3.63)

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# Employment Areas Policies

**Regional Truck Corridors:** Enhance designated streets to accommodate forecast freight growth and support intensified industrial use in nearby freight districts. See Figure 3-7 — Employment Areas. Designated regional truckways and priority truck streets (Transportation System Plan classifications are shown to illustrate this network). (CP Policy 3.68)

Pattern Areas

Portland has five distinct Pattern Areas. The development patterns and characteristics of these areas are influenced by the natural landscape and how and when these parts of the city were developed.

1. **Rivers**
2. **Central City**
3. **Inner Neighborhoods**
4. **Western Neighborhoods**
5. **Eastern Neighborhoods**

Each Pattern Area has unique physical, social, cultural, and environmental qualities that differentiate them and create their sense of place. To maintain and enhance the positive qualities and sense of place in each pattern area, it is desirable to have policies and regulations that respond to each area’s unique natural and built assets.

The following policies identify key positive characteristics of each of Portland’s Pattern Areas that are relevant to decisions related to future development in these areas. Area and neighborhood plans should be consulted for more detailed guidance on design priorities in different parts of the city.

# Rivers Pattern Area Policies

**River transportation:** Recognize and enhance the roles of the Willamette and Columbia rivers as part of Portland’s historic, current, and future transportation infrastructure, including for freight, commerce, commuting, and other public and private transportation functions. (CP Policy 3.70)

**Recreation:** Improve conditions along and within the Willamette and Columbia rivers to accommodate a diverse mix of recreational users and activities. Designate and invest in strategically‐located sites along the length of Portland’s riverfronts for passive or active recreation activities that are compatible with nearby land uses, historically and culturally important sites, significant habitat areas, restoration sites, and native fish and wildlife usage. (CP Policy 3.71)

**Industry and port facilities:** Enhance the regionally significant economic infrastructure that includes Oregon’s largest seaport and largest airport, unique multimodal freight, rail, and harbor access; the region’s critical energy hub; and proximity to anchor manufacturing and   
distribution facilities. (CP Policy 3.72)

**Commercial activities:** Enhance the roles of the Willamette and Columbia rivers in supporting local and regional business and commerce, including commercial fishing, tourism, recreation, and leisure. (CP Policy 3.74)

**River access:** Enhance and complete Portland’s system of river access points and riverside trails, including the Willamette Greenway Trail, and strengthen active transportation connections between neighborhoods and the rivers. (CP Policy 3.76)

**River management and coordination:** Coordinate with federal, state, regional, special districts, and other agencies to address issues of mutual interest and concern, including economic development, recreation, water transportation, flood and floodplain management and protection, regulatory compliance, permitting, emergency management, endangered species recovery, climate change preparation, Portland Harbor Superfund, brownfield cleanup, and habitat restoration. (CP Policy 3.77)

**Columbia River:** Enhance the role of the Columbia River for river dependent industry, fish and wildlife habitat, subsistence and commercial fisheries, floating‐ and land‐based neighborhoods, recreational uses, and water transportation. (CP Policy 3.78)

**Willamette River Central Reach:** Enhance the role of the Willamette River Central Reach as the Central City and region’s primary riverfront destination for recreation, history and culture, emergency response, water transportation, and as habitat for fish and wildlife. (CP Policy 3.80)

**Willamette River Greenway:** Maintain multi-objective plans and regulations to guide development, infrastructure investments, and natural resource protection and enhancement within and along the Willamette Greenway. (CP Policy 3.82)

# Central City Pattern Area Policies

**Central City pedestrian system:** Maintain and expand the Central City’s highly interconnected pedestrian system.(CP Policy 3.85)

**Central City bicycle system:** Expand and improve the Central City’s bicycle system.(CP Policy 3.86)

# Inner Neighborhoods Pattern Area Policies

**Inner Neighborhoods main streets:** Maintain and enhance the Streetcar Era pattern of street-oriented buildings along Civic and Neighborhood corridors. (CP Policy 3.87)

**Inner Neighborhoods street patterns:** Preserve the area’s urban fabric of compact blocks and its highly interconnected grid of streets. (CP Policy 3.88)

**Inner Neighborhoods active transportation:** Use the extensive street, sidewalk, and bikeway system and multiple connections to the Central City as a key part of Portland’s active transportation system. (CP Policy 3.90)

**Inner Neighborhoods residential areas:** Continue the patterns of small, connected blocks, regular lot patterns, and streets lined by planting strips and street trees in Inner Neighborhood residential areas. (CP Policy 3.91)

**a:** Support development of, access to, and service enhancement for North-South transit. (CP Policy 3.91.a)

**b:** Promote and guide the implementation of alley improvements that result in alleys that are safe, well maintained, and an asset for the community. (CP Policy 3.91.b)

# Eastern Neighborhoods Pattern Area Policies

**Eastern Neighborhoods street, block, and lot pattern:** Guide the evolving street and block system in the Eastern Neighborhoods in ways that build on positive aspects of the area’s large blocks, such as opportunities to continue mid-block open space patterns and create new connections through blocks that make it easier to access community destinations. (CP Policy 3.92)

**Eastern Neighborhoods site development:** Require that land be aggregated into larger sites before land divisions and other redevelopment occurs. Require site plans which advance design and street connectivity goals. (CP Policy 3.93)

**Eastern Neighborhoods trees and natural features:** Encourage development and right-of-way design that preserves and incorporates Douglas fir trees and groves, and that protects the area’s streams, forests, wetlands, steep slopes, and buttes. (CP Policy 3.94)

**Eastern Neighborhoods corridor landscaping:** Encourage landscaped building setbacks along residential corridors on major streets. (CP Policy 3.96)

**Eastern Neighborhoods active transportation:** Enhance access to centers, employment areas, and other community destinations in Eastern Neighborhoods by ensuring that corridors have safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities and creating additional secondary connections that provide low-stress pedestrian and bicycle access. (CP Policy 3.97)

**a:** Prioritize new sidewalk connections.Prioritize adding sidewalks where there are none over expanding/ widening existing connections. (CP Policy 3.97.a)

**b:** Support development of, access to, and service enhancement for North-South transit. (CP Policy 3.97.b)

# Western Neighborhoods Pattern Area Policies

**Western Neighborhoods active transportation:** Provide safe and accessible pedestrian and bicycle connections, as well as off-street trail connections, to and from residential neighborhoods. (CP Policy 3.99)

**Western Neighborhoods trails:** Develop pedestrian-oriented connections and enhance the Western Neighborhoods’ distinctive system of trails to increase safety, expand mobility, access to nature, and active living opportunities in the area. (CP Policy 3.102)

**a:** Explore and emphasize Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies and tools, that function in spite of unique topographic conditions of the West Hills, to provide effective options for commuters while reducing carbon emissions, improving neighborhood livability and cycling safety, and protecting important natural resources. (CP Policy 3.102.a)

**b:** Protect the ecological quality and function of natural Forest Park’s natural resources in the design and development of transportation projects in or near the park and avoid, minimize, then mitigate adverse impacts to wildlife, habitat, and riparian corridors. (CP Policy 3.102.b)

**c:** Primarily focus sidewalk and bicycle route improvements in (and in close proximity to) the designated Centers and Corridors of the Comp Plan. (CP Policy 3.102.c)

**d**: Fill gaps in important access connections, including exploring traditional ROW acquisition and partnerships with other City bureaus. (CP Policy 3.102.d)

**e**: Improve accessibility/create parallel routes in some cases (for motor vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, and/or both). Explore what existing facilities and connections most merit upgrades or secondary accessible routes. (CP Policy 3.102.e)