

# REVITALIZE NEWBERG RIVERFRONT

WILLAMETTE RIVER WATERFRONT CONCEPT PLANS - JANUARY 2017





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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City of Newberg  
414 First Street  
Newberg, OR 97132

City Council  
Mr. Bob Andrews, Mayor (His Worship)

Community Development & Planning  
Jessica Pelz, Associate Planner

Public Works & Engineering  
Jason Wuertz, Senior Engineer  
Keith McKinnon, GIS Analyst

Planning Commission  
PC Members 2015-16



Faculty of Environmental Design  
Professional Faculties Building, Room: 2182  
University of Calgary  
2500 University Drive NW  
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4

Regional Planning Studio  
Dr. H. Harker, Instructor  
Jarryd Csuti, MPlan Student  
Hemontika Das, MPlan Student  
Layne French, MPlan Student  
Rachel Greene MPlan Student  
Nida Hassan, MPlan Student  
Adetoun Osuntoun, MPlan Student  
Madison Smith, MPlan Student  
Aaron Thibeault, MPlan Student  
Hassan Zuberi, MPlan Student  
Crystal Jackson, MPlan Student  
Aaron Bombback, MPlan Student

Cover Image by: Aaron Bombback (Faculty of Environmental Design)

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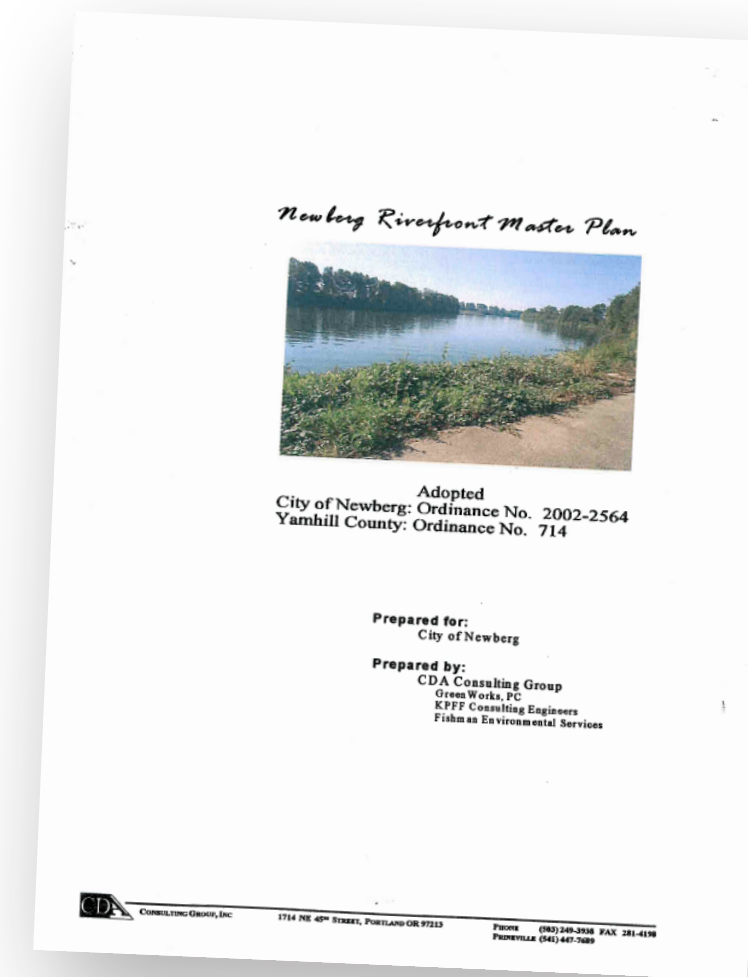


# PART 1: INTRODUCTION

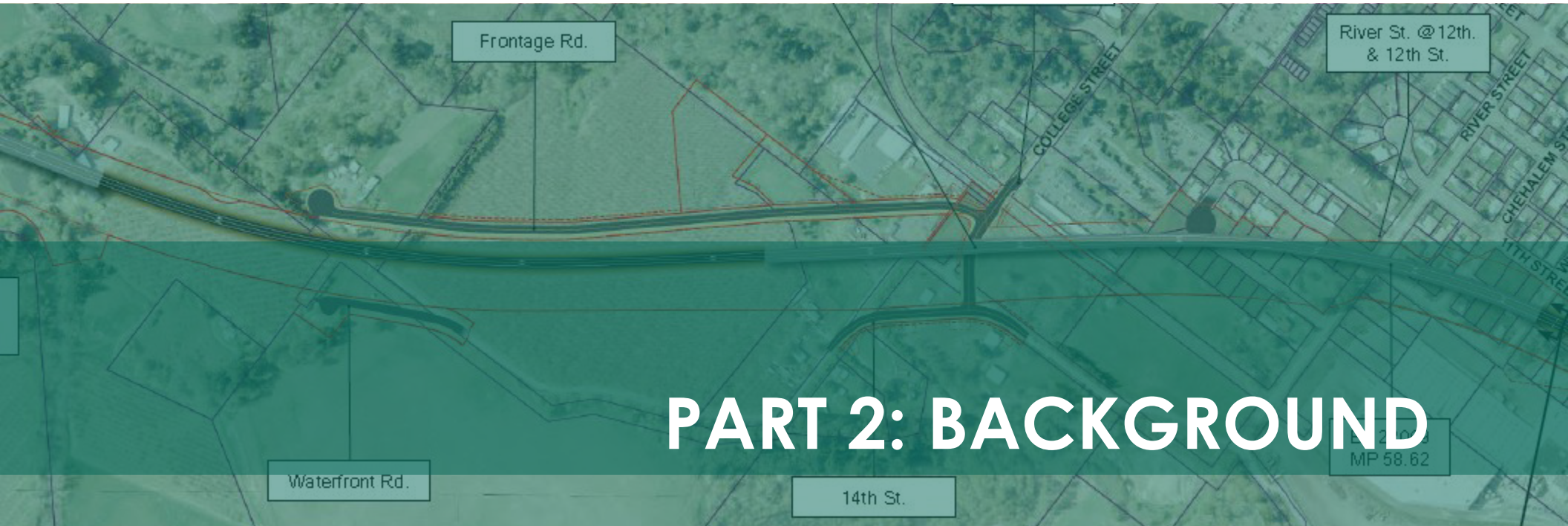
In 2001 the City of Newberg published a Riverfront Master Plan to address the redesign of the city's Willamette River waterfront, and re-establish the historically important connection between the river and the greater community. Due to other pressing needs, however, the Riverfront Master Plan was shelved and has remained dormant to this day.

Now, however, an interest in carrying through with the redevelopment of the Riverfront Area has emerged. To complicate matters, though, several things have changed in the Site Area since the original Master Plan was published—including especially the confirmation of the Highway 99 Bypass through the Site Area, and the closing of the SP Newsprint facility in the Site Area (and the simultaneous freeing-up of the Red Electric Trolley line). Therefore, while the original Plan was thoroughly researched; expressed a comprehensive understanding of the needs and desires of the city; and incorporated the feedback of a very well-run public engagement process, the Master Plan is now in need of being modified to reflect the recent changes.

This is where our team enters the picture. Specifically, on a recent visit to Newberg, we were asked by the planning department to come up with some ideas on how to approach the redesign of the Site Area given the recent changes. This report aims to fulfill this purpose.







## 2.0 The 2001 Newberg Riverfront Master Plan

As mentioned in the introduction, the original Riverfront Master Plan was both rigorous and comprehensive, and expressed a thorough understanding of the needs and desires of the city (and included a very well-organized and respectful public engagement component). The original Master Plan Map is presented in **Figure 1**.

To recap, the original Master Plan called for a mixed-use Riverfront Commercial Zone to occupy the northeast section of the Site Area (an original sketch of which is shown in **Figure 2**), as well as a Medium-Density and a Low-Density Residential Zone moving west. The former landfill area at the southwest of the site was designated to remain open space, while the Stream Corridor Zone was designated to remain largely as it was—Rogers Landing Park, a boat ramp, and a parking lot (the new boat launch was not yet in place).

In terms of circulation, the original Plan called for improved pedestrian connections throughout, including new tie-ins from the top of the escarpment into Rogers Landing; as well as new connections both to the Willamette Greenway Trail and into the city. Also, the original plan called for improvements to River St. and College St. to improve vehicular access to and from the greater community. The original Plan also mentioned the possibility of reactivating the Red Electric Trolley between the Site Area and downtown for public use—using the rail line which, at that point, was still leased and used daily by the SP Newsprint facility for freight service.

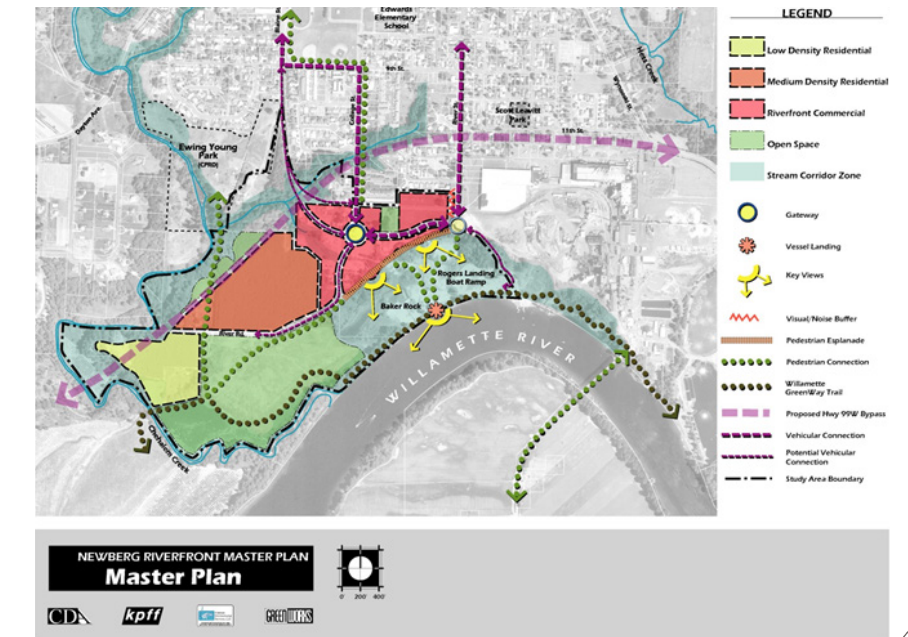


Figure 1: Newberg Riverfront Master Plan



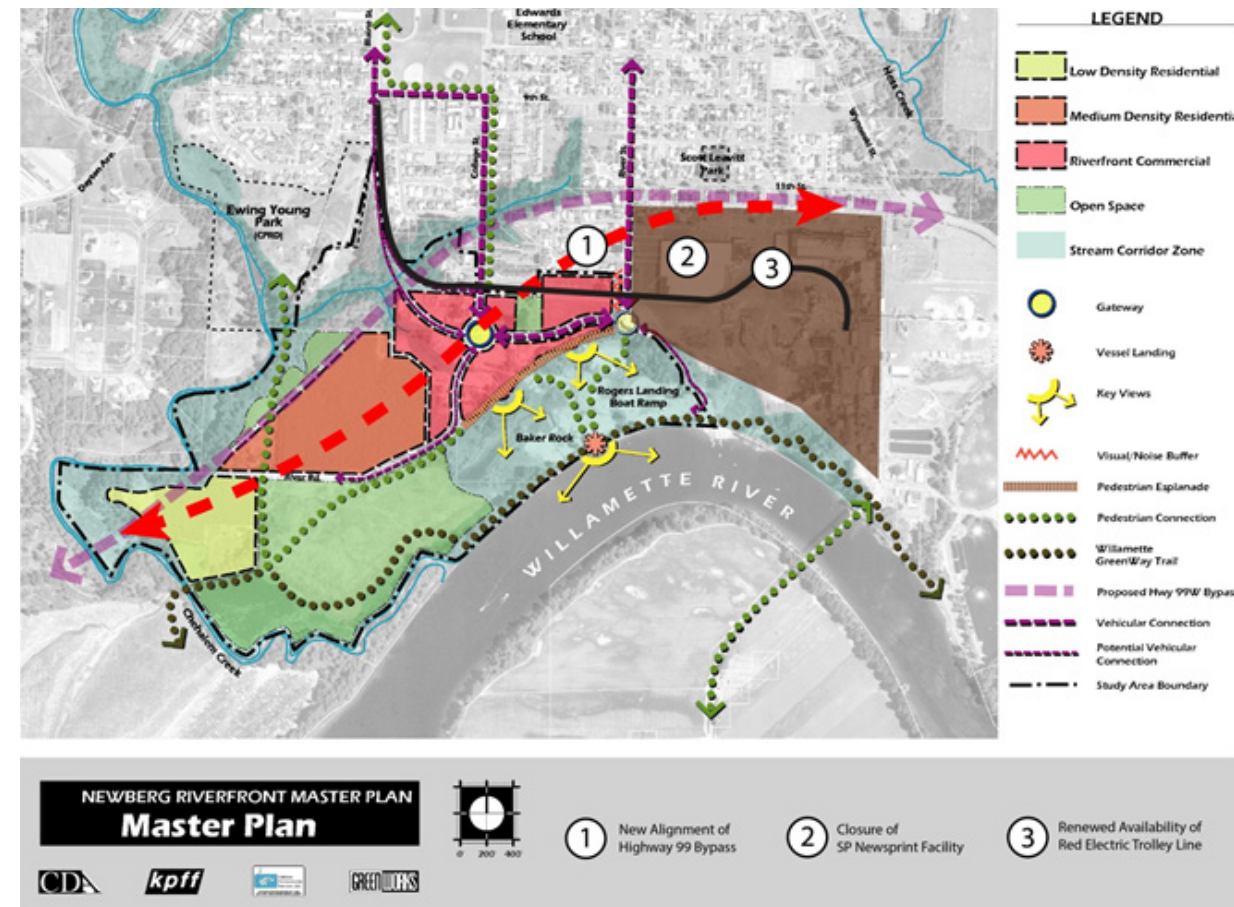
Figure 2: Riverfront Commercial Zone



## 2.1 Changes Affecting the Site Since 2001

Since the original Master Plan was published two major changes have occurred that affect the Site Area—one that represents a significant constraint, and another that represents a significant opportunity.

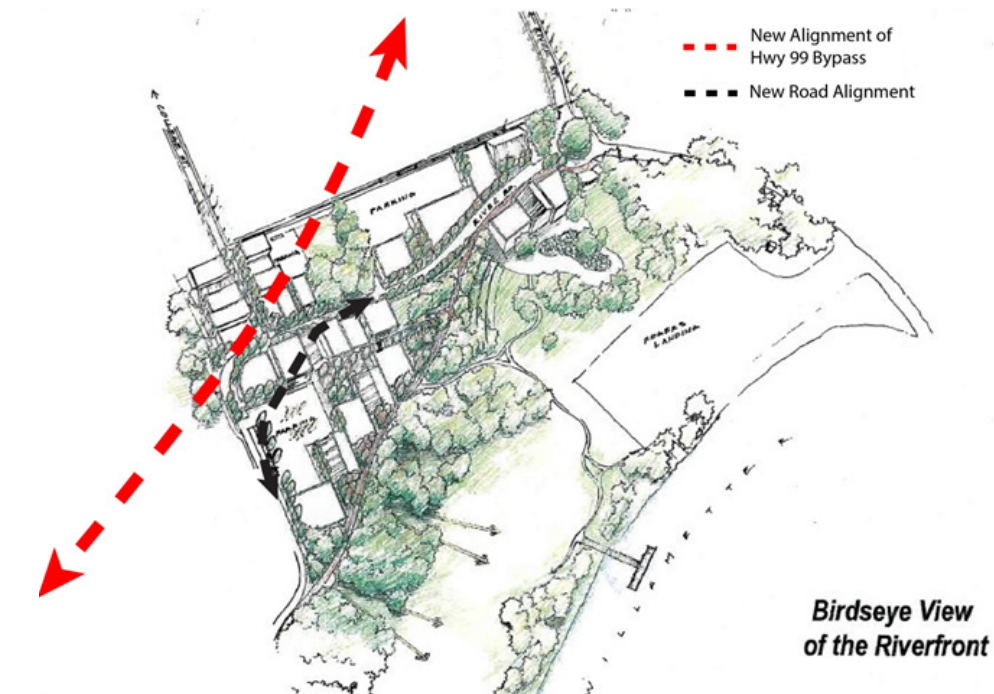
First the constraint. Since 2001, it has been confirmed that the corridor for the Highway 99 Bypass will run through the Site Area, and construction has indeed started. Not only that, but the actual alignment of the Bypass is somewhat changed from the one that was speculated on in the original Plan. Both the predicted path and the actual path are shown in **Figure 3**.



**Figure 3:** Highway 99W Bypass through Commercial Zone

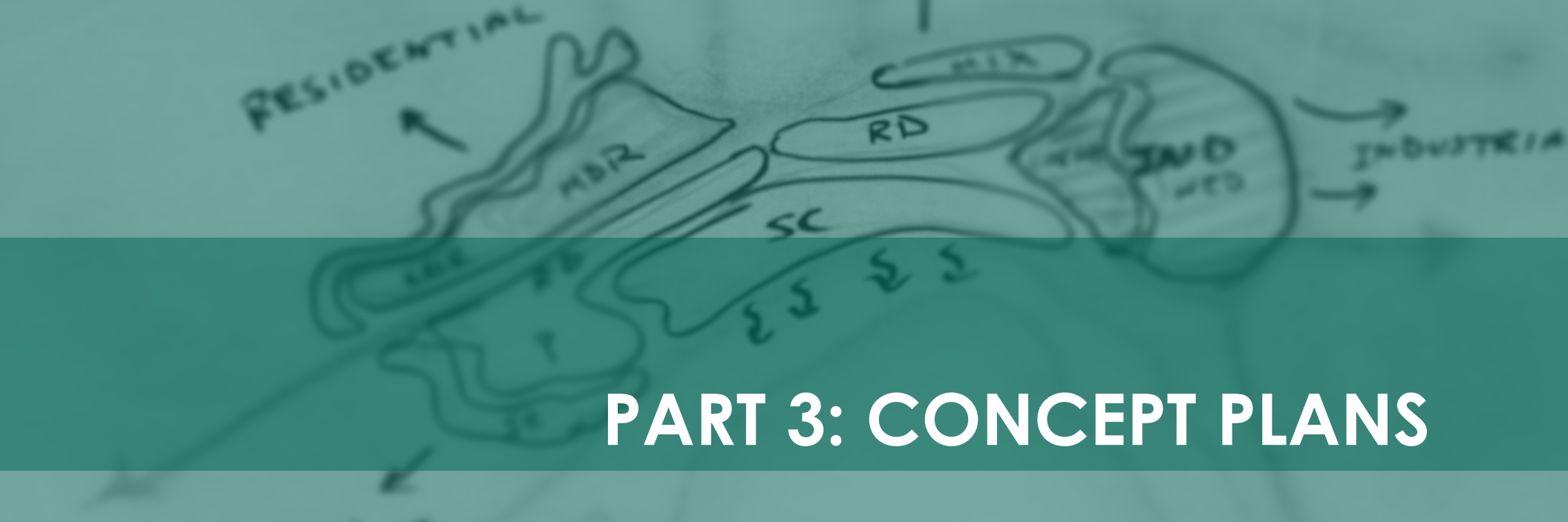
As feared in the original Plan, the Highway 99 Bypass represents a significant challenge for any development in the Site Area. The proposed mixed-use commercial zone is particularly hard hit by the Bypass, as the corridor now runs directly through that zone, as shown in **Figure 4**.

As for the change that represents an opportunity, this is the closing of the SP Newsprint facility. Indeed, while the closing of this facility represents a significant economic and historic loss for the community, it does open up a large section of land for Riverfront redevelopment. The hope and aim here is that the new use for this space will recapture the economic benefit of the old facility, while also allowing for development that is more consistent with the city's hope for the waterfront, in addition to being respectful of the historic significance of the site.



**Figure 4:** Highway 99W Bypass Alignment





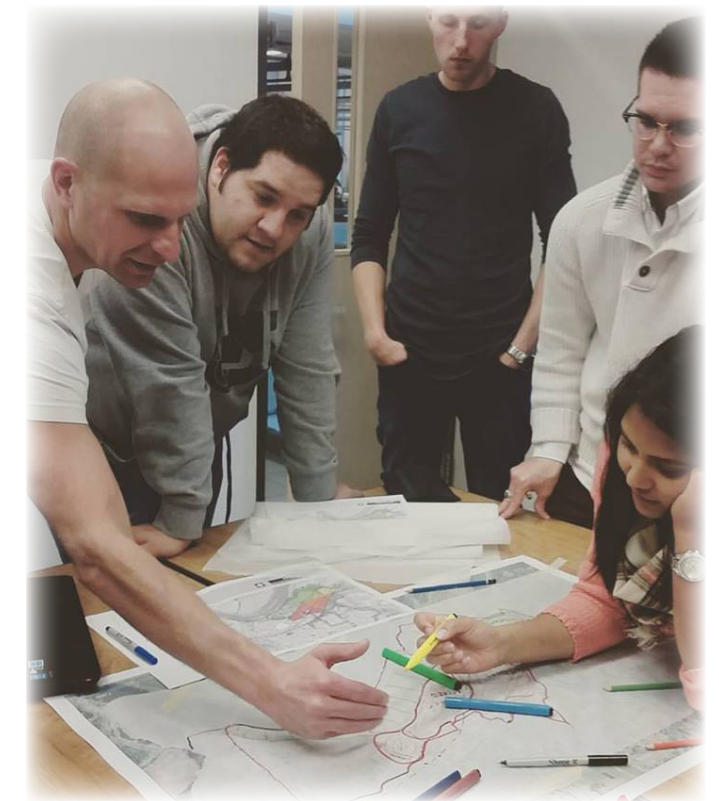
## PART 3: CONCEPT PLANS

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

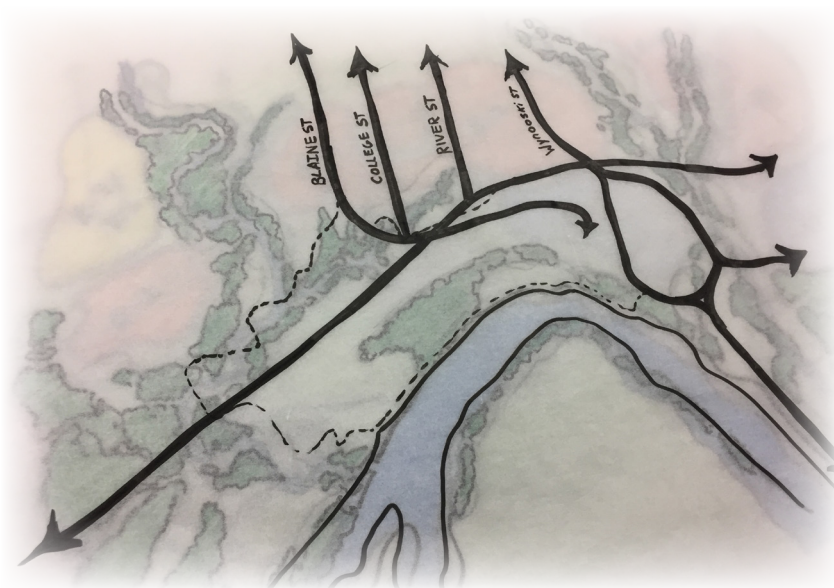
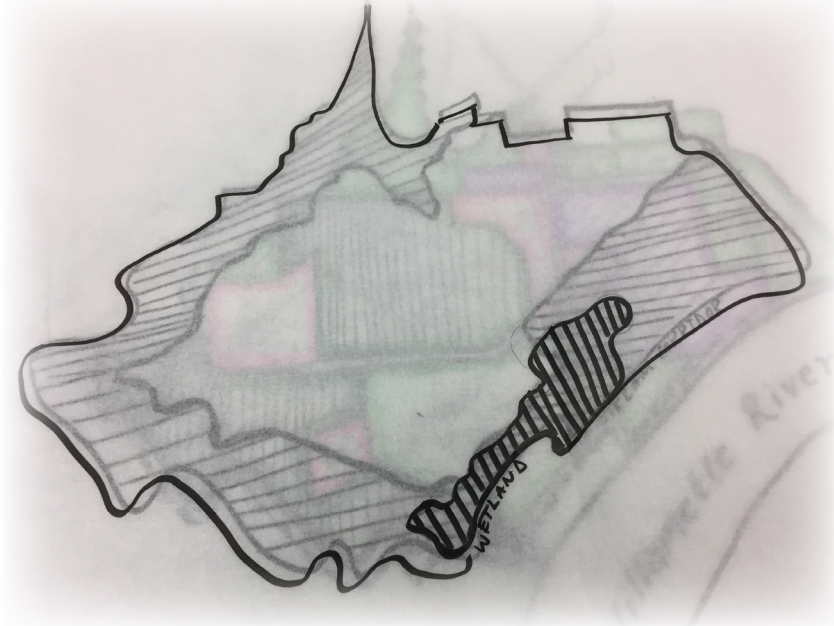
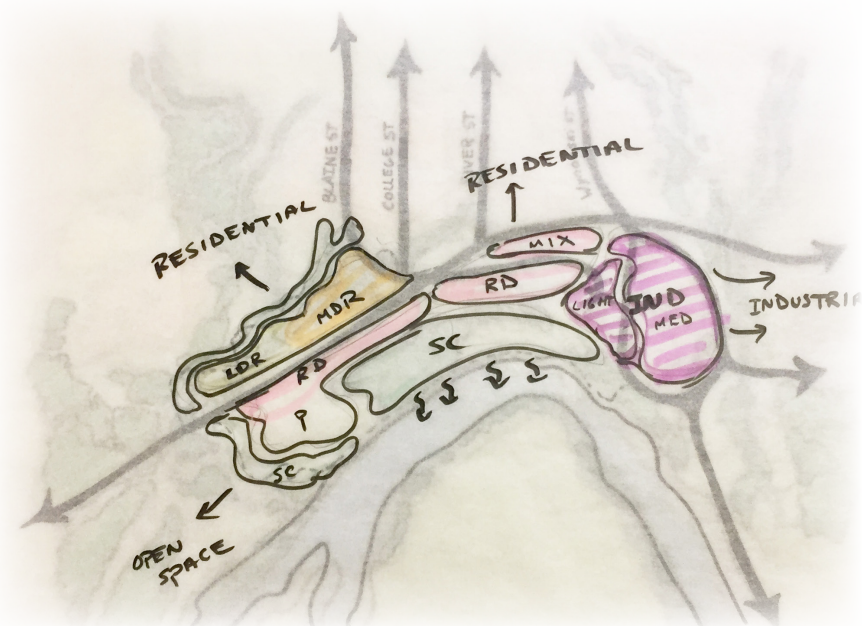
In approaching this project, we first researched the Site Area (which included studying the original Plan) and held a community mapping exercise.

We then held a half-day design charrette to get some possible solutions out on the table. Some images and sketches from both the community mapping exercise and design charrette are shown on the following two pages.

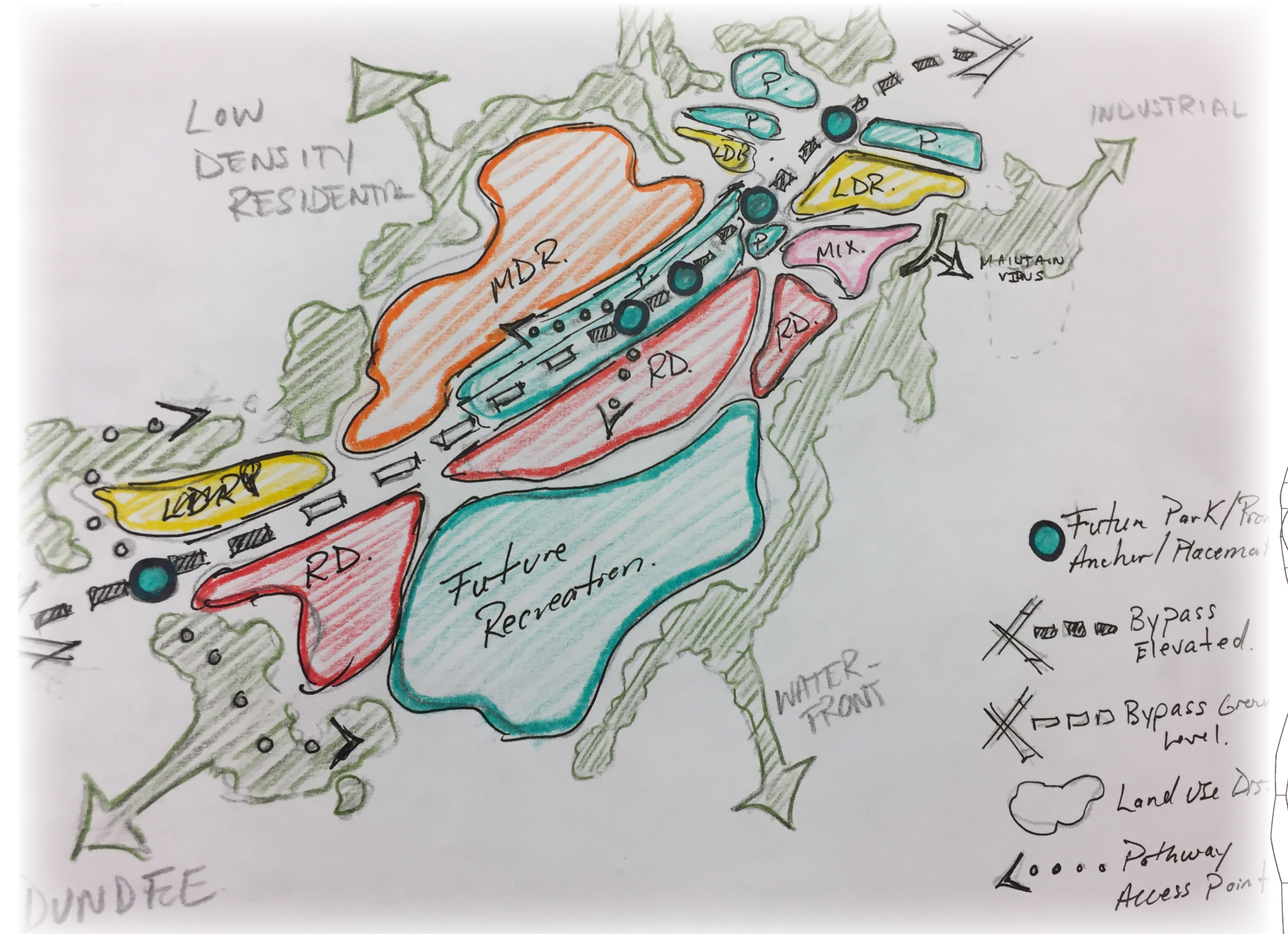
From here, two teams emerged with their with each team developing their own Concept Plan. We now present the two Concept Plans, one after the other.







WILLAMETTE RIVER WATERFRONT CONCEPT PLANS

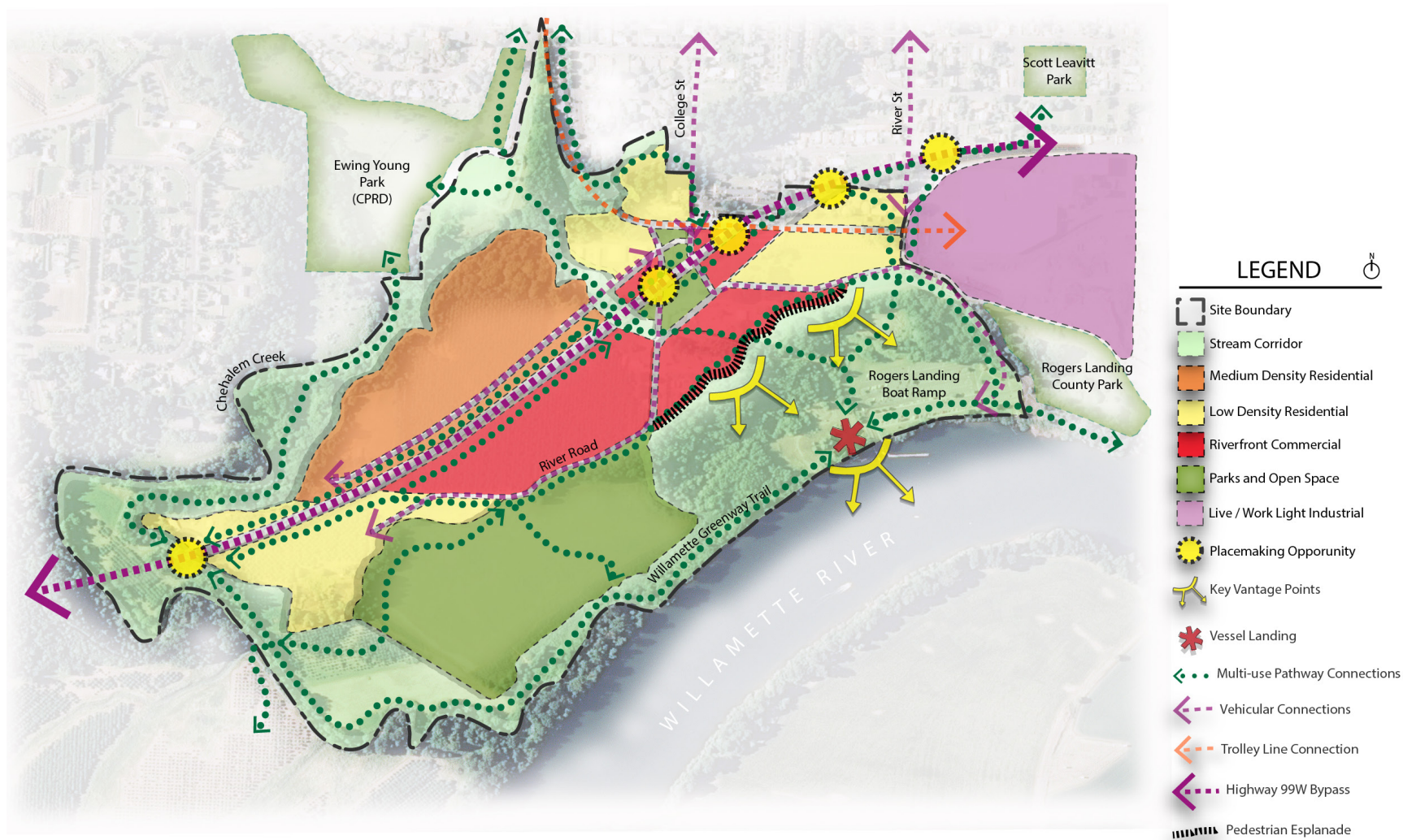


WILLAMETTE RIVER WATERFRONT CONCEPT PLANS



### 3.1 Concept # 1

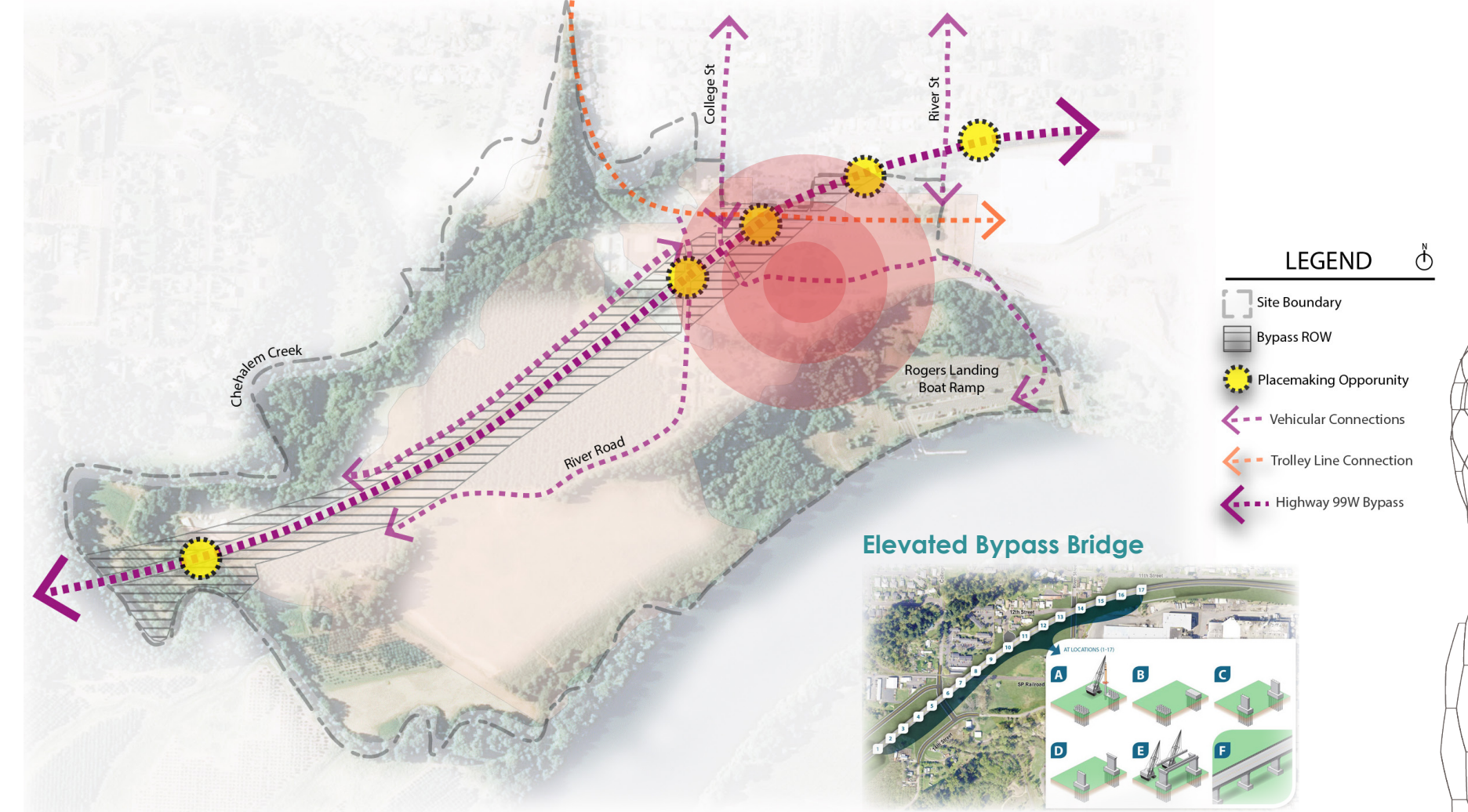
Concept Plan # 1 is shown in **Figure 5**.



**Figure 5:** Final Concept Plan #1

### A Unique Opportunity to Bridge Communities

The Newberg-Dundee Highway 99W Bypass can be viewed as a constraint or an opportunity. The elevated sections of the bypass offer a unique chance to utilize the longestest bridge in the State of Oregon. The bypass right-of-way could be utilized for the development of parks and pathways along the roadway system creating a spine leading to a “hub” of riverfront commercial activity (see **Figure 6**).

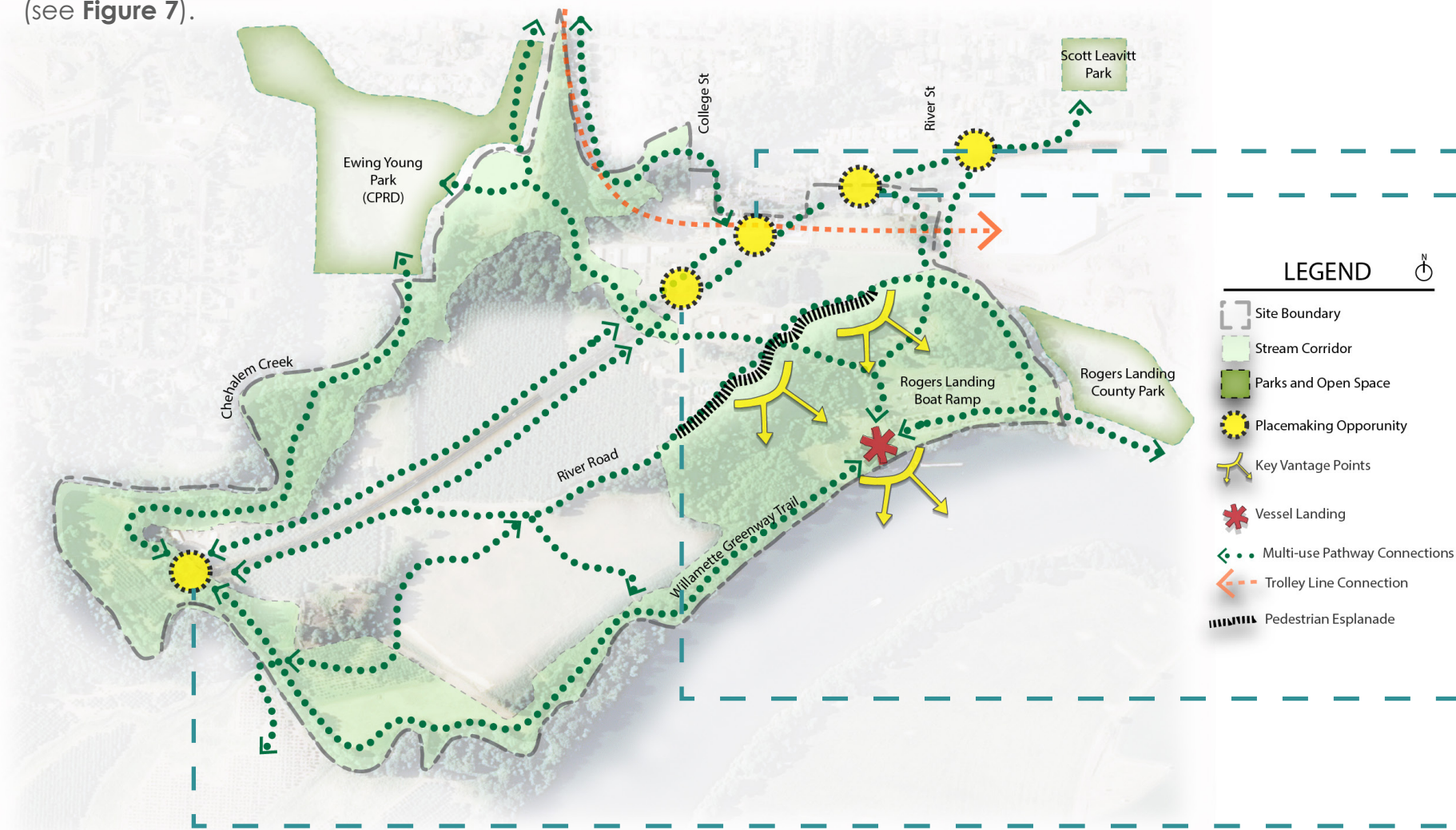


**Figure 6:** Proposed Major Transportation Routes



## Urban Design Ideas

The proposed pathway system aims to achieve the policies outlined in the City of Newberg Comprehensive Plan by supporting the pedestrian and bicycle paths in open spaces and connecting existing parks. By incorporating urban design into the placemaking sites, this will build a tourist attraction to these unique areas that can be accessed by pedestrians, cyclists, or by The Red Electric to create “the spot” for a sense of community (see **Figure 7**).



**Figure 7:** Proposed Pathway System and Placemaking



10 mile walking & biking path in Miami connected by urban parks



Portland's skatepark has added a positive attribute to the neighbourhood



Located below the I-45 is a 1/2 mile stretch of pathways



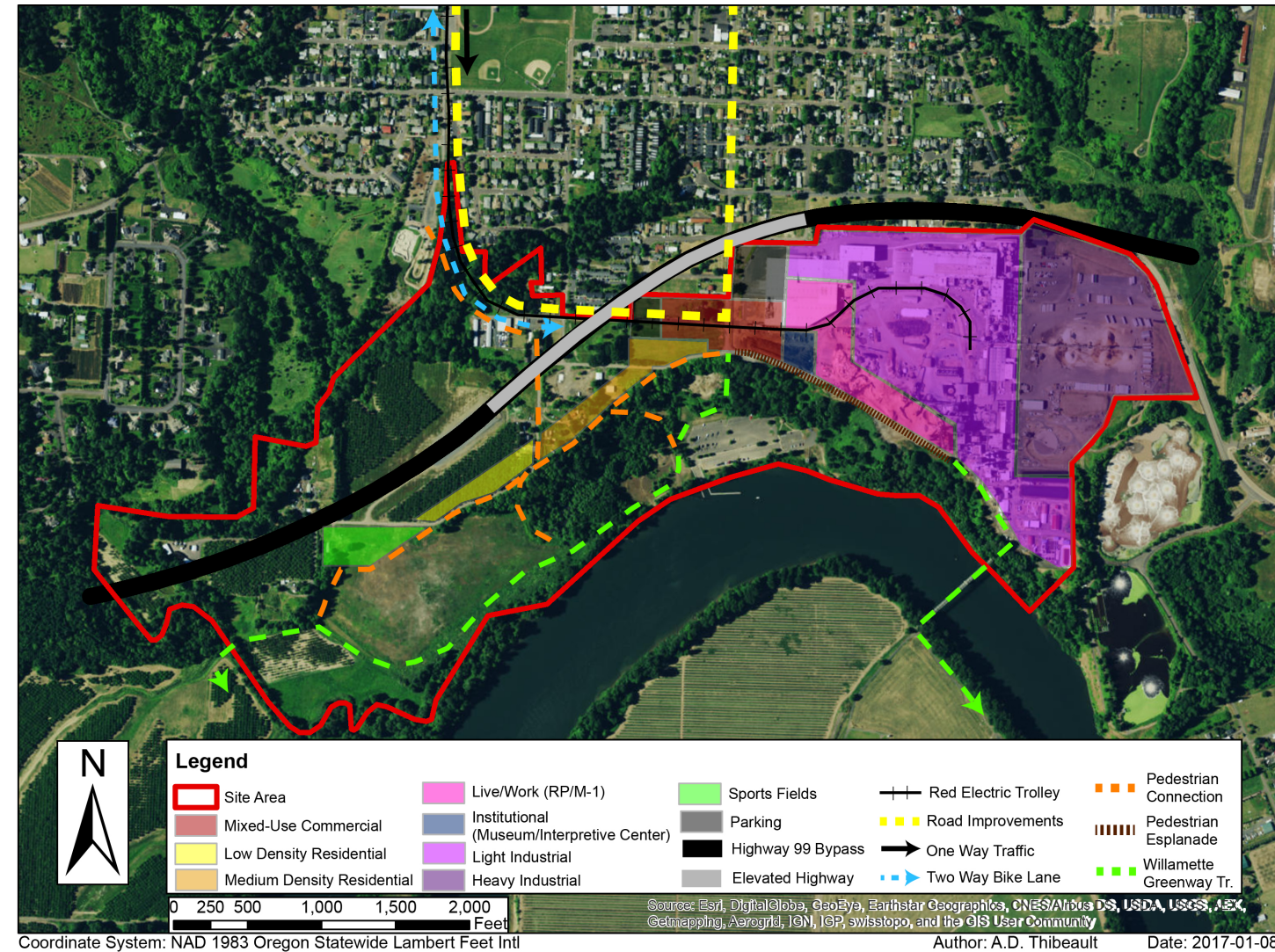
America's first urban mountain bike parks built under the I-5 in Seattle



### 3.2 Concept # 2

Concept Plan # 2 is shown in **Figure 8**.

## Land Use & Circulation Plan



**Figure 8:** Final Concept Plan # 2

### 3.2.1. Land Use Rationale

Since the area originally designated as the mixed-use commercial zone is now compromised by the Highway 99 Bypass, this area is no longer suitable to be used as a commercial zone. However, because the SP Newsprint facility is now closed, there is an opportunity to move the commercial zone to the east. In addition, because the trolley formerly used by the SP Newsprint facility is now available to be reactivated for public use, the trolley corridor can be redeveloped as a main street for the commercial zone (with retail on the main floor and 1 to 2 stories of office/residential above). The streetscape and building scale of this development is captured by **Figure 9** (which shows the recently refurbished Main Street Trolley in Memphis, Tennessee).



**Figure 9:** Main Street in Memphis, Tennessee

Since Newberg is currently in need of industrial land, we recommend that much of the remainder of the former SP Newsprint facility remain zoned for industrial use. This is an appropriate use for the site not only because it has already been used as industrial in the recent past, but because the site will now also have excellent access to the Highway 99 Bypass via the junction to the east of the site and Wynooski Road.

In order to minimize the nuisance effects from the industrial area on the mixed-use commercial zone, we recommend that a transitional land use be used. In this case we recommend a live-work zone with light industrial use, similar to Tin Town in Courtney, B.C., Waterpark Lofts in Alameda, California, and Westside Place in Chio, California (see the Live-Work website for more such examples). The live-work zone would essentially be a combination of Newberg's RP Residential-Professional District and the M-1 Limited Industrial District designations. Such a land use would not only provide the desired buffer, as noted above, but would also help generate additional tax revenues, and would provide an additional reason for local and regional residents to visit the new waterfront area.

Still on the former SP Newsprint facility, the land east of River St. and adjacent to the escarpment has excellent views of the river, and therefore, has a more appropriate use than industrial. To begin with, we recommend that the land immediately adjacent to the escarp-



ment be redeveloped as the Pedestrian Esplanade originally intended to go west of River St., and that the Esplanade connect to the historic Willamette River Bridge (this solves the issue of having to connect to the bridge via the difficult and steep pathway along the river).

Again, though, in order to ensure that the Esplanade is protected from the industrial area to the north, we recommend that a transitional land use be used. Specifically, there are two land uses that could work here. The first would involve extending the live-work zone mentioned above into this area (doing so would allow the plan to capture many of the benefits originally planned for locating the mixed-use commercial zone along the Esplanade west of River St.). Second, we recommend that a cultural and heritage site with a museum/interpretive center be located along the escarpment to commemorate the importance of the forestry industry in the area (including the original logging mills, and the newsprint operation). Apart from being a respectful salute to the history of the industry in the area, the museum/interpretive centre would also provide a significant draw to the waterfront for both locals and tourists, young and old.

As for the medium density and low density residential zones originally planned to the west of the mixed-use commercial zone, we recommend that these should remain. However, the Highway 99 Bypass now runs through the northern portion of these zones, and there-

fore, the zones themselves will need to be truncated. In particular, there may only be enough room to site one row of residences nearest the escarpment. Still, these residences will have excellent views of the river, and should be far enough away from the Bypass to be protected from it, and therefore, every attempt should be made to keep them. Also, given the desirability of this area for residential use, we recommend that the site originally planned to be the mixed-use commercial zone be switched to medium density residential, to maximize the number of riverfront residences. A SketchUp model of how the mixed-commercial zone might look, and how it might integrate with the residential area to the west, and the live-work and industrial areas to the east is shown in **Figure 10**.

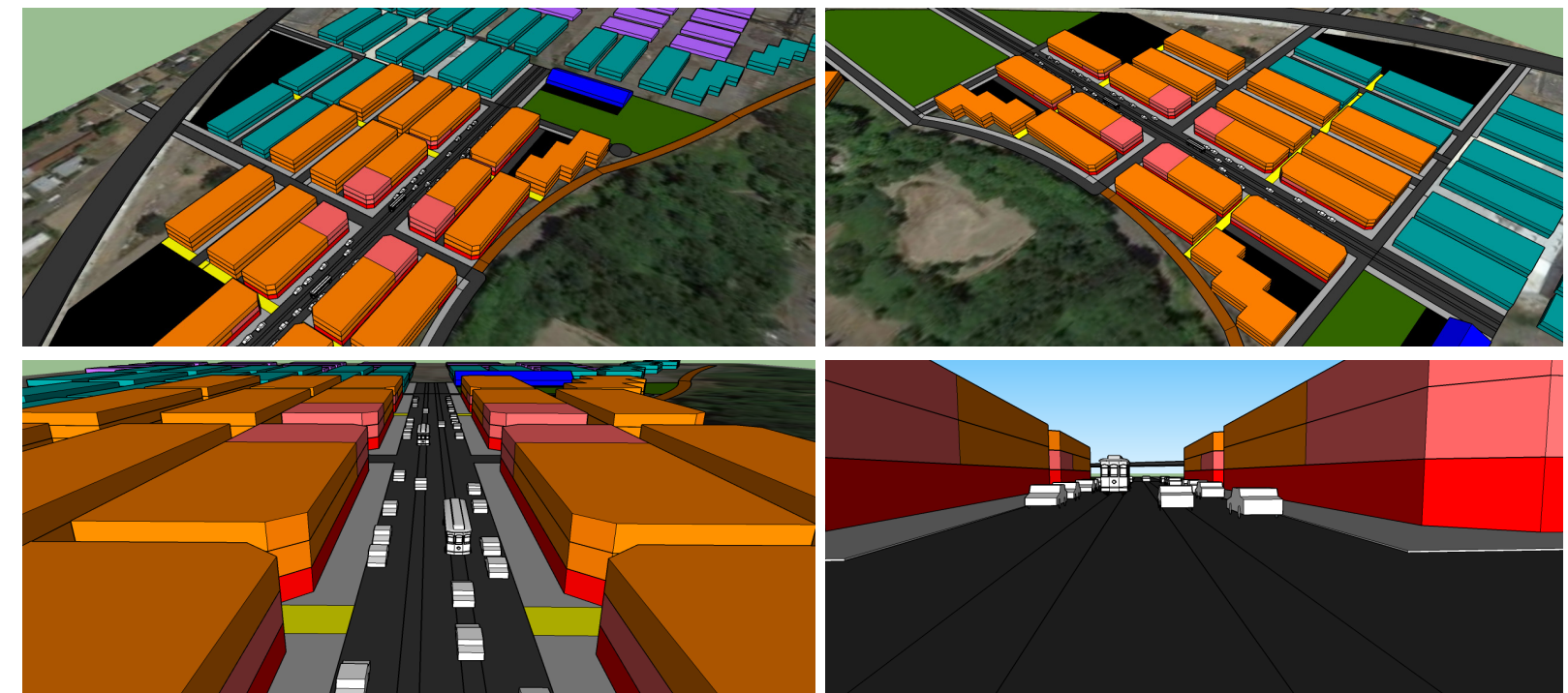
### 3.2.2. Circulation Network Rationale

In terms of the circulation network, we begin with the reactivation of the Red Electric Trolley line for public use. As mentioned above, the trolley would provide an excellent backdrop for the new mixed-use commercial area, and would also provide a very convenient way for visitors to access both the commercial area and the waterfront from the downtown (virtually all of which is within a 5 minute [1/4 mile] walk of the line) (see the separate map provided). What's more, most of the infrastructure is already in place, and therefore, this would represent a relatively low-cost intervention.

In addition, adding a northern leg of the Red Electric extending from downtown to the Allison Inn & Spa would greatly expand the accessibility of both the downtown and the waterfront area. Indeed, doing so would ensure

#### Legend

- Retail
- Office
- Multi-Family Resi.
- Live-Work
- Institutional
- Light Industrial
- Ped. Walkway
- Ped. Esplanade
- Sidewalk
- Road / Alley
- Parking



**Figure 10:** SketchUp Model of Mixed-Commercial Zone



that 10 of the city's 14 schools would be within a 5 minute (1/4 mile) walk of the line (including George Fox University and Newberg High School). Also, easy access would be afforded between the waterfront, downtown and both the city's major employer (A-dec), and one of its premier tourist and local attractions (the Allison Inn & Spa).

As with the original Plan, we recommend increasing the pedestrian connections both within the Site Area, and to the rest of the city. The only difference is that this plan takes into account the specific areas where the Bypass is elevated (and which therefore allow for direct connections between the waterfront and the rest of the city). Also, as mentioned above, we recommend connecting the Site Area to the historic Willamette River Bridge via the Pedestrian Esplanade, thus avoiding the necessity to make this connection via the steep and difficult path at the base of the escarpment (this may then become Newberg's contribution to the Willamette Greenway Trail).

Again in line with the original Plan, we recommend making improvements to River St. and College St. in order to facilitate access to the waterfront. However, we also recommend making improvement to Blaine St. Specifically, we recommend adding a two-way bike lane to the west side of the trolley tracks to facilitate bike access from the downtown to Ewing Young BMX Park, the Riverfront Commercial Zone, and the rest of the waterfront. We also recommend converting the lane to the east

of the trolley tracks into a one way traffic lane leading down to the waterfront via 9th St. and College St. Cars returning from the waterfront would still be able access downtown but would have to do so via River St. (either directly or via College St. And 9th St.). This would ensure that Blaine St. would still be accommodating to cars (including those bound for the waterfront), while giving precedence to alternative modes of transportation (including the trolley, bikes and walking). River St., for its part, would remain mostly accommodating to cars.

### 3.2.3. Additional Measures

In addition to the land use and circulation suggestions mentioned above, we believe there are many other measures that could be taken to draw residents to the area, and help revitalize the waterfront (all of the forthcoming interventions are mapped in **Figure 11**).

#### Lumberjack Games (and Zipline)

To begin with, it was mentioned above that one of the potential land uses for the eastern escarpment would be a heritage site with a museum/interpretive center to commemorate the forestry industry. Now, one activity that is associated with this history are the lumberjack games, and one of the more popular and exciting lumberjack games is the log-roll competition, for which water is needed. It just so happens that Rogers Landing is just down the escarpment from the proposed heritage site, and would be an excellent location for the lumberjack log-roll competition—and other simple and inexpensive apparatuses could also be located here to allow for the full suite of lumberjack

games. An annual competition and festival could even be organized to help generate interest and spur tourism.



Of course, the distance between the heritage site at the top of the escarpment and the lumberjack games below would create a separation between them, and a challenge for access, but this challenge could be overcome with a simple and very fun solution: a zipline.



#### Non-Motorized Boathouse and Bleachers for Spectators

An even more promising idea for drawing people down to the waterfront and revitalizing the area would be to encourage the use of non-motorized boats on the river (a recommendation that is also found in the original Master Plan). In order to facilitate this, we recommend that the city invest in a simple boathouse with non-motorized boats that can be rented out by the general public. With Ash Island to the southwest, and Champoeg State Heritage Area (and campground) to the southeast, there are already nearby attractions that could serve as destinations for day and weekend trips, and that would make the boat rentals valuable for both locals and tourists alike (and that would represent an additional revenue stream for the city).

In connection with this, one measure we recommend is to furnish the boathouse with Olympic row boats. Olympic rowing has a rich history in Oregon, and a number of well-organized clubs and regattas already exist (including the Northwest Collegiate Rowing Conference and the Northwest Rowing Council) that Newberg could easily tap into. In addition, a deal could be struck between the city and the numerous public and private schools in the city (including George Fox University and Newberg High School) to encourage the development of youth rowing clubs. As mentioned above, 10 of the city's 14 schools are within a 5 minute walk of the Red Electric Trolley line, so reopening the trolley for public use would allow for a very convenient way for many of the city's students to reach



rowing practice, thus helping ensure success.

If a culture of rowing were to take hold among the city's youth, it is likely that this would carry over into adulthood, ensuring that the riverfront would become a very popular destination for people of all ages. And for those who have no interest in rowing themselves, a grandstand could be sited on the former landfill where people could come to watch the rowers (including any rowing regattas that may eventually be organized).

### Treehouse Campground

A further attraction that could be established to help draw residents and tourists down to the river would be a treehouse campground similar to the Vertical Horizons Treehouse Paradise and the Out'n>About Tree-sort both in Josephine County, Oregon.

Building a treehouses campground would take advantage of some of the impressive trees along the riverfront, while ensuring that the structures would not be threatened by any potential flooding (and would, once again, represent a potential new revenue stream for the City).



### Sports Fields and Horse Stable

As for the remainder of the former landfill, sports fields could be set up on the northern portion of the site to serve the new residences in the area. Also, land could be designated for a horse stable to encourage equestrian riding along the Willamette River Greenway.

See **Figure 11** for Land Use & Circulation Plan with Waterfront additions.

## Land Use & Circulation Plan with Waterfront Additions

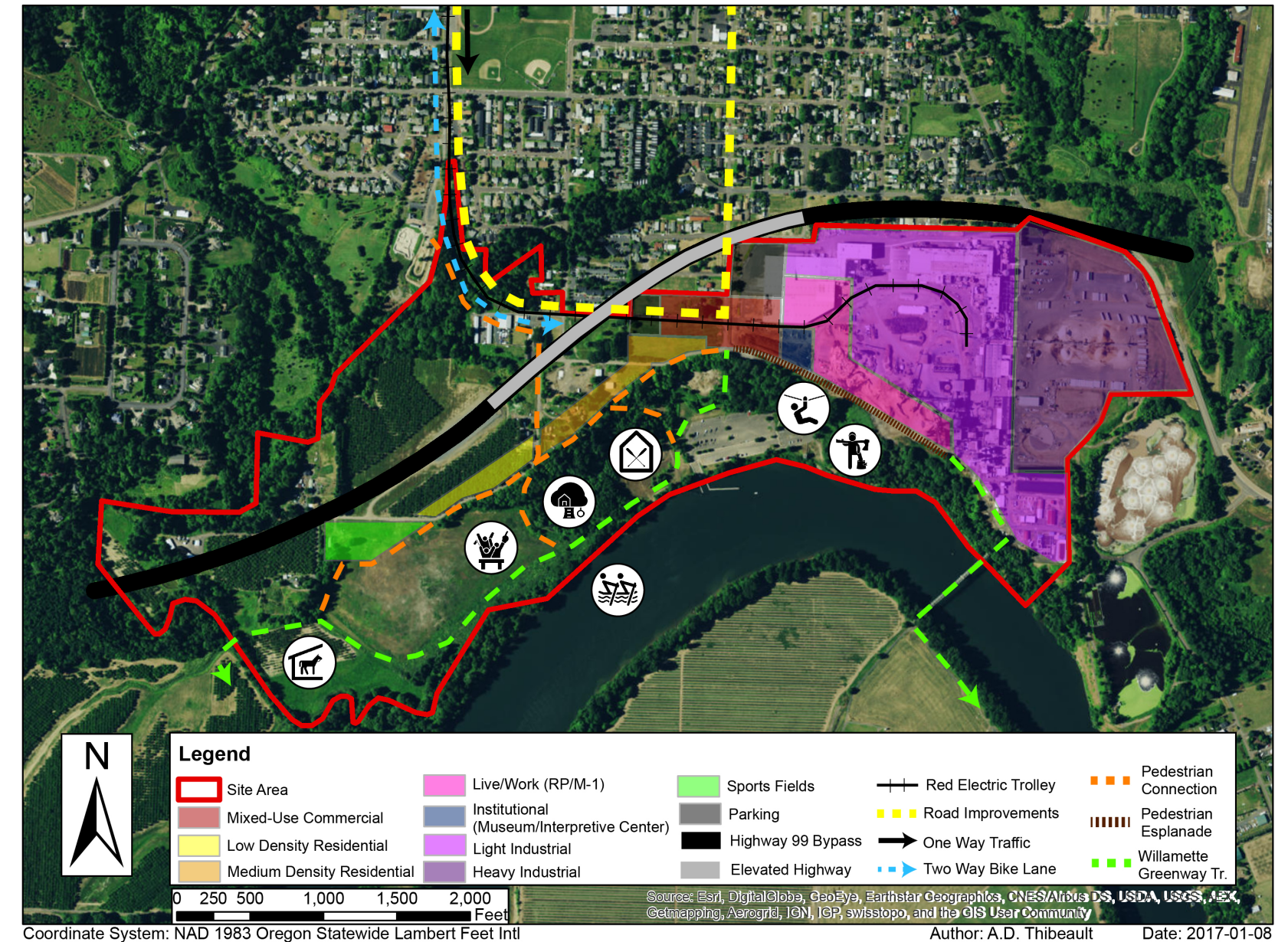


Figure 11: Waterfront Additions





## PART 4: CONCLUSION

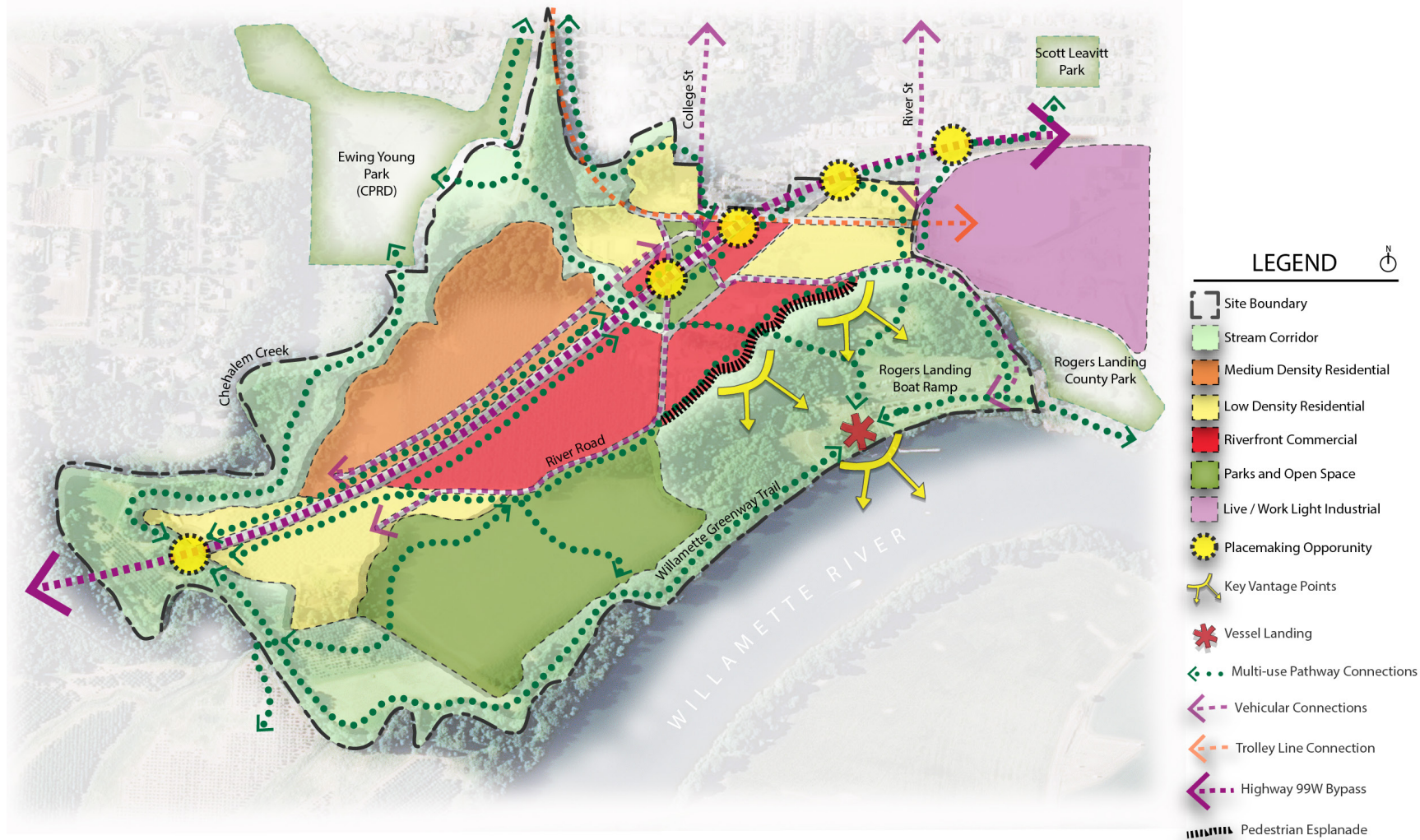
Though the two Plans differ markedly in their recommendations, we believe that both have much to offer, and in fact both teams came to believe that the best solution may well involve mixing and matching from both. Interestingly, both teams came to believe that the best solutions were those that treated the challenges associated with the site as opportunities. Specifically, both teams liked the approach of treating the underside of the Highway Bypass as a linear park; treating the recently vacated SP Newsprint facility and newly available trolley line as the backdrop of a mixed-use commercial zone; and treating the floodplain as the site of numerous low-cost, flood-resilient interventions meant to draw people and activity down to the waterfront. Whatever direction the City of Newberg decides to go with the project, we have enjoyed the opportunity to work with you on it, and wish you well in the process!



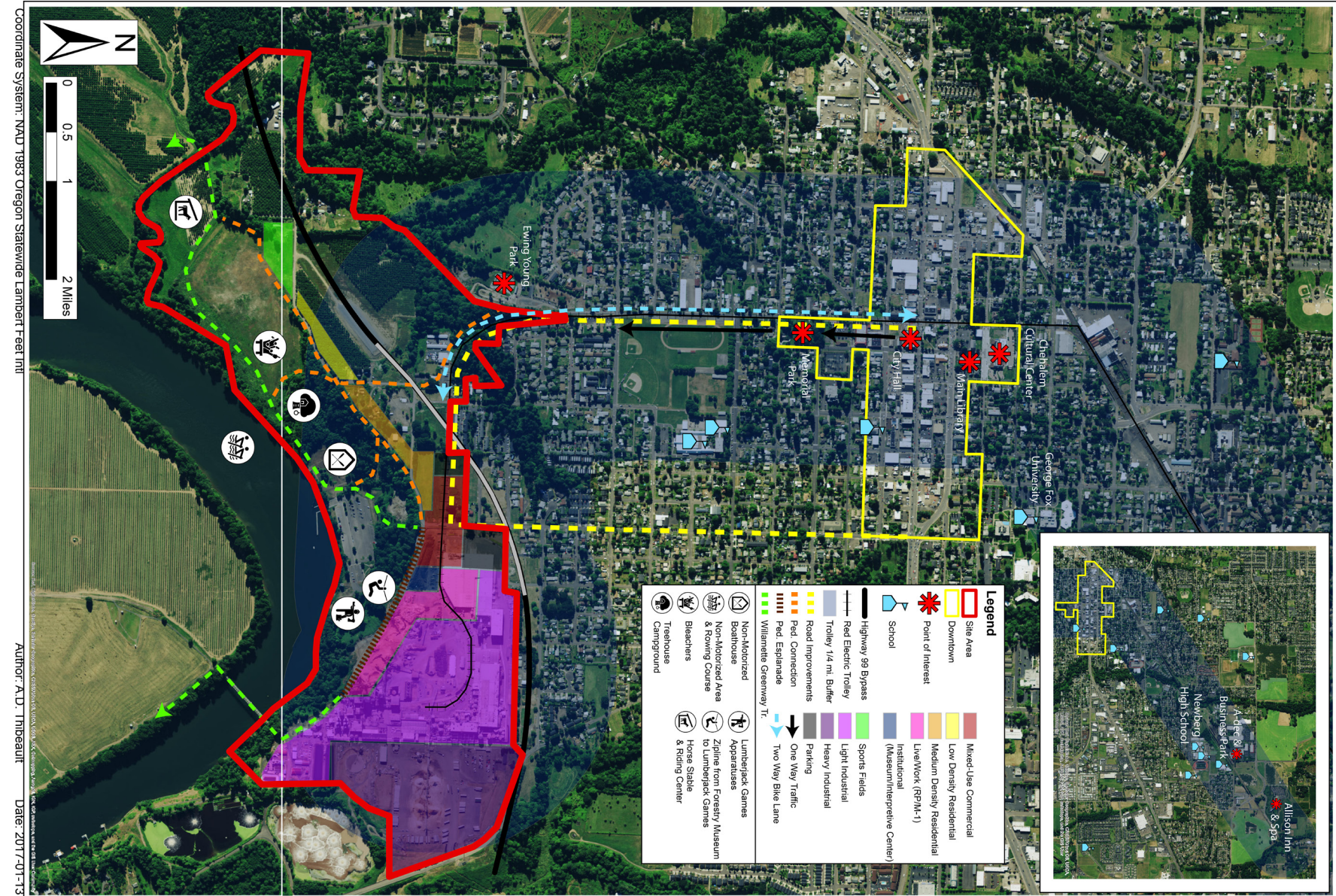


# Appendices

A.1: Concept Plan #1



A.2: Concept Plan #2







# REVITALIZE NEWBERG RIVERFRONT

**For more information contact:**

Faculty of Environmental Design  
Professional Faculties Building, Room: 2182  
University of Calgary  
2500 University Drive NW  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada T2N 1N4  
+1 (403) 220-6764  
hharker@ucalgary.ca

