



Economic Development Committee Meeting Minutes

Scappoose City Hall, 33568 E Columbia Ave., Scappoose, OR 97056

July 20, 2023 12:00 – 1:30 pm

Disclaimer: These minutes are intended to summarize the conversations that took place in this meeting rather than provide a full transcript. Anyone wishing to view the full conversation can find a recording of this meeting on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/JNNSJUgZhQg>

Attendees: Chair Christine Turner, Vice Chair Brian Rosenthal, George Hafeman, Paul Fidrych (remote), Sean Findon, David Sideras (remote for part and in-person for part), Karl Fenstermaker, Andrew LaFrenz, Josh Koch, Nancy Ward, Heidi Ralls, Jeff Weiss, N.J. Johnson, Laurie Oliver Joseph, Mayor Joe Backus, Miguel Bautista, Amanda Normine (remote), and Gretchen Witt (remote)

Absent: None

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 12:01 PM by Chair Christine Turner.

1.1 Meeting Agenda

Vice Chair Brian Rosenthal made a motion to approve the July 20, 2023 agenda. Sean seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.2 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chair Brian Rosenthal made a motion to approve the June 15, 2023 minutes. Karl seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

1.3 Public comment

Amanda Normine: My name is Amanda Normine and I am the President of Columbia County HUB (Helping Undue Barriers). Our mission is about empowering young people in Columbia County transitioning into adulthood. We have a new project to encourage entrepreneurship. We always appreciate word of mouth support as well as financial support. The program starts with training courses on the basics of business. Then they are partnered with an established local business and placed in a contest. The end result will be a local business owned and operated by a young person with \$12,500 in startup funds for winning the contest.

2. **NEW BUSINESS**

2.1 Elections for Chair & Vice Chair

Chair Christine Turner: I am now accepting nominations of yourself or another voting member for the position of Scappoose Economic Development Committee Chair.

Vice Chair Brian Rosenthal: I nominate Christine Turner to continue serving as Chair.



David: I second.

Chair Christine Turner: Would anyone else like to nominate themselves or someone else?

Nobody responded in the affirmative.

Chair Christine Turner called for a vote for Christine Turner to be EDC Chair. All voting members voted in favor except for Christine Turner, who abstained.

Chair Christine Turner: I am now accepting nominations of yourself or another voting member for the position of Scappoose Economic Development Committee Chair. I nominate Karl.

Sean: I second.

NJ: Karl, do you accept?

Karl: Yes.

David: I nominate Brian.

Paul: I second.

Vice Chair Brian Rosenthal: I respectfully decline the nomination.

Chair Christine Turner called for a vote for Karl Fenstermaker to be EDC Vice Chair. All voting members voted in favor except for Karl Fenstermaker, who abstained.

2.2 Check in on Downtown Overlay Code Changes

Laurie: NJ and I presented an overview of the Downtown Overlay code at the last EDC meeting. There was discussion on whether it makes more sense to do small revisions of the chapter now or go out for a TGM (Transportation Growth Management) grant to do a larger look at the chapter in the future. This would allow us to hire a consultant who's an expert in downtown planning and they would hold community workshops and other stakeholder meetings. The end product is a report with a list of recommendations for our Downtown Overlay code. Staff does not have capacity to do this kind of large review of the chapter right now with the ongoing 50-Year Plan project.

Paul: I'm in favor of the TGM grant. I think it would benefit the community for a consultant with fresh eyes and perspectives to propose solutions to help us.

David: I agree. Would this include zone changes or just code changes?

Laurie: As part of our look at the Downtown Overlay chapter, we would also look into adjusting the overlay boundary.



NJ: The other advantage of going with the TGM grant is that we'll potentially have our branding work done, which would allow us to establish design/aesthetic requirements in the Downtown Overlay that match our brand.

Brian: I have no problem getting a consultant if that's what everyone wants. I do think there are some things we could clean up. There are requirements for street trees but that makes it difficult to display signage when the building has 0 setbacks, which is problematic for businesses.

Laurie: This is an instance where the species and size of tree are important.

Brian: I agree. Because the buildings have no setbacks, trees that are too tall can put trees on roof. I think an alternative to trees would be awnings and flower baskets. I'm also concerned about pushing up costs on developers. I'd like to see in the scope of work that the consultant will balance improving aesthetics with keeping costs low.

Paul: The City of Sandy has their Sandy aesthetic standards. Developers aren't required to use them but they are a prerequisite to receiving urban renewal grants, which has worked incredibly well for them.

Brian: I do think what Paul's saying could work in our Urban Renewal Grant Program. Existing buildings would have to bring their aesthetics up to current standard.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: Are we likely to get grant funding for this?

Laurie: Yes.

Brian: I'm all for getting the consultant. The only way I would be against it is if we don't get the grant funding. In that case, I'd want to see us take it on because this isn't horribly complicated.

2.3 Discuss August 7, 2023 Joint Urban Renewal Agency Meeting

NJ: As you know, the Urban Renewal Agency (URA) has invited the EDC to a joint work session on August 7th at 6:00 pm. I hope everyone can attend because this will be a very important meeting where staff will present a new grant application form with new program requirements. Then you all and the URA Commissioners will provide your feedback. To help us in this conversation today, I provided a map of the areas where the Downtown Overlay and the Urban Renewal District overlap. Christine and I wanted to provide this committee some space to discuss anything in advance of the joint URA meeting.

Laurie passed out maps that are attached as an appendix.

Brian Rosenthal: I have some ideas. *(from handout)*

1. All Grants should be limited to \$25,000 or less.



2. All Grants must have a specific purpose and not be for research, engineering, or design phase of a project.
3. All grants over \$5,000 shall be in the form of a matching grant where the business owner or building owner must match the amount provided by the urban renewal district.
4. All grant projects shall have an aesthetic appearance component on the exterior of the building/business.
5. No grants shall be provided for equipment or interior improvements.
6. All grants shall be of benefit to Scappoose as a whole.

Chair Christine Turner: Do we want to require applicants to go through land use before seeking grant funding?

Laurie: It's designed as a reimbursement program, so they have to spend the money to get the money back.

Brian: If it's a reimbursement program, I don't see a problem with it.

David: I would add too that businesses should not be able to spend grant dollars on promotion that advertises their business, like signs.

Brian: That's completely reasonable.

Chair Christine Turner: I like that too.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: Could a residential property apply for these grants?

Chair Christine Turner: No, commercial only. NJ, can you explain the project tiers?

NJ: Yes, the way we're proposing to structure the criteria is that there are projects of primary preference, projects of secondary preference, and ineligible projects. This allows for limited flexibility while also creating a clear emphasis of the Grant Program.

Paul: Multifamily residential is allowed in commercial zones. How do we want to regulate that if these grants are only for businesses?

Laurie: The Urban Renewal Plan has a list of identified projects and one of them is to spend money on housing or mixed use grants or loans.

Brian: I'd like for the Plan to emphasize the area west of Columbia River Highway between SW Hall Street and NW Prairie Street.

Chair Christine Turner: Tier 1 should not include new development; it should only be aesthetics.

NJ: One thing to consider though is that if you're replacing a really old and unattractive building, new development is a major aesthetic improvement.



Brian: I've been thinking about if we give a grant to new development, we require that they exceed the minimum code.

Paul: This conversation makes me wonder if we need to be thinking about all of our projects together under one consultant rather than doing everything here and there separately. I'm concerned that we're making these changes before we've completed our branding work.

Laurie: They certainly all play together. We do have a well-developed Downtown Overlay code as it is; that's our downtown plan.

Brian: I think we need to move forward with this.

Paul: Sandy had a clear vision with their brand and look. That way, every building owner was under the same standards and the town has a cohesive look and feel.

Laurie: All of these projects are in motion around a similar timeframe but it really is a matter of timing. Also, the EDC and URA get to decide whether or not they award a grant if they feel it doesn't align with what we want Scappoose to look like.

NJ: The Urban Renewal Grant Program criteria doesn't speak to what the aesthetic standards are because that work hasn't been done yet.

Jeff: We can change the criteria at any time but we need to move forward for stuff to get done.

Chair Christine Turner: We should have a tasteful spectrum of paint colors we will and won't approve.

Vice Chair Karl Fenstermaker: Can't we just not approve it?

NJ: Yes. There are two realms that can be used to think of any set of program guidelines. There's softer language like "preference" or "aligns with the Agency's goals" and then there's harder language such as "Grants cannot be spent on design work."

Chair Christine Turner: It would be great if we had a contractor who could redo all of the older buildings at once.

NJ: The EDC is now a recommendation body for these grants so we need to be mindful about rhetoric that could be construed as favoritism for a particular contractor.

David: There are ways to do improvements that look really nice but don't have to be the same theme.

Brian: Going back a bit, I do think we should include mixed use because a lot of the older buildings along the highway are mixed use and we wouldn't want to make those ineligible for grants.



Laurie: Mixed use is also more costly to build so if you want to incentivize that kind of development, it helps to include them.

Paul: This seems like a bad decision to spend the grant money on improvements before we know what our brand is. Just because we can spend the money today doesn't mean we have to or even should.

Laurie: I agree; I think that makes a lot of sense. I do want to clarify that if someone applied to complete a project in a certain way and then they deviate from that after receiving URA approval, we wouldn't reimburse them. EDC and URA have a lot of discretion with the kinds of aesthetic improvements you approve. This will need to be discussed at the August 7th meeting because it's a valid point.

Brian: Maybe there's a middle ground here where we move forward but we don't look at this as though we have a pile of money to burn.

Chair Christine Turner: There's a lot of buildings in town where any improvements would be a massive upgrade.

NJ: What's being discussed is precisely why EDC and the URA are both involved in the grant process. EDC provides business expertise and a vision for branding while the URA provides the more holistic, community look at things.

Sean: I'm interested in relocating the older buildings because outdoor seating right on Highway 30 is not very attractive. That's not really our downtown.

Brian: It's probably part of our downtown but it's not the central part of what makes the area downtown.

David: We could prioritize certain properties and types of development.

Brian: I hesitate to do that because then you increase the value of whatever properties you put into the Plan as having preference. It doesn't mean that the development is going to occur.

Laurie: It has to develop because the program is reimbursement based.

Paul: Laurie, were you able to get information on if EDC has a budget that we could put towards an outdoor dining program?

Laurie: The \$30,000 I mentioned last meeting was actually for the Community Enhancement Program, not the EDC. EDC has had \$10,000 in the past but this year, due to a tight City budget, we do not have funding allocated to EDC.

Paul: Could we create an outdoor dining program to get funding for the program?

Laurie: You would want to make that an EDC goal and recommend that Council adopt it as a Council Goal.



Brian: Would it be an appropriate use of UR grant funds to allocate some of it to community events?

NJ: No, because events are temporary and don't stay within the Urban Renewal District.

Laurie: Going back to an outdoor dining program, I would want to see a list of restaurants in town where offering outdoor dining is even possible. One of the reasons that the Wigwam is being required to remove their outdoor dining tent is because it occupies required parking for their use. We don't have 12-foot-wide sidewalks that allow for shared use between dining and pedestrians.

David: There are areas of Beaverton where they shut down the streets to provide outdoor dining. I don't think we should worry about who will come to town. If you build it a certain way and provide code that allows for it, businesses will come.

Laurie: I'd love to include this conversation and our questions in our Downtown Overlay scope of work to figure out how we can encourage that.

2.4 Vote to Consider Canceling August 17, 2023 Meeting

David: I move to keep the August 17, 2023 meeting.

Sean: I second.

The motion passed unanimously without abstentions.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NEXT MEETINGS

- Next meetings
 - August 17, 2023 at 12:00 pm
 - September 21, 2023 at 12:00 pm
 - October 19, 2023 at 12:00 pm
- Upcoming events
 - Urban Renewal Agency/Economic Development Committee Joint Meeting
 - Monday, August 7, 2023 at 6:00 pm
 - Adventure Festival
 - August 12-13, 2023

Paul: I have a comment. I've been working with the Columbia Economic Team on their tourism branding initiative. The consultant team is very knowledgeable and the process is well thought out. My ask/takeaway is that Scappoose should be completely aligned with the County on this. They're probably going towards an outdoor theme.

NJ: Thanks for mentioning that, Paul. When I spoke with their consultant team, I asked him a similar question because Scappoose is about to enter this process. He told me to think of it like a family where you probably look a lot like your parents but you don't



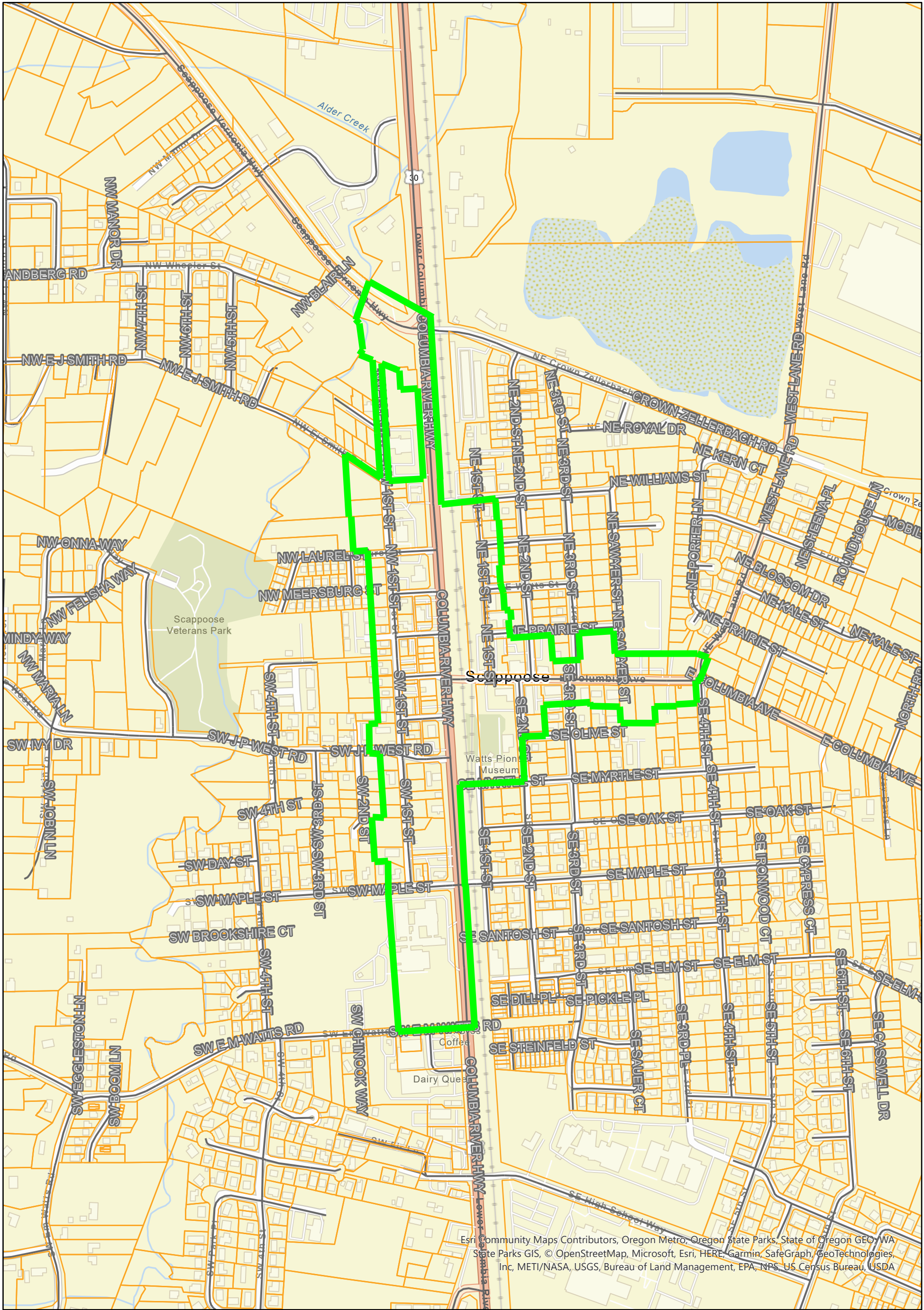
SCAPPOOSE
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look exactly like them. There's certainly going to be similarities and coordination between our branding work and the County's.

Paul: I'm asking specifically about using this branding agency so that the processes align.

NJ: The process of selecting a consultant takes place once we've developed and issued an RFP through the public process. I can't speak to who we're going to select at this point.

4. Meeting Adjourned at 1:33 pm.

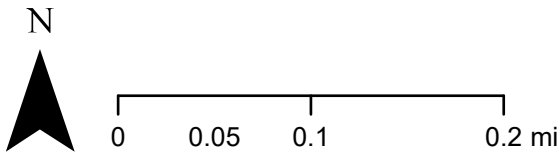


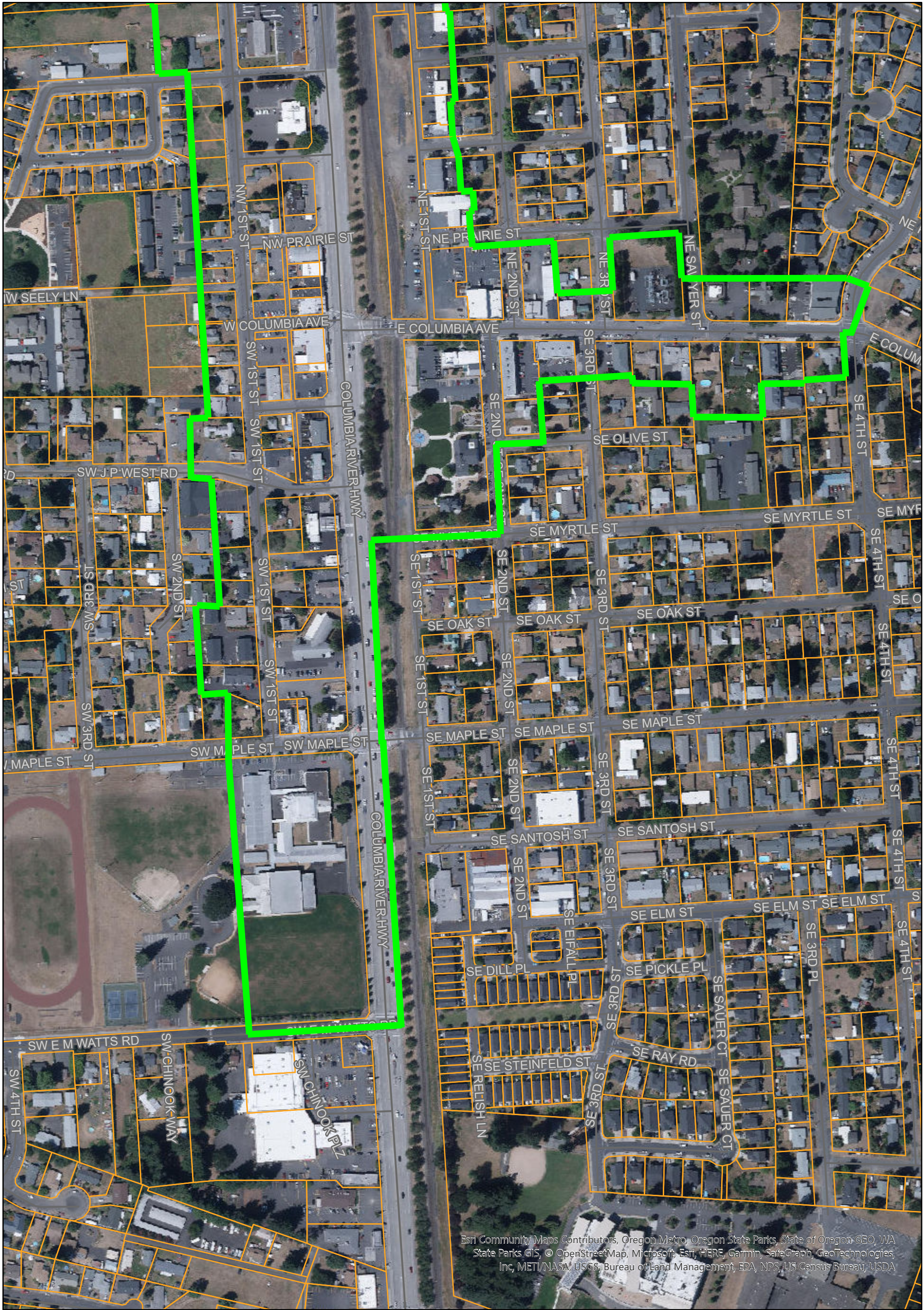
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- Tax Map - Taxlots
- Streets
- Downtown Overlay and Urban Renewal District

Vicinity Map





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