



# MILWAUKIE

*Dogwood City of the West*

**To:** Design and Landmarks Committee

**Through:** Dennis Egner, Planning Director

**From:** Brett Kelper, Associate Planner

**Date:** May 31, 2016, for June 7, 2016, Worksession

**Subject:** Downtown Design Guidelines Update – Session 4

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## **ACTION REQUESTED**

None. This report is preparation for the Committee's ongoing worksession efforts to update the Downtown Design Guidelines (DDG) document.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **History of Prior Actions and Discussions**

- **Winter/Spring 2016:** Ongoing discussion of Milwaukie Character element in the DDG.
- **August 3, 2015:** The Committee discussed and finalized the proposed 2015-2016 DLC Work Program, including the item concerning a DDG update.

## **MILWAUKIE CHARACTER ELEMENT**

At the May 2 meeting, the discussion focused on DDG page 11, the "Reinforce Milwaukie's Sense of Place" guideline. Much of the existing text on DDG page 11 was found to be more useful as background in the "Intent" section on DDG page 10, so staff has made some proposed revisions to both pages (see Attachment 1). We may want to take a few minutes at the June 7 meeting to discuss any comments the members may have on these pages, though it would be ideal if the bulk of the June 7 discussion could focus on three more pages from the DDG:

- Integrate the Environment (p. 12)
- Promote Linkages to Horticultural Heritage (p. 13)
- Establish or Strengthen Gateways (p. 14)

At the May 2 meeting, members noted that DDG pages 12 and 13 have a lot in common and should be reviewed together. See Attachment 2 for copies of these pages to use either in preparation for the meeting or as mark-up copies in the meeting itself. Note that a couple of

suggested edits have already been noted for DDG page 12, pulling from comments at the last two DLC meeting.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed revisions to “Intent” section (DDG page 10) and “Reinforce Milwaukie’s Sense of Place” guideline (DDG page 11) *(from May 2 meeting)*
2. Mark-up copies of DDG pages 12, 13, and 14 *(for use at June 7 meeting)*

Note: E-Packet materials will be available online at <http://www.milwaukieoregon.gov/planning/design-and-landmarks-committee-57>.

## Milwaukie Character

Milwaukie Downtown Design Guidelines

### Intent

These guidelines address Milwaukie's unique "sense of place" - that is, the qualities that make it special and give it personality. They consider what makes Milwaukie a unique collection of spaces and buildings, not simply a group of individual projects.

### History

Milwaukie life has always been oriented to the Willamette. Originally, Clackamas Indians lived in villages along the banks of the River. Milwaukie was officially founded in 1847 by Lot Whitcomb, and its downtown grew along the river in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century.

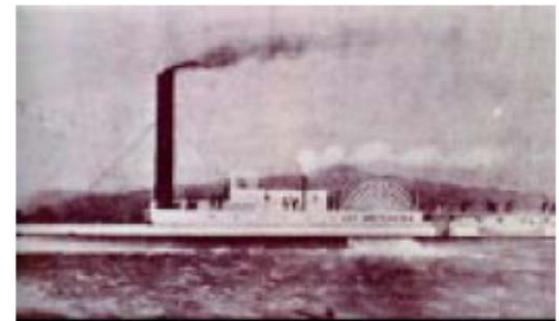
During that period, Milwaukians created its vibrant shipping, shipbuilding, timber, flour milling, and horticulture industries. Lot Whitcomb built one of the earliest steamer ships in Oregon, a sidewheel steamer which he named after himself. The ship began its Milwaukie to Astoria run along the Willamette and Columbia Rivers in 1850.

At the same time Milwaukie's rich heritage of horticulture was born. Settlers from the Midwest, including the Luelling family, moved out to Oregon with an ox-drawn "travelling nursery," carrying 700 fruit trees of all sorts and settling in Milwaukie. They and others continued to create new varieties of fruit, including the Bing cherry. The efforts of these early Milwaukie residents led to the great nursery and orchard business that still thrives in Oregon today.

From the beginning, downtown has been the heart of Milwaukie, and the city's rich heritage should inspire the character of redevelopment in downtown. Its historic Main Street and riverfront should be a place for celebrations and festivities, for the community to gather, and should continue to be an important destination for all who live in Milwaukie.



Milwaukie's waterfront in the 19th century.



Lot Whitcomb on the Willamette River in Milwaukie, 1850.



Milwaukie's waterfront in the 19th century



Main Street parade in the 1950s

## Milwaukie Character

Milwaukie Downtown Design Guidelines

### Reinforce Milwaukie's Sense of Place

#### Guideline

*Strengthen the qualities and characteristics that make Milwaukie a unique place.*

#### Description

From the beginning, downtown has been the heart of Milwaukie, and the city's rich heritage should inspire the character of redevelopment in downtown. The historic Main Street and riverfront should be a place for celebrations and festivities, for the community to gather, and should continue to be an important destination for all who live in Milwaukie.

Milwaukie was a leader in the mid-19th century in the shipping and fruit industries, and this rich heritage should inspire the character of redevelopment in downtown; the Design Guidelines encourage development that authentically reflects Milwaukie's unique history and thus genuinely reinforces its sense of place.

For instance, the adopted Milwaukie Downtown and Riverfront Plan strengthens the town's sense of place by reconnecting downtown to the River, recognizing that Milwaukie life has always been oriented to the Willamette. Originally, Clackamas Indians lived in villages along the banks of the River; Milwaukie was officially founded in 1847 by Lot Whitecomb, and its downtown grew along the river in the mid-19th Century.

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Milwaukie is defined in part by its relationship to Portland. The city takes pride in being an entity that is distinct from its larger neighbor to the north—it is NOT

*(Current images to be deleted and replaced with new.)*

just another Portland neighborhood. It has its own character, its own local government, and its own neighborhoods.

And yet Milwaukie's proximity to Portland, with the variety of transportation connections that have developed over time, is one of the features that makes it a particularly attractive community for long-time residents and newcomers alike. Milwaukians can be close to the bigger city and take advantage of its amenities while enjoying the advantages of life in a smaller community.

#### Recommended

- Emphasize special relationships at pedestrian level first and foremost.
- Riverfront or marine design references.
- Small-town urban character.
- Colorful flowering trees and shrubs.

#### Not Recommended

- Downtown development that has a "themed historic" appearance.
- Overscaled, monotonous, and non-descript development projects.
- Security or privatization measures that physically segregate community members through high-security gates and fences or window bars.
- Development that is universal or generic, which could apply anywhere, whether in downtown Milwaukie, an airport terminal, or a shopping mall.

## Milwaukie Character

Milwaukie Downtown Design Guidelines

### Integrate the Environment

#### Guideline

*Building design should build upon environmental assets.*

#### Description

All new development should capitalize upon its proximity to the Willamette River, Scott Lake, Kellogg and Spring Creek, and other natural assets that make downtown Milwaukie unique. Building designs should feature these environmental assets. Adjacent development should provide graceful transitions and use compatible materials, forms and colors that are harmonious and complementary with these assets.

#### Recommended

- Active and passive gathering areas and walkways oriented toward water elements.
- Public access.
- Natural and/or man-made elements engaging water edges.
- Places where people can directly see, touch, and hear the water.
- Utilizing the environment to improve transitions between commercial areas and natural areas.
- Strengthening or emphasizing environmental features and context.

#### Not Recommended

- Elements that may adversely affect water quality, wildlife habitat or visual quality of natural waterways or vegetation.
- Parking, loading or service areas adjacent to water elements or open space.
- Brightly-colored buildings that clash with the natural colors of the environment that surround them.



Recommended: Public gathering areas engaging streams and ponds  
(Denver, CO)



Recommended: Development facing waterways (Boulder, CO)



Recommended: Public access oriented to natural features  
(Boulder, CO)

## Milwaukie Character

Milwaukie Downtown Design Guidelines

### Promote Linkages to Horticultural Heritage

#### Guideline

*Celebrate Milwaukie's heritage of beautiful green spaces.*

#### Description

Milwaukie, the “Dogwood City,” has a celebrated history of horticultural innovation and beauty. Development that includes courts, plazas, or other open spaces should include gardens, planting areas, and specimen plantings that promote the City's horticultural heritage.

#### Recommended

- Use of dogwoods, cherry, and other flowering, ornamental trees.
- Formally planted, manicured courtyards and squares.

#### Not Recommended

- Large expanses of paved plazas, parking lots or other paved areas.
- Expansive monocultural plantings of turf, groundcover, bark dust or other mulching material.



Recommended: Ornamental flowering trees (McCall Waterfront Park, Portland)



Recommended: Manicured, landscaped gardens and courtyards (Washington Park, Portland)

## Milwaukie Character

Milwaukie Downtown Design Guidelines

### Establish or Strengthen Gateways

#### Guideline

*Projects should use arches, pylons, arbors or other transitions to mark special or primary entries and/or borders between public and private spaces.*

#### Description

Gateways may be used to celebrate access points into private development parcels while clearly indicating the transition between the public and private realm. Gateways should be neither fortress-like nor intimidating. They may occur at entries to courtyards, along walkways, stairs, or pedestrian pathways. Safety should also be a concern.

#### Recommended

- Gated internal courtyards on high-density residential projects.
- Gateways used to separate and indicate transitions from public to private spaces.
- Gateways used to indicate change or separation of transportation modes (i.e., auto areas from pedestrian areas).
- Gateways used to indicate change in land use (i.e., retail mixed use from residential area).
- Ornamental or decorative elements combined with lighting or signs.

#### Not Recommended

- Gated private residential development compounds (including buildings, open space and parking).
- Utilitarian gateway materials (i.e., chain link gate/fence combinations).



Recommended: Gateways into courtyards, squares or entries to pedestrian walkways (Boston, MA and Boulder, CO)



Recommended: Residential or open space gateways (Denver, CO and Dallas, TX)



Not Recommended: Private compounds (NW Westover, Portland)