

Comments from Forum Survey

Dec. 2010-Jan. 2011

The River Forum Survey was a web-based survey posted in January 2011. It received 121 responses. A number of survey questions either allowed additional text responses, or invited open-ended text entries. These comments are displayed verbatim below (they include responses from two emails sent to the Rivers Office when respondents encountered electronic difficulties with the survey). Each row below represents a response from one individual.

Contents:

[3.3. Please select one of the following as the statement that most accurately represents your experience regarding Portland's stretch of the Willamette](#)

[3.4. How important is it to you to have a vital riverfront downtown that acts as Portland's main civic space](#)

[3.5. How often do you use the following to get down to or on to the Willamette?](#)

[3.6. What's the single best thing about Portland's downtown waterfront?](#)

[4.1 What do you think is missing, if anything, from Portland's downtown waterfront?](#)

[4.4 What, if anything, keeps you from getting down to the river more often?](#)

[4.5 Name up to 3 things \(features, actions, ideas\) that would get you more connected to the river](#)

[4.6 Name up to 3 things \(features, actions, ideas\) that would improve the river environment](#)

[Please provide any additional comments](#)

3.3. Please select one of the following as the statement that most accurately represents your experience regarding Portland's stretch of the Willamette (from about the Sellwood Bridge down to the mouth at Kelley Point Park).

I water-ski in the river 2 or 3 times pr week in the summer.
The river should be safe for wimming, but it is not.
Almost all my water-related recreation occurs at Sauvie Island / Columbia R three miles downstream from Willamette confluence.
TOO MANY CONTAMINANTS TO SWIM. NO CURRENT PROOF ON WHAT EFFECT THEY MIGHT HAVE.
This is also why I'm reluctant to go boating more
I prefer to be ON the water, not IN the water
I have not yet but might be inclined to wade or swim at Kelley Point.
access is a problem it does not seem like a good thing to do
I haven't waded or swam in the Willamette, but I would have no qualms about doing so, except after a rain storm when the sewers overflow into the stormwater system and flow into the river.
I don't know whether the river is safe (currents, pollution)
Il have researched and written about the history of water pollution abatement in the Willamette watershed, and, whereas I am keenly aware of the fact that the river is drastically more clean these days than it was up to the 1960s, I still wouldn't swim in the river downstream of Eugene. (I grew up on the Siletz River and feel spoiled to have enjoyed that clean river for decades now.)
I haven't in the past year. I would consider it, but would prefer to go to a cleaner river if I really

want to swim.
Limited access to the river makes use difficult unless by boat and even then there are limited docking locations with land access.
I am hopefully that sewage incidents will decline and that more Portlander will feel comfortable swimming and recreating in the river. We should be able to.
Testing for comments
Not safe for me or my dog. When we get our feet wet from getting in and out of the boat, we go home and wash. When our hands get wet from paddling, we make sure not to put our hands near our face or mouth.
I would swim more if there were more access points for swimming. Now that it's getting cleaned up I think swimming should be included in the overall plan for the river. Imagine, a dock and or an area set aside for swimming. How many cities can boast that kind of resource?
I think sauvie island is below Kelley point so outside the areas you are asking about, I would wade/swim at Sauvie Island
I don't wade or swim in the Willamette, though I did farther up river when I was a kid.
I don't, but not because of water quality. It's just not an appealing activity in this area.
Not enough good, safe public river access points for swimming.
I live in North Portland, and spend a great deal of personal time paddling the river. I also work on the river professionally, and spend a great deal of time in canoes, kayaks, small powerboats, etc as well as wading in/near Sellwood Park, Willamette Park, Ross Island, Cathedral Park, Kelly Point Park, Columbia Slough, Smith & Bybee Wetlands, as well as locations up and down river from Portland.
I am a coxswain for one of the rowing clubs in Portland and work in the environmental consulting business. I understand the term "CSO" and see the effects of it every time it rains. Secondary contact recreation is more than enough exposure to the water quality in the river - I'm glad I have no contact with the sediments in the river.
This is a working river rather than a recreational destination. 800 ships call on the Portland Harbor every year. I go to the river to watch the action.
none of the above characterize my thoughts on wading or swimming in the River
The Willamette River is too contaminated
I have not been in the river in recent years.
Wade maybe, not swim. I don't trust that the water is clean.
The river is too dangerous (currents, hidden stuff under water, changing conditions, etc.). In fact, I don't get into too much of the waters of Oregon because of these circumstances. I almost drowned at Honeyman State Park because of currents.
my office overlooks the river, so i see it everyday
i would wade but have not
We frequently take people on boat tours of the working waterfront to highlight its role in our regional economy and the jobs it creates. Our guests are amazed and often delighted at this aspect of our river.
Nonswimmer.
I'm too concerned about the pollution and also there is not a lot of access points to wade or swim.

too cold
It's not that I never would wade or swim in the River, the opportunity for me has not come up. So I have not yet waded or swam in the river, but I would not be opposed.
The lack of swimming and wading has nothing to do with my perception of the cleanliness of the river - simply don't have the time nor desire to - especially given the heavy boating and recreational use.

[return to top](#)

3.4. How important is it to you to have a vital riverfront downtown that acts as Portland's main civic space (i.e., features places, both commercial and public, that draw people in and enliven the area day and night; has more water-based activities and events; etc.):

Works for San Antonio, St. Paul MN, Baltimore, even Cleveland, Ohio & countless other US cities
I am looking forward to when the river will be cleaner as well.
And industrial users for jobs
Downtown should include both sides of the river. I-5 should be buried, on the Eastside so there a real riverfront here, not an elevated freeway.
I don't want the riverfront to begin feeling 'crowded'. Right now, both sides of the downtown area are already busy with foot/skate/bike traffic. I want the riverfront to be nice, but not overdeveloped and not to negative environmental impacts.
The River is the main attraction that holds East and West Portland together.
I'd like to see some riverfront but not at the expense of having riverwalk overrun with business. It should be a blend of solitude and quaint businesses.
Provided that it does not remove habitat and allows for restoration
You can have a mix of riverfront uses downtown including water-based activities.
Let me specify that my opinion is that the IMPORTANCE of a vital riverfront downtown also includes the benefits that the industrial neighbors contribute to this equation. We cannot forget that it's our industrial folks - and main tax contributors - are vital to economic success of the downtown area. Let's not forget about them!
Most cities, globally, that have vibrant waterfront areas are generally viewed positively - good for people, the economy, tourism, environmental health, etc etc.
BUT not commercial; more important for passive rec (i.e. water and bird watching)
It is important to have a lively downtown, but the activities do not need to be water-based.
we need more vital connections to our river besides downtown
Having it do the work it's supposed to do--move energy through the landscape--is more important.
Alongside industrial uses whenever possible. I see the CLD grain terminal by the Rose Garden and other public and private marine terminals as vitally important assets to our city and region.
The river should be embraced in all of its aspects--working, recreational and habitat. It is fascinating that right here in our city we can sit and listen to a symphony and watch recreational boats and barges loaded with products sail by.
We should have river taxis served by a Trimet pass.

More water based activities that do not affect the resources values of the river. Additional commercial/retail development to "draw" people to the river is NOT the answer.
I love water and the river and would like to see many more access points, rather than just view points.
Important to maintain the view corridor with step back requirements on building height. Avoid high rise close to river that cast shadows and block view. Appreciate waterfront park as a focal point of the city hosting major events and serving as gathering place for citizens.

[return to top](#)

3.5. How often do you use the following to get down to or on to the Willamette?

I live three blocks from Oaks Bottom in Sellwood / the river is a neighbor.
As often as I can. I love the river.
use bridges - frequently
by the way, I don't know what these 'viewpoints' you're referencing are.
I commute by bike on the waterfront and over the bridges almost every day.
While our parks are a great asset, they serve mainly as a buffer to the river, versus a connector. More access points are needed to connect the public with the beauty of our waterways.
In terms of commercial facilities I would only rent kayak, canoe or sailboat. We should champion small craft in the downtown area. How about a small craft boat house?
Public dock at OMSI.
I appreciate having the Portland Spirit in downtown.
My work place is on the river so I frequent the river via my work site
Vehicle access that's pretty close where you don't have to get out of your car--to survey activity and decide whether to get out.
I also go to the Willamette for my job at the marine terminals and aboard ships.
Public access areas for fishing - Frequently, though these opportunities are very limited
River cruises on the paddle boats
love eastside esplanade providing floating boat ramps and trails for access - even if you are not boating

[return to top](#)

3.6. What's the single best thing about Portland's downtown waterfront? (pick just one)

viewing the city and industry by boat
This is difficult. I like it all. Not so much the Esplanade. It's ok.
dedicated green space!
The cool breeze off the water in the summer.
easy access to low/no cost, fun activities in a beautiful environment
Those scenic vistas include birds and other wildlife plus people.
access to walk along the water

swimming!
Hard to choose 1; the combo creates the beauty and joy. Tops are public spaces and must be safe for wildlife, in and around the river
Having thriving industry so that people are gainfully employed (9% Unemployment)
The Portland Spirit
The skyline, bridges, freightors, a bustling economy, and many cultural activities. Basically a mix of all of the above.
Being able to cycle to the river with my canoe in tow and see wildlife in the midst of the city.
It would be nice to walk along the esplanade w/o being run over by bikes.
All of the above is important
Being able to watch the river doing its important work.
businesses and everyday activities that tie how we live to the river rather than turning our back on it architecturally
That it maintains a working waterfront and supports jobs within the Portland Harbor.
Its balanced use of the resource for both commercial and recreational uses
Having places where you can actually get right down to the water.
it is easily accessible

[return to top](#)

4.1 What do you think is missing, if anything, from Portland's downtown waterfront?

spots to get right down to the river level. Most spots on the esplanade and waterfront park are 20+ feet above the river.
virtually no access for many neighborhoods -- NW/Pearl; Brooklyn & HAND, inner NE
more ways to get TO the water (not necessarily ON)
more boaters and more industrial activities and more transportation eg ferries
remove the Marqum Bridge and the Eastbank Freeway
a knowledge of the wildlife (fish, turtles, etc). in the earlier question, I didn't even think you could see ospreys, etc from the downtown waterfront, but I do enjoy the wildlife very much nearer to Oak's Bottom
Westside waterfront needs a bike path separate from the people wandering aimlessly on the waterfront. It's dangerous, and they're very different uses of the same space. (And not just the bike lane on Naito. Cyclists deserve to bike with the waterfront view, away from car exhaust.
a walking/biking connection all along the waterfront, up to Kelley Point Park
It seems as though a permanent maritime/riverine center is needed and conspicuously missing.
Would love it if we were able to staff a lifeguard on Portland's swimming beach.
access to the water's edge as a walker/biker, especially on the east side
I reluctantly checked "more dining/coffee." I find waterfront dining way too expensive and therefore not accessible to the regular Jo. How about more weekday models like Saturday market where you can get cheap eats and sit in the park? What if there was a business/park model where restaurant proceeds supported the purchase of more waterfront public spaces. An

interconnected symbiotic relationship where in exchange for lower rent/lower food prices, there was also public accessibility to the waterfront? Need some indoor spaces for year round eating.
The re-alignment of I-5 away from the river on the Eastside.
more educational facilities and opportunities, particularly for school groups
Removing or lowering the concrete sea wall along the west bank of river so people can get river access.
Public art that reflects on or incorporates the waterway
Less riprap; it's time to pull some of the banks back and restore natural function
safer places to walk. The esplanade is no fun because of the bikers.
Working on salmon access to Kellogg Creek in Milwaukie (blocked by ODOT's road)
I think that it should be more engaging all the time with food and possibly small sales kiosks like along european city rivers
Public market like Seattle's
River taxi served by Trimet pass.
personal, not boating, access to the water - not just as diarama
Water taxis from Milwaukie area
I'd love to see something like WaterFire, that would be a huge draw. All glad to have the bridge festival last year, although more family friendly events would be better.
a better waterfront venue, like an ampitheater

[return to top](#)

4.4 What, if anything, keeps you from getting down to the river more often?

Some areas do not feel safe at certain times of day. "bums" hanging out in the old town area. Also some sections on the esplanade can feel unsafe if it's really quiet out. Late night.
boat noise; traffic noise; and, at times, exhaust fumes from boats.
few if any public amenities, particularly on east side, w/o freeway or industrial pre-emption from Ross Island to St. Johns
More, more, more.
I live closer to the Tualatin
poor and expensive parking, vagrants, drug dealers
lack of leisure time to wander about. but, you can't do anything about that. Peaceful areas near the river might be good though. Like that section on the east side where there's the statue of the laughing boy on the bench. Or that 'gateway' thing under an overpass.
Other than taking a walk or kayaking, the river is something you see in the background. Also, during festivals, sometimes you cannot get to the waterfront path without paying the entry fee. The public space is turned private.
river trail dead-ends as you go north from downtown.
The rain/weather.
you can get alongside the river, but I want to sit right by the shore and wade in or throw rocks. Interact WITH the river, not just be next to it behind a fence.

few good places to go and be for the purpose of connecting with the river
noise
I live in the suburbs.
It would be nice if there were more centrally located direct access points
It's in town, I'd rather be on a wild river than a urban one, and I seldom go downtown
less freeway, but please don't think about spending our limited public dollars to move it
Time & work commitments.
Time
parenting and house projects
Why would I want to get to the water? I'm just fine viewing it.
spending so much time on surveys on the computer
I live 1/2 block from the River, south of Milwaukie, but my responses are re: Pdx
I'm usually there 5 or 6 days a week - paddle 3 time/week, bike 3 or more times a week; one must do laundry sometimes.
My husband is always concerned about the big homeless population.
I assume this question means actually getting to the water itself. Personally, I like to be next to and view the water more often than actually get to the water. In that regard I don't think anything is keeping from the river.

[return to top](#)

4.5 Name up to 3 things (features, actions, ideas) that would get you more connected to the river (e.g., more organized nature tours; a place to have a beer and look at the river; a river-history center; a ferris wheel; water taxi; etc.)

Maybe OMSI could have a meter showing temp, flow rate- you could link it with USGS Gage
more boating launch points
much better control of boat noise; more nature tours
more tours, & amenities; more kayak, canoe rental; more Greenway trails /
Cleaner, healthier; A complete greenway trail; More habitat but with access
public access areas such as parks, trails, beaches, docks; remove/renovate obstructions like old sea walls; better street to river areas (see #1) connections, esp eastside
cleaner water; places to swim safely (once the water's clean); being able to access it biking while pulling a kayak on a trailer:)
less jet boats; less jet skis; less wake boarders
more pubs with waterfront views; water taxi; more natural areas (not just grass parks)
more canoes
more bank access, swimming/wading areas; more riverfront development (ie Centennial Mill; east side); water taxi
Remove I-5 on the eastside; A major entertainment destination such as a baseball park or amusement park with downtown views; More restaurants/bars

use for transportation - Ferries; westside boat docks; more nearby parking
Better access for canoes and kayaks on both sides
remove the Rose Festival Fun Center from Waterfront Park and maintain the grass all summer; remove the Eastbank Freeway; activities that a low income senior citizen would enjoy
In the downtown stretch, more access points like those on the east side esplanade; more places to have a beer and look at the river; eliminate the sea-wall in several places and replace it with a sand beach
Green things. An awareness of shoreline and fish; an ability to go fishing in the river and eat what I catch; known safe areas to go swimming/kayaking
River history center is a FABULOUS idea; a place to have a beer and look at the river; more natural areas
Do something about the big wall that separates people from the river on the waterfront; Don't forget about the bridges. That's where I experience the river most often, as I bike over.
connected bike/walking trail from downtown to the Columbia; cafes along this trail would be kind of fun
River History/Maritime Center (ecological, historical, sailing, youth programs, etc); Water taxi; More connections directly to the water versus ABOVE it
I don't know enough about the various options to comment.
Bankside amphitheater, movable floating stage; Water taxis; More eating and drinking venues
more amenities; a destination resource - botanical garden maybe; more nature information
lifeguards; more docks for boats, more options for boat rentals; floating bar
Coffee/outdoor cafe; ferry tours like in Vancouver, connecting to farmers market like Granville; Summer campouts for kids
An Oregon Maritime museum; Water taxi; Close in boat launch sites
The idea of a water taxi is neat, would be fun to share with visitors.; I love the artwork along the river. More of that; NP Greenway, more river side path north on the east side and south on the west side
continuous trail routes; pededstrian bridge; accessible beach
Commercial activity - look at Seattle
Temporary art on the river and adjacent to the river; Fireworks; More vehicular bridges over the river
better access (especially inner east side); more quiet places to sit and enjoy views and wildlife
wake free zones
a swimming area; docks for fishing or swimming too. Could be seasonal.; availability of small craft to rent.
Easier kayaking access; Place to have a beer; Clean Water
better east side access away from freeway noise; east side river park/natural area; water taxi would be great, commute from Sellwood to downtown by water!
easier access; river access map / visual aids - we have bike maps, why not water maps?
A water taxi would be cool for visitors, like in Vancouver, B.C.; More trails and access to the river.; Increased acerage of the greenway along the river.

clean water/beach area for swimming/lounging; better access points
riverside cafes and pubs; better paths separating pedestrians from bikes
free kayak/canoe trips; less pollution; fewer motor boats
More water-related jobs full-time year-round; Signage and displays along existing parks; reconnection to the thriving waterfront roots of Portland
beer; kayak
restaurant/beer/coffee with a view on east side; kids park/play area on the east side; river-oriented sight seeing more nature tours and public trails along the river; more and better public access points along the river; places to have wine/beer/food closer to river bank
more organized nature tours; restaurants/cafes; river history center
cruise terminal; more food options; more docking for boats More dining options with indoor and outdoor seating on river; Water taxi with stops from Lake Oswego to Vancouver
all of your suggestions sound good- I hadn't really thought about it; interactive activities to learn more (not phone apps!)
improved beach access; east side restraunts
A public swimming beach if the water quality / sediments were cleaner; If I-5 could be moved the Esplanade would be a nicer place to visit (that'll never happen); move the homeless people that stay under the elevated highway sections someplace else
Less noise
A history of Portland's working harbor - fascinating
more organized nature tours; more places to actually get down to the water; more cafes with river views
water taxi
Access; Nature trails such as board walks over riparian areas; Water taxi would be great
Places on the river for repeat meetings (like watershed council); Group gatherings; School field trips
restaurants closer to the river; more people for a feeling of safety; possibly retail kiosks/carts for business startups along the river as part of park design
restaraunts, coffe shops etc; things to do without spending a lot of money; better kayak/canoe access
activities; businesses on, near or overlooking the river; water taxis Water taxi; Wildlife habitats; year round farmers/fish market like Pike Place
More boat launches; Cafes and other commercial areas near kayak rental spots; Love the river history center idea!
continuous hiking/biking trail; better access to parking; better access from public transportation
Access; Access; Access
Pockets of better habitat; parking for boaters; a boat ramp
Water Taxi; Place to have tea and watch the river; Kayak classes/access
River commerce to put more working people on the river
extend esplanade; better winter rescue; more natural areas

More kayak and canoe rental places; More "walk to" access points
affordable family eatery/pub on the river; more access points; kids activities
Connected pathways all along the riverfront; River and Bridge museum/history center; paddle boats to make river accessible to entire families
Functional art pieces; better walking areas in "the Bowl"
Better Trail connectivity; less festivals and more casual use of parks during nice weather; more free and open concerts in the open spaces
places to have a beer, especially on the East side
Riverside pubs; Access accross I-5 in Central Eastside
places for beer wine, ice cream on northeast side, between steel and Broadway; walking biking tours; outdoor kids activities near OMSI - river walks
Dining places with a river view; River areas that are only for non motorized boats
More "natural" river banks with view points; Restaurants with windows and outdoor seating along the river; Moving I-5 on the east sidemore organized nature tours; more walking/city events like Doggie Dash; more community events such as Bridge Pedal
water taxi; kayak launch point/rowing launch docks; better public boat house and dock facilities

[return to top](#)

4.6 Name up to 3 things (features, actions, ideas) that would improve the river environment (e.g., more trees and vegetation on the banks; more ways to learn about the river [signs; smart phone app's]; more river clean-ups; more ways to keep stormwater out of the river; etc.)

cleaner water, more info about water quality (smart phone app)
Sound barriers to block highway noise while on the eastbank esplanade near Morrison bridge - it can be deafening. much better control of boat noise and motor vehicle traffic noise; more signage of plants and natural features; keeping the river cleaner
native trees, shrubs; more interpretative info; restore natural banks, remove rip-rap & weeds
More river clean ups; A complete greenway trail; More accessible habitat, Yeaaaaaa BIG PIPE
river/water related activities with small boats, get folks on the water; environmental restoration; if river is about nature, skip the apps that feed distraction
trees and natural areas; educational materials; shops, dining, river-centric stores
a way to keep any and all sewage out of the river; parks, maybe with nature/picnic areas;
less wake boarders; less jet skis; less jet boats
Keeping storm water out of the river; More trees and native vegetation; More side channels for salmon spawning
no jet boatsmore protection of the river from pollution; complete trails to Lake Oswego/Oregon City on both sides;
more river clean-ups; more press;
More city streetcar routes and bikeways to reduce run-off; Less surface parking throughout the city; Habitat restoration up stream outside the UGB
slower and more considerate bikers; more parking to access commercial boats; get the vagrants

and drug dealers off the trails
Keep and grow family wage industrial jobs on the North Reach and rethink the Plan before it impacts our job base. Portland cannot afford to use the whole Willamette River as a playground, when the Columbia/Willamette is our most important economic asset. tiered access to the river on both sides; longer trails on both sides of the river; low cost rental of paddle boats, canoes, etc., swimming
reduction of stormwater inputs; eliminate all industrial discharges;
publicly visible monitors of pollution levels; a celebration of the ability to canoe/kayak on or fish from the river might make people more interested in and invested in river quality; increased awareness of the fish that inhabit the river. Salmon festival or something to link us with the natural patterns of the river.
more trees and vegetation on the banks; more ways to learn about the river;
Continued progress on green stormwater facilities with signage to help people understand the land-water connection; Restore side channels and refuge areas; pollution prevention
restoration for fish and birds along the water; serious commitment to preserving natural spaces along the water in perpetuity, instead of having them developed one by one.;
enhance the ease of docks for all uses; beach, lower elevation access for public to access and touch river; fun educational programs focused on youth
I don't know enough about the options to comment. New eastbank park between Steel and Broadway Bridges; Curves in RR eliminated, tracks moved east into tunnel; Trail connection between new park and Katz Esplanade
more gardens/landscaping; more signage; no more festivals - permanent structures
trees and vegatiion; banning chemicals on lawns/landscapes for homeowners and business on the river.; expand east and west side bike path.
less of those boulders and sea walls; historical nature walk;
No wake zones between Ross Island and Broadway bridges; Keep the geese off the grass;
More diadactic material would improve the learning aspect; More clean ups south of OMSI, that area gets very trashed;
daylighting tributary streams; remove armour and create beaches; more trees and shady shallows
shape the city and its river relationships through some key plans--especially the Central City 2035 Plan and the River Plan. To make sure these fresh looks at the river reflect the interests, aspirations, and wisdom of Portlanders, the Office of Healthy Working Rivers is holding this two-hour public brainstorming session to get public input. This River Forum will be followed in February with a couple of river symposia hosted by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, where local river experts will discuss ideas raised at the Forum and elsewhere to frame Portland's river plans. finish the big pipe project Completion of the big pipe; City leadership on a realistic and cost effective clean up of the superfund site;
more trees and vegetated shoreline; access to the water's edge;
clean industry; educate at drains; bioswales
more landscaping; mitigate the freeway noise on the riverwalk on the eastside with a wall and sound deadening under the bridges.; interesting and complimentary art pieces
Remove all CSOs; Remove hardened banks and replant; Remove gas powered motor boats from downtown area

more interspersed natural areas with trees like there is south of riverplacetrees and vegetation; beaches;
More greenway space.; More river clean-ups, increased funding for NGOs like Willamette Riverkeeper; Reduce non-point source pollution like run-off from streets and lawns.
complete circuit pathway connection along river on both sides - the ability to stay along river down to Ross Island bridge and back; more ways to learn about the river and Portland's connection to it; areas for children to connect and learn with the river, play around the area
better direct access, maybe boardwalks; restore historical wetlands and sloughs; restore the tributaries in the watershed
More river clean-up and less regulatory delay; Removal of Restrictive Greenway & River Review; Encouraging the City of Portland to support existing businesses along the Willamette River
treemore trees specifically to separate from I-5; cleaner river;
more natural streambanks, e.g., less walls and riprap; keeping stormwater out of river, e.g., holding and treating it first; keeping personal care products and pharmaceuticals out of the river
removing I-5; more trees and vegetation;
stormwater divered from river; we have lots of green waterfront..maybe more signs; tell the story of how clean the river
less stormwater; more information to public at river edge; more wildlife incentives
More stormwater treatment; More habitat; Ag runoff control upstream in the watershed
vegetation in riparian zone; Harbor clean-up; reduced CBO spills
Pull back river banks and revegetate; Control invasive weeds!; Control wakes and speed
more trees and vegetation; removing the freeway;
More river cleanups would help; Finish the big pipe so the CSO issue is dealt with;
More natural vegetation; More rocks;
The river environment is really quite good.; What's wrong with it?;
more trees; less litter; clean up contaminated sites
trees,vegetation on banks; less pollution, sewage; better safety at night, in public areas.
tributary creek restoration; nature parks along rivers edge; clean up of contaminants and restoration of river banks
unfettered salmon access to ALL tribs to river (i.e. Kellogg, Boardman, Tyron); Summer water features at or near the water, safe for toddlers; Public agencies change their ways
less pollutants allowed to flow into it from any source; mitigate the contamination on its banks; fish friendly vegetation on the banks
stormwater management; clean up the river; control the geese
address panhandlers and street people on paths and under bridges; river cleanups;
Habitat improvements (wetland and riparian buffers); stormwater flow reductions.; River walk interpretive signage (human and natural history)
keeping stormwater out of the river; riverbank enhancements with real environmental benefit; fewer homeless encampments
family-friendly spaces; water clean enough that the kids can play in it; fewer CSO's

shoreline diversity; Shaded banks; bank habitat complexity
Clean up the Superfund Area, stop pollution at source; More tree canopy and native plants along the banks; Educational ops
Compatible economic development that will connect caring people with resources to continue environmental enhancements less rip rap, sea walls and channelization of the river; more trees; slower motor speeds in selected areas
Nature signs would be great; Keeping stormwater out would also be great; Generally making it cleaner
connection/ access to the water - paths are high above; interactive/fun educational stops/points; more people/activities would feel safer/more inviting year-round
Keep stormwater out of river - thank you Big Pipe!; Definitely river clean-ups; Signs along paths about river, habitat, wildlife, etc.
Native vegetation; stormwater pollution control;
completion of CSO project; implementation of a city-wide system of stormwater swales; more trees in the city
more access/use of the stretch between the silos and st Johns to enforce maintenance/safety Full-on riparian vegetation; Motorboat-free area east of Ross Island;
industrial mitigation; more river clean-ups; learn about the river - apps
A more natural view; continued water quality improvements;
A more "natural" river bank - reduce extent of riprap, remove seawall, add native vegetation; Retrofit stormwater facilities to reduce transport of pollutants to the river; daylight tributary stream and improve confluence habitats
keeping tall buildings away from the waterfront; move I-5 from eastside river bank to structure over MLK; create more green space on east bank - soften and open up to balance the riverbank to better match west side and create more community gathering space
finish the CSO Big Pipe project; control run off from streets and highways

[return to top](#)

Please add any comments below

I live close to the convention center and I love being close to the river. I love crossing it and running around it. Its nice to have a huge open space to recreate in. Portland has a better infrastructure around the river than any other place I've ever lived. Wahoo!
Perhaps having more water related competitions that shoreline spectators can enjoy would help Portlanders connect more with the river, such as swim, sailboat, or rowing races, and waterski and wakeboard competitions.
Jet-skis (personal watercraft) and water skiing should not be allowed on the river. Recreational boating should be limited to sail-powered, human-powered or to the use of quiet electric motors.
More public utilization & friendly access -- Powers Marine Park, Holgate channel, Ross Island Commit city resources to Multnomah Channel / Harborton natural areas & limited access just north Linnton Will the Port of Portland ever participate in public 'enjoyment' of its riverfront properties? Has anyone every asked?
I would like to see more people active in the clean up of the river both in the Superfund site and the SOLV type of clean ups and plantings. It would be nice to have more beaches and access to the river once it is cleaned up. Once the BIG PIPE is built I would like to see a more natural way

<p>of filtering stormwater. The new generation of filtering water using biological sources is phenomenol. See the Oregon Garden for a great example. Thank you for this opportunity to comment. I hope these are taken to heart and used.</p>
<p>The biggest drawback (and it's a huge one) for me is the potential of sewage in the river. I enjoy seeing the river, and being near it, but it sure would be awesome to feel safe swimming and kayaking in it, too!</p>
<p>Removing or downgrading I-5 on the eastside would by far be the most transformative thing that should be done. The inner eastside needs a major attraction and the space to put it.</p>
<p>The river is under used. It's a free right of way and should have more commercial/industrial activity. It should have better access for those of us who have to drive to it e.g. parking. There are plenty of parks and trails for bikes and pedestrians.</p>
<p>From the questions, I assume the River Forum is just about the downtown and recreation uses of the river. These things are very important, but I am most concerned that the proposed North Reach Plan could be putting Portland's strong industrial riverfront economic base at risk, in the midst of a severe recession, and at a time when Multnomah Co ranks 198th out of 199 US metro counties in private job creation in the last decade. I think the City needs to open a broader dialogue about the river's and the City's economic future before adopting the current proposed North Reach plan.</p>
<p>fewer motorized boats Better bridges that are more pedestrian friendly and lower. Restrict commercial ships an barges south of the Burnside Bridge A more natural environment along the river with special places to visit. Bring back Neighborfair and Folkfest (it was in existance from 1976 to about 1988 and was the first major event in McCall Waterfront Park.</p>
<p>I suppose that people of all sorts will want to use the river in their own way: nature appreciators, fishers, boaters, people wanting to have a drink, people wanting the riverfront to be busy and vibrant, etc... (busy and vibrant sounds nice, but I would also appreciate some 'calm and peaceful'), so I think we should just be careful to not try to make the whole thing one way, but perhaps everyone can have their characteristic pockets of the riverfront to make it an even more exciting journey from the steel bridge to Sellwood. (...I really like the natural spaces in Sellwood, but the people and places near downtown are also fun) Ooh. maybe near-river food carts would facilitate strolling, viewing, and munching as a "thing to do" Of course, I'd have to get to the waterfront with the intention to stroll first. It's a good place to stroll, but I think it would be nicer if there were more green areas or something to set off one part as different from another. I keep thinking of it all as long, gray cement. The couple times I've walked there with friends, the walking is fine, but it would be neat if there were more sheltered-feeling areas to sit. Perhaps if the benches weren't just all like one another...The Portsmouth Square in San Francisco and the LanSu Garden I think both offer ways of making a small amount of space seem very large and versatile.</p>
<p>Keep up the great work! Public desires for use of the river and city and state government capacity to achieve these desires have changed and evolved drastically over the past 150 years, and it seems to me that we're on the (gradual) path to balancing the urban and natural environments in a way that facilitates citizens and businesses.</p>
<p>Acknowledge the tributaries that used to exist in Portland, perhaps with signage where they used to flow. Helps people connect with the river when they're not right next to it.</p>
<p>Development along the River should focus on redevelopment of existing sites instead of developing the few remaining natural-ish areas. Riverbanks should be restored in key places to protect the fish that need the whole river system to thrive.</p>
<p>remove festivals from tom mccall park (blues festival in bowl could probably stay). take those blocks and create a destination project - a botanical garden, food market, etc. - to drive traffic to the river. develop permanent gardens, architecture that enhances waterfront. Because of festival usage the area must by necessity be "faceless" and without character building elements.</p>

We should be swimming and playing more on the river.
"Great survey overall. The last two questions didn't accept my answers, so you may want to look at how they are set up. Here are my answers again. Thanks for your work! Please enter a positive number. (This is the survey monkey message I got when I tried to submit these comments) Name up to 3 things (features, actions, ideas) that would get you more connected to the river (e.g., more organized nature tours; a place to have a beer and look at the river; a river-history center; a ferris wheel; water taxi; etc.) 1. A wake free zone at Ross Island. Awful to have motor boats roaring by you when you are canoeing. 2. More easy access points (and coffee/pub/sandwiches) for non-motorized boats. We don't need big launching pads, docks, or long parking spaces. We can carry from the parking lot to a sidewalk- sized ramp. And there are a lot of us to help a business thrive. What if the sandwich/breakfast/coffee-(beer wouldn't be bad either) shop had a parking lot and sidewalk down to the river with signs that said ""boaters welcome to park here."" I bet that would be good for business. 3. Other places/zones (cove, half) on the river for non-motorized boats? Name up to 3 things (features, actions, ideas) that would improve the river environment (e.g., more trees and vegetation on the banks; more ways to learn about the river [signs; smart phone app's]; more river clean-ups; more ways to keep stormwater out of the river; etc. 1. ""clean industry"" - more public involvement from river businesses finding ways to keep the river clean. Not just DEQ enforcement, but true evolution of practices because its good for business and good for the Willamette 2. Paint and re-paint all drains - this flows to the Willamette 3. Keep on track with development and re-development to use permeable surface, bioswale, eco-roofs, etc. Tax incentives to make price not a burden. Think long term and don't let ""immediate result"" people get in the way of workable ideas that will make a difference. Change takes time."
I just want to reiterate that the plan should include a place to swim. I can think of some european cities that have incorporated this into their plans but I don't know of any u.s. cities that do. Imagine floating in the Willamette on hot August day. We could turn our air conditioners off and possibly save the planet.
Make the entire river in the city no wake. Let's go green.
If marine business continues to be driven out of Portland and the Willamette River, we'll have a nice river to visit after picking up our unemployment checks. Seriously, is anyone in the City looking for a balance? It certainly doesn't seem like it to me.□
I'm a native Portlander who has a positive view of the river as scenery, but a fairly negative view of actually using the river (swimming, boating, etc). If I'm wrong about the water quality of the Willamette, I think education is key to getting more folks to use the river.
Ensure good pedestrian and bike paths (separate!!) along new max river crossing.
The Willamette River is essential for moving goods and commerce up and down the river. When looking at rail, trucking and barge transport by far the most economical is barge shipments of goods. Creating jobs related to the Willamette River and helping existing business survive and thrive should be the focus not tourism, water skiing, and recreational boating. What is happening by not supporting local waterfront business in the Central Reach, and along the entire Willamette River you create congestion and increase carbon footprint and encourage commuting. Business as a whole find the City of Portland as not-so-business-friendly but, a great place to live. Most business along the Harbor have made significant capital investments which are not easily transferable to other locations. Due to the restrictive codes, ordinances, and lengthy review processes Portland gets a D+ or F for new business wanting to locate here. Look at Vancouver, WA, Kalama, WA, Longview, WA, Camas, WA, Pasco, WA, Troutdale, OR, Hood River, OR, The Dalles, OR all of these places welcome business and encourage waterfront business. The City of Portland should rethink it's focus.
Please extend the west side river trail south from RiverPlace marina to connect with the existing trail along the Johns Landing area, and also extend it south from Sellwood Bridge. That would help greatly in connecting people on the west side with the river. Work on more natural riparian

<p>zones along the river, instead of riprap and concrete walls. Have more canoe and kayak rental shops that are reasonable in price. Limit use of high speed, large wake motor boats and jet skis in the city reaches of the river, e.g., make it a no wake zone. Consider developing a water taxi service(s) downtown to get across the river. Ensure there will be a bike and pedestrian walkway constructed as part of the new SE-Milwaukie light rail crossing project.</p>
<p>It would be nice to see sailboats on the river, much like the Charles River in Boston. But to do that would probably require less barge traffic from Ross Island Gravel. Also, I think the proximity and noise of I-5 plays a significant role in making the Eastside Esplanade less pleasant than it otherwise would be. It seems to principally be a place for bike commuters, people out for exercise, or the homeless. The East side of the river could definitely use more life and viable attractions.</p>
<p>We need to end the war on commerce in this city. Allow more commercial activity...boat rentals etc..docks food options, more life on the river</p>
<p>There appears to be some kind of a glitch or an error in the computer code for Questions 5 and 6 initially. When I wrote in my answers the first time it wouldn't let me move off the page and gave the error message "Please enter a positive number". I erased the answers, came to this page, and went back and then it let me enter my answers.</p>
<p>Check out the new Brooklyn Bridge Park website. Nice execution!</p>
<p>The Willamette is a working river so keeping it clean is a tough thing to do, especially with the industrial history of Portland and Portland Harbor. Continual cleanups, reducing current pollution loads and maybe some riparian restoration efforts (instead of rip-rap armoring the shoreline, which is necessary I understand) may help aesthetically enhance this stretch. Public education (signage? if people actually cared to read them and/or they weren't vandalized) would also help - but the amount of general apathy in the city is pretty high. Get more school kids involved in keeping the river clean? Seems to have worked in some cities back east - have the public feel like they're taking ownership and they'd be more inclined to get involved.</p>
<p>It's important to remember this is a working river. 40,000 men and women work in or near the Portland Harbor. The city should embrace these jobs and take steps to ensure the viability of the working harbor for future generations.</p>
<p>limits on building heights help scenic vistas. perhaps unrealistic. south waterfront towers are eye sores, block views, not enough waterside pedestrian, bike, areas. business, industrial pollution is hard to enforce against. The power of greed versus the common good. The city has done great things with the river. Not much room for improvement. Due to Sinful nature of mankind. As above, pollution, greed, violence, etc.</p>
<p>Portland needs more connection to its primary waterways. It should be a primary resource for not only industry but also for creating a healthy community by connecting people with the water. Opportunities for recreation as a jobs creator as it pertains to the Willamette river are overlooked.</p>
<p>Our urban creeks feeding into the river that should be home to salmon are not getting enough political support and funding for actual restoration and better fish access. Further, our neighborhoods are not really sustainable if salmon can't be a part of it year around. This is especially evident in Clackamas County and its cities on BOTH sides of the river.</p>
<p>The more people that are actively engaged in the riverscape, the more people will care about the river. right now, the businesses located along the river are spotty, have turned their back to the river. The esplanade and waterfront are great for runners/bikers but outside of the limited draw of the Saturday Market, no one wants to go down there. I also HATE the Rose Festival and think it is a giant mess of an event. I never took my kids there the entire time they were growing up - really any vacant lot would work for that. Encourage business start-ups by allowing some sort of business kiosks and or carts for a limited time. These can be uniform in design and rented out by the parks department. I for one want to see more folks along the river in Waterfront Park. I think families and tourists would be more tempted to spend time there if there were things to do</p>

and if the park environment weren't so bleak between "food on a stick" festivals.
river festivals should never include putting dye in the river (as was done a couple years ago through a pumper boat- some colored material...) just thought I'd mention -always bothered me
Thanks for the opportunity to comment. I'm hoping to see more on industry's positive role and the river as a place for trade, transportation and jobs as well as a visual and recreational amenity.
Thanks for your efforts to beautify and connect the city to the river!
Don't let business/industry take over valuable wildlife habitat on Hayden Island. "Jobs" can be made to happen on a variety of places (some cheaper and more convenient than others),and can be established later where other things exist now. Wildlife habitat, once gone, is almost impossible to restore. Our grandchildren deserve at least as good as we got.
I'm very concerned that special interest groups are working so hard on our elected officials to gain support for restricting/prohibiting certain existing and traditional uses, and to define and designate areas of the river for restricted, specific use.
These questions help me realize that I mostly like the sense of the river in the middle of our city-- its expanse, the activity on the river. I enjoy it most often by river walks, including across the existing bridges. Less often, I will go to an event at the park along the river, but like being able to do that. I don't need to change much for me to have these ways to enjoy the river.
I'm deeply concerned about the folks who dump their chemicals into the river from their businesses, such as the chemical that causes nerve damage, in the Barokavich film. (Have no idea how to spell her name!) They need to be cited, and fined. I understand they have been cited over 70 times, the fine is \$150 per citation, and they have paid 0\$! Go get these folks! Get the Feds after them! This is completely unacceptable. How many people know that the river is tidal? I lived in Portland for over 30 years before I knew that! It's such a cool thing to know, and explains why sometimes the river is flowing "backwards". Public education about the fish and wildlife who live here, and what they need in order to survive, and why that matters to human beings. A river iphone ap sounds like a lovely idea to me. Developing some kind of school curriculum might be helpful - especially around the watersheds that drain into the river, so people can begin to see how it all links together, even if they live in the SW hills, or deep in SE.
I am concerned that the focus on non-economic uses of the river will, over the long term, leave too few resources to sustain the improvements in the environment in general and river habitat in particular. Check river quality associated with places such as Eastern Europe.
My main concern is the visual aspect and shoddy nature of "the Bowl" area just southwest of the Hawthorn bridge. The trail adjacent to the water is ugly and dangerous, and a lack of design and native vegetation allows the large volume of goose scat deposited on the grass to run directly into the river. Goose scat is known to carry Cryptosporidium, among other dangerous pathogens, and geese browse the lawn through much of the year, especially winter, when rainfall is greatest. Recontouring of the lawn to slow runoff and provide better structure for the music festivals may be in order, and implementation of the master plan would be a good start. On another note, it seems that a more semi-permanent structure or foundation for the festival stages would make more sense than requiring the stages to be built from scratch each time. thanks for your consideration.
The riverfront in downtown is great. the portion between the rose garden and st johns needs to be improved and better utilized. at the same time, industry needs to stay in these areas.
Portland residents and visitors need continuous, direct access along the east side of the river from the Marquam Bridge to I-84. This would necessitate covering this section of I-5 with a park or digging a new tunnel for the freeway.
I think revitalizing the river will take a mix of development and social activities/education, people need to experience it to care about it.

I don't live in Portland, I work here and have for over 12 years. I wish that the City would consider the opinions of those who work in downtown and spend our lunch hours walking/jogging along the river. This also explains my answer to "would you take visitors to the Willamette" - it's just too far from my home (but there wasn't a place to put a rationale for why I don't take people to the river.) Some of the questions were confusing as to what you wanted; like the questions about water quality and Port exports. Were you trying to gauge my perceptions or how much I know? Also, it felt like there was an assumption that people want to have direct access to the water, be able to touch it. I enjoy walking along the river, eating a restaurants by it and going to events. While I have been out on the water and enjoyed that, my primary desire is to see it and be near it, not necessary wade in it (although I am not opposed to wading in the water.)

I understand the proposal is to revise city code and requirements to allow high rise developement, similar to the South Waterfront. I am very much opposed to that proposal. I believe the South Waterfront was developed with high rises primarily because of the contaminated site conditions making it very costly to develop in this area. Developers argued that higher density was required to make it economically feasible to develop. This was an EXCEPTION and should not be taken as THE MODEL.... Part of what makes Portland waterfront so beautiful and enjoyable to many is the fact that buildings are stepped back in height providing an open view corridor for the river as you live and work in downtown as well as travel across the many beautiful buildings. In addition, the stepped back approach provides for more light for vegetation to grow and for people to enjoy as they walk through the water front area. This open, sunny environment promotes people's desire to go to the water front for recreation and enjoyment. If the goal is to bring more people to the waterfront - I believe you should look at opportunities to take the streams out of the pipes in the westhills and restore the natural creeks with trails from the westhill nature trails down to the river. Make the natural trail system accesssible and connect to the Willamette. Provide parkways for people from downtown to walk that connect down to the river. The first urban renewal area by the Keller Auditorium needs to be re-energized. This is in the same area as some of the buried creeks. Consider redeveloping the area with a parkway running west to east bringing PSU area down to the waterfront. This would be a fantastic improvement.

I believe there is an important social justice element to Willamette River health issues in Portland. North Portland is particularly affected by the poor health of the Willamette River due to pollution. Recreation such as boating, swimming & fishing and local wildlife have all been put at risk. Sadly, St. Johns has a beautiful sandy beach under the St. Johns Bridge which is unusable for swimming and probably will be for many years due to chemical pollution. It serves as a constant reminder. In spite of the DEQ study, there is not enough data on the wide variety of chemicals present...no statistics on their cumulative affects, no data on what affects occur when particular elements combine and no satisfactory scientific data on how much exposure to carcinogens can trigger cancer. It varies with individuals, both human and animal. That means until we remove as much as possible and convince polluters that it doesn't pay to pollute, it will remain a danger & we are merely giving lip service to incorporating the Willamette River in a positive way into our lives. If we want the Willamette to be safe for ALL neighborhoods, job one is cleaning it up and making sure polluters begin to take their place as responsible community members in regard to its health.

Kayak Commute - Canoe Commute: Portland already has a reputation as a bike commute city. Why not expand to incorporate paddling to work? We'd get some fun local and national news attention for that, even if it starts small. Eastside businesses like Alder Creek or Next Adventure provide small boat lockers for an affordable rate on the east side. Similarly, West side businesses (like Ebb and Flow paddlesports -SW Nebraska near Willamette Park) offer similar lockers for the west side. Commuters can easily access their boat, paddle across the Willamette, park their boat on the other side, and use public transportation to reach their final destination. It helps if you can go to work with Texas, neoprene, and that lovely river smell. This takes care of "what to do with your boat" while you're at the office.

[return to top](#)