



Albany Water Avenue Corridor Revitalization: Challenges and Opportunities

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About SCI

The Sustainable Cities Initiative (SCI) is a cross-disciplinary organization at the University of Oregon that promotes education, service, public outreach, and research on the design and development of sustainable cities. We are redefining higher education for the public good and catalyzing community change toward sustainability. Our work addresses sustainability at multiple scales and emerges from the conviction that creating the sustainable city cannot happen within any single discipline. SCI is grounded in cross-disciplinary engagement as the key strategy for improving community sustainability. Our work connects student energy, faculty experience, and community needs to produce innovative, tangible solutions for the creation of a sustainable society.

About SCYP

The Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP) is a year-long partnership between SCI and one city in Oregon, in which students and faculty in courses from across the university collaborate with the partner city on sustainability and livability projects. SCYP faculty and students work in collaboration with staff from the partner city through a variety of studio projects and service-learning courses to provide students with real-world projects to investigate. Students bring energy, enthusiasm, and innovative approaches to difficult, persistent problems. SCYP's primary value derives from collaborations resulting in on-the-ground impact and expanded conversations for a community ready to transition to a more sustainable and livable future.

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About Albany, Oregon

The city now known as Albany has an established history as a central hub in the Willamette valley. Founded in 1848 and incorporated in 1864 the city has served as the Linn County seat since 1851. Albany's unique place in Oregon's history is exemplified in its dedication to historical preservation. Albany is often noted to have the most varied collection of historic buildings in Oregon. Its "four historic districts are listed in the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior." This downtown core has served as the center of revitalization efforts since 2001.

Located on the Willamette and Calapooia rivers Albany spans both Linn and Benton counties. With a population of 51,720 people, Albany is Oregon's 11th largest city and the second largest city in Benton County. Albany is administered under a home rule charter, adopted in 1957 establishing a Council and City Manager model. The city's vision, to be a "vital and diverse community that promotes a high quality of life, great neighborhoods, balanced economic growth and quality public services," is exemplified by its administration and government. Albany has a very active civic community with nearly 100 citizens serving on advisory commissions and committees dedicated to municipal issues.

Historically, Albany's economy has relied on natural resources. As the self-styled "rare metals capital of the world," Albany produces zirconium, hafnium and titanium. Major employment sectors include "wood products, food processing, and manufactured homes." Because of its short, dry temperate growing season Albany farmers excel in producing specialized crops like grass flower and vegetable seeds, "tree fruits, nursery stock, nuts, berries, mint and grains." Albany and the surrounding (Linn and Benton) counties are so agriculturally productive it is often called "The Grass Seed Capital of the World."

Albany's central location and mild climate has made it a popular destination for a variety of outdoor and leisure activities. Located in the heart of Oregon's most populous region with the Pacific coast to the west and the Cascade range to its east, Albany is connected to the wider state by Interstate 5, Oregon Routes 99E and 34, and US Route 20. The city is also served by Amtrak, a municipal airport, and a local and regional bus network.

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This report represents original student work and recommendations prepared by students in the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program for the City of Albany. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from the University of Oregon.

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Executive Summary

The City of Albany partnered with the Planning, Public Policy, and Management Department through the Sustainable City Year Program to help the city generate ideas for activating the Water Street corridor and to consider its connections to the downtown historic core through analysis and research of catalyst sites. This document summarizes the methodology, findings, and recommendations. These include: an entertainment complex, targeting the need for activity in the area; a historical walk, addressing the changing identity of the district; a parkway, addressing the need for connectivity in the site; an innovation district, diversifying the economy in the area; and a food hub, generating needed commercial synergy.

Introduction

The City of Albany is a community providing comfortable living and many amenities to its residents. Since the formation of the Central Albany Redevelopment Association (CARA) in the 1990s, Albany has attracted interest and activity to its historic downtown and the surrounding area. To capitalize on these successes, redevelopment efforts are currently occurring in other areas linking the core of the area to the rest of the city. Water Avenue is well positioned to spread these redevelopment efforts into the larger city fabric. Furthermore, its specific redevelopment issues led to creative and innovative planning ideas.

Project Scope

The city approached the University of Oregon's Sustainable City Year Program with the following problem statement: to help the city generate ideas for activating the Water Street corridor and consider its connections to the downtown historic core through analysis and research of catalyst sites.

Groups within the Introduction to Planning Practice (instructor: Rich Margerum), Introduction to Planning Analysis (instructor: Robert Parker), and Human Settlements (instructor: Stacey Rosenberg) courses taught at the Department of Planning, Public Policy, and Management (PPPM):

- Conducted research to consolidate and assessed existing data and plans related to the downtown, riverfront, and Water Avenue corridor.
- Reviewed and summarized relevant best practices for activating downtown areas.
- Researched applicable case studies for Water Avenue corridor opportunity sites.
- Generated ideas and concepts for key sites in Albany that may be used to prioritize future urban renewal projects. Aspects to consider include access to city owned properties and other key sites, best site uses, interface of city owned and public spaces with private spaces and streets, interaction with the Albany Parks Master Plan, and methods to capitalize on river use as an amenity.

The city assisted the groups in the following ways:

- Provided data and documentation of previous work products (e.g., program documents, reports, market studies, plans and maps) related to the scope of work.
- Convened a team of city staff to facilitate project development and provision of technical assistance to students.
- Contacted external stakeholders and/or organize those stakeholders, as needed, to provide timely information to support project development.
- Provided comment on student/course progress at the final presentation in December 2016.

Internal stakeholders were identified as CARA and the Community Development Department; external stakeholders were identified as the Albany Downtown Association, the Albany Chamber of Commerce, and property and business owners in the area. Due to the limited time frame and resources, the student teams did not directly involve stakeholders or the public in their process. Instead, they relied on existing documents that articulated city and public goals and concerns. Research findings, analysis, and recommendations are included in this report.

The Water Avenue Site

Albany city planners and PPPM faculty had considered focusing the project directly in downtown. However, at that time, a significant amount of redevelopment work had already been accomplished by CARA. City staff and UO faculty directed students to the Water Avenue corridor between Broadalbin Street SW, and Main Street SE. The City of Albany described Water Avenue corridor as needing future redevelopment and revitalization.

The Water Avenue corridor from Washington Street to Main Street was the focus of revitalization for groups. The corridor is along the Willamette River adjacent to, but not part of, Albany's historic downtown. It is parallel to the river on one side and half of a traffic couplet on the other. It is used mostly to shuttle commuters towards Corvallis. It includes a mixed-use landscape with a greenway and access to parks, and some new developments infusing the area with new activity.



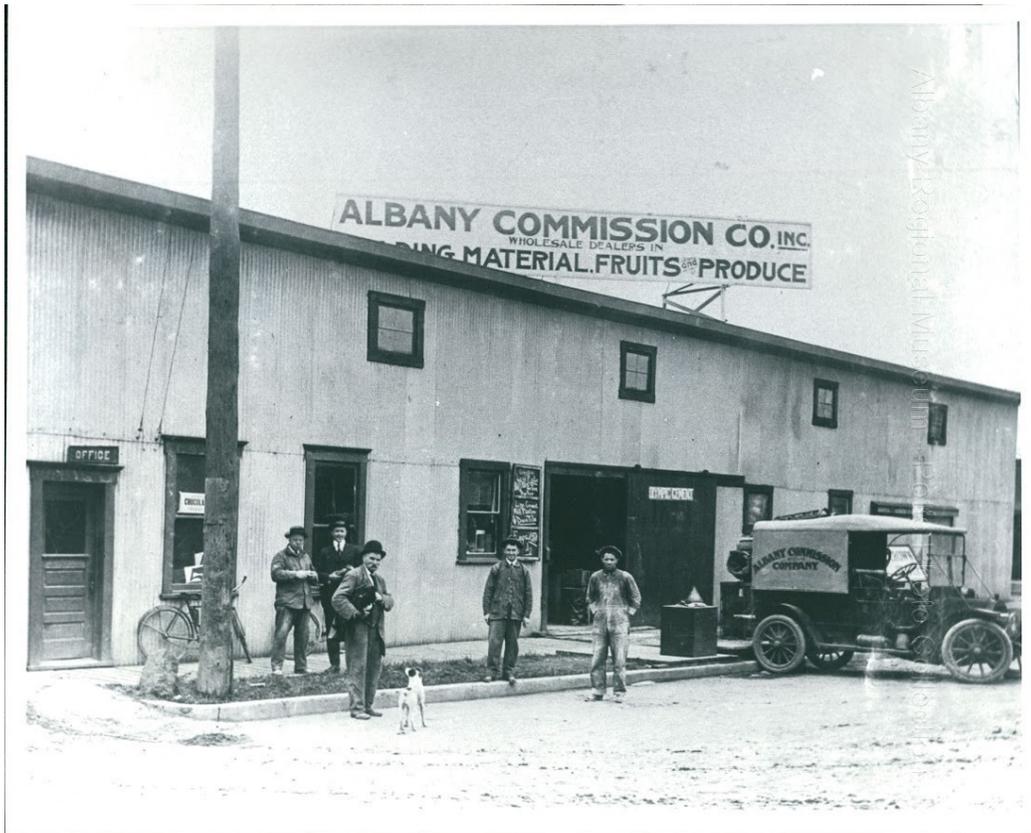
Albany Regional Museum photo.
Bertram Veal and Percy Kelly at Veal Chair Factory on Water Avenue circa 1900. Water Avenue historically was a manufacturing center and transportation thoroughfare for many industrial traffic along the river.



First Avenue was a thoroughfare for much of the city's economic activity, and Water Avenue was equally busy with laborers.

Water Avenue's history is significant as one of Albany's main economic thoroughfares behind 1st Street and Broadalbin Street.

Most daily industry and travel in the 19th century involving the river had to cross Water Avenue. Horse carts hauled goods across it and down to the river; materials and shipping crossed it; and nearly everything transactional that would service 1st Street activity was done on this plat of land along its interface with the river, the life of the region (City of Albany, 2016). While many of these industries changed 30 years later, and much of the development of the town grew outward towards the freeway or to the outskirts of town, this identity has not left it, both because of its historical composition and because of its connections with the area.



A grocery and supply store.

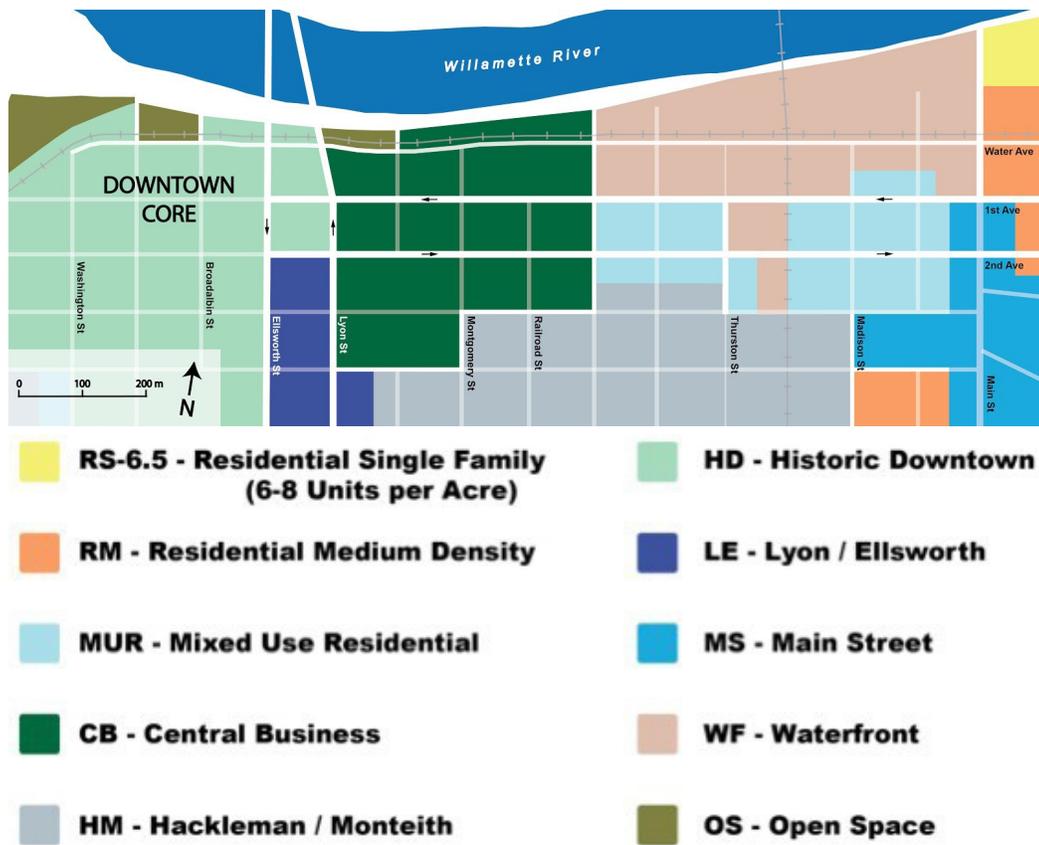
Transportation was a service in itself, and Albany excelled at it. Riverboat business in the 19th century soared. The construction of trolley cars and rails added to the manufacturing, processing, and transport capabilities of what are now arterials. Ferry Street, which crosses Water Avenue, is a reminder of the riverfront's transportation identity. This is reflected in the area by the proximity of large warehouses and other buildings near the river and along the rails lining Water Avenue.

The city shifted its focus in the 1950s from Water Avenue by constructing front-facing shops on 1st Street. Since the 1970s, efforts to reclaim the Willamette refocused attention to the river and the greenway was established and trails and parks drew people back to the area.



Water Avenue today





The zoning of Water Avenue

Currently, traffic patterns makes access to the site difficult. It is bifurcated by a railroad, significant amounts of parking, and minimal connection to the robust park space next to the river. The space for parking is paved and does not help to reduce the impacts of flooding. However, the site is full of buildings that are ready for adaptive re-use. Several existing businesses and industries (a movie theater, a cheese manufacturing company, machining businesses), could also be supported in the future. Furthermore, Water Avenue has many connections to different layers of the city fabric. Parklands reach out from the river and through the historical district. Tourism and eateries extend from the downtown and into certain commercial spaces along the avenue. Albany's Water Avenue, as an economic connection to the city's connection to the river and transportation, stands ready for redevelopment efforts to support its residents.

Methods and Plan Construction

Groups responded to these conditions and created plans for:

- An entertainment complex
- A historical walk
- A parkway
- An innovation district
- A food hub

Plans were generated through several avenues of research. First, a site analysis and design charrette outlined the possibilities latent in the site. Social and economic analyses focused initial suggestions into practical recommendations. Findings from these analyses—concentrated around certain themes—were then integrated into plans for revitalization.



Michael Johnduff

Student groups tour Water Avenue.

Site Analysis and Design Charrette

On Monday, October 10, 2016, the team visited Albany. Student groups listened to city officials, including city manager Wes Hare and Mayor Sharon Konopa, describe their sense of the city's vision, the history of the city's administration, and their revitalization efforts. The team asked follow-up questions of city staff, including Albany Planning Manager, Bob Richardson. Groups were given a walking tour of downtown and Water Avenue's existing features. Groups collected photographs, sketches, and other data, while scrutinizing areas of opportunity.

research included consideration of maps and photos from the Albany Historical Museum and the University of Oregon Library. Groups also considered documents outlining the history of Albany’s settlers. More than one group considered original documents and family trees of the leading members of early Albany society. Researching several key businesses in the area contextualized Albany’s current changing economy in relation to the region’s past. This research into Albany’s history, marked by the city’s boom times in the 1890s, and 1940s, the clear evidence of street-level vitality, and being historically filled with various commercial buildings and services, prepared groups to work within the site’s future and maintain continuity with the past.

Groups investigated the ancient geological construction of the Willamette Valley, the formation of the Willamette River, and the rich agriculture of the region. River depth readings and news stories of the repeated floods gave warning for physical planning and encouraged disaster resilience. Documentation of the regional disposition of the site—its relation to the city as a whole—and the gathering of initial data about its socioeconomic, physical, and cultural features allowed a general understanding of the nature of Water Avenue corridor’s current and past assets.

Students used Census data and economic market data to analyze the economic potential of the area.

Plan Construction

Student groups took these analyses and identified plans and resources to revitalize the economic conditions of the Water Avenue corridor and enhance the existing amenities.

Findings and Recommendations

The site analysis, design charrette, historical, community, and economic and market profiles and analyses provide findings used in student plans that can be organized into five themes:

- The site is a promising space for vitality and activity, as well as current industrial and commercial uses
- The site is a demographically changing area though it is historically rich like the Downtown Historic district
- The site holds the potential to connect the area to other places within the city
- The site has many underutilized green, river-based amenities
- The site has underutilized local and regional economic connections

In response to these themes, each group isolated a challenge and plans responding to them. The following table presents the groups, their project focus, and the challenges each sought to address.

	Challenge	Recommendation
Group 1	Increase activity	Entertainment District
Group 2	Integrate identity	Historical Walk
Group 3	Increase connectivity	Parkway
Group 4	Diversify economy	Innovation Lab
Group 5	Increase commercial synergy	Food Hub

Michael Johnduff

Table 1. Groups Challenges and Recommendations

Challenge 1: Activity

Challenge: The downtown area and Water Avenue corridor could benefit from increased foot traffic and more than retail purchasing.

Though extensive efforts have gone into restoring the Downtown Historic district, and many significant investments have occurred through the CARA program, the downtown remains a relatively unfrequented daytime zone for retail shoppers and government employees. Businesses close early and shops are small. Efforts to organize and build the new Albany Carousel, for instance—a significant success in community planning and a major addition to the downtown fabric—have historically been unable to be integrated into a larger network of attractors (Odegard 2016). Traffic counts suggest, however, that the shopping center near the freeway is a greater attractor to the area (City of Albany 2010). Efforts to restore and reestablish the local theater downtown through CARA grants have struggled to increase visits. These findings led many groups to focus on entertainment and active use in the area.

Recommendation 1: Entertainment District

Mission:

Identify existing activity zones in the region and enhance them through the creation of entertainment-focused amenities.

Plan:

Use the newly constructed Albany Carousel as the inspiration for a larger district for consumers. Use signage to guide recreators from entertainment to entertainment. This will be supported by the construction of a greenway along the Thurston Canal, which will provide even more green space in the area.



Group 1's Plan for an Entertainment District

Current entertainment sites will be linked and enhanced, including the park and greenway. An amphitheater addition to park space will complement the recent revitalized theaters in the area and promote active events and festivals being held in the park. Thematic connections will be formed through pavement paintings, which will lead fun seekers from place to place, site to site, like in Portland, Oregon. Similarly, wall murals as found in Springfield could also enliven the area.

The plan currently integrates into the Water Avenue Streetscape Plan. It also involves the building of a volunteer and sponsorship network willing to invest in the area.

Challenge 2: Distinct but Changing Identity

Challenge: *The working character of the area makes it a prime location for the restoration of a commercial thoroughfare.*

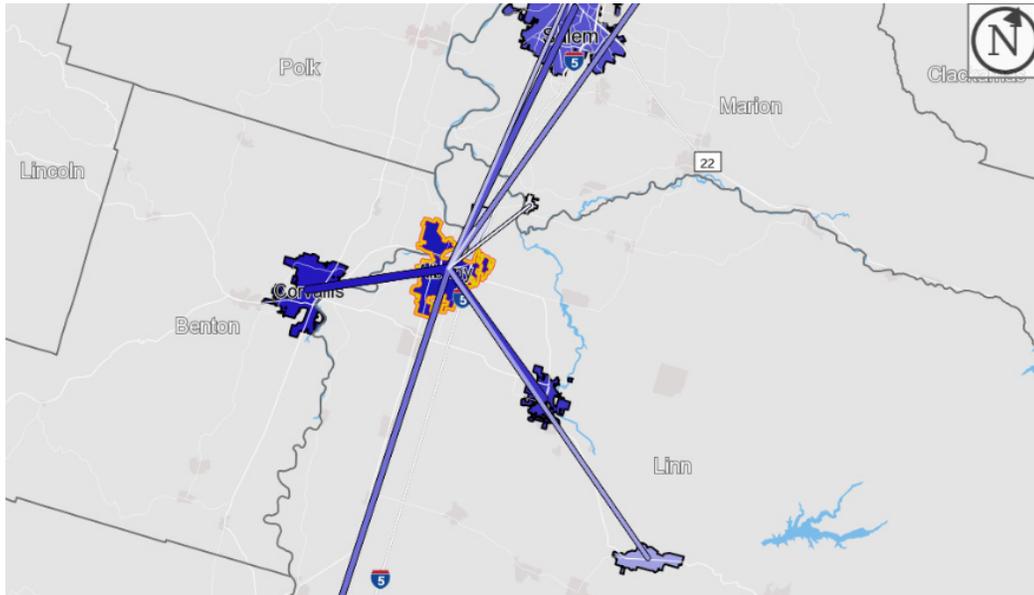
Albany is experiencing a boom in real estate prices, population, and demographics. Over 4,000 people live in Census Tract 204 in 1,654 households (67% of the households are made up of 1-2 persons).

Location	2000	2010-2014	Percent Change
Oregon	3,421,399	3,900,343	14%
Linn County	103,069	118,270	15%
Albany	40,852	51,210	25%
Census Tract 204	4,051	4,390	8%

Source: American Community Survey 2010-14

Table 2. Population growth in Albany.

Population increased 25% between 2000 and 2014, which is higher than Linn County and Oregon growth rates.

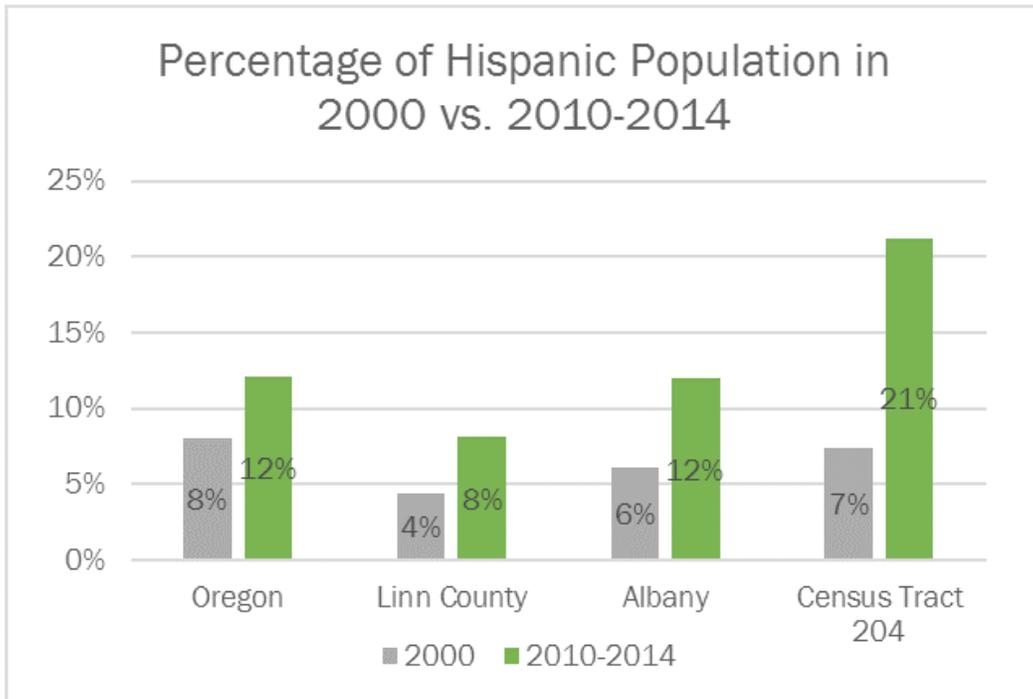


Source: Census Bureau, 2014

Figure 1. Albany as a regional hub.

Population is projected to continue to grow throughout the next decade. In 2040 the population of Albany is projected to grow to 77,914 people, and Census Tract 204 (at an average annual growth rate of 0.6%) to 5,097. Half of Albany’s population is 35 or under, and 60% are renters (Census Bureau, 2014).

The Hispanic population has also grown in Albany. In the Water Avenue area (Census Tract 204) it increases at a higher rate than at the state and county levels (see Figure 2). This suggests that there are incentives for living in and moving to Albany, and that the minority community is being drawn into Albany as opposed to other areas of Linn County (Census Bureau, 2014).



Source: Census Bureau 2010, American Community Survey 2010-2014

Figure 2. Percentage of Hispanic Population in 2000 vs. 2010-14.

Instead of adding to the economic vitality of the location, housing prices are pricing out new residents: households remain cost burdened in the area. Half of Census Tract 204 are cost burdened. It is an opportune time for developers to invest in the area, and yet only five new residential building permits were filed in the area over the last year. The opportunity for low-cost housing has been capitalized upon by the small developments at Montgomery Street and Water Avenue, and the new development being built at Hill Street and Water Avenue will lead to infill and increased housing density.

Recommendation 2: Historical Discovery Center

Mission:

Taking into account the population increases and historical connections, create an interpretive historical walk and a Discovery Center along the Water Avenue Corridor, along with a housing mix to support the creation of an active community.

Plan:

Establish historical continuity through reflection, celebration, and continuation of Albany’s rich past – a story that still gives prominence to the city as the home of the most varied collection of historic buildings in the State of Oregon. This involves constructing a history walk along the Water Avenue corridor to draw, educate, and bring together people across all walks of life by including interactive plaques and statues, and a Discovery Center that will host historical interpretive exhibits and open community spaces for events.



Group 2’s Plan for a Historical Walk

The Washington D.C. Neighborhood Heritage Trail and the Juneau, Alaska plaque trail are inviting case studies to investigate. Washington D.C. and Juneau, Alaska’s plaques provide different vantage points, including striking historic photos, approachable maps, and engaging text. Albany could place plaques in the planter shown in the Water Avenue Streetscape Plan. This allows space to be used on both sides, and stands out more to the eye. Plaques should also be consistent in their appearance so residents know what to expect. The Powerhouse Science Center in Durango, Colorado, also has programming that might appeal to Albany residents. When the Powerhouse Science Center ends their historical walk, activities are available for different age groups (toddler to adult). Adult-specific activities include hosting science educators to give dynamic presentations during a “happy hour” event and outdoor science trivia. Adult activities could benefit from partnerships with the two breweries along Water Avenue.

Challenge 3: Connectivity

Challenge: Connect Water Avenue to the surrounding neighborhood.

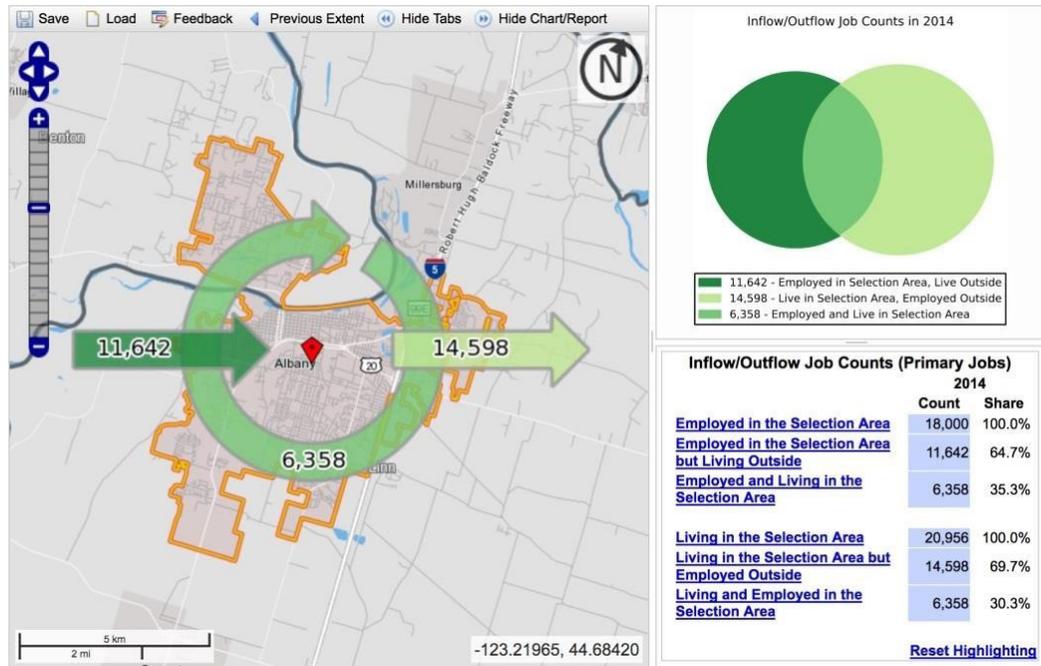
Water Avenue and the surrounding neighborhood do not currently support the vision of a Village Center outlined in the Albany Comprehensive Plan (City of Albany, 2013). Outside of the downtown core, a car-oriented streetscape and industrial buildings discourage active transportation modes such as walking and biking, making it unlikely that people will adopt these activities within the center. Additionally, much of the area lacks investment as new development has preferred to locate on open land at the city edge rather than redeveloping underutilized lots in the city center.



Michael Johnduff

Water Avenue is currently dangerous for pedestrian traffic.

During the site analysis, groups found it difficult to walk along Water Avenue and 1st Avenue. While flow is increased by the new roundabout at Santiam Streets and Main Streets, cars race from this speed controlling feature and towards Highway 20. Significant traffic deaths have occurred nearby on Pacific Blvd/99E, and more pedestrian activity in this area could reasonably expect similar dangerous conditions. Furthermore, the speed and singular direction of the traffic has no opportunity or incentive to stop and enter the area. Returning traffic along 2nd Avenue’s end of the couplet has no connection to the Water Avenue Corridor.



Source: Census Bureau Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics Tool

Figure 3. The traffic flowing into and out of Albany per day.

Water Avenue is frequently used as a bypass to State Route 20 or 1st Avenue because of its low traffic volume and speed restrictions, making traffic patterns erratic and unpredictable—a fact compounded by the lack of adequate striping. There are bike lanes and bike parking along the sidewalk on 1st Avenue, but otherwise the bike lanes are mostly confined to the downtown area.

Public transportation, which services the Downtown Historic district well, does not pass through the study area. Two stops on 2nd Avenue are close enough that they could be used to enter or exit the area. If someone were to take the bus, the distance a pedestrian would have to travel from most destinations exceeds one quarter mile.

Currently these connectivity patterns disperse traffic in the area. The amount of parking involved in the site is too great for its usage. Integrating these features with a more comprehensive connectivity plan seemed to many groups to be essential. The Water Avenue Streetscape Plan (see Appendix 1), which seeks to beautify the street and add basic amenities like sidewalks, vegetation, and parking, is considered ambitious in its larger suggestions to be of use in the total revitalization of the area, but also insufficient in terms of what it adds to the comprehensive development and revitalization efforts of the entire corridor.

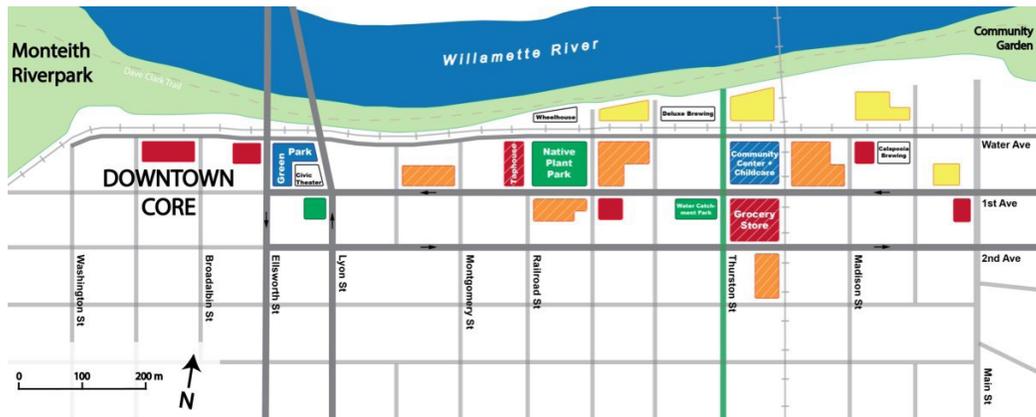
Recommendation 3: Parkway

Mission:

Using the waterfront connection, this plan will connect all green space and provide connectivity to the area.

Plan:

This plan will focus on improving streetscape along Water Avenue and two key north/south streets to promote active transportation modes such as walking and biking. It will also feature two new city parks, a historical walk along the Dave Clark Trail, a Thurston Canal greenway, and a downtown parking structure to support growth and redevelopment within the historic downtown district.

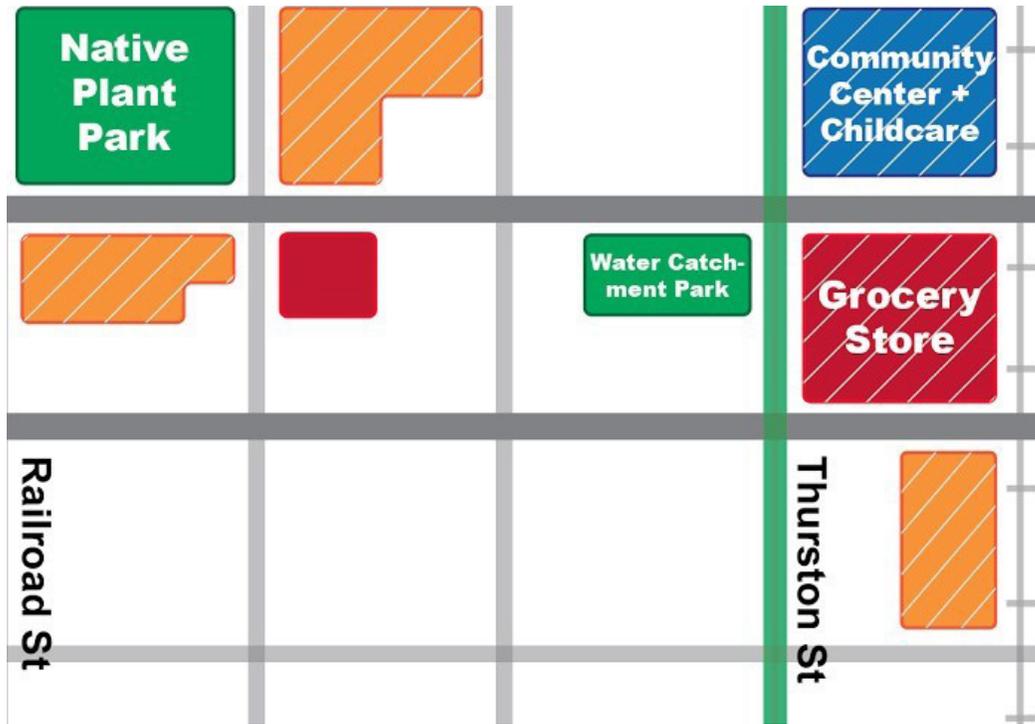


Group 3's Plan for a parkway and walkable path



Group 3's Plan for a parkway and walkable path

The plan would encourage retail parking structures to be built according to current plans for the area (see Appendix 1), but would also encourage their design according to green standards, and in such a way as to link them with the parkland surrounding the area, with vertical gardens and green rooftops such as the Edwards Lifesciences parking garage in Irvine. Furthermore, the daylighting of Thurston Creek could create a walkway that would break up the traffic in the area, and continue the connection to the green walkway along the Willamette with the construction of a catchment park similar to the model of Tanner Park in Portland, Oregon.



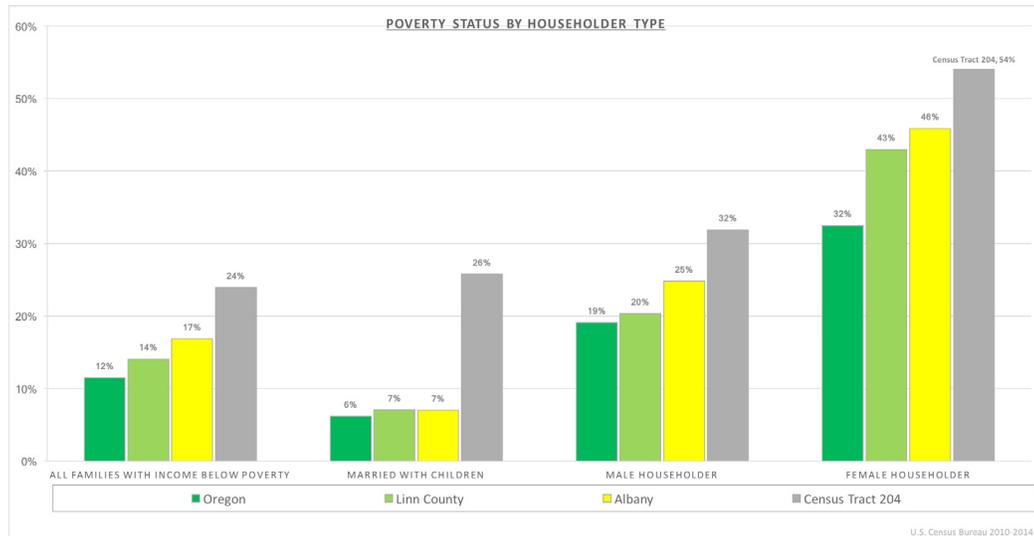
Group 3's Plan for a catchment park at Thurston Street's open space

The plan will be supported by the phasing in of medium to high density mixed-use development, multi-family housing at a variety of income levels, and retail, commercial, and office spaces providing employment and accommodating the daily needs of residents in the area.

Challenge 4: Economic Diversity

Challenge: *The region's recovering economy could further benefit from diversifying.*

Thirty-two percent of Census Tract 204 lives in poverty (see Figure 5). Nearby Corvallis is in a prominent growth period within the “Silicon Forest,” the highly populated stretch of tech companies stretching from San Francisco to Vancouver. And yet, nearby Albany’s participation in this economic dynamism has been small. The major employer is still TDI, formerly OreMet, on a site just north of Albany, which has been decreasing its workforce there and throughout the city by almost 50% since 2008 (Democrat-Herald, 2004). Seed growing and canning also remain a vibrant part of the local economy. However, not many of the tech workers from Corvallis commute from Albany. Further diversification of the local economy in this direction, and towards growing its connection to agriculture, could be useful.



Source: American Community Survey 2010-14

Figure 4. Poverty status by householder type in Albany

Currently, the most active industries in Albany include educational services, health care, and social assistance, which employs 24.1% of the population, the retail trade that employs 14.1%, and manufacturing that employs 12.4%. The difference in total employment from 2000-2014 in Albany was a decrease in 1,359 employed people. Among the sectors of mining, manufacturing, retail trade, finance (including insurance real estate), and services, the services sector contributed the largest number of employees with a total of 20,927, which is approximately 42% of the total employed population of Albany (Census Bureau, 2014).

Given the state of the current Albany economy, we believe the future economic development should center around the following underutilized industries:

- Food Services
- Entertainment
- Finance
- Real Estate
- Arts

The mixed-use nature of this location is ideal for these industries. Ochoa's Queseria, Katon Precision Machining, and the brewing companies are examples of improving this utilization. However, for future development of the economy, further diversification is needed.

Recommendation 4: Innovation District

Mission:

Revitalizing the economy means shifting the economy, and this ambitious but practicable innovation hub will make the area a commercial center with a strong technology identity connected to the surrounding new economic region along computing products and services.

Plan:

The plan will establish Water Avenue as a place where leading-edge anchor institutions and companies cluster and connect with start-ups, business incubators, and accelerators. They will be housed in physically compact, transit-accessible, technically-wired, office, retail, and mixed-use housing.



Group 4's Plan for an Innovation District

Albany's Innovation District will link local skilled labor markets, business services, and residential livability to form a Great Neighborhood. This new neighborhood will service the city center, adjacent to the Willamette riverfront, by providing proximity for community networks, natural features, and the revitalization of local economies.

It will convert the low-use former industrial zone to a sustainable "Eco-District," involving:

- High residential density
- Mixed-use buildings
- Short home-to-job distance
- Green transit
- Ample access to natural waterscapes



Group 4's mockup of an Innovation District streetscape at Water and Main

Challenge 5: Commercial Synergy Opportunities

Challenge: Generate synergy between local commercial amenities and Water Avenue's unique features.

The city itself is the center of a larger agricultural region. And yet, food in the district and in the area is hard to come by, despite efforts of local businesses to begin work in this area (as seen in Figure 6). Large grocery stores are between 1.0 and 2.0 miles from the project area.

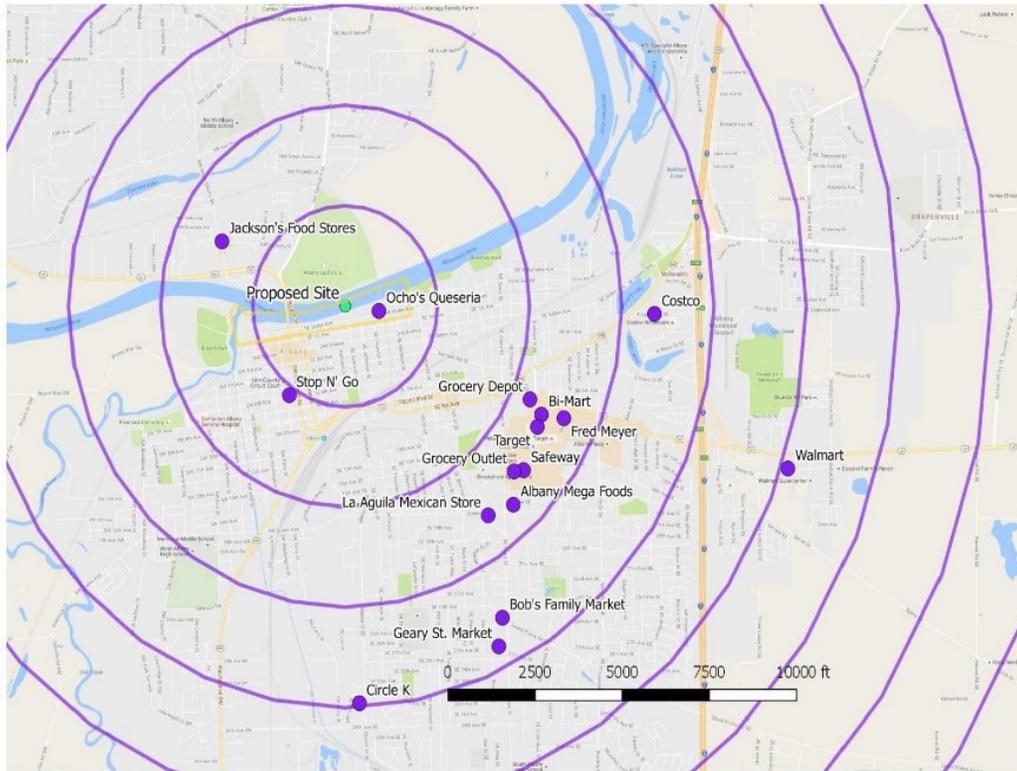
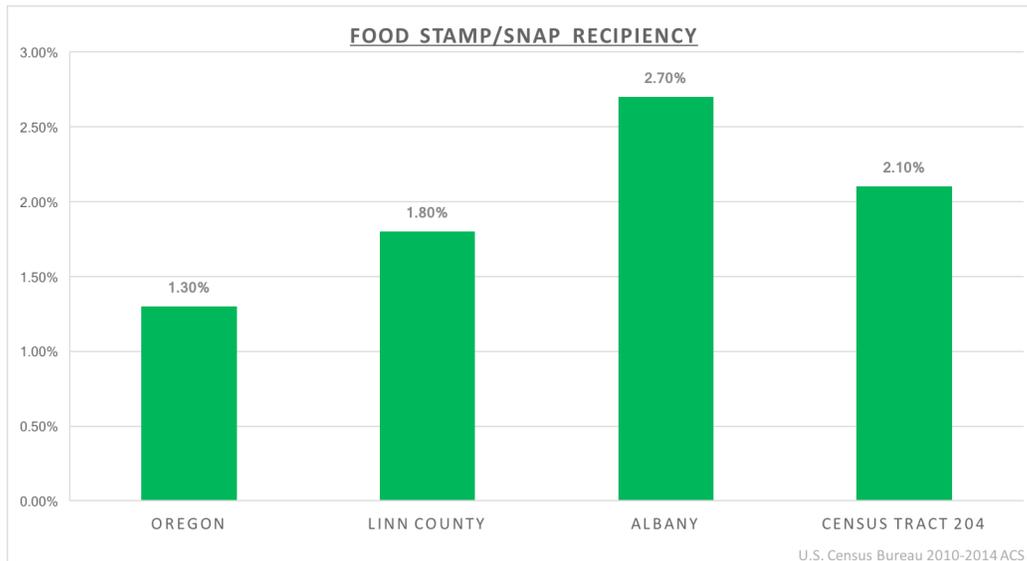


Figure 5. The distribution of grocery stores in relation to Water Avenue

Market analyses suggest that the city should begin integrating the relationships between businesses and the downtown, especially given the population of government jobs and skilled labor in the area. Albany has the benefit of a young population likely to start participating in the job market, which should be able to consume more readily in a downtown area.



Source: American Community Survey, 2010-2014

Figure 6. Number of food stamp recipients in Albany

It might be reasonable to suggest piecemeal retail as effective in capturing this market, but the current trend suggest synergy between businesses as holding the best opportunity for consumption given the educational attainment of the population in this position. The dilemma around this scenario is that employment has been largely declining, and the sectors of retail trade and manufacturing have declined as well.

Recommendation 5: Riverfront Food Hub

Mission:

Using the local vitality in agriculture, brewing, and eateries, this plan focuses on building a co-op and public market by adaptively reusing old warehouse buildings along the river.

Plan:

Taking the economic history of the area into account, and the strengths in Albany's economy, this plan seeks to create a food, brewing, and agriculturally-centered hub, focusing the area's opportunities on innovative, community-led

commercial activity of selling and vending. The anchor would be a cooperative built next to the Borden Building, at the center of Water Avenue. The identity of the Borden Building, a former milk bottling plant, with its connections to the agricultural economy surrounding Albany, gives the plan a theme and becomes a key feature in an adaptive re-use focused strategy.



Group 5's Plan for an Food Hub

In this plan, the Water Avenue corridor and its surrounding area will be a center of commercial vitality around earthy, agricultural uses. It will take its model from the case study of the Ashland food co-op. It is a certified non-profit organization with over 10,000 members/owners. Beginning in 1971 as a food buying club, the Ashland food co-op has become one of the most successful co-ops in the country.



The cooperative in Ashland is an excellent case study for a proposed food hub.

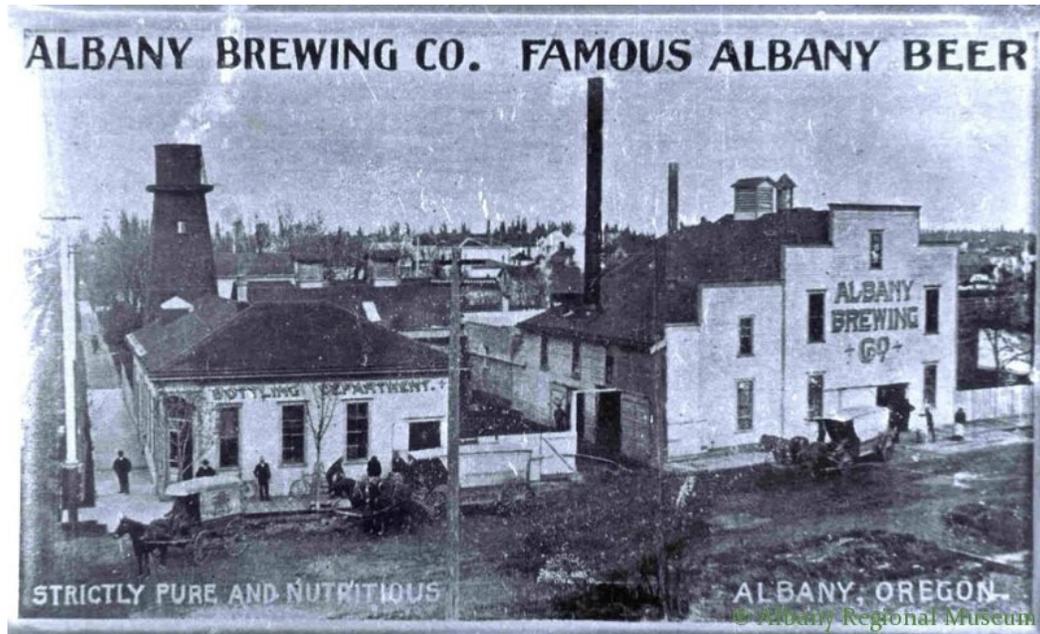
Recommendations

The described plans present three main recommendations for Albany:

Build on Identity

The corridor has several possible identities, which can be restored through enactment of the proposed plans.

- The entertainment district capitalizes on its central and developed location, with its attractive buildings and scale.
- The historical walk highlights the connections to the historic district.
- The parkway emphasizes the active lifestyle already present in adjacent park uses.
- The innovation lab takes central features of the regional economy and integrates them into a well defined and centrally located site.
- The food hub takes existing buildings and reuses them, while integrating agricultural and sustainable resources present in the city.



Brewing has been a large identity of Albany and is present again now.

Each one of these identities presents many options for the community to help guide the direction for the area. Depending on its preferences, other elements can be combined together, but the perception that Water Avenue lacks character can be rectified immediately by identifying and celebrating those identities listed above. There is character eager to be expressed and brought out.

Concentrate Identity in an Anchor

Identity can be concentrated with the help of a distinctive community-building anchor. This focus addresses the site's interrelationship with the surrounding area. The biggest deficit of the area is that it lacks a center that unifies its mixed-use character. The historical center, innovation lab, and other projects, provide a potential solution to these concerns. The presence of a significant anchor sends a statement that small, innovative businesses, as well as sophisticated ventures, will be present in the area, and are alternative options to chain stores. It capitalizes on existing plans for revitalization and generates a commercial center, rather than a set of haphazard retail ventures. This further makes possible significant CARA projects.

A Prime Locale for Compact Development and Adaptive Reuse

Compact development and adaptive reuse are ways Albany can approach revitalization, targeting the use of redevelopment funds. Unlike the Downtown Historic district, instead of preserving current facades, the much easier and dynamic approach of re-use can be taken towards existing structures, such as the Borden Milk Building. The deteriorating buildings in the area can be replaced. This means interaction between existing assets (particularly the Downtown Historic district) and the city fabric. Synergy is the necessary component of revitalization.

Conclusion

The goals of this project were to:

- Assess existing data and plans related to Water Avenue.
- Review best practices for activating downtown areas generally.
- Research applicable case studies.
- Identify key sites and opportunities for revitalization along Water Avenue.

Student groups found that the site was a key component of downtown's economic revitalization. The project area has features conducive to the creation of a commercial center, historic district, and more connected residential area.

To actualize any strategies described within this document, the City of Albany will first need to establish an action plan. Students hope that this report be a valuable resource to the City of Albany in their attempt to address the opportunities afforded by the Water Avenue location, to inspire creativity in the city's decisionmaking, and add specificity to the ways it chooses to realize the potential of the Water Avenue corridor.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Existing Plans

Some of attempts to address Water Avenue issues were included in previous plans. A content analysis of those plans found many features that could support and enhance the economic revitalization projects that would target the above themes. The plans include:

Albany General Plan (1980)

The Albany Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1980. Specifying several objectives, including: To provide for economic vitality, to protect the waterway and natural resources, and to grow the economy.

Historic District Transformation (1985-)

Albany passed an ordinance requiring an inventory and review of all landmarks and historic buildings; it was the first step in the adoption of a Historic Overlay Zone, comprising three National Register Historic Districts: Monteith, Hackleman, and the Downtown Commercial district.

Riparian Zone and Waterways (1992-2009)

Statewide Planning Goals, Goal 15 was established; a Willamette Greenway-initiated cleanup efforts from years of industrial pollution.

CALUTS (1995)

Throughout the early 1990's, the city engaged in a significant community-based update of major planning project goals culminating in the City of Albany Land Use and Transportation Study (CALUTS) of 1995, which identified the historic city core as an area for revitalization, established a Town Center Plan, and set the stage for revitalization of the city core with CARA.

CARA (2001)

The Central Albany Revitalization Area (CARA) Plan was adopted by the city council in 2001 to create an urban renewal district, which would implement the aims of the Town Center Plan. Fifty-six million maximum was scheduled to be used over 25 years. CARA's aim is to attract new private investment by eliminating the effects of blight. Its first success was in providing a \$115,000 grant to develop the Jefferson Lofts in 2003. Recent successes in providing

funds for historic revitalization and large business investment include:

- Venetian Theater (2004): \$4,000 pledged
- Wheelhouse Building (2007): Nearly \$750,000 pledged; the Wheelhouse replaced the decrepit Buzz Saw building
- Albany Historic Carousel and Museum (under construction): Provided not only loans for the non-profit-led venture to purchase the land and pay architectural fees, but also funds the building of the structure itself and the purchasing of parts and motor.

CARA has provided \$4.4 million in grants and \$500,000 in loans to investors. Initial phase out of the plan is scheduled in 2026. CARA was overwhelmingly considered a benefit and opportunity, and many groups enjoyed seeing the significant success the city has had in this area.

Water Avenue Streetscape Plan (2007)

In 2007 the City of Albany drafted a plan to pave sidewalks and add other amenities alongside Water Avenue, including better parking and making the south side of the street walkable.

Albany 2030 Transportation System Plan (TSP) (2010)

In 2010, Albany adopted their 2030 TSP. The plan analyzes current and forecasted impacts of the City's transportation infrastructure for a 20-year period, consistent with Oregon Statutory requirements. These forecasts draw from 2030 population, household, and employment forecasts. The TSP includes state highways and interstate connections with neighboring cities in four counties. As applied to the Water Avenue Improvement District location, the TSP governs future planning objectives for two nearby state highways (HWY 20 and HWY 99).

Capital Improvements Plan (2017-2021)

This plan provides project descriptions and funding allocation during the targeted 2017-2021 years period for capital improvement projects in the City of Albany. These projects include improvement projects for revitalization (commercial and retail), transportation, and parks. The CIP projects are listed by category and completion status (in process or completed). The CIP also lists the funding status of each project. In the case where a project does not have funding allocated, Albany policy makers, such as the Albany City Council, Planning Commission, and Budget Committee, are tasked with establishing funding plans consistent with citizen participation procedures.

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