

December 2021

Gates
OREGON

*Community Vision
&
Strategic Plan*



Prepared By:



Better City
Solving Problems. Creating Opportunity.

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INTRODUCTION



Santiam Canyon is a beautiful, wooded canyon of approximately 670 square miles located on the eastern border of Marion County, Oregon. It comprises federal land managed by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and several private parcels in small communities located up and down the canyon. Combined, private property makes up only around 28 percent of the total land ownership in the North Santiam Watershed¹, with more private ownership on the eastern side. The canyon is home to an estimated 4,261 residents, most of whom live in Stayton, Lyons, and Mill City. State Highway 22 runs through the canyon and connects the Salem MSA to the eastern half of the state. An estimated 5,700 vehicles per day travel the canyon near Gates, with the peak volumes up to 9,000 per day in the busiest summer months.²

For generations, the Canyon's economy has revolved around a vibrant logging and milling industry. The Canyon was heavily impacted by a decline of economic activity starting in the 1990s, however. The protection of the Northern Spotted Owl (1990), Northwest Forest Plan (1994), and Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act (1996) all impacted the timber industry. While timber is still a primary driver of the Canyon's economy (especially in the Gates/Mill City area), stakeholders informed Better City that employment and real wages in this industry have dropped significantly since the late 20th century, leading to a decrease in economic activity in the community compared to previous decades.

2020 brought new economic impacts to the Canyon. The Coronavirus pandemic and resultant stay-at-home orders put a short halt to travel and tourism, leaving many residents out of work, especially in service industries. However, the Canyon started seeing some increases in sales during the early part of the summer as people increasingly went to more remote locations to avoid large crowds and mitigate risk. Traffic and sales surpassed previous years. But the boon was short lived; the Canyon experienced record-setting temperatures during the summer, making the area a fire risk.

¹ Source: ECONorthwest, Oregon Bureau of Land Management

² Source: Oregon Department of Transportation, ECONorthwest

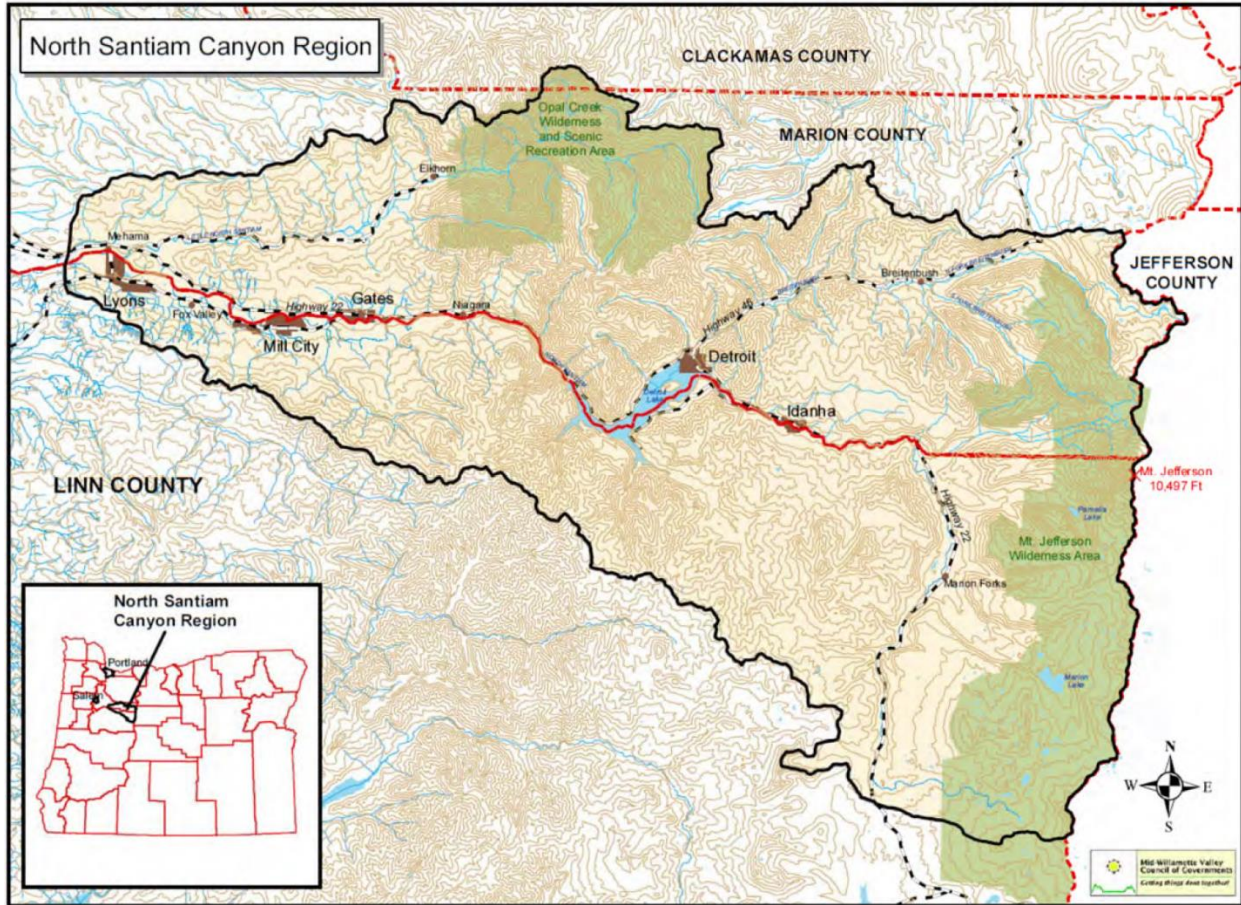


Photo Credit: Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments

Figure 1—Santiam Canyon Area as used in this report

In August of 2020, three separate wildfires started in the Santiam Canyon area. The Beachie Creek Fire, Lionshead Fire, and the P-515 Fire (known collectively as the Santiam Fire), grew significantly during a heatwave in September, when high-speed winds surged the fires, posing imminent threat to many of the communities located in the canyon. Evacuation orders were given on September 8th, 2020, and the fires spread through the canyon, killing five residents and destroying an estimated \$1 Billion in personal and public property³. Many families lost their home to the disaster and were displaced. While all of the canyon communities were impacted, the fires were particularly devastating to the cities of Gates and Detroit.

The State of Oregon and Marion County were quick to respond to the disaster and partnered with several groups to get funding and recovery assistance for the Canyon. This document, among with others from partners and consultants, will help form a strategy for recovery efforts in the next ten years. As part of this effort, Better City was hired to perform Visioning and Strategic Planning for the cities of Gates and Detroit. This document represents the Vision and Strategic Plan for Gates. However, it is part of a broader recovery and resiliency efforts led by Marion and

³ Source: FEMA, DR-4562-OR, April 30, 2021

Linn counties and will also discuss projects and initiatives occurring in the Canyon and broader region.

City of Gates History

The City of Gates is located approximately 30 miles to the east of Salem, Oregon. The City grew out of a school that was established in 1865. A post office was added in the 1880s, providing early services to residents of the small mountain community. The City, then called Gatesville, was platted in 1888 by the Gates family. The City's growth increased at the completion of the Oregon Pacific Railroad in 1891, becoming a prosperous timber community that shared many of its services with nearby Mill City. Gates was formally incorporated as a City in 1950.



Figure 2—Western Gateway Signage

The City is represented by a five-member City Council with an acting mayor. The City employs a City recorder, newly-hired assistant, and three public works staff members. The County has provided temporary staffing support in the form of a Community Services Liaison, Maryann Hills, who is acting as a de-facto City Manager during the recovery period. This position will be complete by the end of the year.

According to the US Census Bureau, the total population of the City has been fairly stable since the 1980s. The City's estimated population was 543 in 2020⁴, before the fires destroyed homes and caused a large decrease in the City's population. An estimated 90-100 dwellings were lost, and several families are still living outside the community as they struggle to work through

⁴ Source: Portland State University Population Research Center

insurance claims, rebuild their homes, and restart their lives. Others have moved away, and many will not return the community in the foreseeable future.

Goals of the Study

This document will focus exclusively on the City of Gates and its vision and strategy for economic development. The study documents the City's shared vision for recovery, along with several strategies and activities that will help achieve this vision. The document will do the following:

1. Describes the visioning process that has taken place through more than 40 interviews with County, regional and State officials, local leaders and business owners, and members of the public.
2. Provides the results of a virtual public surveys and public forums and how the City's vision informs recovery efforts currently underway.
3. Outlines recommended strategies to move the City towards those visions.

The recommendations are characterized as short-term (to be addressed in the next 1-2 years), medium-term (to be addressed in the next 2-5 years), and long-term (to be addressed over the next 5+ years).

Process

In July 2021, Marion County and Better City launched the community visioning and strategic planning project to assist the communities of Gates and Detroit in accelerating economic recovery from the 2020 Beachie Creek wildfire. This process included a review of prior pertinent plans and documents to understand the communities' unique situations and backgrounds, interviews and open houses to engage the community and stakeholders in the visioning and strategic input process, utilization of ECONorthwest's Baseline Economic Analysis, and the provision of strategic project recommendations to further recovery efforts and future development.

On July 26 to 30, there was a tour of the affected communities and initial interviews with key stakeholders. 12 one-on-one interviews were conducted. During the following weeks, additional stakeholder interviews were conducted virtually. In total, more than 40 stakeholders were interviewed.

On September 23 a public forum was held. In this meeting, key trends and ideas were brought before the community for additional input and dialogue. Community members and stakeholders reviewed the topics and provided ideas and strategies for several areas of focus. Additional in-person stakeholder interviews as well as additional site tours were also conducted.

On November 16th, the draft recommendations were presented to the public, with both virtual and in-person offerings available. During the meeting, feedback and responses to the recommendations was received and integrated into the final report.

This report is the culmination of all those efforts and was delivered to the County in December 2021.

Coordination with Other Parties

Marion County hired other parties under separate contracts to provide different scopes of work. Those other parties include ECONorthwest, OSU Public Health, Project Ltd., the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association. Better City would like to thank these firms for participating and providing valuable insight and feedback on this document. There was extensive collaboration and coordination among the different parties, and every effort was made to remain consistent in the analysis and recommendations. Ultimately, however, the analysis and recommendations provided in this report are from Better City who is solely responsible for the content.

Acknowledgements

This Community Visioning and Strategic Plan was made possible through the generous support of Marion County, Linn County, the State of Oregon, and many others. Better City would like to thank the following individuals/organizations for their time to hold interviews, provide input and feedback, and any other work that was done to assist in drafting this report:

Name	Title/Role	Organization/Affiliation
Brian Nicholas	Public Works Director	Marion County
Chris Eppley	Detroit Community Development Manager	Marion County
Colm Willis	County Commissioner	Marion County
Dale Weise	Former Sanitation Manager	City of Gates
Danielle Bethell	County Commissioner	Marion County
Danielle Gonzalez	Economic Development	Marion County
Daphnee Legarza		Oregon Travel Information Council
Dawnielle Tehama	Executive Director	Willamette Valley Visitors Association
Dean O'Donnell	Owner	Mountain High Grocery
Deana Freres		Long-Term Recovery Group
Elaine George	Owner	Driftwood Grill/Detroit Lodge
Gabriel Amadeus	Director	Timber Trails Alliance
Greg Benthin	Public Works	City of Gates
Jack Carriger	District Chief	Gates Fire District
Jessy Fabrizio	OR & Wildfire Recovery Coordinator	Willamette Valley Visitors Association
Jim Trett	Mayor	City of Detroit

Name	Title/Role	Organization/Affiliation
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John McCormick	Former City Councilor	City of Gates
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Ken Cartwright	Station Manager	KYAC FM
Ken Woodward	Chair	North Santiam Sewer Authority Board
Kevin Cameron	County Commissioner	Marion County
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Patrick Rahm	Council Member	City of Gates
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Traci Archer	Administrator	City of Gates
Tyler Freres	Vice President, Sales	Freres Lumber

SECTION I: BASELINE CONDITIONS



This section details baseline conditions in the City of Gates, defined as those existing prior to the Santiam Canyon fires. It will also describe the current community and economic environments and what efforts are currently underway. Local, regional, and state leaders have done significant work to improve economic conditions in the Canyon, including millions of dollars of federal and state funds allocated for recovery and economic development efforts in Santiam Canyon. Insights from this section, combined with the baseline economic analysis by ECONorthwest, will provide context for the strategies presented in Section III.

Past Studies

A review of past studies and plans was conducted to ensure that ideas and suggestions from prior reports were included in this plan (see Appendix A: Summaries of Prior Studies for a short description of each plan, along with key takeaways.) The studies provide background on what projects are currently underway in the community as well as prior findings regarding community goals and support. This information provides a basis for many of the strategies contained in this strategic plan.

Economic Opportunities & Goals

Tourism was identified as a key opportunity for economic growth in the Canyon. To support the diversification of the economic base, it was recommended that the County collaborate and foster innovation in agriculture and technology, workforce training, entrepreneurship, and affordable housing and transportation.

Multiple prior studies identified the importance of using land strategically. The City of Gates is surrounded by County and Federal lands and its current urban growth boundary (UGB) is therefore limited. As such, land should be viewed as one of the most restricted resources for the City. City Council and staff members need to be aware of the opportunity costs of land development. Council should ensure that any new development is the highest and best use for the community.

The development of a sewer system is a major opportunity to create new potential for economic development. In 2020, the cities of Gates, Detroit, Mill City, and Idanha created the North Santiam Sewer Authority (NSSA) under the auspices of ORS Chapter 190. This entity exists and operates independently from the cities' governing bodies and, as an ORS 190 organization, can only access revenue bonds.

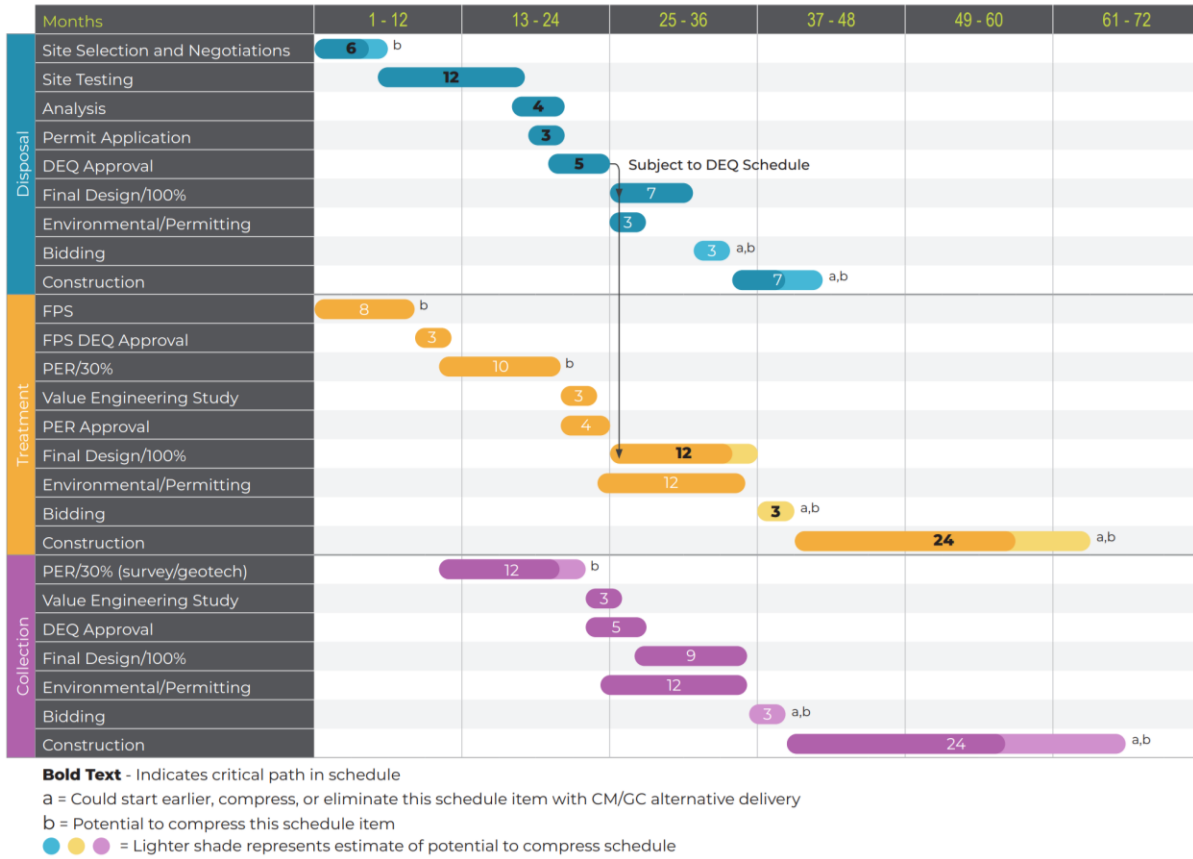
Infrastructure Projects Underway

The Canyon Journeys Trail System will provide a non-motorized transportation alternative to State Highway 22, connecting parks, schools, churches, and key locations in the canyon communities to improve quality of life and create recreational focal points to stimulate tourism and boost economic productivity. Despite this study being completed in 2004, is currently being implemented under the Timber Trails Alliance.

Wastewater System (sewer) is an upcoming infrastructure project that will provide centralized sewage collection and treatment for businesses and homes and allow them to transition from their current septic systems. The State of Oregon allocated \$50 Million in 2021 for design, planning, and construction of the system. This funding has garnered increased traction to this multi-decade project. There is funding to pay for most of the Gates/Mill City portion of the project (estimated at \$45 million), but some funding has been set aside for the Detroit/Idanha portion (estimated at \$61 million) so a shortfall of \$5 million for the Gates/Mill City portion still exists.

Because the sewer system upgrade is still in the design stage with many technical, cost and construction details to be worked through by the Sewer Authority, a detailed discussion of the specifics and timing of the sewer project is not included in this report. For a more thorough analysis of the implications of sewer for the canyon, please see the ECONorthwest report

published alongside this one. A Gantt chart of the Gates/Mill City portion of the sewer project is provided below.



General recommendations, including the upsides and risks inherent in the County’s current wastewater strategy, are discussed throughout the document. The sewer system upgrade will likely have the single largest impact on the City and its impact is analyzed in many of the recommendations. Because the Gates/Mill city portion is 90 percent funded, the operating assumption in this report is that the system will be completed in the medium term (2-5 years).

Broadband and internet access are areas of concern for many of the communities in the canyon. A Marion County Broadband Strategy was completed in 2019 to identify what the internet needs are of citizens, home based medical care providers, emergency management, schools, community organizations, and businesses. Marion County is now working on making high speed broadband internet accessible through public and private partnerships. The rollout of Gates’ partnership is underway and should be completed within the next few years.

Baseline Economic Analysis

ECONorthwest conducted a pre-fire analysis of all of the communities in the Canyon. While not a comprehensive summary of that report, the following are salient data points that are referred to in the recommendations and strategies of this report:

- At 54.6 years, the City of Gates’ median age is 18 years higher than Marion County as a whole

- Gates has a smaller average household size (2.21) than the County as a whole (2.79)
- The City has lower median household incomes (\$42,250) than surrounding communities (Mill City at \$53,243 and Lyon/Mehama at \$66,485).
- 18.4 percent of the City’s households are categorized as incomes that are below the federal poverty line (compared to Marion County at 14.2 percent).
- The majority of Gates workers commute out of the City for work. A large share of those workers are going to Mill City, Lyons, and the Salem MSA.
- The preponderance of the Gates/Mill City commercial and retail activity occurs in Mill City. The area should be viewed as a contiguous economic area rather than as two distinct Cities with little shared economic activity.
- Top industries for the Gates area (Zip Code 97346) include government, crop farming, greenhouse/nursery, logging, and education⁵.
- Manufacturing is the dominate industry in terms of employment (at 44.3 percent) and payrolls (56.7%) and has a wage that is higher than the median.
- Median home sale prices have doubled for the five zip-code area between 2018 and 2021, from a median price of approximately \$200,000 to \$400,000.
- Recreation is a main driver of tourism, with more than 400,000 visits to recreation sites per year.
- The recreation areas shows high levels of seasonality, leading to sharp increases and decreases in economic activity throughout the year.
- Total annual traffic on Highway 22 increased between 2009 and 2019, with an annual average of more than 1.5 million trips each year.
- Timber Harvests have decreased between 1990 and 2019, with a major shock between 2006 and 2013. Production is typically between 50,000 and 100,000 thousand board feet (MBF) each year
- Wholesale timber prices have increased significantly since 2010, from a low of \$200 per MBF to more than \$400 per MBF in 2018.
 - Interviews with stakeholders revealed that prices reach new highs in 2021 due to labor issues, supply chain disruption, and other pandemic-related impacts.
- Timber payment revenues reached more than \$8.5 million in 2019, higher than the previous three years combined.

⁵ The greenhouse/nursery industry described in the analysis was likely capturing a marijuana company that is no longer located within the City.

SECTION II: VISIONING PROCESS



In person and virtual interviews, public forums and surveys were used to conduct outreach to community members. Broad participation from a wide range of community members provided insights into the needs and vision of the community. This section describes the outcomes of the interviews, public forums, and online surveys.

Stakeholder Interviews Report

Input on the vision plan came from more than 40 interviews of elected officials, county and city staff, business owners, stakeholders in nonprofits, and citizens. The interviews had broad, general questions designed to provide understanding of community dynamics, power structures, projects and initiatives, and current efforts for recovery. As the interview process progressed, more specific questions were asked to better understand topics and themes that had emerged from the previous interviews, defining key trends that were explored with the community at the public forum.

Concepts that arose in these unstructured interviews were sorted and categorized into the “Areas of Focus” described within this document. The project ideas were then rated on two different scales to represent relative difficulty and duration of a given project when compared to other projects in that Area of Focus. The result of this work is shown in the bubble charts below.

The **size of each bubble** represents **how many times** the project idea was brought up by individual interviewees. A larger bubble means that it was a more salient idea, while a smaller bubble represents ideas that were only brought up once or a handful of times. The size of the bubble should not be viewed as showing support or rejection of an idea since both negative and positive responses to a project contributed to the size (positive and negative sentiment was collected during the first public forum and the results are described starting on page 23).

The bubble’s **location on the X-Axis** represents the **estimated time** it will take to complete the project. Note—this does not represent the order in which projects should be completed. For example, some 1-year projects may be more relevant or timely if started after a 3-year project is complete.

The bubble’s **location on the Y-Axis** represents the **estimated investment** it will take to complete the project.

Infrastructure/Governance—Eight topics in this area of focus were discussed, with the most-cited topic the planned sewer system and its potential impacts. Other common projects included having interlocal agreements with surrounding communities to reduce costs, increasing the number of services provided to work-from-home employees, and identifying new revenue sources to bolster the City’s reserve fund and increase sustainability. There is interest in the City taking on a larger array of services, but there is also little interest increasing taxes or other fees so the city can pay for these services. This led to several discussions around the role of the City and the way it should serve its citizens. Discussion on the governance structure became a major topic through this process and was reflected in the following meetings.

Some community members were interested in exploring ways to increase the city’s boundaries through annexation and land purchasing. Gates has an option to annex some land to the south of the river, which would increase the total area of the City and present some opportunities for sustainability depending on build-out.

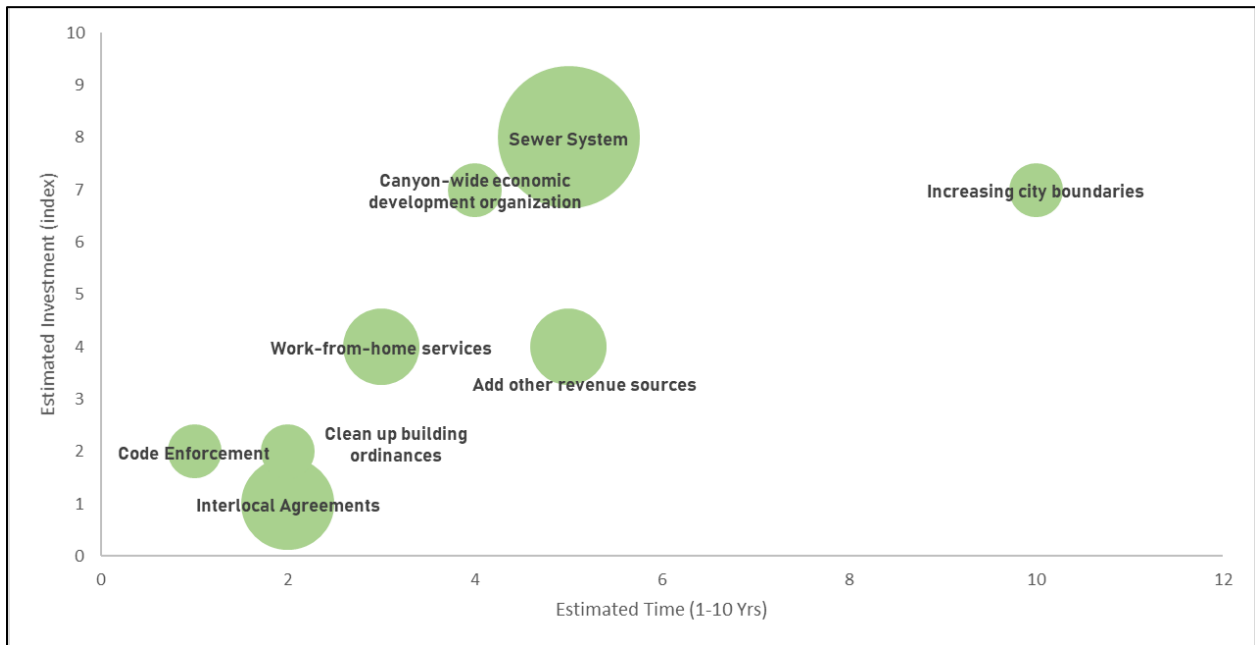


Figure 3—Infrastructure/Governance Interviews Bubble Chart

Housing—Housing was brought up often in the interviews as a need, especially for those who lost their homes in the fire. Several solutions were brought forward to address this, including temporary housing, a tiny home project current underway with the county, as well as several other non-traditional unit types. Another topic which was discussed several times was the need for assistance with permitting, a common issue for residents who are trying to rebuild.

Gates is a bedroom community, meaning that the majority of the residents work outside of the City’s boundaries. Community members would like to keep this type of community and are not interested in having significant changes to the type and character of their housing stock.

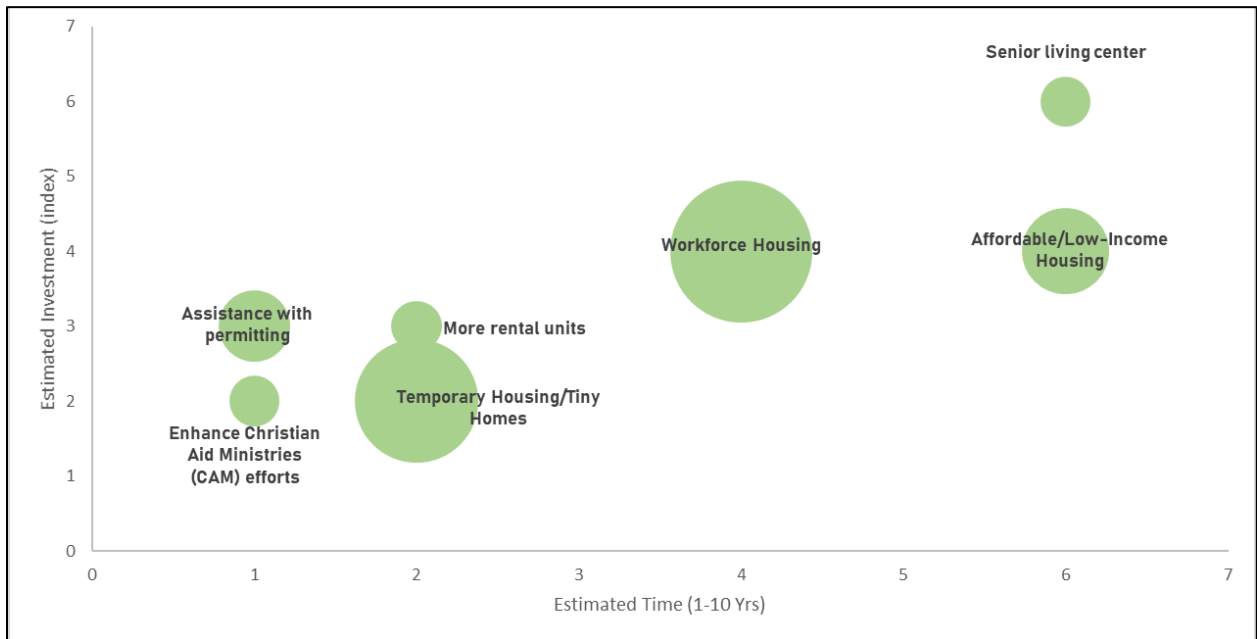


Figure 4— Housing Interviews Bubble Chart

Downtown/Commercial Corridor— The community is eager to bring commerce back to the City’s commercial corridor. Several ideas surfaced to address needs and wants. Ideas included services for travelers and locals (hardware store, gift shop), restaurants, and creating a downtown theme for the structures. Some activation of a downtown commercial will be important for the community and will ensure the City’s financial sustainability. It will also provide some space for civic events, cultural heritage, and amenities for community members and visitors. Interviewees expressed an interest in smaller and more modest structure types that would conform to the City’s current aesthetic.

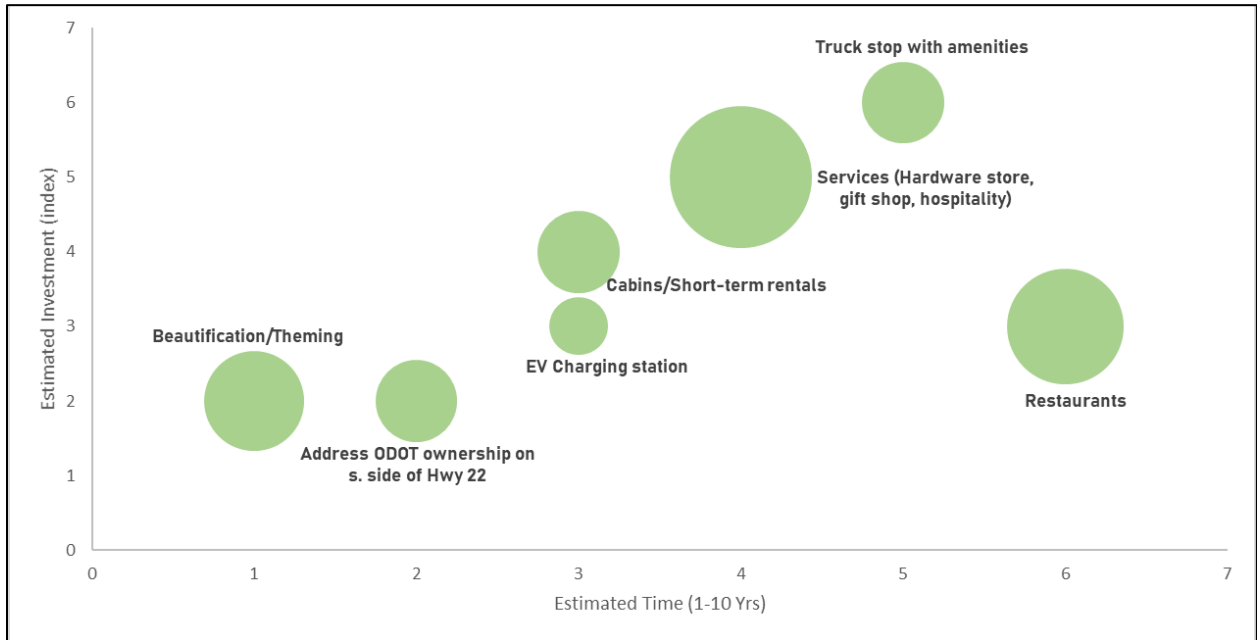


Figure 5–Downtown/Commercial Corridor Interviews Bubble Chart

Recreation/Tourism— The community has a lot of excitement regarding recreation and tourism opportunities, with many community members viewing the City as a potential basecamp for outdoor recreation throughout the canyon. Common ideas included improving river and trail access, adding a new city park focused on outdoor recreation opportunities, and using trails as a tool for wildfire mitigation.

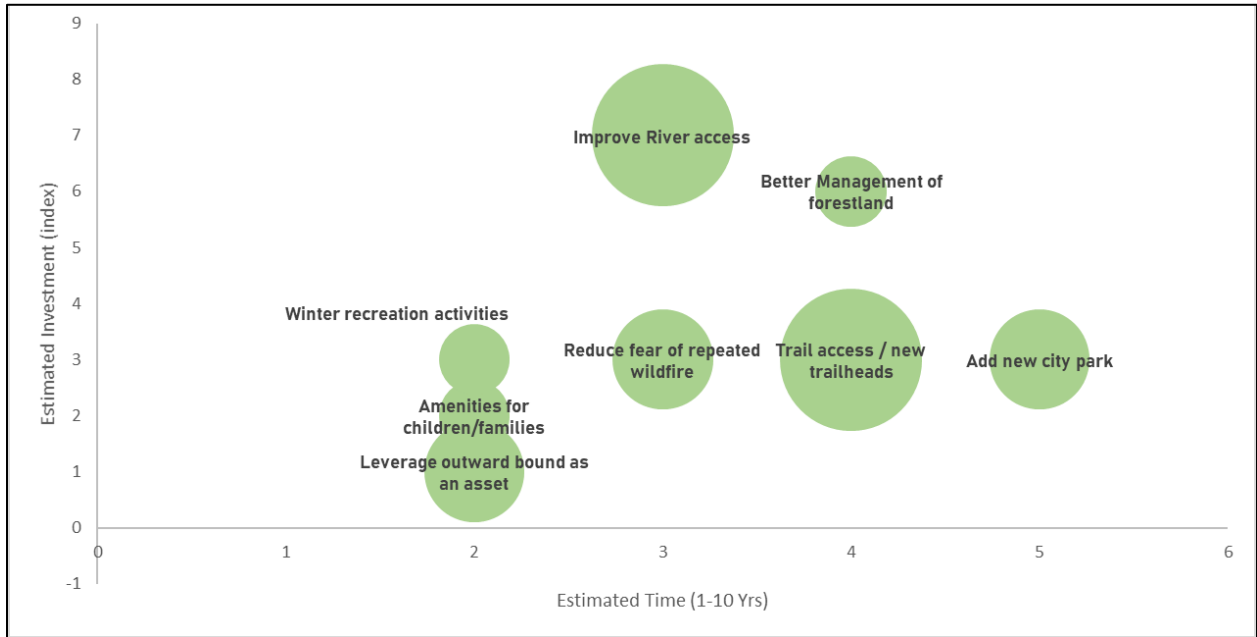


Figure 6–Recreation/Tourism Interviews Bubble Chart

Public Forum

A public forum was held on September 23rd to discuss the areas of focus that had emerged from the interviews. The meeting was held at the Community Church of Christ⁶ and was available for both in-person as well as remote attendees. A total of 10 people participated in-person, with another 18 participating virtually.



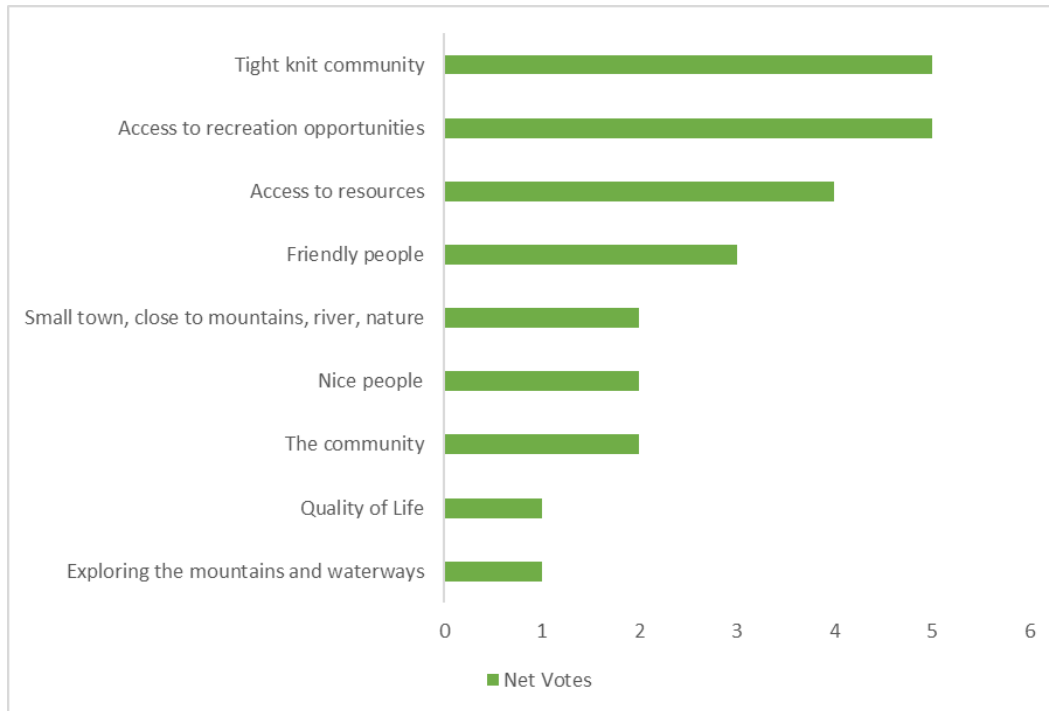
Figure 7—Gates Community Church of Christ

The purpose of the meeting was to gather additional feedback and determine if there was consensus concerning areas of focus. The meeting previewed potential projects at a high-level and discussed the economic benefits and ramifications of those projects. Participants showed a general support of the areas of focus and felt that the topics represented what was salient and important to the community as a whole.

Those who attended in person participated in a live poll. Their ideas and feedback were captured and are represented graphically below. The height of each column represents the net votes of ideas presented (upvotes minus downvotes).

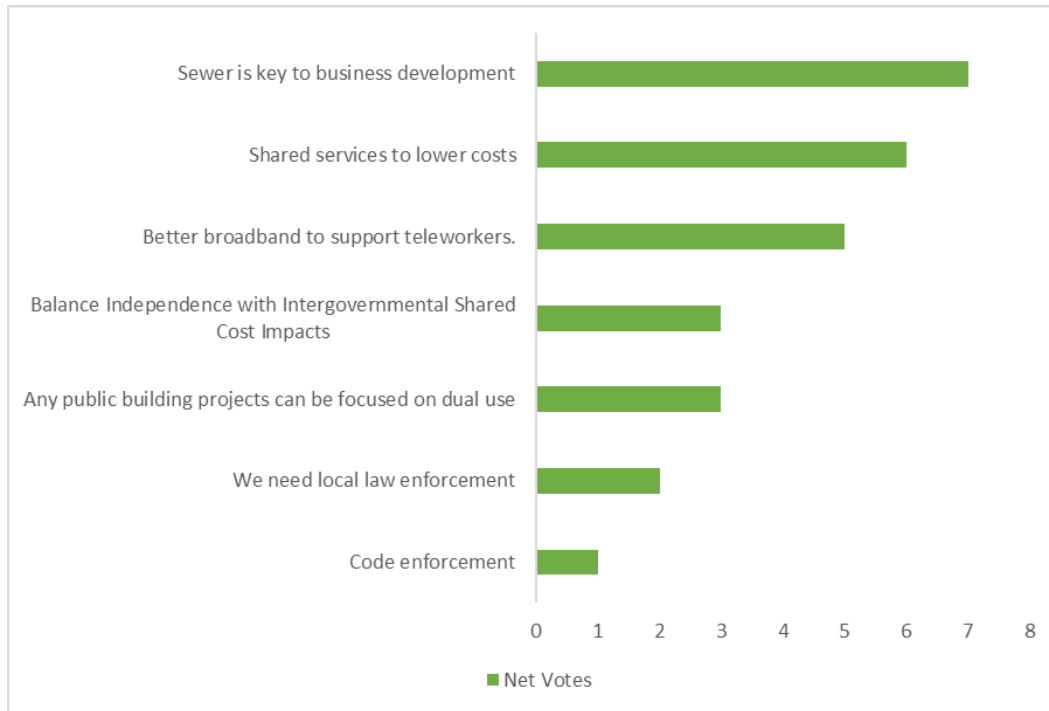
⁶ Special thanks to the Gates Community Church of Christ for hosting the public meetings.

What do you love about the City of Gates?



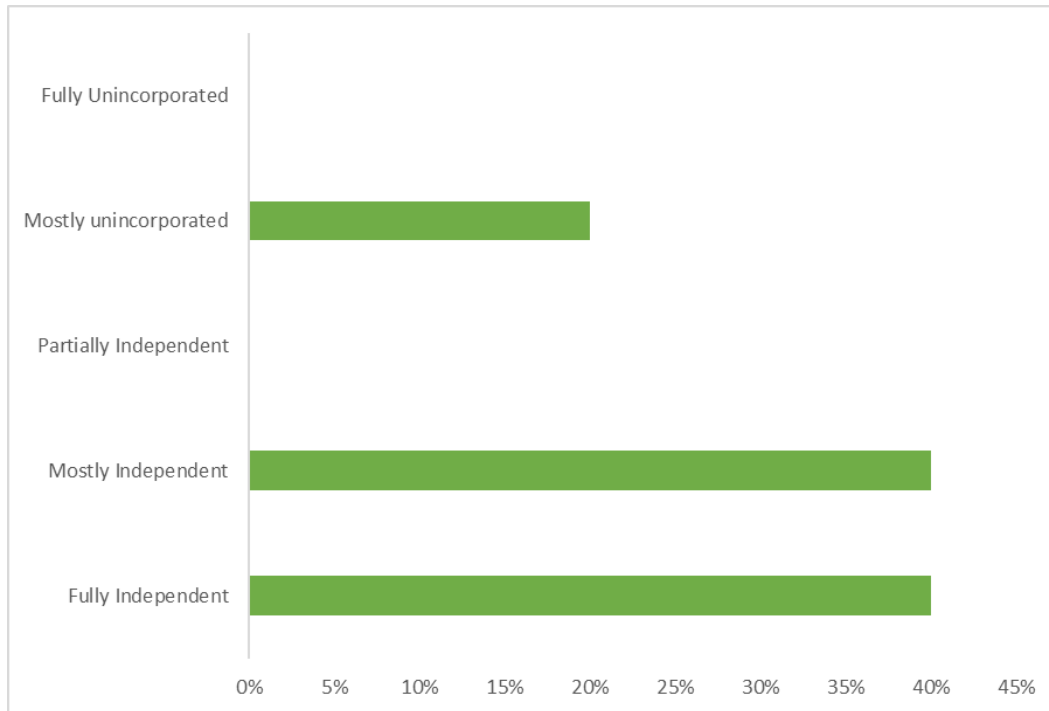
The first question allowed community members to get to know how the software worked and to describe why they loved the City of Gates. The answers reveal what is authentic to the community: a close group of residents who live close to several recreation opportunities, providing a high quality of life. This is representative of the City brand and was brought up in the one-on-one interviews as a few of the reasons that people had moved to the community from elsewhere.

What Ideas/Thoughts do you have regarding Infrastructure/Governance?



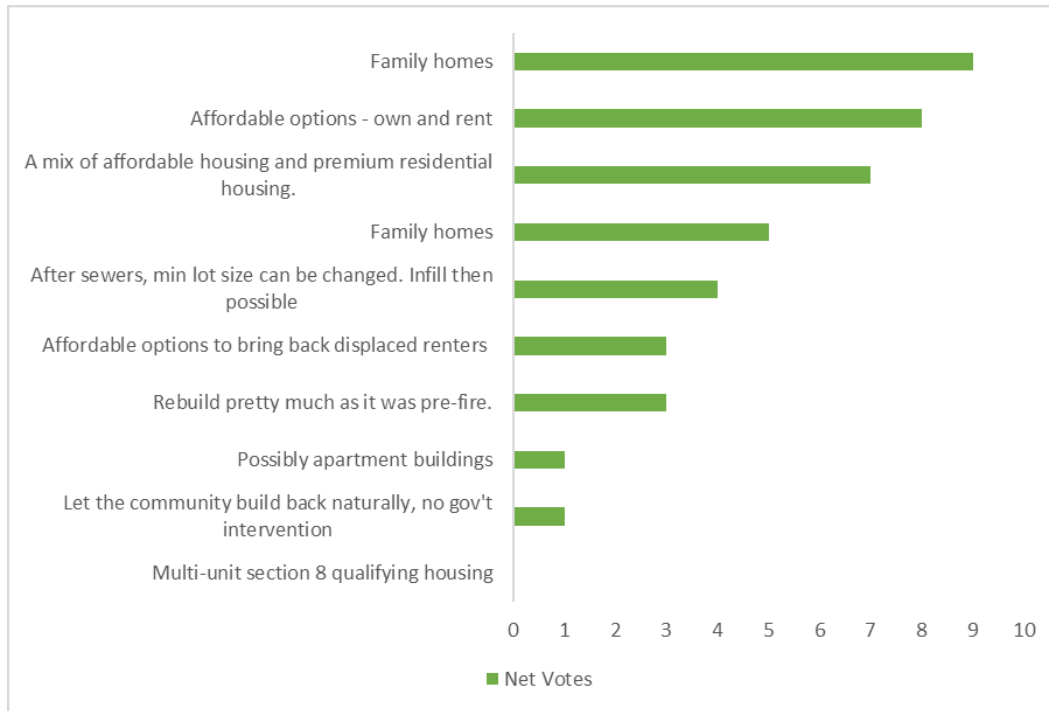
Many community members understand the importance of the sewer system on the development of the community. They also understand the current financial straits of the community given the decrease in residents, property values, and other revenues. An issue with local law enforcement was also brought up that had not been previously mentioned during the one-on-one interviews. It is difficult for police to respond to domestic issues and the wait time for an officer to arrive on scene is quite long.

What do you think is the correct civic structure for the City?



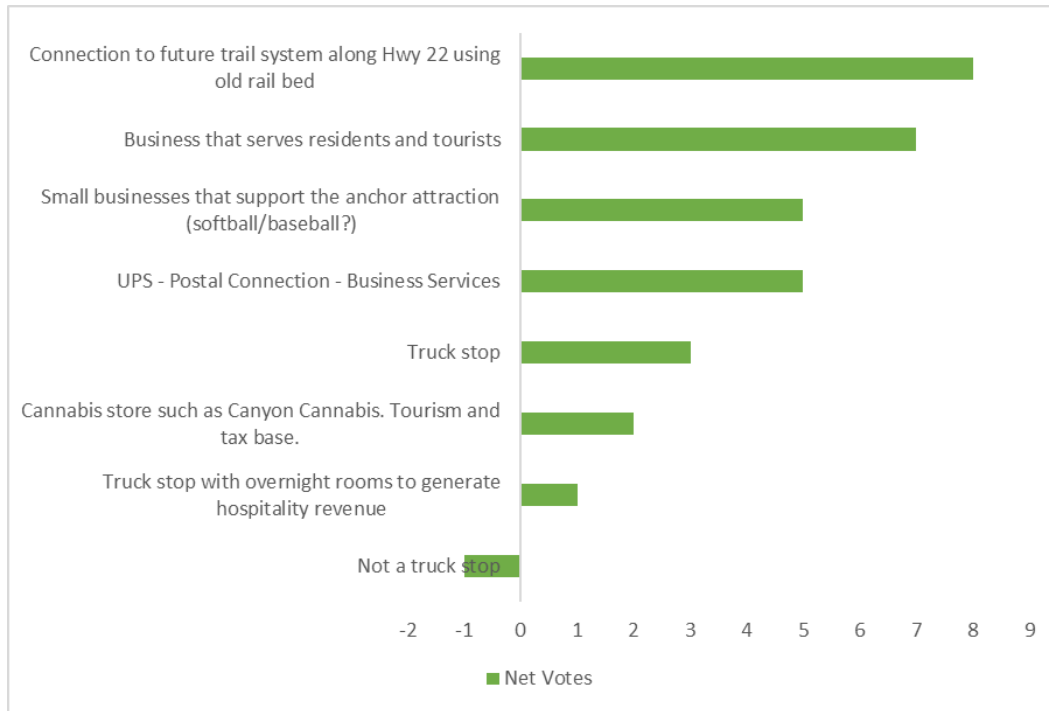
The trade-offs between the need for City services the costs for those services has become a major talking point of the community. If services are added, the City will need to pay for it through a local option or via use fees. Community members are hesitant to support new services because, due to the number of residents, the cost per family will be quite high. As such, this question was added to understand where community members were in terms of their preferred level of services, knowing that adding services could impact local costs. As shown in the chart, there wasn't an apparent winner, with some preferences toward minimal services (mostly unincorporated) and independence with higher levels of services.

What Ideas/Thoughts do you have regarding housing in Gates?



Community members strongly supported the vision of Gates as a bedroom community. Due to the costs of reconstruction and hot housing market, affordability is a key priority for community members. There was general support for smaller structures, allowing for the infill of property after sewer is added. There was not a lot of support for multifamily structures nor income-restricted properties.

What Ideas/Thoughts do you have regarding the Downtown/Commercial Corridor?



The ideas represented above are closely aligned with the ideas presented in one-on-one interviews. Community members are looking for ways to provide some key services to community members while increasing revenues enough that the city can be financially sustainable. There is not a strong desire to have multi-level or dense property types.

What Ideas/Thoughts do you have regarding Outdoor Recreation and Tourism?



There was a general support for providing river access, which was not in accordance with interviews. The river had been brought up during the one-on-one interviews but did not seem like a high priority due to the costs of development. There was also a strong support for increasing access and wayfinding for local trails, as well as adding visitation to annual events. A new project idea that was brought up was the development of a baseball/softball complex.

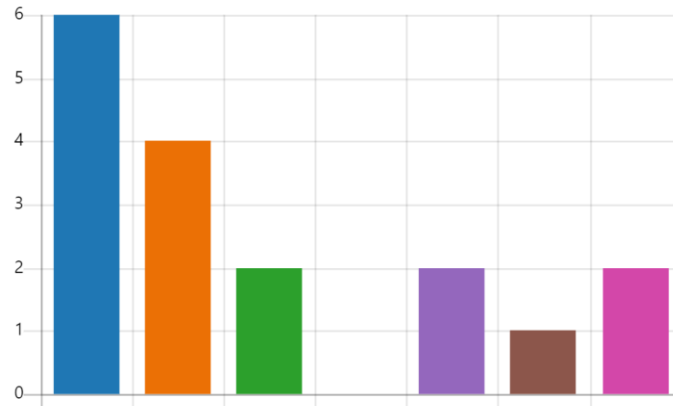
Post Forum Survey

An online survey was made available to community members through October 2021 to facilitate further input. An additional seven members of the community participated in this survey. Their feedback is shown below:

Which of the following housing projects do you support?

[More Details](#)

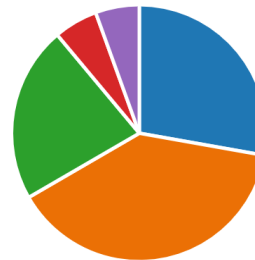
● Family Homes	6
● Affordable options	4
● Change lot sizes after sewer c...	2
● Rebuild community as it was b...	0
● Let city build back naturally, w...	2
● Apartment buildings	1
● Multi-unit section 8 qualifying...	2



Which of the following Downtown/Commercial projects do you support?

[More Details](#)

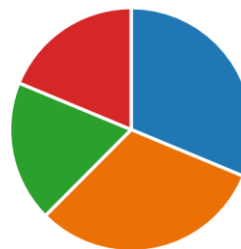
● Connection to trail system alo...	5
● Business that serves residents ...	7
● UPS--Postal Connection with ...	4
● Truck stop	1
● Bring back cannabis store	1



Which of the following recreation/tourism projects do you support?

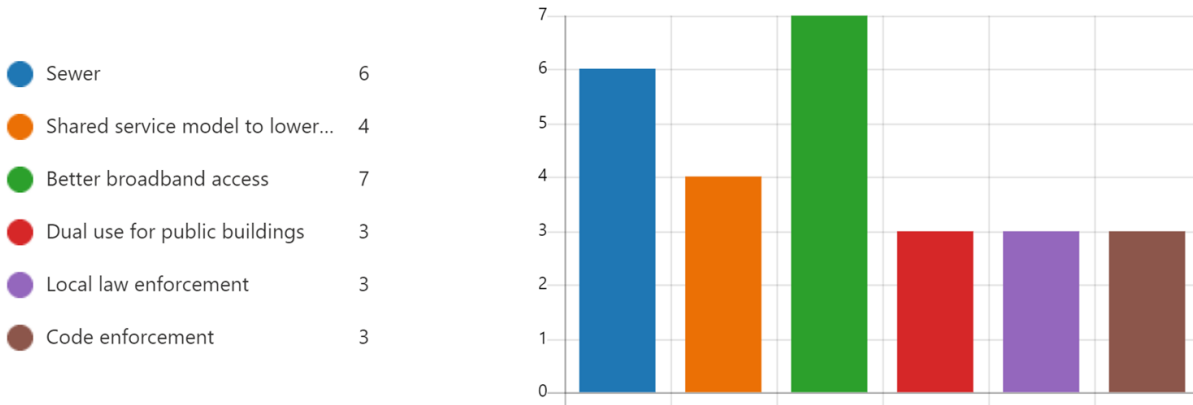
[More Details](#)

● River access with ability to lau...	5
● Annual community festival	5
● Baseball/Softball complex	3
● New City park with playground	3



Which of the following infrastructure/governance projects do you support?

[More Details](#)

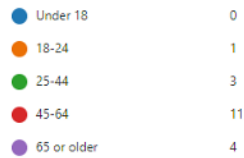


Public Survey

An online public survey was available from July to October. This survey asked community members to answer specific questions about where they live, their employment status and industry/occupation, and to rate and prioritize various aspects of the canyon economy. The survey received 19 responses, with the results shown below:

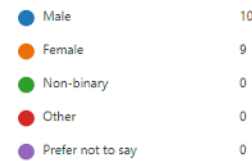
1. What is your age?

[More Details](#)



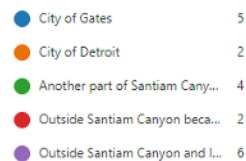
2. What is your gender?

[More Details](#)



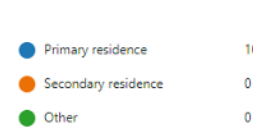
3. Where do you currently live?

[More Details](#)



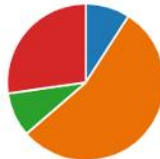
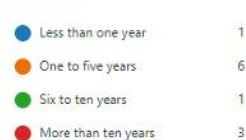
4. What type of residence do you have in the Canyon?

[More Details](#)

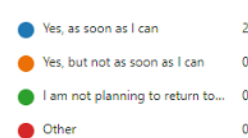


5. How long have you lived there?

[More Details](#)



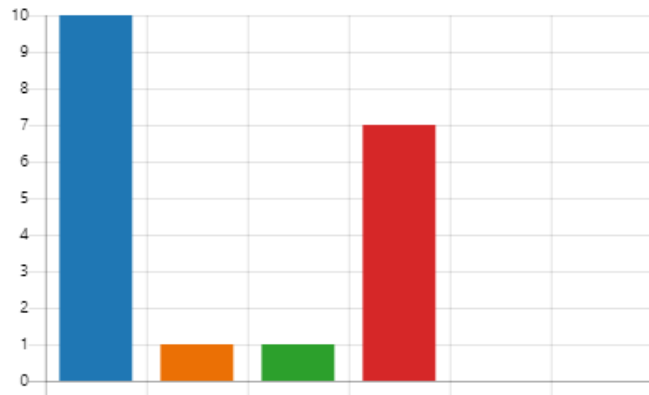
6. Are you planning to return to the canyon, either as your primary residence or secondary residence?



7. What is your current employment status?

[More Details](#)

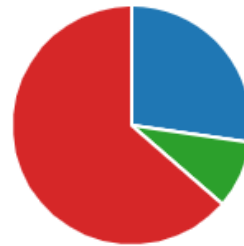
● Employed (Full-time)	10
● Employed (Part-time)	1
● Unemployed but searching fo...	1
● Not in labor force (retired and...	7
● Active-duty military	0
● Student	0



8. Where are you employed?

[More Details](#)

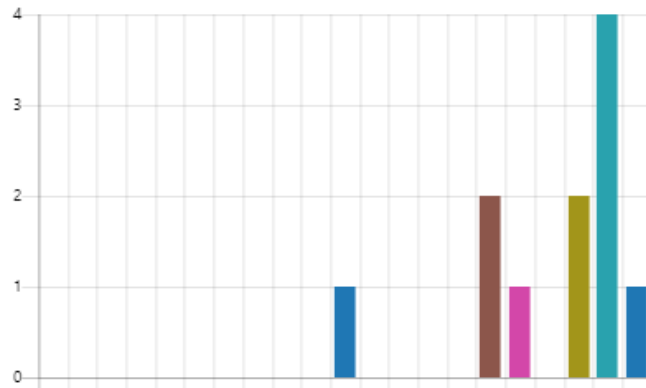
● City of Gates	3
● City of Detroit	0
● Another part of Santiam Canyon...	1
● Outside of Santiam Canyon	7



9. What industry group best represents your business/employer?

[More Details](#)

● Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing a...	0
● Mining, Quarrying, Oil and Ga...	0
● Utilities	0
● Construction	0
● Manufacturing	0
● Wholesale Trade	0
● Retail Trade	0
● Transportation and Warehousi...	0
● Information (IT)	0
● Finance and Insurance	0
● Real Estate and Rental and Lea...	1
● Professional, Scientific, and Te...	0
● Management of Companies a...	0
● Administrative and Support a...	0
● Educational Services	0
● Healthcare and Social Assistan...	2
● Arts, Entertainment, and Recre...	1
● Accommodation and Food Ser...	0
● Other Services (except, Public ...	2
● Public Administration	4
● Other	1



10. In your opinion, has your business/employer...

[More Details](#)

● Struggled to be successful aft...	4
● Experience few if any impacts ...	1
● Met or exceeded performance...	6



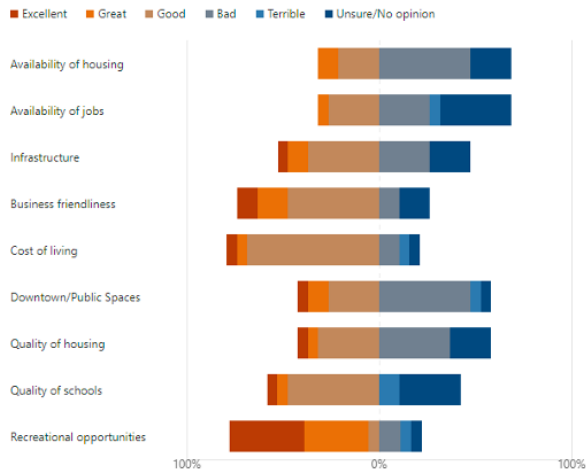
11. Where are you looking for work?

[More Details](#)

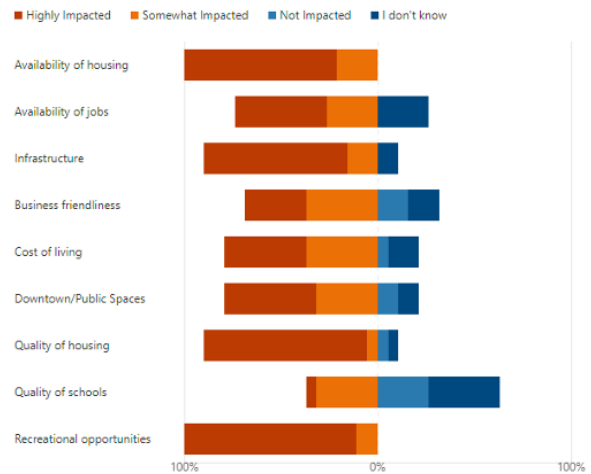
● City of Gates	1
● City of Detroit	0
● Another part of Santiam Canyon...	0
● Outside of Santiam Canyon	0



13. Please rate the following aspects of the Santiam Canyon economy before the disaster



14. To what extent were these aspects impacted by the disaster?



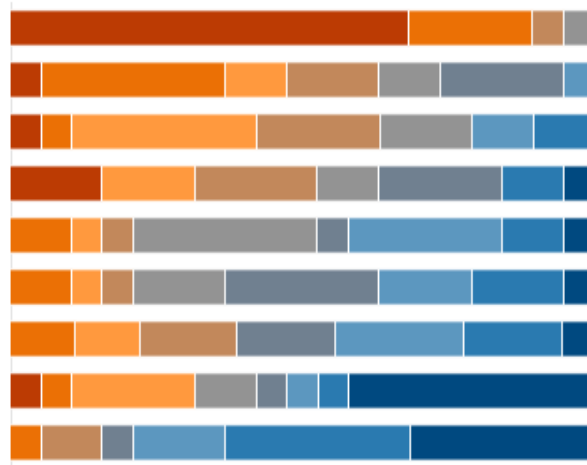
15. Of the aspects listed above, rank the ones that you believe would be MOST important for community leaders/elected officials to address over the next two years (from most important to least important)

[More Details](#)

Rank Options


- 1 Availability of housing
- 2 Availability of jobs
- 3 Cost of living
- 4 Infrastructure
- 5 Downtown/Public Spaces
- 6 Business friendliness
- 6 Quality of housing
- 7 Recreational opportunities
- 8 Quality of schools

First choice Last choice



16. OPTIONAL: Is there an aspect of the economy not listed above that should be added to the report? If so, briefly describe why you think it is important to the recovery of the canyon communities.

[More Details](#)

 Insights

6

Responses


Latest Responses

2 respondents (33%) answered **Detroit** for this question.



17. OPTIONAL: Is there anything else that this survey has not address that you feel would be important for recovery efforts?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

7

Responses

Latest Responses

"Cost of rebuilding"

2 respondents (29%) answered **Detroit** for this question.



The input provided through the interviews, public forums, and online surveys revealed insights and opportunities for the canyon economy and the City of Gates. These ideas are the foundation of the following strategies and recommendations and are described in the introductory narratives for each area of focus presented in Section III.

**SECTION III: RECOVERY &
RESILIENCY STRATEGY**



This section provides an overview of the current economic conditions and relevant visioning outcomes for the four key areas of focus: Infrastructure & Governance, Housing, Downtown, and Outdoor Recreation & Tourism. The areas are not independent, meaning that each area of focus is connected to the other areas in terms of impacts and strategies (i.e. pursuing a downtown project will impact the viability and auspiciousness of outdoor recreation), so many topics will be addressed both in their core area of focus and in the other areas when relevant. The impact of the sewer system is a key theme and will be referenced throughout the document.

The strategies are provided in a “Next Steps” table at the end of each section. Strategies are listed in order according to their implementation timeframe. Short-term strategies should be addressed in the next 1-2 years, medium-term strategies should be addressed in the next 2-5 years, and long-term strategies should be addressed beyond 5 years. These strategies were developed with the current availability of local resources and funds, so changes to this assumption can change the timeframe of the activities.

Each strategy also has required and/or recommended participants listed alongside them. The list of participants mentioned, and their abbreviations, are as follows:

Participants	Abbreviation
Gates City Council	Council
Gates City Staff	Staff
Residents of Gates	Community
Marion County	County
Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments	MWVCOG
North Santiam Sewer Authority	NSSA
Santiam Canyon Chamber of Commerce	Chamber
Willamette Valley Visitor’s Association	WVVA
Travel Oregon/Travel Salem	TO/TS
Santiam Integration Team	SIT
Small Business Development Center	SBDC
Third-party consultant	Consultant
Entities or individuals with whom the City can coordinate to accomplish a project	Stakeholders

An important consideration to keep in mind is the pain and suffering endured by those who lost their homes in the fire. Many were uninsured or underinsured due to the sharp increase in housing prices in 2020, leading to limited funds to rebuild. In addition, materials and labor shortages made it difficult for many to rebuild even if they had the resources. Others still are dealing with displacement, loss of personal possessions and social support, and other forms of trauma. The physical, psychological, and emotional needs of these families and individuals are difficult to express and are beyond the scope of this strategy. Despite the current lack of involvement from many of these community members, their voices and desires should continue to be actively sought as the City rebuilds.



SOURCE: Sean Meagher, The Oregonian, Sep 21, 2020

Figure 8—Destroyed home in Gates

The strategies outlined in this section are to provide the County, Gates City Council and Staff a pathway to enhance all aspects of the City—quality of life, job availability, housing, recreation, etc. A lack of resources may impede the ability to pursue all options. City and County leaders should be tactical in what projects are pursued based on resources available and potential impediments. The City must support any new services by an additional revenue source, and projects must have clear end dates and/or pathways to sustainability before existing resources are spent.



Infrastructure & Governance

The City of Gates provides several civic services including water, street maintenance, and permitting. Other municipal services (such as police and planning) are provided through contracts with Marion County and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG). The Gates Rural Fire Protection District provides fire safety. The City's budget is limited as too are the City's offerings of services. There is an inherent trade-off between the services that the City can provide and the revenues needed to execute on them. While this is true of every city, the small population in Gates can have a drastic impact because the fixed costs of operating cannot be spread out to a larger population; adding or taking a service away has a significant impact on the City's budget and local taxes.

The primary sources of forecasted revenue for the City in 2022 include water bills (approximately \$175,000), franchise fees (\$27,000), state revenue sharing (\$20,000), and state liquor revenue (\$10,000).⁷ Actual receipts will likely be lower than the forecast due to the loss of economic activity and population caused by the fire. The City's population will not recover for

⁷ Source: City of Gates Adopted Budget FYE 2022

several years, so the state revenue sharing—which is based on the City’s total population—is likely to drop when Portland State University’s estimates are adjusted.

Property taxes provide approximately \$8,000 per the 2022 budget; however, this is anticipated to decrease to approximately \$5,000 due to the units damaged from the fire. The impact on revenue will be large during the next few years, as the City rebuilds and regains its population. New homes are being rebuilt with higher average home values than before, so the City’s revenue will increase commensurately over time. The City Council should be aware of these impacts and make sure that the City’s services are lean over the next few years. They should also have some hope that the budget will become more and more sustainable over time, likely in the next five to seven years.

City Finances

The City of Gates has a loan balance of \$458,636.36 for upgrades to its water system. Fortunately, payments have been deferred until December 2021 as a part of the wildfire relief effort. Conversations with City leaders have expressed optimism that this debt is manageable despite current budget constraints; however, this debt may become an issue if the City were to pursue an option of disincorporation because it would need to resolve this debt before the option to disincorporate would become available (see Governance Structure).

Provided that the City continues to receive grant funds and support from the County and MWVCOG for specific services, the City should be able to maintain its current budget in the short term, especially given the number of grants that have been made available to boost the City’s coffers. However, unless alternative revenue streams are identified and pursued, it will be unfeasible for the City to plan on providing additional services in the future beyond what it is currently providing. The City will need to be strategic in how it grows and what services are offered, with any new service offerings carefully considered: not only should the initial cost of setup or construction, but also the ongoing maintenance and repair work that will need to be done. For example, if the City wants to invest in a new park (one of the ideas proposed during the interview process), allocations for watering, maintenance, upkeep, playground equipment repair, and staff time, etc. would also need to be added to the long-term budget. A revenue source, such as a local option tax, would need to be levied to pay for this amenity.

The City’s finances should be carefully monitored over the next several years to ensure that expenses do not exceed revenues. There little room to cut services or personnel to reduce costs—the City is already running at a minimum level of service. Instead, the City could explore options to increase its revenue sources to reduce its debt ratio. Potential options for new revenue include:

- **Charge impact fees for new construction.** New homes and commercial buildings can pay according to a modest fee schedule. This—like water hookups—would have a meaningful impact in the near term but would be limited due to the landlocked nature of the community. If the City pursues this option, the fee should be waived for fire-impacted residents who are rebuilding or returning to the City.
- **Lease City-owned land.** The City owns several parcels on which it could lease the land for revenue sources. This could include areas that appeal to food trucks, pop-up businesses, or event venues. This option would do well if pursuing a new city park, since the park could be leased out for short-term events and festivals.

- **Parking/Access fees for City-owned amenities.** Charge a modest fee for parking at popular tourist amenities. This would be particularly effective if implemented at a river access point. This type of fee is common in Oregon as a revenue source and is currently in use within the Canyon, such as near the County and State parks.
- **Leverage local resources to pursue more grant funds.** The City’s limited staffing makes it difficult to apply for and administer grants. The City should coordinate with the County, MWVCOG, and nonprofit entities to apply for grants that are administered by the partners. The COG’s RARE participant, who will have a presence in the canyon for the next few years, is a great example of using regional resources to boost local capacity. Partners are often willing to participate in grant applications so long as there are funds set aside for administration to offset the burden of participating, ensuring the grant isn’t a drain on the partner’s resources. As the City adds staff members, a portion of staff time should be set aside to work with partners to identify and apply for grants so the City is not reliant on current revenue funds alone. At a minimum, the City should make sure that it has a grants.gov account and related SAM.gov numbers so it can apply for grants.

A municipal financial advisor is best able to analyze these and other scenarios and determine which revenue sources would be most effective for the City to implement.

The City lost its auditor and had no financial reviews for the last two years. According to ORS 297.425, the “accounts and fiscal affairs of every municipal corporation shall be audited and reviewed at least once each calendar or fiscal year.” To avoid a state code compliance issue, the City should prioritize having the City’s financial statements audited. Having audited financial statements is also important when qualifying for grants; not having the proper statements could prevent the City from pursuing a funding opportunity. Financial reports also provide insight into the City’s fiscal standing and can help a community know where it stands financially. It is also important for these records to be available for local residents so they know the current standing of their community.

Task	Recommendations – City Finances	Timeline	Participants
1.1.1	Work with the County to hire an auditor to complete the financial reviews for Gates.	Short	Staff, County, Auditor
1.1.2	Secure grant/capital outlays for technical assistance to develop a strategy for the City’s finances. The Community Development Block Grant program might be a good fit for this type of review.	Short	Staff, Consultant, Stakeholders
1.1.3	Determine what steps will be taken to increase the City’s revenue sources. Be sure to get community feedback on potential solutions.	Short	Council, Staff, Community
1.1.4	Create an action plan for implementing the decided course. Aim to have any new fee schedules created and approved by City Council as soon as possible to ease the constraints	Short	Staff, Council

Task	Recommendations – City Finances	Timeline	Participants
	that are being place on the community due to the drop in property values from the wildfire.		
1.1.5	Work closely with key partners—including the County, MWVCOG, State agencies, and non-profits to be aware of local and regional resource streams with the intent to apply for grants and technical assistance. Plan on allowing some funds for administration of the grant under these partners.	Short	Staff, Council
1.1.5	Continue searching for grants and other resources for public services, staff support, and funds for major projects.	Medium	Staff
1.1.6	Begin pursuing the options provided above for adding new revenue sources to ensure the City’s sustainability.	Medium	Staff
1.1.7	Work closely with the North Santiam Sewer Authority (NSSA) to understand how the sewer system will impact the City’s finances.	Medium	Staff, Council, NSSA
1.1.8	Build an emergency fund to deal with repairs and upgrades to local infrastructure.	Long	Staff, Council
1.1.9	Hire assistant staff members who can provide support to current staff as well as assume main roles as current staff leave their positions or retire.	Long	Council
1.1.10	Work with a consultant to forecast the City’s expected revenues and expenses after the City is fully built out to ensure that it will have a sustainable budget in perpetuity.	Long	Staff, Council, Consultant

Governance Structure

The wildfires sparked an identity crisis of sorts regarding the City’s status and its relationship with residents. After the Beachie Creek fire, several community members asked if the City should retain its status or if it should attempt to disincorporate and transition back to unincorporated County lands. During interviews, various Gates residents brought up different types and models of government services, with conflicting opinions on what services should be provided by which governmental entity. There wasn’t a strong agreement on what the City’s level of service should be into the future.

Deciding what services the City provides to its citizens is an important part of the City’s strategic course of action. This topic should guide financial decisions for several years to come. To frame a discussion regarding the levels of service, a description of various scenarios is provided below. This list is not exhaustive but should be helpful for City Council and staff as they decide the appropriate course of action.

The options for type of governance structure encompass a spectrum from full disincorporation to being fully independent with no shared services under ORS 190. The issue was salient enough that it was included as a topic in the public forum meeting to see if there was a consensus

surrounding how the City should be structured in terms of its level of independence regarding services. Despite a small sample of attendees, responses showed that there was not a shared vision for how the City should view its approach to providing services for residents and the inherent trade-off with those models.



Figure 9—Spectrum of Governance Structure

Full-Service City: A full-service city is one that is capable of funding and providing for a complete array of in-house public services to residents without contracting out with third-party agencies. Advantages of living in a full-service city include convenience, local control, better customer service, and an enhanced relationship with municipal government through an array of opportunities. It also allows for a more coordinated response between departments. There is a natural cap on the size of population in Gates since land area is limited. This means that the City will have to push the burden of fixed costs (a wastewater treatment plant and staffing, for example) onto its limited population. It is unlikely due to this constraint that Gates would be able to function as a full-service city due to the costs alone.

Partial-Service City: Many cities rely on special districts and counties to provide a variety of public services to their residents. Responsibilities that fall under the jurisdiction of a municipality vary depending on the size and needs of the community. Services generally include providing for parks and recreation, police and fire departments, housing services, emergency medical services, municipal courts, transportation services (such as public transportation), and public works (streets, sewers, snow removal, signage, and so forth). In partial-service cities, these functions are divided between the municipality and the county, special districts, or other entities.

Oregon law permits a “unit of local government [to] enter into a written agreement with any other unit or units of local government for the performance of any or all functions and activities that a party to the agreement, its officers or agencies, have authority to perform (ORS 190).” These intergovernmental agreements enable public agencies to provide services and resources in efficient and economic ways that smaller agencies wouldn’t be able to accomplish on their own due to constrained resources and personnel.

Basic-Service City: A basic-service city is a type of partial-service city, but the city only provides the bare minimum of services—generally due to limited financial capacity. Most public services in Gates are provided by the County, MWVCOG, or other entities, so Gates is considered a basic-service city under this definition.

There is a wide spectrum of roles and services that municipalities provide for residents. It is important for community members to understand where to access information on services and who is providing services. While actual adjustments to which entities provide services in Gates may be unfeasible, creating clarity for community members and for City leaders and staff can prevent frustration. The table below shows a high-level breakdown of how services and roles are divided between the City and other entities. Clearly presenting how roles are divided will enable

decision makers to understand sources for each type of public service, identify potential gaps that aren't clearly defined under a specific steward, and communicate effectively to the public who provides which services. Providing this information to the public can also help community members understand which entities provide what services—creating clarity in residents' interactions with local government organizations. The City should post a list or table similar to the one below on the website and/or in the City offices.

Service	Provider
Cemeteries	Fairview Cemetery Association
Community development and planning	City of Gates, MWVCOG
Administration and record keeping	City of Gates
Courts	Linn and Marion County, Circuit Courts
Economic development	City of Gates, County, MWVCOG
Education/schools	Santiam School District
Electricity	Pacific Power
Emergency services	Gates Fire Department, Lyons/Mehema Fire Department
Environmental protection	DEQ, County
Fire department	Gates RFPD
Healthcare	Santiam Hospital
Housing	City of Gates, Realtors' Association
Library	Mill City
Medical services	Santiam Hospital
Municipal courts	N/A
Parks and recreation	City of Gates, Marion County
Sherrif's department	Marion County, Linn County
Public buildings facilitation	City of Gates
Public transportation	Cherriots
Public works department	City of Gates
Senior citizen programs	Mill City
Septic Permits	Marion County
Sewer	North Santiam Sewer Authority
Social services	City of Stayton (SIT, Wildfire Relief, DMV)

Service	Provider
Streets	City of Gates
Tax/finance department	City of Gates (water), Marion County (property), Linn County
Transient lodging tax	N/A
Telecommunications	Wave Broadband
Urban planning	City of Gates, MWVCOG
Waste management	Pacific Sanitation
Water treatment and distribution	City of Gates

Disincorporated City: Sometimes municipalities disincorporate when they become fiscally insolvent, and services become the responsibility of a higher administration. This option could be considered by the community as they determine the sustainability and structure of how the local government is able to provide local infrastructure and community services to the residents. If Gates chooses to disincorporate, the City government would dissolve, and community services would be provided by Marion County.

There are pros and cons to disincorporating. According to ORS 221.610, “any City not liable for any debt or other obligation, may surrender its charter, disincorporate and cease to exist if a majority of the electors of the City authorize the surrender and disincorporation as provided in ORS 221.621.” Preliminary to any discussion of disincorporation, the City would need to learn whether it is possible while still in debt if the County were to assume the City’s liabilities; otherwise, the City will need to wait until the outstanding debt is resolved to explore this option.

The decision of whether to disincorporate is in the hands of the community members. The process is outlined in ORS 221.621, in summary “the governing body of the City shall call an election when a petition is prepared, circulated, and filed as provided by Oregon law, and the governing body of the City shall not consider adoption or rejection of the measure before submitting it to the electors. The question of disincorporation shall be submitted to the electors of the City at an election held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November in any year.

For the remainder of this document, it will be assumed that the City will remain as a basic-service city. However, it is important for the City council to have an open discussion regarding what level of services should be provided and, if appropriate given the feedback from community members, to hold a vote on the desired structure of the City. The level of services provided will play an important role in how the City is able to execute on other areas of this strategy but are not considered explicitly within the remainder of the document.

Task	Recommendations – Governance Structure	Timeline	Participants
1.2.1	Work with a financial advisor to understand how different governance models will impact the City’s budget and ability to provide differing levels of services.	Short	Council Staff, Advisor

Task	Recommendations – Governance Structure	Timeline	Participants
1.2.2	Hold a special City Council meeting to discuss the structure of shared services and the benefits and disadvantages of remaining incorporated versus disincorporating.	Short	Staff, Council, Community Council
1.2.3	Make the division of responsibilities between different governmental organizations transparent to the community.	Short	Staff
<i>Optional (Depending on Community Feedback)</i>			
1.2.4	Hold a vote on desired structure so that residents can voice what level of taxes and services they prefer.	Short	Staff, Community Council
1.2.5	Add information to the City website what new residents should expect from their City, as well as what entities perform services and how to contact those entities if issues arise.	Short	Staff
1.2.6	Implement voice of the public for desired structure, making requisite trade-offs for services and tax rates to ensure sustainability.	Medium	Staff, Council

Emergency Planning

It is urgent that the City create an emergency plan in case of another emergency. In elementary school children are taught the “stop, drop, and roll” response for if they catch fire, and similarly the City must know how it will communicate an impending disaster to the community, and residents need to know how to react in the event of a disaster.

The City has already undertaken efforts with the County to plan and prepare for another wildfire event. Climate change has increased the base risk of wildfires in the Canyon, and in the short term the Canyon is extremely susceptible to wildfire, at least until the debris from the Beachie Creek fire is fully cleared out. These efforts are critical to the City’s ability to respond to and recover from future disasters. Rebuilding is a challenge, and the County’s building code and enforcement practices are key to ensuring that the community is aligned with best practices. Gates should conduct a review of its ordinances and enforcement practices to ensure that buildings are properly protected from wildfire, flooding, and other disasters. The City should also create an emergency plan that is shared periodically with residents so there are clear gathering areas and action steps to best protect residents.

Additionally, the City must work with County, State, and Federal agencies to mitigate wildfire risk through maintenance of the woodland areas and by constructing trail networks that create artificial fire breaks (see Outdoor Recreation & Tourism for more information).

Create an emergency plan in case of another wildfire event. This should include a system for alerting the community in the event of a disaster, and instructions for residents to follow. The plan should also include a method for dispersing the information in the plan to residents well in advance of any disaster, as well as a schedule of re-distribution so the plan remains up-to-date and top of mind for community members.

The instructions on what residents should do in case of an emergency should be summarized in a single page (ideally an infographic, as these are easier to read and remember).

Revisit City ordinances and enforcement practices to ensure wildfire mitigation best practices are being followed. Articles such as [Fundamentals of Resilient Design: Designing Homes for Wildfire Resilience](#) from the Resilient Design Institute should be helpful in framing discussions around resilient design practices and should guide City leadership as it creates ordinances around this practice.

Task	Recommendations – Emergency Planning	Timeline	Participants
1.3.1	Create an emergency plan to guide future disaster response.	Short	Staff, County
1.3.2	Revisit City ordinances and enforcement practices to ensure that wildfire mitigation best practices are being followed. Conduct this process on a recurring basis every 5 years. Enforce the ordinances on new builds and as properties are surveyed.	Short, Recurring	Council, County
1.3.3	Inform residents of updates to the emergency plan whenever changes occur.	Medium	Staff
1.3.4	Enforce wildfire mitigation ordinances to protect the City from future wildfire threats.	Medium	Staff, Council

Infrastructure

The City of Gates currently runs on individual septic systems. According to a 2003 sanitary survey performed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), many of the individual systems in the canyon consisted of cesspools on small lots, which did not meet existing standards for on-site sewage. Of the cities surveyed that year, DEQ reported a failure rate of 34-37 percent. Any property owners who try to rebuild must ensure that they can meet existing standards, preventing construction and excluding some lots from being rebuilt.

The development of a sewer system is a project that has been in the works for several decades. However, the costs to plan, design, and construct the system have prevented momentum until recently. The state legislature approved funding earlier this year for a sewer system connecting Idanha, Gates, Detroit, and Mill City. The build-out is expected to occur over the next five years.

The City needs to be forward-looking about sustainability and infrastructure to determine what can and cannot be done. Even with a new sewer system, there will still be restraints to growth due to what the sewer will be able to handle according to the three basin rule⁸ as well as the community being landlocked - with Forest Service land on all sides.

The County and NSSA have done an excellent job of planning and preparing the City for this shift, but the City will need to be diligent in how it prepares for the system. In addition to the

⁸ https://oregon.public.law/rules/oar_340-041-0350

system itself, there will be impacts to other infrastructure such as demand for property, more dense construction, and pressure for more water, police, and other municipal services.

The feasibility of the sewer system is heavily reliant on the number of participants in the system. If many households participate, the costs of the system and be spread out between more households and the rates and be more affordable; if few households participate, the costs of the system will be too high and will discourage more entries. This virtual and/or vicious cycle provides a high risk to NSSA and City leaders and staff must do what they can to ensure that a large share of households participate, even those who recently purchased a new septic system and will want to get a “good return on the system” despite it being a sunk cost. The impacts and considerations with the sewer system are only described briefly here. For a more in-depth discussion, including financial impacts, see the ECONorthwest report, published alongside this one. City-specific tasks are provided below.

Task	Recommendations – Infrastructure	Timeline	Participants
1.4.1	Make a priority list of infrastructure needs, including both new infrastructure and planned upgrades. Identify priority level and funding needs for each.	Short	Staff, Council, MWVCOG
1.4.2	Pursue grant funding to support infrastructure planning, design and construction (see funding sources section).	Short	MWVCOG, County
1.4.3	Work with County to determine who will implement the sewer project.	Short	Staff, Council, NSSA
1.4.4	Research grant programs that may offset household hookup costs. Prepare a resource packet (brochure and/or webpage) that can be shared with residents that connects them with resources.	Short	Staff, NSSA
1.4.5	Create an ordinance that requires new builds, as of when the sewer system is nearing complete build out, to hook up to the sewer.	Medium	Council

Other Considerations

Most infrastructure needs will be beyond local staff’s resources and knowledge. The City will want to work closely with the County, MWVCOG, the State, and special districts to identify needs and sources of funding. City leaders will need to advocate with elected officials and their staff to implement infrastructure projects. The 2021 infrastructure bill recently passed by the Biden administration represents a significant opportunity to apply for funds and prepare the community for sewer and other infrastructure needs that have arisen as a result of the Santiam Fire. City Council should immediately advocate for their needs and ensure their needs are represented to provide the best chance of acquiring funding under that and future national and state funding allotments.



Housing

The housing market in Gates has been quite volatile since the wildfire, with a mix of speculative buyers seeing opportunity in the Canyon hoping for cheap land and displaced citizens hoping to maximize the value of their land. This has led to a sharp increase in housing prices due to limited inventory and lower interest rates, meaning that the Gates market is fairly close in terms of pricing to the Salem metro area. However, this analysis is based on very limited data and are more observational in nature—there simply aren't many transactions within the City to make a robust comparison. However, assuming that this analysis is correct, it can be assumed that several factors will continue to put upward pressure on the Gates market over the next several years:

- Gates will likely experience some spillover effects as high price-per-square-foot values in Detroit increase the market rates throughout the Canyon.
- Demand for homes in Gates will increase as expensive pricing in Mill City and the Salem Metro area drives price-conscious to more affordable locations.
- The development of a sewer system will increase the density of units in the City, allowing for a surge of new homes in parcels that previously were too small to allow for a septic tank and drain field.

The City of Gates was viewed as a bedroom community before the fires—a place where people live but not work. This is supported by the commuting patterns provided by ECONorthwest and shown in Figure 10. A majority of workers within Census Tract 106 (containing the communities of Gates, Mill City, Detroit, Idanha, and Mehama) went outside of the tract for work (shown as the light green arrow), while a minority either commuted in (dark green arrow) or stayed within the tract for work (circular arrow). This means that homes, rather than businesses, are of paramount importance to the community's viability. If the housing does not fill the needs of residents, then the City's will lose population and become destabilized. The viability of the

community is going to depend on the ability of the City to draw in homeowners who will provide the population base needed to keep the City sustainable, both in terms of finances as well as civic engagement, leadership, and staffing.

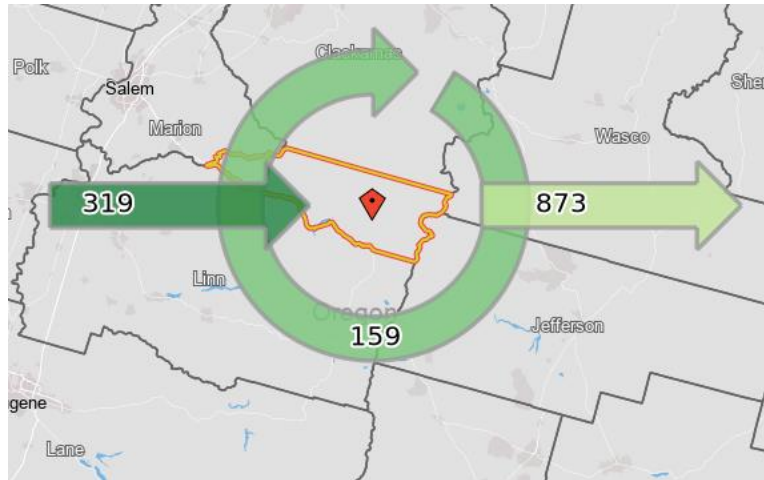


Figure 10—Census Tract 106 Commuting Flows

It is essential for the City to understand its own housing needs, both the urgent needs due to losses caused by the fire as well as the long-term needs that the community will address as a bedroom community for the region.

Housing Market

The fires caused great devastation across the canyon. 90-100 dwellings, including RVs, were destroyed, displacing the families that lived there. Many of the families have likely relocated elsewhere on a permanent basis, but there are some who have indicated to City leaders and the SIT group that they would still like to return to live in Gates. Many of these residents currently live in a temporary location in Mill City, which is set to expire soon and will displace them again.

Recovery from the fire requires that the City and County identify and address the urgent housing needs as soon as possible to help these displaced families and ensure that the housing market can return to a new normal state. However, the City and County need to be careful—the quality of the housing stock also impacts the appeal of the community and the quality of life of its residents. Along with immediate housing solutions, the City should have plans to address future housing needs that are likely to arise. Knowing that the City’s boundaries are fixed and that land is a limited resource, City Council must discuss what type and character of stock it would like to have, be it small and affordable residential units, more dense duplexes or triplexes, larger homes with big lots, or a mix of all of the above. Buyers and sellers should decide individual transactions and the market should determine pricing, but the City plays a key role through its zoning ordinances and through its defined vision.

There are also concerns surrounding the permitting process to get homes rebuilt. Many homes found themselves in a FEMA floodplain area post-fire or that a new structure will be noncompliant with building code, preventing rebuilding of their home. The County has taken an active role in helping these families but there is still more that needs to be done to help these households navigate the process and return to their property.

Housing Stock

Based on an analysis of the housing market and built environment, the City of Gates is likely to continue on its pre-fire path of being a good place for family-based workforce housing that is especially favorable to commuters who are wanting to live in single family structure in the Canyon but still live a reasonable drive to the Salem metro area. This is reflected by the City's smaller and more affordable homes than what is currently being constructed and sold in Detroit, for example. This observation was shared with community members at the second public meeting and was generally approved as the role of the city in the region.

To assist in achieving this vision and assist fire-impacted households, the City must simplify permitting process as much as possible to facilitate rebuilding, working with the County and non-profits to shepherd impacted families through the process of permitting and rebuilding. Determine if there are any redundant steps in the permitting process, and if there are alternative approaches that could be used to simplify obtaining a permit—both for those applying for permits and for those providing build permits.

Marion County has created some checklists that provides people with information about permitting steps, contact information for questions, and easy access to any forms or technical requirements. All of this information should also be hosted on the Gates City website so it is readily accessible online. It should also be proactively sent to impacted households that are eligible for assistance and that haven't already started the process.

There was some frustration that arose due to impacted families not taking the initiative to complete the process themselves. While many households have the time and resources they need to do this process, many are still suffering from emotional, physical, and psychological impacts from the fire and coronavirus pandemic. The County can continue to take a proactive role in completing some of the paperwork and sending it to homeowners for approval rather than putting the burden on them to complete the paperwork.

Housing Recommendations

It is recommended that City leaders coordinate with the County to create a housing plan that addresses immediate needs. Note that the total number of houses that burned down is not the same number that are needed to address immediate needs. Individual situations vary greatly, and whenever natural disasters occur, it causes displacement that pushes many households to seek new employment or living situations. Additionally, some households had older or low-quality homes that they inherited or had not sufficiently insured. A lack of adequate insurance, a small insurance payout, and macroeconomic trends may make rebuilding a home according to code a non-viable option for these households.

The SIT group and Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) is in a position to compile a list of residents looking to return. The County can take the lead on this effort, work with staff to work through the permitting hurdles and tracking progress until all of the impacted

families are in new homes or confirmed to have moved away. Tracking this progress will be important. Over time, fewer families will desire returning and the government response should be well responsive to this reality, ensuring that it isn't dedicating resources and staff time to a solution that is no longer relevant.

Partners and stakeholder groups working to assist residents with finding housing must keep in mind that the effort needs to be on helping individuals find optimal solutions rather than trying to rebuild the housing market to where it previously was. Lancaster's Theory of the Second Best argues that often actions intended to correct a specific market failure are not as ideal as directly assisting market participants who are harmed by that failure.⁹ The City should be clear-eyed its actual goal to assist impacted families and allow households to choose their best path based on the options available to them.

The construction of housing should be done with regional partners and organizations. The City's role will be to help identify locations and housing types that would fit within its housing plan, and then inform the private and public sector about changes to its approach over time.

New homes should be built with the sewer in mind. These homes should include sewer hookups that will enable them to connect once the sewer infrastructure is in place. The North Santiam Sewer Authority should work with builders to ensure that the system will be successful. It is important to make it easy for these homes to move from individual septic systems to sewer.

It must be considered that the highest and best use of a lot that was previously used for housing may not be to construct new housing. This is especially true for the area adjacent to Highway 22. One area of concern is where the motel burned down—a location being considered for a tiny home project. The City must make sure that this project is moved to a different location in Gates or later transition the units to commercial types in alignment with the concept of the development of a downtown, described later in the section titled Downtown Gates (page 55).

The downtown area is an ideal location for mixed-use types with some small retail and for-rent stock. One concept that was supported by community members was senior living on the back half of the first level and retail on the front of the first level, with additional workforce housing units on the upper level if two-story structures are developed.

Development is more cost effective in terms of City revenues if created with higher density. Doing so would require that this development is planned and built along a timeframe that aligns with the development of the sewer project.

Task	Recommendations – Stabilizing the Housing Market	Timeline	Participants
2.1.1	Simplify permitting process as much as possible to facilitate rebuilding.	Short	County, MWVCOG
2.1.2	Compile a Permitting Process Checklist that provides people with information about permitting steps, contact	Short	Staff, SIT, County, Stakeholders

⁹ Lipsey, R. G.; Lancaster, Kelvin (1956). "The General Theory of Second Best". *Review of Economic Studies*. 24 (1): 11–32. doi:10.2307/2296233

Task	Recommendations – Stabilizing the Housing Market	Timeline	Participants
	information for questions, and easy access to any forms or technical requirements.		
2.1.3	Coordinate with the County and non-profits to shepherd impacted families through the process of permitting and rebuilding.	Short	Staff, Council, County, Stakeholders
2.1.4	Coordinate with the County to create a housing plan that addresses immediate needs.	Short	Staff, County
2.1.5	Facilitate the construction of needed housing by working with regional partners and organizations who will construct new housing. The City can help identify locations and housing types that would fit within the housing plan, and then inform partners who are building new housing.	Short	Staff, Stakeholders
2.1.6	Update the housing plan, based on post-crisis recovery needs and with an eye to the future housing needs. This plan should especially ensure housing stock for various income levels and ages and note if there are major gaps in the local housing market.	Medium	Staff, Consultant
2.1.7	Facilitate the development of seasonal workforce lodging for hospitality workers and senior living, along with other needed housing types.	Medium	Staff
2.1.8	Evaluate the City’s zoning and, upon buildout of the sewer system, ensure the City is responding appropriately to the sewer systems and its potential impacts to the built environment and allowable density.	Long	Staff

Community Character

According to the American Planning Association, community character refers to the distinct identity of a place. It is the collective impression a neighborhood or town makes on residents and visitors. People often choose the places they live and spend their leisure time based — in part — on their perceptions of community character. Community character is tied to the natural and built features that shape a City's identity. Times of crisis can result in unwanted shifts to community character if measures are not in place to prevent the short-term solutions from becoming the status quo.

The County, FEMA, and other organizations are assisting with the provision of emergency housing and facilitating development of new housing to replace those homes lost in the fire. The City’s role in this is to help coordinate the rebuilding of homes in Gates, but also to ensure that the needs and desires of the residents—both current and future—are met. This includes ensuring that the recovery housing is developed with a view to how it impacts the community’s character over time.

As an example, City Council recently allowed for small housing structures (less than 1000 SF) as part of its recovery assistance. This is a sympathetic and laudable action for fire-impacted families wanting to return to the City, but it can also allow for an unintended surge of low-quality development that can easily turn into blight if not given a clear sunset and is combined with strong property maintenance requirements. Assuming that City leadership intends to avoid blight, the City needs to be as forgiving and flexible as possible to impacted residents in the near term, but be clear that these allowances are temporary and that the ordinances are well understood and reasonable as soon as the recovery stage has been completed.

Community Character Recommendations

Ensure that all wildfire recovery changes to ordinances are temporary solutions that have a sunset clause. This will prevent unwanted permanent affects to the built environment. A best practice of disaster recovery is to ensure that measures put in place to assist with rebuilding do not cause undesired long-term impact. Sunset clauses are an excellent way to guard against this negative impact.

Adopt wildfire resistant home ordinances. Decades of research and post-fire assessments have provided clear evidence that building materials and design, coupled with landscaping on the property, are the most important factors influencing home survivability during a wildfire. By adopting building codes that require new home construction to meet wildfire-resistant standards, the City can help prevent potential future fires from causing as much devastation to the community.¹⁰

According to Headwater Economics, “A new home built to wildfire-resistant codes can be constructed for roughly the same cost as a typical home. Costs vary for retrofitting an existing home to be wildfire-resistant, with some components having significant expense; these costs can be divided and prioritized into smaller projects.” And “Technology and standards exist today that will make communities safer. Cities...can implement wildfire-resistant building codes to reduce their vulnerability to wildfire.” However, this doesn’t just apply to residential units. Power lines and electric equipment must be safeguarded against accidental sparks that can cause another wildfire.

Task	Recommendations – Community Character	Timeline	Participants
2.2.1	Ensure that all wildfire recovery changes to ordinances are temporary solutions that have a sunset clause.	Short	Council
2.2.2	Adopt wildfire resistant home ordinances.	Short	Council
2.2.3	Re-evaluate ordinances to prepare for sewer and reduce future blight.	Medium	Council
2.2.4	Pursue the development of a retiree community or senior living center to provide age-in-place housing options.	Long	Staff, Stakeholders

¹⁰ <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wp-content/uploads/building-costs-codes-report.pdf>



Downtown Gates

Gates' downtown area was devastated by the wildfire. Many commercial structures and most of the City's businesses were lost. The City's current economic situation and high costs to rebuild makes it unlikely that the structures will be replaced and the businesses will return in the near term. Redevelopment of the downtown is most likely going to come from new residents and businesses.

The destruction of the downtown enables a unique (and hopefully one-time) opportunity for the City to reimagine its commercial center. This section describes the potential for a revitalized downtown area. But leaders must keep in mind that the City of Gates is primarily a bedroom community—a place where people live but not work. It is unlikely this characteristic of the City will fundamentally change since long-term growth is limited. Commercial growth will be modest. If possible, the City should try to bring in and approve of business that will enhance the community's quality of life, increase employment, and provide useful goods and services.

Downtown Area

The downtown area as defined in this study is the land located immediately adjacent to highway 22 as well as some parcels between City Hall and highway 22. A potential downtown development area is shown in Figure 11. Please note that this area includes several residential units and should not represent an intention to purchase or convert these units in the foreseeable future.

One of Gates' major assets is its adjacency of Highway 22 to the road to see the City's downtown. With an estimated 5,600 vehicles traveling Highway 22 daily, (AADT) and frontage access, the strip of land adjacent to Highway 22 has significant commercial potential. Most of the remaining businesses located in Gates are adjacent to Highway 22, and more could be supported if they draw in customers from Mill City and the 270,000 tourists who come into the canyon every year to recreate.



Figure 11—Potential Downtown Area

At present, however, the City has only a few retail establishments that capture very little of the potential commerce from the highway. Vehicles coming from the Salem Metro area will likely stop in Stayton or Mill City for food and supplies before continuing on into the Canyon or, if heading westbound, will be willing to wait until they reach Stayton to have more options. Therefore, the City needs to have a unique offering that can attract some traffic into its downtown area.

Zoning

Land use decisions are critical—development decisions must focus on the highest and best use of each parcel. This is especially true of land-locked communities that, once built out, have few options for development. Once development occurs, there is little flexibility to change the use of a parcel. Highest and best use is determined based on what is physically possible, legally permissible, financially feasible, and maximally productive.

Gates' residents expressed interest in a better downtown commercial environment. They also prioritized the replacement of destroyed homes and providing homes for displaced residents. Correspondingly, the County has proposed the former motel site as a potential location for a new temporary housing development. While this would provide relief from the housing crisis for displaced families — it would also encumber one of the most viable locations for developing a commercial corridor in the City. This is the only area in the City that will be financially feasible for commercial development due to its proximity to Highway 22. It is therefore recommended that the City be firm in ensuring that these units are relocated to another part of the City or, more favorably, can be converted into small commercial units that can be rented out to entrepreneurs (see Business Revitalization & Creation).

It is also recommended that the downtown area be re-zoned as a strictly commercial corridor. Establishing an area as a downtown in the zoning ordinances ensures appropriate development occurs in the area because City leaders and staff are prepared to respond to permit requests for development. The zoning ordinances should specify use and/or design principles. Ideally, residential uses in the downtown area would be limited denser structure types (quadplexes or small apartment units) or to the upper floors of multi-story mixed-use units to achieve the vision of a walkable and vibrant downtown. When there are residential properties interspersed on street level, it decreases the long-term likelihood of a commercial downtown ever becoming a reality. It is not possible for mixed-use, multi-level development to occur in the short term with the septic system requirements but having the appropriate zoning in place will keep it a possibility that can occur once the sewer is developed.

Gates also needs to establish a site plan review process. This will allow the City staff and leaders to make decisions regarding unique or unanticipated uses. The City’s zoning ordinance should specify what area qualifies as downtown (be that it matches the area provided in Figure 11 or another area decided upon by City Council) and it should allow a variety of uses that are relevant to a commercial corridor.

Downtown Area Recommendations

Better City believes there is an opportunity to position Gates as a destination for travelers and that this asset can pull customers into a “Main Street” style commercial area. This project should be adjacent to Highway 22 to ensure high visibility and easy access. The proposed layout is presented in Figure 13. The key elements of the project are as follows:

- **Rest Stop**—The 2.5 acres between Highway 22 and Central Street from Gates Hill Road to approximately River View Street has been identified as a potential location for the rest stop. It could be configured to have 50 angled parking spaces on the outside with a green space walking trail, dog park with benches and tables in the center. The public restrooms would be similar in size to those at the Maples Rest Area (see Figure 12). The Rest Area could include a plaza commemorating those who died and lost homes in the 2020 fire.
- **Convenience Store**—A unique gas station / convenience store concept is envisioned for the southeast corner of Central Street and Horeb Street. To preserve the walkability and old west feel of the development, it is proposed that the storefront be along Central Street with the gas pumps in the rear. The convenience store would connect in size and finish with the other small shops along Central Street to create the feel of a unified downtown space.
- **Small Shops**
Extending east from the convenience store, it is proposed that small, contiguous store fronts be developed,



Figure 12—Maples Rest Area

preserving either a timber town aesthetic or a more modern finish. These storefronts could be targeted towards the visitors to the rest stop as well as providing some of the daily needs for the community. Ideas from the community about shops that might be successful in that space include:

- Coffee Shop
 - Ice Cream Shop
 - Barbershop / Hair & Nail Salon
 - Outfitter
 - Tackle shop
 - Small engine repair and maintenance
- **Housing** Second stories could be added above the retail establishments to provide additional units of affordable housing.
 - **Parks/Trails** It is recommended that the Canyon Journeys trail as well as the City’s gazebo along Central Street be connected to the rest stop to create a contiguous recreation trail linking these assets. Additionally, the City should consider adding a park with swings, slides, and a play area that can draw in families looking to take a break from road trips.



Figure 13—Concept Sketch of Commercial Center

It is recommended that the City conduct a feasibility study for an amenity-rich rest stop and mixed-use development to encourage travelers to stop in downtown Gates. The primary objective is to bring amenities to Gates that will enhance the quality of living for the City’s residents, as well as to drive sufficient demand that local businesses can be more viable, especially during the winter season when traffic diminishes. The focus on capitalizing and

monetizing the tourist traffic on Highway 22 will make the development itself financially viable. Creating a project that is sufficiently unique and appealing will be critical to ensuring its long-term viability. The project design should be authentic and reflect the uniqueness of the region and the City.

The project will not be viable until after the new sewer is in place because it is not feasible to construct a rest area with a significant number of public restrooms and amenities under the current requirements for septic systems. It will therefore be imperative to stimulate short-term vibrancy of the area. It is recommended that pop-up retail, food trucks and other temporary uses be recruited to create commercial vitality that will help the downtown area be successful.

Appendix B: Case Studies presents case studies of small-community downtown projects and how those cities used development to capitalize on existing traffic.

Task	Recommendations – Downtown Area	Timeline	Participants
3.1.1	Create downtown zoning ordinance.	Short	Council, MWVCOG
3.1.2	Secure agreements / leases with private property owners for pop-up retail and food trucks, and/or secure options to purchase residential properties within the Downtown development zone.	Short	Staff, Chamber
3.1.3	Recruit pop-up retail businesses (see Business Revitalization & Creation, Page 60)	Short	MWVCOG, Chamber
3.1.4	Secure technical assistance grant to create a Downtown Plan.	Short	Staff, County, MWVCOG
3.1.5	Secure project funding, including grants and tax incentives to plan and design the rest area concept	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG
3.1.6	Develop rest area amenity, parking, and greenspace to create anchor asset for Downtown.	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG
3.1.7	Recruit developer to build a convenience store and gas station to anchor the downtown.	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG, Chamber
3.1.8	Ensure ongoing funding for rest area upkeep, maintenance, and improvements.	Long	Staff, Council
3.1.9	When the sewer is under construction, recruit developer to build contiguous retail and second story housing.	Long	Staff, MWVCOG

Business Revitalization & Creation



Figure 14—Local Coffee Shop

There are currently a couple of businesses in Gates, including a coffee shop and a Mexican restaurant. The first step in economic recovery from the fire is the revitalization of these businesses. (There was also a motel that burned down—it is unknown whether they intend to rebuild.) The next step is the development of a commercial center that will create opportunity for more businesses within the City. There are three core reasons why Gates would benefit from supporting the development of a commercial center to facilitate business in the City.

- 1) Businesses that provide goods and services in proximity to residents will increase quality of life for those living in Gates.
- 2) Nearby businesses provide employment opportunities. While most people will still commute to neighboring communities for work—having some local job opportunities is helpful for youth, seniors, and those who find commuting burdensome. Several public engagement participants expressed an interest in working locally if jobs were available.
- 3) Providing an area that can support micro-entrepreneurs is a valuable means to assist community members in building wealth and driving prosperity.

Small, Business-Friendly Commercial Space

Consider including in the design of the commercial center space for very small shops. These would be for short-term leases, and—if possible—provide subsidized rent, to enable start-up businesses to test the commercial viability of their goods and/or services. A case study for this type of small commercial development to support startups is the “chalets” built in Muskegon, Michigan¹¹. These micro enterprise shops activated their downtown and enabled local businesses to test things on a small scale before renting a permanent storefront. By designing the commercial center with small affordable store fronts, the City can lower the barriers to new businesses entering the local market. This will allow Gates to offer experiences and amenities that would otherwise be unfeasible for a community as remote and small as Gates. The tiny homes project currently proposed by the County might be a good fit for this as it would create a community of entrepreneurs in an accessible and high-traffic location on Highway 22. An

¹¹ <https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2018/2/19/low-cost-pop-up-shops-create-big-value-in-muskegon-michigan>

alternative to the small chalet shop is non-permanent commercial buildings, such as food trucks and stalls.



Figure 15—Micro Enterprise Shops
SOURCE: StrongTowns.org – Muskegon, Michigan



Figure 16—Example Non-Permanent Commercial Developments
SOURCE: Daniel Nystedt, www.nystedtphotography.com

Support Local Businesses

In addition to providing space, the City should promote general entrepreneurship and local businesses. The staff and resources of the City are limited, so rather than researching a full inventory of resources, the City should work with the Chemeketa Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide these businesses with technical assistance and services necessary to make the businesses successful in Gates. The Resource Center can assist the businesses in finding relevant County, regional, and State resources that can support businesses.

Supporting businesses will provide a source of local jobs, goods and services, and wealth-building opportunities for local residents. While there is not currently a strong culture of entrepreneurship in the City, one can be built by providing exposure to regional entrepreneurs

and by offering spaces for entrepreneurs to test their products. This will have spillover effects and will engender a culture of entrepreneurship that will be necessary to help lower-income families develop intergenerational wealth.

Attract New Businesses

Business attraction is a long process—often requiring a lot of time and effort that results in a few wins. Rather than focusing too many resources on traditional business attraction, the City should conduct targeted outreach. Identify a short-list of existing businesses in the region and send the business owners an inquiry if they would have interest in exploring the opportunity to expand to Gates. This outreach should occur after an anchor tenant for the downtown is already secured.

If there are ever opportunities for recruiting a primary employer (an enterprise that exports its goods or services outside the community) the City should pursue it, as these types of businesses bring funds into the local economy. Many communities suffer from economic shocks if they are overly dependent on a single industry. In Marion County, the timber industry is most prevalent, so it is important to support primary employers in other industries if there is any opportunity to do so to ensure proper diversification of the local economy. MWVCOG and Marion County are best suited to assist with relocation and expansion efforts for other businesses in the region.

Regional Opportunities

Several nonprofit and outfitting organizations (i.e. Upward Bound, Friends of Opal Creek Wilderness) are located within the region, many of whom are focused on the canyon’s history, biodiversity, and natural beauty. The City should do what it can to allow these organization a platform in Gates, such as by offering public spaces to promote their mission, provide wayfinding to their sites, and market events and available positions. This relationship can be fostered and can grow into these organizations having a permanent presence within the downtown area.

Task	Recommendations – Business Rejuvenation & Creation	Timeline	Participants
3.2.1	Develop a relationship with the Salem Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and provide local businesses with the contact information.	Short	Staff, Chamber
3.2.2	Develop Small Business Friendly Commercial Space in the downtown to lease to entrepreneurs and startups.	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG, Stakeholders
3.2.3	Contact targeted list of businesses in the region to see if there are any relocation and expansion opportunities for increasing tenants in the downtown commercial center.	Medium	Chamber, MWVCOG



Outdoor Recreation & Tourism

This section focuses on outdoor recreation and tourism opportunities. The City's unique location in the Canyon affords it the opportunity to be a launching point for outdoor recreation amenities on the eastern side of the canyon area. Trying to add some tourism and recreation opportunities will be important for ensuring the viability and sustainability of the community. The vision of the community is to have a downtown corridor with services, restaurants, and housing. This is only possible if there are some amenities that can draw in people and incentivize them to go to Gates' downtown area. Outdoor recreation is one of the best ways to get this kind of activation and can also provide a source of revenue that isn't provided by the local population.

River Access

Gates is endowed with great visibility and access to the river and is one of the only communities in the canyon that has access so close to the highway. This makes Gates a great location for day-use amenities and activities. Many residents expressed interest in improving river access in the City, both for locals as well as for tourism. It is recommended that the City apply for grant projects that will allow it to leverage its river access as a local amenity and can be utilized a modest source of revenue.

Attempts to identify a specific location for river access proved unsuccessful at this point in the vision. However, it is recommended that the City pursue identifying a location in the short term, working with the property owner to provide public access in a way that does not infringe on nearby owner's rights and access routes. The City should also consider how river access can leverage the existing park plan for the Minto County Park (see Figure 17). It should then work to

design, engineer, and construct the park, with an eye for how the park and best serve the local population while providing a modest revenue source through parking fees. Having river access can make the area more inviting to visitors and will support local businesses dependent on regional traffic to be viable.

Task	Recommendations – River Access	Timeline	Participants
4.1.1	Identify location for river access point, purchase property as needed.	Short	City, County
4.1.2	Secure funding and perform a feasibility study that address environmental impacts as well as estimate the capital and maintenance and operations costs to ensure the amenity will be a net positive on the City’s budget.	Medium	City, Consultant, Stakeholders
4.1.3	Secure funding to implement on the project and construct river access improvements.	Long	City, Contractor



Legend

- ① 18" tall stone seatwalls with crushed aggregate surfacing
- ② Parking
- ③ Wood interpretive signage
- ④ Pre-fabricated, CXT Cascadian single vault restroom structure
- ⑤ Wood footbridge with 42" tall wood and steel wire guardrail
- ⑥ Crushed aggregate driveways, typical
- ⑦ River access
- ⑧ New wood and galvanized steel
- ⑨ All pathways to be crushed aggregate surfacing
- ⑩ Concrete picnic tables, typical. 18 total on site
- ⑪ Picnic pockets: crushed aggregate surfacing (shovel cut) and concrete picnic tables, typical



Minto

Santiam Canyon Wildfire Recovery Plan
Marion County Parks | March 31, 2021

Figure 17—Minto Park Planned Development

Trail Access

Gates is one of the first communities on the western side of the canyon that had direct access to outdoor recreation assets. The City is well positioned near Elkhorn Valley Golf Course, Santiam State Forest, and the Opal Creek Wilderness Area. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that there are already some outfitters and short-term rentals that have been successful using Gates as a basecamp. The City should leverage its location—even the Gates name—to brand itself as a gateway to Santiam Canyon’s recreational opportunities.

The first key step will be to make an inventory of what the City already has. Work with the visitor’s authorities (Willamette Valley Visitor’s Authority, Travel Oregon, Travel Salem) to add as many assets as possible to this list. Make the list easily accessible for online use so visitors can plan daytrips and events.

The City can then develop a trails masterplan to ensure that all of these assets are accessible. Sites within five miles of the City should be fully multimodal including hiking, biking, and automobile. Site beyond five miles should be accessible by either bike or automobile or both. Wayfinding should be provided so travelers on Highway 22 can see the plethora recreational opportunities that can be accessed from Gates.

Canyon Journey’s Trail System

A trails masterplan for the Santiam Canyon area was completed in 2004 that provided a vision for connecting all of the canyon communities via a shared multi-use trail (the Gates-specific portion is shown in Figure 18. While this plan did not gain traction for quite some time, the Resilient Headwaters Group (led by the Timber Trails Alliance and Oregon Mountain Biking Coalition) has begun working with WVVA and other partners to resurrect the vision of this study and begin work to implement on it. Their concept includes a mountain bike trail that would run through the canyon as a spine, with pump tracks in several communities and trail connections to county parks and regional trails such as the Old Cascade Crest and Pacific Coast Trail.

The City will play a support role in this effort and should attend meetings and events, providing input and gathering feedback from community members to make sure the plan doesn’t go another 15 years before it is picked up again. Mountain biking provides several business opportunities, especially through travel Oregon’s bike-friendly business program. Having a regional trail network that connects into Gates will support local businesses and provide entrepreneurial opportunities. It also adds to the quality of life for residents, many of whom wanted to live in Gates because of the recreational assets.

Task	Recommendations – Trail Access	Timeline	Participants
4.2.1	Maintain a list of recreational assets, opportunities, and events on the City’s website and in City Hall.	Short	Staff, TO/TS
4.2.2	Secure funding and create a trails masterplan for the City (might be done as part of a regional effort; if regional planning is occurring, the City should participate).	Short	Staff, TO/TS

Task	Recommendations – Trail Access	Timeline	Participants
4.2.2	Work with outdoor recreation organizations to develop the City’s hiking and biking trails and provide connectivity to County- and State-owned assets (County parks, wilderness areas, etc.)	Medium	TO/TS, Stakeholders
4.2.3	Recruit outfitters, short-term rental operators, and hoteliers to provide lodging options for tourists and visitors who will use the trail network	Medium	WVVA, TO/TS, Stakeholders
4.2.4	As needed, support increase used of local infrastructure by adopting a local lodging tax that applies to hotels and short-term rentals	Medium	Council

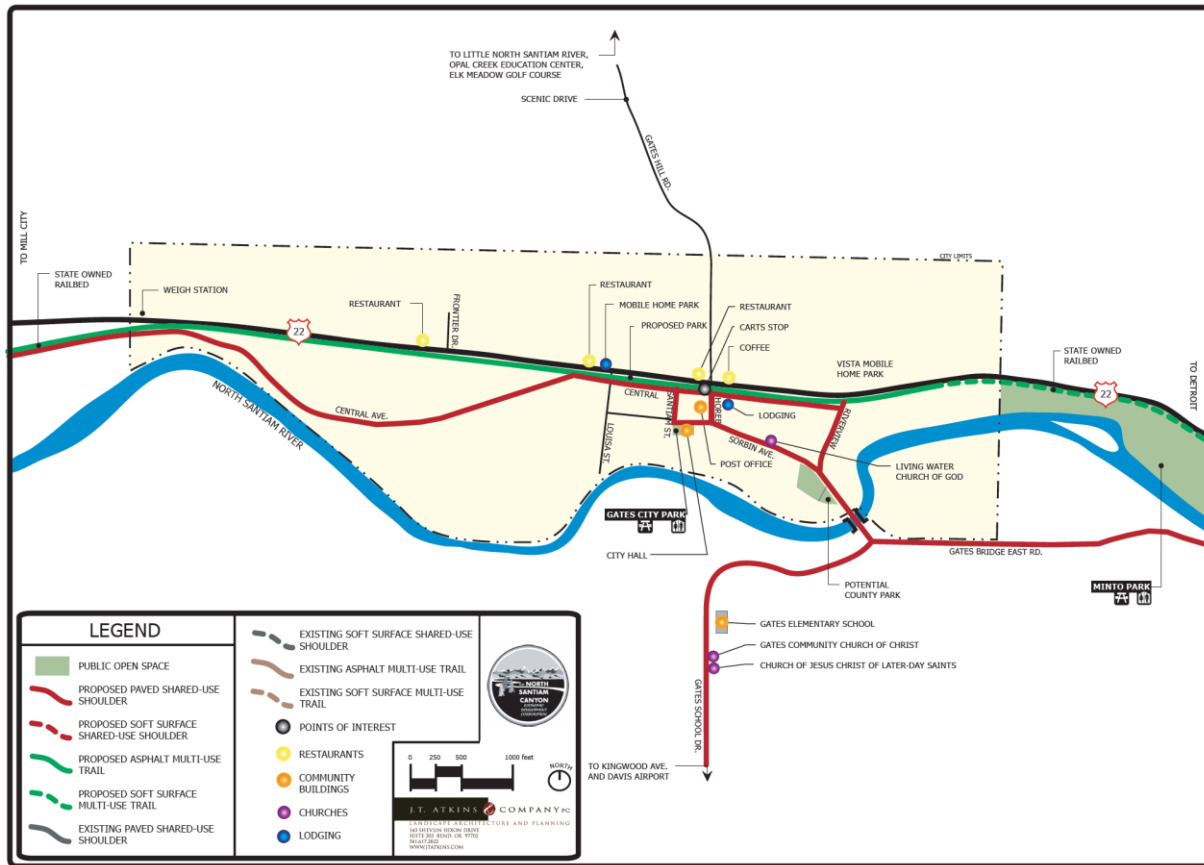


Figure 18—Canyon Journey's Trail System Concept Map, Gates portion

Other Considerations

The City has some recreational assets that can be improved from time to time and that can ensure a good quality of life for families within the community. The City has already done a good job

building these assets and providing places for families and travelers to enjoy the Canyon’s natural beauty.

Gates City Park

Gates has a City park located directly adjacent to City Hall. The park includes playground equipment that is surrounded by a chain-link fence.

The Park should be marketed as an asset available to travelers to bring more people into Gates who can then buy a drink or other goods and services provided by new entrepreneurs. The Park should also have connections to the regional trail network and a mountain bike maintenance stall can be installed to provide self-repair services for mountain bikers.



Figure 19—Gates City Park

Gazebo Park

The City has constructed a gazebo (shown on page 5) with some benches and a small trail that connect it to the bus stop and parking area. This trail should be expanded to connect into the regional trail network and the rest stop concept described on page 57.

Events

The City should identify potential events (such as whitewater events or 5k races) that the City can host or sponsor. The events should be an annual occurrence and should be right-sized so as to get an audience that can be served and managed by local businesses. The purpose behind these events will be to market the City as an outdoor recreation destination, bringing more visitors to the area who can ensure business viability of the downtown corridor. It can also be a good way to bring in future residents who can fall in love with the City’s unique offerings and culture. City Council should be careful that the events are reflective of the City’s vision and should not become a nuisance to residents.

Task	Recommendations – Infrastructure and Governance	Timeline	Participants
4.3.1	Improve marketing of the city park and gazebo park and make connections to regional trail network.	Medium	Staff
4.3.2	Identify and sponsor annual events in the City to support local businesses.	Long	Staff

SECTION IV: TASK LIST AND STEWARDSHIP MATRIX

This section is a quick-reference guide that combines all the tables from the recovery and resilience strategy (Section III of the document). It should be used as a quick-reference guide and can be printed out and posted so tasks can be tracked over time.

Infrastructure and Governance

Task	Recommendations – Infrastructure and Governance	Timeline	Participants
1.1.1	Work with the County to hire an auditor to complete the financial reviews for Gates.	Short	Staff, County, Auditor
1.1.2	Secure grant/capital outlays for technical assistance to develop a strategy for the City’s finances. The Community Development Block Grant program might be a good fit for this type of review.	Short	Staff, Consultant, Stakeholders
1.1.3	Determine what steps will be taken to increase the City’s revenue sources. Be sure to get community feedback on potential solutions.	Short	Council, Staff, Community
1.1.4	Create an action plan for implementing the decided course. Aim to have any new fee schedules created and approved by City Council as soon as possible to ease the constraints	Short	Staff, Council

Task	Recommendations – Infrastructure and Governance	Timeline	Participants
	that are being place on the community due to the drop in property values from the wildfire.		
1.1.5	Work closely with key partners—including the County, MWVCOG, State agencies, and non-profits to be aware of local and regional resource streams with the intent to apply for grants and technical assistance. Plan on allowing some funds for administration of the grant under these partners.	Short	Staff, Council
1.1.5	Continue searching for grants and other resources for public services, staff support, and funds for major projects.	Medium	Staff
1.1.6	Begin pursuing the options provided above for adding new revenue sources to ensure the City’s sustainability.	Medium	Staff
1.1.7	Work closely with the North Santiam Sewer Authority (NSSA) to understand how the sewer system will impact the City’s finances.	Medium	Staff, Council, NSSA
1.1.8	Build an emergency fund to deal with repairs and upgrades to local infrastructure.	Long	Staff, Council
1.1.9	Hire assistant staff members who can provide support to current staff as well as assume main roles as current staff leave their positions or retire.	Long	Council
1.1.10	Work with a consultant to forecast the City’s expected revenues and expenses after the City is fully built out to ensure that it will have a sustainable budget in perpetuity.	Long	Staff, Council, Consultant
1.2.1	Work with a financial advisor to understand how different governance models will impact the City’s budget and ability to provide differing levels of services.	Short	Council Staff, Advisor
1.2.2	Hold a special City Council meeting to discuss the structure of shared services and the benefits and disadvantages of remaining incorporated versus disincorporating.	Short	Staff, Council, Community Council
1.2.3	Make the division of responsibilities between different governmental organizations transparent to the community.	Short	Staff
1.2.4	Hold a vote on desired structure so that residents can voice what level of taxes and services they prefer. (OPTIONAL)	Short	Staff, Community Council
1.2.5	Add information to the City website what new residents should expect from their City, as well as what entities perform services and how to contact those entities if issues arise. (OPTIONAL)	Short	Staff

Task	Recommendations – Infrastructure and Governance	Timeline	Participants
1.2.6	Implement voice of the public for desired structure, making requisite trade-offs for services and tax rates to ensure sustainability. (OPTIONAL)	Medium	Staff, Council
1.3.1	Create an emergency plan to guide future disaster response.	Short	Staff, County
1.3.2	Revisit City ordinances and enforcement practices to ensure that wildfire mitigation best practices are being followed. Conduct this process on a recurring basis every 5 years. Enforce the ordinances on new builds and as properties are surveyed.	Short, Recurring	Staff, Council
1.3.3	Inform residents of updates to the emergency plan whenever changes occur.	Medium	Staff
1.3.4	Enforce wildfire mitigation ordinances to protect the City from future wildfire threats.	Medium	Staff, Council
1.4.1	Make a priority list of infrastructure needs, including both new infrastructure and planned upgrades. Identify priority level and funding needs for each.	Short	Staff, Council, MWVCOG
1.4.2	Pursue grant funding to support infrastructure planning, design and construction (see funding sources section).	Short	MWVCOG, County
1.4.3	Work with County to determine who will implement the sewer project.	Short	Staff, Council, NSSA
1.4.4	Research grant programs that may offset household hookup costs. Prepare a resource packet (brochure and/or webpage) that can be shared with residents that connects them with resources.	Short	Staff, NSSA
1.4.5	Incentivize people to join the sewer system through lottery or discount program.	Medium	Council, NSSA
1.4.6	Create an ordinance that requires new builds, as of when the sewer system is nearing complete build out, to hook up to the sewer.	Medium	Council

Housing

Task	Recommendations – Housing	Timeline	Participants
2.1.1	Simplify permitting process as much as possible to facilitate rebuilding.	Short	County, MWVCOG
2.1.2	Compile a Permitting Process Checklist that provides people with information about permitting steps, contact information for questions, and easy access to any forms or technical requirements.	Short	Staff, SIT, County, Stakeholders
2.1.3	Coordinate with the County and non-profits to shepherd impacted families through the process of permitting and rebuilding.	Short	Staff, Council, County, Stakeholders
2.1.4	Coordinate with the County to create a housing plan that addresses immediate needs.	Short	Staff, County
2.1.5	Facilitate the construction of needed housing by working with regional partners and organizations who will construct new housing. The City can help identify locations and housing types that would fit within the housing plan, and then inform partners who are building new housing.	Short	Staff, Stakeholders
2.1.6	Update the housing plan, based on post-crisis recovery needs and with an eye to the future housing needs. This plan should especially ensure housing stock for various income levels and ages and note if there are major gaps in the local housing market.	Medium	Staff, Consultant
2.1.7	Facilitate the development of seasonal workforce lodging for hospitality workers and senior living, along with other needed housing types.	Medium	Staff
2.1.8	Evaluate the City’s zoning ordinance upon buildout of the sewer system to ensure that the City is responding appropriately to the sewer systems and its potential impacts to the built environment and allowable density.	Long	Staff
2.2.1	Ensure that all wildfire recovery changes to ordinances are temporary solutions that have a sunset clause.	Short	Council
2.2.2	Adopt wildfire resistant home ordinances.	Short	Council
2.2.3	Re-evaluate ordinances to prepare for sewer and reduce future blight.	Medium	Council
2.2.4	Pursue the development of a retiree community or senior living center to provide age-in-place housing options.	Long	Staff, Stakeholders

Downtown Area

Task	Recommendations – Downtown Area	Timeline	Participants
3.1.1	Create downtown zoning ordinance.	Short	Council, MWVCOG
3.1.2	Secure agreements / leases with private property owners for pop-up retail and food trucks, and/or secure options to purchase residential properties within the Downtown development zone.	Short	Staff, Chamber
3.1.3	Recruit pop-up retail businesses (see Business Revitalization & Creation, Page 60)	Short	MWVCOG, Chamber
3.1.4	Secure technical assistance grant to create a Downtown Plan.	Short	Staff, County, MWVCOG
3.1.5	Secure project funding, including grants and tax incentives to plan and design the rest area concept	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG
3.1.6	Develop rest area amenity, parking, and greenspace to create anchor asset for Downtown.	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG
3.1.7	Recruit developer to build a convenience store and gas station to anchor the downtown.	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG, Chamber
3.1.8	Ensure ongoing funding for rest area upkeep, maintenance, and improvements.	Long	Staff, Council
3.1.9	When the sewer is under construction, recruit developer to build contiguous retail and second story housing.	Long	Staff, MWVCOG
3.2.1	Develop a relationship with the Salem Small Business Development Center (SBDC) and provide local businesses with the contact information.	Short	Staff, Chamber
3.2.2	Develop Small Business Friendly Commercial Space in the downtown to lease to entrepreneurs and startups.	Medium	Staff, MWVCOG, Stakeholders
3.2.3	Contact targeted list of businesses in the region to see if there are any relocation and expansion opportunities for increasing tenants in the downtown commercial center.	Medium	Chamber, MWVCOG

Outdoor Recreation and Tourism

Task	Recommendations – Outdoor Rec. and Tourism	Timeline	Participants
4.1.1	Identify location for river access point, purchase property as needed.	Short	City, County
4.1.2	Secure funding and perform a feasibility study that address environmental impacts as well as estimate the capital and maintenance and operations costs to ensure the amenity will be a net positive on the City’s budget.	Medium	City, Consultant, Stakeholders
4.1.3	Secure funding to implement on the project and construct river access improvements.	Long	City, Contractor
4.2.1	Maintain a list of recreational assets, opportunities, and events on the City’s website and in City Hall.	Short	Staff, TO/TS
4.2.2	Secure funding and create a trails masterplan for the City (might be done as part of a regional effort; if regional planning is occurring, the City should participate).	Short	Staff, TO/TS
4.2.2	Work with outdoor recreation organizations to develop the City’s hiking and biking trails and provide connectivity to County- and State-owned assets (County parks, wilderness areas, etc.)	Medium	TO/TS, Stakeholders
4.2.3	Recruit outfitters, short-term rental operators, and hoteliers to provide lodging options for tourists and visitors who will use the trail network	Medium	WVVA, TO/TS, Stakeholders
4.2.4	As needed, support increase used of local infrastructure by adopting a local lodging tax that applies to hotels and short-term rentals	Medium	Council
4.3.1	Improve marketing of the city park and gazebo park and make connections to regional trail network.	Medium	Staff
4.3.2	Identify and sponsor annual events in the City to support local businesses.	Long	Staff, WVVA

APPENDIX A: SUMMARIES OF PRIOR STUDIES

See the following summaries for a short description of each plan, along with key takeaways.

North Santiam Canyon Alternative Transportation Link Feasibility Study: Canyon Journeys, November 2004

Purpose: To define the concept of a canyon-wide trail system to provide a safer non-motorized travel alternative to State Highway 22 and connect the Canyon’s communities to each other.

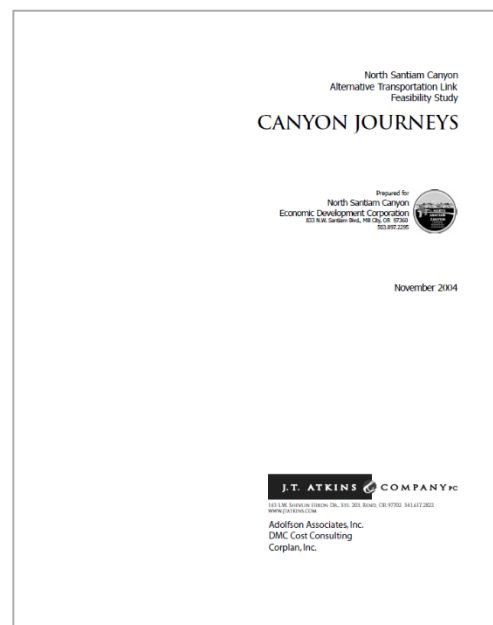
Vision Statement: Canyon residents and visitors will be able to travel to many Canyon resources thanks to the Canyon Journeys trail system. Visitors will also be able to experience the historic development of the Canyon through visits to the local museum and enhanced historic tour opportunities.

Project Goals:

- Stimulate tourism and boost economic productivity
- Improve quality of life
- Provide a safe non-motorized travel alternative to Highway 22 for residents and visitors

Proposed Canyon Journeys Trail System:

1. Canyon Connector trail segments will provide a non-motorized transportation alternative to State Highway 22. The trail system will use the state-owned rail bed and shared-use paved road shoulders to connect Canyon communities with each other and with local attractions including scenic overlooks, parks, historic sites, and businesses. The trail surface character will fit within the character of the adjacent landscape (paved in sections that pass through the communities, and compacted aggregate in natural areas).
2. Use trails, sidewalks, pathways, and adequate shared-use paved road shoulders to create a trail network within each Canyon community. Link the Canyon Connector trails and connect parks, schools, churches and with other key locations within each of the Canyon communities.
3. Canyon Hubs present opportunities to create recreational focal points or specialized facilities for non-motorized uses such as mountain biking, hiking, boating, and equestrian activities. These trails and facilities will help attract visitors to the Canyon communities, boosting local economies.



Gates lies between Mill City and Detroit. A small area of public open space is provided by Gates City Park. As it passes through Gates, the state-owned rail bed runs parallel to Highway 22. This open space serves as a gateway to Gates' central business district, which includes the post office, CARTS station, and shops. Minto Park, located just east of Gates, is a 100-acre Marion County Park with trails and scenic river views. Beyond Minto Park is Packsaddle Park, which is also a Marion County Park. Packsaddle Park has fishing, trails, fire pits, restrooms, and a whitewater recreation put-in. Four sections of the trail are planned to link to the City of Gates, (1) Central Avenue to Gates west City limit, (2) Gates west City limit to approximately 400 feet west of Louisa Street intersection, (3) Approx. 400 feet west of Louisa Street intersection in Gates to the eastern City limit, and (4) Gates eastern City limit to The Maples Rest Area.

Action Plan:

- Continue developing a management structure for the Canyon Journeys Trail System.
- Prioritize the development sequence of first-priority projects.
- Seek funds and partners for the design and development of priority trail sections.
- Involve the public and adjacent property owners in trail design and construction process.
- Work with the individual adjacent property owners who oppose trail sections within their area.
- Coordinate with state and County to include improved shared-use paved shoulders in their road improvement plans.
- Work with groups and individuals interested in developing or expanding recreation and interpretive hubs.

Marion County Economic Development Strategic Plan

Purpose: To identify specific actions to promote economic growth and development.

- **Partners:** Create a culture of collaboration and convene partners to foster opportunities and derive solutions that break down barriers that impede growth.
- **Natural Resource Innovation:** Agricultural and forestry industries provide significant employment opportunities in Marion County's urban and rural areas. These industries depend on the integration of new technologies and innovation. The County will foster collaboration with the agriculture and technology industries.
- **People:** Marion County's has a direct impact on the health, vibrancy, and job opportunities for County residents. Access to employment is provided by enhancing the skills of the workforce through training and supporting access through affordable housing and transportation options. Opportunities to start a new business will empower residents and diversify the economic base.

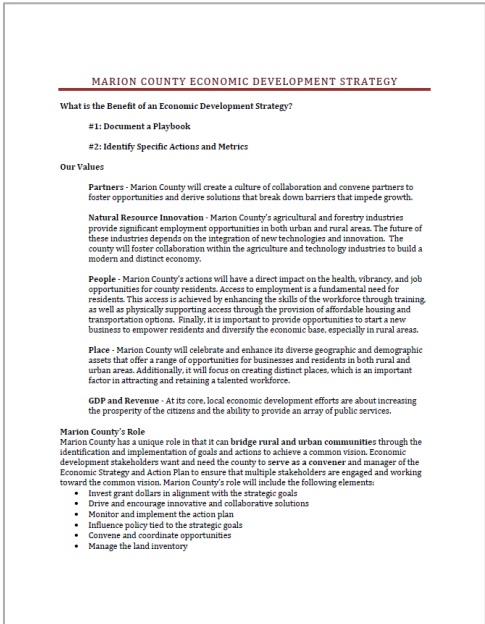
- **Place:** Marion County will celebrate and enhance its diverse geographic and demographic assets that offer a range of opportunities for businesses and residents. The County will create distinct places, an important factor in attracting and retaining a talented workforce.
- **GDP and Revenue:** Economic development efforts increase the prosperity of citizens and enable an array of public services.

Role of Marion County:

- Invest grant dollars in alignment with the strategic goals
- Drive and encourage innovative and collaborative solutions
- Monitor and implement the action plan
- Influence policy tied to the strategic goals
- Convene and coordinate opportunities
- Manage the land inventory

Goals:

1. Build organizational capacity. Align the governance and management with the outlined strategy, facilitate collaboration amongst departments to remove the barriers of business growth, and align stakeholders with the economic development strategy.
2. Use land strategically. A land inventory should be found and developed, and build strategic infrastructure.
3. Create business opportunities. Enhance existing industry cluster, support a healthy workforce, and foster a startup ecosystem by supporting small business, start-ups, and micro enterprises that are focused in forestry and wood products, agriculture, food and beverage products, natural resource innovation, and metals/machinery & equipment.
4. Enhance natural resource innovation. Encourage innovations and R&D. Define and promote market opportunities in the workforce.
5. Foster placemaking. Support and promote agritourism, rural downtowns, and recreation destination development.



Purpose: To observe, analyze, and record obstacles to community and economic development in the North Santiam Canyon region.

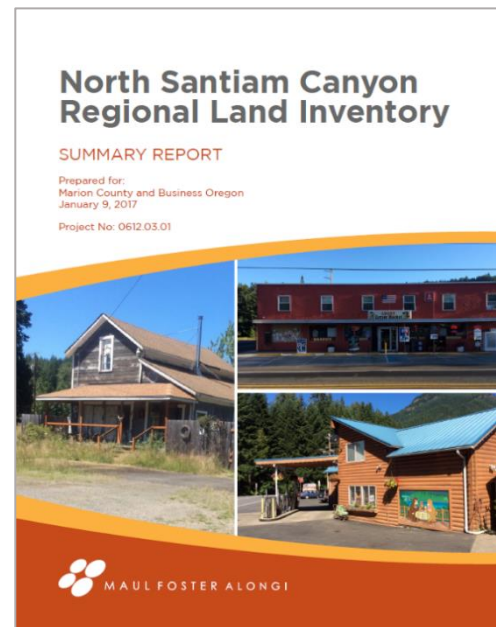
Project Objectives:

A land inventory of properties and current conditions in the region to aid short- and long-term planning efforts related to land use, infrastructure, real estate marketability, and redevelopment potential.

In addition to the inventory, collaborators examined governance options for a common regional water/wastewater district (the wastewater study). This will contain conceptual design for wastewater system development in the research region, as well as estimated costs and construction project phasing.

Primary Objectives for Execution:

- Developing an understanding of specific opportunities and constraints affecting community and economic development goals in the study area.
- Using the best available data to provide the COG, study area communities, and regional stakeholders with an analytical tool to assist in appropriate and successful decision-making and prioritization of resources.



Results of the Inventory:

- An interactive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) database providing insight into priority development areas, specific properties, and catalytic projects to stimulate economic and community development in the region.
- Analysis of the impact of modeling wastewater treatment options explored in a parallel wastewater study on population and employment growth projections.

Scope of Work:

- Data Compilation and Review
 - The project kicked off by gathering available data from multiple sources and compiling them into a single geodatabase. The data were made available for access and use through a secure Web-based interactive map application.
- Field Surveys
 - Through property windshield surveys and focused interviews with key local stakeholders, this endeavor entailed direct data collection and analysis of the research area. The goal of this project was to collect data that would otherwise be unavailable and/or unquantifiable using existing data sets.
- Redevelopment Analysis

- Modeled growth projections were used to determine future land demand in the study area. These growth projections helped inform the parallel wastewater study.
- The North Santiam Canyon Corridor Industrial & Commercial Land Demand Forecast was used to assess and rank commercial and industrial properties according to readiness to develop or redevelop, using the following approach:
 - Develop typologies to sort commercial and industrial properties for modeling redevelopment options and impact.
 - Apply a Site Suitability comparative ranking matrix to show weighted scores for each typology factor and total comparative scores to rank the suitability of the types for various uses.
 - Apply the matrix to the population of properties identified by typology.
 - Rank the properties according to matrix under different growth scenarios.
- Impact Analysis
 - An order-of-magnitude analysis informed potential utility demand generated by property redevelopment. As we progressed through the development of the inventory and the analysis of redevelopment, it became clear that this new demand would be included in the model generated through the wastewater study, and that it was more valuable to understand the impact of a sewer system on growth projections and land demand. Therefore, in collaboration with staff from the County and COG, MFA developed and applied an alternative “augmented” growth scenario to the Land Demand Forecast.
- Project Deliverables
 - Interactive GIS Database of Properties: geodatabases were provided to appropriate project partners at the County. The geodatabases consist of all supporting datasets integrated into the analysis, along with the final layers generated through project-specific analysis. The geodatabases contain appropriate metadata and is accompanied by documentation describing the methodology and analysis.
 - Land Demand Forecast and Redevelopment Matrix: A model for land demand in industrial and commercial uses, based on employment growth projections for the study area. The analysis was complemented by the impact analysis, which modeled the potential growth, based on the availability of sewer infrastructure and services in the study area. The growth projections and the Land Demand Forecast were provided to project partners to support system modeling in the wastewater study. Commercial and industrial properties were sorted into typologies for modeling redevelopment options and impact. The typologies were based on zoning and parcel size. The team then developed a unique site suitability comparative ranking matrix to calculate weighted scores for each typology factor and generate total comparative scores to rank the suitability of the parcels for development. The comparative matrix was reviewed, and final scored were recorded in the GIS dataset.

Communities:

Gates is a rural residential community and there are no signs that this will change in the near future. There may be minor additions to its commercial base to service an increasing volume of tourists from the Willamette Valley.

Detroit should also see increased demand for tourist commercial services in its central business district and at lakefront businesses.

Employment:

Overall, total primary employment in the study area averaged 24.94 percent of the total population compared to a ratio of 42.6 percent for the whole state of Oregon. Several reasons were cited for this disparity, including an aging labor force, more seasonal and part-time employment, and volatility in the lumber and wood products sector of the economy. The 2015 to 2035 employment growth projection is as follows:

City	Total Jobs 2002	Total Jobs 2014	Employment Percentage 2015	Baseline Average Annual Growth Rate	Augmented Average Annual Growth Rate
Gates	23	14	0.03	14	14
Total North Santiam Study Area	848	1,033	0.25	1,304	1,581

Land Demand:

For the North Santiam Corridor, the analysis indicates that there will be demand for both industrial and commercial land over the next 20 years. Demand for industrial land is estimated at 17.0 acres under the baseline average annual growth rate projections, and demand for commercial land is estimated at 7.4 acres, for a combined total of 24.4 acres. Under the augmented agar assumptions, new demand would rise by 34.4 acres for industrial land and 15.0 acres for commercial land, for a combined increase of 49.4 acres.

Population:

From 2000 to 2015 there was a 20 percent increase in population in Gates, and a 53 percent increase in population in the total North Santiam Study Area.

The baseline growth rate used in the study is the 20-year growth rate produced by the Population Research Center of Portland State University and certified by the County. That report covered the period from 2010 to 2030 and the projections were extrapolated an additional five years to provide estimates for 2015 to 2035. The individual baseline Average Annual Growth Rate for each community is calculated and aggregated for a total canyon-wide population growth rate of 0.89 percent.

City	Baseline	Population 2000	Population 2015	Population with Baseline 2035
Gates	0.07%	471	485	492

Total North Santiam Study Area	0.89%	3,829	4,142	4,949
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North Santiam Canyon Economic Development Update, March 2016

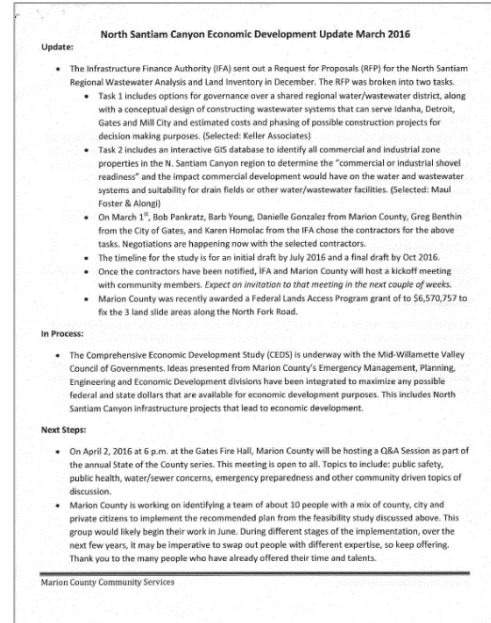
Purpose: To provide a written update for progress on areas in North Santiam Canyon economic development, per 2016.

Areas of Weakness:

1. Water/Sewer Infrastructure
2. Broadband
3. Access to Employment

Project Updates:

- Regional Wastewater Feasibility Study
 - Contractors were selected to create a conceptual design and estimated costs of constructing wastewater systems that can serve cities in the area (Gates and Detroit), and develop an interactive GIS database to identify all commercial and industrial zone properties in the region in order to determine their impact on the wastewater system and if they are shovel ready.
 - Last year, the City of Gates received a \$1.7 Million Community Development Block Grant for the purpose of water main repair, updates to the water plant and diesel generator, and upgrades to the propane generator/booster.
- Broadband Internet Feasibility Study
 - Many of communities in the canyon area lack quality broadband and internet to suit the needs of citizens, home based medical care providers, emergency management, schools, community organizations, and businesses. As a result, Marion County is working on making high speed broadband internet accessible through public and private partnerships.
- Regional Health Assessment
- Hazard Mitigation Plan
 - A Q&A session was conducted at the Gates Fire Hall to discuss public safety, health, water/sewer concerns, emergency preparedness, etc.
 - Marion County was awarded a Federal Lands Access Program Grant of \$6,570,757 to fix 3 land slide areas along the North Fork Road.
 - Low interest loans were offered to Marion County businesses in 2015 as a part of the national disaster declaration.



- The Comprehensive Economic Development Study was underway with the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments to present ideas for maximizing federal and state dollars in terms of economic development. This included North Santiam Canyon infrastructure projects that lead to economic development.

North Santiam Canyon Regional Wastewater Analysis, January 2017

Purpose: To provide community leaders and staff with a feasible approach and associated cost to providing sanitary sewer services to the North Santiam Canyon communities.

Background:

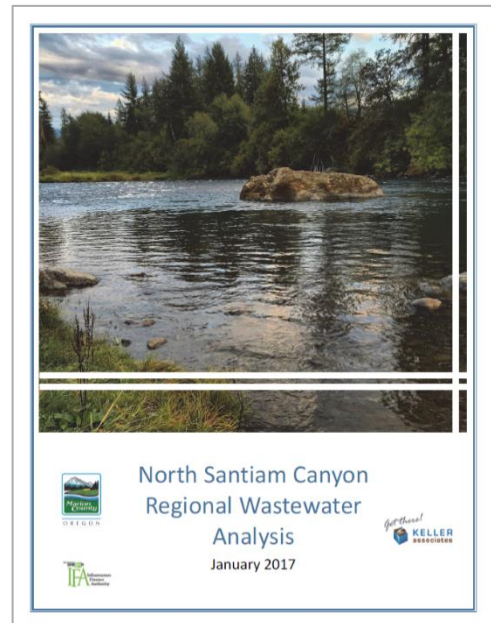
The lack of community wastewater systems in Idanha, Detroit, Gates, Mehama, and Lyons (all five communities are on individual septic systems only) and the need for upgrades to Mill City’s wastewater system is identified as a limiting factor to economic and community development in the North Santiam Canyon.

Stakeholder Interviews were conducted to gain information and perspective in evaluating alternatives, septic system performance in the community, and existing community governance for utilities.

A detailed report for the development potential of the economy was completed by Maul Foster & Alongi (MFA).

Scope of Work:

- Data Compilation and Review
 - The project began by collecting data from a variety of sources and putting it into a single geodatabase. A secure Web-based interactive map application was used to make the data available for access and use.
- Field Surveys
 - Through property windshield surveys and focused interviews with key local stakeholders, this endeavor entailed direct data collection and analysis of the research area. The goal of this project was to collect data that would otherwise be unavailable and/or unquantifiable using existing data sets.
- Redevelopment Analysis
 - To evaluate future land demand in the study area, MFA and Elesco analyzed growth projections. The parallel wastewater investigation was aided by these growing forecasts.
 - MFA used the North Santiam Canyon Corridor Industrial & Commercial Land Demand Forecast (Land Demand Forecast) to evaluate and rate commercial and industrial assets based on their readiness to develop or redevelop using the following approach:



- Develop typologies to classify commercial and industrial assets so that redevelopment choices and impacts may be modeled.
 - Use a Site Suitability Comparative Ranking Matrix to provide weighted scores for each typology factor as well as total comparative scores to rank the types' suitability for different uses. The TAG was formed to examine the data and assist in the prioritization of matrix variables.
 - Apply the matrix to the typology-identified population of properties.
 - In different growth situations, rank the attributes according to the matrix.
- Impact Analysis
 - Initially, MFA was charged with performing an order-of-magnitude analysis to evaluate the anticipated utility demand created by property redevelopment. As they worked on the inventory and the redevelopment analysis, it became evident that this new demand would be factored into the model developed by the wastewater study, and that understanding the influence of a sewage system on growth estimates and land demand was more important. As a result, MFA designed and implemented an alternate "augmented" development scenario to the Land Demand Forecast in consultation with County and COG employees.

Project Deliverables:

- An Interactive GIS Database of Properties
 - The project's final delivery is a secure Web-based interactive map application that allows project stakeholders and partners to engage with the combined datasets and deliverables. ArcGIS file geodatabases have been distributed to suitable project partners at the County in addition to the Web application. All supporting datasets integrated into the study, as well as the final layers generated through project-specific analysis, are stored in the geodatabases. The geodatabases include relevant metadata as well as documentation outlining the approach and analysis.
- A Land Demand Forecast and Redevelopment Matrix
 - Produced the Land Demand Forecast, which projected land demand for industrial and commercial applications based on the study area's job growth estimates. The impact analysis, which estimated prospective expansion based on the availability of sewer infrastructure and services in the study region, was added to the analysis. To aid system modeling in the wastewater study, project partners were given growth predictions and the Land Demand Forecast.
- Catalyst Property Cut Sheets
 - MFA selected the highest-scoring sites that satisfied the projected growth demands for development or redevelopment based on the output of the redevelopment site suitability matrix analysis for the baseline growth scenario, using the results of the redevelopment and impact evaluations. These are the properties that, based on the relative weighting established in the site suitability matrix, are considered the most generally desirable for development; however, individual business requirements may identify additional criteria that were not included in this study and may not score the properties in the same way.

Anticipated Treatment:

The North Santiam River Subbasin includes the towns of Idanha, Detroit, Gates, Mill City, Lyons, and Mehama. The lack of, or poor state of, community wastewater collection and treatment systems has been cited as a limiting issue for economic and communal progress in this region. One of the major obstacles to these communities having wastewater systems is a regulation called the Three Basin Rule. The Three Basin Rule was established to preserve/improve the existing high quality of water in the North Santiam River basin. This rule prohibited any discharge of wastewater to surface waters requiring a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, a Water Pollution Control Facility (WPCF) permit, or a 401 Water Quality Certification. The Three Basin Rule did allow the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) the ability to issue a WPCF permit for a new domestic sewage treatment facility contingent on three terms:

1. There is no discharge to surface water.
2. All groundwater protection requirements of OAR 340-040-0030 are met.
3. The Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) finds that the new sewage treatment facility provides a preferable means of disposal from the current means of disposal.

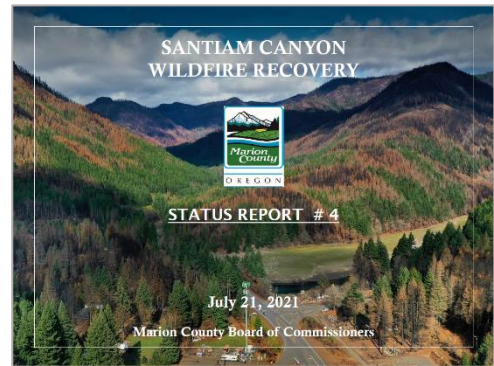
Currently most of the communities rely on onsite septic tank treatment. After discussions with DEQ, the most likely option for a community wastewater system in the North Santiam River basin to receive a WPCF permit is for year-round subsurface discharge in the root zone with water that meets the DEQ requirements for Class a Recycled Water (defined in OAR 340-055-0012(7)). In addition to the WPCF permit, a Recycled Water Use Plan (RWUP) must be developed which may include a groundwater monitoring plan. Subsurface discharge would satisfy the Three Basin Rule's requirement to not discharge to surface water. According to the DEQ, in order to ensure the groundwater is protected it is likely that the effluent will need to meet the requirements for Class A Recycled Water. Additionally, Class A Recycled Water disposal in the root zone should be looked at by the DEQ as a preferable means of disposal to individual septic systems. The reason that Class A Recycled Water is more protective of groundwater than other categories of recycled water is because of the level of treatment that is required. OAR 340-055 defines five categories of effluent, identifies allowable uses for each category, and provides requirements for treatment, monitoring, public access, and setback distances.

[Santiam Canyon Wildfire Recovery Status Report #4, July 2021](#)

Purpose: To record the status of the community in relation to the fire.

Data Collected:

- 697 homes in the Santiam Canyon in need of repair or replacement (about 27%).
- In Gates, there was a total of 31 dwelling permits issued, and 42 septic permits issued.
- 502 Properties with Signed Right of Entry
- 310 of 666 Home Sites Cleared (46.5%)
- Total Number of Hazard Trees –24,000
- Hazard Trees Removed –9,008 (37.5%)



County Led Recovery Projects:

- Financial Needs Analysis
- Communications and Outreach & Recovery Website
- Economic Impact and Opportunities Analysis
- Health Impact Assessment
- Community Visioning and Strategic Plans

Progress Points:

- Met with Mill City Recorder to discuss recovery efforts.
- Held initial meeting to discuss Hazard Mitigation Program applications.
- Housing Team developing a proposed list of projects for State funding. Researched models for developing a housing recovery plan.
- Held a discussion with World Renew, a group that can help document the total damage from disasters.
- Discussed disaster recovery efforts with the new County CDBG/HOME Manager.

Oregon Wildfires Listening & Media Analysis Report, September 2021

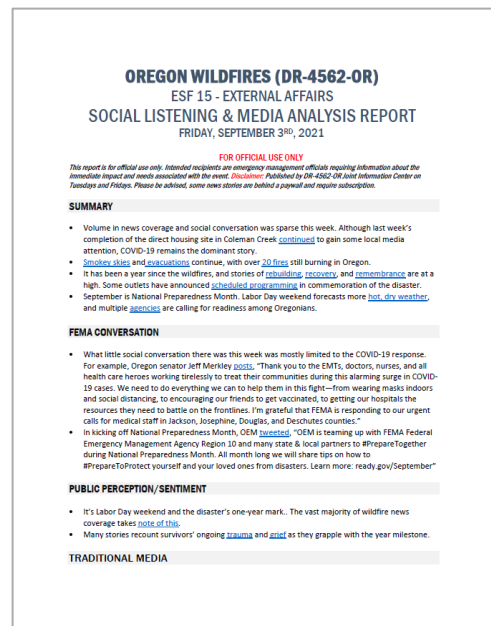
Purpose: To document media coverage and progress made in recovering from the Beachie Creek fires.

News Coverage Overview:

Although most of the news still is centered around COVID-19 complications, the press continues to report news on the fires, which happened over a year ago. Stories of rebuilding, recovery, and remembrance are at a high. Some outlets have announced scheduled programming in commemoration of the disaster. September is National Fire Preparedness Month, and as such, media outlets have been paying extra close attention to the fire stories. Many stories recount survivors' ongoing trauma and grief as they grapple with the year milestone.

Progress and Recovery Efforts:

- Coleman Creek Estates rehouses survivors nearly a year after Almeda Fire.
- The State's Office of Emergency Management approached Talent about Applying for money that the Federal Emergency Management Agency had originally granted for the Mosier Creek fire.
- Smoke and damage from the fires is still heavy.
- Dry conditions and high fire warnings have led to recent evacuations in attempts to lessen potential fire damage.



Santiam Canyon Wildfire Recovery Project (Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association, Community Planning Assistance Program) CAPP, August 2021

Purpose: To provide an overview, give methods, and outline opportunities for recovery from the 2020 Oregon Wildfires.

Background and Purpose:

Many Santiam Canyon communities were devastated by wildfires in 2020, which destroyed homes, businesses, community institutions (such as churches, fire stations, and municipal buildings), historic features, and the infrastructure that sustains them. The most major and devastating effects on properties occurred in the cities of Detroit and Gates, as well as many rural residences in between. The fires have severely harmed the area's woods, natural regions, County and state parks, and other recreational attractions, as well as Santiam Canyon's tourist sector.

Residents, businesses, and local governments of the canyon are still addressing immediate needs and each community impacted will have their own schedule and interests to be addressed. All parties involved are working hard on grant and funding applications; economic analysis and studies to support rebuilding; and to engage in community-based planning and visioning efforts when communities are ready to proceed with those steps.

Methodology:

Resiliency planning considers how future events and conditions may affect a community. Communities use recovery planning to figure out how to rebuild after a tragedy. It assists a community in adapting to and recovering quickly from disruptions such as wildfires, pandemics, earthquakes, and other natural disasters.

The accompanying elements of the Community Assistance Planning Program (CAPP) team’s research include a summary of existing plans, policies, and relevant studies, an assessment of how the wildfires have impacted those plans, and initial ideas for improvements or next steps. The CAPP team has also developed a compendium of best planning practices identified by disaster response experts across the country and lessons learned from the experiences of other communities recovering from wildfires. Finally, the team compiled a directory of individuals and organizations charting recovery projects and plans for Santiam Canyon recovery. All of these documents are “living,” and can be changed at any point in time.

Opportunities For Recovery:

According to CAPP research, community and economic development goals set many years ago are still relevant and serve as a solid foundation for rebuilding. The disaster has revealed strategies and policies that should be modified to increase system resilience and, as a result, strengthen the community's ability to respond to and recover quickly from future disasters or emergencies.

The “planning context” summaries provided by the CAPP team highlight areas where plans and policies need to be updated to reflect current conditions or strengthen resilience. A common theme noted by the researchers is the need for continued collaboration and community-driven decisions, which includes a need for increased staffing and capacity building in the Santiam Canyon to ensure a community-supported recovery and a resilient Santiam Canyon.

Planning and Prevention Strategies:

Experiences from other communities' post-disaster planning efforts can be useful for moving forward with recovery and rebuilding, as well as assuring resiliency to prevent, decrease the risk of, and recover from future disasters. The following is an overview of planning efforts and lessons learned from previous wildfire incidents across the region, as well as best practices that have been investigated or implemented in similarly afflicted areas. Best practices are those sound, responsible policies, methods, activities, or tools that are often thought to be the most effective for preventing or limiting the negative effects of a wildfire disaster.

Resources—Policies, Codes, Tools, Plans for Before and After Wildfire:

- APA Planning the Wildland-Urban Interface
 - <https://www.planning.org/publications/report/9174069/>
- APA Hazard Mitigation Policy Guide
 - <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9203323/>
- Building a Wildfire-Resistant Home: Codes and Costs
 - <https://headwaterseconomics.org/wildfire/homes-risk/building-costs-codes/>
- Colorado Post-Fire Recovery Playbook for Counties, Tribes, Municipalities, and Water Providers

- https://aftertheflames.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CO_Post_Fire_Playbook_2021_update-1.pdf
- Community Wildfire Safety Through Regulation: A Best Practices Guide for Planners and Regulators
 - <https://nfpa92.nfpa.org/-/media/Files/Public-Education/By-topic/Wildland/WildfireBestPracticesGuide.ashx>
- Disaster Recovery Guidance: Research Study
 - <https://www.planning.org/nationalcenters/hazards/recoveryguide/>
- FEMA’s U.S. Fire Administration Wildland Urban Interface
 - <https://www.usfa.fema.gov/wui/index.html>
- Firebreak: Wildfire Resilience Strategies for Real Estate
 - <https://knowledge.uli.org/reports/research-reports/2020/firebreak-wildfire-resilience-strategies-for-real-estate>
- International Code Council Wildland-Urban Interface Model Code
 - <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/IWUIC2021P1>
- Oregon’s Post-Wildfire Flood Playbook
 - https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Portals/24/docs/flood/Post_WildFire_Playbook.pdf
- Planning’s Role in Wildfire Mitigation
 - <https://www.planning.org/publications/document/9170741/>
- Pocket Response Plan (PReP)-Disaster Preparedness Tool
 - https://www.oregon.gov/oprd/OH/Documents/OC2C_PReP.doc
- Recovering and Rebuilding from Oregon’s 2020 Wildfires
 - https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policy/Documents/WERC-2020/Wildfire_Report_FINAL.pdf
- Zoning Practice: Zoning and Disaster Recover (July 2021) & Wildfire Mitigation (May 2012)
 - <https://www.planning.org/zoningpractice/previous/>

Case Studies:

- After the Fire: Vulnerable Communities Respond and Rebuild
 - <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/green/reports/2019/07/25/472738/fire-vulnerable-communities-respond-rebuild/>
- Austin Area Wildfire Hub
 - <https://wildfire-austin.hub.arcgis.com/>
- Fire Adapted Ashland
 - <https://www.ashland.or.us/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=539>
- Wildfire Safety Ordinance
 - <https://www.ashland.or.us/Page.asp?NavID=17670>
- Case Study: Hayman Fire, Hayman, Colorado
 - <https://www.planning.org/research/postdisaster/casestudies/haymanfire.htm>
- Road to Recovery website: Town of Paradise, California

- <https://www.townofparadise.com/recovery>
- Urban Land Institute summary case study
 - <https://developingresilience.uli.org/case/paradise-long-term-recovery-plan/>
- Sonoma County Recovery & Resiliency Framework
 - <https://sonomaCounty.ca.gov/CAO/Policy-Grants-and-Special-Projects/Recovery-and-Resiliency/Recovery-Framework/>

Opportunities for Recovery:

While limited community visioning took place pre-disaster, there is renewed interest in engaging Santiam Canyon communities in visioning processes following the 2020 fires. With the help of a Community Development Block Grant, Marion County contracted a team of consultants to assist with community visioning for the cities of Gates and Detroit, along with other strategic planning efforts throughout the impacted areas of the canyon. Data collection and community surveys for this effort commenced in July 2021. This project may catalyze interest in community visioning in other Santiam Canyon communities and should be used as a case study for future efforts.

While the Cities of Gates and Detroit have previously undertaken independent community visioning processes, future visioning work should acknowledge the importance of shared assets and a comprehensive vision for Santiam communities. While each community in Santiam Canyon is unique, many are faced with similar challenges. A collaborative vision could highlight the ways cities can work together to leverage resources and increase long-term resiliency.

The Oregon Department of Forestry is working on several plans that will direct future management of state forests. These plans—including the Companion Forest Management Plan, the Habitat Conservation Plan, and the Climate Change and Carbon Plan—have direct links to fire management activities. Local governments can look to these plans for guidance on how to prepare for and respond to future fire events.

In addition to management direction, these Plans include ongoing public engagement opportunities for communities to learn more about the future of forest management. Providing the Oregon Department of Forestry with community perspectives will strengthen the actions and directions that come out of these planning documents.

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Post-fire, coordinated and regional improvements to infrastructure, housing development (outside of flood and landslide zones, constructed to code and with more fire resilient materials)

and aligned economic development efforts are possible –this is due to the large amount of state and federal funding available for wildfire recovery that otherwise would not be in play.

Santiam Canyon will benefit from the increased economic and housing development opportunities that can be realized with the wastewater project—drain field size would no longer be a factor nor will expensive septic systems be necessary. The wastewater project would also serve to expand opportunities for recreation and tourism, as safe treatment will allow for a higher number of users.

North Santiam Sewer Authority Wastewater Master Plan (September 2021)

Purpose: Tourism and outdoor recreation have become an important part of the Canyon’s economy as activities near Detroit Lake continue to drive and attract users from around the state.

Urgency Post Fires: The wildfires and mass destruction created additional pressure to obtain permits for septic repairs or new septic systems for recovering business owners and residents. The permitting challenge and costs to repair or replace septic systems will stall the recovery process for many in the region.

Funding: In 2021, Marion County submitted for a Capital Funding Request to the Oregon Legislature on behalf of the NSSA for \$50 million. The funding request was broken down into two distinct projects:

- Project A: Gates / Mill City
- Project B: Interim Measures Detroit/Idanha

Population Projections: Historical and projected population was retrieved from Portland State University (PSU) and a case study of the nearby city of Sisters. According to this analysis, the annual average growth rate for the communities in North Santaim Canyon was 1.6 percent.

Build Approach: Keller Associates recommended that the project be split into to geographies: Mill City/Gates and Detroit/Idanha.

Cost Summary: Total capital costs for the system are \$106.2 million. Maintenance and upkeep costs are estimated at \$0.44 million per year.

APPENDIX B: CASE STUDIES

Please see the following case studies to see how new development designed to attract existing traffic impacted the commercial viability of Durham, North Carolina; St. Louis, Missouri; and Hooksett, New Hampshire.

Durham, North Carolina

In recent years, the City of Durham has taken advantage of these lessons gained and the possibilities of gas station rehabilitation. Geer Street Garden restaurant and bar, Grub restaurant, Local Yogurt frozen yogurt store, and Joe Van Gogh coffee shop are all notable examples in downtown Durham. The revitalization of Durham's West End Neighborhood, where Grub, Local Yogurt, and Joe Van Gogh are located, has been aided by the rehabilitation of abandoned gas stations; real estate prices have increased substantially in recent years.

- <https://ced.sog.unc.edu/from-gas-station-to-gastro-pub-the-potential-of-gas-station-redevelopment/>

St. Louis, Missouri

The EPA technical assistance team analyzed the former gas station sites, located in Fox Park, Tower Grove South and Benton Park neighborhoods. The Land Reutilization Authority (LRA) owns all three sites and, therefore, the SLDC can influence their use. The sites require environmental site assessments (ESAs) and remediation, which will be facilitated by SLDC, Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) and EPA. Because the sites were located on separate parcels, EPA's technical assistance team developed separate site reports that provided:

- A policy and infrastructure evaluation of the conceptual redevelopment plan to ensure it was consistent with land use and zoning requirements and that infrastructure and utilities were available and capable of supporting redevelopment.
- A market assessment to evaluate the neighborhood's demographics and an assessment of how the data might influence the conceptual redevelopment plan.
- A review of the organizational capacity of SLDC and partners to facilitate interim uses and redevelopment.
 - https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2015-07/documents/redevelopment_planning_for_abandoned_gas_stations.pdf

Hooksett, New Hampshire

The site of the Hooksett used to be an old liquor store and rest stop built in 1977. There were 1.0-1.2 million visitors annually. NH Department of Transportation found the facilities to be outdated and lacking robust services. A redevelopment of the northbound and southbound rest areas was completed in 2014-15. It is now a huge rest stop with a gas station, a visitors' center, concession sales, and a state liquor and wine outlet.

- <https://pmi-nh.org/component/rsfiles/download-file/files?path=Web+Documents/Presentations/HooksettRestArea.pdf>