



UMATILLA TOGETHER

Official cover pending, courtesy of Tristan Cole, community artist

THE CITY

The City of Umatilla is surrounded by rolling hills, sitting at the confluence of the Columbia and Umatilla Rivers. The natural beauty of eastern Oregon and abundant waterways have had an unmistakable influence on the development of the city over the years. The relationship between the built environment and natural landscape has been deeply intertwined, crafting a distinct identity over the years and providing the background for a vibrant and unique sense of place. Preserving and enhancing the scenery, while also embracing the rich heritage of the city will distinguish Umatilla as a city brimming with opportunity, shaping its growth over the coming years.



THE PEOPLE

Constantly adapting and changing through the years, the present day location of the City of Umatilla is the ancestral home to the native people of the lower Columbia. The Umatilla tribe, Shahaptian speaking river people, lived off the bounty that the water and lands provided. As time progressed, the lands once again provided resources to the early settlers during the Gold Rush Era that allowed the town to flourish. The era of big dams harnessed energy from the rivers and allowed the region to grow with the construction of McNary Dam.

From rippling waters to landing days, the river system has always been the lifeblood of the people; providing resources and creating communities with strong connections to the landscape. While change over the years has been constant, the people have remained unwavering in their dedication to create a community that reflects strong family ties and traditional values. Once again, the city is on the cusp of change with a growing Latino community that embodies rich cultural values that will strengthen the fabric of society, enriching the overall community by bridging the generations.

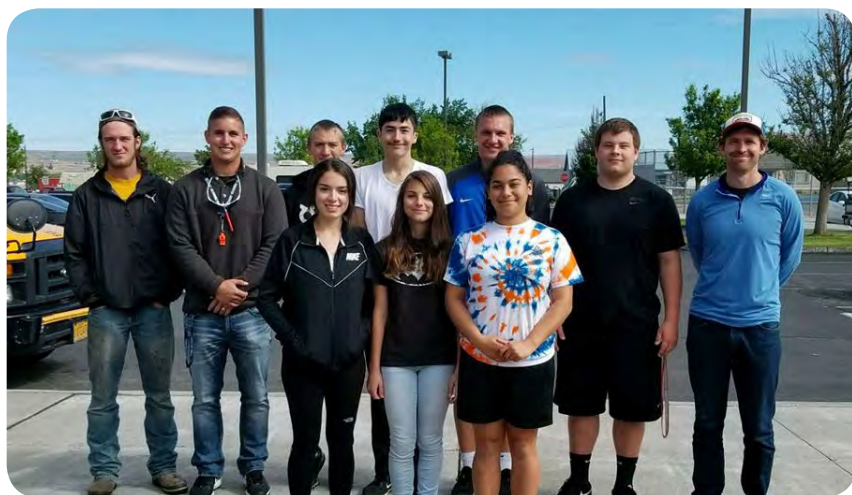


Since it's a small town everyone knows each other and I feel as a community we are a lot stronger than bigger cities" - Response from Youth Survey

A CITY IS SHAPED NOT BY BRICKS AND MORTAR, BUT BY THE SPIRIT AND VISION OF ITS PEOPLE.

THE TIME IS NOW

Umatilla Together sets the stage for great opportunities and seeks to inspire the residents of Umatilla to imagine what your city could be: a truly desirable place to live, work, learn, and play. Great places are not created by accident. They are the result of a vision, leadership, planning, public investment, unrelenting tenacity on the part of city champions, and strategic, meaningful partnerships.



INFORMING THE VISION

The motivation for Umatilla Together comes from the people of Umatilla, inspiring through their commitment to see the city become a thriving and active community, thereby enhancing the quality of life for all residents. The City of Umatilla initiated a visionary process in 2017 that signals a shift in the planning culture of the city. Confluentis Planning was invited to be a part of a process to:

- Strengthen local assets
- Foster connectivity and accessibility
- Create a distinct downtown

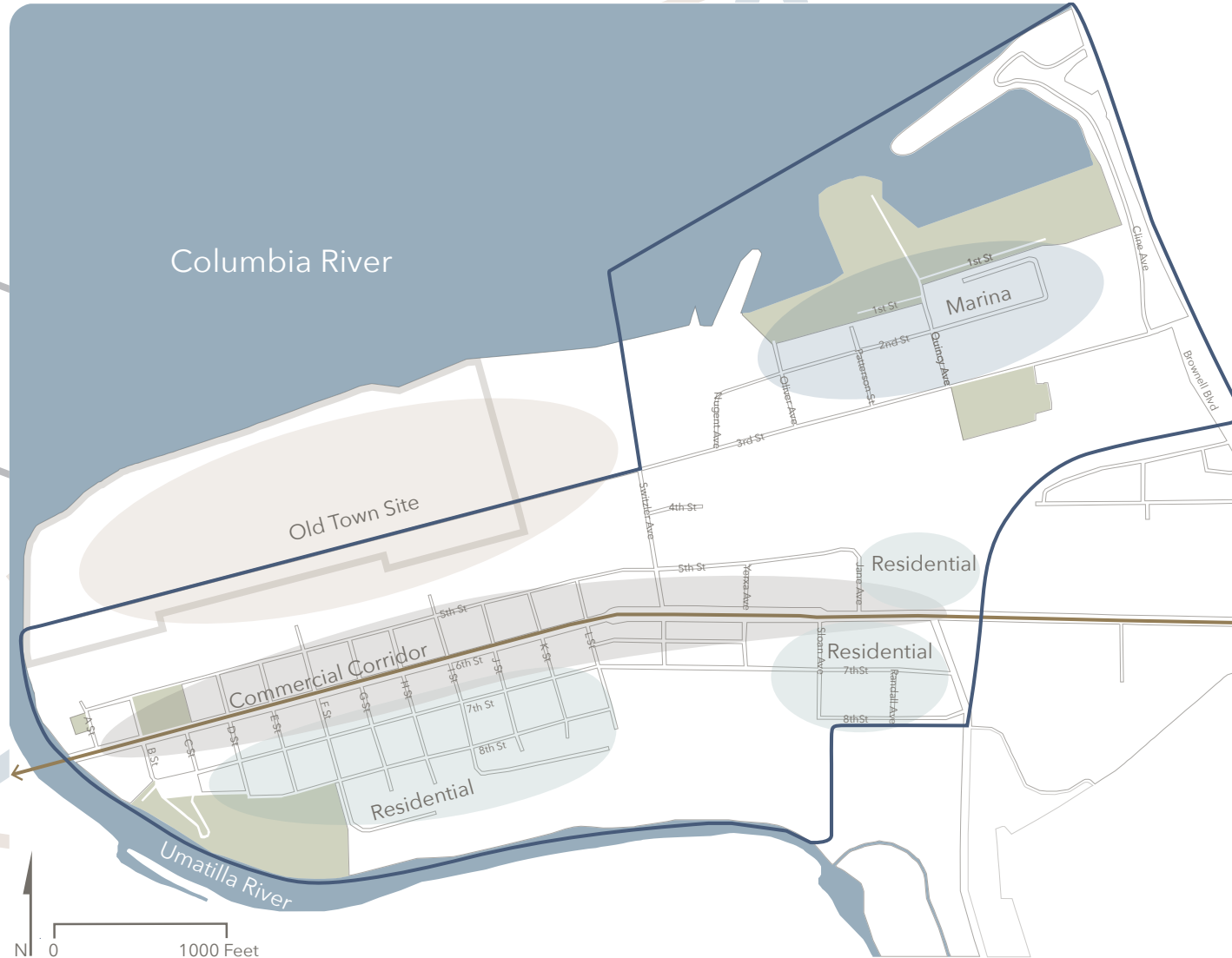
Centered around inclusive community visioning, the recommendations presented build upon past outreach efforts, existing plans, and are motivated by the feedback gathered at community engagement events. The following vision is thought to inspire and help guide current and future plans and policies. The leadership of the city recognizes that change leads to new opportunities, and the community members of Umatilla are excited to see the urban landscape reflect their values. Umatilla Together is about capturing these incredible opportunities and setting the city on a positive trajectory for future growth.

**"Bridge together to
create change."
- Mark Keith**



A CONNECTED COMMUNITY

The beautiful natural landscape around Umatilla provides unique development opportunities for the city that do not exist elsewhere in the region. At the confluence of the Umatilla River and Columbia River, the project area serves as a starting point for celebrating the city's rich heritage, while establishing a pathway for future growth. Centering around the downtown corridor, recommendations within the project area seek to increase connectivity, strengthen local assets, and enhance public life.



Currently, primary reliance is on the automobile, thereby limiting how people interact with the downtown corridor and diversity of users. Highway 730 is a main east/west connector running through the downtown corridor (i.e., 6th Street), functioning as an expressway for commuters.

Starting in the Summer of 2018, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and City of Umatilla will begin construction on the 6th Street Sidewalk Improvement Project. This project focuses on improving pedestrian infrastructure along 6th Street to enhance the look and feel of Umatilla's main street. However, creating greater connectivity by looking for more north/south opportunities will help achieve the vision of a walkable, social, riverfront community.



TRANSFORM HOW PEOPLE MOVE THROUGHOUT THE CITY

Switzler Avenue is a key connector for linking the High School to the Marina, 3rd Street soccer fields, and the Lewis & Clark Trail. I Street provides additional opportunities for increasing N/S connections, while also drawing people down to the Umatilla River Trail, taking advantage of the amazing views of the surrounding landscape.



There are also opportunities for creating civic spaces along I Street, as several undeveloped lots can be envisioned as vibrant public spaces for all members of the community to gather. F Street connects with the pedestrian bridge and can increase flow and, along with B Street, help bring activity to the west end of town. Creating a distinct gateway at the west end of town can bring commerce, recreation and reinforce the unique sense of place. Making the downtown corridor inviting to people on foot make B, F, I, and Switzler central streets for creating a downtown street network that can connect with any future downtown development.



REUNITE THE PEOPLE WITH THEIR WATERFRONT

Accessing the water's edge is essential to connecting the community to waterfront activities. Discussions with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and the Army Corps of Engineers are currently underway for a waterfront preservation plan that could open up the Old Town Site (OTS) for educational and restoration opportunities.



Respecting the rich heritage and culture of these historic lands could ensure that native, pioneer, and natural history always be protected and treasured. By strengthening partnerships with other government and non-government entities, easements could be established along the Umatilla River Trail that extend and connect with the existing natural areas and create a river trail system and regional open space network (i.e., Lewis and Clark Trail extension to Hat Rock State Park).



**"Rekindle that spark
and allow people to
see the potential."
-Paulette Dufloth**



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONNECTING GREENSPACES

Umatilla residents have expressed a unified desire to enhance and expand outdoor activities (e.g., fishing, hiking, biking, marine activities, etc.). Proposed expansions near the 3rd Street soccer field and a partnership with the CTUIR for a waterfront preservation plan inspired the idea of a Park Corridor.



The idea of a Park Corridor connects the pending Parks Master Plan and the vision for the Old Town Site together, creating a park space that reflects the need for both active and passive recreational opportunities. Examples include movies in the park, a splash park, car shows, tournaments, etc.



PROPOSED RECREATIONAL PARK SPACE



PROPOSED MODERN PARK



CONNECTING THE PARKS

60 percent of the land in the project area has federal restrictions that limit the types of activities and uses, preventing it from being developed. Local leaders and investors should recognize that the strategic utilization of the few private lands that do exist within the Park Corridor are crucial to the vision. Being strategic about private lands along this area for targeted commercial and retail opportunities will help reinforce the idea of a riverfront community, with access to the waterfront and a range of amenities.



"If we had more fields, we would be able to hold a tournament and have local businesses come out and put a small stand out and sell their products to promote themselves." - Latino Focus Group Participant





GREEN SPACE, RIVER VIEWS, HOUSING, AND A VIBRANT COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR

Parks and open spaces can be used as a catalyst for spurring economic development, adding personality and distinctiveness to the city.



Celebrating the natural landscape and leveraging the close proximity to the rivers and parks can set Umatilla apart from neighboring cities. These spaces can build and strengthen connections to other neighborhoods. Increasing housing opportunities along 5th Street takes advantage of the viewshed and provides ample amenities to draw people into the area. Enhancing residential development along 5th Street will bring activity into the area, leading to renewed interest in the downtown corridor for increasing commercial and retail opportunities.



HOME IS WHERE THE DOWNTOWN IS

Increasing single and multi-family housing along the southwest end of the area will further utilize the viewshed and network of trails, with a future prospect of creating a regional recreational pathway that connects with Hermiston.



To support a diverse residential neighborhood, a variety of housing types and employment opportunities are necessary, as are neighborhood amenities. Through community engagement, Umatilla High School has been identified as a place where the community currently gathers. Increasing activity within the downtown corridor will provide the opportunity to activate the west end of town and provide better access to Umatilla River, Nugent Park, and connections to the high school.



"Since I migrated here with my family, I've dreamed big and experienced great things and I do believe Umatilla is a great place to live." - Response from Youth Survey



A GREAT DOWNTOWN TELLS A STORY

While the Park Corridor may embody the values of the people and highlight the beauty of the surrounding landscape, the downtown corridor is the heart of the city. It should reflect the distinct history and cultural setting of Umatilla, be a source of civic pride, stimulate economic development, improve tourism opportunities, and provide housing and mobility options.

"Umatilla's location is a huge selling point, let's get people to stop here for other things than just filling up their gas tanks" - Melissa Ince



Creating an exciting downtown for residents and visitors requires a starting point for centralizing commercial and retail activity. Through community mapping exercises, Switzler Avenue was confirmed as the primary street for connecting neighborhoods and serves as a channel to and from important auxiliary streets. Whereas 6th Street is the main commercial corridor for downtown Umatilla, Switzler Avenue is the main north/south arterial.



City of Umatilla should focus on growth efforts around 6th Street and Switzler Avenue, filling vacancies and creating a contiguous retail corridor. Working with existing property and business owners to discuss the advantages of concentrating businesses into a dense two to three block corridor and offering relocation and rental incentives are essential to promote a lively, thriving downtown.



"I would like to see many more businesses open up, it would gather more people into the city" - Response from Youth Survey



INTERESTING AND ACTIVE STREETS

5th and 7th Streets are frequently used as “relief streets,” providing a quieter route that accommodates a diverse range of users. Envisioning 5th Street as an active transportation-friendly street allows for greater connectivity into the Park Corridor.



7th Street is an important east/west secondary connection, extending from Umatilla River Road at the east end to the river's edge on the west end. It provides access to the high school and middle school, linking up to the trail system and Nugent Park. B Street can enhance the west end development, providing the residential gateway into the downtown corridor.



CREATE A DISTINCT IDENTITY

Enhancing the character of the downtown involves creating a balance between culture and public spaces, allowing for urban and regional development projects to adapt.



Creating a prominent entrance or gateway to downtown from the various points of entry serves the purpose of creating a distinct identity. Another way to craft a unique identity is by incorporating murals, unique streetscape designs, and other public art that celebrates the city's rich cultural heritage.



BRINGING BACK MAIN STREET

Reinforce connectivity and safety by designing 6th Street as an appealing “main street” that promotes pedestrian activity, thereby revitalizing the downtown corridor and leading to increased economic development opportunities. By targeting commercial and retail businesses around a centralized location (e.g., Switzler Avenue and 6th Street), and activating the west end of downtown, future growth can begin to radiate outward and extend into the surrounding areas.

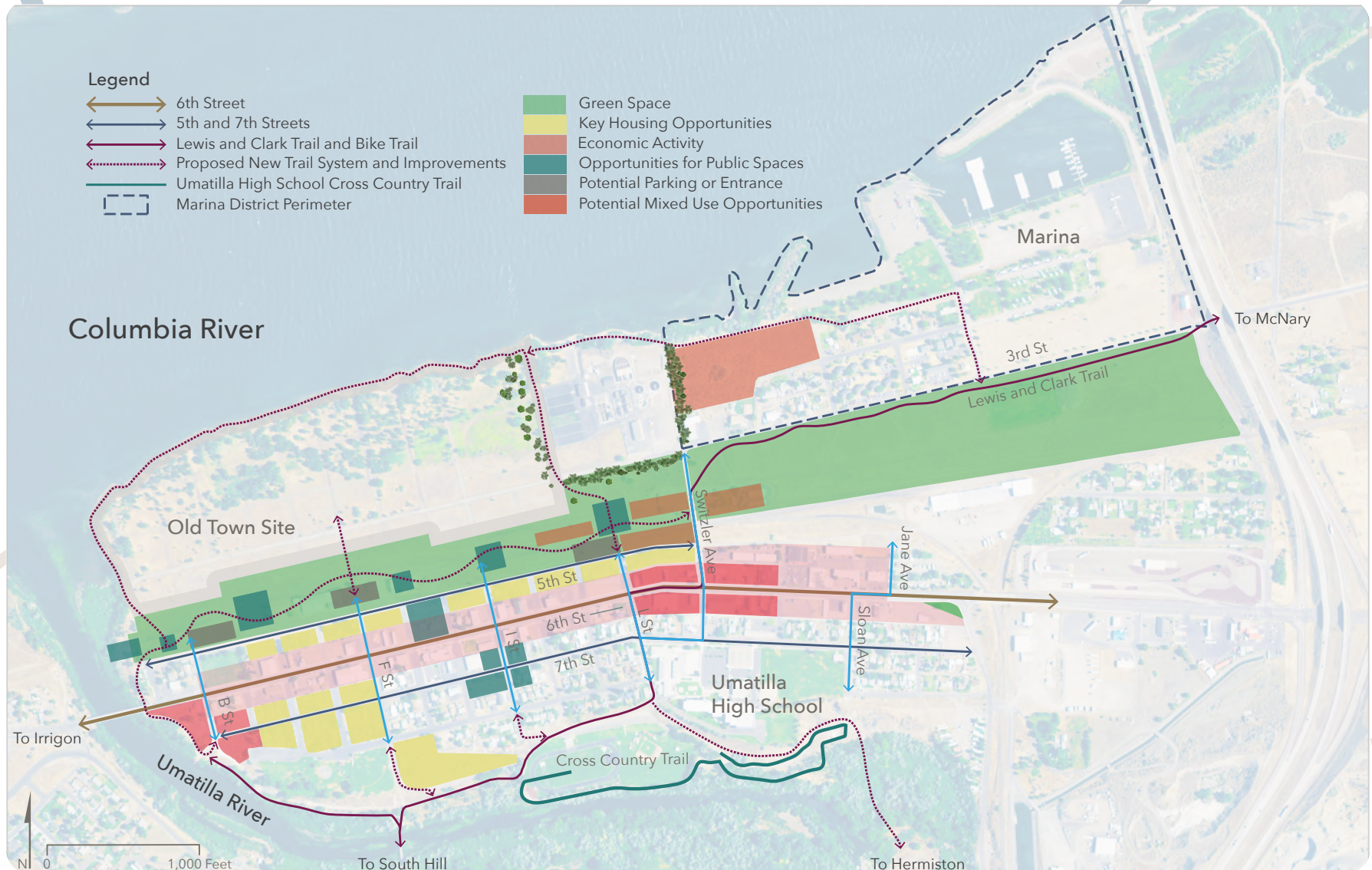


The community has expressed interest in more businesses that reflect a shared lifestyle, supply everyday necessities, and function as gathering places for social and leisure time (e.g. an arcade, ice cream shop, or additional restaurants). Furthermore, creating pathways off of 6th Street to safely walk allow people better options for getting around without an automobile, leading to more transportation options for community members and promoting a more active and healthy lifestyle.



AN EVOLVING SPACE

The city should incorporate public spaces, ranging in size and atmosphere, to promote spaces where people can gather and interact outside of formal establishments. 7th Street and I Street have several undeveloped properties that provide exciting opportunities to imagine places where the community could come together in a plaza or square. This intersection provides exceptional views of the river and is just off of main street, allowing for a quieter and safer alternative to the bustling commercial corridor.



Whatever form the public space takes, community members should work together to think creatively about the design and functionality of these spaces. Long term visioning and planning can set Umatilla apart, leveraging its natural and built amenities to become a regional destination for visitors. Many possibilities exist for iconic projects, such as the Confluence Overlook where educational, historical, natural and commercial opportunities abound. The Port of Umatilla owns prime riverfront land along the Columbia River that presents limitless possibilities for a larger Waterfront Community, with mixed-use development and activities that take advantage of the close proximity to the water. Mixed-use neighborhoods and great public spaces bring people together, infusing a sense of pride within the city and community.

"Increase the overall vision of the city"
- Donn Walls



With greater connectivity along the riverfront and the creation of the Park Corridor, Umatilla will attract visitors to enjoy the park experience through the city. Better recreational activities through the Park Corridor and renovations at the marina will set the stage for the city to become a regional attraction, with a unique sense of place that is entirely its own.

"Create incentives for people to live, work and play more in Umatilla" - Mark Keith



BRIDGING THE GENERATIONS

The future of Umatilla does not rely on the buildings or the built infrastructure, but the power of building community. People are at the center of creating an authentic sense of place and are the backbone that makes it unique. Nearly 400 people were involved in the visioning process, showcasing the people of Umatilla take great pride in the city and community. Revitalization efforts moving forward should manifest the community's vision and speak to the collective heart of the city. It will require the careful nurturing and maintenance of relationships among a diverse set of community members.

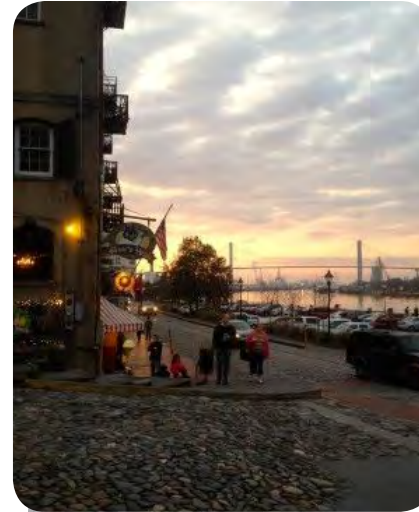
"It's time to do something for my town."
- Juan Mendoza



NEXT STEPS

Immediate actions moving forward should include the careful consideration of when and how to implement the actions included in, but not limited to, those found in the technical report associated with this vision plan. As part of this process, ideas can be packaged together that have strong community support, and focus should be placed on projects that already have momentum. This plan should be used as a tool for achieving the community's vision. The power and strength that a community-backed plan is immense—use it to inspire.

"I'm excited to see the new Umatilla."
- Latino Focus Group



Dear Umatilla,

Thank you. Thank you for inviting us into your community, your homes, and your lives. Every conversation held with each of you, however big or small, has greatly impacted the direction and content of Umatilla Together. Your dedication to create a vibrant and thriving community has been undeniably inspiring, and we are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work in a city as colorful and energized as Umatilla.

Let this document be a reminder - by working together, you, Umatilla, have the opportunity and the capacity to do great things for your city. Use Umatilla Together as a galvanizing force - invite your friends, invite your neighbors, and get everyone on board to be the positive change you wish to see. And remember - teamwork makes the dream work!

Sincerely,
Confluentis Planning

