

Wilsonville Industrial Land Readiness (WILR)

JOINT PLANNING COMMISSION (PC) AND CITY COUNCIL (CC) WORK SESSION SUMMARY | OCTOBER 6, 2025

Meeting Format

The joint Planning Commission and City Council work session was held on October 6, from 5:00 – 6:40 p.m., in the Wilsonville City Council Chambers. Alex Dupey and Lauren Scott from the MIG Consultant Team attended in person to present while Meg Grzybowski hosted the virtual discussion on Mural Board. The team briefly reviewed the existing conditions within the West Railroad project area and then presented the three potential urban design concepts for the area for feedback and discussion. The team also hosted a discussion regarding the preferred design elements and components from the concepts presented to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Existing Conditions Presentation

During the presentation, the Team reviewed existing conditions for the West Railroad area of the Basalt Creek Concept Plan. Recent site analysis indicates that the area now contains significantly less habitat than it did in the 1990s. Still, only slightly more than half of the land is considered “unconstrained” for development. Natural resource constraints are primarily concentrated along the western edge near Coffee Lake Creek.

The area’s large parcel sizes make it attractive for potential development, but existing land is largely dominated by contractor establishments and a mining operation. Currently, the West Railroad area lacks sewer, water, and stormwater infrastructure. However, it is well positioned relative to the regional transportation network, with close proximity to I-5. The site is separated from the rest of the Basalt Creek Planning Area by the Portland and Western Railroad line and a large BPA easement running parallel to it. A key infrastructure element for improving future connectivity will be the Grahams Ferry Road railroad undercrossing, which currently has too low of a clearance to accommodate freight traffic.

Draft Urban Design Concepts

The following draft concepts were presented to the City Council and Planning Commission as starting points for discussion.

C1: Tonquin Environment

This concept emphasizes natural resource enhancement and ecological integration. It envisions an improved creek edge, an extended Tonquin Trail corridor, and interconnected open space and forest areas. Employment areas would support campus-style development, craft industrial uses, and small-scale office or manufacturing spaces. The concept centers on creating a unique employment and innovation district where economic development is closely tied to environmental stewardship and access to high-quality natural and recreational amenities.

C2: Manufacturing & Industry

Focused on regional connectivity and employment generation, this concept envisions upgrades to key transportation infrastructure such as the Grahams Ferry Road railroad undercrossing and the Cahalin Road railroad crossing. The land use mix emphasizes large-scale industrial and office development to attract high-density employment opportunities. Overall, this concept positions the area as a hub for manufacturing and logistics supported by improved access and circulation.

C3: Limited Connectivity and Flexible Land Use

This market-driven concept allows for a broad mix of land uses not typically found elsewhere in Wilsonville. It emphasizes flexibility and responsiveness to market demand, potentially supporting commercial recreation, outdoor retail, storage, and low-intensity small businesses. Rather than a predetermined vision, this concept encourages organic growth and adaptation based on evolving economic conditions.

DISCUSSION

Guiding Principles

Of the market-driven, balanced, and aspirational Guiding Principles from the Basalt Creek Master Plan, a discussion was held to identify what principles felt the most relevant to West Railroad, what the opportunities were, and what would be more challenging in the area.

The discussion highlighted both opportunities and challenges in shaping guiding principles for the West Railroad area. Commissioners and Councilors noted that Wilsonville is well positioned to leverage its natural resources as an economic and community asset, with the potential for nature to support a broader business ecosystem. Large parcel sizes were recognized as unique advantages that could allow site aggregation and coordinated development without direct City intervention. There was also interest in fostering employment opportunities that complement nearby Tualatin, supporting a more regionally balanced mix of uses.

Key challenges include limited infrastructure, connectivity, and access—particularly across the railroad at Cahalin Road—and concerns about flood risk in areas near the wetlands. While preserving natural features like the Ice Age Tonquin Trail corridor remains a priority, participants acknowledged the need to balance conservation with job creation. Additional considerations include the difficulty of assembling properties and the limitations imposed by the railroad’s proximity, which may restrict certain sensitive land uses.

Throughout the discussion, Commissioners and Councilors emphasized Wilsonville’s history as a forward-thinking city, setting the stage for creative, sustainable, and strategic approaches to future planning in the West Railroad area.

Urban Design Concepts

The discussion of urban design concepts led to the group leaning towards a preferred concept that was a balance of C1 and C2. However, there were pros and cons to each concept that were taken into consideration, as summarized below:

C1: Tonquin Environment

Pros / Opportunities:

This concept presents a strong opportunity to capitalize on the Ice Age Tonquin Trail corridor and establish a continuous greenway along Coffee Lake Creek, enhancing connectivity and recreation while highlighting the area’s natural assets.

Cons / Constraints:

Participants expressed concern that the significant environmental emphasis may come at the expense of job creation. The large share of land dedicated to natural areas could overly limit employment and economic potential.

C2: Manufacturing & Industry

Pros / Opportunities:

C2 offers the strongest job creation potential, with opportunities to integrate vocational or higher education components. It is seen as providing the most long-term revenue and property value, while also maintaining flexibility to incorporate natural areas—such as extending the Coffee Lake Creek greenway into the development design.

Cons / Constraints:

The concept’s success depends heavily on infrastructure feasibility. Both the Grahams Ferry Road undercrossing and the Cahalin Road crossing are critical elements, and participants questioned whether these improvements would be achievable or cost-effective.

C3: Limited Connectivity and Flexible Land Use

Pros / Opportunities:

This approach keeps future options open, allowing for a mix of uses and natural features that could include elements like commercial recreation or a multi-use complex. It provides flexibility for the community to respond to evolving market conditions.

Cons / Constraints:

Some felt the concept lacks the intentionality and forward-thinking approach that typically guides Wilsonville's planning efforts. Without a clearer direction, it may appear more reactive than strategic.

Preferred Elements

As previously mentioned, the Planning Commission and City Council expressed an affinity for the combination of C1 and C2. When asked what the preferred elements or pieces were from their ideal concept, several key elements came to the forefront:

- Balance between the natural and built environment
- Property values and job creation
- Creating a core space
- Intentional planning and intervention; though opportunity for flexibility
- A linear greenway
- Ability to align land uses with Tualatin

Strategies

A final piece of the discussion had the Commissioners and Councilors brainstorming how Wilsonville could achieve these concepts (or elements of the concepts); what the City's role was, and what tools or strategies could be considered when advancing the vision for West Railroad. Some suggestions included:

- Form-based regulations
- Incentives
- Partnership and legislative support

Defining Phrases

When asked to provide defining phrases or unique characteristics that would define the future of West Railroad, these phrases were presented as top of mind:

- Attractive
- Active
- High-use
- Jobs and industry
- Flexibility

Additional Questions

There were additional questions posed by the Planning Commission and City Council that will be included in the considerations for the preferred Concept.

Q: What was the initiator for the large levels of development over the last 15 years?

Q: Construction costs for Graham's Ferry Road railroad undercrossing improvements – are they in today's dollars or future estimates?

Q: Over time have we seen a change in gravel activity at the quarry and what do we know for the future?

A: We don't really know what their plans are. One of the landowners said they had acquired another firm, so they would be shifting to the Tualatin facility, but no plans in the immediate future for this part of their properties in West Railroad.

Q: Trail system and wetlands – is that integrated into the plan or is it separate?

A: Assuming trail / regional system and wetlands would remain.

Q: Has the city heard from developers/investors interested in the area? Could we use those conversations to tailor the approach?

A: Unlimited interest in industrial land in Wilsonville, though the land has to be served by infrastructure and there has to be a reasonable path forward to aggregating a site

Q: What prevents trucks from coming up to Graham's Ferry Road from the south?

A: That is a long way around – want access to the I-5 interchange – desirable for access

A: Haven't completed traffic study to analyze

Q: What top sectors can we attract if sensitive sectors (to noise and vibration) cannot come in?