

# PGE, WL partnering in waterfront master plan

■ **Electric company owns majority of developable land in area**

By **PATRICK MALEE**  
*The Tidings*

West Linn has a new partner as it plans for large scale redevelopment along its waterfront.

Portland General Electric (PGE), which owns a significant portion of the land the City hopes to redevelop between the Arch Bridge and Willamette Park, recently an-

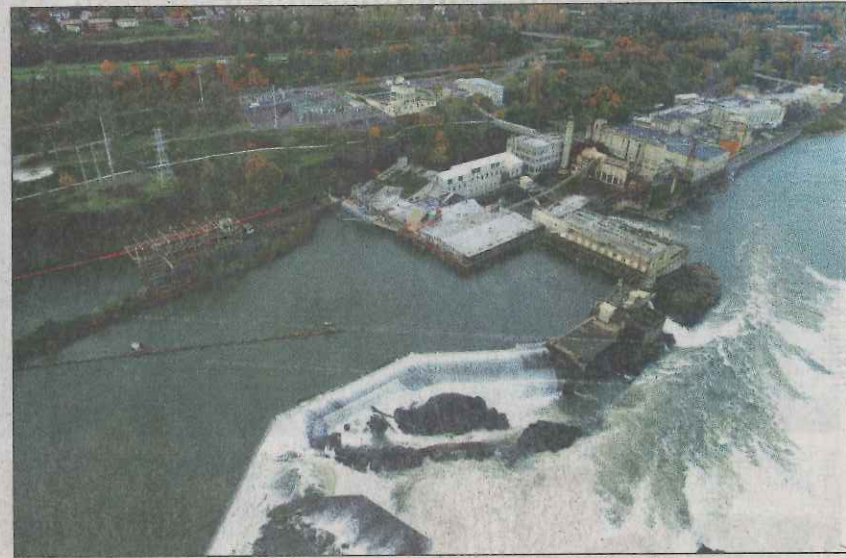
nounced that it will hire a master planner to evaluate future uses of its riverfront property. That work will be done in conjunction with West Linn's own master planning process, which is targeted for completion in 2019.

The City has long hoped to spur economic and recreational redevelopment along its riverfront, and its most recent planning project — referred to

as West Linn's Waterfront — began in 2016. A prior concept plan for the area was approved in 2014, but scrapped when the City Council underwent a significant overhaul.

For PGE, the decision to get involved was driven by a significant change on its property.

"The biggest driver is that West Linn Paper announced its



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**PGE owns more than 130 acres of land along West Linn's waterfront that may be redeveloped, including the island that houses the former West Linn Paper Company mill.**

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# Planning

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closure back in October,” said Brooke Berglund, PGE’s local government affairs manager for West Linn. “They’re a tenant of ours on our property, and so when the City was moving forward with their planning process, we determined it was a good time to be able to marry those two together, for us to really be able to look at, ‘What does the future of that site look like?’”

West Linn Paper’s lease with PGE runs through 2030, meaning that up until that point another company could come in and use the mill land for a similar purpose.

“We aren’t sure yet what that will look like long-term,” Berglund said.

What’s clear is that PGE,

which has operated the T.W. Sullivan hydroelectric plant next to the paper mill for more than 120 years, isn’t going anywhere.

“We want to be able to maintain Sullivan ... continue to operate that, provide the fish passage while also partnering with the City,” Berglund said. “(The plan) will look at the whole gamut of everything that’s on the island and the property — how do those interact with each other? And then moving forward, what that could look like.”

PGE owns a total of nine parcels of land totaling 130 acres along the waterfront, according to West Linn Community Development Director John Williams. That total doesn’t include the island, which Williams estimated to be about 15 acres. In all, Williams said PGE owns about 60 percent of West Linn’s Waterfront project area, not including road right-of-way.

The island — created when

the Willamette Falls Locks were carved out of rock in 1873 — that houses the plant and sits next to the Willamette Falls will be a particular point of focus as master planning is completed.

“That piece is so unique,” Berglund said. “We have an operating hydro power facility, the (Willamette Falls) Locks, it’s the site of West Linn Paper — there’s all these different components for it.”

Williams agreed.

“The property on the shore, some of it is quite challenging and interesting. But the island I would say is the most unique, and the piece of property with the biggest opportunity on it that anyone is looking at in the state of Oregon right now,” Williams said. “There’s nothing like that, in every sense of the word — both opportunities and challenges.”

Berglund said PGE hopes to make significant progress on its plan through the second half



After West Linn Paper — a tenant on PGE land — announced its closure late last year, PGE felt the time was right to evaluate its property and how it might fit in with West Linn’s redevelopment goals.

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of this year.

“We have a tentative timeline where we’re hoping to have a master planner on board this summer,” she said. “They’ll start working with us on outreach in the community, what the community is looking for, and take the information we have and what the City has from previous planning pro-

cesses. And hopefully they’ll have a recommendation by the end of the year that would then fold into the City’s overarching plan in the beginning part of 2019.”

Beyond public outreach, the planners will also do site analysis on PGE’s properties.

“They’ll take into consideration the requirements we have

with the power plant, and the requirements that exist to maintain it,” Berglund said.

As planning moves forward, Williams said the City is excited to see how the partnership will unfold.

“It will allow us to get a much better understanding of what that property is,” Williams said.