

RESOLUTION NO. 14-33

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE RE-OPENING OF THE WILLAMETTE FALLS LOCKS

WHEREAS, On January 1, 1873, the Willamette Falls Locks opened to allow passage around the waterfall at Oregon City thereby providing access to a one river system; and

WHEREAS, in 1915, the Army Corps of Engineers purchased the Locks from the private operator thereby ensuring free public passage through the Locks; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, the Willamette Falls Locks were listed on the National Register of Historic Places; it was the first significant facility built to improve navigation on the Columbia-Snake River Inland Waterway system and through 1939, the most important facility; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, the Willamette Falls Locks was designated as a State Historic Civil Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers; and

WHEREAS, in 2006, Governor Kulongoski designated the Willamette Falls Locks as an Oregon Solutions project and formed the Willamette Falls Locks Oregon Solutions Task Force which continues today as the One Willamette River Coalition hosted by the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation to preserve the Locks and support its continued operation; and

WHEREAS, on October 23, 2008, the Center for Economic Development Education and Research released a report under contract to the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, titled "THE WILLAMETTE FALLS LOCKS: A CASE STUDY ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL TRANSFER ISSUES;" and

WHEREAS, from 2006 through 2010, funding provided to the Corps from ODOT, Clackamas County and the US Congress allowed for seasonal operations and selected structural upgrades including \$2.2 million in ARRA funds; and

WHEREAS, in November 2011, the Willamette Falls Locks were placed into "non-operational" status and on short notice were closed to vessel passage based upon an engineering assessment that identified safety concerns of potential failure; and

WHEREAS, closure has placed a severe hardship on commercial, recreational, and tribal river users; and

WHEREAS, in March 2012, the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the Willamette Falls Locks as one of the most threatened National Treasures, thereby providing added technical assistance; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the Historic Preservation League of Oregon (now Restore Oregon) named the Willamette Falls Locks as one of its 10 "Most Endangered Places;" and

WHEREAS, the Locks are a primary historic asset under applications being prepared for designation of the area at the Falls as State and National Heritage Areas; and

WHEREAS, on September 23, 2013, the Corps of Engineers gave notice of their intent to initiate a public consultation process under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation

Act to determine whether the closure action has an adverse effect on the historic integrity of the Locks based upon the defining qualities and features that made the Locks eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, on May 15, 2014, the Corps of Engineers released their finding of historic adverse effect under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act and announced their intent to proceed with development of an agreement to establish how to best “avoid, minimize or mitigate” the identified adverse effect to the historic character of the Locks; and

WHEREAS, in August 2014, ECO Northwest, under contract to the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation published the “Willamette Locks Economic Potential Report” providing information on potential operating costs and community benefits.

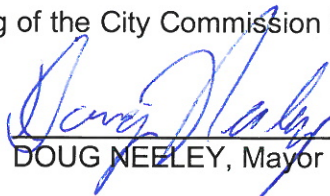
WHEREAS, the City of Oregon City regards Willamette Falls Locks as an important part of its history and the history of the development of commerce between the upper and lower Willamette Valley, and the Locks can still play an important role in that commerce; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oregon City views Willamette Falls Locks as an important feature to attract tourism and recreation in conjunction with our Willamette Falls Legacy project.

NOW, THEREFORE, OREGON CITY RESOLVES:

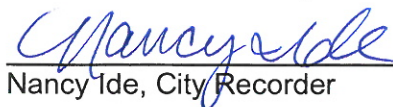
1. That Oregon City urges the Corps of Engineers to re-open the Willamette Falls Locks to general public commercial, recreational and cultural marine traffic.
2. That Oregon City thanks the Corps of Engineers for working with local stakeholders to assess and mitigate the adverse effects of the closure and urges the Corps of Engineers to expedite the needed repairs and craft a plan for sustainable operations of the Locks.
3. That Oregon City supports recognition of the Willamette Falls Locks in the Regional Transportation Plan and inclusion of the Willamette Falls Locks as a JPACT federal priority.
4. That Oregon City supports creation of a State Task Force to work with the Corps of Engineers to develop a plan for sustainable operations of the Willamette Falls Locks.
5. That Oregon City urges our Oregon Congressional delegation to support the expedited repair and re-opening of the Willamette Falls Locks.

Approved and adopted at a regular meeting of the City Commission held on the 19th day of November 2014.




DOUG NEELEY, Mayor

Attested to this 19th day of November 2014:



Nancy Ide, City Recorder

Approved as to legal sufficiency:



City Attorney