



E A S T B A N K

EXPOSED

Celebrating the Eastbank Esplanade:  
Portland's New Waterfront Experience

## Eastbank Esplanade Fact Sheet The Beginning

The Eastbank Esplanade is an important part of the long-term “vision” for downtown Portland. Early city planners included the park in both the Central City Plan (1988) and most recently, the Eastbank Esplanade Park Master Plan (1994).

As the City celebrates its 150th birthday this year, the Eastbank Esplanade is one of the citizen’s key “gifts to the city.”

At the direction of City Council, work began on developing a Master Plan to guide the design and construction of the Eastbank Esplanade. The City formed a citizen Eastbank Riverfront Project Advisory Committee (PAC) to provide project oversight to City staff. PAC members were appointed by the Mayor and Parks Commissioner Francesconi. The PAC (which is still advising the City on future project phases) includes members of adjacent neighborhoods, the Central Eastside Industrial Council, landowners, river and environmental enthusiasts, and long-time parks activists.

To help with the Master Plan and overall, long-term vision of the park, PDC issued a Request for Proposals for a lead consultant and selected Hargreaves Associates landscape architects based in San Francisco. Hargreaves, City staff, the citizen advisory committee and a technical advisory committee completed the Eastbank Master Plan in January 1994. The Master Plan described an esplanade with docks, piers, overlooks, a plaza for festivals and gatherings, floating walkways, fountains, public art, and connections to the neighborhoods and Portland’s bridges. The Esplanade would connect the east and west sides of the Central City around its central feature—the Willamette River.

The Portland Development Commission and Portland Parks and Recreation have been partners in the development of Phases I and II of the Esplanade. Once the Esplanade is officially open, day-to-day management of the Esplanade will be handled by Parks.

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### Vital Stats

- The Master Plan called for a phased approach to building the Esplanade:  
  
Phase I – The Floating Walkway, Steel Bridge to Burnside Bridge (complete)  
Phase II – Burnside Bridge to Hawthorne Bridge (complete)  
Phase III – The “crescent” area between the Hawthorne Bridge and OMSI (future phase)

With the Master Plan in place, work then began on developing the detailed schematic plan to guide the Esplanade's construction. Hargreaves teamed with local firms Mayer/Reed and KPFF Consulting Engineers to oversee this important step. Groundbreaking for the Esplanade was held in October 1998 from the deck of a construction barge on the Willamette River.

The Esplanade is approximately 1.5 miles in length from the Steel Bridge to the Hawthorne Bridge.

### Project Costs

- Total Phase I and II project cost is \$30 million:

Eastbank Esplanade	\$20 million
Steel Bridge walkway and boat dock	\$10 million
- Funds for Phase I came primarily from tax increment funds from the Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal Area.
- Funds for Phase II came from federal CMAQ funds (Congestion Mitigation Air Quality), and tax increment funds from the Central Eastside Urban Renewal Area.

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- Funds for the (Phase II) Steel Bridge walkway, overlook, railroad bridge, and public boat dock came from CMAQ, tax increment funds from the Oregon Convention Center Urban Renewal Area, Oregon Department of Transportation, Local Improvement District funds, and City's Office of Transportation.

### Phase I

- Construction started in October 1998.
- The floating walkway is 1,200-feet long, 17-feet wide, and is the longest floating walkway in the United States. Poured concrete sections weigh 800,000 lbs. each. Sections were constructed in Bellingham, Wash., trucked to the construction site and floated into position.
- The floating walkway includes a 120-foot dock constructed by the Portland Office of Transportation. The dock will provide a substantial amount of tie-up space for recreational boaters.

### Phase II

- Construction started in summer 1999.
- Includes the Burnside Bridge connector—47-foot elevation from trail to bridge deck. The connector includes a wheelchair lift. For the first year of operation, this connector will serve as an exit only per the wishes of the nearby neighborhoods. Disabled individuals will access the lift through use of a card key available through Portland Parks and Recreation.
- Features include: overlooks, cantilever walk connected to an old industrial wall, continuous seating and landscaping, lighting and interpretive panels.

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### Phase IIB

- Construction started in winter 2000.
- Features include trail, events plaza and overlooks, riverbank reclamation demonstration projects, Fire Station plaza, and Fire Station boat dock.

### Phase III

- Known as "The Crescent" because of its shape, it is located between the Hawthorne Bridge and OMSI.
- At three acres, it has the potential to become a major feature of the park. Its size can accommodate open space, parking and a public attractor.
- In July 1999, an RFP was issued to select a multi-disciplinary team to provide design, engineering and administrative services through construction.
- In January 2000, local architecture firm OTAK and internationally recognized landscape architect Martha Schwartz were selected from the RFP process.
- Conceptual design is underway. The Portland Development Commission has included funding for Phase III in its 2001-06 Five Year Plan at approximately \$15 million.
- Phase III will be a joint project of the Portland Development Commission and Portland Parks and Recreation.

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## Steel Bridge Walkway

The Portland Office of Transportation coordinated the new bicycle/pedestrian walkway on the Steel Bridge with a crossing over the railroad tracks to an Overlook near the Rose Quarter. (See the enclosed Steel Bridge and Pedestrian Crossing fact sheet for more information.)

## Project Art

The Eastbank Esplanade project qualifies for the Percent for Art program coordinated by the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC). Local artists from RIGGA have designed four pieces of art for Phase II of the project. The four pieces are known as the Echo Gate, the Ghost Ship, the Stack Stalk and the Alluvial Wall. (See the enclosed public art fact sheet for more information.)

There are 13 "Urban Markers" along the Esplanade designed by Mayer/Reed, landscape architects. They mark the city street grid and give a sense of location when using the Esplanade. Each marker also includes unique lighting to illuminate the walkway at night.

Mayer/Reed also designed 22 interpretive panels that are attached to urban markers at key locations along the Esplanade. The interpretive panels are educational and deliver information about topics ranging from the building of Portland's bridges to the development of Portland's Eastside.

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## Environmental Challenges

Construction of the Eastbank Esplanade was not without its challenges. Because much of the construction of Phase I took place in the water, schedules had to be carefully coordinated around fish migration timetables. Many aspects of the project feature cutting-edge bank restoration techniques to improve fish and wildlife habitat. There are also demonstration projects such as stormwater filtration swales that catch polluted stormwater runoff from the freeway and filter it naturally before it reaches the river.

All these efforts are important to the animals who make the riverbank their home including beavers, ducks, geese, herons, steelhead and salmon.

## Connections Are Key

At the center of the development of the Eastbank Esplanade is a desire to improve connections between all corners of the city.

- The “loop” nature of the Esplanade provides an easy connection between the east and west sides of the Central City.
- The new Steel Bridge walkway, grand staircase and railroad bridge provide improved connections from the Eastbank up to the Rose Quarter and Lloyd District.
- The Steel, Burnside, Morrison and Hawthorne Bridges all connect to the Esplanade and all are ADA compliant.
- Improvements to SE Salmon, Main and Madison Streets will provide easy access to the Esplanade for neighbors as well as workers in the Central Eastside Industrial District.

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## Fire Station and South Boat Dock

The Portland Fire Bureau's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) unit is located along the Esplanade at the base of SE Madison Street. The EMS office is open daily 9 a.m.-5:00 p.m. There is no public restroom at the facility.

Below the EMS facility on the water is a 240 foot boat dock with gangway. Plans call for the dock to become the eventual home of the city's historic fireboat, "David Campbell."

## Eastbank Exposed Celebration

The Eastbank Esplanade will come to life this summer with many fun activities, a spectacular July celebration and Labor Day festivities. Examples include kayaking trips to explore the Eastbank by river, bike trips that explore nature in the city, photography workshops, Volkswalks, bridge walks and lectures. For more information, contact Parks at 503.823.2223.

On July 14 and 15 the Eastbank Esplanade will feature an Urban Fair and opening celebration. The two-day public event will feature food, music, information booths in the four corners of the Central City loop, biking and walking events. The weekend will also feature a Saturday evening extravaganza staged on the Willamette River. Watch for more details to come!

