

# Sunrise Corridor Community Visioning

Task 4.1 Historical Context and Storytelling

March 2024

**Jacobs**

Challenging today.  
Reinventing tomorrow.





View of Sunrise Highway and northern part of the industrial area of the project area, looking east towards Mt. Hood.



# Introduction and Purpose

*The purpose of this draft memorandum is to understand and articulate the cultural, historical, geographical, and environmental significance of the Sunrise Corridor Vision Study Area.*

This memo is a critical step toward guiding the visioning process. It will provide a foundational story of the corridor, including findings of the historical context.

The area was of great significance in part due to the **confluence** of the different travel routes and trails used throughout time. Clackamas River and Barlow Road were two major routes that shaped the county's history and impact.

Historically, it was major route for various tribes and bands in the northwest to fish, hunt gather, and trade and later became a route for the explorers, traders, settlers, and miners of the region.

Although the Barlow Road did not directly run through the project area, historically is enabled significant migration of immigrants to Clackamas County during the 1840's.

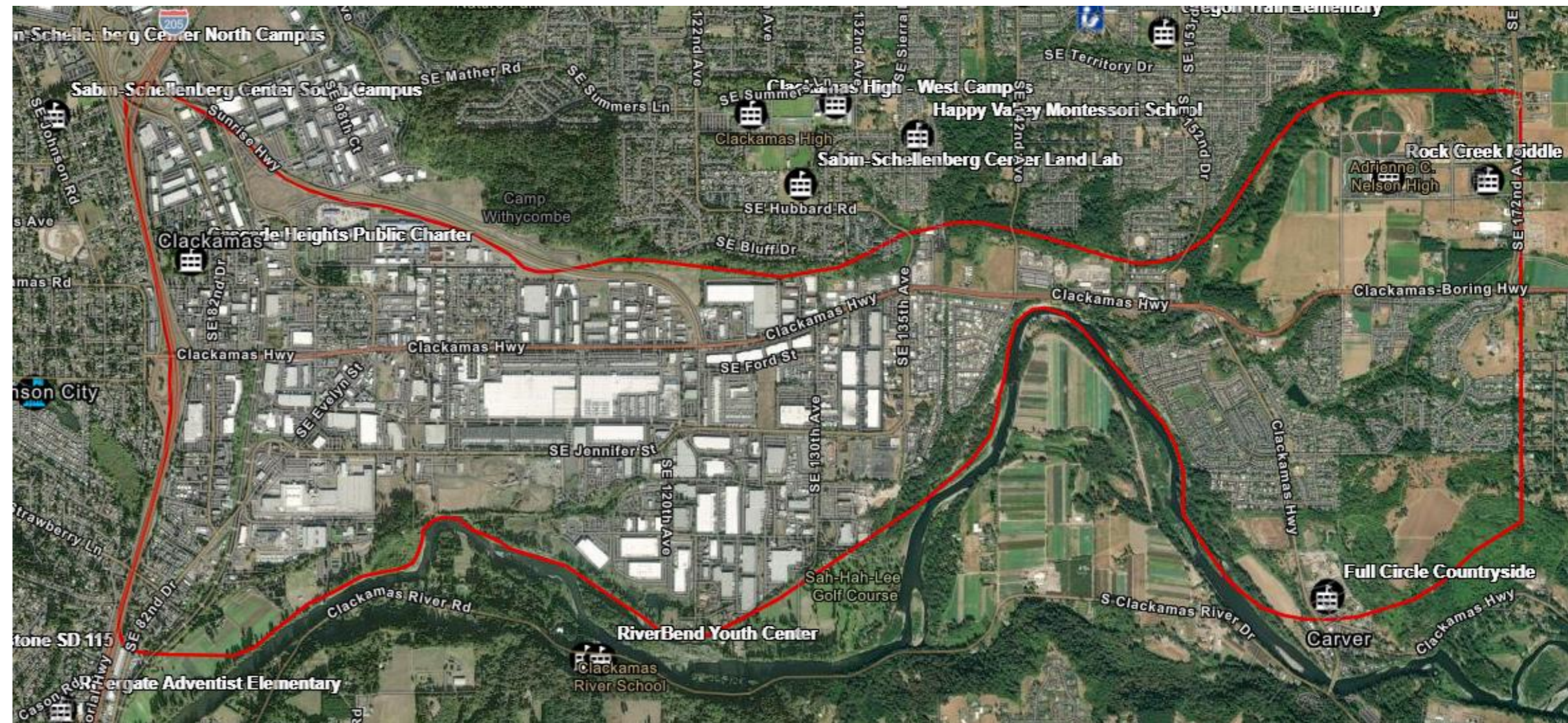


Figure 1: Project Area (available as Online GIS [HERE](#))



# Land Acknowledgement



Figure 2. Sketch of a typical Chinook dwelling in lower Columbia

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There are many Indigenous communities that have a historical, cultural and spiritual connection to what is now Clackamas County. The Willamette Valley and surrounding areas – from the mountain range to the ocean – were honored by Indigenous groups for its diversity, beauty, and abundance. This is what drew people here for generations prior to colonization. We will never be able to name every tribe that visited or lived upon this land because these communities frequently traveled for trade and other reasons.

The Indigenous **people lived, traded and navigated along great rivers and tributaries** presently named the **Clackamas, Molalla, Pudding, Sandy, and Willamette**. Many of the original inhabitants of this land **died from disease, brought on by early European settlers and French fur trappers**. Those that survived fatal diseases and other conflicts were **forcibly removed and relocated by the United States Government** because of the land's value. Today, descendants live on, carrying on traditions and cultures, honoring their ancestors.

**We honor the Native American people of Clackamas County** as a vibrant, foundational and integral part of our community here today. We respectfully acknowledge Wy'east, also known as Mount Hood, and Hyas Tye Tumwata, also known as Willamette Falls, as sacred sites for many Native Americans. We **thank those who have connection to this land and serve as stewards**, working to ensure our ecosystem stays balanced and healthy.

Acknowledging the original people of the land is a simple, powerful practice that demonstrates respect by making Indigenous people's history and culture visible. It is also a small step along the path toward reconciliation and repair.

**Please join us in taking this opportunity to thank and honor the original caretakers of this land.**



# Natural and Environmental Context

## Project Area Environmental Context

- Project area is nestled in a valley **between Clackamas River on the southern border** and **forested low hills to the north** including Mt. Talbert, Rock Creek to the east, and I-205 to the east.
- Clackamas River, a tributary of the Willamette River north of Oregon City, runs along the southern border of the project area.
- Topography is mainly woodlands where the Clackamas River runs northward to adjoin the OR 212. Topography surrounding the interchange of OR 212/224 is mainly mature trees and flat terrain.
- Sunrise Corridor passes through two major landforms/significant topographical features:
  - The valley associated with the Clackamas River floodplain.
  - The hilly topography associated with the western foothills of the Cascade Mountains.
- Before 1800, forests covered most of the watershed and streams supported large populations of salmon, steelhead, and other fish.
- Settled lands in the study area was largely farmland, often subsistence farming, through the 1940s, until roads opened the land to new development and industry.



Figure 3. View of the Clackamas River



# Geographical Context of Clackamas County

- Main geographical features include **Mt. Hood** and various **rivers** including the **Willamette, Clackamas, Sandy, Pudding, Molalla, and Salmon**.
- Heavily forested, with agriculture, timber, manufacturing, and commerce being the county's principal activities.
- Historically the terminus for water transportation on the Willamette River and a meeting place for Native Americans, hunters, trappers, and Hudson's Bay company voyagers for years.
- The first overland immigration to Oregon City was in 1842. Three years later, the Barlow Road was established to Oregon City. The Barlow road enabled the way for many immigrants into Oregon City and Clackamas County.
- Oregon City, as the capital of the Oregon Territory, was the center of political, business and social life in Oregon. The Oregon Territory originally encompassed all of present-day Oregon, Washington and Idaho. In 1852, the capital was moved to Salem. This signaled a shift in Oregon's center from Clackamas County. Portland emerged as a commercial hub in Multnomah County in 1854, along with access to the Columbia River.
- **The Sunrise visioning area in the Clackamas River Valley remained sparsely populated until roadbuilding in the early 1900s opened the area to dependable year-round land travel. Research suggests the Clackamas River was not used for transportation, and mills were located further upriver at Carver (Stone) where terrain allowed.**

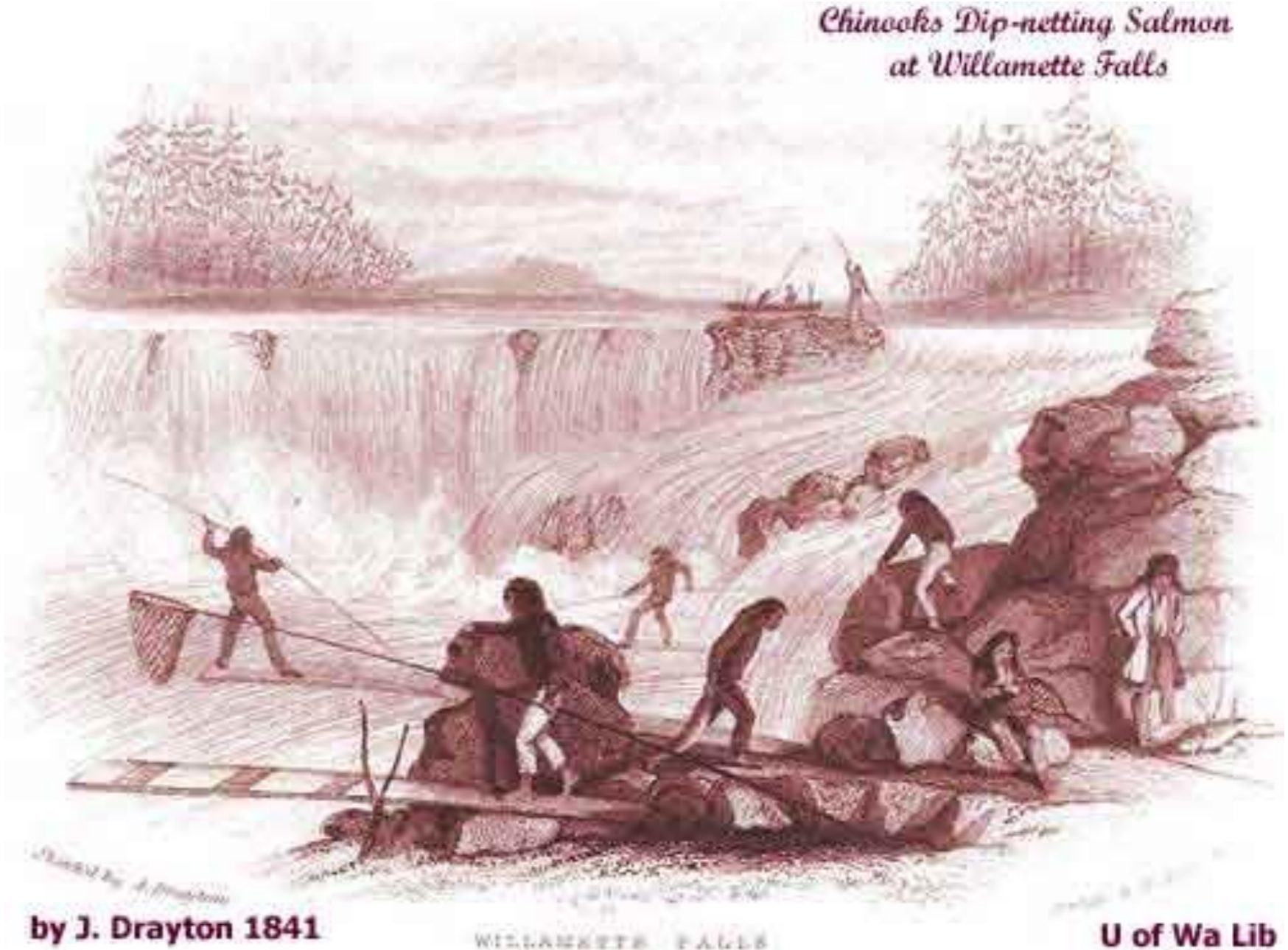


Figure 4. Chinook dip-netting salmon at Willamette



# Historical and Cultural Context

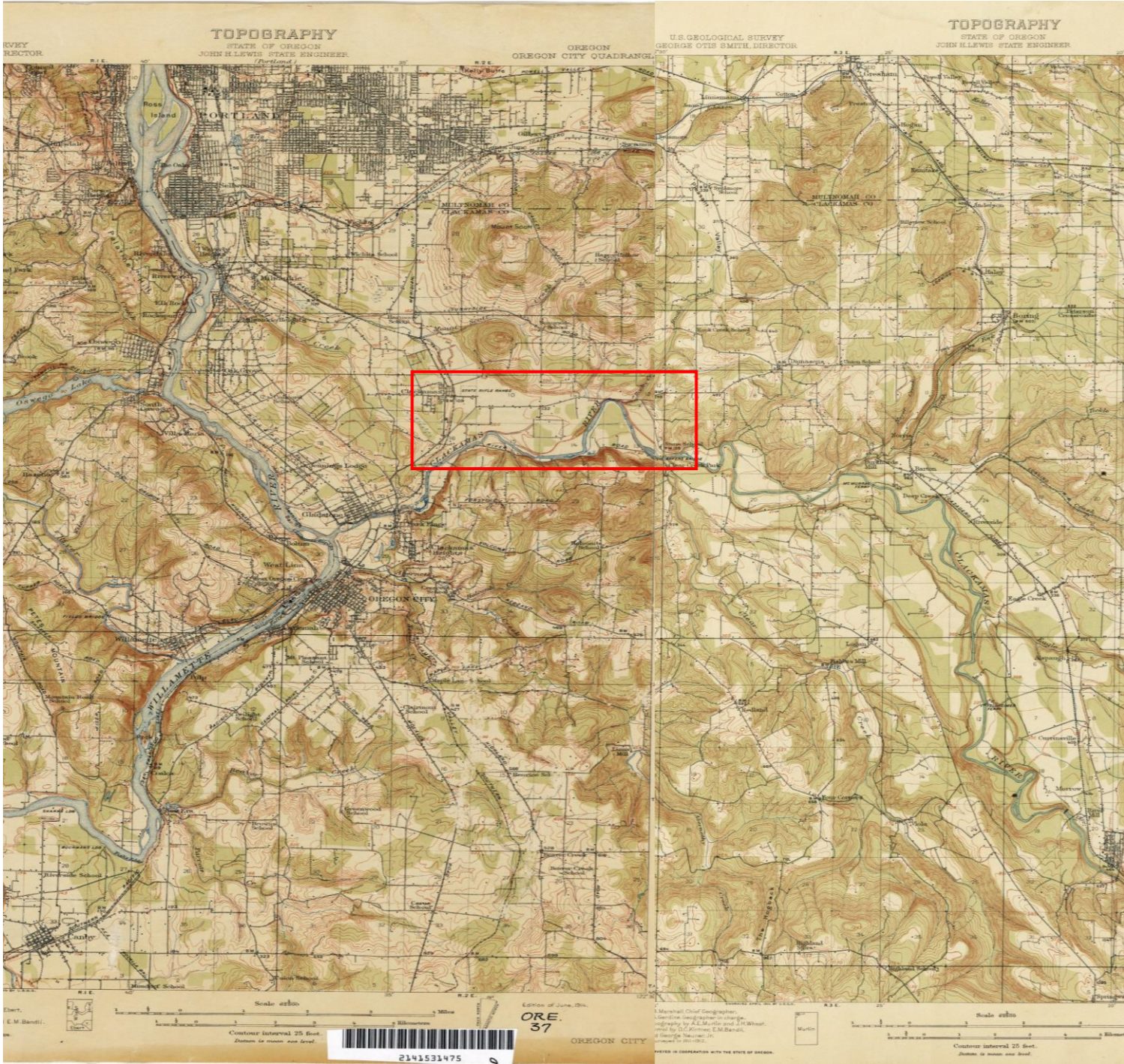


Figure 5. Historic Map of the Project Area

- Prior to colonization, Indigenous communities thrived in the present-day Sunrise Corridor. These tribes included the **Clackamas, Chinook Bands, Kalapuya, Kathlamet, Molalla, Multnomah, Tualatin, Tumwater, Wasco** and many other tribes of the Willamette Valley and Western Oregon.
- Tribes with a significant historical and cultural connection to what is now the Sunrise present day Clackamas County and/or its landmarks and geographic area include the :
  - Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
  - Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
  - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
  - Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- While many tribes traveled the area, Clackamas County is the ancestral homeland of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.
  - Tribal members were skilled hunters and fishers, constructing cedar fishing platforms at Willamette Falls to harvest lamprey eel, and weaving fishing nets for use on the Willamette, Clackamas and other tributaries to harvest salmon and other fish. Other goods were obtained by trading.



# Access and Connectivity

## Early Transportation Routes and Modes of Travel

- When the American pioneer were settling in Oregon, three major routes served travelers:
  - **Columbia River (to Willamette River and Portland)**
    - Important trade route for Indigenous people and then fur traders; falls and rapids presented a challenge for early settler colonists.
    - In the 1860s, Portland entrepreneurs put together a system of steamboat routes on the upper and lower river, connected by portage railroads at Cascade Locks and The Dalles.
  - **Willamette River**
    - The main route south to Willamette Valley, the main north-south transportation corridor until rail-, then road-building in 1900s. Required tolled portage around Willamette Falls, an industrial and social hub of early County/State development.
  - **Barlow Road (to Oregon City)**
    - A wagon route added to the Oregon Trail in 1846 as an alternative to expensive, dangerous trip on the Columbia and Willamette Rivers.
    - Roads/trails branch from Barlow Road to Portland and Upper Clackamas River Valley

## Highway System in 1900s

- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) formed in 1913, uses first gas tax to expand rural road system; expands access to Clackamas River Valley, opens forest and agriculture lands
- U.S. Highway 320 was commissioned in 1926, connecting US 20 in Shoshoni with US 87W in Riverton, Wyoming. The original part of US 320/WYO 320 became part of an extension of US 26 in 1950.

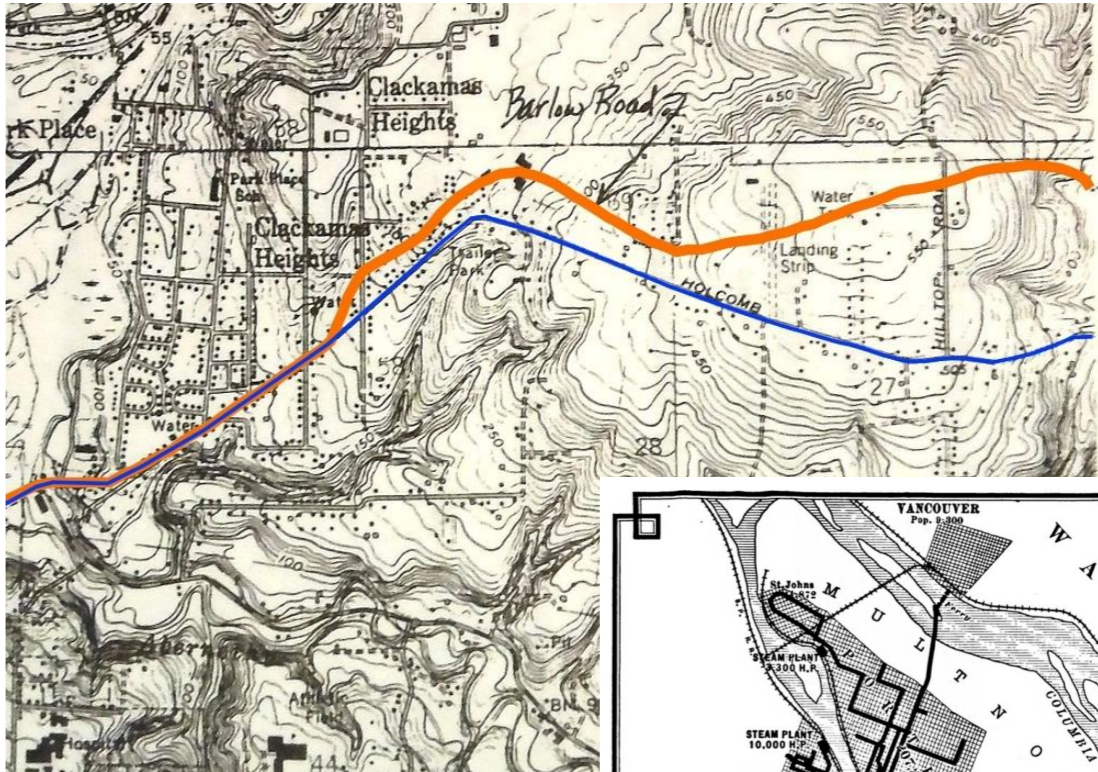


Figure 6. Barlow Road, North or Holcomb Road, both south of project area.

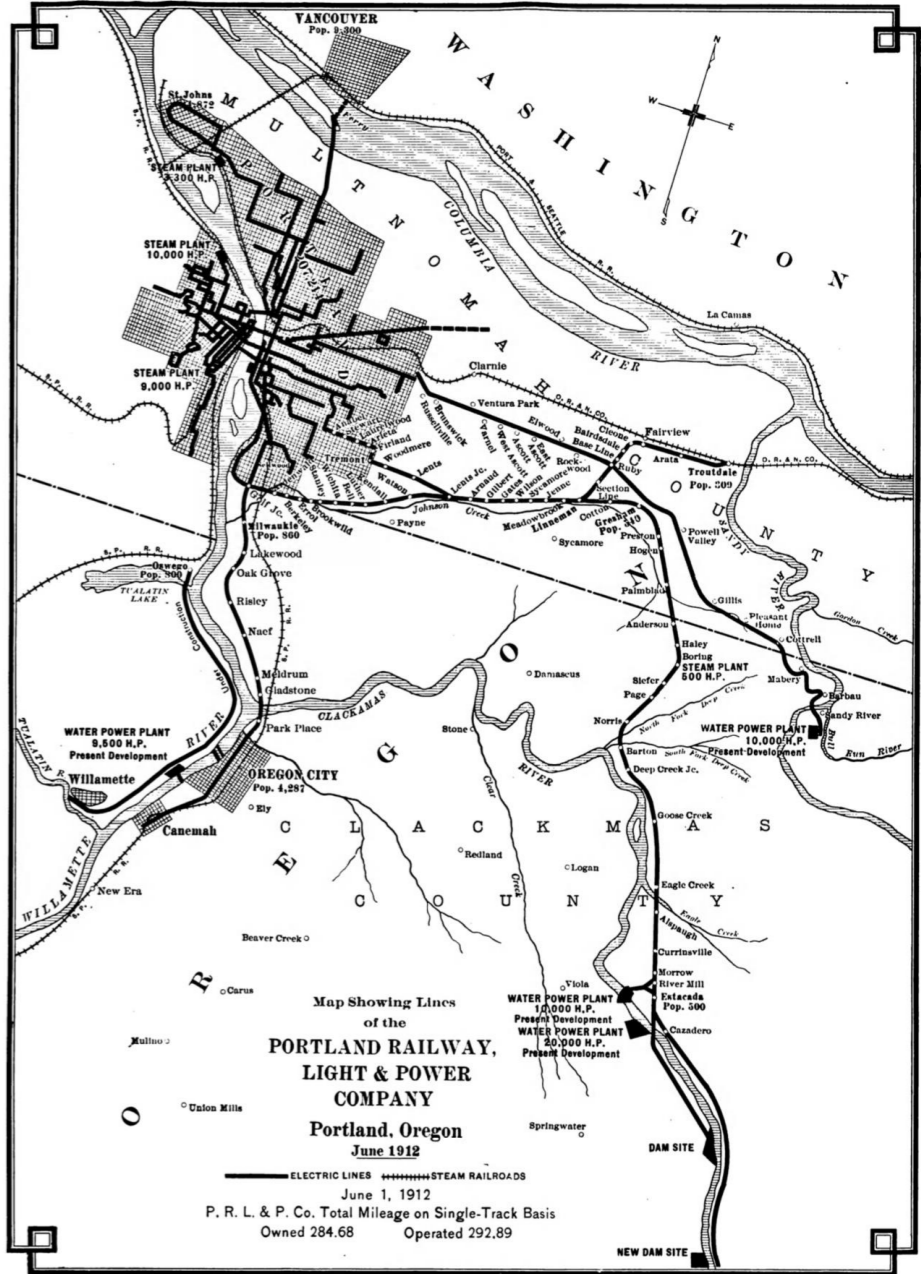


Figure 7. Portland Railway Light & Power Company Map, June 1912



# Barlow Road/Oregon Trail



The Barlow Trail

The Barlow Road is a branch of the Oregon Trail. Opened in 1846 by Sam Barlow and Philip Foster after authorization by Oregon's provisional Legislature, it stretched 100 miles from Tygh Valley to Eagle Creek.

- The construction of Barlow Road allowed covered wagons and livestock to avoid the expensive and dangerous trip down the Columbia River from the Dalles by going up and over the Cascades to the Willamette Valley.
- This saved settlers about a week of travel. However, settlers did have to pay a toll to use the road, as it was a toll road for approximately 70 years.

★ Sunrise Gateway Corridor Project Area

Figure 8. Barlow Road Map



# Removal of Indigenous People from their Homelands



Figure 9. A drawing of Clackamas Indians by Paul Kane.



Figure 10. Grand Ronde Reservation during the late 19th century



Figure 11. Grand Ronde Restoration Hearing

## Before 1840s Prior to Removal

Before removal from their lands, there were **about 60 tribes** from six different language groups in western Oregon.

## 1848-1856 Treaties and Removal

The U.S. government made several treaties with the tribes of western Oregon between 1848 and 1855, **removing Native Americans from their ancestral homelands** and converting it into American pioneer settlements. In 1856, the U.S. military forced at least 27 of those tribes, about 2,000 people, to resettle at the Grand Ronde Agency in the southern Yamhill valley in an event that has been described as "**Oregon's Trail of Tears.**" As a way of negotiating the treaties, the tribes were offered money, food, and supplies so they could only trade with the Americans and take up an agricultural way of life.

## 1857-1954 Reservation Establishment

Initially, the Grand Ronde Reservation was established in 1857. The reservation was 61,000 acres, but this land base quickly decreased due to Federal government actions.

## 1954 Western Oregon Indian Termination Act

In 1954, Congress passed the Western Oregon Indian Termination Act, terminating the majority of recognized tribal sovereigns in Western Oregon, including the Grand Ronde and Siletz. Tribes were stripped of their social, economic, and political powers and identity for them to "assimilate" into American culture. They suffered the devastating loss of their communities, languages, and cultural and spiritual practices. Throughout the Termination era, however, tribal families worked to keep their language and traditional practices alive.

## 1954-1970s Reestablishing Efforts

In the 1970s, Elders and chosen leaders began the process of Tribal Restoration, which involved the support of the State of Oregon and the U.S. Congress. The tribe dedicated time and money lobbying Congress and testifying in Washington D.C. to in order to establish the tribe's federal status.

## 1977-1983 Tribal Restoration

Grand Ronde tribal members fought to reestablish the Tribe's federal status, and in 1977, the Siletz Tribe was recognized and restored. In 1980, President Jimmy Carter signed a law creating an over 3,000-acre reservation for the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. In 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the Grand Ronde Restoration Act, restoring the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Restoration efforts by other Oregon Tribes were successful in the following years. Today, there are nine federally-recognized sovereign tribal governments in Oregon.



# Map of Tribes with Significance to the Project Area

- Tribes with a significant historical or cultural connection to what is now the Sunrise area present-day Clackamas County and/or its landmarks and geographic area include the:
  - Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
  - Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
  - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
  - Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs

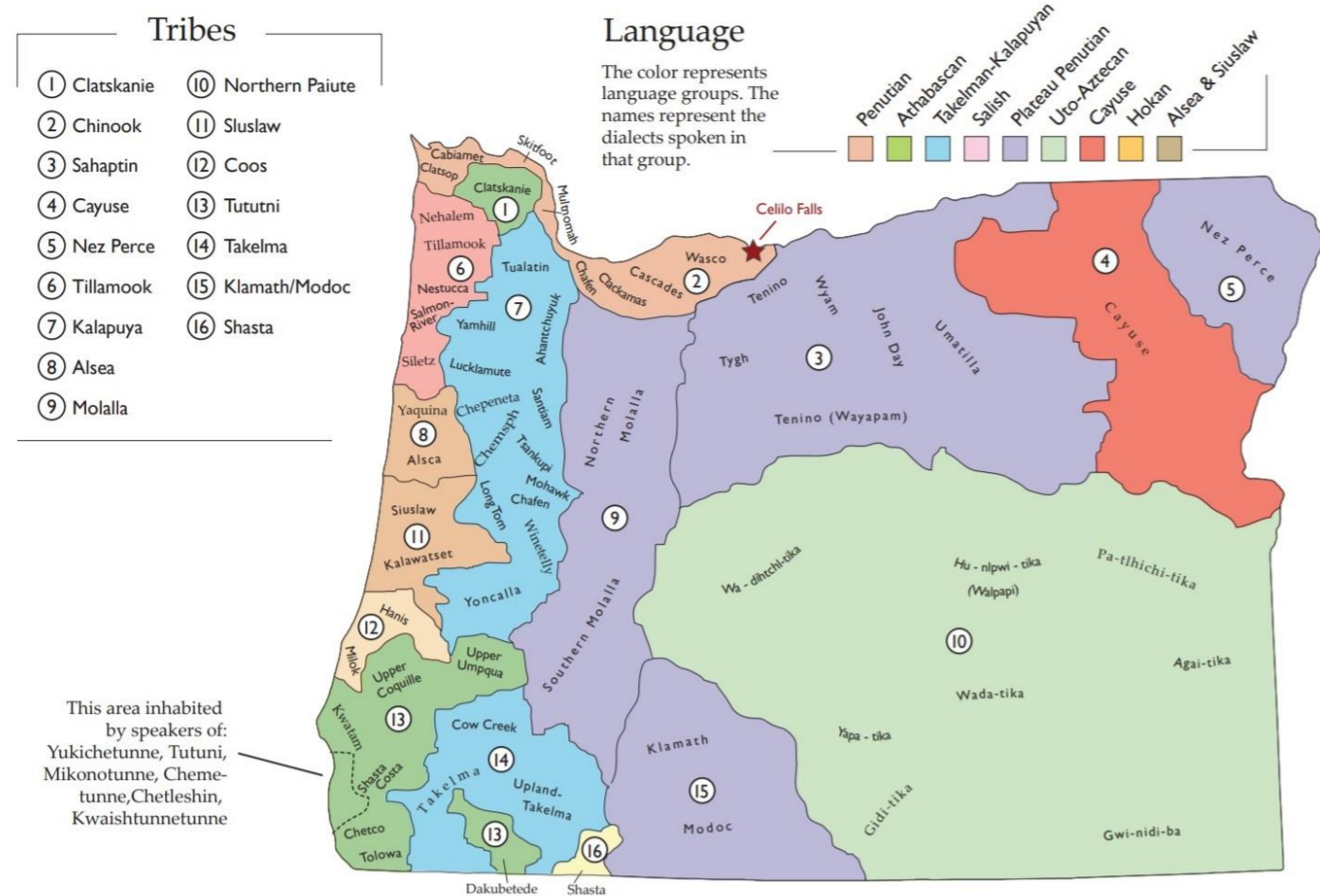


Figure 12. Map of Oregon Language Groups & Tribes

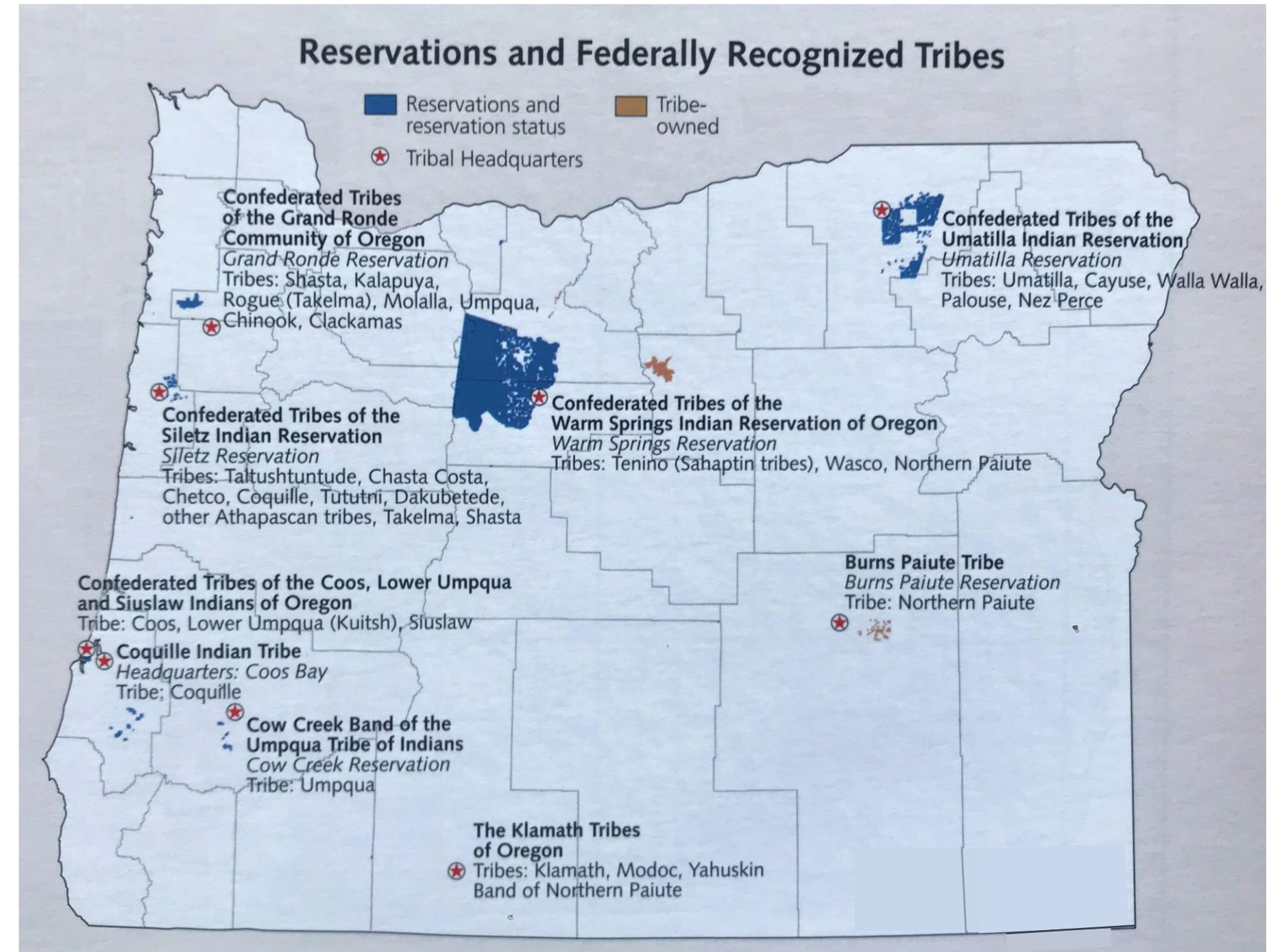


Figure 13. Oregon's Federally Recognized Tribes



# Aerial Timelapse of Sunrise Corridor from 1937-2000





# History of Industrialization

- Significant Industrial Growth and Railroad Era
  - Between 1869 and 1870, the town of Clackamas (formerly Marshfield), was platted around an Oregon-California Railroad stop on the east side of the Willamette River. The town was located near the I-205/OR213/OR224 interchange.
  - Willamette Locks opened on January 1, 1873, lowering freight rates by 50%.
  - In 1873, the Oregon and California Railroad opened from Portland through Oregon City and south, spurring investment in and construction of market roads to rail and increasing outlets for agricultural demand/trade.
  - In 1893, East Side Railway spurs growth in upper Clackamas Valley, Gladstone, Milwaukie, and Oregon City by providing transportation for products.
  - In the 1920s, Oregon City Railway connected Oregon City to Carver on a privately owned and developed railroad. New lumber towns, such as Estacada and Mulino, emerged in Clackamas River Valley thanks to truck routes and electricity connections.
  - For more details on the history of these railways, see the Historic Resources Memo for the Pleasant Valley/North Carver Comprehensive Plan.
  
- Clackamas Industrial Area
  - One of three county urban renewal districts in Clackamas County.
  - This industrial area is a regional distribution, warehousing and wholesale trade center.
  - The district was created in 1984 to support development of the area as a vital employment center, and attractive commercial and residential service center.
    - In 1984, the Clackamas Fire District Fire Chief noted the “importance of the Clackamas Industrial Area to the community. Thousands of persons are dependent on the area's commercial activity for their livelihood. At present, about 45% of the value of our Fire District is contained therein...**Land was being grabbed up rapidly at that time** and the District found itself hard pressed to find a suitable location at a fair price.”



Figure 14. Aerials of Clackamas Industrial Area from 1937, 1980, and 2000 (top to bottom)



# History of Travel and Roadways

- Interstate I-205
  - Background
    - Construction began in 1967 with work on the Abernethy Bridge over the Willamette River, which opened in 1970. This costed \$17.1 million to construct (equivalent to \$93.5 million in 2021 dollars).
    - The final section of I-205 in Clackamas County, connecting OR 213 at Lake Road to Sunnyside Road, opened in February 1975.
    - Oregon Department of Transportation and Washington State Department of Transportation maintain I-105 within their states
    - A group representing the Clackamas Industrial Area, which was to be bisected by I-205, requested a study in 1967 to find a new route that would avoid the industrial park. The study concluded that an alternative alignment would be infeasible and displace nearby homes, which led to a 1969 decision by the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners to retain the original plan.
    - In 1967, Oregon began acquiring homes, businesses, and other properties on the future route of I-205 through buyouts and condemnation. The buildings were auctioned for relocation to clear the right-of-way.
  - Controversy around freeway construction
    - In 1973, groups opposed to the project, including the “Committee to End Needless Urban Freeways (ENUF), allied with Sensible Transportation Options for People (STOP), the Coalition for Clean Air, the Oregon Environmental Council and others, filed petitions with the Environmental Quality Commission ...related to clean air/lead levels to be applied to the construction of freeways” (ODOTGF, 2 May 1973).
    - Multnomah County Board of Commissioners wanted the freeway to include fewer lanes, fewer connections for local traffic, and increased mass transit improvements.
    - Compromise between Multnomah County Board of Commissioners and Oregon State Highway Department resulted in maintaining the right-of-way but including bus-only lanes and removing/redesigning several of the planned interchanges.
- The four-lane, 2.5-mile Sunrise Expressway was completed in 2016. The \$130 million project extended the Milwaukie Expressway east to connect to Clackamas Highway.
- Oregon City Bypass (Oregon Route 213) was completed in 1989.



Figure 15. I-205, Interchange with I-5, looking east in 1977



Figure 16. I-205, Glenn Jackson bridge construction in 1982



## History of Mobile Home Parks

- Most of the homes placed in the area during the 1960s and 70s were mobile homes. One location at SE 114th Avenue is still present today. Riverbend at SE 142nd Avenue was another early development.
- Standard home construction in the area gradually rose through the 1950s then effectively stopped in the early 1960s due primarily to the application of industrial zoning, which for the most part, prohibits new residential use.



Figure 17. A mobile home in Sunrise Corridor

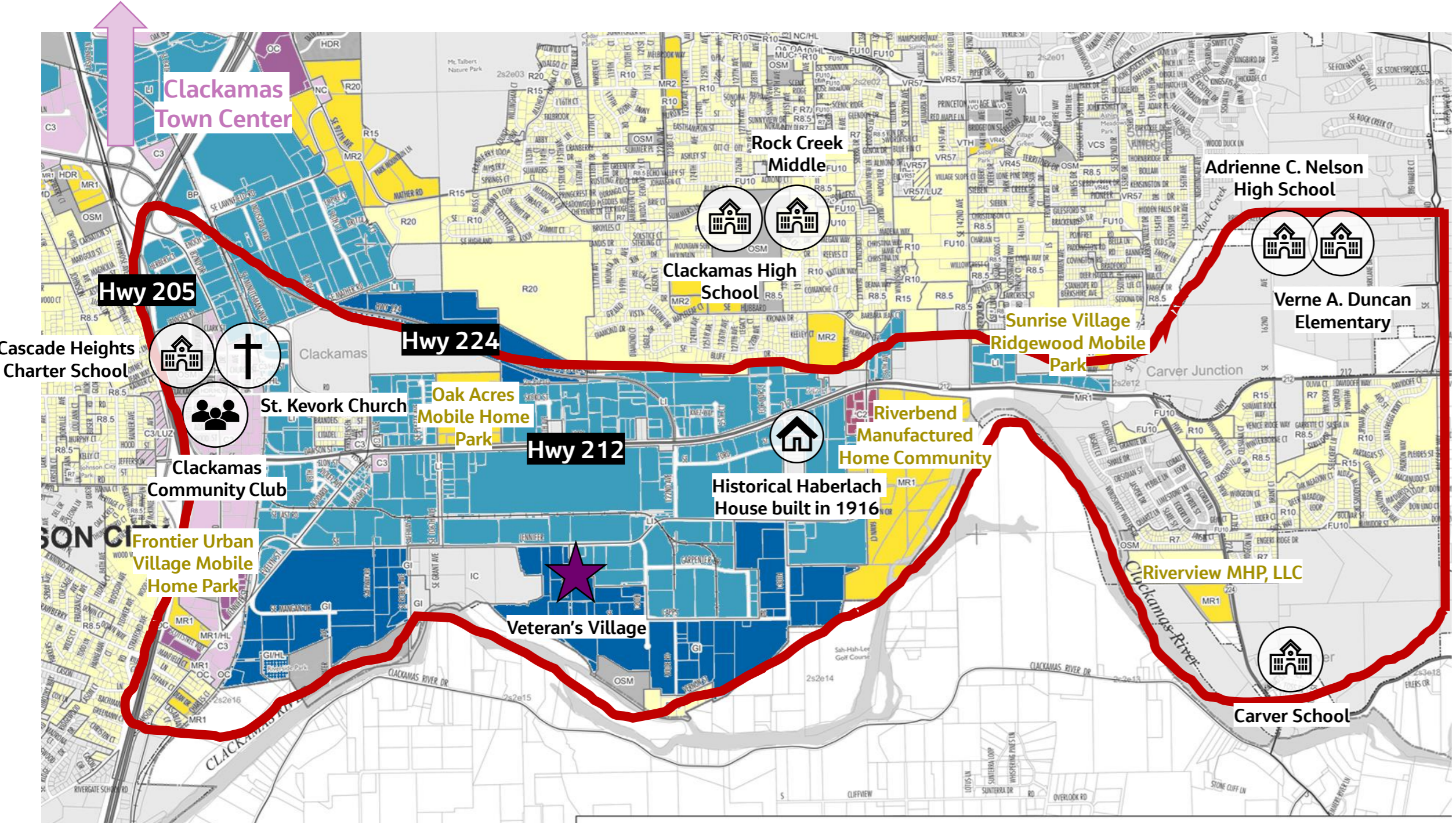


Figure 18. A mobile home in the Riverbend Manufactured Home Community in Sunrise Corridor



# 1.5 Present Day Local Community Context

Figure 19. Land Use Map



**Light Industrial/General Industrial**  
 The Clackamas Industrial Area is one of three county urban renewal districts in Clackamas County. This industrial area is a regional distribution, warehousing and wholesale trade center. The district was created in 1984 to support development of the area as a vital employment center, and attractive commercial and residential service center.

**Residential**  
 Manufactured housing communities are a major source of unsubsidized housing affordable to low- and moderate-income households, providing more than four times as many homes as government-subsidized housing in Unincorporated Clackamas County. Manufactured homes and communities provide housing for nearly 24,000 county residents. Based on 2020 census data, there are 854 households and 2,082 residents within the project area who live in manufactured homes.

**Corridor Commercial**  
 For its first urban renewal program in 1980, the County selected the area around the intersection of I-205 and SE Sunnyside Road. The community needed new and expanded road systems to support the opening of the Clackamas Town Center shopping mall in 1981, and to meet the needs of the growing residential neighborhoods, health care facilities and businesses.

**Veteran's Village**  
 Veteran's Village is a Clackamas County transitional shelter program that helps veterans transition into permanent housing. It is located South of the 212 on SE 115th Avenue. The program started in 2018, with the help of commissioners, county staff, and partners including nonprofits, charities, local governments and businesses.

Legend	
	Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Community Commercial (C-2)
	Office Apartment (OA), Office Commercial (OC), Regional Center Office (RCO), Village Office (VO)
	Corridor Commercial (CC), General Commercial (C-3), Regional Center Commercial (RCC), Retail Commercial (RTL)
	Future Urban, 10-Acre (FU-10), Urban Low Density Residential (R-2.5, R-5, R-7, R-8.5, R-10, R-15, R-20, R-30), Village Small Lot Residential (VR-4/5), Village Standard Lot Residential (VR-5/7)
	Medium Density Residential (MR-1), Medium High Density Residential (MR-2), Planned Medium Density Residential (PMD), Village Townhouse (VTH)
	High Density Residential (HDR), Special High Density Residential (SHD), Regional Center High Density Residential (RCHDR), Village Apartment (VA)
	Business Park (BP), Campus Industrial (CI), Light Industrial (LI)
	General Industrial (GI), Village Community Service (VCS)
	Project Boundary



## 1.5.1 Tribal Path to Sovereignty

### Tribal Restoration

- Due to the tribal leader's hard work testifying and lobbying in Congress, in 1983, President Ronald Reagan signed the **Grand Ronde Restoration Act, restoring the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde**. In 1988, the tribe regained 9,811 acres of the original reservation when the Grand Ronde Reservation Act was signed on September 9, 1988.
- Today, the Indigenous tribes of the Clackamas County region, including the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, continue to preserve and revitalize their languages, cultures, and traditions. As a sovereign nation, they pursue an array of social, cultural and economic development opportunities for their members.

### Local Projects and Partnership Opportunities

In 2015, the Rock Creek Confluence Restoration Project was completed Ecological Engineering LLC for Clackamas River Basin Council and Clackamas County's Water Environment Services. This project enhanced in-stream habitat and riparian vegetation on approximately 1,800 feet of Rock Creek at its confluence with the Clackamas River.

- The Grand Ronde Tribe has a strong historical and cultural connection to **Willamette Falls**, defined by their long history of water stewardship and as the home of their ancestors.
  - In 2018, the construction of the **fishing scaffold** at Willamette Falls was complete and contributes to the tribe's ceremonial fishing harvest.
  - In 2019, Grand Ronde purchased the Blue Heron Paper Mill near Willamette Falls and began redeveloping the site through a new economic development project, Tumwata Village, that will feature environmental restoration, cultural access and preservation and mixed-use areas for the public.



Figure 20. The Confederated Tribes fishing platform at Willamette Falls in 2018.



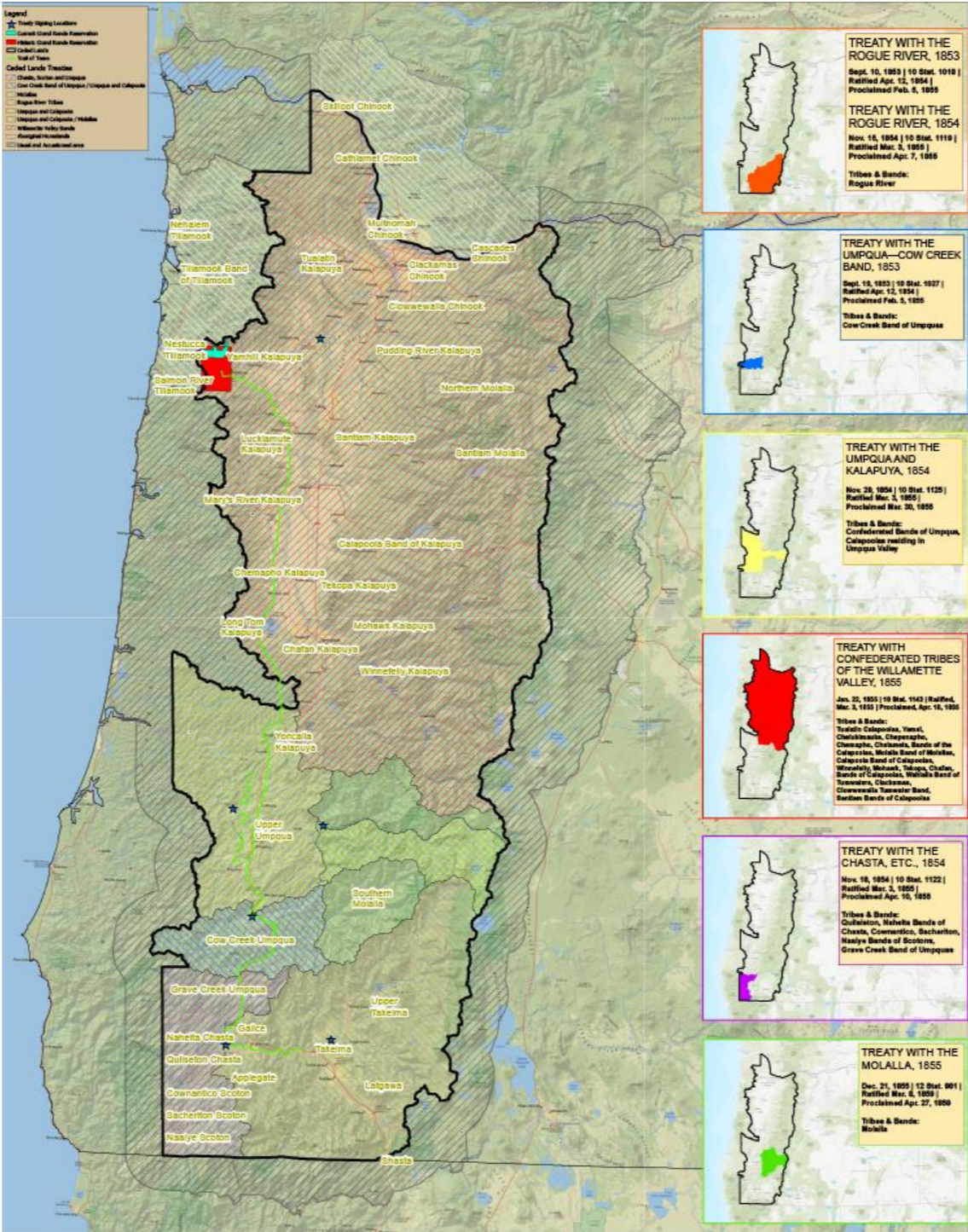
Figure 21. 23 –acre site at Willamette Fall. This site provides opportunity to return public access and provide economic development to a historically significant area .



# 1.5.1 Tribal Path to Sovereignty (cont.)

## Figure 22. Map of the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon

- This map includes the current and historic Grand Ronde Reservation boundaries, the Trail of Tears, the location of ceded lands treaties, and treaty signing locations.
- [Link to full map](#)





## Restoring Landscapes and Rights

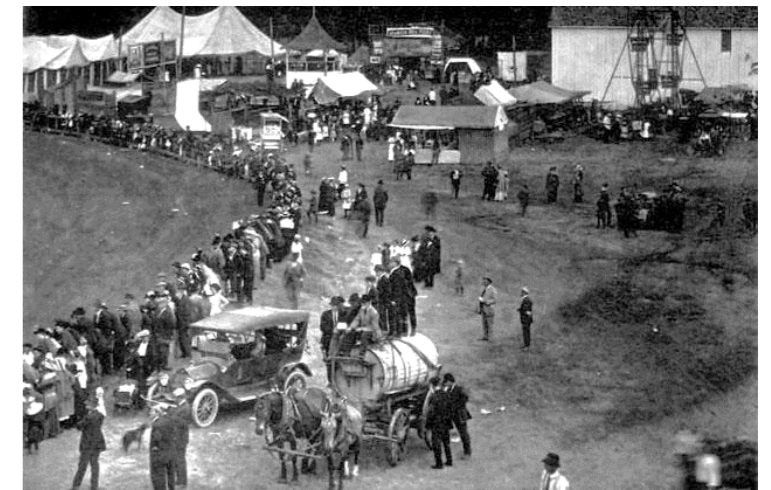
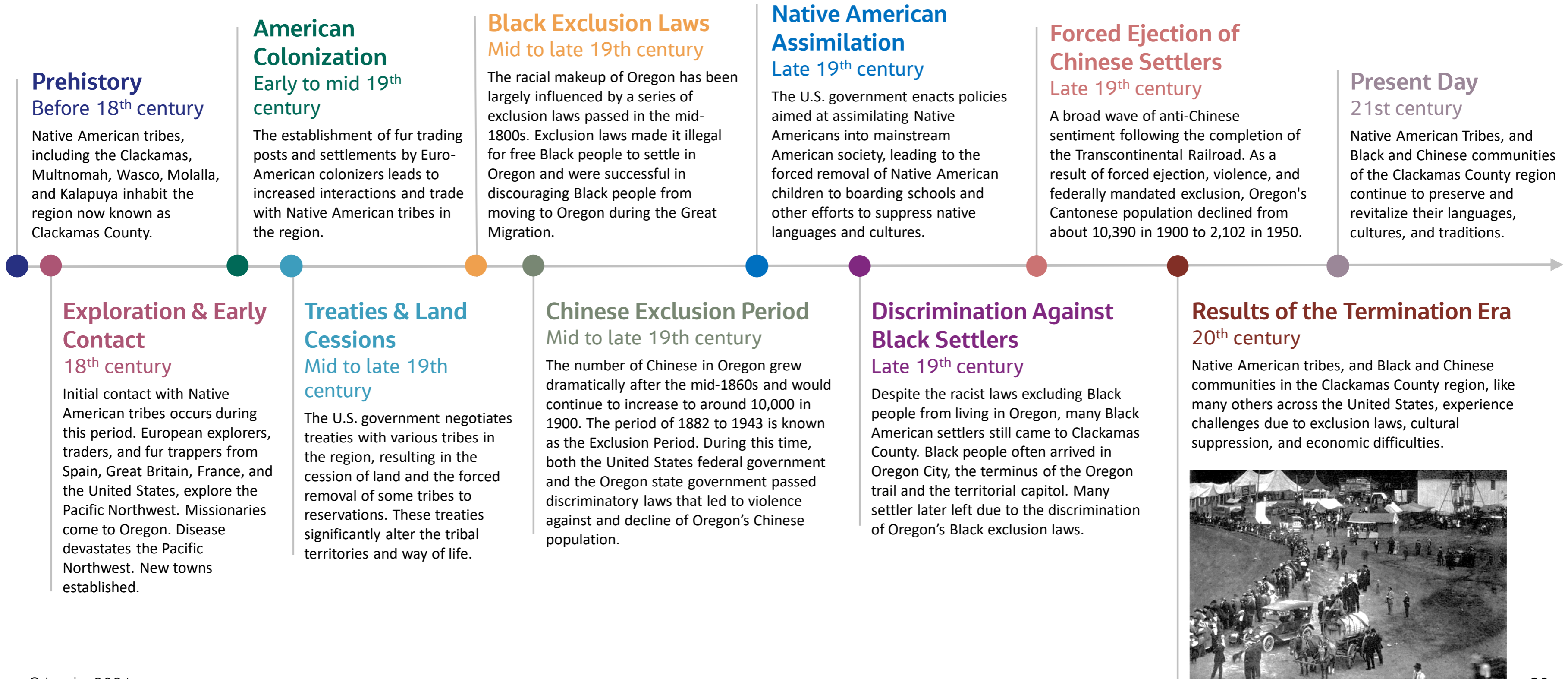
- In 1985, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon were forced to sign a Consent Decree with the State of Oregon and Federal Government. The decree essentially allowed the tribe two choices; their land or their hunting and fishing rights. They chose land but were only given a fraction of their original land as a Reservation. Their hunting and fishing rights were very restricted.
- In 2021, Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley introduced a bill that would give the Tribe the opportunity to review the consent decree and work with the State of Oregon to modernize fishing and hunting rights.
- In 2023, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife approved an agreement that allows the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to issue their own hunting and fishing licenses to tribal members for subsistence and ceremonial harvest.
  - However, several tribes, including the Umatilla, Warm Springs, Yakama and Nez Perce, requested revisions to the agreement that would exclude Willamette Falls due to the agreement "disputing the existence of treat-reserved rights at locations in these units and we have conflicts in the past" (Written by N. Kathryn Brigham, chair of the Umatilla board of trustees).



Figure 23. Willamette Falls.

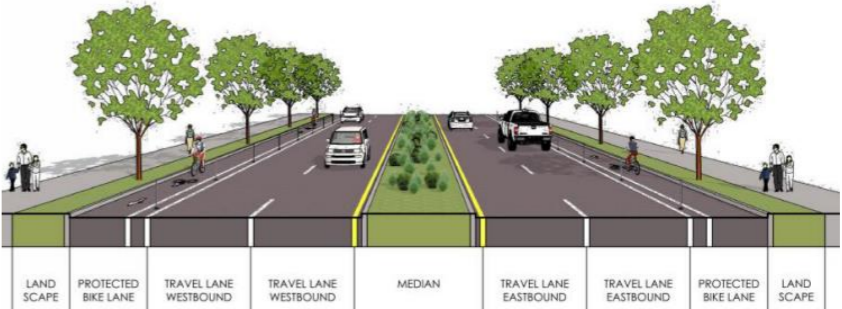


# Cultural History of the Corridor





# Transportation and Economic History of the Corridor



<p><b>Developing New Roads</b> 20<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>From 1920 to 1940, the state sets about expanding and graveling all roads in the state, spurring development of lands. Lower cost transportation expands lumber, agricultural and mining industries.</p>	<p><b>Sunnyside Road</b> 1900-present</p> <p>The Sunnyside Road is marked in maps dating back to the early 20th century.</p>	<p><b>Early Residential Mobile Home Parks</b> 1960-1970</p> <p>Around 1960, people begin developing residential / mobile home parks in the Sunrise Corridor.</p>	<p><b>Clackamas Town Center</b> 1975-1985</p> <p>The Clackamas Town Center Shopping Mall opens in 1985 after a decade of planning, community opposition and construction.</p>	<p><b>Urban Growth Boundary</b> 1979</p> <p>Oregon establishes the Portland Metro Urban Growth Boundary in 1979. It has since expanded to Rock Creek, Tong Road, and into Damascus.</p>	<p><b>Sunrise Expressway</b> 2013-2016</p> <p>ODOT built the limited-access 4-6 lane Sunrise Expressway connecting I-205 and Hwy 212, including a multi-use path.</p>	<p><b>The Future</b> Beyond present day</p> <p>The next steps for Clackamas County include... 2050 – Carbon Neutral Clackamas County</p>
<p><b>Growing Transportation</b> Late 19<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>Clackamas District is established in 1843. Upper Clackamas River Valley gets new roads and trails, but main transportation still by water due to rough trails in rain weather. Oregon and California Railroad and the East Side Railway spur growth in the region.</p>	<p><b>Sunrise / Highway No. 171</b> 1900 - present</p> <p>Through the early 20th century, the Sunrise Corridor (Highway No. 171) is mostly a regional farm road. The roadway has been updated over time.</p>	<p><b>Happy Valley</b> 1965</p> <p>Happy Valley is established in 1965. Key issue at the time is Portland's boundary expansion and maintaining a rural community character.</p>	<p><b>I-205</b> 1967-1977</p> <p>I-205 is built as an alternative route to I-5. The highway opened up the Clackamas County region to lower cost transportation and facilitated growth. It takes another 10 years to connect the highway through Portland and across the Columbia River.</p>	<p><b>Clackamas Industrial District</b> 1986-2006</p> <p>The Clackamas Industrial Area is one of three urban renewal districts in Clackamas County. This industrial area is a regional distribution, warehousing and wholesale trade center.</p>	<p><b>Sunrise Corridor FEIS</b> 2010</p> <p>The Sunrise Corridor's Final Environmental Impact Statement is approved in 2010.</p>	<p><b>Sunrise Corridor Gateway Concept</b> 2019</p> <p>The 2020 Transportation Investment Measure Survey is made public in 2019. Responses highlight strong support for transportation improvements that prioritize pedestrian and bicycle safety, mitigate and decrease greenhouse gas emissions, and support safe traffic flow.</p>



## Conclusion

Story of the area and highlighting the importance of the tribal communities' connections to the Clackamas Valley.

- Honor and acknowledge **cultural history**
- Tell the **story of the Tribes**
- Enhance **economic viability** of the area
- This has been a natural resource for ages, continue with **sustainable practices**, green sustainable buildings , integrate other forms of clean energy
- Redevelopment consistent with the **values of the communities** that have lived here for generations



*Figure 24. Chinook dip-netting salmon at Willamette*