

# Historic Willamette Main Street Newsletter

*Where Rivers and People Meet*



January – March 2026



## Welcome to 2026

Historic Willamette Main Street is a nonprofit organization that works to care for, strengthen, and celebrate the Willamette Business District – the places where people gather to shop, dine, attend events, and connect with one another.

As we begin 2026, we are reintroducing the Historic Willamette Main Street Newsletter as a quarterly update to share what's happening in the district, why it matters, and how our community can be involved. This newsletter is intended for business owners, residents, property owners, volunteers, and partners – anyone who cares about the vitality and character of Willamette and West Linn.

Our work includes supporting local businesses, preserving historic buildings, improving the look and feel of the district, hosting community events, and creating opportunities for people to connect. Some of that work happens behind the scenes, and some of it is very visible – from heritage workshops and tourism bootcamps, banners and signage to markets, festivals, and seasonal celebrations. Together, these efforts help keep Willamette a welcoming, vibrant place for everyone.

This first quarter, we are launching several new initiatives focused on better communication, stronger connections, and shared problem-solving, while continuing long-term projects that celebrate Willamette's history and identity. You'll also find a look ahead at events planned for the year and ways to participate at whatever level works best for you.

Later this quarter, we will be releasing a Business Resource Guide designed to make it easier to navigate available resources, contacts, and support tools. While the guide is business-focused, it is part of a broader goal of strengthening the district as a whole – because thriving businesses help create a thriving community.

Thank you for being part of Willamette. We're glad you're here!

— Rebecca Hollenbeck  
Executive Director, Historic Willamette Main Street

## Our Mission:

Historic Willamette Main Street's mission is to celebrate and preserve the rich history and natural beauty of the area, invest in the heart of our downtown by promoting our local businesses. Our purpose is to foster an inclusive, diverse community where local residents and visitors feel welcome to dine, shop, connect and socialize with others.

January 2026

## Working Together to Support Willamette

Historic Willamette Main Street's work is governed by a all volunteer Board of Directors, shaped by community input and carried out through a combination of committees, partnerships, and open conversation. These structures help ensure that projects reflect the needs of the district while allowing people to participate in ways that fit their interests, skills, and availability.



## Committees That Guide Our Work

Historic Willamette Main Street uses the nationally recognized Main Street Four-Point Approach, which organizes work into focus areas that support a healthy, vibrant district. Committee members include business owners, residents, property owners, and community partners.

New members are welcome. Anyone interested in joining a committee is encouraged to reach out to learn more about current projects and expectations.

### ECONOMIC VITALITY COMMITTEE

First Monday of each month | Noon | Vibe Real Estate - 1751 Willamette Falls Drive

- Focuses on business support, district vitality, and initiatives that strengthen the local economy. Meetings are held at midday so participants can bring their lunch and easily attend.

### DESIGN COMMITTEE

Fourth Thursday of each month | 5:00 pm | In-person meeting

- Works on projects that enhance the appearance and character of the district, including historic plaques, signage, building documentation, and other placemaking efforts.

### ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Third Monday of each month | 5:30 pm | In-person meeting

- Supports the overall health of the organization through governance, outreach, fundraising, and long-range planning.

### PROMOTIONS COMMITTEE

Every Tuesday | 9:00 am | Online Meeting

- Focuses on events, marketing, and activities that bring people into the district and support community engagement.

Meeting locations are shared directly with committee members and invited participants.

## Staying Connected in 2026

Historic Willamette Main Street is continuing to look for ways to improve communication, strengthen relationships, and make it easier for people to stay informed and involved in the district. Several new efforts launching in 2026 are focused on creating more consistent touchpoints and opportunities for connection.

### NEW: Monthly General Meeting

Beginning in April 2026, Historic Willamette Main Street will be hosting a monthly General Meeting designed to bring businesses, residents, property owners, volunteers, and partners together in one place.

This meeting will provide:

- Updates on current projects, events, and initiatives
- Opportunities for businesses to share feedback and ideas
- A space to identify volunteer help for upcoming efforts
- Conversation around partnerships and collaboration

The General Meeting is not task-based and does not require an ongoing commitment. It is intended to be an easy, welcoming way to stay informed, ask questions, and learn how to engage at whatever level feels right.

Meetings will be held in the back room of Community of Faith Church the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of every month from 9am-10am. You may enter via the front doors or the 12<sup>th</sup> Street entrance.

### Weekly Business Spotlight - Launching in January

In 2026, Historic Willamette Main Street is launching a Weekly Business Spotlight, highlighting a different business every Tuesday. These spotlights will feature a mix of long-established businesses, newer businesses, and those in between - all of which contribute to the character and vitality of the Willamette Business District.

The Economic Vitality Committee will oversee this program and will reach out to businesses approximately one month before their scheduled spotlight. Participating businesses will be asked to:

- Answer a short series of questions
- Allow photos of the business and owner/operators to be taken

Spotlights will be shared through our website and social media channels to help tell the stories behind the businesses that make Willamette unique. Make sure to go to the blog on our website to see all the information.



### Business Resource Guide Coming Soon

A new Business Resource Guide is currently being developed and is scheduled for release later in the first quarter of 2026. The guide will bring together helpful contacts, resources, and tools to make navigating available support easier for businesses.

While the guide is business-focused, it is part of a broader goal of strengthening the district as a whole by improving access to information and encouraging collaboration.

Visit our website and social media pages for more information on each event



## Historic Willamette Main Street 2026 Events

- 03/17 St. Patrick's Day in Willamette
- 04/11 Willamette Spring Wine Walk
- 05/05 Cinco de Mayo in Willamette
- 05/13 Wednesdays In Willamette Summer Street Market (05/13 - 09/09)
- 07/11 Old Time Fair Parade
- 09/12 Willamette Chalk Walk Festival
- 09/12 Willamette Autumn Wine Walk
- 10/04 WillametteFEST
- 10/31 Halloween In Willamette
- 11/07 Willamette Brews & Spirits Stroll
- 11/28 Small Business Saturday
- 12/05 Willamette Holiday Tree Lighting & City of West Linn Holiday Parade
- 12/12 Winter In Willamette & Holiday Market



Note: Our revised date for our Tree Lighting.

We are working with the City of West Linn Parks & Recreation Department this year to combine our Tree Lighting directly after their Holiday Parade. This will allow us to close down the street for both events.

### Support 2026 Events & Programs

Many of the events and programs listed here are made possible through sponsorships from local businesses, organizations, and community members. Our 2026 Sponsorship Booklet outlines opportunities to support events, placemaking projects, and year-round programming.

👉 View sponsorship opportunities at: [historicwillamette.com/sponsorships](https://historicwillamette.com/sponsorships)



# Historic Willamette Main Street

## Caring for Willamette: Design, Preservation & Representation

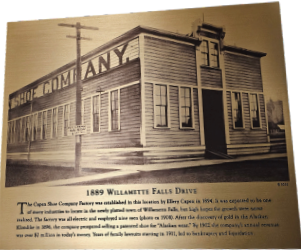
Historic Willamette Main Street's work goes beyond events and meetings. A significant part of our mission focuses on caring for the physical character, history, and long-term vitality of the Willamette Business District — both through visible improvements and behind-the-scenes advocacy.

This work helps ensure that decisions affecting the district are informed, thoughtful, and grounded in local context.

## Preserving the District's Story

The Design Committee is leading several long-term projects that celebrate Willamette's history and strengthen its sense of place.

One current effort is the development of a series of Historic Building Plaques that recognize notable buildings and share information about their current and former uses. These plaques help tell the layered story of the district and create an ongoing educational resource for residents and visitors.



In addition, the committee is conducting building assessments to document how structures have changed over time. This work helps preserve historical information that might otherwise be lost and supports thoughtful conversations about reinvestment and preservation.

The committee is also exploring additional district signage and wayfinding, helping people better navigate the district while reinforcing its identity.

## Working on Behalf of the District

Much of Historic Willamette Main Street's work happens outside the public eye. To ensure Willamette's needs and priorities are understood and represented, the organization participates in ongoing coordination, collaboration, and advocacy at the local, regional, and statewide levels.

This includes regular participation in:

- Countywide economic development partner conversations, connecting with agencies and organizations working on business support, workforce, and economic vitality across the region
- Collaboration with the City of West Linn across multiple departments and committees, supporting efforts related to economic development, arts and culture, planning, and community initiatives
- The newly formed West Linn heritage partners group, working alongside other organizations focused on preserving and sharing local history
- The Oregon Main Street Network, which includes more than 100 downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts across Oregon. Through weekly calls, quarterly meetings, and peer-to-peer collaboration, we learn from other communities and share strategies, challenges, and solutions

Historic Willamette Main Street also participates in professional conferences and forums focused on tourism, economic development, heritage, and downtown revitalization. These opportunities help bring new ideas, best practices, and resources back to the district while ensuring Willamette has a seat at the table.

When issues arise that directly affect the district, Historic Willamette Main Street also engages in advocacy and communication with elected officials, including providing input and testimony when appropriate.

### Why This Work Matters

Preserving history, improving shared spaces throughout the district, and representing Willamette in broader conversations all contribute to a stronger, more resilient district.





## Placemaking & District Identity

Historic Willamette Main Street plays an active role in planning and implementing improvements that enhance the look, feel, and functionality of the Willamette Business District. Through design leadership, pursuing grant support, and collaboration with partners, these projects help create a district that is welcoming, recognizable, and thoughtfully maintained.

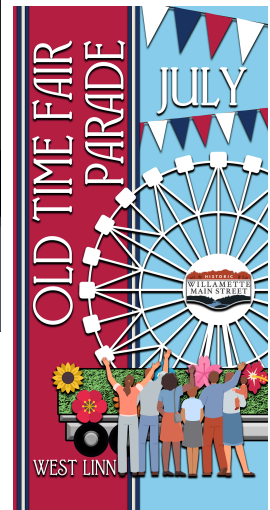
## New Main Street Banners

Historic Willamette Main Street designed a new series of Main Street banners that will be installed throughout the district in the coming months. The banners were created to visually unify the district, reinforce its identity, and support year-round activity.

Funding for the banners, along with additional improvements such as the bike kiosk, decorative bike racks and street furnishings, was made possible through grant support secured by Historic Willamette Main Street. The organization identified opportunities, pursued funding, and is coordinating the implementation of these projects.

These improvements help:

- Strengthen the visual presence of the district
- Support events and seasonal activity
- Create a welcoming environment
- Enhance the experience for residents, businesses, and visitors



## Investing In Shared Spaces

Beyond banners, Historic Willamette Main Street continues to identify opportunities to improve shared spaces throughout the district. By seeking funding, collaborating with partners, and guiding projects from planning to installation, the organization helps turn ideas into tangible improvements.

## Why This Work Matters

Design improvements may seem small on their own, but together they shape how people experience the district. When signage, banners, furnishings, and public spaces are aligned and intentional, they create an environment that encourages people to linger, explore, and return.

These projects reflect Historic Willamette Main Street's ongoing commitment to strengthening Willamette in visible, lasting ways.

## Transit Changes & New Connections

Proposed service changes from TriMet may affect transit access to the Willamette area. At the same time, Wilsonville's SMART Transit will soon open a stop in Willamette along a new route connecting Wilsonville to Clackamas Town Center.

Historic Willamette Main Street continues to monitor transit access as it directly impacts businesses, employees, and visitors traveling to the district.



## Waterfront Vision Plan Adopted

The City of West Linn has adopted its Waterfront Community Vision Plan, outlining long-term ideas and guiding principles for the Willamette Falls waterfront area.

While implementation will occur over time, the plan represents an important step in shaping the future of the broader area that connects to and supports the Willamette Business District.

Historic Willamette Main Street encourages community members to stay informed and review the full plan.

➡ View the full plan at: [City of West Linn Waterfront Vision Plan](https://www.westlinnoregon.gov/finance/tax-increment-finance-district)



Credit: City of West Linn

## Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District Update

The City of West Linn has established a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) District that includes the Willamette Business District. A TIF district is a tool cities use to help support infrastructure, public improvements, and economic development projects within a designated area.

The creation of this district aligns with other planning efforts — including the Waterfront Visioning Plan — and is intended to help fund long-term projects that improve transportation, public spaces, utilities, and the overall economic health of the area.

Members of the Historic Willamette Main Street Board were involved in the planning process, helping ensure the interests of the Willamette Business District were represented.

For more details on the TIF District and what it may mean for the community, visit: [westlinnoregon.gov/finance/tax-increment-finance-district](https://www.westlinnoregon.gov/finance/tax-increment-finance-district)

## Historic City Hall Reopens

Historic City Hall, originally built in 1936, has reopened following renovations completed through a partnership between the Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area Coalition and the City of West Linn.

Managed by the Coalition, one of West Linn's Heritage Partners, the building now features exhibit space and rentable meeting rooms. It is open Thursday–Saturday, 11:00 am–2:00 pm, with room rentals available outside those hours.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.wflha.org/historic-city-hall/>



Credit: Old Oregon Photos

# Historic Willamette Main Street

## About Historic Willamette Main Street

Historic Willamette Main Street operates through two nonprofit entities in order to fully support the needs of the Willamette Business District.

- Our 501(c)(3) organization primarily supports historic preservation, historical initiatives, and design projects within the district.
- Our 501(c)(6) organization supports economic vitality efforts and community events, including programs such as the Wednesdays in Willamette Summer Market.

This structure allows us to carry out a broad range of work while remaining compliant with federal nonprofit regulations.



## Accredited Main Street

Historic Willamette Main Street is proud to be:

- An Accredited program of the Oregon Main Street Network
- An Accredited Main Street America™ Program

These designations reflect our commitment to preservation-based economic development and strong organizational standards.



## Volunteer With Us

Volunteers are essential to Historic Willamette Main Street's work. Opportunities range from board and committee participation to event-day and short-term project support.

We welcome both long-term leadership volunteers and episodic volunteers who assist at markets, festivals, and special events throughout the year.

👉 Find all current volunteer opportunities and application links at: [historicwillamette.com/volunteer](http://historicwillamette.com/volunteer)

## Community Support

Historic Willamette Main Street exists because of community support.

The businesses listed below have chosen to invest in the vitality of the Willamette Business District through their financial contributions to our organization.

If you value a vibrant and welcoming Willamette, we would love to have you become a donor as well.

🌸❤️ Learn more and donate at: [historicwillamette.com/donate](http://historicwillamette.com/donate)



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