



# City of McMinnville Scenic Viewpoint and Viewshed Inventory Report

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# City of McMinnville

## Scenic Viewpoint and Viewshed Inventory

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## INTRODUCTION

The City of McMinnville's Great Neighborhood Principles call for equitable access to community amenities such as scenic views and viewpoints. McMinnville residents have expressed their desire to preserve the City's scenic views for all to enjoy – as stated in Great Neighborhood Principle 2 as implemented by Policy 187.50(2) Scenic Views:

*Policy 187.50. The McMinnville Great Neighborhood Principles are provided below. Each Great Neighborhood Principle is identified by number below (numbers 1 – 13) and is followed by more specific direction on how to achieve each individual principle.*

2. **Scenic Views.** *Great Neighborhoods preserve scenic views in areas that everyone can access.*
  - a. *Public and private open spaces and streets shall be located and oriented to capture and preserve scenic views, including, but not limited to, views of significant natural features, landscapes, vistas, skylines, and other important features.*

### Interpretation of Policy 187.50(2)

McMinnville Comprehensive Plan Policy 187.50(2) focuses on the future location, orientation and design of viewpoints from existing and planned public parks, streets and trails to corresponding viewsheds (significant scenic features that are observable from viewpoints). While City designated viewpoints are all located within the McMinnville Urban Growth (UGB), scenic views from these viewpoints (viewsheds) include urban and rural landscapes, such as significant natural features and urban streetscapes within the UGB, and rural farm and forest lands, and distant hills and mountains outside the UGB. For purposes of this scenic inventory, Scenic Views Policy 187.50(2):

- Applies primarily to public improvements on public land – to ensure that vertical public improvements (including but not limited to signs, bridge railings, lighting, overhead wires, utility cabinets, and street trees) are considered in the public facilities design process and do not unnecessarily obstruct significant scenic views.
- Applies when determining the location, orientation and design of planned public streets, parks and trails that will serve future urban development – focusing on undeveloped land within the 2020 UGB expansion area – consistent with applicable area plans such as the McMinnville UGB Framework Plan and the Three Mile Lane Corridor Plan. The intent is to provide public access to significant viewsheds by locating, orientating and designing public streets, trails and parks to take maximum scenic view potential.
- Is not intended to limit the location, orientation or design of private development allowed under the McMinnville Zoning Ordinance (including base zones, and natural

resource and natural hazard subdistricts) outside of existing and planned public parks and transportation rights-of-way.

- Is not intended to provide an additional layer of local protection to scenic viewsheds outside the McMinnville UGB. The protection of rural areas, however, is ensured by state and federal ownership and management practices, and Oregon Statewide Planning Program, primarily Goals 3 (Agricultural Lands) and Goal 4 (Forest Lands) that restrict development on farm and forest lands.

To implement Great Neighborhood Principles and its scenic policy, the City authorized Winterbrook Planning to prepare an inventory of scenic viewpoints within the McMinnville UGB – and corresponding scenic viewsheds both within and beyond the UGB.

### **Characteristics of Significant Viewsheds**

Viewsheds have scenic characteristics that, when considered together, are valued by the community. City staff and Winterbrook have identified the scenic characteristics that cumulatively define significant scenic viewsheds.

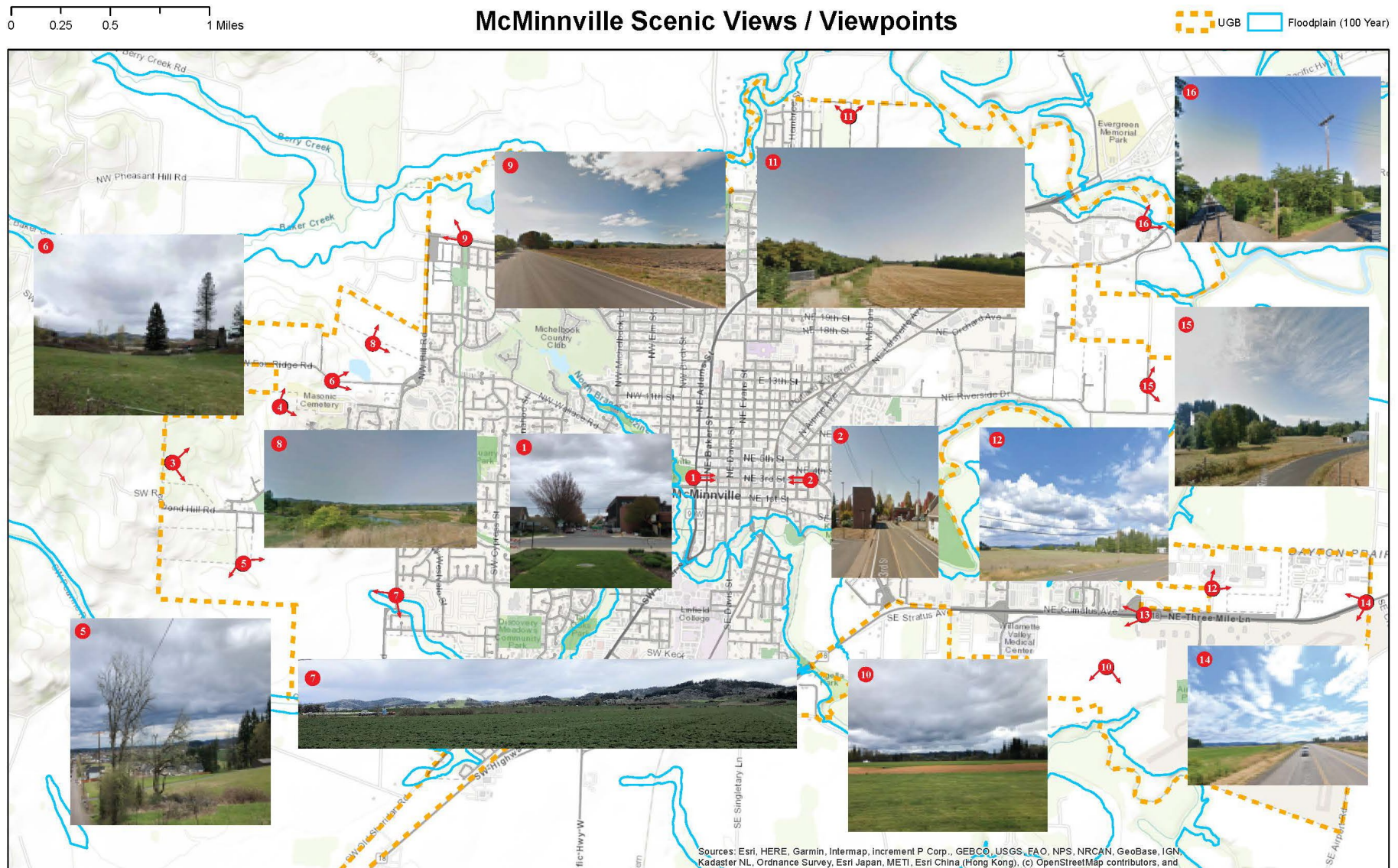
- **Mountain views** – Cascade Range, including Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Hood and the Coast Range areas.
- **Hill views** - McMinnville’s West Hills, Red Hills of Dundee, Amity Hills, and Chehalem Mountains, including forested areas.
- **Agricultural land views** - Cropland, pastures, orchards, and vineyards.
- **Riparian corridor views** - Forests and floodplains along North and South Yamhill Rivers and Baker Creek.
- **Gateway views** - Views entering City along Hwy. 18 and views of Downtown historic buildings and tree-lined streets.
- **City views** – Views of the City from the West Hills, including downtown, forested riparian corridors and park views.

Many of these scenic characteristics overlap. For example, scenic vineyards are frequently found on the southern exposures of hillsides that can be seen from the McMinnville viewpoints; and gateway views overlap with city views.

### **Scenic Viewpoint Site Selection**

Working collaboratively with City planning staff, the project team identified 16 scenic viewpoints within the McMinnville UGB with viewsheds that have one or more of the characteristics described above.

Figure 1





## SCENIC INVENTORY METHODS

Winterbrook Planning conducted the McMinnville Scenic Viewpoint and Viewshed Inventory for viewpoints within the McMinnville UGB between April and June 2021.

1. Based on field observations, Winterbrook initially identified a selection of potential scenic viewpoints on public land within the UGB. Working with City planning staff, 16 significant scenic viewpoints were identified, including potential viewpoints that could be located in planned transportation rights-of-way and parks.
2. Figure 1 shows each of the 16 numbered viewpoints, including the general direction and images of corresponding viewsheds. Figure 1 provided the basis for subsequent scenic viewpoint and viewshed analysis.
3. Winterbrook visited and took additional ground-level photographs from publicly accessible viewpoints, including public rights-of-way, public parks, and other public lands. Each preliminary viewpoint was revised and their respective viewsheds were preliminarily determined. Because viewpoints on undeveloped private lands could not be accessed without written authorization from the property owner, Winterbrook took photos or used publicly available online imagery from nearby roads that were similar to selected views from viewpoints on private land.
4. Using GIS technology combined with geographical research and aerial photography analysis, Winterbrook mapped the characteristics of significant viewsheds that are visible from the corresponding viewpoint.
  - a. The GIS viewshed analysis relies on two main data inputs: observation points (viewpoints) and bare earth digital elevation modeling (DEM) available from the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries.
  - b. The spatial analyst “Viewshed” tool was used to determine visible and non-visible surface locations, as viewed from each of the 16 viewpoints. These 360° outputs represent unrefined viewsheds from each viewpoint.
  - c. Winterbrook refined viewsheds to reflect the general scenic characteristics originally identified by City Staff. This refinement narrowed each viewshed to a general direction and extent (width).
  - d. Each viewshed was color coded by elevation, using classifications of 100 ft. or 200 ft., depending on the viewshed.
  - e. Winterbrook analyzed arial photographs to identify agricultural land types (cropland and vineyards) found in mapped viewsheds.
  - f. Winterbrook used [McMinnville city, OR Nearby Mountains](#) to identify the common names of mountains, hills and peaks in each viewshed.
  - g. Both viewpoints and viewsheds were projected in Oregon’s 2011 National Spatial Reference System – North (International Feet) to allow for the creation of a series of overlay maps that can be evaluated with inventoried natural hazards in a composite natural features inventory.

## SCENIC INVENTORY RESULTS

To implement McMinnville's Great Neighborhood Scenic Policy 187.20(2) the City initiated an inventory of scenic views within the McMinnville study area.

The City identified 16 significant scenic viewpoints and corresponding viewsheds within existing and planned public parks and transportation rights-of-way. Corresponding significant scenic viewsheds include both urban and rural landscapes, city gateways, natural features and scenic vistas of observable mountains and hills. **Figure 1. Scenic Viewpoints and Viewshed Key Map** shows the location of scenic viewpoints and the direction and images of corresponding scenic viewsheds.

Winterbrook analyzed the viewsheds from selected viewpoints using available geographical resources, arial photography, field observations, and GIS digital elevation modeling.

- **Table 1. Summary of McMinnville Scenic Viewpoints and Viewshed Characteristics** on the following page summarizes the results of the inventory for each numbered viewpoint and the scenic characteristics of the corresponding viewshed.
- **Appendix A: Scenic Viewpoints and Viewsheds Annotated Inventory Maps** includes 16 annotated GIS scenic viewpoint and viewshed maps showing the direction of scenic views, elevation levels, and scenic characteristics within each viewshed.

## Next Steps

The McMinnville Scenic Viewpoints and Viewshed Inventory will inform program recommendations encouraging the preservation and enhancement of identified scenic viewpoints and their corresponding viewsheds to ensure public access to scenic viewpoints from public rights-of-way and parks.

A companion report entitled "McMinnville Natural Resources Program Recommendations" includes draft policies to ensure that public access to significant scenic viewpoints and viewsheds is considered in the location, orientation, and design of planned public facility projects in McMinnville.

**Table 1. Summary of McMinnville Scenic Viewpoints and Viewshed Characteristics**

VIEW-POINT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	PRELIMINARY REMARKS/ RECOMMENDATIONS
1	NE 3rd Street - East	View type: City/Gateway view Orientation: East Object of view: Historic Downtown view from City Park/Giant Sequoia tree. View of historic buildings, street, prominent tree canopy.	Maintain and enhance gateway image by preserving tree canopy, limiting obtrusive vertical structures, and supporting complementary streetscape improvements. Note that as a historic district/ streetscape view, DEM viewshed mapping was not found useful.
2	NE 3rd Street - West	View type: City/Gateway view Orientation: West Object of view: Historic Downtown view from east end of street. View of historic buildings, street and prominent tree canopy.	Maintain and enhance gateway image by preserving tree canopy, limiting obtrusive vertical structures, and supporting complementary streetscape improvements. Note that as a historic district/ streetscape view, DEM viewshed mapping was not found useful.
3	West Hills north of SW Redmond Hill Road	View type: City/Mountain view Orientation: East/Northeast Object of view: View over City and agricultural land to Red Hills, Amity Hills and Cascade Range. View from conceptual "Ridge Trail" in McMinnville UGB Framework Plan.	Maintain and enhance views of the City, local hills and Cascade Range. Guide the location, orientation and design of future trail and park improvements. Note that this viewpoint is located within an identified tree grove.
4	West Hills, west of Masonic Cemetery	View type: City/Mountain view Orientation: East Object of view: View over City and agricultural land to Red Hills, Amity Hills and Cascade Range. View from conceptual "Ridge Trail."	Maintain and enhance views of the City, local hills and Cascade Range. Guide the location, orientation and design of future trail and park improvements.
5	West study area, south of West Hills Nbhd. Park	View type: Agricultural view Orientation: Southeast Object of view: View of agricultural land (primarily cropland) with backdrop of Amity Hills. View from conceptual "Ridge Trail."	Maintain and enhance agricultural land views. Guide the location, orientation and design of future trail and park improvements.
6	Fox Ridge Road - East	View type: Agricultural/City view Orientation: Northeast Object of view: View of City and agricultural land (cropland and vineyard) with backdrop of Red Hills and Chehalem Mountains.	Maintain and enhance agricultural land and City views. Manage street tree selection and location. Guide location and design of above-ground utilities and potential viewpoint improvements.
7	West study area, west of SW Hill Road (at Fellows Street)	View type: Agricultural/Local hills view Orientation: Southwest Object of view: View of agricultural land, Coast Range, West Hills and Amity Hills. View is along conceptual future extension of Fellows Street near activity center identified in Framework Plan.	Maintain and enhance views of local hills, Coast Range, and agricultural land. Guide the location, orientation and design of future transportation corridors and park improvements to capture views.
8	West of SW Hill Road and north of Fox Ridge Road	View type: Mountain view Orientation: Northeast Object of view: View of Mt. Hood with agricultural land, Red Hills and Chehalem Mountains in foreground. View from conceptual "Ridge Trail" south of future high school in Framework Plan.	Maintain and enhance views of the Mt. Hood, Chehalem Mountains, and Red Hills. Guide the location, orientation and design of future trails, park improvements, and transportation corridors.



VIEW-POINT	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	PRELIMINARY REMARKS/ RECOMMENDATIONS
9	Baker Creek Road - West	View type: Local hills view Orientation: West Object of view: View of West Hills, looking west from Baker Creek Road in northwest corner of study area.	Maintain and enhance views of West Hills. Guide the location and design of above-ground utilities and viewshed improvements. Manage street tree selection and location.
10	Southeast study area, south of Hwy. 18	View type: Mountain/Local hills view Orientation: South/Southeast Object of view: View of Mt. Jefferson and Amity Hills across agricultural land (cropland).	Maintain and enhance views of Mt Jefferson and Amity Hills. Guide the location, orientation and design of future trails, park improvements, and transportation corridors.
11	North of Grandhaven Elementary School	View type: River Corridor view Orientation: North Object of view: View of North Yamhill River and Baker Creek corridors, with agricultural land in foreground, local hills as backdrop. View from conservation easement/school district land looking north.	Maintain and enhance views of river corridors and local hills. Guide the location, orientation and design of public parks, trails, bridges, and viewpoint improvements.
12	North of Hwy. 18 at Evergreen Aviation	View type: Mountain/Local hills view Orientation: Northeast Object of view: Views from Three Mile Lane corridor northeast to Mt. Hood and Red Hills with agricultural land in foreground.	Maintain and enhance views of mountains and hills to northeast. Guide the location, orientation and design of public parks, trails, and roads to capture views.
13	Southeast study area, view from Hwy. 18	View type: Mountain/Gateway view Orientation: Southeast Object of view: View of Amity Hills and Mt. Jefferson looking across agricultural land (cropland). View southeast from Hwy. 18.	Maintain and enhance mountain and gateway views. Guide the location, orientation and design of public parks, trails, and roads to capture views. Inform the design of public improvements such as signage, art, landscaping, and seating.
14	View from Hwy. 18 entering City from east	View type: Gateway view Orientation: West Object of view: View of agricultural land (cropland), West Hills and coastal foothills. View entering City on Hwy. 18.	Maintain and enhance gateway view by limiting obtrusive vertical structures and supporting complementary streetscape improvements. Manage the selection and placement of trees on public property.
15	Riverside Drive - South	View type: River Corridor view Orientation: East Object of view: View looking east from Riverside Drive of South Yamhill River corridor and agricultural land (cropland).	Maintain and enhance river corridor views by limiting obtrusive vertical structures and supporting complementary streetscape improvements. Manage the selection and placement of trees on public property.
16	Riverside Drive - North	View type: River Corridor view Orientation: Northeast Object of view: View looking northeast from Riverside Drive of North and South Yamhill River corridors/floodplains and agricultural land (cropland) with backdrop of Red Hills.	Maintain and enhance river corridor views by limiting obtrusive vertical structures and supporting complementary streetscape improvements. Manage the selection and placement of trees on public property.