



Portland General Electric
Historic Preservation Priorities

Mill A Outreach & Engagement
January 2022



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Guiding Values for Addressing Mill A Hazards.....	3
3.	Goals and Objectives.....	3
4.	Methodology.....	4
	4.1 Stakeholder engagement.....	4
	4.2 Community Engagement.....	4
5.	Results.....	5
	5.1 Stakeholder Engagement.....	5
	5.2 Community Engagement.....	2
6.	Appendix.....	7

1. Introduction

In 2017, the City of West Linn launched a community engagement process to support the future redevelopment of the waterfront. When the West Linn Paper Company ceased operations, Portland General Electric (PGE) began the process of revising its property along the waterfront in support of the City's efforts.

In 2019, PGE engaged Tribes, stakeholders and the community at large to share information about PGE's property - including access challenges and site characteristics of the 15-acre island where PGE's historic T.W. Sullivan certified low-impact hydroelectric plant produces clean energy. To help inform PGE's thinking about possibilities for future development and zoning, PGE launched a robust community engagement process. That process and learnings are available [here](#).

In 2021, PGE re-engaged stakeholders and community members with a focus on Mill A, one of the largest, oldest and most complex paper mill structures on PGE's island property. Eligible for listing on the National Registry of Historic Places, Mill A is connected to Oregon's industrial history around Willamette Falls.

To help inform PGE's approach to hazardous conditions and to preserve the stories of Mill A consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), PGE conducted a series of individual meetings, stakeholder workshops and virtual community meetings to share conditions and secure input. The process was based on guiding values for PGE's approach to remediating the hazards in the Mill A complex.

2. Guiding Values for Addressing Mill A Hazards

- Awareness that Indigenous history is present and finding ways to honor continued Tribal presence; including historical and cultural aspects of Mill A in remediation plans.
- The safety of people, the dam and the environment around Mill A.
- Fulfilling all FERC hydropower license responsibilities, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Capturing the stories of Mill A as an important part of Oregon history.

3. Goals and Objectives

To ensure that stakeholders and community members were able to learn about hazards at Mill A, and meaningfully engage to share their priorities for historical preservation. PGE endeavored to:

- Broadly engage stakeholders and community members through conversations, workshops and digital platforms.
- Develop awareness of the complex set of structures known as Mill A and their role in Oregon's pre-industrial and industrial history.
- Proactively engage stakeholders and community members to provide information about conditions and urgent hazards requiring action.

- Create a range of opportunities to learn about priorities for preserving the stories of Mill A for future generations to inform the plan PGE will present to the State Historic Preservation Office.
- Reinforce that the dialogue about Mill A is a part of a broader exploration of future possibilities for PGE's property along the West Linn waterfront, and that future opportunities to engage and share feedback are anticipated.

4. Methodology

4.1 Stakeholder engagement

PGE engaged with stakeholders in two phases.

In Phase 1, PGE met with representatives from 25 stakeholder groups including Tribes, public officials, local leaders and organizations focused on the Willamette Falls area, its history and future. Through these conversations, stakeholders were informed about current conditions, the process for Section 106 consultation, remediation options before sharing their priorities for historic preservation.

In Phase 2, PGE convened the Historic Properties Work Group (designated through PGE's federal license for operating the T.W. Sullivan hydropower plant) and engaged other historic preservation organizations (e.g. historical societies and non-profits) in two virtual workshops. Prior to the workshops, participants received access to an interactive website with narrative, photo and video about Mill A, and PGE's efforts to assess the complex and structural, environmental and biological hazards. PGE also provided information about historic uses of areas within the complex, current conditions and site characteristics that limit the range of remediation options available.

The Work Group's familiarity with the Mill A complex helped inform a dialogue about specific areas and artifacts of interest and the pragmatic challenges presented by the site - including the island, shoaling on the bay side, complex shoreline with no land access, limited roadway access to, on and from the island, and limitations on crane reach, among other challenges.

During the workshops in Phase 2, questions centered around the efforts to assess conditions, who owned the Mill A complex and when PGE became aware of the severity of conditions after the paper mill ceased operations, and how PGE was factoring Mill A into broader redevelopment options for the entirety of PGE's property along the West Linn side of the Willamette Falls.

4.2 Community Engagement

Given the broader community interest in the area around Willamette Falls, PGE hosted two virtual community meetings at varying times during the week and on a weekend day, to help make participation more accessible. For those unable to join either of the virtual meetings, PGE developed an interactive website that was available for two weeks, from Dec. 1 through Dec. 16, 2021.

PGE promoted the workshops and website to more than 34,000 customers in Oregon City and West Linn through direct mail and an email blast, and digitally, including on PGE's website, social media and

through Oregon City and City of West Linn channels, including through newsletters and social media. A total of 55 people joined the two virtual community meetings.

Both the virtual meetings and interactive website provided historical information about Mill A, an overview of the hazards, the assessments PGE had overseen and completed, and current conditions within the Mill A complex.

Participants were provided a series of interactive polls with multiple choice, ranked and open-ended questions that allowed them to identify preservation ideas, priorities and possibilities. Virtual meeting participants also had the opportunity to ask questions for PGE's subject-matter experts to answer. PGE also provided online and virtual meeting participants with an email address they could use to submit historical information and artifacts about Mill A, which generated one submission.

5. Results

5.1 Stakeholder Engagement

Through both individual meetings and the virtual workshops, competing themes emerged. Overall, stakeholders acknowledged the site's complexities, the decrepit and hazardous conditions of the Mill A complex and the potential impact that limited access may have on remediation and preservation options.

The Willamette Falls Trust joined the Stakeholder Workshops and expressed a desire to remove the industrial artifacts that had eclipsed the site's longstanding history among Indigenous people and Tribes.

Other stakeholders generally expressed an understanding that the poor conditions of Mill A present challenges for preservation of the site and potential repair for the purposes of public access. Even still, some expressed a desire to explore redevelopment opportunities for people to eventually experience the history of Mill A on Moore's Island. In tandem, stakeholders shared a desire to better understand PGE's long-term vision for its property, if only to inform priorities and thinking around Mill A.

Key priorities for historic preservation:

- The Tribal history and presence surrounding Willamette Falls since time immemorial should be included in any interpretation or storytelling, especially as the site continues to be a place for cultural practices.
- A desire to keep the historic elements, such as key equipment, onsite to capture the scale of Oregon's industrial history for future public access at a future time when industrial operations cease.
- Public access to viewpoints of Willamette Falls from the Mill A location, whether or not the structures remain.
- Interest in the stories of early mill workers, what they did and what the artifacts at the site tell us. This could include the power of the river and the constant presence of water as experienced by workers.

Suggested Mitigation Ideas:

- Create ways for people to interact with the history of Mill A, preferably onsite, virtually or otherwise, to understand what industry looked like in Oregon's early days.
- Robust documentation of Mill A's industrial history.
- Create interpretive signage.
- Preserve representative samples of different eras of history to convey how expansion took place over decades.
- Protect key equipment and artifacts that have historic value.

Representative Comments:

"It's true that this discussion is centered around the Mill's historical significance, but in another very real way, it is also a reflection of a brief moment in the many thousands of years of use of this very, very significant location. It is very important to interpret the mill in that light, as well."

"My main takeaway is that it's not a question of 'if' - but 'when' the buildings will fall down."

"Existing conditions make me wonder if the structures could even be covered... if a crane can't reach them. The point about the challenges of scaffolding was especially interesting."

"It's important to keep and preserve equipment from Mill A close to where it was used. Once it's moved, you lose the power, sense of scale of the work done at Mill A; however, the equipment could be kept in Grinder Room #3 and not necessarily exactly where it originally stood. It is important to preserve and maintain as much as possible as close as possible to the falls."

"If the buildings cannot be saved, perhaps the foundations can be, to show the scale of the building, where things were, and how logs moved through the mill."

"Selective preservation of the grinders, debarkers, head rig, etc. And leaving it in place might be a good option in the event safe access can be had in the future."

"Access is an issue that adds complexity to restoration and/or removal. I'd like to capture how the mill was built on the island."

"Any mitigation efforts should be created with the intent to be shared and made public. Accessibility is key since physical accessibility to the site seems far-fetched at present."

"The entire falls is a place people will want to come and see. Not everything needs to be done and not all stories need to be told in one building or site on the island... The ability to tell the story of the entire site is important and can increase interest in visiting."

Stakeholders:

- Army Corps of Engineers
- City of Oregon City
- City of West Linn
- Clackamas County Commissioners
- Clackamas County Legislative Delegates
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla
- Confederated Tribe of the Warm Springs
- Metro Regional Council
- Oregon State's Regional Solutions
- State Historic Preservation Office

- West Linn Historical Society
- Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area Coalition
- Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation
- Willamette Falls Locks Commission
- Willamette Falls Paper Company
- Willamette Falls Trust

Historic Properties Work Group - formed as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license for PGE's T.W. Sullivan hydropower plant at Willamette Falls:

- Army Corps of Engineers
- City of West Linn
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
- Confederated Tribe of the Warm Springs
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- State Office of Historic Preservation
- Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

5.2 Community Engagement

Roughly half of the community members who registered to attend the two virtual community meetings actually participated. Additionally, representatives from several stakeholder organizations participated, including Willamette Falls and Landings Heritage Area Coalition (3), Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation (3), West Linn Historical Society (1). Additionally, the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation submitted comments for consideration, which are included in the Appendix.

During the virtual community meetings, the 55 participants were invited to ask questions and to participate in an interactive tool to identify community preferences and priorities. The same questions were available on an interactive website designed for community members who could not attend the virtual meetings or who preferred to participate in the process independently.

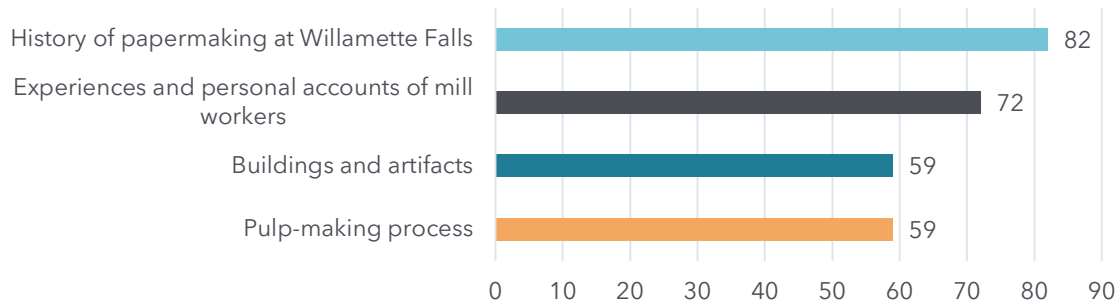
In addition to input from virtual community meeting attendees, the interactive website was open for the first half of December 2021 and drew a total of 150 views, with 21 individuals providing input. All preferences and priorities follow below.

1. If we were to do interpretation through signage, sculptures or other forms, what aspects of the mill history is of most interest?

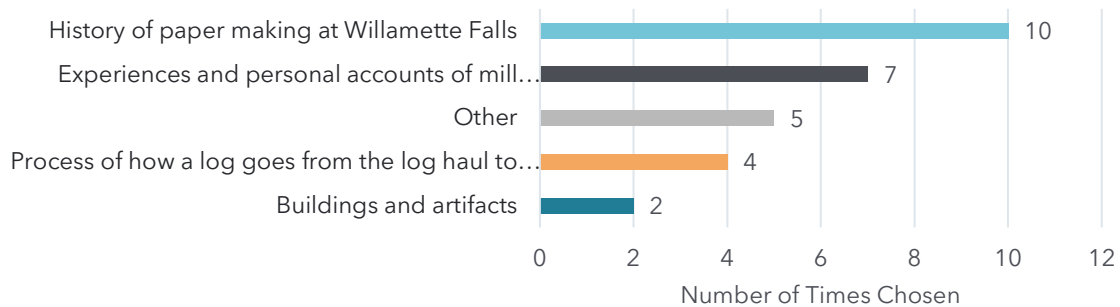
Virtual Community Meetings: The "history of papermaking at Willamette Falls" scored highest as the most interesting aspect by weighted average (82), followed by the "experiences and personal accounts of mill workers" (72), buildings and artifacts (59) and the pulp-making process (59).

Interactive Website: Results were similar among those who participated via the interactive website, with the same top (and secondary preferences. Among those who selected "Other," comments focused on removing environmental hazards, maximizing views of Willamette Falls, documenting images of Mill A when it was operational, and focusing on the Native American history in the area. The pulp-making process ranked fourth with buildings and artifacts coming in last.

Results from Virtual Community Meetings



Results from Interactive Website

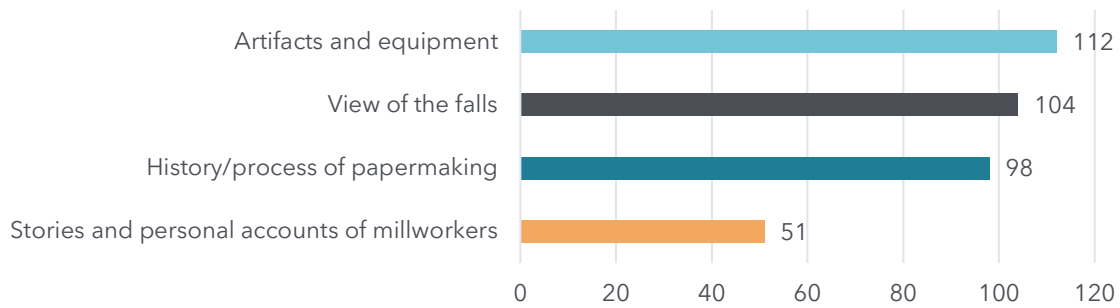


2. What is the most important aspect/feature of Mill A?

Virtual Community Meetings: The “artifacts/equipment” scored highest by weighted average (112), followed closely by “view of the Willamette Falls” (104), the “history of papermaking” (98), “stories and personal accounts of millworkers” (94) and least important by a significant margin, “buildings” (51).

Interactive Website: Over half (53%) named “view of the falls” as most important, followed by a tie (21% each) for “stories and personal accounts” and “the history/process of papermaking.” A respondent selected “Other,” commenting that the mill's impact on the development of West Linn was important.

Results from Virtual Community Meetings



Results from Interactive Website

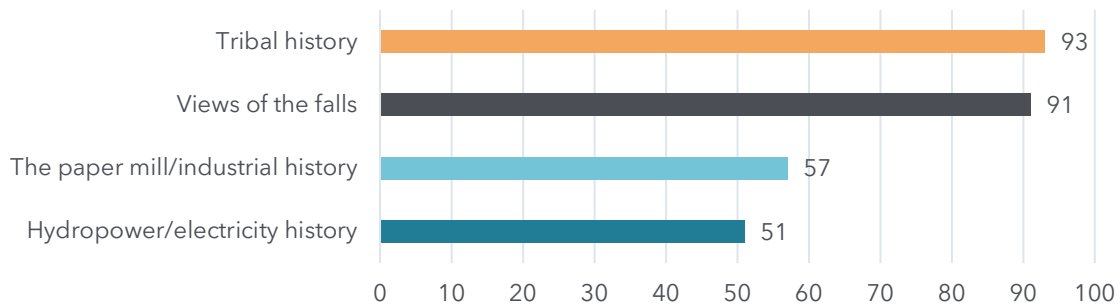


3. What is the most important aspect/feature of the West Linn side of the Willamette Falls, to you?

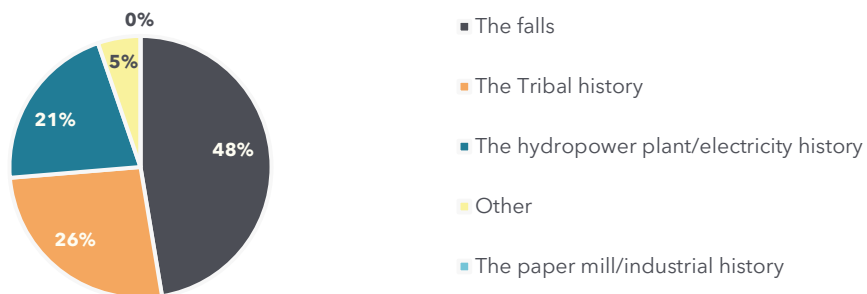
Virtual Community Meetings: "Tribal history" scored highest by weighted average (93), "views of the falls" followed (91), trailed by "the paper mill/industrial history" (57) and lastly, "hydropower/electricity history" (51).

Interactive Website: The majority (48%) named "view of the falls" as the most important aspect/feature, followed by the "Tribal history" (26%), "hydropower plant/electricity history" (21%) and "other" (5%). "Other" elicited only one comment, expressing that the mill should be torn down and the area returned to its natural state.

Results from Virtual Community Meetings



Results from Interactive Website

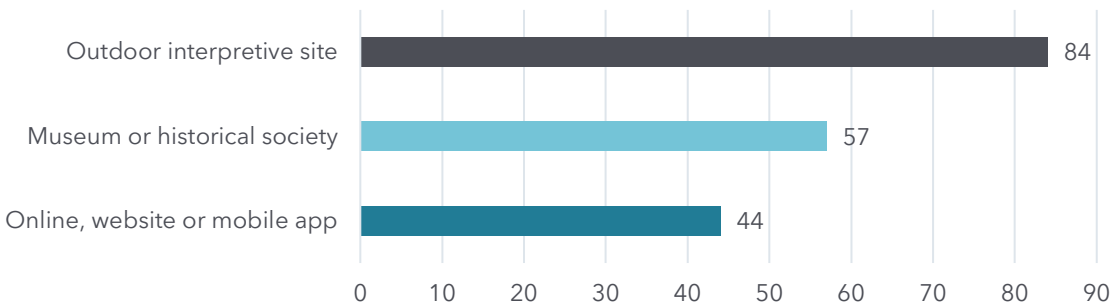


4. *Where would you like to go to learn more about the paper mill and history of Willamette Falls?*

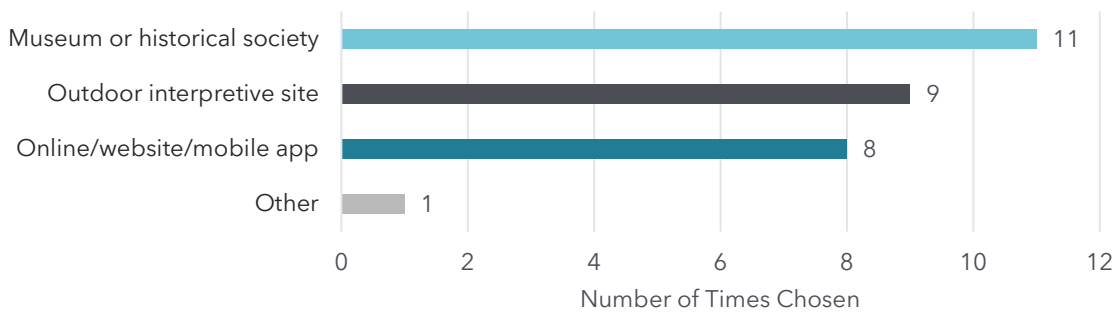
Virtual Community Meetings: The top preference by weighted average was “outdoor interpretive site” (84), followed by “museum or historical society” (57) and least favored, “online, website or mobile app” (44).

Interactive Website: Conversely, the majority preferred to learn this history through a “museum or historical society” with “outdoor interpretive site” placing a close second, followed closely by “online, website or mobile app.” One participant chose “other” and expressed a desire for any interpretive site to be located on the site of the original mill.

Results from Virtual Community Meetings



Results from Interactive Website



5. What other ideas do you have for telling the story of Mill A?

Virtual Community Meetings: PGE received a total of 29 responses to this open-ended question in the virtual community meetings. Many comments acknowledged that current conditions may require removal, with a broad range of views about the approach PGE should take.

Some participants would like to see all of the buildings removed and the area returned to its pre-industrial state. Others prefer PGE to focus on the Indigenous people of the area and less on the industrial history of the site, with input from Tribes.

Some expressed a desire to preserve timber elements, artifacts, and mill equipment to be seen and learned about off or onsite, as determined. Others felt strongly that Mill A should be restored and preserved on-site for future public access.

Representative Comments:

"Removal of buildings to open view of the falls and upper river. Creating a multi-media exhibit nearby. Buildings were built to protect machinery, not last centuries."

"Gut the buildings, remove and restore artifacts, and display in a safe environment."

"If buildings cannot be preserved, be sure to include interactive features at the site (like QR codes that link to listening tours)."

"I understand the significance of this industrial site to the pioneer story but find myself wanting to know more about the indigenous people and less emphasis on the colonizer stories. Maybe moving equipment offsite and allowing for tribal input."

"Restore the buildings for an interactive site. Support the river trail to connect the river to the people. Repurpose the buildings - do not tear down."

Other participants shared ideas for possible remediation, and PGE's consideration as it works to mitigate the potential adverse effect with ideas for potential interpretation through signage, sculptures and/or exhibits. The group was split on whether interpretation should be done onsite, where Mill A currently stands, or off-site. Either way, people expressed an interest in interpretation to include oral histories of mill workers, how the mill was built, and be accessible to the public.

For off-site interpretation, participants suggested:

- Installing signs or exhibits along the river walk in West Linn from Willamette Park to the bridge.
- Creating a memorial structure using reclaimed materials from the Mill A buildings.
- Creating a papermaking museum with exhibits and workshops about the mill.
- Displaying equipment and artifacts off-site, whether at City Hall or in a safe, outdoor environment, with interactive and interpretative panels and information.
- Digitizing Mill A and its history on a website, through virtual tours and using Lidar, to make it accessible to historic organizations and to the public.
- Installing a web cam at the falls that can be viewed at home or online.

For on-site interpretation, participants suggested:

- Walking tours, potentially with volunteer docents or historians dressed in period clothing.
- Restore the Mill A complex and provide outdoor, interactive and interpretive experiences.
- If demolition is necessary, provide interactive interpretive features on-site. For example, create listening tours that can be accessed through smart phones that would guide visitors through the area.
- Converting the space for an alternate use, such as theater or artists spaces.
- Allowing artists access to materials to create new works.

As PGE considers documentation of Mill A as a mitigation strategy, community members also expressed interest in information about the area's geology and pre-industrial history, a timeline or other visual tool to share the history of Tribes and Indigenous People, and lastly, information about the technology behind power transmission and how it has changed over time.

Participants also shared ideas for preserving Mill A stories through ways that do not depend on how PGE addresses the hazards, and that could happen even as industrial operations take place, including:

- Making available exhibits or educational presentations to local schools.
- Creating curricula for teachers about the history and science of Mill A.
- Creating a movie to tell the story of the Mill A complex.

- Creating a booklet with brief descriptions of the duties of people who worked at the mill and other historical information.

Interactive Website: Participant feedback in this space diverged from that received in public meetings. Of the 13 comments received to the final open-ended question, nine urged removal of the industrial buildings in favor of a more scenic place and view. The balance of comments mirrored familiar themes, as well, including a desire to capture the broader history of the site (honoring Indigenous People and the Willamette Falls Locks), and an interest in public access to scenic views of the falls.

Representative Comments:

"I have lived in West Linn for 19 years... not every structure that someone considers "old" should be preserved."

"Please clean to preserve the falls. Mills are just environmental impact."

"More important than trying to focus on the balance of Tribal/industrial history (paper, electricity)... these line up to tell a story about the place around the falls as distinct from Portland. We have more history than a suburb."

"The history of the mill doesn't feel like something we should be memorializing onsite. It's great to document everything online but continuing to honor this portion of history onsite would be disappointing."

"Tear it down - it's an eyesore."

"The buildings are a toxic eyesore and need to be removed. Land should be restored and turned into public access viewpoint with walking trails."

"I am firmly on the side of tear this down and use the good pieces somewhere else. As a neighbor (O.C.), show me the falls - which are a tourist draw, not the mill(s)."

6. Appendix

This section includes written comments submitted to PGE through the Community Workshops.

Submitted by Troy Bowers of the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation on Dec. 1, 2021:

"Thank you for the opportunity to participate tonight.

I am Troy Bowers, president of WFHF.

We appreciate the long-standing relationship we have with PGE for the past couple of decades.

Our mission is to preserve the economic and industrial heritage at the Falls including the stories, some of the equipment and some of the architecture.

We laud PGE for considering preserving and maintaining key pieces of equipment.

We understand the importance of the Sullivan plant and concerns about security and safety.

My message tonight reflects the Foundation's wishes and aspirations for the site.

Our vision is to continue collaboration that saves key infrastructure as safety and maintenance projects get executed.

In the near term, we would like to prioritize what can be saved for future display.

This includes some equipment and representative building materials for use in a future onsite exhibit.

We believe this valuable history is best shared on site in context of the power of the Falls.

It provides a sense of scale that can only be understood and appreciated by being there.

The proximity to the locks, the paper mill and power plant and all of the iterations of the site from its first use by humans.

We believe this can be accomplished while respecting and prioritizing the power generation important to us all.

Now is the time to save important pieces so they can be incorporated into a future interpretive display and exhibit.

We look forward to working with PGE and other stakeholders to accomplish this important work.

Thank you."



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