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The Landscape: Tualatin

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Tualatin

by Liza Morehead

Twelve miles south of Portland on the border of Washington and Clackamas counties, Tualatin is a small town where carefully curated landscapes make up for the absence of traditional town features. Founded in 1913, Tualatin's population remained small through much of the twentieth century. During the 1960s, Tualatin, like surrounding Washington County, experienced a population boom. The small city's population more than doubled between 1960 and 1970, from 359 to 750 residents. The following decade saw even greater growth, with a population increase of 880% between 1970 and 1980. While the rate has slowed, the city's population continues to grow. ^[1]

The city's growth was influenced by and necessitated new infrastructure. Interstate 5 was completed in 1966, running through the eastern part of the city and strengthening connections to other parts of the region. During the 1960s and 1970s, a new connection to the Bull Run watershed supplied the city's new reservoirs with fresh water, while a new sewage treatment plant completed the cycle. Since 1973, Legacy Meridian Park Hospital has served the area's medical needs and is one of the city's largest employers. ^[2]

As the city's population grew, there was a mounting sense that a new type of infrastructure was needed. Developers, city planners, and residents began to reimagine existing areas of the city. City leaders created the Central Urban Renewal District in 1975. Comprising more than 327 acres, the district centered on SW Nyberg Street and SW Boones

Ferry Road. Planners sought to improve infrastructure, including traffic congestion, inadequate flood protection and drainage facilities, while providing a sense of community that Tualatin was lacking. New attention would be paid to the area's natural features, including the Tualatin River, while promoting community institutions and cultural uses. One area ripe for redevelopment was a former industrial site located in the northern section of the city between I-5 and Boones Ferry Road. Once the home of a sawmill, the site housed the Hervin Company, manufacturer of Blue Mountain Pet Food, for more than forty years. When the company closed in the late 1980s, it was sold to the city and redeveloped as the town center. ^[3]

In 1994, Tualatin Commons opened on more than five acres of this site. Serving as the city's downtown, it includes a three-acre artificial lake, a plaza and signs pointing visitors to nearby nature trails. The site is ringed by small businesses, apartments, and a hotel. Events are held there throughout the year, including the Pumpkin Regatta, Holiday Lights, and a summer concert series. Trails extending from the Commons leads visitors through wetlands, past public art, and to many of the city's community institutions, and historic homes.

Visitors to Tualatin Commons can choose from a variety of restaurants and cultural activities, but those looking to pass the day shopping go to a different carefully curated landscape. In 2005, Bridgeport Village, a thirty-acre open air shopping center, opened in the former site of a county-owned rock quarry. ^[4]



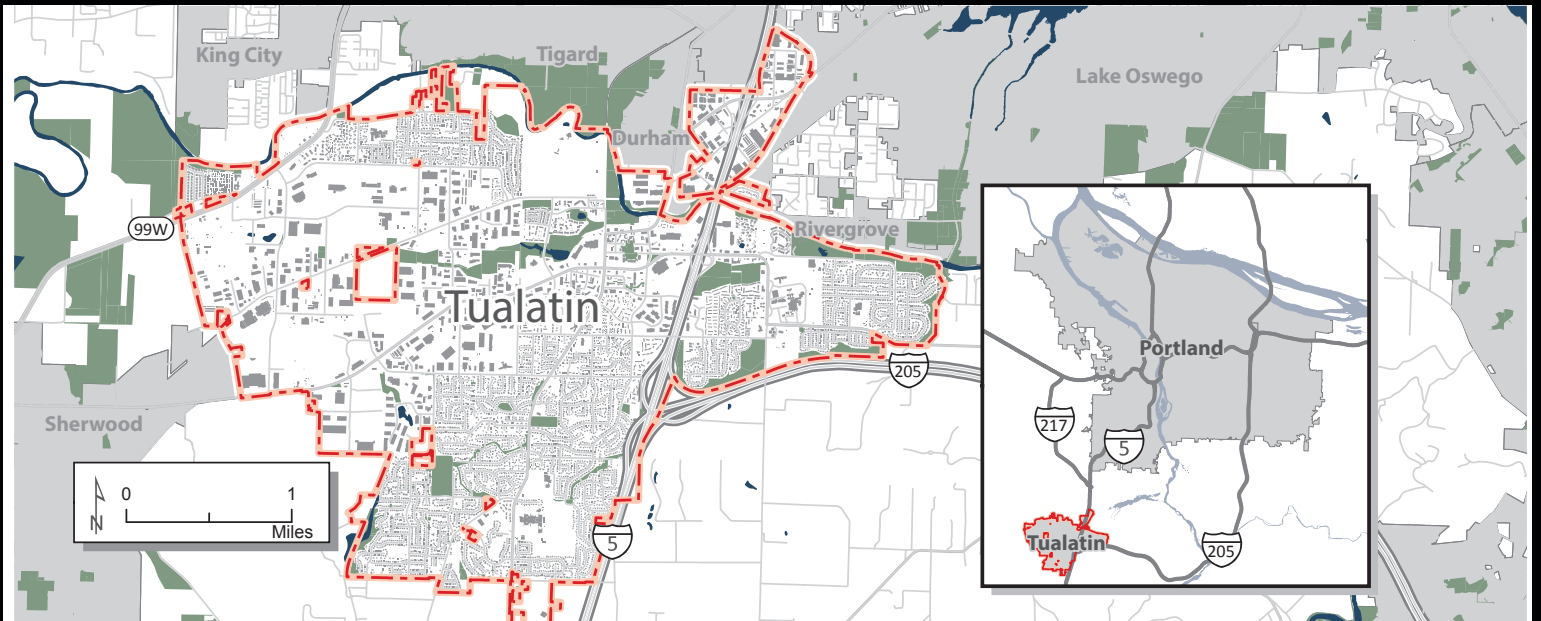
Public art at Tualatin Commons.



The Commons was once the site of the Herwin pet food company.



Concerts and other public events are held at the Commons throughout the year.



[1] US Census
 [2] Nyhaard, Karen Lafky. City of Tualatin. The Oregon Encyclopedia. Oregon Historical Society. https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/tualatin_city_of/#.WGv-_1MrLAU
 [3] Martinazzi, Loyce. *Tualatin OregonGoing to the Dogs with Blue Mountain Pet Food*. Tualatin Life. September 2010.
 [4] [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridgeport_Village_\(Oregon\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bridgeport_Village_(Oregon))