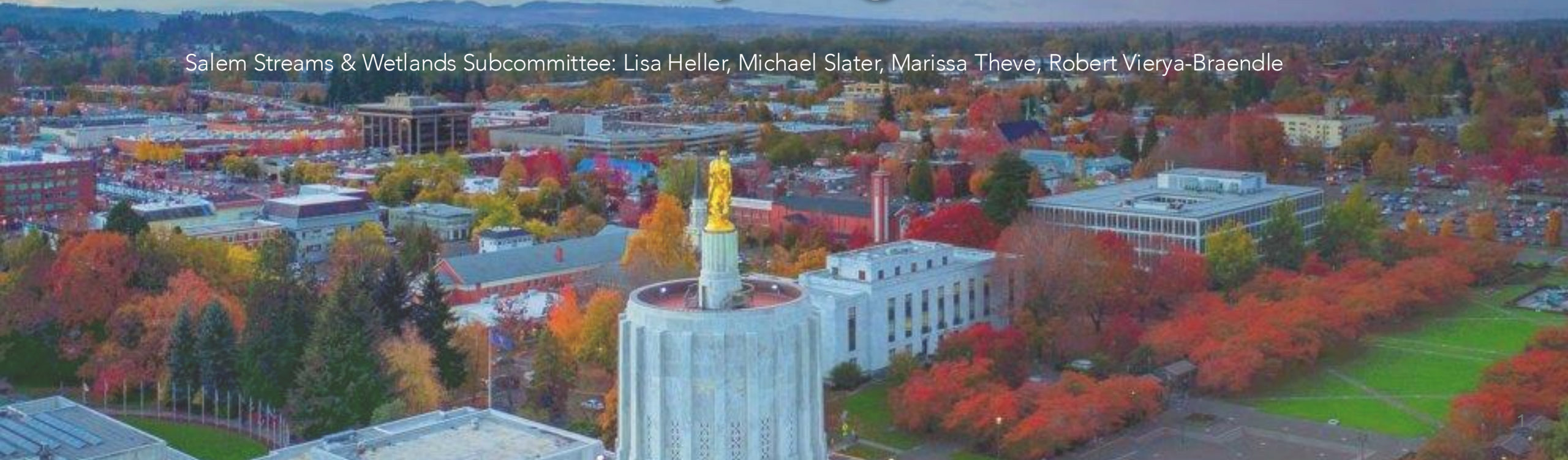


Conserving Salem's Environmentally Significant Lands

Salem Streams & Wetlands Subcommittee: Lisa Heller, Michael Slater, Marissa Theve, Robert Viera-Braendle



Our Goal



We need to strike a balance between developing urban lands to meet human needs and conserving urban lands to meet human needs.

(And help our native species, too.)

Environmentally Significant Lands

- Rivers
- Streams
- Lakes
- Ponds
- Wetlands
- Riparian Areas
- Floodplains
- White Oak Groves
- Open Spaces
- Wildlife Habitat

Denotes goal 5 resources

Ecosystem Services



Ecosystem services are the benefits people obtain from ecosystems.

- Provisioning services such as food and water
- Regulating services such as flood and disease control
- Cultural services such as spiritual and recreational benefits; and
- Supporting services, such as nutrient cycling, that maintain the conditions for life on Earth.

A wide-angle photograph of the Oregon State Capitol building in Salem, Oregon. The building is a large, light-colored stone structure with a prominent central dome topped by a golden statue of Oregon Pioneer. The building is surrounded by a green lawn and some trees. The sky is overcast.

Oregon Policies

Goal 5 & Oregon Conservation Strategy

State Policies

Goal 5: Natural Resources



A program to inventory, evaluate, and selectively preserve natural and cultural resources

- Riparian Corridors*
- Wetlands*
- Wildlife Habitat*
- Open Spaces
- Historic Resources
- Scenic Views and Sites*

**Not implemented in Salem.*

Oregon Conservation Strategy



Oregon's official policy to preserve and restore fish and wildlife.

- Willamette Valley is one of nine Oregon ecoregions
- Salem is inside the Mid-Willamette River ecoregion
- The Mid-Willamette Valley has 4 strategy habitat: flowing water and riparian habitat, grasslands, wetlands, and oak woodland.
- The Mid-Willamette Valley has 68 strategy species*

** Strategy Species are defined as having small or declining populations, are at-risk, and/or are of management concern.*

A photograph of a construction site. In the foreground, there are large, uneven piles of brown soil and dirt. A yellow CAT excavator is positioned in the middle ground, facing left. Another yellow excavator is visible further back, to the right. The background features a line of tall, thin evergreen trees under a clear blue sky. A concrete wall or foundation is visible on the right side of the image. The text "Regulated, Not Conserved" is overlaid in white, bold font across the lower portion of the image.

Regulated, Not Conserved

Environmental Land Management Regulations

Federal

- Rivers and Harbor Act
- Clean Water Act
- Endangered Species Act
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- Bald and Gold Eagle Protection Act
- National Flood Insurance Program

State

- Oregon Wetland Statute

Local

- Significant Trees
- Riparian Vegetation

The Subcommittee finds that the City of Salem complies with the laws and regulations listed above.



Environmentally Significant Land in Salem

Lakes & Ponds | Rivers & Streams | Wetlands | Riparian Areas |
Floodplains | Oak Groves | Open Spaces | Animal Habitat

Environmentally Sensitive Lands The Willamette River

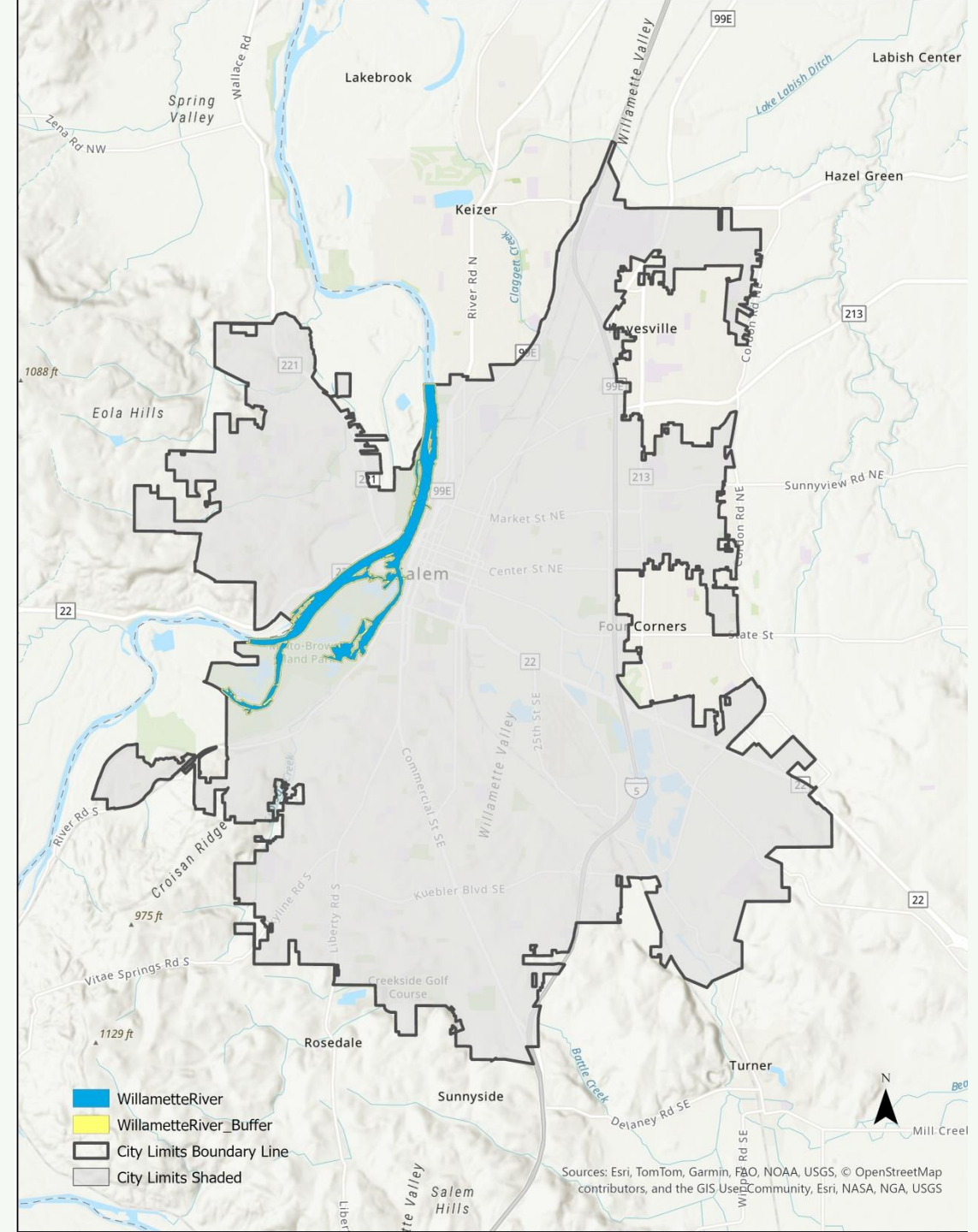
Ecosystem Services

- Drinking water
- Stormwater conveyance
- Effluent outfall
- Temperature regulation
- Habitat
- Cultural, recreational, and tourism opportunities

Total Area: 542 acres

Riparian Buffer (75'): 216 acres

Area as a Percent of Salem: 1%



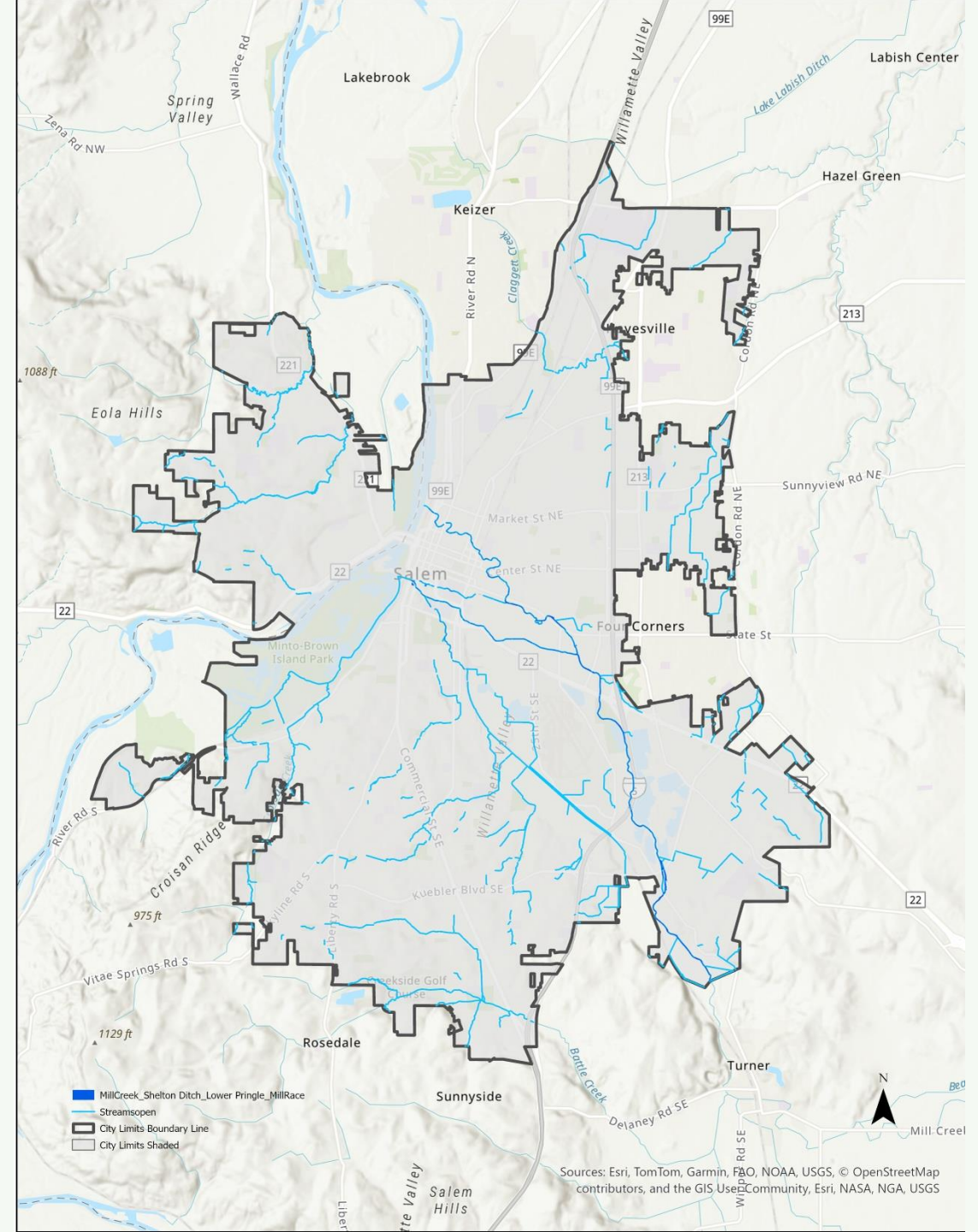
Environmentally Sensitive Lands Streams

Ecosystem Services

- Stormwater management
- Groundwater recharge
- Climate regulation
- Fire risk mitigation
- Recreational, cultural, and educational opportunities

Area: No data

Percent of Salem Area:



Environmentally Significant Lands

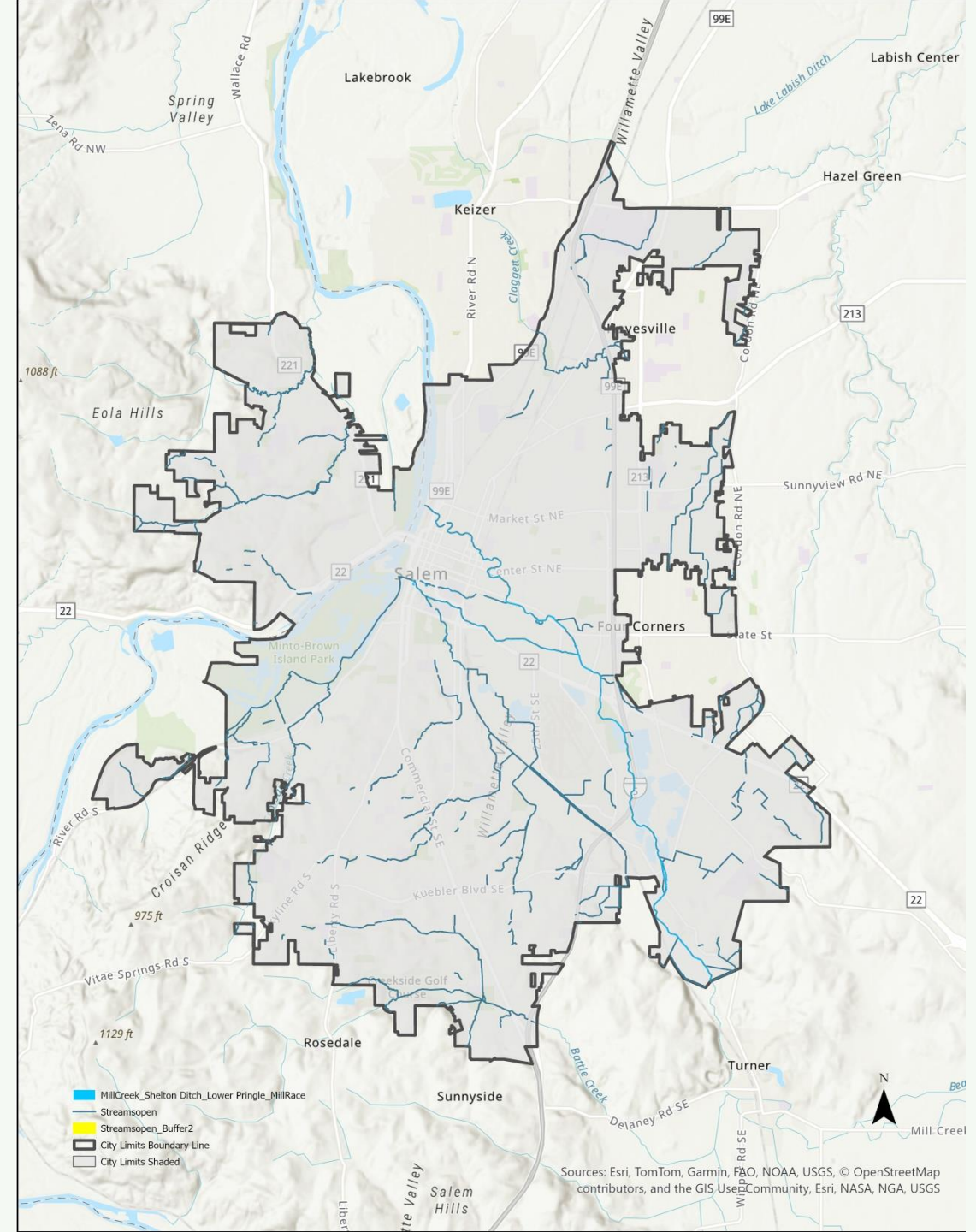
Riparian Buffers

Ecosystem Services

- Pollution mitigation
- Habitat provision
- Climate regulation,
- Biochemical processing
- Fire risk mitigation
- Recreation, educational and cultural services

Area: 1,239

Percent of Salem's Area: 2%



Environmentally Sensitive Lands

Wetlands + Hydric Soils

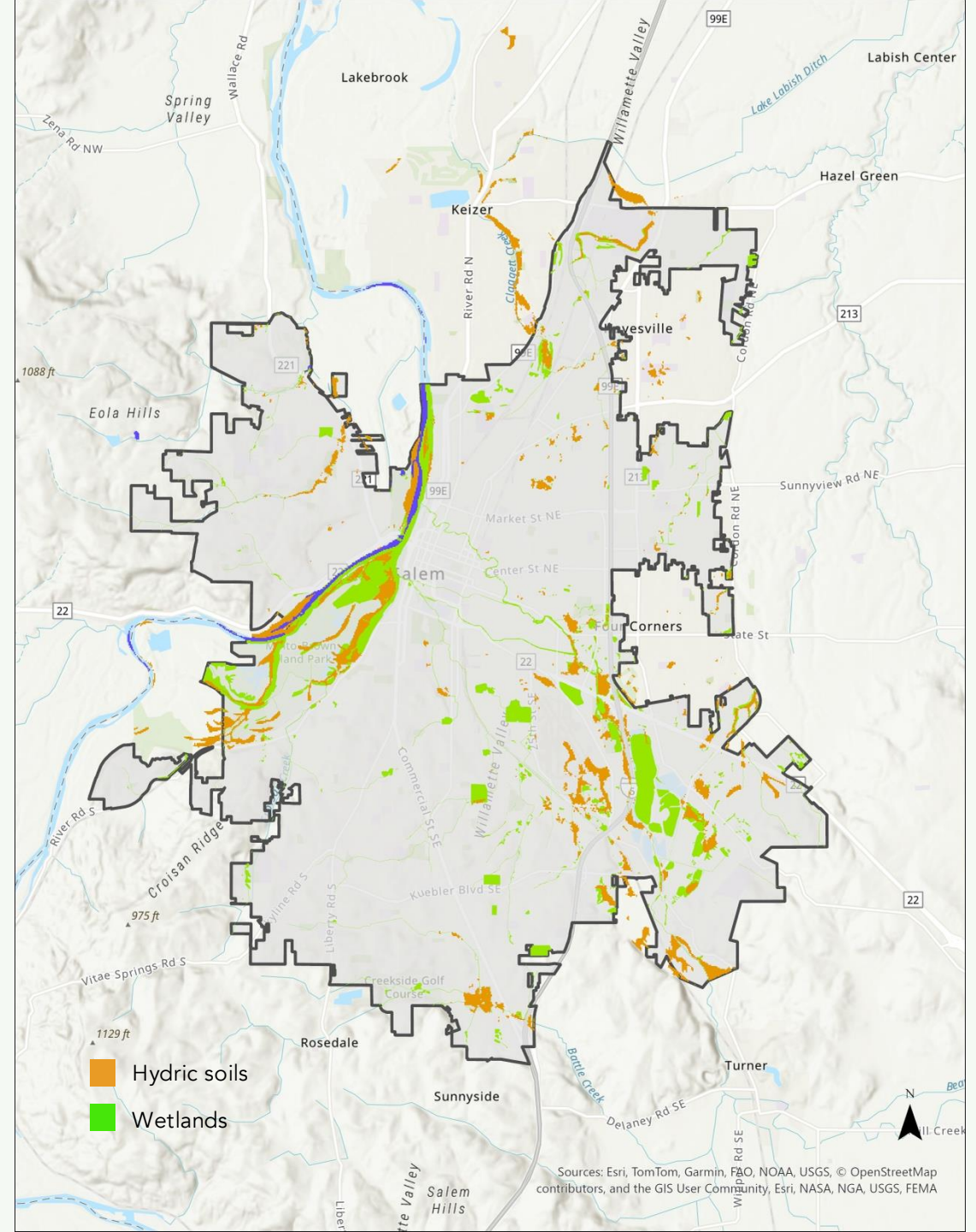
Ecological Services

- Stormwater management
- Water quality management
- Groundwater recharge
- Biogeochemical processes
- Habitat

Wetlands Area: 1,239

Hydric Soils: N/A

Percent of Salem's Area:

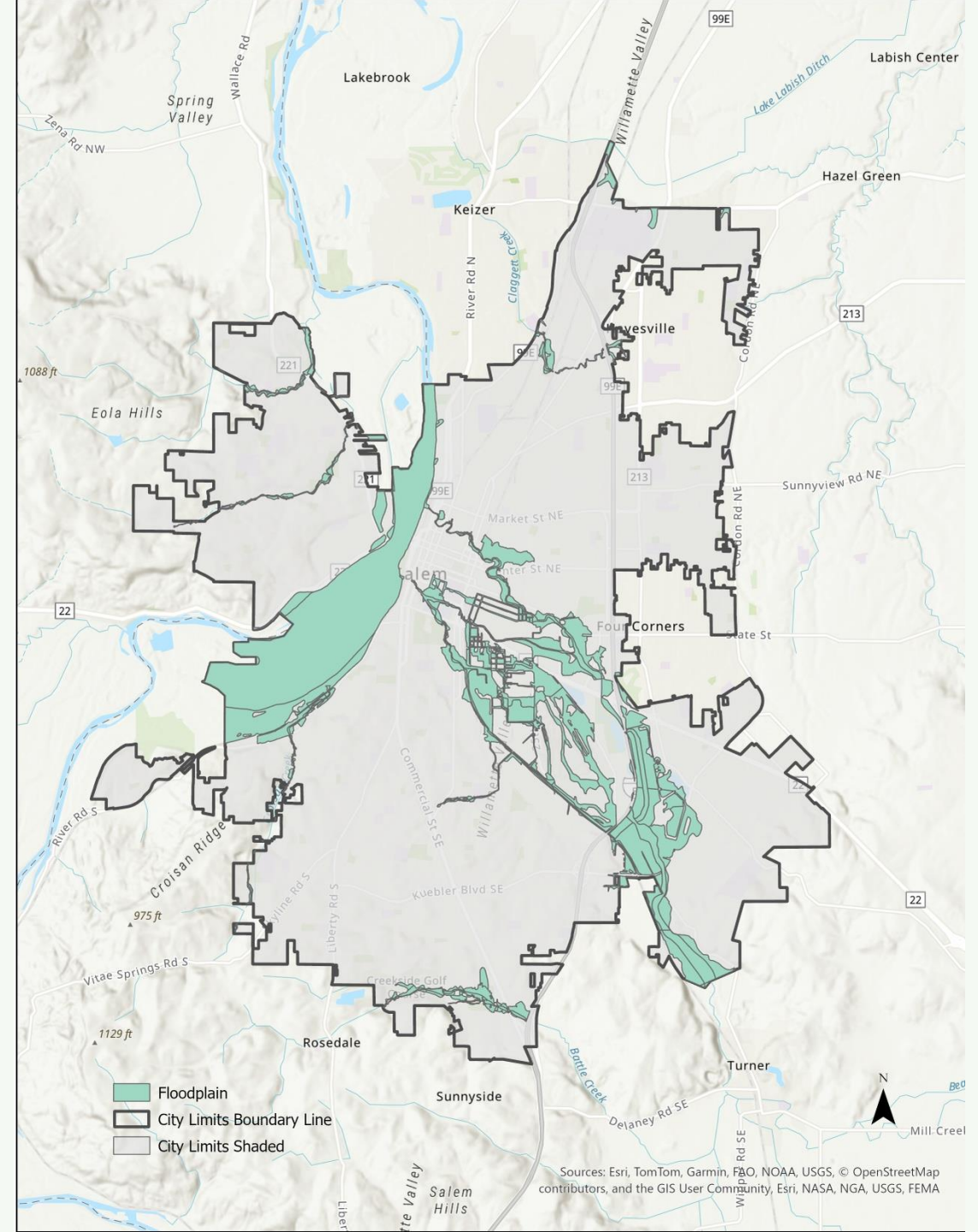


Environmentally Sensitive Lands Floodplain

Ecosystem Services

- Water quality management
- Stormwater conveyance and storage
- Habit for native species
- Groundwater recharge

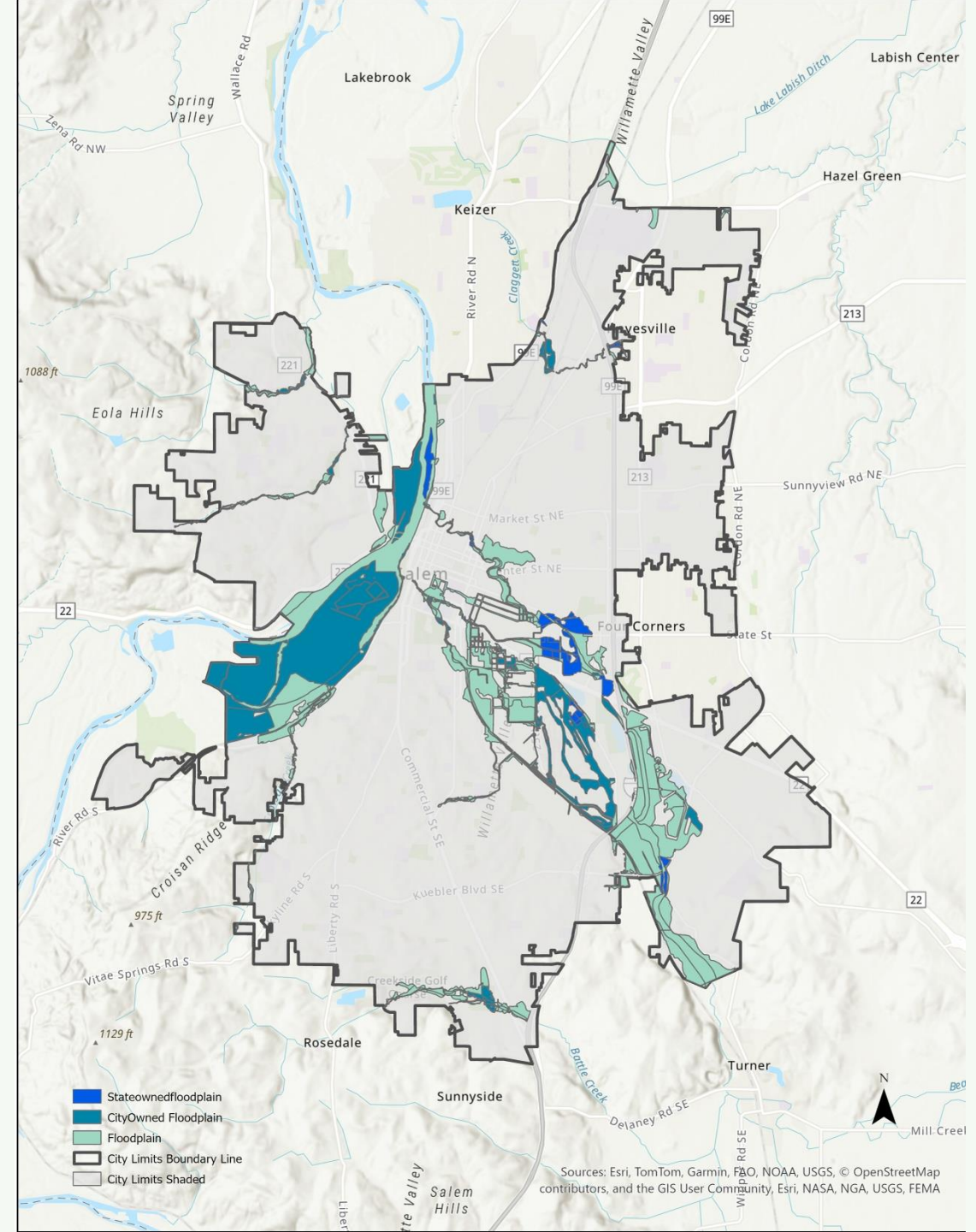
Area: 6,192 acres
Percent of Salem's Area: 10%



Environmentally Sensitive Lands Floodplain

Ownership

- 80% of the floodplain is owned by the City of Salem
- 10% is owned by the State of Oregon



Environmentally Sensitive Lands Open Spaces

Ecosystem Services

- Cultural and recreation services
- Temperature regulation*
- Habitat*
- Pollinator*
- Fire break
- Air quality management
- Water quality management*
- Storm water management

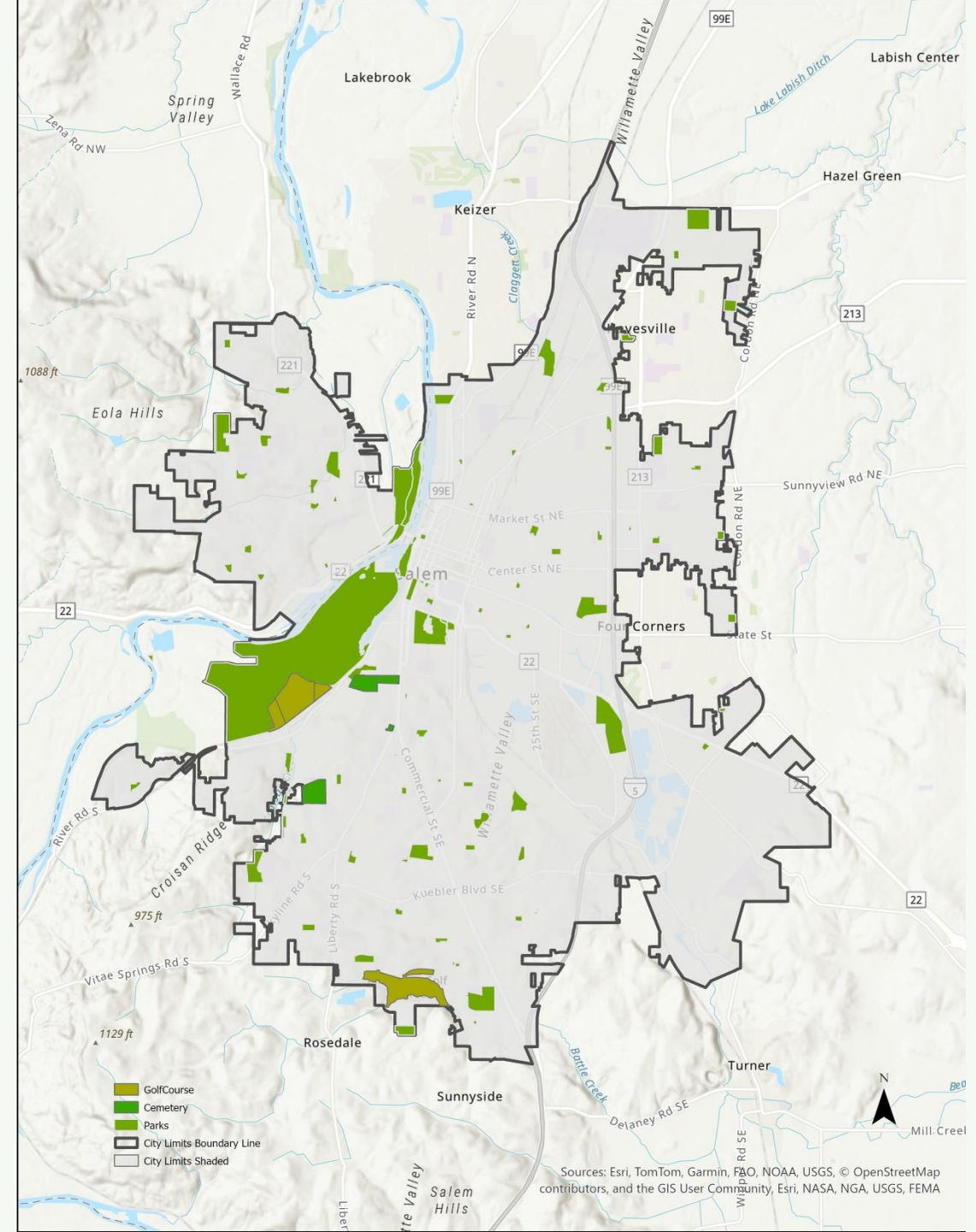
* If vegetated

Park Area: 2,335

Cemetery Area: 109 acres

Golf Course Area: 119 acres

Percent of Salem's Area: 4%



Environmentally Significant Lands

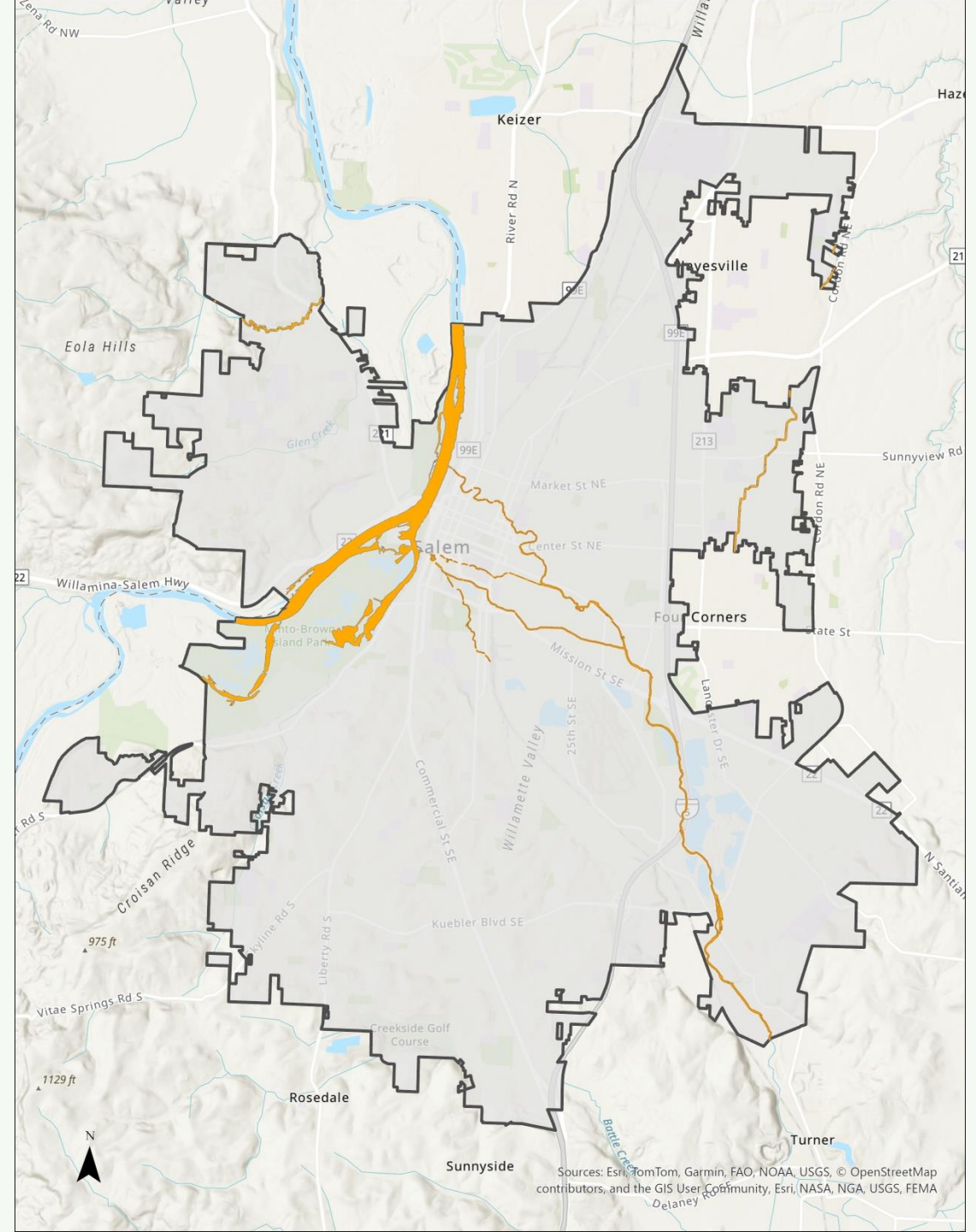
Wildlife Habitat

Ecosystem Services

- Habitat
- Pollination
- Primary production
- Pest management
- Cultural and recreational services

Area: No data

Percent of Salem's Area: No Data



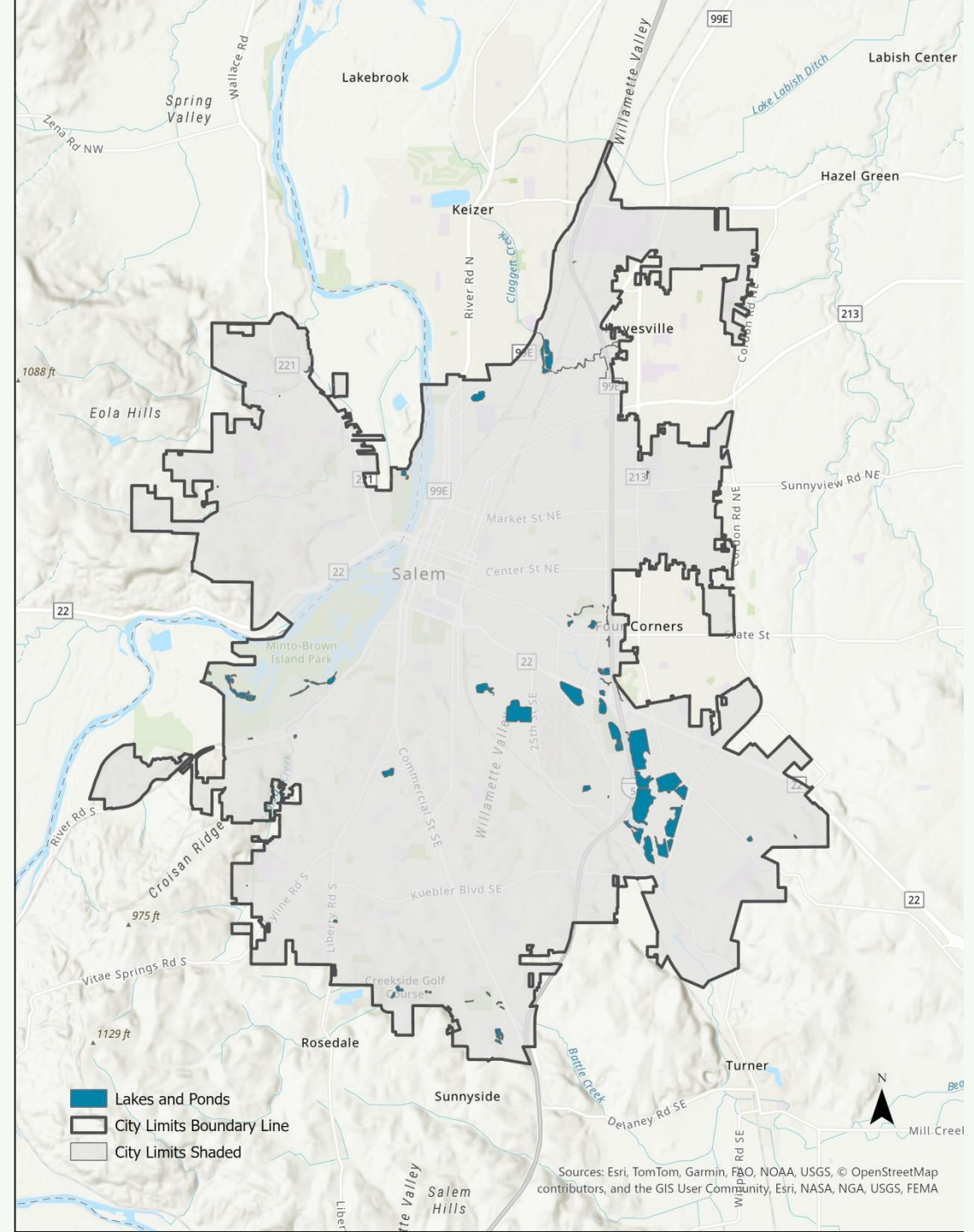
Environmentally Sensitive Lands Lakes and Ponds

Ecosystem Services

- Water quality management
- Stormwater storage
- Habit for native species
- Groundwater recharge
- Biogeochemical processes
- Cultural and recreational services
- Temperature regulation

Area: 455 acres

Percent of Salem's Area: >1%



Environmentally Significant Lands

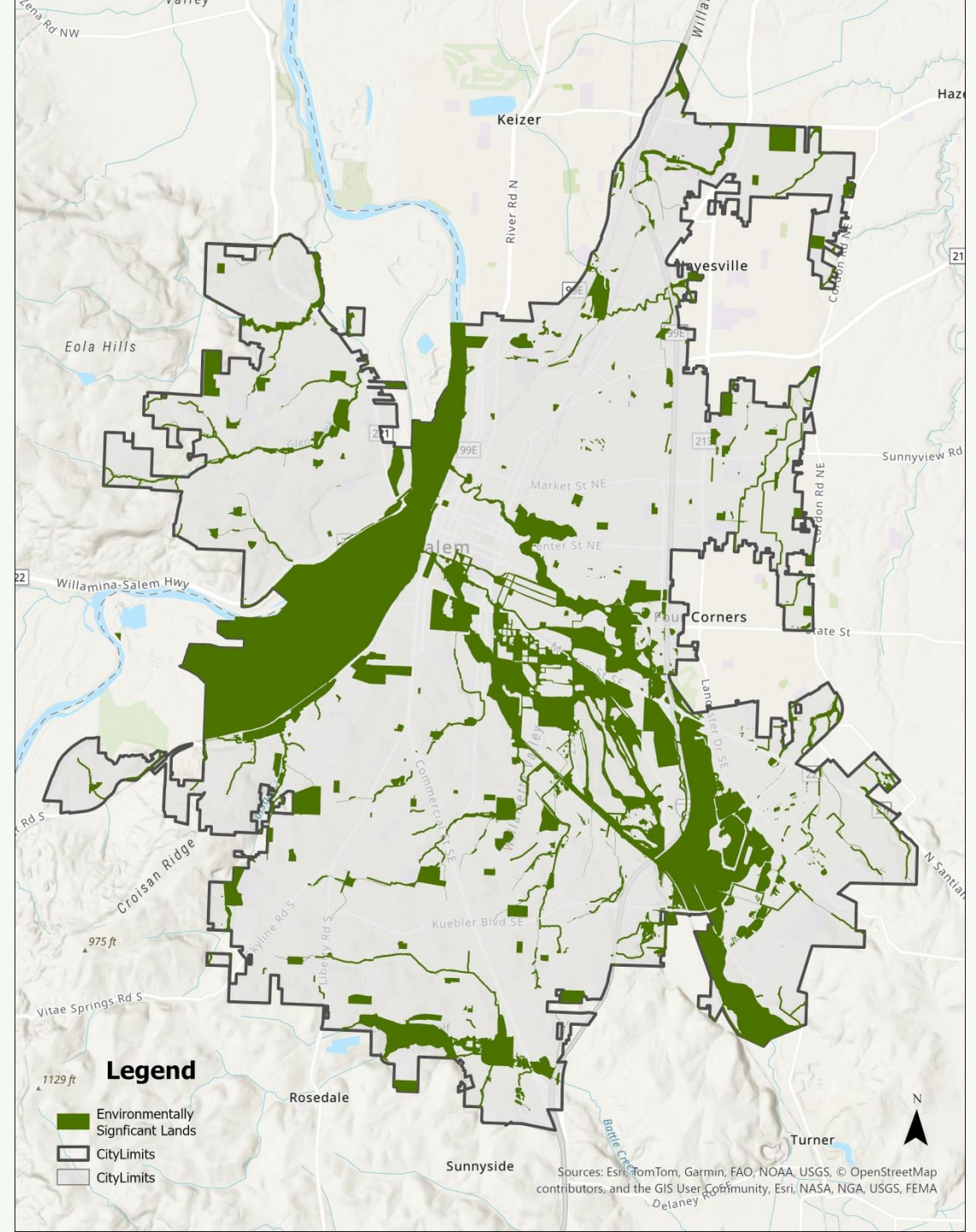
Willamette River and riparian buffer
Streams and riparian buffers
Wetlands
Floodplains
Ponds and lakes
Public parks
Golf courses
Cemeteries

Not included: wildlife habitat & Oregon white oak groves

Area: 14,304

Percent of Salem's Area: 22.5%*

**Includes some developed lands*

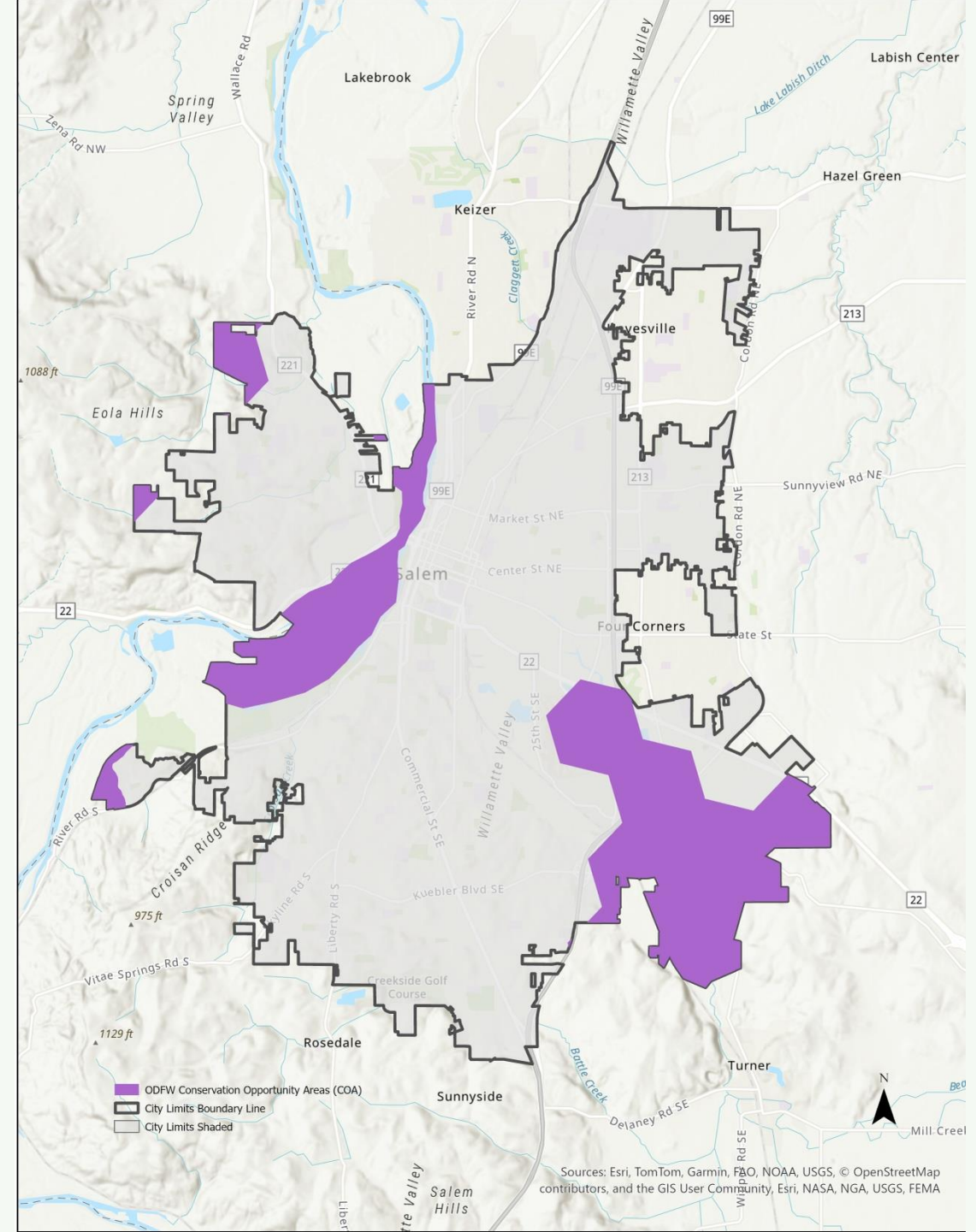


Conservation Opportunity Areas

"Conservation Opportunity Areas (COAs) are places where broad fish and wildlife conservation goals would best be met. Focusing investments in these prioritized areas can increase the likelihood of long-term success, maximize effectiveness over larger landscapes, improve funding efficiency, and promote cooperative efforts across ownership boundaries."

Source: Oregon Conservation Strategy

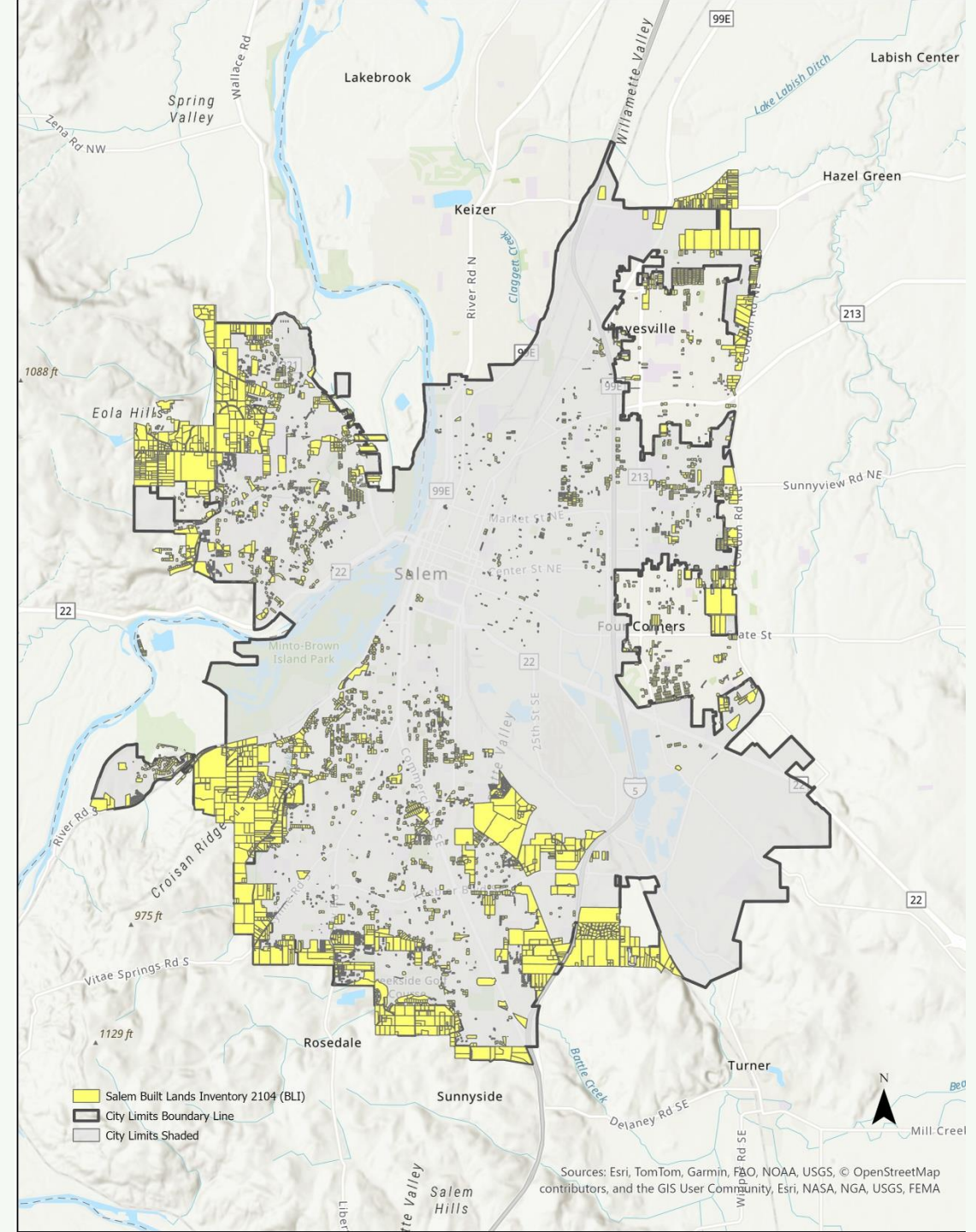
Area: 5,754 acres
Percent of Salem's Area: 9%



Buildable Lands Inventory (2014)

Oregon cities must maintain a 20-year supply of buildable land to meet housing and business needs. This is called the Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI). Salem's BLI was last conducted in 2014 and is shown on the map.

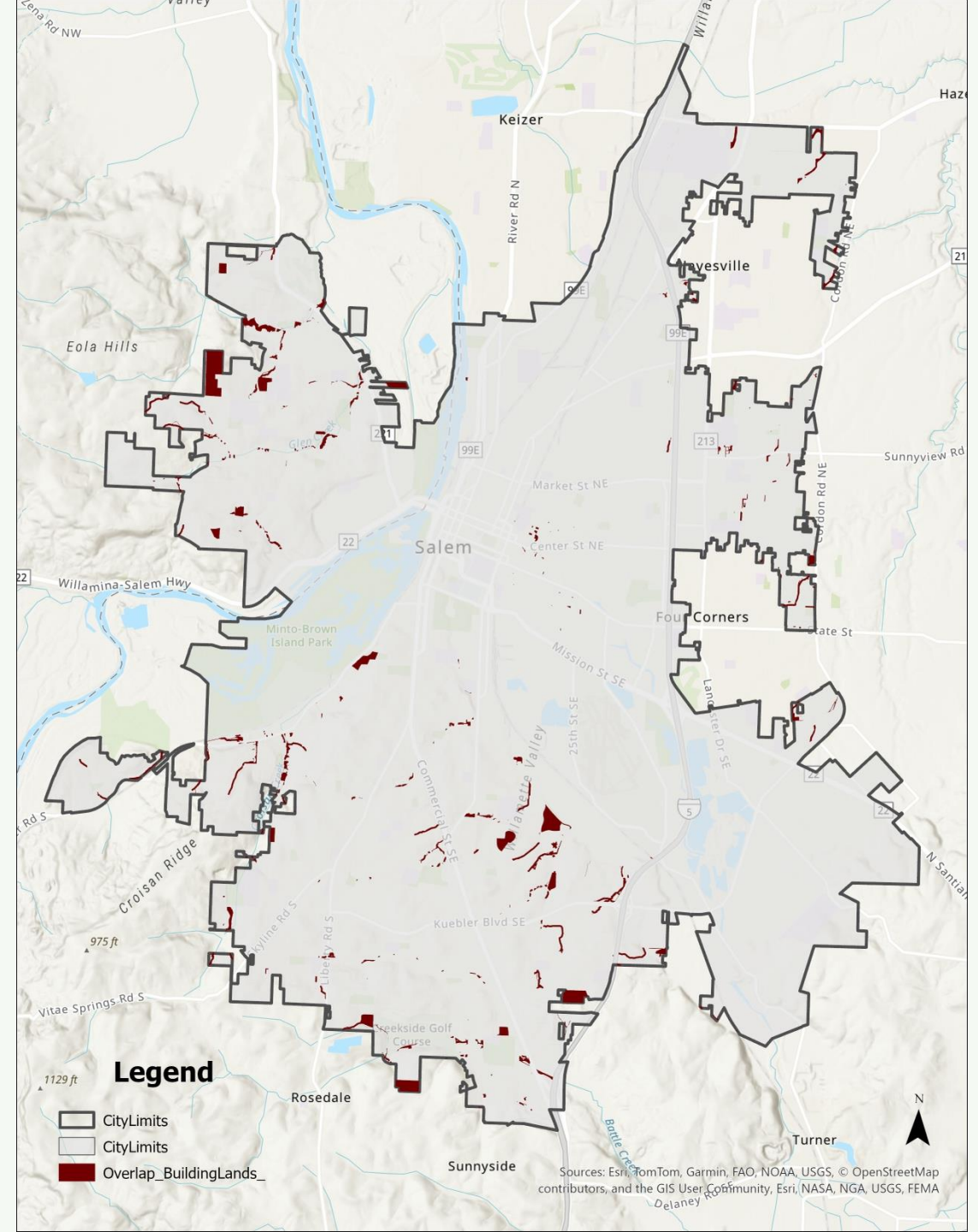
Area: 7,195 acres
Percent of Salem's Area: 11%



Points of Conflicts

The map at right shows lands that are Environmentally Significant Land and also within the Buildable Lands Inventory.

Area: 1,284
Percent of Salem's Area: 2%
Percent BLI: 18%





Conclusion

Findings

1. Salem's land use policies, contrary to our comprehensive plan, are not aligned with state natural resource policies.
2. Salem does not have a vision or integrated policy framework to preserve and manage our natural resources.
3. Natural resources, other than the urban forest, have no political or senior staff champions.
4. Planning and managing environmentally significant land are divided across several different City departments. There is no "owner."
5. Salem's natural resources policy is by default compliance-driven.
6. There is no citizen advisory committee or ongoing public engagement for natural resources management.
7. Regulated resources are "permitted" away.

Recommendations

1. Align Salem natural resource policies with Oregon Land Use Goal 5 and the Oregon Conservation Strategy
2. Enact an environmentally significant lands ordinance
3. Manage environmentally significant lands for ecosystem services and natural habit
4. Preserve environmentally significant lands through conservation easements, deed restrictions, or other legal mechanisms
5. Develop rehabilitation and management plans for each class of environmentally significant lands
6. Make better use of GIS capabilities to track and report on natural resource management
7. Improve cross-departmental planning and coordination among staff that set policy and manage natural resources

Acknowledgements

Subcommittee on Streams & Wetlands

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Questions?

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Maps available at <https://tinyurl.com/39c7as5w>