



POWELL-DIVISION TRANSIT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

EQUITY WORK GROUP

March 4, 2015 | 5 to 6:30 p.m. | David Douglas High School south cafeteria, 1500 SE 130th Ave, Portland

KEY THEMES AND OUTCOMES

Community members, advocacy organizations, professionals working on issues related to equity, staff from TriMet, Portland, Gresham, Multnomah County, the Oregon Department of Transportation, Metro and members of the Powell-Division Steering Committee convened for a second work group meeting on March 4, 2015. The group was charged with applying an equity lens to the route choices that will go before the Steering Committee on March 16, and to continue the spirit of learning together and exploring opportunities to fully integrate community stabilization, equitable access, and anti-displacement ideals into decisions and implementation of the transit project and development project.

The equity work group meeting was publicized at community meetings and through the project website, targeted email invitations, the project interested parties list, and partner updates. Over 50 participants attended. Key themes that emerged from the meeting include the following.

Route options

- **Willamette River crossing options** - Participants recommend the Steering Committee strongly consider Tilikum for the benefits of speed, reliability, and direct connections to jobs and local transit service; but caution the committee pay attention to potential negative impacts and displacement pressures on the diverse business community in inner eastside. West and east side residential neighborhoods are perceived to have similar impacts with either crossing.
- **Portland north/south crossover options** - 82nd Ave. was predominantly viewed as the best crossing option to support the diverse business community, need to connect residents to jobs and training opportunities, and to serve the greatest number of vulnerable populations. Participants also said the benefits of 82nd Ave. would best be achieved with careful planning to mitigate displacement pressures on the small businesses, increase pedestrian safety investments, and improve and stabilize affordable housing, while balancing speed and reliability of the bus rapid

transit. 50th and 52nd Ave. crossings were widely perceived to pose negative impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, without much positive return.

- **Gresham north/south options** - Participants stressed the primary importance of connecting to Mt. Hood Community College, Legacy Mt. Hood Medical Center, and Gresham Vista Business Park in order to expand access to jobs and educational opportunities. Eastman has the potential to connect to many employment areas and Gresham High School, while Kane and Hogan are perceived as having the ability to serve the highest number of residents and vulnerable populations. Participants noted concerns that service on Cleveland would not maximize ridership, given the lower-density neighborhoods in the area.

Potential actions and tools

- Participants advise the project team and Steering Committee continue to track the studies underway in Gresham and Portland and be mindful of their findings and recommendations when available (late spring).
- There is excitement about the 'Community Stabilization Tools and Actions' (attached) emerging from eastside communities and a willingness to continue exploring options and defining priorities that can be aligned with the transit project's needs and implementation schedule.
- Participants encouraged one another and the project team to continue researching best practices and others' experiences with tools in order to identify actions and methods that have been most promising in communities around the country.
- Participants expressed that now is the time to have these conversations and recommend continuing the equity dialogue specific to the Powell-Division corridor.



Meeting purpose

- Provide input for the Steering Committee on route options for their March 16 meeting.
- Learn about and discuss equity work underway in Portland and Gresham, and about some of the community priorities for actions that contribute to equitable development, prevention of involuntary displacement, and otherwise meet the project's goals and desired outcomes.

Questions posed to the work group

- **Route choices:** What equity and anti-displacement considerations should the Steering Committee should contemplate as it makes decisions for the bus rapid transit route: (1) Willamette River crossing, (2) Portland North/South crossing, and (3) Gresham North/South options?
- **Potential tools and actions:** Do you have preferences or priorities for tools to address equitable development and prevention of involuntary displacement? Do you have ideas for other tools community members and project partners should be considering?

INPUT ON ROUTE CHOICES

Willamette River crossing

- Need to outreach to folks in the corridor, locally in inner east, to determine if they perceive possible impacts or to understand their pressures.
- May not be much difference between crossings. Neighborhoods are the same either way.
- Orange Line has already impacted the communities who may have been affected by bus rapid transit.
- There are many areas in inner east that have preserved affordable housing stock, but the rest of the area is already unaffordable to most.
- Seek to maximize the benefit of reliability and travel speed.
- There is equal redevelopment potential for both bridges.
- There is already a good stock of affordable housing in central eastside.
- The area on the eastside is more of a destination than a residential neighborhood.
- Tilikum offers opportunities to connect to job training on east side at PCC's CLIMB facility near OMSI and to education and jobs at South Waterfront on west side.
- Ross Island is heavy traffic, predominantly serving offices and industrial (jobs), not residential
- Option that best connects to the rest of the transit system is critical - transfer to local buses, Orange Line, and streetcar
- Either crossing offers opportunities to connect nearby working class neighborhood residents to jobs.
- Tilikum is a good option
- Take a specific lane to address speed and reliability
- Remember to serve the westside neighborhoods of the Ross Island Bridge - could be served by local transit, bus 19.
- Travel speed for people going long distances is important
- Consider it from a ridership perspective too - serving vulnerable populations through transit.
- Opportunities for affordable housing
- Q: What happens to the existing local bus service, line 4, in either option?

- Concerns about impacts to existing businesses on eastside of crossings.
- Think about the speed of the transit - reduced travel time is critically important
- West end of connection is not a major concern for displacement
- Ross Island is not logical
- How many more riders have access between the two routes? What are the opportunities for increasing affordable housing in the area? Need to understand what the data are telling us.
- Tilikum benefits include: efficiency to destinations; access to jobs; shorter route; fewer displaced populations
- What is the impact to businesses near OMSI? Concern with Tilikum
- Ross Island is not as good a choice given the existing level of traffic, congestion

Portland north/south crossover options

- Pay attention to highly vulnerable populations and areas with high risk of disinvestment - listen to and apply lessons from studies underway in Portland and Gresham.
- 82nd is the right choice to maximize service to the existing, very diverse, businesses in the area.
- 82nd is a great choice, but need to be very thoughtful and deliberate to prevent displacement of businesses.
- Staying on Powell longer - to 82nd - appears that it would serve more people and more vulnerable populations than cutting up to Division in the 50's.
- 82nd Ave is preferred: PCC, minority-owned businesses, Powell neighborhoods that have more vulnerable populations are better served, greater redevelopment potential.
- Staying on Powell to 82nd means that pedestrian traffic is being attracted to a corridor that is not designed for pedestrians - safety concerns. How to safely get people to transit?
- Powell to 82nd helps to serve the Lents neighborhood, closer than the Division route.
- Missed opportunity if it isn't on 82nd
- 82nd serves communities of color
- 82nd links to PCC
- PCC is a major destination - needs to be served. 80% of students come from zip codes immediately around the campus. Student body of PCC pulls south of Powell primarily, then Jade, then east of 205. Let's serve them.
- How much political will does their need to be to get a dedicated bus rapid transit lane on 82nd? How much priority is there for a dedicated lane? Would a dedicated lane address speed and reliability needs and concerns?
- 82nd has the potential to negatively impact small businesses
- For the choice, need to consider balance of options: pedestrian connections, traffic congestion/ bus rapid transit speed, and air quality
- 82nd is becoming a main street between Powell and Division
- Air quality, noise pollution, and slowing down the line are major concerns with 82nd Ave.
- Q: How does local service work with bus rapid transit? Does staying on Powell longer mean that those neighborhoods have increased distances from bus stops (over what is currently provided by local bus service)? Increased distances to stops would be a significant impact to vulnerable populations.

- Q: Which populations want to go where?
- Diverse communities are found in either direction for 122nd
- 50th and 52nd make no sense. There has been a lot of recent public and private investment in area and along Division - why would be tear that up?
- Concerns that 50th and 52nd are not adequate rights of way, especially with turning movements, which seem to require property acquisition and significant impacts to small businesses.
- 50th is more residential, potential issues with maintaining desirability of place
- bus rapid transit near I-205 (92nd Ave) is not walkable
- Inner Division is too narrow and congested with auto traffic.

Gresham north/south options

- Connect to destinations! That is the primary equity consideration in Gresham
- Connect to Legacy Mt. Hood, Mt. Hood Community College, and Gresham Vista for employment
- bus rapid transit needs to captures access to employment and educational opportunities
- Hogan and Kane have apartments with residents needing service; not as much with Cleveland
- Hogan has a higher level of displacement potential and lots of traffic off the freeway
- Kane is the widest street - less displacement
- There seems to be support for Eastman and Cleveland
- Eastman would provide good access to Gresham High School, which is a plus
- Eastman provides a good opportunity to connect workforce to jobs
- Highly recommend talking with residents on Cleveland - transit there would be very beneficial
- Cleveland has less population, wouldn't serve as many people, more middle income neighborhoods
- Q: Does Cleveland or Hogan have the greatest advantage to access Gresham Vista?

Studies underway and ideas for equity actions

Project partners from Gresham and Portland shared how they're trying to understand and address the potential for involuntary displacement and equitable access, while a group of community organizations presented a "conversation starter" list of ideas they would like to see explored. Gresham is focusing first on trying to identify which neighborhoods are most vulnerable to displacement and will begin to develop strategies to address the potential displacement concerns. Portland is working with a consultant to look at existing policies to fight displacement and provide recommendations for how to strengthen them. In addition, Portland is doing field studies to get an on-the-ground assessment of housing stock and quality near potential stations. An ad hoc group of representatives from several equity- and community-focused organizations – most of them also members of the Powell-Division project steering committee – presented some possible strategies to help ensure everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the prosperity. The group's ideas are summarized in "11 Goals to Community Stability" with 28 potential policy actions (attached).

Work group participants asked questions of the cities and ad hoc group members and discussed opportunities to keep moving the discussion and actions forward:

- Would like participants to consider rent control districts. What can be learned from how other places have designed and implemented rent control?

- What is meant by “affordable housing”, especially related to Portland’s no net loss policy? We need to develop a common language as we discuss these issues in the corridor.
- How do the ‘floating’ Section 8 vouchers factor into opportunities for securing affordable housing in the corridor now and once bus rapid transit is established?
- Recent Portland Water Bureau projects present good case studies for the potential structure and authority of an ongoing Powell-Division steering committee that could be convened to collaborate on development decisions. What types of decisions would an ongoing committee address? How can community members access decision-making on projects that impact their local communities?
- How have developers, especially housing developers, been engaged on the Powell-Division transit project thus far? How could they be engaged to help solve the problems we are discussing? Need to address housing supply in general to bring costs down, and potentially look at land banking to ensure future affordable housing supply.
- Metro’s recent purchase of a property near 82nd Ave and Division is an example of cooperative action between public partners and local residents and businesses, to pursue equitable development early in the transit project.
- Rent control and similar policy actions will require significant political investment. It would be hopeful if the 11 Community Stability goals are prioritized based on level of investment that will be required to implement - political and financial capital needed - and prioritized to the timing of opportunities and transit schedule.
- Seek to find ways to develop business incubator space in concert with housing stability, so folks have the needed jobs and housing to stay in the corridor.
- Now is the time to have these conversations and recommend continuing the equity dialogue specific to the Powell-Division corridor.

Other considerations and issues

- The previous study Portland conducted was drafted in the context of North and Northeast Portland, which have a different history and market than East Portland. Concern that the study does not adequately capture what is happening on the ground in East Portland, as the market has as yet not developed to the same point as N/NE. School data are typically better resources for understanding who is living in East Portland and what their needs area. Citywide data hides the extremes of East Portland.
- Would like to know more how the local bus service will blend with bus rapid transit.

Community Stability Goals and Tools

Powell-Division Transit Development Project

The Powell-Division Transit Development Project presents a great opportunity to create a healthier, better connected, and economically vibrant Powell-Division Corridor. It is critical that this project focuses on improving transportation options and addressing active transit safety concerns along the corridor. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that this is more than just a transportation project- it is also a development project.

This development project has the potential to make necessary improvements so that communities residing along the corridor are supported and empowered to meet their potential wellbeing. However, there are significant concerns among local residents regarding the impacts that development will have on their ability to continue to reside in and enjoy the new benefits that this project will bring. As is evidenced by the various development projects that Multnomah County has experienced over the decades, our low-income communities and communities of color have shouldered the burdens of displacement and gentrification that have resulted from such projects.

The Powell-Division Transit Development Project area is home to neighborhoods with some of the highest percentages of communities of color, youth, and families living on low incomes in Multnomah County. If deliberate and early steps are not taken to ensure that these demographic groups are protected from displacement and other potential ill side effects of development, we will likely see a repeat of the gentrification and subsequent displacement that has occurred in Multnomah County. Proactive action to address these concerns must be prioritized, as reversing damage done can be burdensome on the region and inadequate. This project is an opportunity to ensure that all residents living along the Powell-Division corridors have access to essential resources such as varied transportation options and affordable housing.

What follows is the product of an ongoing and collaborative conversation between community members, community organizations, city entities, and business members combining resources to produce a guide on community stability that seeks to prevent and/or address gentrification and displacement. This guide is intended to be a conversation starter, not an exhaustive list of tools. It is imperative to start these conversations now, before we repeat history and find that the only options to reverse damage are limited and inadequate. Below you will find a shorthand list of the goals developed, as well as the tools proposed to aid in the achievement of those goals.

Eleven Goals to Community Stability

Goal 1: Affordability of housing in the corridor is maintained

- Adopt policy of No Net Loss of affordable housing along the corridor
- Limit or prevent conversion of market rate affordable housing to condos
- Retain expiring-subsidy units

Goal 2: New Housing in the corridor is developed in a manner that provides housing opportunities for a profile of household incomes that are representative of the city

- All partners/jurisdictions advocate at the state level for inclusionary zoning
- Adopt a policy requiring new housing production within the Powell-Division corridor to match countywide income profile
- Provide support for non-profit acquisition of affordable housing

Goal 3: The quality of rental housing in the corridor is healthy and above standard

- Additional rental inspectors to work along this corridor. Property owner fines should go into a community controlled fund

Goal 4: Renters in the corridor are provided with protection from displacement and landlord malfeasance

- Institute rent control along the corridor
- Eliminate No Cause Evictions
- Develop funding package for Rental Assistance
- Current renters get first right to access new affordable housing if displacement occurs
- First Right to Purchase
- Property owners to provide relocation fees if renters are displaced

Goal 5: Programs are established to protect and increase access to homeownership for low-income communities

- Provide long-term homeowners with tax credit
- Develop limited-equity cooperatives
- Create a real estate investment trust
- Establish a Community Land Trust

Goal 6: New development projects provide economic opportunities for current low-income residents living along the corridor

- First source, local job hiring and training for all new large developments from low-income communities

Goal 7: Community development strategies are implemented to provide economic opportunities for small, immigrant, refugee, and minority-owned businesses

- Establish contained Mixed-use Zones along the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alignment for East Portland
- Establish development packages that are East Portland specific in mixed use areas
- Establish savings matches so businesses could expand over time

Goal 8: Improving health outcomes in the corridor are prioritized in all new development

- A Health Overlay Zone within the Jade District that requires new development to mitigate air and noise pollution
- Transfer ownership of Powell Blvd and 82nd Avenue to the City of Portland in order to create healthy and safe conditions

Goal 9: Powell-Division residents are meaningfully engaged and empowered to influence the direction of development activity along the corridor

- Provide jurisdictional support for an ongoing steering committee to direct and guide development activity along the corridor

Goal 10: Equity standards guide investments in the corridor

- Require developers to conduct a community or equity impact report outlining community burdens and benefits- to be submitted with development proposal and approved by the steering committee

Goal 11: Programs are established to support and uplift low-income families so that they can remain and thrive in the community

- Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for renters in the corridor who have low incomes
- Microenterprise and small-scale economic development projects for renters in the corridor who have low-incomes
- The creation of a Community Bank