



**Cully Community Feedback on
Programs
Spring 2020**

**Get Moving 2020 Transportation
Measure**

January 2020 - May 2020

Overview

Verde was contracted by Metro to identify community priorities and needs. This was done through the following spaces:

- 2 Virtual Cully forums
- 1 forum with the Lideres Verde entirely in Spanish
 - 34 Community Members
- 1 forum in English focused on the Black Cully community
 - 7 Community Members
- Phone Interviews
 - 11 Phone interviews
- In total we collaborated with 50+ Cully community members

Workshop & Call Format

Each workshop and call had an introduction to the measure and a brief summary of each program which was then followed by a vote on their top 4 programs.

The start of each of the three categories holds the programs with meaningful community prioritization. In each of these categories in this report there will be feedback, and quotes from the community, as well as Verde's analysis.

Facilitation of the feedback is not exact since effectively engaging the community is never static, and shifts depending on the group. The questions are always different. The similarity being that the questions sometimes need to get more specific or need to be grounded in examples based on the feedback you hear in the workshop.

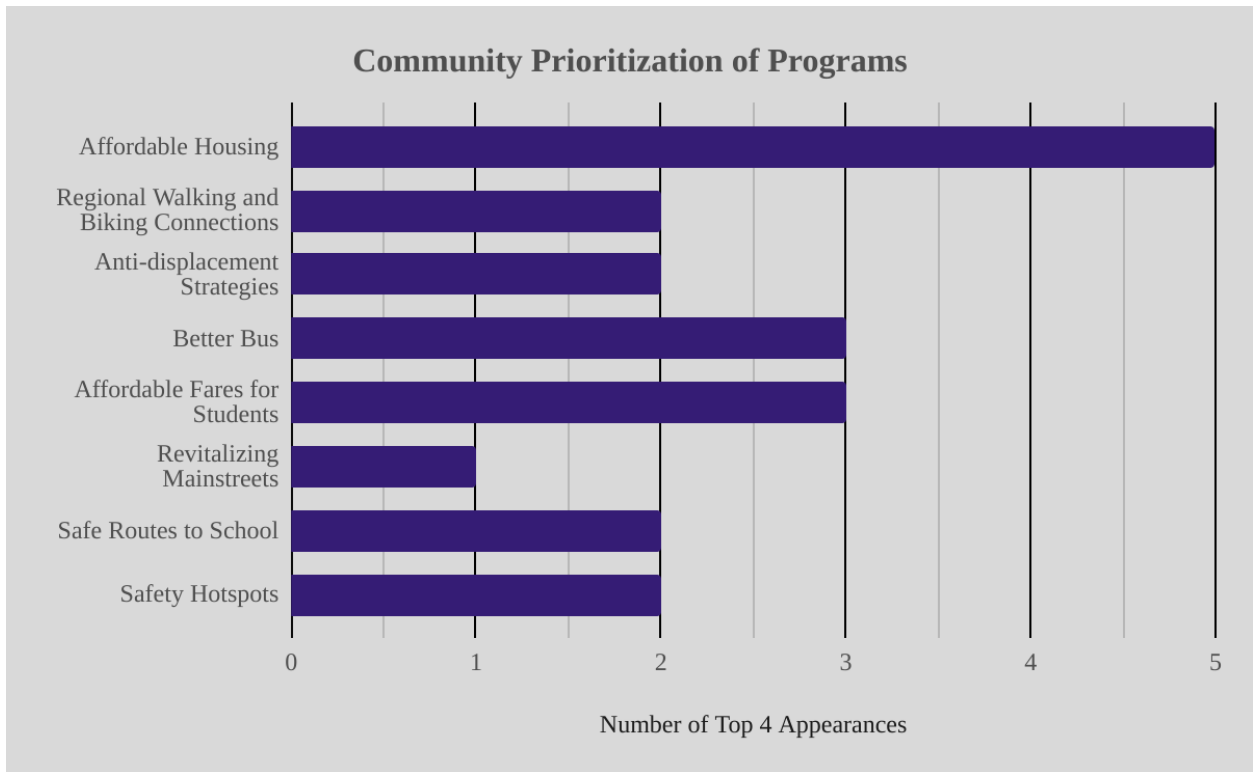
However, there is a set of questions around the pandemic that were prepared:

- 1. ¿Si se necesitan a ir al hospital como van llegar ay?***
- 2. ¿Cuando necesitan a comprar comida como llegan y el mercado?***
- 3. ¿El dinero que gastas para tu modo de transporte, como para el boleto del autobús, ese costo te quita la oportunidad a comprar más comida o pagar la renta?***
- 4. ¿Te sientes que el costo de nuestro transporte y la falta de transporte público te quita la oportunidad a ir donde necesitas o las hace más difícil?***

In English,

- 1. If you needed to get to the hospital, how would you get there?***
- 2. When you need to go grocery shopping how do you get to the market?***
- 3. The money you spend on transport, like the cost of bus fare, is a real barrier from buying food, and paying rent?***
- 4. Do you feel that the cost and the lack of public transit keeps you from accessing opportunities that you would otherwise have?***

Calls were then made to include additional voices, and feedback for the community programs already prioritized.



Sum of the programs discussed in each workshop group from April 2020

The table here shows the importance of three categories, anti-displacement, bettering our transit system, and safety. These are emphasized throughout this report since that is where the community energy is, where we have the biggest prioritization, and where the Cully community wants to focus.

Anti-Displacement

(Anti-Displacement Strategies and Affordable Housing)

“If all these improvements are coming we don’t want to get displaced.”

All the efforts we are putting towards bettering this community will be lost if the population we are looking to serve gets displaced from all the infrastructure investment. Previous projects support this community perspective. The Cully community is very vulnerable to displacement through the exploitation of their labor, language inaccessibility, job discrimination, rising property taxes, and extreme rent hikes.

Let’s seek to preserve and expand our community’s stock of permanently affordable housing – so that Cully will always be a place where lower-income community members, people of color, immigrants and refugees, working families and older adults can find stable, affordable homes. Let’s seek to preserve all lower-income Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color across the Portland Metro area.

When community members stay in their homes, and community. Then give them the resources to thrive. We will see tangible community networks take place, and beautiful social infrastructure that creates a nurturing place for our vulnerable populations.

“Remove [language, application, and cost] barriers to affordable apartments[housing].”

- “Ready to Rent classes”
- “\$600-700 for a 2-3 bedroom”
- “Make wages cap higher”
- “Not all can qualify, that’s wrong”
- “More expensive & complicated with kids”

Families and community need places to live and an easy way to make it happen. Having a housing representative that doubles as an advocate at each affordable housing complex to help new families and the general community find housing.

People want to see high density but comfortable housing, specifically apartments. Community members named how they want to see classes that teach community members how to apply for affordable housing.

We need to prioritize having more affordable housing in our city so we are not putting so much energy on trying to decide who is poor enough to deserve stable housing. All our community members deserve stable housing, and we need more affordable housing so we do not have to be so strict with who we let in. With more affordable housing we can serve a more holistic population of those who are most vulnerable.

Anti-Displacement (continued)

Right now vulnerable community members with slightly higher incomes are not given the stable housing they deserve due to the income cap, which is not reflective of the actual need. Currently the process to get housing is comprehensive and overwhelming for community members.

Access to stable housing is difficult for our community members because of the layered oppression they have to navigate. Which ranges from the emotional weight of adversities that come with their identities, to the health and physical infrastructure discriminations they face.

These additional barriers include the cost of transportation, when community members have to use a portion of their income to access the opportunities transportation offers, and the housing options transportation gives, they have a smaller margin for error. Community members do not have room for accidents, they do not have the room to thrive, and support the resources they need to thrive. Adding the other problem that in order to access an income, you need to have access to reliable transportation, but that becomes a problem when you do not start with an income or funds for transportation. This can be helped by providing fareless transit.

Lack of transportation, specifically, reliable public transit hurts our vulnerable communities given that public transit is often their only viable choice, and many barely manage it financially. Once our transit system becomes fareless Portland will see the value in our transit system through the increased opportunity and the potential in our most vulnerable. These low income community members alone would lift our whole city to a new level of prosperity once given restorative opportunities to shine. This is done by providing stable housing, transportation, healthcare, and food access. This would allow for us to expand public transit service, and make it more frequent for the good of our whole region.

Stable housing is a need that needs to be as accessible as possible. Anything less than manageable for our most vulnerable community members is a disservice to ourselves and the rest of our community because of the loss of potential that these individuals can share with us when given stable housing. We can loosen the grip on affordable housing if we exponentially increase how much affordable housing we can provide, and that is a priority for us and our community.

Anti-Displacement (continued)

“Provide case managers who double as interpreters and community [facilitators].”

- “Shared community space”
- Amenities

Community members have seen how continual investment and continued support makes a world of a difference when it comes to moving past disparities. So having a case worker on affordable housing sites to check up on families and community members is seen as a real need, as it is one. It is also important to note how this case worker can double as an agent of light organizing in their community, and building community power through collective care, and emotional wealth.

“[Buyout] luxury apartments that are mostly empty [and serve very few]”

Community members are frustrated by the abundance of expensive housing. While community members have a lack of stable housing, and houseless community members are dying. They would like Metro to buy out those complexes that do not hold many individuals and repurpose them as affordable housing.

“Have [complexes] that are built generationally, to have elders to youth”

- “Dry Buildings”

Community members value the community aspect of building those multigenerational relationships and sharing their differences in experiences.

Some community members also expressed how they want to see “dry buildings”, meaning substance-free buildings, for future affordable housing. This concern stems from the prevalence substance abuse can have in our communities which is a product of substance companies targeting our communities, and the historic lack of investment in our communities. Which leads to toxic forms of coping, and dealing with problems, which BIPOC have many of because of how much they have been ignored.

Anti-Displacement (continued)

“Affordable apartments are not very available, we need them, and they should also have health clinics nearby.”

→ “Lower rent and keep it stable”

Community members are having a hard time accessing their needs in Cully, including healthcare, food access, and entrepreneurship. Community members are forced to go outside their communities for healthcare, and far distances for food relative to where they live. Their community has not had the care and attention needed to provide intentional infrastructure to make these needs accessible to them.

“Community is more invested in each other when we see more community spaces with cultural representation.”

“I want to see community-owned produce [grocery] stores, spread out around Cully to make food accessible by walking”

→ “Sell[s] culturally specific products

→ “Government [sponsored] but run by people who looks like us”

→ “Supplied by community gardens”

Community wealth needs to be physically tangible, be able to be shared throughout generations, and retain value as time passes. Community members want a community space to sell their goods, and make living off their personal work. They want this to be more accessible. This is a place where community members can see themselves as the bosses. This space needs to be supported by Metro, or simply be city or government sponsored. This means bought by the city and given to community members for ownership, then continually funded.

Anti-Displacement (continued)

“Invest in a Central Cully space for community to Unify”

- “And to sell crafts & goods, like a flea market”
- “To build relationships”
- “Where cultures can unify”
- Community owned

Invest in a space where people can see themselves in their craft, and where people can invest in relationships in their community so there is more value in coming together. This is how the seeds of organizing, and community wealth distribution are planted.

“[Include] tax relief or credit for property taxes when Black, Indigenous, Brown, and other people of color make fixes to their homes”

- “Property taxes keep going up”

Black, Indigenous, and other people of color are having a harder time paying off their property taxes through the layered oppression they experience, and through a lack of investments in their community.

Adding to the transportation layers of oppression that was unpacked under the second quote of the anti displacement section, the other layers that apply here are job discrimination and higher disposability which means our community members have a hard time being accepted for positions, and are the first ones to be laid off, receive disciplinary action, and fired. This doesn't allow our community members to have consistent employment.

Lack of generational wealth does not allow for our BIPOC¹ community members to have a safety net, or to be set up for financial success as well as their white counterparts through a consistent flow of resources. Which BIPOC communities often lack because of historic denial of resources, and true payment for their labor, one well known example being slavery for Black people in the United States. To acquire this kind of consistent resourcing requires great sacrifice which is paid for in other ways like health, including both emotional and physical, through great exploitation of their labor. This continually keeps our BIPOC communities down.

Environmental racism is especially key in Cully because of the health costs that come with having poor health of a community's environment. For example, Cully has one of the lowest air qualities for a neighborhood in the country. With several industrial facilities in the area, specifically some major polluters being the major

¹ BIPOC - An acronym used to represent Black, Indigenous, and other People Of Color.

Anti-Displacement (continued)

industry corridor, then asphalt and glass blowing companies. This not only takes a toll on community members' lungs, brain functions, their oxygen intake, the particulate matter that enters their bloodstream and affects the rest of their body, but also has a direct mental health toll. This is on top of any mental health issues contributed by physical diseases caused by this air pollution.

The health costs on a community member's body both physical and mental is enough to keep them from being able to keep up with the property taxes, and other bills that need to be paid. Then it is made harder by having to pay hospital bills, or for resources that mitigate that health impact. Health is top priority because it is needed to be kept well to continue to keep up with bills and other family or community needs. However, losing housing reduces one's health significantly. Our community members are continually in this game and cycle of constantly making decisions that are rooted in "which option hurts me less". Instead our community should be making decisions with the idea of "which option will help me thrive" in mind.

Cully residents want to see a form of tax relief specifically for property taxes, so their homes are not taken away and they themselves do not become displaced.

"I would rather see community organizations be the ones to [implement] investment"

The Cully community has trust in community based organizations (CBO's), and would rather see CBO's carry out the implementation of social programs, and oversee every other type of infrastructure.

This means resourcing CBO's well enough to have the capacity to ensure that the programs in the transportation measure are implemented in a way that is as effective as possible, and ensure that they meet the demands of the Cully community. This translates to all communities in our region looking for investment.

Better Our Public Transit

(Better Bus, and Affordable Fares for Students)

“Free is definitely better, a pass is a stress on families”

“Help all youth, not just students, kids all over need transit”

“Free [fares] year round for youth, they help families in the summer by working”

Families are having a hard time dealing with transportation costs, and want to see subsidized fares for all youth in the region from 18 and under. Many community members even mentioned how kids in college, or even youth 25 and under should also have subsidized fares.

Subsidized fares for all youth in our region will help bring value to our transit system immediately, with a no fare incentive to ride for youth, and will help an independent population of youth learn how to use transit as a pivotal and reliable mode of transportation. This gives our city a fewer car future. This helps us reach our goal to halt climate change immediately and in the future through less single occupancy vehicles.

“When I lost my ID, the driver didn’t believe that I was a student”

We are seeing discrimination on who allowed to ride or trusted in having youthpass, and who needs to show ID for them to be allowed to use the youthpass program they are eligible for.

We need to head towards a system that does not require any form of identification if we are going to effectively eliminate discrimination from our transit system, in a society and city riddled with racism.

Safety

(Safe Routes to School, Safety Hotspots, & Connecting Bikeways and Walkways)

“We need more crosswalks.”

Community members want to feel safe in their neighborhood. They want to have confidence when crossing streets that they have to every single day. They want to be able to do it quickly without fear.

“Crosswalks with no lighting need to have streetlights, beacons, ground lights, colorful paint, and neon paint.”

“I would even like to see speed cameras that show people how fast they are going, but without reporting it to anyone!”

*Community members want to see **more** crosswalks, crosswalks that stand out, crosswalks that are paired with a radar sign, sensors to know when people are walking through them, and other technology that doesn't report or does not add law enforcement to enforce traffic laws.*

It's also important to note that the Cully community explicitly stated that they do not want law enforcement to enforce traffic laws.

“We need more walking [paths] and bike paths that connect to sidewalks to get to Albertsons”

There is a need, and want for walking paths that are away from traffic, or at least guarded. Coupled with being connected to sidewalks and streets so community members can have safe walking access to food, school, and community spaces.

A suggestion is to make bridges meant just for bicycles and pedestrians to skip over traffic, similar to a skywalk.

Safety (continued)

“I would like to see drivers slow down and be more careful with signs, and speed bumps”

We saw that community members really want to see people slow down through multilingual signage to increase accessibility to all major languages in the area. Slowed down signs are especially wanted around schools.

Community members want overall speed limit reductions across Cully, especially along NE Portland Hwy.

Community members want to have signs that light up to let drivers know when buses in front of them will stop, for both school buses and transit buses. This would alert drivers to slow down before they absolutely need to. This would prevent some accidents.

One major concern for the community was how the roads will be made more family friendly around Las Adelitas, a major affordable housing project on Cully and NE Portland Hwy, where many families will be moving in.

“We should designate walking streets for kids going to school where cars don’t enter, or maybe they do going really slow, like 5-10 mph”

Community members want to see selected streets in every neighborhood be made for kids walking or biking to school, or at least allow them the opportunity to do it safely. Community members are willing to make a street less functional so their kids can walk to school safely.

Another notable idea is that community members suggested a shelter for kids at bus stops to protect from cars, because crashes do happen.

Pandemic Questions

“When the virus goes away, and everything opens up, we would like to see less people on the bus...we should have more buses”

“There should be a rule to wear a mask on the bus, after everything opens too”

The Cully community is calling for more frequency along transit lines so they can properly socially distance on the buses. Everyone is very concerned about the second wave of infections and are very fearful that the Cully community will be hit even harder after restrictions start to lift because of transit use.

There needs to be areas meant for one or two people sectioned off with glass or plastic on the buses so people can ride in confidence during the global pandemic.

*The Cully community has urgent concerns here. They need more bus frequency to allow for more room on each transit bus. This allows for more room to socially distance themselves which allows them to remain healthy when riding the bus and get home to their loved ones without being infected, including other families. **It has been said that this is not the measure to increase service, or improve frequency, but why not? Our communities are suffering, why are we waiting to help?***

“I don’t know how I would get to the hospital if I got sick”

Many in the Cully community do not have enough options to get around. One community member said they would not know what to do if their husband got sick.

Transit is not a great option because community members are not able to properly social distance, and there is no back door entry on the bus so the driver is put at risk constantly. There needs to be a quarantine specific section on the bus that is closed off with plastic or glass so people can confidently ride to the hospital knowing they won’t be infecting others.

Pandemic Questions (continued)

“We are having trouble buying food, how are we going to pay for the bus???”

The members most vulnerable are worried. How are they supposed to live their lives without transportation after the pandemic when they have huge amounts of debt in rent, and other bills. They will be struggling just to buy food after the pandemic with how the health of the economy will be.

If we want our communities, and economy to recover after this pandemic. Then we need to be doing everything we can to head towards a fareless system. We can get there. Currently we see Trimet operating at a virtually fareless system.

Going fareless would overwhelmingly help community members access employment. It would give them more money to put back into businesses, and it would encourage spending in local businesses through increased community mobility.

It has been said that this measure was not going to be used to improve service however we have heard council talk about how this measure will be shifted to be used to boost the economy. That is great, now we must do the same when it comes to helping our communities recover. This means increasing service, funding a fully subsidized fareless system, and investing in the bus frequency our communities need. Currently we and our community feel that we are not getting the transit service that we deserve.

Summary

Safety: The Cully community wants to see more paths away from traffic, and crosswalks to provide confident crossing when they do need to come close to traffic. This should include other types of safety focused technology, and infrastructure that does not promote law enforcement enforcing traffic laws more.

Better Transit: Cully wants to see more service in their neighborhood, specifically a bus that goes downtown is heavily demanded. They want to see more frequency, and want to tear down financial barriers. Including barriers that provide the framework for discrimination.

Anti Displacement: Cully wants to see spaces owned by the community, for the community, run by the community, and bought by Metro, the city, or any other government entity.

Community Based organizations are pivotal in successfully including communities in shaping policy due to trust, relationships, and community knowledge.

As a Cully community, we have no corridor in the measure.

For this reason, please heavily consider our asks. We ask that you Metro Council, heavily invest in affordable housing, make communities of affordable housing, with multiple complexes in a block, that is sustained with community owned grocery stores, social spaces, and clinics.

Heavily invest in physical safety infrastructure in the Cully community, where our community has true confidence in their safety when crossing their streets, and walking to school or the grocery store.

Heavily invest in a better continually expanded public transit system that is accessible to those even without incomes, and serves our community at a higher reliability and frequency that works for them.

We want to see Participatory government work with communities of color, specifically **Black, and Indigenous communities. In other words, center community members in the decision making of this process, and in the implementation of these programs.**

**Thank you,
Jose Mikalauskas
Verde's Climate Justice Organizer**