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# Lents Strong: Community Action Plan for a Livable, Affordable Neighborhood

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An aerial photograph of the Lents neighborhood in Seattle, Washington, taken during the "golden hour" of sunrise. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and casting long shadows. A thick layer of fog or low clouds hangs over the surrounding hills and valleys. In the foreground, a multi-lane highway with several lanes of traffic runs diagonally across the frame. To the right of the highway, there's a large green field, possibly a sports field, and several industrial or commercial buildings. The rest of the neighborhood is densely packed with residential houses and streets. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

# **LENTS** community action plan for a livable, affordable neighborhood

# **STRONG**

**FINAL REPORT**  
JUNE 8, 2016





# LENTS STRONG

## Community Action Plan for a Livable, Affordable Neighborhood

**FINAL REPORT**

JUNE 8, 2016

CREATED ON BEHALF OF



**GREEN LENTS/LIVABLE LENTS**

Nathan Jones

Izzy Armenta

This plan was created by [collaborative]AP, a group of students in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning Program at Portland State University with a shared interest in advocacy planning.



**COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY PLANNING**

Adam Brunelle

Claire Lust

Drew DeVitis

Katie Selin

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This plan is the result of extensive collaboration and consultation. It would not have been possible without the help, guidance, participation, and material support of residents, community partners, colleagues, planning professionals, family, and friends.

## LIVABLE LENTS: A PROJECT OF GREEN LENTS



**Nathan Jones** has served as a member of the Green Lents board and has guided Livable Lents' work since beginning the program through The Northwest Institute for Community Enrichment (The NICE), a consulting group that provides support for community leaders who seek to create holistic and sustainable solutions to their community's challenges.



**Izzy Armenta** is an AmeriCorps member who has worked with Green Lents since 2014. He coordinates outreach efforts, mobilizes volunteers, and oversees the day to day operations of the Livable Lents listening project.

## Project partners

### Portland Housing Bureau

Michelle DePass

### Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon

Duncan Hwang

Khanh Pham

### Institute for Sustainable Solutions

Jacob Sherman

Rebecca McLain

### ROSE Community Development Corporation

Luke Bonham

Nick Sauvie

## Interviews with community members and organizations

### GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

#### Portland Development Commission (PDC)

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Charri Schairer

#### Portland Housing Bureau (PHB)

Andrea Matthiessen

#### Bureau of Environmental Services (BES)

Marie Walkiewicz

Kate Carone

#### Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS)

Chris Scarzello

#### Portland Parks & Recreation (PP&R)

Maija Spencer

## COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

### **Africa House**

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Djimet Dogo  
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### **Clackamas Youth Workforce Center**

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### **Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT)**

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Christina Palacios

### **East Portland Action Plan**

Lore Wintergreen

### **Green Lents**

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Jalene Littlejohn  
Renee Orlick

### **Lents Grown**

Brandon Rhodes

### **Living Cully**

Cameron Herrington

### **Lents Neighborhood Association**

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Cora Potter

### **Native American Youth & Family Center (NAYA)**

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### **People-Places-Things**

Patrik McDade  
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### **Portland Farmers Market (Lents International Farmers Market)**

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### **Portland Community College Links Program**

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### **Portland Youth Builders**

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### **Proud Ground**

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Diane Linn  
Kathy Armstrong

### **ROSE Community Development Corporation (ROSE CDC)**

Luke Bonham  
Nick Sauvie  
Eden Radfarr

### **Wattles Boys & Girls Club**

Quintell Saunders  
Kathryn Chavez

### **Wisdom of the Elders**

Ciarra Greene  
Rose High-Bear

## BUSINESSES

### **Caveman Pantry/Artistic Dry Cleaners and Laundromat**

Mo Nguyen

### **Palindrome Communities**

Chad Rennaker

### **Rolling Oasis Grocers**

Brandon Rhodes

## Advising and project support

### **PSU Toulon School of Urban Studies & Planning Faculty**

Dr. Ethan Seltzer  
Dr. Marisa Zapata  
Susan Hartnett  
Dr. Lisa Bates  
Dr. Vivek Shandas

### **PSU Institute for Sustainable Solutions**

Tania Hoode

### **PSU Geography Department**

### **Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon**

Carol Chan  
Wanna Lei  
Sarah Tran

### **Portland Housing Bureau**

Letimya Clayton

### **Northwest Nannies**

### **Passport to Languages**

### **Green Lents**

Michelle Moulton  
Spencer Ward  
Heidi Trombley

### **Volunteers**

Santiago Mendez Garcia  
Felicity Wood  
Dora Plancon





# executive summary



The Lents Strong Community Action Plan presents a series of recommendations that provide Green Lents, community partner organizations, and government agencies with actions to best address issues important to livability and affordability in Lents.

Between January and June 2016, a team of students from Portland State University, with help from partners, conducted extensive community engagement in Lents.

These efforts are a continuation of outreach done by Green Lents' Livable Lents Listening Project in 2015. The results and lessons learned from Lents Strong community engagement are woven through each of the recommendations.



### Community engagement summary

#### 45 INTERVIEWS

**GOALS**

- Identify collaboration opportunities
- Build partnerships
- Mobilize participation
- Improve shared understanding

#### 80 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

**GOALS**

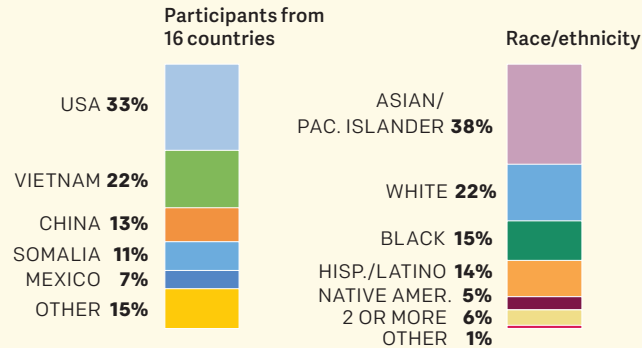
- Gather community feedback on potential action items within our three focus areas (housing affordability, economic development, and safe and accessible community spaces) and create an opportunity for interaction and discussion among a diverse group of community members

#### 9 FOCUS GROUPS 93 PARTICIPANTS

**GOALS**

- Seek input from these communities that have been underrepresented or are vulnerable to displacement:
- Renter
- Native American
- Slavic/Russian
- Hispanic/Latino/a
- Vietnamese
- Chinese/Cantonese
- African American
- Somali
- Youth

#### Who we reached through focus groups



### Stemming the tide of displacement

Portland is known for its sustainable, livable neighborhoods. At the same time, housing prices are increasing rapidly. Residents with lower incomes are being displaced to neighborhoods with fewer opportunities.

Lents is an increasingly diverse neighborhood. While the neighborhood has not gentrified yet, impending development, rising housing costs, and climate vulnerability threaten affordability for many communities of color and immigrants.

Lents community members want to know:

**How can residents, businesses, community groups, and government officials work together to build a sustainable, diverse neighborhood that is both livable and affordable?**

## Recommendations for advocacy and action

In the context of a changing Lents, the recommendations in this plan reflect a shared vision of affordability, livability, and community control. Drawn from community engagement as well as best practices and policy research, recommendations are organized into three focus areas: housing affordability, economic development, and safe and accessible community spaces.

### HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

#### OBJECTIVE 1

##### **Build the knowledge base and improve access to financial assistance programs for housing.**

###### **ACTION 1**

Host a series of renters' rights workshops in partnership with the Community Alliance of Tenants.

###### **ACTION 2**

Improve access to and participation in available housing grant programs, homebuyer loans, down-payment assistance, home repair, and rental assistance through community education.

#### OBJECTIVE 2

##### **Preserve and build more permanently affordable housing in Lents with opportunities for home rental and ownership.**

###### **ACTION 1**

Ensure the development of an adequate mix of traditional affordable housing options in Lents, with a focus on family-sized apartments, single-family homes, and middle-density housing that includes duplexes and row houses.

###### **ACTION 2**

Collaborate on the development of creative, alternative housing models in Lents which provide affordable opportunities for homeownership and rental housing.

###### **ACTION 3**

Collaborate with Oregon Solutions partners to develop conservation-based affordable housing as part of the Lents Stabilization and Job Creation Project.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

#### OBJECTIVE 1

##### **Invest in community leadership.**

###### **ACTION 1**

Fund community-based internship and training programs, including Livable Lents Community Ambassadors and Lents Youth Initiative.

###### **ACTION 2**

Contract with community-based groups, such as Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Wisdom of the Elders, and Green Lents, to perform culturally specific engagement and program implementation.

#### OBJECTIVE 2

##### **Create a thriving, affordable, multicultural business district.**

###### **ACTION 1**

Increase local awareness of Portland Development Commission grants that support small local businesses.

###### **ACTION 2**

Grow and diversify the membership of Lents Grown business association.

###### **ACTION 3**

Develop tenancing criteria for affordable commercial spaces in the Lents Town Center which prioritize a mix of emerging and local businesses that benefit the diverse residents of Lents.

###### **ACTION 4**

Recruit more diverse vendors and ensure the cultural diversity of products available at the Lents International Farmers Market, as management transfers from Zenger Farms to the Portland Farmers Market.

### COMMUNITY SPACES

#### OBJECTIVE 1

##### **Foster a diverse, connected community by bringing people together in ways that are fun and engaging.**

###### **ACTION 1**

Offer experiential, hands-on English learning programs.

###### **ACTION 2**

Develop and promote activities and programs that will bring Lents neighbors together in community spaces.

###### **ACTION 3**

Create an online catalogue of community events, festivals, classes, meeting spaces, markets, local businesses, and community organizations.

#### OBJECTIVE 2

##### **Improve walkability and safety while strengthening neighborhood identity.**

###### **ACTION 1**

Conduct walkability audits of the Lents neighborhood.

###### **ACTION 2**

Build community-based advocacy for guiding investments and upgrades in the built environment through the Lents Green Ring and ABLE projects.

###### **ACTION 3**

Design a pedestrian wayfinding program to enhance walkability, strengthen Lents' multicultural identity, and highlight community assets.

### Implementation and the Lents Strong vision

The next five years are critical to Lents' future. The Lents Strong Community Action Plan envisions a neighborhood where residents from across cultures are active and empowered to guide Lents toward a vibrant and diverse future. The success of Lents Strong depends upon continued investment and collaboration. Green Lents and Livable Lents will work with community organizations, government bureaus, and a broad range of community members to ensure implementation. Thorough and representative engagement of the diverse Lents community is also essential to implementation and must continue. The spirit of Lents Strong is the recognized need for collaboration that brought so many people together around a mutual desire for a more livable, affordable Lents.





# neighborhood and project overview







ADAM SIMMONS

## THE PROBLEM

Portland is known for its sustainable, livable neighborhoods. At the same time, the city faces some of the fastest increasing housing prices in the country. Residents with lower incomes, who are disproportionately people of color, are being displaced to neighborhoods with fewer opportunities. Lents has not gentrified yet, but impending increases in development and cost of housing threaten affordability for many of its diverse communities. Meanwhile, climate change threatens to exacerbate displacement pressures, especially for vulnerable populations who are least able to adapt.

We must work together now to ensure the benefits of development extend to both current and future residents of all income levels. **How can residents, businesses, community groups, and government officials work together to build a sustainable, diverse neighborhood that is both livable and affordable?** To address the challenge, we produced this action plan in consultation with neighborhood organizations and underrepresented communities most at risk of displacement, including renters, low-income households, communities of color, and immigrants.

# PLAN GOALS AND PURPOSE

**This is a community action and advocacy plan, created in consultation with neighborhood organizations and underrepresented communities most at risk for displacement. It focuses on actions where collaboration and community engagement will have the largest impacts. This is a plan for the next five years.**

The overarching goals of the plan are to:

**Ensure the viability of Livable Lents.** Livable Lents should remain a transparent, accountable, accessible, and holistic community engagement process that works collaboratively with non-profits, city agencies, and community members. This plan serves in part as a collaboration strategy which integrates engagement on a wide range of projects that are integral to livability and affordability.

**Build community capacity for advocacy on key issues.** This plan is intended as both the continuation of conversations that have been occurring for years as well as the impetus for community-driven advocacy efforts around the issues most important to Lents residents. Through its 2015 survey, Livable Lents identified a list of community priorities for future attention. Lents Strong expands and diversifies the conversation around these priority areas.

**Foster effective collaboration.** Commitment by those already doing important work in the community is crucial to the successful implementation of the recommendations in this plan. This will ensure that the work is both wide-reaching and lasting.



**GREEN LENTS AND LIVABLE LENTS**

**Green Lents** is a community-initiated nonprofit founded in 2009. Green Lents is working to create a more sustainable, thriving community that supports neighborhood livability projects including the Malden Court Community Orchard, the Community Tool Library, the Pollinator Habitat, and in particular the **Livable Lents** community listening project. Through Livable Lents, Green Lents engages the community on a wide range of livability issues and connects residents with opportunities to take action on livability issues that matter to them. The Lents Strong project was co-created in partnership with several organizations working in Lents.

# GREEN LENTS PROJECTS

Community Tool Library



Pollinator Habitat



Pollinator Habitat



Community Orchard



Lents Green Ring

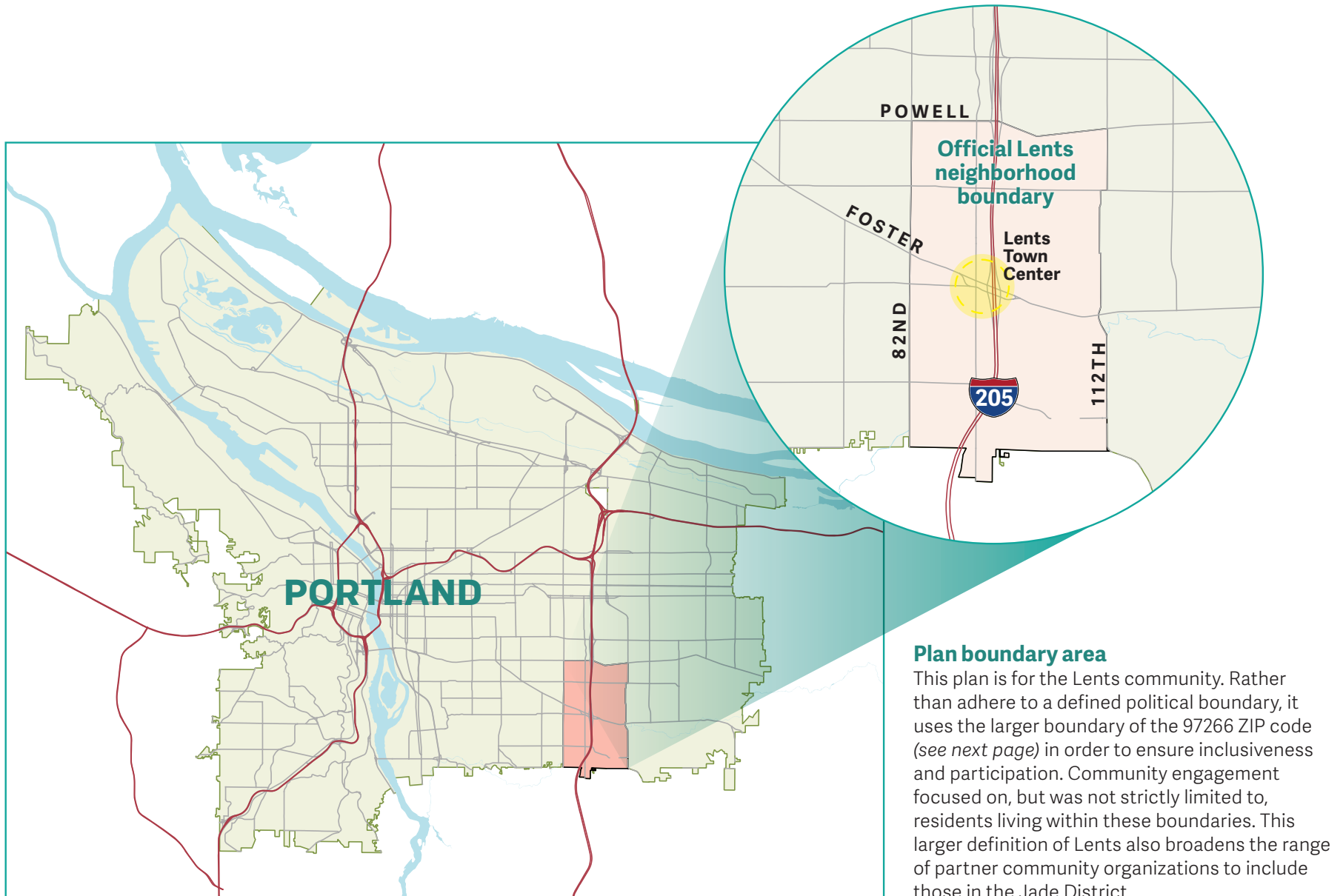


A Future Vision

PHOTO: NACTO



# GEOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

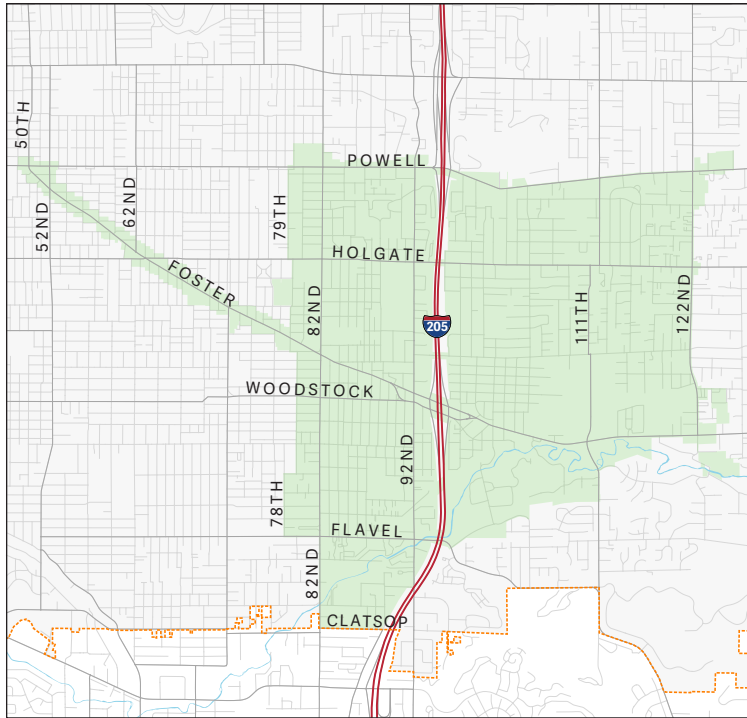


## Plan boundary area

This plan is for the Lents community. Rather than adhere to a defined political boundary, it uses the larger boundary of the 97266 ZIP code (see next page) in order to ensure inclusiveness and participation. Community engagement focused on, but was not strictly limited to, residents living within these boundaries. This larger definition of Lents also broadens the range of partner community organizations to include those in the Jade District.

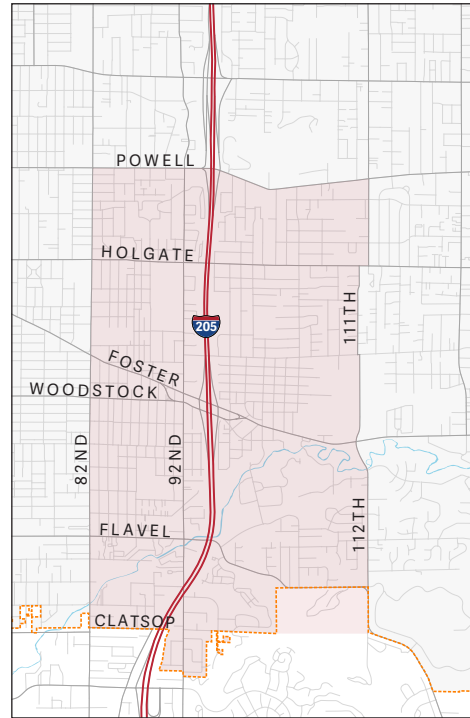


## Lents study area boundaries



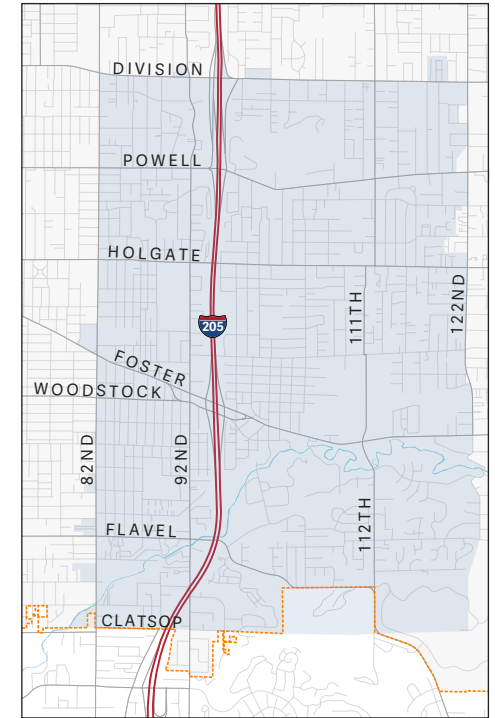
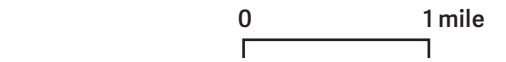
### Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area

Operated by the Portland Development Commission, the URA is an area for focused investment and projects.



### Lents neighborhood

Defined by the Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement, this is the official jurisdiction for the Lents Neighborhood Association.



### ZIP code 97266

The data analysis in our report was conducted using statistics available for ZIP code 97266.

# SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

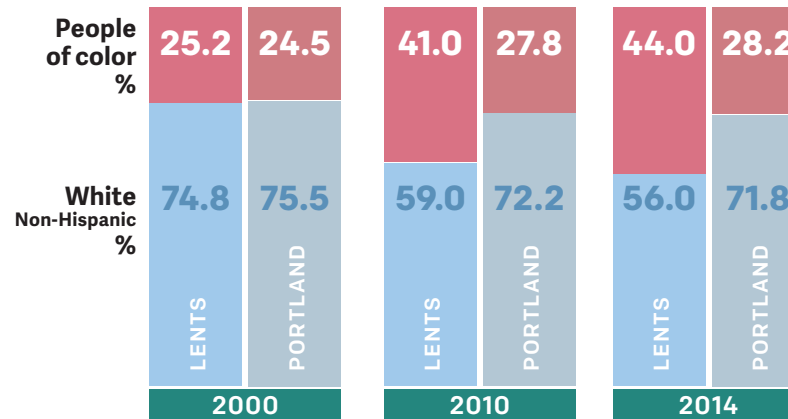
## Diverse people

**Lents is racially and ethnically diverse** compared to Portland as a whole. In 2014 nearly half of Lents residents were people of color, almost double the amount in 2000.

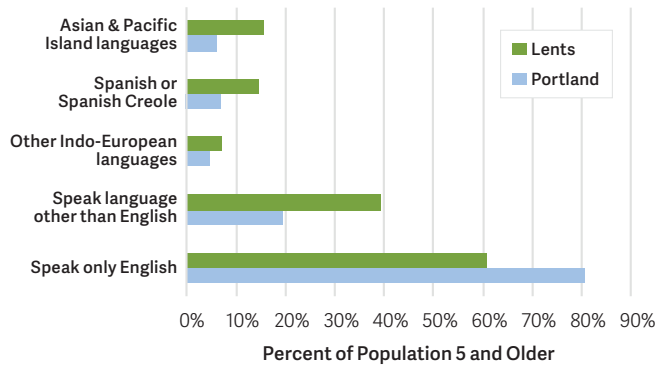
**Lents has a large immigrant population.** Nearly 40% of Lents families speak languages other than English at home, including Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Russian, and Somali. Nearly 25% of Lents residents were born in another country.

*Data source: US Census and American Community Survey estimates for ZIP code tabulation area 97266*

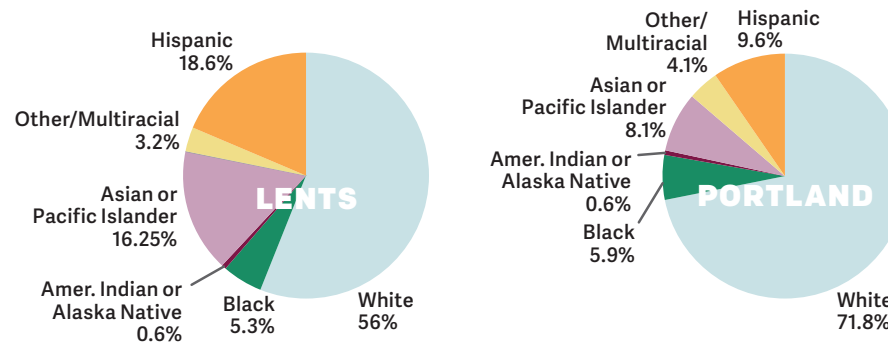
## Racial minority population in Lents and Portland 2000–2014



## Languages spoken at home (2014)



## Race and ethnicity in Lents and Portland (2014)

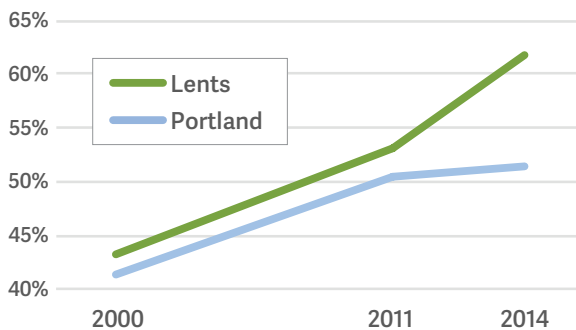


## Rising housing costs

**The cost of homes is increasing** and Lents residents spend more of their income on housing than average Portlanders. Homes in Lents do remain more affordable than most of the city, yet this is a fragile balance. More than half of Lents residents with mortgages spend at least 30% of their income on payments. In Portland this same portion is only 38%.

**Rents are increasing faster than incomes.** In Lents, the share of households paying more than 30% of their income on rent is growing even more rapidly than in the rest of Portland. Between 2011 and 2015 alone, rents and home prices increased approximately 60%. These large increases have already pushed many housing opportunities in the Lents area out of reach for communities of color, immigrants, and low-income renters.

### Renter households paying more than 30% of income on rent



## Gentrification and displacement

Gentrification is defined as the negative effect of increased investments in a community: housing costs and property values rise in response to physical improvements, resulting in decreased affordability. With higher costs, community members are forced to move their families or relocate their businesses. The process of gentrification can also cause voluntary displacement, where community members choose to leave because they no longer feel at home in a changed neighborhood. Communities of color and immigrants experience these effects disproportionately, in Portland and nationwide.

In 2013, PSU professor Dr. Lisa Bates released a comprehensive study of gentrification and displacement in Portland which identified Lents and many East Portland neighborhoods as vulnerable to displacement, and provided guidance for advocacy and policy efforts. Grassroots coalitions like Anti-Displacement PDX and the East Portland Action Plan built on this work, engaging across cultures. The impact of these efforts is evident in anti-displacement policies recently adopted in Portland. The work of these coalitions is driven by several dozen community organizations who aim to stabilize vulnerable communities. The long list of organizations includes project partners working in Lents like Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), ROSE CDC, Community Alliance of Tenants, Proud Ground and many more. This plan relies heavily on the hard work they have done to make anti-displacement practices viable in Portland.

## Climate change vulnerability, resilience, and displacement

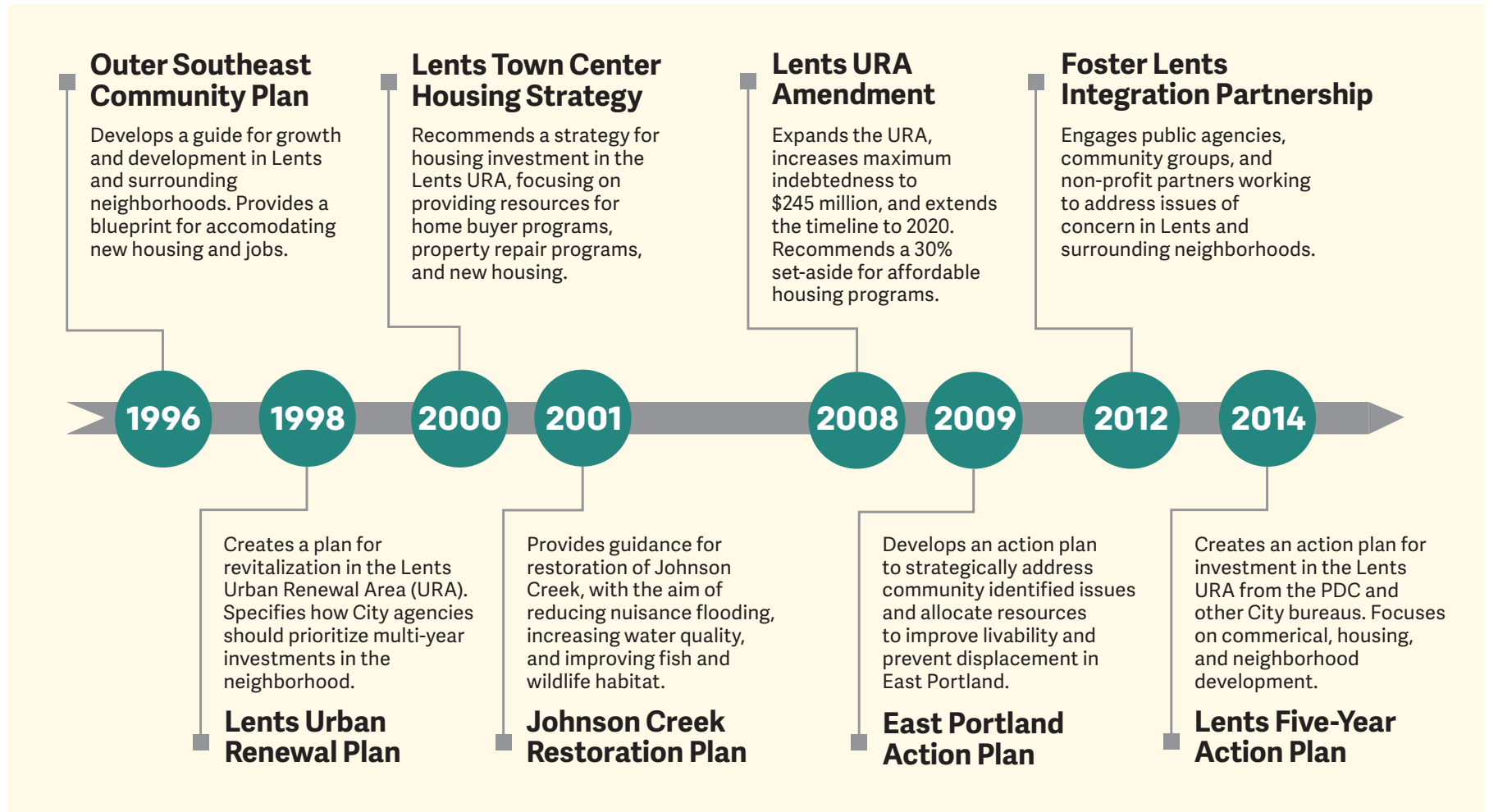
Another threat to the Lents community is its high vulnerability to climate change. As with displacement, the burden of climate change is felt more acutely by those who cannot afford the associated and often unpredictable costs that come from economic shocks, heat waves, flooding, and other climate impacts. In Lents, the extensive Johnson Creek Floodplain contains approximately 600 properties. Johnson Creek experienced multiple 25-year floods in the last seven years, though the Foster Floodplain project has reduced the impact and extent of flooding. Flood insurance costs have increased sharply in recent years as the federal government responds to its solvency in the face of ever more extreme weather around the country. These increased costs are shouldered by Lents residents, increasing displacement pressure on homeowners.

The climate-induced water crisis in the southwest United States has increased migration to Oregon and Washington, helping to drive up housing demand and costs. Meanwhile, Portland is increasingly home to immigrants and refugees who left their homes due to resource deficits and conflicts caused in part by climate change. Immigrant and refugee communities are particularly vulnerable to climate change and displacement in Lents, indicating a need for solutions which simultaneously build community resilience to both threats.

# PLANNING AND POLICY CONTEXT

## Planning Timeline

Over the past 20 years, Lents has been the focus of several significant planning efforts. During this same period, the community became much more diverse. As the context continues to change, future planning efforts will need to adapt to ensure the broad participation, intentional engagement, and accurate representation of all community members.





# LENTS STRONG CORE PARTNERS

## Asian Pacific Network of Oregon

APANO is a statewide, grassroots organization that unites Asians and Pacific Islanders to achieve social justice. APANO uses collective strengths to advance equity through empowering, organizing, and advocating with their constituents. As a project partner, APANO contributed staff time, expertise, space, funding, interpretation, and translation. Their support was particularly instrumental in planning and executing Lents Strong outreach.

The successful implementation of the Lents Strong vision will depend upon close collaboration and coordination between community organizations.

## Institute for Sustainable Solutions

ISS is a hub for sustainability at Portland State University, supporting interdisciplinary research, curriculum development, student leadership, and meaningful community partnerships that contribute to a just, prosperous, and vibrant future for our region and the world. In recent years, ISS has funded and collaborated on multiple projects in the Lents neighborhood. ISS provided important financial and technical capacity to the project team and was also a crucial early supporter of the project vision.



**Portland Housing Bureau**

**APANO**  
Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon



**ROSE CDC**



**Institute for Sustainable Solutions**

*Green Lents*  
**Green Lents**



**Livable Lents**



**[collaborative]AP**

## Portland Housing Bureau

In order to serve its mission of solving the unmet housing needs of the people of Portland, Portland Housing Bureau administers a broad range of resources, including federal funds, the local general fund, and the affordable housing set-aside of tax increment financing (TIF) funds generated through urban renewal districts. This set-aside commits 45% of TIF funds to affordable housing. PHB provided significant financial support that made the Lents Strong model of outreach possible.

## ROSE Community Development Corporation

ROSE CDC is dedicated to revitalizing outer southeast Portland neighborhoods by developing quality homes and creating economic opportunities. They are rooted in the belief that affordable housing gives people the opportunity to build better lives. Since their first project in 1992, rehabilitating a home in Lents for a low-income family, their work has extended far beyond housing. ROSE CDC made outreach possible by sharing facilities and by directly connecting the Lents Strong team to Lents residents.

# LENTS STRONG GUIDING VALUES

**These values were co-created with project partners around a shared vision for Lents. They are the core tenets of this document and serve as the threads with which all of the recommendations are sewn together.**

## **Preserve affordability**

The cost of housing is rising at a rate that is becoming difficult for residents to bear. Future planning and development must underscore efforts to preserve affordability.

## **Enhance livability**

Lents is experiencing increased investment. Enhancing livability means leveraging this investment to enhance the quality of life for those that currently live in Lents.

## **Foster community control**

Lents residents must have the opportunity and the agency to shape the outcomes of projects and programs. Communities of color, non-English language speakers, renters, and other disadvantaged populations have faced barriers to participating in the public process in Lents. Collaborating with these community members on opportunities to advocate and affect project outcomes strengthens the legitimacy of recommendations.

It is important to note that there is often a tension between enhancing livability and preserving affordability. Increased investment, particularly in the built environment can result in increased property values and decreased affordability. The Lents Strong team believes that Lents residents, by being more engaged and able to advocate for their own interests, will be best situated to mitigate the effects of gentrification and avoid displacement of vulnerable populations.







Lents Street Fair  
PHOTO: ADAM SIMMONS



A black and white photograph of a man in a plaid shirt standing at the front of a room, presenting to a group of people seated at tables. He is holding a small object in his hand. Behind him is a large screen displaying a presentation slide titled "Who We've Engaged So Far!" which lists various organizations and logos. The room is dimly lit, and the audience is focused on the presenter. A teal overlay covers the right side of the image, containing the text "building a model for community engagement in Lents".

# building a model for community engagement in Lents

# THE LIVABLE LENTS COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MODEL

The Livable Lents engagement process began in 2011, and activates neighbors by connecting them to local organizations, small businesses, and city and state agencies on livability issues in Lents. In 2015, Green Lents greatly expanded this process. New partnerships with Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS) at Portland State University and Confluence Environmental Center added capacity to the project, which surveyed more than 400 residents from a diverse range of backgrounds through door-to-door canvassing, social media, community events, and a community forum.

Key aspects of the Livable Lents outreach process include:

- 1. Expanded staff capacity**, including a full-time AmeriCorps member to coordinate outreach, summer interns, two PSU Masters students working part time, and assistance from a community-based mapping researcher from ISS.
- 2. Culturally specific outreach**, through community ambassadors hired to conduct survey outreach door-to-door and at community events in Spanish, Vietnamese, and Russian.
- 3. The Livable Lents pledge**, which connects residents with opportunities to get engaged with livability issues through a wide range of partner organizations working in the Lents area.

Lents community members identified a wide range of opportunities through survey outreach, but three key livability issues stood out as central to Lents' future: housing affordability, economic development, and safe, accessible community spaces. The Lents Strong action plan focuses its recommendations on these three issues.



## Livable Lents Community Listening Project 2015 Outreach Report

A Project of Green Lents | In Partnership with Northwest Institute  
for Community Enrichment and Portland State Institute for  
Sustainable Solutions

March 2016



(left) The Livable Lents 2015 Outreach Report details the results of neighborhood outreach efforts. Download a PDF of the report at [livablelents.org](http://livablelents.org).

<b>Lents Demographics</b>		2010-2014 Census ACS	LL Survey
<b>Total Population</b>		20,433	400+
<b>Race &amp; Ethnicity</b>	White Alone	57%	*69% (175) <i>n=253</i>
	<i>Eastern European</i>	<i>no data</i>	7% (17)
	Hispanic or Latino	19%	7% (18)
	<i>by specific origin:</i>		
	<i>Mexico</i>	84%	--
	<i>Other</i>	9%	--
	<i>Cuba</i>	3%	--
	<i>Central America</i>	3%	--
	<i>South America</i>	1%	--
	African American or Black Alone	5%	5% (12)
	Asian or Pacific Islander Alone	15%	5% (12)
	<i>by specific origin:</i>		
	<i>Vietnamese</i>	39%	--
<i>Chinese</i>	32%	--	
<i>Other</i>	19%	--	
<i>Laotian</i>	5%	--	
<i>Asian Indian</i>	1%	--	
<i>Japanese</i>	2%	--	
<i>Korean</i>	1%	--	
<i>Filipino</i>	2%	--	
Two or More Races/Ethnicities	3%	3% (8)	
Native American Alone	1%	2% (6)	
Other	0%	*9% (23)	
<i>*Confusion over question makes these estimates unreliable</i>			
<b>Gender</b>	Male	52%	43% (137) <i>n=319</i>
	Female	48%	57% (181)
	Fluid	<i>no data</i>	0% (1)
<b>Tenure</b>	Rent	45%	30% (35) <i>n=117</i>
	Own	55%	70% (82)
<b>Unemployment</b>		11.8%	--

## Overcoming Barriers to Participation

The Livable Lents listening project reached many communities who have historically faced barriers to public participation. However, these communities—in particular renters, communities, of color, immigrants, and youth—were still underrepresented during the 2015 outreach. These populations are among those most at risk of displacement as Lents changes. Local anti-displacement literature highlights the necessary role of community engagement in ensuring that vulnerable communities impact decision making outcomes.

The Lents Strong action plan was created in consultation with these communities, neighborhood organizations, and government agencies. Including the 2015 listening project, which guides the plan, more than 600 people participated in its creation.

(left) This summary from the Livable Lents 2015 Outreach Report compares the demographic composition of the Lents neighborhood to the outreach participants

## Turning listening into action: Lents Strong

### Co-Creation Fosters Ownership

From the outset, Lents Strong was a collaborative effort co-created with project partners Green Lents/Livable Lents, PHB, APANO, ROSE CDC, and ISS. Green Lents began approaching partners for Lents Strong in Fall 2015, soliciting interest and developing project scope, focus, values, and goals for the project. In early 2016, the team held larger convening partner meetings to define the content of the project and align supporting resources necessary to undertake Lents Strong engagement.

### Pooling Investment Provides Multiple Benefits

Organizations invested jointly in this project, pooling resources to support a project which had benefits for all involved. Partners valued the importance of protecting affordability, improving livability, and fostering community ownership of the process. Each organization invested resources in a strategic and coordinated way to ensure project success.





## Outreach components

### Interviews

Interviews engaged a wide range of community organizations that are active in Lents to identify collaboration opportunities, build partnerships, mobilize participation in the Lents Strong focus groups and forum, and improve shared understanding of work going on in Lents. Interviews also provided valuable insight regarding local concerns, cultural considerations, political sensitivities, and available resources.

### Focus Groups

Nine small group conversations provided historically underrepresented communities the opportunity to weigh in on key livability issues. These conversations were a major guiding force behind the plan and the central component of the Lents Strong process. Through guided conversation and hands-on activities, participants provided direct input for Portland Housing Bureau on spending new housing money in Lents, as well as guidance for approaches toward safer, more accessible community spaces. Dinner, childcare, and a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card were provided for each participant. Translation and interpretation were provided for five of the nine focus groups. Outreach included culturally specific tabling opportunities, canvassing businesses and community spaces, and working through organizational networks to identify participants.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Renters  
 Youth  
 Hispanic and Latino  
 Vietnamese  
 Cantonese  
 Slavic and Russian-speaking  
 Somali  
 African American  
 Native American

### “Let’s Talk About Lents” Community Forum

More than 80 residents from diverse communities across Lents gathered at the Wattles Boys & Girls Club to identify their priorities for Lents as it changes. Let’s Talk About Lents helped build a sense of shared purpose and provided opportunities to connect across cultural and geographic barriers. Attendees heard initial results from focus groups and worked in small table activities to identify the community benefits they would like to see as the neighborhood changes. These priorities were key in developing the Lents Strong action plan recommendations. Attendees then mingled over the results of the activities, and the evening closed with a spirited raffle. Dinner, childcare, translation, and interpretation in five languages were provided.

For a more detailed and comprehensive explanation of our outreach, see the Outreach Methods and Results Appendix and our Community Engagement Toolkit.

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Seattle, showing a mix of residential and commercial buildings, streets, and green spaces. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent teal color. The text "recommendations for advocacy and action" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the upper portion of the teal overlay. The background image shows a cityscape with a large open lot in the foreground, surrounded by various buildings and parking areas. In the distance, there are hills and a layer of fog or low clouds.

# recommendations for advocacy and action



# RECOMMENDATIONS

**These recommendations reflect the ideas that will best support affordability, livability, and community control in Lents. Drawn from our community engagement as well as best practices and policy research, recommendations are organized into three focus areas: housing affordability, economic development, and safe and accessible community spaces. Community members identified these focus areas as livability priorities during Livable Lents' 2015 outreach. Within the focus areas, 17 total actions are nested in six broader objectives. Recommendations primarily target Green Lents and community organizations, but also require the participation of government agencies and residents.**

## Evaluation Criteria

Through outreach and research, the Lents Strong team identified many ideas for how to better engage residents and build toward a more livable and affordable Lents. The final recommendations, however, do not include everything we heard. Not every suggestion fits within the scope of this plan, nor is it within the capacity of Green Lents and community partners to address each issue. The set of standards below ensures that the recommendations best serve Green Lents, community partners, and community members.

These criteria are not a checklist, but rather a means of aligning each action with the overall project purpose:

### VALUES

Does the recommendation fit the values of preserving affordability, enhancing livability, and fostering community control?

### COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Have community partners or residents demonstrated support for the action? Did we hear interest throughout our community engagement process?

### FEASIBILITY

Is at least one of our primary community partners positioned to take action? Can Green Lents realistically support or acquire capacity to support the proposed action? Can the action be implemented in the next 5 years?

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Can the groups implementing this recommendation use community engagement to reach the desired outcome? Is there an opportunity to apply the community engagement best practices learned during Lents Strong outreach?

### IMPACT

Is there evidence from policy and best practices research that this recommendation will support affordability, livability, and community control in Lents?




### Time to Act!

This symbol indicates an action that is “shovel-ready” and requires only minimal

additional funding and planning to begin. The groundwork is in place, and it is time to dive in! Starting with these smaller, achievable projects will build momentum and get more organizations and Lents residents involved as partners begin to implement long-term actions.





FOCUS AREA  
**HOUSING  
AFFORDABILITY**

Housing is typically considered affordable if households are able to spend 30 percent or less of their monthly income on rent or a mortgage. It is important that housing remain affordable to households making less than median family income, which in Lents was \$34,508 in 2014. Average rent for a two bedroom apartment has increased 14 percent in the past year. Similarly, the median list price of homes for sale in Lents increased 16.2 percent in the last year. This increases pressure on low income renters and homeowners, who are disproportionately communities of color in Lents. Therefore, preserving housing affordability can foster diversity.

In Livable Lents' 2015 summer outreach, dozens of community members voiced their concerns about housing affordability, with 24 percent of respondents identifying affordable housing as a neighborhood priority. A number of Lents Strong focus group participants also detailed their concerns about the pressure of rising housing costs in Lents. After initially moving to Lents for its affordable housing options, many fear that they will not be able to remain in their homes

or even in the neighborhood. Many immigrant families settled in Lents due to its relatively low costs, but now face displacement to outlying neighborhoods with fewer amenities and services.

Guided by the Portland Development Commission's Lents 5-Year Action Plan, Portland Housing Bureau will invest approximately seven million dollars in the community, aiming to construct new affordable housing units and preserve housing affordability for homeowners and renters.

At the same time, several nonprofit organizations are working in Lents to preserve housing affordability. ROSE CDC is set to develop Woody Guthrie Place in the Lents Town Center, providing several dozen more units of affordable housing in the neighborhood. Proud Ground is using the community land trust model to provide permanently affordable housing in Lents. These community partners also advocate for policy measures that prevent displacement, supporting the work of Anti-Displacement PDX and the East Portland Action Plan.

# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

## OBJECTIVE 1

**Build the knowledge base and improve access to financial assistance programs for housing.**

Building knowledge builds power, whether it is knowing your rights as a renter, understanding housing opportunities in the community, exploring alternative models of homeownership, or identifying baseline targets for housing affordability. Green Lents/Livable Lents is poised to help build this knowledge base.

*“Work with the City and across sectors to create spaces that work for all Portlanders. Set standards for anti-displacement.”*

—2015 LIVABLE LENTS SURVEY RESPONDENT

## ACTION 1

**Host a series of renters’ rights workshops in partnership with the Community Alliance of Tenants.**



### Rationale

Renters’ rights workshops provide vital information to those most impacted by the affordable housing crisis. These workshops offer the knowledge needed to self-advocate when faced with no-cause evictions, rent increases, or unsafe living conditions. Oregon passed modest tenant protections in early 2016 and this recommendation is an opportunity to inform Lents renters of the changes. Participants in 2015 Livable Lents outreach and Lents Strong engagement expressed concerns over rising rents. Renters emphasized the sense of helplessness they feel at the mercy of landlords and the rental market.

### Key Actors

Community Alliance of Tenants  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
ROSE CDC  
People-Places-Things

### Implementation

Green Lents/Livable Lents will co-convene the workshops, recruit attendees, identify appropriate host spaces in the community, and connect Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) to Lents renters through their own network as well as through community organizations. APANO and ROSE CDC are ideal partners to connect with the wider renter community. Livable Lents door-to-door canvassers will identify additional renters who are not connected with existing organizations. Since a diverse range of Lents residents face the threat of displacement, CAT should conduct these workshops in multiple languages.



*“Keep the neighborhood affordable! Prices everywhere are rising, outpacing everyone’s income levels. It’s getting harder to afford apartments, housing, food, etc. Keep this in mind when planning please.”*

—2015 LIVABLE LENTS COMMUNITY FORUM PARTICIPANT

# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

## ACTION 2

**Improve access to and participation in available housing grant programs, homebuyer loans, down-payment assistance, home repair, and rental assistance through community education.**

### Rationale

Focus groups revealed little awareness of Portland Housing Bureau's (PHB) available resources, particularly among residents of color and immigrants. These programs can generate resilience to displacement by creating paths to homeownership, stabilizing low-income homeowners, and combating disinvestment. PHB also connects residents to organizations that provide resources helping prevent renter displacement, including rental assistance. Residents expressed both surprise at the programs' existence as well as a desire to learn more. To benefit from programs, Lents residents must know what assistance is available and how to access it.

### Key Actors

Portland Housing Bureau  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Lents Neighborhood Association

### Implementation

Improving access to housing assistance resources and increasing participation in programs will require intentional community education across languages and cultures. Green Lents/Livable Lents and APANO can help PHB connect resources to residents across Lents by integrating PHB's programs into community education events. They can identify potential grant applicants through multi-lingual canvassing, both door-to-door and at existing community events. This is a logical next step to build on the partnership between Green Lents, PHB, and APANO that Lents Strong established.

### CANTONESE COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Focus group participants talked about the difficulty of saving for a 20 percent down payment and of borrowing from friends and relatives to get the necessary money. Issues with credit history are another barrier to homeownership. Participants discussed the challenges of paying high property taxes and deciphering the tax system. Though programs do exist to address many of these concerns, few focus group attendees knew about them. Additionally, many programs do not have readily available Chinese speaking staff or translated materials.



*(right)* Cantonese families participated in the Let's Talk About Lents community forum



# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

## OBJECTIVE 2

**Preserve and build more permanently affordable housing in the Lents neighborhood with opportunities for home rental and ownership.**

Building wealth and ownership is a proven strategy for preventing displacement. Ensuring and expanding permanent affordability is a long term strategy. The following actions build on direction from residents to maintain affordability in the Lents neighborhood and provide opportunities for stabilization through programs and policies.

### ACTION 1

**Ensure the development of an adequate mix of traditional affordable housing options in Lents, with a focus on family-sized apartments, single-family homes, and middle-density housing that includes duplexes and row houses.**

#### Rationale

There is a shortage of every kind of affordable housing in Portland and Lents. Focus group participants indicated demand for various types of housing to rent and own. Participants identified a need for more family-friendly housing, a finding backed up by the 0% vacancy rate for 3BR units in Lents. Others stressed the importance of smaller and more dense housing with community spaces. The reality is that a mix of housing types will best meet the diverse needs of Lents residents with different household sizes and preferences.

#### Key Actors

Portland Housing Bureau  
Rose CDC  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
Proud Ground

#### Implementation

Portland Housing Bureau, ROSE CDC, and Proud Ground are planning to develop significant affordable housing in Lents over the next few years. These organizations should proceed with a mandate from the Lents Strong process to create and preserve affordable single family homes, family-size apartments, and middle-density housing that includes duplexes and row houses. Green Lents should use its growing relationships with housing providers and policymakers to advocate for these housing types. Should more technical assessment of housing needs become necessary, Portland State University and the Institute for Sustainable Solutions could connect community groups with student researchers.

## PROUD GROUND: WORKING AND LIVING IN LENTS

*"Proud Ground provides affordable homeownership opportunities for people who live and work in the community. Proud Ground homes are forever affordable, stabilizing families and building wealth. We see Lents as the next frontier in Portland. While still relatively affordable, prices are rising very quickly and we need to work now to maintain affordability for the future. Homeownership is the number one way to protect affordability and prevent displacement."*

—YESIKA ARÉVALO



(left) Yesika and her children live in a Proud Ground house in Lents. She works for Proud Ground as Cross-Cultural Community Coordinator.

## PROUD GROUND SERVICE TO LENTS

52	current homeowners
4	pending opportunities
2004	first Lents homebuyer closing
42%	households of color
65%	households with children
75%	female head of household
\$132,400	median sales price
59%	MFI
\$37,000	median household income
12	resales
\$128,500	median resale price
\$5,434,865	subsidy administered (buy-down and rehab)

# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



## CASE STUDY: HIGH POINT

High Point is a large, family-oriented affordable housing development run by the Seattle Housing Authority. This community of 425 mostly attached single-family units shows one possible option for development in Lents that provides sustainable, high quality housing for the people who need it most.



# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

## ACTION 2

**Collaborate on the development of creative, alternative housing models in Lents which provide affordable opportunities for homeownership and rental housing.**

### Rationale

Throughout the 2015 listening project and Lents Strong outreach, Lents community members have shown a strong interest in alternative housing approaches. Many focus group participants viewed homeownership as unrealistic, providing suggestions for alternative ownership models that are affordable and feature shared communal spaces. Some barriers to homeownership are specific to immigrant communities, including required documentation for obtaining a mortgage or accessing homeownership programs. While increased affordable opportunities for homeownership is a critical community stabilization goal, rental housing is a crucial component for a sustainable housing market in the neighborhood. Alternative models, as described below, lend themselves to a community land trust approach, a robust tool for creating affordable housing.

*“I [prefer] that there would be more homes to rent, that would be affordable to our income because there would be more space for us and our kids. Since we can’t buy, we would at least like to rent a home to live more comfortable.”*

—LATINO FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

### Key Actors

Proud Ground  
ROSE CDC  
Portland Housing Bureau  
Portland Development Commission  
Habitat for Humanity  
Portland Youth Builders

### Implementation: Promising Opportunities in Lents

#### *Manufactured and Modular Homes*

These low cost homes are a path to homeownership for people with limited credit. Manufactured homes were specifically mentioned in the Lents Strong Latina focus group as housing option that would provide independence and proximity to extended family members. The value of manufactured homes can depreciate, offering a questionable return on investment when compared with typical single-family homes. However, intentional manufactured home communities can provide community space and connection while remaining low cost compared with other options. Proud Ground is a partner particularly well suited to explore this possibility.



(above) An abandoned home, called a “zombie house” by neighbors, on SE Reedway St.

#### *Abandoned Homes*

There are an estimated 430 abandoned homes on Portland’s east side, many of them in Lents. These homes have been a major concern over the past year of outreach due to squatters and criminal activity. Neighbors have suggested strategies to purchase these homes, repair them, and put them back into the housing supply. The city should land bank vacant properties in the URA, negotiating purchase where possible and exercising eminent domain on nuisance properties which do not improve or are otherwise untraceable. The city should use home repair funds to rehabilitate vacant homes where possible, donating the land to a community land trust such as Proud Ground or community developer like ROSE CDC to integrate additional long-term affordable housing. There are barriers to implementation, from tracking down owners to restrictions on liens and sale prices in the foreclosure process. Still, this is a promising opportunity which addresses Lents residents’ frequently voiced concerns.



# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY



## ALTERNATIVE HOUSING MODELS CASE STUDY: CAMP CULLY

### A Role for the Private Sector

Camp Cully is a planned development in the Cully neighborhood in Northeast Portland. Orange Spot, the developer, is modeling voluntary inclusionary zoning by providing several units of communal, higher density housing to families making less than 80 percent of Median Family Income.

Orange Spot is collaborating on the project with nonprofits Proud Ground and Living Cully. This model could work well in Lents as a way for private developers to creatively contribute needed affordable housing. The neighborhood's large lots and residential zoning capacity for housing provide opportunities for building higher density, communal housing.

# HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

## ACTION 3

### Collaborate with Oregon Solutions partners to develop conservation-based affordable housing as part of the Lents Stabilization and Job Creation Project.

#### Rationale

A coalition of government agencies in Portland are pursuing the Oregon Solutions Lents Stabilization and Job Creation Project, which aims to improve community stability and equity, restore natural resources, and stimulate job growth in Lents. The Bureau of Environmental services will take a lead role in developing an approach for Johnson Creek floodplain restoration, including working with industrial property owners and acquiring residential land adjacent to Johnson Creek. On residential land, BES often restores only a portion of the property, providing the opportunity to set aside the leftover land area for the purpose of developing affordable housing. A conservation-based housing approach would ensure both strategic conservation efforts in the floodplain and the development of affordable housing in proximity to jobs, services, and transit.

#### Key Actors

Bureau of Environmental Services  
Portland Housing Bureau  
Portland Development Commission  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Proud Ground  
ROSE CDC  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Wisdom of the Elders  
Lents Neighborhood Association

#### Conservation-based affordable housing

is a unique tool that can be used to build more affordable housing units in Lents. In traditional conservation efforts, land is donated to a land trust and preserved as open space or a natural area. Conservation-based affordable housing, however, works to both conserve natural areas and provide well-designed homes for low- and moderate-income community members. In the last 30 years, conservation-based affordable housing projects have emerged through partnerships between local governments, land trusts, housing organizations, and other nonprofit groups. The most visible success story is the Vermont Housing and Conservation Trust Fund, which has developed more than 7,000 affordable homes and conserved more than 350,000 acres in nearly 30 years of operation.

#### Implementation

The Bureau of Environmental Services, Portland Housing Bureau, and other agencies should work with nonprofit partners such as Proud Ground and ROSE CDC to develop conservation-based affordable housing as a part of the Oregon Solutions project. The best way to ensure this happens is for Oregon Solutions partners to donate remaining residential land in the restored floodplain to a community land trust like Proud Ground or community development corporation like ROSE CDC. The development on this land should reflect the needs of the community, some of which are highlighted in this plan, but will require further engagement across cultural and language barriers. This need makes it ideal for a partnership with Livable Lents, Wisdom of the Elders, APANO, and the Lents Neighborhood Association.



(left) Wisdom of the Elders interns work on restoration of the Johnson Creek Floodplain

FOCUS AREA  
**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

Economic development can simultaneously prevent displacement, enhance livability, and foster community control. Effective economic development also produces improvements in quality of life, through increased access to financial and social capital such as job opportunities and community resources. These opportunities can increase residents' capacity to determine their own future. Survey participants in 2015 outreach identified economic development as the second most important factor in livability, behind crime and safety. Participants in the 2015 listening project and Lents Strong echoed one another in calling for the need to foster local entrepreneurship and support small businesses, particularly in a way which values cultural diversity. Many residents highlighted the Portland Mercado and Lents International Farmers Market as two valuable assets in the Lents area.

In the next year, five development projects are set to begin in the Lents Town Center. Each will receive public funding through urban renewal dollars. Three of these development projects will add almost 30,000 square feet of commercial space along Foster Road and 92nd Avenue, the heart of the business district. While Portland Development Commission has invested more than \$90 million into the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area since 1998, the upcoming development may be the single greatest catalyst for economic development in the neighborhood. Government agencies and community organizations will have the opportunity to ensure that development provides benefits and stability to Lents communities most vulnerable to displacement. PDC has worked to promote the Lents Grown business association and various grant programs for local entrepreneurs

and business owners, such as Community Livability Grants and grants for business improvements. As the neighborhood changes, Livable Lents is also poised to play a key role as a convener, working with PDC and other partners in support of efforts to engage the diverse, multicultural Lents community.

(right) This rendering from the PDC shows the location of three prominent projects that will soon be built on Foster Road in Lents Town Center





# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## OBJECTIVE 1

### Invest in community leadership.

Funding local organizations helps build community capacity and creates sustainable, durable community assets. It is also a best practice in anti-displacement planning with strong potential for positive equity outcomes. Interviews with community organizations revealed consensus around the need for increased capacity and coordination. In particular, people identified the need to improve cultural engagement, build community control over the process and outcomes, and provide leadership opportunities.

*“I didn’t know much about my community, so getting into Lents Youth Initiative opened it up for me. Because I really wasn’t active in my community at all.”*

—LENTS YOUTH INITIATIVE  
FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

## ACTION 1

### Fund community-based internship and training programs, including Livable Lents Community Ambassadors and Lents Youth Initiative.

#### Rationale

Internship and training programs can provide people with the opportunities they desire to impact their neighborhood, make money, and learn job and language skills. These are outcomes identified as important across the 2015 survey, multiple interviews with youth and young adult organizations, and several focus groups. Community leadership development for a variety of ages and backgrounds is a key strategy to achieve the values set forth in Lents Strong. Residents and community organizations benefit from increased community leadership capacity,

particularly with regard to advocacy efforts. Paid internships can provide supplemental income for families and provide needed career pathways.

#### Key Actors

Green Lents/Livable Lents  
ROSE CDC  
OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon  
APANO  
PCC Links  
People-Places-Things

#### Implementation

Two programs which build community leadership and are ideal candidates for ongoing funding from public agencies and foundations are Lents Youth Initiative and the Livable Lents Community Ambassador Program, highlighted on the following page.

*(below)* A meeting of the Lents Youth Initiative



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**Lents Youth Initiative** (LYI), founded by ROSE CDC and OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, provides youth with hands-on skill building and training in environmental justice and community organizing. Youth participating in the LYI Youth Empowerment Series who came to a Lents Strong focus group affirmed the program's value to them and their community. In 2016, Green Lents will employ Lents Youth Initiative interns for a second summer. Past interns have worked with Rolling Oasis Grocers, Green Lents, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Lents International Farmers Market, ROSE CDC, Learning Garden Laboratory, and Zenger Farm.

The **Livable Lents Community Ambassador Program** began through the 2015 listening project, which paid three community ambassadors to conduct outreach in Spanish, Russian, and Vietnamese. In its second year, Green Lents plans to expand the program by building on Lents Strong outreach to underrepresented communities. Though language-specific communities remain a high priority, there is a continued need for culturally specific outreach to communities who speak English, in particular low-income renters, African Americans and Native Americans in Lents. The Community Ambassador Program provides residents from these communities valuable leadership and outreach training. Meanwhile, community ambassadors provide government agencies and nonprofits with a reliable, annual outreach strategy that actively engages a wide range of residents on important issues in Lents.



(above) Community Ambassadors

(left) Lents Youth Initiative



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ACTION 2

**Contract with community-based groups, such as Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Wisdom of the Elders, and Green Lents, to perform culturally specific engagement and program implementation.**



### Rationale

Community groups such as Green Lents, APANO, and Wisdom of the Elders are embedded and active in the Lents neighborhood. They are closely connected to community members. As such, they are better situated to inform government processes and resource allocation through a process that is representative of community needs and preferences. Lents Strong heard this desire from Wisdom of the Elders and APANO, which as part of their Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) grant initiative — Asians Building Livable Environment (ABLE) — wish to empower residents to influence the public planning process. By directly investing in community organizations, government can empower community members and make civic processes more accessible, transparent, and inclusive.

### Key Actors

Portland Housing Bureau  
Bureau of Environmental Services  
Bureau of Planning and Sustainability  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Wisdom of the Elders  
ROSE CDC

### Implementation

Each partner organization provides different expertise and opportunities for engagement.

### APANO

Though a statewide organization, APANO's office location in the Jade District adjacent to Lents means it has close ties with Asian and Pacific American community members living in the area. APANO is active in recent land use debates around the inclusion of anti-displacement measures in the Portland Comprehensive plan. APANO has a skilled team of multilingual interpreters, facilitators, and planners who can be paid for expertise and services on a wide range of planning projects. There will be ample opportunities to partner through APANO's ABLE project which focuses on healthy eating and active living and addresses barriers Asian residents experience in the built environment.



### GREEN LENTS

Active in the neighborhood since 2009, Green Lents has a broad, sustainability-oriented constituency of both longtime residents and newcomers. Through the Livable Lents project, Green Lents has built the capacity to reach residents who do not normally participate in community events or respond to emailed surveys. They have demonstrated success in seeking to meet people where they are. The Lents Green Ring project is an upcoming opportunity for engagement partnership on important issues like pedestrian and bike safety, access to community spaces, and neighborhood wayfinding.

### WISDOM OF THE ELDERS

Through workforce development and ecological restoration, Wisdom of the Elders partners with Metro and other government bodies to create jobs and training opportunities in East Portland parks and natural areas. This valuable program should be supported and expanded for the many benefits it creates in the community. By working with Wisdom of the Elders, there are opportunities for agencies to engage native residents, support economic development, and enhance environmental sustainability. One particularly promising opportunity includes the proposed Oregon Solutions project, which will include floodplain restoration.

*(left)* An APANO gathering of Oregon's Asian and Pacific Islander community leaders



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Create a thriving, affordable, multicultural business district.

In Lents, a thriving town center business district will be a diverse one. Lents is a diverse and affordable neighborhood and the inclusion of small, minority, and women-owned businesses will represent the community well while providing amenities that increase livability. This vision reflects a major takeaway from the 2015 Livable Lents survey. However, many respondents were concerned that as the town center develops, it will be a catalyst for gentrification and displacement.

A business district created by Lents and for Lents will be better supported by residents and will be positioned to attract and keep wealth in the community. There are already many businesses that fit this profile in Lents, such as El Pato Feliz, Artistic Dry Cleaners, Rolling Oasis Grocers, and Oliver's Cafe. These businesses and many others will benefit from better organization and awareness of resources.

## ACTION 1

### Increase local awareness of Portland Development Commission grants that support small local businesses.

#### Rationale

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) offers community livability and business improvement grants that can directly benefit small businesses in Lents. Grants and low interest loans provide vital sources of capital to businesses looking to establish, upgrade, or expand. Without community-wide knowledge of available resources, PDC assistance will fall short of its goal to foster the prosperity of area residents and businesses. Lents community members and Lents Grown desire better dissemination of information on resources available to diverse small business owners and residents alike. PDC wants to increase community engagement around available resources and is exploring improvements to its programs, including new grant eligibility for tenants pursuing interior improvements.

#### Key Actors

Portland Development Commission  
Lents Grown  
Green Lents/Livable Lents

#### PDC GRANTS HELP LOCAL BUSINESSES

We talked to **Mo Nguyen**, a Lents business owner, whose family used a Storefront Improvement Grant from PDC to upgrade their facade and paint a mural on the side of their business, **Artistic Dry Cleaners**. When asked why he thought other local small businesses didn't take advantage of PDC resources, he gave two answers. First, business owners may be unaware of the grants or face language barriers in accessing them. Second, they may actually think it is too good of deal, wondering what the catch is. Either way, there is a need for increased local outreach and engagement to help local businesses connect with resources.

#### Implementation

PDC and Lents Grown, with the assistance of Green Lents, can organize and advertise a resource workshop with an emphasis on reaching communities of color and non-English language communities. Green Lents, via Livable Lents, will connect to established outreach networks, promoting the event in multiple languages and ensuring that event content and materials are accessible to non-English speaking communities.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ACTION 2

### Grow and diversify the membership of Lents Grown business association.

#### Rationale

Lents Grown, formed in 2011, is a relatively young business association. To better serve the community, Lents Grown wants to expand and become more of a central resource for Lents businesses by providing an organized group for collective bargaining and decision making. Lents Grown can use their close relationship to PDC to elevate the needs of current and aspiring Lents business owners and encourage the useful distribution of resources to reflect their interests. A more inclusive business community led by Lents Grown will better reflect and serve the diverse Lents neighborhood. A more united and connected Lents business community will be better equipped to advocate for itself.



#### Key Actors

Portland Development Commission  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
Lents Grown



ADAM SIMMONS

#### Implementation

Green Lents and Lents Grown will partner to promote Lents Grown and advertise opportunities to join the organization to local business owners. Livable Lents can help Lents Grown develop multilingual outreach materials that articulate membership benefits for businesses. One valuable and attractive benefit that a business association can provide to its members is access to a larger network. Green Lents and Lents Grown can work together to plan and co-host a networking event that also serves as an opportunity to inform and recruit new members.

(above) Businesses and storefronts line SE 92nd Avenue in Lents Town Center

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## ACTION 3

**Develop tenancing criteria for affordable commercial spaces in the Lents Town Center which prioritize a mix of emerging and local businesses that benefit the diverse residents of Lents.**

### Rationale

By prioritizing local businesses in tenancing decisions, new developments will provide opportunities for local businesses and nonprofit organizations to directly benefit the Lents community. This is an opportunity to preserve the neighborhood's affordable character and increase its livability by prioritizing the affordable amenities that Lents neighbors desire, such as coffee shops, a music venue, and international markets. Portland Development Commission, local business owners, and residents highlighted the need for affordable commercial space in Lents Town Center, particularly as new development occurs and potentially raises property values.

### Key Actors

Portland Development Commission  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
Lents Grown  
Local businesses



(above) Rendering of planned developments on Foster Road in Lents Town Center

### Implementation

Tenancing processes should prioritize local businesses and organizations. Lents Grown should work to schedule negotiations between PDC, developers, and interested local organizations and businesses. Identified businesses should not be required to be from the neighborhood, but should serve the community well by providing affordable goods or services

that meet an identified need. Green Lents/Livable Lents, while not playing a central role, heard from a lot of people concerned about neighborhood change and can help guide the conversation and ground it in evidence and community priorities. For example, Lents Strong outreach shows that community members prioritize small-scale, affordable groceries or restaurants.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### ACTION 4

**Recruit more diverse vendors and ensure the cultural diversity of products available at the Lents International Farmers Market, as management transfers from Zenger Farms to the Portland Farmers Market.**



#### Rationale

Community members frequently cited the Lents International Farmers Market (LIFM) as a valuable neighborhood asset. As an event that already has broad community support and attendance, the farmers market is ideally situated to serve as a model of how a diverse business community can benefit the wider neighborhood. While residents consistently emphasized the market's popularity, they also expressed a desire for increased offerings and expansion. More culturally specific product options will make the market accessible and appealing to a larger, more diverse population. Portland Farmers Market works to ensure the financial viability of vendors and farmers while also better serving the communities where they operate markets. Making the LIFM more attractive will achieve both objectives. Vendors will have access to more potential customers and residents there will be more diverse shopping options.

#### Key Actors

Portland Farmers Market  
Lents International Farmers Market  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization



#### Implementation

Portland Farmers Market can provide vendor application materials in non-English languages and can use the established community cultural organizations such as APANO and Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization for promoting and recruiting vendors. Portland Farmers Market can also expand the existing application process beyond its online format. Livable Lents can serve as an engagement consultant to the Portland Farmers Market as they try to identify products for which there is a greater demand than supply.

*“Portland Farmers Market is committed to the business success of Lents International Farmers Market by reflecting the diverse community in market vendors, products and programs. By assuring the long-term viability of the market and its place in the community, we will open doors for emerging farmers and food artisans. We hope to permanently embed the farmers market into the development of Lents Town Center by building strong relationships with community partners and cultural leaders. Through this collaboration, we will create an inclusive market that attracts vendors and shoppers alike.”*

—AMBER HOLLAND  
PORTLAND FARMERS MARKET MANAGER

This can be accomplished through the Lents Strong focus group model. Additionally, Livable Lents can serve as a community consultant, connecting Portland Farmers Market with organizations and resources to best serve its engagement needs.



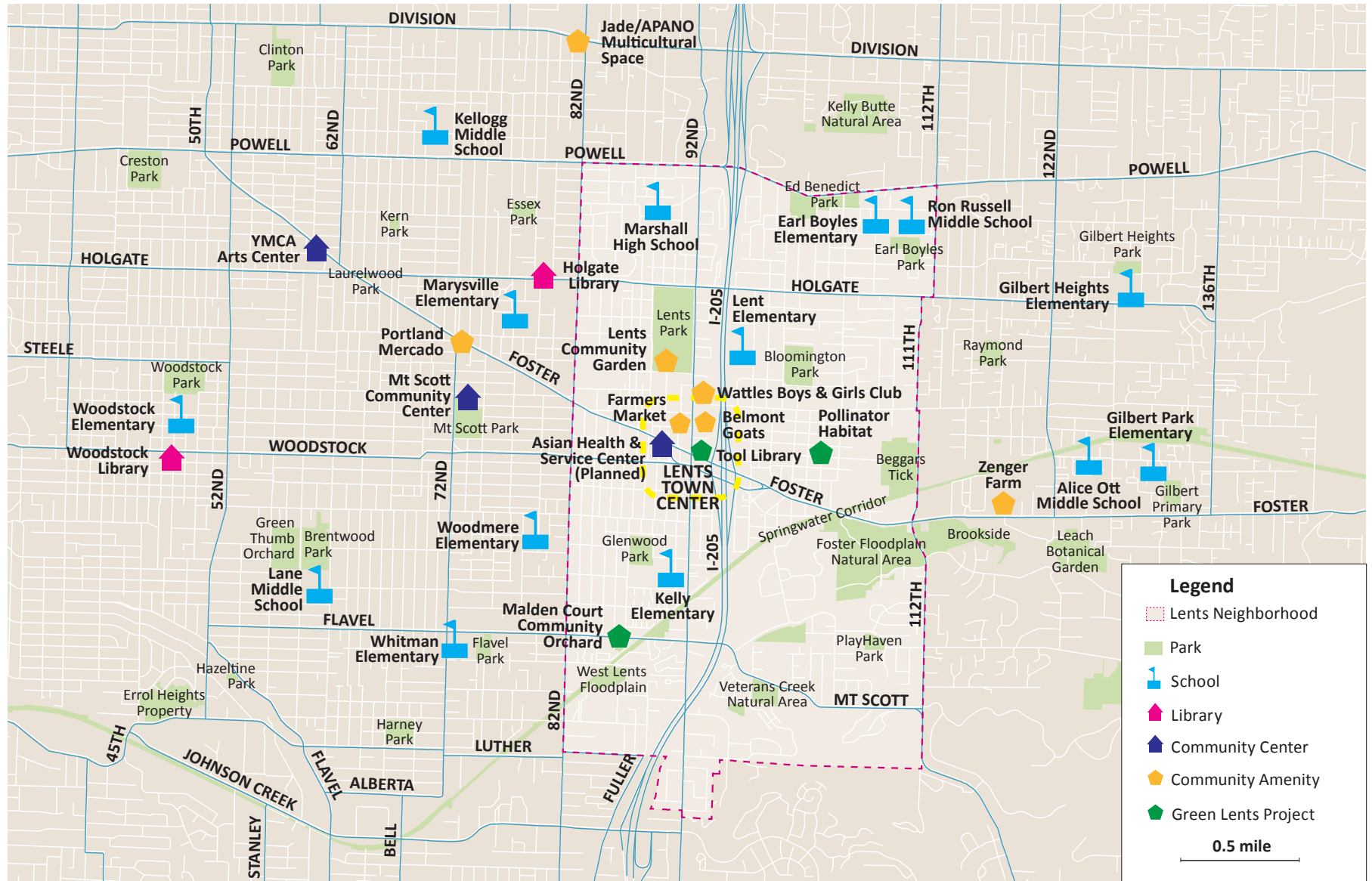
FOCUS AREA  
**SAFE AND  
ACCESSIBLE  
COMMUNITY  
SPACES**

Livable communities feature social spaces that are open and welcoming to community members of all ages, races, cultures, and abilities. This includes public outdoor spaces as well as community centers, coffee shops, and family-friendly restaurants. Lents has a variety of vital community spaces, from Lents Park to the Green Lents Tool Library. Residents also use nearby amenities, including the Holgate Library and Mt. Scott Community Center.

Livable Lents 2015 outreach identified safety and community spaces as leading community priorities for livability. These issues were echoed in focus groups and interviews, with residents calling for safe, accessible community spaces that could foster greater community involvement and interaction with their families and neighbors. Community members perceived a deficit of spaces and programming that are both relevant and affordable for a full range of Lents residents. They are interested in programming and activities that provide leisure and exercise, bring people together, and engage a range of ages and cultures.

Community members also identified areas of concern in the built environment, including unsafe crossings, missing sidewalks, and unwelcoming spaces. These conditions create barriers to accessing community assets. Currently, a number of community organizations are taking steps to address these issues. Green Lents is working with ROSE CDC and OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon to develop the Lents Green Ring, a project that will link neighborhood amenities and greenways to create a safe walking and biking route in Lents. In addition, APANO and the Asian Health & Service Center (AHSC) were recently awarded a Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) grant through Kaiser Permanente to improve active transportation in the Jade District and Lents. These organizations are in a great position to work with residents to create a more walkable, interconnected, and livable community.

# LENTS NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY AMENITIES





# SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

## OBJECTIVE 1

**Foster a diverse, connected community by bringing people together in ways that are fun and engaging.**

Offering social and educational activities in Lents can enhance neighborhood identity and connections. Livable Lents and Lents Strong outreach efforts found many people expressing pride in distinctive neighborhood events, such as the Lents Farmers Market, the Lents Street Fair, the Slavic Festival, and the Jade District Night Market. Lents community members also appreciate regular programming taking place at local schools, libraries, community centers, and Green Lents project sites. However, many residents had additional ideas for new activities or ways to make existing activities more accessible for those who do not speak English, who have low incomes, or may not be keenly aware of neighborhood activities.

*“What if we use English classes as a place where people can connect with each other?”*

—PATRIK MCDADE  
PEOPLE-PLACES-THINGS



## ACTION 1

**Offer experiential, hands-on English learning programs.**



### Rationale

Focus group participants and Livable Lents survey respondents identified a need for English language learning opportunities for all skill levels. Community leaders from People-Places-Things (PPT) and Green Lents suggested that classes offering an experiential, hands-on curriculum could be a way for English language learners to practice their language skills while strengthening community involvement in the neighborhood.

### Key Actors

People-Places-Things  
Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
ROSE CDC

### Implementation

People-Places-Things, whose mission is to provide immersive English language learning experiences, will establish classes in Lents. Livable Lents has already connected PPT instructors to accessible teaching spaces in Lents at ROSE CDC properties, and should work with PPT to create experiential learning opportunities through the Green Lents Tool Library, Malden Court Community Orchard, and other projects and programs in the neighborhood. Livable Lents should also work with community partners such as ROSE CDC, APANO, and local Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) programs to promote the classes to their constituencies.



**People-Places-Things** provides intercultural communication services to the emerging America that embraces its multiethnic, multilingual identity. Their vision is living in integrated communities which nurture their language and cultural diversity. PPT uses language and cultural learning places to connect native and non-native speakers of English. Their programs offer real-world settings to develop and practice English skills.

# SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

## ACTION 2

**Develop and promote activities and programs that will bring Lents neighbors together in community spaces.**

### Rationale

Lents community members desire more activities and programs that activate public space, enhance social connections, and build a better sense of belonging in the neighborhood. Among immigrant communities, there is a desire for cultural celebrations and events that offer opportunities to meet people outside of their language or ethnic community. Lents Strong participants also want more activities for neighborhood youth, particularly teenagers. Lents Youth Initiative members discussed a lack of affordable options to hang out with friends outside of school. APANO and the Asian Health & Service Center (AHSC) are also interested in supporting community activities that promote healthy, active living.

### Key Actors

Green Lents/Livable Lents  
Asian Health and Service Center  
Wattles Boys & Girls Club  
APANO  
Portland Parks & Recreation  
Lents International Farmers Market  
Hogate Library  
Mt. Scott Community Center  
SUN Programs



### Implementation

Neighborhood organizations should collaborate to offer programs responding to community interests. Organizations such as APANO, ROSE CDC, AHSC, and the Wattles Boys & Girls Club have a lot to gain from sharing information and ensuring a wide range of available activities. Green Lents can serve as a clearinghouse for information about activities offered in the neighborhood, as well as needs identified through outreach. Events should have translated posters and materials that are distributed widely, for example through local schools.



*“I would like this to continue to be a family-comfortable space and not just an easy hop on 205 for commuters to elsewhere; this is a place to be, not a place to leave for elsewhere.”*

—LIVABLE LENTS SURVEY RESPONDENT





## SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

The table below provides examples of desired programming and activities suggested by Lents Strong focus group participants. It is meant to serve as a starting point for organizations seeking to expand their offerings, not a comprehensive list. Soccer, language classes, play structures for children, and neighborhood clean-ups were some frequently mentioned options across focus groups, interviews, the Let's Talk about Lents workshop, and the 2015 Livable Lents outreach.

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY	FOCUS GROUP(S)
Soccer	Somali, Vietnamese
Playgrounds for children	Russian/Slavic, Latino, Renters
Language classes	Latino, Russian/Slavic
Art, music, and dance classes	Latino
Teen programs	Youth, Renters
Community garden	Native American, Cantonese
Multilingual/multicultural programs	Native American
Nature education	Cantonese, Native American
Community center	Cantonese
Skills classes (cooking, budgeting, etc.)	Renters
Community dinners	Renters



*"I would go to Lents Park if there were more things for kids to do. It's just a field."*

—CANTONESE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT



*"It would help my girls out a lot to have programs. Since they don't go out for walks or use bikes, they could dance. I like Aztec dancing!"*

—LATINO FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT





## SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

### ACTION 3

Create an online catalogue of community events, festivals, classes, meeting spaces, markets, local businesses, and community organizations.



#### Rationale

In focus groups and interviews, residents expressed that cultural and language barriers make it more difficult to participate in meetings and activities. In organizing Lents Strong focus groups, it was clear that variations in social norms and socioeconomic factors among different groups are important to consider when bringing people together. Often Lents community members simply do not know about events that are taking place or opportunities to benefit from programs like community gardens, meeting spaces to rent, or free classes.

#### Key Actors

Green Lents/Livable Lents  
Lents Neighborhood Association  
Lents Youth Initiative  
APANO  
Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization  
Latino Network  
Padres Unidos



#### Implementation

Through their role as a neighborhood convener and outreach hub, Livable Lents is already aware of much of the relevant information about events and activities taking place in the neighborhood. The next steps are to collect additional information about community opportunities, organize it, and make the information accessible to community members by translating and strategically publicizing it. This could be an appropriate task for a Green Lents summer intern.



# SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

## OBJECTIVE 2

### Improve walkability and safety while strengthening neighborhood identity.

A safe, walkable pedestrian network makes a neighborhood more livable by improving mobility and access to amenities for all people. Good walkability is associated with improved public health and lower transportation costs.

Green Lents, ROSE CDC, and OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon are working together on the Lents Green Ring project, which will connect community assets in Lents through wayfinding signage, safety and road enhancements, and community events. Likewise, the Green Ring will provide bike and pedestrian friendly access through Lents. The Lents Green Ring is well-positioned to frame neighborhood advocacy around walkability, safety, and connection. These issues are also closely tied to APANO's work on their HEAL grant initiative, Asians Building a Livable Environment. Lents Active Watch and the Lents Neighborhood Association are currently engaged on these issues and are interested in working to make Lents more accessible.

## ACTION 1

### Conduct walkability audits of the Lents neighborhood.

#### Rationale

Pedestrian safety (dangerous intersections and inadequate sidewalks) and barriers (unpleasant corridors) were two of the most frequently mentioned concerns about community space and the neighborhood environment from participants in the Livable Lents survey and the focus groups. Through mapping activities, participants have actively identified some of the most pressing safety concerns. APANO and the Asian Health & Service Center (AHSC) have recognized the need to improve sidewalk and crossing conditions as part of their work to promote healthy, active living. While areas of concern have been identified, a walkability audit provides a more thorough evaluation of the walking environment and can be used by agencies such as Portland Bureau of Transportation and Oregon Department of Transportation to identify potential improvements and treatments that agencies can implement.

#### Key Actors

Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Asian Health & Service Center  
Oregon Walks  
Lents Active Watch  
Lents Neighborhood Association  
Lents Youth Initiative

*"We drive to the park, because it is too dangerous to walk."*

—SLAVIC FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT

#### Implementation

Livable Lents will work with APANO and AHSC to coordinate walkability audits, prioritizing locations of highest concern from Livable Lents' outreach. These partners and Livable Lents can enlist the support of Oregon Walks to provide technical assistance. Livable Lents will engage volunteers from Lents Active Watch to help conduct audits, along with participants in the Lents Youth Initiative.



**Feet First**, a pedestrian advocacy organization based in Seattle, has conducted dozens of walkability audits that have been used to support grant applications and prioritize changes to the built environment. Through Seattle's Safe Routes to School program, Feet First walk audits have guided several million dollars of infrastructure improvements by the Seattle Department of Transportation to create safer, more connected neighborhoods. Feet First believes the key of walkability audits is "participation of local residents — people who know the area, who live or work there, and know what it's like to walk around the neighborhood."



# SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

## PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CONCERNS



**82nd Avenue**

- Very narrow sidewalks
- Limited crosswalks
- Fast moving vehicles
- High crime area

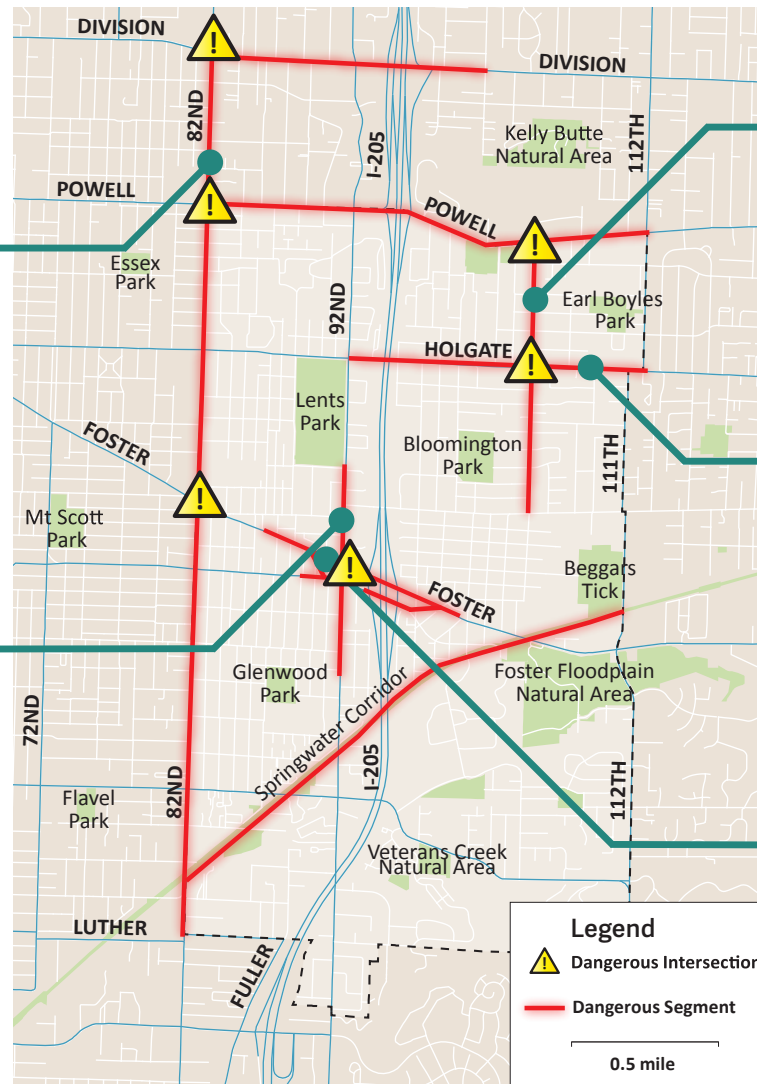


**Lents Town Center**

- #1 pedestrian safety concern
- Limited crosswalks on 92nd Ave
- Dangerous for children

*"A big problem spot is Foster and I-205 exits, with no crosswalks and very unsafe intersections."*

—SOMALI FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT



**104th Avenue**

- No sidewalks present at all
- Fast moving vehicles



**Holgate Boulevard**

- Limited crosswalks
- Narrow sidewalks
- Gaps in the sidewalk



**Lents Town Center**

- Dangerous intersection for pedestrians
- Fast moving vehicles to and from I-205



## SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

### ACTION 2

#### Build community-based advocacy for guiding investments and upgrades in the built environment through the Lents Green Ring and ABLE projects.

##### Rationale

A coordinated neighborhood advocacy strategy will bring attention to the conditions of the built environment and direct investments into enhancing walkability, bikeability, and green amenities in Lents. Through the ABLE initiative, APANO and the Asian Health & Service Center (AHSC) aim to connect residents in the Jade District with the newly approved AHSC community center in the Lents Town Center in a way that creates momentum for investments in a more livable environment. Meanwhile, the Lents Green Ring is emerging as the central frame for a shared vision to improve walkability and accessibility of community spaces in Lents for years to come.

##### Key Actors

Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Asian Health & Service Center  
Lents Active Watch

##### Implementation

Livable Lents will coordinate with community partners such as APANO, AHSC, and Lents Active Watch to create an advocacy strategy for improving the bike and pedestrian environment in Lents. This can be similar to the Living Cully Walks program, which has worked to enhance pedestrian and bicycle access through community-based advocacy. Institute for Sustainable Solutions can help support this coordinated approach for infrastructure investments from sources such as Portland Bureau of Transportation and Metro.



(above) Rendering of Asian Health and Service Center's planned new facility, designed by Holst Architecture



Through Kaiser Permanente's **Healthy Eating Active Living** grant program, the Asian Health and Service Center and APANO have developed the **Asians Building Livable Environment (ABLE)** initiative. ABLE will implement strategies to improve the active transportation environment and develop community-based programming to support physical activity and active transportation in Lents and the Jade District. A key objective of ABLE is to increase grassroots advocacy to support investments that will create a greener, more walkable and bikeable environment with better connectivity to transit.

## SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY SPACES

### ACTION 3

**Design a pedestrian wayfinding program to enhance walkability, strengthen Lents' multicultural identity, and highlight community assets.**

#### Rationale

Lents Strong focus groups revealed that there is a lack of awareness about community assets, particularly among communities of color, immigrants, and diverse language communities. A wayfinding program would highlight the neighborhood's key assets and multicultural identity. The timing is good for this action. Lents Green Ring is poised to brand these signs, and APANO is interested in signs enhancing connectivity between the Jade District and the Lents Town Center. Translation into multiple languages would make community spaces more accessible to the diverse communities in Lents. The program could expand upon the efforts of members of the Lents Neighborhood Association, who have developed a small wayfinding system in the Lents Town Center that highlights community assets.

#### Key Actors

Green Lents/Livable Lents  
APANO  
Asian Health & Service Center  
People-Places-Things  
Lents Neighborhood Association  
Lents Youth Initiative  
Institute for Sustainable Solutions



### CASE STUDY LIVING CULLY WAYFINDING

The **Living Cully Wayfinding System** is a three mile series of maps and signage that directs pedestrian and bicyclists to community resources such as Cully Park, NAYA-Whitaker Ponds, and K<sup>h</sup>unamokwst Park. The program enhances connections to community spaces and was developed through an extensive community outreach process that engaged the diverse members of the Cully community. The wayfinding system builds off the work of the Living Cully Walks program, which leveraged the largest equity-focused grant ever awarded through Metro's Regional Travel Options program.

#### Implementation

Green Lents should convene a variety of Lents community organizations to help identify and map neighborhood amenities. Through the ABLE initiative, APANO and Asian Health & Service Center can leverage funding to develop the wayfinding program. Metro's regional travel options grants and community enhancement grants are potential sources of funding. Lents Youth Initiative members can play active roles in designing and building the wayfinding signs. If needed, Institute for Sustainable Solutions can provide resources and engage PSU students to support the development of the wayfinding program.

# IMPLEMENTATION



**The hallmark of Lents Strong is the collaborative spirit that brought together so many people with a mutual interest in a more livable, affordable neighborhood.**

This is a living document that will require ongoing implementation that responds to changes in Lents. Its success relies on continued collaboration and investment from partners. Green Lents and Livable Lents will work with community organizations, government bureaus, and a broad range of community members to ensure the plan is implemented over the next five years.

## Keys to success

**Coordinate outreach and collaboration efforts** between government agencies and community organizations with overlapping goals and outreach needs in the neighborhood.

**Provide the opportunity to convene** a diverse range of residents on behalf of community organizations, city agencies, and community members.

**Streamline the participation process** to avoid duplication and missed opportunities, as well as limit participation fatigue that comes from uncoordinated and repetitive project-specific outreach.

**Offer transparency and accountability** to a diverse range of Lents residents who have decision making power over outcomes and direction of the plan.

**Honor the value of participation** by paying participants stipends.

**Ensure culturally-relevant engagement** through best practices in language-specific community outreach, outlined in the Community Engagement Toolkit.

**Invest in community leadership** and in build capacity for community-led advocacy



## Collaboration strategies

Green Lents will reconvene Lents Strong project partners to develop a detailed implementation timeline and collaboratively delineate responsibilities for enacting the plan. Below are three potential collaboration strategies that could serve as a model for Lents Strong implementation.

### **Formal coalition**

Like Living Cully, Green Lents and project partners could seek funding, develop a memorandum of understanding, and define a scope of work that defines clear responsibilities for implementation. Wide ranging organizational support would strengthen funding opportunities, providing the means to pay staff for program coordination through Livable Lents. Foundation grants and discretionary funding from multiple city agencies could provide short-term and long-term funding. Some promising funders include Meyer Memorial Trust, Kaiser Permanente, McKenzie River Gathering, East Portland Action Plan, PDC, and Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) grants, and contracts for services through city agencies. This model would require an active participation process for community members created collaboratively by this Lents Strong Coalition.

### **Action Plan committee**

East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) provides a model for community-led advocacy which could inform the Lents Strong process. Community members are a driving force behind the EPAP process, which has seen immense success in activating a diverse range of residents in East Portland over the past seven years. Lents Strong will require clear pathways toward community ownership of the process. If not an EPAP model, a body of Lents residents should be established to direct Lents Strong implementation.

### **Loose, ongoing communication**

Many interviewees mentioned a need to stay updated on work going on in Lents. Quarterly social events between Lents Strong partner organizations provide opportunities to share the work going on in the neighborhood with each other and the wider Lents community. Livable Lents and project partners should continue to engage the Lents community in implementation of the Lents Strong action plan, present to requesting organizations, and identify potential community advocates who can assume leadership roles.



# a five year vision for the future of Lents

## LENTS STRONG VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Lents Strong provides a roadmap for future collaboration and advocacy to make Lents more livable and affordable. Lents is positioned well to benefit from a wide range of tools that can preserve affordability, enhance livability, and foster community control over a shared vision for the neighborhood. Many of these tools and concepts are at the forefront of equity and anti-displacement planning in Portland. The innovative work of coalitions like Living Cully, Anti-Displacement PDX, and the East Portland Action Plan have paved the way for this project, challenging the status quo and demonstrating that these strategies can work in Portland.

### **The next five years are critical to the enduring future of Lents.**

Lents Strong creates new pathways to homeownership and affordable rentals for community members with varying income, immigration status, and family size. Lents Strong builds a Lents Town Center that thrives thanks to the neighborhood's cultural diversity and investments empowering low-income entrepreneurs, businesses, and nonprofits. Lents Strong plans a future where Lents residents are better connected because they see each other at the multicultural Lents Neighborhood Association meeting on Tuesday and again at the International Farmers Market on Sunday. After years of neighborhood advocacy and close coordination with the city, Lents is a safe place to walk, bike, and breathe, with an abundance of community spaces that cater to all Lents residents. Lents Strong establishes a framework for residents and organizations to work together on projects of their choice, empowering new community voices and creating a neighborhood that works for everyone.





# community engagement toolkit

**LENTS** community action plan  
for a livable, affordable  
neighborhood  
**STRONG**



## LENTS STRONG OUTREACH

From January through June 2016, a group of Portland State University Master of Urban and Regional Planning students worked with Green Lents, Livable Lents, and several partner organizations to develop Lents Strong: A Community Action Plan for a Livable, Affordable Neighborhood.

In light of increasing costs of living in Lents, the team sought to address the question: *How can residents, businesses, community groups, and government officials work together to build a sustainable, diverse neighborhood that is both livable and affordable?* The project focused on three priority areas — housing affordability, economic development, and safe, accessible community spaces — identified in Livable Lents' 2015 outreach to over 400 Lents community members.



Group discussions at the Let's Talk About Lents Community Forum, with more than 80 attendees who participated in four different languages

The Lents Strong team believes that an inclusive community action plan must be built on extensive collaboration with different groups in Lents, particularly those most vulnerable to displacement. Four primary goals driving community engagement were:

*Give previously underrepresented communities an opportunity to voice their livability priorities and identify relevant action steps for key issue areas.* Convene focus groups with translation and interpretation that focus on housing affordability, economic development, and safe, accessible community spaces.

*Increase and improve collaboration on issues of affordability and livability between neighborhood organizations.* Develop partnerships with community organizations and government agencies to create a common basis for action that focuses on strategies that increase livability and preserve affordability in Lents.

*Create a sense of community connection and collective action across Lents' many diverse cultures.* Convene a cross-cultural neighborhood celebration that brings together communities from across Lents to take action together through a hands-on workshop.

*Build the capacity of Green Lents and other neighborhood organizations to mobilize volunteers, support community projects, and solicit funding for their work.* Ensure that engagement activates residents to get involved in new or existing projects.

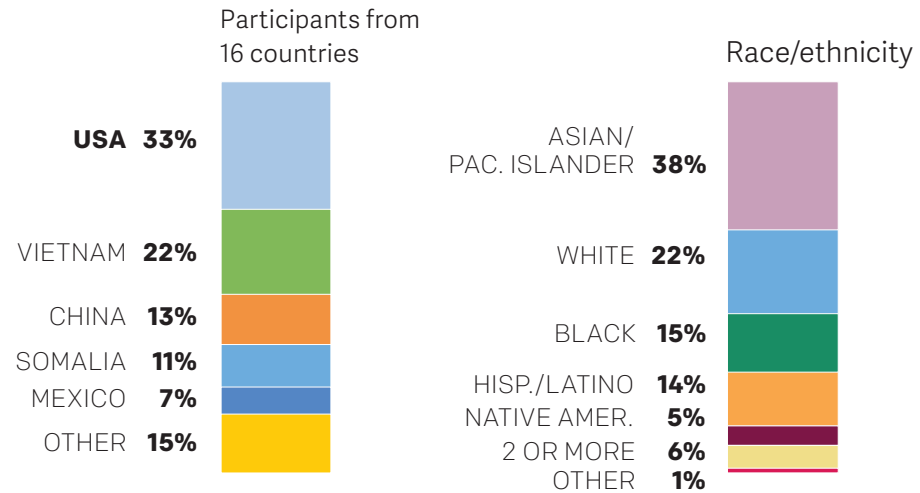


# OUTREACH PARTICIPATION

Lents Strong outreach was extensive, reaching dozens of community members and several neighborhood groups through interviews, focus groups, and a community workshop.

Demographic data collected from focus group participants highlights the diversity of Lents Strong outreach. The 93 participants represented 16 home countries and spoke 17 languages. Over half were renters, and 86 percent reported a household income below \$50,000. Participants ranged in age from 14 to 83 years. Slightly under two thirds were women.

## Who we reached through focus groups



## 45 INTERVIEWS

### GOALS

- Identify collaboration opportunities
- Build partnerships
- Mobilize participation
- Improve shared understanding

## 9 FOCUS GROUPS 93 PARTICIPANTS

### GOALS

Seek input from communities that have been underrepresented or are vulnerable to displacement

- Renter
- Native American
- Slavic/Russian
- Hispanic/Latino/a
- Vietnamese
- Chinese/Cantonese
- African American
- Somali
- Youth

## 80 COMMUNITY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

### GOALS

Gather community feedback on potential action items within our three focus areas (housing affordability, economic development, and safe and accessible community spaces) and create an opportunity for interaction and discussion among a diverse group of community members

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

After working with community partners to engage with diverse groups of Lents residents, the Lents Strong team compiled a variety of strategies for conducting relevant, rewarding outreach with a tangible impact. These lessons can be applied to future projects in Lents as well as other neighborhoods and cities.

## Make it Relevant

*Work through existing organizations where possible.* The Lents Strong community engagement process was most successful when working with existing neighborhood groups. Focus groups convened with community partners yielded the largest reach, including our conversations with Native Americans through Wisdom of the Elders, Vietnamese and Chinese through APANO, Somalis through Africa House, and youth through Lents Youth Initiative.

*Coproduce content and participation guidelines with participants.* When working across diverse groups, events and activities might need to be structured differently to achieve the same goals. It is important to let participants shape activities based on their own cultural values. For example, Lents Strong presented discussion norms at the beginning of the focus groups. After learning from Wisdom of the Elders participants that some of these, such as “speak from the I,” did not reflect their understanding of community, our team shifted from norms to guidelines coproduced with each new group of participants.

*Employ a broad range of outreach strategies to ensure access to the process.* Organizations are not always available or able to collaborate on outreach. For renter, Slavic, Latino, and African American conversations, Lents Strong used a broad outreach strategy, speaking directly with residents at community events, posting flyers in popular community spaces and through social media, spreading the word through community member interviews, and partnering with ROSE CDC to invite residents face to face at home. This layered strategy ensured between six and twenty participants in each of nine focus groups.

(right) Translated Russian event flyer for the Let’s Talk About Lents Community Forum

(below) APANO staff member facilitating the Vietnamese community focus group at their office





Provide interpretation, translation, and child care. Lents residents speak a wide range of languages, with up to 40% speaking a language other than English at their homes. Where possible, it helps to have a trained facilitator who speaks the language of the community. Portland Housing Bureau hired Passport to Languages to translate outreach materials and interpret for focus groups in five languages: Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Russian, and Somali. Child care is an essential component to ensure that parents can participate and was used at all events. These events also provided opportunities for kids to play, including a notable run on the lemonade and a visit to the Belmont Goats.

Use visuals and exercises which are easily transferable across languages and cultures. Project activities paired photos with written descriptions, making the activities more readily understandable. The structure of activities was simple, involving the use of colored dot stickers. One style of activity asked participants to rank their top two priorities out of a list of options displayed on a wheel. The other used a map and asked people to plot their homes, workplaces, and identify assets and hazards in community spaces and the built environment.

Child care field trip to visit the Belmont Goats next door



(above) Slavic community focus group participants plotting favorite community spaces on a map of Lents

(below) Tabling at Earl Boyles Elementary Family Night to invite folks to the Let's Talk about Lents Community Forum, with flyers translated into five languages





## Make it Rewarding

*Value participation.* Providing incentives, such as a small stipend, greatly increases rates of participation by those with low incomes. Participants in the focus groups received a \$20 Fred Meyer gift card. This also extends to organizations providing capacity to the project. Community organizations also benefit from compensation for their time, as many are stretched beyond capacity. This was a bigger challenge for the Lents Strong project, though some compensation was provided to APANO for its translation and interpretation services.

*Feed the people.* Food is an essential component of culture and thus also of the Lents Strong process. Food for focus groups was sourced through community member preferences, supporting local Lents area businesses and providing food which participants actively enjoyed. As a side benefit, a large portion of participants were able to take extra meals home.

*Have fun.* While community engagement often comes with a serious purpose, fun activities make it all the more enjoyable. Without the resources to provide stipends for participation at the community forum, Lents Strong held a raffle with a wide range of donations from neighborhood businesses, including gift cards, bike accessories, toys, and more. Raffles can add an infectious spirit and provide a high note on which to end an event.



Free buffet with dinner from local restaurant Thai Fresh at the Let's Talk About Lents Community Forum



Izzy Armenta of Green Lents draws raffle prize winners at the 2015 Lents Community Forum



Let's Talk About Lents attendees sharing their table discussion take aways with other groups

## Make it Matter

*Demonstrate clear purpose and meaningful outcomes.* Many interviewees expressed frustration with repetitive engagement processes that ask the same questions, but fail to lead to clear outcomes. The partnership with the Portland Housing Bureau provided direct community input on priorities for approximately \$7 million in additional housing funding for the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area. Participants also provided guidance on community priorities which resulted in the Lents Strong action plan and will help guide advocacy and planning efforts.

*Show your work.* It is important to communicate results of outreach and receive direction from community members on a continuous basis. Lents Strong is a clear outgrowth of the Livable Lents 2015 listening project, as well as anti-displacement efforts that identified the need to advance key community priorities. Results from the outreach process were shared directly with participants at the forum. Now, the Lents Strong action plan will be shared widely with community members, organizations, and government agencies. Detailed outreach results are included in the plan's Outreach Appendix for transparency.

*Collaborate holistically.* Partnerships are most successful when there are overlapping goals. The Lents Strong project leveraged a team of six emerging planners and resources from a handful of organizations. Rather than approach outreach separately, Lents Strong leveraged approximately \$10,000 of funding for a project which typically requires a far greater investment. This is a relatively small sum for the value it provides to each partner organization in achieving their goals. Lents Strong is an attempt to identify prime collaboration opportunities which can effectively leverage resources for community engagement and advocacy efforts for the benefit of multiple stakeholders.



Nathan Jones of Green Lents explains the purpose of the Let's Talk About Lents Community Forum and how community input will be used



Table dot activities on display at the Forum. Participants walked around to share what they discussed at their table with others



Community partner kick off meeting at the beginning of the project

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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*Special thanks to Portland State University's Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning*



### COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY PLANNING

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### GREEN LENTS/LIVABLE LENTS

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# appendix: outreach methods and results

From February through April 2016, [collaborative] AP worked with Lents residents, community groups, and government agencies to gather public input informing Lents Strong: A Community Action Plan for a Livable, Affordable Neighborhood. This appendix describes the community engagement methods our team used in Lents and summarizes the input gathered through these methods. It describes the content of several stakeholder advisory meetings, 45 interviews, nine focus groups, and a community workshop. The sections are as follows:

## **Part 1: Philosophy and methods**

### **Part 2: Engagement**

- Stakeholder meetings
- Interviews
- Focus groups
- Community workshop

### **Part 3: Detailed Focus Group and Community Workshop Results**

# PART 1: PHILOSOPHY AND METHODS

From the outset of the Lents Strong project, [collaborative]AP has held that an inclusive, equitable community action plan must be built on extensive collaboration with different groups in Lents, particularly those most vulnerable to increased cost of living. We outlined four primary goals driving our engagement methods:

*Give previously underrepresented communities an opportunity to voice their livability priorities and identify relevant action steps for key issue areas identified in the 2015 Livable Lents survey. Convene focus groups with translation & interpretation that focus on affordable housing, economic development, and safe, accessible community spaces.*

*Increase and improve collaboration on issues of affordability and livability between neighborhood organizations. Develop partnerships with community organizations and government agencies to create a common basis for action that is implementable and focuses on strategies that both increase livability and preserve affordability in Lents. Produce and action plan and associated documents that operate at three levels: community organizations, individuals, and government.*

*Create a sense of community connection and collective action across Lents' many diverse cultures. Convene a cross-cultural neighborhood celebration that brings together communities from across Lents to evaluate our plan and take action together through a hands-on design workshop.*

*Build the capacity of Green Lents and other neighborhood organizations to mobilize volunteers, support community projects, and solicit funding for their work. Ensure that engagement activates residents to get involved in new or existing projects sponsored by Green Lents and project partners.*

Guided by these goals, [collaborative]AP used a variety of methods to gather extensive public input. These methods include stakeholder meetings, interviews, community conversations (focus groups), and a community workshop. The table below illustrates the breadth of Lents Strong outreach.

## Outreach summary by type

	Meetings	Participants
Interviews	-	45
Focus groups	9	93
Community Workshop	1	80
Total	10	202 (includes overlap)

## PART 2: ENGAGEMENT

### STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

From the outset of the Lents Strong project, our team recognized a need to work with partner organizations alongside our client, both to enhance the quality of our own work and to foster working relationships between our client and other groups active in Lents. To this end, we convened a core group of project advisor and stakeholders, identified through previous and ongoing Livable Lents work. Along with our client Green Lents/Livable, this core group included Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), Portland Housing Bureau (PHB), Institute for Sustainable Solutions, and to a lesser extent ROSE Community Development Corporation (CDC).

In a series of stakeholder meetings with the whole group in January and February, we worked collaboratively to identify the three Lents Strong priority areas: Housing affordability, economic development, and safe, accessible community spaces. During these meetings we also discussed the costs of doing our project well — particularly those costs associated with the type of inclusive outreach we planned to conduct. We negotiated with different partner organizations to help cover these costs. We thank APANO, PHB, and ISS for funding materials, printing, translation, interpretation, food, and childcare for all of our outreach events.

We met regularly with each of these groups throughout the duration of the project to develop programming and discuss recommendations. These meetings provided important context and continuity when paired with our biweekly client meetings.

### INTERVIEWS

Beginning in February 2016, our project team interviewed 45 community organization leaders, Lents business owners, and representatives from government agencies active in the neighborhood. Our goals were to:

- Better understand community needs by reaching out to organizations who work on behalf of underrepresented communities and attending relevant community events.
- Identify opportunities for community members to take action.
- Discuss organizational priorities and identify opportunities for collaboration.
- Introduce the opportunity to partner on a focus groups with incentives, food, translation and interpretation provided.
- Identify specific priority policies for the action plan based on anti-displacement efforts, climate resilience, and community control.
- Define parameters of, or interest in, future collaboration to ensure a smooth transition into plan implementation.

In order to achieve these goals, our team collaborated with our client to develop an interview guide based on the three project focus areas: housing affordability, economic development, and accessible community spaces. This interview guide was developed with the understanding that every interviewee would talk about something slightly different, but that it would be important to cover a couple of primary themes.

We identified interviewees by mapping organizations and projects active in Lents, as well as organizations representing different cultural groups living in Lents. We used both email and phone calls to contact organizational leaders, and asked these primary contacts for referrals when appropriate.

We began each interview by talking about the project and what we were hoping to get out of the interview: increased collaborative capacity, recruitment of people for focus groups, and thoughts on what *should* and actually *can* happen in Lents to keep it affordable and make it even more livable. We then used the interview guide to focus the conversation around the focus area(s) appropriate for the interviewee and their organization. Following each interview, we recorded our notes in a template organized by follow up actions, person and organization background, potential plan actions, neighborhood asset inventory, work happening in Lents, and other key takeaways. To initiate plan development, our team organized all potential plan actions by focus area. The following table shows examples of how organizations informed potential action items in the three focus areas.



Focus Area	Organization	Potential Action Items
<b>HOUSING AFFORDABILITY</b>	<b>Portland Youth Builders</b>	Identify potential housing projects in the neighborhood
	<b>Proud Ground</b>	<p>Connect Green Lents to Proud Ground staff for assistance with outreach and convening, particularly in the Spanish-speaking communities.</p> <p>Develop an accurate, thorough, and easily accessible affordable housing inventory in Lents.</p> <p>Increased promotion of Proud Ground’s community realty service, and homeownership for moderate income families, an important piece of the affordability puzzle.</p>
	<b>NAYA</b>	Connect the Generations project to the Lents community, offer classes, learning opportunities, cultural programming.
	<b>Lents Grown</b>	Rather than sell at market rate, sell your home to Proud Ground to ensure that homes can remain affordable in the future.
<b>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b>	<b>Lents Grown</b>	Better engagement of the entire Lents community, including additional and more robust outreach efforts.
		Provide coupon/promotion booklet highlighting Lents businesses to new tenants in the upcoming housing in the town center.
		More incentives for home businesses.
		Rather than subsidize rents development loans should result in controlled rent for spaces that are reserved for local and small businesses.
		Work with Livable Lents and other groups to increase the diversity of the business association, as well as provide small business clinics, connect home-based businesses, provide connections to existing public and nonprofit resources for businesses, and internet 101 classes for businesses who lack the savvy for an online presence.
	<b>Portland Farmers Market</b>	Encourage a more diverse and local vendor community through improved and more culturally appropriate means of engagement and communication. Improve the application process so that it is not only online and in English.
	<b>Portland Youth Builders</b>	Identify additional service opportunities in the neighborhood.
		Identify potential housing projects in the neighborhood.

Focus Area	Organization	Potential Action Items
<b>COMMUNITY SPACES</b>	<b>People Places Things</b>	Use something like Mercado or Jade night market to create economic development around culture; can be an anti-displacement model by bringing money into local pockets. Find a home for an English language class in Lents.
	<b>PDC</b>	Community assistance in identifying potential local tenants for commercial space in Palindrome projects. Research and outreach around the types of businesses that the community wants in the new developments. Increase community awareness of available grants.
	<b>Mo Nguyen, Lents business owner</b>	Improve outreach to immigrant communities about PDC grants to better address language barriers.
	<b>Portland Farmers Market</b>	Encourage a more diverse and local vendor community through improved and more culturally appropriate means of engagement and communication. Improve the application process so that it is not only online and in English. Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of the market, physically and perceptually.
	<b>Portland Youth Builders</b>	Establish a community center.
	<b>People Places Things</b>	Find a home for an English language class in Lents.
	<b>Africa House</b>	Find a way for immigrant communities to be involved with the LNA; Connect LNA to schools, and schools to community groups. Fund more robust marketing of community events and city programs.
	<b>NAYA</b>	Improve connectivity in the neighborhood, both physically via wayfinding and transportation as well as through activities to bring people together, such as nature tours, soccer games, etc. Connect the Generations project to the Lents community, offer classes, learning opportunities, cultural programming. Identify how community spaces might better serve the Native American Community.

By speaking with community leaders, we also identified opportunities for different groups, organizations, and government bureaus to collaborate on work in Lents.

These interviews proved integral in identifying action items and building partnerships with community leaders with whom we could later reconnect to refine recommendations.

### Collaboration opportunity examples

Organization	Action	Potential partners
<b>Portland Farmers Market</b>	Identify strategic partners in strengthening the market’s attendance as well as attracting diverse vendors.	LIFM, Portland Farmers Market, APANO, Portland Development Commission
<b>Portland Youth Builders</b>	Recruit more local volunteers.	Portland Youth Builders, Green Lents
<b>People Places Things</b>	Create a 1–3 year cultural ambassador plan, including language classes and identifying intercultural community leaders.	People Places Things, Green Lents
<b>NAYA</b>	Establish a citizen involvement committee similar to in Cully. Provides a stipend to members to encourage homework, follow-up, and further engagement of other community members.	Green Lents, Lents Neighborhood Association, Lents residents, Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement
<b>Lents Youth Initiative</b>	LYI Intern with Livable Lents, focusing on intercultural engagement.	Lents Youth Initiative, Livable Lents, APANO
<b>Community Alliance of Tenants</b>	Host Renter’s Rights Workshops in multiple languages through Community Alliance of Tenants this summer (2016), and ongoing.	CAT, Livable Lents, EPAP



## FOCUS GROUPS

From March 29 to April 16, 2016, we conducted nine focus groups with Lents community members. The primary goal of these community conversations was to gather input about affordable housing and community spaces in the neighborhood. In addition, we worked with Portland Housing Bureau (PHB) to develop questions and an activity to gather community input prioritizing TIF spending in Lents. In these community conversations, we intended to hear from members of groups underrepresented in past outreach efforts and those most vulnerable to displacement as housing costs rise. Over three weeks, we facilitated conversations with the following groups:

- Renter
- Native American
- Slavic/Russian
- Hispanic/Latino/a
- Vietnamese
- Chinese/Cantonese
- African American
- Somali
- Youth

During this outreach, we spoke with 93 Lents community members representing 17 household languages and 16 home countries.

## Methodology

We recruited focus group participants using both targeted and broad outreach. Our contacts at community organizations in Lents advertised the events to their constituents and we posted flyers at local businesses and organizations as well as on social media. The flyers were available in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Somali. To incentivize participation, we offered dinner, childcare, interpretation, and \$20 Fred Meyer gift cards, funded by PHB.

With input from our project client (Green Lents), PHB, and the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), we developed a facilitation guide to use at each focus group. The central elements of the facilitation plan, which focused on our project focus areas of affordable housing and accessible community spaces, proceeded as follows:

- Introduction: How long have you lived in Lents, and what do you like most about the neighborhood?
- Housing discussion: What has been your experience finding housing in Lents? Was it easy to find the type of housing you prefer, or were there barriers?

- Housing dot voting activity: Participants used yellow and blue dot stickers to indicate their first and second priorities for TIF spending out of eight options — single family own, single family rent, condo, small apartment (0-1 br), large apartment (2+ br), townhome/duplex, home repair assistance, and down payment assistance. We indicated estimate proportional amounts of each option, based on a similar activity conducted for PHB's N/NE Housing Strategy. They explained their choices along with any important housing features.
- Community spaces map activity: On a large map of Lents and surrounding neighborhoods, participants used blue dot stickers to show where they live and yellow to show where they work. We discussed community spaces they like or use a lot, marking with green stickers. Red stickers indicate areas with poor safety or access. Participants discussed their choices and provided ideas for programming in community spaces.

For both activities, materials were provided in English, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, and Somali.

During three events — Slavic/Russian, Hispanic/Latino, and Somali — our team members facilitated with the help of a professional interpreter. In the Vietnamese and Cantonese conversations, APANO staff facilitated in Vietnamese and Cantonese using our materials, providing English notes after the event. Members of our team facilitated the remaining conversations and notes were taken in English.

**Aggregate housing results: housing experience themes**

*Concern over displacement.* Many participants are experiencing the pressure of rising housing costs in Lents. They fear that they will not be able to stay in their homes or even the neighborhood, after having initially moved to Lents because it was easy to find housing.

*Barriers for immigrants.* Immigrant families have settled in Lents due to its relatively low costs. However, lack of documentation and credit history limit housing choice.

*Housing for families.* Lents residents with children have had difficulty finding affordable housing with enough space, indoor and outdoor, for their children.

*Priority 1: Single family homeownership.* The first priority participants chose most frequently was single family homeownership. They value having space for a family. Current renters aspire to own, and current owners want to see others experience homeownership.

*Priority 2: Down payment assistance.* For a second priority, participants most frequently chose down payment assistance. This is seen as an important step in achieving homeownership.

**Aggregate housing activity results**

Housing type	Total 1st priority (yellow sticker)	Total 2nd priority (blue sticker)	Total dot votes (yellow + blue stickers)
Single family own	23	8	31
Small apartment	15	5	20
Townhome/duplex	12	6	18
Single family rent	7	3	10
Large apartment	7	11	18
Down payment assistance	6	17	23
Condo	5	4	9
Home repairs	1	6	7
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>136</b>

**Other housing activity themes**

*Balance size and affordability.* Participants have experienced the difficulty of finding housing that is large and private enough for a family yet still affordable. A total of 36 participants chose townhome/duplex or large apartment as either their first or second priority, and discussed the merits of these units as a compromise between single family homes and small apartments. Balancing size and affordability means enhancing these mid-level housing options.

*Consider families with children.* In general, the housing discussions pointed to the needs of families with children. These families want space, stability, and yards or play areas.

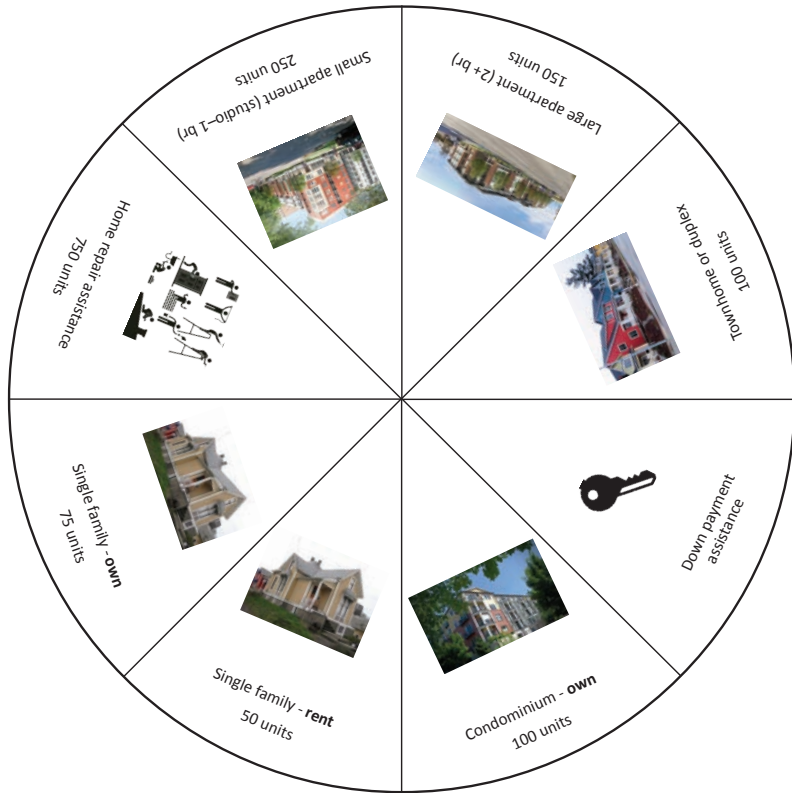
*Address affordability of small units.* Twenty participants chose small apartments as either their first or second priority. In conversation, a few reasons for this choice arose. Small apartments were largely understood as affordable for very

low income people or the elderly. Others saw small apartments as a way to house young professionals while preserving larger units for families.

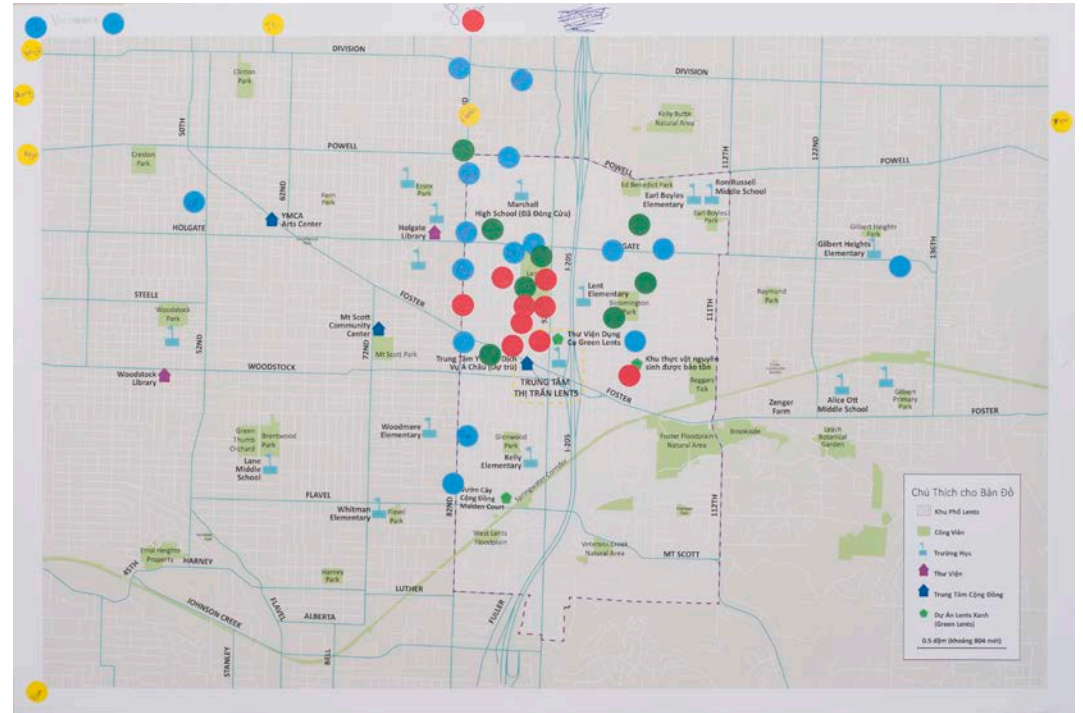
*Preserve Lents' housing stock and character.* While participants understand the need for more housing in Lents, they don't want it to change the character of the neighborhood. New units should be affordable and avoid altering the existing scale of development drastically. Efforts to rehabilitate current housing stock should precede new development.

*Incorporate alternative housing options.* Many participants drew on their own experiences, locally and in other countries, to suggest housing options not presented on the activity wheel. These options — including mobile homes, co-op housing, and cottage clusters — represent ways to produce affordable units with space to connect with neighbors.

## Housing activity wheel



## Results of community spaces activity map from Vietnamese focus group





**Workshop activity**



### Aggregate community spaces themes

*Parks, schools, and shopping.* Participants use parks and schools a lot for recreation, and are generally pleased with their availability in the neighborhood. Similarly, participants identified businesses such as Fred Meyer as places they frequent.

*Safety.* Safety is the overarching concern among participants. This can be divided into safety from people, especially near the homeless camps along the Springwater Corridor, and safety from traffic at intersections throughout Lents.

Geographic diversity. Across the focus groups, people found good things in all parts of the neighborhood. Often the community spaces they marked on the map were those closest to their homes, or those the whole group agreed were good places.

### Aggregate community space programming themes

*Offer more programming for children, teens, and families.* Lents is missing opportunities to bring families together. Parents spoke to a lack of cheap activities (such as movies in the park or dance lessons) to do with their children, and teens emphasized that Lents does not have place for them to go shop and spend time with friends.

*Use more diverse programming to activate Lents Park.* Participants largely enjoy Lents Park but wish it had more programs — sports, community dinners, or music.

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

On April 28, 2016, [collaborative]AP hosted a workshop/forum for Lents community members at Wattles Boys & Girls Club in the Lents Town Center. The goals of this event were to gather community feedback on a series of potential action items within our three focus areas (affordable housing, economic development, and community spaces) and to create an opportunity for interaction and discussion among a diverse group of community members. In total, 64 people attended the workshop.

### Methodology

To recruit workshop participants, we invited focus group participants and community leaders we had previously interviewed. We encouraged these people to invite other Lents community members they knew. Additionally, we posted event flyers in local businesses and on social media, including several facebook groups run by neighborhood organizations. Attendees included people who had participated in prior Lents Strong outreach and new participants. Of the 64 participants who signed in, 48 noted where they heard about the event as follows:

### How did you hear about this event?

Method	Number of Responses
APANO	13
Lents Neighborhood Association	7
Facebook	6
MURP Student	5
Family	4
Email	3
Livable Lents/Green Lents	3
Previous Event	2
IRCO	1
Lents Active Watch	1
PCC Links	1
School Event	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>

We held the event at Wattles Boys & Girls Club, a neutral location in the Lents Town Center with ample space to accommodate a large community event. To incentivize participation, we offered dinner, childcare, and interpretation and raffled off eleven prizes at the end of the event. APANO and PSU's Institute for Sustainable Solutions (ISS) funded this event.

Working with Green Lents/Livable Lents and APANO, we developed a detailed program for the evening. After an unstructured period for attendees to get dinner and mingle, our team and Livable Lents introduced the Lents Strong Project and summarized prior outreach. Then, facilitators at each of 12 tables helped attendees participate in an action item prioritization activity. Facilitators included [collaborative]AP team members, Livable Lents volunteers, and a MURP student. At three tables, Cantonese, Somali, and Russian interpreters aided facilitation. Spanish and Vietnamese interpreters attended the event but were not needed.

Using yellow dot stickers, participants at each table identified which of three focus areas — affordable housing, economic development, and community spaces -- they believed to be the highest priority for upcoming work in Lents. Then participants used yellow and blue dot stickers to identify first and second priority action items, or community benefits, within each focus area. The community benefits, informed by prior engagement and policy research, were as follows:

#### *Affordable housing*

- Renter assistance
- More community owned land
- Homeowner assistance
- More affordable housing units
- Other

#### *Economic development*

- Grocery store or other amenities
- Local business assistance
- Local hiring and living wage jobs
- Contracting with women and minority owned businesses, local businesses, and nonprofits
- Other

#### *Community spaces*

- New or improved gathering spaces
- More community events and activities
- Pedestrian improvements
- Street trees and green infrastructure
- Other

Each participant received a menu of these benefits and brief descriptions in English, Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, Cantonese, or Somali.

#### **Community benefit prioritization themes**

Housing affordability:

*Increase the supply of affordable housing units.* Participants emphasized a need for more affordable housing options in Lents, including a variety of unit types to accommodate small and large families.

*Lower barriers of entry for assistance and programs.* Particularly for immigrants and low-income individuals and families, housing assistance resources should be easier to access and use.

*Work with existing housing resources and units.* Rehabilitate abandoned or under-maintained housing in the neighborhood, and preserve these existing resources for those who need affordable housing.

*Concern for others in the community.* Participants are sensitive to the needs of other people in their neighborhood struggling to find housing, and want Lents to develop in a way that is accommodating to very low income residents.

Economic development:

Keep wealth in the neighborhood. Participants want the benefits of economic development, including jobs and wealth, to stay in Lents.

Provide more food related amenities and businesses, particularly affordable ones. There is a shared desire for affordable grocery stores and restaurants in Lents. Participants would like to patronize these types of establishments, few of which currently exist.



Relate education and economic development. Immigrants and English language learners in particular want to see more workforce development opportunities such as job training and training to understand how owning a business works in Portland.

Community spaces:

*Improve the pedestrian experience.* Safety when walking is a large concern in Lents, particularly focused on the lack of sidewalks and crossings.

*Use public spaces for events and opportunities to get outside.* Participants see the potential for public spaces in Lents to be more activated with community events, cultural activities, sports, and trails.

*Make community spaces more welcoming to diverse groups of Lents community members.* Community spaces should have programming and features that welcome different cultural groups, based on better outreach.

*Find new ways to address homelessness.* Participants are frustrated at the lack of effective responses to homelessness, and are open to more community-based approaches to making public space feel safer and more accessible for everyone

### Aggregate results

Focus area prioritization results

Focus area	Number of top priority votes
Affordable housing	20
Economic development	16
Safe, Accessible Community Spaces	8

Action item prioritization results:

Action	Total number of votes (1st and 2nd priority)
Grocery store or other amenities	37
More community events and activities	35
Homeowner assistance	31
Pedestrian improvements	30
Local business assistance	28
Affordable housing units	27
New or improved gathering spaces	27
Affordable housing units	19
Local business assistance	18
Grocery store or other amenities	17
Pedestrian improvements	17
New or improved gathering spaces	17
More community events and activities	17
Grocery store or other amenities	20
Homeowner assistance	19
More community events and activities	18
Street trees and green infrastructure	17
Pedestrian	13

# PART 3: DETAILED FOCUS GROUP AND WORKSHOP RESULTS

## FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

### Somali

Saturday April 16, 2016  
 2-4pm  
 Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)  
 10301 NE Glisan St, Portland, OR 97220  
 # of participants: 9

*How long have you lived in Lents?*  
 Anywhere from 1 month to over 7 years.

*What is your favorite thing about Lents?*  
 Attendees liked that the neighborhood is quiet and safe. Several mentioned the close proximity to schools and businesses as being their favorite thing about the neighborhood.

### Housing experience themes

*Increased difficulty of finding housing.* This is particularly true for newcomers and recent immigrants that are not aware of available resources, face language and cultural barriers, often do not qualify for programs, and are taken advantage of. The requirements of large families also contribute to increased difficulty in obtaining adequate housing.

*Inadequacy of programs and services.* There is a sentiment that current programs do not do enough to serve the people, especially those most at risk to poor housing quality or lack of housing such as single mothers. Other families are caught in the middle when they make just enough to disqualify them from receiving housing benefits such as section 8 vouchers.

### Somali focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent		
Single family own		
Condo		
Small apartment		
Large apartment		1
Townhome/ duplex	8	
Home repair assistance		2
Downpayment assistance		6

*Priority 1: Townhome/duplex.* Provide more space than apartments, but also some privacy and insulation from neighbors.

*Priority 2: Downpayment assistance.* Owning one's home is appealing because of the amount of space provided.

### Community Space Themes

*Concern for pedestrian safety.* Participants discussed a lack of pedestrian safety, especially when trying to cross busy roads such as Division. One woman spoke of how her son's friend was hit.

*Concern for environmental contamination.* The industrial areas in the southern part of the neighborhood and the potential for detrimental public health impacts, especially for children.

### Community space programming themes

*Additional opportunities for sports.*

*Future Islamic Community Center.* Is in the planning phases.

## Slavic/Russian

Tuesday April 5th, 2016  
630-8pm  
8940 Reedway Place  
# of participants: 8

### *How long have you lived in Lents?*

Participants have generally lived in the neighborhood or in the City for at least several years, some as many as 13.

### *What is your favorite thing about Lents?*

Participants noted the positive changes they have seen in the neighborhood including pedestrian and street improvements, the parks, schools, and the growing strength of the community.

### **Housing experience themes**

*Housing is too expensive.* The supply of affordable housing is too low.

*Better collaboration is required.* It is important to structure coordination between non-profits so that buildings are better-maintained.

*More options.* Larger families require more 3-4 bedroom units.

*Invest in current housing stock.* Repair and refurbish the existing houses in the neighborhood. Reduce the barriers to rehabbing older buildings.

## Slavic/Russian focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent	2	
Single family own		
Condo	1	1
Small apartment	2	1
Large apartment	1	1
Townhome/ duplex		
Home repair assistance		
Downpayment assistance	1	

*Priority 1: Single family rent, small apartment.* Participants recognize the need for housing that accommodates large families, as well as increasing the supply of housing for young professionals to relieve demand pressures and rising costs.

*Priority 2: Small apartment, large apartment, townhome/duplex.* Participants discussed the merits of various housing types, with a focus on housing for families.

*Other:* There was discussion of clustered housing with shared open space.

## Community spaces themes

*Concern for pedestrian safety.* Participants discussed a lack of pedestrian safety as a barrier to walking to parks.

*Concerns for safety in public spaces.* Poor lighting and the prevalence of campers contributes to concerns for well-being.

### **Community space programming themes**

*More options for younger children.* It is difficult to find playgrounds for children between the ages of 3 and 8.



## Latino

Thursday April 7th, 2016  
630-8pm  
8940 Reedway Place  
# of participants: 5

### *How long have you lived in Lents?*

Participants have lived in Lents for 7-10 years, and currently reside at the Bellrose Apartments.

### *What is your favorite thing about Lents?*

Participants like living near families with kids that go to school together, and the general sense of community shared with their neighbors. They appreciate easy access to the MAX line and shopping.

### **Housing experience themes**

*Easy to find housing.* Finding apartments was not difficult when they moved to Lents, but rising rent is concerning.

*Homeownership is an aspiration but not a reality.* People who lack income and/or documentation rent, and will likely need to continue renting. Proud Ground homes or mobile homes could however be routes to affordable homeownership.

### *Housing that accommodates children.*

Participants are concerned that the small space and strict rules in apartment complexes stifle their children.

## Latino focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent	2	1
Single family own		
Condo		
Small apartment		
Large apartment	1	
Townhome/ duplex	3	
Home repair assistance		
Downpayment assistance		1

*Priority 1: Townhome/duplex.* Duplexes would be more comfortable than apartments, with more parking and space for children.

*Priority 2: Large apartment.*

## Community spaces themes

*Additional opportunities for families and children.*

*Safe transportation to school.* Participants indicated a desire for safer routes to Kelly Elementary in particular, both for pedestrians and motorists.

*Safe access to the MAX station.* Participants expressed concerns about themselves and their older children walking to the MAX station near homeless camps.

### **Community space programming themes**

*Places for children to play outside.* Participants use parks a lot because they are nice for all ages.

*Art, music, and dance classes.* There aren't enough opportunities to learn these things in school, and it would be good for families to be able to participate together.

*Language learning opportunities.* Participants want to learn English, but can't find classes that are at the right level or at convenient times/ locations. They also want their children to use Spanish, and would use resources like Spanish storytime at the Holgate library and dual immersion programs in schools.

## Youth

Saturday April 16, 2016

1:30pm

Team Event Center

9201 SE Foster Ave

# of participants: 16

*How long have you lived in Lents?*

N/A

*What is your favorite thing about Lents?*

Lents Youth Initiative participants enjoy living near parks and libraries. Some think the local transit connections are good, along with the ability to walk to stores, school, and parks.

### **Housing experience themes**

*Youth are cognizant of housing issues.*

Participants had good ideas of how much rent is generally as well as how much it has increased.

*Concern about displacement.* About half of the participants have had to move or know someone who has moved due to rent increases.

*Diverse housing experiences.* Attendees came from many different housing situations and levels of housing hardship.

### **Community spaces themes**

*Shopping and atmosphere.* While there is some shopping in and near Lents (such as Eastport Plaza), some teens prefer areas like Hawthorne where it is easier and more comfortable to window shop with friends.

*Pedestrian safety.* Participants walk a lot, and are wary of unsafe intersections and areas with frequent crime. They would like to see sidewalk and street improvements.

*Access without vehicles.* For teens who don't drive and/or don't have a family car and rely on transit or walking, it can be logistically difficult to reach community spaces, schools, and grocery stores.

### **Community space programming themes**

*More places for teens.* Teens described diverse interests, and indicated a desire for more places catered toward them. They like Mt Scott Community Center, but most of the programs are for younger kids.

*Free community spaces.* Teens want places to hang out with friends and use wifi without paying, rather than having to go to Starbucks, for example.

## African American

Tuesday April 12th, 2016  
8940 Reedway Place  
# of participants: 5

### *How long have you lived in Lents?*

Most have lived in the neighborhood for 4-7 years and one attendee has lived in the neighborhood for a couple of months.

### *What is your favorite thing about Lents?*

Participants liked the easy access to transportation such as bus lines, the MAX line, as well as being able to walk places. Lents park is a popular destination as are Lent Elementary and the Wattles Boys & Girls Club. The neighborhood is quiet.

## Housing experience themes

*Direct advocacy helps.* Many participants discussed how one person told them about their current housing and directly helped them in obtaining it. Having a personal advocate was very important in overcoming barriers.

*More stable housing situations.* Most participants were in lower quality or more unpredictable housing before moving into their current building in Lents. Four of five attendees used to live in North or Northeast Portland and moved elsewhere for different reasons.

*Housing amenities matter.* The appeal of housing increases if there are amenities such as a gym/weight room, community space/room, or even an onsite store for residents.

## African American focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent	1	1
Single family own	1	1
Condo		
Small apartment		2
Large apartment	3	
Townhome/ duplex	1	2
Home repair assistance		1
Downpayment assistance	1	

*Priority 1: Large apartment.* Large apartments provide a good compromise between lower cost and room for a family.

*Priority 2: Small apartment, townhome/duplex.* Duplexes are another lower-cost option for families who need space. Low cost small apartments are needed in the neighborhood to address homelessness.

## Community spaces themes

*Concerns about homelessness.* A lack of a sense of safety occurs in the areas where houses are abandoned and people may be squatting. There is a perception that there is increased crime around these areas.

*Concerns over pedestrian safety.* Attendees feel unsafe walking from their homes to the park or when going shopping for groceries.

Community space programming themes

*Good variety of available programs.* Attendees indicated satisfaction with many programs currently offered in the community such as tax services and roller skating available at the Mt. Scott Community Center.



## Native American

Wisdom of the Elders  
3203 SE 109th Ave.  
# of participants: 8

*How long have you lived in Lents?*

Most attendees do not currently live in Lents.

*What is your favorite thing about Lents?*

The greenery, public spaces, and the energy of the community.

### Housing experience themes

*Homeownership is not attainable for all.* For many low-income folks homeownership is unrealistic. It is much too expensive and viewed as an option that is unavailable.

*Renters need assistance.* Landlords are often predatory and many renters do not know their rights and are taken advantage of. The rent is often raised without concern for whether the tenants can afford it or where they will go if they cannot.

*Sustainable development.* We must repair and rehabilitate what we have first. In new development we must make sure that it impacts the land as little as possible. All development, especially affordable housing should be environmentally-conscious.

## Native American focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent	2	
Single family own		
Condo	1	1
Small apartment	2	1
Large apartment	1	1
Townhome/ duplex		
Home repair assistance		
Downpayment assistance	1	

*Priority 1: (Single) family own.* Participants aspire to own homes, and see retrofitting current family homes as more desirable than building new units.

*Priority 2: (Single) family own.*

*Other:* Participants noted that so-called single family homes don't necessarily house only one family. In practice, housing is often shared.

## Community spaces themes

*More greenspace.* There needs to be more in the neighborhood. Introduce pocket parks and take advantage of underutilized space. Find more places to grow plants and food.

*Greenways are important.* They serve as crucial connections for people that do not have cars and support the focus on sustainability.

### Community space programming themes

*Cross-cultural opportunities.* In order to become a stronger community there must be understanding across different cultures and languages.

*Additional spaces to grow.* With a 2 year wait list for some community gardens, there is a need for additional spaces and opportunities to grow food, medicinal plants, and flowers.

## Vietnamese

Thursday April 7th, 2016  
5:30pm  
APANO  
2788 SE 82nd Ave  
# of participants: 18

*How long have you lived in Lents?*  
N/A

*What is your favorite thing about Lents?*  
N/A

### Housing experience themes

*Homeownership is the community goal.* Questions center around what programs are available to provide assistance to people with low incomes so they can own homes. Apartments are seen as stepping stones to homeownership.

*Jobs matter.* Income is the issue. Without a job that pays an adequate amount, it is very difficult to afford a home or rent. The concern is on obtaining better jobs.

*Language is not a barrier.* There are many Vietnamese realtors willing and able to help the community.

## Vietnamese focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent		1
Single family own	14	3
Condo	4	3
Small apartment		
Large apartment	1	
Townhome/ duplex		1
Home repair assistance		
Downpayment assistance	2	1

*Priority 1: Single family own* - Participants preferred single family home because they like the privacy and safety for the children. Attendees also like the quiet and the backyard so that people and families can gather. Homes also are a good way to build equity.

*Priority 2: Condo* - Still a way to own property, but without all of the concerns for upkeep and maintenance that a house requires.

## Community spaces themes

*Safety is an issue.* Many see Lents Park as unsafe and difficult to reach, because there are too many cars. Concerns for children specifically. Street lighting is insufficient.

*Not enough spaces for elders.* Participants see the need for a quiet garden or park with plenty of places to sit and enjoy the environment, but also with amenities such as a bathroom and a fountain.

### Community space programming themes

*More opportunities to gather.* This could be encouraged more at existing parks or in the shape of festivals or community events.

*Additional amenities.* Participants expressed the desire for more shelters, soccer fields, a stage, and picnic tables.

## Chinese/Cantonese

Monday April 11th, 2016  
 5:30pm  
 APANO  
 2788 SE 82nd Ave  
 # of participants: 13

*How long have you lived in Lents?*  
 N/A

*What is your favorite thing about Lents?*  
 Participants like the convenience of the neighborhood. Everything is nearby, including shopping, schools, and parks.

### Housing experience themes

*Concern with rising costs.* Participants are worried about keeping up with rent and mortgage payments as the neighborhood becomes more expensive.

*Issues with credit.* Participants largely own their homes, yet discussed how it was difficult to finance housing due to credit checks.

*Access to amenities.* Another factor that made finding housing difficult was waiting for a home that is close to transit and within walking distance of shopping, parks, and schools.

## Chinese/Cantonese focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent		
Single family own		1
Condo		
Small apartment	11	2
Large apartment		3
Townhome/ duplex		1
Home repair assistance		2
Downpayment assistance	2	4

*Priority 1: Small apartment.* Participants thought small apartments would be the best way to increase the volume of affordable housing, which they recognize as a need in Lents. This would also address a need for elder housing.

*Priority 2: Down payment assistance.* Homeownership is valued, and it is hard to save money for a down payment.

## Community spaces themes

*Safety at Lents Park.* Participants feel unsafe in Lents park, where they have found needles and people doing drugs.

*Pedestrian safety.* Lents Town Center is not walkable due to heavy traffic and few crosswalks.

### Community space programming themes

*More activities at Lents Park.* Participants would use Lents Park more if there were more activities and programs, such as a track and a space to learn about nature.

*Community center.* Several people enjoy using Mt. Scott Community Center with their children and would like another similar community space in Lents.

*Gardens.* Participants would like space to grow food, either in public space or in housing courtyards.



## Renters

Thursday March 29, 2016  
6:30pm  
8940 Reedway Place  
# of participants: 8

### *How long have you lived in Lents?*

Participants have lived in Lents between 1 month and 30-plus years. Most have lived here six or fewer years. One participant was recently displaced from Lents.

### *What is your favorite thing about Lents?*

Participants like the diversity of Lents, and the sense of community where neighbors are friendly and look out for each other. They also enjoy the farmers market.

## Housing experience themes

*Fear of displacement.* Several participants are barely able to stay in Lents due to sharp rent increases. They are afraid to report problems with their units, which could lead to increased costs or evictions. One participant recently had to move into Clackamas County because Lents had become too expensive.

*Homeownership goals.* Some participants are, or were previously, saving to buy a home. They would like to do so in Lents.

### *Concerns about changing housing stock.*

Participants don't like new skinny houses, which don't fit in with the neighborhood and cost a lot even though they provide less space for families.

## Renter focus group housing votes

Housing Type	First Priority	Second Priority
Single family rent	2	
Single family own	4	
Condo		
Small apartment		
Large apartment	1	2
Townhome/ duplex		
Home repair assistance		1
Downpayment assistance		4

*Priority 1: Single family own.* Single family homes offer more parking and space for kids to play outside. The permanence of homeownership is appealing.

*Priority 2: Down payment assistance.* This would not only help current renters own homes, but also open up those rental units to other people who need low-cost housing.

*Other:* Participants recognize that not everyone wants to or can own, and advocate for large apartments that will accommodate families.

## Community spaces themes

*Parks and community centers.* Participants use neighborhood parks a lot, as well as the Mt Scott and East Portland Community Centers.

*Safety near the Springwater Corridor and MAX station.* Participants are wary of the large homeless population and have safety concerns related to drug use and harassment.

*Pedestrian safety.* Harold Street in particular is unsafe due to busy traffic and a lack of sidewalks.

*Lack of cheap or free meeting spaces.*

Organizations too often hold meetings in restaurants and bars, and it is uncomfortable to participate if you can't afford or don't want to purchase anything.

## Community space programming themes

*Free/cheap family activities.* Programs such as community dinners in the park would allow neighbors to meet each other and parents to do things with their kids for little cost.

*More activities for teens and kids.* There aren't enough things for young people to do in Lents.

*Skills classes.* Cooking or budgeting classes, for example, would be a good neighborhood resource.

## WORKSHOP RESULTS

Thursday April 28th, 2016  
6-8:30pm  
Wattles Boys & Girls Club  
9330 SE Harold St, Portland, OR 97266  
# of participants: 64

### Affordable Housing

#### Affordable housing themes

*Increased supply of affordable housing units.* Provide additional units for low income individuals and families in Lents.

*Rising cost of housing is felt acutely throughout the neighborhood.* There is broad consensus that rents and home values are rising faster than most can cope with. Rent control and the prohibition of no-cause evictions are seen as palliative measures.

*Lower barriers of entry for assistance and programs.* Immigrants and low-income individuals and families are often unable to participate in programs offered by nonprofits and government agencies

*Greater unit variety.* A more diverse portfolio of housing will do better to serve the diverse needs of the community.

*Prioritize existing housing resources and units.* Address abandoned or under-maintained housing in the neighborhood. Work to preserve and rehabilitate the existing housing stock.

*Community awareness.* There is an appreciation and understanding that there are diverse needs within the community.

*Homeownership.* The desire to own one's home is widely held as a way to increase individual and community stability and wealth.

#### Affordable housing votes

Affordable Housing	First Priority	Second Priority	Total
Renter Assistance	10	11	21
More community-owned land	10	10	20
Homeowner Assistance	12	19	31
Affordable Housing units	19	8	27
Other	6	11	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>116</b>

*Priority 1. Affordable housing units.* Beyond the general desire for increased supply, community members also called for a greater variety of unit type and size. Affordable housing catered to elders and families was of particular concern. Participants also expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of existing affordable housing.

*Priority 2. Homeowner assistance.* Many participants expressed keen interest in expanding downpayment assistance and other programs that enable low-income households to purchase and own homes. There is a shared desire to expand opportunities to include immigrant communities.

*Other: Renter Assistance.* Renter assistance was seen by many participants as a very important safety net preventing homelessness. When compared to the construction of housing and homeowner assistance it is viewed as a shorter term approach to the housing affordability crisis and includes rent control and the prohibition of no-cause evictions.

## Economic Development

### Economic development themes

*Keep wealth in the neighborhood.* Creating more local jobs, with an emphasis on small businesses, will keep money in Lents.

*Add food-related amenities and business.* Participants desire local, affordable restaurants and grocery stores.

*Relate education and economic development.* This includes job training and enhancing cultural competency around understanding how businesses and the economy work.

### Economic development votes

Economic Development	First Priority	Second Priority	Total
Grocery Store or other amenities	17	20	37
Local business assistance	18	10	28
Local hiring and livable wage jobs	14	6	20
Contracting with women and minority owned businesses, local businesses, and nonprofits	5	7	12
Other	3	5	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>105</b>

*Priority 1: Local business assistance.* Participants would like to see more small businesses in Lents Town Center in order to have more amenities. They recognize that these businesses would likely need start-up and growth assistance.

*Priority 2: Grocery store or other amenities.* Participants want more options of places to buy affordable groceries and meals. Small stores are preferred as they are good meeting places and may be more in line with neighborhood demand than a large grocery.

## Community Spaces

### Community spaces themes

*Invest in pedestrian safety improvements.* Walking in Lents needs to be safer.

*Improve public spaces.* Improving public spaces will create opportunities for events and opportunities for people to get outside. Focus on making community spaces welcoming to diverse communities in Lents.

*Address homelessness.* Homelessness is a visible issue in Lents that requires creative solutions, perhaps including community-based approaches.

### Community spaces votes

Community Spaces	First Priority	Second Priority	Total
New or improved gathering spaces	17	10	27
More community events and activities	17	18	35
Pedestrian improvements	17	13	30
Street trees and green infrastructure	5	17	22
Other	3	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>119</b>

*Priority 1 (tie): New or improved gathering spaces, more community events and activities, and pedestrian improvements.* Participants expressed broad support for better community spaces as well as amenities in these spaces and safer ways to reach them. Crosswalks and disability access are important.

*Priority 2. More community events and activities.* Participants suggested specific events, activities, and amenities including a community center, coffee shop, and outdoor movies.

# appendix: community context

[collaborative]AP gathered and analyzed a large volume of data and information about Lents, which informed the development of Lents Strong: A Community Action Plan for a Livable, Affordable Neighborhood. This appendix provides a brief overview of the community context in Lents, highlighting the information that was most central to plan development. It contains basic information about the geography of Lents, as well as economic, demographic, housing conditions, and planning processes that have shaped the community.

## **Part 1: Geography**

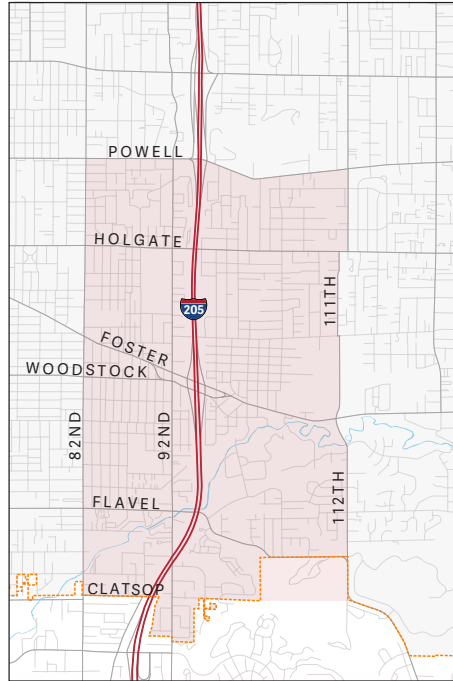
## **Part 2: Community Profile**

## **Part 3: Planning Context**



# GEOGRAPHY

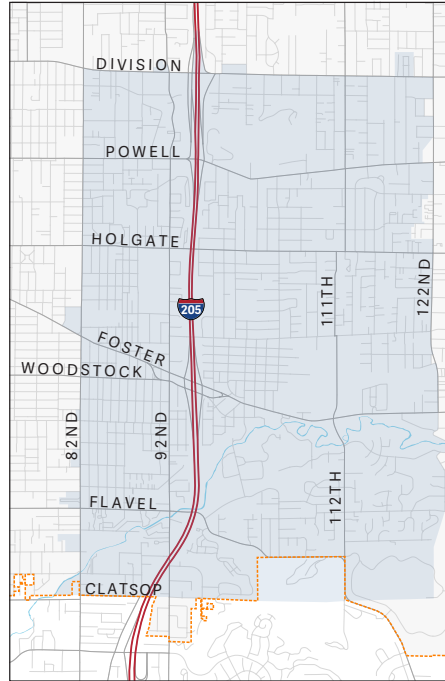
## Lents study area boundaries



### Lents neighborhood

Defined by the Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement, this is the official jurisdiction for the Lents Neighborhood Association.

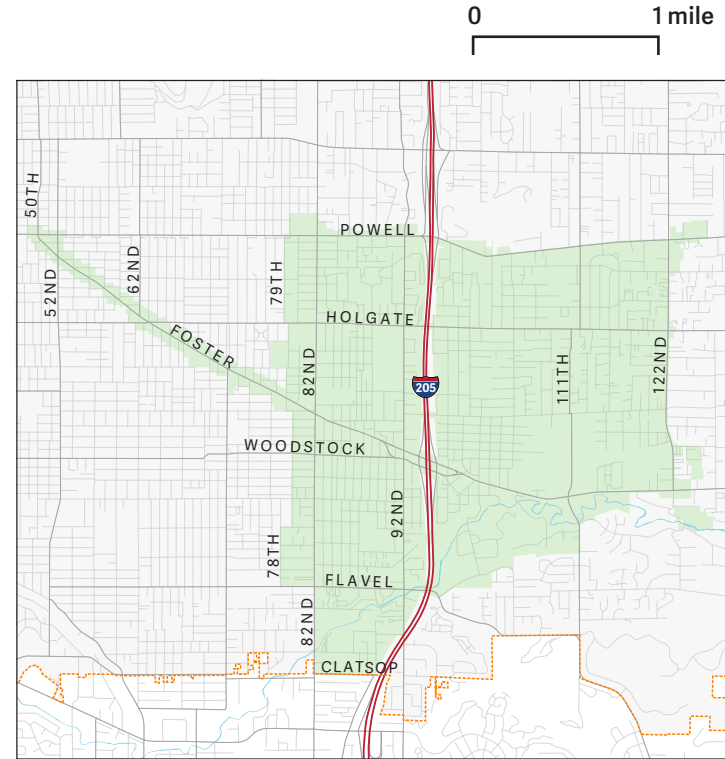
There are several ways to define the geography of Lents. The City of Portland has traditionally defined the Lents Neighborhood as the area in East Portland south of Powell Boulevard, west of SE 111th/112th Avenues, north of SE Clatsop Street and east of SE 82nd Avenue. While this definition is useful, it does not include many who identify as Lents residents; a neighborhood typically functions more as a perceived area and less a political entity.



### ZIP code 97266

The data analysis in our report was conducted using statistics available for ZIP code 97266.

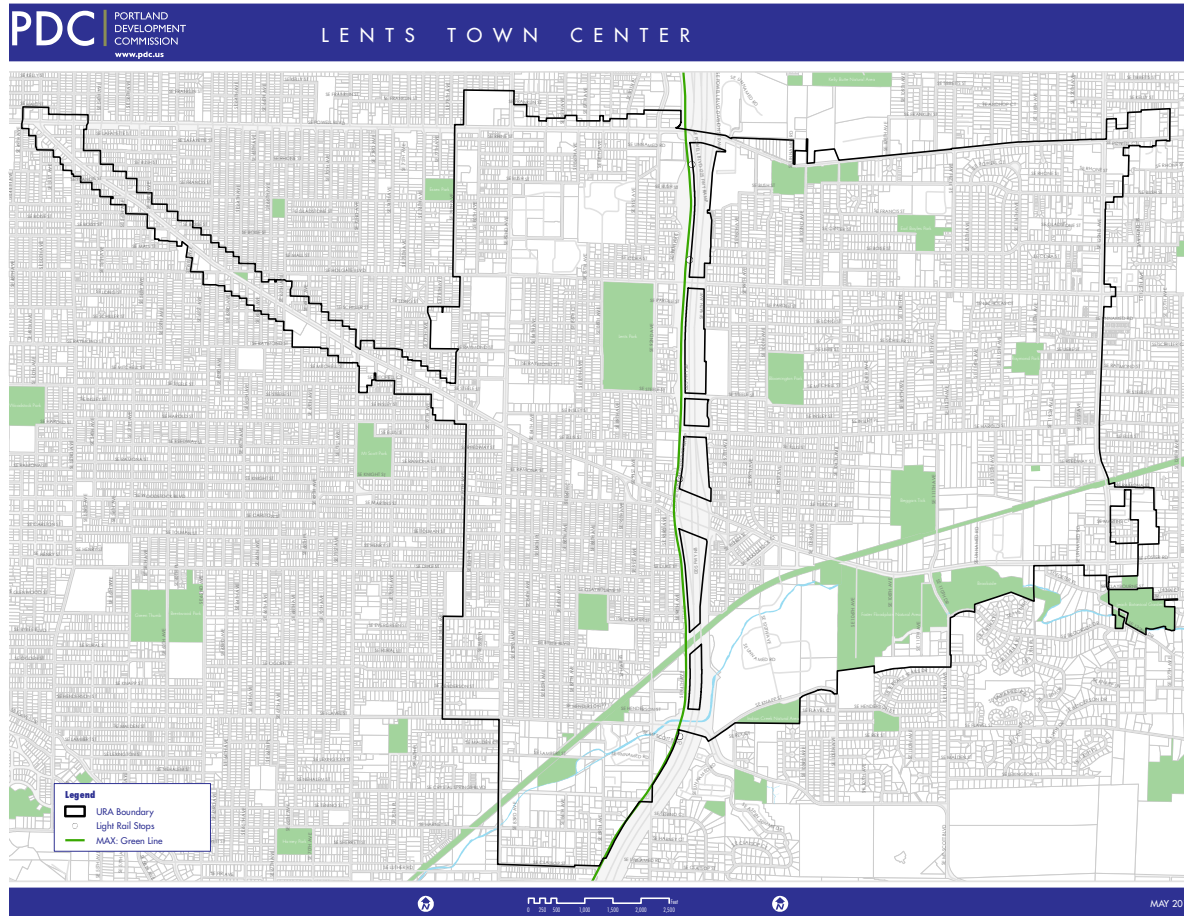
In order to serve the greater Lents community and to emphasize inclusion, the Lents Strong team defined the project area along the boundaries of the larger 97266 ZIP Code. This definition is convenient for purposes of analysis, and also best serves Green Lents, which works in and around Lents.



### Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area

Operated by the Portland Development Commission, the URA is an area for focused investment and projects.

## Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area



The Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Area (URA) is another significant geography to take into consideration. Formed in 1998, the URA represents a region for focused investment by the City and private developers. The Portland Development Commission (PDC) operates Portland's URAs. It has recently been active in the Town Center, where it owns eleven properties.

PDC and the City have an incentive to encourage increased investment in the URA. Investment increases the resulting tax increment financing (TIF), which in turn funds additional projects in the URA. The URA differs from the neighborhood definitions above in that it does not stretch as far to the southeast or north, but reaches farther west to 80th Avenue and covers the section of Foster Road from Powell to 82nd Avenue.

Lents Town Center is located at the junction of SE Foster Road and SE 92nd Avenue. Immediately east of the Town Center is Interstate 205, which divides the neighborhood and was constructed amid significant controversy in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Along the southern portion of the neighborhood are Johnson Creek, the Foster Floodplain Natural Area, and the Springwater Corridor Trail. In the northeast corner of the neighborhood rises the prominent Kelly Butte.

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

## Economic profile

**Table 1.1 Median household income**

	2000	2011	2014
<b>Lents</b>	\$37,234	\$39,000	\$36,772
<b>Portland</b>	\$40,227	\$50,177	\$53,230

Source: American Community Survey and U.S. Census

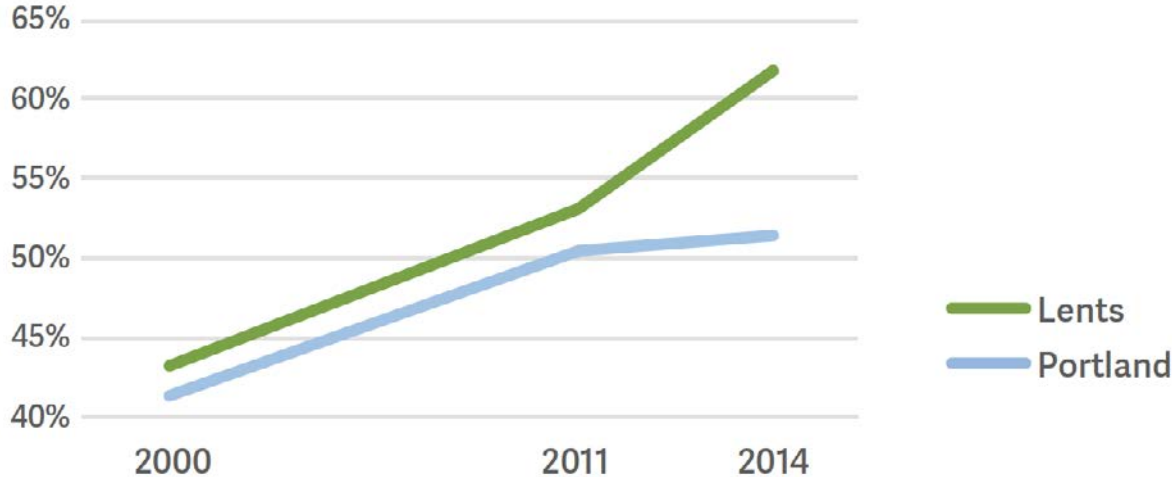
**Table 1.2 Poverty rate**

	2000	2011	2014
<b>Lents</b>	17.8%	25.4%	26.5%
<b>Portland</b>	15.7%	16.8%	18.3%

Source: American Community Survey and U.S. Census

**Housing profile**

**Households paying more than 30% of income on rent**



Source: American Community Survey and U.S. Census

**Table 1.3 Median monthly housing costs**

	2011	2014
<b>Lents</b>	\$996	\$1,045
<b>Portland</b>	\$1,107	\$1,169

Source: American Community Survey



**Table 1.4 Percent change in rental prices from 2014 to 2015**

	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR
<b>Lents-Foster</b>	11.2%	14.0%	16.7%
<b>Portland</b>	8.7%	7.9%	8.7%

Source: 2015 State of Housing in Portland Report

**Table 1.5 Affordability of Lents-Foster housing units at 30% of income level**

	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR
30% Median Family Income	No	No	No
60% Median Family Income	Yes	No	No
80% Median Family Income	Yes	Yes	No
Lents-Foster Median Family Income	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: 2015 State of Housing in Portland Report

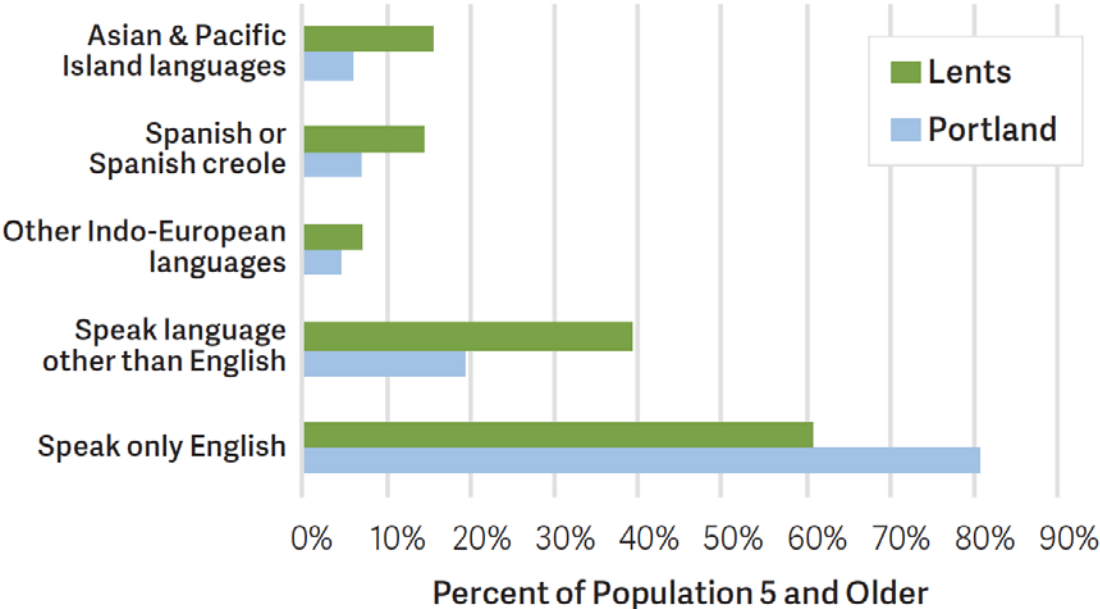
**Table 1.6 Affordability of Lents-Foster housing units at 30% of median family income by race/ethnicity**

	1 BR	2 BR	3 BR
White	Yes	Yes	Yes
Black	No	No	No
American Indian or Alaskan Native	No	No	No
Asian or Pacific Islander	Yes	Yes	No
Latino	No	No	No

Source: 2015 State of Housing in Portland Report

**Demographic profile**

**Languages spoken at home (2014)**



Source: American Community Survey

**Table 1.7 Foreign born population**

	2000	2011	2014
<b>Lents</b>	17.8%	25.4%	26.5%
<b>Portland</b>	15.7%	16.8%	18.3%

Source: American Community Survey and U.S. Census

**Table 1.8 Race and ethnicity**

	2000	2011	2014
<b>Lents</b>			
White Alone	74.8%	59.5%	56.0%
Black	2.1%	4.6%	5.3%
Amer. Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1%	0.6%	0.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	9.6%	15.5%	16.3%
Hispanic	9.1%	15.1%	18.6%
Other/Multiracial	3.3%	4.7%	3.2%
<b>Portland</b>			
White Alone	75.5%	72.4%	71.8%
Black	6.6%	6.1%	5.9%
Amer. Indian or Alaskan Native	1.1%	0.6%	0.6%
Asian or Pacific Islander	6.7%	7.6%	8.1%
Hispanic	6.8%	9.2%	9.6%
Other/Multiracial	3.3%	4.1%	4.0%

Source: American Community Survey and U.S. Census

# PLANNING CONTEXT

In the past two decades, a number of planning efforts have shaped the growth and development of Lents. Most relevant to the implementation of this plan are planning processes that have occurred within the last few years, which are briefly summarized below to provide context for the work of Lents Strong going forward. The larger timeline of planning in Lents over the last twenty years is illustrated on page 16.

## **Lents Town Center Plan Amendment Study (2008)**

Contains recommendations from the Lents Town Center Urban Renewal Advisory Committee and members of the Foster-Powell and Lents Neighborhood Associations to expand the URA by adding the Foster Corridor, increase maximum indebtedness of the PDC for the URA from \$75 million to \$245 million, and extend the URA expiration date to 2020. It also recommends a 30% TIF set aside for affordable housing, with a focus on homeownership development, financing, and first-time homebuyer programs.

## **East Portland Action Plan (2009)**

Looks at strategic opportunities to improve livability and address challenges facing East Portland, including those in Lents. Focuses on how to strategically address community-identified issues by allocating resources to improve livability and prevent involuntary displacement in the community. Specific strategies cover public policies and incentives for housing development, bicycle and pedestrian safety, parks and community spaces, workforce development, and employment opportunities.

## **Foster-Lents Integration Partnership (2012–13)**

Funded by a Community Planning Grant from Metro, the Partnership is a collaboration among public agencies, community groups and non-profit partners working together to improve economic, environmental, and social conditions in the Foster-Lents Corridor. The Foster Corridor Investment Strategy to prioritizes public investments and actions along the Foster Corridor. These include improving safety and connectivity for walking and biking, increasing the diversity of housing options, creating new pocket parks and plazas, and encouraging business development.

## **Lents Five Year Action Plan (2014)**

A plan for development of the Lents Town Center URA between 2015 and 2020, providing recommendations for the development of neighborhood centers, commercial corridors, industrial and open space, and affordable housing. The plan addresses affordable housing preservation for homeowners and renters, opportunities to construct new multifamily housing, investment in corridor safety, and business development promotion. It incorporates previous outreach from the Foster-Lents Integration Partnership and the Foster Green EcoDistrict Steering Committee.

## **Comprehensive Plan Update (2015)**

A long-term plan that uses goals, policies, and significant capital projects to meet Portlanders' vision for the future. In Lents, proposed land use changes largely recommend more mixed use designations, particularly in Lents Town Center. These changes increase land use flexibility while also making the area more pedestrian and transit friendly. In the eastern, more residential areas of Lents, proposed zoning code changes intend to lower the maximum allowable housing unit density. The Comprehensive Plan Update also lists significant capital projects. The East and West Lents Flood Mitigation projects aim to spend more than \$14 million through the Johnson Creek Restoration Plan to restore floodplain, stabilize stream banks, and restore habitat and wetland function with the goal of protecting homes, businesses, and sewer infrastructure.



## APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

**Affordable housing:** Refers to housing units that are considered affordable to households with a monthly gross income less than 100 percent of area Median Family Income. To be considered affordable, a household should pay no more than 30 percent of monthly gross income toward housing costs.

**Climate change vulnerability:** The degree to which natural and socio-economic systems are susceptible to, and unable to cope with, the adverse impacts of climate change. With regard to human vulnerability, this includes floods, heatwaves, and other direct impacts, along with indirect impacts that range from economic shocks to involuntary displacement.

**Community control:** The process by which local residents control issues that directly affect their community, empowering them to determine and control the pace, shape, and manner of change and decision-making.

**Community engagement:** The process of working collaboratively with community groups and residents to address issues and processes that impact their wellbeing. Good community engagement will increase the ability of organizations and residents to direct and participate in public processes.

**Community spaces:** Social spaces that are generally open and accessible to and welcoming of community members of all ages, races, cultures, and abilities. This includes both public outdoor spaces such as parks, plazas, and street fairs, as well as indoor spaces such as community centers.

**Displacement:** The relocation of individuals, groups, and/or communities from their historical dwelling place, driven by market forces. This includes not just the physical displacement of households, but the displacement of culture, neighborhood characteristics, and amenities. Displacement is tied to gentrification and predominantly affects communities of color, renters, low income earners, and people with low educational attainment.

**Economic development:** Investment and stimulation of the economy for the benefit of the community and its members. These benefits can take the form of increased self-sufficiency, greater availability of goods and services, higher wages, and ultimately a higher quality of life.

**Gentrification:** The process of neighborhood change related to new and ongoing public and/or private investment into a community. It creates a rise in property values and a change in demographic and economic conditions in neighborhoods, typically shifting from lower-income to higher-income households and households of color to white households.

**Housing affordability:** An expression of the social and material experiences of households in relation to their housing situations. Affordability consists of the decisions individual households face in balancing the costs of housing with non-housing expenditures within the constraints of their income. It is important to distinguish housing affordability from affordable housing, which refers to physical housing units.

**Livability:** Relating to the core conditions that people see as important to their lives as community members, which include but are not limited to housing affordability, health and safety, education opportunities, economic development, food access, community spaces, environmental health, and transportation options.

**Sustainable community:** A community that preserves and improves upon its economic and environmental health, promotes social equity, fosters broad-based public engagement, and meets its challenges through long-term integrated solutions.

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