6-2001

Boise Neighborhood Gateway Project

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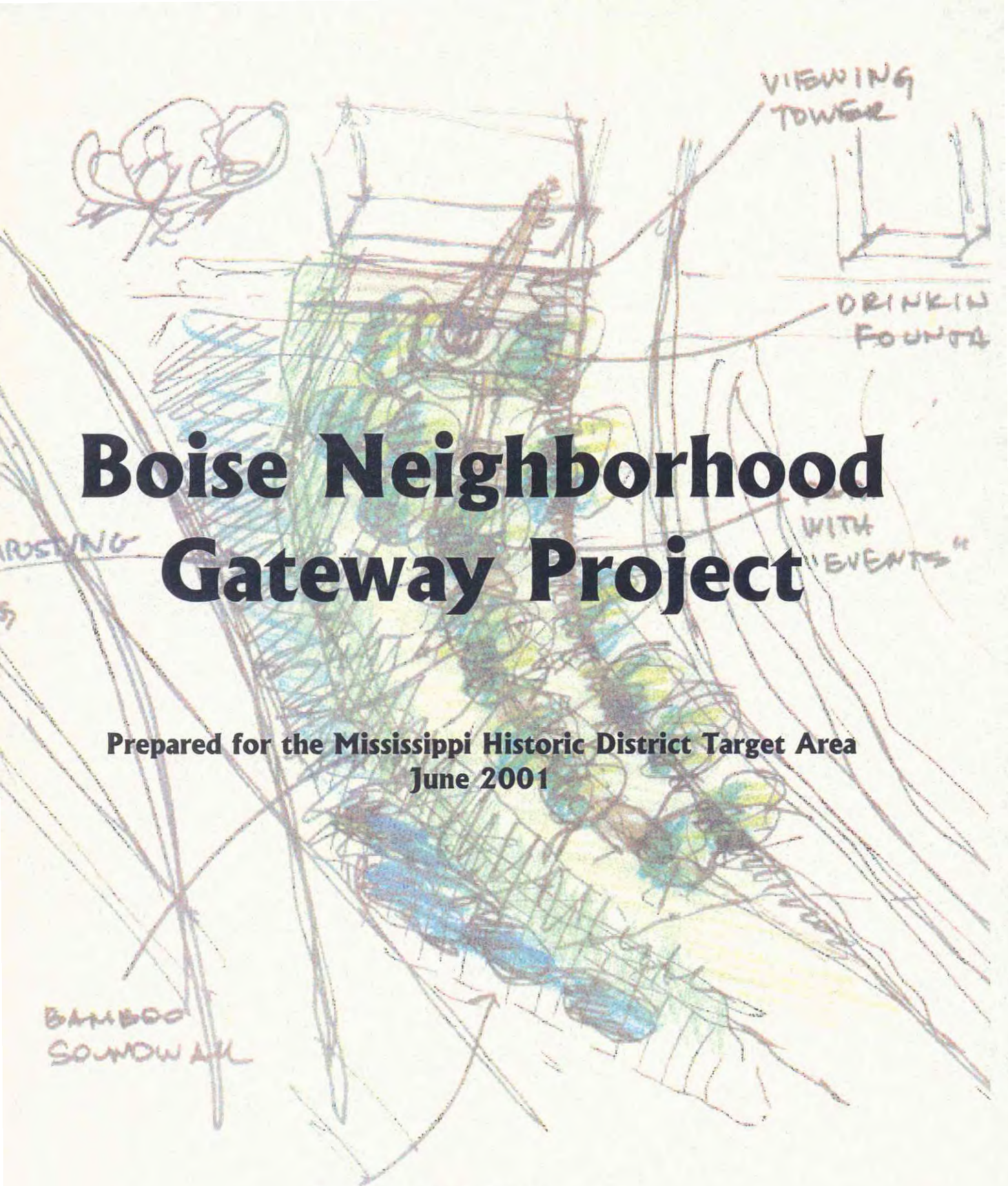

Boise Neighborhood Gateway Project

Prepared for the Mississippi Historic District Target Area
June 2001

Project Team

Debra Andreades — **Emily Hughes**
Arif Khan — **Tony Konkol**

PROJECT FRAMEWORK

This project was completed for the Planning Workshop course, in accordance with requirements for obtaining a Master Degree in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) from Portland State University, Portland, Oregon. In the Planning Workshop, students work within an organized team approach to address a current planning problem or opportunity in the Portland metropolitan area. Keeping a regional planning context in mind, groups address a specific planning project for a client in the community. Group members are responsible for identifying a planning issue or opportunity, contracting with a client for services, developing a work plan, and producing a final product. The project was conducted in accordance with the AICP Code of Ethics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mississippi Historic District Target Area Project

We wish to thank the Mississippi Historic District Target Area Project and Director Janet Bauer for supporting this project as the client. This organization consists of local residents and business owners in the Boise neighborhood, and is primarily funded by the Bureau of Housing and Community Development and the Portland Development Commission. The Mississippi Target Area is interested in the revitalization of N. Mississippi Avenue.

Boise Gateway Advisory Committee

The Boise Neighborhood Gateway Project formed an Advisory Committee that was involved in shaping the direction of the project. Included on the committee were individuals and representatives from the following organizations: The Oregon Department of Transportation, The City of Portland Environmental Services, the Albina Youth Opportunity School, Portland Development Commission, the Mississippi Target Area, Rachel Elizabeth of the Boise Neighborhood Association, design consultant Jason Graf, and adjacent property owner Vern Luce.

Boise Community and Other Contributors

Several members of the Boise community and colleagues of the project team deserve special acknowledgement and thanks. Rachel Elizabeth donated her studio space for advisory committee meetings; Rance Spruill allowed the use of Albina Youth Opportunity School for public meetings; Jeff Thierfelder, Joseph Christman, Carol Collier, Oliver Kuehne, and Jason Graf donated their services as urban designers to develop the site plan. Tova Peltz offered pro-bono services as a geotechnical engineering consultant for the project. Adam Zucker offered engineering expertise in reviewing early plans for bioswales on the east side of N. Mississippi Avenue.

Professors

Deborah Howe, Tom Sanchez and Connie Ozawa, faculty of Portland State University, provided guidance for the project from its inception to completion. As advisors, they provided critical feedback for the project team.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project is a plan to transform an under-utilized parcel of public land into a community asset. Through the analysis of construction, funding, site constraints, maintenance and stewardship options, the project team created a design concept and implementation plan for a parcel of land adjacent to the Interstate 5 freeway. The project team solicited input from community residents through a public involvement process and created an advisory committee consisting of stakeholders to provide guidance for the project. The plan documents the process of project initiation and the selection of alternatives. This plan may be used as a reference for enhancing publicly owned parcels in other neighborhoods.

The site is an unimproved 1.5-acre parcel abutting a raised portion of I- 5 situated on the west side of N. Mississippi Avenue between N. Monroe Street to the north and N. Stanton Street to the south. (See Figure 6) The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) owns the parcel. Initial inquiries by the project team indicated that the Oregon Department of Transportation would be willing to allow improvements to the landscape on this parcel. After making preliminary contacts with the Boise neighborhood, the Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS) and the Mississippi Historic District Target Area (Mississippi Target Area), the project team found that the creation of a neighborhood gateway met the needs of the area. For this reason the Mississippi Target Area, which is involved in numerous neighborhood revitalization projects, was chosen as an appropriate client for the project.

View of site, looking south

Working with the concept of a neighborhood gateway, the project team conducted two public workshops to gather input from the neighborhood regarding the use and design of the site. Representatives from the Oregon Department of Transportation, City of Portland Environmental Services, Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS), the Mississippi Target Area, the Portland Development Commission, and neighborhood representatives served on an advisory committee that reviewed design suggestions from the community.

Several organizations were interested in partnering with the neighborhood to contribute to site development and maintenance. The City of Portland Environmental Services (BES) expressed interest in the site as a demonstration project to educate the public about native vegetation and watershed health. AYOS and the Boise-Eliot Elementary School expressed interest in using the site for environmental education and community service projects. The Portland Development Commission has been looking at potential sites in the Interstate Urban Renewal Area for use as parks and greenspaces. As a result of the partnership between citizens and public agencies, the project team drafted a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Contingent upon the signing of this document by ODOT, BES, and the Boise Neighborhood Association, the project could be implemented as early as Spring, 2002.

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PROJECT BACKGROUND

Project Initiation

The Boise Neighborhood Gateway Project began as a proposal for a public-private partnership. Jason Graf, an urban designer and student at Portland State University, submitted the proposal as a project for a course in sustainable development. Graf proposed to use fallow land owned by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to serve as an environmental demonstration area, while beautifying the physical environment. Graf envisioned a demonstration bioswale that would filter stormwater runoff, a street tree reserve for the City of Portland, a community mural, and a gateway element. Graf also presented the ideas to the Boise Neighborhood Association (BNA), Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS), and Mississippi Historic District Target Area (Mississippi Target Area), but no actions were taken to plan and implement the project.

Project team member Arif Khan approached Graf about resurrecting the initial idea. Graf and Khan presented the idea to staff of ODOT as well as the City of Portland Environmental Services (BES). Khan also solicited input of an environmental engineer and a geo-technical engineer to determine the feasibility of creating a bioswale on the east side of N. Mississippi Avenue.

Planning Workshop students Emily Hughes, Debra Andreades, and Tony Konkol joined Khan in developing this plan for implementation and stewardship of site improvements to the ODOT parcel. The group proposed to coordinate the planning process for the Mississippi Target Area.

Project Objectives

The objectives of the project were to:

- Produce a plan for design and implementation of site
- Explore past and existing neighborhood conditions to determine if they are conducive to the development of a gateway site
- Engage community members, public organizations, and private organizations in formation of design and implementation plans for the site
- Document the process and outcomes of developing publicly owned land to create a local community asset, for possible use as a model for other such projects

Regional Context Statement

This project demonstrates an opportunity to improve fallow public land for the benefit of the local community. The Boise neighborhood, like many others, was negatively affected by development of the I-5 freeway. This project is one attempt to mitigate the harmful effects of high-volume transportation corridors through urban areas, while restoring native vegetation.

Transformation of fallow publicly owned land into a neighborhood asset requires public-private partnerships and cooperation between public agencies. This project will make a contribution toward establishing procedures for these types of partnerships when attempting to use land held by a public

agency. This project sets a precedent for partnerships between the Oregon Department of Transportation, the City of Portland Environmental Services and the Boise Neighborhood Association.

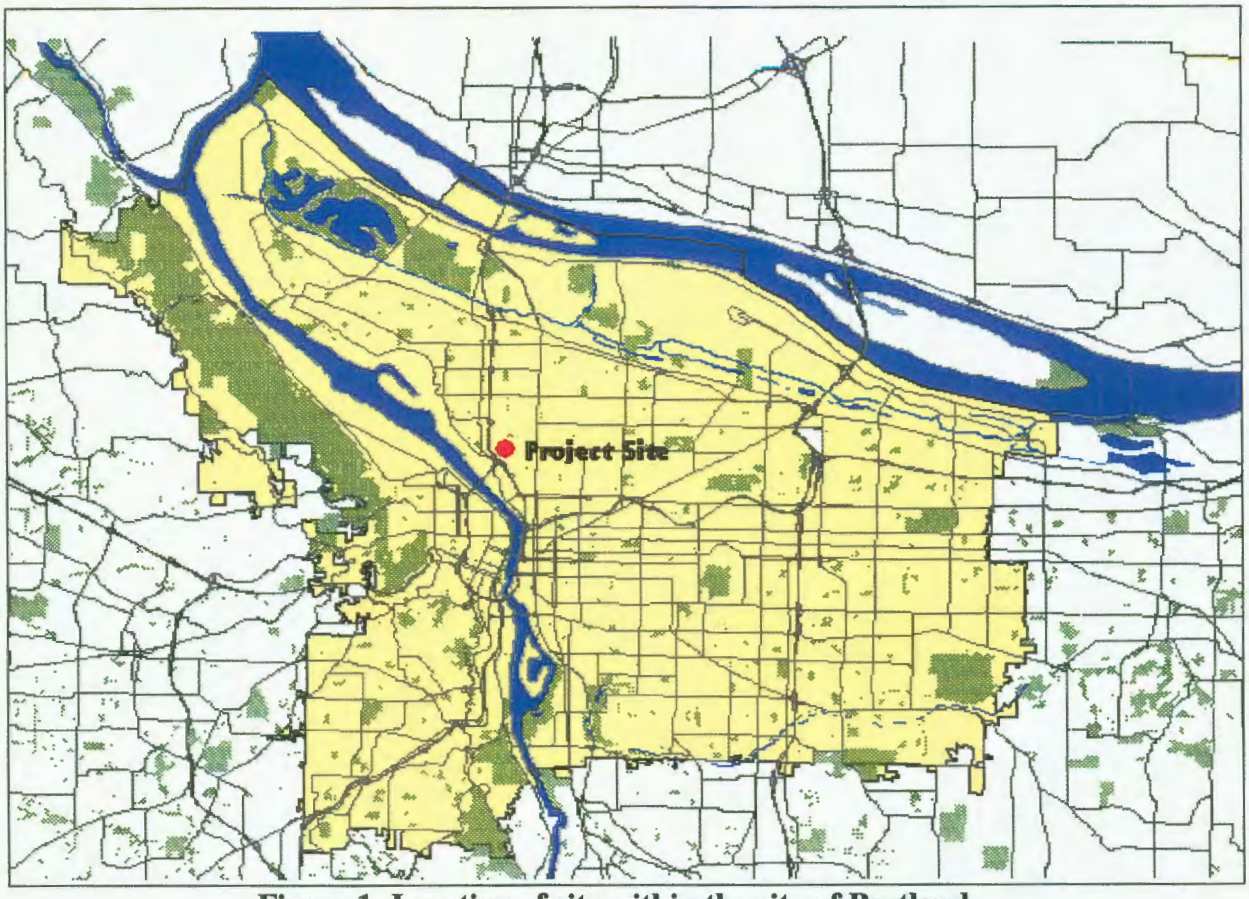


Figure 1: Location of site within the city of Portland

RECOMMENDATIONS

Through a process founded on research, advisory committee input, and public involvement, the Boise Neighborhood Gateway project team recommends the following elements of site design and steps for implementation. The basis for the recommendations are detailed in the remainder of this document.

Site Design

Based on the analysis of advisory committee and community input, the project team recommends the following design elements:

- Plant native, mid-height flowers and shrubs dispersed throughout the site and concentrated in the middle
- Plant native trees planted around the outside of the site, with a few clusters of trees in the middle of the site. Native trees will also be planted on the east side of N. Mississippi Avenue to create a balanced streetscape along the street
- Create a path from the northern end of the site to the southern end of the site. The path will remain within view of the sidewalk, but will meander through the wildflowers and pass on the western edge of the proposed art site
- Place artwork in the middle of the site, between 20 and 30 feet from N. Mississippi Avenue.
- Plant a vegetative screen should be planted along the western edge of the site, designed to frame the existing views of Portland and the West Hills

Implementation

Based on input from the community and advisory committee and an analysis of our research, the project team recommends the following actions:

1.0 Form a subcommittee of the Boise Neighborhood Association to act as the managers of the site.

The creation of this subcommittee will be facilitated by Janet Bauer of the Mississippi Target Area and Ross Kevlin of the Boise Neighborhood Association. This group could work with the staff of Albina Youth Opportunity School and the Boise-Eliot Elementary School. The sub-committee will also consist of other community residents interested in the stewardship of the ODOT property.

2.0 Finalize contract agreement with ODOT, BNA, and BES.

The three agencies will need to agree on the terms and responsibilities of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to proceed with making improvements to the land (draft copy of this MOU has been included in Appendix C). The MOU will have to be reviewed by with ODOT and by the City of Portland Attorney on behalf of BES. The Boise Neighborhood Association will have to provide proof of liability insurance for the site. The final terms of the MOU are currently being negotiated by the aforementioned signatories.

3.0 Solicit funding for initial costs

The Boise Neighborhood Association sub-committee will be responsible for soliciting funding for this project. Janet Bauer of the Mississippi Target Area will provide technical assistance for grant seeking in the first year. See page 37 for information regarding appropriate funding sources.

4.0 Prepare site: grading, clearing, spraying

Site preparation will include grading necessary for proper drainage and planting of the site. BES will attempt to remove any invasive species on the site and prepare the soil for planting. Wildish Standard, the contractor for the ODOT sound wall project may be willing to grade and prepare the site at reduced or no cost as part of an existing agreement with ODOT.

5.0 Site planting

The first planting of the site is scheduled to take place in the early spring of 2002. This planting will consist of native species of plants, shrubs, and trees. BES's Watershed Revegetation team will carry out the planting.

6.0 Solicit and select artwork

The Boise Neighborhood Association will solicit ideas and designs for artwork based on criteria established by the BNA subcommittee that manages the site. Preference can be given to local residents to showcase the talent of Boise residents. Local artists may apply for a project grant through the Regional Arts and Culture Council. The Oregon Department of Transportation will need to ultimately approve of any sculpture or art installed on the site.

7.0 Maintain vegetation

The City of Portland Environmental Services Watershed Revegetation Program will be responsible for maintaining the native plantings for five years from the initial planting. After year five, the Boise Neighborhood Association will be responsible for maintenance and additional planting projects. Since the revegetation will be suited to the local site conditions, maintenance after year five should be minimal. BES has mentioned that it could provide technical expertise on an as-needed, as-available basis after year five. Maintenance will consist of invasive species removal, mulching and replanting.

8.0 Maintain site area

The Boise Neighborhood Association will be responsible for the management of the site and associated improvements to the property. This includes future amenities such as benches or artwork placed on the site. A representative from BNA will coordinate activities with BES and ODOT to ensure that the agencies' needs and interests are being incorporated into the site.

Figure 2: Boise Gateway Area Action Plan

	Action	Date	Responsible
1.0	Form subcommittee	Summer 2001	MTA, BNA, Residents
2.0	Finalize Contract Agreement	Summer 2001	BES, BNA, ODOT
3.0	Solicit funding for in initial costs	Summer 2001	BNA, MTA
4.0	Preparation and Grading of Site	Fall 2001	BES
5.0	Site Planting: Initial	Spring 2002	BES, BNA
6.0	Solicit and select of artwork	Fall 2002-Summer 2021	BNA, (approval of ODOT)
7.0	Maintain vegetation	Spring 2002-Spring 2007	BES, AYOS, Boise-Eliot
8.0	Maintain site area	Spring 2002-Summer 2021	BNA

METHODOLOGY

The Boise Neighborhood Gateway Project consisted of background research and analysis, advisory committee process, public involvement process, site design development, and implementation plan development. Each of these components contributed to the development of final recommendations for the site. All components were conducted concurrently, except for the background research and analysis which occurred only in the initial stage.

Background Research Analysis

Gathering background research for the Boise Neighborhood Gateway project was a necessary step toward gaining an understanding of how the community functions and the strengths of the neighborhood. The information highlighted opportunities, limitations, and current conditions of the Boise neighborhood with regard to the past, present, and future planning initiatives within the community.

The neighborhood history provided a context for the neighborhood prior to the development of I-5. Cultural and racial demographics as well as the historical land use and zoning of the area were used to establish a historical link to the current gateway project.

The existing conditions within the Boise neighborhood and surrounding areas are necessary to determine the needs of the community and potential links to surrounding areas and services. Research and analysis of the community demographics, traffic volumes, surrounding land uses, and visual aspects of the site were utilized to determine how the project would best serve the community.

Research of the planning context of the project included past planning activity, current planning projects, and planning and policy constraints that would affect the implementation on the proposed site. Past planning projects were researched in order to determine the overall objectives of previous plans and identify ways that a new project would be able to contribute to the neighborhood's long-term goals. Common themes in current projects can be taken into account in order to create a continuous streetscape and community identity. Through cooperation with current community projects, this project will contribute to the overall composition of the neighborhood and the community members' objectives. The research and analysis of existing planning projects will support connections to larger city and regional projects, specifically, bus transportation and the development of the N. Interstate Light Rail Transit line.

The research and analysis of similar projects contributed to the design, funding, stewardship, maintenance, and implementation options for the proposed project. Researching local, national, and international projects not only created several implementation options and strategies, it also supported the positive impacts and importance of such projects in communities.

Advisory Committee Process

The advisory committee was expected to offer the project team guidance on acceptable uses for the proposed site and areas of concern that would prohibit the agency from agreeing to the implementation of the project plan. The advisory committee consisted of stakeholders in the process from which agreement was necessary in order to implement the project. Through the advisory committee process the project team was able to determine the constraints of the project from each agency or interest group and focus on expanding the available options in order to meet the goals and desires of all involved.

Public Involvement Process

The public involvement process of the Boise Neighborhood Gateway project was intended to create community support for implementation and stewardship of the proposed project as well as allow for neighborhood input into the design of the site. Public meetings were designed to inform the community about possible uses for the site and gain an understanding of how the project could further the long-term goals of the Boise neighborhood.

There were several expectations for the public involvement process. The team expected to gain useful information for the potential uses of the site and community concerns related to the development of the site. Through this process the amount of community support would be along with potential for neighborhood involvement in the long-term care of the site.

Site Design Concept

Development of a site design concept was necessary in order to address the concerns of the advisory committee and neighborhood residents. The project team was able to use the site design concept to determine the cost breakdown of each aspect of the project in order to determine funding options and potential partners.

Implementation Plan Development

An implementation plan was created to outline phases necessary to meet funding, planting, and the long-term goals of the project. The implementation plan was designed to guide the client towards the completion of the proposed project, by identifying further actions needed, phase schedules, funding options and potential partners.

BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Neighborhood History

General

The Boise neighborhood is located in North and Northeast Portland, approximately two miles northeast of the city center. It occupies 276 acres of land and is home to about 4400 residents, according to the 1996 American Community Survey. Boise was originally part of the town of Albina, which was annexed to the city of Portland in 1891. The area was inhabited by primarily Irish and German immigrants who worked in the railroad and shipbuilding industries, which were well suited to lower Albina (including Boise) because of its proximity to the Willamette River. Several commercial strips developed as a result of this growth, including the one at N. Mississippi Avenue (Eliot Multiple Property Submission, 1997).

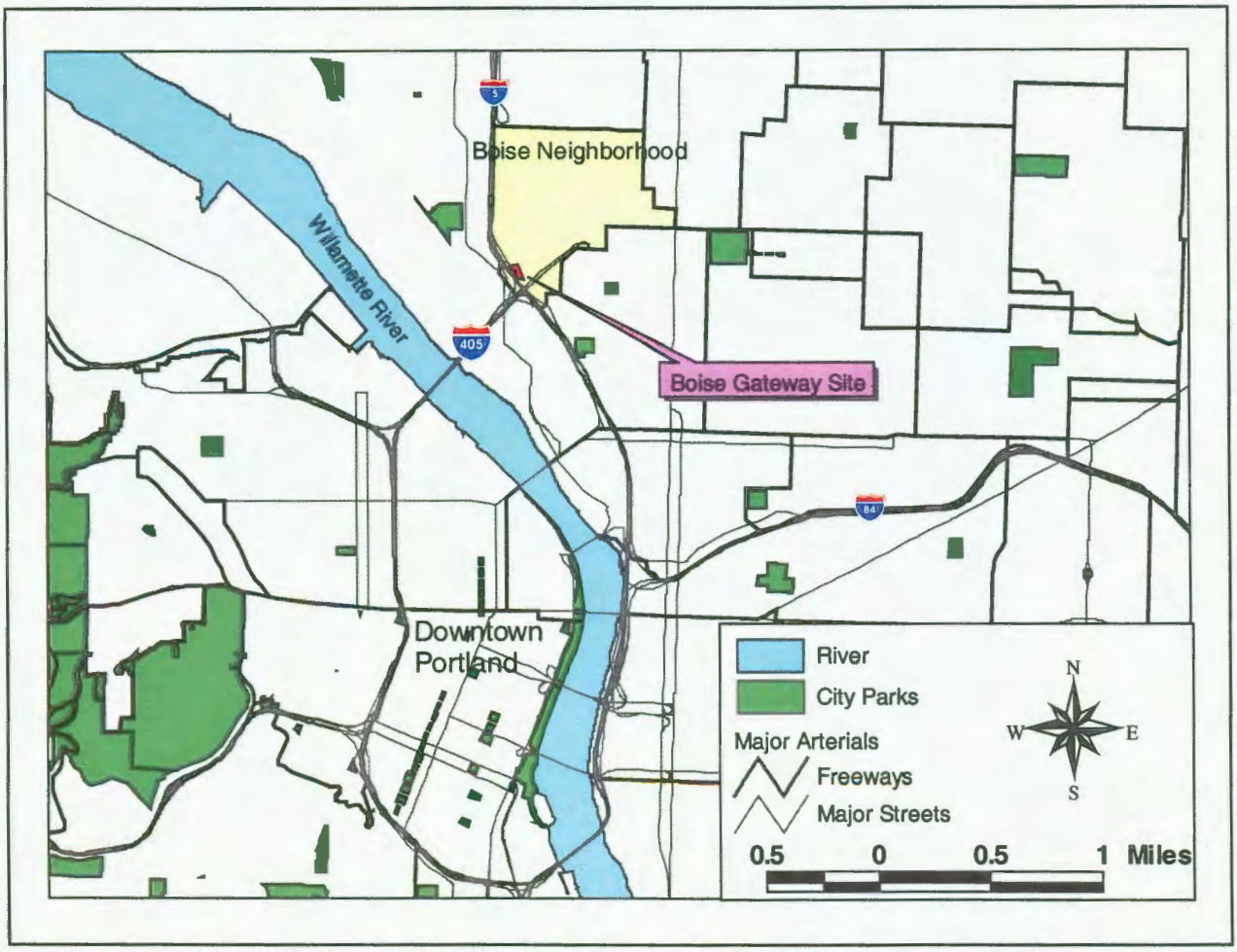


Figure 3: Location of Boise neighborhood and Gateway

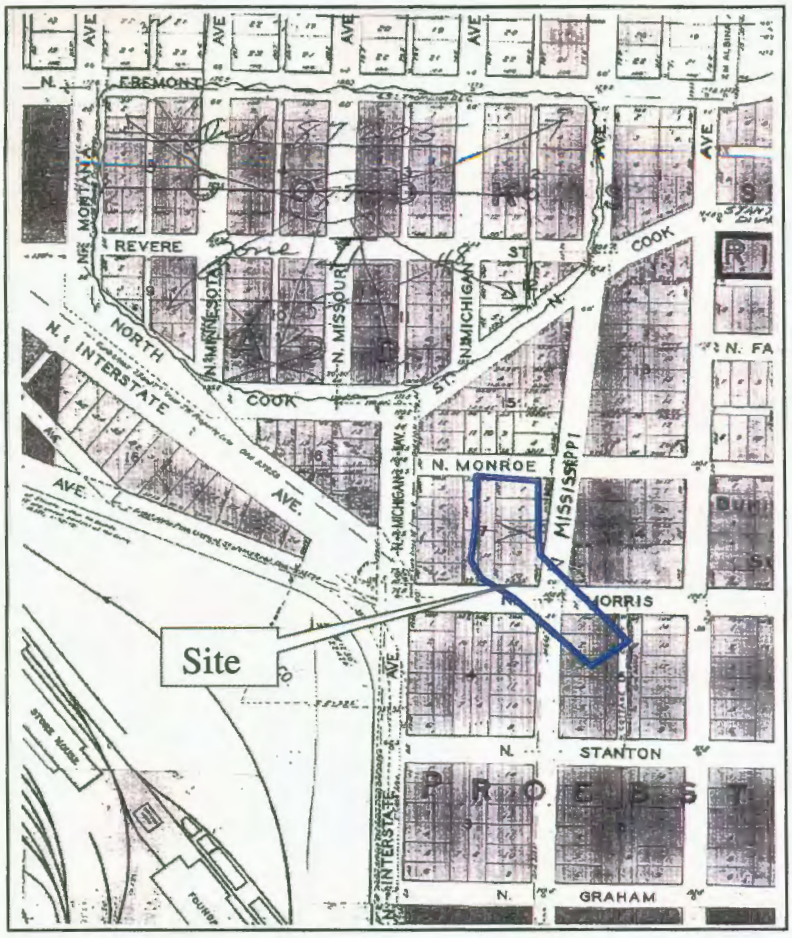
In the early twentieth century, Portland's African American population began moving from the area around West Burnside Street to Boise, drawn there by the presence of jobs in the railroad

and shipbuilding industries. However, it was not an exclusively African-American neighborhood. In 1940 the area formerly known as Albina, which includes Boise, was 93% white (Eliot Multiple Property Submission, 1997).

The neighborhood continued to change with the wide-spread use of the automobile, which decreased the vitality of the N. Mississippi Avenue commercial strip. The area was further harmed by the installation of Interstate 5 (I-5) in 1964, which drew through traffic out of the neighborhood. Construction of the interstate led to the demolition of many homes and businesses which were replaced with the I-5/I-405 interchange on the southern end of Boise. The site location was originally acquired to accommodate an off-ramp that was never constructed. In 1967 further areas of the neighborhood were cleared for the construction of the Emmanuel Hospital Renewal Project in the southeastern part of the neighborhood.

Figure 4: Aerial view of site

Figure 5: 1959 Plat Map



In the 1970s urban planning initiatives shifted from condemning properties for redevelopment to the revitalization of blighted areas. Procedures for planning began to evolve from top-down approaches to those initiated and facilitated by local residents and business owners. As a result of this shift, Boise adopted the Boise Neighborhood Plan in 1993, which was incorporated into the larger Albina Community Plan.

Land Use and Zoning

Before I-5 was constructed, block 5 of Cook's Addition and all of the lots west of N. Michigan Street, which is just west of N. Mississippi Avenue, contained industrial or residential uses. There was a church on the southwest corner at Mississippi and N. Fremont Street. South of Monroe Street, on the site of the current project, there was a portion of land that was a separate taxlot that later became part of ODOT property.

Prior to the adoption of the Albina Plan in 1993, the site was zoned General Industrial (IG). Most of the surrounding neighborhood was designated R2.5, a multi-dwelling residential zone, with some Central Employment (EX) on the N. Mississippi Avenue, north of N. Fremont Street. Mississippi, south of Fremont, was formerly split between Central Employment and General Industrial. The site is now zoned General Industrial on the east portion and Open Space (OS) on the west portion.

Existing Conditions

On N. Mississippi Avenue, north of N. Fremont Street, old and run-down storefronts are being renovated and new businesses are appearing, re-creating the vibrant commercial district of 80 years ago. One new business, the Rebuilding Center, attracts 180 customers a day and is a magnet for those who use recycled materials to renovate homes and businesses. Many customers come from outside the neighborhood. Clustered around the

SEI Community Center

Rebuilding Center are a new pizza restaurant, a café and a plant nursery. Further north on Mississippi are businesses that were already located there such as Soup and Soap, a restaurant/laundromat combination, Sunlan Lighting, and Grandfather's General Store. The old Rexall Drug Store is owned by an artist who is renovating it to locate a new business. This same artist has a piece of vacant property just north of the building that she intends to donate to the neighborhood for a pocket park. After Unthank Park, this property will become only the second park in the neighborhood. A Historic Landmark, the Palmer House, is located further north at N. Skidmore Street.

Boise Neighborhood

The 60,000 square foot Center for Self Enhancement (SEI), located on N. Kerby Avenue, is a 10 million dollar building constructed in 1997 on property in Unthank Park. SEI serves North and Northeast Portland youth with after-school and summer programs.

Demographics

Recent efforts to attract private and public investment, coupled with rising housing costs in other areas of the city, have begun to attract young, white professionals and artists looking for their first homes and/or studios. In the last decade, Boise has seen some significant changes, but it is still one of the poorest minority communities in Portland.

Household Income

In 1990, 59% of Boise households earned less than $15,000 per year, 76% earned less than $25,000, and .5% earned more than $75,000. By 1996, 46 % of Boise households earned less than $15,000 per year, 59 % earned less than $25,000, but no household earned more than $75,000 annually. In contrast, as of 1996, only 22 % of Portland households earned less than $15,000, 40% earned less than $25,000 and 12% earned more than $75,000 annually. According to Multnomah County's analysis of 1996 American Community Survey data, only the adjacent neighborhood, Eliot, had a greater percentage of households, 48%, earning less than $15,000.

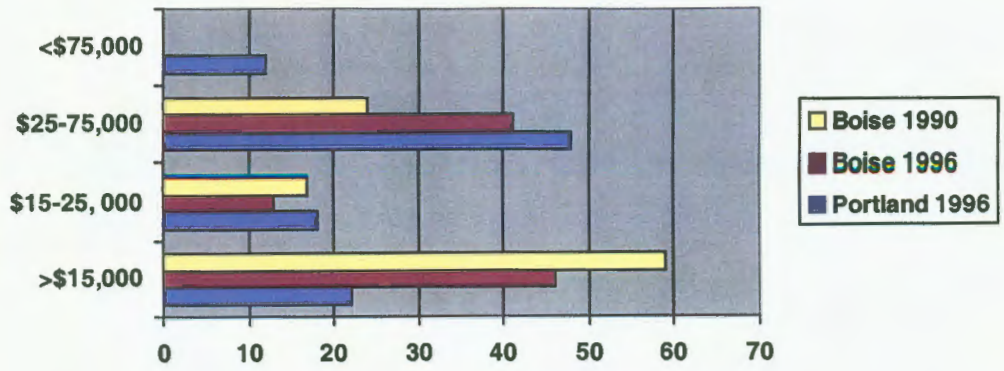


Figure 6: Household Income in Boise and Portland

Racial Composition

Though the neighborhood's white population has increased over the last decade, it remains home to a greater proportion of the city's minority population compared to Portland as a whole. In 1990, Boise was 64% Black, 29% white and 7% were of another race. As of 1996, Boise's racial composition consisted of 51% Black, 44% White, and 12% Hispanic. According to the 2000 census, the city of Portland is 7% Black, 78% White, and 7% Hispanic. Percentages may exceed 100 because Hispanic respondents can identify as more than one race

Traffic Impacts

The primary generators of traffic include the City Maintenance yards located across the street from the site, with heavy truck traffic during the weekdays, The Rebuilding Center with heavy automobile traffic on the weekends, and the Boise-Eliot Elementary School with early morning and mid-afternoon school bus and automobile traffic. Pedestrian traffic to and from Boise and the Albina/Mississippi light rail station on N. Interstate Avenue between N. Russell and N. Knott Streets is expected to increase when Interstate light rail begins operating in 2004.

Location	Vehicles Per Day
N. Mississippi Ave. (south of Fremont St.)	1850
N. Mississippi Ave. (Fremont St.to Skidmore St.)	3400
Kerby Ave.	3530
Interstate 5	145,500
Interstate 405 (Fremont Bridge)	121,900

Source: PDOT, 1997

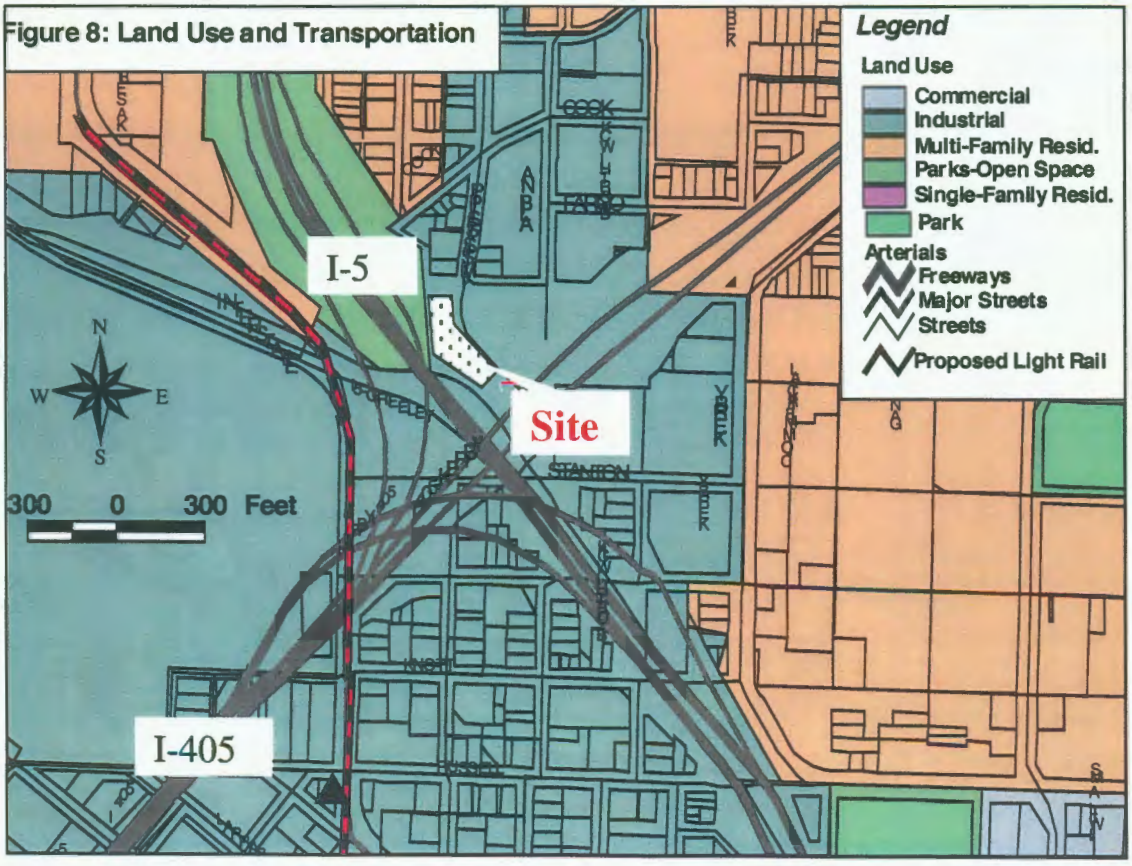
Figure 7: Daily Traffic Volumes Near Site

Zoning and Land Use

Current neighborhood Zoning designations include multi-dwelling, high-density multi-dwelling, Central Employment, Commercial Storefront, and Industrial. R2a, a high-density multi-dwelling residential zone with an Alternative Design Density overlay zone allows for higher density in certain areas of the city when a proposal meets the Community Design Standards. RH., a high density multi-dwelling residential zone, is characterized by a relatively high percentage of building coverage. Types of housing allowed are low, medium and high rise apartments that are in close proximity to transit.

Exd, Central Employment, with a design overlay allows for residential, institutional and commercial uses and new development on N. Mississippi Avenue is taking advantage of the full range of uses allowed. CS, Commercial Storefront, is intended to preserve and enhance older commercial areas that have a storefront character. Retail, service and business uses, as well as residential uses, are allowed.. IG1, an Industrial zone, allows for industrial preservation and residential development as a Conditional Use.

Current land uses generally reflect zoning designations. The majority of the neighborhood is single family residential, with commercial uses lining N. Mississippi Avenue, and industrial uses located at the southern end of the neighborhood.



Site Analysis

The entire site is visible from the I-5 freeway as well as the Kirby Street off-ramp because it sits at a higher elevation than the surrounding area. Transformation of the site may be a signal that a thriving district is located close by. Standing on the site, one sees converging freeway overpasses, the buildings of downtown Portland to the south, Forest Park and the West Hills. Although the site is isolated, the higher elevation allows interesting views of downtown. As one travels north up N. Mississippi Avenue, from Interstate Avenue, the site is the first parcel visible before one enters the neighborhood. This unique location may serve as a rest stop or gathering place for dog walkers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

View of the site, looking north

View of site, looking south

View from the site, looking east

Slope

The site slopes downward towards the southwest. The slope is gradual along N. Mississippi and N. Monroe and increases from 5% to about 10% in the southwestern section of the site. There is a change in elevation of about 20 feet. The highest point of the site is along N. Monroe at about 110 feet above sea level. The lowest point is along the southern section, about 90 feet above sea level, where the site abuts the Greeley off-ramp of I-5. Slope conditions are changing since the site is currently being used as a staging area for ODOT's soundwall construction north of the site. The contractor for the soundwall construction, Wildish Standard, has been using the northern area site to dump excavated soil on the site, thereby changing the local elevations of certain areas in the site. Wildish Standard will be moving some of the

soil away from the property when the soundwalls are completed in August of 2001.

Soil

Soil quality is an important factor when considering construction, planting, and soil permeability for potential bioswales or vegetation. According to the Soil Conservation Survey (SCS), the site's soils are classified as 50C-Urban Land. According to data from Multnomah County Soil Surveys, the native (naturally depositied) soils in the area consists of inter-bedded silt and sand layers, underlain by gravels. These materials are well-draining. Unfortunately, the soil on the site has been altered by the construction of I-5. Currently, there is a significant amount of heterogeneous fill placed by humans. This consists of sand, silt, and construction debris. The presence of this material adds great variation in the soil permeability of the site, meaning the soil would need to be tested in the exact location of the proposed bioswale.

Planning Context

Past Planning Initiatives

Several formal planning initiatives have influenced the development and existing conditions of Boise today. Initial planning initiatives contributed to both the physical and social disruption of the neighborhood which led to later grassroots efforts aimed at re-creating community identity.

Urban Renewal

In the 1950s, urban renewal initiatives changed the landscape of North and Northeast Portland. In the western section of the Boise neighborhood, single-family houses were condemned and replaced by the Interstate 5 expressway, freeway off-ramps, and Legacy Emmanuel Hospital. As a result, a large part of the population was displaced and the grid pattern of street development was disrupted.

Model Cities

Boise was one of eight Portland neighborhoods to participate in the federal Model Cities program beginning in 1967. In 1973, as a result of this program, Boise published a plan for land use changes and public improvements. One relevant proposal is: "developing dead end streets at the freeway for recreational use..." (Boise Neighborhood Plan, 1993).

Boise Neighborhood Plan

In 1993 the Boise Neighborhood Plan was developed and adopted into the larger Albina Community Plan of the same year. Relevant goals of the neighborhood plan include:

- Protect views of downtown and the West Hills from the neighborhood. (Policy UD7)
- Establish gateway with name markers or other amenities at points of entry into the Boise neighborhood. (Policy UD1)
- Work with property owners to convert vacant lots into community gardens. (Policy P10) (Boise Neighborhood Plan, 1993)

Albina Community Plan

The Albina Community Plan, including the associated Boise Neighborhood Plan, was adopted by the City Council on September 30, 1993. Relevant goals in the plan include:

- Increase the attractiveness of Albina to residents, institutions, businesses and visitors; create a land use pattern that will reduce dependence on the automobile. (Policy IA)
- Enhance the Albina area with attractive and well-maintained parks and open spaces. Ensure that open space and recreation facilities in the Albina Community meet the needs of present and future residents. Develop green links between Albina's parks and recreation facilities, its residential areas, a system of green spaces and nearby natural areas. (Policy IC)
- Focus new development at locations along transportation corridors that offer opportunities for transit-supportive developments and foster the creation of good environments for pedestrians in these areas. (Policy IE)
- Emphasize light rail transit as the major transportation investment while improving access to freeways to serve industrial and employment centers. Provide safe and attractive routes for bicyclists and pedestrians (Policy II)
  (Albina Community Plan, 1993)

Current Planning Projects

Several current planning projects will have significant impacts on Boise's future development. The following projects incorporate the goals of the Boise Neighborhood Plan and the Albina Community Plan. These projects aim to create an economically vibrant and physically attractive neighborhood with special emphasis on retaining the area's current character.

Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area

The Portland City Council created the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (URA) in August 2000, in order to create a funding source for the revitalization of approximately 3,700 acres in North and Northeast Portland. Funding generated through tax-increment financing will be allocated to transportation (including the creation of the Interstate MAX Light Rail transit line), housing, economic development, general revitalization, community facilities, urban design and historic preservation, and parks and open space, in accordance with goals of the Portland Comprehensive Plan and Albina Community Plan.

Mississippi Historic District Target Area Project

The Mississippi Historic District Target Area Project (Mississippi Target Area) was created in 1998 as part of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) Community & Targeted Initiatives Program. The vision of the larger Community & Targeted Initiatives Program is to provide:

> "low and moderate income people and neighborhood residents support and public resources in solving their own problems through the partnering of community resources and support to neighborhoods and community-based non-profit organizations to carry out neighborhood revitalization and other innovative programs designed to benefit low/moderate income individuals or neighborhoods." (BHCD)

The Mississippi Target Area was one of ten neighborhoods to receive direct financial assistance for operating costs, access to BHCD funded services, and the opportunity to access more funding for specific projects or technical assistance, as part of the Target Area Designation Program. As a result, the Mississippi Target Area is involved in numerous efforts relating to various community issues. Major projects include:

North Mississippi Avenue Commercial Revitalization

The primary role of the Mississippi Target Area is to promote and facilitate commercial revitalization along the N. Mississippi Avenue Corridor. This is accomplished by providing monetary and technical assistance to existing businesses, and recruiting and supporting new businesses. Both ventures have an emphasis on the creation and retention of businesses that are locally owned and operated. The Mississippi Target Area has completed an economic analysis that demonstrates the potential for increased business activity and developed a market strategy that identifies market niches, which give direction to business recruitment activities.

Community Corridor Design

Sponsored by the State of Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, the consulting firm, Otak is currently conducting a corridor design process. The purpose of this project is to recommend streetscape improvements and build a corridor identity by increasing the attractiveness of N. Mississippi Avenue as a pedestrian street. The state grant can be used to design a "Main Street" streetscape and may eventually be implemented with Urban Renewal funds from the PDC, aiding the enhancements of pedestrian connections to the new light rail station at N. Interstate Avenue.

Neighborhood Connections to MAX

Using a Transportation Growth Management (TGM) Grant from the State of Oregon, the Mississippi Target Area, is exploring the development of connections from Boise to the Overlook and the Albina/Mississippi light rail stations. Overlook is located west of the neighborhood, across I-5 at N. Interstate Avenue and N. Kaiser Street. Crandall Arambula, an Urban Design firm, conducted preliminary exploration into the development of a pedestrian bridge across I-5 at N. Fremont Street. The Albina/Mississippi station, at North Interstate Avenue and N. Russell, is connected to Boise via N. Mississippi Avenue.

Displacement Prevention

To combat the possibility of neighborhood gentrification created by the Interstate URA, the Mississippi Target Area is actively partnering with other groups such as the Community Alliance of Tenants to prevent displacement of local residents.

Housing Preservation and Development

An economic consulting firm, E.D. Hovee and Company is in the process of analyzing development opportunities on sites that will have the greatest impact on attracting housing investment into the neighborhood in the form of rehabilitation and/or new construction.

Similar Projects

Though there are several types of projects that are analogous to the Mississippi Gateway project, they contain differing design, planning, implementation and maintenance elements. Nevertheless, they provide a source of elements that can inform the current project. They include pocket parks, environmental remediation areas, naturescaping areas, gateways, community gardens, and composting areas. Different mechanisms for funding, implementation, and maintenance can be employed within or among each type of project.

Several of these projects consist of more than one of these elements. For example, a gateway area may also serve as a community garden. There are no formal definitions for many of these categories. For the purposes of this project, these projects will be discussed in terms of naturescaping projects and pocket parks, though they are not exclusive of one another.

Naturescaping

Naturescaping is "natural landscaping." A naturescape is composed of plants that are native to an area. Native species, which are adapted to local conditions, require less water and chemical applications, and therefore, require less maintenance. Such landscapes provide quality habitat for native wildlife. A naturescape may include shelters for wildlife such as thickets, hedges, logs and long grass. Eventually the naturescape will become a self-sustaining environment.

Example of Naturescaping

One function of a naturescape can be to reduce stormwater run-off and filter non-point source pollutants by directing run-off into grassy swales or garden beds and using porous material such as gravel, stones or bricks, in place of pavement. During the creation of a naturescape, it is important to do as little excavating as possible so as not to disturb native soil. Many naturescaping projects involve a stewardship component that increases the chance for success.

Examples of local projects that include elements of naturescaping and their sponsoring agencies inlcude: (See Appendix G)

- Springwater Corridor Habitat Revitalization Project; Lents Target Area Plan
- Native Plant Nursery; Parkrose High School
- Heron Pointe Wetlands Restoration; Heron Pointe Homeowners and Friends
- Eco-Roof Garden; Raphael House of Portland

Pocket Parks

The American Heritage Dictionary defines a pocket park as "a small park usually within an urban area." They are usually parcels of land that were previously used for other purposes but, for various reasons, evolved into an unused space. Previous uses include lots formerly occupied by demolished buildings, vacant pieces of land next to or underneath highways, nonfunctional urban alley ways, parking lots that are no longer needed, isolated parcels of riverfront property, parcels of community land in new housing developments, parcels of land in new business developments, and brownfields. Development of pocket parks may range from opening a vacant piece of land to public use with no improvements or re-bricking and exhibiting art in a non functioning alleyway. Manifestations of pocket parks can include community gardens, neighborhood gateways, outdoor art galleries, revegetation projects, or combinations of such.

Several elements may be used in pocket parks to create several different types of spaces. They include, native revegetation, plantings in raised beds, park benches, public art, private art, all brick/stone surfacing, brick/stone/tar pathways, ponds, performance stages, terracing gateway structures, maintenance sheds, restrooms, murals, concession stands, carnival games, picnic shelters, or gates.

Example of a Pocket Park

Depending on the type of site and level of local interest in a pocket park project, several funding opportunities exist. They include, but are not limited to, a Parks and Recreation department, Community Development Block Grant funds, private individual donors, private business donors, neighborhood non-profit organizations, environmental and arts agencies.

Examples of projects that include elements of pocket parks include: (See Appendix H)

- Hastings Pocket Park Project; Hastings, U.K
- Phillips Neighborhood Gateway; Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Vest Pocket Park; Wichita, Kansas
- Waterbury Pocket Park; Waterbury, Connecticut
- Mill Pond Park; Pittsfield, Maine
- Mallory Meadows; Portland, Oregon

E. Background Research Analysis

The background research was conducted to provide a context for support of the gateway project and aid in exploration of the specific type of project that should be pursued. Overall, the research supports the creation of the Gateway project and guides the specifics of the project in a direction that provides for:

- contributing to the physical restoration of inter- and intra- neighborhood connections
- strengthening community commitment to the neighborhood
- strengthening connections with the N. Mississippi Avenue commercial corridor
- increasing pedestrian friendliness
- entering public/private partnerships

The significant planning efforts of the last decades, as well as efforts currently underway provide justification for the Gateway project. Numerous planning goals from the Model Cities Program, the Boise neighborhood plan, the Albina Community Plan, the Community Corridor Design, and Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area stress the importance of creating open spaces and improving the pedestrian environment. Construction of the Gateway would contribute to the fulfillment of those goals. The major local planning effort, the Community Corridor Design, stresses the physical and

economic revitalization of N. Mississippi Avenue, specifically the commercial corridor. The location of the site, approximately 1/8 mile from the southern end of the corridor, provides an opportunity for a transition into the revitalized Mississippi commercial corridor and the greater Boise neighborhood.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE PROCESS

The project team identified key stakeholders in the development of the Boise Gateway project. Appropriate representatives of agencies and key citizens were invited to serve on an advisory committee. The Advisory Committee consisted of representatives from ODOT, BES, Mississippi Target Area, PDC, AYOS, BNA, an adjacent property owner, and two community members. The purpose of the Advisory Committee was to guide the planning process and provide parameters for the design and implementation of the site.

The Advisory Committee met formally three times in the Boise neighborhood. At the first meeting, the project team presented the project concept and stated the expected goals of the advisory committee process. Committee members were given time to share their interests and concerns about the project. At the second meeting, the project team presented citizen's ideas from the first public involvement meeting. In addition, Advisory Committee members communicated their concerns regarding the long-term maintenance of the site. At the third meeting, the project team reviewed the details of the project regarding both site design and implementation issues. The project team presented a preliminary site plan based on input from the two public involvement meetings and the advisory committee meetings. The visual representation was presented and final approval was obtained.

During the course of the advisory committee process, the committee members communicated several interests to the project team regarding both site design and implementation, which were taken into consideration in the development of the final plan.

Site Design

- Representatives from ODOT established the following site design constraints: the prohibition of permanent structures, the preclusion of profit-generating ventures on the land, and the necessity of retaining tractor access from N. Mississippi Avenue to I-5.
- BES stated the agency's interest in revegetation of the site with native plants.
- PDC stated an interest in opportunities to enhance green spaces in the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (URA).
- AYOS stated their interest in getting students involved in a community and/or environmental education project.
- The Mississippi Target Area stated an interest in any improvements that would contribute to the general revitalization of N. Mississippi Avenue.

Implementation

- ODOT stated that a maintenance agreement, in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding would be required for consent of the project. They wanted to ensure that there was a contract with a sponsoring agency, such as BES, in the event that the private or community based commitments did not follow through with maintenance plans. ODOT stated that issues of liability be addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding.
- BES stated a willingness to share up to 50% of costs of revegetation through their Watershed Revegetation Program
- PDC would be willing to provide funding for such projects as a part of URA after a formal

application process.

- AYOS stated their interest in getting students involved in a community and/or environmental education project.
- The Boise Neighborhood Association stated an interest in projects that involve an opportunity for community collaboration.
- Mississippi Target Area stated that they would take the lead in applying for matching funds, coordinating construction, and forming a sub-committee for maintenance that could then be taken over by the Boise Neighborhood Association, provided that recommendations for proceeding with these tasks were included in the final plan.

Based on input from the first two meetings, the project team presented a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at the third meeting that outlined roles and responsibilities regarding implementation and maintenance for each of the signatories on a proposed contract; BES, ODOT, and the Boise Neighborhood Association. The parties named in the MOU were asked for feedback to identify issues that needed to be refined in the document before it was included in the final plan. (See Appendix A)

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Publicity for public involvement focused on mailings, using lists provided by the Mississippi Target Area, phone calls to community members and businesses, and visits to local establishments. The project team presented the project at one of the Boise Neighborhood Association meetings and at a Saturday neighborhood Workshop conducted by Otak, concerning the Mississippi streetscape and corridor design. The team chose to have one public meeting on a Saturday morning and one on a Tuesday evening to ensure as wide a range of participation as possible.

Meeting Process

Public Involvement Meeting

The first public involvement meeting was conducted as a brainstorming session, keeping in mind the limitations on site design. The goal of the workshop was to introduce community members to the project and begin to generate some specific ideas for use, as well as design elements for the site to present for later review and comment by the Advisory Committee. Rough sketches were created at this meeting, which the team then used to identify categories of desired uses as well as create options. In this way, the team was able to better define the potential uses of the site. The project was introduced and the participants were led on a walking tour of the site. Upon return, specific parameters set forth by the Advisory Committee, were presented in order to provide some guidance to the participants. The project team also developed key points of consideration:

- The distinction between an active site and a passive site. Should the site be primarily *used* or *looked at*?
- The possibility of negative consequences occurring as a result of site development. What are those possible consequences? What kinds of elements or uses of the site might mitigate those negative consequences?
- The type of image of the neighborhood that should be portrayed.
- The needs and desires of people who may not be present at the meeting. What would they like to see at the site? How would they like to use it?

The next step was to break up into small groups to generate specific ideas for the site. Each group was accompanied by an urban designer to aid in expressing group ideas on base maps. The participants reconvened in a large group to discuss the ideas generated prioritize the ideas.

After input on specific ideas and common themes for the site from the Advisory Committee, a second public involvement meeting was conducted in order to refine the site plan. The objective of this meeting was to form consensus on a design concept. Drawings based on ideas from the first meeting

were created and presented to the group to give a visual representation of ideas accepted by the advisory committee. Strategies were generated for maintenance of the site to ensure the long-term success of the project. There was an opportunity for those who were not in attendance at the first public involvement meeting to generate additional ideas for site use and design.

The urban designers who prepared sketches then presented their preliminary site plans. Each participant was given an evaluation form to guide their thoughts regarding what design elements should or should not be retained in the final plan. The participants re-convened in a large group to discuss design options and come to a consensus about the most important design elements. Finally, several ideas for community upkeep and maintenance of the site were presented to the participants to obtain feedback and gauge community interest in participating.

Meeting Outcomes

The community meetings produced several suggestions regarding site design and implementation.

Site Design

Several ideas regarding use of the site, specific design elements and common themes were generated from the brainstorming sessions. Though there was diversity among the ideas, several common themes emerged throughout the discussions.

- ***Orient Design Toward a Passive Use***

The site should be designed to *allow* for active uses without being specifically designed as an active use space. It should provide enough open space for active use, but incorporate few or no elements that actively encourage use.

- ***Establish Primary Visibility From North Mississippi Avenue***

The Gateway area should be visible from both the freeway and N. Mississippi Avenue. The primary and most emphasized points of visibility should be from Mississippi. The northern and southern ends of the site should be focal points, with specific gateway orientation toward entrance from the southern end. It is more important to create a "gateway" feeling from this point than to provide views from the freeway.

- ***Include an Artwork Component***

Artwork should be involved. Included in the art component, art should narrate or describe the history or existing condition of the neighborhood.

- ***Minimize Signage***

A gateway structure or sign with identifying characteristics of the neighborhood could be a part of the site, but should avoid "announcing" entry into the neighborhood. It should acknowledge the project partners and blend in with the overall site design.

- ***Include Vegetation***

The site should be dedicated to native vegetation. Primarily native re-vegetation should be integrated into the design, although non-native vegetation may be allowed.

- ***Emphasize Vertical Elements***

In order to counterbalance the adjacent flat and linear expanses of freeway next to the site, vertical elements should be emphasized through trees, sculpture, gateway structures, and other components.

- ***Enhance View Corridors***

Care should be taken not to disrupt views from the site toward downtown or up N. Mississippi Avenue. Plantings, gateways and other components should be used to enhance or draw attention to these views. Accordingly, the site design should not overly disrupt views into the site from N. Mississippi Avenue or the freeway.

- ***Consider Safety***

The site should be safe for all visitors and passers by. There should be no pockets of closed off space and the site should be accessible from all points on the street.

At the second meeting, design ideas were re-examined based on input from the Advisory Committee and the preliminary site concept plans by the urban designers. Suggestions from the first public involvement meeting were refined, and though there were minor conflicting opinions regarding some design features, moderate to high levels of consensus were achieved for most issues. Those issues related to:

- ***Vegetation***

Street trees lining both sides of N. Mississippi Avenue should be incorporated. Trees should occupy the center of the site, though the emphasis should be on lower vegetation and ground cover.

- ***Pathways***

A pathway with a permeable surface should meander through the site. The path should be continually visible from the street and have minimal curves.

- ***Signage***

No prominent signs to be located at the entry into Boise. A small sign with recognition of project partners is acceptable, but should be located as discretely as possible.

- ***Art***

Art should be dispersed throughout the site, temporary, and located fairly near the street, preferably along the pathway. A sound enhancing or sound modifying sculpture should be included somewhere.

- ***Freeway Barrier***

There should be a "green" barrier on the west side of the site adjacent to I-5. This could take the form of trees or a bamboo sound screen. This barrier should contain breaks as to frame prime views of downtown and the West Hills.

- ***ODOT Access-way***

The access-way should be surrounded by vegetation and composed of a permeable surface

There is support for several other specific elements, which might be implemented in the future upon initiation by the community. They included:

- A flat gathering place with benches
- Trellises to facilitate growth of vegetation and provide shade
- Mosaic art along the pathway telling the story of the neighborhood.
- Progressive stanchions on the west side of N. Mississippi Avenue with art panels to document the history of the neighborhood and/or provide other artistic messages
- Children's art

Implementation

Suggestions for construction, maintenance, and stewardship of the site were discussed. The focus of discussion was the formation of a new sub-committee of the Boise Neighborhood Association. This group would be dedicated to the implementation of this plan, ongoing maintenance of the site, and coordination of special projects relating to the site. The group would function under the Boise Neighborhood Association and therefore have liability insurance through the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods. Responsibilities of the sub-committee would include:

- ***Finalizing Contracts***

Finalize contracts and agreements between relevant partners.

- ***Coordinating Construction***

Initiate applicable permitting procedures, organize contractors, and other tasks necessary for physical development of the site, in accordance with this plan. This could be implemented in multiple phases. The participants also expressed interest in phasing the physical development of the site in order to ensure that maintenance was manageable by a volunteer group. By beginning with the elements that require the least maintenance, the responsible organization would be able to gauge neighborhood interest and capabilities for site upkeep before proceeding to the next level of development.

- ***Operating a Maintenance Plan***

Organize individual and institutional volunteers for site upkeep

- ***Coordination of Future Projects***

Coordinate with artists to implement the art component of the plan, with schools to develop future educational curricula that use the site as an educational demonstration area, explore the feasability of other uses or design elements that may be desired in the future.

SITE DESIGN ANALYSIS

Several options for site use and design generated through research, advisory committee input and suggestions from neighborhood residents were evaluated before the formulation of final recommendations. Options were examined in terms of the extent to which they met neighborhood interests, while remaining within the limitations set forth by the landowner.

Use Options

The use alternatives for the proposed site consisted of active uses versus passive uses. An active use would attract daily uses to the area for recreation and outdoor entertainment associated with parks and open spaces. It would serve as a destination point for community members to use on a daily basis. A passive use would utilize plantings and works of art to beautify the site for citizens passing by or through the site. It would be designed as a transition into the Boise neighborhood.

Design Element Options

Design alternatives that were created by the community were illustrated in site design drawings made during and after the public involvement meetings. Design elements incorporated into the concept plan include:

- Planting native species, specifically wildflowers and trees
- Temporary art representative of the Boise neighborhood
- Walkway through the site connecting artwork
- Sculptures that utilized the noise and vibrations of the site to create a new sound
- Wall of bamboo that would bang together creating a new sound
- Planting vegetation to frame distinctive views of the city and surrounding hills
- Platform to improve the view of the city
- Periscope and viewfinder
- Drinking fountain
- Lighting
- Street trees on both sides of Mississippi
- Bioswales for pollution control and to reduce site runoff
- Water line to site
- Benches
- Historical markers

The design concept was intended to incorporate an educational aspect for local schools to utilize in science classes and through BES educational programs. Many of the options for the site were preferred because of the low maintenance that would be required from the community.

Analysis of Use Options

Conditions at the site are noisy due to the site's close proximity to I-5, I-405 and associated ramps. Based on noise readings from an Interstate Avenue location the same distance from I-5 as the site, the estimated noise level is between 60 and 70 decibels. The federal Occupation, Safety and Health Administration considers sound levels above 85 decibels to be hazardous with exposure of eight hours or more. Therefore, while the noise at the site does not pose any health risks, it is a factor to consider, and may lead to the determination that a passive use may be more appropriate to the site.

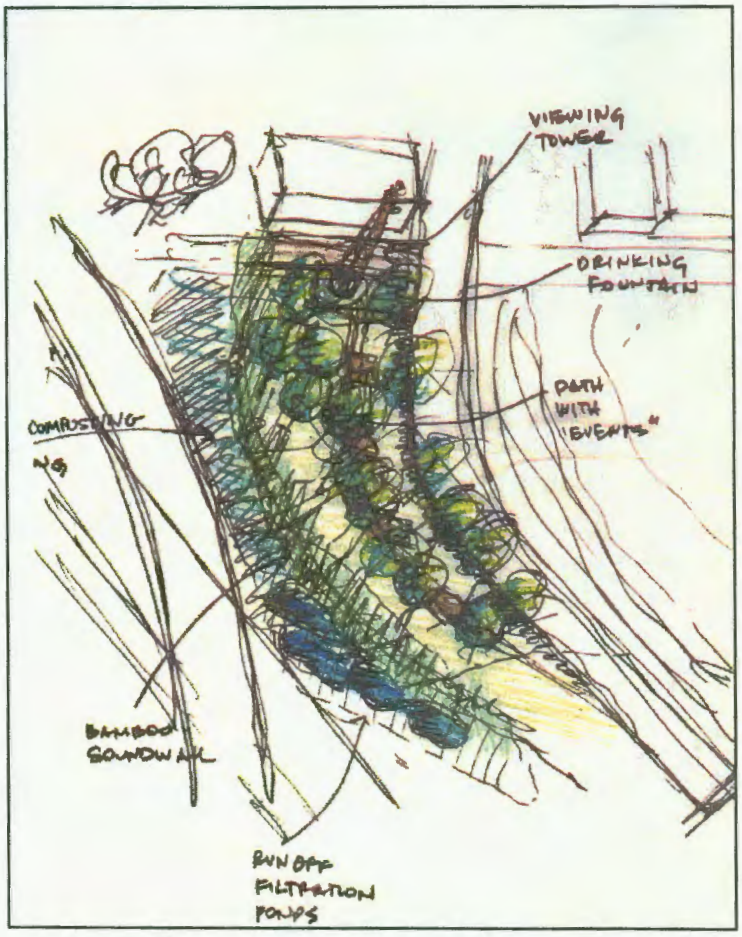
Neighborhood residents suggested that passive use of the site is more appropriate. A passive use would limit the amount of necessary maintenance. If, at a later date, the community can commit to higher levels of maintenance, they may consider adding elements that may transform the site to a more active use if they wish.

Analysis of Site Design Options

Analysis of design alternatives created a list of potential design elements for the site that would meet the requirements of the advisory committee as well as the desires of the community. It was determined that there are several elements that would improve the site while meeting the desire for a low maintenance, passively used area.

Native Species

The planting of native vegetation and trees on the site will improve the appearance of the site and require minimal maintenance from community members. The community has shown an interest in an intensive native wildflower planting in the middle of the site. The height of the flowers is important so they can be seen off-site and to maintain a sense of security on the site. The native vegetation may be surrounded by a ring of larger trees. The trees will break up the views of the highway, highlight unique views of the city and west hills, and improve the streetscape of N. Mississippi Avenue.



Preliminary sketch by Jeff Thierfelder

Temporary Art

Temporary art may serve to represent the history or characteristics of the Boise neighborhood. The use of art could be used to increase stewardship of the site by creating a sense of ownership for the art works placed there. This may also be an incentive for local schools to contribute works of art for potential placement on the site as well as take responsibility for part of the maintenance or monitoring of the site. Allowing art on the site will require agreement from all of the signatories to the final contract to determine if the proposed art is appropriate. An installation may also become a target for graffiti, requiring a maintenance plan to deal with the removal and replacement of exhibits. Possible types of artwork to enhance the site include murals, mosaics, sculpture and two-dimensional paintings. The Regional Arts and Culture Council could provide technical assistance for the public art selection.

Walkway

A walkway through the site would connect the southern end of the site to the northern end. It would meander through the wildflowers, and pass by the proposed art for the site. The walkway would provide access to the plantings for maintenance, and an opportunity to view the art pieces from a different perspective. The walkway would also offer a chance to travel a short distance along N. Mississippi Avenue without being on the sidewalk next to the cars and trucks. Due to safety concerns, the walkway should not be out of sight of the sidewalk to ensure that there is no opportunity for people to hide along the trail. The walkway may be created of stone, mulch, or mosaic tiles. Stone and mulch would be low cost and low maintenance. Mosaic tiles along the pathway may be designed by local students or artists to describe the history of the neighborhood, acknowledging those who contributed to the site development or allowing students to create mosaic tile art to create the path at the site.

Sound Sculptures

Sound sculptures may be designed to use the vibrations of I-5 or wind underneath the expressway to create new sounds on the site. The sculptures would be a possible target for graffiti and vandalism, requiring a maintenance plan to repair any damage that may occur. The Regional Arts and Culture Council could provide technical assistance for the public art selection.

Vegetative Barrier to Freeway

A vegetative wall could be created that would hide parts of the expressway, while concentrating a visitor's attention to the surrounding views of the West Hills and downtown Portland. The vegetative wall would create a physical buffer between the expressway and the site. The development of the vegetative frame would be a long-term investment requiring maintenance to ensure that the plants grow in the desired directions and locations. The vegetative frame would also need to be designed in such a manner as to not create a hiding area.

View Platform

A view platform at the north end of the site would improve the views of the city. The platform could be incorporated into the proposed walkway and offer a place for benches and signs on the site. The platform would require maintenance to ensure that it is safe for use. It would also change the use of the site from a passive use to an active use, since the platform would become

a destination point for citizens. It may also increase liability risks.

Periscope and Viewfinder

A periscope or viewfinder on the site would allow citizens the opportunity to enjoy the views of the West Hills and downtown Portland. A periscope or viewfinder would be expensive to buy and maintain and would change the use of the site from a passive to an active use. There would also be a high probability of graffiti, vandalism, and possible theft of the periscope or viewfinder. Due to contract limitations, the site cannot be used to generate any money, so both a periscope and viewfinder must be free to use. It may also increase liability risks.

Drinking Fountain

A drinking fountain on the site may increase the use of the site and make the site a resting area for those passing by. The installation of the fountain would require a grant to install the water lines and further negotiation with ODOT.

Lighting

Lights could be added to the site to increase the sense of security for those walking through the site at night. There are currently streetlights along the sidewalk on the site, which illuminate a small section of the site. Lighting would require a grant to install the wiring and agreement from ODOT. The installation of lighting may attract users to the site at night, which may cause a safety concern in the neighborhood.

Street Trees

The installation of street trees on the east and west side of N. Mississippi Avenue would improve the streetscape and represent the beginning of the Boise neighborhood. The street trees should be planted on both sides of the street to balance the look of the street and create a boulevard appearance that would slow traffic down as it entered the neighborhood. The installation of street trees would be a long-term investment.

Bioswales

Bioswales incorporated into the site would serve to improve the water quality of rain run-off from the site and act as an educational tool for BES and local schools. The bioswales would be planted with a variety of wetland vegetation, adding to the wildflowers that would be the dominant plant species of the site. The bioswale would require further maintenance and upkeep to ensure that it is functioning properly. The bioswale may also be a liability for ODOT if the run-off is contaminated and eventually settles into the soil on the site. Though it may be possible to install a bioswale, the site's unsuitability for infiltration may hinder its effectiveness.

Signage

There will be signs created describing the native vegetation aspect of the site, acknowledging the stakeholders involved in the process, and a description of the historical and present facts about the Boise neighborhood. The signs would be required to go through a review process with the signatories of the contract to ensure they are proper. The signs could be targets for vandalism.

Benches

The use of benches on the site would allow visitors an opportunity to sit and enjoy the area. The benches could be situated to accent the proposed art or exceptional views from the site. Benches would have minimal impact on the passive use desired for the site and require little maintenance.

Historical Markers

Historical Markers could be installed on the site to increase the awareness and education of the historical significance of the Boise neighborhood. The markers could be incorporated into future artwork, benches, or signs on the site.

ODOT Access

There is the opportunity to utilize the ODOT access route through the northern end of the site, which must be maintained, for a small number of parking stalls and a bioswale to mitigate parking lot runoff and serve as a demonstration site for community members and local schools. The multi use of the access route would increase the educational aspect of the site by using a bioswale with native vegetation to deal with water run-off. The installation of parking stalls may increase the use of the site, though they may still be used in a passive way by those enjoying lunch at the site or those unable to walk up and down the hill on N. Mississippi Avenue. The installation of the parking areas would require a grant to cover the installation costs and would require community maintenance of the area.

IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS

Options regarding implementation and stewardship of the site were evaluated before developing final recommendations.

Construction Options

Planting of native vegetation on the site can be carried out by BES's re-vegetation team. They have a set program for determining efficient planting procedures. Maintenance and monitoring for five years after planting is included in Revegetation Program procedures. Additional plantings may be placed by the Boise Neighborhood Association, Friends of Trees, or the students at the Albina Youth Opportunity School and the Boise-Eliot School. A Wildflower Program through the city of Portland Bureau of Maintenance is another option.

Installing art on the site can be carried out through cooperation with the Regional Arts and Culture Council in an advisory capacity. The Project Grant program, for which an individual artist with a specific idea must apply, includes provisions for installation. The Neighborhood Arts Program provided technical support. The Native American Youth Association, located in the Boise neighborhood, could also be a source of temporary art installations.

Other elements on the site, such as benches, arbors, signage, bike racks, lighting, etc. could be procured with Urban Renewal grants through the Portland Development Commission. Additional elements might be donated by local businesses such as the Rebuilding Center.

Funding Options

Potential funding sources include the following:

BES Willamette Watershed Planning Group

The Planning Group is willing to fund up to 50% of the revegetation and signage costs on this site. The funding covers maintenance costs for a 5 year period. Up to about $6,000 is available from current fiscal year (00-01) funds. Funding would support the efforts of the Bureau of Environmental Services Revegetation Program.
Contact: Jamae Hilliard-Creecy

BES Community Watershed Stewardship Program Grants

One-year grants are given to community organizations with emphasis on environmental education. Up to $5,000 could be awarded to the Boise Neighborhood Association, Boise-Eliot School, or the Albina Youth Opportunity School. The deadline for applications is in early May of each year. Money can be used for native plants, supplies, materials, equipment, feasibility studies, or technical assistance.
Contact: Lynn Vanderkamp 503-823-5281.

Metre Restoration Grant

Grants of up to $4,000 are given to groups for habitat restoration. This money comes from the U.S. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. This funding is distributed to cities, counties, school districts and non-profit organizations. The grant requires a 1:1 match. The grant would only fund expenses directly related to restoration. The funds cannot be used for purchase of tools, equipment, signs, or interpretive facilities.

PDC Urban Renewal Funds

The site is located within the boundaries of the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area and is eligible for capital cost funds that will be available in July 2001.

The ReBuilding Center (Our United Villages)

This grant requires local community involvement in a project that benefits the community. The Rebuilding Center is part of the non-profit Our United Villages. The Rebuilding Center could also provide free or low-cost building supplies and/or materials for artwork. Requests for materials need to be submitted to The Rebuilding Center in writing.

Mississippi Historic District Target Area/ North East Coalition of Neighborhoods

These organizations have funding for community projects.

Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC)

Funds are available for professional artists to create specific works through the Project Grant Program. Funding is available for a calendar year, January to December, and the deadline for applying is September of the previous year.

Sponsorship Programs

Programs that involve "sponsoring a tree" would bring additional revenue and also promote stewardship and neighborhood ownership of the natural area. A business sponsorship program that sought yearly donations from local businesses could help cover maintenance or enhancement costs while increasing local investment in the site. Potential business sponsors include, but are not limited to: The Rebuilding Center, Sunlan Lighting, The Mississippi, Mint, and the White Eagle.

Stewardship and Maintenance Options

Community stewardship and maintenance is a primary consideration in the development of this project. Both ODOT and BES have stressed that community maintenance of this site is required for their respective agency's involvement in this project. While ODOT supports the proposed improvements to their land, they are wary of potential nuisances and hazards that may develop without proper care and maintenance of the site. Likewise, BES is interested in the revegetation of under utilized land, and will typically provide maintenance in the form of mulching, weeding, and watering for 5 years. Because of these factors, community stewardship and maintenance is a primary consideration.

Option 1: Pay-for-Service

The simplest, but costliest option for maintenance would be a pay-for-service program,

whereby professional landscapers would maintain the site and clear weeds as well as unwanted debris for the site.

Option 2: Boise Neighborhood Association Maintains

Form a volunteer committee from the Boise Neighborhood Association that manages and maintains the site. Earlier in 2001, a garden subcommittee of six Boise residents formed a garden sub-committee to look into potential plots for community gardens and greenspaces. This committee could manage the site.

Option 3: Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS) Maintains

AYOS is an alternative high school for "at-risk" youth. Approximately 70 high school aged students attend the school on N. Mississippi Avenue. Under the direction of teachers and volunteers, the students have been introduced to an environmental education curriculum. The principal at AYOS, Rance Spruill, has expressed interest in involving the youth in a community project.

Option 4: Boise-Eliot School Maintains

Boise-Eliot Elementary School is located at 620 N. Fremont near N. Mississippi Avenue in the Boise Neighborhood, approximately a quarter mile from the ODOT site. The principals of the school, Deborah Berry and Eileen Isham, have expressed preliminary interest in having their staff and pupils involved in the project. There are currently about 40 classroom teachers and 700 students in the school. The school serves students from Pre-K to 5th grade level.

Option 5: Independent Volunteer Group Maintains

A volunteer committee that is independent of other existing organizations could be formed to provide maintenance of the ODOT site. This "Friends of..." group could consist of neighborhood residents, employees, or other volunteers from the Portland metropolitan area.

Analysis of Implementation Options

Options for implementation exist for the development of the ODOT site on N. Mississippi Avenue. The methods of construction, funding, and maintenance will be related to the design elements that are selected. The project team analyzed each option according to how the project goals could be met in the most effective and efficient manner.

Construction

A number of elements proposed for the site have been determined to be acceptable by the advisory committee and community members. The project team has divided these elements into the following chart, based on whether they are "possible," "questionable," or "unlikely" to implement. The project team based these determinations on input from the advisory committee, the funding available, ease of installation, safety concerns, and the supporting interest from the community.

Figure 9: Site elements and potential partners

	Site Elements	Potential Partners
Probable*		
1	Native vegetation	BES Revegetation Team, AYOS, Boise-Eliot
2	Art installations/ sound sculpture	BNA, PDC, Regional Arts and Culture Council
3	Wall of vegetation separating 911 N. Monroe	Vern Luce, Friends of Trees
4	Native American art	Native American Youth Association
5	Small arbor of trees	AYOS, BNA, Friends of Trees
6	Winding pathways	N/A
7	Mosaic pathway w/kids' art	Boise-Eliot Elementary School, AYOS
8	Arbor or metal arch sculpture with plantings	Private Businesses
9	A green barrier to the freeway but not walled-off	BNA
10	Signage at street level	PDC, BES,ODOT, AYOS, BNA
11	Demonstration area that changes over time	AYOS, RACC, BNA
12	Wild flowers	BOM Wildflower Program
13	Big trees	AYOS, Friends of Trees
14	Trees, shrubs on eastside of Mississippi	AYOS, Friends of Trees, BNA
15	Screen of trenched bamboo	BNA
16	Viewfinder w/platform	BNA
17	Composting in one area	BNA, AYOS
Questionable*		
20	Bike racks	BNA, PDC
21	Drinking fountain	BNA, PDC
22	Lighting	BNA, PDC
Improbable*		
30	Mural on SW wall	
31	Gateway tower	
32	A visited place i.e. Farmers Market	

Abbreviations

AYOS: Albina Youth Opportunities School
BNA: Boise Neighborhood Association
BES: Portland Environmental Services
BOM:Portland Bureau of Maintenance
ODOT: Oregon Department of Transportation
PDC: Portland Development Commission
RACC: Regional Arts and Culture Council

*categories of "Probable," "Questionable," and "Improbable,"
were determined by PSU Project Team based on discussions with project partners

Funding

Initial funding for this project could be solicited from the City of Portland Environmental Services, Willamette Watershed Planning Group. The BES Planning Group is willing to fund up to 50% of the revegetation costs for this site. Matching funds for the site could be sought from grants and/or sponsorship programs. Beginning in July of 2001, PDC will have funding available for projects that improve neighborhood livability in the North Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (of which this site is a part of). Funding is set aside for capital costs for park or gateway projects. These elements may include natural vegetation, benches, or artwork.

Sponsorships could be solicited from local businesses. This could take the form of an "adopt-a-landscape" program, whereby businesses pay or provide labor for the maintenance of the parcel of land. While this would require on-going management of a local organization, it would result in the greatest amount of stewardship. This program would leverage resources and could increase people's ownership and responsibility for the site. At the same time, it could achieve the opposite effect, if the public assumes that the land has been "privatized" by local businesses.

Specific funding for the public art may be raised through private donations or grants. Requests for art proposals could be solicited through the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC). RACC could offer technical assistance with the art selection and installation process.

Additional grants from Metro and the City of Portland could provide money for environmental education programs and ongoing maintenance of the site. Boise-Eliot School, AYOS, or the Boise Neighborhood Association could apply for these grants. This money could be used for materials, tools, and additional plants that would be planted on this site on a year-by-year basis.

Stewardship and Maintenance

While each of the stewardship alternatives has its merits, the project team has identified strategies that result in the maximum gain for the natural and social environment in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. As previously mentioned, ODOT and BES require the commitment of a local group to maintain the site. A "Pay-for-Service" program would not meet the goals of BES in increasing community stewardship of watershed health.

Based on the expressed concern of ODOT to have an accountable local partner, the local group should be affiliated with a non-profit organization, school, or neighborhood association recognized by the City of Portland. Thus, the Boise Neighborhood Association, or either of the two local schools could direct maintenance. There are a number of local non-profit organizations that could be involved, but none have expressed as much interest as the groups previously mentioned. The Mississippi Target Area, our client, would be a suitable organization to manage the project, but the Mississippi Target Area will no longer receive operating funds beyond 2002.

The challenges to AYOS are that its student body is composed of some youth that may exhibit disruptive behaviors, creating conflicts for working on the project's maintenance. While this provides the opportunity for reaching an underserved population, AYOS may not be appropriate as a project lead. Likewise, the Boise-Eliot may not be appropriate to lead the

project maintenance because its students are typically between the ages of 4-12 years of age. Comments from members of the Boise Neighborhood Association may suggest that this project may overwhelm the BNA with its current volunteer capacity.

Therefore, a subcommittee of interested neighbors that operated under the governance of the Boise Neighborhood Association could manage the project and the partnerships with local schools, organizations, and the agencies involved. This idea was presented at our second public meeting and eight people volunteered to serve on this committee. The current director of the Mississippi Target Area offered to help facilitate the forming of this group during the next year (2001-2002).

CONCLUSION

Through a coordinated public involvement and advisory committee process, the project team was able to create an implementation plan and site design concept for the Mississippi Target Area to use on the gateway site. The public involvement process generated several ideas and alternative uses, which the project team brought to the advisory committee to determine viable design and development options for the site. There is a substantial level of neighborhood commitment to this project, including plan implementation and long-term maintenance of this site. The level of neighborhood commitment to the project was necessary to demonstrate the long-term neighborhood support for the project and to gain support from relevant agencies.

The recommendations represent a phased approach to site development that will allow the neighborhood association to control the progress of the project, and meet the greatest desires of the community during the first stage of development. Through the phased implementation process, the site will first be prepared and planted with native vegetation in cooperation with the City of Portland Environmental Services. The remaining phases of the project are flexible and at the discretion of the Boise Neighborhood Association. The options with the greatest support include the placement of a path through the site, incorporating temporary art, and the development of an educational program with the cooperation of AYOS, Boise-Elliot School, and BES. The implementation plan and design concept lay out the ideas that were generated, but also allow for the neighborhood to work with ODOT to pursue future modifications.

This project was able to direct the energy of local residents and contribute to current neighborhood planning projects to create a unique and innovative agreement among public agencies and local citizens for the use of a parcel of land that previously contributed little to the character of the Boise neighborhood. A sense of place was created among Boise residents with the increased awareness about the potential use of the site. There is excitement for the opportunity to shape a portion of their community and take part in a project that will symbolize the transformation of the physical neighborhood into a community that reflects the care and commitment of its residents.

APPENDICIES

Draft Memorandum of Understanding

Boise Neighborhood Gateway Revegetation Plan
Memorandum of Understanding

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is to define the responsibilities of the sponsoring agency: City of Portland Environmental Services (BES), land-owner: Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), and community partner group: Boise Neighborhood Association (BNA) for the project site listed in this agreement.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located between N. Mississippi Avenue and the I-5 overpass, bounded by N. Monroe St. to the north, and the I-405-Kerby off-ramp to the south. (Refer to Aerial Photo).

Aerial photo of proposed site

Proposed site

PROJECT SUMMARY

The proposed project is an environmental enhancement project involving public and private partners. The site will include vegetation (plants, shrubs, trees), artwork, and appropriate signage as detailed in the site plan. The goals of this project are to reduce bank erosion, enhance visual quality, improve wildlife habitat, and restore diverse native vegetation, while educating the public about watershed health. The City of Portland Environmental Services will assume primary responsibility for the site vegetation in cooperation with the Boise Neighborhood Association. The Boise Neighborhood will assume primary responsibility for all other site elements unless otherwise noted in this MOU or attached agreements. Funding for the project will be sought from Metro Regional Parks and Greenspaces grants and the Portland Development Commission (PDC) Interstate Urban Renewal Area grant. The Boise Neighborhood Association will also seek private sponsorship from local businesses to support maintenance. Preparation of the site will begin in the spring of 2002 as per Attachment #1, Revegetation Plan. The design for the site has been developed with the involvement of community residents, and representatives from ODOT, BES, Portland Development Commission (PDC), and Albina Youth Opportunity School (AYOS). The site plan for this property is attached.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

City of Portland Environmental Services (BES)

BES provides Portland residents with Clean River Programs including water quality protection, stormwater management, wastewater collection and treatment, and sewer installation. BES is interested in this site for purposes of restoring native vegetation and to educate citizens and youth about watershed health. Restoration work improves water quality, controls erosion, reduces stormwater pollution, aids in recovery of salmon species listed under the Endangered Species Act, and enhances wildlife habitat.

BES Responsibilities:

1. BES will work with ODOT and the Boise Neighborhood Association (BNA) to develop plans and designs that meet the needs of all parties for management of the property, and meet the goals of BES Projects.
2. BES Watershed Revegetation Program will provide all labor, planting, seeding, mulching and erosion control materials, and other miscellaneous work incidental to completion of the revegetation project, unless otherwise specified.
3. BES Planning Group will provide 50% cost-share of revegetation costs.
4. BES will not block access to bridge and overpass structures for the purpose of ODOT maintenance.
5. BES Education Program will coordinate maintenance and monitoring programs with Boise Eliot Elementary School and AYOS.
6. BES will provide technical assistance to BNA regarding site maintenance as requested as resources allow.
7. Designate a BES Project Manager for this project. The Project Manager is Roberta Jortner.
8. Prepare, with input from ODOT, a management plan for the long term that will maintain the vegetation component of this project.
9. Perform the treatments specific to this agreement for installation, maintenance, and monitoring of the project site(s) as listed in the table below:

Schedule	Task	Details
Spring 2002	Site Preparation	• Site preparation may include spraying, or cutting and clearing. • Installation of interpretive signage about site.
Spring 2002-Spring 2003	Planting	• Includes all labor and materials for the initial plantings. To be completed by April 30, 2003. • Includes installation of animal damage control prevention materials.
Spring 2002-Fall 2002	Plant Mulching	• Mulch will be a cedar or other organic mulch to conserve water and suppress weeds. • Mulching will occur after Site Planting.
Spring 2002-Fall 2002	Seeding	• Typically seeding will take place in the early spring.
Spring 2002-December 2006	Maintenance & Monitoring	• Will occur on a quarterly basis. • Plant watering will occur on as as-needed basis. • Plant replacement. For all plants installed by BES a minimum survival rate of 50% for trees, 70% for shrubs, 70% for other plants well-distributed throughout the site, and 80% occupation of the site by native plants by December 31, 2006 is considered a successful restoration of the area. BES shall replant the area as necessary due to plant mortality, except for plant mortality caused by catastrophic loss as described in the Section "Disclaimer" or plant mortality caused by landowner negligence, through December 31, 2006 at no additional charge. • Perform vegetation management. By cutting, mowing, and spraying non-native vegetation until planted trees and shrubs are established. • Provide monitoring results upon request to ODOT.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
The mission of the Oregon Department of Transportation is to "provide a safe, efficient transportation system that supports economic opportunity and livable communities for Oregonians." ODOT operates and maintains state and federal transportation roadways. ODOT currently owns the parcel of land in question. This property remains in possession of ODOT as a non-operating right-of-way. No current plans exist to use the land for purposes of transportation.

ODOT Responsibilities:
1. Allow and provide access for representatives of BES to enter upon the premises of the project site for the purposes of installing, maintaining, and monitoring the Project. Access shall accommodate all site preparation, installation and maintenance activities.
2. Allow the installation of interpretive signage, as long as signage does not interfere with ODOT facilities and meets approval criteria of ODOT.
3. Acknowledge that this project is funded in part with public funds and that this project may not be altered or removed without informing BES and the Boise Neighborhood Association.
4. Agree to exercise due care to protect the site during routine maintenance of roadway and overpass.

Boise Neighborhood Association (BNA)
The Boise Neighborhood Association works to maintain the livability of the neighborhood. The BNA is primarily interested in enhancing the physical environment of the Boise Neighborhood. Also, the group has stated support for this project as a means to increase community involvement.

BNA Responsibilities:
1. Solicit grant funding from PDC Interstate Urban Renewal 2001-2002 Livability Group grant cycle for purposes of cost-sharing of revegetation, signage and other capital expenses determined to be acceptable by ODOT.
2. Convene a sub-committee of citizens that will act as stewards of the ODOT property. This group will consist of interested representatives from, but not limited to Boise-Eliot Elementary School, Boise Neighborhood Association, and Albina Youth Opportunity School. This group will be responsible for maintenance of the site after year 5. This group will assign a contact person to coordinate with ODOT and BES. The contact person is Dave Edwards.
3. BNA will be responsible for stewardship and maintenance of this property except as otherwise specified in this agreement. Stewardship and maintenance shall include the following:
    - Maintain sanitary conditions of site (i.e. garbage removal, compost management)
    - Maintain site improvements (i.e. signs, benches, decorative elements, landscaping)
4. Provide liability insurance for the site through the Boise Neighborhood Association's agreement with the Northeast Coalition of Neighborhoods.

DISCLAIMER

BES shall not be responsible for costs associated with replacing native planting projects within or beyond the five-year project scope in the event of natural catastrophes including but not limited to severe flooding, fire, drought, and earthquake.

ODOT reserves the right to reclaim full use of the site at its discretion after 20 years after the ratification of this agreement if repossession is determined to be in the public interest. ODOT may reclaim use of the site prior to this date on request of Boise Neighborhood Association and City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services.

In accordance with the roles and responsibilities specified in this MOU, BNA and BES agree to terms of Attachment 4, ODOT Land Rent Agreement _____.

Oregon Dept. of Transportation	**Date**
City of Portland, BES	**Date**
City of Portland	**Date**
Boise Neighborhood Association	**Date**