

COMMUNITY REPORT

NORTH PDX CONNECTED

Active Transportation Plan for
N Willamette Blvd



WCMC
Willamette Corridor
Mobility Coalition **JUNE 2018**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

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NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS

Overlook Neighborhood Association
Arbor Lodge Neighborhood Association
University Park Neighborhood Association
Cathedral Park Neighborhood Association
St. Johns Neighborhood Association

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Community Cycling Center
Portland African American Leadership Forum
New Columbia
Oregon Walks
Roosevelt High School
St. Johns Center for Opportunity
University of Portland

PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS

Thank you to over 700 participants who engaged in the development of this plan through an online survey, public meetings, interviews, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, and one-on-one conversations.



REPORT PREPARED BY:



All photos in this report were taken by and belong to PACE Planning.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

The North PDX Connected Community Report is a summary that highlights key information. To read the full report, go to www.northpdxconnected.com

“We are realizing that if you have people walk and bicycle more, you have a more lively, more attractive, more safe, more sustainable and more healthy city. What are you waiting for?”

- JAN GEHL





“

Impossible to see cyclists on Willamette in rain. New LED streetlights have limited range, lots of shadows and do not illuminate pedestrians and cyclists enough. We need better and more uniform lighting.”

- Mapping Workshop Attendee -

It's not just for cyclists. The whole community benefits from having better bikeways.



01

INTRODUCTION

North PDX Connected

is an active transportation improvement plan for North Portland focusing on the N Willamette Blvd corridor. The plan uses input from the community to recommend improvements to safety and comfort for people walking, biking, and taking transit along the corridor and to ensure equitable engagement and impact.

Active transportation is human-powered transportation, most commonly walking, biking, and accessing transit. Improving active transportation provides health, environmental, and safety benefits while reducing cost and increasing mobility choices.



PACE Planning

PACE Planning (People, Access, Community, Equity) is a Portland State University Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) workshop team committed to improving access to active transportation and promoting equitable community engagement and public investment.

Team Members: Taylor Campi, Mohammad N Hotak, Héctor Rodríguez Ruiz, Leeor Schweitzer, Mike Serritella

MISSION STATEMENT

Working in partnership with interested community stakeholders and historically underrepresented groups, PACE Planning aims to create an active transportation plan for N Willamette Blvd that provides a safe and comfortable connection for people walking, biking, and rolling throughout the peninsula. Recommendations promote the equitable distribution of impacts among all North Portlanders.



WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO DO?

PACE Planning developed *North PDX Connected* with the following three main priorities in mind:

Goal 1: Process

Engage community members to collect opinions, concerns, hopes, and ideas for the corridor, with additional focus on groups who have historically been excluded from planning processes, such as people of color, youth, and people with low incomes.

Goal 2: Product

Develop recommendations that improve safety and comfort for people walking, biking, and accessing transit on N Willamette Blvd between the Killingsworth MAX station and the St. Johns Bridge.

Goal 3: Impact

Assess the potential benefits and burdens caused by active transportation investment and offer recommendations to promote an equitable distribution among all North Portlanders.





A CLOSER LOOK AT THE EQUITY LENS

PACE Planning recognizes that certain groups have been underrepresented in planning processes throughout history and still today. The team applied an equity lens to inform project scoping, community engagement, and final recommendations. The team chose to focus on three groups who are commonly excluded from public decision-making processes: People of Color, people with low incomes, and youth. Focus groups and interviews with community-based organizations helped the team gather perspectives from these communities. Final recommendations include policy and programming tools to promote social equity in Portland.



**PEOPLE
OF COLOR**



**PEOPLE WITH
LOW INCOMES**



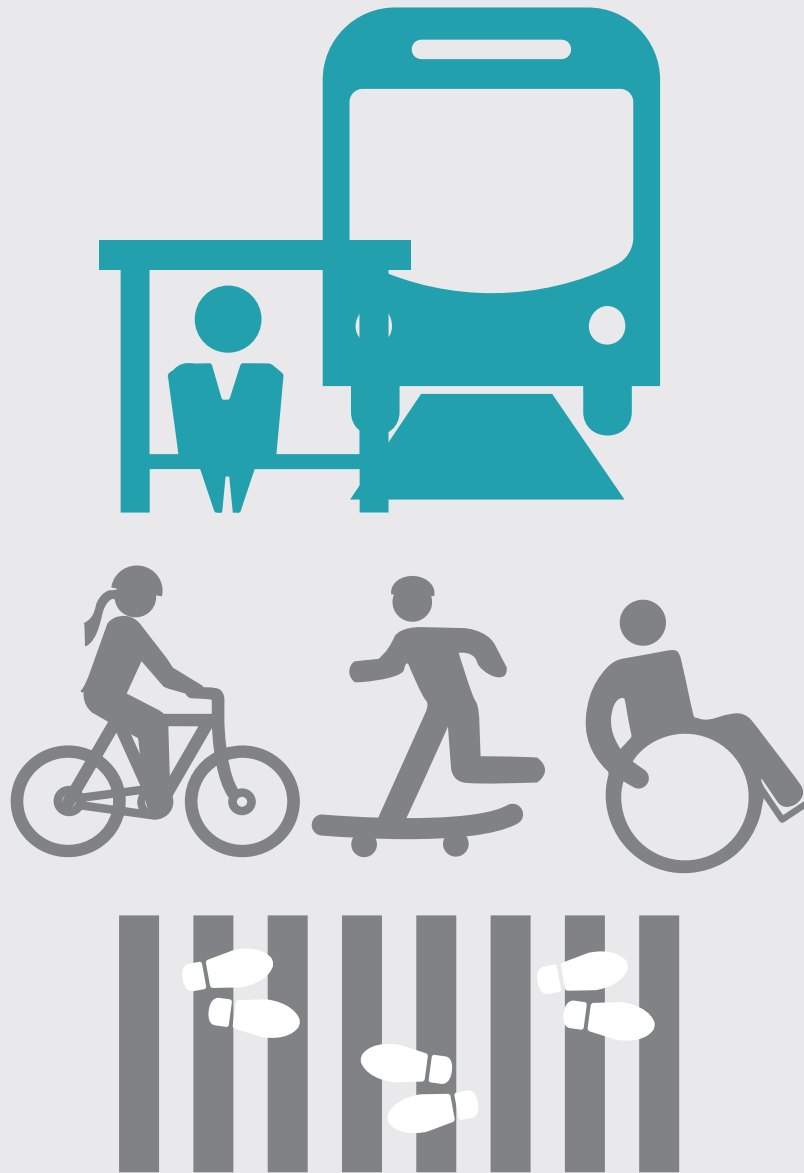
YOUTH



WHAT IS EQUITY?

Equity is the just and fair inclusion and distribution of resources such that all members of society have equitable opportunity to participate in public processes as well as equitable access to the resources and amenities necessary not only to survive, but to prosper.

**Better sidewalks and bike lanes
make it easier for people to access
transit options.**



02

EXISTING CONDITIONS

History of the Area

North Portland has historically had a large working-class population because of the port and various manufacturing areas along the Willamette River. The Vanport flood in 1948 displaced many people into North Portland, including large Communities of Color that were not welcome elsewhere in Portland. North Portland residents often mention that, as the “fifth quadrant,” they have been forgotten and neglected by the City of Portland and planning efforts.

N Willamette Blvd has been a focal point as the best candidate for active transportation in and through North Portland for several decades. It is the only through corridor that does not prioritize freight. Bike lanes have been added over the years, but some improvements stalled in response to neighborhood opposition to removing on-street parking. A restriping project in November 2017 that removed parking created significant controversy.



WHAT IS HAPPENING IN THE STUDY AREA?

Demographics

North Portland is more racially diverse, has lower incomes, and has more youth than the city as a whole. Communities of Color and those with lower incomes are more heavily concentrated in Kenton, Portsmouth, and St. Johns. The share of people who own vehicles and drive to work in these neighborhoods is higher than in the rest of the city, which contradicts national trends and suggests infrastructure or geographic barriers to alternative modes of transportation. Portsmouth and St. Johns are identified as at risk of gentrification and vulnerable residents are at high risk of displacement. Housing cost has rapidly increased alongside the population in North Portland.



Existing Street Conditions

N Willamette Blvd has very few marked crossings, as there are only six along the entire four mile corridor. High speeds and volumes along most of the corridor create dangerous conditions for active transportation users. At its busiest section, N Willamette Blvd carries almost 20,000 vehicles a day, and cars travel at nearly 40 mph. Substandard bicycle facilities for these conditions produce high levels of traffic stress for most of the corridor. The conditions also pose major safety issues. There have been 36 pedestrian and bicycle crashes from 2006-2015, including one fatality.

Policy Background

PedPDX, the 2030 Bike Plan, and the Transportation System Plan highlight all parts of N Willamette Blvd as a priority for walking and biking, and classify some portions as a priority for transit. The current street conditions on N Willamette Blvd do not match the expectations for these street classifications.

“ Put in those flashing walk signs or put a yield sign that says to wait/watch for pedestrians. ”

- Mapping Workshop Attendee -



Making safer streets means more than crossings and bike lanes. People need to feel welcome & comfortable moving around their community.



03

COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

A variety of outreach methods helped inform the plan's final recommendations. PACE Planning established explicit equity goals and designed outreach to hear from People of Color, youth, and low-income people, who are often underrepresented in planning processes. Outreach methods included stakeholder interviews, mapping workshops, an online survey, and focus groups.



COMMUNITY INPUT HELPED PACE PLANNING UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES.

HOW WE LISTENED



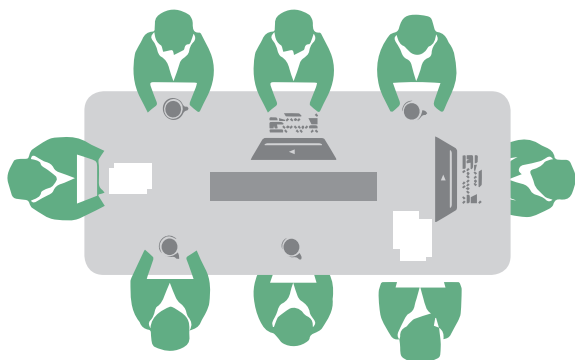
Stakeholder Interviews

Interviews with stakeholders and community representatives closely involved with the area and issues provided strategies and insight on community needs, priorities, and interests. These conversations helped to inform PACE Planning's outreach methods.



"If [the City] wants our input, they need to come to us."

- Roosevelt HS Student -



Mapping Workshops

Mapping workshops were conducted at the Overlook, Arbor Lodge, University Park, Cathedral Park, and St Johns Neighborhood Association meetings. Workshops were also held at Roosevelt High School and in front of Rosa Parks Elementary School. They allowed participants to indicate specific locations on the corridor and in North Portland, and describe their concerns and ideas.

Online Survey

The online survey gathered nearly 500 responses, predominantly from neighborhood residents. The survey prompted respondents to identify barriers to walking and biking as well as opportunities to make walking and biking easier. It also provided space for respondents to voice other concerns.

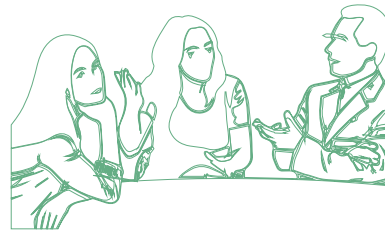
Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted to hear more in-depth perspectives from priority groups. Three focus groups allowed participants to talk with each other and share nuanced information with PACE about the barriers they face in their neighborhoods and opportunities for solutions.



WHAT WE HEARD...

#1 *"Put in those flashing walk signs or put a yield sign that says to wait/ watch for pedestrians"*



#2 *"We want to use the St Johns Community Center more, and Willamette would be the best way to get to St Johns, but it's not safe enough to bike with the kids."*

#3 *"Can't access the transit station, no curb ramp. Pave and add curb ramp"*



#4 *"My neighbors were my family... we were very few Latinos and it was good to have your community nearby. But almost everyone has moved, because the rent is very high."*

WHAT WERE THE KEY FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY INPUT?



BIKING



EQUITY



WALKING



ENGAGEMENT



TRANSIT



COST BURDEN



SPEED



**MODE
CONFLICT**

Participants were very concerned about the speed and volume of cars. There are too few safe places to cross N Willamette Blvd, biking in current conditions and facilities is unsafe and uncomfortable, and neighborhood through traffic endangers residents. People were also concerned about access to transit, lighting along the corridor, and parking. Focus group discussions with priority groups provided important feedback about how their experiences with gentrification, displacement, and racial harassment in their community and from TriMet bus operators create barriers to using active transportation. Participants shared ideas about how to improve engagement and better serve priority groups.

People of all abilities should feel comfortable traveling by foot, wheelchair, or with any other mobility device.



04

HOW CAN WE KEEP
NORTH PDX
CONNECTED?

North PDX Connected offers two categories of recommendations for community members, organizations, and public actors to promote: 1) changes to physical infrastructure, and 2) improvements in public policy and processes. Recommendations offer solutions to remove barriers to using active transportation along the corridor and to create more equitable public engagement and investment.



INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATIONS



Infrastructure recommendations were informed by outreach findings and evaluated based on how much they promote equity, improve safety and comfort, address community input, and cost. Policy and process recommendations were informed by case studies of efforts in both Portland and other cities, and by concerns raised by the priority groups.

Crossings



The lack of safe crossings was one of the most commonly mentioned concerns during community outreach. Recommendations include over a dozen new crossings along N Willamette Blvd and a few more crossings on the St Johns alignments. Most crossing recommendations are for marked crosswalks, following PBOT guidelines. At a few intersections, pedestrian refuge islands are recommended because of high speeds and volumes or because of significant community input.



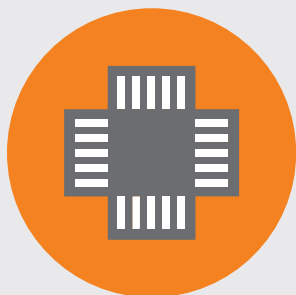
In Roadway

Most of N Willamette Blvd is currently a high stress facility for people biking, making it unwelcoming to inexperienced riders. Recommendations include a two-way protected bike lane along the bluff and near University of Portland, with a pedestrian lane to support access to transit. The recommendations also include new bike lanes on the section of N Willamette Blvd in Cathedral Park. Adding high quality bike lanes will require removing some parking. The recommendations include some suggestions to preserve curbside activity and access to houses.



Through Traffic Diversion

Residents in Arbor Lodge and Cathedral Park were vocal about safety concerns related to neighborhood through traffic (commuters using neighborhood streets instead of collectors or arterials). The recommendations include a diverter on N Willamette Blvd near Dog Bowl Park, and two diverters near the St Johns Bridge to deter this behavior. Diverters should be launched as pilots to allow for further analysis and feedback.



Intersection Simplification

There are a few intersections around the bluff and in Cathedral Park where N Willamette Blvd meets cross streets at an angle, creating crossings that are over 120 feet wide. The recommendations include sidewalk islands and extensions that will shrink these down to standard crossings widths.

Other Amenities

Other recommendations in *North PDX Connected* include better pedestrian lighting along the corridor, enhanced transit stops, upgrading ADA ramps, and sidewalk infill along N Ida Ave.



POLICY & PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and process recommendations focus on promoting social equity through equitable engagement, equitable investment, and training and hiring practices within City bureaus.

Equitable Engagement

Outreach participants expressed that they do not feel heard or valued by the people who make decisions about their neighborhoods. Often, it is not clear how they can engage with City planning efforts. Recommendations include building and nurturing community relationships, supporting better inclusion in existing community structures such as neighborhood associations, making materials more accessible and culturally relevant, and evaluating diversity and inclusion in public engagement.





Equitable Investment

Public investments can have a significant impact on housing cost and on who gets to live where. Focus group participants voiced concerns about gentrification and displacement related to new development. Recommendations include a North Portland in Motion strategy to gather community input on new transportation investments, assess displacement risk around potential new investments, and measure the impacts of investment.



Training and Hiring

City employees must be aware of equity issues, culturally responsive, and competent in interracial interaction in order to be inclusive and welcoming of priority groups. Racial diversity in City bureaus is critical for ensuring that public investments reflect and address the needs of all communities. Recommendations include equity training for City managers, employees, and specifically TriMet bus operators. They also call for hiring and advancing People of Color within City bureaus, and creating spaces for bureau-based equity efforts to align with organizations and members of marginalized groups.



PACE VISION

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

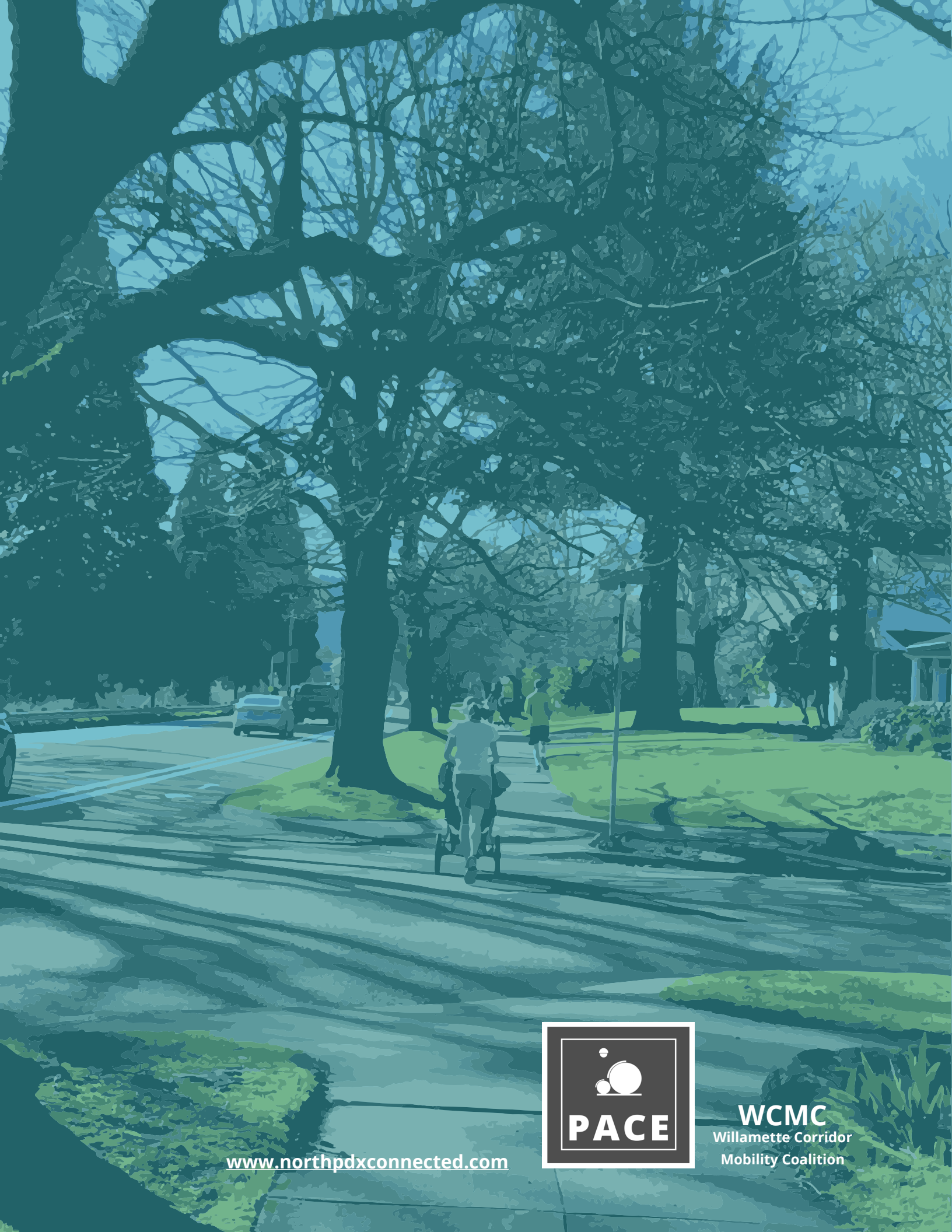
N Willamette Blvd is the only multimodal corridor in the North Portland peninsula, creating connection between neighborhoods and to the rest of the city. The corridor is currently unsafe and uncomfortable for many people wishing to walk, bike, and take transit. With the implementation of *North PDX Connected*, N Willamette Blvd can become an enjoyable and thriving connection for children, elderly folks, families, people in wheelchairs or with other mobility needs, and any other users who wish to walk, bike, or access transit while enjoying the natural scenery of the bluff and North Portland's neighborhood charm. Commitment and action from City bureaus will

ensure that implementation is led by communities through equitable and inclusive engagement processes. New investments must be vetted to mitigate against displacement so that the communities living here today will be able to enjoy the improvements in their neighborhoods for years to come.

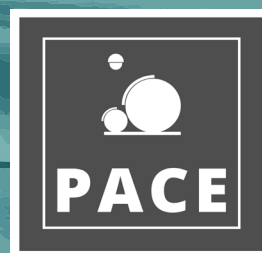


PACE Vision





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