

# **East Portland Placemaking Plan Existing Conditions Reports**

**To inform the planning and public engagement of the  
East Portland Placemaking Plan**

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## **Glossary**

*Displacement* – The market-driven relocation of individuals, groups and/or communities from their historical dwelling place. Includes not only the physical displacement of households, but also the displacement of culture, neighborhood characteristics and services. Displacement is closely coupled with gentrification and primarily impacts communities of lower economic means.

*Equity* – A social goal defined by justice, fairness, inclusiveness and participation. Equity includes the consideration of historical disadvantage, marginalization or unequal opportunity in the determination of what is fair, right and good.

*Gentrification* – A process at the neighborhood scale and larger, by which continued new investment affects changes in neighborhood culture, property values and the economic class of neighborhood inhabitants. Investment can be driven by the public sector, by individual “entrepreneurial” real estate investors, or by the concerted efforts of a real estate and development “growth coalition”.

*Growth coalition* – A term coined by Harvey Molotch and John Logan to denote pluralistic groups of elite players in the urban environment who share the objective of continued economic growth and urban renewal/expansion. Traditionally recognized members of the growth coalition include developers, real estate agents, financial institutions, politicians and the media.

*Inhabitant* – Anyone who lives in a place, city, neighborhood, etc. The word *inhabitant* is used here instead of the word *citizen* because the former is more inclusive. Use of the word “citizen” implies a special set of rights and privileges that are only enjoyed by those with legal or institutional recognition.

*Placemaking* – A practice in which community members and relevant stakeholders engage in land-based projects to enhance livability, social fabric, neighborhood beauty, or other shared community values.

*Project geography* – The area of East Portland that is the focus of the East Portland Placemaking Plan. It is defined by five census tracts bounded by SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave to the west, SE 162<sup>nd</sup> to the east, SE Powell Blvd and Foster to the south and SE Burnside and Stark streets to the north.

## **Abbreviations**

<i>BRT</i>	Bus Rapid Transit
<i>CBD</i>	Central business district
<i>CCC</i>	Coalition of Communities of Color
<i>EPAC</i>	East Portland Action Committee
<i>EPAP</i>	East Portland Action Plan
<i>EPPP</i>	East Portland Placemaking Plan
<i>ICULA</i>	Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area
<i>LULU</i>	Locally undesirable land use
<i>MFI</i>	Median family income
<i>NEDS</i>	Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy
<i>NHS</i>	North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy
<i>NPD</i>	Neighborhood Prosperity District
<i>NPI</i>	Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative
<i>PAALF</i>	Portland African American Leadership Forum
<i>PCI</i>	Per capita income
<i>PDC</i>	Portland Development Commission
<i>PG</i>	Project Geography
<i>TIF</i>	Tax Increment Financing
<i>TPP</i>	The Portland Plan



## **A note from the planning team**

The topic of gentrification and displacement appears to finally be getting the formal recognition it deserves from public sector institutions in Portland. The recently released Portland Plan, the Equity Baseline Report released by the METRO Regional Government, and the Neighborhood Housing Strategy that was recently accepted by the Portland City Council are notable examples of this trend.

Urban and regional planning can address gentrification in both a post-hoc and an ad-hoc manner. Anticipatory planning that brings the best available science and expert knowledge to bear can identify neighborhoods that are at risk or vulnerable to gentrification in the near term. Assuming that political will and financial resources are present, this anticipatory approach can inform policies aimed at minimizing the displacement of long-time residents while ensuring that the unique culture of the neighborhood remains intact.

This type of anticipatory planning, however, cannot be expected to successfully anticipate, mitigate and ameliorate *every* instance of gentrification in all circumstances. Nor can it address the issues related to those families and groups that have *already* been displaced. We need satisfactory answers and planning tools for dealing with gentrification at *all stages*, since many of the worst impacts of gentrification occur in the years *after* displacement, when communities struggle to reintegrate into new geographies, away from a culturally familiar setting and the social fabric of their previous neighborhood.

The East Portland Placemaking Plan (EPPP) is a case study within the broader *Peoples' Plan* being convened by the Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAAALF). Our planning team, consisting of six graduate students in urban and regional planning at Portland State University, aims to collect data, engage African American community members, and foment leadership in East Portland, which has become a major receiving geography for African Americans displaced from North Portland. Our project has at its heart *placemaking* and *community building*, and aims to achieve the following goals:

- Identify the most salient issues impacting the post-displacement African American community in East Portland and generate awareness among policymakers of these issues;
- Identify and help to train African American community leaders in East Portland to work as advocates for issues impacting their community;
- Generate a prioritized list of actions and advocacy agendas for community leaders and supportive advocacy groups;
- Catalyze placemaking projects with African American and African immigrant and refugee communities in East Portland.

These ambitious goals are tempered by the recognition that the issues confronting post-displacement communities can take years to emerge, and can have lasting and even intergenerational impacts. We also understand that our project will only have lasting impacts if solutions are place-based and neighborhood-scale, and we thus seek to advance a participatory approach to planning in all possible instances.

## **Executive Summary**

The African American community in Portland has experienced racism, discrimination and marginalization for the entirety of their long history in Oregon. This is not a sentimental observation, but a well documented historical fact. While strong leadership and a thriving civil society have been consistent aspects of the African American community in Portland, they have nonetheless struggled to have their unique concerns and aspirations recognized and fully represented in formal, public sector planning and policies. Here, *equal* treatment is not enough, for their role as a historically disadvantaged population demands that African Americans receive considerations and representation that is *more robust* than other groups.

Organizations like the Coalition of Communities of Color, the Urban League of Portland and the Coalition for a Livable Future have conducted extensive research on the current state of the African American and African immigrant and refugee communities in Portland. However, there has to date been very little research into the African American community in East Portland, the majority of whom are thought to have “landed” there after being displaced by decades of gentrification in North Portland. This existing conditions report is based on a review of existing planning documents, spatial (mapping) data and U.S. Census and American Community Survey data. The report is intended to inform the ongoing public engagement and outreach efforts of the East Portland Placemaking Plan (EPPP).

### **Summary of Findings**

- *African Americans in Portland have always experienced race-based discrimination and entrenched institutional barriers to self and community advancement. Recent research shows that African Americans continue to face inequitable outcomes in areas of economic justice, access to opportunities like jobs and education, and unfair treatment by institutions and authorities.*
- *A majority of African Americans living within the project geography of the East Portland Placemaking Plan have likely been displaced by gentrification in North Portland over the past decades.*
- *Many of the existing plans in Portland that pertain to housing equity, community economic involvement, equity and the future of East Portland have promising aspirational language for enabling community involvement, ensuring the long-range sustainability of affordable housing and ameliorating the impacts of gentrification. Recent policies offer hope that these goals may indeed be gaining traction among policymakers and planners, though the extent to which this is true remains unclear.*
- *There remains a need to explicitly include race and race-based inequities in research findings, social indicators and basic demographic research.*
- *The project geography of the East Portland Placemaking Plan has seen increases in the population of American inhabitants since 1980, with dramatic increases between 2000 – 2010.*
- *Impending investments in Bus Rapid Transit and from two Neighborhood Investment Districts within the project geography suggest that gentrification pressures are likely to increase there in the near future. Other neighborhood attributes, like proximity to natural areas, above average lot sizes and widespread street cover, may enhance the investment desirability of the area.*

### ***African American and African immigrant communities in Portland***

A 2009 report by the Urban League of Portland produced in-depth analysis on the current state of the African American community in Oregon (Urban League of Portland, 2009). A more recent report by the Coalition of Communities of Color (Bates & Curry-Stevens, 2014) presents an updated analysis that focuses solely on Multnomah County. These reports present a robust and data-rich narrative of the challenges confronting the African American community today. Persistently inequitable social outcomes, systematic economic inequality and institutional injustices have been historic mainstays among African Americans in Portland, and current trends show no sign of relenting.

The abovementioned reports show that African Americans in Portland are still far from attaining wage equality and economic justice. African-American family income is less than half that of Whites, while the poverty rate among African-American children is nearly 50% compared to 13% for white children. About 80% of all African Americans in Oregon reside in the Portland metro area, comprising 6% of Portland's total population. Only 0.74% of business owners in Oregon are Black. All of the reports examined emphasized the need to more explicitly examine issues of race and to organize research and data so that race-based inequities can be clearly discerned.

Overlapping these economic inequities are institutional barriers that regenerate unequal social outcomes for Blacks, unequal opportunities and education outcome, and systematic race-based discrimination by police. Teachers in school suspend and discipline Black students more than twice as much as their White counterparts, while less than ½ of African American youth complete high school. Meanwhile, much like national trends, Black incarceration rates in Oregon are six times those for Whites. Black youth are also 6 ½ times more likely to be charged with a crime than White youth, and 33% more likely to be held in detention.

Gentrification-driven displacement has had immense impacts on Portland's African American community for decades. As the scale and extent of the issue has finally reached the forefront of policymakers' attention, it has received increasing attention as of late. From 1990-2007, the African American population in North Portland declined by almost 40%. A recent survey administered by the Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAAALF) sought input from African Americans who had been displaced by gentrification in North Portland. The survey was administered in both North and East Portland, and helps to contribute a more fine-grained understanding of the post-displacement coping strategies and general well-being of African Americans in Portland. The findings show that 69% of survey respondents were renters and did not own a home, while 63% were former residents of North Portland. Only about 30% of those surveyed left North Portland by choice, while 90% stated that they would like to return to North Portland if given the opportunity.

Another report by the Coalition of Communities of Color (Curry-Stevens, 2014) focuses on African immigrant and refugee communities in Multnomah County, and arrives at comparable findings along a number of fronts. Like African Americans in Oregon, African refugee and immigrant communities face dramatic income inequality, disparities in health and education outcomes, and face inequities that are reproduced and institutionalized.

While the myriad inequities confronting African Americans in Portland cannot be fully attributed to failures of public policy, it is unlikely that these trends will be reversed *without* concerted policy intervention. These negative outcomes have immense historical inertia behind them, and have thus become entrenched into every facet of the urban social and economic system.

### ***Planning landscape relevant to African Americans in East Portland***

In order to achieve a well-informed and relevant perspective for our ongoing planning efforts, we examined several existing plans and antecedent planning efforts relevant to our project. The planning landscape in Portland is complex and multi-layered, and it was thus not possible to consider every plan that has relevance to the EPPP. The plans examined were the East Portland Action Plan; the PDC Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy and Equity Policy; the North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy; and The Portland Plan.

The East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) aims to bring about positive change in East Portland among four focus areas: built (environment), economic, learning, social and environmental objectives. Our research found no evidence that African Americans were included in any way in the drafting of the EPAP, and many of the issues most central to displacement and gentrification are left largely unaddressed. Indeed, the word “displacement” is found nowhere in the plan, while housing objectives largely focus on form, design and other property value relevant planning strategies. Multifamily housing is given little attention, and appears to be treated mostly as an undesirable land use. One of the EPAP planning strategies aims to “explore ways to balance regional affordable housing supply and promote fair share for different parts of Portland”.

The Portland Development Commission’s (PDC) Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy (NEDS) acts as a guide for community-level, cooperative economic development, particularly in the city’s Neighborhood Prosperity Districts (NPD). Its relevance to the East Portland Action Plan draws on the fact that our focus geography contains two NPDs. The plan aims to “proactively support” communities of color, economically depressed neighborhoods, as well as neighborhoods experiencing gentrification pressures. Most of the concrete goals set out in NEDS pertain to employing minimum thresholds of communities of color in urban renewal and neighborhood economic development activities. Based on in-document word searches, more policy relevant documents from the PDC like the citywide Economic Development Strategy, have little to say about displacement or equity.

The recently adopted North/Northwest Neighborhood Housing Strategy (NHS) represents an ambitious effort to address historic displacement in North Portland, as well as to avert further displacement in the area. \$20 million in Tax Increment Financing funds will be dedicated to various housing objectives, including new construction of affordable housing, home repairs for existing houses, and an effort to allow a very small number of the historically displaced residents to move *back* to North Portland if they desire. Due to fair housing laws, race cannot be considered in selecting the few families that are granted this “right to return” to North Portland. The NHS is clearly aimed at dealing directly with the forces underlying gentrification, and represents both an *anticipatory* approach to displacement and a progressive approach to post-displacement communities.

### ***Field Research, Census Data and Spatial Analysis of Project Geography***

The project geography (PG) for the EPPP was initially defined by census tracts, comprising five tracts bounded by SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave to the west, SE 162<sup>nd</sup> to the east, SE Powell Blvd and Foster to the south and SE Burnside and Stark streets to the north. The area is contained within Multnomah County, and overlaps with four neighborhood boundaries: Hazelwood, Mill Park, Centennial and Powellhurst-Gilbert. Powell Butte Nature Park lies at the southern end of the PG, and David Douglas High School towards the north caters to over 3,000 students.

The PG was annexed by the City of Portland between 1983-1994, and most buildings there were constructed after WWII. This area, and East Portland in general, includes a high number of multifamily rental units, and between 1996 and 2006, almost half of all multi-unit housing build in Portland was constructed in East Portland. Historic zoning from Multnomah County emphasized low-density residential zoning such as R10 and R7.5, which preserve large lot sizes and deep setbacks (Portland BPS, 2009b). Portland adopted zoning responsibilities in the 1980s and 90s, and current zoning in the PG is a mix of medium and low-density multifamily zones (R1, R2, R3) along with normal and lower density residential zoning classifications (R5, R7).

Over the past three decades, the 5 census tracts comprising our PG have experienced steady growth in African American population, particularly between 2000 and 2010. Inhabitants living in the PG have average medium family incomes that are about \$25,000 *less* than the citywide average. Data from the U.S. Census show that, among inhabitants over 25 years old, only 15% in the PG have completed college, with only 1/3 of those (5%) holding advanced degrees.

East Portland is already recognized as a place where inequities of access and opportunity are to some extent embedded in the very *geography* of the area (City of Portland, 2012) (EAPA, 2009). Because of this, African American inhabitants in the PG are likely to experience an extreme version of *overlapping inequities*, with geography, race-based discrimination, and entrenched institutional and historically derived injustices all combining to form serious barriers to self and community advancement. This is particularly true in light of the psychological, economic and social impacts that can endure among displaced communities for generations.

The PG includes two City-designated Neighborhood Prosperity Districts, while a Bus Rapid Transit line is set to run through the heart of the PG down SE Division St. These facets of impending urban development and renewal, coupled with other neighborhood features like proximity to parks, widespread street tree cover and above average tax lot sizes, suggest that pressures of gentrification may begin to impact the PG in the near future. Awareness of these potential gentrification impacts increases the need for community building, placemaking, and policy measures to ensure housing justice in the PG.

### ***Conclusion***

The post-displacement African American community in East Portland is vulnerable to a number of overlapping inequities—some derive from entrenched race-based discrimination, some derive from entrenched historical patterns of injustice, and some derive from inequities of access and

services inherent to the geography of East Portland. Some of the broad issues that have historically impacted African Americans in Portland are gaining increasing attention from planners and policymakers. There has, however, been a widespread failure to engage directly with issues of race; to fully acknowledge the intergenerational legacy impacts that emerge from historic, race-based discrimination; or to explicitly organize and gather policy-relevant data in such a way as to reveal the unevenness of social and economic outcomes among different races. The East Portland Placemaking Plan represents an effort to respond to the unique needs of African Americans and the issues confronting them.

## **EC 1: African and African American Communities in Portland**

### ***EC 1.1. Introduction***

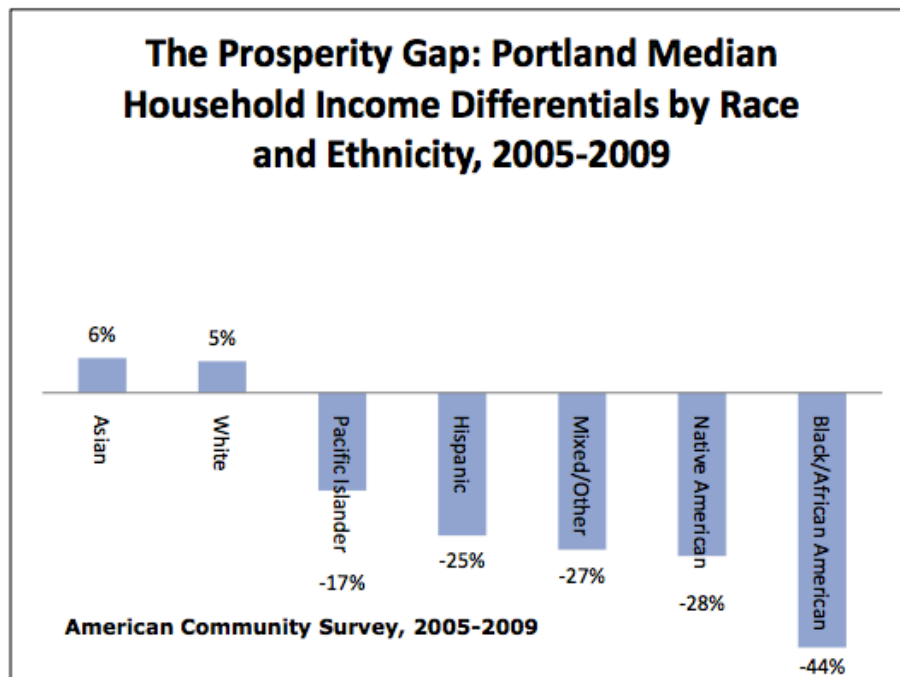
This section summarizes existing research and planning work related to prominent issues and conditions of well-being among African and African American communities in Portland. This review is meant to inform the planning and community engagement efforts of the East Portland Placemaking Plan (EPPP).

Our background research has revealed anecdotal evidence that few people, groups or even government institutions fully recognize the extent to which our focus geography has become a receiving area for African Americans displaced from North Portland. At the same time, there is a dearth of fine-grained data pertaining to African Americans in our geography. For this reason most of the reports referenced below pertain to the city of Portland on the whole.

### ***EC 1.2. Coalition of Communities of Color report on African Americans***

A 2014 report by the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) presented exhaustive research regarding the current state of the African American community in Multnomah County (Bates & Curry-Stevens, 2014). The findings from this review present startling evidence that systemically inequitable social and economic outcomes are continually generated in the Portland metropolitan area. A few of the key findings from that report are given below.

- African-American family income is less than half that of White families, and the poverty rate among African-American children is nearly 50% compared to 13% for white children (figure 1.1.);



**Figure 1.1. African American household income compared to other ethnic groups. From PDC, 2011.**

- 2009 levels of unemployment among African-Americans are nearly double that among White populations;
- Fewer than one-third of African-American households own their homes, compared to about 60% of white households in Multnomah County. African-Americans have experienced widespread housing displacement and the loss of community from gentrification in North Portland;
- African-Americans face substantial disparities for health outcomes like diabetes, stroke, and low birth weight, and in access to health insurance, prenatal care, and mental health care;
- African-American children are three times more likely to be placed in foster care than White children. Once in foster care, African American children are likely to stay in care much longer than White children;
- More than half of African-American youth do not complete high school, compared to just over a third of White students. School administrators are much more likely to discipline Black youth with suspensions and expulsions – at levels more than double those of Whites. This pattern exists despite studies that reveal Black children do not misbehave more frequently than White students;
- Black youth are 6 ½ times more likely to be charged with a crime than White youth, and 33% more likely to be held in detention. A White youth found guilty stands a one-in-ten chance of receiving a custodial sentence while a Black youth faces a one-in-four chance.

This CCC report—which bears the subtitle *An Unsettling Profile*—offers a trenchant view into the current realities of African Americans in Multnomah County. After exploring these unsettling indicators, the authors make a series of policy recommendations for the African American Community. Only a few of these recommendations can be examined here:

- *Support black business ownership.* Business leaders in the geography pertinent to the EPPP could identify only 1 African American business owner;
- *Diversify public agencies.* Only 6.5% of the City of Portland workforce is Black or African American, while 78.5% is White;
- *Ensure affordable housing for African Americans in high opportunity [redevelopment] areas.* The authors of the CCC report recommend concerted, concrete steps to ensure that revitalizing urban areas do not become exclusionary zones for the wealthiest (usually White) urban inhabitants. The geography relevant to the EPPP contains two neighborhood prosperity districts, as identified by the Portland Development Commission, and local residents rely heavily on existing affordable housing;
- *Expand support for African American homeownership.* The field research conducted thus far for the EPPP indicates that business leadership councils, neighborhood groups and



neighborhood prosperity groups tend to privilege the interests of homeowners over renters.

#### EC 1.2.1. Discussion

The report goes on to make numerous recommendations for health, child welfare, education, criminal justice and civic engagement. It also emphasizes the need for concrete and measurable goals, accountability and transparency in policies aimed at the inclusion of communities of color. Our background research for the EPPP found that existing policy goals relevant to East Portland are largely lacking this type of accountability and concreteness (**section EC 2.3.**).

#### ***EC 1.3. Urban League of Portland—State of Black Portland, 2009***

This report, modeled after the National Urban League’s *State of Black America* report, examines the realities of African Americans in Portland through a variety of lenses (Urban League of Portland, 2009). The report includes intimate portraits of the stories of a number of Black Portlanders, a historical timeline of African Americans in Portland, and a series of issue briefs for economic development, education, housing, and several other focus areas. The *State of Black Portland* also includes extensive data pertaining to African American populations in Portland from 1990-2007. While much of the richness of this report is in its anecdotal profiles of real people, our brief review here will focus on the data-based indicators primarily found in the indices. A few of the highlights pertinent to the EPPP are:

- In 1990, 51% of all African Americans in Oregon lived in North Portland. By 2005-2007, this number had dropped to 20%;
- In 1999, median income for African American households in Oregon was 17.7% *lower* than White household incomes. By 2005-07, wages became more inequitable, with African American households making 36% less than White households;
- Black incarceration rates are six times those for Whites in Oregon;
- About 9.4% of Black non-Hispanic (including African) Oregonians were not born American citizens, compared with 3.1% in 1990;
- Less than 1% (0.74%) of business owners in Oregon are Black.

#### EC 1.3.1. Discussion

These indicators are informative for the broader context of the EPPP. As 80% of African Americans in Oregon live in Portland, the *State of Black Portland* report can serve as a good proxy for citywide data on African Americans. The report makes a number of policy recommendations that are too extensive to review here. One overarching recommendation pertains to better data collection, and the disaggregation of data into racial race/ethnicity categories to better track disparities in treatment or access. As displacement and housing affordability is a key focus of the EPPP, the housing-related recommendations in the *State of Black Portland* report highlight the need to preserve affordable housing options, the innovation of

new and equitable pathways to homeownership for African Americans, and the management of future development to avoid displacement.

***EC 1.4. Coalition of Communities of Color, African Immigrant & Refugee report***

A 2013 report from the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) reviews the current state of African immigrant and refugee communities in Multnomah County (Curry-Stevens, 2014). Census data comparing 2000 to 2007 show an increase in immigrants from Sierra Leone, Egypt and Nigeria, with notable decreases in the percentage (share of total) of Somali-born inhabitants. In 2011, African-born inhabitants comprised about 11,700 total individuals. This represents more than a 30% increase from only 2 years prior, when their total population was about 8,100. This being said, the report states that there is documented evidence of the undercounting of the African Population in Portland.

Early conversations with community leaders in our focus geography indicate that the African immigrants near the Division-Midway redevelopment area (SE Division St.) are equally or more prominent than African Americans. The CCC report notes that, “like other low income communities of color, [African immigrants] are spreading further east and west in search of affordable housing”. Key findings from the report include:

- African immigrants and refugees have the highest child poverty rate in the region, with 66.6% of children living in poverty;
- Average annual household incomes for African immigrants are \$32,584, compared to \$53,225 for Whites;
- Unemployment for African immigrants and refugees is 13.5%, while unemployment among Whites is 7.5%;
- More than 1/3 of this community does not speak English very well;
- ¼ of the African community in Multnomah County hold graduate or professional degrees;
- 38% of African immigrants and refugees own their own homes, while 62% of Whites are homeowners.

The report identified 11 policy priorities for advancing equity for the African immigrant and refugee community. Some of these are:

- Focus on firm timelines, resources and policy commitments in reducing disparities between the African community and others;
- Prioritize resources for education and early childhood services;

- Enhance research and data collection to improve knowledge of populations of color—“make the invisible visible”;
- Acknowledge race in policy deliberations, respect racial identity and acknowledge the link between race and experience;
- The report calls for culturally specific services for the African immigrant and refugee community.

#### *EC 1.4.1. Discussion*

The overarching goal of the report largely revolves around more policy attention being paid to this community, the advancement of more research to better understand their specific concerns, and improvements in data collection and reporting vis-à-vis the African immigrant and refugee community. Given that data for these populations are scarce and vastly incomplete, the report relies substantively on nation-wide data. There is also a large emphasis on educational attainment, parental support, and classroom improvements focused on the children of immigrant families. Indeed, the inclusion of African immigrant populations in the EPPP, and the broader Peoples’ Plan of PAALF is based on recognition that, as immigrant families raise and give birth to children in our region, they will come to face many of the same challenges as African Americans.

#### ***EC 1.5. 2014 PAALF Neighborhood Survey<sup>1</sup>***

During the summer months of 2014, the Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF) conducted a survey by going door to door in neighborhoods throughout North/Northeast (N/NE) and East Portland. The survey collected information about demographics, such as estimated household income and race. Open-ended questions were designed to collect information about issues regarding strengths and challenges in the neighborhood. Finally, survey questions also shed light on perceptions from the community regarding issues such as gentrification and policing.

Overall, PAALF collected approximately 148 surveys. More than 90% of survey respondents identified as Black. Below is a review of some of the key findings from this survey:

- At least 80% of survey respondents reported a household income under \$50,000, with over half (58%) making under \$25,000;
- 69% of respondents were renters, while 16% owned their home at the time of the survey;
- At least 63% of survey respondents reported that they were former residents of N/NE Portland neighborhoods,
- 68% indicated that they did not leave their home in N/NE Portland by choice and 59% said that their reason for leaving was related to decreased affordability or because their building was sold;

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<sup>1</sup> Survey data analysis was completed by PSU graduate students in urban planning during the fall of 2014.

- A vast majority of survey respondents (99 out of 122 who answered the question) believed that African Americans were intentionally removed from neighborhoods in N/NE Portland, while 90% of the identified former N/NE residents stated that they would return to their former neighborhood if given the opportunity.

While survey respondents revealed a high level of interest and motivation for community involvement or action, at least 43% said that they have experienced limited positive experience when engaging with local community leaders or community groups. Despite these challenges, more than 80% of survey respondents indicated interest in attending community meetings and 1/3 said that they would be willing to attend training sessions on community organizing.

#### EC 1.5.1. Discussion

These results show a clear desire among African Americans in Portland to engage in post-displacement community building. While 90% of respondents indicated a wish to return to N/NE Portland, this is clearly not a feasible alternative from a policy standpoint; the “re-relocation” of so many households would entail vast market intervention on the part of the public sector. While the soon-to-be implemented Neighborhood Housing Strategy (**section EC 2.4.**) will seek to offer some historically displaced families the “right to return” to N/NE Portland, this will only apply to a few hundred families, even though the scale of funding will total over \$20 million. Furthermore, fair housing laws prevent the consideration of race for such policies, so the racial and cultural dimensions of displacement cannot be fully encompassed in “right to return” policies.

The survey also reflects the difficulty that African Americans have experienced in engaging with community groups and organizations in their post-displacement neighborhoods. Anecdotal evidence from our field research for the EPPP indicates that a primary issue among post-displacement African Americans is *community fragmentation*. Inhabitants move from a neighborhood where community roots run deep, where they are a racial majority, and where day-to-day encounters are familiar and comfortable (pre-displacement) and into neighborhoods where they are likely a racial minority, where they have few community ties and where social fabric and social capital are much less robust. Concerted efforts of placemaking and community building (**section BR 4**) can help to address this issue of “root shock” in post-displacement communities. Creating a strong tradition of community organizing, social reciprocity and advocacy can help to put the issues of post-displacement communities on the map, while ensuring that ample energy is behind these advocacy efforts to affect real policy changes. The reinvigoration of such trends is a major focus of the East Portland Placemaking Plan.

#### **EC 1.6. Conclusion**

The above discussion leaves no doubt that the historical disparities experienced by African American communities in Portland remain a salient, and in some instances a *worsening* issue. While the many negative social and economic outcomes examined above cannot be fully attributed to failures of public policy, it is unlikely that these trends will be reversed *without* concerted policy intervention. These inequitable outcomes have immense historical inertia behind them, and have thus become entrenched into every facet of the urban social and economic system.

Examining data of the sort reviewed above can help to identify racially derived inequities faced by the African American community, while more geographically focused research (**section EC 3**) deepens our knowledge of spatially-grounded inequities. As this background research informs the our direct public engagement and organizing efforts, our understanding of the concerns and issues relevant to African Americans in East Portland will become more fully resolved.

## **EC 2: Existing plans and policies relevant to African Americans living in the East Portland Placemaking Plan Project Geography**

### ***EC 2.1. Introduction***

This section examines a few of the plans and policies that we expect to prove most relevant to the East Portland Placemaking Plan (EPPP). Because the planning landscape in Portland is complex, and involves a large number of individual plans, not all plans or policies that have bearing on our project could be considered. The plans and policies considered below were selected based on their relevance to the EPPP project geography (**section EC 3**), and the issues of equity, gentrification and displacement. Notable plans that were not considered include the METRO Equity Baseline Report (METRO, 2015) and the recently updated Portland Comprehensive Plan. In lieu of the latter plan, we examined the 2012 Portland Plan (**section BR 2.5**).

Within the context of the equity concerns of the African American and African communities in Portland, our background research indicates a need to advance planning and policy measures that,

- 1) Advance policies that ensure justice in the rental housing market and homeownership for communities of color;
- 2) Anticipate gentrification and mitigate displacement and cultural impacts of gentrification;
- 3) Advance opportunities for political organizing and empowerment for renters;
- 4) Implement policies that address the community fragmentation and loss of social fabric that are common in post-displacement communities;
- 5) Ensure affordability and livability in multifamily housing units.

### ***EC 2.2. East Portland Action Plan***

In early 2009, the Portland City Council adopted the East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) (Portland BPS, 2009a). The plan was adopted amidst widespread recognition that East Portland had overlapping challenges with regard to housing, economic development, and public safety, and may be at a critical “tipping point” that demanded policy intervention. The plan notes salient concerns like, “a shifting of poverty to the area, the quality and design of new housing, missed opportunities for economic development, a lack of investment and concerns about public safety”. The plan was written under the guidance of the East Portland Action Committee (EPAC), which included no African American or Black members. While the names listed in the EPAC include members of the “Asian community” and “Slavic community”, there is no mention of African American or African immigrant community representatives.

The objectives contained in EPAP are organized into four categories: built (environment), economic, learning, social and environmental objectives. The social objectives are further divided into four focus areas: public safety; housing assistance and safety net services; community

building; and equity. A number of “principles for improved livability” are articulated in EPAP, one of which is “attain and sustain equity”. The narrative related to this principle calls for East Portland to receive a fair share of “resources and attention by policy makers”, and suggests that East Portland is also “receiving a disproportionate share of new housing development without the commensurate level of infrastructure, services and amenities”.

Issues of race are not specifically addressed in the plan, though the strategies related to community building call for increased interaction among different cultures and geographic neighbors. Specific actions to advance this goal include community organizing events like block parties, cultural and ethnic celebrations and other neighborhood-scale activities.

The objectives outlined for housing assistance outline the need to “support diversity in neighborhoods”, through enhancing “sustainable homeownership” for lower-income households, and increasing opportunities for minorities to own homes. Because our background research suggests that neighborhood-scale planning and advocacy efforts often disproportionately represent the interests of homeowners—and not renters—we consider efforts to enhance homeownership among African Americans and African immigrants to be an important step towards equitable community building. Nowhere in the EPAP does the word “displacement” show up.

The “community building” section of EPAP acknowledges this dynamic, calling for an outreach program for East Portland residents “typically underrepresented” in neighborhood associations. Both renters and minorities (“diverse race and ethnicities”) are mentioned as underrepresented groups. Overall, however, the strategies related to housing in EPAP appear to do little to address the renter-specific concerns enumerated above. The housing objectives of EPAP are delineated into six focus areas, as follows:

- *Improve the design and quality of new housing structures;*
- *Improve the appearance, quality and safety of existing housing stock;*
- *Improve public notification for new development and enhance community knowledge, capacity and influence;*
- *Review and assess public policies and incentives for housing development;*
- *Improve regulations and implementation of City code to increase benefit and reduce impacts;*
- *Review and assess Comprehensive Plan Map and implementation in East Portland.*

These six housing policies of the EPAP set a clear tone in favor of the redevelopment and redesign of existing housing stock. Little is mentioned to indicate that long-term rental justice and equity is at the forefront of the EPAP planning objectives. While the six goals are elaborated

upon via 28 concrete action proposals, nowhere in the section does the word “affordable” (or any variation thereof) appear. Furthermore, while EPAP articulates 13 prioritization criteria for determining concrete actions, none pertain to affordability, equity, minority interests, poverty alleviation or the interests of underserved populations. Not until the very last policy objective pertaining to “Equity” does the word “affordable” show up, but here it is in the context of a call to provide *less* affordable housing in East Portland. This strategy reads as follows:

- *Explore ways to balance regional affordable housing supply and promote fair share for different parts of Portland.*

Indeed, multifamily housing is popularly regarded as a locally undesirable land use (LULU) that purportedly lowers property values. The above goal of the EPAP appears to be an affirmation of this assumption, calling for other parts of the city to allocate their “fair share” of land to this zoning designation. From 1996-2006, East Portland was home to over 30% of all new multifamily residential units in the City, and about 46% of all rowhouses and duplexes (Portland BPS, 2009b).

#### *EC 2.2.1. Discussion*

EPAP pertains to the entire scope of our project geography for the EPPP. As an officially adopted plan for the area, it is intimately relevant to all community engagement efforts in the area. While some of the omissions with regard to housing and equity discussed above give reason for concern, the EPAP provides a framework and planning artifact that can form the basis of public engagement, dialogue and community organizing. The real agency of the plan, however, will depend on other programs, public initiatives and investment efforts. One of the overarching concerns of EPAP is to increase public investment and policy attention in East Portland, and only when such investment programs are implemented will the objectives and strategies of the plan come to bear.

#### ***EC 2.3. PDC Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative and Equity Policy***

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) leads the Portland Main Street program, which created 8 Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative (NPI) districts throughout Portland. Two of these districts are included in the geography of the EPPP, the Rosewood Initiative along SE Stark St. and the Division-Midway Alliance, along SE Division St. These geographies are targeted for ongoing investment for economic development, which has historically been found to be a main driver of gentrification and displacement (**section BR 2**). The robustness of the equity goals and anti-displacement strategies imbedded in the NPI will to some extent determine the success of placemaking, community-building and long-term efforts to build social capital in the focus geography of the EPPP.

The goals and strategies of the NPI are embedded in PDC’s Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy (NEDS), which “articulates how community partners, business leadership and public partners can use focused neighborhood-level actions to collectively foster economic opportunity and neighborhood vitality throughout Portland” (PDC, 2009). Its relevance to the East Portland Action Plan draws on the fact that our focus geography contains two NPDs. The



plan aims to “proactively support” communities of color, economically depressed neighborhoods, as well as neighborhoods experiencing gentrification pressures.

NEDS acknowledges, “an inequity in benefits that is borne by communities of color” and states that an, “equity lens will guide every action, investment and program” (PDC, 2011). However, the PDC’s citywide Economic Development Strategy (PDC, 2009), which has far more “teeth” from a policy standpoint than NEDS, does not contain the word “affordable” and only mentions the word “equity” once in a highly sentimental context.

NEDS states that the PDC will ensure that no less than 20% of “hard construction costs” pertaining to urban renewal projects should go to minority-owned, women-owned or small business firms. However, given that African Americans are systemically underrepresented in the business community of the EPPP focus geography, it is quite possible that minority employment in the Division-Midway and Rosewood renewal districts will go to African Americans living outside the focus geography. The NEDS also suggests that a “City Action Team” will be formed and will work with the Portland Office of Equity to focus on anti-gentrification within renewal districts, though our research uncovered no evidence of the formation of such an action team.

Finally, NEDS intermittently references the “equity objectives” of the PDC. These are contained in the PDC Equity Policy, a resolution adopted by the PDC in early 2013 (PDC, 2013). This resolution states that PDC investments, programs and projects will strive for equitable outcomes, enhance employment opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities, and increase internal diversity and transparency with the aid of an “Equity Council”. Our research showed no evidence of the existence of such an Equity Council, while the “soft” nature of this resolution and its unspecific language makes enforcement and accountability difficult.

### *EC 2.3.1. Discussion*

The PDC is a primary public sector entity in the allocation and strategic implementation of urban renewal and neighborhoods development projects. The existence of two NDI areas within the project geography of the EPPP mean that gentrification pressures are likely to increase in the area over the next several years. The historic failure of the PDC to ameliorate public investment-driven gentrification is largely responsible for the displacement of African Americans *into* the EPPP project geography. The EPPP’s focus on community building and the reconstruction of social fabric will prove difficult if gentrification pressures are not adequately checked. Whatever the outcome in this regard, increased employment and economic development opportunities for African Americans in our project geography will also hinge to some extent on how successfully and/or earnestly the PDC implements its equitable employment and economic development goals.

### ***EC 2.4. North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy***

In March of 2014, Portland Mayor Charlie Hales dedicated \$20 million in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) funding towards affordable housing and displacement “atonement” goals for the urban renewal area in N/NE Portland known as the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area (ICURA) (City of Portland, 2015). The North/Northeast Neighborhood Housing Strategy (NHS) came on the heels of a drawn-out public controversy in which Hale sought to push through a

[illegible]

<http://www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/article/517145>.

Individuals that have been historically displaced from the N/NE will have priority access to housing and program funds made available in the ICURA. This so-called “right to return” aspect of the NHS follows similar programs implemented in New York, Massachusetts and California (City of Portland, 2015).

- Publicly subsidized home repair programs for low-income residents of N/NE Portland. This element of the NHS aims to “prevent displacement” by augmenting resources for populations in need;
- Assist low-income residents to buy homes. As this strategy does not involve urban renewal or construction, it is ineligible for TIF funds, and can thus also be applied outside of the ICURA;
- The construction of new affordable housing and the redevelopment of existing public property within the ICURA, with an emphasis on family-sized dwellings;
- The acquisition of new land for affordable housing within the ICURA.

The strategy also calls for economic development initiatives, public advocacy for inclusionary zoning measures, and the formation of a citywide displacement mitigation strategy.

#### EC 2.4.1. Discussion

The NHS is unequivocally a major step forward for affordable housing provisioning in N/NE Portland, and a promising policy innovation for affordable housing *in general*. The post-hoc approach to gentrification embodied in the plan has received both great praise as well as robust criticism (Theriault, 2015). While the “right to return” elements of the Strategy represent a progressive effort to redress historical injustices, the scale at which it can be implemented is far from equal to the scale of historic gentrification in N/NE Portland. The NHS is only likely to “return” a few hundred displaced families to N/NE Portland, and fair housing laws prohibit the consideration of race for such allocations.

Furthermore, two decades of gentrification in N/NE Portland have substantively transformed the cultural identity of the neighborhood. Those families that *do* return to the area will thus be returning to a version of North Portland in which African American culture and neighborhood character have been displaced dramatically (Theriault, 2015). For these reasons, the NHS as currently formulated will likely prove incapable of addressing the racial and cultural dimensions of gentrification and displacement.

The plan’s call for the “immediate” creation of a citywide displacement mitigation strategy (City of Portland, 2015) is perhaps the more forward-thinking aspect of the NHS, and is more closely in line with expert recommendations for policy measures to address displacement and gentrification. An acclaimed report on gentrification mitigation in Portland (Bates, 2013) recommends an anticipatory approach to planning whereby the best available science and data are enlisted to ensure that new development and urban renewal are inclusive for individuals from all economic classes. Such an approach could help a neighborhood to retain its historical diversity and cultural uniqueness in the face of public investment and urban renewal, a goal that has largely evaded even the best-intentioned policies to date. From this perspective, placemaking, neighborhood integrity and economic justice can be integrally embedded into long-range planning, ideally avoiding the emergence of injustices *in the first place*, rather than seeking to redress them through perfect policy hindsight

#### **EC 2.5. The Portland Plan**

The Portland Plan was completed in early 2012 in advance of the City of Portland Comprehensive Plan Update. The Portland Plan (TPP) acts as an overarching framework of principles and priority objectives to guide city planning through 2035 (City of Portland, 2012). TPP includes 142 concrete action items, which are focused on a set of four planning priorities: prosperity; education; health; and equity. The plan also states that, “advancing equity must be at the core of our plans for the future”.

TPP defines equity in terms of equitable access to opportunity for the fulfillment of basic needs, well-being and the actualization of potential. At the community level, the plan considers equity

according to a community's ability "to shape their own present and future". TPP also states that equity should be considered both an ends and a means for a "healthy, resilient community".

The plan's "framework for equity" focuses on the identifying disparities in the provisioning of "basic services", and strongly references the fact that public services, utilities and urban infrastructure improvements have historically not been allocated in a balanced way across the city. This acknowledgment is certainly relevant to East Portland, which is widely recognized as being an underserved area vis-à-vis public services and amenities (CLF, 2007). Indeed, TPP has a small section dedicated to East Portland, where it mostly references actions from the East Portland Action Plan that have been included in TPP.

The equity framework of TPP also calls for the launch of a "racial/ethnic justice initiative". Attached to this planning objective are the following actions:

- Initiate a racial and ethnic focus, using well-documented disparities;
- Build the skills, capacity, and technical expertise to address institutionalized racism and practice and intercultural competencies;
- Engage diverse constituencies to discuss race, disparities and public services;
- Actively work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in public agency hiring, retention and contracting.

Gentrification and displacement are addressed in a number of action items. First, TPP states that an evaluation of "equity impacts" will accompany plans for budgeting, public expenditures and project development. The plan also acknowledges the need to improve evaluation methods for social impacts and lists a number of approaches to contribute to this goal. The most direct reference to gentrification and displacement impacts is found in action items #79 and #97:

***Equity in neighborhood chance.*** Use neighborhood planning and development programs to help minority and low-income people stay in their homes and neighborhoods. Raise community awareness of existing programs to prevent eviction and foreclosure.

***Mitigate negative social impacts.*** Develop policy and strategies that anticipate and address the displacement impacts of gentrification, focusing on approaches that address housing, business development and program evaluation.

With regard to race, TPP calls for the convening of public forums about race, the diversification of City advisory boards, and training of city staff about intercultural competency, institutionalized racism, and the Civil Rights Act. Action item #90 specifically references race, reading:

***Race and ethnicity:*** Support programs and policies to increase employment opportunities for low-income residents who face barriers related to race and ethnicity. These approaches include targeted contracting, community workforce agreements, job training and culturally specific services.

#### EC 2.5.1. Discussion

The focus on concrete actions in TPP appears to add credence to the City's commitment to the equity-related objectives, and also creates some means to ensure accountability for the planning objectives identified. The plan's call to improve evaluation methods for equity-related impacts of investment is also closely aligned with many of the reports reviewed above relating to the African American community in Portland (**section EC 1**). Finally, the plan's direct treatment of gentrification and displacement is a promising sign for the future of planning and community building in Portland.

TPP remains, however, cannot be considered much more than a guiding document, since the City's recently updated *Comprehensive Plan* is the true legally binding version of Portland's planning requirements. The latter plan contains a less robust version of the equity objectives contained in TPP, and appears to place these objectives in more vague, less action-oriented language. Given the newness of TPP, it is as yet difficult to gauge whether or not the plan will earnestly act as a guide for policy and resource allocation decisions in the City of Portland.

## **EC 3: Field Research and Spatial Analysis of Project Geography**

### ***EC 3.1. Introduction***

This paper examines the focus geography for the East Portland Placemaking Plan (EPPP). A number of aspects of the EPPP project geography (PG) are discussed, including urban form, street layout, environmental attributes, housing types and land uses. The research reflected here comprises a baseline analysis of existing conditions in the PG, and will inform subsequent research and outreach efforts of the EPPP. Because questions of housing affordability and gentrification risk are central to the EPPP, special attention is paid to indicators relevant to these topics.

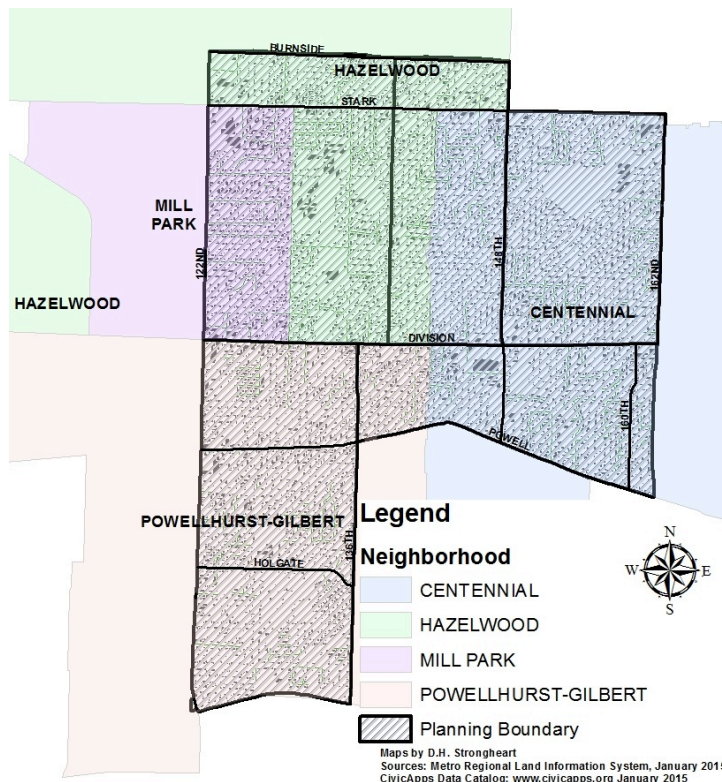
### ***EC 3.2. Methods***

For the spatial, environmental and land use research, global information system (GIS) data were examined, visually analyzed and combined where required. GIS data was accessed through both the METRO government's Regional Land Information System (RLIS) website (RLIS, 2015) and the intergovernmental CivicApps platform (CivicApps, 2015). Qualitative and on-the-ground visual information were gathered through field research methodologies such as photographic research, site reconnaissance and windshield surveys. Gaber's guide on qualitative planning analysis (Gaber, 2007) served as the major guide for the field research components of this analysis.

### ***EC 3.3. Description of geography***

The PG was initially defined by census tracts, comprising five tracts bounded by SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave to the west, SE 162<sup>nd</sup> to the east, SE Powell Blvd and Foster to the south and SE Burnside and Stark

streets to the north (figure 1). The PG is contained within Multnomah County, and overlaps with four neighborhood boundaries: Hazelwood, Mill Park, Centennial and Powellhurst-Gilbert (**figure 3.1**). Annexation of the area began in 1983 as a part of the Urban Services Policy, and by 1994 it was fully incorporated into Portland (Portland BPS, 2009b).



**Figure 2.1. Neighborhood and street boundaries of focus geography.**



### ***EC 3.4. Neighborhood characteristics***

A number of the streets that bound and intersect the PG are main arterial streets. As with much of East Portland, sidewalks in the PG are only partially completed, with the biggest gaps being south of Powell Blvd. to Powell Butte and south of Market St. from about 160<sup>th</sup> to 140<sup>th</sup> avenues. An intermittent but mature tree canopy extends from the north and west sides of Powell Butte up to about SE Market St. to the north (**figure 3.2.**).



**Figure 3.2.**  
*Intermittent tree canopy near SE Market St. & 144th Ave. looking south towards Powell Butte.*

### ***EC 3.5. Housing and development attributes***

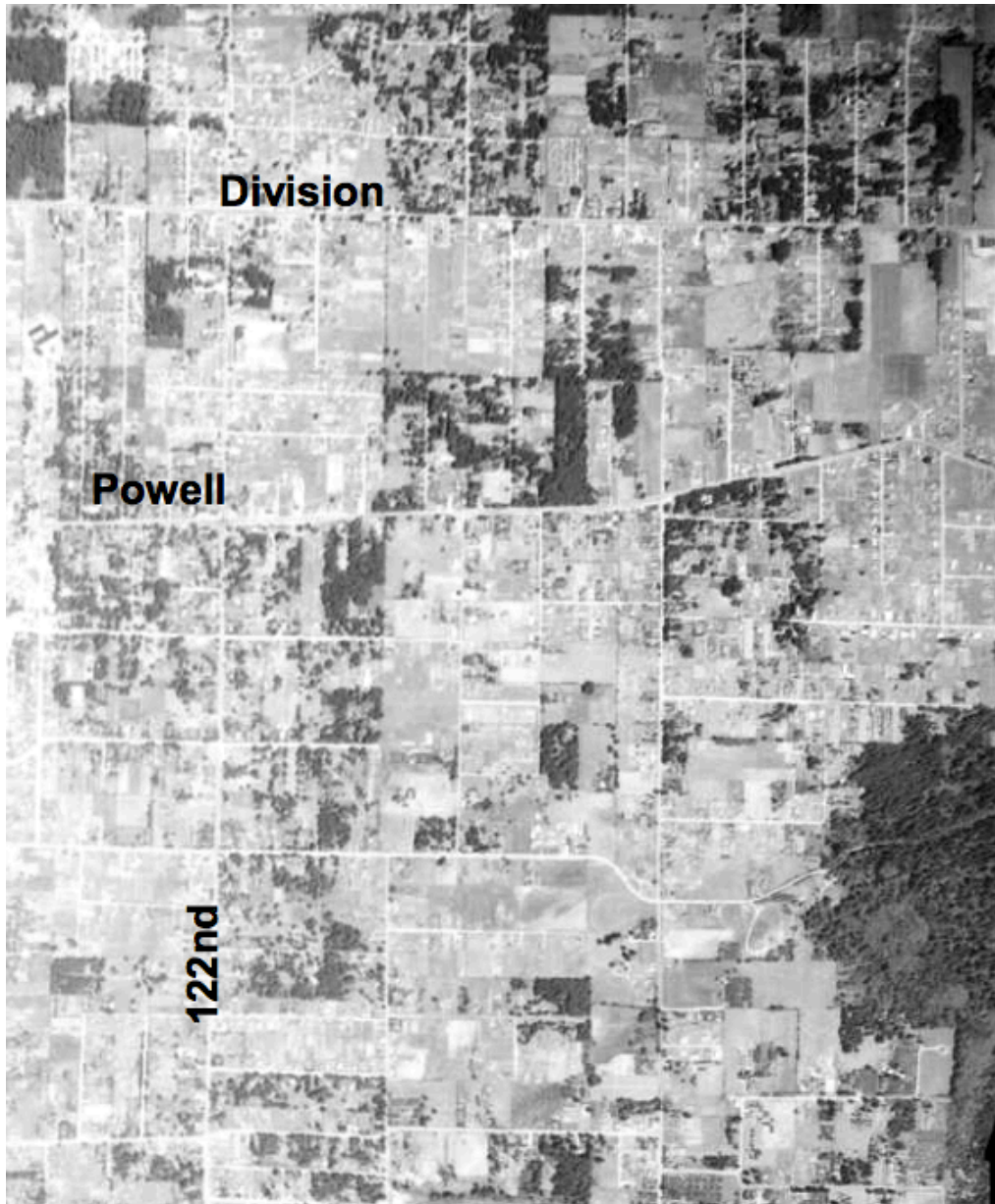
Aerial photographs from 1952 reveal that much of the PG was undeveloped at that time, suggesting that most of the existing development occurred post WWII (**figure 3.3.**). GIS data and historical documentation also confirm that most development within the PG transpired after WWII (**figure 3.4.**).

City-designated

Neighborhood Prosperity Districts along SE Division and SE Stark streets are likely to see renewed investment in the near future, particularly along Division St., where the Powell-Division bus rapid transit project is set to be constructed (**section BR 5**). These Prosperity Districts contain a high number of aging structures (**figure 3.4.**), most of which is currently zoned for medium-density multifamily housing (**figure 3.5. & 3.6.**). Furthermore, field observations showed that much of the single-family housing stock is also in need of repair, with a surprising number of blighted and abandoned houses throughout the PG (**figure 3.7.**).

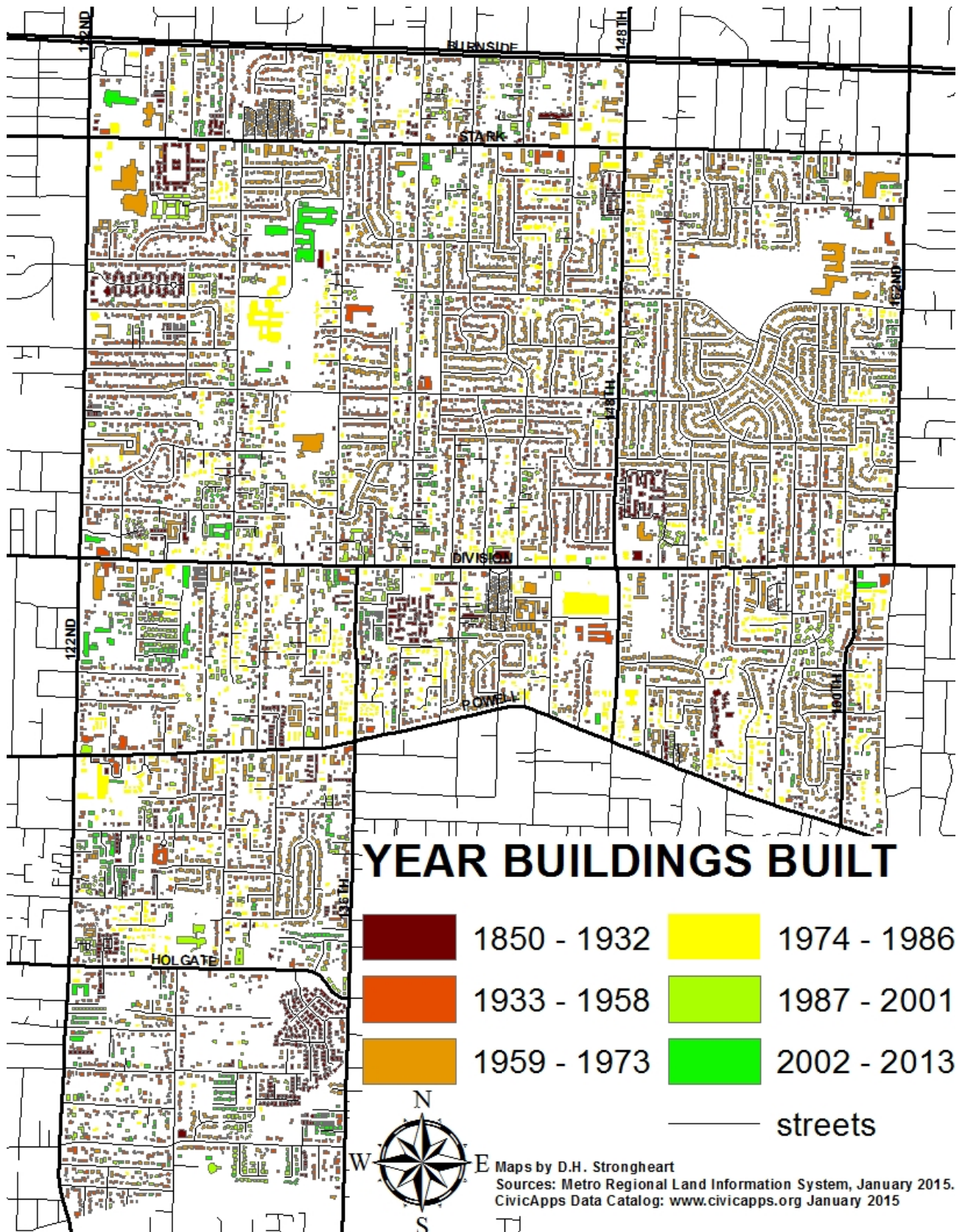
### ***EC 3.6. Land use dimensions of PG***

Zoning regulations in the PG are largely a mix of medium and low-density multifamily zones (R1, R2, R3) along with normal and lower density residential zoning classifications (R5, R7). Main arterial streets accommodate mostly small-scale commercial uses meant to coincide with nearby residential land uses (CN1, CN2) with some more intensive general commercial zones (CG). Multnomah County adopted countywide zoning in 1955, and low density residential zoning such as R10 and R7.5 were applied within much of the PG with the aim of preserving large lot sizes with deep setbacks (Portland BPS, 2009b). When Portland adopted zoning responsibilities in the 1980s and 90s, much of this historical zoning was translated into comparable City zones, though some of the land was also up-zoned to encourage denser developments (ibid).

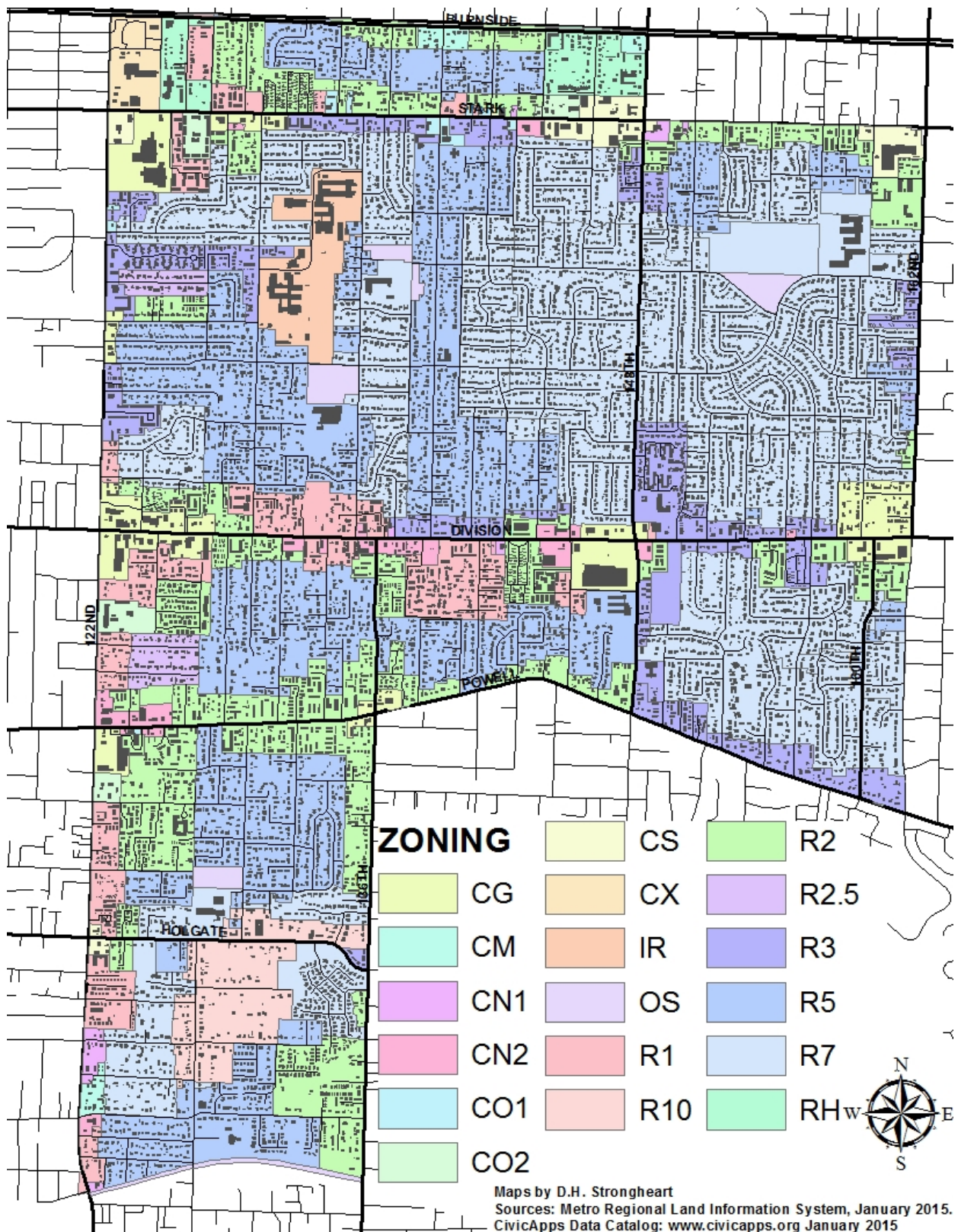


***Figure 3.3.*** Ariel photograph of part of PG in 1952. From Portland BPS, 2009b.



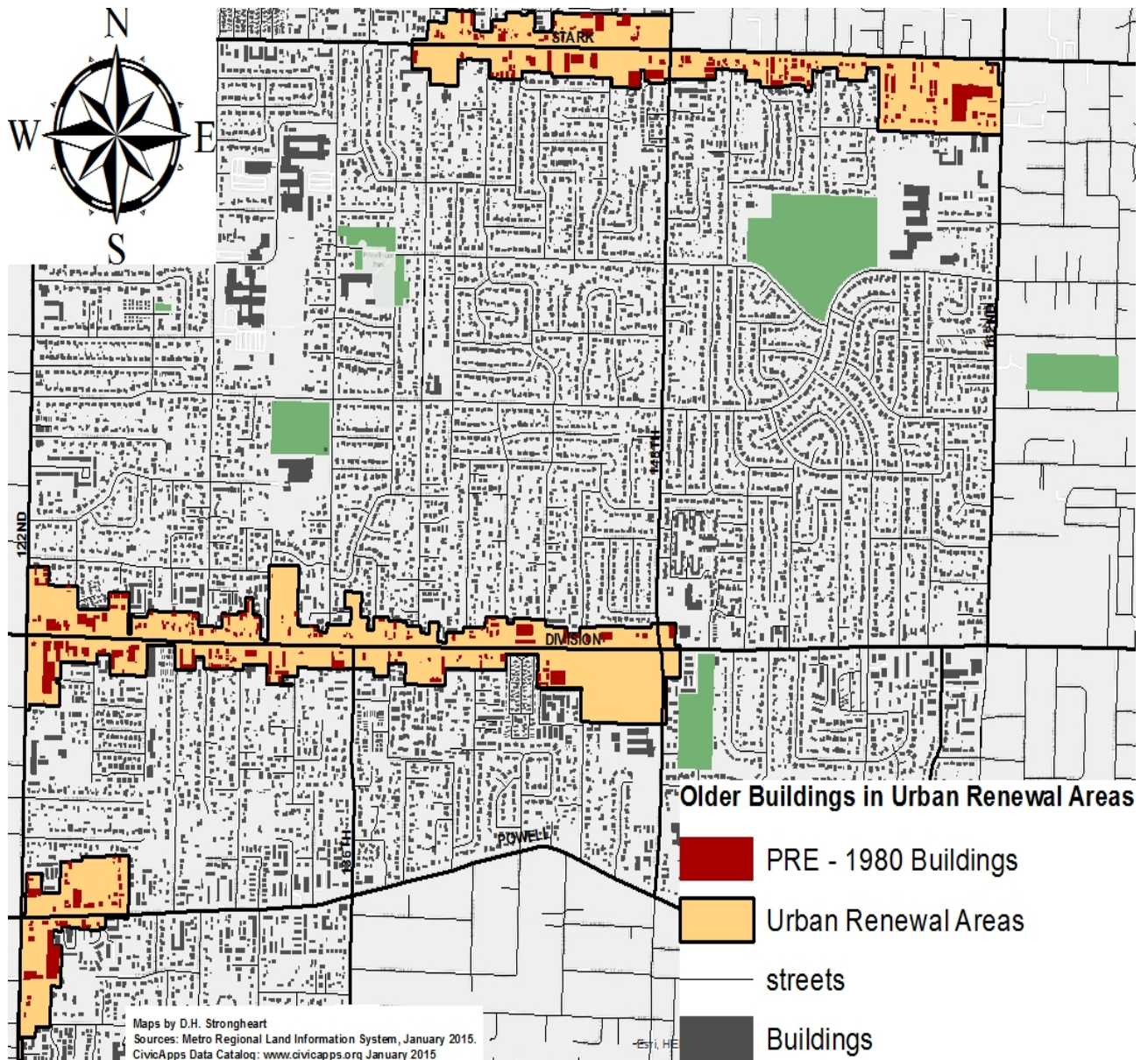


*Figure 3.4. Age of buildings within project geography.*



**Figure 3.5. Zoning designations within project geography.**





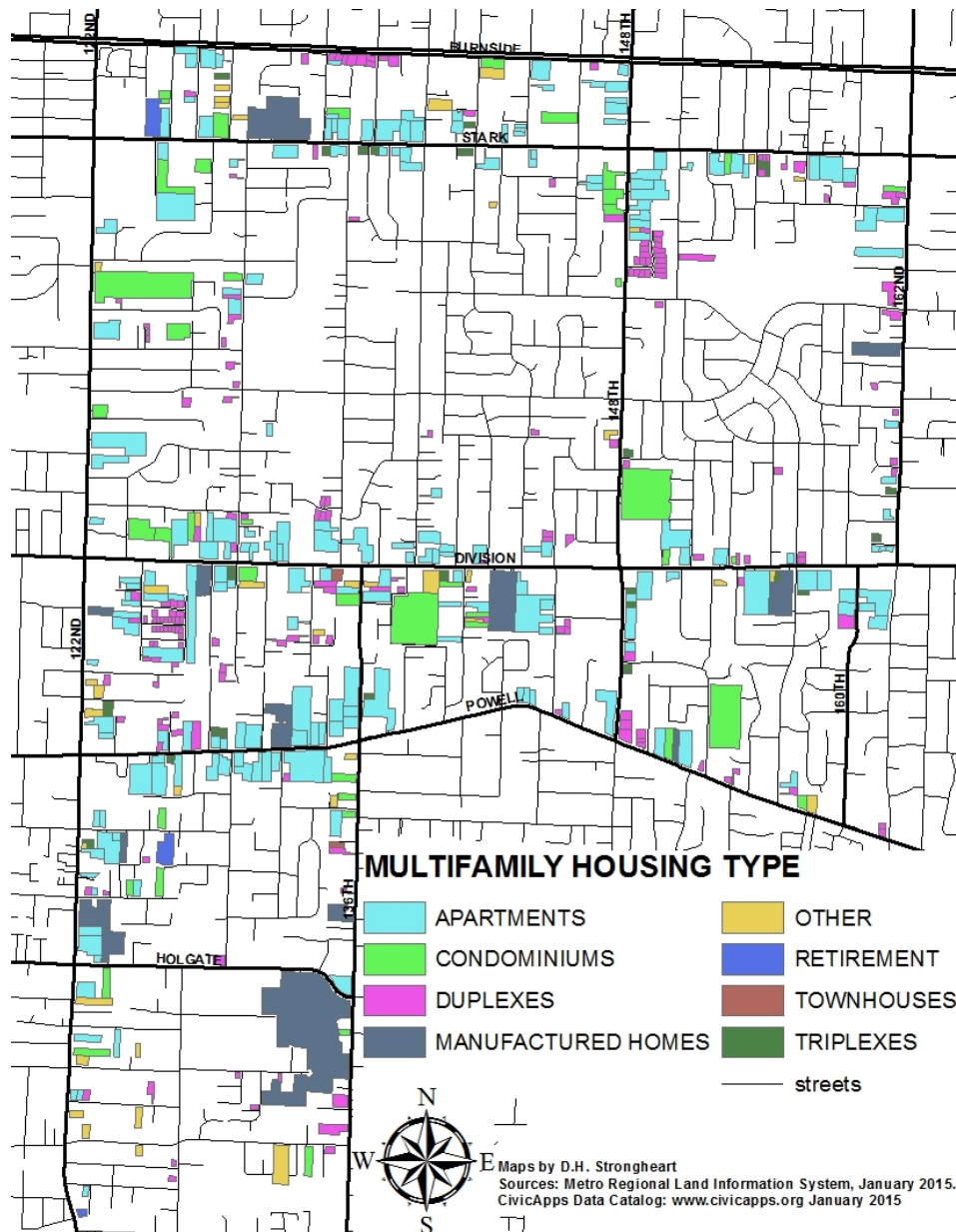
**Figure 3.6. Neighborhood Prosperity Districts within PG and buildings over 35 years-old.**



**Figure 3.7.** *Examples of dilapidated housing stock observed in project geography.*

### ***EC 3.7. Discussion***

Given the impending public investment in the Powell-Division Bus Rapid Transit project, along with the designated Neighborhood Prosperity Districts and aging housing stock in the PG, it is exceedingly likely that large swaths of the PG will face redevelopment in the near future. Windshield surveys and field research suggest that the PG is an “outsourcing region” for many more types of locally undesirable land uses (LULUs) as well. Numerous medical marijuana dispensaries, drug rehabilitation centers, several cell phone towers and a very large number of adult entertainment venues were identified, often in close proximity to churches, restaurants and schools. The high levels of these LULUs may signify a lack of neighborhood-scale social capital as well as a lack of grassroots organizing capacity. If this is the case, then the lack of social cohesion could be exacerbated by the rapid demographic change during the past decade in the PG, which has seen sudden population growth from displaced African Americans from North Portland and new Hispanic and Somali immigrants.



**Figure 3.8. Multifamily housing units by type in project geography.**

### ***EC 3.8. Conclusion***

This brief overview of existing conditions in the focus geography is meant to provide information and reference for the outreach and public participation phases of the EPPP. This background review has revealed a number of salient trends in the PG, which seems poised for ongoing change and near-term urban redevelopment. The need to increase social capital at the neighborhood scale and organizing capacity in ongoing local politics is at the core of the East Portland Placemaking Plan, as well as the broader Peoples' Plan for all of Portland's Black community.



## **EC 4: Select Census Data Indicators for Project Geography**

### ***EC 4.1. Introduction***

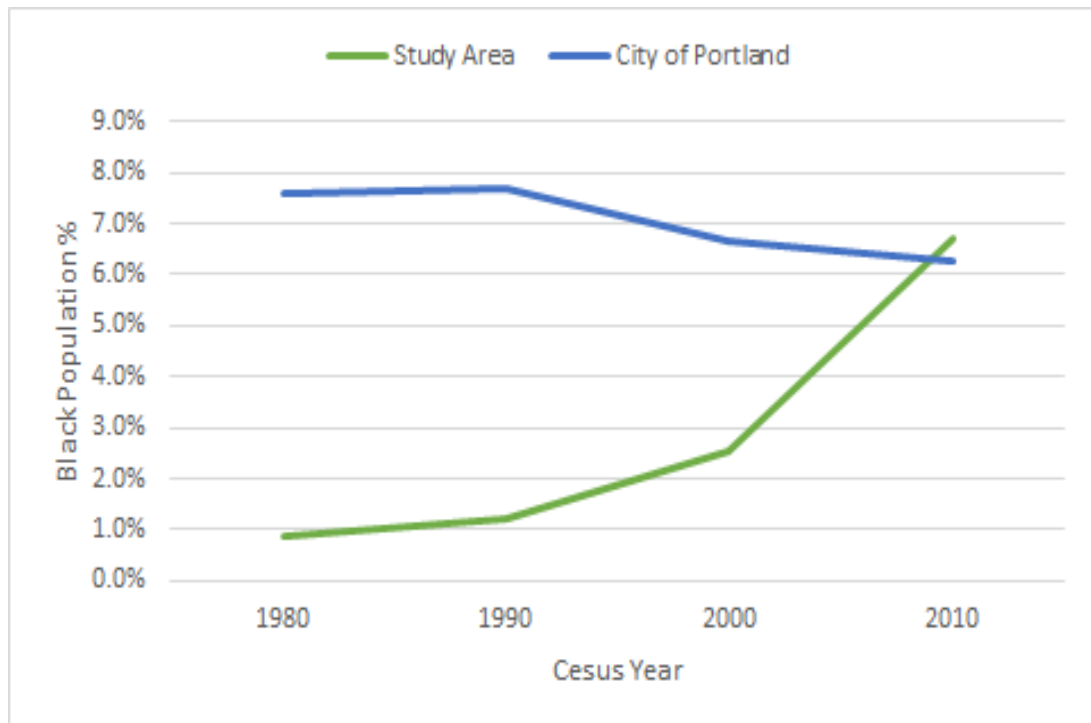
This paper reviews key indicators pertaining to the project geography of the East Portland Placemaking Plan (EPPP). These indicators include racial composition, educational attainment and dropout rates, median household and per-capita income, and employment data by work sector. The data pertaining to this review is U.S. Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data from the years 1980-2010.

The project geography (PG) includes 5 census tracts in East Portland bounded by SE 122<sup>nd</sup> Ave to the west, SE 162<sup>nd</sup> to the east, SE Powell Blvd and Foster to the south and SE Burnside and Stark streets to the north (**figure 4.2.**). This background research is meant to inform the public engagement efforts of the student planning group working on the EPPP, and to add clarity to the broader picture of the African American population living in East Portland.

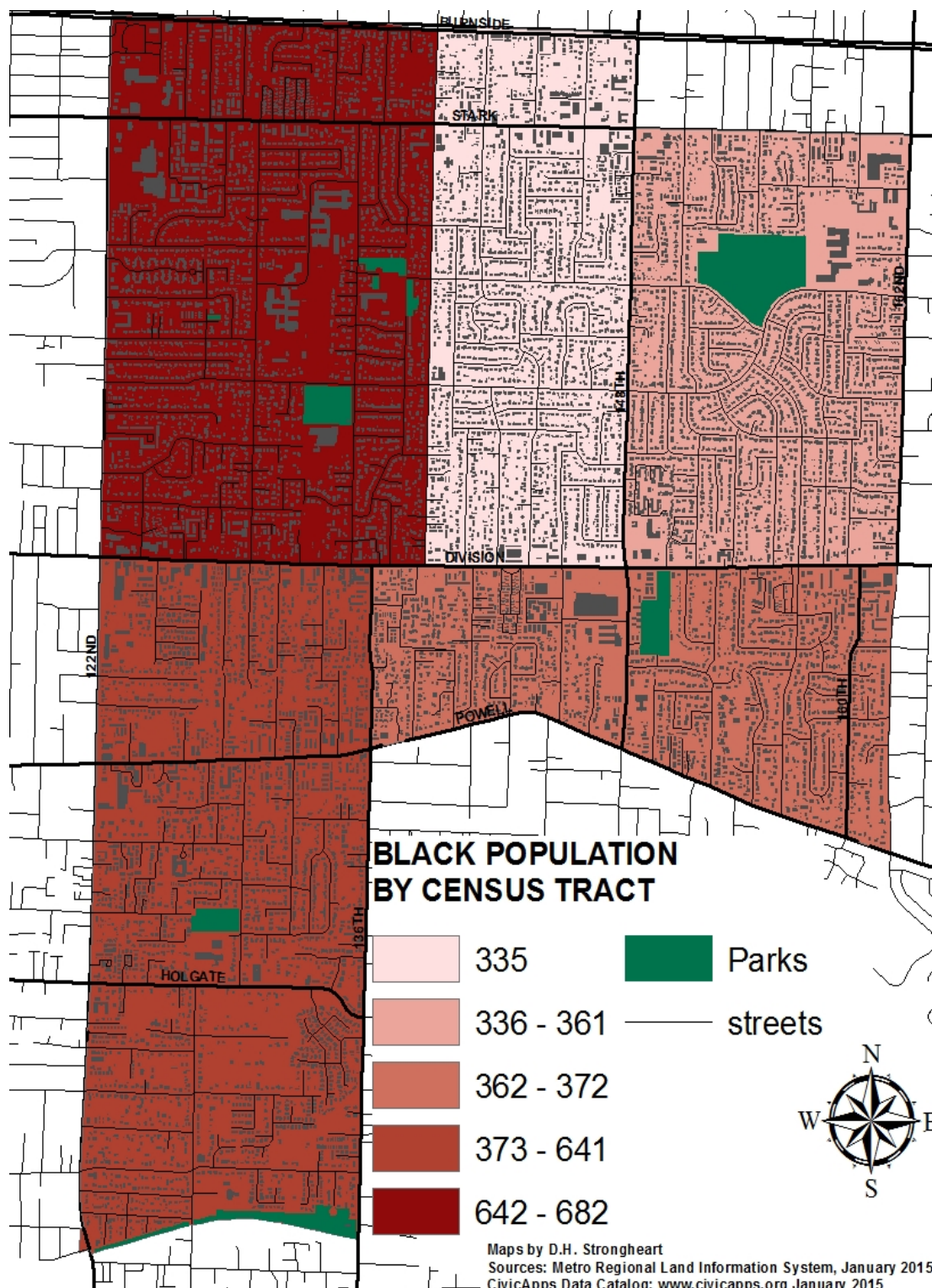
### ***EC 4.2. Racial Breakdown***

While the total number of Black Portlanders has increased slightly from 1980-2010, the Black share of total population has decreased by about 1.3%. The broader story behind this trend is likely traceable to increased share of total population in other races, particularly Hispanic (City of Portland, 2012).

Within the EPPP project geography (PG), however, the concentration of Black inhabitants has increased dramatically during that same period, from comprising just about 1% of the population in 1980 to nearly 7% in 2010 (**Figures 4.1. and 4.2.**).



**Figure 4.1. : Black Population within study area compared with City of Portland.**  
*This and all ensuing graphs use data from the U.S. Census Bureau.*

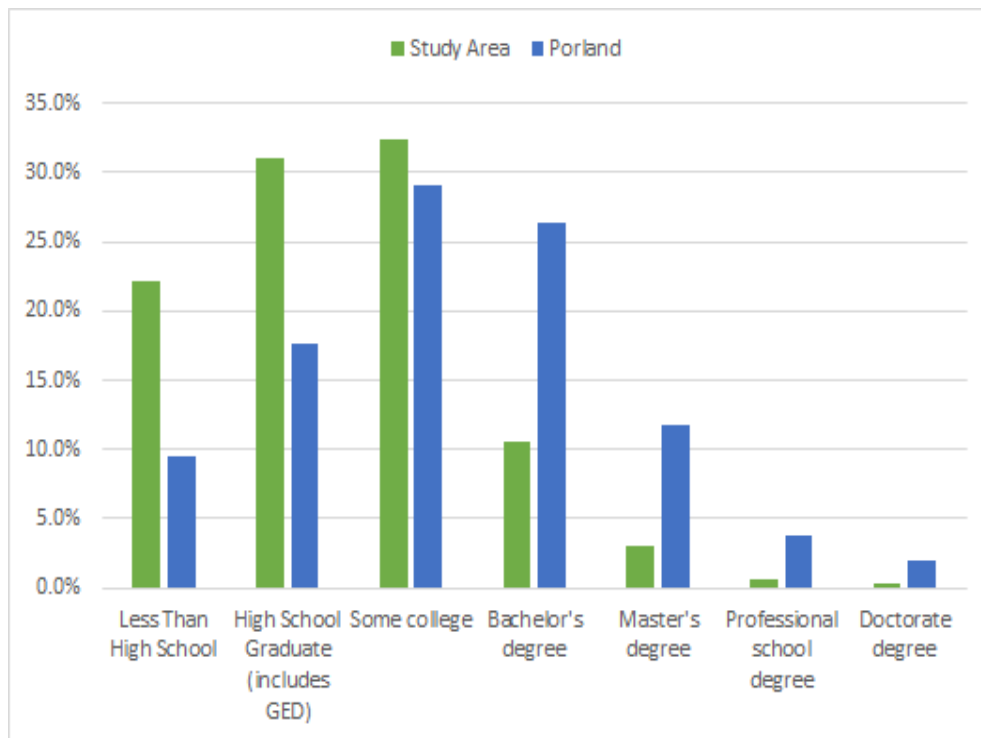


**Figure 3.2.** Black population figures for census tracts included in project geography.

The steady and increasing rate at which Black Portlanders are moving into the project geography largely reflects the gentrification-led displacement of African American from their historical neighborhoods in North and Northeast Portland. These citizens have moved into fragmented geographies in and around Vancouver, Gresham and East Portland, among other areas (METRO, 2015). The average annual growth rate within the PG between 1980 and 2010 was 8.7%, while the Black population across Portland has grown at an annual rate of .8%.

#### ***EC 4.3. Education***

An additional equity consideration is that of education. While consistent data regarding educational attainment is difficult to obtain from the Census Bureau, American Community Survey data from 2009-13 suggests a wide gap between Portland proper and the selected East Portland study area (**figure 4.3.**). There is a comparatively high concentration of individuals 25 years and older without a high school diploma (22.2% for the study area compared with Portland's citywide rate of 9.5%). This rate may suggest that completion of high school or achievement of a GED is less of a cultural norm in the PG than in the city as a whole. Higher rates for graduation from high school and "some college" in the PG (**figure 4.3.**) denote that more individuals have low educational attainment, while Portland has much higher rates of completion for Bachelor's, Master's, professional school, and Doctoral degrees.

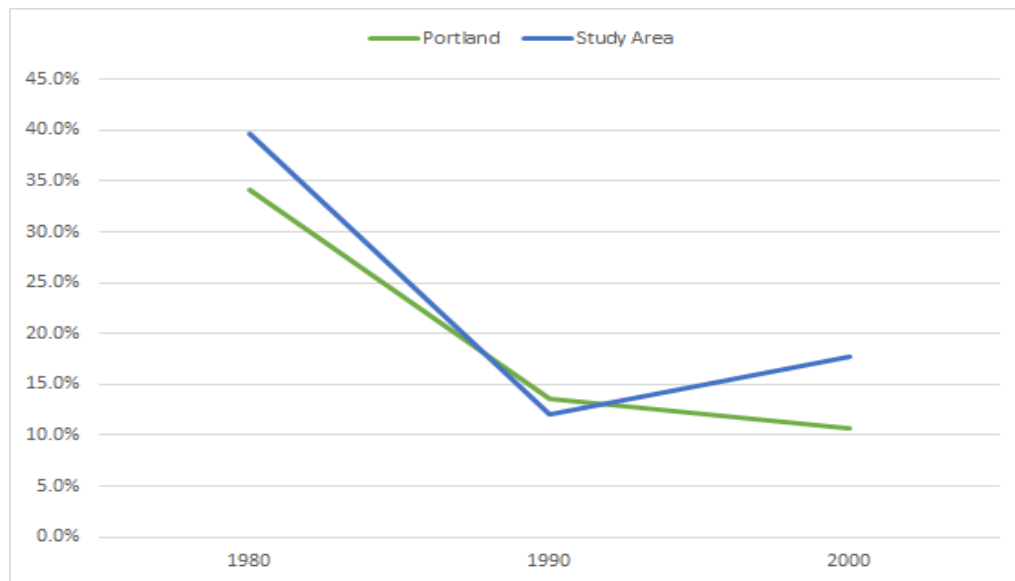


**Figure 4.3. : Educational Attainment for individuals over 25 in PG (2013).**

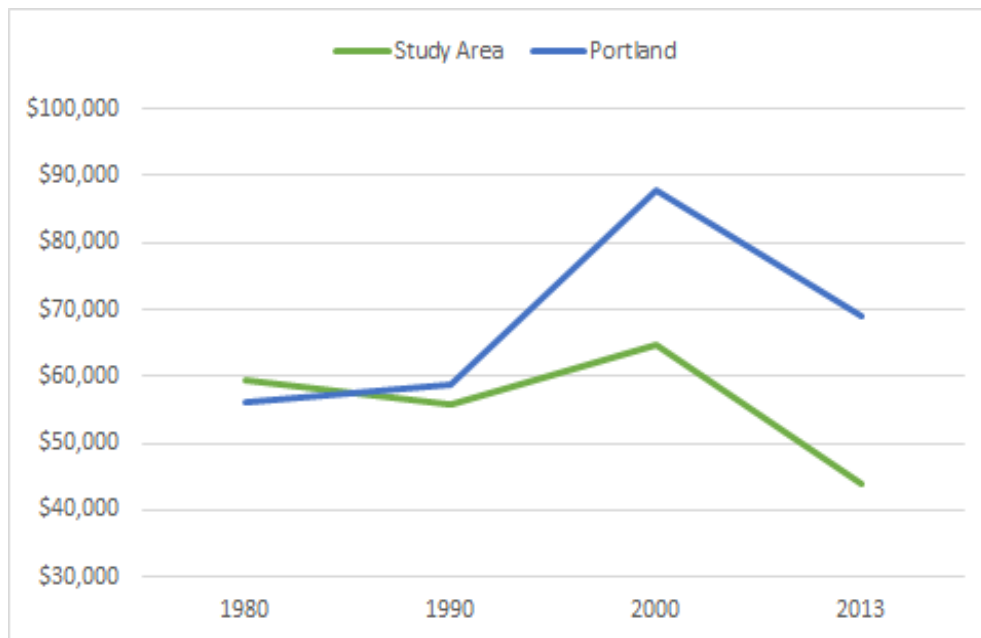
#### ***EC 4.4. Drop out rates***

For individuals aged 16-19, high school dropout rates have declined dramatically over the past few decades for both the PG and Portland on the whole (**figure 4.4.**). While 1990 census data show dropout rates for the PG slightly *lower* than Portland as a whole (12%), by 2000 they had climbed to well above the rate of Portland (17% vs. 10%, respectively).





**Figure 4.4. :** High School Dropout Rate for Individuals Aged 16-19 (1980-2000). 2010 and 2013 data omitted due to non-existence and sampling error, respectively.



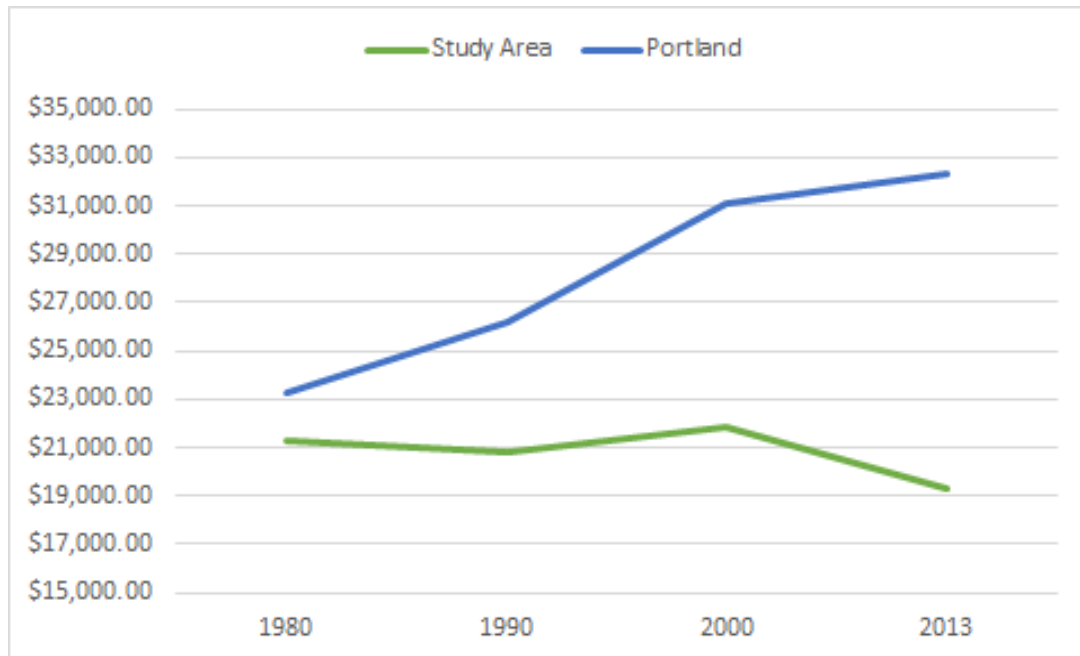
**Figure 4.5. :** Median Family Income 1980-2013. Figures adjusted to 2014 dollars.

#### **EC 4.5. Median Family Income**

Over the 1980-2013 timeframe, the figures for median household income for Portland and the PG have moved along similar trend lines, though they diverged dramatically in terms of overall scale after 1990 (**figure 4.5.**). From 1980-90, median family income (MFI) for both the city of Portland and the PG both hovered between \$55,000 and \$60,000. By the year 2000, Portland's MFI had jumped to \$23,178 above the PG (inflation adjusted 2014 dollars). While MFI figures had dropped for both geographies by 2013, the gulf between them widened to \$25,097.

#### ***EC 4.6. Per capita income***

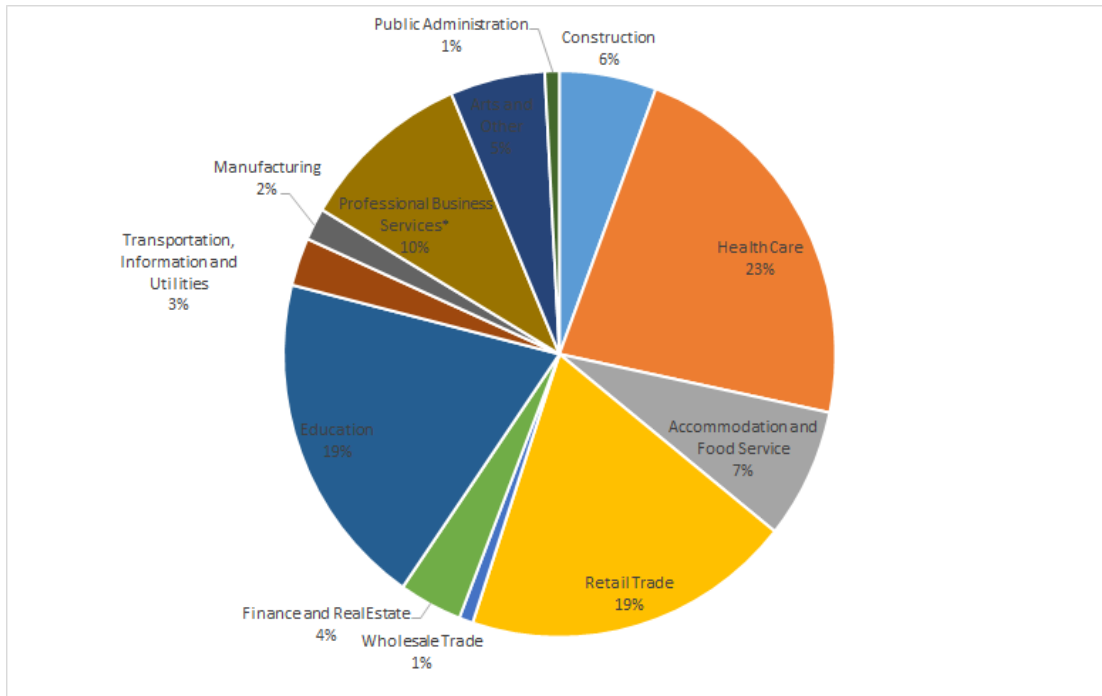
Data for per capita income depict a similar, though perhaps more dramatic trend. As with 1980 figures for MFI, per capita income (PCI) in that year was roughly equal for the PG and the city of Portland, with PCI for the latter being \$1,991 higher than in the PG (**figure 4.6.**). By 1990, this gap had grown to \$5,389, and nearly doubled in 2000 to \$9,269. Up until 2000 the trend lines for PCI for Portland and the PG had followed similar trajectories and directions of growth. Between 2000 and 2013, however, PCI for the two geographies proceeded in opposite directions, with a slight increase in Portland being juxtaposed by a more dramatic decline in the PG. As of 2013, the PCI gap between the two areas was \$13,039.



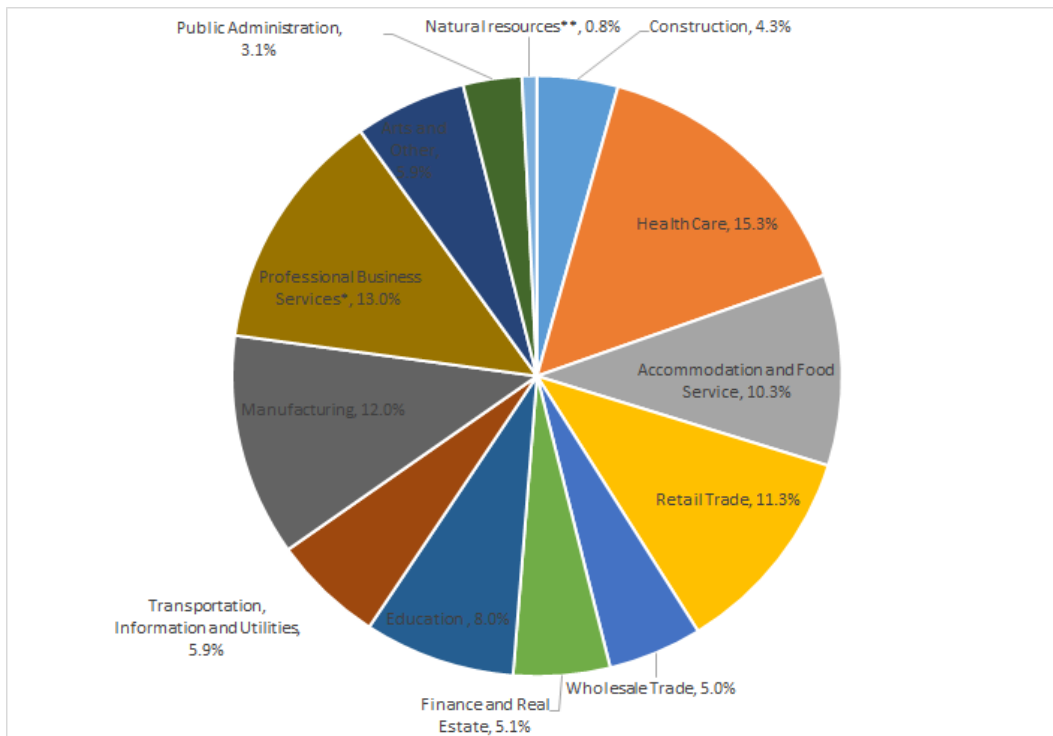
**Figure 4.6. :** Per Capita Income 1980-2013. Figures adjusted to 2014 dollars.

#### ***EC 4.7. Types of employment available within PG***

One explanatory element of the growing income gap between Portland and our study area could be distribution and type of jobs. Of the 5,866 jobs available within the PG, the vast majority are classified as health care, retail trade, professional business services, and education (**figure 4.7.**). Our field research in the PG confirmed the presence of large institutional employers such as David Douglas High School, numerous auto-oriented retail squares, and a variety of small chiropractor and doctors offices as well as drug rehabilitation centers. Observations also revealed a lack of public administration, manufacturing and transportation, information and utilities business in the PG, all of which are sectors that provide low-barrier, entry-level job opportunities.



**Figure 4.7. :** Employment Within Study Area (2011). \* Incl. professional, scientific & technical services, management enterprises, administration & support.



**Figure 4.8. :** Occupation of Workers Residing in Study Area (2011).  
 \* Incl. professional, scientific & technical services, management enterprises, administration & support. \*\* Incl. agriculture, mining and other.

#### ***EC 4.8. Occupation of residents who live within the PG***

Perhaps more important are the figures for jobs held by the residents who reside within the PG. Not surprisingly, a greater diversity of employment types are reflected in this analysis (**figure 4.8.**). This is simply due to the fact that employment is actualized on a regional scale, and more jobs are available at that scale than could be expected within the PG. Of the 14,070 jobs held by residents of our study area, the highest figures are shown for the sectors of health care, accommodation/food service, manufacturing, retail trade, and professional business service. The data indicates that about 1 in 8 workers (12%) in the PG work in manufacturing; as only about 2% of jobs *within* the PG are in manufacturing, most of these workers are likely to be employed outside of the PG.

#### ***EC 4.9. Conclusion***

This short examination of some basic indicators of employment, education, income and population in our project geography paints a picture of an area that has failed to keep pace with the city of Portland along a number of fronts that are directly related to basic well-being. The last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the first decade of the new millennium (1990-2010) is a key period during which this divergence in well-being transpired. During the same time, the PG has become a receiving geography for Black populations, including African Americans displaced from North and Northeast Portland, as well as African immigrants and refugees.

Examining other equity-related data shows that the PG ranks low for other key indicators. Visual analysis of maps accessed on the METRO Regional Equity Atlas webpage suggests that the PG has a more widespread instance of diabetes than most of the Portland metropolitan area, inferior access to parks & natural areas, and lower access to grocery stores and fresh food (<http://clfuture.org/programs/regional-equity-atlas/maps-and-analysis>). While some of these negative outcomes persist in N/NE Portland as well, historically displaced African Americans in East Portland are likely to have experienced a loss of community and degradation of their social safety nets, thereby reducing their capacity to *cope with* these outcomes.

These sorts of aspects of social life, however, can only be inferred from the data. Fine-grained data focused on African American populations in East Portland is mostly non-existent (**EC 1**) and, in the absence of concerted activism and community organizing, the community's challenges may remain below the radar of policymakers and planners for the near term. Informed by the broad analysis contained herein, the EPPP will seek to inaugurate community-based dialogue, bring important issues to the attention of policymakers, and gather qualitative (and perhaps quantitative) data regarding the issues facing the Black community in East Portland.

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