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Gresham Opportunity Framework Plan

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Opportunity Framework Plan
June 2014

Gresham Map

Camassia Community Planning
camassiaplanning.org
Monday, June 2, 2014

To the readers of this Gresham Opportunity Framework Plan:

Together, we’re working to make Gresham even better for all residents. The Opportunity Framework Plan is a step in that direction. It is the first plan to articulate and illuminate the experiences of so many of the residents that we work with every day.

We see the value that opportunities bring to a person’s life. Opportunities such as family-wage jobs; access to fair, affordable, and healthy housing; quality education; safe, affordable, and efficient transportation; easy access to affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant foods; and trusted human and health services. All of these things combine to impact our collective quality of life.

The graduate students of Camassia Community Planning spent the last five months developing strong trusted relationships with key organizations, agencies, and community groups. They have also engaged almost 350 residents to speak about their experiences in Gresham. Through this engagement, we have learned that there are differences in the way people experience their quality of life between neighborhoods. Most importantly, we heard that the people of Gresham want to take active roles to address these differences in order to make their communities more vibrant and more neighborly, and provide all those who live in Gresham access to opportunities for life success.

We would like to thank the City of Gresham’s Department of Urban Design and Planning and Council Office for your generous support during this planning process. We would also like to thank students and faculty from Portland State University’s Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning Masters Workshop Program for their infinite energy and desire to seek community benefits in the practical application of their coursework. Finally, a special appreciation to Kaiser Permanente, whose financial support made this community-driven process possible.

Sincerely and wholeheartedly,

Betty Dominguez, Director of Policy and Equity, Home Forward
Josh Fuhrer, Executive Director, Gresham Redevelopment Commission
Jenny Holmes, Director of Environmental Ministries, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Jenny Glass, Community Organizer, Rosewood Initiative
Vanessa Vissar, Planner, TriMet
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And thank you to the Gresham residents for providing input at discussion groups, filling out surveys, and welcoming us into your community, we are honored to work with you.
DOCUMENT OVERVIEW

Background Report:
The Background Report draws from literature reviews, case studies, and informant interviews to provide concepts, information, and evidence that support the methodology and findings of the Opportunity Analysis and the goals and actions in the Opportunity Framework Plan.

Community Engagement Report:
The Community Engagement Report describes the public involvement efforts completed for the Opportunity Framework Plan, including: interviews, listening circles and discussion groups, online questionnaire, technical adviser meetings, Community Celebration, and the City staff open house. The report concludes with an evaluation of our planning process and engagement methods.

Opportunity Analysis:
The Opportunity Analysis provides a detailed analysis of indicators of opportunity in the city of Gresham and throughout its neighborhoods, including demographics. The report includes maps, methodology, analysis, applicable community engagement findings, and conclusions that inform the recommendations set forth in the Opportunity Framework Plan.

Opportunity Framework Plan:
The Opportunity Framework Plan is the guiding document written for the City of Gresham. The overarching objective of the plan is to improve equitable access to opportunity for Gresham’s neighborhoods and diverse populations. The Plan includes a series of nine goals and 25 actions that were created in collaboration with our community partners, technical advisors, and Gresham City Staff.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

8
Executive Summary
Gresham Context
Problem Statement
Project Purpose
How to Use this Plan

16
Planning Approach
Planning Phases
Mapping and Analysis
Demographic

22
Opportunity Framework
Public Involvement
Housing
Transportation
Food
Employment
Education/Services
Parks
Safety/Livability

76
Implementation
Funding
Opportunity Mapping Guide

84
Appendix A:
Engagement Process steps
Appendix B:
Implementation Matrix
Appendix C:
Additional Considerations
The Map Gresham project was a five month-long planning process to develop a framework for understanding the distribution of “opportunity” among neighborhoods and populations in Gresham. The resulting Opportunity Framework Plan is based on the recognition that the social, economic, and physical conditions of the places we live have a direct impact on our health, well-being, and quality of life. In other words, access to certain opportunities and conditions have a strong bearing on our ability to succeed at our endeavors, and to live happy, healthy lives. These opportunities are related to housing, transportation, employment, food access, education, human and health services, parks, and safety. But, due to historical processes of uneven investment and development, residents of regions throughout the US do not have equal access to opportunities. Research has clearly shown that due to structural processes of exclusion, these disparities are often strongly tied to race and ethnicity.

Camassia Community Planning believes that inequities in access to opportunities can be improved by using planning processes that:

1. Prioritize social equity.
2. Are driven for and by communities and populations that are underserved.
3. Build the capacity of these communities to advocate for their visions of what a neighborhood looks like that meet their needs and provides opportunities to flourish and thrive.

The Opportunity Framework Plan models these planning approaches.

The plan was created by putting community at the center and developing relationships with a spectrum of community organizations, government agencies, and Gresham residents themselves. Throughout the process, Camassia Community Planning partnered with six community organizations, conducted 33 interviews, hosted five listening circles and discussion groups that engaged 69 people, conducted a questionnaire that received 236 responses, and worked with six technical advisors. Over 50 people attended our culminating Community Celebration, and 17 staffers from eight divisions at the City of Gresham participated in a consultation open house, both held at City Hall. Through this engagement we have learned that there are differences in the way people experience their neighborhoods, and that many residents are eager to be more involved in shaping the quality of life in Gresham.

To guide conversations and our analysis, we developed a series of maps displaying the distribution of opportunities across the city. We used a transit-dependent and low-income lens to identify possible barriers to accessing resources and factored in demographics to determine correlations between indicators of opportunity and population characteristics. The maps show that varying degrees of disparities are occurring in Gresham.

Next, we identified key findings from our research, mapping analysis, and community engagement. In collaboration with our community partners, technical advisors, and City Staff, we then developed a series of nine goals and 25 recommended actions. Recognizing that resources are limited, we attempted to design recommendations that are lowest-cost, high-impact, and actionable. Partnerships will be key to successful implementation of these actions. In sum, these goals and actions amount to a holistic approach to addressing complex and mutually reinforcing challenges.

These goals include:

- Facilitate welcoming public involvement practices that resonate with people of diverse backgrounds in all City government plans and decision-making processes.
- Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality, affordable housing options.
- Improve transit service and walkability.
- Improve access to affordable healthy and culturally appropriate food in high priority areas.
- Increase local business ownership and employment opportunities for Gresham residents through community-oriented development.
- Promote community prosperity by increasing access to education and health promotion services.
- Foster safe and welcoming neighborhoods.
- Improve outcomes in priority areas by strategically allocating funds, using opportunity mapping as a guide.

This Plan is accompanied by three supporting reports:
- Background Report
- Community Engagement Report
- Opportunity Analysis
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2014, the City of Gresham Urban Design and Planning (UDP) Department partnered with Camassia Community Planning (CCP), a graduate student group from Portland State University’s Master’s of Urban and Regional Planning program, to undertake an opportunity mapping project. “Opportunity mapping” is a relatively new planning method for analyzing the spatial distribution of indicators linked to opportunities for health and life success.

The impetus for undertaking the project occurred in 2013, when the City of Gresham completed an update of their housing policy in the Comprehensive Plan. The Housing Policy Update resulted in a long-term strategy for meeting and investing in Gresham’s housing needs. During the process, the City identified opportunity mapping as a tool for helping to guide implementation of the updated policy. By winter 2014, UDP identified two other 2014 Council Initiatives that could benefit from a mapping project: the Food Access Project and Community Prosperity Initiative.

The Kirwan Institute of the Ohio State University developed the Opportunity Mapping method to “affirmatively connect marginalized communities to pathways of opportunity” such as employment, safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and public transit. The method involves compiling various datasets into a composite index that designates neighborhoods with a value ranging from low to high opportunity. The maps are used to identify where and what kind of improvements are needed, and to facilitate dialogue about equity.

In addition, the 2011 Consolidated Plan for the consortium of the City of Portland, City of Gresham, and Multnomah County directs the jurisdictions to develop opportunity mapping as a foundation of housing policy. This direction is based on a study of impediments to fair housing in the county.

This project addresses three Gresham Council Workplan Items:

**Housing Policy Update**

The objectives of the housing policy update under the 2013 Council Work Plan were to: promote housing types in locations that best leverage community development objectives, guide partnerships with housing developers, and direct use of federal housing resources.

**Food Access Project**

The primary objectives of this project are: 1) identify where there are areas without grocery stores, and identify strategies to address this issue, and 2) attract and incent natural grocery stores in Gresham.

**Community Prosperity Initiative**

This initiative will explore the role of the City in addressing poverty. It may include a community services inventory and an analysis of current and potential federal, state, and county funding for social services.

Gresham Context

The City of Gresham is located in Multnomah County, along the eastern edge of the Portland region’s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Gresham’s boundaries extend south to the border of Clackamas County, west to the city of Portland, and north to the Columbia River. The cities of Fairview, Wood Village and Troutdale bound Gresham to the north and east.

Gresham was incorporated as a city in 1905 and long served as a retail center for rural east Multnomah County, providing regional goods and services. The city grew from two square miles and a population of about 3,000 in 1950 to a population of 31,275 in 1980. This growth is due in part to the post war demand for suburban single family housing driven by federal highways and housing policies, as well as the gradual annexation of adjacent developed lands since the 1980s. These waves of development and annexation continue to characterize Gresham’s different neighborhoods today. For instance, a significant amount of development in the northern and western parts of Gresham was complete prior to its incorporation into the city, and consequently many homes in these neighborhoods were built without being subject to strict building codes. Today, the city spans 23 square miles and is home to over 105,500 people, according to the 2010 Census.
Problem Statement

Gresham’s population is growing, as are the number of its residents who are living in poverty. Between 2000 and 2010 the city’s population grew by 17% and the share of the population living in poverty grew by 44%. Both of these rates of growth are higher than the regional average. The City’s capacity to provide services has not increased correspondingly. The trends of growing poverty and constrained resources suggest that disparities in opportunities for health and well-being may also be at risk of growing as well. The City’s ability to address potential growth in disparities would be strengthened by a comprehensive understanding of how these opportunities - such as access to quality housing, education, transit, and jobs - vary between neighborhoods and population groups. Further, perceptions of opportunity vary widely in a culturally diverse context such as Gresham’s, which underscores the need for extensive public outreach to better understand the types of opportunities that are needed by people in order to fulfill their aspirations.

Gresham Demographics

Relative Change in absolute population from 2000 to 2010

- Population Density: 11.8%
- White (non-Hispanic) Population: -12.9%
- Hispanic or Latino Population: 58.8%
- Population in Poverty: 44.0%

Project Purpose

The stated purposes of the Map Gresham project were to:

- Analyze the distribution and access to opportunities such as, but not limited to, access to quality transit, food, social services, housing, and employment;
- Assess the relationships between demographics and indicators of opportunity, health, and well-being;
- Engage a wide-range of residents and stakeholders in developing a framework for understanding the opportunity structure in Gresham; and
- Develop a roadmap for enhancing opportunity through potential policy approaches, practices, and community-based actions.

This plan is the culmination of a five month-long effort. It is intended to provide a holistic view of the complex opportunities and challenges for the Gresham community. It also sheds light on the experiences of various populations throughout the city, with emphasis on low income and transit dependent people.

The plan incorporates both community-based needs and policy priorities, focusing on the role of the City while also recognizing the role of various public, private, nonprofit, and community partners. The maps and analysis contained in this plan and accompanying reports provide background information that can apply to a wide range of purposes in general.

Most importantly, this plan is intended to support community action and collaboration. At the core, this project centered on the issues and concerns of the range of community members and groups that we engaged. In this respect, public involvement and building capacity for residents to engage with the City of Gresham was as much a desired outcome as the maps and data analysis.
How to Use this Plan

This Opportunity Framework Plan is the culmination of the Map Gresham project and is intended to serve as the foundation for future projects and partnerships. While the recommendations in this plan are aimed for the City of Gresham, individual residents, community groups, and nonprofit organizations can use this plan and its supporting documents to help inform and support future programmatic and funding decisions.

The Plan refers to and relies on three additional reports for background content and detailed descriptions of the methods, analysis and findings.

The Overview page in the beginning of this document provides a description of each of these reports. When you see the icons below listed in the document, this is a signal that you can refer to the designated report for more information.

- **Background Report**
- **Community Engagement Report**
- **Opportunity Analysis**

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Organization of the Plan

**Chapter 1**

- **Project Purpose Here!**

Provides context for the Map Gresham project including the project purpose and problem we set out to address, the method used (opportunity mapping), and the location where this work took place (Gresham, OR).

Refer to the Background Report for more context information.

**Chapter 2**

- **Process and Methods Here!**

Explains the process and methods used to complete the Map Gresham project, including a summary of our analysis, a list of all indicators used to evaluate access to opportunity, and a summary of our community engagement methods.

Refer to the Community Engagement Report for a complete description of community engagement process and findings.

**Chapter 3**

- **Maps and Analysis Here!**

Describes the importance of each indicator to “opportunity” and provides the methods and key findings for each indicator, community engagement, and other data sources. Additionally, this chapter includes goals and key actions that the city can take to improve access to opportunity.

Refer to the Opportunity Analysis for the entirety of Map Gresham maps and analysis.

**Chapter 4**

- **Summarized Goals and Actions Here!**

Discusses implementation of goals and actions, as well as funding considerations. This chapter includes a goal intended to help prioritize projects and incorporate an opportunity framework into decision-making in Gresham. This chapter also includes a table that shows a holistic picture of how each indicator goal and action relates to opportunity.
Chapter 2: PROCESS AND METHODS

CCP approached this project with a mix of methods, placing community engagement at the center. We used quantitative data from a range of sources such as the Equity Atlas created by the Coalition of Livable Future (CLF), as well as the City of Gresham, Metro (regional government) and US Census Bureau. Given the limitations of spatial data for depicting reality, we also integrated community values, lived experience, and qualitative information in order to strengthen the interpretation of the maps and findings.

The name Camassia is derived from the camas plant—a beautiful purple flower that blossoms every spring in the Willamette Valley. The bulb of this plant was an important food staple of this region’s indigenous nations prior to colonization. To us, the camas flower is symbolic of this place and its history including the experience of colonialism that disrupted the local food system. The camas plant also symbolizes our belief that community flourishing must begin by working at the roots of structural inequities.

The objective of our community-centered approach was to develop a plan that reflected community priorities and to build support for the project among stakeholders, thus increasing capacity for implementing the plan. Through spurring dialogue, we aimed to: develop a shared understanding of “opportunity”; reveal core challenges for Gresham residents including those in low income communities and people of color; and have conversations about root causes of disparities in historic, institutional, and structural terms.

Read more about deliberative democracy and collaborative decision making. Refer here for a full description of the methods used and key findings from the stakeholder involvement process.
Planning Phases

We developed this plan and supporting technical reports in four phases. Phase I involved getting grounded in the Gresham context through background research, demographic analysis, and interviews with City staff, community leaders, service providers, advocates, and academics. CCP also created a set of draft maps to guide conversations and prepared a Draft Background Report. The phase concluded with selecting West Gresham as the focus area and a group of six technical advisors to provide feedback throughout the process. CCP also established partnerships with community organizations to identify problems, collect and interpret data, develop recommendations, and reach out to residents.

Our community partners included:
- Latino Network
- Rockwood Neighborhood Association
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Empower Rockwood (“E-ROC”) Human Solutions Group
- Multnomah Youth Commission
- The Rosewood Initiative

The second phase of the project involved developing and administering an online questionnaire aimed at all Gresham residents. It focused on key indicators of opportunity, including employment, housing and neighborhood conditions, food, and transportation. CCP also worked with community partners to hold four listening circles in the focus area, as well as a discussion group on food access issues. These events provided a chance for community members to discuss the draft opportunity maps and their experiences with living in West Gresham. The phase culminated with a Community Celebration event to report back key findings from the shared learning events and to continue to build relationships.

During the third phase, CCP worked with partners, advisers, and staff to develop recommendations. We met with technical advisors to discuss preliminary goals and actions. We also held a luncheon event to allow for citywide staff input on the maps, framework plan, and possible applications to their work at the City of Gresham. CCP analyzed the findings from all types of data collected and community engagement activities, synthesizing them into a comprehensive analysis.

The final phase involved evaluating the planning process using an equity lens, in order to identify lessons learned and help inform future public involvement efforts. Lastly, CCP worked with City staff to finalize the Opportunity Framework Plan and present it at PSU’s Workshop event, City Council, and Planning Commission.
Mapping and Analysis

CCP chose to analyze seven indicators of opportunity that together form the opportunity structure in Gresham. These indicators are based on established opportunity mapping techniques, input from stakeholders and technical advisers, as well as community feedback. These indicators include:

- Public Involvement
- Housing
- Transportation
- Food
- Employment
- Education/Services
- Parks
- Safety/Livability

For the opportunity analysis, CCP chose to delineate the city into three subregions. This allowed CCP to compare the results from the citywide questionnaire completed for the Map Gresham project with the quantitative Census. The delineation of these subregions also serves as the basis for analyzing each of CCP’s opportunity indicators across the city in a systematic way. These delineations are also reflected in the final recommendations made to the City of Gresham.

The three subregions identified for analysis were West Gresham, Central Gresham, and South Gresham. CCP chose to use census tract boundaries to delineate subregions because the demographic analyses rely on census data.

Additionally, CCP chose West Gresham as a target subregion for engagement and analysis. This selection was based on preliminary analysis of demographic trends, review of existing studies, conversations with City staff, and initial community engagement.

The following table provides a summary of subregional demographic data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>West Gresham</th>
<th>Central and South Gresham</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Density</td>
<td>6,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White (alone)</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Pop. age 25 w/ Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Renter Occupied</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Population in Poverty</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 3: OPPORTUNITY FRAMEWORK

The "opportunity framework" in Gresham is based on the understanding that the social, economic, and physical conditions of the places we live have a direct impact on our health, well-being, and quality of life. In other words, access to certain opportunities and conditions have a strong bearing on our ability to succeed at our endeavors, and to live happy, healthy lives. These opportunities are related to housing, transportation, employment, food access, education, human and health services, parks, and safety. But, due to systemic and historic forces such as uneven investment and development, residents of regions throughout the U.S. do not have equal access to these opportunities.

Research has clearly shown that disparities are often strongly tied to race and ethnicity due to processes of discrimination and exclusion. While most people think of discrimination on an interpersonal basis, such as when a person is refused service at a restaurant, the processes of discrimination that occur throughout the U.S. are larger in scale and usually unintentional (see table below). Institutional discrimination refers to the policies, practices, and programs that create adverse outcomes for some groups over others, while structural discrimination is the cumaltive effect of institutional actions. The interplay of these forms result in differential and harmful effects for some communities, as can be seen in health, education, employment, and housing. Thinking about how these different scales contribute to disparities across population groups helps us to understand how the government and community can address these unintentional forms of inequity from occurring.

CCP proposes a framework for understanding the opportunity structure in Gresham that considers both outcomes and process. With respect to outcomes, improving community health and quality of life will require a comprehensive and holistic approach that addresses root causes of poverty and the cycle of institutional discrimination. Implementing simultaneous efforts that address multiple indicators of opportunity is more likely to result in a collective, beneficial impact. We believe that this approach can lead to more effective outcomes over the long-term, compared to alternatives that focus only on symptoms.

In terms of the process, CCP believes that access to opportunities can be improved by using approaches that (1) prioritize social equity; (2) are driven for and by communities and populations that are underserved; and (3) that build the capacity of these communities to advocate for neighborhood conditions that meet their needs and provide opportunities to flourish and thrive. The premise is that strategies are more likely to succeed, if they are developed and supported by community members and stakeholders.

Based on this framework, CCP has developed a series of nine goals and 25 recommended actions that seek to increase opportunity for Gresham residents. In sum, these goals and actions amount to a holistic approach to addressing complex and mutually reinforcing challenges. The overarching objective of the recommendations is to improve equitable access to opportunity for Gresham’s neighborhoods and diverse populations.

Recognizing that the City of Gresham and their partners have limited resources and many demands, the goals and actions presented here are intended to be recommendations for consideration. We attempted to design recommendations that are lowest-cost, high-impact, and actionable, in collaboration with our community partners, technical advisors, and City staff. We have also identified potential partnerships, which will be key to successful implementation of these actions.

Each indicator in this chapter includes:
- **Introduction:** description of the importance of each indicator to “opportunity”
- **Methods:** description of the methodology used to analyze the indicator (in addition to community engagement and the demographic analysis that apply to all indicators)
- **Key Findings:** applicable findings from our research, mapping analysis, and community engagement
- **Maps:** 1-2 maps that display the distribution of opportunity, highlighting one or more key findings.
- **Goal:** a goal statement to serve as a guiding principle for improving the distribution of and access to opportunity
- **Actions:** the actions that we recommend for implementation in the short-term
Local government stays connected with the needs of its residents primarily through public involvement. In addition to improving outcomes, public participation in planning processes help develop a sense of connection to these outcomes, especially when they can see their input reflected in decisions. Conversely, when jurisdictions leave the public out of decision-making, it can result in outcomes that do not always meet the needs of residents.

Public processes are typically open to anyone and everyone to participate, often through town halls, hearings, open houses, and more recently, web-based tools. However, residents with greater access to resources usually demonstrate a greater voice in public decision-making processes, while those with lower access tend to have a more difficult time participating with these traditional methods. Federal and State Civil Rights law uses the term “protected classes” to refer to the groups that have historically been under-represented in public decision-making, resulting in disproportionate negative impacts. The laws extend protections to people on the “basis of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, sex, income, age or disability” (City of Gresham, Title VI Program, 2014). In other words, given the array of structural and institutional barriers, groups that often remain under-engaged in public processes include: people of color, immigrants, refugees, youth, women, those with disabilities, and people of low income/wealth.

To address the need for public involvement, the City of Gresham operates the Office of Neighborhoods and Community Engagement (ONCE), which coordinates and supports the City’s 16 neighborhood associations. ONCE also coordinates a number of community programs such as: mediation, neighborhood watch, and the Youth Advisory Committee. In addition, Citizen Advisory Committees provide recommendations on policy decisions to City Council.

Oregon Statewide Planning Goal 1: Citizen Involvement
To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

“Operating Principle 5: Make sure that the public participation process opportunities are equitably provided across the spectrum of all interest groups.”
-Rockwood Action Plan Implementation Committee Public Involvement Principles, 2003

There are few opportunities for people to get together informally to build relationships and community. Sometimes I feel isolated even though I have lived here for a while.

- Gresham Resident
Methods

This analysis of public involvement opportunities is based upon a self-evaluation of our community engagement process incorporating feedback from participants. Our approach to involvement and the evaluation each draw upon the experiences of regional projects that successfully involved a diversity of participants and engaged communities that have been historically underrepresented in decision-making.

We also considered the responses to the citywide questionnaire to indicate possible differences in participation between neighborhoods and populations in Gresham. While proportionate representation by demographic groups is one measure of involvement opportunities, we focused on the number of engagements and community events that created welcoming intercultural spaces as a better measure of equitable practices.

Key Findings

Differences in Participation

In analyzing demographic characteristics of the 236 respondents to the online questionnaire, we found that the distribution by race/ethnicity was close to the city’s distribution as a whole. Groups that were over-represented include: seniors (age 65+), females, and residents of owner occupied units. Targeted outreach to Rockwood residents yielded a relatively high response rate. Compared to other neighborhoods other than Rockwood, the three neighborhoods with the most respondents are located in South Gresham which has the lowest share of under-represented populations compared to the West and Central subregions. This suggests that the methods used for citywide outreach are more accessible to populations with more resources, while working with community groups and doing intercept surveys are two methods for reaching populations that experience barriers to involvement.

Barriers to Involvement in Gresham

- A lack of awareness about decision-making processes and opportunities to get involved
- Language and translation (notices, meetings, resources, jargon)
- Timing or location of events that make attendance inconvenient/impossible due to job or family obligations and/or transportation challenges
- The need for childcare services in order to attend events
- Costs related to transportation, childcare, and/or taking time off work to participate
- Doubt that input will be taken seriously
- Intimidation of the formality of City proceedings

Interest and Desire for More Involvement

Community members from a wide variety of backgrounds are very interested in engaging with the City of Gresham to address community and neighborhood-based issues. The community energy speaks to the need for increasing the capacity for City staff to build relationships with community members, regardless of the department or program.

GOAL 1:

Facilitate welcoming public involvement practices that resonate with people of diverse backgrounds in all City government plans and decision-making processes.

It is essential to understand the barriers to participation that under-represented groups experience, in order to make fair accommodations to increase public involvement and foster a positive dialogue about neighborhood issues. By instituting best practices for engaging under-represented populations in the region, the City can take advantage of the energy and eagerness of residents to get involved. Therefore, we recommend evaluating decision-making and planning processes using an equity empowerment perspective, as well as building additional partnerships with trusted community groups and leaders. This goal builds upon existing City policies for public involvement.

A long-term objective of Goal 1 is to increase representation of protected classes on Citizen Advisory Committees. Achieving proportionate representation on advisory and decision-making bodies is an important aspect of equitable practice, particularly with respect to funding decisions. However, it is important that representatives feel prepared to participate and that institutional conditions support increased involvement of historically under-represented populations. Partnering with culturally specific groups to provide leadership training is one way to develop this capacity overtime.

Action 1-1:

Use Multnomah County’s Equity Empowerment Lens to evaluate public involvement practices, planning processes, and policies.

Action 1-2:

Develop new relationships with under-represented groups throughout Gresham, with a particular focus on protected classes.
On the one hand, I don’t want to move out of my neighborhood because I work here. On the other hand I feel stuck, and am sick of having to share a bedroom with my child. But there are no other neighborhoods that I can afford to live in.

- Gresham Resident

Housing choice is fundamental to opportunity because it is the foundation for a healthy and productive life. Housing is more than simply shelter - it serves as a platform, and where one lives matters in terms of access to the resources that meet basic needs. The impacts of housing on individual and community health vary based on several dimensions including: ownership, availability, price and affordability, quality of the housing structure or property, and location or neighborhood context.

Home ownership is the primary source of wealth for most Americans and contributes to neighborhood level stability, yet it is difficult to attain homeownership for lower income households. Additionally, the effects of historic and institutionalized discriminatory practices in the housing market created barriers to ownership for people of color that persist today. People who cannot or choose not to own homes must rent, making the availability of rental housing that is affordable to a range of incomes a necessity in all communities. Eliminating housing cost burden provides families independence and stability. Well-maintained rental housing that is affordable has positive impacts on the health of families and residents. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that existing and new rental units are safe and high-quality.

Neighborhoods provide opportunities such as services, employment, and education, as well as transportation options that connect people to citywide and regional opportunities. Neighborhood context also involves the social environment, including networks of family, friends, and community groups. Given that where one lives matters in terms of access to resources, it is important to consider the location of new housing.

In 2010, Gresham’s housing units were:

- Owner Occupied: 52.5%
- Renter Occupied: 47.5%
- Increase in rental market prices: 12.0%

In 2010, Gresham homes sold for: Median Detached Home Sale Price $190,000

Housing is, without question, the most fundamental component of any community.

-2013 Housing Policy Update, Section 4.800, Gresham Housing Policy
Housing Cost Burden

Houses Spending 30% of Income or more on Housing, by Census Tract

Rate of Cost Burdened Homes

- 0% - 26.6%
- 26.7% - 42.7%
- 42.8% - 54.2%
- 54.3% - 65.9%
- 66% - 81.3%

City of Gresham

Methodology:

Created by calculating the number of cost burdened households in each census tract divided by the total number of households in each census tract. This number equals the rate of cost burdened homes by tract. Map data sources include: City of Gresham, ACS 2008-2012

Renter Occupied & Multi-Family

Percent Renter Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract and Multi-Family Housing

Percent Renter Occupied Units

- 8.5% - 21.2%
- 21.3% - 37%
- 37.1% - 44.4%
- 44.5% - 57.1%
- 57.2% - 73.6%

Multi-family Housing

City of Gresham

Methodology:

Created to show current access to rental units based on the location of multi-family housing and percent renter occupied units by census tract. This map uses multi-family housing from Metro’s RLIS inventory as a proxy for the more precise location of rental housing, although it should be noted that 20.5% of renter occupied units are single family detached or single family attached homes. Map data sources include: City of Gresham, ESRI 2013, Metro RLIS

Map Methodology:
Methods

To analyze housing opportunity in Gresham, we created several maps, including:

- Minority Ownership Gap
- Cost Burden (paying over 30% of household income on housing)
- Subsidized Housing (Section-8 and project based)
- Renter Occupied Households with Multi-family Housing
- Median Age of Housing Structures

In addition to engaging residents, we interviewed stakeholders in housing policy across the region and in Gresham, including city staff in Community Development and Urban Design and Planning, advocates for Fair and Affordable Housing; the Housing Authority (Home Forward); and local jurisdictions that have completed an opportunity mapping project.

Lastly, we referred to the following documents:

- Gresham Housing Policy (2013)
- Gresham Housing Study (Johnson Reid, LLC, 2012)
- Consolidated Plan Documents (2011)
- Examples of opportunity mapping projects that informed housing policy

Key Findings

Home Ownership

Gresham has an affordable for-sale housing supply relative to many parts of the Metro area however given that Gresham's ownership housing units are increasing in price, it is challenging for lower income households to own homes. Community residents would like better access to affordable home ownership that meets their needs. Additionally, the number of people of color that own homes is disproportionate to the total number of people of color in Gresham (the "minority ownership gap"). Low ownership rates as a whole are concentrated in the Central City and Rockwood, the minority ownership gap is highest in these two neighborhoods, as well as Centennial.

Availability and Affordability of Rental Housing

Like most communities, Gresham does not have enough subsidized units to meet demand. Roughly 12.8% of the City's rental stock is "affordable housing", defined as housing operated by the Housing Authority or non-profits specifically to provide housing to a low-income target population. Subsidized housing is located almost exclusively along the MAX Blue line, and the highest rates of Section-8 use are in West Gresham.

In addition, the 2012 Housing Study concluded that there is an unmet need for 5,300 rental units that are priced for the two lowest rent brackets, $0-$380 and $380-$620. In fact, about 44% of Gresham households are "cost burdened," which the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines as paying over 30% of household income on rent or mortgage. The maps on the previous pages show that at least 26.7% of households are cost burdened in all but one census tract, and that multi-family housing is distributed across the city. Consistent with this finding, only 58% of questionnaire respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I am able to pay my rent/mortgage comfortably."

West Gresham as relatively high rates of housing cost burden, high shares of renter occupied units (up to 73.6%), and concentrations of multifamily housing. Listening circle participants expressed concerns related to stretching their budgets to afford housing suitable for their families or not being able to afford higher quality rental housing with amenities such as outdoor space.

Some neighborhoods in Central Gresham also have a high share of renters. With the exception of the Mt. Hood and Powell Valley neighborhoods, South Gresham has no subsidized housing and very little multi-family and rental housing. This suggests that there are fewer opportunities for low-income renters to live in South Gresham, reducing neighborhood choice within the city as a whole.

Quality of Housing

Older building structures are located throughout Gresham with higher concentrations in West and Central Gresham. The oldest housing dating prior to the 1930’s is in the Central City neighborhood. In Rockwood, much of the multi-family housing stock dates back to the 1960’s. The older, detached housing makes the area attractive for family living because it is more affordable. The 2012 Housing Study found that rental housing quality is an issue in the Rockwood neighborhood, which generally has more degraded housing units compared to other parts of the city. Residents expressed the need for safe and quality units, and some were concerned about vacant lots. Community residents expressed the desire for community spaces, outdoor play areas, and garden plots within apartment complexes.

Photo: New Housing in Gresham, Credit: City of Gresham
**GOAL 2:**

Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality, affordable housing options.

This goal addresses the fundamental need for housing that is safe, affordable, and suitable to household needs. In addition to healthy living conditions, quality housing includes sufficient space. It is particularly important that multi-family housing provides common outdoor and multi-use space, given that families are increasingly living in apartments, children need places to play that are visible from dwelling units, and there are existing issues with public parks that limit opportunities for recreation and nature enjoyment (see Parks and Opportunity).

Providing a variety of housing types at a range of prices allows for more neighborhood choice so that families and individuals can locate in places that meet non-housing needs. The goal calls for affordable housing that serves as a springboard to opportunities such as employment, education, healthy food, and services. Reducing housing cost burden provides families with independence and stability. This aligns with the City’s Housing Policy goal to “provide a full range of housing types and sizes that reflect the needs of Gresham’s citizens through all life stages and circumstances” (Comprehensive Plan, Section 10.600).

This goal should be implemented through a three-pronged approach that includes:

- Increase housing choices and affordability
- Rehabilitate or redevelop substandard properties
- Provide tenant protections (e.g., relocation, eviction prevention assistance, and rent subsidies)

The intent is to ensure that low-income residents, particularly those who have suffered in poor quality housing, have access to redeveloped housing or are able to remain in rental units as neighborhood improvements occur.

The City can partner with many actors in order to advance this goal. In fact, the lack of affordable housing and homelessness are regional issues that require collaborative solutions. Participating in regional conversations and advocating for strategies that promote all cities to pursue their “fair share” of housing construction will remain an important part of achieving this goal in the long-term.

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**Action 2-1:** Construct additional housing units, prioritizing units that are affordable to households making less than 30% AMFI and between 50%-80% AMFI; use the opportunity analysis to help guide the location of residential development.

**Action 2-2:** Increase HOME funds for rental housing rehabilitation and redevelopment that property owners can utilize, targeting outreach to properties that have the most complaints through the Rental Housing Inspection Program.

**Action 2-3:** Increase awareness of and resources to existing renter assistance programming, tenant education, and landlord training.

**Action 2-4:** Partner with Home Forward to redevelop properties that are beyond repair with subsidized housing.

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Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
We feel like we live on an island because we cannot walk or bike to downtown Gresham. The roads are narrow and it feels dangerous with no shoulders or sidewalks to walk on.

- Gresham Resident

Robert Bullard, the father of the Environmental Justice Movement, said that "transportation is a basic ingredient for quality of life indicators such as health, education, employment, economic development, access to municipal services, residential mobility, and environmental quality."

For residents who do not have a car or a driver's license, it is fundamental to have access to a transit system that provides frequent and reliable service, as well as a safe pedestrian network. In addition, people that lack reliable access to vehicles due to factors such as cost and age are more reliant on walking to get around and thus more exposed to traffic hazards.

As with all cities, Gresham has a substantial population of people who do not have access to a vehicle or who cannot drive and are therefore dependent on transit and other modes to get around.

Gresham residents seek a safe, multi-modal transportation network. A key objective of the Gresham Transportation System Plan (TSP) is to create a balanced transportation system where pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists have equal opportunity to get around. One goal in the TSP is related to livability: tying the quality and location of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools and safe streets.

Support the growth and development of the city of Gresham as an economically vital and livable community by providing its residents and all transportation system users’ safe, pleasant and convenient access and travel within, to and through the city.

- Gresham Transportation System Plan, Vision Statement 2035

Transportation in Gresham

- 9 TriMet Operated Bus Routes
- 1 TriMet MAX Line
- 11 Miles of off-street, multi-use trails
- 24% Rate of Households without a Vehicle in some areas of Gresham
- 17% Rate of Employed residents > 15 years old who take transit to work
Walkability and Transit

Transit Frequency and Walkability Index by Census Tract

To better understand frequency of transit service in Gresham, this map divides the transit network into three categories:

- **High Frequency** routes run between 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends.
- **Medium Frequency** routes run every 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends.
- **Low Frequency** routes run every hour and do not provide service on the weekends.

Methods

To map transportation opportunities in Gresham, we focused on transit since it emerged as the top community concern. Existing maps of the transit network did not seem to represent residents’ experiences with bus route frequency. Therefore, we created the map shown on the left in order to better understand the frequency of transit service. It shows the bus network divided into three categories:

- High frequency routes run between 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends.
- Medium frequency routes run every 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends.
- Low frequency routes run every hour and do not provide service on the weekends.

We used this new transit frequency map as a tool during our listening circles to get feedback about what residents face. We also overlaid the transit frequency layer on a walkability index provided through CLF’s Equity Atlas, which is based on available sidewalk data. Many of the other indicator maps rely on these transit and walkability layers, providing a transit-dependent lens for evaluating access to opportunity.

Key Findings

**Transit Service**

Gresham is lacking north-south transit service in terms of connectivity and frequency. Line 87 on 181st and 182nd is the only north-south line through West Gresham neighborhoods. It currently is low frequency, running every hour on weekdays from 5:35AM to 5:37PM, with no service on the weekends. Our questionnaire results suggest that non-transit riders would be more likely to take transit if there were more direct routes to destinations. In addition, safety concerns among non-riders are related to bus stops. West Gresham residents expressed the need for more shelters at bus stops, better sidewalk connectivity to stops, longer transfer ticket times, and more night service.

**Walkability**

Walkability was the second largest transportation-related concern, based on our analysis. This is a citywide issue, as only 42% of questionnaire respondents said that it is easy to get around their neighborhood by foot.

West and Central Gresham appear to have the highest need for walkability improvements, based on existing sidewalk gaps and demographic indicators (low vehicle ownership and high concentrations of youth and low income households). In addition, West Gresham residents expressed desire for improved pedestrian infrastructure, particularly to address safety concerns with walking to parks and transit stops. There is a need for more crosswalks, sidewalks, and street lighting.
GOAL 3:

Improve transit service and walkability.

This goal aims to improve connections to key aspects of opportunity, including parks, schools, libraries, grocery stores, social services, and employment. First, the analysis indicates that many improvements are needed for the transit system, including increasing transit frequency and connectivity, as well as upgrading bus stops. There is also a need for a more well-connected pedestrian network, particularly to better serve transit riders. Walkability improvements would include filling in sidewalk gaps, adding crosswalks at intersections, and providing more street lights. Supporting pedestrian activity through more and safer infrastructure supports physical health (from increased exercise). Based on higher levels of transit-dependency, West Gresham and older parts of Central Gresham should be prioritized.

Action 3-1:
Advocate for transit service improvements in Gresham through TriMet's Transit Enhancement Plan process.

Action 3-2:
Complete a "neighborhood walkability assessment" in West Gresham to identify and prioritize projects that improve walking conditions, with emphasis on areas around transit, schools, and parks.

Action 3-3:
Develop a tool for evaluating improvement projects listed in the Transportation System Plan (TSP).

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
The Rockwood neighborhood has a lot of diversity, and a variety or flavor. Thai, Greek, soul food and healthy food options would be a wonderful addition. Overall, people want good food choices but, they just aren’t available.

- West Gresham Resident

Healthy food is a basic human necessity and essential for people to be able to take advantage of other opportunities. Eating healthy and adequate amounts of food results in better educational performance, prevention of chronic disease, and overall quality of life and well-being. Food is also a central piece of many cultures, and the ability for people to connect over a meal is an important part of building community. Over the past decade, food access challenges faced by certain urban populations have received increased attention as scholars, policy-makers, and the media have taken an interest in “food deserts” (urban areas devoid of supermarkets). Some initiatives have focused on eliminating food deserts by reducing the distance between supermarkets and residences.

However, such an approach risks overshadowing other barriers that people face to acquiring nutritious food regardless of their proximity to a supermarket. Consequently, advocates have increasingly shifted their focus away from “food deserts” and toward improving access to affordable, healthy food more broadly.

In recent years, City Council has adopted a number of policies and initiatives intended to address food access in the city including the Healthy Eating Active Living code amendments adopted in 2012 and the Food Access Initiative adopted in 2014. The findings and goals and actions outlined below are intended to complement, support, and help guide this work.

FOOD JUSTICE INITIATIVES IN GRESHAM

Rockwood Food Co-operative
- Working to create a community owned and operated grocery

Ecumenical Ministries Healthy Retail Initiative
- Working to help small neighborhood store owners increase the availability of fresh food options

Outgrowing Hunger
- Re-claiming under-utilized land in order to provide immigrant and refugee families opportunities to grow and sell food

Rockwood Food Incubator
- Plan to help food-based start-ups get established and eventually transition to brick-and-mortar businesses at the Urban Renewal Area Catalyst site

The Ecumenical Ministries Rockwood Food Assessment found that, on average, people travelled 6.3 miles to get their groceries.
Access to Grocers & Supermarkets
by Food Access Priority Areas

Food access “priority areas” were determined using census tract data to determine the level of poverty, access to transportation, walkability, proximity to healthy and affordable food sources, and land use considerations. CCP completed a Market Basket Survey to ID “affordable” grocery stores (below citywide average prices), shown on this map with half and quarter mile buffers. This map also shows the transit network. Map data sources include: Metro RLIS, ACS 2008-2012, City of Gresham, Camassia Community Planning Market Basket Survey.

Community Food Assets
by Food Access Priority Areas

This map shows the previously mentioned food access priority areas along with identified community food assets, such as farm stands, emergency food locations, farms, and community gardens. Map data sources include: ACS 2008-2012, Metro RLIS, 211 Info, EMO Rockwood Food Assessment, Camassia Community Planning Market Basket Survey.
Methods

CCP conducted a comprehensive analysis to identify areas of Gresham where improvements to food access should be prioritized. The grocery and community food asset maps show the “priority areas” where people are more likely to face food access barriers. This analysis is based upon consideration of the following measures, using 2010 Census data, 2008-2012 ACS data, our own research, and business license data:

- The level of poverty by tract (>20% = areas of high poverty)
- Access to transit (sidewalk density and proximity to transit lines)
- Vehicle ownership (number of cars per household)
- Proximity to healthy and affordable food sources (based on a market basket survey conducted by CCP)
- Land uses (industrial or residential)

We also display types of stores. These include:

- Culturally Specialized: Stores that mainly sell traditional foods of a specific cultural group
- Affordable: Full service stores with prices at or below the city’s average prices

Additionally, CCP identified community food assets such as:

- Farmers’ markets, farms, farm stands, community gardens, and locations to acquire emergency food such as food pantries.

The results of our mapping analysis were presented at listening circles and at a discussion group with community leaders and professionals working in the field of food access.

Key Findings

Priority Areas

Based on demographics and existing access to affordable grocery stores, we determined that Rockwood, Centennial, and North Central neighborhoods in Gresham face the highest barriers to accessing healthy food. These areas should be prioritized for food access improvements.

Grocery Stores

Given that grocery stores in the areas with highest poverty rates are among those with the highest prices, and that there have been six grocery store closures in the city since 2003, it appears that the supermarket chain approach to food security is not adequately serving Gresham’s most food insecure populations. Our questionnaire results provided further evidence that residents who live in the high priority areas are travelling longer distances in order to purchase food even when supermarkets exist in their own neighborhoods. While supermarkets must play a role in providing affordable food to the urban population, dependency on large national chain stores does not appear to be a sufficient solution to food security on its own.

Community Food Assets

Community engagement revealed that Gresham residents value access to fresh and affordable food and many prefer to shop at community-owned and operated sources such as Winco or farmers’ markets, rather than at large national chain stores. Gresham has many existing “community food assets”, including community gardens, farms, farm stands, and open-air markets. Our questionnaire and engagement efforts suggest that these food assets are highly valued by residents, but that these existing assets are currently insufficient to serve the needs of residents.

The Food Access Discussion Group was attended by 14 participants, each of whom work on food access issues. We asked stakeholders which aspects of the maps reflected Gresham’s experience, and what needed improvement. Subsequently, we revised our maps to reflect the ideas, suggestions, and feedback that we received.

We would like to thank the following people for their participation in the discussion group, and for their technical feedback on draft maps:

- Adam Kohl, Outgrowing Hunger
- Becky Bodonyi, Multnomah Health Department
- Charles Robertson, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Dina DiNucci, Wallace Medical Concern
- Emily Hull, Gresham Redevelopment Commission
- Janny Holmes, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Josh Fuhrer, Gresham Redevelopment Commission
- Judy Alley, SnowCap Community Charities
- Kathy Minden, People for Parks
- Katrina Haller, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Maribel Gomez, Rockwood Food Coop
- Nathan McClintock, PSU Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning
- Ray Keen, Birch Community Services
- Willie Chambers, The Northeast Health Resource Center


Refer to here for a complete list of findings.
GOAL 4:

Improve access to affordable healthy and culturally appropriate food in high priority areas.

Based on our findings, we recommend prioritizing food access improvements in the areas of Gresham that face the highest barriers to access (see mapped priority areas). We suggest a holistic and community-based approach to strengthen and expand neighborhood food assets, including food co-ops, open air markets, farm stands, community gardens, market gardens, and small locally owned grocers. The City’s approach should provide support to a range of other community food assets that would improve access to affordable healthy food. These community assets would help to better meet the diversity of residents’ food needs and preferences. Strengthening community food assets in residential neighborhoods would make food acquisition more convenient and would reduce transportation-related costs and barriers that are incurred when residents have to travel further distances. The growth of local food assets can also increase the vibrancy of underutilized commercial and public spaces, and provide more opportunities for communities to gather and for social encounters.

We recommend that this approach to food security be pursued in a manner that is consistent with the community economic development strategy outlined in Goal 5 by creating living wage jobs in all phases of the food system, including production (farming), processing, distribution, and retail. A food system that is created for and by the people it serves is likely to be one that is more reflective of the needs of the neighborhoods’ diverse communities themselves.

Finally, we recommend that all improvements to food security and food access be informed by further community engagement and consultation with diverse stakeholders at every stage, in accordance with Goal 1 of this plan. Partnerships with local organizations that are already pursuing food justice and food security initiatives would also be beneficial.

Action 4-1:
Examine and enact zoning code changes that would permit better development of community food assets in priority areas.

Action 4-2:
Provide financial and technical assistance to support the development of community food assets, including locally-owned grocers that provide access to affordable healthy food and pay living wages to employees.

Action 4-3:
Work with small neighborhood retailers to help provide the resources and assistance necessary for them to sell healthy and affordable food.

Action 4-4:
Conduct a feasibility study on how distribution channels could better link the region’s local farms and food producers with neighborhood retailers in priority areas.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
Gresham should think about opportunities to offer small, local business incentives and incubator assistance to inspire professional, technical, and local companies, including small organic food businesses.

- Gresham Resident

When discussing “opportunity”, many people commonly think in terms of jobs and social mobility. The “American Dream” is based on the belief that everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to achieve prosperity and success through hard work. In addition, employment is fundamental to health and well-being, especially access to jobs that provide a wage that meets household needs. Beyond sufficient pay, a “good job” also offers safe working conditions, benefits, flexibility, job security, and the option for full-time work. Additionally, job security and living wages affect other indicators of opportunity, including access to healthy food, and stable housing conditions.

The City’s Economic Development department currently implements a traded sector strategy that focuses on three complementary industries: manufacturing, clean technologies, and professional services. In addition to incentive programs, they work with local businesses to understand their need and have a Rapid Response Team to support expansion and relocation projects in Gresham. The Community Development provides a Small Business Center and administers programs like the Garage-to-Storefront initiative, which helped businesses locate in core commercial areas. In addition, City staff partner with a network of workforce development providers.
Methods

We analyzed employment through a series of several maps, focusing on transit access to jobs paying a living wage. The first map displays an index created by the Equity Atlas for the region based on the number of family-wage jobs in the Portland region that are accessible via transit (bus or train) within 60 minutes of travel time. Each census tract has a value from 0 to 5, with 0 having the least access and 5 having the most. Family wage jobs are defined by the income level needed to support one adult, one preschooler, and one school age child ($47,244 for Multnomah County, based on 2010 wages). The first map displays an index created for the region based on the number of family-wage jobs in the Portland region that are accessible via transit (bus or train) within 60 minutes of travel time. Each census tract has a value from 0 to 5, with 0 having the least access and 5 having the most. Family wage jobs are defined by the income level needed to support one adult, one preschooler, and one school age child ($47,244 for Multnomah County, based on 2010 wages).

To more accurately reflect lived experience in Gresham, we also looked at transit access to jobs paying less than $1,250 and more than $3,333 held by Gresham residents, as well as all jobs held by West Gresham residents (based on 2011 estimates). We compared the current distribution of jobs to the transit network, assuming no transfers to analyze the potential for transit access challenges. Lastly, we analyzed the distribution of jobs by sector and wage level within the city of Gresham as a proxy for opportunities in the local job market.

Key Findings

Transit Access to Jobs

This map shows that based solely on transit access, the Rockwood neighborhood has the highest access to regional jobs. However, this is largely a function of the high frequency MAX line that provides a direct connection to downtown Portland. The map does not take into account the necessary qualifications of the majority of employment opportunities in Downtown Portland that does not seem to match the qualifications of most Gresham residents, based on an analysis of educational attainment at the census tract level. The mapping analysis shows that a significant share of high paying jobs held by residents (as of 2011) are located in the Columbia Corridor, as well as the Northwest Industrial district of Portland. This finding provides support for Goal 3, which calls for improved transit service, particularly for employment areas to the north of Gresham. There are several regional job centers that have little or no direct transit access from Gresham, indicating that transit dependent workers have fewer employment opportunities due to commute challenges. Reflecting this issue, 43% of transit riders reported “transportation difficulties” as a barrier to employment that they have experienced, compared to 15% of all questionnaire respondents that reported at least one barrier.

Non-spatial Barriers to Employment

A key theme from community engagement is the need to increase employment and wages for Gresham residents. There is desire to create jobs and small businesses in Gresham. Based on feedback from stakeholders, potential obstacles to local businesses include high permit fees, a complex application process, and zoning regulations limiting small business activities. These complexities have the effect of pricing out individuals and organizations with low capital.

Distribution of Jobs in Gresham

Less than one-third of survey respondents agree that their neighborhood is close to employment opportunities. Jobs are concentrated in North and Central Gresham. Manufacturing jobs are concentrated in the north, retail jobs are mainly in the city center, and health care and social assistance jobs are mostly in the central and northwest portions with several other pockets throughout. Jobs paying $1,250 or less per month are most concentrated in the central city, likely associated with the retail sector. The highest concentration of jobs paying $3,333 or more per month is north of I-84.
GOAL 5:

Increase local business ownership and employment opportunities for Gresham residents through community-oriented development.

Actions related to Goal 3 (improve transit service, particularly for north-south routes) will help improve access to both existing jobs held by residents and “good jobs” available in the region. Working with the network of workforce development partners will remain critical for helping connect residents to good jobs in the region, as described in Education/Services. In terms of increasing living wage jobs offered in the city, Gresham has a strong manufacturing base, and the traded sector economic development strategy will continue to play an important role.

To further diversify the economic development strategy in Gresham, we recommend strengthening current efforts and exploring new ways for supporting small businesses, local entrepreneurs, and community development. Locally-owned businesses help keep more income circulating in the local economy and are less likely to relocate, because they are rooted in Gresham. This reduces the risk associated with place-based investments and subsidies to outside owned corporations. Evidence shows that small businesses tend to be more nimble and responsive to market changes. It can also be more cost-effective to subsidize small, local businesses compared to large, national corporations, in terms of job creation, tax revenues, and other benefits to the local economy.

Under this approach, new businesses could contribute to the manufacturing sector, including the clusters oriented around clean technology and food, but should also address local needs for goods and services. While many jobs in the service sector do not pay a family wage, local ownership and employment in neighborhood-serving businesses have other benefits such as reducing the leakage that occurs when outside companies provide goods and services. This approach would address multiple priorities for increasing employment and meeting community priorities.

Action 5-1: Provide more direct support to local residents to start and maintain small businesses.

Action 5-2: Initiate a Community Economic Development (CED) strategy in West Gresham, leveraging the Rockwood Urban Renewal Area (URA) funding.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
I don’t hear about how the city and school districts are working together. They should pool resources to better support K-12 students, and beyond.

- West Gresham Resident

Education is important for providing job opportunities that pay living and family wages. Workforce development and employment assistance programs are key resources for job training, skill building, and certifications. Health and Human services are intended to help families achieve good health, get good jobs, and succeed in school, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable populations. However, there are barriers to accessing many of these services, including physical barriers (transportation relative to location), affordability, convenience, cultural relevance, and availability of services in one’s own language. Wrap-around services often work to address some of these barriers, including through the provision of childcare and way-finding in the healthcare system.

It is important to community prosperity that educational and health and human services are distributed throughout the city and match the populations that are in need. This means identifying areas in need and locating services with appropriate and adequate access in terms of transportation, price, and quality of service. There are many service providers and public agencies working hard to meet the needs of Gresham residents. However, many feel that they do not have the capacity financially to meet demand.
Methods

To analyze educational opportunities and access to services, we first analyzed the spatial distribution of adult educational need (Map 7). We did this by creating an index of three measures that reflect the environment in which adult education resources are most needed and should be prioritized. The measures are based on 2008-12 ACS data and include:

- Number of adults (over age 25) with less than a bachelors degree
- Number of unemployed adults
- Number of households on public assistance

We then overlaid adult education and employment services, health and human services, youth services, and community services on the priority areas to analyze current distribution and gaps in access. Additionally, we interviewed stakeholders and community groups that organize, develop, or support many of the services noted above. The following findings are based on spatial analysis as well as anecdotal evidence from service providers and community members.

Key Findings

The City has limited influence on many aspects of service provision. Additionally, many of the existing programs in Gresham are either strapped for resources or are not located in areas that most effectively meet the needs of the population.

Adult Education

There is a lack of adult education services relative to need. For example, the most commonly reported barrier to employment on the questionnaire was “there are not enough jobs available in the industry/occupation that I want to work in.” This indicates the need for retraining and adult education/certificate opportunities that match the labor market demand. However, the Mt. Hood Community College Career Pathways Program, a successful program noted by the State, is under resourced and unable to meet the need in Gresham. In addition, the Rockwood Library is overcapacity and there is demand for more space.

Services

There are limited mental health services in Gresham, and most residents seeking treatment must travel to Portland. The current provision of the Multnomah County SUN School program is not adequate in areas of higher poverty and greater concentrations of youth, where more sites and additional staff are needed. Based on the waitlist at Mt. Hood Community College Head Start, as well as stakeholder feedback, there is a need for more affordable childcare in the city. Finding convenient childcare can be a challenge and barrier to employment and education opportunities.
Key Findings

Priority Areas
The greatest need for adult education services, based on the analysis of the three indicators noted above, is in West Gresham, Central Gresham, and Mt. Hood neighborhood. West Gresham is the highest priority area for families and individuals needing health, human, and community services. This is due to the prevalence of vulnerable populations in these areas, including youth, families in poverty, and unemployed individuals.

K-12 Education
The “quality” of K-12 education is largely a function of neighborhood-level resources, beyond in-school factors. Therefore, the provision of stable and affordable housing options throughout the city, particularly in low poverty neighborhoods, helps ensure equal access to educational opportunities for youth. Offering wrap-around services such as childcare at school sites helps families to meet their needs in a neighborhood location. The City should consider the implications on K-12 schools when siting new housing and implementing actions related to the opportunity indicators in this plan.

Photo: Early Childhood Center at Mt. Hood Community College, Credit: Daily Journal of Commerce, Lincoln Barbour

GOAL 6:
Promote community prosperity by increasing access to education and health promotion services.

This goal recognizes that community prosperity is largely a function of employment, and that education is fundamental to securing living wage jobs. Reducing barriers to education and health promotion services, such as childcare and transportation, is critical to increasing the incomes and well-being of Gresham residents. This is particularly true for vulnerable populations currently facing challenges such as affordability of services.

Opportunity mapping is one tool for analyzing and displaying the distribution and concentration of population groups that most need particular services, as well as highlighting the transportation connections to resources. When prioritizing efforts, it is also important to consider non-spatial challenges with accessing employment and educational opportunities, such as affordability and cultural relevance. Our analysis supports the use of the Rockwood URA Catalyst Site as a site for workforce development facilitates, additional library space, and other services. This site will not meet the entire need, however, and the City should advocate for additional resources to meet the increased need for services at the county (health, library, SUN), state (Work Systems), and federal (Head Start) levels.

We recognize that finding funding is not easy and therefore, encourage partnerships and innovative programs that are not capital intensive. For example, the City should continue to be involved with workforce development partnerships and support job training for living wage career-track jobs that require less than one year of certification/training. Current partners include but are not limited to Human Solutions, Mt Hood Community College, El Programa Hispano, and the school districts serving Gresham.

Action 6-1:
Utilize the Map Gresham Opportunity Analysis as a foundation for the Community Prosperity Initiative work.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail
There is a complete lack of parks and public spaces that are accessible by foot, or a short bike ride, with small children.

- Gresham Resident

Parks are a valuable resource to communities, as they provide a place for people of all ages to gather, enjoy nature, and engage in physical activity. Locating parks and natural areas in proximity to residents and providing transportation connections to these spaces increases opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of nature, contributing to good health and quality of life. In addition to physical access, accessibility also depends on the quality of park space in terms of community-desired amenities and maintenance.

The City of Gresham maintains more than 24 parks with a variety of amenities for its residents. Since the onset of the 2008 economic recession the City has made significant cutbacks to its parks and recreation programming, including the elimination of a parks department and severe reduction in maintenance staff. As a result, the City still maintains parks but must look to other organizations to provide recreational programming.

The City of Gresham Parks Master Plan (2009) states: “Given that Gresham is the fourth largest city in Oregon, the provision of so few programming options is highly unusual. The city does not currently provide most of the programs that are typically offered by comparable communities.”

Parks and recreation is an essential service that enhances the quality of life in the Gresham community by fostering personal health, strengthening community, preventing crime, protecting the environment, and contributing to a healthy economy.

- Gresham Parks Master Plan, 2009
Access to Parks

1/4 and 1/2 Mile Distances from Parks

This map shows buffers around city park access points based on the street network, given the limitations with City of Gresham sidewalk data. The buffers demonstrate residential areas that are within walking distance of the entrance to the park. Overlaid is the sidewalk network and city parks. Map data sources include: Metro RLIS, City of Gresham, TriMet.

Access to Parks for Transit Dependent Residents

This map displays buffers (quarter mile and half mile) around medium and high frequency transit and rail stops in order to show which city parks are within a reasonable walking distance for transit dependent residents. The parks in bright green are not within a half mile walking distance to transit and rail stops during times when the low frequency routes are not running. Map data sources include: Metro RLIS, City of Gresham, TriMet.

Map Methodology:
- City of Gresham Parks
- Max Blue Line
- Walkway Path
- Sidewalks
- City of Gresham

Methodology:
- View Park Kirk
- Columbia
- Portland
- Neighborhood
- Happy Valley
- Marquam Hill
- Southwest Neighborhood
- South Central Neighborhood
- Northeast Neighborhood
- Southeast Neighborhood
- North Central Neighborhood
- Southeast Community Park
- Southwest Community Park
- Sunset Community Park
- St. Helens Community Services
- Hazel Dell Community Services
- Holly Brook Park
- Southwest Community Services
- Wood Village
- Troutdale
- Happy Valley
- Damascus

Opportunity Framework Plan
- Map Gresham
- Map Methodology
- 64
- 65
- Inaccessible Parks
- Parks
- Transit Frequency
- City of Gresham
Opportunity Framework Plan

Methods

In the parks maps, we show the distribution and size of developed, city parks across Gresham in order to assess whether all neighborhoods and regions of the city have equal access to city park space.

The first map shows buffers of one quarter and one half-mile distance around park access points to demonstrate residential areas that are within walking distance of the entrance to the park. The buffers are based on the street network - dark purple buffers represent a quarter mile from park access points and light purple buffers represent a half-mile. This map also shows the MAX line and sidewalks.

The second map shows an analysis of access to parks specifically for transit dependent residents. On this map, instead of buffers around the park access points, we used ESRI's Network Analyst tool to create quarter mile and half mile buffers around transit and rail stops that are of medium or high frequency. This was done to give a clearer picture of the accessibility of city parks to transit dependent riders on weekends and evenings. The parks in bright green on this map represent the city parks that are not within a reasonable walking distance to transit and rail stops during times when the low frequency routes are not running.

Parks shown on these maps include those that are open to the public, currently maintained by the City, and are both developed and undeveloped.

Key Findings

Distribution and Pedestrian Access

There is a disparity in the amount of park space in each neighborhood. Mt. Hood residents now have 7.4 acres of park space per 1,000 people while residents in half of the city's neighborhoods (North Central, Wilkes East, Gresham Butte, Northwest, Southwest, Northeast, Hollybrook, and Pleasant Valley) have less than two acres of park space per 1,000 people. Two neighborhoods, Mt. Hood and Centennial, contain 27% of the city’s park space.

While Gresham’s parks are generally spread throughout the city, some households do not live within a reasonable walking distance to a city park. Community engagement efforts revealed that many West Gresham residents are unable to walk to parks due to unsafe sidewalk conditions or lacking sense of safety while at the parks. These findings suggest the need for targeted improvements to ensure accessibility to parks by foot.

Transit Access

Existing public transit routes do not provide adequate service for residents to access city parks. The lower frequency of many of the north-south routes poses a barrier to residents who are transit-dependent and need to travel north-south to access a park in their neighborhood, particularly since the low frequency routes do not run on the weekends. There are seven city parks in south Gresham that are not within a quarter mile or half mile from transit routes that are either high or medium frequency, and are therefore often not accessible to transit dependent residents.

Amenities and Maintenance

There is a gap in the number of amenities provided at each park with some parks providing three to four times the number of amenities as other parks. Community engagement revealed that residents from West Gresham neighborhoods feel that their parks are not sufficiently maintained and although they do have amenities, they are not the types of amenities that residents want. These residents stated that they would use neighborhood parks more if they had the amenities that they wanted.

Programming

Community engagement efforts for this project and a previous City questionnaire revealed that residents from all neighborhoods would like to see increased recreation programming. As discussed in the Opportunity Analysis, a smaller share of West Gresham residents agreed or strongly agreed that there were things they like to do for recreation in their neighborhood, compared to respondents in the other neighborhoods. The Parks Master Plan, adopted in 2009 contains a complete analysis of the provision of recreation facilities and programs and found that in comparison to other cities of similar size, Gresham is severely lacking in the provision of these services.

The analysis of access to parks in Gresham shows that there are disparities in the amount of park space per neighborhood and the type of infrastructure and amenities in each of Gresham's parks. The community engagement conducted for this project shows that while parks exist in most neighborhoods, it is the quality, safety, and physical accessibility by foot and transit that reduces opportunities to enjoy recreation activities in these parks.
**GOAL 7:**

**Improve the quality of parks and support the provision of youth programming.**

Recognizing the limited fiscal capacity of the City, it will be critical to actively pursue partnerships with other organizations in order to meet this goal. At this time, the City should focus on improving the quality of and access to existing city parks, as well as supporting the provision of recreation activities, rather than attempting to acquire new park space. We recommend prioritizing park improvements in areas with high concentrations of transit-dependent residents, including youth.

This goal also responds to concerns over safety, maintenance, and transportation infrastructure, which are preventing some community members in West Gresham from enjoying the many benefits associated with the city’s existing parks. This goal and its action items are congruent with the community’s vision for a sustainable parks system as outlined in the Parks Master Plan adopted in 2009.

**Action 7-1:**

Develop a strategy to expand community and City capacity to increase the frequency of public parks maintenance to ensure that every neighborhood has usable and enjoyable spaces for residents.

**Action 7-2:**

Establish a community task force and complete a “neighborhood recreation and nature assessment” in partnership with community groups to identify desired amenities and prioritize park improvement projects.

**Action 7-3:**

Convene a youth recreation taskforce to develop a strategy for increasing the availability of youth activities, programs, and events held in parks, schools, and other public spaces in West Gresham.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
feel Rockwood is moving in a positive direction. We can’t be afraid of diversity, we must be willing to embrace the mix of cultures and provide activities and opportunities to meet the needs of everyone.

- West Gresham Resident

Addressing safety and crime is challenging, whether it be at the citywide or neighborhood level. However, it is important to recognize the social factors that shape and even exacerbate the effects of crime and decrease perceptions of safety. Larger structural forces that are expressed spatially across Gresham lend to increased levels of social disorganization, economic instability, and neighborhood segregation of people of color. This Framework Plan provides guidance for policy and program levers that the City could pursue to reduce structural inequities that impact neighborhood safety.

The City of Gresham has initiated a coordinated effort to address crime, holding a Gang Prevention and Enforcement Summit, at which they unveiled a Multi-Agency Gang Prevention and Enforcement Plan. This plan operates under five basic strategies: community mobilization, opportunities provision, social intervention, suppression, and organization change and development. The City wishes to develop strong involvement of residents, programs, and agencies under the principle that “no single entity can expect to achieve needle-moving change” in a problem this complex (Multi-Agency Prevention and Enforcement Plan, 2014).

There are several efforts aimed at bringing new resources to the Rockwood area, including the multi-agency Rockwood/Rosewood Enrichment Neighborhood Enforcement Workgroup (RENEW). This group intends to improve communication and coordination around safety and livability issues. Additionally, the City is partnering with various agencies and community groups to enact prevention and intervention-based strategies, recognizing that it can’t rely solely on police enforcement to reduce the impact of gangs on the community. For example, UDP staff is working on a “Parks and Trails Safety and Awareness” project.

Gresham Safety Partnerships

The City has begun to build partnerships with key agencies. Namely, Multnomah County has been a regional leader initiating innovative programs and services to reduce violence while also providing the necessary human services to address poverty and inequality. The Health Department’s Community Capacitation Center - Youth Violence Prevention program has received a federal STRYVE grant (Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere), taking a youth-centered public health approach to preventing violence before it starts. Additionally, the County’s Department of Community Justice uses a prevention approach in both adult and juvenile services in order to reduce recidivism, assisting clients “in a fair and just manner to develop skills necessary for success” (Multnomah County Department of Community Justice).
Children and Youth
Ages 14 and Under by Block Group

Methods
A people based approach was taken in order to understand how safety, crime, and inequality relate to opportunity, community health, and neighborhood livability. We compiled and analyzed data from the community engagement process, including:

- Interviews
- Listening Circles
- Citywide Questionnaire
- Public Safety data from Gresham

We show a map of youth concentrations in Gresham in this section, since young people are particularly vulnerable with respect to neighborhood safety.

Violence is a leading cause of injury, disability and premature death, and it impacts young people at higher rates than others. Youth violence is complex, and we believe that strategies to prevent violence before it happens is most effective, especially through promoting health and safety in our communities. Efforts aimed at engaging youth and providing safe places for youth create conditions which stop violence before it happens.

Key Findings
Safety Concerns
During our engagement in West Gresham, we found that residents perceive that their safety is compromised in their neighborhoods, particularly at parks and transit stops. Safety concerns vary across groups and include fear of gangs, homelessness, crime, and police. Some youth feel uncomfortable with the high level of surveillance and police contact that they experience and observe. Community members also expressed that there are few safe places for families and youth to gather in West Gresham. Safe gathering places that do exist such as the Rockwood Library are commonly over capacity. There is also a strong need for youth enrichment and recreation activities at the neighborhood level to provide more opportunities for involvement.

Spatial Inequality
The opportunity analysis found that degrees of spatial inequality exist for West Gresham and parts of Central Gresham. This means that indicators of inequality are concentrated spatially. For example, these areas have lower median family incomes, larger household size, a wider gap of homeownership for people of color, and lower levels of educational attainment, in comparison to the rest of the city. Given that these commonly used indicators of economic stability are also strongly associated with perceived crime and safety issues, this analysis suggests that increasing poverty and crime did not just "move" to Gresham, but rather there are structural and institutional forces driving their concentration.

Additionally, West Gresham has higher shares of people of color, with some tracts reaching shares as high as 64%. Neighborhoods in West and Central Gresham also experienced the highest number of police calls consistently from 2009 to 2013 (see table in the Opportunity Analysis). This indicates that residents in these neighborhoods are particularly vulnerable to safety concerns.
Key Findings

areas have the greatest contact with police and are more likely to witness the effects of crime, as compared to other parts of the city. This correlation was affirmed by comments given at listening circles and through the citywide questionnaire. The analysis shows a spatial correlation between income inequality, racial and ethnic concentration, and high rates of policing and effects of crime.

Community Engagement and Active Participation

The common thread that surfaced across groups and individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds was the idea of local community control. Listening circle and discussion group attendees, City staff, and local officials value the ability for people from Gresham to have a voice in shaping their city. Even though fear of crime and/or gang activity exists, adults and youth are resilient. They want to be a part of making their community a safer place through participating with government and non-profit partners to create local solutions. This fervent interest in civic engagement from across different demographic backgrounds indicates a strong pride in Gresham, and suggests an opportunity to guide community-wide energy towards collective action, in order to solve this complex problem.

People identified various policies, regulations, and city-provided services and programs as tools for improving safety conditions in target areas of West and Central Gresham. “Neighborliness” and a sense of community connection is what residents across Gresham desire most as a way to improve their perceptions of safety. Several residents suggested community-led neighborhood patrols to enhance feelings of security.

GOAL 8:
Foster safe and welcoming neighborhoods.

Safety concerns are preventing residents from taking full advantage of opportunities in their neighborhoods such as parks and public transit. We recommend taking a “community development” approach to address the root causes and effects of crime, including spatial inequality and isolation. Community development projects can positively affect neighborhoods by increasing the capacity of residents for self-sufficiency, while also creating a stronger identity of community that resists the effects of crime. Providing both physical spaces and programming to create opportunities for community gathering are essential to this strategy. Also critical is ensuring that these spaces and programs engage residents in a meaningful way in all stages of development from planning, design, implementation, and operation, with a particular focus on youth, low-income residents, and residents of color. The actions associated with this goal emphasize the needs of youth, which is a particularly vulnerable population with respect to neighborhood safety.

Action 8-1:
Partner to create youth-adult partnerships that address youth violence issues through the multi-agency initiative led by the Multnomah Youth Commission.

Action 8-2:
Develop community-led patrols and neighborhood watches in West Gresham, working directly with residents from diverse backgrounds.

Action 8-3:
Develop a community center in West Gresham; consider incorporating into the URA Catalyst site.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
Chapter 4: IMPLEMENTATION

Through this engagement we have learned that there are differences in the way people experience their neighborhoods, and that many residents are eager to be more involved in shaping the quality of life in Gresham. The maps also show that varying degrees of disparities are occurring in Gresham. Taken as a whole, the evidence suggests a mutually reinforcing relationship between the spatial concentration of under-represented populations, disparities in neighborhood resources, and lower levels of public involvement in planning processes.

The actions included in this Framework Plan are recommendations for the City of Gresham to consider as ways to address the root causes of poverty and improve quality of life across Gresham neighborhoods. Addressing each indicator simultaneously will result in the greatest collective impact.

This approach encourages more explicit consideration of the relationship between various indicators of opportunity. As shown on the Indicator Matrix, many of the actions would address multiple indicators, creating synergies. For example, Action 5-2 calls for increasing local employment while meeting community needs for healthy and affordable food, housing rehabilitation, childcare, and recreation.

We believe that taking a holistic approach can lead to more effective outcomes over the long-term, compared to alternatives that focus primarily on symptoms. In addition, this intentional and integrated approach will likely result in long-term change because it is supported by community members and stakeholders.

### Indicator Matrix

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Photo: City of Gresham "If I were Mayor..." contest finalist, sponsored by the Oregon Mayors Association. 4th-12th graders were asked how they would improve their community if they were Mayor?

Read more about recommended partners and their work
In recognition of the City’s limited fiscal resources, CCP has strategically crafted actions with the intention to maximize impacts for the least amount of funding. While many of the recommended actions will require the City to seek new funds or reallocate existing funds, other actions are low-cost and work to reduce the City’s burden in the long-term by promoting partnerships with other organizations. This overarching principle is captured in Goal 9, described in the next pages. This goal encourages the strategic allocation of funds to improve outcomes in priority areas, using the opportunity framework. It also addresses funding, recognizing the potential for trade-offs and providing recommended prioritization of funds.

We also recognize that fiscal constraints will likely limit implementation of the plan in full. Although feasibility may be limited, it is important to note that implementation of a subset of actions will not have the same impact, especially if housing, transportation, and employment are neglected. These indicators relate most strongly to root causes of health and socioeconomic disparities between population groups.

Any set of actions pursued should address Goal 1, as public involvement underlies most of the recommendations. Not only do community members want to be more involved in enhancing neighborhood opportunity, but processes that integrate meaningful public involvement are more likely to result in successful outcomes that better address resident needs. Also, the process itself builds a sense of ownership, meaning people will be more likely to support and utilize any resulting programs and facilities. In financial terms, it leads to more efficient use of funds in the long-term, although it may incrementally increase costs on the front end to incorporate best practices.
GOAL 9:

Improve outcomes in priority areas by strategically allocating funds, using opportunity mapping as a guide.

This goal is intended to inform implementation of the other eight goals in this Plan. While it focuses on HUD funding, the principles could apply to other decision-making processes involving the allocation of local, state, and federal funds.

Using an opportunity framework means improving the quality of life in neighborhoods that have the lowest access to opportunities by strategically allocating funds to these priority areas. A key action to advance this overarching goal is updating the tool for evaluating applications for HUD funding to more explicitly account for community needs and the geographic distribution of resources.

CCP recognizes that trade-offs occur between different priorities when allocating available funds. We also recognize that housing provides the foundation for health and well-being, yet housing is typically the largest cost for households. About 44% of Gresham households pay over 30% of their income on rent or mortgage, posing significant challenges to accessing opportunities. Therefore, we encourage the City to prioritize housing construction and rehabilitation in the allocation of HUD funding, in order to help stabilize rent increases while improving the living conditions for low-income households overtime.

This goal also speaks to the need to secure a long-term source of funding for community development projects and to leverage existing and new sources of funding for transportation projects, beyond HUD funding. When allocating economic development funds through HUD, we suggest targeting community-oriented initiatives that increase employment opportunities and meet needs for neighborhood services (see Goal 5).

Action 9-1:
Proactively allocate HUD funding to priority areas and update the tool for evaluating CDBG/HOME projects.

Action 9-2:
Prioritize use of HUD funds for housing and community development, and seek new sources to supplement existing funding for transportation projects.

Action 9-3:
Develop a funding strategy for the development and maintenance of parks, recreation, and community amenities on public properties.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
Opportunity mapping can be an important tool to evaluate applications, as well as to proactively target different project types that may use CDBG funds (see Project Type table to the right). This Map Gresham project identified priority areas for different opportunities that can provide a foundation for both applications. It is important to note that opportunity maps are one analytical tool and should serve as a guide. As with all tools that rely on quantitative data, maps should not be relied upon to make concrete determinations about projects. This guide is intended to serve as a starting point to implementing Action 9-1.

Project Types

It is important to consider that some project types are place-based and others are more people-based. Place-based strategies include infrastructure projects aimed at improving physical conditions. People-based strategies generally involve providing services to specific populations, although not necessarily from a particular location.

For infrastructure projects, staff can refer to the opportunity maps to rank applications, based on the project’s potential to fill a need in a priority area (i.e., a food co-op in a food access priority area). For people-based strategies, the maps are most helpful in displaying the distribution and concentration of population groups that most need particular services, as well as highlighting the transportation connections to resources. The location of facilities in relation to service populations is more important for some services such as childcare, while improving transportation connections may better serve services such as childcare, while improving transportation connections may better serve users with respect to specific needs (family, elderly, disabled, etc.).

An important tension to keep in mind is that sited new affordable housing in areas of concentrated poverty (greater than 20% rate) has been shown to perpetuate disparities. Based on our analysis, we do not recommend prohibiting new affordable housing in areas of concentrated poverty in Gresham, given the overwhelming need city- and region-wide.

However, family-oriented housing should be encouraged and prioritized in areas of lower poverty, given the strong link between concentrated poverty at the neighborhood level, lower student achievement, and intergenerational cycles of low education and poverty.

When analyzing housing location, each of the indicators in this plan should be considered individually, although it may be helpful to create a composite map for specific population needs to highlight the most applicable opportunities. For example, housing projects with mainly one bedroom units would likely serve single adults or couples; therefore, one of the most important considerations would be transit access. According to this principle an existing policy, higher density and/or mixed use residential developments should (ideally) be located within a half mile of transit stops for existing or planned high frequency routes, including MAX.

We strongly encourage the addition of attached housing types (i.e., duplexes, triplexes and row homes) that provides family living options in more areas throughout the city. Specific criteria could include:

- Areas of lower residential density to support neighborhood compatibility
- Near parks and medium/high frequency bus routes (ideally within a half mile)
- Areas of low poverty (less than 20%) to increase opportunities for children to attend well-resourced schools

Suggested Evaluation Process

We have developed a suggested three-step process for evaluating applications, adapting the existing tool and integrating advice from other opportunity mapping users. The intent of the process is to ensure that projects that most effectively meet community needs are prioritized, working to allow more housing choice in areas of “high” opportunity while improving indicators of opportunity in priority areas. It continues to account for project feasibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Type Evaluation</th>
<th>Proactive Targeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affordable housing construction</td>
<td>Score projects based on housing type and access to relevant opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure: - Transportation -Commercial development and revitalization (e.g., storefront upgrades, streetscape improvements) -Parks and other community facilities</td>
<td>Score projects that propose improvements in a priority area for a given opportunity indicator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs: -Workforce development (job training, career guidance, and job matching assistance) -Small business development</td>
<td>Use maps to determine proximity to and transportation connections between service populations and facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STEP 1: Apply screening criteria against HUD requirements

STEP 2: Score projects using two rating systems:
- Needs and Priorities: use opportunity maps to identify projects that serve areas of high need/in areas of high priority. This narrows down the projects first by need/addressing areas of low opportunity, or looking at increasing housing options in areas of high opportunity (existing rating questions: 1, 8, 9)
- Feasibility: use existing criteria to evaluate financial feasibility and long-term sustainability of projects, consider operational plan and experience (existing rating questions: 2-7)

STEP 3: Discuss the relative value and impact of the projects to determine final recommendations, prioritizing projects that serve highest needs and taking into account feasibility (existing rating question: 10)
APPENDIX A:
STEPS IN THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

| Clarify the purpose of the plan or project | This is the first step. The purpose of a project should be clear, in order to identify the right level of participation you will require, and at what points in the process. Define clear objectives for each phase and identify the public involvement tools to be used. It is important to be honest about the limitations of the process, organization, or agency when determining the purpose. |
| Identify Leaders and Connectors | Leaders are from formal organizations or agencies that are typically asked to represent a particular constituency. Community Connectors are people who know the intricacies of communities, have multiple connections, and have a broad or deep reach within a community. Both are valuable to coordinate with and include in a plan process. |
| Recognize different lenses | Be aware of the perspectives that project team brings to a project or plan. This “lens” may be different than the communities being engaged. Be open to broadening your lens, in order to grow in your understanding of other perspectives. |
| Build strong long-term relationships | Enter discussions with the intent to build a life-long relationship. Project specific engagement can occur only after an initial level of trust and respect is established. Maintain strong relationships through transparent and open communication. |
| Build capacity | Part of relationship building is providing education and tools to support communities to evolve their capacity to engage with government in meaningful ways. |

Techniques and Tools
- **Time**
- **Incentives**
- **Translation Services**
- **Interactive methods**
- **Social media**

| Time: Effective engagement of historically underrepresented communities is time intensive. Planning for successful involvement requires time to build relationships, a resource in short supply in many processes. These relationships must be maintained and continue after the planning process ends. |
| Incentives: Much of the work needed to engage historically under-represented communities is done by non-profits and resident organizations (including school groups). These groups are often understaffed and need support (funding or other cost-saving incentives) to allow them to participate. |
| Contextualize translation: Word-for-word translation is often ineffective in relaying the intent and content of planning projects (which are often already difficult to understand in English). Work with reputable translation firms, and/or organizations that work directly with target communities to get the appropriate context. Community organizations also include clarifying questions that in their experience are often meaningful to the community. When working with presentations – spend time with the translator beforehand so that simultaneous translation isn’t word-for-word but can be refined for better understanding. |
| Interactive methods: Using interactive methods that get people talking and connect with one another is helpful when working with people of varying degrees of English proficiency or familiarity with government processes. Keep people engaged and active. |
| Social media: Social media tools can be a way to promote activities, build energy and “hype” about a project or process. Be clear on your purpose for using it. Do not over-rely on it though, and make sure to have a clear, consistent, and maintain a vibrant presence if you do decide to use it. It is a dynamic medium which requires near-constant updating. |

Resources

- Before planning activities, events, and specific tools make sure you have the people and financial resources to accomplish your process. This may require advocacy to your agency or organization to provide sufficient funds for successful engagement.

APPENDIX B:
IMPLEMENTATION MATRIX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDICATOR: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GOAL 1</strong>: Facilitate welcoming public involvement practices that resonate with people of diverse backgrounds in all City government plans and decision-making processes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action 1-1**: Use Multnomah County’s Equity Empowerment Lens to evaluate public involvement practices, planning processes, and policies.

- **Objective**: Multnomah County’s Equity Empowerment Lens is a tool used across the region to critically evaluate government practices and policies. The evaluation is intended to guide planning processes and decision-making, taking an adaptive approach to better serve residents as demographics shift. As an example, CCP used the tool to evaluate the Map Gresham planning process, shown in Chapter 4 of the Community Engagement Report.

- **How to**: Multnomah County offers training to agencies to learn how to incorporate the tool across departments, providing guidance and support to staff to ensure successful implementation. Providing training at all levels, including elected officials, department directors, and staff, will promote the capacity and comfort needed to use the tool effectively.

- **Potential Partners**: Multnomah County Health Department

**INDICATOR: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

**GOAL 1**: Facilitate welcoming public involvement practices that resonate with people of diverse backgrounds in all City government plans and decision-making processes.

**Action 1-2**: Develop new relationships with under-represented groups throughout Gresham, with a particular focus on protected classes.

- **Objective**: The purpose of this action is to implement intercultural engagement processes that are welcoming and resonate with people of diverse backgrounds. This would involve building new relationships and strengthening existing relationships between City staff and under-represented groups, in order to increase familiarity with City decision-making processes and increase capacity for participation. This action would also involve creating an open and welcoming atmosphere at City events at the beginning and throughout City planning processes.

- **How to**: We recommend contracting with cultural and grassroots organizations to facilitate participation with neighborhood-based planning projects, do outreach to underrepresented residents, and promote membership in Citizen Advisory Committees (see Actions 4-2, 7-2, and 9-2 for examples). We also suggest referring to Appendix A, Steps to Public In for a list of recommended public involvement steps, adapted from best practices for outreach and engagement of historically underrepresented communities developed by Washington County and Metro. These concepts are consistent with the desires expressed by stakeholders and take into account lessons learned from the Map Gresham project.

- **Potential Partners**: Culturally specific organizations and mutual assistance groups such as Latino Network

*Table adapted from the Metro Public Engagement Guide and background work completed for the Aloha Reedville Study and Livable Community Plan*
**INDICATOR: HOUSING**

**GOAL 2:** Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality and affordable housing options.

**Action 2-1:** Construct additional housing units, prioritizing units that are affordable to households making less than 30% AMFI and between 50%-80% AMFI; use the opportunity analysis to help guide the location of residential development.

**Objective:** This action addresses the need of rental housing in the lowest income levels. Construction of multi-family and attached housing types are more likely to be feasible financially to fill this need. Therefore, this action involves identifying and reducing barriers to the development of affordable housing, balancing the desire for stringent design standards with the intent to provide housing that is safe, healthy, and meets the needs of many family sizes (such as outdoor gathering spaces and play areas). This action should be implemented citywide, although neighborhood context should be considered in the evaluation of housing proposals. The ultimate objective is to increase opportunities for low-income residents to live in neighborhoods that provide high access to resources, while supporting household and neighborhood stability for existing residents that want to remain in place. Part of achieving this objective is ensuring that new and existing subsidized housing remains affordable in the long-term.

**How to:** The City can support construction of multi-family and attached housing types by providing subsidies to private developers and affordable housing providers. Another way in which the City can encourage a spectrum of housing sizes and types is to evaluate the Development Code and remove significant barriers to housing development. Possible changes could include: streamlining the permit process, revising the fee structures, and adjusting incentives. The code should also ensure that multi-family design standards provide for sufficient communal and outdoor space, as well as facilities for wrap-around services (see Section 3.6). The opportunity analysis prepared for the Map Gresham project can help staff evaluate housing proposals and determine zoning for different residential types, based on neighborhood opportunities (see the attached “HUD Tool”). Gresham should ensure 60-year minimum terms for new affordable housing (in line with the City of Portland) to reduce the risk of involuntary displacement. If needed, we suggest increasing staff capacity as subsidized housing is constructed, in order to accommodate for the additional time required to administer and track paperwork.

**Potential Partners:** Human Solutions, Home Forward

**INDICATOR: HOUSING**

**GOAL 2:** Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality and affordable housing options.

**Action 2-2:** Increase HOME funds for rental housing rehabilitation and redevelopment that property owners can utilize, targeting outreach to properties that have the most complaints through the Rental Housing Inspection Program.

**Objective:** Our analysis found that there is a need for rehabilitation of low quality housing in certain areas of the city. This action is intended to promote the upgrade of deteriorated but structurally sound housing, as well as the maintenance of high quality housing, consistent with the City’s Housing Rehabilitation/Revitalization Policies.

**How to:** The City can undertake outreach efforts to property owners interested in updating their housing structures but who lack funds to make the necessary upgrades. One potential source of incentive funding already allocated for the 2014-2015 fiscal year is $6,909 in the Development/Contingency funds allocated to the City of Gresham.

**Potential Partners:** Human Solutions, Home Forward

**INDICATOR: HOUSING**

**GOAL 2:** Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality and affordable housing options.

**Action 2-3:** Increase awareness of and resources to existing renter assistance programming, tenant education, and landlord training.

**Objective:** The City’s Rental Housing Inspection Program (RHIP) is a model program in the State of Oregon, implementing mandatory and complaint driven inspections of rental units throughout the City. Some tenants in Gresham are unaware of the program and/or fear unknown implications of filing complaints, such as raised rents or eviction. This action is intended to increase awareness and use of the program among renters, especially low-income and vulnerable populations, in order to ensure enforcement of tenant rights and protection of the health and safety of renters.

**How to:** We suggest for the RHIP to work with the City’s communications team and Office of Neighborhood Involvement to advertise the program at multi-family housing properties, TriMet transit stops, SUN schools, Head Start locations, and other spaces commonly frequented by low-income populations. We also recommend translating materials into more languages and increasing landlord and tenant education offerings, partnering with other organizations that offer eviction prevention assistance.

**Potential Partners:** Community Alliance of Tenants, Human Solutions, Home Forward, Multnomah County Health Department, faith based organizations

**INDICATOR: HOUSING**

**GOAL 2:** Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality and affordable housing options.

**Action 2-4:** Partner with Home Forward to redevelop properties that are beyond repair with subsidized housing.

**Objective:** This action specifically addresses the risk of displacement resulting from redevelopment that involves the demolition of existing housing units. Redevelopment of residential properties should include subsidized units to result in no net loss of affordable units. The intention is to ensure that residents are able to remain in the neighborhood, while improving the quality of housing available to low-income renters.

**How to:** We recommend partnering with Home Forward to redevelop residential properties because federal law requires tenant relocation assistance if federal dollars are used. Additionally, the City can track redevelopment and rehabilitation in areas with vulnerable populations (based on the housing cost burden map and other income measures) to help make sure subsidies are used to minimize involuntary displacement and the destabilizing effect on families.

**Potential Partners:** Home Forward
**INDICATOR: TRANSPORTATION**

**GOAL 3: Improve transit service and walkability.**

**Action 3-1:** Advocate for transit service improvements in Gresham through TriMet’s Transit Enhancement Plan process.

| Objective: | City staff is aware of the need for improved transit service, based on previous studies such as the recent TSP update process. Staff has a working relationship with TriMet, who is actively seeking to collaborate with local jurisdictions and residents as part of the Enhancement Plan process. Therefore, the objective of this action is to improve the quality of transit service throughout Gresham, prioritizing West Gresham and connections to high schools, affordable grocery stores, and employment uses north of I-84. |
| How to: | City staff and TriMet can use the findings from the opportunity analysis to demonstrate a need for the following improvements:  
- increased frequency of existing bus route headways, particularly for north-south transit service on 181st/182nd Street;  
- addition of weekend and evening service to existing low frequency routes;  
- more shelters, seating, and lighting at bus stops; and  
- addition of new routes to improve coverage and reduce walking distance to stops. |
| Potential Partners: | TriMet, Metro, Multnomah Youth Commission, Organizing People, Activating Leaders (OPAL) |

**GOAL 2: Improve transit service and walkability.**

**Action 3-2:** Complete a “neighborhood walkability assessment” in West Gresham to identify and prioritize projects that improve walking conditions, with emphasis on areas around transit, schools, and parks.

| Objective: | The City is currently completing a sidewalk inventory and a street light replacement project. We recommend building upon this work and conducting a walkability assessment in partnership with community groups in West Gresham. Our analysis found this area to have the highest need for pedestrian improvements related to sidewalk quality, crosswalks, and street lighting. This effort would be a relatively inexpensive way to engage residents in the decision-making process, while also identifying improvements that will best meet community needs. |
| How to: | The City is currently completing a sidewalk inventory and a street light replacement project. We recommend building upon this work and a community-driven process to identify specific issues and solutions, consistent with Goal 1. The assessment should culminate with a list of top priorities for pedestrian projects. Special attention should be given to areas around schools, parks, and transit stops. |
| Potential Partners: | Safe Routes to School, OregonWalks, schools, youth groups |

**INDICATOR: FOOD**

**GOAL 4: Improve access to affordable healthy and culturally appropriate food in high priority areas.**

**Action 4-1:** Examine and enact zoning code changes that would permit better development of community food assets in priority areas.

| Objective: | The intent of this action is to improve access to affordable healthy food by allowing the development of more community food assets in priority areas. Examples of community food assets include: food co-ops, open air markets, farm stands, community gardens, and market gardens. These forms of economic exchange may help residents support themselves financially when they first arrive in Gresham. |
| How to: | We recommend examining the code to identify possible barriers related to: farmers’ ability to sell their produce at farm-stands and small open air markets in priority areas; residents’ ability to sell produce grown in community gardens or home gardens located in residential zones; and the ability to sell value-added products that are made locally in certified kitchens. The assessment should include addressing concerns that have been raised about similar proposals in Gresham in the past, as well as at what has worked well and what has not worked well in other cities that have pursued zone code changes in support of urban agriculture. Ultimately, the City should consider changes that would make it easier for people to develop and operate community food assets. |
| Potential Partners: | Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Rockwood Food Co-op, Rockwood Food Justice, Outgrowing Hunger, Rockwood Urban Renewal Area Food Incubator |

**INDICATOR: TRANSPORTATION**

**GOAL 3: Improve transit service and walkability.**

**Action 3-3:** Develop a tool for evaluating improvement projects listed in the Transportation System Plan (TSP).

| Objective: | The City currently makes decisions on where to fund minor transportation improvement projects based on priorities set forth in the Transportation System Plan (TSP) and other planning documents, as funds become available. Developing and utilizing an evaluation tool would help ensure that funds are distributed equitably across Gresham. Given limited resources for pedestrian-oriented projects, prioritizing funding to areas with vulnerable populations would be the most cost-effective use of funds in terms of benefiting the most people. |
| How to: | The tool should take into account specific criteria related to: existing infrastructure, safety concerns such as traffic accident hot spots, and concentration of populations that rely on walking, biking, and transit as their primary modes. These populations include: low-income, low vehicle per household, youth, seniors, and disabilities. The tool could incorporate or refer to demographic maps made for this opportunity analysis. |
| Potential Partners: | Multnomah County Health Department, OPAL, TriMet |
**GOAL 4: Improve access to affordable healthy and culturally appropriate food in high priority areas.**

**Action 4-2:** Provide financial and technical assistance to support the development of community food assets, including locally-owned grocers that provide access to affordable healthy food and pay living wages to employees.

**Objective:** This action aims to provide greater variety of healthy and affordable food to residents in high priority areas, recognizing the role of small neighborhood retailers and convenience stores in providing grocery options. The action would involve identifying barriers that are currently preventing retailers from selling more fresh produce, determining what is needed to overcome these barriers, and exploring innovative ways of increasing the sale of fresh produce.

**How to:** Technical assistance could involve helping groups to find sources of start-up capital and to learn business and fundraising skills required to build a vibrant food landscape in their neighborhoods. It could also include providing clarity regarding how to access City funds to increase chances of obtaining this financial assistance. Other forms of support might include tax exemptions, loans, help with local advertising, or special permitting provisions. When providing financial incentives to attract grocery stores, the City should engage low-income residents who face the greatest barriers to food access, in order to ensure that subsidies are serving community needs related to affordability and cultural diversity.

**Potential Partners:** Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

**Action 4-3:** Work with small neighborhood retailers to help provide the resources and assistance necessary for them to sell healthy and affordable food.

**Objective:** This action is intended to provide greater variety of healthy and affordable food to residents in high priority areas, recognizing the role of small neighborhood retailers and convenience stores in providing grocery options. The action would involve identifying barriers that are currently preventing retailers from selling more fresh produce, determining what is needed to overcome these barriers, and exploring innovative ways of increasing the sale of fresh produce.

**How to:** We recommend that the City engage with local store owners, possibly via the Rockwood Business Coalition, to assess barriers and possible solutions. This might help include advice on how to source wholesale foods or financial assistance for purchasing equipment such as refrigerators for produce, in order to reduce the cost burden of selling healthy food options in a small store. The City should consider working with Multnomah County’s Healthy Retail Initiative, which offers similar forms of support. The City should also partner with community groups that are already working on promoting healthy retail in Gresham neighborhood stores.

**Potential Partners:** Multnomah County Health Department, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon

**Action 4-4:** Conduct a feasibility study on how distribution channels could better link the region’s local farms and food producers with neighborhood retailers in priority areas.

**Objective:** We recommend that the City partner with Multnomah County and other regional actors to conduct further research on how to create the economies of scale necessary for neighborhood stores to sell healthy food at a price that is comparable to that of larger supermarket chains in the region. The ultimate goal is to increase access to low priced produce, while supporting the working conditions and viability of the region’s agricultural sector.

**How to:** This study should consider how a regional food distribution co-operative could be created to link the region’s many farms and producers with small neighborhood grocers and retailers. This study might also determine how much money residents would save on transportation-related costs such as car-ownership by improving access to fresh food within walking distance. Lastly, it should examine the multiple benefits of local sourcing, including environmental sustainability, job growth, skill development, and increased local economic prosperity.

**Potential Partners:** Ecotrust, Oregon Food Bank

**GOAL 5: Increase local business ownership and employment opportunities for Gresham residents through community-oriented development.**

**Action 5-1:** Provide more direct support to local residents to start and maintain small businesses.

**Objective:** Supporting small, locally-owned businesses is intended to help keep more income circulating in the local economy and increase opportunities for low capital entrepreneurs to start and run small businesses. Increasing the relative support they receive would reduce risk associated with providing incentives to large, outside owned corporations, which tend to be more foot-loose. Priority should be given to organizations that are democratically owned such as cooperatives and businesses with an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP) to maximize the social benefits resulting from public subsidies.

**How to:** We recommend that the Community Development and Economic Development departments collaborate to provide additional support to small businesses. This could include maintaining an inventory of vacant commercial properties that local entrepreneurs could pursue. In addition to staff time, we also suggest allocating a greater share of financial incentives to small business development. In accordance with the principles of accountable development, the City should also track and analyze the effectiveness of incentive programs based on long-term job creation, wages, and other community goals, to ensure benefits are realized over time. We also suggest the UDP staff evaluate policies and processes for potential barriers to low capital entrepreneurs such as food carts, short-term sales, and home occupations. Possible changes may include simplifying the permit review process (to reduce the need for consultants) and allowing more flexibility in zoning regulations for micro-businesses or non-profit organizations seeking to occupy vacant or underutilized properties (also reducing costs).

**Potential Partners:** Rockwood Business Coalition, Gresham Chamber of Commerce, Mt. Hood Small Business Development Center
GOAL 5: Increase local business ownership and employment opportunities for Gresham residents through community-oriented development.

Action 5-2: Initiate a Community Economic Development (CED) strategy in West Gresham, leveraging the Rockwood Urban Renewal Area (URA) funding.

Objective: This action aims to address community needs and enhance employment opportunities in West Gresham, which our analysis found to have a high concentration of underemployed adults. The perceived lack of stores and services in West Gresham, relative to the rest of Gresham, presents an opportunity for new local-serving businesses. We recommend taking a community economic development (CED) approach to revitalization of the Rockwood URA, in order to increase social benefits of economic activity and to create capital and wealth from within communities. A CED approach would involve increasing the share of URA funding to entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and community organizations, as well as filling gaps in the provision of neighborhood goods and services. Leveraging URA funding in this manner is intended to maximize benefits to local residents. When combined with Action 5-1, encouraging commercial and/or community use of vacant or underutilized properties in the URA would address desires for more social gathering space, aesthetic enhancements, and safety (through more eyes on the street).

How to: Based on other findings related to community needs, we also suggest pursuing opportunities for local residents to provide services related to food, construction/housing rehabilitation, and recreation. There is a strong desire for the local food system to be grounded in community resources (see Goal 4). Construction is an industry with potential career tracks, and the CED strategy should prioritize local businesses and workers to implement housing rehabilitation and redevelopment projects (see Goal 2). Given that youth programming and parks maintenance are other top priorities in the community, the Redevelopment Commission should seek ways to address these goals while increasing local employment. This recommendation builds upon the current approach of utilizing the URA Catalyst site to address existing community needs for additional job training and library resources, as well as incubator and retail space for local entrepreneurs.

Potential Partners: Ecumenical Ministries, Rockwood CDC, Human Solutions, El Programa Hispano, Rockwood Business Coalition

GOAL 7: Improve the quality of parks and support the provision of youth programming.

Action 7-1: Develop a strategy to expand community and City capacity to increase the frequency of public parks maintenance to ensure that every neighborhood has usable and enjoyable spaces for residents.

Objective: According to the 2007 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment completed by the City, the allocation of parks improvement funds is based on physical access to parks, population density, park capacity, median income, and poverty levels. We recommend revising the tool to ensure the equitable distribution of park improvement funds in the long-run. To increase the frequency of maintenance, the City should pursue formal partnerships with community groups and non-profit organizations to provide additional human power for parks maintenance, supplementing City staff.

How to: Based on CCP’s research, there are two other measures that we recommend adding to the tool for prioritizing parks maintenance: 1) the concentration of youth, and 2) vehicle ownership or transit dependency. Based on the existing and proposed demographic criteria, West Gresham would be the highest priority for increased maintenance. In terms of a funding strategy, a low-cost idea to consider is a parks stewardship program, in which residents, homeowner associations, neighborhood associations, community groups, or businesses could volunteer their time or resources to sponsor park clean-up days, raise funds for parks facilities maintenance, or “adopt” a park or trail.

Potential Partners: SummerWorks, Northwest Youth Corps, Oregon Youth Conservation Corps, and Americorps VISTA, community-based organizations, E-ROC, People for Parks

Action 7-2: Establish a community task force and complete a “neighborhood recreation and nature assessment” to identify desired amenities and prioritize park improvement projects.

Objective: This action is intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the city’s nature and recreation facilities to help prioritize improvement projects based on need and interest. Creating a task force to complete the assessment aims to more directly incorporate community considerations into funding decisions. This approach would help ensure that investments are spent on resources that the community needs and wants.

How to: We recommend convening a task force composed of residents of all ages, income levels, and racial/ethnic groups and representing each neighborhood. The task force would assess the number, types, and conditions of facilities to determine which parks are in the poorest condition, which neighborhoods have the lowest number of amenities, and which additional amenities are most desired by community members. The City should refer to the assessment when allocating and applying for funding for park maintenance and improvement projects. The City may want to explore similar community-driven models such as the Sellwood Gap project, Living Cully’s BioBlitz project, and Let’s Grow Cully Park. The City could consider partnering with community groups and non-profit organizations involved with parks and recreation to facilitate the assessment process.

Potential Partners: People for Parks, Gresham Neighborhood Associations
GOAL 7: Improve the quality of parks and support the provision of youth programming.

Objective:
A multi-agency initiative led by the Multnomah Youth Commission.

Action 7-3: Convene a youth recreation taskforce to develop a strategy for increasing the availability of youth activities, programs, and events held in parks, schools, and other public spaces in West Gresham.

How to:
Working with the existing youth activity providers in Gresham (such as the Rockwood Library and the current vision for the Catalyst site to co-locate community-serving uses). This recommendation builds upon the success of Youth-Adult partnerships (Y-AP) as the practice of youth and adults working together, over a sustained period of time to find action-based solutions to a community issue in a way that promotes social justice. Multnomah County has used this model over the last three years to develop a youth-led action plan to address youth violence issues using policy and program interventions. Youth learn new skills that support their development, while adults learn core skills to understand how to work inter-culturally; both then translate this learning into effective transformative practices for governance and the community. The ultimate aim of this goal is to reduce youth violence.

Potential Partners:
Boys and Girls Club, Gresham residents, community-based organizations, E-ROC, People for Parks

GOAL 8: Foster safe and welcoming neighborhoods.

Objective:
Youth-Adult partnerships (Y-AP) is the practice of youth and adults working together, over a sustained period of time to find action-based solutions to a community issue in a way that promotes social justice. Multnomah County has used this model over the last three years to develop a youth-led action plan to address youth violence issues using policy and program interventions. Youth learn new skills that support their development, while adults learn core skills to understand how to work inter-culturally; both then translate this learning into effective transformative practices for governance and the community. The ultimate aim of this goal is to reduce youth violence.

How to:
We recommend that the City adopt a Y-AP model to develop and implement policies and programs that have broad community impact related to public safety and youth empowerment. A key principle of Y-AP is the authentic empowerment of participating youth through creating a climate of reciprocal learning for both adults and youth. Modeling after Multnomah County’s program, youth leaders in Gresham could work directly with students and adults from various agencies and community groups to identify actions to reduce violence. This action would involve providing City staff time to coordinate planning and implementation with youth, schools, and community organizations.

Potential Partners:
Multnomah Youth Commission (MYC), Multnomah County STRYVE, City Gang Prevention Initiative, Gresham Youth Advisory Council, and E-ROC

Action 8-2: Develop community-led patrols and neighborhood watches in West Gresham, working directly with residents from diverse backgrounds.

How to:
We strongly advise making this a youth-driven project.

Potential Partners:
Boys and Girls Club, Gresham City Gang Prevention Initiative, Gresham Youth Advisory Council, and E-ROC

Action 8-3: Develop a community center in West Gresham; consider incorporating into the URA Catalyst site.

How to:
The City should consider the URA Catalyst site in Gresham (such as the new Boys and Girls Club), the City should determine what youth recreational needs remain and how the City can best partner with organizations to fulfill the demand. The City can also engage individual residents and smaller community groups in this process in order to provide volunteer-based programming in parks (e.g., teaching workshops in parks, running an activity for a day, or sponsoring a special event). We strongly advise making this a youth-driven project.

Potential Partners:
Boys and Girls Club, Gresham residents, community-based organizations, E-ROC, People for Parks
**FUNDING:**

**GOAL 9:** Improve outcomes in priority areas by strategically allocating funds, using opportunity mapping as a guide.

**Action 9-1:** Proactively allocate HUD funding to priority areas and update the tool for evaluating CDBG/HOME projects.

**Objective:** The City currently uses a rating system to evaluate applications for HUD funding through the CDBG and HOME programs. We recommend using opportunity mapping to: 1) evaluate applications for housing and infrastructure projects using HUD funds, and 2) determine areas to target various types of projects that advance livability goals. The aim would be to more explicitly account for the geographic distribution of resources and areas of highest needs, as well as to use funds to proactively increase access to opportunity for low-income residents.

**How to:** Proactively seeking housing projects in areas of “high opportunity” would involve reaching out to housing developers and affordable housing providers, assisting with finding funding sources beyond HUD, and providing additional support to organizations that have not received federal funding in the past through the grant application process. Please refer to the Opportunity Mapping Guide in the plan which includes recommendations on how to use the opportunity mapping as a guide for these various purposes. City staff, led by the Community Development department but including all divisions that utilize HUD funding, should facilitate a process to update the tool. The update would consider HUD requirements, City policies, and community priorities such as those identified in this Framework Plan. In accordance with Goal 1, the process should involve Citizen Advisory Subcommittees and community leaders from under-represented populations in Gresham. We also suggest seeking assistance from other jurisdictions in the region that have completed opportunity mapping such as Washington County, the City of Portland, and Clackamas County.

**Action 9-2:** Prioritize use of HUD funds for housing and community development, and seek new sources to supplement existing funding for transportation projects.

**Objective:** This action recognizes the potential trade-offs between different priorities when allocating HUD funds. We recommend prioritizing housing because it provides the foundation for health and well-being. About 44% of Gresham households pay over 30% of their income on rent or mortgage, posing significant challenges to accessing opportunities. Following housing, we encourage allocation of funds towards community priorities for economic and community development, as identified in this Framework Plan and through on-going public involvement processes. This prioritization of funding may squeeze remaining HUD funds that could be used for transportation.

**How to:** One consideration is adopting a City policy to commit a minimum of 25% of CDBG funds to “housing development and rehabilitation.” We also suggest pursuing new sources of funds to implement pedestrian-oriented transportation projects (Goal 3). The TSP lists various sources of transportation funding, and Safe Routes to Schools is an example of a funding source for walkability projects in residential areas. Consistent with the actions in Goals 4 and 5, we recommend targeting economic development funds from the URA and HUD toward local business ownership and employment opportunities, including community food assets in priority areas. In accordance with Goals 4 and 7, we also suggest that remaining funds for “public facilities and improvements” be allocated to park improvements and community gardens, until a long-term-funding strategy is adopted (see Action 9-3).

**Action 9-3:** Develop a funding strategy for the development and maintenance of parks, recreation, and community amenities on public properties.

**Objective:** This action aims to secure a long-term source of funding for community development projects, recognizing that many of the City’s existing plans and the actions in this Opportunity Framework Plan will require additional resources to implement. The construction of a community center in West Gresham would likely be the largest expense, although other recommendations related to Goals 4, 7, and 8 would require new or reallocated funds. While it may not be possible to complete this action in the immediate future, given the difficulty of raising taxes, increasing public involvement around parks and neighborhood safety would help build support for increasing the quantity and quality of public parks and community facilities.

**How to:** The funding strategy may involve re-establishing a Parks and Recreation department within the City of Gresham. As recommended in the Parks Master Plan of 2009, CCP agrees that the City should consider pursuing the development of a Parks and Recreation Special District as a long-term, stable funding source. In the interim, we recommend that the City seek grant funding to implement park improvements and community development projects and partnering with non-profit, grant eligible organizations (see Actions 7-1 and 7-2).
APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Public Involvement:

Continue to create mechanisms for community involvement

Gresham can continue to build upon its public involvement efforts by creating mechanisms that allow staff to follow up on community input and evaluate community processes (e.g., evaluation tools and checklists). Additionally, the City should continue to partner with Portland State University, University of Oregon, and local colleges to provide technical assistance for planning and research projects that advance opportunity-related goals. In addition to assistance with the recommended actions in this plan, examples of possible projects include: demographic research, equity analyses, and health/social impact assessments. Community-based participatory research could be used as a tool for identifying local priorities and building capacity for community to engage in decision making processes.

Housing:

Work towards regional housing solutions

Scarcity of affordable housing is a regional issue, and all cities need to take responsibility for housing low-income people. One step that Gresham can take is to advocate for regional solutions to affordable housing through Fair Housing networks. There are several active players in the housing world that Gresham can work with, including Washington County’s Community Development office, the Portland Housing Bureau, Clackamas County, and Metro.

Evaluate barriers to affordable housing

The Fair Housing Council of Oregon has developed an evaluation tool that city planners, policy makers, and other practitioners can use to examine local land use through a fair housing lens. The tool suggests clear and straightforward actions that jurisdictions can take to both comply with fair housing law and affirmatively further fair housing. By going through this exercise, Gresham can also identify barriers to affordable housing. While fair housing and affordable housing are related, they are distinct concepts. However, many individuals who are members of protected classes with respect to fair housing also need affordable housing (although not all). The guide primarily focuses on ways land use plans and implementing codes can affirmatively further fair housing, but also contains suggestions relevant to supporting the development of affordable housing. The guide is available through the Fair Housing Council website, and an updated version is expected to be released in the summer of 2014.

One barrier that is mentioned in the tool is the permitting process for new housing. We suggest the city assess the potential for streamlining the permitting process for new multifamily housing, including design standards that might increase the provision of common areas (e.g., green space, play areas, multi-functional community rooms). This includes considering changes to system development charges (SDCs) to encourage the construction of market-rate housing that is affordable to lower incomes. We recognize the need to balance the goal of increasing the affordable housing stock with the intention of SDCs and permitting processes to ensure adequate provision of urban infrastructure and services and of safe, well-designed housing.

Promote minority homeownership

The city should seek ways to close the homeownership gap for people of color in Gresham. One suggestion is to use the Shared Appreciation Mortgage (SAM) Program (2014-2015) funds to provide homebuyer assistance to minority households. Currently, there are not parameters set for this program. If this program continues, it can be a viable source of assistance to minority homebuyers and their families.

Food:

SNAP and WIC Benefit Programs

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program are federal programs that serve as a critical food assistance resource to low-income, qualifying families. In addition to providing a nutritional benefit to enrolled individuals and families, the programs also bring federal dollars to Gresham’s local economy. If residents spend their benefits in stores and markets outside of Gresham, than those federal dollars “leak” from the community. Ensuring that all grocery stores and farmers’ markets in Gresham accept SNAP and WIC dollars is one way the City can maximize the capture of federal funds. This is especially important for stores selling fresh, healthy products. Therefore, the City should consider maintaining a database of stores and markets that accept federal benefits, building upon CCP’s Market Basket Survey, and provide information and encouragement to stores that currently do not. Further, the City could also consider partnering with Multnomah County Health Department and the Oregon Department of Health and Human Services to study the inflow and the outflow of these benefits in the city’s neighborhoods, to help identify ways to capture additional benefits.

Food Policy Council and Food Access Plan

Over the course of this research, we have identified numerous organizations and residents who are very eager to collaborate with the City in developing new policies and approaches to improving food access. The City of Gresham should continue to collaborate and partner with these local organizations, as well as those that work with Gresham’s culturally diverse communities. A food policy council might assist the City of Gresham with identifying and implementing specific food access improvements in high priority areas, building upon the findings of this Opportunity Framework Plan.

Community Gardens Program

The City operates three of the community gardens in Gresham (wheras the others are operated by private organizations). Currently there are about 60 families participating in the City’s community gardening program, and the gardens are at or nearing capacity. There is a short wait list for the City Hall community garden, indicating unmet demand. The City should consider expansion of this program to other underserved areas of the city that face the greatest barriers to food access, consistent with Action 4-2.

Employment Opportunities:

Encourage “accountable development” practices

The City should consider preparing a written economic development plan to help ensure linkage between budgeting process and economic development priorities. This would involve evaluating economic development policies in relation to community priorities and “accountable development” practices. Accountable development includes transparent negotiation processes and written agreements with monitorable and enforceable conditions. Where possible, agreements should address local needs such as living wage jobs accessible to the local population, health benefits, training and advancement opportunities, child care services, public spaces, and/or workforce housing. The planning process should involve regional and local partners, as well as residents.

Education and Services:

Assess child care needs and solutions

An additional step the City might take in addressing barriers to employment and educational opportunities is to look for model programs in cities similar to Gresham that have public support for the provision of affordable and quality child care. We recommend considering possible implementable strategies for Gresham including cooperative childcare organizations; this would help meet community needs, while supporting local employment and economic activity.

Parks:

Increase street trees in underserved neighborhoods

The City has experienced an increase in the amount of street trees in underserved neighborhoods (see Citywide Urban Forestry Management Plan, 2011 for maps). While street trees cannot replace the presence of a well-maintained city park, they are a less expensive way for the City to add aesthetic and environmental health benefits to communities. When considering the addition of street trees, the City should prioritize neighborhoods with the lowest share of the city’s of urban canopy cover, as identified in the City’s Neighborhood Canopy Maps. Street trees also signal public investment in a place, encouraging other types of private investment in the built environment.
Increase access to parks and ensure long-term availability of parks
As discussed in the Transportation section, the connectivity and quality of the sidewalk network limits access to parks, particularly in West Gresham. As such, we recommend developing a system for tracking sidewalk improvements specifically with regard to park access, supplementing Action 3-1. In order to help ensure the long-term availability of park space for Gresham residents, CCP recommends that the City include a designation for parks in the zoning code.

Assess environmental quality in Gresham
Due to limited time constraints, CCP was unable to complete an in-depth analysis of environmental quality across Gresham neighborhoods. However, this is a very important issue to consider when determining access to opportunity, as poor environmental quality can lead to serious health risks. For example, air pollution contributes to respiratory ailments. Based on a brief overview of the City of Gresham’s urban canopy maps, compiled for the Urban Forestry Management Plan, and a review of the Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) Portland Air Toxics Solutions project, it is apparent that there are disparities between neighborhoods with regards to urban canopy cover and exposure to toxic air pollutants. In addition, Map 17 in the Opportunity Analysis also shows an uneven distribution of asthma rates. The City should further investigate the level of risk to residents and determine how they can partner with other organizations such as the DEQ to mitigate these risks.

Safety and Livability:

Create and implement community solutions to neighborhood safety
There are several ways in which the City can partner with community to increase safety and livability in Gresham’s neighborhoods. First, Gresham can create a joint community-city task force to build stronger community-led policing strategies that de-escalate violence and increase safety at the neighborhood level. To inform strategies for reducing disproportionate minority contact, Gresham could also consider collecting and tracking data (i.e. policing rates, criminal justice system rates, and prisoner reentry rates).