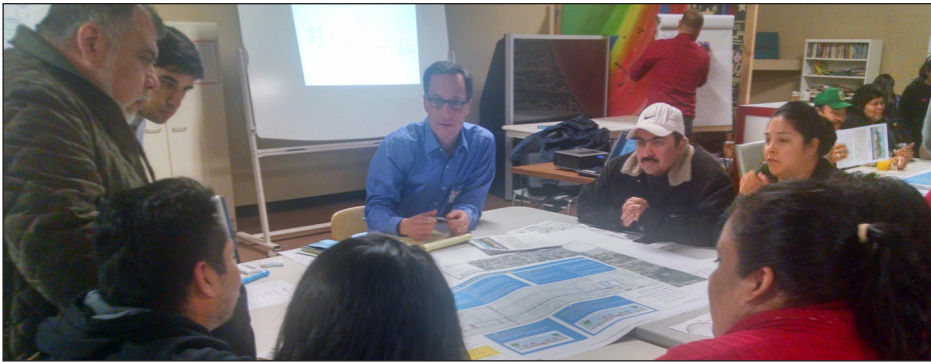




Help make transit better in your community.



POWELL-DIVISION TRANSIT AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECT



CITY OF GRESHAM BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS



February 2015

BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS

February, 2015

Cogan Owens Greene (COG), the Latino Network and members of the Multicultural Collaborative were retained in November, 2014 to extend the outreach and engagement on the Powell Division Transit and Development Project (Project) to populations who normally are not involved. In December, members of the COG consulting team reviewed demographic information and conducted stakeholder interviews to develop outreach and engagement methods to reach diverse populations. We report on these methods here: Business Surveys and Community Based Discussions.

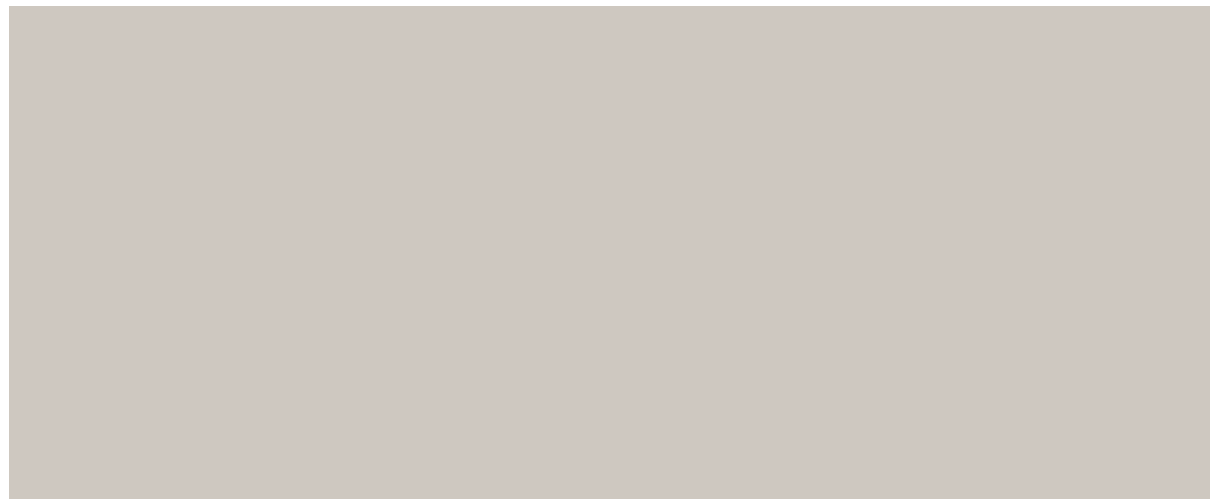
According to our scope of work with the City of Gresham, business surveys were to result in at least 60 completed surveys. Community based discussions in dominant ethnic community streams were to reach individuals or groups connected with at least five of the nine following organizations, cultures or ethnicities: the Latino Network, African Women's Coalition, Russian, Burmese or Zomi, Bhutanese, Chuukese, Tongan, karen and youth. We are on track to meet all these agreements. To date, 64 in-person surveys, 17 "platform" surveys with transit riders, and in depth discussions with the Latino Network, Russian Speaking Network of Oregon, Oregon Bhutanese Community Organization, the Tongan Community Association and the Gresham Youth Advisory Commission have been completed.

Business Surveys

To complete the business interviews, and engage youth, COG developed a Youth Organizer Interest Form. With our project partners, we distributed it to key contacts in these diverse communities. We trained a total of 16 youth on February 7 and February 10. Our first canvass was February 11. On February 12, youth continued to canvass and participated in the Gresham hands on workshop.

In total, 65 Personal Business Surveys [both transit and land use choices] in Spanish and English were collected through interviews the youth canvassers collected.

Responses follow. A copy of the interview questions is included in the appendix.



1. *How can transit better serve your business?*

Of the 65 businesses who responded to this question, top responses include the following the following, using Metro’s key words for coding of the open-ended questions.

- Frequency of service
- Access (better access to transit)
- Convenience
- Destinations (places to go)
- Maintain or increase bus service

2. *How could transit service be improved?*

Top responses include:

- Maintain/increase bus service
- Safety and security
- More amenities (art, places to sit, trash cans, etc.)
- More destinations (places to go)
- Increased reliability
- Increased service hours

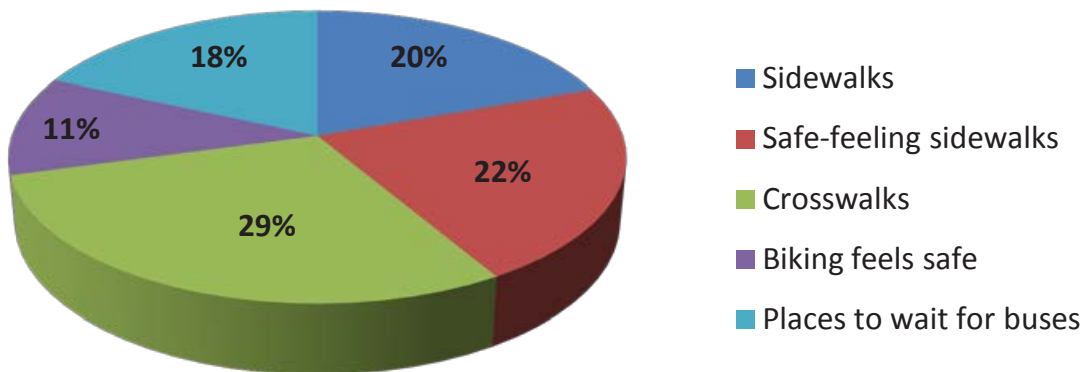
3. *Would it be helpful if more people came by transit?*

Out of the 59 respondents who had an opinion about this question, 41 or approximately 70% said more transit would help their business.

4. *Which are the most important changes you would welcome near the new bus stations?*

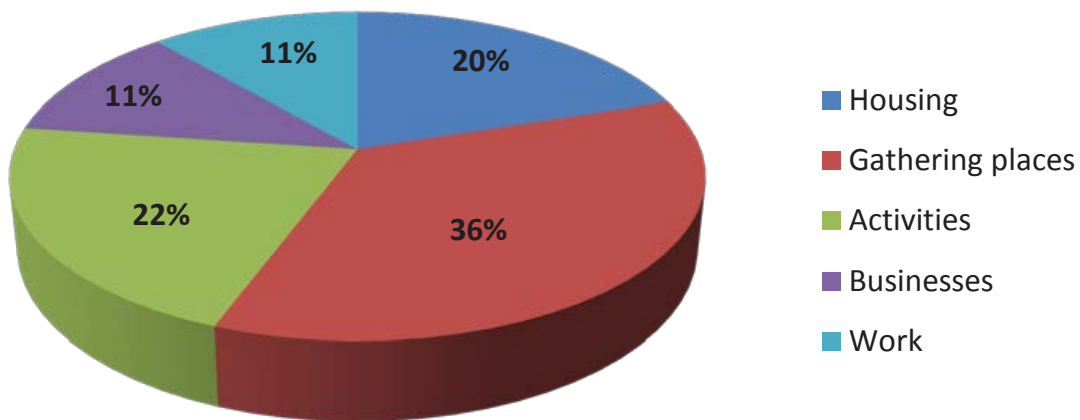
About getting to transit – of the 67 business respondents, most said that more crosswalks would be helpful.

Getting to Transit



About the neighborhood/businesses – of the 65 respondents, the most frequent response was more gathering places.

Neighborhood / Business



Community-Based Discussions

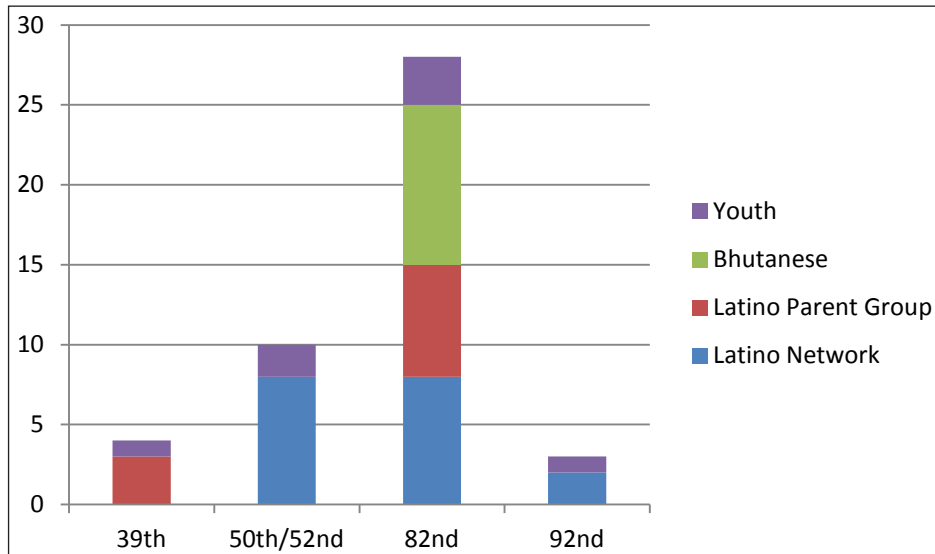
To date, we have held in depth community-based discussions with members of the Spanish speaking community (Latino Network and Latino Parent Night at Gresham High), the Tongan, Bhutanese and Russian speaking community as well as the Gresham Youth Commission. Questionnaires completed by Spanish speaking, Bhutanese and youth canvassers are shown in the charts below. Individual results by community are included in the appendix.

In the discussion groups, fear of increasing rents was a frequent theme. As expressed by the Tongan community, "we moved here from North Portland. If the rents go up, up and up, we will have to move again". This displacement negatively affects kids performance in schools, community and social networks.

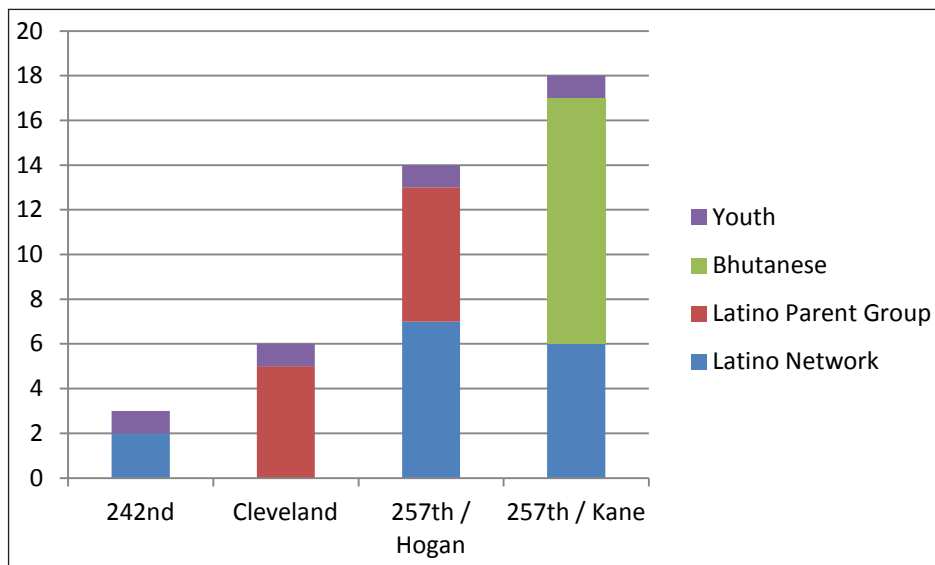
The amount of transit ridership varied from low to no transit use to many daily riders. All the Bhutanese community participants use transit on a daily basis.

When asked where the route should cross over in Portland from Powell to Division, the most frequent response was 82nd Avenue.

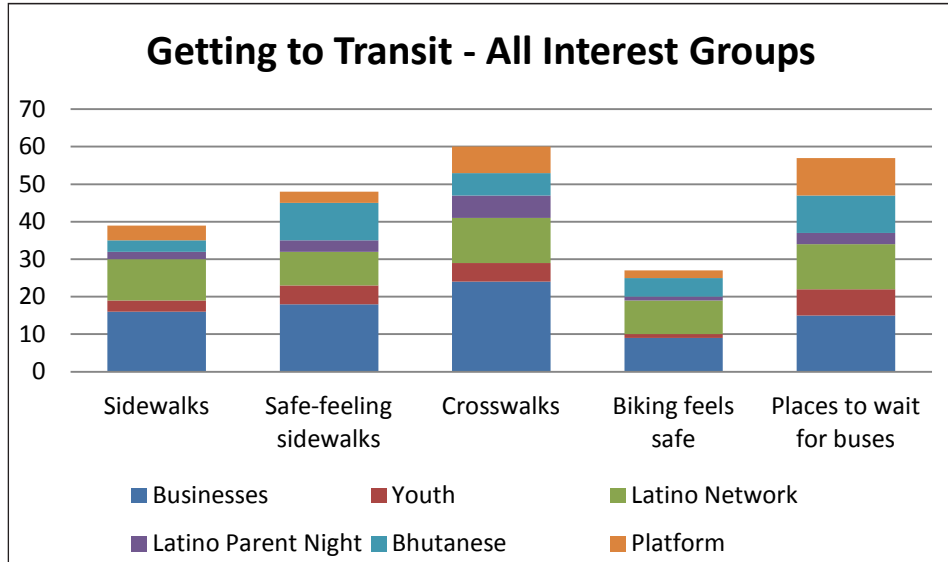
Gresham Crossing:



When asked where the route should crossover in Gresham, responses varied.

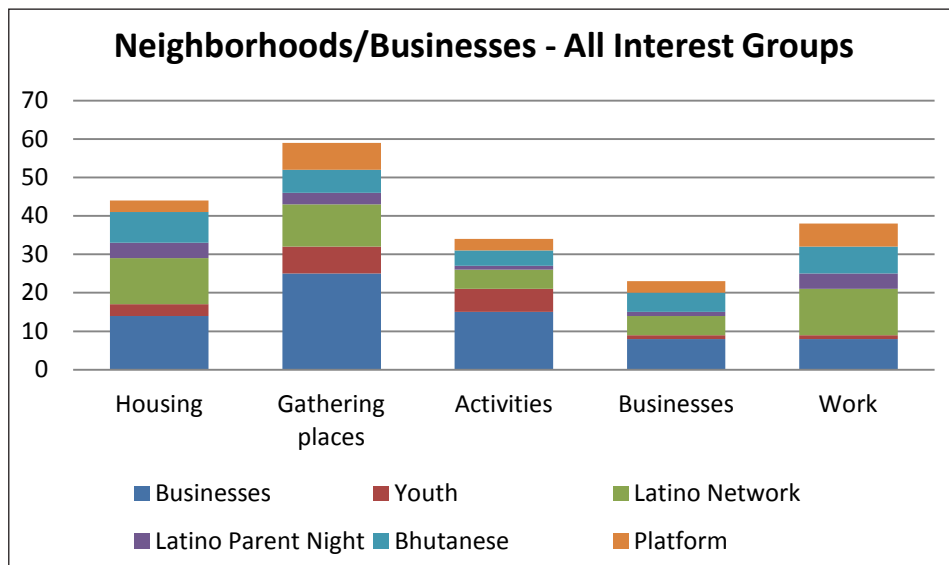


Regarding most important changes you would welcome near the new bus station, the leading response from all groups was more crosswalks.



	Businesses	Youth	Latino Network	Latino Parent Night	Bhutanese	Platform
Sidewalks	16	3	11	2	3	4
Safe-feeling sidewalks	18	5	9	3	10	3
Crosswalks	24	5	12	6	6	7
Biking feels safe	9	1	9	1	5	2
Places to wait for buses	15	7	12	3	10	10
Total	67	10	15	11	13	22

Regarding the most important changes respondents would welcome in the neighborhoods from a built environment or land use perspective, gathering places was the most frequent response.



	Businesses	Youth	Latino Network	Latino Parent Night	Bhutanese	Platform
Housing	14	3	12	4	8	3
Gathering places	25	7	11	3	6	7
Activities	15	6	5	1	4	3
Businesses	8	1	5	1	5	3
Work	8	1	12	4	7	6
Total	65	10	15	7	13	22

Community discussions to date that did not include questionnaire responses, but were instead a full group discussion included the following.

Russian Speaking Network of Oregon

Feedback from the Russian community focus group follows.

TRANSIT

- 92nd Avenue in Portland would likely provide a faster trip because it has less congestion than 82nd Avenue.
- Cesar Chavez is narrow and busy and is not the most promising route.
- 50th is not busy, but the street is narrower.
- Division west of 82nd has only three lanes, which leaves less room for the bus rapid transit. Can it be widened?
- 82nd Avenue would reach the most destinations.
- A stop near Portland Community College is important.
- Ensuring connections on Division to the Green Line MAX Station is important.
- The route to Mt. Hood Community College using Division and Kane likely would be faster and serve multi-family development, but it misses key destinations like the hospital.
- Hogan hits all the key destinations but does experience traffic congestion at times.
- Cleveland is a residential street and has a 25mph speed limit, so it is not the most promising.
- When adding bus rapid transit, the other bus lines running to MHCC should be evaluated to make sure they are working together. Overall, there is not enough bus service in northeast Gresham.
- Other ideas for improved transit included:
 - Fewer stops making the bus rapid transit faster, focusing on intersections with other bus routes and MAX.
 - A separate express bus that uses I-84 should be considered.
 - A circulator bus that serves key destinations like Gresham Vista Business Park, the hospital and MHCC also could be helpful.
 - Stations should be improved so they have shelter from the wind, do not encourage loitering and have adequate lighting.



STATION OPPORTUNITY AREAS

- A marketing plan should be developed to market Gresham and why it is a nice place to live and work. This could be used to attract jobs and people.
- More community gardens are needed throughout the City.
- More safe, comfortable, well-lighted mid-block crosswalks are needed in all three study areas, including on Stark, between the Home Depot and the east side of the hospital campus (where the hospital is putting in the new driveway).



182nd

- Many parking lots in this area have many empty spaces. They should be filled by:
 - Bazaar, market or food carts
 - Stormwater management facilities with native plants (contact the East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District)
 - Plants and flowers
 - Seating and café tables
 - A coffee shop/cafe
 - Open space
 - A combination of the above items that would make a beautiful community gathering place
 - Removing pavement is desired
- Volunteers could help with transformation of parking lots
- Storefront improvements are welcome in this area.
- Added sidewalks to key destinations is desired, including to schools and Grant Butte.
- A place, such as a community center, for families to come is desired. This could have physical activity for children, arts and crafts, classes, etc. And a café or place for parents to spend time while the children are engaged in activities. This should be coordinated with Boys and Girls Club so they are not duplicated services inefficiently.

Downtown

- The community center could be located in Downtown because it is close to the center of Gresham and to MAX. Parents could spend time at Downtown restaurants and shops while children are engaged in community center activities.
- Additional greenspace/gardens/playgrounds are needed integrated into Downtown.

Hogan/Stark

- Better walking connections are important.
- More trees are needed to make the area more attractive.
- More crosswalks with lights on Stark.

OTHER COMMENTS

- More translation of project materials into Russian is needed.

- Put posters with Russian translation into libraries, especially Midland and Rockwood, and stores frequented by Russian-speaking residents.
- Providing door hangers in Russian for Russian community leaders to distribute at people's homes would be effective.

Tongan Community Association

What do you value most about the Powell Division community today?

- Neighborhood, different flavors
- Employment opportunities, particularly for Tongan men in the construction industry.
- Cultural diversity
- Fear of losing the cultural diversity
- Moved from North to the East for affordable rents. If the housing and rents get more expensive, we will have to move again.



TRANSIT

Respondents advise crossing at 82nd Avenue due to the proximity of the community college.

In Gresham, they advise crossing at 223rd.

Regarding changes respondents would welcome at the new bus stations, responses follow:

- Safe place to wait for bus
- More space on the sidewalks to accommodate people standing
- Cars coming, need a safe place to wait
- Shelter in the weather, rain, rest
- Buses on Powell boarding currently is unsafe for all as sometimes the bus has to stop in the street
- Lighting needs to be improved

Regarding changes to the neighborhood/businesses, respondents suggest:

- More businesses. They are separated by long walking distances now.
- Keep, provide more affordable housing
- Provide for more places to work
- Develop a station area to reflect the diversity of the Pacific Island community (station area art/theme)

Downtown, at Division & Hood, respondents suggest:

- Community space
- Saturday market on east side; sell products, booth for sewing class
- Banks/other services
- Clinic, medical center/amenities

At Station areas

- Art theme; Pacific Island theme

Increase safety

- More cameras on bus to record disturbances, cut down on fighting

Fares

- Keep the price down for regular adults
- Increase time of transfer
- Very hard on low low income community members
- If the buses are late and you miss a transfer, can increase the price and frustration

Other Comments

- Tongan community members would like to help repair sidewalks for safety and employment opportunities
- Improve maintenance at the bus stops
- Landscaping, muddy conditions can make it particularly unpleasant

Latino Network

Initial community observations at the introductory power point presentation:

- Bike lanes need to be enlarged, extended
- Crosswalks are needed between signaled streets
- Crosswalks need to have a push button lighting systems to alert drivers and make them stop at crosswalk till light turns off.
- Minimum speed limits at crosswalks need to be established, so speed limits can be respected and provide for more safety for drivers & pedestrians
- Possible routes of Cesar Chavez, 52nd, 82nd, and 92nd are Division with a cross at Stark.
- Question: Will fare increase or change? Brian Martin response: TriMet will decide
- Question: When will these changes in routes take place? Brian Martin response: 2020



The group divided into two small groups. For purposes of consolidation, all responses will be combined and checks for similar observations or responses.

Routes:

- Powell, then 82 (though there is much traffic on 82nd, perhaps 92 might be better).
- Why?
 - Division is too narrow
 - 82nd is a main street
 - 92nd is a residential street
 - Growing business district on 82nd. People who don't drive would prefer 82nd
 - Easier access to other bus routes and ease of transfer
 - Division is a high fatality area. This has to be mitigated
- Mt. Hood CC:
 - o From Division cross at 257

- The return to Portland could be a different route, perhaps a loop route
- Having a Costco like store, Home depot here is important
- Important priorities: Access and speediness
- Catch commercial areas on Hogan to provide employment or create business that increase employment
- Park areas to have covered spaces for family activities
- Better where there isn't already a bus land (Hogan)
- Make sure there is a fast bus (Shuttle) accessible to people who live in Gresham area- most important
- Kane Street needs traffic signals, crosswalks and sidewalks
- Capacitation Center for alternative schools
- Skateboard park near high school
- Community Gym
- Soccer fields
- Keep Skate World!



Division/182nd neighborhood recommendations:

- More buses on 182nd (N/S bus service)
- Lights on crosswalks, crosswalks w/ lights (have seen a lot of accidents in this area)
- Bike lane signage
- Need more crosswalks on 18nd
- Need more sidewalks
- Lower traffic speed limit for safety
- Playgrounds/places to entertain kids
- Community Center w/ social service agencies like Latino Network, activities)
- Improvement to current parks/outdoor areas because now not safe for activities/playgrounds/kids.
- Pool necessary because otherwise have to travel far
- Parks don't have recreation centers, playgrounds or amenities
- People don't use parks because of the above.
- Would like communal gardens
- Would like Water parks/play fountains, these are popular with kids.
- Remove one of the gas sta. to allow for other development (like a pharmacy, Winco, Walgreens)

Downtown Gresham recommendations:

- Area streets around Health dept. clinic are dangerous for pedestrians, esp. when getting off Max/bus.
- Needs more sidewalks
- Cleaner area, improved maintenance
- More lighting
- Dangerous at night
- More childcare options in the area

-
- Develop a center for Prevention and Treatment: mental health care for adolescents and adults

Hogan/Stark recommendations:

- Area needs sidewalks
- Larger park areas with areas for picnics
- A good area for a community center that offers classes, training on technology so community is better prepared for new jobs in this field
- Development of a workforce training center
- Would like to see a mall/outlet (Stark/Mt Hood Medical Ctr area)
- Would like to see a Lowes here
- Crosswalks need flashing lights, maybe something that raised from the ground to assure traffic stops (esp. Stark, Hogan).
- Increase natural areas, more trees
- Repurpose Salvation Army area to make use more efficient

Cross over route references:

- Powell to Division: 50th avenue
- Hogan (Division/Stark): 257th (Kane)

Other recommendations:

- A shuttle for long trips destinations: for Hillsboro and for Mt. Hood
- Question: What will be the long-term impact on the environment and displacement homes in the area?

Oregon Bhutanese Community Organization

In thinking about the proposed route, what do you value most today?

- Affordable housing is the highest priority, so we don't have to move.
- Proximity of jobs to housing.
- The benefit of transit for students. When it is fast and on time.
- Establishing safe crossings. Should be around schools, apartments and at 162nd.

How often do you use transit? Most use daily.

Crossover from Powell to Division: most respondents (9) agreed 82nd would be best. One was not sure.

Thinking about the crossover in Gresham, most (11) recommend going Est on Division to Kane (257th), then north on Kane to Stark to pick up access to the community college, Legacy. Three respondents were not sure.

Regarding transit station areas – in terms of getting there: responses follow, with safe places to wait gathering the most votes.



- 13 Sidewalks (more)
- 17 Safe sidewalks
- 15 Crosswalks (more)
- 16 Biking (safe)
- 17 Places to wait (bigger for more people to wait)

All participants agreed with a suggestion to have an emergency phone in the transit stations. Other suggestions including blinking lights at crosswalks, especially at night. One participant suggested overcrossings. Another participant suggested warmers for particularly cold weather. Several agreed public restrooms proximate to the station areas are important.

Regarding land uses at the station areas, responses follow. Participants were unanimous that affordable housing and places to work are essential.

Neighborhood

- 17 More housing – affordable
- 17 Gathering places – particularly places to socialize for seniors, disabled.
- 17 Activities: fairs, farmers’ market/vegetables
- 17 Businesses/Services
- 17 Work

Other ideas

- Connecting disabled people to work and have resources, independence.
- Hold ESL and basic orientation classes on the weekends. Overview to newcomers.
- Would like to invite City’s neighborhood involvement specialist to next meeting.
- Provide tokens for farmers markets for very low income and seniors

Youth Organizers Methods and Summary

1. Recruitment

Based on Phase I Interview efforts, the COG team reached out to youth serving organizations and groups such as Latino Network, Native American Youth and Family Center, Gresham Youth Advisory Council, Multnomah Youth Commission, Rosewood Initiative, Rosemary Anderson High School, Portland State University and E-ROC to recruit applicants. Methods used were email outreach, and following up on existing relationships with each of these groups. The recruitment explicit in hiring youth in high school and early/community college age, considering our interest in the following objectives for youth in this age range:

1. Have a wealth of experience in Gresham’s built environment, and the Youth Organizer positions would be an opportunity to apply that expertise;
2. Based on best public engagement practices, there is an opportunity to support the planning education and civic engagement of



-
- youth as an under-represented voice in transportation and community planning projects; and
3. Are a reflection of the diversity of Gresham, and are well poised to be the outward representation of the City of Gresham's efforts in multi-cultural community and business outreach.

Most often, successful applicants had the support from staff from organizations we outreached, in order to initiate an application as well as follow through with the final hiring and selection process. In total we hired 16 youth from various race/ethnic backgrounds; ages 13-18; attending MHCC, Reynolds HS, Barlow HS, Madison HS, Harvey Scott MS, and youth currently not in school in the workforce. Youth friendly communication practices, such as text messaging and phone calls during afterschool hours were used to conduct interviews and convey information during the hiring process.

2. Training

Youth training was conducted with positive youth development practices. Two training day options were offered, to ensure that youth schedules were considered, given school, sports, and other extra-curricular or employment commitments youth already have. Trainings were located in the community at Latino Network's Rockwood office on 185th across the street from the Plaza del Sol in Rockwood, as a convenient location for youth commuting. Bus fare and refreshments were also provided to ensure a youth oriented environment, to support their full participation. The training covered basic planning concepts of local provision of transportation, transit, land-use and retail activity. We also included the purpose and objectives the PD Transportation Development project, a brief synopsis of the agencies involved in the planning process, where the results of the youth organizers' canvass would fit into the overall Action Plan, and the decision process. Youth also had time to reflect on their own experiences of transportation, the school system, and their own daily routes. Based on this overall context, youth created their own canvassing "rap" to businesses, to include that they were surveying business owners on behalf of the City of Gresham to learn more about how a new fast bus might be able to serve the community better than the current level of services people experience.

3. Canvassing

Youth, in teams canvassers working in pairs, conducted a total of 67 unique business surveys, over four, 3 hour canvassing shifts. Canvass field areas included SE 182nd Ave and Division, SE Hogan and Stark, and SE Eastman Parkway and Division. Youth were also able to collect 17 transit intercept surveys. Each canvass was conducted professionally, with youth wearing official project name tags, as well as introducing themselves as connected to the City of Gresham, and leaving both COG and City contact information (Brian Martin, Senior Planner) at the end of each survey.

Canvassing was generally a new activity for most youth. It was the first time for at least of the youth, especially high school aged youth. College age youth already had some experience with canvassing and were more confident during collection. We paired strong youth with those just learning, to provide an opportunity for peer learning and relationship building. Youth Commissioners, even those of high school age, also proved to be confident community builders and engaged at the same level as college age youth when meeting with business owners and operators.

4. Coding and Qualitative Analysis

Upon completion of the survey collection, we conducted a final coding and analysis session with youth organizers in order to help process the information for final reporting. Youth met downtown Portland at COG offices, which was a general challenge for youth who do not often go to the Central City.

The session was divided into three main sections: qualitative reflection and analysis, coding, and reflection on the canvassing experience and their employment in this project.

Qualitative Analysis

Based on their memory, youth reflected on the general things they heard and remembered from canvassing over 60 business in Gresham. In order to surface themes from what they heard, youth decided to think about the transportation project and its objective to encourage and provide high quality efficient bus service to Gresham residents. Youth determined that people take the bus for the following reasons to get to:

- Work
- School
- Fun/Entertainment
- Essentials for life like food, soap/hygiene supplies, and clothes, etc.

Youth also asked themselves why do they, themselves take the bus. They determined the following:

- Don't have a car, so we have to
 - Can't afford a car, no other way to get around
 - Connected to income and poverty
- Cheaper, and can save on gas money, and it is cheaper than other options
- May be against the use of gas
- Parking in downtown Portland is expensive, and don't want/can't pay it.
- Efficient and faster than walking
- Must get around, so it's a good way to do it
- Easy to get to friends' houses
- Shopping
- Many people can go together, you can go as a big group to the movies or to a game, and don't need a big car
- Visit family
- You can multitask, read, or chill out and stare out the window
- Some people don't want to drive at all, or they might be afraid to drive a car in traffic
- Some people can take the bus, so they don't have to drive drunk

From this discussion, youth identified that there are many obstacles good transportation options that promote success in life, and that those obstacles might be felt more deeply for some groups than others. The general groups that youth organizers felt were important to think about when we say "Transit Dependent" are:

- Youth
- Low Income or those who experience poverty - particularly those who can't afford cars
- People with disabilities

Youth then used the question, How do we support folks with obstacles? And which improvements that you heard from business owners help do that



the best? Youth were asked to prioritize the qualitative answers this way. The following improvements were prioritized:

- More accessible routes to people in the neighborhoods, not just on the busy streets
- Cheaper fares for youth and adults, to include transfer times
- General stop safety (lighting,shelters, street trees, neighborhood design), and crossings in high traffic areas
- Bus frequency and reliability to support all kinds of schedules (i.e. shift workers)
- Wayfinding and Comfort at the shelters: having posted bus routes, schedules and maps and high quality protection from the weather

Additionally, it was important for youth to note that many business owners did not have positive perspectives or impression of transit and those who ride transit. Youth noticed that it was often a negative response, and that transit was not generally valued as a community asset. Business owners also expressed a general perception that people who use transit might be homeless, poor, or up to no good.

Coding

Youth used the coding categories determined by Metro, coding the raw responses collected. Using the context and “equity” lens they created during the Qualitative Analysis. The codes reflected in this report are included in our results and recommendations here.

Reflection on Employment and Canvassing

Youth concluded that the canvassing work in general was not only fun to do, but also that they appreciated getting to interact with business owners in a way they have never before. They felt that during the surveys they were able to build a community connection with business owners, when usually there is a barrier to engagement between youth and adults. Youth also were generally excited to have this opportunity, as there are few jobs that have the dual purpose of community engagement AND the public benefit of providing information for decision making about neighborhood changes. Some youth also felt like it was a great opportunity to encourage adults to get out of their own comfort zones, to engage with youth in the community as well.

Youth Organizers were adamant that we continue this work if possible, and if there were other such similar opportunities that they be put on a list to be contacted. Youth also generally appreciated the youth friendly hours, atmosphere and positive youth development style of the adults/employers. Youth also responded very positively to having the practice of developing group agreements that everyone would follow, so that all youth and adults were empowered and responsible for their own actions when working and interacting with one another.

On the other hand, youth felt that changes could be made to improve their work and the experience. Youth would like for the process and project to be more youth-led, and to work with adults and the other youth involved in the future to figure out how to better deliver a youth-led project and product. Additionally they wanted to be made more clear that this was an occasional opportunity, and were confused that it wasn’t a Monday through Friday type job opportunity.

5. Preparing for Public Testimony

Youth overall were enthusiastic about the work they did, and would like to meet in March to read through project summary together, in order to develop a 5 minute presentation for March 16 Metro presentation of the outreach work. Youth would like determine who the group will speak and who will support (stand in solidarity) during the presentation.

6. Recommendations

Powell Division Transportation Development Project

- Consider engaging business owners to educate them about the positive contributions that transit can have on their businesses and community;
- Provide basic improvements to the transportation experiences of youth, those of low-incomes, and those with disabilities; and
- Make transit and neighborhoods more affordable, easily accessible, and more inclusive for people in Gresham.

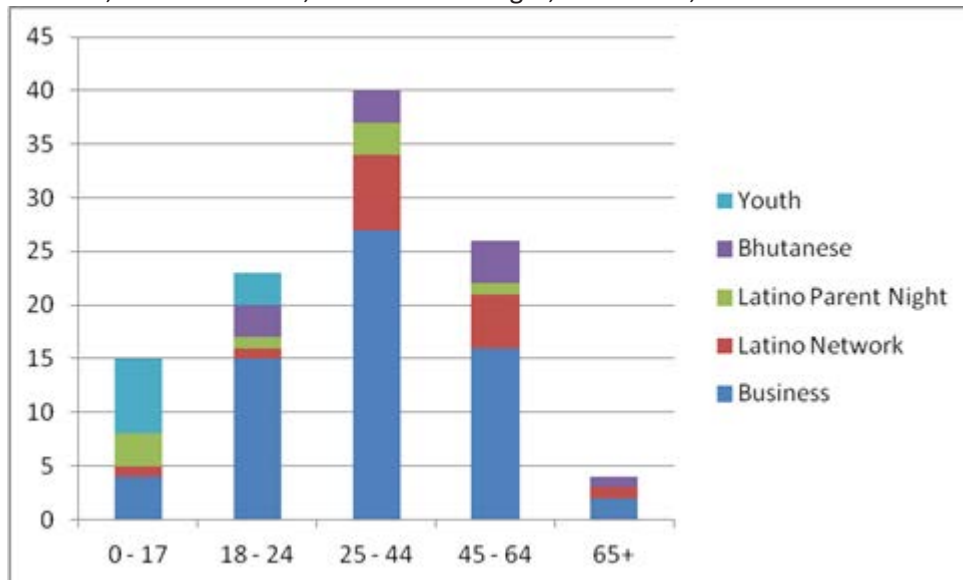
Multi-Cultural and Under-Represented Engagement

- Continue having youth organizers engage community members during the PD Transportation Development Project as ambassadors of the City;
- Provide a youth-friendly and in a culturally relevant way, so that people will get more involved and tell the City what they really think; and
- For the City to provide more opportunities like this for youth and their families to participate in local decision making.

Demographics

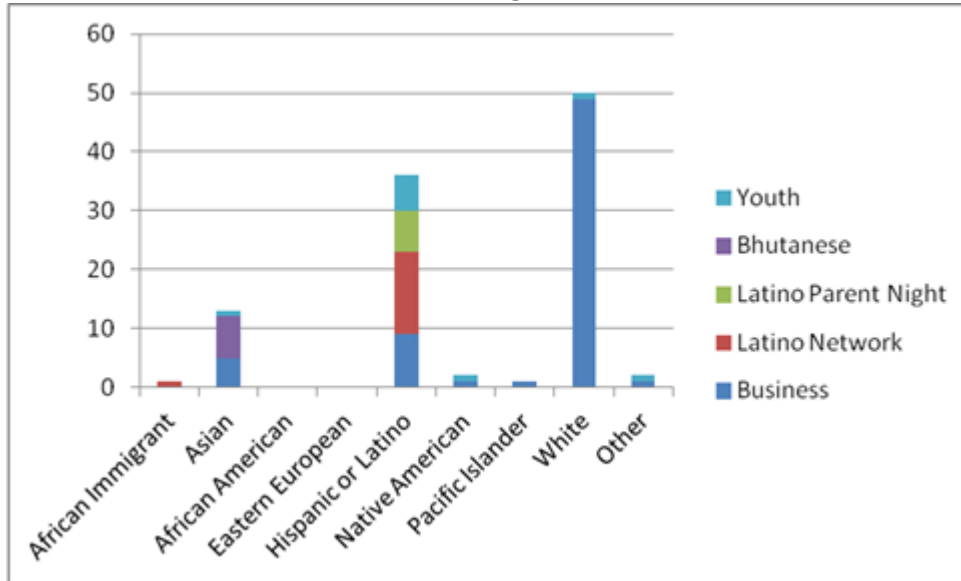
Age

Business, Latino Network, Latino Parent Night, Bhutanese, Youth



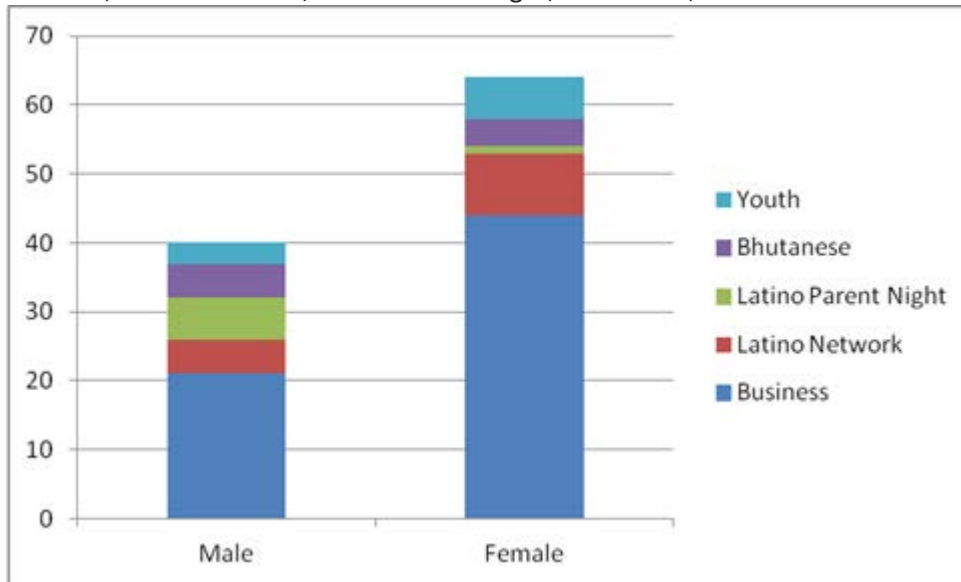
Race/Ethnicity

Business, Latino Network, Latino Parent Night, Bhutanese, Youth



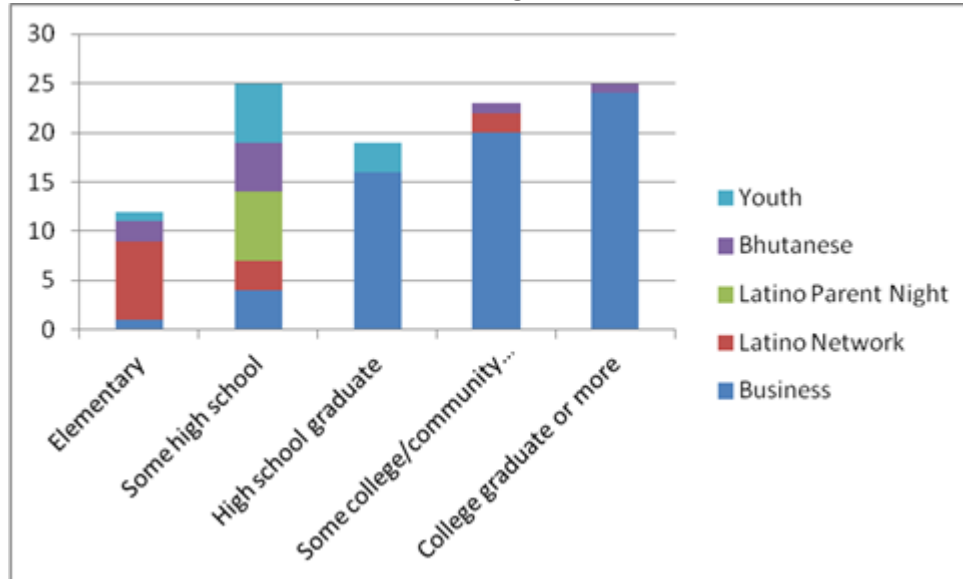
Gender

Business, Latino Network, Latino Parent Night, Bhutanese, Youth



Education

Business, Latino Network, Latino Parent Night, Bhutanese, Youth



APPENDIX