

# Southwest Corridor Inclusive Communities Project: Naito Main Street Project

## Existing Conditions Report



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All supporting materials and maps developed for this project are available at [portland.gov/bps/sw-inclusive](http://portland.gov/bps/sw-inclusive).

All photographs courtesy of City of Portland.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## Project Overview

The SW Corridor is a regional transportation corridor of the Portland Metro area, expected to grow substantially over the next 25 years, while receiving a multi-billion-dollar transit investment along Barbur Boulevard and a major reconfiguration of the Ross Island Bridgehead. This is happening within the context of a current housing crisis, and lack of sufficient transportation options in the corridor that hinders people's quality of life and their ability to access jobs and educational opportunities. As the region grows, more people, especially low-income communities of color, immigrants, and renters who have been disproportionately impacted by a myriad of socio-economic issues, will be burdened rather than benefit from this change. A primary goal of the BPS projects is to plan for equitable development that provides greater quality of life and economic opportunity for low-income households and communities of color.

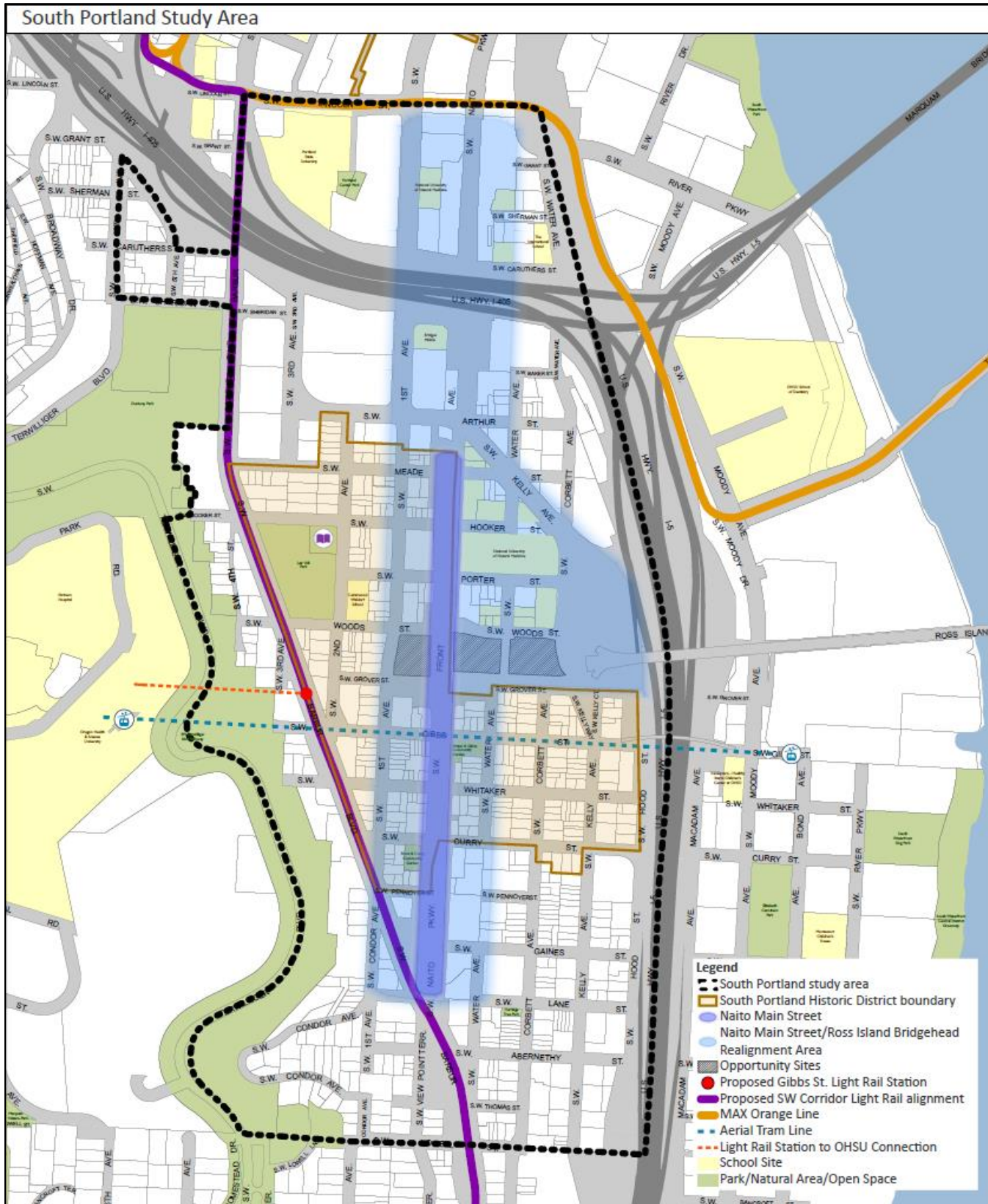
As part of the Southwest Corridor Inclusive Communities Project, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) is working on several land use planning projects in the South Portland neighborhood. The existing conditions in this report will serve as background information for the following projects:

- **Naito Parkway Main Street Project.** BPS and the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) are working with the community to develop transportation and land use plans in South Portland. The Naito Parkway Main Street project will respond to the design of the realignment of the Ross Island Bridgehead, develop new land uses and street designs for SW Naito Parkway and create development concepts for publicly owned opportunity sites created by the bridgehead realignment. All these efforts will serve to meet the community's long-standing needs, redress past harms, and the City's Comprehensive Plan policies for healthier, connected, and more inclusive communities.
- **South Portland Historic District Design Guidelines Update.** BPS is working with community partners to update the design guidelines that apply to alterations, additions, and new construction in the South Portland Historic District. The existing guidelines date to 1980 and lack clarity and consistency.
- **Future SW Corridor Station Area Planning.** BPS, in collaboration with PBOT and other City bureaus, are involved in this South Portland project as part of the larger planning effort for a proposed light rail (MAX) line along Barbur Boulevard. A proposed light rail station at Gibbs Street with connections to OHSU campuses on the hill and on the waterfront will require future planning.

The following are the initial goals of the Naito Parkway Main Street project.

1. Leverage the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-align the Ross Island Bridgehead to improve safety and multimodal traffic circulation and rebuild Naito Parkway as a mixed-use community main street.
2. Redress past harms from land use and auto infrastructure projects that divided this area both physically and socially and disproportionately impacted low-income households and immigrants.
3. Improve public health outcomes for people living and working in South Portland by creating a safer more walkable and bikeable environment on and connecting to Naito Parkway.
4. Redevelop publicly-owned land to increase housing choices for a diversity of household types and incomes, and meet other community needs for gathering spaces, commercial services and open space.
5. Regulate land use and zoning to create more mixed-use development to provide much needed affordable and market rate housing, neighborhood serving retail, and open space.





**Map 1. Projects in South Portland Study Area.** The South Portland study area spans between Terwilliger Boulevard east to Interstate 5; from Lincoln Street south to Lowell Street with views to the Willamette River and the West Hills. Note: The transportation improvements along Naito Parkway extend further north to SW Harrison Street.

Source: BPS

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## Report Organization

This report includes existing information about the following topics: demographics, land use, zoning, transportation, the built and natural environment, residential infill, and community amenities. It also includes information on policies that will influence the planning process, economic and market conditions, relevant planning issues, and community organizations serving the area.

Each chapter of this report will include:

- Facts that are relevant to the South Portland Study area, as well as the larger SW Corridor.
- Each chapter ends with a section that calls out the key issues and planning implications of the material presented.

Chapter 1, **Introduction**, provides an overview of the SW Corridor Inclusive Communities Project and outlines the structure of this report.

Chapter 2, **Demographics**, contains demographic information on the characteristics of the people that live within the four neighborhoods of the South Portland study area.

Chapter 3, **History**, provides a short narrative of cultural and development highlights from Native Americans to present day.

Chapter 4, **Land Use and Zoning** provides a narrative description of the current existing land uses and a discussion of the current Comprehensive Plan map designations for the South Portland study area.

Chapter 5, **Transportation**, discusses transportation facilities in the study area and includes information on traffic volumes, roadway geometry and classifications, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, parking, accident data, and transit routes and ridership.

Chapter 6, **Housing and Infill Development** contains demographic information on housing characteristics within the four neighborhoods included in the South Portland study area.

## Past Plans, Policies, and Studies:

The following is a list of the state, regional, and local planning efforts that guide policy decisions and provide important research and information for the South Portland study area.

### Policy Framework

- Region 2040 Growth Concept (1995), Metro
- 2035 Comprehensive Plan (2016), City of Portland
- Southwest Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy (2018)
- Barbur Concept Plan (2013)
- PBOT/BPS South Portland Focus Area Study (2018)
- Lair Hill Plan (1974)
- Lair Hill Conservation District Design Guidelines (1980)
- 20-Minute Neighborhood Analysis (2010)
- South Portland Circulation Study (1978) and Update (2001)
- I-405 Design Workshop (2010)



## CHAPTER 2: DEMOGRAPHICS

This chapter contains information on education, age, housing, race and ethnicity characteristics of the people who live in this study area. Information in this section was pulled from the 2017 US Census American Community Survey. The statistics in this chapter have been organized by two geographical areas: Study Area and the City of Portland, as a whole.

### Population

The population in the study area has been growing at a faster rate compared to the City of Portland as a whole between 2000 and 2017. The population is expected to continue to grow even more. The growth of families, in particular, has been much faster in the study area than in the rest of Portland.

	2000	2010	2017	% Change (2000-17)
<b>Population</b>				
Study Area	9,890	11,697	14,400	46%
Portland	529,686	566,686	630,331	19%
<b>Households</b>				
Study Area	5,258	5,597	7,700	46%
Portland	233,752	244,803	260,949	17%

**Table 1a: Population Growth**

Source: U.S. Census

Families	2010	2017	% Change (2010-17)
Study Area	2,692	3,139	17%
Portland	125,703	135,543	8%

**Table 1b: Family Growth**

Source: U.S. Census

### Age

In the study area, the percentage of the population in the 18-59 year old age cohort is the largest age cohort, but has seen some decline between 2000 and 2017. Alternatively, those in the 60+ age range of the study area has been increasing. This could signify an aging population in the study area. The percentage of the school-age population (0-18) has remained consistent between 2010 and 2017 in the study area between 11-12%, without much change between the years 2000 and 2017.

	0-18	18-59	60+	0-18	18-59	60+	0-18	18-59	60+
	2000			2010			2017		
Study Area	12%	71%	17%	11%	70%	19%	11%	64%	25%
Portland	21%	67%	15%	19%	65%	15%	18%	64%	18%

**Table 2: Study Area vs. Portland Age Cohorts**

Source: U.S. Census

## Race/Ethnicity

When compared to the rest of Portland, the study area has a slightly larger percentage of residents that identified themselves as 'white alone' in 2017 (78% compared with 71% in Portland as a whole). Still, this area has been seeing a slight increase in racial diversity between 2000, where 12% of the Study Area identified as people of color, and 2017, where that number grew to 22%. This is illustrated in Table 3a, and can probably be attributed to the proximity to downtown, as well as the racial diversity of students at various universities in the vicinity, including OHSU, PSU, and NUNM. Currently, the largest non-white population within the study area is the Asian population, which has decreased slightly between 2010 and 2017 (Table 3c). The smallest non-white population is the Native American, Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander population (Table 3a).

Area	White Alone	Black Alone	Asian Alone	Native American, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander Alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races	Hispanic Origin (Any Race)
Study Area	78%	3%	8%	1%	1%	5%	6%
Portland	71%	6%	8%	1%	0%	5%	10%

**Table 3a: Race and Ethnicity, 2017**

Source: U.S. Census

	2000	2010	2017
Study Area	12%	18%	22%
Portland	25%	27%	29%

**Table 3b: People of Color**

Source: U.S. Census

	2000	2010	2017
Study Area	5%	10%	8%
Portland	6%	7%	8%

**Table 3c: Asian Population**

Source: U.S. Census

## Educational Attainment

Educational attainment has been increasing in the study area between 2010 and 2017, in the same way that educational attainment has been increasing in the City of Portland as a whole. In fact, between 2000-2017, the percentage of those identified as having received Bachelor and Post-Graduate education within the study area has been 10-20% higher in South Portland than the City of Portland as a whole.

Area	High School or Less			Some College			Bachelor's			Post-Graduate		
	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017	2000	2010	2017
Study Area	31%	30%	23%	21%	22%	17%	36%	35%	38%	32%	35%	39%
Portland	67%	59%	52%	31%	29%	28%	21%	25%	29%	11%	16%	19%

**Table 4: Educational Attainment**

Source: U.S. Census

## Household Income

Overall, the median household income within the South Portland study area is much greater compared to the rest of the Portland as a whole. Median household income has increased 24% since 2010 after having dipped during the recession.

Area	2000 Median	2010 Median	2017 Median
Study Area	\$79,890	\$73,705	\$91,883
Portland	\$58,703	\$56,360	\$63,032

**Table 5: Median Household Income, adjusted to 2018 inflation rate**

Source: U.S. Census

## Household Size

Although the overall population of the city is growing, household size in the study area has slightly decreased between 2010 and 2017. Even though families were seen to be increasing, this may be an indicator that smaller families are moving into the area, or just couples without children. The change may be due in part to the high cost of living within the study area, as well as the fact that a greater population in this area may be younger couples attending school in the nearby universities.

	2010	2017
Study Area	1.94	1.86
Portland	2.25	2.35

**Table 6: Household Size**

Source: U.S. Census

## Housing Tenure

Between 2000 and 2017, housing tenure has stayed the same within the study area, with approximately half of all the available units are split between owner-occupied and renters since 2000. Even with higher incomes than the rest of the city, homeownership in the area has not increased perhaps due to the higher cost of housing out-pacing incomes. Homeownership declined citywide between 2010 and 2017.

Area	2000		2010		2017	
	Own	Rent	Own	Rent	Own	Rent
Study Area	52%	48%	48%	52%	48%	52%
Portland	56%	44%	55%	53%	45%	47%

**Table 7: Owner-Occupied vs. Renter Households**

Source: U.S. Census

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## Key Issues and Planning Implications

- The South Portland study area is predominately White (78% in 2017), with the highest non-white population identifying as Asian (8% in 2017). Planning should account for the growing racial diversity of the area to become a more multi-cultural and inclusive community.
- Between 2010 and 2017, household size in the study area declined, whereas citywide household size increased. This could be due to the number of students or young couples living in the study area for its proximity to universities such as OHSU, NUNM, and PSU.
- Overall, the study area population is more white, more educated, and more affluent compared to the city as a whole.
- Though higher educational attainment of the population correlates to higher earning power overall, homeownership in the study area has remained stagnant at 48% between 2010 and 2017.

## CHAPTER 3: HISTORY

This chapter contains information on how the South Portland study area was settled, as well as how the land has been used and regulated over the years. Information about the history of the areas has been gleaned from the Corbett-Terwilliger-Lair Hill Policy Plan (1977), the Southwest Community Plan (2000), [pdxhistory.com](http://pdxhistory.com), as well as City of Portland archives.

### Native American History and Cultural Values

The area now known as Portland has been populated with people from various tribes for thousands of years. In the Portland area, Native Americans lived primarily on the north and south shores of the Columbia River and near the mouth of the Willamette River, and other native peoples also traveled to and through the area. They camped, fished, hunted and gathered first foods such as salmon, lamprey, deer, camas, wapato, acorns and huckleberries. They also used the rivers to travel and trade among area tribes.

Today, there are tribes throughout the northwest and beyond that retain an interest in the Portland area. Portland has a robust Native American community of roughly 40,000 people that represent over 300 tribes. These native peoples have an interest in ensuring the long-term protection and abundance of natural and culturally significant resources in order to continue their long-standing connection to the land and its waters. The rivers, streams, wetlands and natural areas have and continue to be important places for gathering food, conducting ceremonies and celebrations and maintaining lifeways practiced since time immemorial.

### Early Development

Prior to settlement, the South Portland area was once filled with natural features, including gulches, forests, and valleys of large Douglas Firs and hemlock that have since been filled in. With its unique topography and proximity to the Willamette River, the South Portland neighborhood provided an opportune environment for those seeking trade and transportation opportunities. Portland's original downtown grid of small 200-foot square blocks was continued on the late 19th century subdivision plats within the study area. South Portland became an attractive enclave for immigrants arriving from England, Ireland, Canada, Germany, Sweden, Russia, Italy, and even China – immigrants who came to be part of the growing timber, agriculture, and railroad industries.

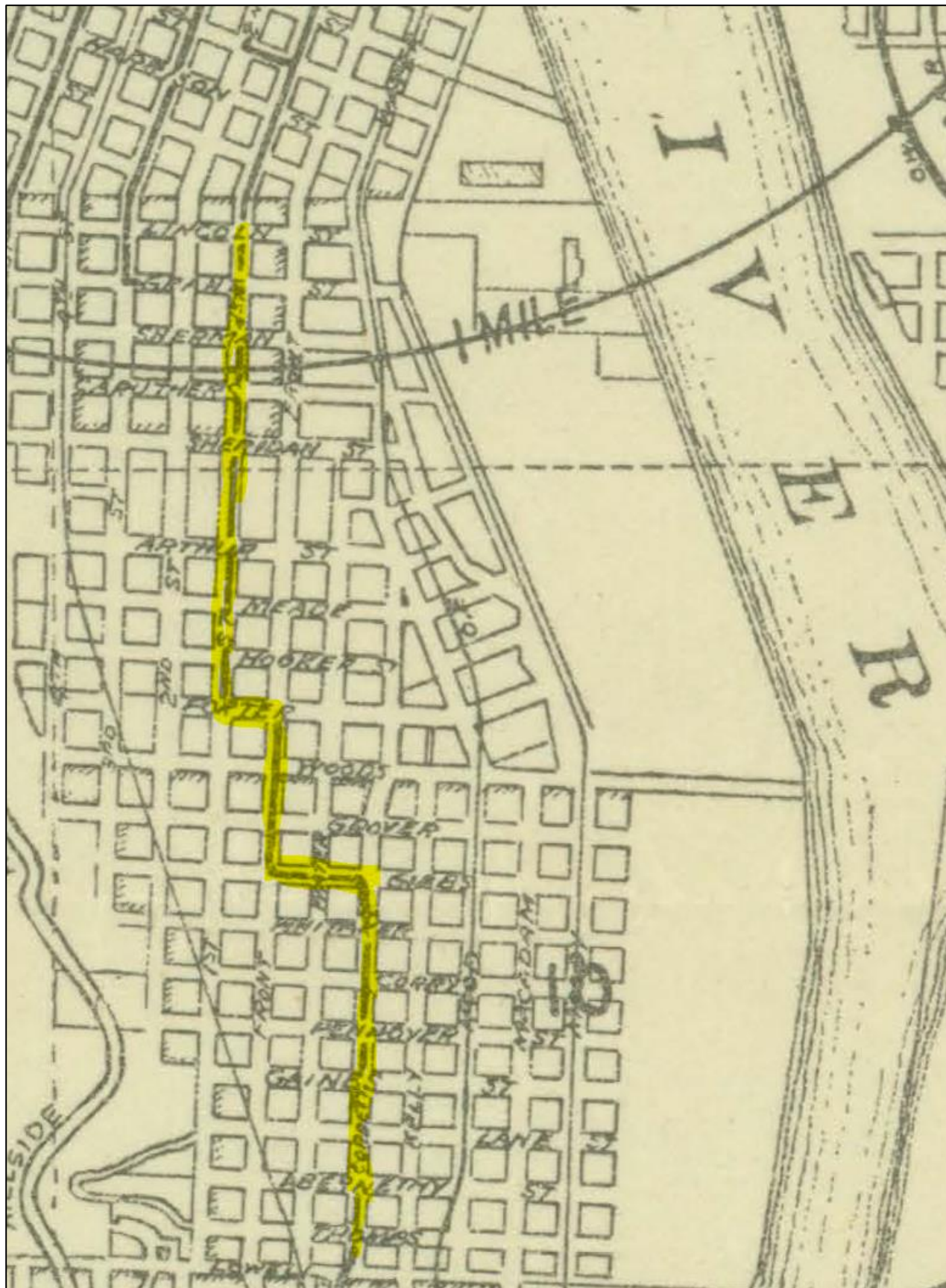
South Portland became a place of firsts for the City. The first horse-drawn streetcar line appeared here in 1872, which extended along First Avenue all the way to Gibbs Street<sup>1</sup>. From here, many had access to both commercial and residential areas, as well as industrial work sites that developed along the Willamette River. Kosher markets, drugstores, and immigrant-owned delis and bakeries were located along the commercial spine, all which reinforced the pedestrian activity along the Lair Hill and Corbett area.

As the neighborhood developed, South Portland became known for its overall walkability, with its small blocks organized into a strong grid system.

It wasn't until 1926 that the construction of the Ross Island Bridge, along with its infrastructure additions, began to disrupt the physical and social fabric of the South Portland neighborhoods. When it was first built, the western bridgehead was integrated into the existing street grid network, but by 1950 the existing bridge ramps were built and Front Avenue was widened to become part of the Harbor Drive Expressway. Meanwhile, the original rail line along SW 4th Avenue was discontinued and replaced with Barbur Boulevard, which functioned as a highway (Pacific Highway 99W). This began the more automobile-dominant era that prioritized vehicular mobility over walkable neighborhoods.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.pdxhistory.com/html/streetcars.html](http://www.pdxhistory.com/html/streetcars.html)



**Map 2.** Historic Pittmon's map of Portland in 1915 showing the historic trolley line (highlighted yellow) that ran through the neighborhood, prior to the construction of Ross Island Bridge and Barbur Boulevard.

Source: Portland City Archives



## Neighborhood Decline

At the onset of the Great Depression in 1929, South Portland homes began to lose property value. The building of the Ross Island Bridge highway ramps as well as the expansion of Harbor Drive, bisected the community several times, isolating different parts of South Portland in favor of automobile circulation. The Corbett, Terwilliger, and Lair Hill neighborhoods began to house most of the South Portland population, resulting in overcrowding, along with slumlords who were known to take advantage of the new, immigrant populations. As families gathered wealth over generations, they were more inclined to leave the area for nearby suburbs such as the Hillsdale neighborhood, leaving South Portland housing conditions in a more depressed state.

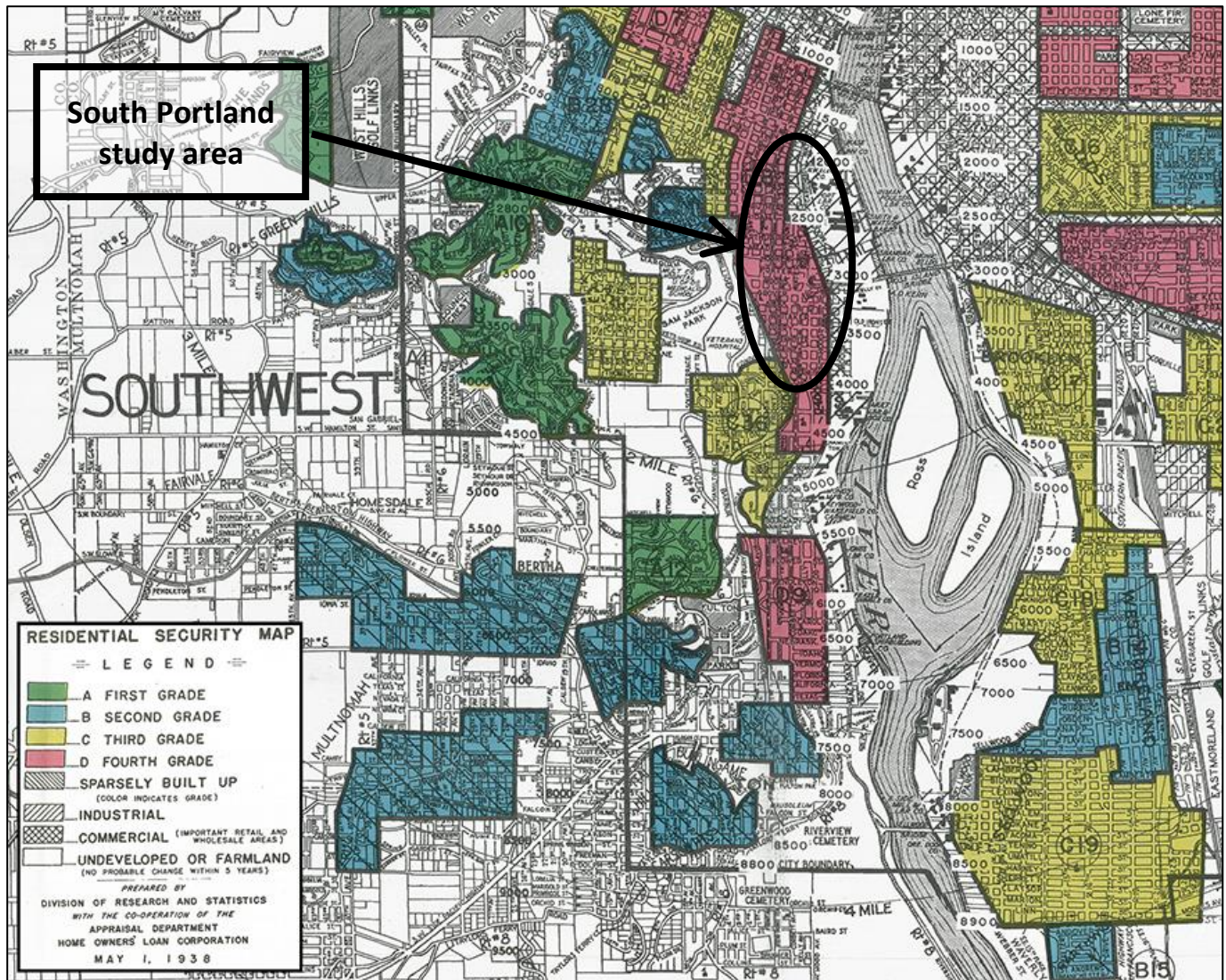
Following WWII, as build-out of automobile infrastructure continued, the streetcar lines through South Portland were removed. Not only did this mark the end of a well-used mode of transportation, but it reduced access to social, business, and neighborhood activities around the South Portland core. This neighborhood decline exacerbated the white population flight to the suburbs. The Ross Island Bridge ramp construction for Harbor Drive expansion added grade separations over and across the neighborhood's core residential and business areas.



*Photo taken during the 1948 floods showing the Ross Island Bridge ramps and Harbor Drive Expressway under construction.*

Redlining is the federally supported practice of denying commercial and homeownership financing products to certain communities, often based on racial and income statuses. South Portland was redlined throughout the 1930s and 1940s. With the influx of immigrant communities from many different cultures finding their first homes here, banks were advised not to lend out to these communities and were therefore marked or “redlined” on City maps, barring them from equitable access to homeownership. Looking at the redlining map on the next page, it is shown that the entire South Portland geography was deemed “definitely declining” or “hazardous” to lenders. After further research on historic redlining in Portland, assessor notes were discovered, explicitly listing the hazards of lending in this area, with racist language such as: “subversive infiltration of Orientals, Japanese, and Filipinos”, as well as “Detrimental influences: presence of subversive foreign population. Heterogeneous character of district”. Redlining practices continued until 1968, when the Fair Housing Act banned racial discrimination based on housing, yet this has had lasting effect the City’s segregated growth patterns and the racial wealth gap.





**Map 3. Historic redlining in Portland, 1938.** The South Portland study area is circled in black.

Source: [dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining](http://dsl.richmond.edu/panorama/redlining)

## South Portland Urban Renewal Area

During the Great Depression, many American cities began to fall into disarray, and Portland was no exception. By the last quarter of the 20th century, South Portland was one of the lowest owner-occupied areas in the city. Businesses were struggling. Over 1/3 of the population's 2,300 residents were seniors over 60 years old and of those, 1,000 residents were living in low-income apartments and hotels. Though students and low-income artists were drawn to this area due to the cheap rental properties, South Portland was beginning to see signs of distress. With the intention to revitalize areas south of downtown, the City razed 84 acres of land, including: several hotels, taverns, rooming houses, businesses, warehouses, and restaurants. Over 400 homes were demolished in the 1960s alone, displacing the predominately Jewish and southern European immigrant families that lived there.





*Photos showing South Portland before and after urban renewal “slum removal” and highway construction.*

During that time, construction of I-5, the Marquam Bridge, and I-405 began to feed thousands of vehicles into a highway system overlooking a once-thriving neighborhood, further dividing parts of South Portland. Portland State University began to take up six to ten blocks in the study area, as it was primed for expansion from a trade school into a full-fledge, major state university.

As a result of urban renewal, there was a 25-fold increase in assessed value across the area, and 15,000 additional jobs were added adjacent to the city center. With the displacement of old businesses and affordable housing and many of the immigrant communities in the area, urban renewal ultimately made way for the South Auditorium District, including a renovated Keller Auditorium, Keller Fountain, office buildings, and more freeways.

## **South Portland National Historic District**

Prior to 1960, the area that is now the South Portland Historic District was a community of Jewish and Italian immigrants, as well as African Americans. In the 1960s, established neighborhoods were cleared for new urban development and freeway infrastructure in the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Area. The Ross Island Bridge ramps were expanded again and interconnected with the new interstate freeways, resulting in a tangle of highway infrastructure. Citizens in the remaining South Portland neighborhoods soon began to vie for preservation of their communities before urban renewal removed them.

By 1976, the South Portland neighborhood was approximately 60% owned by absentee landlords with tenants inhabiting run-down buildings. Students and artists began to move into the area with a desire to fix-up the diminishing conditions of the homes and restore a sense of community reminiscent of the older, immigrant neighborhoods. They advocated for the Lair Hill and Corbett neighborhoods to first receive their conservation designation in 1977, and then its National Register historic district designation in 1998. This ultimately saved many of the homes in South Portland from urban renewal, while also preserving opportunities to maintain housing value.

Today, the South Portland Historic District is an L-shaped area between Marquam Hill and the Willamette River. Bound by Barbur Boulevard on the West and Arthur Street to the north, this 31-block area encompasses 284 structures, primarily consisting of Queen Anne, craftsman bungalow, and Colonial 20th century single-family dwellings. Development within this area is subject to the provisions of Chapter 33.445 (Historic Resource Overlay Zone). These homes, apartments, and larger institutional buildings require special land use approval for exterior alterations and new construction to preserve the historic character of the neighborhood. For this reason, only a small handful of new residential buildings have been built in the historic district since its designation.

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## Current Conditions

Today, despite the freeway barriers and street connectivity issues, the South Portland study area has experienced new construction of both residential and commercial buildings in the South Waterfront area and adjacent to downtown near the southern border of the South Auditorium urban renewal area. New construction in South Portland historic district is limited to smaller infill development projects.

Remnants of the historic street grid remain in some parts of the study area, reminiscent of when the community was first established (see Map 2 on page 14). Walking and biking are challenging in the study area largely due to freeway and highway infrastructure that bisect the neighborhood street pattern.

Educational institutions such as National University of Natural Medicine (NUNM), Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), and Portland State University (PSU) have provided South Portland with an “Innovation Quadrant” with the goal of providing a world-class innovation ecosystem that connects underserved locals with economic opportunities.

## Key Issues and Planning Implications

- Lagging neighborhood investment paired with heavy highway infrastructure investment over the years has created many obstacles to neighborhood cohesion in the South Portland study area.
- The historical harm done to low-income households and immigrant communities in the name of economic progress must be redressed as the City, ODOT, and TriMet plan for transportation improvements that aim to reconnect the neighborhoods.
- With proximity to downtown, the OHSU South Waterfront district, NUNM, PSU, state and federal highways, as well as a historical district designation, land prices have increased here over the years, even in spite of infrastructure challenges. Going forward, there will need to be continued integration of land use closer to the original grid system and improved connectivity pathways throughout the neighborhood
- There are perceived safety threats, especially as it relates to crossing on Barbur and/or Naito, which are physical barriers that divide up the community.

## Resources

[www.southportlandba.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/south-portland-ebook.pdf](http://www.southportlandba.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/south-portland-ebook.pdf)

[www.urbandisplacement.org/redlining](http://www.urbandisplacement.org/redlining)

City of Portland Archives

1974 Lair Hill Plan

[www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/58752](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/58752)

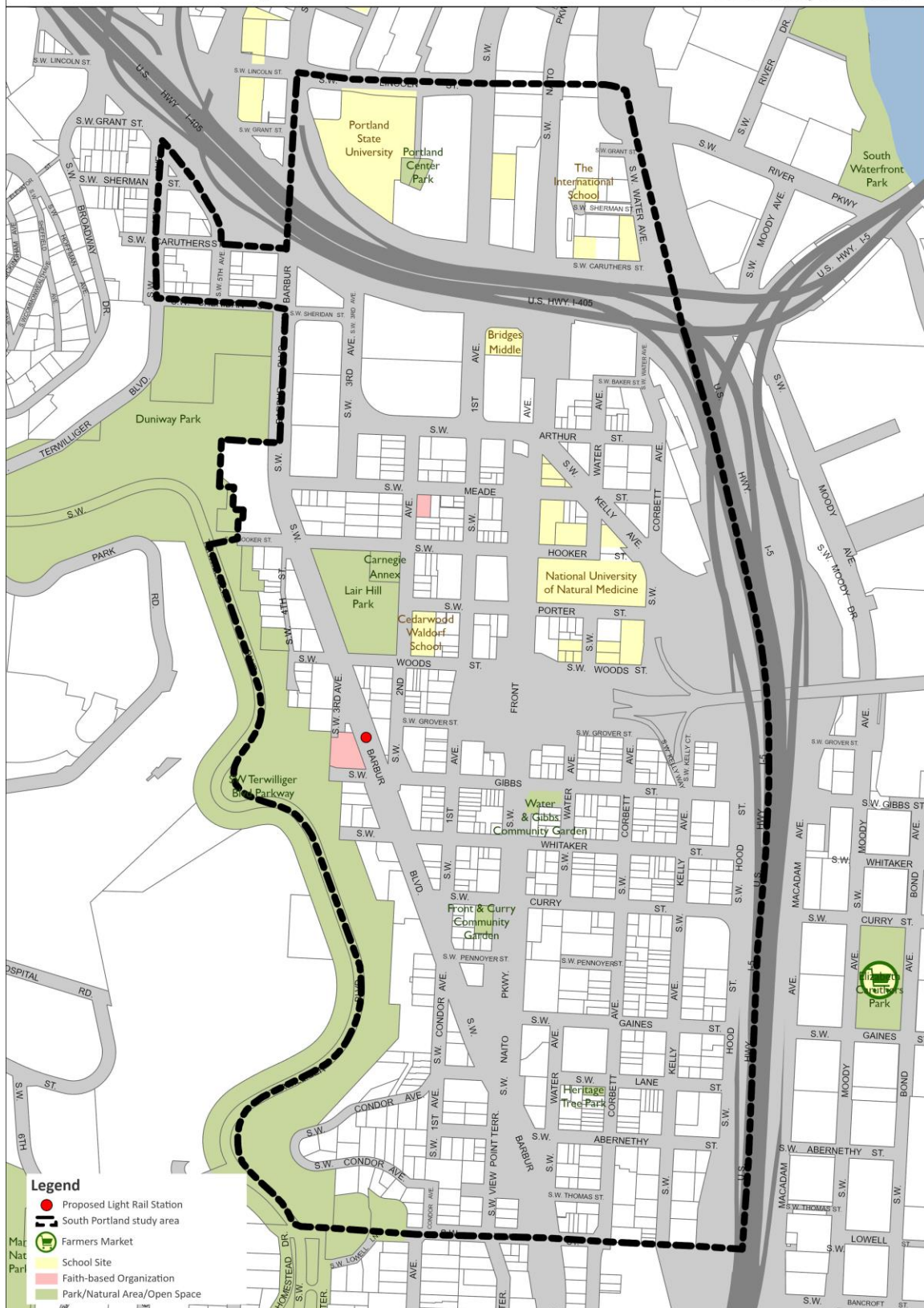
Barbur Concept Plan

[www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/south\\_portland\\_south\\_auditorium\\_urban\\_renewal\\_project/#.XSzouOhKiUk](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/south_portland_south_auditorium_urban_renewal_project/#.XSzouOhKiUk)

[www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/58752](http://www.portlandoregon.gov/bps/article/58752)

## South Portland Study Area

## Community Amenities



February 21, 2020

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0 1 2 Miles



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City of Portland, Oregon

**Map 4: Community Amenities in the South Portland/Ross Island Bridgehead Project study area**

Source: BPS

# CHAPTER 4: LAND USE AND ZONING

## Comprehensive Plan Designations and Zoning

Portland's Comprehensive Plan land use designations are a tool for implementing the goals and policies of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan. The land use designations that best carry out the Comprehensive Plan are applied to all land in the City with a corresponding base zone. The base zone controls the uses and development on the land through the Zoning Code regulations. In the South Portland study area are the following land use designations. In addition, Table 8 shows the breakdown of the corresponding base zones in the study area.

### Open Space Designation (corresponding zone is OS)

#### Residential Designations

- Single-Dwelling—5,000 (corresponding zone is R5)
- Single-Dwelling—2,500 (corresponding zone is R2.5)
- Multi-Dwelling—2,000 (corresponding zone is R2)
- Multi-Dwelling—1,000 (corresponding zone is R1)
- High Density Multi-Dwelling (corresponding zone is RH<sup>2</sup>)
- Central Residential (corresponding zone is RX)

#### Mixed Use and Commercial Designations

- Mixed Use—Dispersed (corresponding zones are CM1 and CE)
- Mixed Use—Neighborhood (corresponding zones are CM1, CM2 and CE)
- Mixed Use—Civic Corridor (corresponding zones are CM1, CM2, CM3 and CE)
- Mixed Use—Urban Center (corresponding zones are CM1, CM2, CM3 and CE)
- Central Commercial (corresponding zone is CX)

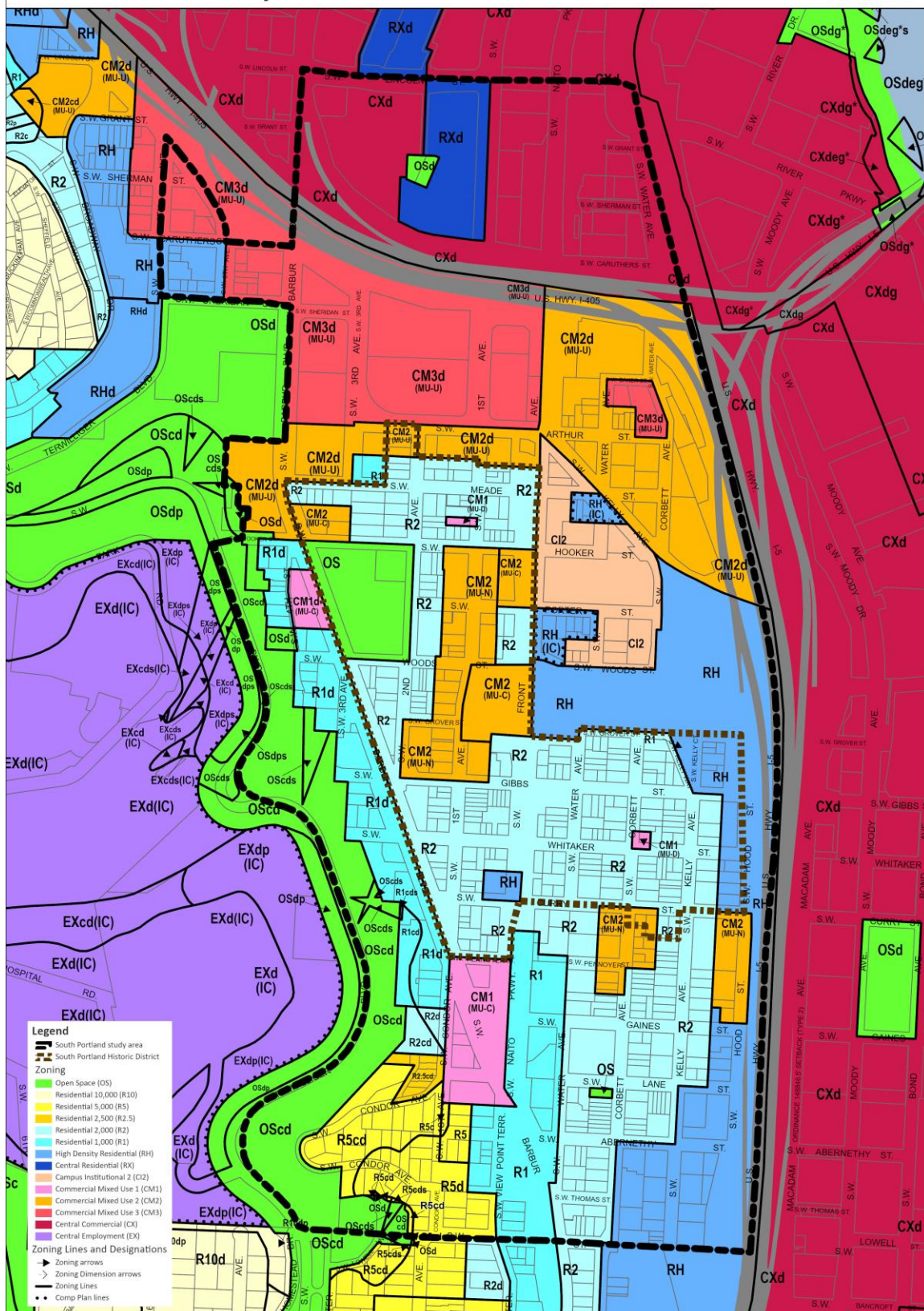
### Institutional Campus Designation (corresponding zones CI1 and CI2)

At a glance, the zoning map (Map 5 on next page) shows that there are two distinct areas of the South Portland geography, separated by the Ross Island Bridgehead and SW Grover Street. In the north, there is a mix of R1 and R2.5, with CM3 more closely abutting I-405. This area is closest to the southern end of the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Area. Just south of the Ross Island Bridgehead and SW Grover Street is where most of the South Portland Historic District lies. Here, there is a mix of R1 and R2, as well as some RH. There are few CM2 zoned lots in this area, in comparison to residential zoning. This could be a barrier to neighborhood development, as there are few commercial gathering areas or a defined commercial main street. In addition, walkability barriers, such as lack of infrastructure makes it difficult to access these few areas. CM2, CM3, and CX are dispersed throughout. Of all the commercial zones, CM2 is the most prominent.

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<sup>2</sup> RH zones will become RM3 or RM4 under the Better Housing by Design project.





### Map 5: Zoning Map of South Portland Study Area

Source: BPS

For the South Portland study area, the current zones are as available as follows:

Zone	% of Study Area
OS	25%
CM2	15%
R5	14%
R1	9%
RH	9%
R2	8%
CM1	6%
CM3	6%
RX	3%
CI2	2%
CX	2%
R2.5	2%

**Table 8: Study Area Zoning Breakdown**

Source: Cascadia Partners

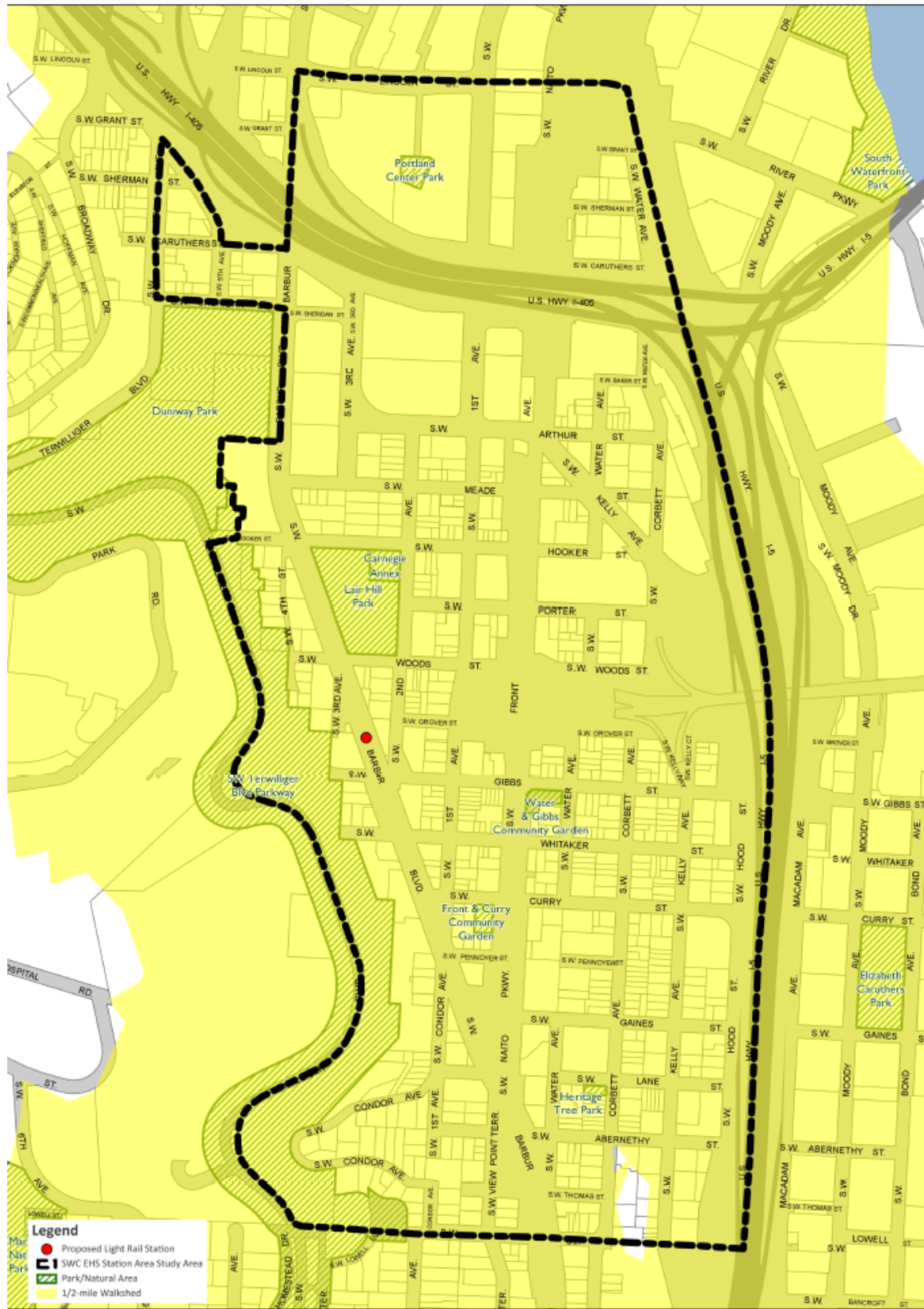
## Key Issues and Planning Implications

- Despite few sites zoned for industrial and employment uses, new job growth is projected in the South Portland study area. According to the 2017 QCEW data, there are 3,319 jobs in the study area, whereas in 2035 it is forecasted that there will be 4,101 jobs (BLI). See chapter 6 for current housing mix and 20-year growth allocations.
- Commercial pockets are scattered along SW 1st and Corbett Avenues where the historic streetcar ran, but today there is no defined commercial main street. Notably, there is no full-service grocery store in the area.
- There is an abundance of open space within and near the study area, but access continues to be a problem. See Map 6 on next page.
- Naito Parkway does not have consistent land uses between Gibbs and Arthur Streets to support a commercial main street once the street improvements have been made.



# SW Corridor Implementation - Existing Conditions

Access to Parks/Natural Areas



March 22, 2019

City of Portland, Oregon | Bureau of Planning and Sustainability | Geographic Information Systems

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City of Portland, Oregon | Bureau of Planning and Sustainability | Geographic Information Systems

**Map 6: Access to Parks and Natural Areas in South Portland Study Area**

Source: BPS

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## CHAPTER 5: TRANSPORTATION

The South Portland Study area includes a regional transportation network for many different modes of transportation, including vehicles (autos), pedestrians, bicycles, transit (buses and rail), transportation network companies (TNCs), and freight (trucks). With proximity to downtown, the Willamette River, and institutional campuses like Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU), Naturopathic University of Natural Medicine (NUNM), and Portland State University (PSU), the South Portland geography provides ample opportunities to be a regional hub of education and innovation. Yet, there are physical barriers to mobility and multimodal connectivity with converging regional highways such as Barbur Boulevard, I-405, the Ross Island Bridge ramps/Highway 26, Naito Parkway, and the Marquam Bridge. Over time, through a long history of urban renewal and freeway expansion efforts, these highways essentially bisected the South Portland community into the fractured parts of today, impeding the flow of pedestrian access, resulting in diverting traffic onto local neighborhood streets.

Below are the most significant transportation projects.

- **Ross Island Bridge.** When the Ross Island Bridge opened in 1926, it initially connected to the existing street network. This was the first major transportation project to displace residents and demolish or move houses—due to the construction of the bridge foundation, piers, and approaches.
- **Barbur Boulevard.** In the 1930s, the first sections of Barbur Boulevard were constructed along a former railroad right-of-way from downtown to the city limits, near the Burlingame Fred Meyer.
- **Harbor Drive.** In the 1940s, the Harbor Drive Expressway (Hwy 99) was the first freeway built in Portland, and ran north/south along Front Street, what is now called Naito Parkway, ultimately separating downtown and South Portland from the Willamette River. During this project, the original Ross Island Bridge approach was replaced with the current array of highway era bridge ramps.
- **Interstates 5 and 405.** The largest impacts to South Portland then came in the 1960s and 1970s, when the northern half and the easternmost sections of the neighborhood were demolished through the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Project to make way for I-5, I-405, and the Marquam Bridge.

Though walking in the area remains a viable option with the existing street grid and sidewalk network, South Portland is still a place of need for infrastructure interventions, especially for pedestrians, the elderly, and those with disabilities.





*Street Grid of South Portland Study Area, circa 1950*

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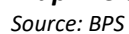
## Street Connectivity/Pedestrian Safety

Currently, both Barbur Boulevard and Naito Parkway are barriers to east-west connectivity, while the Ross Island Bridge ramps break up the cohesive neighborhood street grid. With very few crosswalks and intersections, it is very difficult and dangerous for people, vehicles, and bicycles to cross east/west over these highways, turning them into high crash corridors, with more than 15 collisions recorded on each highway between 2007 and 2019 (see Map 8 on the page 28). Proximity to downtown is obstructed by the I-405 freeway gulch that leads to the Marquam Bridge. This creates a north/south barrier to the neighborhood. In addition, I-5 isolates the area from the South Waterfront.

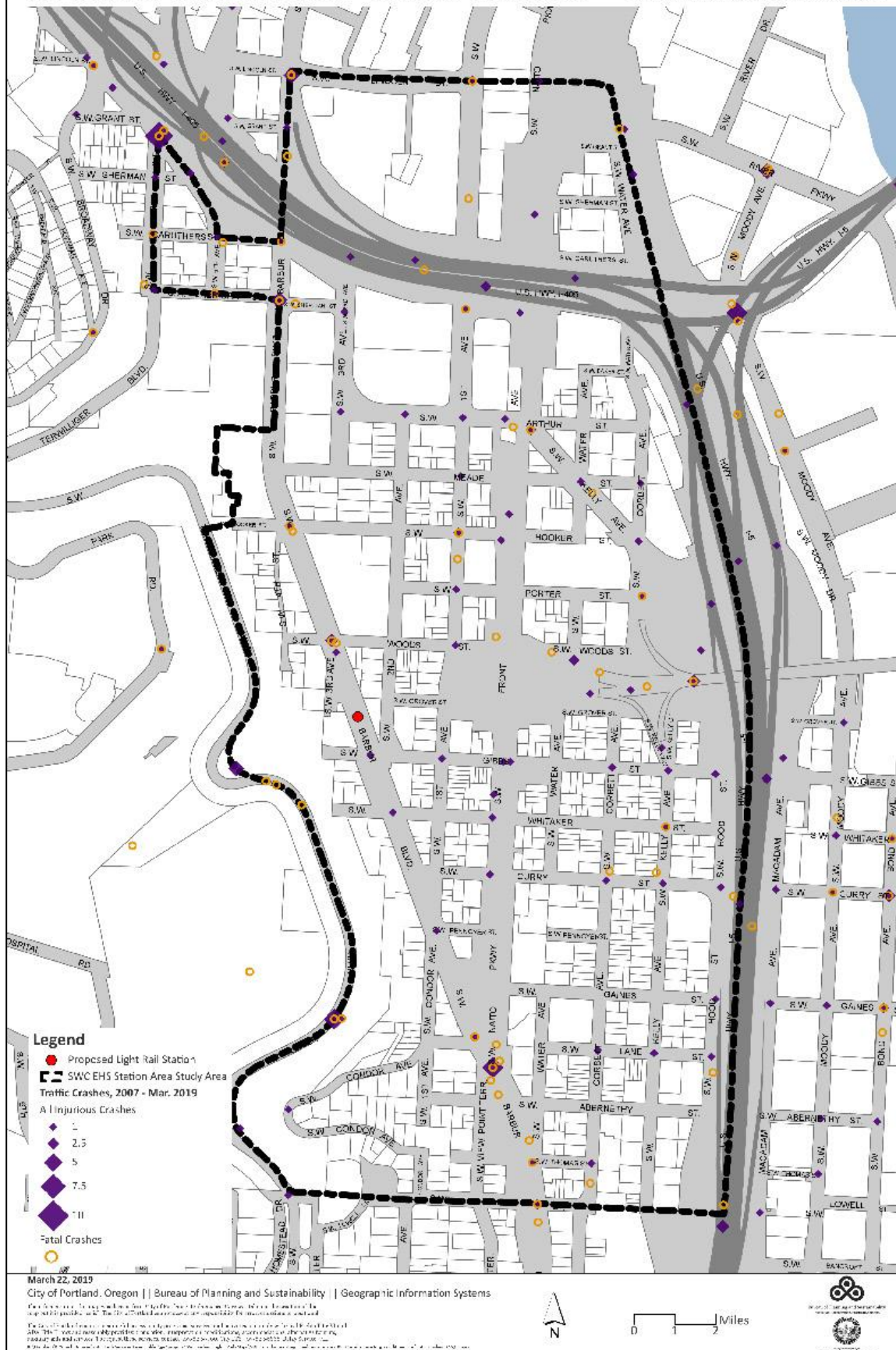
In the 2012 Barbur Concept Plan, community members expressed a strong preference for prioritizing Naito as the spine of the area as opposed to Barbur Blvd, which is perceived as an edge for the community. If successful, transforming Naito into a community main street will be more consistent with interconnected neighborhood streets developed during the streetcar era 100 years ago, and will create a more walkable pedestrian network for the community.



### Sidewalk Presence



# SW Corridor Implementation - Existing Conditions Traffic Crashes (auto/bike/ped)



**Map 8: Traffic Crashes, 2007-March 2019**

Source: BPS and Portland Bureau of Transportation



## Bicycle network

The current bicycle network found in South Portland is not safe. Existing bike lanes on Barbur and Naito provide connections to major employment and commercial areas, but with adjacent auto traffic traveling at high speeds on these highways, riding becomes stressful and difficult for many cyclists. In addition, steep street grades on the west side of the neighborhood makes it difficult to bike east/west. Finally, there are large swaths of the South Portland neighborhood that contain no bicycling infrastructure at all. With a limited network of neighborhood greenways, biking becomes a high-stress experience for the less experienced or more risk adverse riders. Some streets are set to become more friendly through PBOT's Southwest in Motion (SWIM) Plan through a series of bike, pedestrian, restriping, and safer shoulder projects. A few of these being considered are listed below:

## Southwest in Motion (SWIM) Projects

Top Tier Projects: projects that establish a foundational and connected network for walking and biking

RP-02: Terwilliger Trail to 4th Connector

BP-02: 6th Portal to Central City

RP-01: Park Bridge Connector

BP-07: Gibbs Sidewalk

BP-10: Whitaker Trail Enhancements

Second Tier Projects: Projects that expand the bike network and make new connections to transit investments

BP-03: 1st Bikeway

BP-55: Broadway Dr Walkway

BP-11: Hamilton Sidewalks and Bikeway

## Transit service

When looking at the ¼ mile walkshed, South Portland is very well-served by public transit. Even with walking and cycling impediments, most of the bus stops and bus lines are a 10-minute walking distance for everyone throughout the neighborhood. The major TriMet bus routes serving this area frequently are #8, #9, #12, #54, and #56. Further, TriMet provides bus transit service in the South Portland study area that connects to the regional MAX light rail system.

In addition, as the largest employer in the South Portland study area, OHSU brings in 16,478 employees between the Marquam Hill and South Waterfront Campuses combined. Connected by the Portland Aerial Tram, which is owned by the City of Portland and operated by OHSU, transport using the tram is constrained by operating at-capacity during both the morning and afternoon commutes. Currently, there are ongoing design ideas to create an additional Marquam Hill transit connection to relieve congestion between the two campuses as part of the Southwest Corridor Light Rail Project.

## Naito Parkway Main Street Project

The Naito Parkway Main Street Project, which responds to the realignment of the western Ross Island Bridge ramps, addresses key problems in the study area. As the Ross Island bridgehead diverts traffic into the neighborhood, long vehicle queues build up during rush hour traffic that can extend south on Naito, Barbur Blvd, and SW Hamilton as northbound vehicles are approaching from the neighborhood. Traffic also queues along SW Sheridan and SW Fifth Avenue for vehicles approaching from the west and north. There is also a long traffic queue during morning rush hour for vehicles entering the South Portland neighborhood over the Ross Island Bridge from the east.

A reconfiguration of the Ross Island Bridgehead would allow Naito to be re-built from a limited-access highway to an urban arterial with the capacity to take on more main street design characteristics reminiscent of its streetcar days. In addition, zoning in this area will be reconsidered. Some land along Naito is currently zoned



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R1 and R2 (low and medium density multi-dwelling residential). The Ross Island Bridge ramps occupy nearly four city blocks, which, once freed up, can provide opportunity for more housing development. Being so close to a major transportation link, this area could be upzoned to provide for more housing and commercial services. The reconfigured Ross Island Bridge ramps, rebuilt as urban streets, will become more of an urban grid network with signalized intersections, replacing the current weave/merge design of the current highway era ramps that have perpetuated this area as a high crash corridor.

## **Naito Parkway**

Naito Parkway was once part of the Harbor Drive Expressway, which was constructed in 1943 along the downtown waterfront as part of the federal highway system and was the primary north-south artery along the west coast of Oregon. Front Avenue was widened as part of this project to connect OR-99W to Harbor Drive Expressway, close to what is now Tom McCall Waterfront Park. The widening essentially divided the residential community of South Portland, while Front Avenue was converted from a streetcar main street into a limited-use highway, now known as Naito Parkway. This displaced homes and businesses, all the while removing the street car line for increased vehicle access.

Naito Parkway interconnects with ramps onto the Ross Island Bridge, like a highway interchange. This makes for a disconnected street network with dangerous pedestrian crossings and unsafe cyclist access across Naito Parkway. Frequent congestion through the Kelly Street area is due to the demand for eastbound access to the Ross Island Bridge. This also prevents many parcels from using their commercial/mixed use zoning designation. In addition, there is only one auto underpass road to get across Naito Parkway at SW Grover Street and only two pedestrian crossings—one overpass at SW Hooker and one underpass at SW Grover—both of which are challenging for the elderly or those with disabilities. Several underpasses with sidewalks can be intimidating, especially at night. Though there are painted bike lanes on Naito Parkway, fast-moving traffic and the on-ramps to the Ross Island Bridge make riding conditions uncomfortable for most cyclists.

## **Barbur Boulevard**

Barbur Boulevard was once the corridor for a freight railroad and later became a branch of the Red Electric Railroad, which was decommissioned on October 1929, shortly after buses began to operate in the region. Similar to Naito Parkway, Barbur Boulevard is perceived more as a regional highway. Shared between ODOT and the City of Portland, Barbur Boulevard is where the proposed SW Corridor light rail project is located, with opportunities for affordable housing, safer bike and pedestrian facilities, and improved transit service for the region. Currently, there are proposed light rail stops at Barbur/Gibbs and Barbur/Hamilton.

Way-finding improvements could reinforce the link between Barbur, Naito, and the trails leading west to OHSU. There are currently painted bike lanes on Barbur, adjacent to the fast-moving traffic. Pedestrian and bicycle street improvements will be needed in the future, as well as safer connections across I-405, and the integration of upgraded storm water infrastructure.

## **Interstate 5**

A primary interstate for passenger vehicles and freight, I-5 is an important core highway to the region, but also provides noise, pollution, and livability concerns for the South Portland neighborhood. I-5 separates South Portland from the South Waterfront neighborhood and is congested during rush hour peak times.

## **Interstate 405/Marquam Bridge**

Interstate 405 and the Marquam Bridge are located near the northern boundary of the South Portland study area. Both were started as an effort after urban renewal and divided the community with limited local access from the neighborhood into downtown. The Marquam Bridge was the last bridge to link I-5 across the Willamette River.

## Commuting to Work

According to the 2017 Census, South Portland residents have a greater percentage of residents who have no vehicle, utilize public transportation, and walk as a means of commuting to work, compared to the whole city. This could be due to the walkability of the neighborhood, as well as the proximity to downtown. Still, about 50% of residents drive alone to work. Almost 50% of residents have a commute that is less than 20 minutes. Even with proximity to downtown amenities, only about 10% of the population do not use vehicles to get to work. The average commute time is 20.85 minutes for South Portland residents, which is still a shorter commute time than the rest of the City of Portland as a whole.

Census 2017 Households with Vehicles and Workers 16+ by Means of Transportation to Work							Census 2017 Workers 16+ by Travel Time to Work			
Area	No Vehicle	Drive Alone	Carpool	Public Transportation	Walk	Other Means	Less than 20 mins.	20-59 mins.	60 or more mins.	Average time (mins.)
Study Area	10.10%	50.00%	6.20%	14.80%	16.10%	1.50%	46.20%	48.60%	5.20%	20.85
Portland	7.10%	57.70%	8.90%	12.30%	6.50%	1.30%	35.60%	57.40%	6.90%	23.78

*\*means of transportation categories and travel time do not add up to 100%; some residents work from home*

**Table 9: Commuting Travel Mode Splits**

Source: U.S. Census

## Planning Implications

- The South Portland Study area has a history of state and federal highways cutting through the area, with over 24 north/south lanes of traffic including Barbur Blvd, Naito Parkway, I-5, I-405 on-ramps, and Highway 26. This concentration of highway infrastructure creates noise and pollution, increases neighborhood diversion traffic, and results in barriers to walking and biking for residents. Though pockets of the residential area itself are walkable for South Portland, freeway and highway obstacles greatly diminish community cohesion.
- The long queue resulting from traffic during peak commute hours to enter the Ross Island Bridgehead eastbound will need to be mitigated to increase livability.
- Reconfiguration of the Ross Island Bridgehead has the potential to re-purpose land for neighborhood and housing development.
- Though the aerial tram is a frequently used mode of transportation between the OHSU Marquam Hill and South Waterfront campuses, it is currently operating at-capacity and will not be able to accommodate increased passenger volumes in the future.
- As expressed in the 2012 Barbur Concept Plan, Naito Parkway can be rebuilt to be an urban main street with opportunity for a complete street design with sidewalks and bike lanes. Amenities such as street trees and stormwater management could also be provided to help transform Naito from a limited-access highway to a multi-modal arterial.
- The planned City Green Loop Trail could cross Naito at the north end of the proposed station area by Barbur/Gibbs, connecting the district to numerous cultural amenities on both sides of the river.



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## CHAPTER 6: HOUSING and INFILL DEVELOPMENT

This chapter contains information on housing demographics, current and forecasted neighborhood housing mix, a housing gap analysis to show the need of units in the area, and the design and quality of current residential infill development. The data in the charts are from the U.S. Census 2000 and 2017, the Buildable Land Inventory (BLI), and the Regional Multiple Listings Services (RMLS) database.

### Design and Quality

Today, the South Portland neighborhood contains a mix of small-scale residences and businesses that were built at the turn of the 20th century. These include mostly single-family Victorian-style homes, but also some duplexes and small apartment complexes. Buildings of worship, the settlement house, and a small neighborhood deli still exist here. In general, the residential street character still reflects the more leisurely pace of the first part of the century.

A large number of the residential structures in the northern part of the neighborhood were demolished during the South Auditorium urban renewal project in the 1960s, greatly depleting the population density of the area, and spurring the creation of the Lair Hill Conservation District in 1977. A good portion of the resulting vacant land was used for roads, highways and freeways, thus depleting the stock of land that could be used for new construction of buildings.

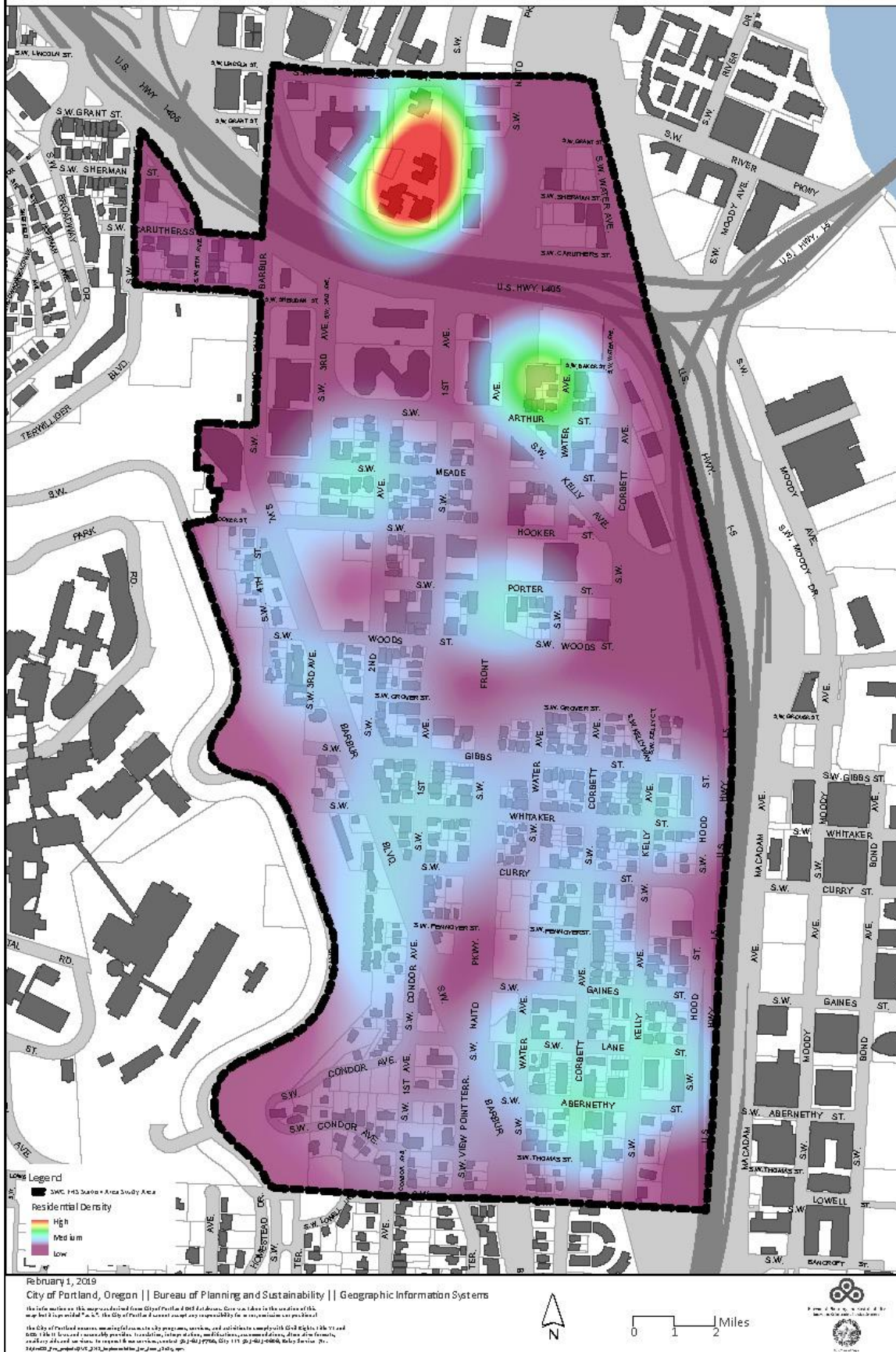
Currently, the mix of housing types in the South Portland study area includes single and multi-family residential, duplexes, and small-to-large apartment complexes. Overall, there are 919 multi-family residential units according to the City's Buildable Land Inventory. There are 567 single-family residential units.

### Housing Demographics

The census tracts encompassing the study area has 4,090 homeowners and 5,640 renters, which translates to 48% and 52% of the housing in the study area, respectively. With close proximity to Oregon Health and Science University, Naturopathic University of Natural Medicine (NUNM), and Portland State University (PSU), the greatest residential density can be found directly adjacent to two sides of I-405 in the north side of the study area.

# SW Corridor Implementation - Existing Conditions

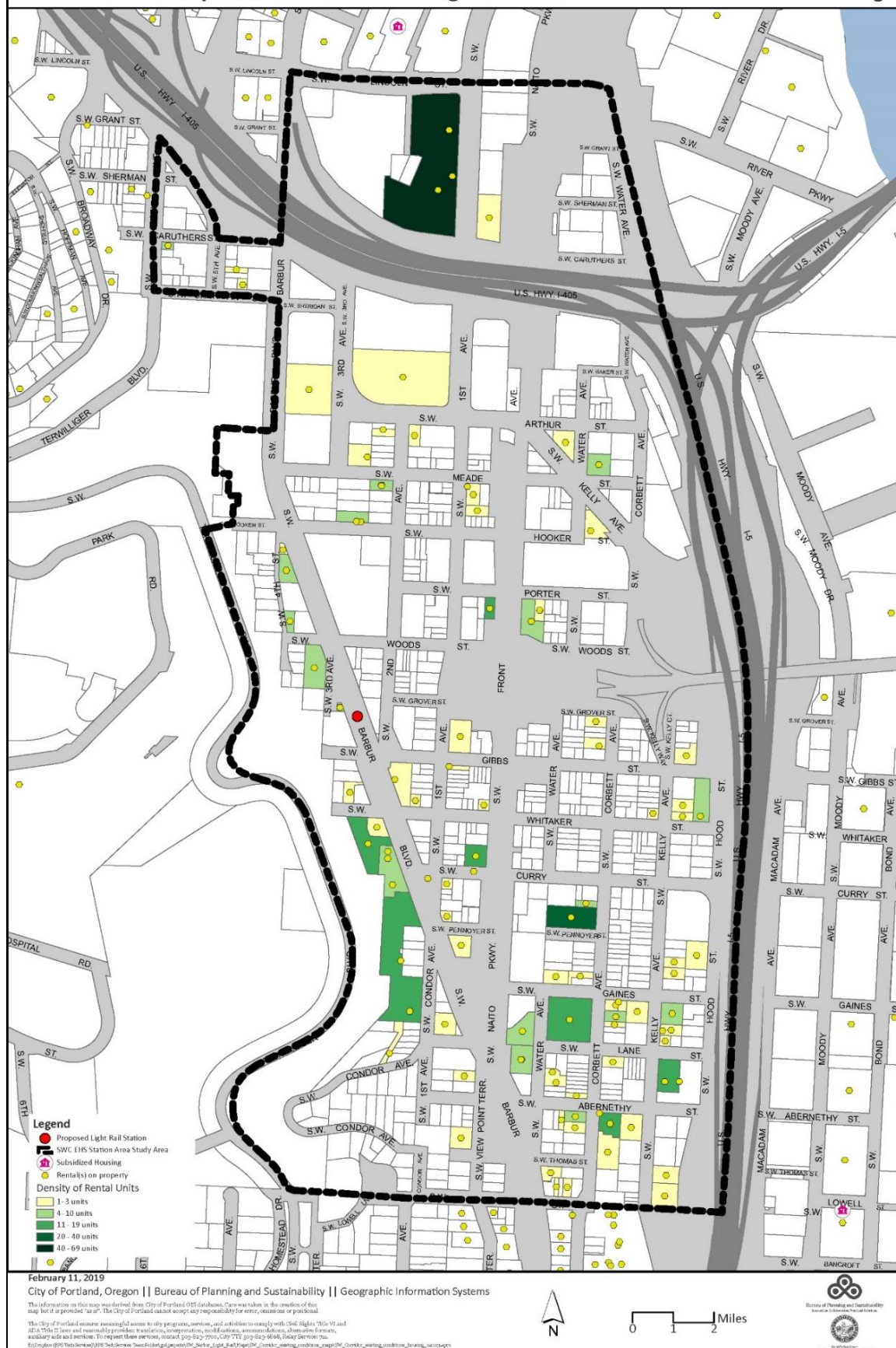
Land Use



**Map 9: Residential Density**

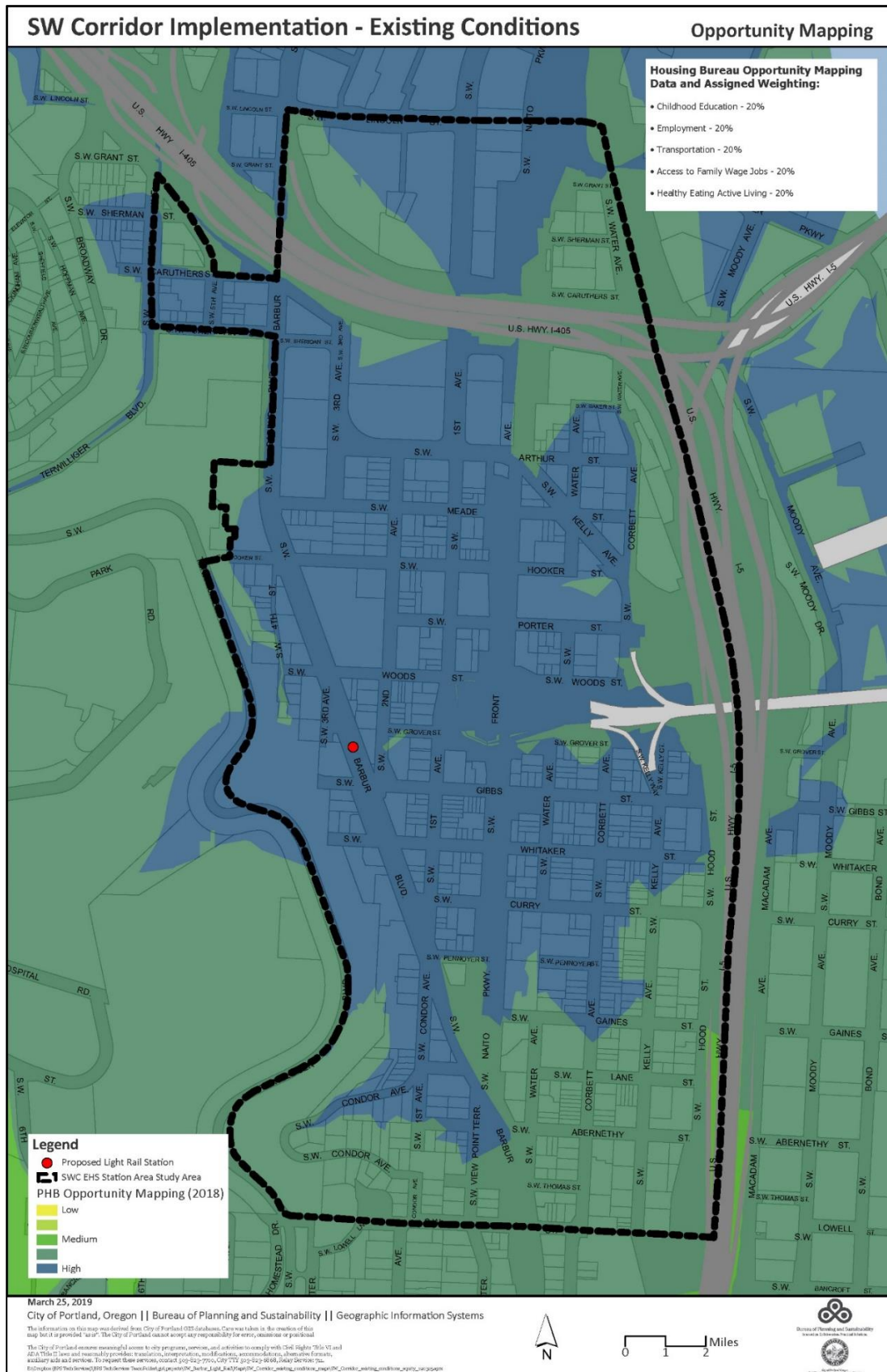
Source: U.S. Census, 2017





### Map 10: Density of Rental Units

Source: BPS



**Map 11: PHB Opportunity Mapping (2018).** According to the Portland Housing Bureau’s Opportunity Mapping analysis, a study that accounts for proximity to transportation, family-wage jobs, healthy food sources, and childhood education, most of the study area has been identified as high opportunity.

Source: Portland Housing Bureau



## Housing Affordability

According to the Portland Housing Bureau's 2018 State of Housing Report, housing affordability for the South Portland neighborhood is currently difficult for a large part of the population. Homeownership is not affordable for the average Portland household or any sub-populations analyzed. Rental prices are out of reach for many racial/ethnic groups to afford.

Housing Affordability	Rental				Homeownership
	Studio	1-BR	2-BR	3-BR	
Avg. Portland Household	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
3-Person Extremely Low-Income	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
3-Person Extremely Low-Income	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
3-Person Moderate-Income	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Couple with Family	YES	YES	NO	YES	NO
White	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO
Black	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Latino	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Native American	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Asian	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Hawaiian-Pacific Islander	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Senior	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Single Mother	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Foreign-Born	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

**Table 10: Household Characteristics, Housing Size/Tenure and Affordability**

Source: Portland Housing Bureau State of Housing in Portland Report, 2018

## Gap Analysis for Rental Units

An alternative way to view the current need for affordable rental housing is to identify the difference between the number of low-income households (demand) and the homes affordable and available to those households (supply).

Market-rate rental units affordable to lower-income households can be occupied by households with higher incomes. This removes supply that would otherwise be available for lower-income households. This phenomenon is known as renting down. It is a major reason why many lower-income households are housing cost-burdened. This analysis included the number of rental units that are both affordable and considered available. We found due to this high price of rentals, many higher income households are renting down, further limiting the supplying of affordable housing that would otherwise be occupied up by those in lower income brackets.

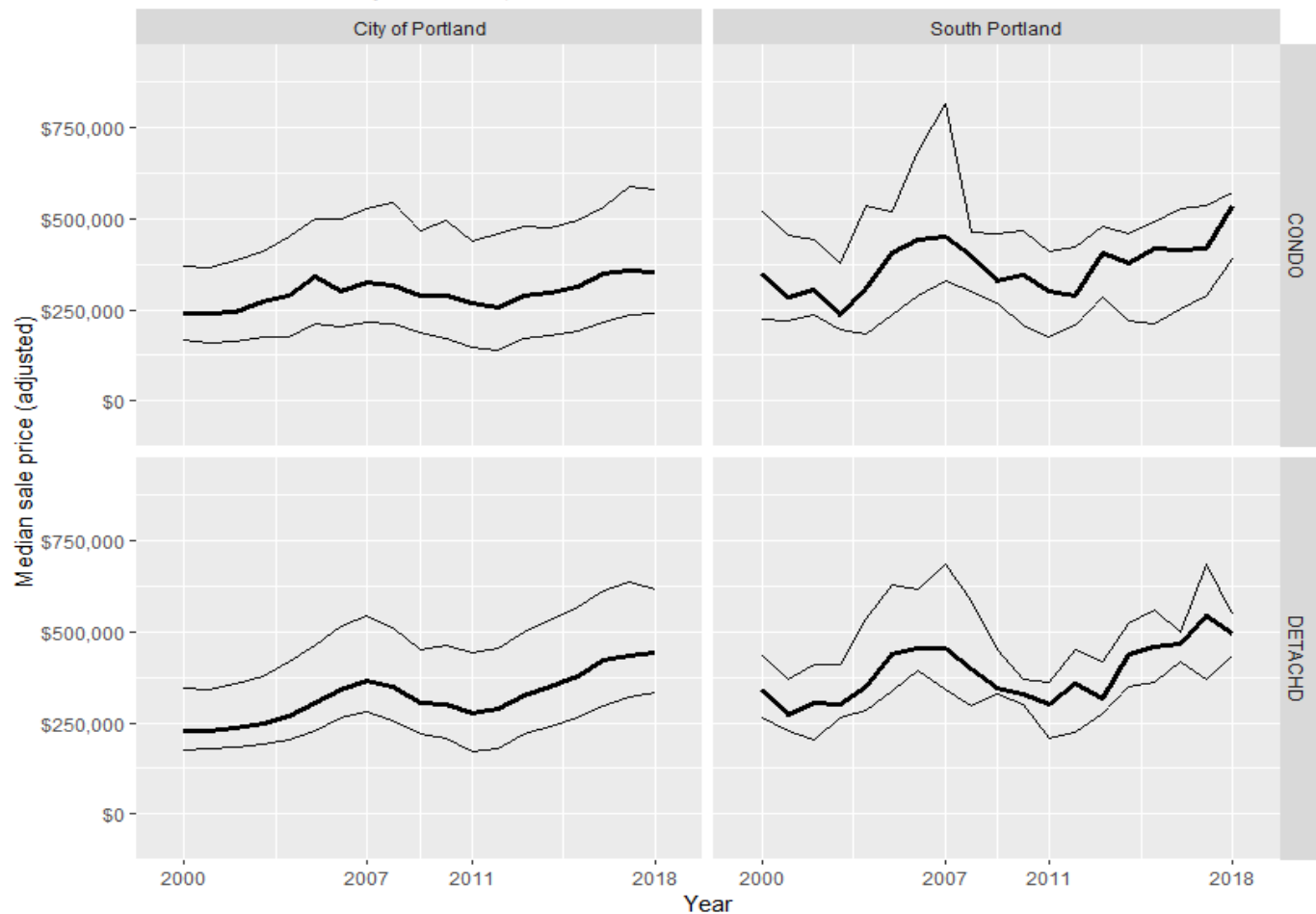
This analysis looked at the shortage or surplus of affordable housing for households with incomes between 0-30% of the median family income (MFI), 30-50% (MFI), 50-80% MFI, and 80% MFI and above.

- In the 0% to 30% MFI range, there is a shortage of 420 units.
- In the 31% to 50% MFI range, there is a surplus of 94 units available.
- In the 51% to 80% MFI range, there is a 479 surplus of units available
- In the 81% MFI or higher range, there is a 153 shortage of units available to households who need it.

## Median Sale Prices

Adjusted median sale price and 20th/80th percentile (2018\$)

South Portland and City of Portland, 2000-2018



Source: Regional Multiple Listings Service (RMLS); Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability.

**Table 11: Graphs of Median Home Sale Prices**

Source: Regional Multiple Listings Service (RMLS); Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Over the years, median sale prices have been steadily rising. There were 30-50 homes sales in the South Portland study area between 2000 and 2018. Between 2000 and 2018, there was an increase between both condo and detached housing sale prices--\$125,000 increase for condos and \$375,000 increase for detached housing. This phenomenon creates housing pressures for an already-expensive market. This also puts many communities at risk of being displaced when updated housing infrastructure becomes available.

## Projected Additional Housing Units

According to the latest County Assessor's Data, there are 567 single-family residential (SFR) units and 919 multi-family residential (MFR) units in the study area, for a total of 1,486 existing units. In the future, according to Portland's Buildable Lands Inventory (BLI), 60 SFR and 804 MFR units are projected to be built between now and 2035, for a total of 864 new units. As forecasted by 2035, total housing could increase to 2,350 units.

Type	Description	# New Units Allocated Between Now and 2035
SFR	SFR Houses	6
	Narrow Lot Houses	11
MFR	Attached Houses Medium Density	29
	Attached Houses High Density	14
	Plexes	41
	Corridor Apartments	109
	SRO Housing	191
	Neighborhood Mixed Use	25
	Mid-Rise Mixed Use Small Units	85
	Mid-Rise Mixed Use Large Units	14
	High-Rise Tower	339
	<b>Total Additional Units</b>	<b>864</b>

**Table 12: Buildable Lands Inventory Residential Allocation in Study Area through 2035**

Source: 2017 BLI

## Development Capacity

The South Portland study area has significant potential to accommodate new housing, especially with land that could be freed up through the Ross Island Bridgehead reconfiguration. Two or three parcels could be made available in this process, and within walking distance to a potential Gibbs station for the Southwest Corridor light rail. Together, these parcels will have capacity for over 350 housing units.

Vacant and Underutilized Land	39 Sites, 24 Acres
Total Capacity for Additional Housing	3000+ Units
Capacity at Bridgehead Parcels	350-400 Units

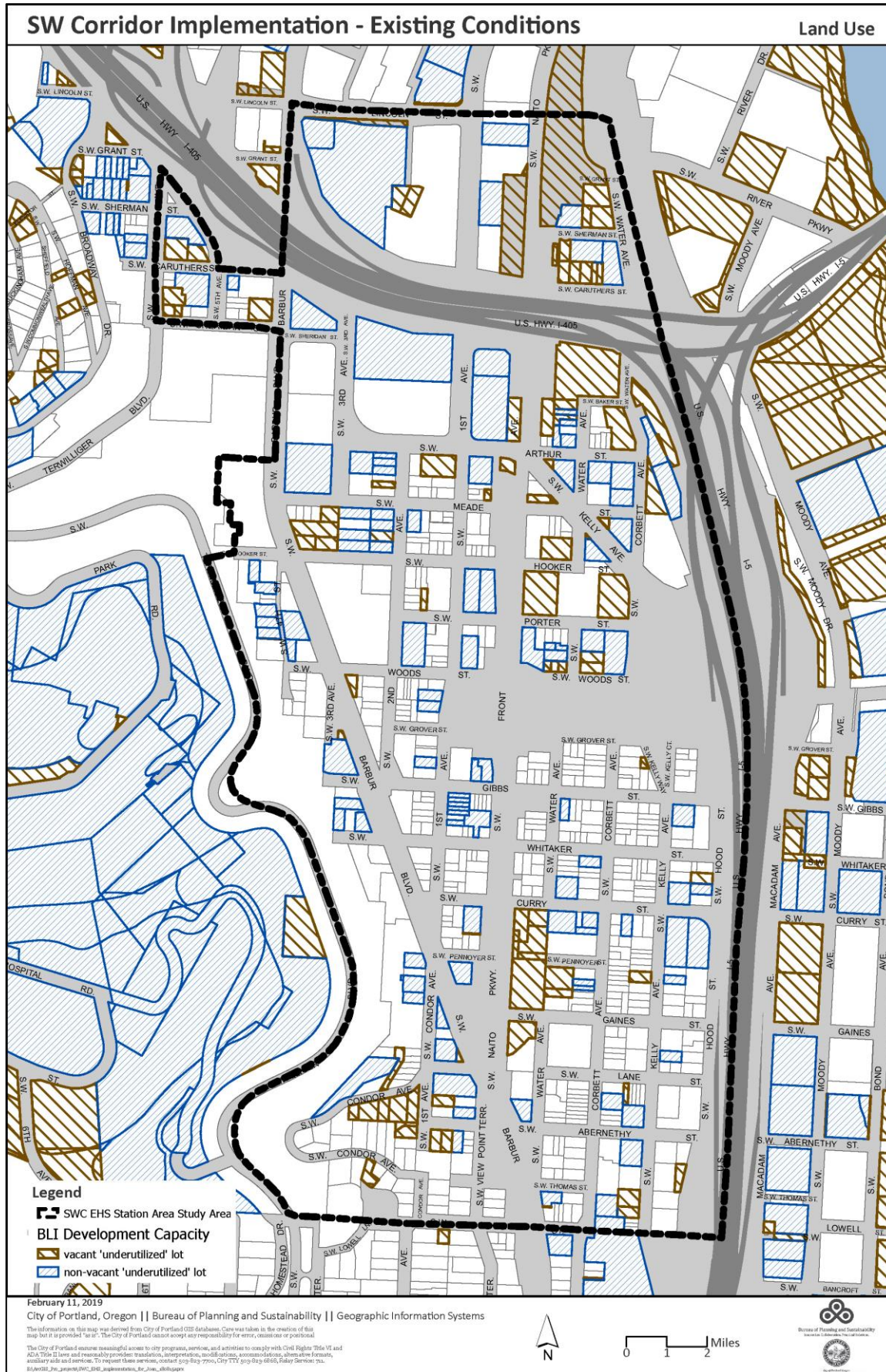
**Table 13: Developable Land Created by Ross Island Bridgehead Project**

Source: South Portland Focus Area Staff Report (Aug. 2018)

## Planning Implications

- Even in spite of high median home sale prices, there is a 48%/52% split between homeowners and renters in the census tracts encompassing the South Portland study area. This may be due to a high number of students living in the area.
- Along with high median prices, there is a gap between the number of houses available in the market and those who are able to afford it in the 0-30% MFI range. This creates a housing stock shortage in the area, and housing cost burdens for low-income households.
- With limited housing stock, 2017 BLI projections forecast more housing in the area. Most of this is expected to be multi-family housing subject to inclusionary housing requirements, which could help with affordability concerns.
- Reconstruction of the Ross Island Bridgehead project could potentially repurpose more land for affordable housing on publicly-owned parcels in the South Portland area.





**Map 12: An analysis of development capacity in the South Portland study area showing underutilized lots**

Source: Buildable Land Inventory, BPS