

# NORTH PORTLAND IN MOTION

## RACIAL EQUITY PLANNING MEMO

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Prepared for:



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## INTRODUCTION

North Portland in Motion (NoPIM) is an upcoming planning effort to identify transportation needs and near-term investments to improve access to community destinations and support walking, biking, and transit use in the North Portland peninsula.

Through NoPIM, PBOT will:

- Engage deeply with North Portlanders to understand transportation needs and barriers to meeting daily mobility needs.
- Identify a near-term prioritized investment strategy of projects and programs to improve conditions for walking, biking, and transit.
- Build new relationships with community-based organizations to represent the diverse neighborhoods and communities within North Portland.

PBOT held three (3) Racial Equity Planning meetings in late spring and early summer 2021 to create a public engagement plan for NoPIM that acknowledges the ways in which systemic racism has impacted people living within the project area, and creates equitable engagement opportunities

In these meetings, PBOT and JLA Public Involvement staff discussed the purpose of the NoPIM project, potential stakeholders, project background, goals for outreach, history of the project area, and ways to consider and intentionally build racial equity into the project deliverables and outreach approach.

This memo summarizes the discussions and outcomes of those meetings. This memo will be used to inform the Public Involvement and Communications Plan (PICP) and public engagement for the NoPIM project.

## KEY THEMES

The following themes are meant to guide the overall project process, including the project goals, deliverables, and public outreach approach.

- Focus on the **process rather than the product**. It will be important to not make assumptions about issues and potential solutions until the team has discussed the project area with stakeholders.
- **Create meaningful and convenient participation opportunities.**
- **Evolve the project goals** if needed, based on stakeholder input.
- Concern about **gentrification and displacement** as improvements are made through NoPIM. The project team can address this concern by **being mindful of who improvements are being made for** and by **focusing on understanding peoples' needs** and what helps them get to their daily destinations safely. *(Important note: While the scale and type of the potential projects recommended by NoPIM should not be large enough to impact displacement, we should consider whether all of them as a whole could be enough to have an impact.)*
- Until funding is secured, **explore solutions with a range of cost and timeline priorities.**
- **Increase input opportunities with marginalized community groups** including, racial equity groups, houseless people, people with Low English Proficiency, and schools (students / youth). More work is needed to further identify these stakeholders.
- There was some concern about PBOT's capacity / ability to commit to being able to **develop and sustain non-transactional relationships.**

- Desire to **increase investment** in lower-income and BIPOC communities and bolster capacity. Participants expressed that it is important to think of these communities as a larger network that are not in one specific geographic place.
- Lower-income and BIPOC communities' needs and desires may diverge from what the project team expects this project will deliver.

## EQUITY GOALS FOR THE PROJECT

The key themes from the Racial Equity Workshop meetings helped inform the following equity goals for North Portland in Motion.

### PLAN PROCESS

- **Engage people in non-traditional, non-elite, and community trusted places.** Cultivate inclusivity by meeting people where they are. This means showing up to places where people already feel comfortable, designing accessible ways to engage with the project, and eliminating barriers to civic participation.
- **Focus solutions to increase safety and access for all trip types and community destinations.** All trips should be safe and a PBOT priority.
- **Seek to establish non-transactional relationships with people and communities.** Be clear with the community that North Portland in Motion is not a one-time investment, but rather an ongoing commitment to community relationships and investments with programs and funding to sustain it.
- **Be intentional about how resources are spent.** Gift cards from local businesses to support engagement. Catering from BIPOC-owned establishments for public events. Contracts with trusted community-based organizations. There are many ways to show up and support the greater North Portland community through our procurement practices.
- **Represent North Portlanders.** Be intentional about the people, places, and symbols we use to represent the public in our outreach and plan materials.
- **Intentionally place new, emerging, and disenfranchised community organizations and voices on a level playing field with more traditional community power structures.** Making a level playing field includes but is not limited to capacitating and educating; giving our time and attention; and providing access to our leadership and policy change process.
- **Valuing qualitative information as much as quantitative.** Also look for opportunities to turn qualitative information into quantitative information through new data collection
- **Clarity about decision-making at every step.** Community members will know their role in shaping the plan and be able to understand how important decisions are made.

### PLAN OUTCOMES

- **Be curious, open-ended, and willing to challenge the status quo.** North Portland in Motion should be open to new typologies of projects that reflect what we hear from the community and elevate the voices and needs of BIPOC and lower income residents.
- **Each project and program needs to have a benefits and burdens analysis.** Public engagement and Community Advisory Group should help determine what is included in this analysis.

- **Build trust through doing good work.** At the completion of this process, BIPOC and low-income North Portlanders will feel heard and see their needs and priorities reflected in the final product. The creation of the plan will be a trust-building exercise which will allow for deeper future engagement.
- **Build capacity with community.** At the end of this process, we will have bolstered and built capacity in existing (and future) community organizations so they can participate in government more fully and advocate for their needs.
- **BIPOC communities will have shaped the transportation future of North Portland.** When future processes (e.g., project development and construction of NoPIM projects) occur, they will see their visions and aspirations in the projects and trust that they have some measure of control of their future and environment

## NEW COLUMBIA SPECIFIC:

- **Seek opportunities to share power/decision-making with communities that haven't had it, where/when possible.** Within New Columbia, PBOT will serve as consultants to help develop a fully community supported vision for transportation and program investments to support New Columbia residents. Within an agreed-upon set of goals, PBOT will delegate decision making power to the community to make decisions about investments and program resources as needed.

## KEY STAKEHOLDER GROUPS

The following are the key stakeholder categories, or groups, identified through the Racial Equity Meetings. A full list of individual stakeholders identified can be found in [Appendix B](#).

- Affordable Housing Residents
- Business Groups
- City and State Government Agencies
- Climate / Transportation Advocacy Groups
- Community Events (users and organizers)
- Environmental / Conservation Groups
- Faith Groups
- Houseless People
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP)
- Major Employer Campuses
- Major Community Destinations (users/organizers)
- Neighborhood Associations and Organizations
- Parks and Trails
- People who do not travel by car
- Racial Equity Groups / Organizations
- Schools (Administration / Institution)
- Schools (Students / Youth)

## ASSESSMENT OF STAKEHOLDER POWER DYNAMICS

In the last Racial Equity Planning meeting, the team mapped the stakeholder groups to their perceived level of interest in the project and their level of influence over project decisions. The graphs from this group activity can be found in [Appendix C](#).

## Level of Interest

Major Campuses, Business Groups, and Schools have the highest expected level of interest in the project, while Schools (Students / Youth), People with Low English Proficiency, and Houseless People were perceived as having the lowest level of interest.

The group determined that they would like to increase interest for the following groups:

- Racial Equity Groups and Organizations
- Houseless People
- People with Low English Proficiency
- Faith Groups
- Schools (Students / Youth)
- Affordable Housing Residents
- Environmental / Conservation Groups

## Level of Influence

Major Campuses and Schools (Administrations / Institutions) will most likely have the largest amount of influence over the planning and decision making processes, while People with Low English Proficiency, Houseless People, Affordable Housing Residents, and Schools (Students / Youth) will have the least amount of influence.

The group would like to increase the influence of the following groups:

- People with Low English Proficiency
- Houseless People
- Schools (Youth / Students)
- Affordable Housing Residents
- Racial Equity Groups and Organizations
- Climate and Transportation Advocacy Groups.

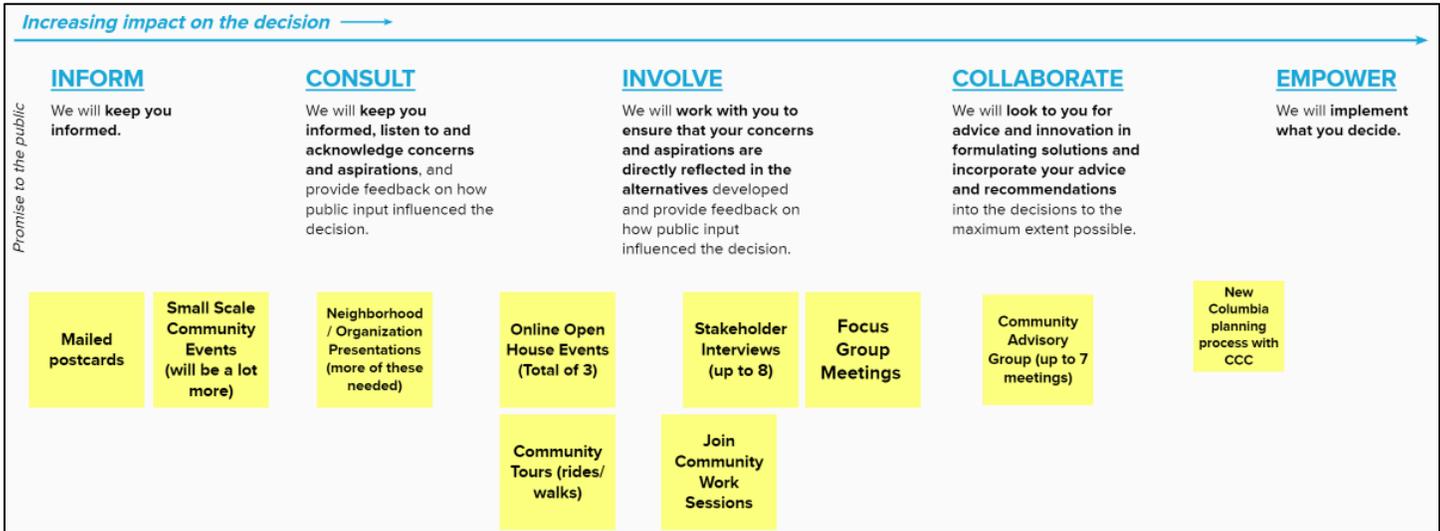
## KEY STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The project includes several planned engagement activities. Through the Racial Equity Planning meetings, participants mapped the engagement activities to the level of impact each activity will have over project decisions. The following graphic captures the outcomes of this discussion.

**Note:** *A more complete overview of the engagement activities and their mapping to the IAP2 Spectrum of Engagement<sup>1</sup> can be found in the Public Involvement and Communications Plan.*

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<sup>1</sup> "IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation." *International Association for Public Participation*, IAP2 International Federation 2018, 2018, [cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum\\_8.5x11\\_Print.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/pillars/Spectrum_8.5x11_Print.pdf).



The following tables outline how each stakeholder group may be involved with the planned engagement activities and project based on racial equity and project outreach goals.

**Engagement Activities**

<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Mailed Postcards</b>	<b>Small Scale Community Events</b>	<b>Neighborhood / Organization Presentations</b>	<b>Online Open House Events</b>	<b>Community Tours</b>
All / General	x			X	
Affordable Housing Residents		x			x
Business Groups					
Climate / Transportation Advocacy Groups			x		
Community Events					
Environmental / Conservation Groups			x		
Faith Groups		x			x
Houseless People		x			
LEP		x		X	
Major Campuses			x		
Major Community Destinations					
Neighborhood Associations			x		x
Parks and Trails			x		

Racial Equity Groups			x		
Schools (Admin / Institution)					x
Schools (Students / Youth)		x			

**Engagement Activities**

<b>Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Stakeholder Interviews</b>	<b>Community Work Sessions</b>	<b>Focus Group Meetings</b>	<b>Community Advisory Group</b>	<b>New Columbia Planning Process with CCC</b>
All / General					
Affordable Housing Residents			x	X	x
Business Groups				X	
Climate / Transportation Advocacy Groups				X	
Community Events	x				
Environmental / Conservation Groups					
Faith Groups	x				
Houseless People		x			
LEP			x		
Major Campuses	x				
Major Community Destinations	x				
Neighborhood Associations				X	
Parks and Trails			x	X	
Racial Equity Groups	x	x	x	X	x
Schools (Admin / Institution)	x				
Schools (Students / Youth)		x	x		

## **BENEFITS, BURDENS, AND OPPORTUNITIES**

The project team has identified several goals for the projects identified with the North Portland in Motion plan. The project team discussed the potential community benefits and burdens for each of those goals, outlined below.

### **Project Goal: Improve conditions for people walking and biking**

#### **Benefits**

- Facilities feel safe and comfortable for all communities
- Close gaps in the greenway network
- Provide low-cost transportation option
- Walking and biking provide personal health benefits
- Many populations (i.e., older, younger, disabled, low income, etc.) don't have access to a vehicle

#### **Burdens**

- Gentrification and displacement
- On-street parking might be removed in areas with few transportation options today
- Large, older, multifamily apartments might not have space for bike storage
- Bike routes can sometimes be seen as being only for elites or people passing through if not planned with communities

### **Project Goal: Improve access to transit and transit reliability**

#### **Benefits**

- Benefits transit riders, which are disproportionately low income, people of color, and women
- Potential to benefit those without access to a vehicle and who have to travel long-distances
- Ability to update stop locations where people need them most

#### **Burdens**

- Gentrification and displacement
- Without transit stop amenities, biggest needs may not be addressed
- Some improvements (increase property values, displace transit-dependent riders, and lead to lower ridership)
- May not address frequency, routing, etc.
- Some people's bus stops may be closed through optimization

### **Project Goal: Support multimodal access to important community destinations**

#### **Benefits**

- Safe access for non-vehicle travelers to businesses and schools
- Reduces car trips (therefore less pollution, safer streets, etc.)
- Improves conditions for people who want to walk, bike, or take transit for neighborhood trip, but currently have to drive

- Improves wayfinding so people can find routes to important places

### Burdens

- Short-term burden of construction on small business corridors
- Gentrification and displacement
- Erosion of some existing community destinations (i.e., commercial displacement, institutions, etc.)
- Potential to miss important community destinations
- On-street parking might be removed in areas with few transportation options
- Places still might not seem welcoming to all kinds of people

## Project Goal: Design for safe streets (infrastructure and non-infrastructure)

### Benefits

- Benefits pedestrians and bicyclists the most, who are disproportionately low income and people of color
- BIPOC and low-income folks are most impacted in traffic crashes
- Opportunity to embrace anti-bias, bystander intervention, etc.

### Burdens

- Gentrification and displacement
- Who are we designing safe streets for?
- A street that is safer from a traffic safety perspective may make it more attractive to a whiter and wealthier cohort and feel less comfortable for people of color
- May miss opportunities if focus is on traffic safety alone

## NEXT STEPS

### Implications for Public Engagement

Through the racial equity meetings, PBOT and project team members determined that they want to **build trust and relationship building** through the public engagement process, **create non-transactional relationships** with people and communities, and **create opportunities for historically underserved communities to shape project goals and outcomes.**

Below are possible ways the project team can address these goals through public engagement:

- **Conduct more open-ended outreach** to understand the perspectives of BIPOC and lower-income communities (i.e., What barriers do they face? How would they define safety? Do they feel at risk of being displaced? What are the major community destinations? etc.)
- **Lead with curiosity.** Strive to come solicit input and feedback before defining the problem that the project is addressing
- Ask community members **how they would like to be engaged.**
- Where and when possible, **give decision-making power to communities that have been historically left out or not had power in the past**, while being transparent about the boundaries around what is and is not possible, and what decisions are ultimately in the power of City Council and other people/institutions.

- **Value community member stories** by asking people to record and send in videos, write stories about how they are affected by transportation in North Portland, and setting up a call-in line where people can leave a voicemail.
- **Hire community liaisons** to help build relationships with low-income and BIPOC communities.
- Intentionally **place new, emerging, and disenfranchised community organizations and voices on a level playing field** with more traditional and/or established community power structures. To begin this work, staff will engage CAG members in discussing opportunities to build this into the process.
- **Continually evaluate if PBOT is successfully reaching the people and communities** they are wanting to engage.

## Gaps and Outstanding Questions

The Racial Equity Planning Meetings helped PBOT define and begin creating an equitable approach to NoPIM. Through these meetings, the group also identified several questions and gaps that will either need to be kept in mind throughout the project or addressed in the Public Involvement and Communications Plan (PICP), at subsequent project team meetings, and/or at Community Advisory Group (CAG) meetings.

Below is a summary of those gap and questions:

- Which Community Based Organizations can help the project team reach BIPOC and lower-income community, members and help us understand their needs and perspectives?
- Where can NoPIM's communication efforts coincide with other messages the city is trying to communicate (e.g., information about housing and rental assistance, home repair loans, COVID, food assistance, etc.)?
- What other people need to be included in the stakeholder interviews?
- Which groups and communities does PBOT want to spend time amplifying?
- Where are people gathering and which community destinations should the project team go to to reach people?
- Which Hispanic/Latinx businesses should PBOT build relationships with to help get the word out about the project?
- How can PBOT support the Community Cycling Center as they organize around transportation in the area?
- How can PBOT empower groups representing and working for lower-income and BIPOC people? (Perhaps ask if they want to lead a planning effort supported by PBOT?)
- How might PBOT increase investment in lower-income and BIPOC communities and bolster capacity? Where would the funds come from? How would they be distributed and managed?
- Who defines "safe"? The project team wants to make sure they understand BIPOC neighbors' safety needs.
- How will the project team know that they have heard from the community? At a CAG meeting, consider and define who is and is not a part of "community" when we talk about reaching community members. Also spend time with CAG determining how we will know when we have heard from the community.
- With the assistance of CAG, conduct a benefit and burden analysis for each transportation project proposed through NoPIM, and create evaluation criteria.

- To develop and sustain non-transactional relationships, PBOT could consider having two representatives from PBOT at meetings with community organizations so that relationships aren't held with one person. PBOT could also create an internal budget to help prioritize these relationships.
- As PBOT moves forward and thinks about implementation strategy for NoPIM, there will be a need to determine how to sustain these relationships, possibly at a higher level within PBOT (not a project level).