

## PWG MEETING #1 SUMMARY

### **Cully Main Street & Local Street Plans Project Project Working Group Meeting #1: Project Overview and Existing Conditions**

**June 21, 2011, Baltazar Ortiz Community Center, 5 – 7 pm**

#### **Attending:**

Debbie Bischoff	<i>Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability</i>
Denver Igarta	<i>Portland Bureau of Transportation</i>
Erin Machell	<i>Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability</i>
Mary Bosch	<i>Marketek</i>
Robert Granger	<i>42<sup>nd</sup> Avenue Business Association</i>
Ruby Ibarra	<i>Multnomah County Health Department</i>
Evans Martin	<i>Cully Association of Neighbors, Land Use Representative</i>
Laura Young	<i>Cully Association of Neighbors, Transportation Representative</i>
Virginia Moayad	<i>Harvey Scott School</i>
Felicia Touvar-Nollette	<i>Harvey Scott School</i>
Brian Wethington	<i>Portland Bureau of Environmental Services</i>
Alan Hipólito	<i>Verde</i>
Nathan Teske	<i>Hacienda Community Development Corporation</i>
Sandra LeFrancois	<i>Central Northeast Neighbors Coalition</i>
Nicholas Johnson	<i>Portland Commission on Disability, Cully resident</i>
Kate Deane	<i>Portland Development Commission</i>

#### **Handouts:**

- Meeting agenda
- Project schedule
- Existing Conditions: Neighborhood Characteristics, Zoning and Land Use
- The Cully Main Street Project Market Analysis: Preliminary Findings

#### **1. Meeting Introductions and Agenda**

Debbie Bischoff welcomed the group. Introductions were made and the agenda reviewed. No changes were made to the agenda.

#### **2. Project Overview and Project Working Group Information**

Debbie provided an overview of the project and described the role of the working group.

The Cully Main Street and Local Street Plans project will take place over the next year. The plan will have a land use and a transportation component, both looking out to a 20 to 30 year timeline for the Cully neighborhood.

This Cully project builds on other recent projects. Several years ago the Cully-Concordia Community Assessment and Action Plan, which included broad-based public engagement activities to assess conditions and needs for parts of these two neighborhoods, created a set of action steps for achieving community goals. This Cully Main Street and Local Street Plans project implements a few action plan items. In addition, this project will help to build on the

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changes created by the Cully Boulevard Improvement Project, which resulted in the recently opened new street section generally located between Prescott and Killingsworth streets. This stretch is now a safer, more inviting street for pedestrians and cyclists. The current project will help improve access to Cully Blvd., and will also seek to create a better neighborhood-serving main street area for the community.

The land use component of the project will consist of studying and recommending rezoning along parts of Cully Boulevard, as well as parts of Killingsworth and Prescott streets, to allow more opportunities for neighborhood-serving commercial uses. The goal is to help Cully function more like a neighborhood main street, its designation in the *Metro 2040 Regional Growth Concept Plan*, and to bring nonconforming uses into conformance. The City will be working with the community to determine which properties are to be recommended for commercial zoning and which should remain residentially zoned, as well as what types of zoning designations best would serve the neighborhood.

For the transportation component the City will work with the community to prioritize routes in the neighborhood for local circulation (primarily for pedestrians and cyclists) and to identify new opportunities for street connectivity. It will also seek to identify additional funding options and alternative designs for improving local streets beyond those currently employed as part of the "local improvement district" process. These new funding and design alternatives could potentially be used in other parts of the city.

The project is currently approaching the end of the existing conditions phase, the topic of tonight's meeting. The next phase of the process will be a needs, opportunities and constraints analysis, followed by the development of possible solutions, and then recommendations in a staff report to the Planning and Sustainability Commission and then to the City Council. The City Council adoption process will take place beginning in March 2012. There will be two public open houses in the fall and winter, and the first public event, the Cully Neighborhood Roll and Stroll and Community Celebration, will be held on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup>. Debbie asked if there were any questions or comments on the project and process. None were received.

The Project Working Group is an advisory group to City staff. There will be 4 or 5 meetings over the course of the next year, scheduled at strategic times in the process. The working group will have the opportunity to review draft project documents and provide commentary. Comments will be integrated into final products.

The composition of the PWG is nearly complete. There is still a need for a Rigler School community representative, as well as representatives that live or own businesses along the Cully main street area. [A Rigler School community representative has been identified since the close of the meeting. Sadie Feibel is a Rigler parent and Cully resident. Also, a Cully main street area property owner named Jamey Harris, has been identified for the PWG.]

### 3. Existing Conditions Presentation and Discussion

Denver Igarta provided existing conditions information from a transportation perspective,

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including a description of the historic development pattern of the neighborhood. The transportation study area includes area within the Cully neighborhood boundary south of Columbia Blvd.

As discussed, part of the project will be identifying new pedestrian and bicycle connections in Cully since the neighborhood currently has poor street connectivity. Cully has a very different street pattern than other nearby neighborhoods such as Concordia, even though it was developed at the same time. This is because Cully was not a part of the City of Portland at the time, and so was subject to different development requirements. (Cully was later annexed into the city in the 1980s.) Cully has longer blocks, fewer intersections and a less developed grid, as well as many substandard and unimproved streets. This promotes dependency on cars and reduces safety and convenience for pedestrian and cyclists.

Condition of streets in Cully:

<b>STREET CONDITION</b>	<b>Miles</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Improved Street (sidewalks on both sides)	9.8	22%
Improved Street (sidewalks on 1 side)	5.0	11.5%
Substandard Street/Driveway (paved with curb)	6.9	16%
Substandard Street/Driveway (paved no curb)	18.1	41.5%
Dirt or Gravel Street	3.8	9%

PWG members asked clarifying questions about the condition of particular streets in Cully, and the location of unimproved streets. Dirt and gravel streets are concentrated east of Cully Blvd., and in the northwest part of the neighborhood. Killingsworth St. west of Cully Blvd. mostly has a sidewalk on one side. Cully Blvd. south of Prescott is a complete street, but traffic moves very fast and there are poor pedestrian crossing options.

The transportation study area includes the local streets throughout the Cully neighborhood. The project will be focused on local street improvements, with an emphasis on livability for residents on residential streets. It will also incorporate the findings of the Safe Routes to School engineering effort that is currently underway for Rigler School. PBOT staff is working with the school to analyze the routes students use to get to school, and prioritizing safety improvements. A PWG member suggested that the school districting maps for the area be included in the project existing conditions report.

Additionally Killingsworth St., as a collector-level street and city walkway, is eligible for road improvement funds that are not available for local streets. A PWG member noted that Killingsworth may be eligible for sidewalk infill funds that are going to be assigned to major streets throughout Portland during the next few weeks, and that neighbors should contact April Bertelsen at PBOT to urge that Killingsworth be considered. Debbie offered to email everyone with April's contact information.

The transportation component of the project has four major objectives:

1. Improve connectivity
2. Identify maintenance options – short of full improvement
3. Explore new street designs alternatives

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### 4. Identify funding sources for local street improvements

Erin Machell provided additional existing conditions information to the group from a zoning and land use perspective, including neighborhood demographic characteristics.

Cully is a growing neighborhood, having grown in population about 3% between 2000 and 2010. It is also the most diverse neighborhood in the state according to the 2010 census figures. Its largest minority groups are Hispanic (21% of residents) and African American (16% of residents). Cully also has a large number of linguistically isolated households (without any adults that speak English well), a high poverty level, and a large number of households with children, compared to the citywide average. PWG members asked questions about these demographics and helped to clarify that Hispanic residents are probably undercounted in the neighborhood, that being Hispanic or not is considered ethnicity, not race by the census, and so in looking at the distribution of different races in Cully, it is likely that a substantial portion of the 58% white and 15% “some other race” population in Cully is represented by Latinos.

The Cully neighborhood is largely residential, with large areas of single family housing, and multifamily housing near many of the arterials, especially around Killingsworth. It has with relatively little open space, and only 2% of land zoned for commercial uses – 10% is typical in Portland, which is an important consideration for completing this project.

The main street study area includes approximately the area around Cully Blvd. from Failing St. to Columbia Hwy, Killingsworth St. from NE 62<sup>nd</sup> to NE 72<sup>nd</sup>, and small parts of Prescott St. and NE 60<sup>th</sup> around the 5-corners intersection. It also includes the future Thomas Cully Park site. Thomas Cully Park will be a large community park that will serve people beyond Cully, as well as being an important asset to the neighborhood. The park will be located in the NE corner of the Cully neighborhood and at the North end of Cully Blvd. The park has been designed but not yet funded for development. It's current zoning – employment, does not reflect its planned open space use as a park.

Of the parcels that front the main street area, 74% are zoned residential, 3% are zoned for employment, and 23% are zoned for commercial uses. But Cully has many nonconforming uses – parcels in which the land use does not fit with the allowed zoning, and most of these are cases of areas that are zoned for residential uses, but that have commercial uses on them. In practice, only half of the parcels that front the main street area are residential, and about a third are in commercial uses. Of these commercial uses, the vast majority are vehicle services, minimarts and fast food, and bars or adult entertainment. There are very few neighborhood-serving uses. PWG members asked clarifying questions regarding zoning, nonconforming uses, and what nonconforming uses might mean for the business owners on those properties. Because they are nonconforming, these businesses are unable to do any kind of expansion, remodeling, or similar, and can't change to any other kind of business.

In addition, the businesses that exist are mostly not pedestrian-oriented, and do not create an activated street front; most of the businesses have parking lots between the building and the street, and few of them have windows, an important feature of creating an inviting walking

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environment. A group of PSU students did a public planning process in Cully two years ago, and heard clearly from the community that they wanted more neighborhood serving uses such as more grocery stores, restaurants cafes and small shops, and that they wanted fewer bars and adult entertainment businesses.

A PWG member asked for comparative demographic data over time, for Cully, and for other neighborhoods that have undergone rezoning projects, such as NE Alberta and N Mississippi. This led to a discussion amongst PWG members of concerns about gentrification and displacement of current minority and lower-income Cully residents as a result of rezoning and new development, as has happened in other Portland neighborhoods. City staff share this concern and will be conscious of strategies and tools to prevent displacement, including keeping PDC involved in the process from the start, from the start of the project. There was discussion of city staff engaging in research of other rezoning projects to understand what factors have helped to minimize displacement and gentrification in similar projects in other places. Neighborhood residents also have a role to play in advocating for tools and program funds to help with locally-based economic and business development in the neighborhood.

The PWG discussed methods by which business development in the neighborhood might remain local, including perhaps methods of inclusionary commercial zoning could provide incentives for local people to open businesses. PWG members also discussed the possibility of a Latino marketplace (“Portland Mercado”) at the current Sugar shack site, and the profound positive effects this could have on the neighborhood for current residents.

### **4. Cully Business District Market and Development Analysis**

Debbie introduced Mary Bosch, the consultant who was hired to do a market analysis for the Cully main street area. Mary presented preliminary results and stated that she expected the market demand to be adjusted upward as the analysis was further refined. The analysis incorporated Cully retail supply and demand findings and assessed the Cully main street area from two perspectives: what good quality businesses need to succeed and what customers want to make shopping convenient and interesting.,

Cully’s primary target markets include neighborhood residents and the 6,000 employees and 600 businesses within a 1-mile radius of the main street. Also, Cully has a low retail vacancy rate. In fact Portland overall has a 6% vacancy rate, compared to the 10% national average.

The analysis looked at two market areas of different scales on a 25-year outlook for business opportunity: a neighborhood market area consisting of a half mile radius from the intersection of Cully and Alberta, and a greater market area, the area within a 6-minute drive of the Cully neighborhood.

Land demand for the neighborhood market area was estimated at 4.7 acres, which translates to a lot of acreage in a small neighborhood like Cully. The greater market area demand was estimated at 39.1 acres. Mary expects both of these numbers to climb with further refinement of the analysis. While these numbers are not enough to justify a commercial strip up the entirety of Cully Blvd., they do support additional retail nodes in the main street area.

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When asked for her opinion by a PWG member, Mary suggested that commercial zoning might be expanded from the north of 5 corners to Wygant St., and to the south to Skidmore St.

A PWG member expressed the support that other business associations in the area, such as 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave., Beaumont-Wilshire, and others, have for a business district in Cully, and the interest in these diverse associations working in complement with each other, each fulfilling a particular niche.

### **5. Next Steps**

After a full presentation and discussion Debbie offered that next steps would be to send out a draft existing conditions report for the PWG to review and respond to staff with comments. Staff will then finalize the report.

### **6. Cully Roll and Stroll and Community Celebration Event**

Debbie reminded the PWG of the upcoming Cully Main Street and Local Street Plans project event on Saturday June 25<sup>th</sup> in the parking lot of Grace Presbyterian Church, on Prescott St. just East of Cully Blvd., from 10am to 2pm. The event will feature walks and bike rides of the project study areas with city staff, providing the opportunity for residents to learn about the project and share ideas and visions for the future of Cully. The event will be held alongside a Cully community celebration hosted by the Cully Association of Neighbors, and featuring community booths, activities and entertainment. Staff sent out announcements to all property owners in the main street project area and broader mailing list. Posters and flyers were posted in the community and distributed through enewsletters in English and Spanish.

### **Meeting adjourned at 7:05**

**The next Cully Main Street and Local Street Plans Project Working Group meeting will be scheduled in October to review the findings of the needs, opportunities, constraints and tools analysis. In the interim, PWG members will be asked to review the draft Existing Conditions and Business Development Analysis reports, and other materials as staff begins work on the needs, opportunities and constraints.**