

# COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SUMMARY

## NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS PROGRAM

August 2016 through October 2017

### STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT, CITYWIDE PHONE SURVEY | August 2016

#### Statistically representative

- 400 Portlanders including 100 residents on unimproved streets
- Stormwater management emerges as top priority for improvements
- Residents believe the City has a responsibility to ensure all streets within city limits are paved

### MULTILINGUAL ONLINE COMMUNITY SURVEY | February-September 2017

#### Broadest reach

- The most strongly held interests and opinions uncovered in the statistically significant telephone survey were also reflected in the online responses.
- 34,000 reached through Facebook
- Additional effort and partnership with PedPDX to increase awareness and participation Portlanders who speak Vietnamese, Spanish, Chinese, and Russian.
- 96% responses in English, 1% Spanish, 1% Vietnamese, 1% Chinese, and 1% Russian.

### RESIDENT FOCUS GROUPS | June and September 2017

#### Guidance from those most directly affected

- 132 residents from 36 neighborhoods participated 3 focus group events
- Postcard invitation to the 27,924 households on unimproved streets, 330 registered interest, all but 2 participants were homeowners.
- Neighborhood streets serve a citywide system and need City's help in paying for improvements.
- Current conditions and lack of maintenance are top concerns
- Strongly support alternative standards

### COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND EVENTS | March - October 2017

#### Growing awareness, understanding, and partnerships

- NSP Focus Group for Neighborhood Associations: Invited 36 neighborhood association chairs and 6 coalition directors; 10 participated (all homeowners, one on unimproved street).
- Community Presentations: Reached over 150 people at 10 neighborhood association and coalition meetings (as invited), PBOT's Pedestrian Advisory and Bureau and Budget Advisory Committees, the Portland Disability Commission, Development Review Advisory Committee, and Fixing Our Streets event.
- Communications and Information: 140 Portlanders emailed or phoned project staff to register their opinions, concerns, and ideas for how to make the program better. Information provided through project webpage, overview handout, interactive map tool, media coverage.

# NSP Community Involvement Process

The project team set out to involve the community in developing the Neighborhood Streets Program with goals for a process to be equitable, transparent, defensible and values-based. Furthermore, the involvement process centered on providing access to decision-making by directly engaging persons with disabilities, communities of color, and those who speak languages other than English. Through these objectives the NSP process engaged thousands of Portlanders coming from many backgrounds and varied perspectives. The proposed program is a direct reflection of the community's values, concerns, and priorities.

What follows is a summary of the process and activities PBOT used to communicate and collaborate with community members in order to develop the Neighborhood Streets Program. A full compendium of survey responses, focus group notes, and other community input is available in the complementary technical appendix.

## COMMONLY HELD VALUES

Throughout the process, the team continually heard a few key messages and opinions that were then integrated with the technical analysis and directly translated into the proposed program. These consistent messages were expressed by a diversity of community members who live in different neighborhoods with different street conditions, and from Portlanders of different races and ethnicities, incomes, physical abilities, and tenure living in the city.

The most consistently held and strongest community values registered through the process:

- » **There should be Citywide responsibility for improving side streets:**  
A strong majority of Portlanders believe the City should be responsible for improving unimproved residential side streets. This sentiment held true for people who live on fully improved streets in Portland, as well as those who live on unimproved streets.
- » **Homeowners on these streets cannot afford the full costs to improve:**  
The majority of Portlanders disagreed with the City's current policy that these types of improvements should be paid for primarily by adjacent property owners. Portlanders expressed support for subsidies, financing options, and cost control measures to reduce or eliminate the costs borne by property owners.
- » **Managing stormwater is a critical street function and top priority:**  
Stormwater management is a top priority for residential street improvements. Portlanders see the lack of stormwater facilities as adversely impacting streams and rivers, often hampering their ability to travel through their neighborhoods, and causing erosion and damage to properties.

- » **Public investments should be prioritized in underserved and high growth areas, and for neighborhood networks in poor condition:**  
Portlanders believe that improvements should be prioritized for traditionally underserved neighborhoods and areas experiencing the most growth, as well as the most degraded roadways that can serve as safe, multimodal connections to neighborhood parks, schools, and nearby amenities.
- » **Residents support street improvements that address safety concerns.**  
Focus group participants placed a high priority on side streets with the most pedestrian traffic, and Safe Routes to Schools. Focus group participants also want street improvements to include traffic calming measures. Portlanders also voiced support for pedestrian improvements on under-improved neighborhood collectors.
- » **Residents want alternative and contextual design standards:**  
Portlanders do not believe that all elements included in the “traditional” street standard are necessary in many situations. The majority of Portlanders would prefer to see the City build streets to alternative design standards, because it would be less-expensive, allow more streets to be improved, and to help ensure improvements fit in the local context.
- » **Dirt and gravel streets need a comprehensive maintenance program:**  
The long-standing policy of the City to maintain only fully improved streets has led to significant degradation of the rights-of-way, as well as problems with stormwater runoff and pooling. Portlanders recognize it will take decades before funding is sufficient to improve most roads, and they are only willing to wait for those improvements if the City is willing to begin maintaining dirt and gravel roads.

# STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT SURVEY



## Citywide telephone survey

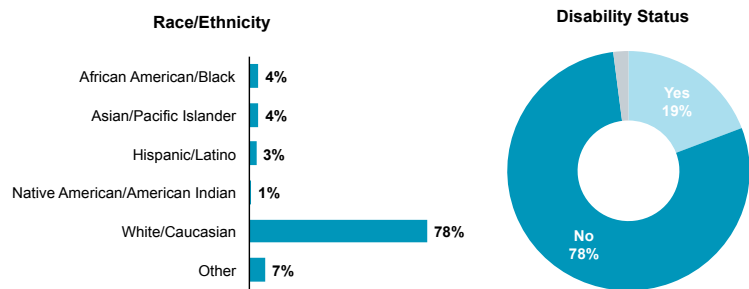
August 2016

The community involvement process kicked off with a telephone survey, conducted by DHM Research, to assess community values, determine level of urgency to address the problem of unimproved streets, and to begin testing interest in elements of a comprehensive program.

The 15-minute telephone survey included 400 Portlanders, among them 100 residents who live on unimproved streets. This was a sufficient sample size to assess resident opinions generally and to review findings by multiple subgroups, including age, race, gender, area of the city, whether the resident lives on an unimproved street, and whether the resident has, or lives with, a person who has a disability.

Respondents were contacted by a live interviewer from a list of registered voters, which included cell phones. In gathering responses, a variety of quality control measures were employed, including questionnaire pre-testing and validation. Quotas were set by age, gender, and area of the city to ensure a representative sample.<sup>1</sup>

### Equity demographics were considered in contacting residents



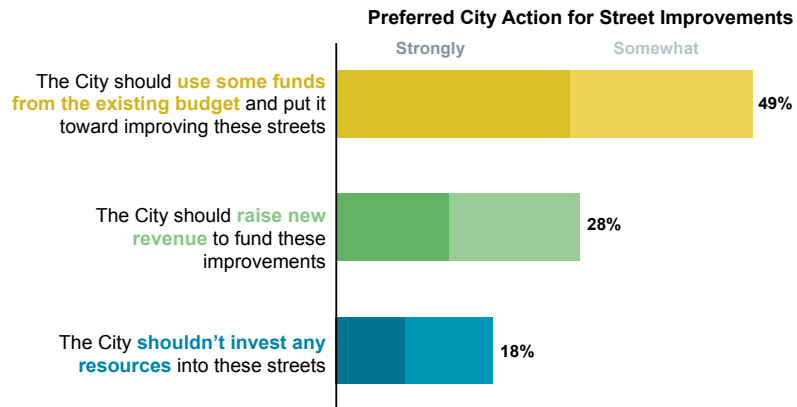
This is thought to be the most reliable source within the NSP process to understanding widely held community sentiments. The other methods of community engagement described in this summary are significant in that they engaged many more Portlanders than the phone survey. However, these outreach efforts gathered input from self-selected participants and cannot necessarily be extrapolated to apply to general community awareness or opinions.

## OUTCOMES

- The vast majority of Portlanders believe the City should be responsible for paving unimproved streets. Overall, more than three-quarters of residents agree that the City should be responsible for paving and improving all unimproved residential side streets within city limits (76%). More than half say they strongly agree with this statement (51%).

<sup>1</sup> Any sampling of opinions or attitudes is subject to a margin of error. The margin of error for this survey is +/- 4.9%. The estimated margin of error for the sub-sample of 100 residents living on unimproved streets is +/- 9.8%. This figure is estimated because the exact number of Portlanders living on unimproved streets is not known.

Agreement: The City should be responsible



- Fewer than one in ten residents say the top priority for investment in unimproved roads should be leveraging funding from property owners on these streets (9%).
- Nearly half of residents say the City should use some funds from the existing budget and put it toward improving these residential side streets, even though that means making cuts from somewhere else (49%).
- Residents identified managing stormwater to protect property and the environment as the most urgent of several transportation-related priorities. Overall, 62% of residents say this is an urgent or high priority for improvement, including 18% who say it is an urgent priority. Proper stormwater drainage was considered more necessary than paved roads, adequate lighting, or sidewalks.
- Portlanders believe street improvements should benefit traditionally underserved neighborhoods and support new development. While 41% of residents say the City should prioritize street improvements in low-income neighborhoods, just as many say the neighborhoods experiencing the most growth should be the top priority (41%).
- The improvement of neighborhood streets is an initiative that is likely best suited by a multi-bureau approach that extends beyond the LTIC. For example, the two street elements considered most necessary to a neighborhood are stormwater management and street lighting, both of which extend beyond PBOT's capacity and budget. Results show that sidewalks are as important to residents as paved streets.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT



## Multilingual online community survey, including English

round 1 | February 1 through March 20, 2017

To begin the community outreach process in February 2017, the telephone survey tool was posted online in five languages<sup>2</sup> (with slight modifications for language translation), and available to any interested party through April 2017. Announcements of the survey were promoted through multi-lingual Facebook ads and through PBOT's various email distribution lists. Community members also promoted the survey through Nextdoor, social media and by sharing to their own networks.

### OUTCOMES

- Promoting the survey through community events, media, and organizations achieved one of the main goals of community research: engaging city residents. Although their attitudes may differ from the general population as estimated through the statistically significant survey, it is helpful to understand these divisions. For example, participants in a community survey may be more likely to attend City Council meetings. City leaders will benefit from understanding how the opinions a resident might share in testimony differ from the broader public.
- Generally speaking, the most strongly held interests and opinions uncovered in the statistically significant telephone survey were also reflected in the online community survey responses, further underpinning the strengths and consistency of the community's desire for the City to fix the multi-faceted problem of unimproved streets.
- Of the 3,405 people who participated in round 1 of the online survey, over 98% responded in English, with the remaining 2% participating in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Online survey and Facebook ads were provided in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, & Russian.

<sup>3</sup> Round 1 of the online survey responses were pulled and analyzed on March 20, 2017, but the survey was left open to allow for additional community involvement. 127 responses were received from March 20-June 15, 2017; all online survey responses were reviewed and considered in development of the NSP.

## Multilingual online community survey, no English

round 2 | July through September 2017

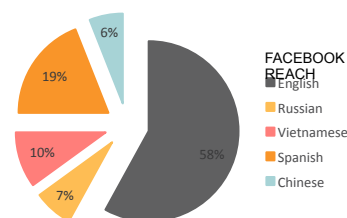
All but about 50 responses in the first round of online surveying were submitted in English language, despite the significant interaction on Facebook from non-English promotions. After having consulted with a variety of organizations that serve Portlanders who primarily speak languages other than English, the project team administered a second round of the online survey tool in partnership with the outreach efforts of PedPDX, the City's pedestrian master planning process currently underway. The final round of online surveying was made available July through September 2017 in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian (not English). The survey was promoted as part of PedPDX outreach with Community Engagement Liaisons and at various community events. Additionally, PBOT made available an incentive for community members to participate in the NSP survey (\$25 gift cards were awarded to 50 randomly-selected respondents).

### OUTCOMES

- In the second round of surveying, there were 86 respondents: roughly 20% in Spanish, 25% in Vietnamese, 20% in Chinese, and 35% in Russian.
- About 30% of people who took the PedPDX survey, continued on to take the NSP survey.
- The perspectives shared by these 86 community members were generally aligned with the other online survey takers, with a few interesting observations. When compared to the responses in prior rounds that were submitted primarily in English, the participants in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian were:
  - More supportive of solving this problem by using existing City funds;
  - In stronger agreement that it is the City's responsibility to pay for these improvements;
  - More supportive of spending funds in low-income neighborhoods;
  - Placing a higher priority on virtually all of the "goals" of improving these streets across the board (e.g., access for seniors, managing stormwater, improved pedestrian safety, etc.);
  - More likely to think that all street attributes are always or often necessary on residential side streets (e.g., pavement, sidewalks, trees, lighting etc.);
  - More likely to identify as living on an unimproved street; and
  - More likely to be renters.

### Online Community Survey

- To date, 3,400+ Portlanders have engaged with the online community survey tool
- Survey outreach via facebook, community meetings, Advisory Committees, Nextdoor, and other PBOT networks
- Online survey results will be analyzed with comparisons to the statistically valid survey
- **Facebook:**  
Ads placed Feb 1-14, 2017  
~34,000 people reached  
~1,500 clicked on survey  
40%+ non-English





## Resident Focus Groups

June and September 2017

Focus groups were conducted over the summer to gather additional information about Portlanders' experiences with unimproved streets and to test trade-offs for various approaches, funding options, and other policy choices that surfaced during program development. The primary goal of the focus groups was to have a meaningful and direct conversation with people who live on unimproved streets.

A postcard invitation to register for a focus group was mailed to each of the 27,924 Portland households on unimproved streets. Two resident focus groups were held in June 2017, one at the Multnomah Arts Center in southwest Portland and one at the Midland Library in East Portland. Residents who could not get into the June focus groups were invited to attend a third and final focus group of residents at the Portland Building in September 2017.

All focus groups were 90 minutes long and followed the same format (refer to the technical appendix for agendas and discussion questions):

1. Brief presentation of the program charge, findings to date, and explanation of programmatic issues yet to be resolved, where community opinions and ideas were needed to shape the program
2. One-hour facilitated, small group discussions with a specific series of questions tailored to address outstanding issues
3. An exit questionnaire completed by all discussion participants, to elicit individual and more detailed responses to the discussion topics.

### OUTCOMES

- Of the ~28,000 households that received an invitation, about 330 residents registered interest in the focus groups and ultimately 132 people participated in the resident focus groups. These participants live in over 36 different neighborhoods across Portland. Additionally, over 100 residents who could not attend, called and emailed to share their opinions and experiences.
- Invitations to the resident focus groups were sent to every address on an unimproved street, with hopes that the events would attract renters as well as homeowners. However, all but two participants were homeowners.
- About half of the residents who participated reported living on a street with dirt or gravel, the other half reported having some pavement, and fewer than five residents said they have sidewalks and/or stormwater facilities on their street. As the focus group participants were self-selecting and registration was first-come, first served, it is likely that those with the worst street conditions were the most motivated to respond and participate in the focus groups.
- The perspectives and input that residents of unimproved streets shared at the focus groups were aligned with the main themes gathered through the surveys and other outreach methods that primarily captured input from those who live on fully improved streets.
- At the focus groups residents shared details about stormwater concerns and mobility challenges they are faced with on a daily basis. They were asked and shared detailed opinions on who should be responsible for repairing these unimproved streets, if and how



property owners should help to pay for the improvements, and what a fair and equitable prioritization system should include. (for more details and outcomes of the resident focus group discussions, refer to the summary memo, exit questionnaires, and detailed notes in the technical appendix).

- Generally, residents at the focus groups believe that residential streets should be recognized as part of the citywide transportation system, especially for getting around by walking or bicycling, and that without improvements the whole community's ability to access parks, schools, and shopping districts is negatively impacted.
- While many residents said they would like some improvements on their streets, they also said that the City's top priority should be to grade and gravel streets where the degradation of the roadway makes it nearly impassable and, at times, unsafe for all modes of travel. Residents shared stories of their attempts to maintain their streets with neighbors, most concluding that they are not sufficiently equipped to do this work and many have modest or fixed incomes that make it financially out of reach.
- Given the citywide impacts, residents did not view this issue as belonging solely to people living on these unimproved streets. There were a few residents in the discussions who think that homeowners should contribute more to improving streets. And others who believe the infill developers aren't paying enough to solve the problem. However, the majority of resident participants voiced concerns about their ability and/or their neighbors' abilities to afford any additional long-term expenses for living in their current homes. Some residents shared their frustrations with the City's current process to improve these streets (through Local Improvement Districts), which included a perceived lack of cost controls and reliance on neighbors to have the time and resources to organize other homeowners.
- There was acknowledgement that improving all of the unimproved streets in Portland could take decades and many residents provided creative ideas for how the City can shore up the residential streets and stormwater systems in the interim. Residents had diverse opinions about how the City should prioritize public funding for streets improvements - some favored a focus on investing first in communities with lower income residents or neighborhoods with many people of color, while others favored prioritizing based on the condition of the street, prior commitments the City made to annexation areas, or relative importance to making important connections to and through the neighborhood.

## Community Meetings and Events

March through September 2017



In addition to gathering input and ideas from community members, the team also sought to develop a common understanding and community awareness of the program. Over the spring and summer, project staff presented at six neighborhood association and coalition meetings (as invited), PBOTs Pedestrian Advisory and Bureau and Budget Advisory Committees, the Portland Disability Commission, and tabled at the citywide outreach events for Fixing Our Streets. The process also included a focus group of neighborhood association leaders. (Refer to the technical appendix for a list of briefings and presentations.)

### **Neighborhood Associations Focus Group:**

36 neighborhoods were determined to be the most heavily impacted by unimproved streets based on the high proportion of neighborhood streets that are unimproved and/or a significant number of miles unimproved within the neighborhood association boundaries. The Chairs / Presidents of the 36 neighborhoods as well as the 6 neighborhood coalition executive directors, were invited to participate in the focus group in September 2017.

### **OUTCOMES**

- 10 neighborhood leaders participated in the neighborhood association focus group, representing all five quadrants of the City. All participants are homeowners and all but one live on a fully improved street.
- There was general support among the 10 neighborhood association representatives for equity and safety to be key factors in the decision-making process.
- There was a greater emphasis among neighborhood leaders on pedestrian safety than there was at the meetings with the general public.
- Neighborhood leaders were very interested in the development of alternative standards.
- There was strong support for a grade and gravel program, as it is a cost-effective approach to have a bigger impact on a larger number of streets, (as opposed to capital improvements which are expensive and will only affect a very small subset of residents in the foreseeable future).
- Participants also reviewed and discussed the proposed LTIC allocation method and the potential for a maximum cap on LTIC assessments.

### **Community events and briefings:**

#### **OUTCOMES**

- Tabling at the Fixing Our Streets event in southwest Portland where NSP staff were available to discuss the program and answer questions.
- Roughly 100 interested Portlanders received a briefing at a neighborhood meeting. These community members provided feedback to help shape the process and program elements.
- Neighbors who participated in the Southwest Neighborhood coalition (SWNI) and Multnomah Neighborhood Association briefings from PBOT staff, some of whom are very

familiar with the Local Transportation Infrastructure Charge on infill developers, voiced concern about funding mechanisms that pool and distribute resources citywide. SWNI's official position, voiced in their March 20, 2017 meeting, is a desire for "keeping portions or all of the LTIC fees within the area in which they were paid. LTIC funds collected should be applied towards their place of origin." It is not clear if other neighborhood coalitions and associations have similar feelings about the LTIC, as it was not a primary topic in other briefings.

- The nature of feedback from neighborhood groups in east and southeast Portland tended to focus more on concerns about the City's maintenance policy on unimproved streets and inquiries about various street standards.
- The Pedestrian Advisory Committee, PBOT Bureau and Budget Committee, the Portland Disability Commission, and Development Review Advisory Committee were also briefed on program development and provided advice on how and where to prioritize improvements to residential streets. The pedestrian committee wrestled with questions of how to focus resources on under-served communities while avoiding displacement pressures and the Portland Disability Commission expressed a desire to be included in future conversations about safety and design when improvements are being scoped.

## Other Communications and Methods of Input

January through October 2017

To support the community outreach efforts, the team developed easy-to-understand and graphic informational materials (print and web-based), and disseminated information throughout the process. Additionally, PBOT staff made themselves available to communicate individually with interested community members, many of whom emailed their concerns and ideas. A summary of phone and email communications is in the technical appendix.

### OUTCOMES

- 140 Portlanders emailed or phoned project staff to register their opinions, concerns, and ideas for how to make the program better. Most of the community members who individually reached out to PBOT staff shared stories of living on unimproved streets, the financial burdens, and how it impacts their everyday use and enjoyment of their neighborhoods. They expressed concerns about the unsafe conditions for people walking and for people who have mobility challenges, with special concern about routes to schools and parks. Most, but not all, said they would like their unimproved street maintained by the City and ultimately seek improvements, though there were noted concerns about the City's high costs for such improvements.
- Informational materials developed included a project webpage and improvements to other PBOT webpages related to various residential street programs, a handout with an overview of the program, and an interactive map tool where residents can determine if they live on an "unimproved" residential street'.
- NSP webpage was promoted as a resource to the 27,294 households of unimproved streets who received the postcard invitation to the focus group.