

## **SW Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy – Community Engagement Report**

### **1. How would you describe your role in engaging low-income households and communities of color in the SW Corridor around affordable housing issues?**

Community Alliance of Tenants (CAT) door-knocked over several days with Unite Oregon, covering four SW Portland buildings and four Tigard buildings, collecting contact information of 24 SW Portland tenants and 21 Tigard tenants interested in learning more about the SW Corridor Equitable Housing Project. Through workshops and outreach events, we have met an additional 15 tenants living along the SW Corridor who have expressed interest in future involvement. The majority of tenants we have engaged with in SW Portland are immigrants and refugees, most of whom are Somali. In Tigard, about half of the tenants we have met are Latino. We have focused our energy on buildings where rent is lower than market rate for the neighborhood, so the vast majority, if not all tenants, are likely low income.

Unite Oregon's role in engaging low-income households and communities of color in the SW corridor around affordable housing issues has been rewarding and a key component to being able to talk to people of color, minorities and low-income tenants face to face that otherwise wouldn't have opportunities to have a direct conversation with someone about how the MAX line project might be coming to their neighborhood and the pros and cons of having a new MAX line in their communities.

Organizing People Activating Leaders (OPAL) is bringing our popular education-style curriculum around land use, transportation, housing and civic engagement to communities in the SW Corridor, focused on engaging low-income households (primarily renters) and communities of color in a series of workshops done in partnership with our partners in the area

Muslim Educational Trust (MET) engaged the leaders of the Islamic Center of Portland, one of the largest mosques in town. The mosque is located on SW Capitol Hwy and attracts more than 200 Muslims living in the neighborhood. MET helped with raising awareness about the future Max line to Tigard and discussing the opportunity of bringing more housing choices to the area. MET also discussed possible challenges that will face the Muslim community as a result of rent prices that could be raised. We also promoted the listening session that took place on October 14th and invited some key Muslim leaders that attended the session.

Community Partners For Affordable Housing (CPAH) has participated in planning the outreach for low income residents, including CPAH residents, in the corridor and participated in the October community forum. CPAH also provided a presentation on affordable housing at the Muslim Education Trust in December.

### **2. How are you working with other organizations?**

All of UniteOregon's field organizing has been in close coordination with CAT. We have worked together to door-knock and lead workshops in both SW Portland and Tigard. We also hold a regular Community Engagement meeting with

representatives from Unite Oregon, OPAL, and CPAH. Momentum Alliance has joined us as they are able to ensure that our engagement work is in line with the advisory work that they are doing. -*Unite Oregon*

OPAL is having monthly in-person meetings with the following organizations: Community Alliance of Tenants, Unite Oregon, Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Momentum Alliance; our agendas are focused on community engagement and curriculum development. We are developing relationships with the Muslim Educational Trust and actively identifying organizations who either serve the geographic area of the SW Corridor and/or have clients/constituencies who are living, working and/or accessing education and social services in the area. -*OPAL*

MET met with CAT, CPAH, and Unite Oregon to discuss strategies to engage impacted communities. MET explained the history and makeup of the Muslim community living in the neighborhood and how to best engage them. We also connected CAT with leaders in the community as well as stakeholders who will be good partners and advisors for CAT’s work. MET also reviewed CAT’s plan for a leadership cohort and gave advice as to ideas for engaging the affected Muslim community. - (*MET*)

**3. What populations have you engaged? How did you engage them? Can you provide a rough estimate of how many people total you’ve engaged?**

UniteOregon has engaged with Somali, Arabic, Spanish, Swahili, and English community members by door-knocking with CAT. See chart below:

Apartment Name	# of Total Units	# of Occupied Units*	# of Conversations	# of Meaningful Conversations**
Manchester Square	67	64	20	11
Tigard Manor	20	19	12	7
Williamsburg	10	10	4	2
Duplex on 12437 SW Hall Blvd	12	12	6	1
<b>Total</b>	109	105	42	21

Also on 11/21/2017 United Oregon and City of Tigard had a Community Forum at St Anthony's Church where we talked church members about the potential ne MAX line. The meeting was presented in English and Spanish; there were 50-60 attendees 98% Latinos 2% others most below 80 MFI. -*Unite Oregon*

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OPAL has primarily engaged constituencies which identify themselves as renters and immigrants through our partnership and collective efforts as a team. We have worked in partnership to engage a broader number of people to plan a number of workshops in the area, and are anticipating engaging many more residents in the first quarter of 2018.-  
*OPAL*

MET engaged the Muslim community living in the SW corridor area around Capitol Hwy. The Muslim community living in this area is quite diverse and represents over 20 countries. Many of the residents are low income renters and a few home owners. We would estimate engaging over 50 people who regularly attend the prayer services at the Islamic Center of Portland.- *MET*

See CAT's numbers in Question 1.

**4. How would you describe any growth in organizational and community capacity/knowledge that has resulted from your work in SW?**

This project has given CAT an opportunity to begin building new relationships in SW Portland with tenants as well as community partners. Through these relationships, we've learned more about the community and how we can best work in solidarity with SW Portland tenants. As an organization, we feel that very localized, neighborhood-based organizing that meets people where they are at in terms of knowledge and culture, is key to building a robust statewide movement for housing justice. In addition to location-specific base-building, we've also begun new relationships with Somali community. Learning from the stories and experiences of Somali tenants is critical to CAT being able to lead a movement that aims to represent all Oregon's tenants, especially those that have been historically disenfranchised from policy decisions that impact their lives.- CAT

By working with other non-profits UniteOregon has been able to grow our base and meet more immigrants and refugees living in WA County, our hope as we are engaging with new people is to get them involved in Leadership Development, grassroots movements and connect them with organizations and other members in their communities so they can be active participants in any future issues or projects. This project has also been an eye opener about how little communities of color know about how the MAX project could affect their life during and after the development; especially around high housing prices and rent increases.-*Unite Oregon*

Organizationally, OPAL has learned much more about the transit ridership in SW and the challenges for accessing transportation options for low-income individuals. We are dedicating grassroots organizers to additional transit center and bus outreach in the corridor.- *OPAL*

MET held a workshop with CPAH about developing affordable housing which resulted in increasing knowledge as well as interest in this field. We have also engaged developers from the Muslim community who can be potential developers of affordable housing. -*MET*

CPAH has benefited greatly for increasing our connections to the other organizing agencies in the corridor. Again, we are a developer, not a pure advocacy agency. But this is giving us a chance to think through our role as supporting organizers and advocates as well as a chance to be advocating ourselves. We are also thinking through how our development site in Tigard can be most useful for current residents who may be displaced.- *CPAH*