

Sam
Adams
Mayor

Tom
Miller
Director

Guiding Statement for the North Williams Avenue Traffic Operations Safety Project
Developed by the North Williams Stakeholder Advisory Committee; adopted January 10, 2012

History

We honor the many people who have been residents, visitors, workers and business and property owners in the historically Black community (Albina) made up of the Boise, Eliot, King, and Humboldt neighborhoods;

We honor the descendants and the collective memory of the community and all those who have suffered or watched their families or businesses suffer due to systemic processes of racial residential segregation, and housing condemnation to make way for urban renewal, and institutional disinvestment, when governmental or institutional goals collided with neighborhood dreams, goals, and hopes;

We understand the legacy of these processes and we're deeply sorry for the history of insensitivity that has taken place as it relates to neighborhood change. We understand now that these actions were malicious.¹ We vow to do everything in our power to reverse that legacy and intentionally use this project to begin the healing process.

We not only hear the passionate and sincere outpouring of our community members, we feel the pain endured by the family members who may have lost their largest asset during this process of urban renewal. We respect those voices as they represent those who can no longer represent themselves because they are no longer able to do so.

We understand that the members of the community are the experts in their neighborhoods, and that the City has expertise in traffic planning and engineering.

Project Foundation

Our Committee has assembled to address safety and traffic concerns on North Williams Avenue. We have agreed as a Committee to make our best decisions with an understanding of the safety issues, while at the same time acknowledging past planning processes, and those who have been hurt. We have agreed to do this in a way that is inclusive, safe, considers all voices, and has positive impact on the entire community.

¹ "Bleeding Albina: A History of Community Disinvestment, 1940-2000." Gibson, Karen J., 2007. *Transforming Anthropology*, Vol. 15, Numbers 1, pps 3-25. ISSN 1051-0559, electronic ISSN 1548-7466. All rights reserved.

(Project Foundation, continued)

We will use the adopted guiding statement for project decision-making and provide it as context to the process when making decisions as to the outcome of the project, and communicating to the public and decision makers such as City Council, City Commissioners and the Mayor about the project.

We are committed to our role as the North Williams Avenue Traffic Operations Safety Project Stakeholder Advisory Committee specifically tasked with recommending transportation solutions that balance the needs and concerns of all users of the corridor including neighborhood residents, businesses, religious institutions, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists. We will strive to hear the needs and concerns of all parties involved, while being cognizant of the history of the area. We will make decisions with compassion, and integrity within a contextual framework. We understand that the technical expertise the City of Portland provides will help us make balanced and sustainable recommendations.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will share this Guiding Statement with the neighborhood, and solicit input from interested parties, particularly those who have suffered past injury, to ensure we've captured the essence of the spirit that will foster respect, honor, and compassion in our decision-making processes.

Future Request

- We strongly recommend that the City of Portland critically evaluate its public participation efforts and stakeholder input processes to determine who in a particular community is not being heard in the process and ask why they are not being engaged, and furthermore to question how those with little power can be more actively engaged.
- We strongly recommend that the City start future projects from a place of community need with early input and guidance. The City needs to be responsible to all communities, especially those which are under-served communities, or culturally disadvantaged communities, when considering project sites, and that the history, land use, and prior planning efforts be considered and questioned while engaging in these projects.
- We strongly recommend that the City right past wrongs by studying the North Williams Transportation Operations Safety Project, its success and failures, utilizing a formal facilitated evaluation process, to guide new policy on engagement processes that ensure that all voices are heard.
- We strongly recommend that the City recognize the opportunities and challenges inherent in planning efforts, and to strive for an outcome that is truly sustainable.