



East Portland Action Plan

Powell-Division Transit and Development Project Guidance*

*When stating “low-income”, we are referencing households living on 60% or lower median income.

Background

Mayor Charlie Hales announced his proposal to establish an Urban Renewal Area (URA) along the Powell-Division bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor. The East Portland Action Plan (EPAP) general group sought a recommendation from the EPAP Economic Development and Housing Subcommittees on guidance related to implementation of a an URA along the transit corridor. This document outlines some concerns and ways to address them.

I. Economic Development Subcommittee Concerns

Project Duration Is Too Short: The proposed 9-month project span is too soon and too short to consider the ramifications of a new URA.

- Given the potential for disparate impact in East Portland, there is a need for a National Environmental Policy Act concerning the effects enhanced transit will have on the area.

Community Oversight: If a new URA is established, how will the community influence decisions such as when and how money is?

Current BRT Proposal Needs Design Improvement: EPAP submitted a proposal for design improvements and the Powell-Division Project team has publically stated that the as currently designed, the project is not viable.

TriMet’s Future Transit Service Intentions Are Unclear: TriMet needs to make transparent commitments as to how local transit service is to be addressed before adopting plans for BRT.

The Potential Link to the Central Eastside URA Is Undefined: How will the burden of funding the transit project be borne? A per-mile metric applied to property owners along the corridor may not be a fair assessment, given that it will connect residents and employees primarily to the downtown core, which has less frontage than other parts of the City. Will the transit funding assessment incorporate land values and employment density?

URA Funds Need to Supplement Other Strategic Commitments to Prevent Housing and Commercial Displacement: The URA funding must be supplemental to defined and committed funding for involuntary displacement along the corridor.

II. Economic Development Subcommittee Solutions

Meaningful Implementation of EPAP ‘Involuntary Displacement Recommendations for East Portland’ before and In Conjunction With URA Funding: Guarantee that most, if not all, of the economic development strategic tools identified in the “EPAP Involuntary Displacement Prevention Recommendations for East Portland” will be pursued and initiated before funding is applied to implementation of the BRT:

- Living Wage Provisions
- Local Hiring
- Minority Contracting
- Commercial Stabilization and Commercial Rent Stabilization
- Community Reinvestment Act
- Commercial Transit Oriented Development (TOD)
- Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs)

Guarantee Community Guidance and Oversight of the URA:

Community must have oversight particularly around spending funds:

- Increased Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative (NPI) capacity and boundaries should serve to institutionalize local oversight of the URA
- Advisory Committee recommendations need to be applied and negotiated before final decisions are made and action is taken
- Implementation adjustments should be only within agreed upon and outlined parameters
- Technical advisors should provide information, resources, options, and support Advisory Committees

Improve the Design of the BRT:

- **Fewer stops**, so that it provides faster travel times that are competitive with autos
- **Maintain local bus service**, until annual assessments demonstrate any changes are justifiable
- **Incorporate design that supports access to businesses**. Learn from the examples that created access barriers and have harmed businesses; for example, East Burnside and Interstate MAX
- **Improve corridor access** by completing sidewalk networks, creating safe pedestrian and bike crossings, ADA improvements, etc.

III. Housing Subcommittee Concerns

EPAP will not support a Powell-Division Transit and Development Project that fails to include an adequate plan, including funding, for preventing involuntary displacement of low-income people, communities of color and neighborhood businesses along the proposed project alignment.

We appreciate that the Project Advisory Committee looked at potential impacts on housing costs within the project area, but we are disappointed that Project development plans as currently conceived contain no actionable solutions to the problem.

We believe that first and foremost it is the responsibility of the BRT project to fund a robust anti-displacement effort within the project budget. This element needs to be viewed as an essential piece of the project, not as an optional add-on.

IV. Housing Subcommittee Solutions

Project plans must include provision for affordable housing, land-banking and associated funding prior to BRT construction. The Project plan must contain the following tools identified in 'EPAP Involuntary Displacement Prevention Recommendations for East Portland':

Owner-Occupied Homeownership Retention For Low-Income People: implement tools to prevent displacement of vulnerable homeowners such as counseling, educational materials, tax assistance and home repair programs.

Rent Stabilization: to protect renters from excessive rent increases.

Just Cause Eviction (JCE), Code Enforcement, and Renter Education: work together to protect tenants from losing their housing, unsafe housing conditions and unjust landlord practices such as retaliation against tenants requesting necessary repairs.

Broadening Homeownership and Cooperative Ownership: to establish programs that increase opportunities for low and moderate income households to purchase homes. Strategies could include first-time home-buyers subsidies, down payment assistance, and/or co-operative ownership.

Inclusionary zoning: requires developers to make a percentage of housing units in new residential developments available to low and moderate income households.

Housing Acquisition Rehabilitation to Insure Affordability: restrictions set applied to public housing funding to purchase existing multi-family developments in poor condition and rehabilitate them for long-term or permanent affordable housing managed by a public agency or nonprofit.

No Net Loss/Affordable Housing Preservation Ordinance: City policy to prevent loss of affordable housing due to new development.

Community Benefits Agreements (CBSs): for the BRT project and all publicly-funded projects in the urban renewal area will have executed CBAs with:

- Local hiring for East Portland residents and businesses
- One percent of project budgets dedicated to community outreach, workforce training and small business technical assistance
- Aggressive goals and disaggregated tracking for disadvantaged, minority and women participation in apprenticeships, workforce hours and subcontracts
- Community oversight committee

Anti-Displacement Impact Analysis: as a tool to require multi-family and commercial developments to provide a pre-build assessment of the effect such development will have on displacement within a one-mile radius of the corridor.

EAST PORTLAND ACTION PLAN

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