The Lents Green Ring

2017 Community-Based Existing Conditions Assessment

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Overview

This report represents community engagement during the Spring, Summer and Fall of 2017. 10 guided walking tours of the Lents Green Ring were convened with more than 70 community members, more than 150 residents were surveyed about their knowledge of, and interest in, the Green Ring, and some spatial data was collected from residents regarding their use of the green Ring.

Project Goals

1. Outreach to Lents (and surrounding neighborhood) residents in order to raise awareness of the Lents Green Ring
2. Get community members walking and connecting with neighbors on the Lents Green Ring
3. Collect specific data on residents’ preferences, concerns, and priorities for improvement as they relate to Lents infrastructure (sidewalks, bike lanes, major intersections, lighting, signs, accessibility).

What is the Lents Green Ring?

The Lents Green Ring is a community place-making project that seeks to improve neighborhood safety, accessibility, and enjoyment through conversations and collaboration across Lents’ diversity and geography.

Physically, the Lents Green Ring is a loop of neighborhood streets and greenways that could upgrades like better crossings, connected paths, sidewalks, and improved signage. Better connections are needed to access popular Lents community spaces, including at least three major parks, the Lents Town Center, schools, natural areas, and grassroots community projects like the Malden Court Community Orchard and the Community Tool Library. The four legs of the Green Ring include SE Steele St, SE 87th Ave, SE 101st Ave, and the Springwater Corridor.

Though much of the Green Ring includes existing infrastructure, additional investments are needed to make the loop feel safe, family-friendly, and accessible to all mobility types. Green Lents and its community partners are pursuing an ambitious three year timeline, with hopes of seeing substantial investments to support the Green Ring made by 2019.

![Timeline Diagram]

- **2017**: Community Prioritization
  - Raise Awareness
- **2018**: Advocate for City or State Investments
- **2019**: Begin upgrades to Green Ring
The Lents Green Ring Map

Segment 1: SE Steele Street from 87th Avenue to SE 101st Avenue

Segment 2: SE 101st Avenue from SE Steele to the Springwater Corridor

Segment 3: Springwater Corridor from SE 101st Avenue to Malden Court Community Orchard

Segment 4: SE 87th Avenue from Malden Court Community Orchard to SE 87th Avenue and SE Steele Street

Please refer to the numbered sections on this map for the existing conditions and priorities assessment section of this report.
PROJECT APPROACH

1. Guided Walking Tours

Summary: During the summer and early fall of 2017, we conducted 10 guided walking tours with over 75 Lents residents and community members. Walking tours covered sections of the Lents Green Ring multi-use pathway and were aimed at starting a conversation with Lents residents about their experiences with utilizing pedestrian and biking facilities— including barriers to cycling and walking—and thoughts about the implementation of the Green Ring.

Demographics of Walking Tours: Walking tours were stratified by sociodemographic characteristics, resulting in specific walks for Lents youth, renters, Spanish speaking residents, and members of the English language learning community. While demographic information was taken for all walking tour participants, not all participants elected to provide information for every demographic question.

Demographic information was collected from youth aged 16-18 at two youth-focused walks, and an additional 20 youth participated in walks, but demographic information was not collected as these participants were under the age of 16. The sample, as a whole, reflects the diverse backgrounds of Lents residents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Walking Tour Participant Demographics</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Lent Residents (N=64)</strong></td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (N=76)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>19-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>30-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race and Ethnicity (N=76)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>50-59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>60 or older</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>Rent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan Native or American Indian</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Race</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Frequency of public transit use (N=47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Household Income (N=43)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $10,000</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>Daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-$19,999</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000-$39,999</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 or higher</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Note:** (N=76) All demographic info is shared, although not all participants provided all info.
2. Surveys at Public Events

This project also collected over 170 surveys from local community members. Paper surveys were distributed at the Lents Founders Fair and the Jade District Night Market, both in August of 2017. Paper surveys were available in multiple languages and included questions assessing participants biking and walking habits and knowledge/support regarding the expansion of the Green Ring. Spatial data was also collected on a poster-sized map at the Lents Founders Fair. Findings from that activity are discussed in the Spatial Data Findings section of this report.

### Transportation Survey Descriptive Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you describe your bicycling habits?</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>How do you feel about the Green Ring?</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I do not have a bike</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>I strongly support it</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I own a bike, and ride it recreationally</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>I somewhat support it</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ride a bike to run errands or work</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>I do not support it</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I own a bike, but never ride it</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>I strongly do not support it</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How familiar were you with the Green Ring?</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
<th>What concerns do you have about the Green Ring?</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never heard of it</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>Increased cost of living</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat familiar</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>Increased traffic in neighborhood</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiar</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>Safety of bicyclists &amp; pedestrians</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very familiar</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>I have no concerns</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: (N=171)

The survey captured a convenience sample of people who attended either the Lents Founders Fair or the Jade District Night Market events and a majority of survey respondents were white women, who reported a higher income than the Lents neighborhood median household income. Thus, this survey, while useful in providing a snapshot of perspectives on the Green Ring, should not be used to make broad generalizations.

3. Outreach Approach

In order to capture the diversity of the Lents community, we partnered with local community organizations such as the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA); People, Places, Things; Oregon Walks; Rose Community Development Corporation; and the Lents Youth Initiative to recruit a range of walking tour participants. Additional focus group recruitment relied on various neighborhood Facebook pages, in which interested participants were directed to an online registration site. Participants were given grocery store gift cards as incentives to participate and efforts were made to accommodate a range of language needs, including a walk conducted in Spanish and another walk exclusive for non-native English speakers.
EXISTING CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

This existing conditions assessment is drawn from the 10 walking tours convened in summer/fall of 2017. Participants were given printed maps to write comments or suggestions about the space, and the PSU research team kept detailed field notes from the walking tour discussions. ¹

Segment 1: SE Steele Street from SE 87th Avenue to SE 101st Avenue

This segment of the Green Ring was part of many of our walking tours due to the centrality of Lents Park in the neighborhood, and key destinations (NAYA Generations, I-205 Multi-use Path, Lent Elementary, and Bloomington Park).

- The corner of SE 87th and SE Steele was visited by multiple walking tours. There was a clear consensus that the intersection, with a 4-way stop and adequate lighting, was sufficient for pedestrians accessing the Green Ring. Concerns were raised about foliage overhanging the stop signs, and the lack of a signage that would let someone know they were on the Green Ring. As such, key suggestions here included a vibrant intersection street mural, and better maintenance of the intersection overall.

- SE Steele Street and SE 92nd Avenue, while having a clearly identified crosswalk, was overwhelming discussed by walking tour participants as needing to be upgraded. Given the volume of children entering and exiting the park through this space, participants discussed the need for a flashing beacon at the intersection, and far more clarity about how pedestrians should move through the space. At present there are 2 painted crosswalks, which can make crossing easier—but more confusing for both pedestrians and drivers.

- SE Steele Street at the 205 Multi-use Path: As this area was traversed by many participants in this study, clear consensus emerged about the need for more signage, better lighting, and the need for the space to feel easier to navigate. At present, SE Steele street is a used as a parking lot for residents, which means the sharrow or pavement signs designating the biking access points are often covered. While the area already has a paved ramp for accessing the 205 footbridge, this access point for bikes is not easy to see or identify when entering the space from SE Steele St.

- I-205 Footbridge: Concerns were raised by participants about the lack of lighting, and the overall sense that that space doesn’t feel welcoming or safe. While there are paved ramps on either side of the bridge, participants repeatedly noted that these ramps would benefit from additional lighting, repaving, and clearer signage overall (particularly signs related to footbridge access, to clarify where

¹ Please see the 2016 report: “Expanding the Lents Green Ring: Bicycle & Pedestrian Improvement Plan Final Report” for a technical report on existing conditions.
the Green Ring is, and to point folks in the direction of Lents Town Center.

- **Lent Elementary**: Tours that started and ended at Lent Elementary noted that the area leading to and from the school felt relatively safe, well-lit and comfortable.

*Left, footbridge access from the 205 Path lacks adequate lighting. This side of the bridge is wheelchair accessible, but the other side (right) can only be traversed by those walking their bikes or on foot. Some stroller access might be possible here, but many participants with children said they would not roll a stroller down this ramp with a child inside.*

**Segment 1 Summary**: Overall priorities voiced by participants in segment one include: upgrades to the SE 92nd and SE Steele Intersection, better lighting and signage along the 205 Multi-Use Path and 205 footbridge, and overall efforts to make the entire segment feel more like a welcoming, accessible place.
Segment 2: SE 101st at SE Steele/Bloomington Park to the Springwater Corridor

- Bloomington Park/ SE 101st: The Green Ring’s Eastern corner abuts the nearly-thirteen-acre Bloomington Park. This park, an amenity to the Lents neighborhood, remains challenging to access. For pedestrians seeking to access the park from either SE 101st or SE Steele, there are no paved entry points. On our walks, those with strollers or mobility devices had trouble navigating the space. For tour participants who biked, they reported that the space was challenging to navigate because of the high density of parked cars and the confusing flow of traffic on the street—particularly during afternoon hours or on weekends when the park is heavily used.

- SE 101st and SE Steele and SE Insley SE Yukon Street: The portion of the Green Ring that runs from Bloomington Park to the Springwater Corridor features shorter, residential blocks. Walking tours in this space included parents with strollers and small children, as well as individuals with mobility devices (though no wheelchairs). The intersections at Steele and Yukon were described as safe, though the navigability of many portions of the sidewalks was limited. For instance, the images below illustrate problems with old sign posts that impede mobility on sidewalks. The photo on the left shows one such sign post on SE Steele that was loose and potentially hazardous. Throughout the Lents neighborhood, outdated or unkempt signage should be addressed in order to increase mobility.

Photo: Exit point from Bloomington Park

Photo: Left loose and obstructive sign post on SE Steele at SE 101st. Right SE Insley sign post obstruction.
- **SE 101st and SE Harold Street:** This intersection features two painted crosswalks and a pedestrian island on each side of the street. Though tour participants noted that this was somewhat helpful, they reported that cars routinely failed to stop for pedestrians at this intersection, and that cars often had speeds in clear excess of the speed limit. Tour participants on Segment 2 of the Green Ring voiced a clear consensus around upgrading this high-traffic intersection with flashing beacons or better signage to remind cars to give pedestrians the right of way.

- **SE 101st and SE Ellis Street to SE Foster Road:** In general, the residential blocks and streets between SE Harold and SE Foster were deemed by walking tour participants to be navigable and, despite some sidewalk impediments and debris in the streets, to be in mostly good condition. Along the route, one tour discovered a temporary sign directing people to Foster Floodplain natural area. This sign sparked a lot of discussion about the need for additional signs providing direction and guidance about where key stopping points in Lents are located.

- **101st Avenue from SE Foster Road to the Springwater Corridor:** At the moment, additional tours are being conducted to assess these intersections with residents. However, given ongoing concerns about the navigability of intersections on SE Foster Road, it is worth assessing this intersection from the perspective of residents.

**Segment 2 Summary:** Overall priorities voiced by participants in segment two include: upgrades to the SE 101st and SE Harold Intersection, better access points to Bloomington Park, and overall efforts to make the entire segment feel more like a welcoming, accessible place—particularly related to signage and the removal of obstacles in pedestrian areas.
Segment 3: The Springwater Corridor from SE 101st Avenue to the Malden Court Community Orchard (at SE 87th Avenue)

The Springwater Corridor is a multi-use bike and pedestrian pathway that runs through the Lents neighborhood. The trail is largely separated from car traffic, except at intersections, and is a vital recreation space. However, challenges related to the ongoing presence of unhoused individuals living and camping on or near the trail was discussed in most walking tour groups (even those that did not walk the corridor during a tour).

In particular, Lents residents voiced concerns about the safety of the space in the evenings, and those with children reported that the Corridor did not feel welcoming for children. Unfortunately, on our Spanish-language walk, a direct confrontation occurred between a person living on the trail and our tour group of women and small children. The individual living on the trail rode their bicycle directly at the tour group while shouting racially-demeaning language. The women reported that this was not an uncommon occurrence and was a primary reason that they chose NOT to use the Springwater Corridor, despite the fact that it is paved and easy to navigate with children and strollers. We ultimately diverted the path of the tour away from the Springwater Corridor.

The challenges facing Portland’s unhoused community are significant and the Springwater Corridor in Lents has been a prime site for the complexities of the problem to play out in a visible manner. Complex solutions related to housing, employment, and health care are critically important needs for the unhoused population. A balance should be struck between treating these individuals with dignity and respect, while also striving to make Lents a thriving and livable place for everyone. Efforts to bring the Green Ring to life will have to tackle these tensions in a thoughtful manner. However, a failure to address the very real safety concerns on the Springwater Corridor risks investing in a project that will not be utilized to its fullest extent.

Segment 3 Summary: Overall priorities voiced by participants in segment three include better lighting and increased attention to the lack of safety on the Springwater at the present moment.
Segment 4: SE 87th Avenue from Malden Court Community Orchard to SE Steele

- Malden Court Community Orchard: This report has progressed spatially through the Green Ring in a clockwise manner. Our discussion of Segment 4 requires reporting on intersections from south to north. Therefore, we start with the Malden Court Community Orchard, which is located at the intersection of the Springswater Corridor and SE 87th Avenue, the southern-most point on the Green Ring. The orchard, a Green Lents project, features edible plants, an outdoor meeting space, and hosts work parties for those interested in learning more about community gardening.

Walking tours that visited the orchard were very pleased to use the space and learn about a neighborhood amenity many were unaware of. However, accessibility to the area from either the Springwater Corridor of SE Flavel Streets was not ideal. For those trying to bring a stroller or small children from the Springwater Corridor to the Orchard, the connecting path is unpaved, steep, and has a very large rock that acts as a barrier to this entry point. The Flavel Street entrance is also unpaved, with mid-sized gravel that can be a challenge for small children, strollers, or mobility devices to safely maneuver.

![The photo on the left illustrates the walking path from the Malden Court Community Orchard to the Springwater Corridor. The photo on the right shows the path from SE Flavel and SE 87th Avenue to the Malden Court Community Orchard.]

- SE 87th Avenue at SE Knapp, SE Rural and SE Bybee Streets: The three blocks from the Malden Court Community Orchard to Glenwood Park are primarily residential in nature. The western side of
SE 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue between SE Rural and SE Bybee streets does not have paved sidewalks, which might be a challenge for those seeking to walk the Green Ring. Otherwise, however, this three-block stretch is navigable and already features some signs and marked crossing for pedestrians.

- **Glenwood City Park:** This 7-acre park is managed by Portland Parks and Recreation and features open space, a baseball field, and a playground. The park has on-street parking and pedestrian access from 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue was sufficient for our walking tour members who had children in strollers.

- **SE 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue at SE Clayborne, SE Duke and SE Tolman Streets:** As noted above, the physical ability walk into Glenwood Park with strollers or mobility devices was not limited. However, concerns were raised about accessing Glenwood park were related to a lack of street lighting on the intersections along 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue that fed into the park- SE Clayborne and SE Duke and SE Tolman, in particular.

  On one walk with NAYA Generations residents, in which the tour moved South down 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue, many reported never having visited Glenwood park, despite living less than a mile away, because the streets leading to it did not feel safe enough to walk on with children. Many residents thought they might access the area with a larger group, but a lack of lighting made many people reluctant to say they would walk to the park from their nearby residence. SE Duke at SE 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue is a busy street. At present there is a marked crosswalk and right of way signage. However, residents did feel that the lack of lighting in this intersection was problematic and that cars often failed to stop when pedestrians were waiting to cross this intersection. Though SE Duke was noted as less of a priority than SE 87<sup>th</sup> Ave and SE Woodstock and SE Foster roads, additional lighting or signage might serve to increase safety at 87<sup>th</sup> and Duke.

- **SE 87<sup>th</sup> Avenue and SE Woodstock Boulevard:** SE Woodstock is a high traffic road and, at present, features a two-way stop for cars crossing SE Woodstock. There are pedestrian right of way signs, and a painted cross walk, but the condition of the paint has deteriorated significantly. The reduced visibility at the intersection, when coupled with the high speeds on Woodstock, let many walking tour participants to assess this intersection as very unsafe for pedestrians and those with small children.

*Below and right, images of Woodstock Blvd.*
• **SE 87th Avenue and SE Foster Road**: Foster Road is well known for the dilemmas it presents to pedestrians and cyclists. Only one walking tour actually crossed SE Foster Road on foot due to concerns about a large group crossing the street safely. However, many individuals in other walking tours referenced their own challenges in crossing SE Foster Road. The high volume of car and bus traffic, and the relatively high speed limit, make this intersection a priority for improvement for residents. The intersection at SE 87th features a light and crosswalk, but residents pointed out that the timer on the crosswalk was insufficient for those with strollers, those who moved at a slower pace, and those with any sort of mobility device. Concerns were also raised about the limited visibility of the crossing.

• **SE 87th Avenue and SE Reedway Street**: This intersection was not identified as being problematic, though walking tours noted the ongoing challenges of narrow sidewalks and a lack of lighting here.

• **SE 87th Avenue and SE Ellis Street**: This intersection was identified by numerous walking tours as a priority for investment. The intersection lacks safe crossing areas, is incompletely paved, and features no crosswalks or other pedestrian safety devices. Overall, this intersection is one of the largest challenges for pedestrians walking through this space and many residents reported avoiding this area altogether due to the lack of safe walking spaces.

• **SE 87th Avenue and SE Insley**: Overall, this intersection is residential in nature and does not present significant challenges to mobility aside from narrow sidewalks.

**Segment 4 Summary**: Overall priorities voiced by participants in segment four include: Improvement of the connection points between the Springwater Corridor and the Malden Court Community Orchard, and upgrades to SE 87th Avenue at SE Woodstock Boulevard, SE Foster Road, and SE Ellis Street. Enhancing lighting and some additional sidewalk improvements were also highlighted as important needs along 87th Avenue.
Access Points to and from the Green Ring

SE 92nd Avenue: A common problem on many walking tours was the issue of navigating the entry points of the Green Ring from various meeting places around Lents. In particular, the challenges of walking along any section of SE 92nd Avenue in order to access the Green Ring proved routinely challenging. From high traffic, high speed autos to a lack of safe crossing areas, SE 92nd Avenue presents many challenges. Challenges also emerged in and around SE 92nd near the Boys and Girls club and Lents Park.

The image to the right illustrates the debris-filled and inaccessible crossing on SE 92nd at SE Knapp Street that walking tour participants were using in order to access the Springwater Corridor entry point nearby.

NAYA Generations: Though the Green Ring runs down SE 87th Avenue, the area surrounding NAYA Generations, at the SE 86th and SE Steele intersection, as well as SE 86th Court, present unique challenges for Lents residents hoping to navigate the area around Lents Park and the NAYA apartment complex. Walking tour participants reported very high speed traffic near children playing, as well as a lack of clear stop signs around the NAYA generations building.

Additional concerns were raised about the lack of lighting on SE 86th Court, which is not accessible by car, and runs parallel to the Green Ring/SE 87th Avenue. Residents reported that improved lighting in this area would enhance the walkability of this area greatly. The next section highlights where some of these key access points are, which may warrant additional community engagement and discussion.
**SPATIAL DATA FINDINGS**

Information on common access points to Green Ring was collected at the Oregon Walkways Lents Founders Fair in August of 2017. At this event, attended by more than 2000 people, residents were invited to tell us where they entered and exited the Green Ring, and what neighborhood amenities drew them into the heart of Lents. Using a large, poster-sized map of the Green Ring, residents were asked to use stickers to mark 1) where they live; 2) where they enter and exit the Green Ring when they walk or bike; and 3) what amenities they use in and around the Green Ring.

The map below features these points overlaid on a map of the Green Ring. In sum, the majority of those who participated in this exercise (~50-75 people) entered and exited on the northern end of the Green Ring. Lents Park, the Green Lents Community Tool Library, the Belmont Goats, and Zoiglhaus were the most frequently marked as locations where people were going.

The large red dot (exit point) along the Springwater without an accompanying large blue dot reflects a pattern in which people enter the ring somewhere else and exit at that point. While this is not a representative map of all of those in the neighborhood, it is helpful in further highlighting high traffic segments of the Green Ring, while also pointing out the specific amenities that draw people in to Lents Town Center.
MAKING LENTS A WELCOMING PLACE

During the course of each walking tour, participants were asked what they would do to improve the safety and accessibility of Lents. Many residents immediately described the need for visual improvements. Discussions about existing murals and street art that people loved brought up ideas about where to place new artistic works. A shared vision emerged in many groups for installations of some kind at each of the four corners of the Green Ring (SE 87th Avenue and SE Steele; SE 101st near Bloomington Park; SE 101st near the Springwater Corridor; SE 87th Avenue near the Malden Court Community Orchard). In these discussions, residents commonly discussed the need to make the Green Ring “feel real” through art and signs.

A commonly repeated idea was also the color green; a consistent thread of conversations across multiple tour groups reflected on how to make the Green Ring green. Youth participants wanted the sidewalks on the entire length of the Green Ring painted green, while adults preferred the idea of either green paint on the curbsides or a green ring logo imprinted over existing sharrows on the street. Numerous residents also noted wanting some kind of Green Ring signage added to the top of street signs (similar to what is on Clinton Street, but unique to Lents).

In addition to desires to improve the visual feeling of the Green Ring as a place, walking tour participants discussed the need for additional signage and wayfinding related to Lents amenities. Distance markers to places such as Lents Town Center, the Belmont Goats, the Springwater Corridor, The Lents International Farmer’s Market, the Malden Court Community Orchard, the Portland Pickles field, Lents Park,
Bloomington Park, and Glenwood City Park were all notable attractions that residents wanted wayfinding signs to highlight.

**CONCERNS ABOUT GENTRIFICATION**

At the end of every walking tour, we asked tour participants to talk about their understanding of gentrification in Lents, and how they thought about a neighborhood improvement such as the Green Ring might contribute to issues of affordability in Lents.

In sum, residents shared a great depth of knowledge about gentrification and how larger development forces in Portland had been contributing to problems in Lents. For participants who were renters, they expressed significant concerns about their ability to afford rent in Lents in the long term. On many of our walking tours, we passed homes for sale and participants would discuss the rapid increase in home prices and the uncertainty that this brought to their status in the neighborhood. This contrasted starkly with homeowners who were encouraged by rising home values and what that meant for the neighborhood as a whole. Both renters and homeowners shared the perspective that Lents was rapidly changing, that gentrification was indeed forcing many people to relocate because of rent increases, yet both groups shared a sense that Lents was, and should remain, a diverse and welcoming community.

A sense of optimism was repeated in many of our walks and discussions. Despite direct questions about the potential tension between improving neighborhood livability via the Green Ring and possibly increasing real estate prices, the vast majority of our participants noted that creating a more walkable, livable neighborhood was a high priority. Renters and homeowners alike wanted investments that made walking and biking in Lents safer, more accessible, and less stressful. A repeated refrain in many walks was, “Gentrification is already happening, so let’s figure out how to make this development work for us.” Of concern for many walking tour members were their perceptions that the city of Portland was improperly balancing investments across the city; at least a dozen residents mentioned concerns that the city needed to do a better job in equally investing resources across East Portland neighborhoods. While walking tour participants were likely to note that resources might be limited at the city, they were hopeful that the city would make investments, both large and small, that would have meaningful impacts in Lents.

Evident in discussions were clear tensions around issues affecting renters in Lents, but a majority of residents who joined our walking tours were optimistic that investments in the public spaces of Lents were the kinds of investments that everyone could benefit from. This buy-in and ownership of the neighborhood is essential in building the sort of community amenity that can make the Green Ring successful.
SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has synthesized a range of community perspectives on the Green Ring. While those opinions collected here represent the diversity of the Lents neighborhood in terms of age, renter status, race/ethnicity and English language ability, it is important to recognize that those who were willing and able to come out and join a walk, complete a survey, or attend a public event where data was collected may not reflect all of the opinions of those in Lents. As such, the recommendations of this report should be seen as a starting point for ongoing discussions related to the Green Ring’s design and implementation.

Connectivity Through Wayfinding: Existing amenities and attractions such as parks, the Portland Pickles baseball team, the Belmont Goats and the Lents International Farmer’s Market are things that make Lents residents proud to call this neighborhood home. These amenities can and should be further enhanced through the connectivity the Green Ring would allow. This connectivity would require specific upgrades throughout the Green Ring, as well as additional wayfinding signs that help people to understand where they are along the Green Ring and how close they are to neighborhood attractions.

Connectivity Through Placemaking: Our data collection efforts demonstrated that Lents residents would like their neighborhood to feel more livable, more connected, and to have more of a sense of a place. For many, this means increasing the presence of street art, murals, Green things, and other investments that make the Green Ring really feel like a connected and thriving space. This notion, often referred to as Placemaking, should highlight the things that make Lents a unique place. Such efforts would also allow community members, community organizations, and local artists to come together in order to cultivate this vision.

Affordability: Lents residents were keenly aware of the dynamic social and economic pressures currently impacting Lents, and Portland as a whole. While our walking tour participants were aware of gentrification and its visible impacts on the Lents neighborhood, residents overwhelmingly wanted to see improvements in walkability and livability prioritized in Lents. Importantly, discussion of housing affordability and houselessness should not be ignored as infrastructure upgrades are considered. Ongoing tensions between investment and affordability are complex, but should not be ignored when efforts to improve active transportation choices occurs.

Priority Intersection Upgrades: Throughout this report, intersections or street segments that are particularly challenging for residents to navigate were highlighted. Though numerous intersections were assessed during these walks, those intersections that were repeatedly discussed by residents were listed as priorities for improvement.

The image below highlights those intersections, with the caveat that only one walk (which was interrupted by a passerby) traveled on the Springwater Corridor. The lack of data for Section 3 is not meant to imply that this section is not in need of further consideration, but simply that this study lacks community input on this segment. However, past outreach and data collection overseen by Green Lents has found that safety concerns related to encampments on the Springwater remain a significant challenge in the Green Ring area.
**Segment 1**
- SE 92\textsuperscript{nd} Ave. and SE Harold St.
- Multi-Use Path at SE Steele St.
- I-205 Footbridge

**Segment 2**
- SE 101\textsuperscript{st} Ave. and SE Harold St.

**Segment 3**
- The point where the Springwater Corridor and Malden Court Community Orchard meet

**Segment 4**
- SE 87\textsuperscript{th} Ave. and SE Woodstock Blvd.
- SE 87\textsuperscript{th} Ave. and SE Foster Rd.
- SE 87\textsuperscript{th} Ave. and SE Ellis St.
In closing, we’ve selected a few images from the walking tours that highlight the potential the Green Ring holds for Lents residents. Enhanced opportunities to get outside, enjoy green spaces, meet neighbors and be connected to the neighborhood are the benefits the Green Ring brings to Lents.

Above, an English as a Second Language (ESL) walking tour visited the Lents Park Playground and the Lents International Farmers Market, learning new vocabulary with Green Lents and the People, Places, Things organization. This walk was our most well-attended walk and suggests ongoing interest in outdoor language learning opportunities in Lents.

Above, a tour with residents at NAYA Generations brought families together to explore Glenwood City Park.