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EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview

This report examines the existing conditions along Fourth Plain Boulevard in Vancouver, Washington, and will serve as a foundation for the Fourth Plain Forward Action Plan. The report looks at general corridor conditions along the segment between I-5 and NE 65th Avenue, as well as more specific conditions for the narrower study area between Fairmount Avenue and Rossiter Lane (see Figure A.1 in the introduction). The analysis is organized into four sections: People, Place, Market Conditions, and Planning Context. The people analysis looks at demographic and socioeconomic trends in order to create an understanding of the community that lives and works in the Fourth Plain corridor. The place analysis examines the physical condition of Fourth Plain Boulevard, as well as the uses located on the corridor. The market conditions analysis describes the current retail business mix on Fourth Plain, explores potential retail clusters, and assesses retail market conditions within a three-mile trade area. And finally, the planning context looks at zoning, as well as recent plans for the corridor, city, and region, in order to create an understanding of how Fourth Plain Forward fits into various ongoing planning efforts.

People

The Fourth Plain corridor is more densely populated and more diverse than the City of Vancouver as a whole, with a higher concentration of multifamily housing and significant Hispanic/Latino and Asian populations. The study area, which runs from Fairmount Avenue to Rossiter Lane, represents the most ethnically diverse segment of the entire corridor. Interestingly, within the study area, concentrations of the two largest ethnic minority groups are shifting. The Hispanic/Latino population is becoming increasingly concentrated in the neighborhood south of the study area (Maplewood), while the reverse is true for the neighborhood to the north (Fourth Plain Village). At the same time, the Asian population is becoming increasingly concentrated in Fourth Plain Village. This discrepancy between the northern and southern neighborhoods also emerges for the foreign-born population, which is more concentrated in the Maplewood neighborhood. This indicates that more immigrants are moving into Maplewood, and might also suggest that immigrant families are leaving Fourth Plain Village to settle in other neighborhoods.

The study area is characterized by low household incomes, low rates of educational attainment, and high poverty rates, particularly in the Maplewood neighborhood, where 40% of residents live in extreme poverty. This is exacerbated by high rent burdens (rent as a proportion of income), which has serious implications for household stability, hardship, and family stress. Nearly one third of households in the study area put at least 50% of their income towards rent each month. Crime is also an issue for the corridor; Fourth Plain neighborhoods have relatively high crime rates compared to other neighborhoods in Vancouver, and crime is particularly concentrated in Maplewood. Businesses within the study area largely employ workers who live near Fourth Plain. This supports the idea that assisting businesses on Fourth Plain will also help nearby residents.

Place

Fourth Plain Boulevard is typical of an auto-oriented, suburban arterial street. The corridor lacks physical unity because of inconsistent building setbacks and large parking lots. It also suffers from a lack of street trees, landscaping, and a distracting number of power lines. The corridor does have a number of community assets, however, including churches, a community center, and large institutions including Clark College and the VA Medical Center. It also has several large parks and green spaces, including Water Works Park, Evergreen Park, and the Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway.

Fourth Plain is a busy arterial street. Though much of the corridor has a speed limit of 30 MPH, cars typically travel much faster. Fourth Plain is also C-TRAN’s (the regional transit authority) highest ridership corridor, and is currently served by three bus lines. C-TRAN will soon construct the region’s
first Bus Rapid Transit line (BRT) along Fourth Plain, connecting riders to downtown Vancouver and the Westfield Mall. This is expected to greatly improve the frequency and predictability of service, with enhanced station areas that will provide wider sidewalks and attractive shelters.

Striped bicycle lanes only cover a small segment of the corridor, and even where lane markings do exist, informal observation indicates that many bicyclists choose to ride on the sidewalk rather than travelling with traffic. Pedestrian conditions are also subpar, with narrow sidewalks mostly lacking buffers from the street and frequently disturbed by driveway curb cuts. Meanwhile, many of the neighborhood streets surrounding Fourth Plain lack sidewalks, and some streets do not connect to the corridor, which greatly limits pedestrian access. Not only are sidewalks and other facilities often unpleasant for pedestrians, they may also present issues for safety, as pedestrian traffic collisions are relatively frequent along Fourth Plain.

Fourth Plain is predominantly a commercial corridor, although portions of industrial and residential use also abut the street. The majority of land on the corridor is developed, with only four completely vacant unpaved lots. There are, however, numerous underutilized parking lots and 25 vacant commercial spaces between NE 65th and Fort Vancouver Way. In addition, 21 businesses and/or commercial spaces on the corridor are in buildings of poor condition, meaning that they have noticeable structural damage and need repair. Currently, there is little redevelopment potential in the study area, based on assessment of improvement-to-land-value ratios for each property. However, redevelopment of a few key sites may have the potential to catalyze investment in other parts of the corridor.

Market Conditions

The Student Team conducted an on-the-ground inventory of the businesses on Fourth Plain and paired that with a retail market analysis to identify opportunities and constraints for the retail vitality of the district. There are 150 total commercial properties in the corridor, and the overwhelming majority are retail businesses with a storefront on Fourth Plain.

Non-discretionary (needs-based) retail categories account for roughly 89% of the businesses in the corridor. This high proportion of non-discretionary businesses can be problematic because the spending power of the local market in the vicinity of the corridor is relatively low, so the people that most frequently visit the area have a very limited amount of money to spend on “wants” or discretionary goods and services. Consequently, the discretionary businesses on Fourth Plain will likely need to draw customers from a wider market area in order to thrive and grow. Restaurants are the most common discretionary category, and are also the most prominent retail businesses in the corridor. Among the 20 full-service restaurants on the corridor, 85% serve an international cuisine, including Latin American, Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese. These restaurants provide both important economic and social benefits to the community. However, given low incomes available for discretionary spending, it is unlikely that existing restaurants will be able to grow revenues or new restaurants will succeed if they rely too heavily on local customers. Both business-specific and district-wide interventions should focus on enabling these restaurants to become destinations to a wider market.

There is a cluster of home improvement retailers in the corridor and particularly in the western end of the study area. Clustering of these types of home improvement stores is a common and effective strategy because there is often significant crossover of customers between these businesses. The City should consider policies to support both the existing cluster and new, complementary home and home improvement stores, as they have potential to draw from a wide market. There are also a number of repair and maintenance businesses on the corridor, and many of these businesses are minority-owned. Auto repair businesses may face challenging market conditions, and many are in need of property improvements. Market conditions are favorable for personal goods repair businesses, but lower frequency or more discretionary sub-categories—such as jewelry or furniture
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

repair—may need support to identify new revenue streams or marketing strategies.

Food and beverage stores make up 11% of businesses in the corridor. Fourth Plain is home to several Latino markets, two Asian markets, and one market for Eastern European food. As a non-discretionary and high frequency category, food markets and grocers can be a stable business even in an area with relatively low incomes. These markets also provide important social benefits, including access to fresh produce and foods that allow immigrant communities to sustain cultural traditions in their new home country. Technical assistance to these businesses might focus on marketing and cost-control strategies that allow them to continue to compete with national chains.

The four retail categories without a major presence on Fourth Plain are all discretionary, low frequency purchases. Discretionary categories are likely to struggle in the context of relatively low local incomes and spending power. However, like restaurants and home improvement retailers, these types of businesses can draw traffic in from a wider market to help revitalize the district as a whole. If a low-income entrepreneur is interested in pursuing a store within one of these categories then they should be highly prioritized for technical assistance, as this type of retail development on Fourth Plain comes with both significant opportunity and risk.

Planning Context

The Student Team examined plans and regulations from multiple jurisdictions, including the City of Vancouver, Clark County, C-TRAN, and various neighborhood associations. These planning efforts help define the broad goals of the larger community and provide support for specific policies and actions along Fourth Plain, while also placing these actions within a regulatory context. The limited comprehensive plan implementation thus far, particularly of the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan and Streetscape Study, creates urgency for the current project’s orientation toward implementable actions.

Some major takeaways from the planning context are: (1) there is ample support for infill development, walkability, and access to a variety of transportation modes, indicating that efforts to make Fourth Plain a denser and more pedestrian-friendly environment should be a priority; (2) safety, both in terms of reduced crime and safer conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, is a major concern for neighborhood residents and businesses, suggesting that recommendations for better sidewalks, bike infrastructure, street lighting, and other safety-related measures are likely to see strong community support; (3) thus far, little has been done to implement pedestrian and streetscape improvements, and there is a need to strategically prioritize potential improvements; (4) the community will likely support creative new activities and partnerships to celebrate cultural diversity; (5) to reach the goals of increasing incomes and wealth in the area, residents will need to be economically linked to high-growth industries, potentially as workers or suppliers; and (6) small business development can help to raise local incomes and wealth, but it is not known if current programs have adequate capacity to substantially affect small business stabilization and growth.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Implications

Synthesis of the existing conditions analysis indicates that the Fourth Plain corridor—and the study area in particular—are in great need of economic development interventions. The area’s low household incomes, high poverty rates, and high rent burdens indicate that many residents are struggling to make ends meet. At the same time, the physical conditions of the corridor leave room for improvement, as the street lacks many amenities—such as landscaping and quality pedestrian and bike infrastructure—that create an appealing public space. Despite these challenges, this is an excellent time to invest in the corridor, as major improvements accompanying the forthcoming BRT line will provide significant value to Fourth Plain’s communities.

In developing economic development strategies for the Fourth Plain corridor, it will be critical to keep in mind demographic conditions—particularly the shifting concentrations of Hispanics/Latinos and Asians, as well as immigrant populations, within the study area. These groups may have different needs in terms of workforce development and opportunities for microenterprise development. It will also be important to keep in mind the existing mix of businesses along the corridor, which may present obstacles in terms of business oversupply and marketability, but also provide opportunities for business clustering and enhancement of district identity.
A.1 INTRODUCTION

Geography

Fourth Plain Boulevard is a major east-west corridor in Vancouver, Washington. This report looks at the portion of Fourth Plain that is bounded by I-5 to the west and NE 65th Avenue to the east. The areas adjacent to this portion of the street will be referred to as the “Fourth Plain corridor.” The Fourth Plain Forward initiative, however, is focusing most of its planning efforts on a smaller segment of the corridor between Fairmount Avenue and Rossiter Lane, referred to as the “study area”. This includes businesses and properties along this segment, as well as the residential community within a short walking distance (roughly one-quarter mile) of Fourth Plain (Figure A.1). This report presents detailed data for the study area, but also looks at the larger Fourth Plain corridor in order to provide a better understanding of existing conditions of the whole area.

Overview

The analysis of existing conditions is organized into four sections: People, Place, Market Conditions, and Planning Context. The people analysis looks at demographic and socioeconomic trends in order to create an understanding of the community that lives and works in the Fourth Plain corridor. This understanding will help the Fourth Plain Student Team identify the most effective strategies for supporting local businesses and increasing household wealth, while also revealing opportunities and constraints for these strategies, and providing a basis for effective community engagement. The Team constructed the demographic and socioeconomic profile with American Community Survey data from 2009-2013 at the census tract level, using 5-year estimates to minimize margin of error and to utilize detailed data.

Figure A.1 - Fourth Plain Corridor and Study Area Context

Figure A.2 - Census Tracts used for Corridor & Study Area Analyses, ACS 2013
A.1 INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Plain corridor east of Fort Vancouver Way is bounded by census tracts 411.11, 416, 417, and 427. For the purpose of analysis, the study area is defined as tract 417 to the north and 427 to the south (Figure A.2). Since tract 417 closely corresponds to the Fourth Plain Village neighborhood, the north side of the study area will be referred to as Fourth Plain Village. Likewise, tract 427 corresponds to the Maplewood neighborhood, so the south side of the study area will be referred to as Maplewood.

The place analysis looks at the physical condition of Fourth Plain Boulevard, as well as the uses located on the corridor. This analysis was constructed using quantitative and qualitative data gathered during a walking tour with planners from the City of Vancouver, and a land use and business inventory conducted by the Student Team (along with many other visits to the corridor). The analysis looks at community assets, transportation infrastructure, land use, and property values to create a picture of the condition and function of the Fourth Plain corridor, and will inform what sort of place-based strategies the Student Team recommends. The market conditions analysis builds on the place analysis by describing the current retail business mix on the corridor and within the study area, by exploring potential retail clusters, and by using a simple market analysis to assess retail market conditions within a three-mile trade area. This will also assist the Student Team in developing strategies around support for local businesses. Finally, the planning context section looks at zoning, as well as recent plans for the Fourth Plain corridor, the city, and the region, in order to create an understanding of how Fourth Plain Forward fits into various ongoing planning efforts.

History

Fourth Plain Boulevard is named for a clearing in the dense forest that once dominated the landscape of what is now Vancouver. Such clearings were called ‘plains’ by 19th century British settlers, and five of these plains were identified by name. The Fourth Plain occupied the area now known as Orchards, and the road leading from Fort Vancouver to this area was called Fourth Plain Boulevard.1

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The Fourth Plain corridor was dominated by farmland up until World War II, when wartime activity changed the area dramatically. The city’s population jumped from 18,000 to over 80,000 in only a few months, as the Kaiser shipyards drew thousands of workers to Vancouver. The challenge of housing all these new residents was taken on by the newly formed Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA), which built six new housing developments. Several of these were built along the Fourth Plain corridor—Fourth Plain Village, Bagley Downs, and Ogden Meadows—which largely changed the area’s character from rural to suburban. It is interesting to note that the VHA was unique among housing authorities of its era, in that it did not discriminate based on race during the housing allocation process. As a result, Vancouver largely avoided the sort of racially segregated neighborhoods that were seen in most U.S. cities during the same period.

Vancouver became wealthy after WWII on the strength of its shipbuilding industry. Yet when the shipyards closed down after the war ended, no major industry took its place, causing the population to plummet and Vancouver’s economic condition to greatly decline. Fourth Plain Boulevard became a congested east-west thoroughfare, and remained so until SR 500 was built in the 1980’s to ease this congestion. Unfortunately, the diversion of traffic away from Fourth Plain also furthered the stagnation of the corridor’s commercial district. Even as Vancouver’s population has boomed in recent decades, Fourth Plain has not seen the same investment as other parts of the city.

A.2 PEOPLE

In 2013, the study area had a total population of 8,725, accounting for 56% of the total population of the Fourth Plain corridor. More people live to the south of the study area (5,030) than north (3,695), resulting in a higher population density in Maplewood (11,821 ppl/mi²) than in Fourth Plain Village (8,444 ppl/mi²). These population densities are two and three times as high as in the city of Vancouver as a whole, which has a population density of 3,532 ppl/mi². The higher population density in Maplewood is likely related to the concentration of multifamily dwellings and mobile home parks in this area south of Fourth Plain.

The study area’s population is also younger than Vancouver, with a median age of 32 years compared to the city’s median age of 37. However, the composition of the study area by resident age is uneven, with large gaps in size between successive cohorts in some cases, and some cohorts heavily skewed towards one sex (Figure A.3). The largest cohorts within the study area by age group are those aged 25 to 34 years, 5 to 14 years, and 45 to 54 years. There are comparatively high proportions of men between ages 55 and 64, as well as women between ages 15 to 24.

Figure A.3 - Study Area Population Age Pyramid, ACS 2013

Figure A.4 - Race and Ethnicity by Geography, ACS 2013
Diversity

The Fourth Plain corridor is more racially and ethnically diverse than Vancouver as a whole, and the study area is the most diverse segment of the corridor. The study area has higher shares of every racial/ethnic category, besides whites and African Americans, when compared to Vancouver as a whole (Figure A.4). Maplewood stands out as particularly diverse, with communities of color making up nearly half of all residents, whereas Fourth Plain Village’s white population has a slightly higher share than in the Fourth Plain corridor overall. The share of residents claiming two or more races is also much higher throughout Fourth Plain compared with Vancouver.

By looking at ethnicity, an interesting story emerges depicting major changes in the study area since the Great Recession, particularly with respect to trends in ethnic composition of Maplewood and Fourth Plain Village (Figure A.5). In 2009, Fourth Plain Village was nearly one third (33%) Hispanic or Latino, and Maplewood only 19%. Since then, Hispanics and Latinos have made up an increasingly larger proportion of the population in Maplewood and a much smaller proportion in Fourth Plain Village, reversing their 2009 proportions by the year 2012. Figures for 2013 maintain and extend this trend. This is occurring in a context in which Hispanics and Latinos are making up an increasing share of the city population overall.

Meanwhile, the proportion of the population in Fourth Plain Village that is Asian has doubled from 4% to 8% over the same time period. Maplewood could be seeing a greater influx of Hispanic and Latino residents due to its greater concentration of multifamily housing, which tends to be more affordable than single-family homes. A further potential explanation regarding shifts in foreign-born population is discussed below (Figure A.6). Differences between Fourth Plain Village and Maplewood appear frequently in the data.

Figure A.5 - Percent Hispanic or Latino by Study Area Tracts, ACS

Since 2009, the Hispanic and Latino population within the study area has shifted. As Maplewood’s share of Hispanics and Latinos has increased, Fourth Plain Village’s share has declined. Meanwhile, Fourth Plain Village has seen a marked increase in its Asian population.

Among Hispanic and Latino residents of the Fourth Plain corridor and the study area, 95% are of Mexican origin. This compares to 81% for the city, which has larger Puerto Rican, Central American, and South American populations than the corridor.

Like the Hispanic and Latino community, the study area’s Asian population is quite different from the rest of the city. Chinese residents make up 20% of Vancouver’s Asian population, but only 4% in the study area. Instead, the study area’s Asian population includes large shares of Filipinos (37%), Vietnamese (20%), Cambodians (10%), and Laotians (7%). The north/south discrepancy within the study area emerges here as well. Vietnamese make
up a larger portion of the Asian population in Maplewood (30%) than they do in Fourth Plain Village (12%). The opposite is true for Filipinos, who account for 46% of the Asian population in Fourth Plain Village, but only 26% in Maplewood. These differences highlight the varying social geography present in the corridor, where ethnicities tend to be clustered rather than evenly distributed.

The percentage of the population that is foreign-born is about twice as high in the Fourth Plain corridor as it is for the city as a whole (20% vs 10%). These figures have barely changed since 2009 for either Fourth Plain or for Vancouver, but this is not true for the two neighborhoods in the study area (Figure A.6). In Maplewood, the foreign-born population hovered between 18% and 22% from 2009 to 2013. But Fourth Plain Village’s foreign-born population has dropped significantly, from 24% in 2009 to only 14% in 2013, nearly matching the city’s overall proportion. This indicates that fewer immigrants are moving into Fourth Plain Village than they are into Maplewood, and might also suggest that immigrant families are leaving Fourth Plain Village to settle in other neighborhoods. No racial or ethnic classification is available for the foreign-born population, but this may be related to the shift in the Hispanic and Asian populations explored above.

Language can be a barrier for diverse communities to engage in planning processes and to participate in the economy, but can also be an important component of cultural community. English is spoken at home in three quarters of households in Fourth Plain Village but only two thirds of households in Maplewood, as shown in Table A.1. Spanish is the most widely spoken non-English language in the study area, particularly in Maplewood. However, Spanish speakers in Maplewood have significantly higher English proficiency than those living in Fourth Plain Village (78% vs 57%). The population with the lowest English proficiency are those that speak an Indo-European language other than Spanish in Maplewood, who make up 7% of households in that area. Similarly, half of those speaking an Asian or Pacific Islander language in Maplewood have limited English.

![Figure A.6 - Percent Foreign-born Population, ACS 2013](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Spoken at Home</th>
<th>Tract 417 (N)</th>
<th>Tract 427 (S)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other Indo-European languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian and Pacific Islander languages</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Asian and Pacific Islander - limited English</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.1 - Language Spoken at Home and Limited English Ability by Household, ACS 2013
A.2 PEOPLE

Economic Status

Median household income (MHI) has generally fallen for both portions of the study area and for Vancouver and Clark County since 2009 (Figure A.7). However, the decreases have been more dramatic in the study area than in the city or county, and in particular Maplewood has experienced the most dramatic drop in incomes (Table A.2). At $26,546, Maplewood’s MHI in 2013 was only 54% of Vancouver’s median income of $48,979, while Fourth Plain Village’s MHI ($33,590) was 69% of the city’s.

Low incomes are driving high poverty rates in the study area. Using the ratio of income to the federal poverty level as the measure, it is clear that the Fourth Plain corridor struggles with poverty—and in many cases, extreme poverty (Figure A.8). This measure is often criticized for not being aggressive enough in classifying poverty, and an alternative practice is to use twice the federal poverty level as an approximate measure of a ‘self-sufficient’ household. A household that is not self-sufficient is struggling to make ends meet. Using that standard, two thirds of the population in the Fourth Plain corridor is not self-sufficient, compared to only one third in Vancouver. Extreme poverty is most pronounced in the Maplewood neighborhood, where 41% of households earn less than the federal poverty level.

In addition to high poverty, the Fourth Plain corridor as a whole suffers from low educational attainment. The number of individuals with bachelor’s degrees is about half the citywide average (7% vs 16%), while the proportion of the population with less than a high school education is about twice that of the rest of the city (21.5% vs 10.5%). The north/south split shows up here as well, as 25.7% of Maplewood’s population has less than a high school attainment level, while only 16% in Fourth Plain Village lacks a diploma. Similarly, individuals with college degrees make up 9.5% of the population in Fourth Plain Village, but only 5.1% in Maplewood.

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<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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</thead>
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<td>0.2%</td>
<td>-4.0%</td>
<td>-5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plain Village</td>
<td>-0.6%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
<td>-4.4%</td>
<td>-4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maplewood</td>
<td>-8.4%</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
<td>-16.7%</td>
<td>-18.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2 - Decline in Median Household Income from 2009 Level (adjusted for inflation), ACS

Figure A.7 - Median Income (adjusted for inflation), ACS
A.2 People

Homeownership is low within the Fourth Plain corridor compared to the city. Since 2009, renter-occupied housing units increased from 47% to 51% in Vancouver. On the Fourth Plain corridor as a whole, renter-occupation reached 81% in 2013. The Maplewood neighborhood shows similar levels of renter-occupation, increasing from 73% to 80% over the same time period. Meanwhile, Fourth Plain Village has only increased from 66% to 69%, showing slightly lower rates of rental occupancy than the corridor as a whole. It seems that the primary explanation for these discrepancies in rental rates is the nature of the housing stock. Based on observation, the corridor as a whole has a much greater proportion of multifamily housing than many other neighborhoods in Vancouver. Similarly, Maplewood has a higher proportion of multifamily housing than Fourth Plain Village.

Thus Maplewood has less opportunity for homeownership than Fourth Plain Village, which has a significant number of single-family homes. Still, Fourth Plain Village’s rental rate of almost 79% likely indicates that many of these single-family homes are currently being rented.

Despite differences in rental occupancy, the burden of rent (rent as a proportion of income) is higher on Fourth Plain than in the city as a whole, reflecting the corridor’s higher poverty rates. Very few corridor residents pay less than 10% of their income on rent, and a greater proportion of corridor residents pay more than half of their income on rent compared with the city (28% vs 22% of residents). The burden is even higher in the study area compared with the corridor as a whole, where a full 32% of study area residents put at least half of their income towards rent. High rent burdens have particularly serious implications related to household instability, hardship, and family stress. When a greater proportion of household income is devoted to paying rent, fewer resources remain available for household necessities such as food and medical care. This can be very stressful to families, and can also make them much more unstable and vulnerable to homelessness.4

Despite low incomes driving high rental burdens, there is a large proportion of affordable housing stock in the study area. In Maplewood, 73% of the tract’s 2,065 renter-occupied units cost less than $800/month, and the same is true for 52% of Fourth Plain Village’s 1,688 rented units. This compares to 35% for rented units in Vancouver as a whole (Figure A.9).

For owner-occupied units, there is a much higher concentration of homes in the $100,000 - $149,000 range within the study area than there is in the rest of the city (Figure A.10). This suggests that homeownership programs targeting lower-income households might be effective in this area, because its less expensive housing stock presents lower barriers to ownership.


Figure A.8 - Ratio of Income to Poverty Level, ACS 2013
A.2 PEOPLE

Employment

Like the demographic and socioeconomic background of the study area, employment varies both between Fourth Plain Village and Maplewood and between the study area and the rest of Vancouver. Table A.6 (in the Supplemental Information section) displays the relative concentration of occupation groups (colored cells) in the study area compared with Vancouver, and total employment within each group (gray bars). Occupations with location quotients below 1.0 (reds) have a low share of employment in that category compared with the city, and those above 1.0 (greens) are more concentrated in that occupation group compared with the city as a whole. This table shows that in the study area, the occupations with the highest location quotients are food preparation and serving, and building and grounds cleaning and maintenance. However the highest total employment for the study area is in professional and related occupations, which are underrepresented relative to Vancouver.

Analysis of employment by sector reveals that rates of self-employment differ between the two portions of the study area, which also differ from the corridor (see Table A.7 in Supplemental Information). For both men and women, self-employment is slightly higher in Maplewood than it is for the entire corridor. Among men, the proportion in Maplewood is 8.1%, compared to 4.8% for the corridor.
A.2 PEOPLE

The rate of male self-employment for Fourth Plain Village is even lower than the corridor, at 3.4%. Similarly, 7.5% of women are self-employed in Maplewood compared to 5.5% in the larger corridor. The discrepancy with Fourth Plain Village is less severe, where self-employed women make up 6.5% of total employed female residents. Self-employment rate is of particular interest to the Fourth Plain Student Team because this is one way to assess the potential for microenterprise development, as these ventures often start out of homes. Supporting small-scale entrepreneurship with strategies such as commercial kitchens and business incubators may be a feasible way to encourage and grow new and existing small businesses and to increase wealth for Fourth Plain corridor residents.

The US Census Bureau’s OnTheMap web application allows for analysis of locations where study area residents work, and where study area workers live. Study area businesses largely employ workers who live right around the Fourth Plain corridor, as well as scattered neighborhoods to the east and northeast of the corridor (Figure A.11). This supports the idea that assisting businesses on Fourth Plain will also help nearby residents. However, local businesses are not providing sufficient employment opportunities to keep corridor residents nearby for work, as many study area residents commute to downtown Vancouver and downtown Portland for work (Figure A.12).
Crime

Based on initial community input, there is a strong perception that crime is a major issue on Fourth Plain, and actual crime statistics substantiate that perception to some degree. In Vancouver overall, crime rates are on the decline, having decreased 25% between 2009 and 2013. However, of the top 20 neighborhoods in Vancouver with the highest per capita crime rates in 2014, six neighborhoods are in the Fourth Plain corridor (this is out of 66 total neighborhoods in the city) (Table A.3). Maplewood ranks as the neighborhood with the 9th highest crime rate, while Fourth Plain Village is the 18th highest.

Analysis of reported incidents within the corridor in 2014 also suggests that the Maplewood neighborhood experiences a higher concentration of crime than other areas of the corridor (Figure A.13), and also has a higher rate of violent crime. Thirty-six percent of crimes in Maplewood in 2014 were violent crimes, compared to 19% in Fourth Plain Village.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>rank</th>
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<th>crimes per 1,000 residents</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Esther Short</td>
<td>728.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Meadow Homes</td>
<td>332.1</td>
</tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Columbia Way</td>
<td>299.6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Hudson's Bay</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Central Park</td>
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<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Roads End</td>
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</tr>
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<td>184.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Hough</td>
<td>173.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Fruit Valley</td>
<td>169.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Fourth Plain Village</td>
<td>169.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>West Minnehaha</td>
<td>158.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Carter Park</td>
<td>149.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.3 - Vancouver neighborhoods with the highest per capita crime rates in 2014

Figure A.13 - Concentration of crime on the Fourth Plain corridor in 2014 (kernel density). Source: Vancouver Police Department
Fourth Plain Boulevard is typical of an auto-oriented, suburban arterial street. The corridor lacks a unifying feel because of inconsistent building setbacks and large parking lots. It also suffers from a lack of street trees and landscaping. Based on the land use inventory, there are roughly 2,000 parking spaces on the corridor, excluding parking for apartment complexes. Much of the parking appears to be underutilized, leaving large vacant parking lots that separate businesses and make pedestrian access difficult.

Fourth Plain Community Assets

A number of community assets are located along Fourth Plain Boulevard—organizations and institutions that are valuable to the community and support quality of life. There are two churches located directly on the corridor: the Fourth Plain Baptist Church and The Potter’s House. The Lord’s Gym sits just a block off Fourth Plain on Grand Boulevard and has historically provided recovery housing for adults and hot meals for the community. It currently houses an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) preschool, but is pausing other community services until much needed upgrades to the facility can be completed. Goodwill Industries has a large location at the intersection of NE 65th Avenue and Fourth Plain that provides employment services. Clark College’s main campus sits at the top of the hill on Fort Vancouver Way, and includes one educational building on Fourth Plain. The VA Medical Center and Clark County Public Health are two other large institutions on the corridor that provide important social services. The medical campus occupies the majority of the south side of Fourth Plain Boulevard between Fort Vancouver Way and I-5. Also, just north of Fourth Plain on Falk Road is the Jim Parsley Community Center, operated by the Vancouver School District.

Parks and Green Spaces

Water Works Park, at the intersection of Fort Vancouver Way and Fourth Plain, is the City’s main water production facility and also serves as a city park. It is adjacent to Clark College and provides seating areas and lawns amidst a heavy tree canopy. Swift Skatepark is located inside Water Works Park and provides skate bowls and street furniture for skateboarders and inline skaters. However, there has been some concern among community members about loitering and dangerous activity in this space. Water Works Park will soon receive upgrades by the City to secure the water facilities, which will shrink the area that is open to the public. The Central Park Neighborhood Association has taken on a lead role (partnering with Rose Village, Fourth Plain Village, and Maplewood) in programming Water Works Park to be an active community space. They started by organizing a park cleanup event in January 2015. They hosted an Easter Egg Hunt in April 2015 and received a grant to install dog waste stations to encourage residents to walk their dogs in the park. They also received a grant from the City’s Urban Forestry program to prune some of the overgrown landscaping in the park. Their active effort to improve the park is an encouraging sign of community involvement on Fourth Plain Boulevard.

Evergreen Park is located in the study area at the intersection of Rossiter Lane and Fourth Plain. It has a playground, basketball court, and benches throughout. A new BRT station will be constructed directly in front of the park. It has been known as a place for gang activity in the past, but recently there has been an effort to increase programming in the park to discourage such activity. Neighborhood police officers are encouraging people to use the park for picnics, and the Fourth Plain Village Neighborhood Association hosts its annual picnic there.

Warriors Field also falls within the study area, at the intersection of Norris Road and Fourth Plain. It is a large fenced-in grass field owned by the Vancouver Public School District. In the past it served as the site for the Fourth Plain International Festival. We heard from the community that people want to spend more time at Warriors Field, but currently find it unsafe or uninviting except during sports practice.
Additional green spaces on the corridor include the right-of-way under the Bonneville Power Administration’s power line corridor, which is maintained as a public park space known as Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway. It provides a flat open space for soccer games, and the Discovery Trail runs through the greenway connecting with other trails in the area. The actual Burnt Bridge Creek runs behind an apartment building on the south side of Fourth Plain just west of the greenway. The creek runs underneath the street and across a private property on the north side of Fourth Plain. Views of the creek from the sidewalk to the north of Fourth Plain are obstructed by a tall fence in disrepair.

There are currently long-term plans to add a public plaza to the corner of Fourth Plain Boulevard and Fort Vancouver Way. The property is owned by the Clark College Foundation and the existing structures are being demolished as of April 2015. The immediate plan for the space is to create a temporary parking lot while construction of the new Clark College STEM building is completed. After this interim use, the College hopes to develop a mixed-use building with student-oriented retail on the first floor (such as a coffee shop, bookstore, or pharmacy) and office or classroom space on the floors above. Clark College officials would also like to use this intersection as a gateway to their campus by creating an international plaza with flags to represent the college’s international students. While primarily intended to serve the college, this public plaza would also help activate Fourth Plain and tie into the international businesses on the corridor.

Transportation

Fourth Plain Boulevard between NE 65th Avenue and Fort Vancouver Way is a wide arterial street with heavy car traffic. The intersection of Grand and Fourth Plain averages 1,375 cars per hour during the busiest time of the day (around noon). The speed limit for much of the corridor is 30 MPH (it increases to 35 MPH east of Stapleton Road), but informal observation indicates that cars travel much faster than the posted limit. There are two lanes in each direction heading east and west and a shared center turn lane, for a total of five lanes. There is no on-street parking, with the exception of three spaces in front of a small retail center near the intersection of Fairmount Avenue.

Person riding with the sharrows between Hazelwood and Falk. They continued on the sidewalk after Falk.

A.3 PLACE

The corridor is currently served by C-TRAN bus lines 4, 44, and 39. Fourth Plain is C-TRAN’s highest ridership corridor, and the 4 and 44 buses are often standing-room only during peak travel times. According to a recent survey conducted by C-TRAN, more than 40% of bus riders along Fourth Plain are transit-dependent. In 2013, 8% of Maplewood residents used public transportation as their primary mode for getting to work, which is much higher than the city’s rate of 3%, according to 2013 American Community Survey data. C-TRAN is constructing the region's first Bus Rapid Transit line (BRT) that will replace bus lines 4 and 44. The new BRT line will connect Fourth Plain to downtown Vancouver and the Westfield Mall. The project will break ground in the summer of 2015 and is expected to be completed by late 2016.

The new BRT stations that are planned for construction along Fourth Plain will be a marked improvement over the existing bus stops. The stations will be permanent structures with covered seating and real-time rider information. The BRT project will also include five new signalized pedestrian crossings (the locations for which are yet to be determined), wider sidewalks in station areas, and improvements to the bike path system. The frequency and reliability of bus service along Fourth Plain will also be improved. Currently, line 4 runs every 15 minutes during weekdays and every 20-30 minutes during the weekends and evenings. The new BRT line will run every 10 minutes during peak times and every 15 minutes during non-peak hours. Due to the expedited boarding process, C-TRAN also expects arrival time reliability to increase to 100%, compared to 60-70% now. The BRT line will retain most of the existing bus stops, while ensuring that stations are within 1/3 mile or less of each other. This enhanced transit service will greatly benefit residents along Fourth Plain, who will have frequent, reliable bus service to meet their daily needs.

Fourth Plain's existing bicycle infrastructure consists of 3-foot striped bike lanes from Grand Boulevard to Hazelwood Drive. East from Hazelwood, the bike lanes end and bike sharrows appear in the far right lanes until Falk Road. East of Falk Road there are no bike lanes or sharrows. Even where the lane markings do exist, informal observation indicates that most cyclists choose to ride on the sidewalk rather than mingle with traffic.

The Student Team’s initial observations indicate that pedestrian access on and around the corridor is of critical importance. Fourth Plain Boulevard and the surrounding neighborhoods are full of people getting around on foot. Sidewalks exist along the length of Fourth Plain Boulevard from Fort Vancouver Way to NE 65th Avenue, but they are quite narrow and many sections are in disrepair. Utility poles and signs further narrow the sidewalks in many places, making it especially difficult for people walking or in wheelchairs and people riding bikes to share the space. Sidewalks also lack a buffer separating them from the street for most of the corridor. Another issue is the lack of connectivity between parking lots off Fourth Plain, necessitating a sidewalk curb cut at nearly every business. Driveway curb cuts generally detract from the walkability of the corridor, as entering and exiting vehicles pose a threat to pedestrian safety. Also, while there are some signalized pedestrian crossings, Fourth Plain lacks medians that would act as a center refuge for pedestrians.

Not only are sidewalks and other facilities often unpleasant for pedestrians, they may also present issues for safety. Pedestrian traffic collisions are relatively frequent along Fourth Plain. The map in Figure A.14 depicts the concentration of pedestrian collisions from 2010-2014. The map shows a hotspot of collisions right at the intersection of Fourth Plain and Rossiter Lane. This intersection has a HAWK beacon to protect pedestrians crossing Fourth Plain, but informal observation suggests that some cars fail to stop at these signals.

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A.3 PLACE

Access to the corridor from the surrounding residential areas can also be difficult. The area south of the corridor lacks a consistent street grid, and only certain roads connect to Fourth Plain, while many residential streets dead end. Access is further impeded by fences, which separate businesses from adjacent residences. Many of the residential streets that connect to Fourth Plain lack sidewalks.

The majority of Fourth Plain Boulevard is developed, with only four completely vacant lots that have not been paved. There are, however, numerous vacant parking lots that are underutilized. There are currently 25 vacant commercial spaces between Fort Vancouver Way and NE 65th Avenue.

The Student Team assessed the condition of buildings during the land use inventory for the corridor, categorizing buildings as one of three conditions: poor, fair, or good. A poor rating was given if the building had noticeable structural damage that needed repair. A fair rating was given to properties that only had cosmetic deficiencies, such as chipping paint or graffiti. A good rating was assigned to properties that had no noticeable structural or cosmetic issues. Of the 25 vacant buildings, 7 were considered to be in poor condition, 10 were considered fair, and 8 were considered good. For the businesses, 21 were in buildings considered to be in poor condition, 59 were fair, and 70 were in buildings of good condition.

Land Use

Fourth Plain between Fort Vancouver Way and NE 65th Avenue is predominantly a commercial corridor. There is one industrial manufacturer, Kyocera Industrial Ceramics, and City Operations buildings are located near General Anderson Avenue. (More information on the corridor’s commercial activity is provided in the market conditions analysis below.) As for residential activity directly abutting Fourth Plain, there are 11 single-family homes, 7 apartment complexes, two four-plex units, and two mobile home parks between Fort Vancouver Way and NE 65th Avenue.
Study Area

Development in the study area between Fairmount Avenue and Rossiter Lane is generally older and the buildings are closer to the sidewalk, compared to the eastern portion of the corridor where large parking lots separate buildings from the sidewalk. The study area contains Evergreen Park and Warriors Field, and a number of minority-owned businesses, including the cluster of Latino businesses at Becerra’s Plaza, along with A-Dong Asian Market and Vietnamese, Thai, and Chinese restaurants (Figure A.15). The majority of these businesses do not own their buildings.

The study area is striped with bike lanes and has three HAWK beacons at Rossiter, Neals, and Fairmount. New BRT stations will be built in front of Evergreen Park on the north side of the street and in front of the Silver Dragon Chinese Restaurant on the south side.

There is one vacant lot that has not been paved adjacent to Vancouver Auto Repair, which is fenced off. Currently there are 9 vacant commercial spaces in the study area. 4 of those vacancies are located in the Fairmount Center strip. Of the total commercial properties in the study area, 16 were classified to be in poor condition during the land use inventory, 24 were considered fair, and 11 were considered to be in good condition.

Property Values

The potential for broad redevelopment in the study area is currently quite low. Redevelopment of a site becomes more feasible as the ratio between the value of existing improvements (including structures and other site improvements) and the value of the land drops. When the ratio is below one (the value of the structure is less than the value of the land) redevelopment is more likely (vacant lots have a ratio of 0). Table A.4 shows the results of an improvement-to-land-value ratio analysis of the 32 privately owned tax lots directly abutting Fourth Plain in the study area. Three sites at the heart of the study area, the Umpqua Bank and U-Haul parking lots and a vacant lot adjacent to Vancouver Auto Repair have no structures present (no improvements) and may be directly developed. Only two developed sites are currently assessed to have a high potential for redevelopment, and an additional two are close, with a ratio between 1 and 1.5. Rents are currently not high enough in the study area to support wide-scale redevelopment, but a few key sites may have the potential to catalyze investment. In addition, the potential for redevelopment will naturally grow over time as land values rise and older structures continue to depreciate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>no improvements</th>
<th>high below 0.5</th>
<th>-redevelopment potential -</th>
<th>low above 1.5</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>

Table A.4 - Improvement to Land Value Ratio, Study Area Tax Lots, Clark County GIS
One of the primary goals of the *Fourth Plain Forward* project is to identify ways that the City can support small business owners and budding entrepreneurs to stabilize and grow their businesses. To help understand the market conditions faced by these small businesses, the Student Team performed an on-the-ground inventory of the businesses with storefronts on Fourth Plain and paired that with a retail market analysis to identify opportunities and constraints for the retail vitality of the district.

A retail trade area of three miles from the center of the study area was used as an approximate measure of the potential market area of businesses on the corridor. The 2013 per capita income of the trade area was $25,548, about 9% lower than the national per capita income of $28,155. The estimated total population of the trade area is 119,970. Retail demand across 77 categories was estimated using national averages from the Survey of Consumer Expenditures, and supply is measured using business registration data. A full description of the methodology for the market analysis is included at the end of this appendix.

There are 150 total commercial properties in the corridor, and the overwhelming majority (93%) are retail businesses with a storefront on Fourth Plain (Table A.5). The remaining properties are government, institutional and community service uses. Within the study area, there are 44 commercial properties, of which 38 are retail storefront businesses. High traffic volumes and a central location make retail development attractive on Fourth Plain. While a wide range of goods and services can be found throughout the corridor, four retail categories represent 62% of the businesses: restaurants, personal services, food markets, and repair and maintenance businesses.

Fourth Plain's retail mix is predominantly composed of non-discretionary goods and services. Non-discretionary goods and services are “needs” rather than “wants”. This includes personal service businesses like salons and barbershops, grocery stores, auto repair businesses, tax services, and gasoline stations.

### A.4 Market Conditions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Category</th>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Corridor</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>Restaurants and Drinking Places</td>
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<td>15%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<td>Personal and Laundry Services</td>
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<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage Stores</td>
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<td>13%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
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<td>8%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gasoline Stations</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sporting Goods, Hobby, Music and Book Stores</td>
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<td>0%</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>136</strong></td>
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Source: Walking inventory completed by 4th Plain Student Team

Table A.5 - Business Inventory

Non-discretionary businesses account for roughly 89% of the businesses in the corridor and 83% of businesses in the study area. The advantage of non-discretionary businesses is that they generate a steady stream of traffic to an area because they provide goods and services that are needed on a regular basis; customers visit these types of businesses more frequently than they shop for discretionary or luxury goods. The disadvantage of non-discretionary businesses is that they pull from a smaller market area than discretionary goods. People are generally not willing to travel long distances for goods and services that they need frequently. In the context of Fourth Plain, this can be problematic because the spending power of the local market in the vicinity of the corridor is relatively low, so the people that most frequently visit the area have a very limited amount of money to spend on “wants” or discretionary goods and services. Consequently, the discretionary businesses on Fourth Plain will likely need to draw customers from a wider
A.4 MARKET CONDITIONS

market area in order to thrive and grow.

Restaurants

Restaurants are the most common discretionary category, and are the most prominent retail businesses in both the corridor as a whole and the study area. Restaurants account for 26% of businesses in the corridor and 15% within the study area. Food is often a cornerstone of business districts in communities of color and immigrant communities. Restaurants allow immigrants to apply their cultural knowledge of food preparation to provide a product that is often seen as authentic or novel to other cultures. Immigrant restaurant owners also cater heavily to their own ethnic communities, providing both a product and a cultural gathering place that may be difficult for these communities to find elsewhere. This social function of restaurants within diverse communities should provide additional impetus to support and preserve them through public policy.

This close connection between restaurants and the ethnic communities they serve is clear on Fourth Plain. Among the 20 full-service restaurants on the street, 85% serve an international cuisine, including Latin American, Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese. This mix holds constant within the study area as well; there are three Mexican restaurants, one Chinese, one Thai, and one Vietnamese. These restaurants closely mirror the racial/ethnic composition of the neighborhoods surrounding the corridor, and the relative share of each type of restaurant even approximates the relative size of each racial/ethnic community; Latino restaurants are the most common with nine locations and Asian follows closely behind with seven restaurants. Despite the high concentration of Filipino and Eastern European residents near the corridor, no restaurants serve these cuisines. The City could support potential food entrepreneurs within these communities so they may also experience the economic and social benefits of culturally specific restaurants. This would also further contribute to Fourth Plain’s reputation as a destination for a diverse range of foods and experiences.

The market conditions for restaurants on Fourth Plain may be challenging, based on our analysis of local spending power and existing supply. There are many more full-service restaurants within this trade area than what would be projected based on local incomes and average spending patterns, so restaurants may be over-supplied. There are two factors that may explain why restaurants still succeed on Fourth Plain, however. First, the restaurants likely draw an above-average share of spending from the local Asian and Latino population because they provide a product and experience that these communities cannot find elsewhere. Second, the restaurants may be attracting customers from a trade area greater than three miles. Both these strategies need to be employed if restaurants are to thrive on Fourth Plain. As noted above, however, given low incomes available for discretionary spending among the population that lives closest to Fourth Plain, it is unlikely that existing restaurants will be able to grow revenues or that new restaurants will succeed if they rely too heavily on local customers. For the Asian and Latino restaurants on Fourth Plain, this may include attracting customers that share their racial or ethnic background from more distant parts of the city, or attracting customers of different racial or ethnic backgrounds both locally and from a wider area.

One challenge in attracting non-local customers is they may not be familiar with the area, and therefore may rely on outward appearances to form opinions about the quality of the businesses. These perceptions are difficult to change, but must be addressed. The conditions of the restaurant buildings on the corridor may be contributing to negative perceptions. Our building inventory found that 17% of the Asian and Latino restaurants were in poor condition, and 52% were in fair condition. Fair condition includes buildings with major aesthetic issues like peeling paint or inadequate signage. The conditions of the Asian and Latino restaurants also look unfavorable compared to the national chain restaurants; only one of the 12 chain restaurants in the corridor was rated in poor condition. This disparity in property conditions is a significant disadvantage to the Asian and Latino restaurants. To pass-through traffic traveling at high speeds or to people
who do not visit the corridor often, an association may be made between
the quality of the property and the quality of the product. More broadly,
the aesthetic quality of the urban environment as a whole likely influences
perceptions of the quality of the restaurants. Public policies and investments
that enhance the aesthetic quality of the properties and their surroundings
can play a role in attracting a wider market.

Home Improvement Retailers

Restaurants are not the only discretionary retail category in the corridor with
potential to generate traffic from a wider market. There is a cluster of home
improvement retailers, including three building/garden material and supply
businesses and one home furnishing business. Although they are small in
number, these stores represent an outsize share of the retail square footage
and likely the retail sales volume of the corridor. The three materials and
supply stores are concentrated within a few blocks on the west end of the
study area: Venice Genoa Stone and Tile, Anderson Glass, and Evergreen
Floor and Door. The market conditions for hardware stores and lawn and
garden stores are favorable based on our market analysis. Notably, there is
no hardware store on the corridor. Home furnishings, furniture stores and
home centers were found to be in line with demand or slightly oversupplied,
however. Clustering of these types of home improvement stores is a
common and effective strategy because there are often significant crossover
customers between these businesses, and it enables these stores to compete
with the convenience of all-in-one retailers like Home Depot or Lowe’s. The
City should consider policies to support both the existing cluster and new,
complementary home and home improvement stores. This is one of the
only retail categories currently present in the district that is likely to draw in
customers from a wider market.

Repair and Maintenance

Repair and maintenance businesses are the third largest retail category, both
on the corridor as a whole and within the study area, and many of these
businesses are minority-owned. Six of the twelve businesses in this category
provide automobile repair and maintenance services. The market conditions
for automotive-related stores is mixed. Automotive parts, accessories, tire,
paint and body stores were found to be in undersupply, but automotive
mechanical and electrical repair businesses were found to be in oversupply.
An additional challenge for automotive businesses may be the condition of
their properties; four of the seven automotive repair and parts businesses in
the corridor are in fair or poor condition. The one automotive store in good
condition is a national chain, echoing the problematic disparity in property
conditions between local and chain restaurants. The association between
quality of the property and quality of the business may be particularly
problematic for repair-related businesses. Given challenging market
conditions and need for property improvement, these businesses should be
prioritized for assistance.

The second half of the repair and maintenance businesses provide either
personal goods repair, including jewelry repair and clothing alterations,
or equipment and appliance repair. Personal goods repair, appliance and
equipment repair, and furniture repair businesses were all found to be in
undersupply in the market analysis, so market conditions are somewhat
favorable. Further, these businesses require relatively low capital investment
and thus a low barrier to entry for low-income entrepreneurs, which
may partially explain their prominence on the corridor. As a largely non-
discretionary retail category, repair businesses may have difficulty attracting
customers from a wide market. Higher-frequency retail categories like
clothing alterations may find a more stable market than more specialized
services like jewelry or appliance repair, which are needed only occasionally
and may even be considered discretionary spending. These lower-frequency
or more discretionary repair businesses may need to be targeted for technical
A.4 MARKET CONDITIONS

assistance to help them broaden their services or identify new revenue streams.

Food Markets

Food and beverage stores make up 11% of businesses in the corridor and 10% within the study area. The corridor is home to two Latino markets, two Asian markets, and one market for Eastern European food. Two major national grocers are present in the corridor as well, Grocery Outlet and Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market. Two of the specialty food markets are located in the study area, one Latino and one Asian. Market conditions for these businesses are generally favorable based on our market analysis. As a non-discretionary and high frequency category, food markets and grocers can be a stable business even in an area with relatively low incomes. Further, the Latino, Asian and Eastern European markets have the same advantage of a loyal local customer base as culturally specific restaurants. These markets also provide important social benefits, including access to fresh produce and foods that allow immigrant communities to sustain cultural traditions in their new home country. However, competition with large, national retailers is always a challenge, especially as these retailers continue to learn to tailor their product mix to match the needs of the racial or ethnic populations in their market. Technical assistance for these businesses might focus on marketing and cost-control strategies that allow them to continue to compete with national chains.

Personal Services

The second largest retail category after restaurants is personal and laundry service businesses, which make up 16% of businesses in the corridor and 20% of businesses in the study area. The category includes hair and nail salons, barbershops, tattoo parlors, pet grooming services, laundromats and dry cleaning services. Barber shops, hair salons and nail salons account for about half of the businesses in the category, many of which appear to be minority-owned. The market conditions for these types of personal service businesses are favorable and they appear to be in undersupply in the trade area. These businesses have a low barrier to entry, require little up-front capital investment, and may cater to a specific racial or ethnic population. These factors make personal service businesses a potentially attractive option for low-income entrepreneurs; they should be prioritized both for technical assistance and potentially for support to fill some of the small vacant spaces in the corridor.

Discretionary retail categories without major presence on Fourth Plain

The four retail categories without a major presence on Fourth Plain are all discretionary, low frequency purchases: amusement and recreation, clothing and accessories, home furnishings, and sporting goods, hobby, music and books stores. As noted previously, discretionary categories are likely to struggle in the context of relatively low local incomes and spending power. However, like restaurants and home improvement retailers, these types of businesses can draw traffic from a wider market to help revitalize the district as a whole. If a low-income entrepreneur is interested in pursuing a store within one of these categories, they should be highly prioritized for technical assistance, as this type of retail development on Fourth Plain comes with both significant opportunity and risk.
A.4 PLANNING CONTEXT

It is important to place the work of *Fourth Plain Forward* within the context of other planning efforts in Vancouver and the larger region. Plans and regulations from multiple jurisdictions, including the City of Vancouver, Clark County, C-TRAN, and various neighborhood associations, help define the broad goals of the larger community, and provide support for specific policies and actions for Fourth Plain, while also placing these actions within a regulatory context. Limited plan implementation thus far, particularly of the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan and Streetscape Plan, also creates urgency for the current project’s orientation toward implementable actions. Key planning documents that inform the *Fourth Plain Forward* effort are summarized below.

Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan

**Overview**

The Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan forms the basis for the Fourth Plain Student Team’s current work, as our purpose is to guide implementation of the plan by the City of Vancouver. The City initiated the Subarea Plan in 2005 to address the concerns of residents and business owners on and around Fourth Plain Boulevard. The plan is intended to evaluate the corridor’s opportunities and challenges, as well as residents’ and businesses’ needs and desires for Fourth Plain. The resulting plan establishes a vision as well as goals and policies for the Fourth Plain corridor, and defines specific implementation strategies to guide investment and shape future development. The Subarea Plan was adopted by the City and formally incorporated into the Vancouver Comprehensive Plan in 2007.

**Planning Process**

The City, in partnership with consultants David Evans & Associates, convened an Oversight Committee of key stakeholders to guide the planning process. Planners also sought to engage residents, business owners, and property owners through a series of workshops, group stakeholder interviews, business visits, newsletters, and expert review panels. Special efforts were made to reach minority and immigrant communities through targeted outreach and translated materials. Initial engagement helped form the plan’s vision and identified geographic focus areas, while later engagement was geared toward soliciting feedback on the draft strategies and actions. The community and stakeholders provided a ‘call to action’ for the corridor, which identified major changes needed to allow Fourth Plain to live up to its potential. These include changing the street, building on community...
assets, and addressing the fundamental economics.

Vision

The Oversight Committee, using community input, established a vision for the Fourth Plain corridor. These are some of the key elements of that vision:

- **People**
  - All people feel valued and safe. Diverse residents are welcomed.
  - Residents and business owners are able to use their skills and experience to increase their economic security.
  - Current residents are able to continue to live in the area.

- **Business**
  - The corridor supports small businesses and attracts business that will assist in raising the income levels of residents.
  - Business owners create an organization to advocate for their interests and to focus attention on the needs of the corridor.
  - A mix of uses are encouraged at key intersections causing retail to cluster around these nodes.

- **Community Character**
  - Fourth Plain is a city-wide destination for goods and services with an international flair.
  - The community’s history and diversity is celebrated.
  - The public realm features places to gather and a streetscape that is well cared for and inviting with adequate lighting, street furniture, and plantings.

- **Access and Mobility**
  - Pedestrian connections and crossings are available as pleasant, safe choices.
  - Safe bike routes are available.

  • Regional transportation systems are strongly connected to the region.

The plan also established urban design principles that would help implement the vision. These principles include focusing development at a limited number of ‘pulse points’ in the corridor, using streetscape improvements to enhance aesthetic character and to improve safety, and celebrating the corridor’s historic past and its present multicultural character.

Pulse Points

The plan used the concept of pulse points to focus more intensive development, and to leverage existing infrastructure to reinforce a distinctive sense of place (Figure A.16). Each of these pulse points is intended to have its own character and purpose.

- **Pulse Point 1 — Village Character**
  This section of Fourth Plain comes the closest to having a village ‘Main Street’ character, as it contains some of the oldest development in the corridor, with many of the buildings close to or at the right-of-way line. The plan imagines future development focusing on retail and residential uses.

- **Pulse Point 2 — Community Center**
  This portion of the corridor is home to many public facilities, including City-owned properties, a school, a park, and the Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway. The plan imagines future development focusing on enhancement of the public facilities and new retail and office uses to complement existing assets.

- **Pulse Point 3 — Employment Focus**
  This pulse point is dominated by the site owned by Kyocera, which the plan saw as representing a good opportunity for job creation.
A.5 PLANNING CONTEXT

- **Pulse Point 4 — Regional Destination**

  This area is focused around the intersection at NE Andresen Street, and is characterized by single-story commercial development and very large blocks. The plan imagines future infill development, as well as efforts to insert new streets in order to break up the blocks and improve traffic and pedestrian circulation.

  It’s important to note that the *Fourth Plain Forward* study area overlaps with pulse point 1, but also covers a few blocks east of the pulse point 1 boundary. Still, the development pattern within the study area is consistent with the ‘village character’ identified for pulse point 1.

**Implementation**

The Subarea Plan identified a number of key components of successful plan implementation, including leadership, leverage, many stakeholders, strategic communications and marketing, and ongoing review. It then incorporated these components into its recommendations for plan implementation. Specific implementation programs were identified, along with rough timelines, lead actors, and some cost estimates. Programs were organized into six goals or areas, and a few key actions from the plan are listed for each of these below:

1. **Increase wealth and homeownership**
   - Designate Fourth Plain as a target district for homebuyer and workforce programs.
   - Target Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds.

2. **Support Business Development**
   - Establish Fourth Plain Merchants Association.
   - Establish business incubator to provide space and support services for small/new businesses in the area.

3. **Facilitate Physical Change**
   - Explore development of a Craft Market and/or Swap Meet, and identify potential location.
   - Seek out available small business assistance

4. **Improve Real / Perceived Safety**
   - Address park safety concerns regarding accessibility and darkness.
   - Establish pro-active, targeted code enforcement.

5. **Transportation**
   - Establish minimum 10 foot wide sidewalks on Fourth Plain Boulevard, or 12 feet where feasible, including street furniture and landscaping.
   - Establish a 500 foot maximum block face standard to provide regular and convenient pedestrian crossings.
   - Support pedestrian activity through intersection improvements.

6. **Regulatory Changes**
   - Establish design standards for building orientation and frontage.
   - Limit curb cuts along Fourth Plain Boulevard, and consider grouping multiple store’s parking in shared parking lots that are accessed from the side streets, rather than from the Boulevard.
A.5 PLANNING CONTEXT

While the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan established a strong vision and direction for the corridor, implementation of the plan was limited due to economic constraints that emerged during the Recession. Also, the Student Team believes that the actions within the plan may have been insufficiently prioritized, as they were not sequenced into phases, and critical actions were not given priority.

It is also important to recognize that while the current effort undertaken by the Student Team is focused on economic development—primarily for the chosen study area—it is part of a broader effort to implement the Subarea Plan by the City of Vancouver. Recommendations made for Fourth Plain Forward will inform later actions taken by the City along other portions of the corridor, and other policy areas, including housing, safety, and transportation, will be further addressed outside of the current project.

Fourth Plain Streetscape Design Plan

The Streetscape Plan was conducted in 2008 to develop detailed design concepts that would build on the vision and goals established by the Subarea Plan. The study covers the right-of-way on Fourth Plain Boulevard between Fort Vancouver Way and NE Andresen Street. In developing streetscape design concepts, the plan divides the corridor into three distinct areas, each reflecting the existing roadway and right-of-way conditions, business environment, multicultural characteristics, and unique opportunities and constraints.

These design areas are Village (between Fort Vancouver Way and the Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway), Green Necklace (between the Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway and NE 62nd Ave), and Commercial (between NE 62nd Avenue and NE Andresen Street) (Figure A.17). The Fourth Plain Forward study area falls under the Village design category. This area is home to some of the oldest development in the corridor, and has the best potential for a ‘Main Street’ character. The existing right-of-way is relatively narrow with many buildings close to the street.

The Streetscape Plan presents a design toolkit, which focuses on three interrelated areas of the street: Border Area, Roadway, and Intersection.

Figure A.17 - Streetscape Design Area Map
A.5 PLANNING CONTEXT

Border Area

The border area is the portion of the right-of-way contained between property lines and curb lines on both sides of the street. It includes pedestrian clear zones (the portion where pedestrians walk), furnishing zones, and buildings’ front setbacks. The existing Village border area is not favorable to pedestrians, but could be improved to create an appealing ‘Main Street’ environment. Improvements that the study targets include a paved furnishing zone, wider pedestrian clear zone, high quality architecture and amenities for transit stops, and a cohesive palette of street furnishings, including street trees (Figure A.18).

Roadway Area

The Streetscape Study notes that the existing five-lane configuration of Fourth Plain, as well as the long distances between intersections, serve as deterrents to pedestrians. The study calls for constructing short segments of landscaped medians, which would serve to ‘green the street’ and reduce traffic conflicts, as well as slowing traffic speeds (Figure 17).

Gateway Intersections

The Streetscape Plan defines gateways as ‘visual portals’, which are usually associated with key nodes or intersections. The plan envisions gateways having features that announce the distinctive character of each design area (Figure A.19). For the Village area, gateways are envisioned for intersections at Fort Vancouver Way, Grand Boulevard, and Norris Road. Plans for these gateways include wider sidewalk widths near intersections. It also suggests tree bosques near each corner, which serve as ‘green architecture’ for the street, as well as benches, bike racks and ornamental lighting. The study also recommends coordinating with C-TRAN around transit station design.

So far, the design strategies established by the Streetscape Plan have gone largely unimplemented, with the exception of several signalized pedestrian crossings that were installed along the corridor. Streetscape improvements are particularly challenging on Fourth Plain due to its relatively narrow right-of-way, in addition to the overall expense of such improvements. However, the design framework is still sound and its standards are recognized by Vancouver’s Transportation Plan as the framework for any future improvements on the corridor. Also, the Fourth Plain Corridor Overlay District (discussed below) incentivizes adherence to the Streetscape Plan for new development by allowing fee reductions if design standards are met, but it does not require meeting these standards. The Fourth Plain Student Team will work with the Streetscape Plan’s design concepts by prioritizing improvements that will have the biggest impact on the corridor.
Figure A.20 - Zoning map of the Fourth Plain corridor
A.5 PLANNING CONTEXT

Zoning

Overview

Land adjacent to Fourth Plain Boulevard has a mix of zoning, including commercial, higher-density residential, lower-density residential, and light industrial areas, as well as a special zone for the Central Park area (Figure A.20). The area is also covered by two overlay districts: the Fourth Plain Corridor Overlay District and the Transit Corridor Overlay District. Within the study area, however, zoning is more consistent, with nearly all of the parcels on Fourth Plain zoned commercial, and only a few parcels zoned as higher-density residential.

Commercial Zones

There are four different commercial zones along Fourth Plain: Neighborhood Commercial (CN), Community Commercial (CC), General Commercial (CG), and Central Park Mixed Use (CPX). The Neighborhood Commercial zone covers only two small parcels on the western end of the corridor, between Fort Vancouver Way and I-5. This zone is intended for small-scale commercial uses that provide services within walking distance of the surrounding residents. They are generally small lots, and are designed to be compatible with the surrounding residentially zoned neighborhoods, with building heights no more than 35 feet. The Community Commercial zone is a step up in scale from the Neighborhood Commercial zone, and covers much of the corridor west of the Burnt Bridge Creek Greenway—including the study area—as well as several spots on the eastern portion. The Community Commercial zone is intended for medium-scale commercial uses, primarily providing retail goods and services purchased regularly by residents of several nearby neighborhoods. The zone also accommodates offices and mixed-use, with residences allowed above the ground floor. Maximum building height is 50 feet.

The General Commercial zone is found in a few large sections of the eastern portion of the corridor, between NE Falk Road and NE 65th Avenue. This zone is intended for medium to large commercial uses, and also allows office and residential development above the ground floor. Development is generally expected to accommodate automobiles given the large service area, and there is no maximum building height. Finally, the Central Park Mixed Use zone is used for land within the Central Park Plan District. The land adjacent to Fourth Plain with this zoning designation includes the VA Medical Center and the Clark College campus. The CPX zone district is designed to enhance and protect existing facilities and to fulfill the vision and policies identified in the Central Park Plan.

Residential Zones

There are a few areas adjacent to Fourth Plain with higher-density residential zoning, and one area with lower-density residential zoning. The higher-density (or multifamily) zones encompass much of the residential neighborhoods south of the study area, as well as the northeastern portion of the corridor area. Meanwhile the lower-density (or single-family) zones cover much of the neighborhoods north of the study area, as well as the northwestern and southeastern neighborhoods near the Fourth Plain corridor. Within the higher-density areas, zoning includes R-30, R-22, and R-18. These zones are intended to accommodate apartments and condominiums, attached housing (such as duplexes and townhouses), and some limited commercial and office uses, which are allowed as part of a mixed-use building or site. The maximum allowable building height for all three zones is 50 feet. The lower-density residential zones (including R-9, R-6, and R-4) include mostly single-family detached homes, with some allowances for duplexes, and townhouses. The R-9 zone has a minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet, R-6 has a minimum of 7,500 sq. ft., and R-4 has a minimum of 10,000 sq. ft.
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Residential zones are subject to the following minimum and maximum densities:

- R-4 — 2.3 - 4.4 units per acre
- R-6 — 4.5 - 5.8
- R-9 — 5.9 - 8.7
- R-18 — 12 - 18
- R-22 — 18.1 - 22
- R-30 — 22.1 - 30

Industrial Zones

Industrial zones are found at the eastern end of the Fourth Plain corridor, and include two different zoning designations: Light Industrial (IL) and Office Commercial Industrial (OCI). The Light Industrial zoned areas include the site of the City of Vancouver Operations Center at General Anderson Ave, and the corner of NE 65th Ave, where the Goodwill store is located. The Light Industrial zone is intended for light manufacturing, research, warehousing, and industrial services, with some provisions for office uses. The maximum allowable building height is 45 feet. The Office Commercial Industrial zone covers the Kyocera site between NE Stapleton Road and NE 65th Avenue. This zone is intended for office, light industrial and small-scale commercial uses. It also requires site plan review that enforces rigorous design and development standards to ensure that developments will be well-integrated, attractively landscaped, and pedestrian friendly.

Fourth Plain Corridor Overlay District

This zoning overlay district is the primary regulatory change that came out of the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea planning effort. The stated purpose of the overlay is to “facilitate transition to an attractive, consistent, and pedestrian-friendly streetscape that accommodates multiple modes of transportation, and supports long term economic development envisioned by the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan.” The overlay applies to parcels abutting Fourth Plain Boulevard within the subarea—between T Street and NE Burton Road—and the standards apply to new or replacement buildings or structures, as well as major expansions (but not to single family homes or duplexes). While the base zoning also still applies to these parcels, in cases where the two sets of standards conflict, the overlay district standards will prevail.

Some of the major provisions of the overlay are that certain uses seen as conflicting with pedestrian activity are prohibited, including drive-through lanes between Fourth Plain and on-site buildings; automobile washing; automobile or heavy equipment sales, storage or rental; wholesale lumber or materials sales; and warehousing that is not ancillary to another use. Additionally, automobile fuel sales and motor vehicle repair are only permitted on a limited basis. The overlay also has more rigorous standards for buildings’ position relative to the street, including no minimum front setbacks, and maximum setbacks of 12 feet for at least 75% of the width of buildings’ first stories. (That requirement is relaxed for patios or plazas that provide space for pedestrian gathering.) The overlay also requires building facades adjacent to Fourth Plain to include windows or doors covering at least 25% of the total lineal width of the facade, and requires spacing of windows, doors, reliefs, or landscaping at least every 15 lineal feet. The overlay also allows for taller buildings (up to 75 feet), but the height limit depends on the allowable height limits in immediately abutting zoning districts (in other words, lower height limits will apply to areas adjacent to single-family and other low-density zones).

The overlay also applies different parking requirements to parcels adjacent to Fourth Plain. Parking is prohibited between the front of buildings and the street, and parcels have no minimum parking requirements (unless a planning official determines that a lack of parking would have a negative impact on adjacent properties). The maximum number of on-site parking spaces allowed is also lower than in the base zones—the maximum being
125% of the minimum number that would normally be required. Finally, joint or shared parking is permitted within the overlay.

Furthermore, the overlay applies incentives to new development or redevelopment along Fourth Plain that meets certain standards, allowing developments to reduce their Traffic Impact Fees by up to 30%. A development can earn fee reductions by achieving one or more of the following: (1) meeting or exceeding the Fourth Plain Streetscape Design Standards; (2) meeting City of Vancouver Bicycle Parking Standards and Guidelines; (3) promoting alternative modes of access and commute programs for employees and customers; (4) providing 25% or fewer parking spaces than normally required for the proposed use; and (5) meeting or exceeding building setback, orientation and facade standards for the overlay district.

Transit Overlay District

The Transit Overlay District is intended to achieve similar goals to the Fourth Plain Corridor Overlay District; its standards are geared toward fostering a vibrant and pedestrian-friendly environment along high capacity transit corridors. However, unlike the Fourth Plain overlay, provisions for the transit overlay are voluntary and incentive-based, and are only applied to parcels when requested by applicants. So far, the transit overlay has not often been used outside of downtown Vancouver. Parcels to which the overlay is applied are subject to higher density requirements and allowances. They also have lower minimum and maximum setback requirements, and more site frontage requirements. Buildings are required to have a certain amount of interest-creating features, such as pedestrian entrances, windows, reliefs, murals, and landscaping. Parcels are also subject to lower parking requirements and may share parking. The available incentives that encourage applicants to adopt these standards include traffic impact fee reduction of up to 24% and a residential density bonus of 125% of the maximum density requirement for the base zone.

C-TRAN Plans for Bus Rapid Transit

BRT Project Background

One of the major changes that will shape the Fourth Plain corridor in the future is the forthcoming Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. The City hopes to capitalize on these new investments in the corridor by pursuing economic development on Fourth Plain.

The BRT project evolved from Clark County’s High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Study, which was completed in 2008. In considering cost effectiveness, ridership, and potential environmental impacts, the study identified BRT as the preferred HCT mode for the county. The study also considered several corridors for implementation of BRT, and with guidance from C-TRAN’s 2030 Transit Development Plan, eventually settled on Fourth Plain Boulevard as the designated corridor for implementation. Once this decision was made, C-TRAN launched the Fourth Plain Transit Improvement Project Alternatives Analysis in 2011 to determine the exact configuration and alignment of BRT for the corridor. The final recommendation from this study was adopted by C-TRAN and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council in 2012, and by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 2013. Since then, C-TRAN has engaged in project development and public outreach, and plans to begin construction in the summer of 2015.

Transit Need

In determining the need for upgraded transit service along Fourth Plain, C-TRAN pointed to a number of key factors. One is that this corridor has the highest transit ridership in Vancouver, accounting for around 1/3 of all boardings in the C-TRAN system. Another factor is that population and employment in the Fourth Plain area are projected to grow by 30-40% by 2035, and that transit ridership is projected to increase by 50% during the same time. As Fourth Plain’s current buses are already near capacity, the
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corridor requires a major expansion of transit service. Other key factors are that more than 40% of transit riders along Fourth Plain are transit-dependent, and that nearly half of riders are destined to the businesses and establishments along the corridor. According to C-TRAN, “transit delays, trip unpredictability, and bus overcrowding impair transit’s ability to carry people to work and non-work activities within the Fourth Plain corridor, constraining the ability of the Fourth Plain subarea to sustain jobs and achieve economic growth.”

Project Goals

C-TRAN set out the following goals for the Fourth Plain BRT project:

1. Improve Corridor Transit Service
2. Create a cost-effective, long-term transit solution
3. Meet Current and Projected Corridor Travel Demand
4. Enhance the Safety and Security of the Corridor
5. Support Economic Vitality and Corridor Revitalization Efforts
6. Support a Healthy and Livable Community

These goals are consistent with those of the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan, particularly the plan’s goal to turn Fourth Plain into a “transit friendly street” by improving pedestrian and bicycle access to transit. C-TRAN’s plans for pedestrian improvements near BRT stations include wider sidewalks, improved sidewalk connections into adjacent neighborhoods, and where possible, bike lanes, ‘sharrows,’ or other bicycle facilities.

Project Outreach

In developing the Fourth Plain BRT project, C-TRAN conducted extensive public outreach in order to educate community members about the project and allow them to provide input on the specifics of the BRT service and design. Beginning in 2011, C-TRAN formed a Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) with representation from stakeholder groups including neighborhoods, businesses, major institutions, economic development, schools, and community organizations. C-TRAN also conducted door-to-door outreach with individual businesses and residences, as well as open houses and design workshops, online surveys, rider surveys, and information tabling events (among other activities). They also designed the outreach process to specifically target the racially- and ethnically-diverse populations that live and work along the Fourth Plain corridor. Efforts included translation for the project website and key documents and events targeted at communities of color, immigrant communities, and low-income communities with interpretation services. C-TRAN also worked with the community to develop context-specific station designs that feature public art, and to develop a brand for the BRT line. While initial engagement with the public was rather contentious, primarily due to business owners’ concerns about congestion, access, and parking, the community has since been very receptive to the project.

Clark County Economic Development Plan

In considering economic development strategies for the Fourth Plain corridor, it is important to consider how they fit into, and are supported by, broader efforts in the community and region. Clark County has an Economic Development Plan, which was developed for the Columbia River Economic Development Council (CREDC) in 2011. CREDC is a private-public partnership that works to advance the economic vitality of Clark County through business relocation, growth, and innovation. Unfortunately, the plan does little to support the economic development goals of the Fourth
Plain Corridor Subarea Plan. The county plan lays out five major goals:

1. Establish Clark County as a regional center of growth and innovation in the Information Technology sector.
2. Greatly expand the economic development influence of WSUV and Clark College.
3. Make Clark County a hub for international investment in the Pacific Northwest.
4. Enhance business vitality through targeted recruitment, expansion, and entrepreneurship efforts.
5. Invest in the infrastructure and amenities needed to attract new businesses and talent.

As these goals are primarily targeted at attracting large businesses, growing business in target industries—such as software and IT—and developing workforce in high-skilled fields, they provide little support for community economic development. The plan fails to address small business development, beyond fostering high-growth startups in specific industries that require high levels of education and skill. The plan also makes no mention of living-wage workforce development or increasing wealth for disadvantaged populations. Furthermore, the infrastructure goals do not address transit, instead focusing only on transportation infrastructure for roads and heavy rail. While these issues are not addressed in the Clark County plan, one goal of the Fourth Plain Forward project is to identify ways that the Fourth Plain community can benefit from the County's growth strategies. Considering that 96% of Vancouver's employers are small businesses (having 50 or fewer employees) and 70% are micro businesses (5 or fewer employees), and small businesses provide approximately 40% of jobs in Vancouver, there is a strong case to be made for supporting small businesses more generally and encouraging new micro-enterprises.9


Vancouver Comprehensive Plan

Vancouver’s Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2011, identifies broad goals and policies that support the more specific objectives of the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan, particularly in the areas of community development and economic development. Within community development, the plan promotes the following policies:

- Encourage infill of undeveloped properties and redevelopment of underutilized properties.
- Create and enhance urban centers and corridors that have a unique identity, compact urban form with a mix of uses, and a range of transportation options.
- Facilitate development that is human scale and encourages pedestrian use and human interaction.
- Create design standards that promote streetfront usage, visual interest, integration with adjacent buildings, and improved pedestrian connections.

Vancouver Transportation Plan

Vancouver’s 20-year Transportation Plan, adopted in 2004, designates Fourth Plain Boulevard as a major arterial and transit corridor. It also targets the corridor for bicycle infrastructure improvement in the areas where bike lanes are not already in place. More generally, the plan's policies are in line with the Subarea Plan's goals around improving transportation access and streetscape. Relevant policy objectives:

- Promote accessibility, not just mobility. Motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders should all be able to use the transportation system in a safe, efficient, and uniform way.
- Create livable streets. Vancouver’s streets are more than simply
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Streets should be viewed as part of a dynamic, integrated land use and transportation system.

• Support all travel modes. Provide facilities for automobile, bus transit, high-capacity transit, pedestrian, and bicycle travel.

• Help build a truly walkable community. Vancouver’s streets need to be more accessible and safer for pedestrians. Especially important are downtown and neighborhood streets, minor neighborhood arterials, and routes along major bus lines.

Vancouver Transportation Improvement Plan, 2015-2020

The Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) is a 6-year implementation plan for new capital improvement projects and yearly programs, and is guided by the needs and goals identified in the Transportation Plan. Two major projects in the TIP are lined up for the Fourth Plain corridor. The biggest planned project (Trans-258) involves streetscape upgrades to Fourth Plain Boulevard between Fort Vancouver Way and NE Andresen Street. Improvements include wider sidewalks, upgraded ornamental street lights, and street trees, as envisioned by the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan and specified by the Fourth Plain Streetscape Design Plan. As of the June 2014 version of the TIP this project does not identify a total project cost or a funding source. As this is a very large project, the lack of identified funding source indicates that these improvements are not likely to be implemented in the very near future. Meanwhile, the other project planned for the corridor, which is smaller in scope, has secured funding. This project (Trans-832) will add sidewalks and ADA improvements along Neals Lane and Rossiter Lane between Fourth Plain and NE 26th St. This project will improve pedestrian safety and livability, as well as access to transit service on Fourth Plain. The project is being funded through a grant from the Federal Highway Administration Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) Program, and construction is expected to occur in 2016.

Community Development Block Grant Program

The City of Vancouver receives funds from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in the form of Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Vancouver’s 2014-2018 Consolidated Plan for Housing and Community Development is the City’s most recent plan laying out its intended use of CDBG funds. In 2007, subsequent to the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan, the City identified the corridor as a target geography for neighborhood revitalization. For the purposes of the CDBG program, this area is referred to as the Central Vancouver Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area (NRSA) (Figure A.21).

In order to guide the CDBG funding, the NRSA plan established four primary goals to focus community and economic development within the area:

• Goal I: Increase home ownership and rehabilitation of homes through grant and loan programs in target area

• Goal II: Support business and property enhancement along Fourth Plain Boulevard

• Goal III: Develop pedestrian friendly streets and encourage public transportation

• Goal IV: Assist with business development and increase customer traffic.

The plan also identified a number of priority needs for the area, which include funding public infrastructure projects such as parks, sidewalks, street furnishings, improved lighting, and increased accessibility. The justification that the plan provided for this need’s priority was the area’s low-income population and Vancouver’s shrinking budget for street and park maintenance. In the Central Vancouver NRSA 2009-2013 Progress Report, the City provided updates on how the four goals listed above have been addressed so far. The report stated that 15 loans have been granted to
meet the home ownership and rehabilitation objectives of Goal I. It also stated that four projects have been funded for streetscape and sidewalk improvements, and one project has been funded for improved street or park lighting. The City also recently used CDBG funds to supply a grant to the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber in order to provide assistance services to small businesses. As the Central Vancouver NRSA goals are strongly aligned with those of Fourth Plain Forward, CDBG funds will be considered by the Fourth Plain Student Team as a potential key funding source for recommended improvements and programs.

Neighborhood Action Plans

There are six neighborhoods adjacent to the Fourth Plain corridor: Rose Village, Central Park, Fourth Plain Village, Maplewood, Bagley Downs, and Meadow Homes (Figure A.22). The two neighborhoods adjacent to the Fourth Plain Forward study area are Fourth Plain Village and Maplewood. Neighborhood associations have been officially recognized by the City of Vancouver since 1975 as a means of community involvement. Also, most neighborhoods have adopted Neighborhood Action Plans (NAP), which identify issues of local concern—such as public safety, traffic, housing, and land use—and recommend solutions. NAPs are not formally adopted as part of Vancouver’s Comprehensive Plan, but they are consistent with the plan’s direction and are submitted for review and acceptance by the Vancouver City Council. All NAPs for the six neighborhoods along Fourth Plain discuss things like safety, neighborhood appearance, and livability, but the objectives directly relevant to the Fourth Plain Forward initiative are discussed below.
A.5 PLANNING CONTEXT

Fourth Plain Village

Fourth Plain Village is located on the north side of the study area. It is one of the city's older neighborhoods, and much of the neighborhood is characterized by small single-family homes built in the 1930s and 1940s. There is also a decent amount of multifamily infill development, with apartment complexes in the northern and eastern portions of the neighborhood. Fourth Plain Village’s Neighborhood Action Plan was adopted in 1999. As part of the neighborhood’s vision statement, the plan embraces the diversity of the neighborhood’s multicultural residents, supports focusing growth and density along Fourth Plain Boulevard and Grand Boulevard, and seeks to maintain a stable residential environment in the neighborhood’s core. Objectives supported by the NAP that are related to Fourth Plain Forward’s efforts include increasing pedestrian mobility and safety, maintaining a diversity of housing types (both in density and style), maintaining residential zoning compatible with neighborhood character, improving street lighting, and encouraging business owners to maintain a positive commercial image within the neighborhood.

Maplewood & Harney Heights

The Maplewood neighborhood lies to the south of the study area. Maplewood is a new neighborhood, having separated from Harney Heights as recently as 2012. As such, it does not yet have its own Neighborhood Action Plan. However, Harney Heights’ NAP was adopted in 2001 before the neighborhoods split, so its goals are still relevant to the Maplewood area. Harney Heights/Maplewood is characterized by a mix of apartments, condominiums, and older homes built around World War II. The NAP presents a vision of a historic and livable neighborhood, where residents enjoy walks and bicycle rides along safe, tree-lined streets. It also calls for businesses that are “neighbor-oriented” and pleasant to visit. Relevant objectives within the plan include improving pedestrian and bicycle safety throughout the neighborhood, fostering community with a new neighborhood center, and enhancing the appearance of the neighborhood by increasing the tree cover in the area.

Rose Village

Rose Village is characterized by mostly smaller single-family homes on smaller lots built between and during the two World Wars. The neighborhood association enjoys active community participation, with neighbors seeking to preserve and enhance Rose Village’s character. The NAP, adopted in 2012, presents a vision for maintaining the affordable and friendly quality of the neighborhood, and it sees the area’s cultural and social diversity as an asset to the community. It also envisions safer streets, sidewalks and lighting, to create a better walking and bicycling environment, and supports focusing growth and density along the arterial and transit streets (Fourth Plain Boulevard, St. Johns Boulevard, and Grand Boulevard), in order to maintain single-family character in the core. Relevant policies include improving street lighting and sidewalk access in neighborhood, improving pedestrian and bicycle access, maintaining a range of affordable housing opportunities, and building and strengthening community resources.

Central Park

Central Park is an older neighborhood with little vacant land for development. It is developed with a mix of single-family and multifamily residences. The neighborhood values and hopes to preserve its mature trees and open spaces. The NAP, adopted in 2010, envisions maintaining and improving the neighborhood’s livability by retaining its essential residential characteristics, preserving its historical values, and promoting improved quality in existing and replacement housing. A major objective relevant to Fourth Plain Forward is that Central Park hopes to split from the northern portion of the neighborhood between Fourth Plain and 18th Street. The plan contends that the natural bluff between 18th and 19th Streets serves to divide the neighborhood and that the area north of 18th Street should be assigned to another neighborhood association. Other relevant objectives include...
improving street lighting, improving and maintaining sidewalks and street crossings, promoting alternative transportation to improve air quality and to solve speeding, parking and traffic congestion problems, and minimizing the adverse impact of new multi-family development within the neighborhood.

**Bagley Downs**

The Bagley Downs neighborhood is densely populated due to residential zoning for all types of multifamily housing. The neighborhood also has many community assets, including a grammar school, an alternative high school, a community center, and recreation facilities including softball fields and a wetland. The vision set out by the NAP, adopted in 1999, includes embracing and nurturing the diversity of its multicultural residents. Relevant plan objectives include identifying, preserving and celebrating the cultural and historic resources of the neighborhood, supporting cultural, ethnic and economic diversity, encouraging businesses to be “neighborhood-oriented,” improving the appearance of businesses along Fourth Plain, protecting significant neighborhood trees and encouraging tree planting, and increasing safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Meadow Homes**

The Meadow Homes neighborhood is characterized by a combination of single-family and multifamily residential areas as well as areas for industrial use. The NAP, adopted in 2006, envisions a safe neighborhood where families take pride in their homes, streets, parks and public areas. Relevant plan objectives include increasing pedestrian safety with sidewalks that are ADA compliant and extend to the entire neighborhood, and working with businesses in the neighborhood to enhance the livability of the community.

**Planning Context Summary**

By looking at the variety of planning efforts for the Fourth Plain corridor, as well as for the larger community, many similar themes rise to the surface. Some key takeaways from the planning context include the following:

- Multiple plans identify density around corridors, infill development, walkability, and access to a variety of transportation modes as core values for development. This demonstrates that efforts to make Fourth Plain a denser and more pedestrian-friendly environment should be a priority.

- Safety, both in terms of reduced crime and safer conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, has been an ongoing concern for neighborhood residents and businesses. Recommendations for better and more sidewalks, better bike infrastructure, and better street lighting are likely to see strong community support.

- While the need for pedestrian infrastructure improvements on Fourth Plain has been widely identified, actual improvements have so far been minor. There is a need to strategically prioritize potential improvement.

- The Fourth Plain community desires to preserve and celebrate the multicultural diversity of the corridor, as this was identified as a priority in the Subarea Plan as well as several neighborhood action plans. The community will likely support creative new activities and partnerships to celebrate cultural diversity.

- Economic development strategies at the county level are largely oriented towards industries in which Fourth Plain residents do not currently find employment. To reach the goals of increasing incomes and wealth in the area, residents will need to be economically linked to these high growth industries, potentially as workers or suppliers to these firms.
### Table A.6 - Employment by Occupation, Vancouver Location Quotient and Total Employment, ACS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Fourth Plain Village</th>
<th>Maplewood</th>
<th>Study Area</th>
<th>Fourth Plain Corridor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, business, and financial</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operations</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional and related</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>218</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare support</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective services</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food preparation and serving</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and grounds cleaning and</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maintenance</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal care and service</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and related</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>117</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and administrative support</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>263</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, fishing, and forestry</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction, extraction, and maintenance</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>1.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>280</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>192</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and material moving</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market Analysis Methodology

Retail demand across 77 categories was estimated using national averages from the Survey of Consumer Expenditures. Annual per capita spending in each category is multiplied by the total population within the trade area and adjusted for local per capita income to estimate total potential retail sales per category in the trade area. The 2013 per capita income of the trade area is $25,548, about 9% lower than the national per capita income of $28,155. The estimated total population of the trade area is 119,970. The total potential sales in each retail category was then divided by the national average sales per store in each retail category to derive the estimated demand for the number of stores in each retail category. Retail supply is measured by using verified business directory listings maintained by ReferenceUSA. The supply of stores in each retail category in the trade area can then be compared to the demand to identify potential areas of over- or under-supply. The methodology is not precise; it does not account for the local variance in store sizes, sales per store rates, or consumer spending patterns. This analysis is only intended to highlight broad trends across retail categories and potential areas for further research and analysis.

### Market Analysis Methodology Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Employment by Sector (2013)</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Self-Employed (incorporated and not incorporated)</th>
<th>Private Non-Profit</th>
<th>Unpaid Family Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark County</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plain Corridor</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>82.3%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plain Village</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maplewood</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female Employment by Sector (2013)</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Self-Employed (incorporated and not incorporated)</th>
<th>Private Non-Profit</th>
<th>Unpaid Family Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clark County</td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>66.8%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plain Corridor</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Area</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Plain Village</td>
<td>61.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maplewood</td>
<td>64.5%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.7 - Employment by Sex by Sector; ACS
Note: This appendix captures the original community engagement strategy as planned, which differs from the actual engagement process that took place. We adapted our engagement methods based on experience working with the Fourth Plain community and upon reassessment of the most effective means of obtaining input from each stakeholder group.

Introduction

The purpose of the *Fourth Plain Forward* community engagement strategy is to support a set of economic development actions that reflect the current needs of the diverse communities that call Fourth Plain home. Community stakeholders also offer rich local knowledge on the assets, challenges, and opportunities along the Fourth Plain corridor which will inform the development of these actions.

The community engagement strategy is organized into three components: **People**, **Methods**, and **Evaluation**.

The **people** component identifies the key individuals and stakeholder groups that will be targeted for outreach and engagement. Each stakeholder group is associated with a particular set of engagement goals and desired outcomes.

The **methods** component identifies viable strategies, practices, and tools for engagement and aligns them with specific engagement goals. Methods are organized into three phases consistent with the timeline of the project. Factors linking particular methods to specific stakeholder groups include prior engagement efforts, efficacy, cost, and logistical feasibility. An overview of the goals and engagement methods associated with each stakeholder group is provided in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Key Informants &amp; Community Leaders</th>
<th>Business Owners &amp; Institutions</th>
<th>Property Owners &amp; Developers</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement Goals</strong></td>
<td>Inform, Consult, Participate, Empower</td>
<td>Inform, Consult, Participate, Empower</td>
<td>Inform, Consult, Participate</td>
<td>Inform, Participate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methods</strong></td>
<td>Interviews, Surveys, Workshops, Focus Groups</td>
<td>Interviews, Business Visits, Surveys, Workshops, Focus Groups</td>
<td>Interviews, Surveys, Workshops, Focus Groups</td>
<td>Surveys, Workshops</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B.1- Engagement Goals & Methods Summary

**Deliverables**
- Community Engagement Strategy (included herein)
- Internal memos documenting the findings of each participation
- Community Engagement Report - Drafts due March 6th, April 27th
B.1 STRATEGY: OVERVIEW

People

The broad goals of the Fourth Plain Forward project necessitate the engagement of a wide range of stakeholders and populations. The people component of the community engagement strategy is organized into four key stakeholder groups: (1) key informants and community leaders; (2) business owners and institutions; (3) property owners and developers; and (4) residents. Across each of these stakeholder groups, an emphasis will be placed on engaging ethnically diverse populations and economically vulnerable populations.

There is a concentration of minority populations that live and work in the study area that may be underserved or underrepresented, including new immigrants to the region that may be hesitant to interact with government-sponsored activities. Therefore, this strategy aims to implement methods that effectively build trust within marginalized communities, facilitate dialogue, and encourage collaboration. These methods will be informed by best practices research, interviews with key informants, and demographic data collected for the existing conditions report.

In accordance with the broader goals of the Action Strategy to identify actions to improve economic security, the community engagement strategy will emphasize economically vulnerable populations. For the purposes of the Action Strategy, ‘economic vulnerability’ shall be defined by composite measures informed by the existing conditions and best practices research. Vulnerability measures will include the Federal Poverty Level and the Self-Sufficiency Standard their professional insight into the most significant challenges to growth, redevelopment, and investment potential along Fourth Plain. Expert testimony from developers can help articulate market-based opportunities and constraints, which may be difficult to discern by talking to business owners and residents alone.

---

Table B.2 - Engagement Goals & Methods Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>• Complete fact sheet</td>
<td>Feb. 20 - Mar. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Setup website/survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gather materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Document strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews/Presentations</td>
<td>• Email/phone</td>
<td>Mar. 1 - May 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify key informants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify community leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site Visits</td>
<td>• Build ongoing trust/network</td>
<td>Mar. 1 - Apr. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify key informants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify community leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Solicit interviews</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote workshop</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Surveys</td>
<td>• Business Focused Survey</td>
<td>Mar. 1 - Apr. 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabling Event</td>
<td>• Resident Focused Survey</td>
<td>Mar 8 &amp; Apr 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 2x3/3x2 Option</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop/Focus Group</td>
<td>• Focus group to develop alternatives (tentative)</td>
<td>Apr. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Workshop to build implementation capacity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Part 2: Evaluation</td>
<td>P2: Draft Apr. 27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Residents
Engagement efforts aimed at residents will focus on expanding economic opportunities for families living in neighborhoods along the Fourth Plain corridor. Residents also represent the demand for business services along the corridor, making them a critical stakeholder group for effectively increasing economic opportunity and security along Fourth Plain. Engagement efforts will focus on increasing residential patronage of existing businesses as well as raising family incomes through workforce and microenterprise development strategies. An emphasis will be placed on lowered barriers to market entry, increasing community capacity, identifying community needs, and assets.

developed by the Center for Women’s Welfare at the University of Washington. Additional vulnerability measures may include housing tenure, vehicle access, and educational attainment; the inclusion of any of these factors will depend on findings associated with the existing conditions and best practices research.

Key Informants and Community Leaders
Individuals who formerly served on the Fourth Plain Plan Oversight Committee emerge as initial key informants. The oversight committee offers the Fourth Plain Student Team a unique opportunity to discuss, evaluate, and re-prioritize 2007 goals in the current context. Knowledge gained from former oversight committee members will serve as a starting point for subsequent efforts, including community engagement, alternatives analysis, and the selection of final recommendations. Many former oversight committee members are also current or past community leaders, which can provide the team with local insights into opportunities and constraints to reaching the public, with historical information, and with connections to other key stakeholders.

Business Owners and Institutions
A stated purpose of the Fourth Plain Forward Action Strategy is to support the stabilization and growth of small businesses in the corridor, with a particular emphasis on minority-owned businesses. Therefore, business owners emerge as perhaps the most important stakeholder group to effectively engage. A strong emphasis will be placed on working with business owners to assess the economic conditions of the area, identify needs, and refine strategies aimed at retaining and growing currently operating businesses. Fourth Plain is also home to a series of large institutions that will play a significant role in assessing needs, evaluating strategies, and planning implementation actions. These institutions include Clark College, Clark County Public Health, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the Vancouver Police Department, and the Vancouver Public Works Department.

Property Owners and Developers
Property owners will be consulted to provide insight into existing opportunities, constraints, and the potential impacts associated with growth and redevelopment along Fourth Plain. Transit-oriented interventions such as C-TRAN’s new BRT line have the potential to generate significant impacts along Fourth Plain, many of which will directly impact property owners. Property owners can also provide insight into challenges associated with tenant vacancies, structural issues, crime, and commercial real estate conditions. Developers will be consulted for
B.2 STRATEGY: METHODS

Phase 1: Understand Needs and Priorities

The purpose of this phase is to understand current community needs, opportunities, and priorities along the Fourth Plain corridor. Community conditions have changed significantly since 2007 due to planned BRT alignment, shifting demographics, and indirect impacts associated with economic recovery; therefore, there exists an opportunity to reassess the goals and actions defined by the 2007 Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan. Although the goals and overarching principles of the 2007 plan are still sound, a reframing of the language or a reprioritization of the goals may be necessary to increase the relevance of the plan in the current context.

Methods to be used:

- Interviews with key informants and stakeholders
- Trust and relationship-building via informal interactions, business visits, and patronage
- Increasing awareness of the project via project website, email updates, business visits, and other channels
- Intercept surveys at community events, popular destinations, and business clusters
- Online survey distributed widely via intercept surveys, partnering businesses, institutions, and other stakeholders

Phase 2: Develop Actions

The purpose of this phase is for the public to participate in the development and evaluation of the actions to be included in the Action Strategy. Although the development of alternatives will incorporate input from all stakeholder groups, the evaluation of proposed actions will focus more intently on the Fourth Plain business community, as final recommendations are expected to impact business and property owners more significantly than other stakeholder groups. The evaluation process will be more collaborative in nature and will focus on specific actions at a planned community workshop. At the workshop, the Fourth Plain Student Team will present a draft menu of actions to consider, best practice research on the effectiveness of those actions in reaching the identified goals, and an initial feasibility check completed in partnership with the client and other partners. The public will be asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions in light of local circumstances and conditions and the desirability of the actions in light of community needs and priorities. The public will also propose revisions to the actions or new actions not yet considered. The findings from this participation will be incorporated into the recommendations identified by the alternatives analysis report.

Methods to be used:

- Ongoing interviews, presentations, and business visits
- Focus groups with institutional leaders, business owners, and community leaders
- Public workshop (business emphasis) hosted in partnership with community organizations that have connections to marginalized populations
Phase 3: Build capacity for implementation

The purpose of this phase of the community engagement process will be to communicate the recommended actions and to build capacity for the implementation package. The Student Team will create a draft implementation program for each recommended action in collaboration with client partners. Although final recommendations will be designed for the City of Vancouver to be the primary implementer, it will be critically important for the City to have the support and ongoing participation of the community in order to fully implement the recommendation package. Community leaders will play a critical role throughout this phase of the engagement process given their potential to organize community support around City-led initiatives.

Methods to be used:

- Consensus-building activity with City staff and partners to create implementation programs for actions owned by the City of Vancouver. Communicate outcomes with community members.
- Interviews and focus groups with community leaders to identify opportunities for ongoing participation in Action Strategy implementation.
B.2 STRATEGY: METHODS

Phase 4: Evaluation

The evaluation component will compare stated engagement goals against actual outcomes. All participation methods will be documented and analyzed in order to determine their influence on final Action Strategy decisions. Limitations associated with community engagement outcomes will be incorporated into the recommended actions. Documentation of the findings of each participation activity will be shared with the public via the project website, email updates, and/or other channels for transparency and to provide an opportunity for feedback if information was interpreted wrongly. A Community Engagement Report will accompany the final plan and will document the participation activities, reflect on their effectiveness in terms of community leadership engagement, build the implementation capacity of the Action Strategy, and strengthen opportunities for ongoing participation with Fourth Plain Forward. The report will conclude with proposed actions to enhance engagement in the future.
# B.3 STRATEGY: SUMMARY TABLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder Group</th>
<th>Engagement Goals</th>
<th>Engagement Methods</th>
<th>Opportunities and Constraints</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residents</strong></td>
<td>- Understand residents as workers and job-seekers: what types of employment opportunities are desired by residents based on current skills, experience, connections</td>
<td>- Resident survey</td>
<td>- Constraints:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understand residents as potential entrepreneurs: what types of business or micro-business start-ups are needed by residents, based on skills, experience, connections</td>
<td>- Intercepts/tabling at high-traffic, diverse locations</td>
<td>- How to reach underrepresented communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understand the residents as customers of the business district: what types of businesses, amenities and services do they desire? How is district perceived?</td>
<td>- Open houses/drop-in events</td>
<td>- How to engage those committees thoughtfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Understand how the corridor can improve the livability of the surrounding neighborhoods</td>
<td>- Web survey</td>
<td>- Electronic/web apps might not be appropriate - english as a second language/ no access to devices or web.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Business Owners &amp; Operators</strong></td>
<td>- Understand the range of business challenges and needs and throughout corridor</td>
<td>- Interviews with business leaders</td>
<td>- How best to reach all persons in such a short time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify programs, services and projects that are responsive to specific business needs and assets</td>
<td>- Presentations to business association meetings</td>
<td>- Constraints:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Modify and tailor programs and projects to be most effective on 4th Plain</td>
<td>- Business owner survey (door-to-door and online)</td>
<td>- Planning fatigue or cynicism about feasibility/effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Identify business leaders that can organize community for ongoing planning and implementation</td>
<td>- Focus group aimed at tailoring strategies for 4th Plain</td>
<td>- Engaging diverse and underrepresented business owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Property Owners &amp; Developers</strong></td>
<td>- Identify developers interested in the corridor</td>
<td>- Workshop meeting to review alternatives</td>
<td>- Conflicting interests within business community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Determine development prototypes that are feasible in 4th Plain market</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Risk of co-option by the most vocal leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Assess the need for incentives or financial assistance to achieve development quality or intensity desired by the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Lack of time available for engagement, esp. focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Evaluate strategies based on their effectiveness in supporting or catalyzing new development</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Opportunities</strong>:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Informants &amp; Community Leaders</strong></td>
<td>- Identify existing and potential leaders</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Build organizational capacity for ongoing implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Gain a deeper understanding of opportunities and constraints.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- Continue momentum for planning generated by BRT project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Expand our reach into the community network.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Empower leaders to mobilize people to get involved in the project</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Institutions and Service Providers</strong></td>
<td>- Understand institutional goals and interests related to the 4th Plain Corridor</td>
<td>- Interviews with key community leaders</td>
<td>- Constraints:</td>
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<td>- Identify providers of services relevant to 4th Plain community needs and discuss strategies to expand outreach and delivery in community</td>
<td>- Focus group with community leaders</td>
<td>- Building trust in the community</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Mobilize institutions around investing attention and resources into corridor</td>
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<td>- Technology/language constraints</td>
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<td>- Financial/organizational capacity constraints</td>
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<td><strong>Opportunities</strong>:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Some community leaders have already been identified</td>
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<td>- Community planning along 4th Plain is in it’s relative infancy -- lots of uncharted opportunities for capacity building.</td>
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Table B.3 Strategy Summary Table
B.4 LIMITATIONS OF FINDINGS

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of our community engagement methods. Due to varying levels of participation across different methods and stakeholders, multiple sources of information needed to be triangulated in order to arrive at the set of key findings included in this report. Therefore, we are careful not to assume false precision about our interpretations of what we heard from the community.

A major limitation of the findings were their disproportionate representation of English-speaking. There were various reasons why it was more difficult to engage Spanish speakers, including a mistrust of government-sponsored activities, individual language ability, and access to technology. These factors substantially limited the availability of readily-comparable data between English-speaking and Spanish-speaking community members.

Another limitation had to do with an unforeseen flaw in our survey design, which skewed participation disproportionately in favor of English-speaking residents. Very few business surveys were collected, and of those that were, all were done in English.

We believe that the low-response rates among Spanish-speaking businesses occurred for three important reasons.

- **First**, there are simply more residents in the corridor than there are businesses.
- **Second**, business owners and operators tended to have less time to speak with us, making engagement with this group far more challenging.
- **Third**, we placed a greater emphasis on promoting web-based surveys rather than paper surveys.

Over time, we realized that this web-heavy approach effectively limited the ability of certain community members to participate in the project, particularly Latino business owners and operators. This was verified through our conversations with some of the corridor’s businesses, who told us they had limited access or proficiency using web and mobile technology. Others told us they simply couldn’t find the time to take the web survey, and that a formal surveying efforts were not the ideal methods for engaging the Latino business demographic. Efforts to engage with the community in the future should aim to correct for these limitations by adopting a more rigorous approach to dealing with issues of representation, cultural relevance, and an over-reliance on web and mobile technology.
B.5 RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

1. Do you live near 4th Plain? n=72
   - Yes
   - No

2. Which 4th Plain neighborhood do you live in? n=62
   - Other
   - Rose Village
   - 4th Plain Village
   - Maplewood
   - Central Park
   - Don’t Know
   - Ogden

Other responses: Falks, ‘all over’ (homeless), Carter Park (3), Hough, Shumway (2), North Garrison, Salmon Creek, Fruit Valley, Harney Heights (2), Arnada, Hazel Dell

3. How often do you visit 4th Plain? n=72
   - Daily
   - A few times a week
   - Once a week
   - A few times a month
   - Once a month
   - Other

Other response: ‘never-it is too sketchy’

4. Which of the following activities have you done on 4th Plain this month? n=72
   - Shopping
   - Restaurant/bar
   - Visited friends or family
   - Community event
   - Work
   - Religious service
   - Other
   - School

Other responses: hair cut, Visited my rental property, bought gas, rented a uhaul, Commute, none, park
B.5 RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

5. What kinds of services do you use on 4th Plain? n=73

- Grocery stores/food markets
- Restaurants/bars
- Financial services
- Personal services
- Auto service
- Other

Other responses: Recreational Facilities, buy gas, Nursery, goodwill, library, WDFW, Laundromat, bank

6. What are the top three things that 4th Plain needs more of? n=73

- Public art/landscaping
- Outdoor market
- Community gardens
- Jobs
- Places for kids to play
- Community spaces
- Spaces for small businesses
- Places to shop
- Places to eat
- Food carts
- Education or job training opportunities
- Other

Other responses: Apartments and live/work spaces; Getting rid of the syringe/drug use and homeless issues!; fewer transients!

7. Do you work on 4th Plain? n=73

- No
- Yes

8. How do you usually get to work on 4th Plain? n=50

- Drive alone
- Other
- Bus
- Walk
- Bike
- Get dropped off by someone
- Carpool

Other responses: Don’t Work on 4th Plain, N/a, Don’t work on 4th Plain, Don’t work on 4th Plain, Don’t work on 4th plain, I work from home, I don’t work
B.5 RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

9. In the last 12 months, have you searched for a job that pays a higher wage than your current job?

   Yes: 30%
   No: 70%

10. How do you find out about job opportunities?

   Online job postings: 60%
   Friends and family: 30%
   Other: 10%
   WorkSource on Mill Plain: 0%
   Goodwill: 0%
   Community and family resource center: 0%

11. What are the primary barriers to you obtaining better employment opportunities?

   Other: 35%
   Skills or work experience: 25%
   Transportation: 15%
   Language: 10%
   Other responses: none, Skilled Jobs, Industry Wages, N/a, education, Disabled, Age, Not planning a change, lack of jobs, no barriers, not looking, Education, retired, Education, age, Work availability, age, AVAILABLE JOBS, to old, Opportunities in my field, I LIKE MY CURRENT JOB, lack of jobs, Not living near seattle

12. Do you currently operate a small business based out of your home or garage?

   Yes: 45%
   No: 55%

Other responses: OnLine, N/a, Medically Retired Disabled Veteran, Currently employed, Own my own small business, retired, I'm not looking for job opportunities..., dvr, not looking i am 85, Network of coworkers
B.5 RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

13. What type of small business do you operate? n=10

- Other
- Personal services
- Lawn and garden maintenance
- Building or home maintenance, repair, or renovations

15. What type of small business did you consider starting? n=38

- Other
- Food production or catering
- Child care
- Building or home maintenance or repair
- Personal services
- Lawn and garden maintenance
- Auto repair or customization

Other responses: sewing clothing, Dog groomer and breeder, Pet services, Clothing boutique, Mobile ready websites., I already have my own business, secretarial services, antique/garden, Small farm, I’m a marketing consultant., Bed and Breakfast, craft store consulting, sewing making clothing to order, teach sewing and art, Shirt design, Consulting, Consultation and Business/Non-Profit Services, Woodworking/craft shop, Childrens bookstore, art

14. Have you ever considered starting your own small business? n=62

- Yes
- No

Other responses: Consulting, Dog breeder, entertainment, Services for real estate appraisers, Artist, secretarial services, transcription, Consulting

16. Why didn’t you start the small business you were considering? n=41

- I need more business training
- Other
- I was unable to obtain a loan
- I could not afford the space

Other responses: other, fear, Working fulltime, not sure, Until Disability claim is awarded can not attempt to raise or earn income. sucks, N/A, neighborhood has to many scumbags, I’m getting an education, I did. I operated a business for 6 years., I have had two of these businesses in California. I will start the next one soon., go not know how to start. Finances, Haven’t had time
### B.5 RESIDENT SURVEY RESULTS

**17. How old are you?**

- 55-64: 30%
- 45-54: 25%
- 35-44: 15%
- 25-34: 10%
- 19-24: 5%
- 65-74: 2%
- 75 or more: 1%
- 18 or less: 1%

**18. What ethnicity or race do you identify with, if any?**

- White/caucasian: 25%
- I prefer not to answer: 20%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 15%
- Latino or Hispanic: 10%
- African American or Black: 5%
- Native Am / First Nations / Nat. Hawaiian: 3%
- Other: 2%

Other responses: white, multi-race american

**19. What is your gender identity?**

- Female: 50%
- Male: 30%
- I prefer not to answer: 20%
- Other: 0%

Other response: genderqueer
B.6 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

1. **What do you like best about 4th Plain?**
   - Conveniend location near transit and on a major roadway: 60%
   - Concentration of small, locally owned businesses with unique products: 40%
   - A sense of cultural or ethnic community: 20%

   Other responses: 4th Plain is a convenient thoroughfare with arterial access to many parts of the city. Promote all local business.

2. **What are the distinctive and positive qualities about the 4th Plain business district that should be promoted?**
   - Concentration of food markets and restaurants representing diverse ethnicities: 70%
   - Promote all local business: 10%
   - 4th Plain is a convenient thoroughfare with arterial access to many parts of the city.: 40%
   - Concentration of home and home improvement-related businesses: 20%

   Other responses: east of these streets on fourth plain, 4th Plain one block West of Grand.

3. **Where is your business located?**
   - On 4th Plain, between Fairmount and Todd/Rossiter: 80%
   - Other: 20%
   - Another location in Vancouver: 10%
   - Somewhere else on 4th Plain Blvd: 0%

4. **Do you own the property that your business is currently located on?**
   - Yes: 80%
   - No: 20%
B.6 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

5. Do you own other commercial properties on or near 4th Plain?
   - No (n=7)
   - Yes

6. Where do most of your customers live?
   - Neighborhoods surrounding 4th Plain
   - Other neighborhoods in Vancouver
   - Portland
   - Northern Suburbs (Minnehaha, Hazel Dell, Walnut Grove, Five Corners)
   - Eastern Suburbs (Orchards, Mill Plain, Camas)

7. Where are your most important competitors located?
   - 4th Plain (n=10)
   - Other
   - Mill Plain
   - Westfield Mall
   - Downtown Vancouver
   - Cascade Station

Other responses: same four counties, none, 501 c(3) Non Profit, Don't have any
B.6 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

8. For your business, how valuable is support in the following areas? Please rate each category on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = not valuable, 5 = very valuable)

- **Accounting/Bookkeeping**
  - Not Valuable: 3
  - Somewhat Valuable: 4
  - Very Valuable: 3

- **Business Planning**
  - Not Valuable: 2
  - Somewhat Valuable: 3
  - Very Valuable: 4

- **Access to Financing**
  - Not Valuable: 1
  - Somewhat Valuable: 2
  - Very Valuable: 4

- **Marketing and Advertising**
  - Not Valuable: 2
  - Somewhat Valuable: 3
  - Very Valuable: 1

- **Staffing/Hiring**
  - Not Valuable: 3
  - Somewhat Valuable: 2
  - Very Valuable: 3
B.6 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

9. How would you prioritize the following actions to support the success and growth of the 4th Plain business district? (1 = not a priority, 5 = high priority).

- **Hire experts to provide business consulting/training services**
  - Not a Priority: 4
  - Medium Priority: 6
  - High Priority: 0

- **Reduce taxes/fees related to starting or expanding a business**
  - Not a Priority: 0
  - Medium Priority: 5
  - High Priority: 5

- **Help small businesses renovate interior spaces**
  - Not a Priority: 0
  - Medium Priority: 7
  - High Priority: 3

- **Lead efforts to clean up litter and graffiti**
  - Not a Priority: 0
  - Medium Priority: 8
  - High Priority: 2

- **Provide loans to businesses**
  - Not a Priority: 0
  - Medium Priority: 6
  - High Priority: 4
10. Which of the following property improvements are most important to your business success? (1 = not a priority, 5 = high priority).

- **Improve the quality of the parking lot**
  - Not a Priority: 1
  - Medium Priority: 3
  - High Priority: 6

- **Improve the quality of the exterior of the building**
  - Not a Priority: 1
  - Medium Priority: 1
  - High Priority: 8

- **Interior renovations to better suit my space needs**
  - Not a Priority: 0
  - Medium Priority: 2
  - High Priority: 8

- **Improve signage and banners**
  - Not a Priority: 1
  - Medium Priority: 1
  - High Priority: 8
B.6 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

11. Which of the following is the most significant barrier to making improvements to your property? Check all that apply.

- I don't own the property
- Other
- City permitting requirements, taxes, and fees
- I cannot find loans or financing to fund improvements

Other responses: Not planning improvements, continual vandalism

13. Where do you look for information on business loans? Check all that apply.

- Banks
- Online
- Ask friends and family
- Other

Other responses: don't take out loans

12. Has lack of access to business loans prevented you from expanding your business in the past?

- No
- Yes

14. If a regular public market (farmer’s, craft, food, or swap meet) were established on 4th Plain, would you be interested in promoting your business there?

- Yes
- No
B.6 BUSINESS SURVEY RESULTS

15. Are you aware about programs and organizations that support small businesses located on 4th Plain?

- Yes: 40%
- No: 60%

17. What is your gender identity?

- Female: 88%
- Male: 12%
- I prefer not to answer: 0%

16. How old are you? (Optional)

- 65 or older: 10%
- 55 - 64: 9%
- 45 - 54: 9%
- 35 - 44: 9%
- 25 - 34: 9%
- 18 - 24: 9%

18. What race/ethnicity do you identify with, if any?

- White / Caucasian: 9%
- African: 9%
- African American or Black: 9%
- Arab or Middle Eastern: 9%
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 9%
- Latino or Hispanic: 9%
- Native American / First Nations / Native: 9%
- Other: 9%
- I prefer not to answer: 9%
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TOOLKIT

C.1 Introduction C-1
C.2 Preparation for Staff C-2
C.3 Working with the Community C-7
C.4 Ongoing Engagement C-6
C.5 Recommendations + Case Studies C-7
Community Engagement in Diverse Communities: Best Practices, Actions and Recommendations for Fourth Plain Forward

Fourth Plain Boulevard is a unique corridor that is celebrated by the community as a multicultural destination. New immigrants continue to find home in the corridor and contribute to a sense of community for their culture. This diverse population is primarily composed of Hispanic, Filipino, Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Korean, and Eastern European populations, many of whom contribute to the corridor’s vibrancy as businesses owners and patrons.

The benefits of community participation are plentiful. It is well documented that involving the community in partnerships creates better decision-making, greater community support for projects and policies, spurs community development, renews local democracy, and increases social capital and resources. With this in mind, the City has an obligation and opportunity to engage these communities by facilitating the inclusion of voices of diverse population groups in the decision-making process.

The first challenge the City will face is how to properly connect with these diverse communities. As we learned, these communities are often challenging to reach. Culture, social structure, language, and trust create barriers to engaging and conversing openly. The following is a framework for a holistic approach to ongoing community engagement with the diverse populations surrounding Fourth Plain.
C.2 PREPARATION FOR STAFF

Personal Reflection

Through self-reflection, professionals are able to assess how well their practice is meeting the desired goals of the profession and society’s needs. Personal reflection is a way to continue lifelong learning, professional development, and personal transformation. This practice will require planners and their partners to constantly seek new knowledge and reflect on their experiences in public engagement.

Actions:

- **Examine your privilege and position.** Examine your privileges and identity how this frames your perspectives of others and the world. When the goal is to engage underrepresented communities, planners need to take time to consider how public sector decision-making processes are perceived from the other person’s perspective.

- **Educate yourself on history, power, and social structure.** Understanding the history of the community and its relationship to others is essential to creating a fair process.

- **Reassess the purpose of your outreach efforts.** After exploring culture, identity, and privilege, you will gain a better understanding of your position in the context of your outreach efforts.

Stakeholder Identification:

Determining the best methods for identifying stakeholders will continue to change over time. Identifying a diversity of stakeholders will help to improve the quality of difficult decisions about disparities, economic conditions, and community development needs.

Actions:

- **Perform an objective stakeholder assessment.** We identified community leaders during our engagement process, and we introduced these leaders to City staff members who will be building on those relationships going forward. These leaders are currently invested in the community, but new leaders will arise. Therefore, it is important to assess community partners periodically to sustain projects, programs, and policies.

- **Establish legitimacy.** Establish regular check-ins to gauge progress with stakeholders, partners, and residents, gain feedback on the process and gain new ideas for cultivating connections and maintaining relevance to the community.

Community Context:

Understanding the context of the community you are working in will help staff to engage underrepresented communities more thoughtfully. It is important to understand the community’s history, culture, social structure, and demographic profile. This knowledge can be obtained in the Fourth Plain Forward Existing Conditions Report and through the Community Engagement Report. Knowledge can further be obtained through people-centered understanding.

Actions:

- **Respect the historical/social context of the community.** Research past relationships and interactions through community members and within your network. When working with underrepresented minority groups and new immigrants you will likely be faced with additional barriers that may include:

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Mistrust of the government. Immigrant communities coming from countries with totalitarian, dictatorial, or corrupt governments might be more reluctant or even opposed to engaging with public officials due to a lack of trust.

Psychological trauma. Historical atrocities like war, genocide, forced relocation, and enslavement are still very much alive today in the form of intergenerational psychological trauma. This may also be true for the homeless populations that call Fourth Plain home. Everyday marginalization and systematic exclusion can exacerbate psychological trauma.

Communications

Effective communication about a project, program, or policy ensures transparency for observers and participants. However, as we experienced, communications within underrepresented or minority communities is a challenge. We found that using grassroots channels is essential in reaching these groups.

Actions:

- **Work with and through trusted community representatives.** In some cases, this leadership may be a religious or cultural leader in a community, or even a community-based organization that has historical experience representing the community. Whatever form this trusted representation takes, they should be regarded as one of the most valuable resources in engaging underrepresented communities. Furthermore, any documents or informational material should be dispersed early on through trusted representatives. Communities are more likely to react favorably to such material when obtained by their trusted representative.³

- **Build direct relationships with communities in an informal setting.** Public involvement should not be regarded as a one-off event. If ongoing actions are made, minority communities will likely return for future engagement. By participating in community events and engaging outside the normal confines of a public sector project, planners can help foster trusting channels of communication and intimacy that will help build long-term relationships.

- **Give leadership tasks whenever possible.** In any appropriate instance, representatives from underrepresented communities should be invited to assume leadership roles. Encouraging leadership within the community may foster empowerment if coupled with support and technical assistance.


Some of the various Asian businesses found along Fourth Plain.
Institutional Barriers

Public institutions unintentionally create barriers to engagement for underrepresented communities. Complicated procedures and strict norms of behavior can marginalize groups, or shut them out altogether. This can place serious constraints on one’s ability to act in an advocacy role.

Other decisions, such as what language(s) materials are available in and the location and time of meetings can inadvertently exclude groups with limited education, mobility, and/or economic resources.

Actions:

- **Adjust to their schedules and offer services.** Determine what times work best for your target group. This could be after traditional working hours or on weekends. Find out what is keeping them from participating and prepare; offer dinner and/or free childcare at outreach events as needed. Single working parents, one-car families, populations in poverty, and homeless or transient stakeholders are unlikely to find suitable childcare during these events.

- **Locate where it is most convenient for underrepresented groups.** If an underrepresented group is defined to some extent by their geography, they are much more likely to participate if events are held in convenient locations. In addition, outreach efforts within the neighborhoods of underrepresented groups can be empowering to the community.

- **Ensure that important information is translated.** Previous planning efforts have identified Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, and Russian as prominent languages on the corridor. This list should be evaluated periodically to insure that major language groups are fully informed in the planning process. Furthermore, strong visual materials and simple explanations are powerful both for stakeholders with limited literacy, and for those whose learning styles are strongly visual.

Inclusion

Even though all relevant stakeholders may be present, they may not all possess the same power or leverage as other stakeholders. This can create a serious power deficits for some stakeholders.

Actions:

- **Make space in the conversation for underrepresented groups.** For groups that do not speak English as a first language, or are new to public engagement, making a deliberate space in the conversation to hear their views is important. This can be done by having a breakout session to work more closely with individual participants or asking their opinions directly in conversations.

- **Make sure no one group dominates.** Any systematic or institutionalized power imbalances that exist within the broader social context can exist in community engagement efforts. If one group or individual is highly engaged and likely to dominate the conversation, a skilled facilitator may be needed to create a balanced conversation.

- **Keep early proposals general.** If planning, project, or policy proposals are too specific when first introduced, stakeholders are more likely to feel that they have been excluded from important decision making processes.

- **Lower technological barriers.** As we observed, technology-based tools are not always efficient in reaching target populations. If a planning process relies upon access to technology-based tools, or assumes technological fluency among stakeholders, groups/individuals may be excluded. Staff can strive to level the technology playing field by relying on hard copies whenever possible or working to ensure equitable access to technology-based tools.
Trust

Due to a history of oppression or just difficulty understanding the process, underrepresented communities often have a sense of mistrust when participating with government agencies. Many of the principles and actions laid out above would not be achievable without trust as an underlying factor. Worse still are instances when underrepresented communities have been marginalized, or taken for granted by public sector representatives. A transparent process can help make planning more efficient and positive for all participants.

Actions:

- **Be transparent and clearly explain the process.** Groups who are aware of the formal structure to public processes can feel more empowered because they know what to expect. By being transparent and providing information on conduct and expectations of the outreach event, stakeholders will not be caught off guard and can bring a more informed and critical perspective to the engagement. In an effort the make public negotiations less intimidating, staff should avoid jargon or clearly define it as many stakeholders are unfamiliar with acronyms, technical terms and planning lingo.

- **Appreciate the group’s or individual’s situation, feelings, and ideas.** Many underrepresented communities do not bother expressing their concerns because of a sense of mistrust. A key to breaking down this concern is through appreciation. Solicit the community’s views, validate their feelings, and consider their ideas.

- **Make room for relationship-building and different approaches for discussing and understanding issues.** Some cultures may prefer to communicate through storytelling. Allowing time to share stories may reveal biases and perspectives, and ultimately reveal the values behind interests.
We believe that a major goal for Fourth Plain Forward should be for underrepresented communities to experience empowerment from within. Staff can devise strategies to help support existing leadership within the community and ensure access to resources for training, education and capacity building.

Actions:

- **Support existing leadership structures.** Some underrepresented communities may have a history of working directly with community based organizations, such as SW Washington LUAC. Other communities may look to religious leaders or a trusted business owner. While such leadership structures often play a mediating role between the public sector and the underserved community, it is also important to reach out broadly to multiple groups to eliminate political infighting within groups. Staff can work to provide support for positive ongoing relationships and community leadership.

- **Celebrate success.** Planning projects can involve hotly contested outcomes and may require stakeholders to make compromises on resources, goals or demands. Celebrating a successful outcome can help communities recover from an exhausting processes, and can help avoid fatigue of engagement with the public decision-making process.

- **Assign roles to foster community ownership.** Once stakeholders have agreed to an outcome, the important stage of implementation must be continually nurtured. Ensuring that underrepresented communities have concrete and consequential roles in the ongoing implementation of an agreement can help build capacity, social fabric and an important sense of legitimacy within the community.

- **Follow through and do what you say.** Staff engaging underrepresented communities should take painstaking measures to ensure that 1) they know what is being expected of them and/or the public sector institution, and 2) these expected resources or agreements are delivered according to the agreement. Failure to follow through in this way can easily damage trust and can create disinterest on the part of the underrepresented groups.

- **Create mechanisms for evaluation and monitoring.** The planning process should not be considered complete unless it includes specific guidelines for ongoing evaluation. These can be formal or informal regular reports, benchmarks and indicators, regular field (visual) assessments, etc.

*The above actions are inspired by the document “A Planning Professional’s Toolkit: Engaging in Negotiations with Underrepresented Communities” (2014), a compilation of literature and interviews on engaging with underrepresented communities. A special thank you to Master of Urban and Regional Planning students Lorrie Chang, Christine Corrales, Stefan Heisler, Leslee Humphrey, Ryu Sakuma, and D.H. Strongheart for allowing us to pull from their work.*
Target resources to support ongoing engagement

Community engagement encompasses a multifaceted set of strategies implemented by many partners. These partners will need to be creative in identifying funding sources to sustain the goals of the project, which may necessitate changes to organizational structures and budgeting processes in order to ensure implementation. Ongoing funding streams are critical for successful implementation of engagement strategies.¹

Implementation should be placed front and center, emphasizing that the opportunity for impact in marginalized communities lies not in the development of plans, but in its implementation. Residents will feel more confident about the process if it results in tangible outcomes along with the resources and political will to implement the plan effectively.

Create a community liaison or “trusted advocate” program:

The City of Vancouver values the diversity of races and cultures found in the neighborhoods and businesses along Fourth Plain. To ensure that all communities are represented in engagement efforts, a community liaison program could be established to help the City facilitate meaningful civic participation.

The liaison positions would ideally be filled by community members who can help close the cultural, relational, and racial divides that often exist between public institutions and underrepresented communities. These liaisons will be incredibly important to help develop relationships in the community, connect residents and businesses to resources, and surface key community concerns. The district manager we recommend will likely not be able to make inroads with all of the diverse communities on Fourth Plain, so these liaisons could assist the district manager in building relationships. They could even serve as steering committee members to represent the interests of the diverse groups they interact with.


CASE STUDY

Seattle, Washington

The Seattle Department of Neighborhoods Outreach and Engagement program includes the Public Outreach and Engagement Liaisons (POELs) program that supports the City's neighborhood planning and community capacity building efforts. The POEL program works to increase participation of historically underrepresented communities. The POEL program is a successful inclusive outreach and public engagement program that has received awards from the National League of Cities and American Planning Association.

The City of Seattle has successfully utilized community liaisons to build better engagement processes. Liaisons act as expert “bridge-builders” who are part of their respective cultures, are fluent in their respective languages, and are bicultural and bilingual. Outreach and engagement work is conducted in a culturally-specific manner allowing participants some comfort and familiarity while navigating the City's processes. Liaisons are also charged with providing:

- Quality translations
- Fair and equitable facilitation (in native language)
- Simultaneous interpretation
- Constituent support at City-hosted events
- Feedback and expertise on cultural concerns and barriers
- Accurate records and reports of participant feedback and concerns
- Community workshops and events

The liaisons are contractors who are compensated for their work through an agreement between a fiscal agent and Seattle Department of Neighborhoods. This arrangement creates a high level of neutrality and trust as they work with community members.

Source: City of Seattle
CASE STUDY

City of Redwood, California

The City of Redwood City Neighborhood Liaisons program is not focused on using communities members as mediaries. Instead, the program focuses on empowering individuals to build community in their neighborhoods and to work with others to bring ideas to life. Some examples of liaison projects include:

- Block parties
- Emergency preparedness
- Neighborhood watch
- Energy and water conservation
- Community service

Liaisons work with neighbors to resolve neighborhood issues, develop and implement projects, and plan events or other community-building efforts. In the process the liaison learns about available City resources (community improvement grants, neighborhood watch programs, etc.). The Neighborhood Liaisons participate in training workshops lead by the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, a local nonprofit that “empowers individuals to advocate for themselves and to create positive change in their communities” to strengthen the individual’s community-building skills.

Source: City of Redwood

CASE STUDY

Portland, OR:

The Portland Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) hosts the Community Engagement Liaison (CELs) program. Portland’s CEL program identifies civic-minded individuals from vulnerable and underserved neighborhoods and provides them with training in collaboration and advocacy skills, creating a link between their communities and the City government, and allowing City bureaus to provide greater public involvement opportunities to more Portlanders.

Liaisons are City of Portland-trained civic activists, fluent in English, who are available to assist City public involvement programs with interpretation and facilitation services. At the high end of the range, a CEL costs $79 per hour.

Source: City of Portland

Additional Resources

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Policy Link

Inclusive Outreach and Public Engagement Guide

The Community Engagement Guide for Sustainable Communities
BEST PRACTICES + CASE STUDIES

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D.1 INTRODUCTION

This appendix highlights the key findings of our best practice research. This research included reviews of academic and practice literature, interviews with subject matter experts, and interviews with staff of organizations and government agencies responsible for implementing relevant programs and projects. We identified four fields of best practice research based on the goals of the Fourth Plain Corridor Subarea Plan and the overall goals of the Fourth Plain Forward project:

1. **Small Business Support:** strategies and programs used by cities and their nonprofit partners to directly support the stabilization and growth of small businesses.

2. **Business District Support:** programs and projects aimed at supporting the development and vitality of retail business districts.

3. **Streetscape Design:** street design interventions that support business district vitality, pedestrian and bike safety, and transit ridership.

4. **Transit-Oriented Development:** public policies and programs to shape private development in a way that supports transit ridership.

Thriving small businesses are the cornerstone of a healthy neighborhood and commercial district. Healthy small businesses circulate income back into the local economy, employ community residents, provide access to culturally-significant goods and services, improve safety by putting “eyes on the street”, and foster community leaders. Small businesses makeup 96% of Vancouver’s employers (having 50 or fewer employees) and 70% are micro businesses (5 or fewer employees). Small businesses provide approximately 40% of jobs in Vancouver, so there is a strong case to be made for supporting small businesses more generally and encouraging new microenterprises.\(^1\)

There are a variety of strategies employed by cities and their nonprofit partners to support small business and microenterprise development, but they can be organized around four basic categories:

- **Technical assistance (TA)** involves support and training to help business owners manage their business effectively. This may include training on accounting practices, financial analysis, market research, human resource practices, legal advice, advertising and promotion strategies, or a number of other services or resources tailored to the needs of the business.

- **Business incubators** extend upon technical assistance by creating a physical facility that provides affordable access to space, equipment, on-site support and an entrepreneurial community.

- **Financial assistance programs** helps businesses obtain the capital necessary to invest and grow, and may include low-interest loans, grants, or Individual Development Accounts (IDA).

- **Property assistance programs** can help businesses to find, renovate or improve their physical property through permitting assistance, regulatory streamlining, fee deferrals or waivers, and grants for improvements.

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These strategies are employed independently or in combination, and there are relative strengths and weaknesses to each form of support. Given limited resources, cities must make tradeoffs between some of these strategies, but they are not mutually exclusive alternatives. A review of the literature on small business development and interviews with subject matter experts revealed the following key findings.

Technical assistance at the core

TA is a comprehensive and strategic approach to supporting small businesses. TA providers help businesses to diagnose their most important challenges through one-to-one consulting before recommending a plan of action. Obtaining a loan or storefront improvement grant may not be the most important action that a business can take to stabilize and grow. In some cases, these actions may actually be harmful to the business if foundational issues like marketing, financial management or accounting are left unaddressed. TA providers help business owners identify strategic interventions that will have the greatest impact on the health of their business. This guidance and consultation is particularly important to low-income or immigrant entrepreneurs that face cultural barriers, financial vulnerability and often challenging market conditions.

Networks of support

A single TA provider will not be able to provide a wide range of services that matches the diverse needs of small businesses in different sectors, phases of growth and personal circumstances. TA providers are most effective when they leverage networks of support from a range of small business development organizations, linking small business clients to the most appropriate organizations for specialized services after a comprehensive business assessment. Additionally, small businesses in similar locations and sectors can benefit from networking and interaction within their own community to share best practices and strategies for addressing shared challenges. City governments can facilitate both networking amongst TA providers and within a small business community to increase the flow of information and resources.

CASE STUDY

Portland Development Commission Small Business and Microenterprise Development Program

The Portland Development Commission (PDC) works with ten non-profit organizations that provide a range of business development services. Businesses must meet size and income eligibility requirements, and the program prioritizes businesses that are very small (less than five employees), owned by a person of color or with limited English proficiency, or located in a targeted area. Several of the service providers are oriented toward serving a specific ethnic or cultural community. One of the strengths of PDC’s approach is the diversity of organizations and services available to businesses. Some business owners may prefer to be matched with an organization that is representative of their ethnic and cultural background, or provides services in their primary language.

PDC has also worked to build internal connections between providers in order to improve practices and client service. PDC organizes regular meetings of TA providers to discuss shared challenges and collaborate on solutions, acting as an intermediary for referring clients and fostering the development of specialized expertise. One outcome of this collaboration is the creation of “a la carte” services from specific providers with specific expertise such as legal counseling or market analysis. Creating a network of providers enables PDC’s service to be centered around the business owner; the business is assessed before the most appropriate services and resources are determined. Research supports that this networked and customized approach is more effective than a standardized set of services.

Source: PDC and Interview with Morgan Masterman
Partnerships with microlenders

The size of the loans needed by small retail, food or service businesses—also known as microloans—are usually below conventional bank lending standards. Additionally, these small business owners and entrepreneurs may have less credit history, past credit issues, or lack the education and skills necessary to package together a compelling loan application to a conventional bank. Non-profit organizations and occasionally city governments seek to fill this gap in the lending system. To administer loans directly, city governments must setup loan committees to oversee applications, dedicate staff time to process applications, and ensure compliance with all state and federal regulations. If microlending organizations currently serve a city or region then it is more efficient to contract with these organizations to provide access to microloans then to incur the high costs of direct administration. Many of these organizations participate in the Small Business Administration Microloan program that provides access to loan funds on the condition that the organization maintains a reserve for loan losses.

Packaging and targeting support

One of the most challenging aspects of operating a small business support program is persuading business owners to invest time and effort working with a TA provider. Business owners are consumed by managing the immediate needs of their business. Further, they may be unaware of the potential benefits of engaging with a TA program, or unconvinced that the benefits outweigh the costs of time and effort. This challenge is compounded among immigrant business owners who may be generally hesitant to engage with government-sponsored support. Two strategies can be used to encourage business owner participation. First, access to loans or storefront grants can be packaged together with the TA program by requiring business owners to meet with a TA provider before submitting an application for a loan or grant. Second, businesses that are highly visible or well connected to other business owners in a commercial district can be targeted as demonstration projects; their success story will disseminate to other businesses and generate awareness and familiarity with the program.

Engaging home-based businesses

Storefront businesses are much easier to engage for support due to their public and permanent location and relative comfort working with public sector organizations. Existing home-based businesses or potential microentrepreneurs—most commonly in the cleaning, janitorial, landscaping, construction, maintenance, child care and food preparation industries—are more difficult to reach. Some of these businesses may be operating informally without the requisite legal licenses; this is common in immigrant communities because entrepreneurial activity is generally more informal in many Latin American, Asian and African countries than it is in the United States. These cultural and physical barriers necessitate intentional and creative efforts to reach home-based businesses that may benefit greatly from support programs. Perhaps the most effective strategy is to make connections through trusted community organizations like churches, schools or other non-profits.
CASE STUDY

Neighborhood House Child Care Improvement Program

Neighborhood House was the city of Portland’s first organization established to support immigrants and their families, beginning in 1905. The Child Care Improvement Project (CCIP) has been in place for eleven years, and is both a microenterprise development strategy and a method of providing affordable, quality child care to community members. The program provides technical and financial support for home-based childcare businesses—also known as family child care—to achieve two goals: improving the quality of family child care and strengthening family child care businesses. These family child care providers are of diverse ethnic backgrounds, have low incomes, and are often recent immigrants. Notably, the two most prominent ethnic backgrounds of the providers are aligned with communities found within the Fourth Plain Forward study area and the corridor more broadly: Latina and Russian. Informal, home-based child care businesses are common within immigrant communities due to strong social and cultural ties, language needs, and the inability to find affordable child care in formal centers. The program published an assessment in 2012 of progress toward its goals. A total of 65 providers are enrolled in the program, and 21 of those providers had been operating long enough to be assessed in 2012. 78% of the providers increased their overall quality score on the nationally recognized Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale. A majority of the providers also strengthened their business over this time frame—62% of the providers increased their income by over 25%.

Source: Neighborhood House and Interview with Meera Batra

Kitchen incubators: a successful model for low-income and immigrant entrepreneurs

A kitchen incubator is a type of business incubator that focuses on food businesses by providing access to a licensed and affordable commercial kitchen space and business development support. Kitchen incubators have expanded significantly in recent years, partially driven by growing demand for local and specialty foods. There are three reasons why a kitchen incubator may be the most effective model for business incubation in a low-income, immigrant community like the Fourth Plain corridor.

First, food businesses are a common and viable business opportunity for low-income and immigrant entrepreneurs. Immigrants account for 38% of the owners of food-based businesses nationally compared to 18% of all businesses.\(^2\) Restaurants, catering services, food trucks, bakeries and packaged foods are common entrepreneurial ventures within immigrant and low-income communities. Starting a food business usually does not require significant formal education; about 60% of food sector workers have a high school diploma or less, compared to 44% for the economy as a whole.\(^3\) Additionally, immigrant food entrepreneurs can leverage their cultural background and existing skills and knowledge to create a differentiated product.

Second, a kitchen incubator removes a very significant and tangible barrier to starting a food business: the legal requirement to produce food in a licensed commercial kitchen. Food businesses can only produce a very limited range and quantity of food for resale from home kitchens, and mobile food vendors in Washington State must be registered with a commercial kitchen. Renting commercial kitchen space at a restaurant or other facility can be prohibitively expensive. Alternatively, incubators for

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\(^3\) Initiative for a Competitive Inner City. (2011). Designing an Inner City Food Cluster Strategy.
service businesses—such as construction or landscaping—cannot offer such a valuable benefit to their clients, who may only need some storage or office space that is often less costly to obtain.

Finally, the success of a kitchen incubator is not reliant on a strong local retail market. Incubator staff help connect businesses with sales venues and customers, including farmer’s markets, institutional or corporate customers, wholesalers and retailers. General retail business incubators must attract customers to the space, which may be difficult if spending power in the trade area is low, like on Fourth Plain. A kitchen incubator can also function as a public marketplace for retail sales, host a farmer’s market on-site, or host private events, but the incubator clients are not entirely dependent on these local sales channels.

**CASE STUDY**

**Pasco Specialty Kitchen**

Pasco Specialty Kitchen (PSK) is a kitchen incubator developed through a partnership between the City of Pasco and the Pasco Redevelopment Authority. PSK operates a fully licensed commercial kitchen facility that clients rent at an affordable rate of $12-$18 per hour. PSK has one technical support staff person who provides consulting services including business planning, channel development, outreach to retailers, loan packaging and brand development.

The mission of PSK is to graduate small, local food businesses into full-service restaurants, catering companies or packaged food producers. PSK has 42 clients that include farmers market vendors, food truck operators, catering companies and aspiring bakeries and restaurants. About 40% of the business owners are people of color—primarily Latino—and 33% are women. Between 2012 and 2014, 12 businesses graduated from PSK into full-service restaurants or bakeries. PSK expects continued growth in its client base; potential new clients contact the kitchen several times per week.

The initial capital construction cost of the facility was funded through a U.S. Economic Development Administration Public Works grant and the City of Pasco’s Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. Client revenue accounts for about 50% of PSK’s total operating budget of about $100,000. The remainder of the budget is funded by the City of Pasco’s CDBG program, a funding structure that has been in place since 2003 when the kitchen was built. Many of PSK’s clients are low to moderate income business owners that meet income requirements to be eligible for the economic development functions of CDBG. Clients that do not meet CDBG income eligibility requirements must create at least one job for a low to moderate income individual.

*Source:* Pasco Specialty Kitchen and Interview with Marilou Shea
Storefront improvement grants centered around business owners

Storefront improvement grants or loans are a widely used tool for revitalizing commercial districts. Businesses can benefit greatly from enhancing the quality and appearance of their storefront; potential customers often use the quality of the building’s storefront as a proxy for product or service quality. In low-income communities, however, many businesses do not own their own space. Storefront improvements must be done in partnership with the property owner or may even be initiated by the property owner. The interests of the property owner and the business owner may not always be aligned; the property owner may be interested in upgrading the storefront in order to justify a rent increase or to attract a new tenant. If a city’s goal is to support low-income or minority business owners, then the application process for storefront improvements should include an assessment of the risk of the grant resulting in the displacement of a business owner because they cannot afford a rent increase. This may involve using the expertise of a TA provider to assess the health of the business and the terms and duration of the lease before approving the application.

Additionally, minor storefront improvements like paint and new signage—in contrast with full reconstruction of the façade—can have a significant impact. These lower-cost enhancements may offer higher return on investment, be applied to more businesses throughout a district, and lower the risk of displacing low-income business owners. The risks and benefits of storefront improvements should be weighed carefully to ensure that policy goals are achieved most equitably and efficiently.

Additional Resources

- Americas Society/Council of The Americas
- Association for Enterprise Opportunity
- Brau & Woller, Journal of Entrepreneurial Finance and Business Ventures
- Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED)
- Econsult Solutions
- Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco
- Huang, Research on Social Work Practice
- La Cocina
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations
- PolicyLink
- PolicyLink
- Portland Development Commission
- Servon, Economic Development Quarterly
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Walker et al., Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development

**Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow**

**Introduction to Starting and Sustaining a Microenterprise Development Program**

**Microfinance: A comprehensive review of the existing literature**

**In Search of Solid Ground: Understanding the Financial Vulnerabilities of Microbusiness Owners**

**U.S. Kitchen Incubators: An Industry Snapshot**

**New Markets Tax Credit Issue**

**Effects of Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) on Household Wealth and Saving Taste**

**La Cocina 2012 Annual Report**

**An Analysis of Downtown Storefront Improvements: A Selection of Wisconsin Case Studies**

**Beyond Gentrification: An Equitable Development Policy Platform for Philadelphia**

**Equitable Development Toolkit: Commercial Stabilization**

**Equitable Development Toolkit: Community Reinvestment Act**

**City of Portland Neighborhood Economic Development Strategy**

**Microenterprise Development in the United States: Current Challenges and New Directions**

**Study of HUD’s Section 108 Loan Guarantee Program**

**Small business owners: too busy to train?**
Cities support their business districts in a number of ways, with the most comprehensive approach being a program or initiative that encompasses several key areas needed for success. Every city tailors their business district support services to their own specific context, yet the same common themes emerge. The key themes of a successful business district are:

1. A clean and safe district;
2. An attractive physical appearance;
3. A welcoming pedestrian environment;
4. Thriving existing businesses;
5. Complementary new businesses and redevelopment; and
6. An organized group in the district with the capacity to lead.

Clean and safe

A district with graffiti, litter, and unclean sidewalks leaves a negative first impression with visitors that is difficult to overcome. Many larger municipalities have centralized hotlines and cell phone apps for reporting litter and graffiti locations. If city maintenance crews are not available to clean a district, the most common tactic is to provide cleanup supplies to groups of volunteers. Cleanup events where volunteers pick-up trash and remove graffiti can double as community building events if organized effectively. Incentives such a free food and giveaways are commonly used to encourage volunteer participation. Adopt-A-Street programs are a similar volunteer-led effort initiated by a sponsoring business, school, or organization that agrees to maintain a designated portion of a street, usually adjacent to their location.

It is critical for people to perceive a district as a safe place to be. There is national consensus that the key to reducing crime in low income neighborhoods is through police and community collaboration. Neighborhood beat cops who patrol an area on foot or by bicycle are a proven crime deterrent, but many neighborhoods have lost beat cops due to budget constraints. Jorge Rivas, a business district liaison with the Office of Economic and Workforce Development in San Francisco, says it takes a concerted effort on all fronts to lobby for a district beat cop. It takes merchants, residents, Council members, and city workers all advocating for a police presence on the street. The Office of Economic and Workforce Development works with local police to make sure they know how important neighborhood beat cops are to the success of business districts.

Community policing groups are a common tactic that extends the collaboration between police departments and the areas they serve. Volunteers are trained by the police department and typically agree to patrol a given area on foot or by bike. Business watch groups, similar to neighborhood watch groups, are also common in business districts. Businesses typically create a communication network to keep each other informed of activity, with a central point of contact to reach out to the neighborhood officer.

The physical layout of an area can also go a long way to deterring crime, often referred to as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Clear sight lines and a well-lit area deter actual crime while greatly improving perceived safety as well. Adequate street lighting, along with litter and graffiti cleanup, are often cited as the most important first steps needed for district revitalization.

Attractive physical appearance

After the litter and graffiti are removed, the physical appearance of the buildings and street form strong impressions of the business district. Facade improvement programs are ubiquitous in cities of all sizes, since minor repairs and fresh paint can go a long way to improving the look of a business district. Cluttered and mismatched signage also detracts from the overall
appearance of an area, making clean and cohesive signage an important unifying element for a district. Other unifying elements such as banners, matching street furniture, landscaping, and distinctive street and lighting treatments are commonly used to denote a business district from the rest of the city.

Encouraging people to linger in an area by creating comfortable and enjoyable public spaces benefits the surrounding business community. Measures that improve the public realm include providing benches, tables and chairs, wayfinding signage, providing enough shade or sun depending on the climate, and enhancements such as landscaping, pedestrian-scale street lighting, and public art. Murals and public art can double as district beautification while creating a sense of place and serving as a graffiti abatement measure. These improvements can draw more people to the district by helping the space function as a destination in its own right.

Perception matters a great deal for a business district, and when attention is given to the appearance of an area it can have a catalytic effect on revitalization. A way to beautify a business district while strengthening the ties between residents and the district is through community placemaking. Placemaking is a community-driven approach to creating public spaces that is rooted in local assets and local desires. It can be initiated and funded by local governments, but the work on the ground is carried out by the community.

CASE STUDY

Depave project on commercial corridor in Tacoma

Depave is a Portland nonprofit that recently expanded into Washington. They organize groups of volunteers to remove unwanted concrete and asphalt to create greenspaces, public plazas, and community gardens. They have created 40 new greenspaces in Portland alone since 2008, and began working in Washington in 2014. A partnership between the City of Tacoma, neighborhood churches, and the 6th Avenue Business District depaved a section of underutilized pavement near the busy intersection of Division & Sprague in March of 2014. Native plants and trees were added to create a landscaped greenspace on the street where only underperforming asphalt had been before.

Source: [Depave](#)

Welcoming pedestrian environment

Vern Rifer, who has been involved with successful redevelopments in Vancouver, notes that he cannot visualize a business district that isn’t walkable. He is clearly not alone. Improving the pedestrian environment is an oft repeated strategy for revitalizing a business district, and it is especially needed on suburban arterial corridors that were designed for high-speed traffic. *Retrofitting Suburbia*, the seminal work on the greatest urban planning and design challenge of this century, notes that the key to suburban renewal lies in walkability and density.4

A goal for many business districts is to encourage walking between individual businesses rather than driving, which typically requires centralized parking and a concentration of businesses. Walking is more

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D.3 CITY SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

pleasant when sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate a buffer zone between people and traffic. Buffer zones often consist of street trees, parked cars, or both. Before pedestrian comfort, a base level of pedestrian safety must be achieved. Streetscape improvements for safety, comfort, and district identity are discussed further in the following Streetscape section.

CASE STUDY

St. Nicholas Avenue, New York City

A section of commercial corridor on St. Nicholas Avenue was recently retrofitted to add a new public plaza and pedestrian improvements. Most of the businesses along the project site are small, non-discretionary businesses that directly serve the surrounding community rather than a regional clientele, similar to Fourth Plain. The new plaza provides benches, tables and chairs, and aesthetic elements such as landscaping and painted concrete, which has encouraged residents to linger longer in the area. Pedestrian crossings were also shortened and safety islands were added to the street, leading to increased pedestrian volumes. Retail sales for the surrounding neighborhood businesses increased 48% after the improvements were made. This example and others like it demonstrate that the benefits of street enhancements apply just as much to low-income neighborhoods with small businesses as they do to well-off retail districts. Modest retail strips in residential areas are just as likely to benefit from street improvements and an enhanced public realm as downtown commercial districts.

Source: New York City DOT

Thriving existing businesses

The existing businesses in a commercial area are the bedrock for a successful business district. In addition to technical assistance and access to capital, cities often support existing businesses through marketing, promotion, and special events. Theresa Barreras, head of the Business Services Team for the Only in Seattle Initiative, believes that one of the best actions a city can do to help a business district is to convene a branding discussion. If a city can get the community excited about a common vision, it will make moving forward with future actions that much easier. It is crucial that the identity resonate with the business owners and residents rather than being imposed from the outside. Promoting a brand based on a district’s shared identity and strengths is a great way to draw attention to the area’s small businesses.

Promoting a district can happen a number of different ways. Shop local campaigns, coupon books, and programs that offer incentives for frequenting local businesses are common. Developing a business guide, usually coupled with a district map of businesses, is another way to promote what the district has to offer.

Perhaps the most visible and effective way to promote a business district is by hosting recurring special events and festivals. In addition to building on a district’s identity, organized events allow residents to gather and celebrate while attracting visitors. Farmers markets, art walks and food festivals are the most common event types, but the right event for a district will obviously depend on its identity and character. Special events and festivals that highlight what a district has to offer can even serve as a catalyst for business organization, as mentioned in the case study below.
D.3 CITY SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

CASE STUDY
Plate of Nations, MLK Jr. Way South in Seattle

MLK Jr. Way South, a commercial corridor in the Rainier Valley neighborhood of Seattle, is home to a variety of ethnic eateries and minority-owned businesses. A business owner wanted to highlight the restaurants on his corridor, so he organized the Plate of Nations event which is now in its fifth year. The Plate of Nations event was catalytic for organizing the MLK Business Association as well, according to member Susanna Tran. Excitement about the event spurred business owners to get involved and provided a reason for the association to form. This reflects the experience of many informants in the field who have tried organizing business groups. Providing a specific action or cause to rally around is the most effective way to engage business owners.

Rather than a festival, the Plate of Nations is a two week long event during which participating restaurants highlight their cuisine. Diners receive a passport card with a map of the corridor’s participating restaurants. They receive a stamp from each location they visit and are then entered into a prize drawing depending on how many stamps they collect in the two week timeframe. Business owners report repeat customers after the event is over who may not have tried their restaurant if not for the Plate of Nations event. The event receives marketing and promotion assistance from the Only in Seattle Initiative, a business district support initiative by the Office of Economic Development.

Source: Plate of Nations and Interview with Susanna Tran

Complementary new businesses and redevelopment

It is common practice for cities to help districts reach out to neighborhood-relevant retailers to fill vacant spaces. Targeted business attraction can help shore up an existing market niche or balance the mix of businesses in a district. Some cities target specific community-facing services that may be lacking in an area. Declining strip centers on suburban corridors are being reused for health clinics, day cares, and library annexes, among other uses. New developments should be held to neighborhood design standards and rehabilitating underutilized spaces should be encouraged whenever possible.
D.3 CITY SUPPORT FOR BUSINESS DISTRICTS

CASE STUDY

Pacific Boulevard, Huntington Park

Pacific Boulevard, a commercial corridor in Huntington Park outside of Los Angeles, is a mix of small businesses and Mexican chain stores that occupy revamped older buildings and new infill developments. “El Boulevard,” as the locals call it, attracts visitors from the larger metro area because of its vibrant street life. Stores frequently display their merchandise on the sidewalks and street vendors, often commissioned by the area’s shop owners, sell merchandise on the street. The area exemplifies what consultant Michele Reeves refers to as “show, don’t tell.” A cacophony of shop signs easily blur together for drivers passing through, but activity on the street signals a destination.

The commercial strip had largely fallen into disrepair with a large number of vacancies when the city council initiated a multi-million dollar revitalization effort. The goal was to reposition Pacific Boulevard as a center for Latino economy and culture. The success of the business district was largely rooted in community ownership of the Latino identity, and the city of Huntington Park attracting complementary businesses and compatible new development. The city aggressively attracted developers who adopted the vision of a Latino commercial strip, and the appearance of the corridor was unified by murals, bright colors, signs, and flags that speak to the local identity.


Business organization with strong community capacity

Building organizational capacity within the business district should be the top priority for the city. Experts with extensive business district experience believe that the best thing a city can do for an area is to help organize local business owners, residents, and non-profits to lead the work on the ground. Without a dedicated group willing to spearhead efforts, the City will struggle to leverage investments in an area. Capacity building is a slow, long-term process but it is essential for success. Mihailo Temali, an experienced community economic development leader, believes “if anything is going to turn a commercial district around, it must be a long-term, persistent effort led by local businesses and residents that draws resources from the private and public sectors.”

A successful business district needs a unified group to advocate for what the district needs from the private and public sectors.

There is consistent support for hiring paid staff to spearhead business organization efforts, encourage resident participation, and recruit volunteers. Many successful districts employ a district manager to build capacity, manage finances, program events, and develop revitalization strategies that reflect district needs. The Portland Development Commission’s Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative and the Only in Seattle Initiative both fund paid staff to lead business district organization efforts. In Portland and Seattle, these individuals typically come from existing nonprofits working in the area, or they form a nonprofit for the business district as part of their work. San Francisco’s Invest in Neighborhoods Initiative also funds district managers, which are essentially an extension of the Office of Economic and Workforce Development. The positions are jointly funded by Bay Area LISC, which serves as the OEWD’s capacity building partner.

In addition to dedicated staff, a dedicated funding stream to implement projects is needed to sustain the business district. Forming a Business Improvement Area (BIA) establishes a funding mechanism by collecting

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a yearly fee from businesses based on their revenue. A survey of BIAs in Seattle revealed that all were using a portion of their funds to pay for management staff. Many contracted for cleaning and safety services beyond the base level of services provided by the city, and most also used a portion of their funds for marketing and promotions. The benefit of a BIA is a dedicated funding stream that propels the district toward long-term sustainability, but a number of other funding streams can be used in the interim if a BIA is not initially feasible, including tax increment financing, Community Development Block Grant funding, or City general funds.

Additional Resources

LISC Institute
Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)
Project for Public Spaces
San Francisco Office of Economic and Workforce Development
Seattle Office of Economic Development
Urban Land Institute

CASE STUDY

The Jade District, 82nd Avenue in Portland

82nd Avenue in Portland is an auto-oriented corridor that shares similar characteristics with Fourth Plain. The corridor had a business association that was trying to change the negative perception of the area, but it struggled to gain traction. When the neighborhood centered around 82nd and Division was selected to be part of the Portland Development Commission’s Neighborhood Prosperity Initiative, one of the first actions was to hire a district manager. Todd Struble was selected from the Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), which already had an active presence in the area. A series of community workshops organized around ethnic groups resulted in a vision for the district, which is now known as the Jade District. The community envisioned a night market, which is now in its second year and will host two events in 2015. Todd believes a successful event is catalytic for district success since people now associate the district with this event. Visible wins early on are key for building momentum in the community, as is a dedicated district manager to organize and program the district. In addition to the night market, Todd also helps organize ongoing cleanup events called Polish the Jade and is involved with the adaptive reuse of a furniture store that will house the Jade District Community Space.

Source: Interview with Todd Struble
A shift in the dominant thinking about the purpose and use of streets is well-underway in the U.S. Streets make up more than 80% of public spaces in cities, yet they are often devoted to the sole purpose of moving vehicles. The goal for many cities across the U.S. is now for streets to be an accommodating place for people walking, bicycling and taking transit, in addition to driving in a car. Safe, comfortable, and convenient access for all street users is the ultimate goal of the ‘complete streets’ movement, which goes by various names. In Washington this concept is referred to as the Great Streets approach, defined as a shift toward viewing streets as public space to serve a broad range of community objectives. The Great Streets concept is currently being applied to the redesign of Fort Vancouver Way.

Key principles in street redesign best practice research that are applicable to Fourth Plain, given the constrained right-of-way, include:

1. Designing for Safety
2. Multi-Modal Streets are Good for Business
3. Starting with Interim Projects
4. Great Streets Concept in the Long Term

### Designing for Safety

Since transit corridors that house light rail or BRT generate significant pedestrian traffic, they should be prioritized for safety improvements. Fourth Plain is a high crash corridor, with informal observation indicating that cars frequently travel over the posted speed limit of 30 MPH. The corridor also sees significant pedestrian and bicycle activity. Pedestrian counts from 2013 estimate that around 13,000 pedestrians cross through the intersection of Fourth Plain and Grand Blvd every month. The signalized crossings in our study area are a needed improvement, yet we still witnessed people crossing in between these treatments. The Federal Highway Administration recommends placing signalized or high-visibility crosswalks every 200-600 feet on a street designed to be a walkable urban thoroughfare. A less formalized standard is to apply crosswalks where pedestrian traffic is anticipated and encouraged.

Medians and pedestrian safety islands are proven to reduce crashes and vehicle speeds. They create a two stage crossing for pedestrians, which is easier and safer than crossing the entire length of a wide corridor at once. They are recommended on roads with at least a 12,000 average daily traffic count, making Fourth Plain a prime candidate for this type of treatment. Landscaped medians and safety islands serve the dual function of reducing crossing distances and enhancing the corridor’s appearance.

Most serious collisions between drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists occur at intersections, making their design especially important. The best practice for intersection redesign is to make the intersection as compact as possible. Compact intersections allow pedestrians and bicycles to traverse shorter distances, and putting road users in closer proximity to one another creates better visibility and predictability.

Where minor streets intersect a major street, design elements are needed to signal to drivers that they are entering a slow-speed residential area. Curb extensions, raised crossings across the minor street, and tight curb radii are the most common elements used to reduce turning speeds.

Finally, pedestrian scale lighting is another addition to a streetscape that can accomplish multiple objectives. For lighting to be at a pedestrian scale, it is typically positioned 12 to 15 feet over the sidewalk, rather than over the street. Illuminating the sidewalk increases safety for pedestrians, deters

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crime, and provides better exposure to businesses, making it especially beneficial to business districts. Fixtures can be added to existing poles, or new poles can be installed. Light poles can be used to display decorations, banners, and hanging flower baskets, reinforcing the business district’s image, and various styles of light fixtures are available to complement the character of the street. Adding lighting to storefronts, buildings, and awnings is another option for lighting sidewalks while enhancing the business district.

Multi-modal streets are good for business

Perhaps nowhere are the impacts of street design felt more acutely than in a commercial business district. Numerous studies from across the country have shown that improving the walkability of an area has a direct economic benefit on commercial districts. Commercial space in walkable communities experiences lower vacancy rates when compared with commercial space in driving dependent areas. When auto-oriented corridors are retrofitted for better multi-modal access, retail sales increase, vacancy rates decrease, and private investment typically follows.

The case for safety, access, and mobility is easy to make, but the economic vitality of local businesses should not be overlooked when evaluating streetscape improvements. Physical changes to the street can calm speeding traffic and enhance the pedestrian environment, while also signaling that the business district is a distinct place. Creating dedicated cycling space, pedestrian islands, landscaped medians, shortening pedestrian crossings, and adding public plazas with seating are the commonly employed strategies that do not require narrowing or removing traffic lanes. These types of street elements, when properly incorporated into the context of the area, are proving wildly successful for helping area businesses.

CASE STUDY

Vanderbilt Avenue, New York City

Vanderbilt Avenue is a commercial corridor that was originally designed to accommodate vehicle and bus traffic, but nothing else. The street had two traffic lanes in each direction. The street was redesigned for one travel lane in each direction, curbside parking, and dedicated cycling lanes. A full-length landscaped median was installed on one block to visually narrow the street and calm traffic. Safety islands were installed where left-turn access was not needed, and landscaping on all medians and islands created a more pedestrian-scaled environment. These changes to the street resulted in a dramatic reduction of speeding vehicles and an increase in foot and bicycle traffic. Retail sales along Vanderbilt Avenue saw a significant increase after the street redesign was complete when compared to nearby areas that did not receive upgrades.

Source: New York City DOT

Starting with interim projects

Pioneered by the New York City DOT, the use of interim design projects has spread across the U.S. Low-cost materials such as paint, movable planters, and bollards can be used to test a design before a permanent infrastructure change is made. Curb bulb outs or curb extensions are a popular treatment that create shorter crossing distances for pedestrians and pinch the intersection so cars slow down as they pass through. The same effect can be achieved with low-cost gravel, epoxy, and paint.

This phased approach to street redesign can quickly get a project on the street, allowing the community to test and provide feedback on the proposed changes. This can result in a better final product, and help build political will.
and support for funding. These projects could even be community-led if the community identifies the locations that would be best served by a new safety treatment.

Great Streets Concept in the Long Term

As defined by the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, “Great Streets go beyond Complete Streets and integrate community economic development and placemaking objectives in addition to all modes of travel.”

Redesigning an auto-oriented arterial to be a walkable retail street is a long term improvement that would require the reallocation of road space. Typical lane reconfigurations reduce the number of travel lanes and add space for on-street parking, center turn lanes, wider sidewalks, and bicycle lanes. Research shows that lane widths of 10 feet have a positive impact on road safety without compromising traffic flow, and even narrower travel lanes (9-9.5 feet) can be effective when coupled with a center turn lane.

Numerous case studies demonstrate positive outcomes for all road users when street space is reallocated. The average driving speed usually declines (typically from above the posted speed limit to closer to the limit), resulting in fewer crashes. Pedestrian use of the street increases and retail sales often increase as well.

CASE STUDY

Fourth Plain Boulevard, west of I-5

While not referred to as a Great Street makeover at the time, the stretch of Fourth Plain Boulevard west of I-5 was successfully reconfigured for one travel lane in each direction in 2002. Fourth Plain had been designated a state truck route, but Mill Plain Blvd. was converted to a state truck route bypass in conjunction with the redesign of Fourth Plain. The new street design added wide bike lanes that double as a sidewalk buffer from traffic. The number of collisions decreased by 52% and traffic speeds decreased by 18%. Pedestrian and bicycle use increased, while the number of pedestrian collisions decreased. The Fourth Plain/Main Street commercial area fared better than other west side commercial areas after the street redesign was complete, as measured by taxable retail sales. A 2004 follow up survey about the road redesign found that most respondents noticed improvements to traffic, safety, and livability, and 67% would recommend a similar treatment on other streets.

Source: City of Vancouver Transportation Services

Additional Resources

Federal Highway Administration
NACTO
re: Streets Initiative

Context Sensitive Solutions database
Urban Street Design Guide
re: Streets Best Practices and Case Studies

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D.5 TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

One of the initial goals of the Fourth Plain Forward project was to identify strategies that leverage transit investments. C-TRAN’s planned Vine BRT line—a $53 million investment for transit infrastructure on Fourth Plain and the first of its kind in the Portland-metro region—represents a significant opportunity to foster new development and redevelopment around transit stations on Fourth Plain. Transit-oriented development (TOD) increases the number of residents and employees that have easy access to transit, thus supporting transit ridership and reducing reliance on automobiles. Higher-density development associated with TOD can help support a business district by locating more people within walking distance of the district and increasing foot traffic for businesses. TOD strategies are also highly compatible with strategies around improving streetscape and pedestrian safety, as discussed earlier in this report. Successful TOD relies on a pedestrian-friendly environment in which people are able to walk to meet their daily needs.

While TOD has traditionally been associated with rail transit, planners are increasingly recognizing the potential for bus transit to spur economic and real estate development. While standard bus transit does not have the same perceived reliability and permanence as light rail—two factors seen as important for attracting investment—BRT has significant advantages in this regard. The Vine’s plan for enhanced station area design, system branding, larger state-of-the-art buses, and greater predicted speed and reliability will create an environment that is more conducive to TOD investment. Several studies suggest that BRT has been proven to increase land values adjacent to stations and to stimulate economic development. Additionally, a recent study found that the greatest determinant of investment along transit lines is not transit type, but government intervention via planning, policy, and financial support. The City of Vancouver has the opportunity to play a major role in TOD investment on Fourth Plain by devoting resources and adjusting policy to create an environment that is conducive to such development.

Inclusive TOD

We advocate that transit-oriented development on Fourth Plain should be inclusive to people of all income levels. Our research and community engagement reinforced that an adequate supply of affordable housing is critical to achieving the goals of the Fourth Plain Forward project. In particular, both the preservation of currently affordable housing and the construction of new affordable housing within walking distance of Vine BRT stations would directly advance the goal of supporting a multicultural business district on Fourth Plain and maximizing the benefits of transit investment.

Neighborhood-serving retailers—the great majority of Fourth Plain businesses—are inextricably linked to the surrounding housing market. Their business model is built upon the demographic makeup of their community. Demographics are largely dependent on the cost and types of housing in a community. The businesses that Fourth Plain residents appreciate and visit most—ethnic restaurants and food markets—are highly dependent on the Latino, Asian and Eastern European communities that live in surrounding neighborhoods. These businesses survive because there is a concentration of loyal customers in their neighborhoods. Therefore, the presence of a multicultural business district is directly linked to the presence of housing that is affordable to people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The economic value of transit investment is also dependent on the cost and type of housing that transit serves. Lower income individuals ride transit at significantly higher rates than higher income individuals. BRT will be more cost-efficient if it serves communities with higher population densities and lower income individuals.

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TOD Best Practices

After extensive literature review and case study research on TOD projects across North America, we found that successful TOD tends to have certain features in common. These six components are vital to the success of any TOD:

1. Transit-supportive land uses
2. Density and compact development
3. Pedestrian friendly design
4. Limited parking
5. Station area placemaking
6. Financial support

Transit-supportive land uses

It is important to encourage a mix of transit supportive uses while discouraging non-transit supportive uses. Transit supportive uses encourage pedestrian activity and transit ridership, and are usually compatible with compact development patterns (i.e., they do not consume large areas of land). They also create activity throughout the day and evening and provide opportunities for multi-purpose trips that can be made as a pedestrian. Some examples include medium to high density residential, offices, appropriate retail, restaurants, personal services, and institutions. Non-transit supportive uses generally require significant land areas for low intensity development and parking, and create unsafe or unpleasant pedestrian environments. Examples include warehouses, car dealerships, auto service centers, and drive-through businesses. A mix of residential, employment and commercial uses in station areas can generate transit trips throughout the day. Workers can run daily errands within walking distance of their jobs; transit riders can access convenient services while at the station.

Most cities with successful TOD have adjusted their zoning around transit stations to regulate for transit-supportive uses. Whether adopting a transit overlay, adjusting base zoning, or creating new TOD zones, cities typically prohibit those non-transit supportive uses discussed above. Zoning codes typically allow a mix of residential, commercial, and office space and some require mixed-use development to help activate station areas throughout the day.

Density and compact development

Significant residential and employment density is necessary to maximize ridership and support TOD. It is best to focus the greatest density directly adjacent to transit stations, and to allow increasingly lower densities as the distance from stations increases. This is most effective when the density is targeted at specific nodes, rather than along the entire length of the transit corridor. The determination of appropriate densities should be tailored to the type of transit around which the TOD is focused. Since BRT is often appropriate for areas with lower densities than light rail, the TOD zoning ordinance should reflect this by allowing lower densities around BRT stations than might be appropriate for light rail.

Buildings that are clustered together offer the opportunity to conveniently access a variety of destinations on foot and create an easily navigable walking environment. Orienting buildings along the street helps establish an environment where people are encouraged to walk between buildings.

Most TOD zones establish minimum densities and maximum building setbacks to regulate for dense, compact development. Many cities also offer density bonuses in exchange for certain public benefits (such as affordable housing and public space). Selecting the appropriate density is important, and depends on the transit type. A study of TOD guidelines in cities
across the country suggests that 15 dwelling units per acre is appropriate residential density for premium bus service. TriMet in Portland recommends a minimum of 24 units/acre within one-eighth mile of bus stations and 12 units/acre within one-quarter mile. As for commercial and employment densities, the Puget Sound Regional Council recommends a minimum of 0.5 to 1.0 floor-area-ratio (FAR) for commercial developments without structured parking. The Regional Council further suggests that employment densities of 25 jobs per gross acre will support frequent, high-capacity transit service.  

Pedestrian friendly design

Walking distances between transit stations and key destinations should be short and direct. Pathways for pedestrians should be safe, continuous, and accessible for wheelchairs, strollers, scooters and other mobility aids. Crosswalks across busy streets should be clearly marked and protected with traffic signals. Vehicular and pedestrian ways should be designed to minimize points of conflict. Sidewalk and pathway routes should have as few driveway or parking lot crossings as possible. Safe facilities for bicycles should also be included.

A pedestrian-friendly street is visually interesting and makes walking enjoyable. Trees, landscaping, and wide, separate sidewalks will protect people from vehicle traffic and create a pleasant pedestrian zone.

The ground floors of buildings are also important to the pedestrian environment. Buildings should be close to the sidewalk and have windows and other architectural details to create visual interest and transparency for the building. Building entrances should be oriented toward the sidewalk. Plazas and spaces for outdoor seating or gathering foster a lively pedestrian environment. Surface parking lots and driveways should be limited along major pedestrian streets.

Limited parking

While the purpose of TOD is to encourage the use of non-motorized transportation, a thriving mixed-use district realistically necessitates the accommodation of automobiles as well. However, parking should be balanced with pedestrian friendly design. In the same way that ample off-street parking encourages automobile usage, a limited supply of parking is more likely to encourage transit use, walking, and biking.

Setting both minimum and maximum parking standards can help ensure the success of a station area as well as optimize transit ridership. Locating parking to the rear and sides of buildings keeps the station and building entrances oriented to the sidewalk and to pedestrian users. Larger parking lots can be divided into smaller lots and separated by landscaped walkways. These smaller lots also create an internal movement network and establish a framework for longer-term intensification.

Most TOD ordinances set stringent parking maximums and requiring no minimum parking. It is also common to allow shared parking by adjacent properties, and to encourage shared parking by limiting the number of driveways and offering incentives. TOD ordinances can also require developments to provide a certain amount of bicycle parking, in order to further reduce the reliance on automobiles.
D.5 TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT

CASE STUDY

Charlotte, North Carolina

Charlotte created new TOD zoning districts in areas within one-half mile of its Lynx light rail (LRT) corridor. There are three TOD districts, each of which has slightly different standards based on its primary use:

- TOD-R is for residential areas with limited commercial uses;
- TOD-E is intended for employment (primarily office) areas; and
- TOD-M is intended for mixed-use areas.

Each district sets minimum density standards (with higher density within one-quarter mile and slightly lower density within one-half mile of transit stations). Each TOD district also establishes parking maximums for each land use type, with restaurants requiring the most parking per square foot and residential requiring the least. However, the districts allow properties to exceed parking maximums if they (1) share a driveway, (2) reach a shared parking agreement, or (3) allow adjacent parking lots to connect or be combined.

Aside from a strong regulatory framework, Charlotte used a number of other government interventions to encourage investment along its LRT corridor. Strong station area planning and outreach to developers helped build momentum around TOD. The City invested in high-quality sidewalks as well as new light fixtures and street furniture in order to encourage development on the transit corridor. The City also partnered with a bank and the Charlotte Area Transit System to establish an acquisition fund to purchase land near transit stations, in order to ensure the development of mixed-income, mixed-use TOD. Since opening in 2007 Charlotte has leveraged over $800 million in private investment around its Lynx LRT.

Sources: City of Charlotte Code and Institute for Transportation and Development Policy

Station area placemaking

It is important to create a destination with a collection of unique places that attract visitors, while also serving transit riders and the local community. Public spaces near a transit station can provide comfortable waiting areas for users and act as gathering points for the local community. Small parks or plazas might incorporate public art or other distinctive design features to create a unique sense of place and tie into the local community character and identity.

While it is possible to encourage public space on private development through regulations and incentives, placemaking generally requires more direct public involvement by the government and/or by the community.

Financial support

It is necessary to reduce barriers to private development by providing incentives to developers. Incentives may help developers unfamiliar with TOD to consider a different form of development than what they are used to, and may also attract developers’ attention to Fourth Plain. Also, any new development on Fourth Plain would be infill, which has greater financial challenges than greenfield development and generally costs more per square foot. It often requires assembly of multiple small lots, whose owners may be unwilling to sell. Demolition of existing structures and site preparation can also be expensive. Construction costs are often higher for multi-story infill projects due to the added expense of structural support. Developers may have a harder time securing financing for infill projects, as challenging sites and uncertain outcomes may prevent risk-averse lenders from providing loans. Mixed-use development is particularly challenging because banks often separate their residential and commercial loan functions.
Cities can assist developers with TOD/infill projects and make investment in Fourth Plain more appealing by providing incentives that boost the profitability of development. Some of the most common and effective incentives are (1) streamlining the permitting and development review processes, (2) providing pre-development assistance, (3) reducing impact and development fees, (4) offering density bonuses, (5) providing tax exemptions, (6) assisting with marketing, (7) facilitating low-interest loans, and (8) assisting with property acquisition.

Cities can also boost the effectiveness of their TOD programs by creating an independent Public Development Authority (PDA). PDAs, as enabled by Washington state law, are established to pursue a clear mission and have more flexibility than local government bodies. PDAs can also loan and borrow funds; own, sell, and transfer property; limit liability to their assets; and enter into contracts; so they provide a good conduit for federal and state funds. They may be particularly useful in administering some of the TOD incentives mentioned above, including marketing assistance, facilitating low-interest loans, and property acquisition.

Incentives can be used to not only foster new private development, but also to encourage projects that exceed minimum development standards and benefit the community. Incentives that support affordable housing construction should be most highly prioritized given the critical role of affordable housing in sustaining the multicultural business district and maximizing the value of transit. Other community benefits that could be incentivized include affordable commercial space, public gathering spaces, and streetscape improvements. Incentives could also be used to encourage lot consolidation, shared parking, and mixed-use development.

CASE STUDIES

Prince George’s County, Maryland

Prince George’s County, which is outside of Washington, D.C., established a program for Expedited Transit-Oriented Development Site Plan Applications in 2013, which speeds the process for applications whose site plans meet certain urban design criteria. These criteria include moderate or high density development within walking distance of a transit station; a high quality, active streetscape; minimal on-site and surface parking; pedestrian-friendly public spaces; and a mix of uses. If application sufficiently meets the criteria, the Planning Board will render a decision within 60 days after the application is submitted.

Sources: Prince George’s County Planning Department and Prince George’s County Code

Bellingham, Washington

Bellingham authorizes the waiver, reduction, or deferral of SDCs for key redevelopment projects that contribute to city-wide economic development. The City has used SDC waivers to spur housing development in its downtown core. Bellingham planners have recently recommended expanding this program to reduce SDCs for development projects within targeted urban villages and for qualified affordable housing projects.

Source: City of Bellingham
CASE STUDIES

Glendora, California

Glendora, a small city in Los Angeles County, created a series of incentives for lot consolidation for properties within its Route 66 Corridor Specific Plan district. The City offers density bonuses of up to .15 FAR (on a base of .35 FAR) for commercial zones, and up to 15 dwelling units per acre (on a base of 15-25 du/ac for residential zones). It also offers permit fee assistance, approval process expediting, and other financial incentives as deemed appropriate by the planning director.

Source: [Glendora Municipal Code](#)

Seattle, Washington

Seattle formed the Seattle Chinatown International District Preservation and Development Authority (SCIDpda) to “preserve, promote and develop the district as a vibrant community and unique ethnic neighborhood.” The PDA achieves its mission through residential and commercial property development and management, as well as economic development activities. The PDA owns and manages nearly 500 affordable housing units and over 200,000 square feet of commercial/retail space rented to small business owners at affordable rates. The PDA also provides marketing for the district, organizes regular neighborhood cleanups, works with the city on streetscape improvements, and assists small neighborhood businesses with façade improvements, marketing, and finance.

Source: [SCIDpda](#)

Additional Resources

- Chicago Regional Transportation Authority
- City of Calgary Land Use & Policy
- Institute for Transportation & Development Policy (ITDP)
- Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC)
- PolicyLink
- Puget Sound Regional Council
- Reconnecting America
- State of Washington Department of Commerce
- Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP)

- [Streamlining the Entitlement Process for Transit-Oriented Development: Best Practices Summary](#)
- [Transit Oriented Development Best Practices Handbook](#)
- [Transit-Oriented Development](#)
- [Equitable Development Toolkit: Transit-Oriented Development](#)
- [Creating Transit Station Communities in the Central Puget Sound Region: A Transit-Oriented Development Workbook](#)
- [Case Studies for Transit Oriented Development](#)
- [Short Course on Local Planning Resource Guide Supplement—Chapter 12: Infill Development for Small Cities](#)
- [REPORT 102 - Transit-Oriented Development in the United States: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects](#)
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
The city will need a diverse range of funding sources to implement Fourth Plain Forward. A dedicated, permanent funding source is critical for ongoing district management. Grant funding sources are appropriate and desirable for specific, high-impact projects. Below we outline potential funding sources and their respective strengths and weaknesses. The specific funding strategy employed by the city will depend on citywide fiscal planning.

- Community Revitalization Financing (CRF)
- Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
- CDBG Section 108 Loan Guarantee
- New Markets Tax Credit Fund (NMTC)
- Federal Grant Programs
- State Grant Programs
- Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA)

Community Revitalization Financing (CRF)
A tax increment financing mechanism that is limited to local (city and county) property taxes. The revenue from state property taxes is not included. The city may capture up to 75% of the assessed value growth, but the city must obtain approval from other taxing jurisdictions, such as county and fire districts.

Strengths
- Ability to capture some of the property value growth expected with BRT
- Dedicated source of funding for infrastructure improvements
- No state approval is required

Weaknesses
- Must obtain approval of taxing districts that in the aggregate levy at least 75% of the regular property taxes within the district and participation from overlapping fire district
- Limited revenue generation potential because it excludes increment from state property taxes

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)
The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is a flexible program that provides communities with resources to address a wide range of unique community development needs. The CDBG program works to ensure decent affordable housing, to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities, and to create jobs through the expansion and retention of businesses. The CDBG program provides annual grants on a formula basis to 1209 general units of local government and States

Strengths
- Eligible uses of funds are fairly flexible and wide-ranging
- Relatively permanent revenue source

Weaknesses
- Directing CBDG funds to new uses requires they be allocated away from current uses
CDBG Section 108 Loan Guarantee

Section 108 is the loan guarantee component of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program. Section 108 provides communities with a source of financing for economic development, housing rehabilitation, public facilities, and large-scale physical development projects. This flexibility makes it one of the most potent and important public investment tools that HUD offers to local governments. The Section 108 loan guarantee program allows local governments to transform a small portion of their CDBG funds into federally guaranteed loans large enough to pursue physical and economic revitalization projects capable of renewing entire neighborhoods.

Strengths

• Eligible uses are fairly flexible and wide-ranging as they include all eligible CDBG uses
• Potential to finance a large scale project using existing revenue sources

Weaknesses

• Loan must be repaid from general funds or CDBG allocation, so not a new funding source but a financing tool

New Markets Tax Credit Fund (NMTC)

The New Markets Tax Credit Program (NMTC Program) was established by Congress in 2000 to spur new or increased investments into operating businesses and real estate projects located in low-income communities. The NMTC Program attracts investment capital to low-income communities by permitting individual and corporate investors to receive a tax credit against their Federal income tax return in exchange for making equity investments in specialized financial institutions called Community Development Entities (CDEs). The credit totals 39 percent of the original investment amount and is claimed over a period of seven years (five percent for each of the first three years, and six percent for each of the remaining four years). The investment in the CDE cannot be redeemed before the end of the seven-year period.

Strengths

• The city can establish a CDE that is operated by city staff
• Eligible uses range from investments or loans in real estate projects to individual businesses, providing flexibility based on the project or program
• All tracts in the 4th Plain Subarea and most within downtown and the waterfront qualify, so funds can be used for many projects
• Administrative fees are collected by the entity that allocates the investments. The city could use these fees to fund staff to administer the program and for additional small business support activities

Weaknesses

• Applications for NMTCs are competitive; a community development entity needs to have a strong pipeline of projects to compete with national organizations seeking funds
• Complex to setup and administer, would likely require up-front investment in a consultant to guide the city
E. POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Federal Grant Programs

- EDA Public Works Program
- EDA Economic Adjustment Program
- White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative - Choice Neighborhoods
- White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative - Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program
- White House Neighborhood Revitalization Initiative - Building Neighborhood Capacity Grants
- Transportation Alternatives Program
- Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program

Strengths

- Fourth Plain census tracts are eligible for many federal grants focused on economically distressed communities
- Many specific actions are eligible for federal funding, including capacity building, business incubators, additional planning or technical assistance, streetscape improvements and safety initiatives

Weaknesses

- Not a dedicated, permanent funding source for district management and programming

State Grant Programs

- Washington State Department of Ecology Community Litter Cleanup Grants
- Washington State Department of Commerce Community Economic Revitalization Grants

Strengths

- State grants likely less competitive than federal grants
- Many specific actions are eligible for funding, including additional planning or technical assistance, infrastructure improvements, and litter cleanup

Weaknesses

- Not a dedicated, permanent funding source for district management and programming
- Some grants are closed until legislative reauthorization
Parking and Business Improvement Area (PBIA)

Funding mechanism that allows business owners within a defined area to establish a special property tax assessment that is imposed on businesses, multifamily residential developments, and mixed-use developments located within the geographic boundaries of the area.

**Strengths**

- At least 60 percent of impacted business and property owners must sign petition agreeing to join
- Dedicated revenue source for improvements and programming in the district
- Eligible uses are very flexible
- Establishment of the BIA can help to galvanize the organization of business owners

**Weaknesses**

- Need strong advocate and staff or local capacity to organize petition
- Strong probability of resistance from at least some business and property owners
- Complex procedures for establishing district