Opportunity Framework Plan

June 2014

Gresham Map

CAMA SIA COMMUNITY PLANNING
camassiaplanning.org
Monday, June 2, 2014

To the readers of this Gresham Opportunity Framework Plan:

Together, we're working to make Gresham even better for all residents. The Opportunity Framework Plan is a step in that direction. It is the first plan to articulate and illuminate the experiences of so many of the residents that we work with every day.

We see the value that opportunities bring to a person’s life. Opportunities such as family-wage jobs; access to fair, affordable, and healthy housing; quality education; safe, affordable, and efficient transportation; easy access to affordable, healthy, and culturally relevant foods; and trusted human and health services. All of these things combine to impact our collective quality of life.

The graduate students of Camassia Community Planning spent the last five months developing strong trusted relationships with key organizations, agencies, and community groups. They have also engaged almost 350 residents to speak about their experiences in Gresham. Through this engagement, we have learned that there are differences in the way people experience their quality of life between neighborhoods. Most importantly, we heard that the people of Gresham want to take active roles to address these differences in order to make their communities more vibrant and more neighborly, and provide all those who live in Gresham access to opportunities for life success.

We would like to thank the City of Gresham's Department of Urban Design and Planning and Council Office for your generous support during this planning process. We would also like to thank students and faculty from Portland State University's Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning Masters Workshop Program for their infinite energy and desire to seek community benefits in the practical application of their coursework. Finally, a special appreciation to Kaiser Permanente, whose financial support made this community-driven process possible.

Sincerely and wholeheartedly,

Betty Dominguez, Director of Policy and Equity, Home Forward
Josh Fuhrer, Executive Director, Gresham Redevelopment Commission
Jenny Holmes, Director of Environmental Ministries, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Jenny Glass, Community Organizer, Rosewood Initiative
Vanessa Vissar, Planner, TriMet
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Camassia Community Planning would like to extend our gratitude to all of the community members that assisted with the Map Gresham Project. We would also like to thank the City of Gresham for the opportunity to work together on this project; the faculty of PSU’s Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning for their desire to seek community benefits in the practical application of their coursework; and Kaiser Permanente for their Partnership Support donation which helped fund our community engagement efforts. We would like to specifically acknowledge the following individuals and organizations for their continued support and assistance throughout the planning process:

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And thank you to the Gresham residents for providing input at discussion groups, filling out surveys, and welcoming us into your community, we are honored to work with you.
The Opportunity Framework Plan is the guiding document written for the City of Gresham. The overarching objective of the plan is to improve equitable access to opportunity for Gresham’s neighborhoods and diverse populations. The Plan includes a series of nine goals and 25 actions that were created in collaboration with our community partners, technical advisors, and Gresham City Staff.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Map Gresham project was a five month-long planning process to develop a framework for understanding the distribution of “opportunity” among neighborhoods and populations in Gresham. The resulting Opportunity Framework Plan is based on the recognition that the social, economic, and physical conditions of the places we live have a direct impact on our health, well-being, and quality of life. In other words, access to certain opportunities and conditions have a strong bearing on our ability to succeed at our endeavors, and to live happy, healthy lives. These opportunities are related to housing, transportation, employment, food access, education, human and health services, parks, and safety. But, due to historical processes of uneven investment and development, residents of regions throughout the US do not have equal access to opportunities. Research has clearly shown that due to structural processes of exclusion, these disparities are often strongly tied to race and ethnicity.

Camassia Community Planning believes that inequities in access to opportunities can be improved by using planning processes that:

1. Prioritize social equity.
2. Are driven for and by communities and populations that are underserved.
3. Build the capacity of these communities to advocate for their visions of what a neighborhood looks like that meet their needs and provides opportunities to flourish and thrive.

The Opportunity Framework Plan models these planning approaches.

The plan was created by putting community at the center and developing relationships with a spectrum of community organizations, government agencies, and Gresham residents themselves. Throughout the process, Camassia Community Planning partnered with six community organizations, conducted 33 interviews, hosted five listening circles and discussion groups that engaged 69 people, conducted a questionnaire that received 236 responses, and worked with six technical advisors. Over 50 people attended our culminating Community Celebration, and 17 staffers from eight divisions at the City of Gresham participated in a consultation open house, both held at City Hall. Through this engagement we have learned that there are differences in the way people experience their neighborhoods, and that many residents are eager to be more involved in shaping the quality of life in Gresham.

To guide conversations and our analysis, we developed a series of maps displaying the distribution of opportunities across the city. We used a transit-dependent and low-income lens to identify possible barriers to accessing resources and factored in demographics to determine correlations between indicators of opportunity and population characteristics. The maps show that varying degrees of disparities are occurring in Gresham.

Next, we identified key findings from our research, mapping analysis, and community engagement. In collaboration with our community partners, technical advisors, and City Staff, we then developed a series of nine goals and 25 recommended actions. Recognizing that resources are limited, we attempted to design recommendations that are lowest-cost, high-impact, and actionable. Partnerships will be key to successful implementation of these actions. In sum, these goals and actions amount to a holistic approach to addressing complex and mutually reinforcing challenges.

These goals include:

GOAL 1: Facilitate welcoming public involvement practices that resonate with people of diverse backgrounds in all City government plans and decision-making processes.

GOAL 2: Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality, affordable housing options.

GOAL 3: Improve transit service and walkability.

GOAL 4: Improve access to affordable healthy and culturally appropriate food in high priority areas.

GOAL 5: Increase local business ownership and employment opportunities for Gresham residents through community-oriented development.

GOAL 6: Promote community prosperity by increasing access to education and health promotion services.

GOAL 7: Foster safe and welcoming neighborhoods.

GOAL 8: Improve outcomes in priority areas by strategically allocating funds, using opportunity mapping as a guide.

This Plan is accompanied by three supporting reports:

- Background Report
- Community Engagement Report
- Opportunity Analysis
Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2014, the City of Gresham Urban Design and Planning (UDP) Department partnered with Camassia Community Planning (CCP), a graduate student group from Portland State University’s Master’s of Urban and Regional Planning program, to undertake an opportunity mapping project. “Opportunity mapping” is a relatively new planning method for analyzing the spatial distribution of indicators linked to opportunities for health and life success.

The impetus for undertaking the project occurred in 2013, when the City of Gresham completed an update of their housing policy in the Comprehensive Plan. The Housing Policy Update resulted in a long-term strategy for meeting and investing in Gresham’s housing needs. During the process, the City identified opportunity mapping as a tool for helping to guide implementation of the updated policy.

By winter 2014, UDP identified two other 2014 Council Initiatives that could benefit from a mapping project: the Food Access Project and Community Prosperity Initiative.

The Kirwan Institute of the Ohio State University developed the Opportunity Mapping method to “affirmatively connect marginalized communities to pathways of opportunity” such as employment, safe neighborhoods, quality schools, and public transit. The method involves compiling various datasets into a composite index that designates neighborhoods with a value ranging from low to high opportunity. The maps are used to identify where and what kind of improvements are needed, and to facilitate dialogue about equity. http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/

In addition, the 2011 Consolidated Plan for the consortium of the City of Portland, City of Gresham, and Multnomah County directs the jurisdictions to develop opportunity mapping as a foundation of housing policy. This direction is based on a study of impediments to fair housing in the county.

This project addresses three Gresham Council Workplan Items:

- **Housing Policy Update**
The objectives of the housing policy update under the 2013 Council Work Plan were to: promote housing types in locations that best leverage community development objectives, guide partnerships with housing developers, and direct use of federal housing resources.

- **Food Access Project**
The primary objectives of this project are: 1) identify where there are areas without grocery stores, and identify strategies to address this issue, and 2) attract and incent natural grocery stores in Gresham.

- **Community Prosperity Initiative**
This initiative will explore the role of the City in addressing poverty. It may include a community services inventory and an analysis of current and potential federal, state, and county funding for social services.

Gresham in Multnomah County

The City of Gresham is located in Multnomah County, along the eastern edge of the Portland region’s Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Gresham’s boundaries extend south to the border of Clackamas County, west to the city of Portland, and north to the Columbia River. The cities of Fairview, Wood Village and Troutdale bound Gresham to the north and east.

Gresham was incorporated as a city in 1905 and long served as a retail center for rural east Multnomah County, providing regional goods and services. The city grew from two square miles and a population of about 3,000 in 1950 to a population of 31,275 in 1980. This growth is due in part to the post war demand for suburban single family housing driven by federal highways and housing policies, as well as the gradual annexation of adjacent developed lands since the 1980s. These waves of development and annexation continue to characterize Gresham’s different neighborhoods today. For instance, a significant amount of development in the northern and western parts of Gresham was complete prior to its incorporation into the city, and consequently many homes in these neighborhoods were built without being subject to strict building codes. Today, the city spans 23 square miles and is home to over 105,500 people, according to the 2010 Census.

Read more about Gresham context
Problem Statement

Gresham’s population is growing, as are the number of its residents who are living in poverty. Between 2000 and 2010 the city’s population grew by 17% and the share of the population living in poverty grew by 44%. Both of these rates of growth are higher than the regional average. The City’s capacity to provide services has not increased correspondingly. The trends of growing poverty and constrained resources suggest that disparities in opportunities for health and well-being may also be at risk of growing as well. The City’s ability to address potential growth in disparities would be strengthened by a comprehensive understanding of how these opportunities - such as access to quality housing, education, transit, and jobs - vary between neighborhoods and population groups. Further, perceptions of opportunity vary widely in a culturally diverse context such as Gresham’s, which underscores the need for extensive public outreach to better understand the types of opportunities that are needed by people in order to fulfill their aspirations.

Gresham Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative Change in absolute population from 2000 to 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.8 % Population Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-12.9 % White (non-Hispanic) Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.8 % Hispanic or Latino Population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.0 % Population in Poverty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Project Purpose

The stated purposes of the Map Gresham project were to:

- Analyze the distribution and access to opportunities such as, but not limited to, access to quality transit, food, social services, housing, and employment;
- Assess the relationships between demographics and indicators of opportunity, health, and well-being;
- Engage a wide-range of residents and stakeholders in developing a framework for understanding the opportunity structure in Gresham; and
- Develop a roadmap for enhancing opportunity through potential policy approaches, practices, and community-based actions.

This plan is the culmination of a five month-long effort. It is intended to provide a holistic view of the complex opportunities and challenges for the Gresham community. It also sheds light on the experiences of various populations throughout the city, with emphasis on low income and transit dependent people.

The plan incorporates both community-based needs and policy priorities, focusing on the role of the City while also recognizing the role of various public, private, nonprofit, and community partners. The maps and analysis contained in this plan and accompanying reports provide background information that can apply to a wide range of purposes in general.

Most importantly, this plan is intended to support community action and collaboration. At the core, this project centered on the issues and concerns of the range of community members and groups that we engaged. In this respect, public involvement and building capacity for residents to engage with the City of Gresham was as much a desired outcome as the maps and data analysis.
How to Use this Plan

This Opportunity Framework Plan is the culmination of the Map Gresham project and is intended to serve as the foundation for future projects and partnerships. While the recommendations in this plan are aimed for the City of Gresham, individual residents, community groups, and nonprofit organizations can use this plan and its supporting documents to help inform and support future programmatic and funding decisions.

The Plan refers to and relies on three additional reports for background content and detailed descriptions of the methods, analysis and findings.

The Overview page in the beginning of this document provides a description of each of these reports. When you see the icons below listed in the document, this is a signal that you can refer to the designated report for more information.

Organization of the Plan

Provides context for the Map Gresham project including the project purpose and problem we set out to address, the method used (opportunity mapping), and the location where this work took place (Gresham, OR).

Refer to the Background Report for more context information.

Explains the process and methods used to complete the Map Gresham project, including a summary of our analysis, a list of all indicators used to evaluate access to opportunity, and a summary of our community engagement methods.

Refer to the Community Engagement Report for a complete description of community engagement process and findings.

Describes the importance of each indicator to “opportunity” and provides the methods and key findings for each indicator, community engagement, and other data sources. Additionally, this chapter includes goals and key actions that the city can take to improve access to opportunity.

Refer to the Opportunity Analysis for the entirety of Map Gresham maps and analysis.

Discusses implementation of goals and actions, as well as funding considerations. This chapter includes a goal intended to help prioritize projects and incorporate an opportunity framework into decision-making in Gresham. This chapter also includes a table that shows a holistic picture of how each indicator goal and action relates to opportunity.

Refer to the Opportunity Analysis for the entirety of Map Gresham maps and analysis.
Chapter 2: PROCESS AND METHODS

CCP approached this project with a mix of methods, placing community engagement at the center. We used quantitative data from a range of sources such as the Equity Atlas created by the Coalition of Livable Future (CLF), as well as the City of Gresham, Metro (regional government) and US Census Bureau. Given the limitations of spatial data for depicting reality, we also integrated community values, lived experience, and qualitative information in order to strengthen the interpretation of the maps and findings.

The origins of Camassia Community Planning...
The name Camassia is derived from the camas plant - a beautiful purple flower that blossoms every spring in the Willamette Valley. The bulb of this plant was an important food staple of this region’s indigenous nations prior to colonization. To us, the camas flower is symbolic of this place and its history including the experience of colonialism that disrupted the local food system. The camas plant also symbolizes our belief that community flourishing must begin by working at the roots of structural inequities.

The objective of our community-centered approach was to develop a plan that reflected community priorities and to build support for the project among stakeholders, thus increasing capacity for implementing the plan. Through spurring dialogue, we aimed to: develop a shared understanding of “opportunity”; reveal core challenges for Gresham residents including those in low income communities and people of color; and have conversations about root causes of disparities in historic, institutional, and structural terms.

Read more about deliberative democracy and collaborative decision making. Refer here for a full description of the methods used and key findings from the stakeholder involvement process.
Planning Phases

We developed this plan and supporting technical reports in four phases. Phase I involved getting grounded in the Gresham context through background research, demographic analysis, and interviews with City staff, community leaders, service providers, advocates, and academics. CCP also created a set of draft maps to guide conversations and prepared a Draft Background Report. The phase concluded with selecting West Gresham as the focus area and a group of six technical advisors to provide feedback throughout the process. CCP also established partnerships with community organizations to identify problems, collect and interpret data, develop recommendations, and reach out to residents.

Our community partners included:
- Latino Network
- Rockwood Neighborhood Association
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Empower Rockwood ("E-ROC")
- Human Solutions Group
- Multnomah Youth Commission
- The Rosewood Initiative

PHASE 1:
GETTING
GROUNDED

- ENGAGEMENT
  INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS
- ANALYSIS
  BACKGROUND RESEARCH
- PRODUCT
  BACKGROUND REPORT

FEBRUARY 2014 JUNE 2014

PHASE 2:
SHARED
LEARNING

- ENGAGEMENT
  LISTENING CIRCLES & DISCUSSION GROUPS
- ANALYSIS
  SPATIAL ANALYSIS & DATA GATHERING
- PRODUCT
  DRAFT MAPS OF OPPORTUNITY INDICATORS

JANUARY 2014 JUNE 2014

PHASE 3:
PLAN
DEVELOPMENT

- ENGAGEMENT
  CITY CONSULTATION EVENT
- ANALYSIS
  COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS
- PRODUCT
  FINAL MAPS OF OPPORTUNITY INDICATORS

PHASE 4:
PRESENTATIONS

- ENGAGEMENT
  PSU WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS
- ANALYSIS
  EVALUATION OF PLANNING PROCESS
- PRODUCT
  FINAL OPPORTUNITY FRAMEWORK PLAN AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

During the third phase, CCP worked with partners, advisers, and staff to develop recommendations. We met with technical advisors to discuss preliminary goals and actions. We also held a luncheon event to allow for citywide staff input on the maps, framework plan, and possible applications to their work at the City of Gresham. CCP analyzed the findings from all types of data collected and community engagement activities, synthesizing them into a comprehensive analysis.

The second phase of the project involved developing and administering an online questionnaire aimed at all Gresham residents. It focused on key indicators of opportunity, including employment, housing and neighborhood conditions, food, and transportation. CCP also worked with community partners to hold four listening circles in the focus area, as well as a discussion group on food access issues. These events provided a chance for community members to discuss the draft opportunity maps and their experiences with living in West Gresham. The phase culminated with a Community Celebration event to report back key findings from the shared learning events and to continue to build relationships.

The final phase involved evaluating the planning process using an equity lens, in order to identify lessons learned and help inform future public involvement efforts. Lastly, CCP worked with City staff to finalize the Opportunity Framework Plan and present it at PSU’s Workshop event, City Council, and Planning Commission.
Mapping and Analysis

CCP chose to analyze seven indicators of opportunity that together form the opportunity structure in Gresham. These indicators are based on established opportunity mapping techniques, input from stakeholders and technical advisers, as well as community feedback. These indicators include:

- Public Involvement
- Housing
- Transportation
- Food
- Employment
- Education/Services
- Parks
- Safety/Livability

CCP prepared numerous maps through an iterative process of feedback and revision. The resulting maps reflect input from the community, City staff, and technical advisers. We did not prepare a composite opportunity map as is typically done for similar projects. Instead, we opted to analyze each opportunity indicator independently, integrating the spatial analysis with findings from community engagement, demographic analysis, literature review, and best practice research. The combined analysis of the seven indicators is intended to provide a holistic view of opportunities in Gresham. We chose this approach over creating a composite analysis in response to some of the limitations and critiques of opportunity mapping, including the potential to oversimplify issues thereby stigmatizing areas as "low opportunity."

For the opportunity analysis, CCP chose to delineate the city into three subregions. This allowed CCP to compare the results from the citywide questionnaire completed for the Map Gresham project with the quantitative Census. The delineation of these subregions also serves as the basis for analyzing each of CCP’s opportunity indicators across the city in a systematic way. These delineations are also reflected in the final recommendations made to the City of Gresham.

The three subregions identified for analysis were West Gresham, Central Gresham, and South Gresham. CCP chose to use census tract boundaries to delineate subregions because the demographic analyses rely on census data.

Additionally, CCP chose West Gresham as a target subregion for engagement and analysis. This selection was based on preliminary analysis of demographic trends, review of existing studies, conversations with City staff, and initial community engagement.

The Map Gresham Analysis Subregions table provides demographic data for each subregion:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subregion</th>
<th>Population Density</th>
<th>% White (alone)</th>
<th>% Hispanic</th>
<th>% of Pop. age 25 w/ Bachelor’s Degree or Higher</th>
<th>Unemployment Rate</th>
<th>% Renter Occupied</th>
<th>% Population in Poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>West Gresham</td>
<td>6,253</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td>26.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>54.3%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central and South</td>
<td>3,720</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chapter 3: OPPORTUNITY FRAMEWORK

The “opportunity framework” in Gresham is based on the understanding that the social, economic, and physical conditions of the places we live have a direct impact on our health, well-being, and quality of life. In other words, access to certain opportunities and conditions have a strong bearing on our ability to succeed at our endeavors, and to live happy, healthy lives. These opportunities are related to housing, transportation, employment, food access, education, health and human services, parks, and safety. But, due to systemic and historic forces such as uneven investment and development, residents of regions throughout the U.S. do not have equal access to these opportunities.

Research has clearly shown that disparities are often strongly tied to race and ethnicity due to processes of discrimination and exclusion. While most people think of discrimination on an interpersonal basis, such as when a person is refused service at a restaurant, the processes of discrimination that occur throughout the U.S. are larger in scale and usually unintentional (see table below). Institutional discrimination refers to the policies, practices, and programs that create adverse outcomes for some groups over others, while structural discrimination is the cumulative effect of institutional actions. The interplay of these forms result in differential and harmful effects for some communities, as can be seen through the U.S. are larger in scale and usually unintentional (see table below). Institutional discrimination refers to the policies, practices, and programs that create adverse outcomes for some groups over others, while structural discrimination is the cumulative effect of institutional actions. The interplay of these forms result in differential and harmful effects for some communities, as can be seen through the table below. The Social Determinants of Health: Adapted from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation “Overcoming Obstacles to Health” report. The Social Determinants of Health: Adapted from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation “Overcoming Obstacles to Health” report.

In terms of the process, CCP believes that access to opportunities can be improved by using approaches that (1) prioritize social equity; (2) are driven for and by communities and populations that are underserved; and (3) that build the capacity of these communities to advocate for neighborhood conditions that meet their needs and provide opportunities to flourish and thrive. The premise is that strategies are more likely to succeed, if they are developed and supported by community members and stakeholders.

Based on this framework, CCP has developed a series of nine goals and 25 recommended actions that seek to increase opportunity for Gresham residents. In sum, these goals and actions amount to a holistic approach to addressing complex and mutually reinforcing challenges. The overarching objective of the recommendations is to improve equitable access to opportunity for Gresham’s neighborhoods and diverse populations.

Recognizing that the City of Gresham and their partners have limited resources and many demands, the goals and actions presented here are intended to be recommendations for consideration. We attempted to design recommendations that are lowest-cost, high-impact, and actionable, in collaboration with our community partners, technical advisors, and City staff. We have also identified potential partnerships, which will be key to successful implementation of these actions.

Each indicator in this chapter includes:

- **Introduction:** description of the importance of each indicator to “opportunity”
- **Methods:** description of the methodology used to analyze the indicator (in addition to community engagement and the demographic analysis that apply to all indicators)
- **Key Findings:** applicable findings from our research, mapping analysis, and community engagement
- **Maps:** 1-2 maps that display the distribution of opportunity, highlighting one or more key findings.
- **Goal:** a goal statement to serve as a guiding principle for improving the distribution of and access to opportunity
- **Actions:** the actions that we recommend for implementation in the short-term

Refer to Appendix B for an Implementation Matrix, which includes detailed suggestions for each action.
There are few opportunities for people to get together informally to build relationships and community. Sometimes I feel isolated even though I have lived here for a while.

- Gresham Resident

Local government stays connected with the needs of its residents primarily through public involvement. In addition to improving outcomes, public participation in planning processes help develop a sense of connection to these outcomes, especially when they can see their input reflected in decisions. Conversely, when jurisdictions leave the public out of decision-making, it can result in outcomes that do not always meet the needs of residents.

Public processes are typically open to anyone and everyone to participate, often through town halls, hearings, open houses, and more recently, web-based tools. However, residents with greater access to resources usually demonstrate a greater voice in public decision-making processes, while those with lower access tend to have a more difficult time participating with these traditional methods. Federal and State Civil Rights law uses the term "protected classes" to refer to the groups that have historically been under-represented in public decision-making, resulting in disproportionate negative impacts. The laws extend protections to people on the "basis of race, color, national origin, limited English proficiency, sex, income, age or disability" (City of Gresham, Title VI Program, 2014). In other words, given the array of structural and institutional barriers, groups that often remain under-engaged in public processes include: people of color, immigrants, refugees, youth, women, those with disabilities, and people of low income/wealth.

To address the need for public involvement, the City of Gresham operates the Office of Neighborhoods and Community Engagement (ONCE), which coordinates and supports the City’s 16 neighborhood associations. ONCE also coordinates a number of community programs such as: mediation, neighborhood watch, and the Youth Advisory Committee. In addition, Citizen Advisory Committees provide recommendations on policy decisions to City Council.
Methods

This analysis of public involvement opportunities is based upon a self-evaluation of our community engagement process incorporating feedback from participants. Our approach to involvement and the evaluation each draw upon the experiences of regional projects that successfully involved a diversity of participants and engaged communities that have been historically underrepresented in decision-making.

We also considered the responses to the citywide questionnaire to indicate possible differences in participation between neighborhoods and populations in Gresham. While proportionate representation by demographic groups is one measure of involvement opportunities, we focused on the number of engagements and community events that created welcoming intercultural spaces as a better measure of equitable practices.

Key Findings

Differences in Participation

In analyzing demographic characteristics of the 236 respondents to the online questionnaire, we found that the distribution by race/ethnicity was close to the city’s distribution as a whole. Groups that were over-represented include: seniors (age 65+), females, and residents of owner occupied units. Targeted outreach to Rockwood residents yielded a relatively high response rate. Compared to other neighborhoods other than Rockwood, the three neighborhoods with the most respondents are located in South Gresham which has the lowest share of under-represented populations compared to the West and Central subregions. This suggests that the methods used for citywide outreach are more accessible to populations with more resources, while working with community groups and doing intercept surveys are two methods for reaching populations that experience barriers to involvement.

Barriers to Involvement in Gresham

- A lack of awareness about decision-making processes and opportunities to get involved
- Language and translation (notices, meetings, resources, jargon)
- Timing or location of events that make attendance inconvenient/impossible due to job or family obligations and/or transportation challenges
- The need for childcare services in order to attend events
- Costs related to transportation, childcare, and/or taking time off work to participate
- Doubt that input will be taken seriously
- Intimidation of the formality of City proceedings

Interest and Desire for More Involvement

Community members from a wide variety of backgrounds are very interested in engaging with the City of Gresham to address community and neighborhood-based issues. The community energy speaks to the need for increasing the capacity for City staff to build relationships with community members, regardless of the department or program.

GOAL 1:

Facilitate welcoming public involvement practices that resonate with people of diverse backgrounds in all City government plans and decision-making processes.

It is essential to understand the barriers to participation that under-represented groups experience, in order to make fair accommodations to increase public involvement and foster a positive dialogue about neighborhood issues. By instituting best practices for engaging under-represented populations in the region, the City can take advantage of the energy and eagerness of residents to get involved. Therefore, we recommend evaluating decision-making and planning processes using an equity empowerment perspective, as well as building additional partnerships with trusted community groups and leaders. This goal builds upon existing City policies for public involvement.

A long-term objective of Goal 1 is to increase representation of protected classes on Citizen Advisory Committees. Achieving proportionate representation on advisory and decision-making bodies is an important aspect of equitable practice, particularly with respect to funding decisions. However, it is important that representatives feel prepared to participate and that institutional conditions support increased involvement of historically under-represented populations. Partnering with culturally specific groups to provide leadership training is one way to develop this capacity overtime.

Action 1-1:

Use Multnomah County’s Equity Empowerment Lens to evaluate public involvement practices, planning processes, and policies.

Action 1-2:

Develop new relationships with under-represented groups throughout Gresham, with a particular focus on protected classes.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail
On the one hand, I don’t want to move out of my neighborhood because I work here. On the other hand I feel stuck, and am sick of having to share a bedroom with my child. But there are no other neighborhoods that I can afford to live in.

- Gresham Resident

Housing choice is fundamental to opportunity because it is the foundation for a healthy and productive life. Housing is more than simply shelter - it serves as a platform, and where one lives matters in terms of access to the resources that meet basic needs. The impacts of housing on individual and community health vary based on several dimensions including: ownership, availability, price and affordability, quality of the housing structure or property, and location or neighborhood context.

Home ownership is the primary source of wealth for most Americans and contributes to neighborhood level stability, yet it is difficult to attain homeownership for lower income households. Additionally, the effects of historic and institutionalized discriminatory practices in the housing market created barriers to ownership for people of color that persist today. People who cannot or choose not to own homes must rent, making the availability of rental housing that is affordable to a range of incomes a necessity in all communities. Eliminating housing cost burden provides families independence and stability. Well-maintained rental housing that is affordable has positive impacts on the health of families and residents. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that existing and new rental units are safe and high-quality.

Neighborhoods provide opportunities such as services, employment, and education, as well as transportation options that connect people to citywide and regional opportunities. Neighborhood context also involves the social environment, including networks of family, friends, and community groups. Given that where one lives matters in terms of access to resources, it is important to consider the location of new housing.

"Housing is, without question, the most fundamental component of any community."

-2013 Housing Policy Update, Section 4.800, Gresham Housing Policy
Housing Cost Burden
Houses Spending 30% of Income or more on Housing, by Census Tract

Rate of Cost Burdened Homes
- 0% - 26.6%
- 26.7% - 42.7%
- 42.8% - 54.2%
- 54.3% - 65.9%
- 66% - 81.3%

City of Gresham

Created by calculating the number of cost burdened households in each census tract divided by the total number of households in each census tract. This number equals the rate of cost burdened homes by tract. Map data sources include: City of Gresham, ACS 2008-2012.

Renter Occupied & Multi-Family

Percent Renter Occupied Housing Units by Census Tract and Multi-Family Housing

Percent Renter Occupied Units
- 8.5% - 21.2%
- 21.3% - 37%
- 37.1% - 44.4%
- 44.5% - 57.1%
- 57.2% - 73.6%

City of Gresham

Created to show current access to rental units based on the location of multi-family housing and percent renter occupied units by census tract. This map uses multi-family housing from Metro’s RLIS inventory as a proxy for the more precise location of rental housing, although it should be noted that 20.5% of renter occupied units are single family detached or single family attached homes. Map data sources include: City of Gresham, ESRI 2013, Metro RLIS.
Methods

To analyze housing opportunity in Gresham, we created several maps, including:

- Minority Ownership Gap
- Cost Burden (paying over 30% of household income on housing)
- Subsidized Housing (Section-8 and project based)
- Renter Occupied Households with Multi-family Housing
- Median Age of Housing Structures

In addition to engaging residents, we interviewed stakeholders in housing policy across the region and in Gresham, including city staff in Community Development and Urban Design and Planning, advocates for Fair and Affordable Housing; the Housing Authority (Home Forward); and local jurisdictions that have completed an opportunity mapping project.

Lastly, we referred to the following documents:

- Gresham Housing Policy (2013)
- Gresham Housing Study (Johnson Reid, LLC, 2012)
- Consolidated Plan Documents (2011)
- Examples of opportunity mapping projects that informed housing policy

Key Findings

Home Ownership

Gresham has an affordable for-sale housing supply relative to many parts of the Metro area however given that Gresham’s ownership housing units are increasing in price, it is challenging for lower income households to own homes. Community residents would like better access to affordable home ownership that meets their needs. Additionally, the number of people of color that own homes is disproportionate to the total number of people of color in Gresham (the “minority ownership gap”). Low ownership rates as a whole are concentrated in the Central City and Rockwood, the minority ownership gap is highest in these two neighborhoods, as well as Centennial.

Availability and Affordability of Rental Housing

Like most communities, Gresham does not have enough subsidized units to meet demand. Roughly 12.8% of the City’s rental stock is “affordable housing”, defined as housing operated by the Housing Authority or non-profits specifically to provide housing to a low-income target population. Subsidized housing is located almost exclusively along the MAX Blue line, and the highest rates of Section-8 use are in West Gresham.

In addition, the 2012 Housing Study concluded that there is an unmet need for 5,300 rental units that are priced for the two lowest rent brackets, $0-$380 and $380-$620. In fact, about 44% of Gresham households are “cost burdened,” which the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines as paying over 30% of household income on rent or mortgage. The maps on the previous pages show that at least 26.7% of households are cost burdened in all but one census tract, and that multi-family housing is distributed across the city. Consistent with this finding, only 58% of questionnaire respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I am able to pay my rent/mortgage comfortably.”

West Gresham as relatively high rates of housing cost burden, high shares of renter occupied units (up to 73.6%), and concentrations of multifamily housing. Listening circle participants expressed concerns related to stretching their budgets to afford housing suitable for their families or not being able to afford higher quality rental housing with amenities such as outdoor space.

Some neighborhoods in Central Gresham also have a high share of renters. With the exception of the Mt. Hood and Powell Valley neighborhoods, South Gresham has no subsidized housing and very little multi-family and rental housing. This suggests that there are fewer opportunities for low-income renters to live in South Gresham, reducing neighborhood choice within the city as a whole.

Quality of Housing

Older building structures are located throughout Gresham with higher concentrations in West and Central Gresham. The oldest housing dating prior to the 1930’s is in the Central City neighborhood. In Rockwood, much of the multi-family housing stock dates back to the 1960’s. The older, detached housing makes the area attractive for family living because it is more affordable. The 2012 Housing Study found that rental housing quality is an issue in the Rockwood neighborhood, which generally has more degraded housing units compared to other parts of the city. Residents expressed the need for safe and quality units, and some were concerned about vacant lots. Community residents expressed the desire for community spaces, outdoor play areas, and garden plots within apartment complexes.
GOAL 2:

Increase opportunities for residents to meet their diverse housing needs in neighborhoods of their choice by providing a variety of quality, affordable housing options.

This goal addresses the fundamental need for housing that is safe, affordable, and suitable to household needs. In addition to healthy living conditions, quality housing includes sufficient space. It is particularly important that multi-family housing provides common outdoor and multi-use space, given that families are increasingly living in apartments, children need places to play that are visible from dwelling units, and there are existing issues with public parks that limit opportunities for recreation and nature enjoyment (see Parks and Opportunity).

Providing a variety of housing types at a range of prices allows for more neighborhood choice so that families and individuals can locate in places that meet non-housing needs. The goal calls for affordable housing that serves as a springboard to opportunities such as employment, education, healthy food, and services. Reducing housing cost burden provides families with independence and stability. This aligns with the City’s Housing Policy goal to “provide a full range of housing types and sizes that reflect the needs of Gresham’s citizens through all life stages and circumstances” (Comprehensive Plan, Section 10.600).

This goal should be implemented through a three-pronged approach that includes:

- Increase housing choices and affordability
- Rehabilitate or redevelop substandard properties
- Provide tenant protections (e.g., relocation, eviction prevention assistance, and rent subsidies)

The intent is to ensure that low-income residents, particularly those who have suffered in poor quality housing, have access to redeveloped housing or are able to remain in rental units as neighborhood improvements occur.

The City can partner with many actors in order to advance this goal. In fact, the lack of affordable housing and homelessness are regional issues that require collaborative solutions. Participating in regional conversations and advocating for strategies that promote all cities to pursue their “fair share” of housing construction will remain an important part of achieving this goal in the long-term.

Construct additional housing units, prioritizing units that are affordable to households making less than 30% AMFI and between 50%-80% AMFI; use the opportunity analysis to help guide the location of residential development.

Increase HOME funds for rental housing rehabilitation and redevelopment that property owners can utilize, targeting outreach to properties that have the most complaints through the Rental Housing Inspection Program.

Increase awareness of and resources to existing renter assistance programming, tenant education, and landlord training.

Partner with Home Forward to redevelop properties that are beyond repair with subsidized housing.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
We feel like we live on an island because we cannot walk or bike to downtown Gresham. The roads are narrow and it feels dangerous with no shoulders or sidewalks to walk on.

- Gresham Resident

Robert Bullard, the father of the Environmental Justice Movement, said that "transportation is a basic ingredient for quality of life indicators such as health, education, employment, economic development, access to municipal services, residential mobility, and environmental quality."

For residents who do not have a car or a driver's license, it is fundamental to have access to a transit system that provides frequent and reliable service, as well as a safe pedestrian network. In addition, people that lack reliable access to vehicles due to factors such as cost and age are more reliant on walking to get around and thus more exposed to traffic hazards.

As with all cities, Gresham has a substantial population of people who do not have access to a vehicle or who cannot drive and are therefore dependent on transit and other modes to get around.

Gresham residents seek a safe, multi-modal transportation network. A key objective of the Gresham Transportation System Plan (TSP) is to create a balanced transportation system where pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists have equal opportunity to get around. One goal in the TSP is related to livability: tying the quality and location of transportation facilities to broader opportunities such as access to good jobs, affordable housing, quality schools and safe streets.

"Support the growth and development of the city of Gresham as an economically vital and livable community by providing its residents and all transportation system users' safe, pleasant and convenient access and travel within, to and through the city."

- Gresham Transportation System Plan, Vision Statement 2035
Walkability and Transit

Transit Frequency and Walkability Index by Census Tract

Methodology:

Walkability and Transit

Walkability was the second largest transportation-related concern, based on our analysis. This is a citywide issue, as only 42% of questionnaire respondents said that it is easy to get around their neighborhood by foot.

West and Central Gresham appear to have the highest need for walkability improvements, based on existing sidewalk gaps and demographic indicators (low vehicle ownership and high concentrations of youth and low income households). In addition, West Gresham residents expressed desire for improved pedestrian infrastructure, particularly to address safety concerns with walking to parks and transit stops. There is a need for more crosswalks, sidewalks, and street lighting.

Key Findings

Transit Service

Gresham is lacking north-south transit service in terms of connectivity and frequency. Line 87 on 181st and 182nd is the only north-south line through West Gresham neighborhoods. It currently is low frequency, running every hour on weekdays from 5:35AM to 5:37PM, with no service on the weekends. Our questionnaire results suggest that non-transit riders would be more likely to take transit if there were more direct routes to destinations. In addition, safety concerns among non-riders are related to bus stops. West Gresham residents expressed the need for more shelters at bus stops, better sidewalk connectivity to stops, longer transfer ticket times, and more night service.

Methods

To map transportation opportunities in Gresham, we focused on transit since it emerged as the top community concern. Existing maps of the transit network did not seem to represent residents’ experiences with bus route frequency. Therefore, we created the map shown on the left in order to better understand the frequency of transit service. It shows the bus network divided into three categories:

- **High frequency routes** run between 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends.
- **Medium frequency routes** run every 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends.
- **Low frequency routes** run every hour and do not provide service on the weekends.

To better understand frequency of transit service in Gresham, this map divides the transit network into three categories: High Frequency routes run between 15 to 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends, Medium Frequency routes run every 30 minutes on weekdays and weekends, and Low Frequency routes run every hour and do not provide service on the weekends. The Equity Atlas walkability index is displayed as a proxy for pedestrian accessibility at the census tract level. The data is based on 2005 sidewalk network data. Map data sources include: Equity Atlas 2.0, City of Gresham, TriMet

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GOAL 3:

Improve transit service and walkability.

This goal aims to improve connections to key aspects of opportunity, including parks, schools, libraries, grocery stores, social services, and employment. First, the analysis indicates that many improvements are needed for the transit system, including increasing transit frequency and connectivity, as well as upgrading bus stops. There is also a need for a more well-connected pedestrian network, particularly to better serve transit riders. Walkability improvements would include filling in sidewalk gaps, adding crosswalks at intersections, and providing more street lights. Supporting pedestrian activity through more and safer infrastructure supports physical health (from increased exercise). Based on higher levels of transit-dependency, West Gresham and older parts of Central Gresham should be prioritized.

Action 3-1:
Advocate for transit service improvements in Gresham through TriMet’s Transit Enhancement Plan process.

Action 3-2:
Complete a “neighborhood walkability assessment” in West Gresham to identify and prioritize projects that improve walking conditions, with emphasis on areas around transit, schools, and parks.

Action 3-3:
Develop a tool for evaluating improvement projects listed in the Transportation System Plan (TSP).

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
The Rockwood neighborhood has a lot of diversity, and a variety or flavor. Thai, Greek, soul food and healthy food options would be a wonderful addition. Overall, people want good food choices but, they just aren’t available.
- West Gresham Resident

Healthy food is a basic human necessity and essential for people to be able to take advantage of other opportunities. Eating healthy and adequate amounts of food results in better educational performance, prevention of chronic disease, and overall quality of life and well-being. Food is also a central piece of many cultures, and the ability for people to connect over a meal is an important part of building community. Over the past decade, food access challenges faced by certain urban populations have received increased attention as scholars, policy-makers, and the media have taken an interest in “food deserts” (urban areas devoid of supermarkets). Some initiatives have focused on eliminating food deserts by reducing the distance between supermarkets and residences.

However, such an approach risks overshadowing other barriers that people face to acquiring nutritious food regardless of their proximity to a supermarket. Consequently, advocates have increasingly shifted their focus away from “food deserts” and toward improving access to affordable, healthy food more broadly.

In recent years, City Council has adopted a number of policies and initiatives intended to address food access in the city including the Healthy Eating Active Living code amendments adopted in 2012 and the Food Access Initiative adopted in 2014. The findings and goals and actions outlined below are intended to complement, support, and help guide this work.

FOOD JUSTICE INITIATIVES IN GRESHAM

Rockwood Food Co-operative
Working to create a community owned and operated grocery

Ecumenical Ministries Healthy Retail Initiative
Working to help small neighborhood store owners increase the availability of fresh food options

Outgrowing Hunger
Re-claiming under-utilized land in order to provide immigrant and refugee families opportunities to grow and sell food

Rockwood Food Incubator
Plan to help food-based start-ups get established and eventually transition to brick-and-mortar businesses at the Urban Renewal Area Catalyst site

Read more about food deserts, and other non-spatial barriers to healthy food access

The Ecumenical Ministries Rockwood Food Assessment found that, on average, people travelled 6.3 miles to get their groceries.
Access to Grocers & Supermarkets
by Food Access Priority Areas

Food access “priority areas” were determined using census tract data to determine the level of poverty, access to transportation, walkability, proximity to healthy and affordable food sources, and land use considerations. CCP completed a Market Basket Survey to ID “affordable” grocery stores (below citywide average prices), shown on this map with half and quarter mile buffers. This map also shows the transit network. Map data sources include: Metro RLIS, ACS 2008-2012, City of Gresham, Camassia Community Planning Market Basket Survey.

Community Food Assets
by Food Access Priority Areas

This map shows the previously mentioned food access priority areas along with identified community food assets, such as farm stands, emergency food locations, farms, and community gardens. Map data sources include: ACS 2008-2012, Metro RLIS, 211 Info, EMO Rockwood Food Assessment, Camassia Community Planning Market Basket Survey.

Map Methodology:
- City of Gresham
- Food Access Priority Areas
- Community Food Assets
- Emergency Food Locations
- Farms
- Community Gardens
- Industrial

Map Gresham

Opportunity Framework Plan
Methods

CCP conducted a comprehensive analysis to identify areas of Gresham where improvements to food access should be prioritized. The grocery and community food asset maps show the “priority areas” where people are more likely to face food access barriers. This analysis is based upon consideration of the following measures, using 2010 Census data, 2008-2012 ACS data, our own research, and business license data:

- The level of poverty by tract (>20% = areas of high poverty)
- Access to transit (sidewalk density and proximity to transit lines)
- Vehicle ownership (number of cars per household)
- Proximity to healthy and affordable food sources (based on a market basket survey conducted by CCP)
- Land uses (industrial or residential)

We also display types of stores. These include:

- Culturally Specialized: Stores that mainly sell traditional foods of a specific cultural group
- Affordable: Full service stores with prices at or below the city's average prices

Additionally, CCP identified community food assets such as:

- Farmers’ markets, farms, farm stands, community gardens, and locations to acquire emergency food such as food pantries.

The results of our mapping analysis were presented at listening circles and at a discussion group with community leaders and professionals working in the field of food access.

Key Findings

Priority Areas

Based on demographics and existing access to affordable grocery stores, we determined that Rockwood, Centennial, and North Central neighborhoods in Gresham face the highest barriers to accessing healthy food. These areas should be prioritized for food access improvements.

Grocery Stores

Given that grocery stores in the areas with highest poverty rates are among those with the highest prices, and that there have been six grocery store closures in the city since 2003, it appears that the supermarket chain approach to food security is not adequately serving Gresham’s most food insecure populations. Our questionnaire results provided further evidence that residents who live in the high priority areas are travelling longer distances in order to purchase food even when supermarkets exist in their own neighborhoods. While supermarkets must play a role in providing affordable food to the urban population, dependency on large national chain stores does not appear to be a sufficient solution to food security on its own.

Community Food Assets

Community engagement revealed that Gresham residents value access to fresh and affordable food and many prefer to shop at community-owned and operated sources such as Winco or farmers’ markets, rather than at large national chain stores. Gresham has many existing “community food assets”, including community gardens, farms, farm stands, and open-air markets. Our questionnaire and engagement efforts suggest that these food assets are highly valued by residents, but that these existing assets are currently insufficient to serve the needs of residents.

The Food Access Discussion Group was attended by 14 participants, each of whom work on food access issues. We asked stakeholders which aspects of the maps reflected Gresham’s experience, and what needed improvement. Subsequently, we revised our maps to reflect the ideas, suggestions, and feedback that we received.

We would like to thank the following people for their participation in the discussion group, and for their technical feedback on draft maps:

Adam Kohl, Outgrowing Hunger
Becky Bodonyi, Multnomah Health Department
Charles Robertson, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Dina DiNucci, Wallace Medical Concern
Emily Hull, Gresham Redevelopment Commission
Jenny Holmes, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Josh Fuhrer, Gresham Redevelopment Commission
Judy Alley, SnowCap Community Charities
Kathy Minden, People for Parks
Katrina Haller, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
Maribel Gomez, Rockwood Food Coop
Nathan McClintock, PSU Toulan School of Urban Studies and Planning
Ray Keen, Birch Community Services
Willie Chambers, The Northeast Health Resource Center

Refer to here for a complete list of findings.
GOAL 4:

Improve access to affordable healthy and culturally appropriate food in high priority areas.

Based on our findings, we recommend prioritizing food access improvements in the areas of Gresham that face the highest barriers to access (see mapped priority areas). We suggest a holistic and community-based approach to strengthen and expand neighborhood food assets, including food co-ops, open air markets, farm stands, community gardens, market gardens, and small locally owned grocers. The City’s approach should provide support to a range of other community food assets that would improve access to affordable healthy food. These community assets would help to better meet the diversity of residents’ food needs and preferences. Strengthening community food assets in residential neighborhoods would make food acquisition more convenient and would reduce transportation-related costs and barriers that are incurred when residents have to travel further distances. The growth of local food assets can also increase the vibrancy of underutilized commercial and public spaces, and provide more opportunities for communities to gather and for social encounters.

We recommend that this approach to food security be pursued in a manner that is consistent with the community economic development strategy outlined in Goal 5 by creating living wage jobs in all phases of the food system, including production (farming), processing, distribution, and retail. A food system that is created for and by the people it serves is likely to be one that is more reflective of the needs of the neighborhoods’ diverse communities themselves.

Finally, we recommend that all improvements to food security and food access be informed by further community engagement and consultation with diverse stakeholders at every stage, in accordance with Goal 1 of this plan. Partnerships with local organizations that are already pursuing food justice and food security initiatives would also be beneficial.

Action 4-1: Examine and enact zoning code changes that would permit better development of community food assets in priority areas.

Action 4-2: Provide financial and technical assistance to support the development of community food assets, including locally-owned grocers that provide access to affordable healthy food and pay living wages to employees.

Action 4-3: Work with small neighborhood retailers to help provide the resources and assistance necessary for them to sell healthy and affordable food.

Action 4-4: Conduct a feasibility study on how distribution channels could better link the region’s local farms and food producers with neighborhood retailers in priority areas.

Refer to Appendix B (Implementation Matrix) for additional detail.
Opportunity Framework Plan

Map Gresham

Gresham should think about opportunities to offer small, local business incentives and incubator assistance to inspire professional, technical, and local companies, including small organic food businesses.

- Gresham Resident

When discussing "opportunity", many people commonly think in terms of jobs and social mobility. The "American Dream" is based on the belief that everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to achieve prosperity and success through hard work. In addition, employment is fundamental to health and well-being, especially access to jobs that provide a wage that meets household needs. Beyond sufficient pay, a "good job" also offers safe working conditions, benefits, flexibility, job security, and the option for full-time work. Additionally, job security and living wages affect other indicators of opportunity, including access to healthy food, and stable housing conditions.

The City's Economic Development department currently implements a traded sector strategy that focuses on three complementary industries: manufacturing, clean technologies, and professional services. In addition to incentive programs, they work with local businesses to understand their need and have a Rapid Response Team to support expansion and relocation projects in Gresham. The Community Development provides a Small Business Center and administers programs like the Garage-to-Storefront initiative, which helped businesses locate in core commercial areas. In addition, City staff partner with a network of workforce development providers.

Employed Gresham Residents: Where do they commute for their primary job?

- Portland: 45%
- Locations surrounding Gresham: 39%
- Remain in Gresham: 16%

Gresham Jobs

- 31,000 Jobs in Gresham
- Gresham jobs in manufacturing, healthcare and social assistance, and retail trade sectors: 46%

Read about "spatial mismatch" - the separation between job opportunities and populations with low employment rates.