

82nd Avenue Community Forum

Summary Report



May 2013

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Acknowledgements

The 82nd Avenue Community Forum would not have been possible without help from a lot of people. Thank you to Madison High School for donating the use of a wonderful community meeting space. Principal Petra Callin graciously opened the building for us on her day off. We would especially like to thank the members of the event organizing committee for their assistance with just about every aspect of the forum. The committee included: Lew Scholl and Fritsch Hirsch from the Montavilla Neighborhood Association, Frank and Lisa Walsh from the Madison South Neighborhood Association, and Brad Taylor and Samantha Freeman from the Office of Neighborhood Involvement. Interns Chase Ballew and Jordan Potter also contributed greatly to the forum.

We are also thankful to the elected officials and staff who took time from their busy schedules to listen, learn and contribute ideas at the forum. They included Portland City Councilor Amanda Fritz, State Representative Michael Dembrow, Multnomah County Commissioner Loretta Smith, Metro Councilor Bob Stacey, and staff from the Portland Bureau of Transportation, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Bureau of Environmental Service, Office of Neighborhood Involvement Crime Prevention, Oregon Department of Transportation, and Multnomah County District Attorney's Office.

Resource Tables

The following groups provided invaluable information about the varied projects taking place in the 82nd Avenue Corridor:

Dharma Rain Center	Elders in Action
Jade District	82 nd Avenue Improvement Coalition
82 nd Avenue of Roses Business Association	Portland Bureau of Transportation
Portland Bureau of Planning & Sustainability	Montavilla Co-op
	Multnomah Co. District Attorney's Office

Facilitators

The following people helped to facilitate discussions and take notes during the World Café:

Fritz Hirsch	Shavon Caldwell	Samantha Freeman
Jeff Stookey	Julia Khuns	Brian Wong
Christine Egan	Chase Ballew	
Matt Wickstrom	Marc Jolin	
Frank Walsh		

Food and Beverage Donors

The following local businesses generously donated food and beverages for the forum:

Bipatisan Café (7901 SE Stark)	Space Monkey Coffee (5511 SE 72 nd)
Crema Bakery and Café (2728 SE Ankeny)	Starbucks Coffee (3639 SE Hawthorne)
Mekong Bistro (8200 NE Siskiyou)	Tabor Bread (5051 SE Hawthorne)

Forum Overview

On May 4, 2013, nearly 100 neighbors, business owners, community leaders, and representatives from government and community organizations gathered in the cafeteria at Madison High School to discuss the many projects that are occurring along the 82nd Avenue corridor and to envision what the area could look like in the future.

The idea for the 82nd Avenue Community Forum came out of extensive conversations with people who live, work, play, and recreate in the communities in the corridor. A couple of general themes emerged from those conversations. First, there are many people, organizations and agencies already putting forth great effort to improve conditions along 82nd Avenue. With so many different things going on, it is not always easy to know who is doing what. Second, there is a strong desire for even more to be done. There is recognition that the corridor has the potential to become even better.

With that in mind, the forum's goals were to:

- 1) Help connect with others around common issues and concerns;
- 2) Provide an opportunity to learn about the many people and groups working in the 82nd Avenue corridor;
- 3) Raise the visibility of the needs in the area;
- 4) Begin the conversation about the next steps for the corridor.

The conversations at the forum utilized a World Café format. Participants sat at tables in one of six topic areas: Arts and Culture, Business Development, Crime Prevention, Family Wellness, Streetscape Design, and Sustainable Transportation. There were four rounds of discussions with a facilitator taking notes at each of the tables. The questions for the each round were:

- Round 1: What do you like most about 82nd Avenue in its current condition?
- Round 2: What do you think is most challenging about 82nd Avenue?
- Round 3: If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change to 82nd Ave, what would it be?
- Round 4: What can you or your neighbors do to improve 82nd Avenue

The follow provides a summary of what was heard in each of the topic areas.

Arts and Culture

What current artistic and cultural aspects of 82nd Avenue do you like most?

- Retro '60s feel of buildings like Safeway, iconic car dealerships, Route 66
- Milepost 5's monthly exhibits, theater, and music
- Montavilla Art Walk – First Friday
- Possibility for ethnically diverse festivals, dance, music, and art

What do you think is the biggest challenge to improving the art, cultural qualities and diversity of 82nd Avenue?

- The perception of the area is that it is not rich in arts and culture.
- Difficulty in publicizing events and activities so that a broader group of people know about them.
- A lack of public gathering spaces for art to be displayed and for festivals, performances, etc.
- Hard to support art in a community that lives paycheck to paycheck
- State highway rules limit the amount and types of public art.

If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change that would improve the artistic and cultural expressions and the diversity on 82nd Avenue, what would it be?

- Push for more public art and change ODOT policies about public art on state highways.
- Work to develop conditions that allow for more affordable live-work space.
- Preserve low-income housing and cultural diversity.

What can you and your neighbors do to improve the art, cultural presence and diversity on 82nd Avenue?

- Spread the word about art and cultural activities in the area.
- Increase inter-group communication to bring together diverse cultures together to share artistic expressions.
- Participate in Village Building Convergence projects like intersection painting.
- Support existing arts groups like Milepost 5.
- Work to add colorful banners along 82nd Avenue.
- Encourage vacant storefronts to be used as temporary spaces for arts.
- Organize a festival of cultures sometime around the Lunar New Year.

Business Development

What current businesses or developments do you like most on 82nd Avenue?

- Family-friendly businesses
- The diversity of businesses and services
- Family-owned restaurants and grocers
- Businesses that try to be a part of the “neighborhood feel”.
- Businesses that focus on serving the neighborhood more than just people passing through the corridor.

What do you think is the biggest challenge in developing new businesses on 82nd Avenue?

- The poor reputation associated with 82nd Avenue.
- Crime increases insurance and makes it more costly for new and existing businesses.
- Neighbors don’t do enough to support local business development.
- The number of adult businesses keeps families away.
- The difficulty of accessing businesses on foot and bike.
- Existing business do not do enough to reach out to the nearby communities.

If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change to improve business development on 82nd Avenue, what would it be?

- Look at zoning codes to promote more mixed-use development.
- Find a new way to fund urban renewal areas and to add additional NPIs.
- Improve the visual appeal of the streetscape so that it is more attractive for businesses and people in the area.
- Improve the walkability by removing utility polls in the middle of sidewalk, adding better lighting, and ADA accessibility.
- Change the rules to allow for more trees planting along 82nd Avenue. Follow the example of what has been done on MLK Boulevard.
- Public/private development to encourage subsidized and affordable housing.
- Develop more parks and meeting spaces to encourage people to visit the corridor.

What can you and your neighbors do to improve business development along 82nd Ave?

- Patronize local businesses and tell other people about them.
- Work to change the reputation/perception of 82nd Avenue.
- Form a group to organize a farmer’s market on the north side of 82nd Avenue.
- Urge ODOT to make changes to streetscape and/or work to transfer road to PBOT.
- Work with Friends of Trees to plant more trees.
- Encourage the businesses that are wanted: friendly coffee shops, all ages music venue, healthy grocery stores.
- Look at having two different business associations for North and South parts of corridor.
- Leverage successful business knowledge to help new businesses.
- Work to connect neighborhoods and neighborhood associations with businesses.

Crime Prevention

What existing crime prevention efforts on 82nd Avenue do you like the most?

- Community policing program like the Prostitution Coordination Team, where the police have tools to help people instead of just arresting them.
- Increasing involvement from neighborhood associations and individual neighbors
- Foot Patrols and Neighborhood/Business Watches
- Legitimate businesses that are attracting a good clientele
- City bureaus have been very responsive

What do you think is the most challenging aspect of crime prevention on 82nd Avenue?

- Prostitution is a difficult crime to prevent. Funding cut for the Prostitution Coordination Team will be bad.
- Police sometimes can't respond quick enough to catch the people committing crimes
- Businesses like the strip clubs and used car lots seem to facilitate crime.
- The used car lots create lots of hiding spots where people can commit crimes, and also they take up a lot of room on the street but have few employees that are actually monitoring what is going on in front of their business.
- Criminals can escape and hide easily in 82nd, and often run into the neighborhoods
- People don't report crime since the area has a reputation of being crime-ridden, so people tolerate more crime.
- Few opportunities for youth to be involved in positive things.

If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change to prevent crime and promote safe communities on 82nd Ave, what would it be?

- Offer more money for business district revitalization efforts and store front improvement. The area doesn't look very nice, so people don't want to shop there.
- Help attract more good business, and less strip clubs and car dealerships.
- Promote more Career Day type events where kids out here learn all about the different kinds of jobs you can get with the City or County and can learn what they need to do to get them.
- Have the police spent more time hanging out with our kids and encouraging and praising their good behavior.
- Better enforcement of code violations.

What can you and your neighbors do to reduce crime and the fear of crime along 82nd Ave?

- Get involved! Take the streets back! Get out and walk around, start a Neighborhood Watch, join a foot patrol.
- Advocate for items in the budget like the Prostitution Coordination Team.
- Report crime.
- Neighbors need to let elected officials know where they care about, where the problems are, make them prioritize it.
- Neighbors need to keep an eye out for each other.

Family Wellness

What current aspects of 82nd Ave that promote family wellness do you like most?

- Montavilla Community Center
- Beautiful, diverse and affordable neighborhoods on each side of 82nd.
- Some good schools with diverse student bodies.
- Portland Community College is a resource.
- Good community policing efforts.

What do you think is the biggest challenge to family wellness on 82nd Ave.?

- Poor walkability makes it difficult to access family friendly businesses and kids' activities.
- Lack of varied health care services.
- The poor maintenance and safety of existing parks.
- Declining housing affordability.
- Adult stores and other businesses that contribute to crime.

If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change to improve family wellness on 82nd Ave., what would it be?

- Use tools to promote affordable housing that can serve families.
- Consider zoning changes to allow housing on 82nd Avenue so that there are more eyes on the street and more housing options.
- Help to form business districts that focus on family friendly businesses.
- Create a platform for an 82nd Avenue-wide neighborhood association coalition.
- Facilitate events to celebrate the area, share information, and leverage resources

What can you and your neighbors do to improve family wellness along 82nd Ave?

- Have more community events.
- Volunteer at schools and work with youth in the area.
- Take part in foot patrols and community policing.
- Advocate to prevent further displacement of families.
- Create a clearinghouse where people could go to submit and learn about volunteer opportunities.
- Work with volunteer organizations and city agencies to fix up parks and public spaces.

Streetscape Design

What existing streetscape design qualities on 82nd Avenue do you like most?

- There was very little that people said that they like. Instead, most people talked about what they would like. This included:
 - More roses; trees; planters; traffic calming, perhaps with islands with trees or smaller plantings; community gardens.
 - Public art, murals, better design of bus stops.
 - Empty lots should be cleaned up, and perhaps find ways for temporary uses of empty lots. This could include flower markets; artists markets, farmers markets.

What do you think the most challenging aspect of creating and maintaining desirable streetscape design qualities on 82nd Avenue?

- It is a long street that needs to have distinct areas/places yet also have a sense of continuity.
- ODOT regulations make it hard to make the street friendlier for humans and more attractive.
- 82nd Ave separates neighborhoods
- What the public sees is mostly people dashing north and south.
- Because of the car lots and other elements of 82nd, it seems like a “hard” place.
- Sidewalks have no buffering from the street.
- ODOT sees 82nd as state highway 213, not a local street.

If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change to improve streetscape design on 82nd Avenue, what would it be?

- Transfer jurisdiction from ODOT to PBOT.
- Direct ODOT and PBOT to develop a clearer vision of the future of 82nd Avenue.
- Re-examine policies regarding street trees.
- Tackle certain segments as demonstration projects to show what corridor could become.
- Use MLK as a model, including islands with small trees, good management of left turns.
- Use Asian American Market at 82nd and Siskiyou as a model for corner properties; entrance on side street, and pleasant design of the buildings and parking areas.
- Better design of buildings as they move to new owners, so that the building design better fits this use.
- Enforce codes, especially on vacant properties.

What can you and your neighbors do to improve the streetscape on 82nd Avenue?

- Coordinate tree planting and landscape plantings.
- Advocate for shared jurisdiction on 82nd Avenue.
- Participate in graffiti cleanups and other beautification projects.
- Make 82nd Avenue a piece of your neighborhood, not just an arterial.
- Organize street paintings and storefront paintings.
- Advocate for policy changes to close driveways and improve pedestrian safety.

Sustainable Transportation

What existing types of sustainable transportation on 82nd Avenue do you like the best?

- A high frequency bus line (#72)
- Access to the MAX

What do you think is the most challenging aspect of increasing sustainable transportation options along 82nd Avenue?

- The funding it will take to improve walking and biking conditions.
- ODOT sees the road as an arterial to move cars and not as a neighborhood street where people can move without cars.
- The perception of crime prevents a critical mass of people from walking and biking.
- Agencies like PBOT, ODOT and TriMet don't have a coordinated view of how 82nd Avenue should function.
- The road needs to serve many users like freight, public transportation, cars, pedestrians, and bikes. There are competing needs.

If you could ask civic leaders to promote one change that would improve sustainable transportation options on 82nd Ave, what would it be?

- Transfer 82nd Avenue to PBOT
- Focus on making it easier to cross by adding things like more rapid flash beacons.
- Change state law to spur development of state highways in urban areas.
- Completely re-do the 82nd Avenue MAX station. It is poorly designed and a source of many problems.
- Use money and resources from Safe Routes to Schools program to fix some of the problems.

What can you and your neighbors do to improve sustainable transportation options on 82nd Avenue?

- Get out and walk and bike so that there are more people and activity on 82nd Avenue.
- Let elected officials and agencies know that it is not acceptable that we can't safely cross the street.
- Advocate for the transfer of 82nd Avenue to PBOT.
- Work with OPAL and others to push for improvements to bus stops so that there are more and better shelters.
- Drive safely and set a good example to others in cars.
- Ask for better enforcement of crosswalk laws.
- Work with businesses to make it safer for people to walk along 82nd Avenue.



Moving Forward

The discussions at the 82nd Avenue Community Forum resulted in a number of ideas for continuing the improvement that is taking place along the corridor. It is clear from these conversations that it will take more than just one agency or organization to make 82nd Avenue better for people who live, work, play, and recreate in the communities in the corridor. It is going to take neighbors, businesses, organizations, and government working together to take advantage of the opportunities that exist and to continue to come up with creative solutions.

The forum provided an opportunity to start the conversation and to connect people so that they can carry the ideas forward. If you are interested in connecting with others around a particular project or idea, please let us know and we will do our best to assist you.

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