

Social Determinants of Health Accelerator Plan Final Report: Executive Summary

West Portland Town Center

December 2022



The Interstate 5 (I-5) and 99W corridor in Southwest Portland is projected to experience significant population and job growth over the next 25 years — by an estimated 3,000 new households in the next 10 years alone¹. To meet this housing and development demand, the Southwest Corridor Inclusive Communities project², a cross-sector, multi-agency effort led by the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS), is coordinating several inter-related projects to ensure that future investments benefit all communities, both current and future residents.

Portland has a history of planning and development shaped by structural racism, including redlining and racially restrictive covenants³. Along with other factors, these practices in Southwest Portland contributed to fewer people of color living in this part of the city. Furthermore, residents of color that did move into the area were more likely to live near major transit corridors or highways, which disproportionately increase health impacts like asthma and cardiovascular disease. More recently, new development across the city has contributed to rising housing costs and displacement of low-income households and communities of color, pushing them farther east and to outer southwest Portland, where infrastructure is incomplete and access to transit, jobs, services, and community is more difficult.

¹ City of Portland (2018). Southwest Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy.

<https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2019-09/final-sw-corridor-equitable-housing-strategy.pdf>

² Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, SW Corridor Inclusive Communities.

<https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/sw-inclusive>

³ Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (2019). Historical Context of Racist Planning: A History of How Planning Segregated Portland. <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/history-racist-planning-portland>

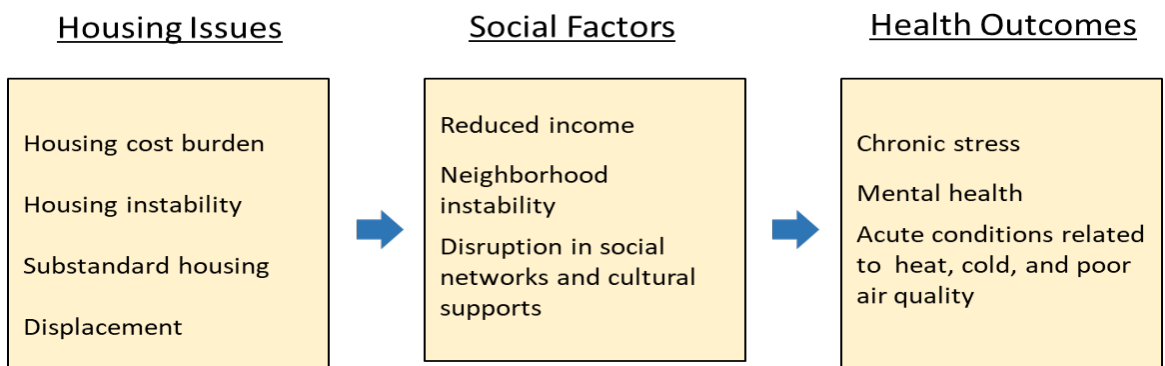


THE BUREAU OF
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SUSTAINABILITY**

Acknowledging Portland’s harmful and discriminatory history and its harmful effects on vulnerable and under-represented communities is critical to planning and development along the Southwest Corridor.

With plans for a new light rail line along the Southwest Corridor connecting downtown Portland to Tigard in full swing, it’s imperative to avoid creating new disparities or deepening existing ones as new development and investments trigger gentrification and displacement. It’s also an opportunity to use growth and investments differently, thus protecting existing residents and enhancing their housing security, community cohesion, economic prosperity, health, and well-being.

To ensure a racial equity advocacy lens was utilized in the corridor/light rail planning process, a coalition of community organizations, residents, businesses, philanthropic partners, and state and local government bodies formed the Southwest Corridor Equity Coalition (SWEC). Residents in and around the West Portland Town Center (WPTC) – at the crossroads of I-5, Barbur Blvd and Capitol Highway – repeatedly highlighted housing issues (housing cost burden, housing instability, substandard housing, displacement) that are related to social factors and health outcomes such as chronic stress, mental health, and acute housing quality conditions.



Logic Model Linking Social Determinants of Health with Health Outcomes.

These issues and concerns were elevated as BPS, in partnership with other City bureaus and community-based organizations, developed an area plan for the town center (WPTC Plan) to prepare for expected population and business growth. Through extensive community engagement, particularly with the SWEC members, two community priorities were identified⁴:

1. Place keeping strategies to build **residential stability** and **health**.
2. Creating cultural anchors that support **economic opportunity** and **community connections**.

⁴ Unite Oregon, Haki Community Organization, and Community Alliance of Tennant (2019). Community Based Priorities for the West Portland Town Center Plan. https://www.portland.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/community-based-priorities-for-west-portland-town-center_0.pdf

These priorities are examples of social determinants of health (SDoH), conditions of the physical and social environment that affect our well-being by shaping what risks and opportunities we experience in our daily lives.

To advance these SDoH priorities, BPS applied for and received a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Accelerator Grant. The grant allowed City staff to work with a Leadership Team comprised of individuals representing diverse organizations. Together they built on the momentum generated by the WPTC Plan and the Southwest Corridor Equitable Housing Strategy to improve housing stability and social connectedness by mapping short term next steps in an *Accelerator Plan*.

The grant supported convening a leadership team of nine community partners who met monthly for one year to prioritize objectives, gather additional community input, and identify actions to improve nonregulatory multifamily rental housing quality, grow multifamily community ownership opportunities, and establish a multicultural hub. Together they established the two key initiatives that contain objectives and goals for the Accelerator Plan:

Advance Housing Stability

Stable housing is a critical foundation for well-being. Residents in WPTC have expressed concerns around rental unit maintenance, and how the conditions in their apartments are detrimental to both their health and monthly budgets. They also would like more homeownership opportunities to build wealth, reduce displacement, and maintain strong community ties. The actions below support the goal to advance housing stability (full housing stability work plan on page 28 in full report):

1. Identify and implement incentives to support property owners to conduct energy improvements and maintenance on rental units without increasing rent.
2. Establish a framework that would support community ownership of multifamily housing units.

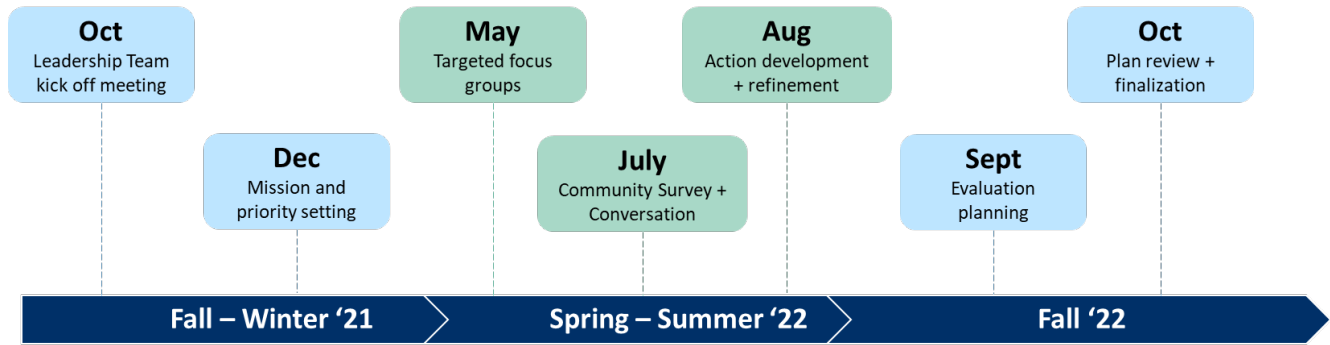
Advance Social Connectedness

Social connectedness supports a sense of belonging, increases access to resources and opportunities, and improves physical and mental health. Establishing a multicultural hub is a top community priority to reduce isolation, provide microenterprise opportunities, and increase access to social and medical services. The actions below build momentum toward the goal to strengthen social connectedness (full social connectedness work plan on page 38 in full report):

3. Plan and program a series of pop-up events to refine a business model for a permanent multicultural hub.
4. Conduct site planning to identify possibilities for a permanent location for a multicultural hub.

Accelerator Plan Development Timeline

The timeline below highlights Leadership Team activities to develop the WPTC SDoH Accelerator Plan.



Accelerator Plan Timeline for Leadership Team Activities and Community Outreach Activities.

Implementation

Implementation of the WPTC SDoH Accelerator Plan begins in January 2023, but full implementation efforts depend on future funding acquisition for all agencies and organizations involved. Each proposed action has an identified lead organization(s) based on mission and scope of the work. In lieu of leadership team meetings, conversations to advance Accelerator Plan actions will be held in SWEC subcommittee meetings.

BPS has committed staff to steward some actions and support communication and collaboration with community organizations between SWEC meetings. Partnership expansion with stakeholders in the energy and housing sectors, and community and business services, will also be needed to support implementation.

In fall 2022, HAKI Community Organization applied for and received a grant from Metro, the regional government, to hold a multicultural pop-up market event and begin developing a business model for a future permanent multicultural hub. Other than the Metro grant, there is no additional funding beyond limited staff time commitments. Leadership team organizations will continue to monitor funding opportunities to advance actions from the Accelerator Plan.

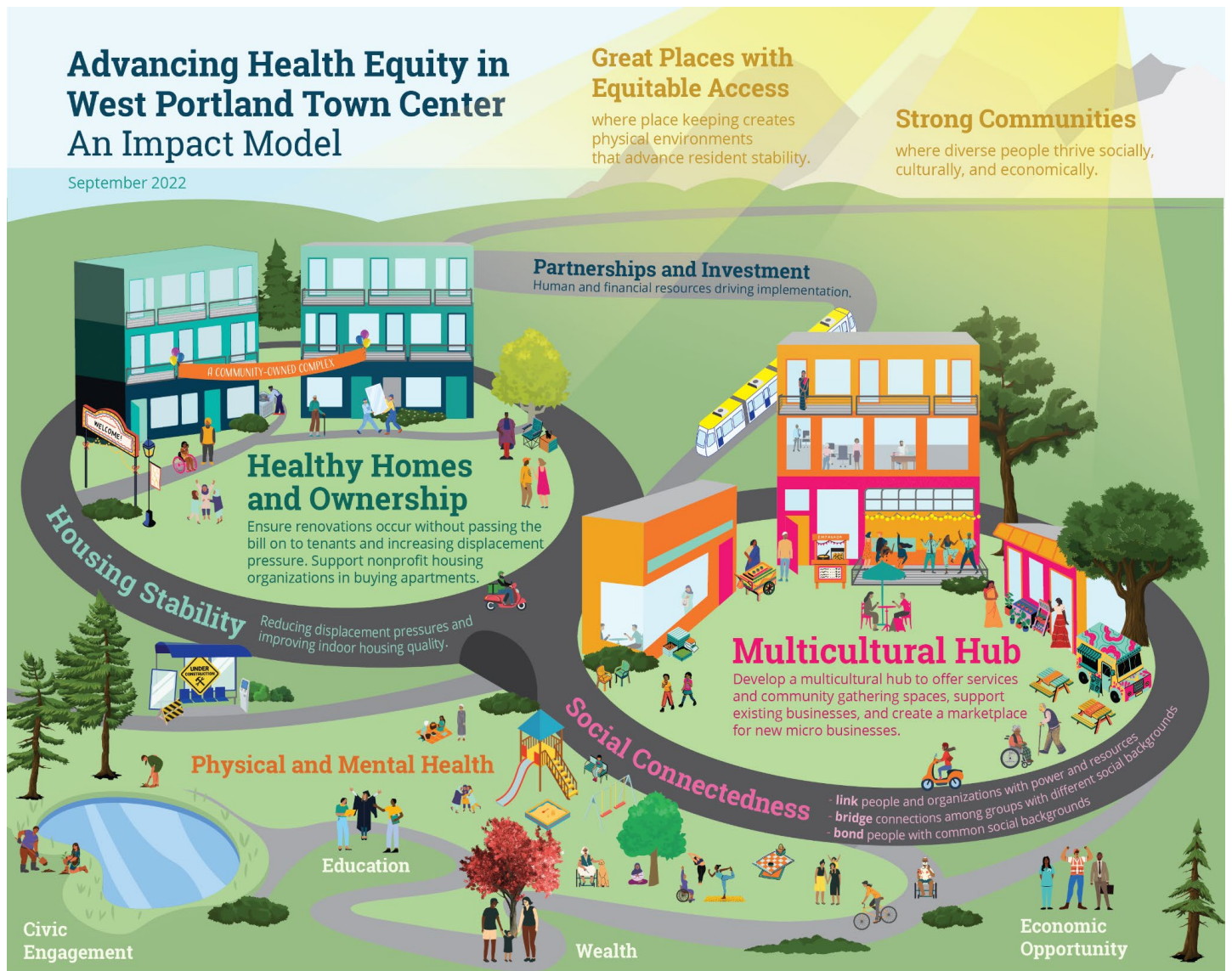
Measures of Success (Evaluation)

The WPTC SDoH Accelerator Plan evaluation strategy includes an approach for measuring outcomes and assessing progress. The strategy provides a menu of options for data collection and evaluation, adaptable to available funding at the time. Four potential categories of indicators are proposed: (1) Change agent capacity, (2) levers, (3) community conditions, and (4) resident impacts (full evaluation strategy on page 56 in full report).

A Model for Advancing Health Equity in the Face of Growth

This Accelerator Plan can serve as a model for other communities in the region that are facing growth and change. By focusing on the social determinants of a community's health, we can plan for growth that accommodates and enhances the well-being of all. We hope this project will serve as a helpful guide for similar efforts.

The WPTC SDoH Accelerator Plan Impact Model below visualizes how the plan goals (center) align with WPTC Plan vision statements (top) and have compounding benefits across multiple determinants of health (bottom) (full impact model description on page 26 in full report).



Impact Model: Advancing Health Equity in West Portland Town Center.