



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA)

R2 Interim Key Message Framework | Updated: October 24, 2022

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this key message framework is to identify the most effective and meaningful ways to communicate about the Economic Opportunities Analysis to stakeholders, elected officials, and other identified key audiences such as community members. The interim messaging included in this framework is designed to serve as a starting point — all messaging will be developed iteratively and updated frequently based on new information and decisions made throughout the project.

INTERIM MESSAGING

Background

The City of Portland is launching an Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) that will establish data to determine the City's long-term (20-25 years) job growth and land development needs. The technical analysis will be rooted in racial equity, inclusive prosperity, and aims to reduce income disparities for Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. Once completed, the evaluation will identify key policies for fostering a diverse and competitive city economy and upward mobility for Portland households over the next 20 years.

The development and implementation of the EOA will address opportunities for people, businesses, and places—including individual and household prosperity, business and job growth, land development opportunities, and urban competitiveness — through the lens of the 2035 Comprehensive Plan, which identifies guiding principles of human health, environmental health, equity, and resilience.

At its core, the EOA process is designed to explore opportunities to advance inclusive economic prosperity and sustain natural resource protections through the following focus areas:

Land Development

- The strength of our economy is dependent on the available land we have to develop—and strategic land use policies that reflect economic, employment, and industry needs and innovation opportunities.

- Land development capacity continues to be a key driver for industry and employment growth, job creation, and increasing resources to support next-generation infrastructure development.
- Spatial efficiency—the strategic distribution of industrial, commercial, and residential land uses promote better job matching and worker mobility.

Employment Growth

- Establishing a spectrum of quality jobs across industries and businesses, matched with workforce development programs, to support upward economic mobility for individuals and households.
- Prioritizing infrastructure development—like multimodal transportation can increase access to jobs, employment centers, and economic activity hubs.
- Increasing mid/high-wage employment opportunities with career ladders, particularly for BIPOC communities, could decrease income disparities and advance inclusive prosperity.

Income and Wealth Creation

- Increasing access to high-quality employment, higher incomes, and career ladders can facilitate opportunities for homeownership and long-term wealth creation.
- Strategic and equitable land use policies can increase spatial efficiency, access to employment centers, mitigate income inequality, and create upward mobility for underemployed workers.
- Increasing access to and locating major economic investments closer to residential centers can facilitate a clear pathway to high-quality employment, higher income levels, and wealth creation for populations and neighborhoods across Portland.

Climate and Environment

- Supporting industries with adopting clean/green business practices can help advance the City's climate action goals—while supporting economic growth.
- Integrating natural resource protection decisions in combination with economic development can help protect our natural resources like wetlands and rivers as our economy grows over time.
- Augmenting transit options to employment and residential centers can increase access to jobs and reduce emissions and our City's overall carbon footprint.

Challenges, Opportunities, and Trade-offs

While designed to support a diverse and competitive economy, the EOA must also consider the potential trade-offs and long-term impacts of growth and land development on the City's carbon reduction and natural resource protection goals. In particular, the study will assess potential impacts to natural resources and ecosystem functions, access to green spaces and rivers, and livability for neighborhoods in close proximity to industrial areas.

As a part of the analysis, the project team in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders intends to identify barriers, potential trade-offs, and mitigation strategies for achieving strategic growth and inclusive economic prosperity that can be leveraged to advance climate, natural resource and racial equity goals over the next 20 years.

Who is leading this work?

The City of Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) is facilitating this work in partnership with, the Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), Prosper Portland, Urban Forestry and other city bureaus who will:

- Conduct economic and land development analysis and planning (BPS)
- Provide data to support technical analysis (Prosper Portland, BES, Urban Forestry)
- Engage relevant bureaus and subject matter experts to analyze the full ecosystem of economic development, ecosystem functions, transportation, infrastructure, workforce development and more
- Design opportunities for stakeholders to inform the approach to technical analysis and data interpretation (Camille E. Trummer Consulting)
- Assemble an EOA Collaborative Working Group who will refine iterative drafts through the lens of racial equity and equitable economic prosperity (BPS, Camille E. Trummer Consulting)

When will the EOA be complete?

The analysis will be developed iteratively, informed by quantitative analysis and stakeholder input, and refined with recommendations from the EOA Collaborative Working Group. Portlanders can expect to see technical analysis development through Spring 2023 and a discussion draft by Summer 2023. A proposed draft will be reviewed by the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) in Winter 2024 followed by City Council adoption in Spring 2024.

Where are you in the process today?

Currently, BPS and its bureau partners are conducting research – through trends and market factors analysis to understand the opportunities and challenges to the City's economic growth and land development capacity.

The research will inform key policies, trade-offs, mitigation strategies, partnerships, and investments necessary to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable land development opportunities over the next 20 years.

How does this project connect to other work facilitated by the City of Portland?

The EOA will inform and contribute to broader efforts and a strategic plan to spur economic development and advance climate, environmental, and racial equity goals across the City of Portland.

The EOA will be compliment several ongoing projects including:

- The Inclusive Economic Development Strategy (2022 - 2027)
- [Floodplain Resilience Plan](#)
- [Columbia Corridor E-Zone Map Correction Project](#)
- [Montgomery Park to Hollywood Transit Project](#)

Success of the EOA and other strategic efforts to encourage inclusive economic growth will require cross-sector collaboration between City leadership, key partners, stakeholders, and leaders and policymakers in industry and business, workforce, and land use development.

How can I learn more and get involved?

To learn more about the EOA, please visit <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/eoa> or email: eo@portlandoregon.gov.

There will be inclusive engagement opportunities once a substantive draft (Discussion Draft) is available for public comment in Summer 2023. BPS will assemble an EOA Collaborative Working Group for interested stakeholders starting in January 2023; to learn more and submit your interest in joining email Rachael Hoy at Rachael.hoy@portlandoregon.gov. Honoraria is available for selected Working Group members in reciprocity for sharing their expertise and time to support the development of the Economic Opportunities Analysis.

To prioritize participation of and engagement with those most impacted by economic disparities, the EOA project team wants to hear from community members. We want to hear about your experience accessing education, employment, workforce development, and wealth creation opportunities in order to better understand which development strategies could best support advancing inclusive economic prosperity and reducing income disparities.

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Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA)

Engagement: Subject-matter Expert Interviews

Key Findings Report | Feb 1, 2023

Economic Opportunity Analysis Key Findings Report for Subject-matter Expert Interviews

BACKGROUND

The City of Portland has launched an Economic Opportunities Analysis (EOA) that will establish data to determine the City's job growth and land development needs. The technical analysis is rooted in racial equity, inclusive prosperity, and aims to reduce income disparities for Black, Indigenous, and people of color communities. Once completed, the evaluation will identify key policies for fostering a diverse and competitive city economy and upward mobility for Portland households over the next 20 years. The development and implementation of the EOA will address opportunities for people, businesses, and places—including individual and household prosperity, business and job growth, land development opportunities, and urban competitiveness — through the lens of racial equity and climate resilience. At its core, the EOA is designed to explore opportunities to advance inclusive economic prosperity and sustain natural resource protections.

As a part of the analysis, the project team in collaboration with key partners and stakeholders intends to identify historical and anticipated barriers, potential trade-offs, and mitigation strategies for achieving strategic growth *and* inclusive economic prosperity that can be leveraged to advance climate and racial equity goals over the next 20 years.

APPROACH TO CONSTITUENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Due to the historical negative impacts of urban planning outcomes on disadvantaged communities, the City of Portland is committed to encouraging and increasing civic

participation from historically marginalized and underrepresented populations. The perspectives and input from historically disadvantaged populations helps the City of Portland and its partners consider historical context, potential impacts, challenges, barriers, and opportunities across various scopes of work. More specifically, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) relies on collaboration with community partners and subject-matter experts in both public and private sectors to inform and advise on strategies to achieve the bureau's goals in alignment with its equity policies.

At the outset of the EOA project, BPS acknowledged the challenges and barriers to civic engagement and recognized that meaningful input requires time, commitment, resources, and access to information. Therefore, community and constituent engagement to support the development of the EOA has been designed to reduce barriers, encourage civic participation from historically marginalized communities using core principles developed by Camille E. Trummer Consulting:

- Acknowledge the institutional, systemic, and structural barriers that perpetuate inequality that have silenced communities over time
- Honor, respect, and center community expertise and resilience to own and co-create solutions that meet their needs
- Build trust, credibility and authentic long-term relationships
- Facilitate meaningful engagement, shared leadership, swift community support and capacity building, and co-creation of solutions using social justice and antiracist frameworks and best practices
- Compensate individuals and groups in reciprocity for their engagement and to increase their capacity to support initiatives aligned with their mission and values

As a result, the EOA project prioritized engagement with and has solicited feedback from historically disadvantaged populations and those who have experienced barriers to participating in planning and sustainability projects and policymaking initiatives.

Prioritized populations include but have not been limited to:

- Black, African, and African Americans
- Alaskan Indian, Indigenous, and urban Natives
- Low-income individuals

To encourage and incentivize engagement—and to ensure *new* community and subject-matter expert (SME) voices are considered throughout the development of the EOA, the project team developed an honoraria program to compensate individuals in reciprocity for sharing their time and insights.

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERT INTERVIEWS

To gain insights that can inform and help determine the City's job growth and land development needs, the EOA project team conducted seven 60-minute interviews with local subject-matter experts with experience ranging from nonprofit community development to natural resource sustainability and private commercial real estate. Interviews were held between December 1, 2022 and January 6, 2023. The goals and objectives of the interviews were to:

- 1) Test strategic assumptions about market conditions in Portland; solicit hard-to-access data from practitioners
- 2) Capture insights and recommendations from subject-matter experts on policy concepts designed to encourage growth *and* strengthen natural resource protections
- 3) Develop long-term relationships with subject-matter experts interested and invested in civic engagement through the lens of urban planning and sustainability
- 4) Gauge interest and recruit subject-matter experts to join the EOA Collaborative Working Group to support the development of EOA policy concepts

Subject-matter interviews were well received by all participants. SMEs reported feeling more knowledgeable about the City's process for determining job growth and land development needs—and how their work and access to data can help inform future policy concepts. Interviewees also appreciated having a centralized venue to share their insights that connects to various interrelated scopes of work across City bureaus like BPS, BES, and Prosper Portland.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ENGAGEMENT

As a result of the seven SME interviews, the EOA project team surfaced several key themes to help inform the development of the EOA. The following key findings offer a set of strategic recommendations to support determining Portland's job growth and land development needs — through the lens of policy solutions and best practices tested by a spectrum of nonprofit and private-sector practitioners.

In addition to evaluating Portland's available land supply, focus should be dedicated to exploring the best and highest use of underutilized land. Interviewees with experience in commercial real estate development previewed the high-level interest developers have in underutilized land. Evaluations of available land supply should also explore opportunities to revitalize land in ways that capitalize the best and highest use in response to market

demand. Interviewees also expressed the need for the City to incentivize revitalization through a more streamlined and efficient development process (creating more balance between the inception of development and delivery to the market) to get projects built faster.

Forward looking trends in our local economy should inform robust redevelopment plans across corridors. Industries on the cusp of cutting-edge innovation like semiconductor manufacturing, life sciences, and climate tech are already demonstrating market trends that corridor plans should take into consideration in order to be prepared for and responsive to future market demands.

Market changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic should spark innovative ideas for reconciling zoning to allow for better and higher use of land supply. As an example, the demand for employment/office space has plummeted due to the sharp increase in remote work stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. One interviewee inquired, “if employment/office space is the centerpiece of our central city, and market trends aren’t projecting workers returning to offices, then how can the City retool zoning to incentivize a better and higher use of existing land supply and now vacant office buildings in that area?”

Agencies responsible for city and region-wide natural resource cleanup should use a fully integrated approach that includes restoration. Sustainability practitioners emphasized the need for convening groups around how best to initiate cleanup *and* restoration efforts at the same time to avoid missed opportunities to prepare sites for better natural resource protections and intentional redevelopment.

Mitigation practices should lead with strategies that maximize the environmental benefits of the area. As an example, Yakama Nation believes that mitigation is only one piece of the natural resource protection puzzle—since most developers want to develop land and mitigate somewhere else. Yakama Nation advises that site cleanup should always integrate restoration efforts (primary restoration) in order to reconcile decades of impacts to a particular area. Yakama Nation believes that mitigation should be magnified to always include restoration as a best practice, in order to truly restore lands that have been damaged for centuries.

Public-private partnerships are required in order to proactively retool the employment market to invest in homegrown talent. According to interviewees, the City of Portland is best positioned to forge public-private partnerships to help employers identify and invest in—through workforce development programs—the local talent they need to support

growing sectors. Multi-year investments supported by data could demonstrate how the entire employment market benefits from retooling, potentially led by larger organizations. This approach may also meet the demand of an underutilized workforce looking to transition to industries with more upward wage mobility.

Establish and promote creative redevelopment opportunities that attract mission-aligned developers. Instead of relying on developers solely focused on delivering density in terms of residential and employment projects, create unique programmatic opportunities that attract developers interested in revitalizing underutilized land and/or vacant buildings, especially in industrial areas. For example, the central city will attract businesses who need to grow and offer more amenities not available in the neighborhood business districts. How can the City incentivize developers to engage in strategic placemaking efforts that support business growth in priority corridors?

Strategies focused on job growth should be coupled with interventions to support and scale the childcare industry. Several interviewees mentioned the deep constraints experienced by middle income families that lack access to affordable childcare in close proximity to employment hubs. Overall, the size of the childcare industry is too small to meet the high demand of workers who cannot return to the central city due to lack of consistent, affordable childcare—and the demand will only increase as Portland grows and attracts new businesses and talent.

Invest in a city-wide rebranding effort to support economic growth and improve public perception. Portland’s reputation as being a “difficult place to do business” will only hinder the City’s growth goals while the region continues to attract businesses and spark job growth outside of city boundaries. Interviewees recommend the City invest in a city-wide rebrand to help reframe negative narratives about the city, its governance, and relationships with businesses and private-sector leaders.

Reduce regulatory barriers in Portland’s land use development process. Interviewees with experience in commercial real estate development reported first-hand accounts of project failures due to Portland’s permitting process and fee structure. While designed to promote intentional development, the process creates significant barriers for developers invested in meeting market demands in a timely manner—ultimately creating an unbalanced built environment that small businesses and residents bear the brunt of. The best way to encourage more industrial growth is through reconciling zoning and creating incentives, making redevelopment more affordable, and easing permitting processes and cutting development fees to support expedient, intentional growth.

Create incentive-based programs to encourage better uses of land that support the community and economy. A nonprofit leader shared how a community-based organization (CBO) utilized tax increment financing (TIF) to develop a program designed to encourage industrial land owners to consider better uses of their underutilized or vacant land to support their local community (i.e., invest in sustainable, low-carbon upgrades, allow a business with the intent to create local jobs utilize their land, etc.) As a result, multiple property owners in Portland’s Cully neighborhood have agreed to redevelop their land in partnership with the nonprofit organization and a private developer.

As BPS proceeds with compiling data to determine Portland’s job growth and land development needs for the next 20 years, the EOA will continue to be a key vehicle for incorporating community and subject-matter expert insights and strategic direction. The EOA project team intends to continue to solicit strategic direction from subject-matter experts through the EOA Collaborative Workgroup starting in spring 2023.



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA)

Engagement: Focus Groups

Key Findings Report | Feb 1, 2023

Economic Opportunity Analysis Key Findings Report for Focus Groups

BACKGROUND

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The development and implementation of the EOA will address opportunities for people, businesses, and places—including individual and household prosperity, business and job growth, land development opportunities, and urban competitiveness — through the lens of racial equity and climate resilience. At its core, the EOA is designed to explore opportunities to advance inclusive economic prosperity and sustain natural resource protections.

As a part of the analysis, the project team in collaboration with key partners and constituents intends to identify historical and anticipated barriers, potential trade-offs, and mitigation strategies for achieving strategic growth *and* inclusive economic prosperity that can be leveraged to advance climate and racial equity goals over the next 20 years.

APPROACH TO CONSTITUENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Due to the historical negative impacts of urban planning outcomes on disadvantaged communities, the City of Portland is committed to encouraging and increasing civic

participation from historically marginalized and underrepresented populations. The perspectives and input from historically disadvantaged populations helps the City of Portland and its partners consider historical context, potential impacts, challenges, barriers, and opportunities across various scopes of work. More specifically, the Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) relies on collaboration with community partners and subject-matter experts in both public and private sectors to inform and advise on strategies to achieve the bureau's goals in alignment with its equity policies.

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Prioritized populations include but have not been limited to:

- Black, African, and African Americans
- Alaskan Indian, Indigenous, and urban Natives
- Low-income individuals

To encourage and incentivize engagement—and to ensure *new* community and SMEs voices are considered throughout the development of the EOA, the project team developed an honoraria program to compensate individuals in reciprocity for sharing their time and insights.

The EOA project allocated an honoraria budget of \$5,000. Honoraria has been offered at the following market rates for civic participation:

- \$100.00 per individual for one 90-minute engagement activity

The following individuals are eligible for honoraria:

- Community members
- Subject-matter experts; Portland-based public and private-sector constituents
- Affinity-based groups and coalition members

To date, \$2000.00 honoraria dollars have been utilized to compensate community members, subject-matter experts, constituents, and affinity groups for sharing their insights to support the development of the EOA.

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CAUCUSED FOCUS GROUPS

To gain insights that can inform and help determine the City's job growth and land development needs, the EOA project team designed and implemented two 90-minute caucused BIPOC focus groups with prioritized populations. The first focus group was held virtually on December 15, 2022, followed by a second virtual focus group held on January 18th, 2023. The goals and objectives of the focus groups were to:

- 1) Provide background and education on an economic opportunity analysis exercise and its connection to Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan
- 2) Capture insights from participants about their experiences accessing employment opportunities and achieving individual and household wealth
- 3) Develop long-term relationships with community members interested and invested in civic engagement through the lens of urban planning and sustainability
- 4) Demonstrate the project development and policymaking process for individuals newer to local civic engagement

Focus groups were well attended with participation from 20 community members across the two focus groups. Participants left feeling more deeply informed about the City's process for determining job growth and land development needs—and how that connects to their ability to access quality jobs and create shared prosperity across their households and neighborhoods. Participants also reported feeling more confident participating in and providing feedback on city livability projects and policy making initiatives in the future.

KEY FINDINGS FROM ENGAGEMENT

As a result of the two caucused focus groups, the EOA project team surfaced several key themes to help inform the development of the EOA. The following key findings offer a peek into the insights, perceptions, and attitudes held by community members about Portland's job growth and land development needs — through the lens of their experiences accessing high-quality employment opportunities and achieving individual and household wealth.

Increasing access to high quality jobs is contingent on employers adopting equitable hiring practices. Above all else, community voices expressed their deep challenges with accessing high-quality jobs due to race and gender-based discriminatory hiring practices. When considering policy solutions, participants urged the City to establish public-private partnerships dedicated to supporting frontline workers with accessing and securing placements in innovation sectors offering upward wage and career path mobility.

Lack of access to information about emerging industries remains a barrier for low-income workers looking to transition to the green economy. Focus group participants expressed interest in learning about emerging industries but were challenged when asked to name industries they'd like to see in Portland in the near future. Without clear information about emerging industries such as the available jobs, skill requirements, training opportunities, and salaries offered, workers assumed they would not meet standard job eligibility requirements, limiting their potential for creating individual and household wealth.

Upward wage mobility offered in emerging industries like climate tech and solar are difficult to access without professional or workforce development support. Participants reported facing challenges with completing unaffordable and prolonged professional development and certificate programs while working full-time. Recommendations for alleviating those challenges include developing paid workforce development programs that enable workers to earn an income while developing skills to support job and career transitions into emerging industries.

Low-wage jobs without a clear pathway toward upward wage mobility incentivizes workers to pursue entrepreneurship to establish household stability. As Portland develops a strategic plan for growth through the lens of economic development, frontline communities already experiencing displacement remain deeply concerned about stability. As a result, more low-wage workers are likely to have and continue to seek out entrepreneurial opportunities such as side businesses and short-

term gigs to create household stability and generate more income than possible through their current jobs.

Creating individual and household prosperity and wealth creation requires a multipronged approach focused on addressing root causes of racial and economic disparities. Historical racial and economic disparities caused by systemic racism and longstanding disinvestment in BIPOC communities and neighborhoods are still felt by focus group participants today. Intersectional issues such as lack of access to basic needs like affordable housing and close proximity to fresh food and middle wage jobs make achieving prosperity and wealth creation nearly unattainable. Job growth and land development are one piece of a complex, intersectional puzzle. Without a multipronged approach to better support historically disadvantaged communities, racial and economic disparities will only deepen as Portland charts a path for sustainable growth through the lens of economic development.

Intergenerational community connections is an underestimated tool used by disadvantaged populations to identify and seek out opportunities for upward economic mobility. In each focus group, several participants expressed familial and professional connections to each other. This dynamic highlights the importance of community connections as a tool for sharing information and supporting each other in seeking opportunities intended to create shared household and neighborhood prosperity. Therefore, greater emphasis on establishing long-term relationships with community leaders and affinity groups should be considered to increase participation in workforce development programs established by the City or through public-private partnerships.

Improved spatial efficiency across Portland may incentivize workers to consider employment opportunities outside of their preferred geographic area.

Proximity to current and future employment opportunities is a major consideration reported by participants. Most are challenged by inefficient public transportation lines that make it difficult for workers to travel to jobs outside of their corridor. If Portland's spatial efficiency improves, workers indicated being more likely to consider high-quality job opportunities outside of their preferred geographic area.

As BPS proceeds with compiling data to determine Portland's job growth and land development needs for the next 20 years, the EOA will continue to be a key vehicle for incorporating community and constituent insights and strategic direction. Additional opportunities to engage community members and subject-matter experts is being considered as the initial draft of the EOA is developed.



Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Economic Opportunity Analysis (EOA)

Engagement: 2023 Focus Groups

Key Findings Report | May 25, 2023

Economic Opportunity Analysis Key Findings Report for 2023 Focus Groups

BACKGROUND

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As a part of the analysis, the project team in collaboration with key partners and constituents intends to identify historical and anticipated barriers, potential trade-offs, and mitigation strategies for achieving strategic growth *and* inclusive economic prosperity that can be leveraged to advance climate and racial equity goals over the next 20 years.

APPROACH TO CONSTITUENT AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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At the outset of the EOA project, BPS acknowledged the challenges and barriers to civic engagement and recognized that meaningful input requires time, commitment, resources, and access to information. Therefore, community and constituent engagement to support the development of the EOA has been designed to reduce barriers, encourage civic participation from historically marginalized communities using core principles developed by Camille E. Trummer Consulting:

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As a result, the EOA project prioritized engagement with and has solicited feedback from historically disadvantaged populations and those who have experienced barriers to participating in planning and sustainability projects and policymaking initiatives.

Prioritized populations include but have not been limited to:

- Black, African, and African Americans
- Alaskan Indian, Indigenous, and urban Natives
- Low-income individuals

To encourage and incentivize engagement—and to ensure *new* community and SMEs voices are considered throughout the development of the EOA, the project team

developed an honoraria program to compensate individuals in reciprocity for sharing their time and insights.

The EOA project allocated an honoraria budget of \$5,000. Honoraria has been offered at the following market rates for civic participation:

- \$150.00 per individual for one 90-minute engagement activity (2023 rate due to inflation)

The following individuals are eligible for honoraria:

- Community members
- Subject-matter experts; Portland-based public and private-sector constituents
- Affinity-based groups and coalition members

To date, \$5,000.00 honoraria dollars have been utilized to compensate community members, subject-matter experts, constituents, and affinity groups for sharing their insights to support the development of the EOA.

ENGAGEMENT THROUGH CAUCUSED FOCUS GROUPS

To build on insights gathered during the first round of engagement (two caucused focus groups) held in December 2022 and January 2023, the EOA project team implemented two additional 90-minute caucused BIPOC focus groups with prioritized populations. The third focus group was held virtually on May 11, 2023, followed by a fourth virtual focus group held on May 22, 2023. The goals and objectives of the focus groups were to:

- 1) Provide a refresher on the Economic Opportunity Analysis for previously engaged stakeholders; provide background and education on the City of Portland's economic opportunity analysis exercise and its connection to Portland's 2035 Comprehensive Plan for new stakeholders
- 2) Capture recommendations from participants on how best to balance inclusive economic growth with natural resource protection
- 3) Build on insights gathered from previous focus groups about participants' experiences accessing employment opportunities and achieving individual and household wealth
- 4) Develop long-term relationships with community members interested and invested in civic engagement through the lens of urban planning and sustainability
- 5) Demonstrate the project development and policymaking process for individuals newer to local civic engagement

Focus groups were well attended with participation from 22 community members across the two focus groups. Participants left feeling more deeply informed about the City's process for determining job growth and land development needs—and how that connects to their ability to access quality jobs and create shared prosperity across their households and neighborhoods. Stakeholders also reported having a better understanding of potential policy tradeoffs when balancing the need for inclusive economic growth and natural resource protections—as well as the need for stricter accountability measures for businesses who fail to adhere to the City's natural resource protection and air quality policies. Participants also reported feeling more confident participating in and providing feedback on city livability projects and policy making initiatives in the future.

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ENGAGEMENT

As a result of the two caucused focus groups, the EOA project team surfaced several key themes to help inform the development of the EOA. The following key findings offer a peek into the insights, perceptions, and attitudes held by community members about Portland's job growth, land development, and natural resource protection needs — through the lens of their experiences accessing high-quality employment opportunities and recommendations for stricter natural resource protection policies.

Partner with local employers to attract and connect BIPOC Portlanders to well-paying jobs with upward mobility. Participants stressed the importance of attracting diverse industries and creating high-paying jobs to promote economic opportunity in Portland. Key sectors identified included healthcare, industrial trades, manufacturing, education, finance, non-profits, transportation, food and beverage, music and arts, cultural and social services, clean energy, sustainable businesses, and self-employment. Stakeholders called for expanding outreach and market-relevant training programs like internships, apprenticeships, and leadership initiatives in these sectors. The suggestion to attract businesses specializing in innovative materials for aviation and medical technology, such as powdered alloys and polyurethane products, was highlighted, with [OMIC](#) in Scappoose, OR serving as an inspirational model. Participants also emphasized the need to address barriers faced by underrepresented communities, particularly BIPOC individuals, with specific attention given to electrical, plumbing, and masonry trades where concerns about gatekeeping practices were raised.

"We hear there's a shortage of jobs—Nurses, Electricians, Plumbers, Masonry...and there are apprenticeship programs...but what kind of outreach is happening in BIPOC communities to

inform them or let them know that these positions are available and they're invited? ...if there's a shortage we can fill those spots. Is it being hidden away because they don't want POCs to know about those jobs?"—Participant, Focus Group 3

Increase access to workforce development programs that better position BIPOC individuals for upward economic mobility. Participants reported encountering difficulties in completing unaffordable and prolonged professional development and certificate programs while juggling full-time employment. To overcome these challenges, recommendations were put forth to establish paid workforce development initiatives. These programs would enable individuals to earn an income (e.g. “earn while you learn”) while acquiring the necessary skills for transitioning into emerging industries and advancing their careers. By offering financial support and flexibility, such initiatives aim to alleviate the burden of costly education and training, empowering workers to pursue professional development without compromising their livelihoods.

"It seems that recruiters look for people who don't live in Oregon to come here—and pay them a lot to do so." —Participant, Focus Group 3

Expand programs that create economic opportunities and leadership development for youth and young professionals. Participants in both focus groups stressed the need for programs that create educational and economic opportunities for youth. They highlighted the importance of internships, leadership development, and support for young people in various career paths, with specific emphasis on music and leadership. Existing programs like [Emerging Leaders](#), [SINE](#), and [SEI](#) were mentioned as successful examples to emulate, that help to mitigate youth from engaging in gang activity and on a path to prosperity.

"I'm hoping there's focus on programming for kids 16–25 years old, to keep them off the streets and curb gang violence, we need more trade schools to get them job-ready and economy-ready" —Participant, Focus Group 4

Enhance support and resources to nurture Portland's active arts, music, and entrepreneurial community. Participants emphasized the underfunded arts scene in Portland and called for stronger support and opportunities for local artists, musicians, and entrepreneurs. During conversation, stakeholders suggested providing resources and support for artists and entrepreneurs to create opportunities for locals to learn how to open their own establishments, such as restaurants and music venues. The arts and music industries, in particular, are of strong interest to young people and can offer a safe alternative for youth in areas with higher risks of gang activity and violence.

“Other major cities have a thriving art and culture sector. Portland has a lot of talented artists, but we shy away from supporting our own. Investing is important because it supports youth who are struggling. Jobs in those industries can pay well and provide stability. It takes a lot of work to succeed, but support (which there isn’t much of) helps a lot. With support, I would be able to achieve more faster. It would have made a difference if I had felt supported before needing to prove myself. Support the culture that’s very much alive here.”—Participant, Focus Group 3

Strategically balance economic growth with natural resource protection to sustain Portland’s identity and practice as a leading sustainable city. Participants expressed concerns about the adverse health effects faced by communities living near industrial areas and emphasized the need for better conditions, environmental justice, and community engagement. They acknowledged the trade-offs and tensions involved in pursuing both sustainability and economic growth—but urged the City to find a way to keep Portland's green identity as untarnished as possible. Suggestions included incentivizing sustainable practices, enforcing regulations particularly on businesses, improving infrastructure (especially EV infrastructure), holding businesses accountable for their environmental impact, and prioritizing community health. Albany Oregon’s [Taking Water Gardens](#) was cited as inspiration for combining civic space, industry, and sustainable practices. Participants also highlighted the importance of educating BIPOC communities about climate change issues, incentivizing sustainable practices, and promoting representation and accountability in decision-making processes.

“We should be proactive, not reactive with policies for things like illegal dumping to happen. We need to have procedures in place to do random testing to be [and hold businesses] accountable ahead of time.” —Participant, Focus Group 3

Foster climate resilience by empowering BIPOC communities through education, sustainable infrastructure, and emerging sector job creation. Focus group participants recognized climate change as both an economic driver and a potential threat to Portland's economy. They identified job creation and opportunities in sectors such as firefighting, restoration efforts, clean energy, and HVAC systems. However, they also highlighted potential threats, such as the impact on agriculture and the vulnerability of crops—specifically in winemaking—due to climate change and wildfires. The participants emphasized the importance of education opportunities for BIPOC communities, flagging that there is a gap in knowledge around climate change in the community, and that learning more about it could inspire a desire to support resilience efforts in everyday behaviors as well as career choices. They were curious about investments in sustainable infrastructure, including water and sewer systems, and explored possibilities for utilizing waste to create energy, citing a [pilot program in Deschutes County](#) that turns landfill methane into energy.

"A lot of us don't know what climate change really is. There is lots of misinformation. If I don't know what is real, how can I help? If you teach our communities about this, they will want to help."—Participant, Focus Group 4

As BPS proceeds with compiling data to determine Portland's job growth and land development needs for the next 20 years, the EOA will continue to be a key vehicle for incorporating community and constituent insights and strategic direction. Additional opportunities to engage community members and subject-matter experts in fall 2023 is being considered as the initial draft of the EOA is developed by the project team.



Equity and Inclusion Self-Assessment

The purpose of this memo is to reflect on the results of the inclusive outreach and identify lessons learned and next steps to continue to incorporate specific actions for inclusive outreach for the balance of the EOA update process.

Overall, the stakeholder interviews revealed common themes that we see in other forums. Whereas, the focus groups provided more insights into issues, challenges and opinions that are outside the policy context and require deeper analysis to translate to inform the EOA process.

Stakeholder Interviews

The stakeholder interviews were designed to be a discovery process to better understand attitudes and perceptions of economic opportunity and prosperity in Portland.

The results of the interviews were insightful. Camille Trummer conducted seven (7) confidential interviews with local subject-matter experts with experience ranging from nonprofit community development to natural resource sustainability and private commercial real estate. Key takeaways are:

- Be more forward thinking and look for innovations.
- Create public-private partnerships to invest in local talent.
- Work to attract mission-driven developers and businesses that support Portland values.

Added benefit: BPS was able to leverage the stakeholder interview process to recruit two new members to serve on the upcoming Collaborative Working Group.

Focus Groups

The purpose of this task was to conduct focus groups to explore key elements of economic prosperity and desired opportunities that will help inform the EOA policy choices and evaluation. Ultimately, BPS was only able to conduct four focus groups with our consultant, Camille Trummer. While those focus groups were informative, BPS found that it difficult to engage other community organizations in this discussion.



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The focus group participants were engaged in the discussion and appreciative of the opportunity. A key takeaway was the persistent discrimination and limited access to opportunity that BIPOC Portlanders experience and the need for continued programs to promote and connect BIPOC Portlanders to those opportunities. Another important takeaway was a strong desire to do create economic opportunities and protect natural resources – do both. Highlight companies and development that do both. Do not compromise the environment in the name of economic growth.

Next Steps

The purpose of this task was to reflect on the inclusive outreach.

Collaborative Working Group. BPS continues to recruit for working group members to reach beyond the usual suspects and create a more inclusive forum for discussion.

BIPOC Focus Groups. The focus groups are an informative outreach tool. The focus groups create a safer space that enable a community to come together to discuss issues. BPS will look to utilize more focus groups in the next phase of the EOA update process to solicit specific feedback on policy choices.

