



# HALSEY/WEIDLER COMMERCIAL DISTRICT INVESTMENT STRATEGY

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Landscape Architecture



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### Halsey Weidler Group

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- Joe Garofoli, Joe's Shoe Repair
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- Eva Liu, King's Omelet
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## INTRODUCTION

### Gateway Area

The Gateway Regional Center Urban Renewal Area (Gateway URA) is served by two interstate freeways, four MAX light rail lines, and the Halsey/Weidler couplet. Over time the Gateway URA is expected to become a high density, urban, mixed-use center that offers jobs, housing, services, and amenities within walkable neighborhoods (Gateway Urban Renewal Plan 2000). The Gateway community is more diverse than the City of Portland as a whole and has a higher percentage of families, children and seniors. The age profile of the district has shifted to an older demographic, while income levels have risen as well (Gateway Urban Design & Market Study January 2012). The Gateway area has two community shopping centers, the Gateway Shopping Center and Mall 205 that anchor the north and south ends of the area, and many scattered small businesses. The Halsey/Weidler couplet is the historic Gateway business district providing a unique mixture of locally-owned businesses and neighborhood amenities. It's located to the north end of the URA and has direct access from the I-205 freeway off ramp. Halsey/Weidler is differentiated from other commercial areas within Gateway by having only two lanes of traffic, offering the potential for a more pedestrian friendly 'Main Street' feel.

### Developing the Investment Strategy

Despite its excellent location, Gateway has seen only modest redevelopment activity since the inception of the URA. The City of Portland and the Portland Development Commission (PDC) are committed to increasing neighborhood vitality and economic opportunity in Gateway and will develop a Five-Year Action Plan for the URA. As a precursor to that broader action plan, PDC staff

worked with community and city partners and consultants to consider the historic Halsey/Weidler Commercial District and opportunities for strategic and direct investment.

The focus of this investment strategy is the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District, a concentration of small local businesses located along the Halsey/Weidler couplet, approximately between 102<sup>nd</sup> and 114<sup>th</sup> Avenues. This area is relatively walkable with a mix of building styles and retro 50s/60s character that evokes a sense of nostalgia within the community for the once-active and family-friendly business district. Halsey Street is considered neighborhood commercial with the best commercial connectivity. Weidler acts as the arterial; a concentration of residential properties lies to the north (see the image on page 7).

### Strategy Objectives.

The objectives for an investment strategy for Halsey/Weidler are to:

- A. Identify and implement infrastructure improvements in the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District that support business growth;
- B. Build capacity within the business district;
- C. Explore development opportunities in the district; and
- D. Move forward a commercial or mixed-use development and a park on the PDC and Portland Bureau of Parks & Recreation-owned site on Halsey at 106<sup>th</sup> in a holistic and aligned manner

The development of the strategy entailed two phases that built upon previous studies – The Gateway Urban Design and Market Study (2012) and the Gateway Business Development Strategy (2011). The first phase included working with Civilis Consultants to assess the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District connectivity and identity. The goals of the first phase were to identify opportunities to i) create positive identity and brand for the district, and ii) improve economic performance in the couplet. In the second phase, Nevue Ngan Associates built on the first phase

outcomes and the priorities identified by the community, and created a streetscape vision plan for Halsey and Weidler.

### Status and Next Steps

As of October 2014, Community members and staff have already begun implementing key actions of the investment strategy:

Action	Status	Next Step	Partner
<b>Identify and implement infrastructure improvements</b> in the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District that support business growth.	Key intersections at 103 <sup>rd</sup> , 106 <sup>th</sup> , 108 <sup>th</sup> , and 112 <sup>th</sup> identified; PDC and Portland Bureau of Transportation negotiating agreement to provide design and construction funding	Signed agreement for design-November 2014 Design complete- spring 2015 Construction complete- late 2015	PDC, PBOT
<b>Build capacity</b> within the business district.	Halsey Weidler Group recognized as sub-committee of Gateway Area Business Association	Halsey Weidler Group will continue to meet and move identified projects forward, including organizing a coffee and issues forum with PDC as an interim partner	Halsey Weidler Group, PDC business outreach staff, Venture Portland
<b>Explore development opportunities</b> in the district.	Property owner at a key development node is using PDC DOS program to determine development options	Work with property and business owners to explore development opportunities	PDC, property and business owners
<b>Move forward a commercial or mixed-use development and a park</b> on the PDC and Portland Bureau of Parks & Recreation-owned site on Halsey at 106 <sup>th</sup> in a holistic and aligned manner.	Parks refining design and releasing Request for Proposals for construction of park site PDC committing \$1 M towards park PDC releasing RFQ for one-acre redevelopment site in November 2014	Park construction complete – early 2017	Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation, PDC,

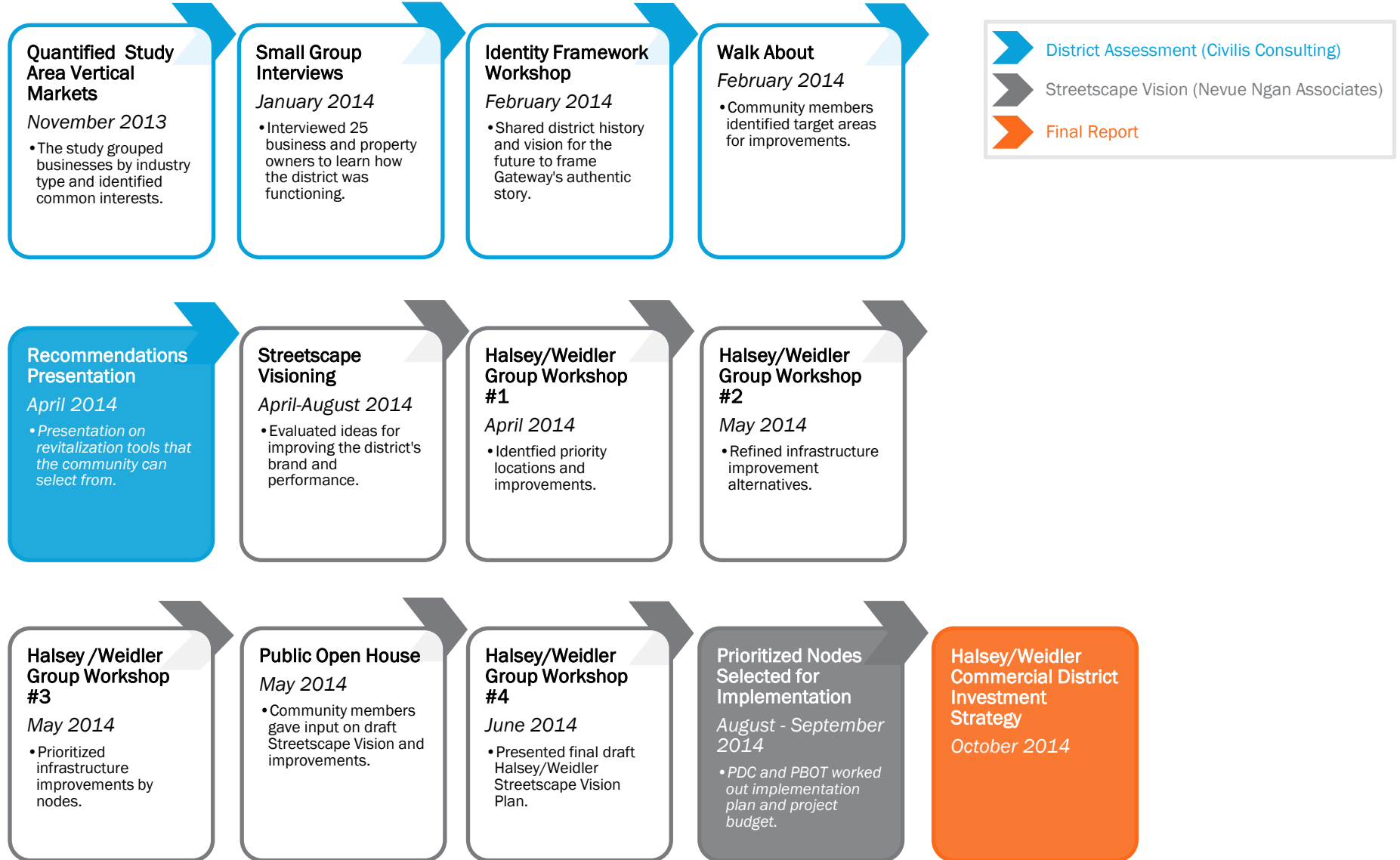
Figure 1 Halsey/Weidler Study Area



Figure 2 Halsey/Weidler Identity Zones



## STRATEGY PROCESS



## CURRENT CONDITIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS

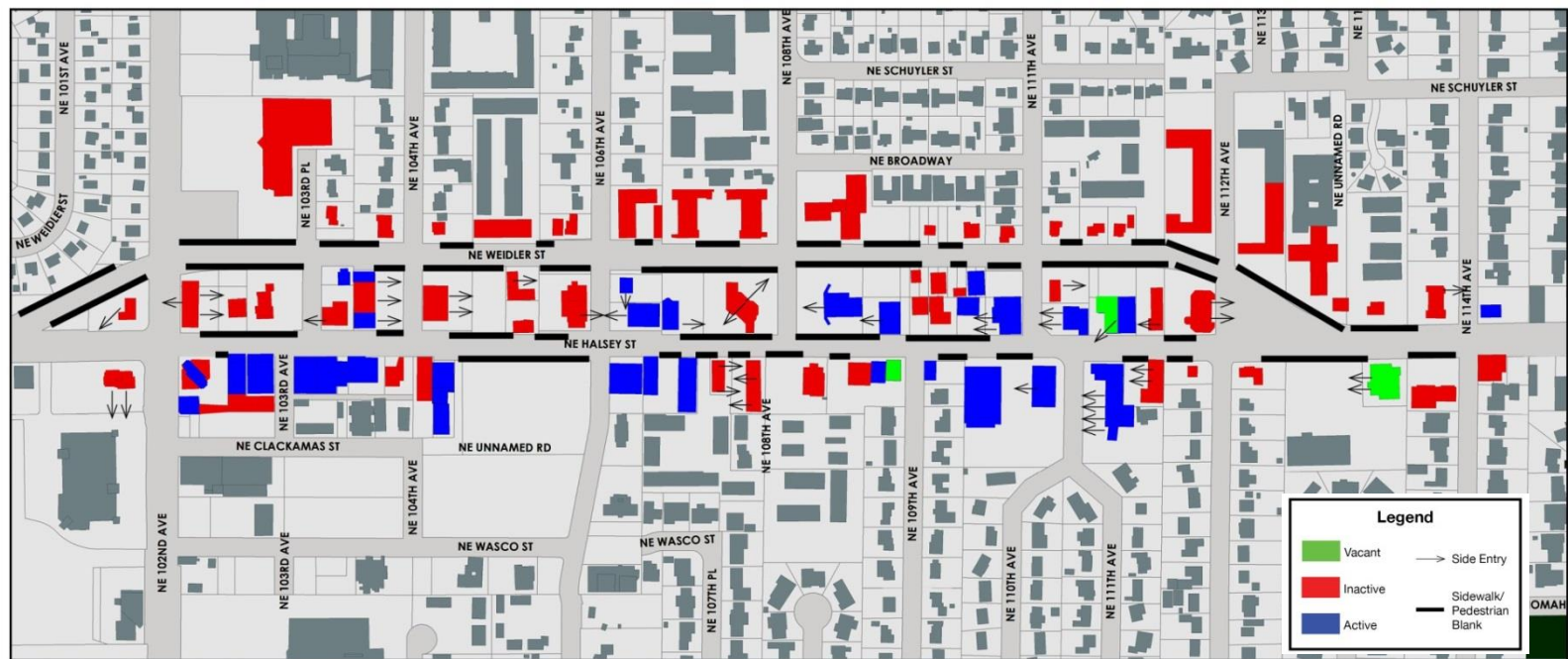
According to the [Vibrant Streets Toolkit](#), a program created to help communities revitalize neighborhoods, a strong and successful commercial district encompasses five key elements: identity, community capacity and district management, safety, retail connectivity, and retail mix. Throughout the development of this investment strategy, including interviews with business and property owners, a workshop on the fundamentals of marketing places and building a story framework, the Halsey/ Weidler Commercial District was measured against those five elements.

1. **IDENTITY** – A commercial district must be identifiable and memorable. Gateway currently lacks a real definition, and the story the district is telling is of being tired and dated.
2. **COMMUNITY CAPACITY AND DISTRICT MANAGEMENT** – No one is focusing on Halsey and Weidler together; businesses are essentially

islands that are not cooperating.

3. **SAFETY** – The perceived safety of a street is key to a vibrant commercial corridor. The traffic speeds on Halsey and Weidler are having a negative impact on business; homeless activity is adding to the perception of the area as being unsafe.
4. **RETAIL CONNECTIVITY** – There are a number of gaps in retail connectivity due to inward-facing buildings, tired and dated-looking buildings, blank walls, and large surface parking lots. As figure 3 illustrates, very few buildings actively engage the street.
5. **RETAIL MIX** – A district takes its identity from ground floor businesses with the goal of local, active, outward-facing retail. In Gateway, businesses are not engaging with the street. According to a community member, there are “no high quality restaurants or good places to suggest to clients”, and “no coffee shops or family hangouts”.

Figure 3 Halsey/Weidler Ground Floor Activation Map (As of November 2013)



## PHASE ONE: DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

HALSEY/WEIDLER OPPORTUNITIES & CONSTRAINTS	
OPPORTUNITIES	CONSTRAINTS
<b>Walkable.</b> The Halsey/Weidler commercial district is relatively walkable, and offers a mix of building types and styles that have a retro 50s/60s character.	<b>Built Form.</b> The couplet defines the commercial district by encouraging building forms that don't engage with the street.
<b>Easy access.</b> Gateway is served by two interstate freeways, four MAX light rail lines, and the Halsey/Weidler couplet.	<b>Freeway Interchange.</b> Vehicular access to the Halsey/Weidler is challenged by the freeway interchange itself with its limited signage and somewhat concealed off-ramp.
<b>Triangles.</b> The triangles at either end of the couplet provide an opportunity to establish the district identity.	<b>Lack of Identity.</b> The Halsey/Weidler district is challenged in terms of clearly-defined boundaries and center. Its identity and image are difficult to define.
<b>Affordable.</b> The neighborhood is generally affordable for commercial space and housing.	<b>Leasable Space Mismatch.</b> Leasable building space is too large to attract small local entrepreneurs, a key component to building the identity of the district.
<b>Park Development.</b> The PDC/PPR site to be developed as a 3-acre park and 1-acre mixed-use development will catalyze district building.	<b>Development and Density.</b> Development standards and density requirements in the Gateway URA deter development of under-utilized parcels.
<b>Unique Streets.</b> Two narrow lanes of traffic is an asset unique in Gateway that can be leveraged to differentiate the district.	<b>Narrow Sidewalks.</b> Sidewalks are generally narrow – 9 feet.
<b>Office Anchors.</b> Kaiser Medical Offices and David Douglas School District administrative offices anchor the west and east ends of the couplet.	<b>Auto-Oriented.</b> Halsey/Weidler is an auto-oriented district with large surface parking lots.

### The Gateway Store

Using a store analogy, Civilis Consultants broke down the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District into easy-to-understand components to explain how the district functions. Just like a store, the commercial district has front doors, aisles, fixtures and products:

- **Front Doors** – Gateway's 'store' is not defined. Halsey/Weidler is a logical choice to define Gateway because it is the only commercial district in Gateway with only two lanes of traffic, a sense of history and connection for residents, and a unique collection of one-of-a-kind-businesses.
- **Aisles** – In a commercial district, the streets and sidewalks serve as the store's aisles or its circulatory system, and they are vitally important to creating an economically high performing place. The streetscape visioning phase evaluated and prioritized tools that will provide a safer pedestrian environment and help the streets tell a story of a great and walkable place.
- **Fixtures** – In the 'store' analogy the fixtures are what display the products you're trying to sell. For a commercial district, the buildings are the fixtures displaying the product (the businesses). Inward-facing buildings that look tired and dated and vacant lots create blanks in the commercial district that discourage shoppers. The commercial district should have a connected feel from 102<sup>nd</sup> to 114<sup>th</sup> with all buildings contributing to the positive experience of being in the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District.
- **Products** – A 'store' experience is driven largely by the products for sale, including selection, display, and lighting. The products in this analogy are the businesses, and the Halsey/Weidler 'store' takes its identity from ground floor businesses. Halsey/Weidler businesses should be local, active, and outward facing.

## DISTRICT ASSESSMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

### Front Doors

- Build on the passion and expertise of the Halsey Weidler Group to transition the group into a formal subcommittee of the Gateway Area Business Association (GABA) focused on the Halsey/Weidler Commercial District. Encourage Halsey/Weidler business and property owners to join GABA.
- Establish a district identity and brand to tell the story of Gateway.

### Aisles

- Show, don't tell. The district needs to share its stories and unique identities with the streets and sidewalks. Establish an ambience out into the street, using the sidewalk and parking lots to tell the retail story.
- Move forward the development of Gateway Park. Work with Portland Parks & Recreation to program a public plaza.

### Fixtures

- Mitigate blanks in the retail connectivity: activate, engage, and program parking lots; light and decorate empty walls, orient buildings/spaces toward the street.
- Move forward development of the PDC commercial site at Halsey and 106<sup>th</sup> to align with the Gateway Park development schedule.

- Consider line of sight when developing the PDC commercial site and buildings with permeability for more commercial continuity and visibility.

### Products

- Update buildings: introduce three- and four-color paint schemes for the district; introduce building lighting and outdoor lighting.
- Right-size interior spaces so buildings are more leasable and attract small local entrepreneurs, a key component to building the identity of the district and generating income for business and property owners.
- Improve retail execution: engage the sidewalk, create dynamic storefront windows, highlight local businesses and expertise; interconnect vertical markets in the district and adjacent businesses.

## PHASE TWO: STREETSCAPE VISION

The streetscape visioning process was the second phase of this project in which various tools were evaluated and selected to improve pedestrian safety and to help the district begin to tell an authentic story. This process built on the message heard through the corridor analysis phase identifying safety and identity as the priorities for the corridor, and stressed commercial corridor viability through targeted infrastructure improvements.

- Safety – slow traffic, enhance the pedestrian environment, improve lighting
- Identity – create a cohesive impact through streetscape improvements and revitalized storefronts; capture the historic identity of Gateway, including recreating the iconic Gateway arch in some manner within the design

Community members and staff identified the 103<sup>rd</sup>, 106<sup>th</sup>, 108<sup>th</sup> and 112<sup>th</sup> intersections for improvements, as they are the strongest potential development nodes and/or the highest traveled north-south pedestrian routes. A toolbox of actions (see Appendix Halsey/Weidler Commercial District Investment Streetscape Improvement Plan 2014 Nevue Ngan) was considered to calm traffic and introduce new elements that give the street a new look and feel.

### Recommendations.

- Reduce the posted traffic speed limit along Halsey and Weidler.
- Introduce curb extensions, enhanced marked crosswalks where allowed, and pedestrian scale lighting for a safer pedestrian environment.

- Plant street trees and install banners on the new street lights to reestablish the identity of the neighborhood.
- Build new curb extensions that provide opportunities to incorporate benches, trash receptacles, planters, bike racks, or public art.
- Use the triangles at the east and west ends of the couplet to help create a positive identity for the commercial district.

### STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENT COST ESTIMATE :

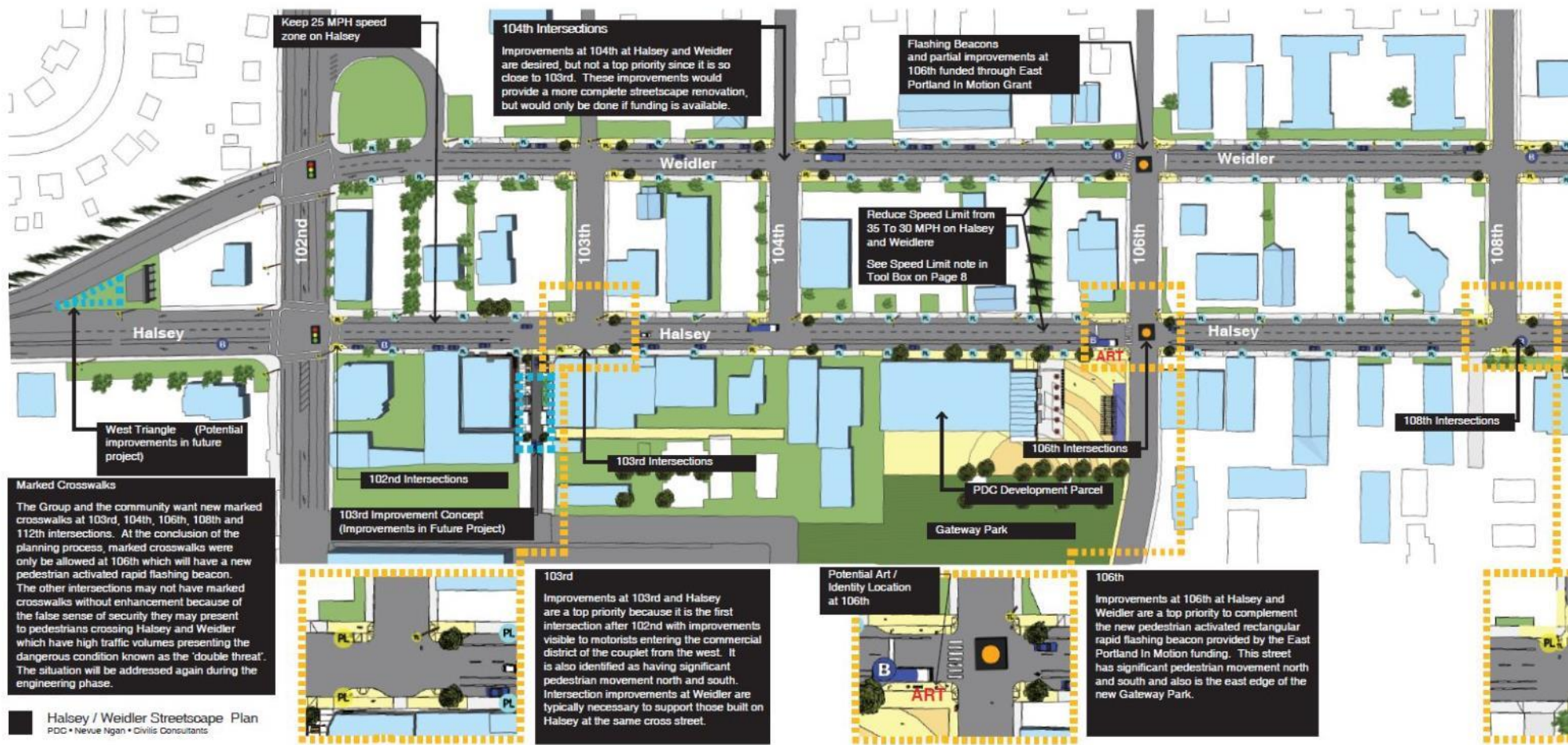
	Location	Improvements	Cost
COMMUNITY PRIORITIES	Halsey and Weidler at 103 <sup>rd</sup> , 106 <sup>th</sup> , 108 <sup>th</sup> , 112 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curb extensions</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian-scaled lighting</li> <li>▪ Street trees</li> </ul>	\$1,358,000 (combined)
	Halsey and Weidler at 106 <sup>th</sup> , 112 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pedestrian flashing beacon</li> </ul>	
2ND TIER PRIORITIES	Halsey and Weidler at 102 <sup>nd</sup> , 104 <sup>th</sup> , 111 <sup>th</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Curb extensions</li> <li>▪ Pedestrian-scaled lighting</li> <li>▪ Street trees</li> </ul>	\$723,000
3RD TIER PRIORITIES	Halsey and Weidler from 102 <sup>nd</sup> to 112 <sup>th</sup> (both sides of the streets)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pedestrian-scaled lighting along corridor every 70 feet</li> </ul>	\$3,150,000

**Note 1:** Cost estimates include design/engineering, construction mobilization, traffic control and contingency. Improvements also include thermal striping for parking and the crosswalk at 106<sup>th</sup> estimated to cost an additional \$2,500.

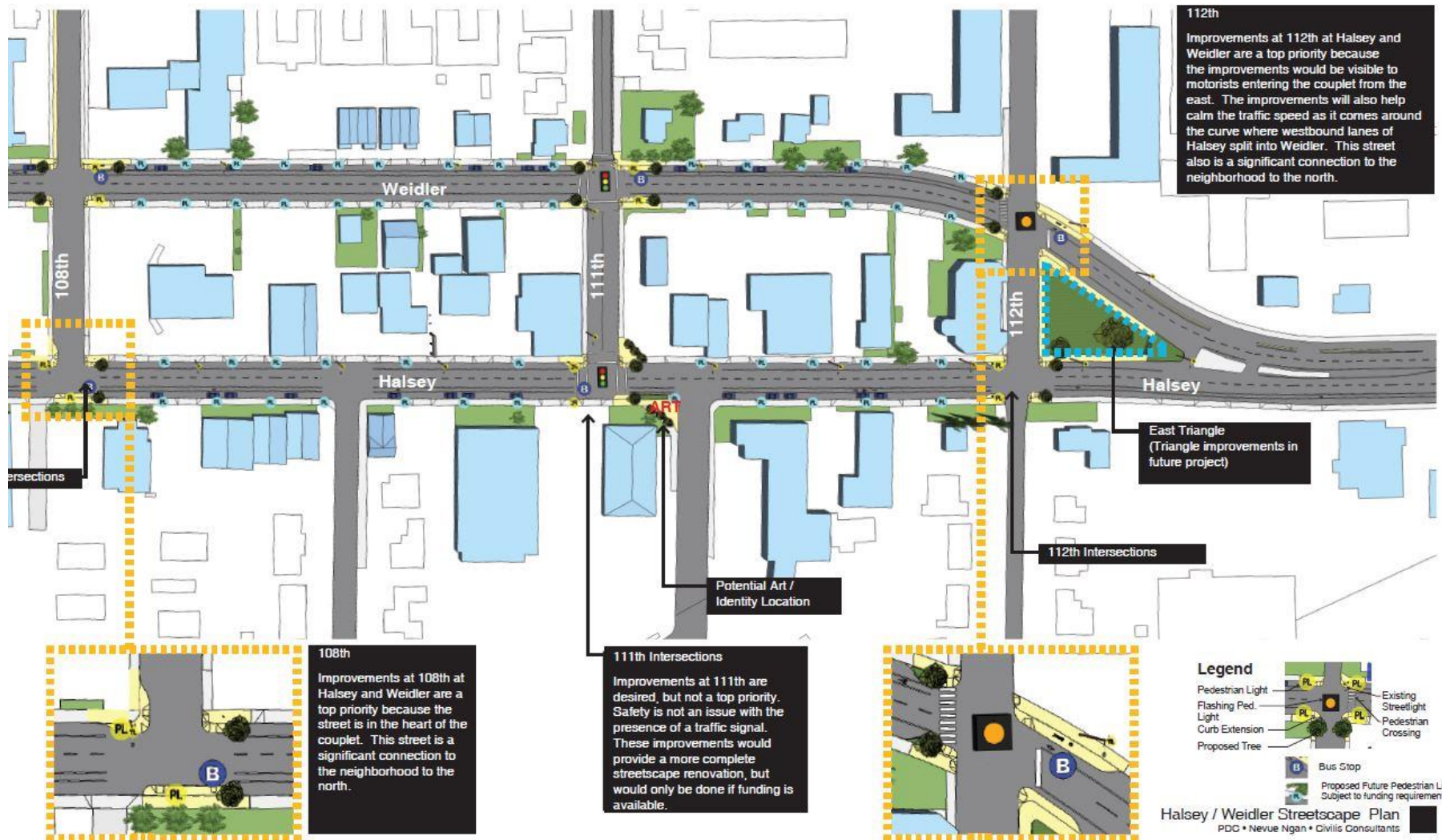
**Note 2:** Cost estimates are based on historic bid prices from past ODOT/PBOT projects as of June 2014.

**Note 3:** Improvements on 106<sup>th</sup> will be completed in partnership with the State of Oregon with funds awarded to the East Portland in Motion Project.

# Halsey / Weidler Couplet



# Vision Plan



## NEXT STEPS

The recommendations resulting from this study support business growth, building capacity within the commercial district, strengthening the Gateway identity, and sparking development interest. The strategy includes not only infrastructure improvements, but also immediate actions that a business or business district can take on with little or no cost, actions that the community can implement in both short- and long-term, and longer-term or more capital intensive actions by individual property owners or that will require funding partners to accomplish.

Actions being undertaken within the next year include:

### Identity and Capacity Building

- In September 2014 the GABA Board acknowledged the Halsey Weidler Group as a standing subcommittee of GABA.
- The Halsey Weidler Group is leading efforts to add trash receptacles and benches and to begin planning and design of the east and west triangles. The goal is to apply for PDC's 2014-15 and/or 2015-16 round of Community Livability Grant funds.
- Several community members have expressed interest in participating on the Gateway Park advisory committee. Applications for the committee are expected to be available in fall 2014.

### Business Development.

- Property and business owners have joined GABA and have been recruited as board members.
- The Halsey Weidler Group will partner with PDC to introduce a “coffee and issues” forum starting in fall 2014.
- PDC and PBOT are finalizing a schedule for design/engineering and construction of the priority streetscape improvements identified in the vision plan.

### Commercial District Investment.

- Parks has initiated design and construction of the Gateway Park with a grand opening goal for early 2017. PDC is investing \$1 million in construction of the park.
- PDC is pursuing development of the site at Halsey and 106th with the goal to align development with the Gateway Park design and construction.
- Several individual property and business owners have started working with PDC to explore redevelopment and enhancement projects, including right-sizing ground floor space and utilizing parking lots to engage the street.
- The Halsey Weidler Group is considering options to address district clean-up and landscape maintenance with the help of Venture Portland.

The full investment strategy is outlined in the following Recommendations Table and categorized into three areas:

- Identity and Capacity Building
- Business Development
- Commercial District Investment

## IDENTITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Notes
<b>IC1 Focus On Halsey.</b> Halsey Weidler Group to coordinate with Gateway Area Business Association (GABA) to focus on Halsey as a neighborhood commercial district with immediate potential and to build on the momentum of this strategy work.	Halsey Weidler Group HWG	Gateway Area Business Association (GABA)	Venture Portland	GABA formally recognized the Halsey Weidler Group September 2014 as a standing subcommittee.
<b>IC2 Establish District Identity.</b> Establish a district identity and brand to tell the story of Gateway; create district collateral that can be accessed by individual businesses and guidelines for brand placement within the broader district.	HWG		PDC Community Livability Grant (CLG), Venture Portland Grants	The brand created and used on the 102 <sup>nd</sup> Ave street banners is being considered for adoption for the Halsey commercial district
<b>IC3 Signage.</b> Use signage to reinforce district identity, including street banners, freeway signs, and signs at the district 'front doors' - the triangles.	HWG	GABA, East Portland Rotary	PDC CLG, Venture Portland	Street banners can mirror the banners on 102 <sup>nd</sup> with distinct images for Halsey.
<b>IC4 Connect with Neighbors.</b> Organize a monthly 'coffee and issues' forum that features a series of topics to benefit business owners, property owners, and the general community.	HWG	PDC	PDC Gateway URA TIF; GABA; Venture Portland; area banks; area businesses	PDC will coordinate and finance the first year in cooperation with HWG to prepare HWG to assume lead.
<b>IC5 Support Livability.</b> Coordinate community efforts to identify and prioritize district livability projects and to go after various funding sources.	HWG	GABA	PDC CLG, Venture Portland	The Halsey Weidler Group began meeting in August 2014 to determine project priorities; ideas discussed include: improving the triangles, adding trash cans, benches and bike racks.
<b>IC6 Address Safety.</b> Develop a plan to address safety issues, real and perceived. This may include, working with police and other city bureaus, managing street and public design elements, addressing signs of neglect.	HWG	East Portland Rotary, Hazelwood Neighborhood Association (NA), Parkrose Heights Neighborhood Association (NA)	Venture Portland Portland Police Bureau	This may be a topic for the coffee and issues forum.
<b>IC7 Incorporate Civic Uses.</b> Encourage businesses to incorporate civic uses into their business plan, such as offering related classes to the public, opening space to community meetings, hosting a community bulletin board, hosting a coffee and issues forum.	HWG	GABA Business and Property Owners		
<b>IC8 Community Clean-Up.</b> Organize a community clean-up and landscape maintenance program.	HWG	Hazelwood NA, Parkrose Heights NA	Venture Portland grants	The HWG is researching program models.
<b>IC9 Billboard Options.</b> Think strategically about alternatives to the existing billboard at the triangle at the west end of the couplet	HWG	East Portland Rotary		The HWG is researching the logistics of having some control over the billboard message.
<b>IC10 Promotion.</b> Build buzz and positive stories about the Halsey/Weidler strategy and about the Gateway area through website presence.	HWG	GABA	TBD	PDC website may be used in interim to communicate information; other options: i) work with PSU students through Gateway Park project to create website; ii) leverage community expertise; iii) update GABA website
<b>IC11 District Front Doors – Triangles.</b> Maintain and enhance the triangles at the east and west ends of the couplet to define the district and enhance the community's identity.	HWG	GABA, East Portland Rotary	PDC CLG, Venture Portland	The HWG is applying for grants to fund design work for the east triangle.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Notes
<b>BD1 Build Business Network.</b> Organize quarterly social events to encourage networking among business and property owners.	HWG	GABA	Venture Portland	
<b>BD2 PDC Business Assistance.</b> Promote business growth and vitality through PDC business assistance with activities such as outreach, financing, and technical assistance.	PDC	Various technical assistance providers and lenders, business owners	PDC grant and loan programs and technical service providers	
<b>BD3 Business District Resource Tools.</b> Coordinate business technical assistance tools as a resource for support individual business.	HWG	Venture Portland, GABA		
<b>BD4 Attract Retailers.</b> Research community commercial broker programs as a model to be pro-active in filling vacant spaces quickly and with appropriate retailers.	HWG	Building owners, Business owners	PDC grant and loan programs, private lenders	Possible coffee and issues topic
<b>BD5 Right Size Spaces.</b> Encourage right sizing interior spaces so buildings are more leasable and attract small local entrepreneurs, a key component to the identity of the district.	HWG	Building owners, Business owners	PDC grant and loan programs, private lenders	
<b>BD6 Improve Retail Execution.</b> Improve business visibility: engage the sidewalk; create dynamic storefront windows; highlight local businesses and expertise; interconnect vertical markets in the district and adjacent businesses.		Property and business owners	PDC grant and loan programs, private lenders	

## COMMERCIAL DISTRICT IMPROVEMENTS

Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Notes
<b>CD1 Streetscape Improvements – Recommended Priority.</b> Invest in streetscape improvements that focus on pedestrian safety, slowing traffic, and building a cohesive district identity.	PDC	Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT)	Gateway URA TIF, PBOT SDCs	The conceptual streetscape vision plan is complete. PDC and PBOT will enter into an IGA for design in fall 2014.
<b>CD2 Slow Traffic.</b> Request speed limit reduction on Halsey and Weidler: Halsey from 106 <sup>th</sup> to 114 <sup>th</sup> from 35 to 30; Weidler from 35 to 30; Halsey from 102 <sup>nd</sup> to 106 <sup>th</sup> to remain at 25.	HWG	PBOT GABA		Determine if approval is with PBOT or ODOT.
<b>CD2 Build Gateway Park.</b> Develop Gateway Park to complement and enhance district revitalization efforts.	Portland Parks and Recreation (PPR)	PDC	PPR and PPR SDCs, Gateway URA TIF	The Gateway Park will start design/engineering in October 2014 and construction is expected to be complete by spring 2017.
<b>CD3 Commercial Development.</b> Capitalize on the Gateway Park development and move forward a mixed-use development on PDC's one acre site at Halsey and 106 <sup>th</sup> . Consider residential development above to provide 'eyes on the street/park.'	PDC	Development community	Gateway URA TIF, private financing	PDC has started plans to move the commercial development forward in step with the park development
<b>CD4 Promote building rehabilitation and development.</b> Stimulate rehabilitation and development of privately-owned properties to support business growth and vitality, as well as safety, by offering PDC financing.	PDC	Various lenders, consultants, and property owners, development community	PDC grant and loan programs	
<b>CD5 District/Building Design Pallet.</b> Facilitate development of community design guide to encourage redevelopment that supports district identity and supports premise to 'show, don't tell'; introduce 3 and 4 color paint schemes; introduce building lighting and outdoor lighting.	HWG	PDC	Gateway URA TIF, other grant programs	
<b>CD6 Incorporate Sustainability.</b> Incorporate sustainability and green features in all improvements to support Gateway as an EcoDistrict.		Developers, property and business owners, Bureau of Environmental Services		
<b>CD7 Improve the Retail Experience.</b> Mitigate blanks in the retail connectivity through repurposing under used space: activate, engage, and program parking lots; light and decorate empty walls, and reorient buildings/spaces toward the street.	HWG	Property and business owners	PDC grant and loan programs	Could be a coffee and issues topic.