

Lombard Investment Strategy Summary Memo



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OVERVIEW

Beginning in the Fall of 2015, the Portland Development Commission, Civilis Consultants, and Walker Macy began studying a roughly two mile stretch of N Lombard St (from N Chautauqua Blvd to N Vancouver Ave) with the goal of putting together an investment strategy for Lombard. The role of Civilis Consultants in this strategy was to consider how to improve economic performance and identity in the district using the assets already present on the street.

In order to gather information about the district and quantify how it was functioning for consumers, landlords, and business owners, we discovered the vertical markets present in the area, mapped the district for active uses, conducted small format group interviews with owners, businesses, and residents, and held a community identity building workshop where participants fleshed out the story framework for the N Lombard St study area.



Chatting After the Findings and Recs Presentation

The culmination of this project was a Findings and Recommendations presentation that was held at De La Salle High School on April 28, 2015 for interested community members. (The photograph above right shows some of the attendees chatting after the event.) This memo is a condensed summary of the content covered in the Findings and Recommendations presentation.

Acknowledgements

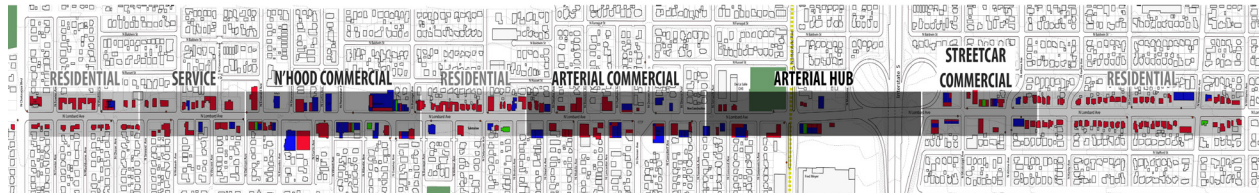
*This work was made possible through the sponsorship of the **Portland Development Commission** and the fantastic participation of Walker Macy and N Lombard St area residents, business owners, and property owners. A big and sincere thank you to all.*

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Key Findings

The study area of N Lombard Street, shown below, features a wide variety of infrastructure, uses, buildings types, and businesses. Generally, the study area breaks up into the following types of zones, shown below: residential, commercial, and arterial.

Study Area Zones



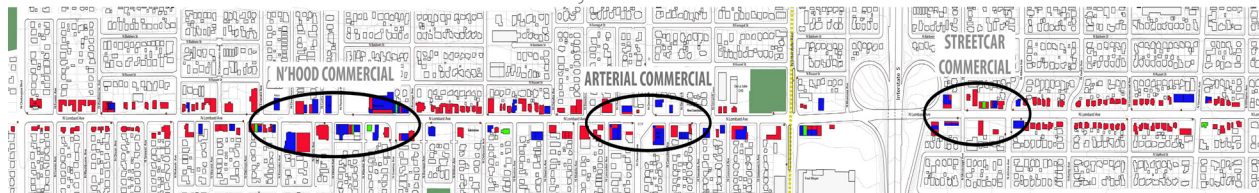
It is best when trying to improve an arterial to work within the authentic identity of its existing zones, rather than try to fight them or change them. If it is a residential area, make it the best, most fantastic residential area, and don't worry that it might be bracketed by commercial uses on either side.

The map above also is color coded for activity, where the **blue buildings** are active, the **red buildings** are inactive from the street, and the **green buildings** are vacant. As you can see, there are few vacancies in the Lombard study area, but there are very few good runs of active, outwardly engaging businesses, which will be an area for focused improvement in the future.

The last task with the mapping was to identify nodes for future streetscape investment. It's not possible with small investments to improve a corridor all at once, so one of the best ways to approach investment is to phase projects, focusing on nodes where there is intensity—intensity of activity (uses that can be outward facing), intensity of small business, and intensity of small buildings/spaces. We want buildings and businesses that are right next to each other, and as close to the sidewalk as possible.

Three nodes on the street were identified as having potential for intensity, and they are shown below. The top two nodes are the neighborhood commercial node and the streetcar commercial node (named for its proximity to historic streetcar infrastructure).

Study Area Nodes



Additional findings:

- The road is having a big impact on the district. It is negatively affecting the ability of businesses to be successful, it is separating neighborhoods to the north and south because no one wants to cross the street, and it is creating an environment that people do not relate to—both for residents and those passing through. These impacts are represented in the word cloud from the marketing workshop shown above right. (The larger the word, the more frequently it was said. The smaller the word, the less frequently it was mentioned).

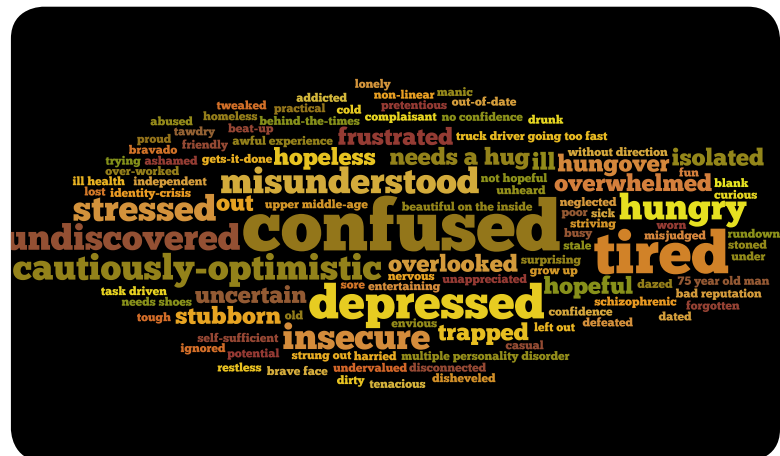
What Words Describe N Lombard St Today?



- There is tremendous community spirit along N Lombard St. We heard moving stories, from immigrant business owners who were wholly embraced by their neighbors, to businesses locating in this district because they fell in love with the people. There is pride, passion, and commitment to be tapped into amongst the business and residential population of the study area.

- The retail experience happens long before a customer walks in a door, and right now, N Lombard St is not executing on creating that district-wide experience. This is evidenced in the answers to the question we asked at the identity workshop: If North Lombard Street was a person, based on everything it presents to the world right now, what is that person feeling? The reason we ask this question is because the answers are the way consumers feel when they are on the street. And, as is shown above, N Lombard St is not generally providing an atmosphere that lends itself to feeling happy, making connections, and spending money!

If N Lombard St Was a Person,
How Is that Person Feeling Right Now?



There Are a Great Collection of Businesses on N Lombard St!



Recommendations

In order to improve district experience, increase sales, and create connection on corridors, we take a four-pronged approach: leveraging adjacencies, working with existing buildings to tell a better story, introducing sidewalk dialog, and looking at how we might be able to change the road. We are going to organize recommendations for Lombard around these four approaches.

CORRIDOR REVITALIZATION

- Leverage Adjacencies
- Existing Buildings
- Sidewalk Dialog
- Role of the Road

Leverage Adjacencies

The term adjacencies comes from retail theory, and it is essentially the science of what merchandise you set next to other merchandise in a store so that everything sells better. Every district should be in the business of creating as many adjacencies as they can, which requires that businesses know each other and work together toward common goals. So recommendation number one for adjacencies is to form a business association!

There are two types of adjacencies to consider in a district: physical and emotional.

Physical Adjacencies

At their core, physical adjacencies have to do with leveraging anything that is physically near a business. And make no mistake, everything that is next to a business is impacting that business. Physical adjacencies should never be ignored.

There is a great example of a dentist creating physical adjacencies on N Lombard happening right now that perfectly illustrates how to execute on the concept. Edelweiss Dental, pictured to the right, is located adjacent to a bus stop, and the dentist has wired his office to be able to pipe music to the exterior for people waiting at the bus stop. The biggest challenge is that traffic noise (due to speed of traffic, not so much volume), often drowns it out.



Dentist Pipes Music out to the Bus Stop

But the dentist doesn't stop there. One of the closest commercial uses to this practice is a bar. Most people would think it impossible to create a physical adjacency between a dentist and a bar, but Edelweiss Dental proved up to the challenge! He figured out that bars need coasters, and he provided free coasters with funny advertising and a coupon to his alcohol serving neighbor. GREAT example of a physical adjacency. (Please see the two photos below for coaster examples.) We need to see much more of this interconnection on N Lombard St.

Front of the Coaster



Back of the Coaster



Emotional adjacencies are the concepts/passions/vertical markets that you might be able to interconnect within a district, even if they are not immediately next to each other. For instance, I once worked in a district that had a wedding planner, a high-end stationary store, a jewelry store, a caterer, and one of the largest ballroom dance floors west of the Mississippi. Other, but there was a very natural flow of weddings.

industrial

nature

blue-collar

green

history

real

old-school

diverse

proud

gateway

historic

natural

central

gentrifying

entrenched

tainted

trains

peninsular

transportation

final frontier

sufficient

reverse

getting younger

secret portland

interesting

highway

potential

younger

unique

fastest road to airport

self-sustaining

family

access

behind-the-times

coming

transitory

wetlands

park

diamond in the rough

thumb of pdx

old/new

independent hub

open-space

flat

space

dog parks

last stop b4 vancover

vancouver

open

folks

separate

not dense

real

natural

central

gentrifying

entrenched

tainted

trains

peninsular

transportation

final frontier

sufficient

reverse

getting younger

secret portland

interesting

highway

potential

younger

unique

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flat

space

dog parks

last stop b4 vancover

In order to explore ways to create emotional adjacencies on Lombard, it is best to start from a place of authenticity, drawing out elements of existing identities. In the word cloud above are the answers to a question about how the area around N Lombard St might be described, and there is this wonderful tension between industrial/blue-collar and green/nature. So let's look at how Lombard might express these two characteristics using emotional adjacencies:

So how can we leverage this as an emotional adjacency?

First, if each auto business actually put a great example of a tricked out ride in front of the building along Lombard that *showed* what type of work they were capable of, it would create an emotional adjacency throughout the district that would be pleasant to look at and cement the street as “the place to go” to get your car fixed. It could become a draw in and of itself.

Second, the schools could partner with the auto focused businesses to have internships and classes for everything from in-depth auto repair to how to change a tire. This would create emotional adjacencies between all the schools in the district and the car focused businesses.

Third, you could create a N Lombard St event that was focused on cars. Everyone has a street fair. Forget that. Have an American Graffiti weekend. People could cruise with their cool rides. Parking lots could be filled with different themed cars—classics to modern. Bars could serve retro drinks and food. And, there could be outdoor sixties dances in the parking lots as well.

Edible Street! In the study area, there aren't a lot of areas represented by the words *park* and *green*. So looking at the strong sense of community, the passion for green and gardening, and all of the schools and combining that with the very wide sidewalks (especially wide for an arterial), N Lombard St could become an edible street, with community serving edible food grown on the street.

If Seattle can have an edible park. If LA can pass a law to make it legal to plant food on sidewalk islands. Why couldn't N Lombard St become known as an edible street? A project like this is green, sustainable, community building, harkens back to the apple orchards that used to be here, could involve the schools, would leverage volunteer hours, could be started small, would create an attractive and appealing environment that people would want to visit, and if it becomes large enough, might become a draw.



Church's Edible Front Yard

Existing Buildings

Every building should be telling a great story from the street, contributing to district identity and showing us who they are, what they are about, and giving us an idea as visitors what sort of experience we might have in their store. There is an easy formula for tackling buildings: Introduce color, highlight buildings details, make the windows great, and make it dramatic with some exterior lighting.

COLOR IS THE CHEAPEST AND EASIEST WAY TO INTRODUCE VIBRANCY



Recommendations for Lombard's existing buildings include:

Existing Buildings	Recommendations
<i>Color!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three- and four-color paint schemes on every building. • Ban Beige! Businesses should be trying to get people's attention, not make themselves invisible! • Color is the cheapest and easiest way to introduce district vibrancy.
<i>Building Detail</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every building has something physically interesting about it, so highlight all building details. It can be trim, molding, texture differences, grain, patterns, shapes, etc.
<i>Transparency</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncover windows that are blocked by posters/curtains/blinds. • Remove awnings/restore transom windows. • Remove dark U/V window coatings that turn windows into mirrors. • Light the inside of windows so they are transparent during the day.
<i>Exterior Lighting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Storefront windows should be amazing at night and make the sidewalk engaging, even though businesses are closed. • Introduce building lighting, tree lighting, sconce lighting, gooseneck lighting, decorative lighting—these are the things that tell us a place is open for business and safe for customers at night.

MOST BUSINESSES DO NOT HAVE WINDOW TRANSPARENCY ON LOMBARD



Sidewalk Dialog

The identity of a district entirely comes from what conversations are happening at the sidewalk. This is true whether a business is located in a building built up to the sidewalk, or whether it is located in a recessed building. The only difference is that in a recessed building, businesses have two sidewalks to engage: the ones right in front of their building, and the ones next to the street.



Recessed Buildings Have Two Sidewalks

Why do conversations on the street matter? Why does sidewalk dialog have an impact economically? Because happenings on the sidewalk draws people, are visually engaging, encourage exploration and cross pollination between businesses, slow traffic (which makes businesses more visible), and make consumers happy, priming them for commerce. Areas to consider on Lombard for sidewalk dialog include:

Sidewalk Dialog	Recommendations
<i>Know Your Zone!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Know your Sidewalk Zones! <i>The Store Zone</i> is the area immediately in front of stores facing the sidewalk. Each ground floor business should SHOW what sort of experience and products a shopper can expect from that store or restaurant or lawyer or accountant or bank. <i>The District Zone</i> is next to the curb of the sidewalk. This is the place where you focus on building a consistent district identity with street furnishings, trees, landscaping, benches, lighting, garbage cans, etc. And remember, the Store Zone can invade the District Zone, but generally speaking, the District Zone should not invade the Store Zone.
<i>More Outdoor Seating</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Take off-street parking spaces close to the street and turn them into outdoor seating areas.More attractive tables, chairs, and umbrellas on Lombard. Even if no one sits in them, it becomes a visible reminder of the restaurant offerings on the street.
<i>Show, Don't Tell!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Make sure a person driving in a car tell what each business does in just a few seconds. (<i>Hint: they aren't going to read a sign.</i>)Merchandise and light windows so it's a great part of the experience of being on the street.Put product outside.Showcase people. Humans are pack animals and are hard wired to go do and see what they observe other people doing and seeing.

Tigard: Sidewalk Dialog Before



Tigard: Sidewalk Dialog After



Role of the Road

Now we are coming full circle, back to the word cloud at the beginning of this report. It's inescapable that the road is playing a big role in everyone's mind, and not in a good way—*disjointed, traffic, busy, congested, potholes, fast, dangerous*. Also in the workshop, when we asked who didn't relate to the street, the biggest answer was *cyclists*. (Caveat: people did not say they wanted bike lanes, that was not part of any discussion. But people were very clear that Lombard is not a great place for cyclists, either for biking on the street, or trying to get across the street.)

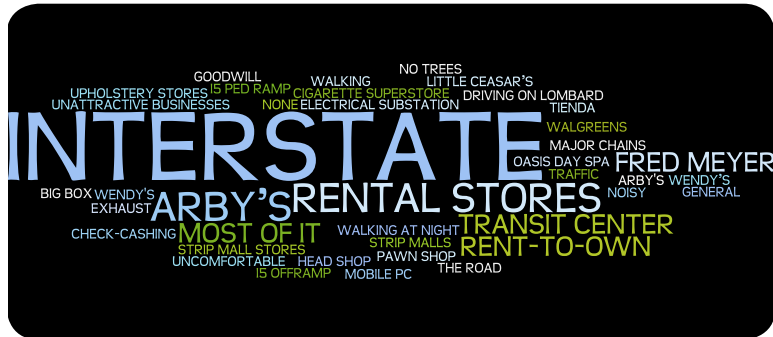
In the small format group interviews, businesses were adamant that the fast traffic, the lack of street parking, and the generally unattractive street identity were having a negative impact on commerce. Most characterized the study area of N Lombard St as being a place that people put their heads down and drive through as fast as possible.

One interviewee believed the Lombard experience to be sufficiently negative that they actually direct their clients to their Lombard location via Rosa Parks Blvd because it's a much more enjoyable trip.

Residents mentioned time and again that N Lombard St acts as a sort of dividing line between north and south, severing the connection between neighborhoods because it creates a boundary that everyone dislikes, that people avoid, and especially that everyone does not like crossing.

And lastly, the least favorite place on Lombard also has to do with the road, it is the intersection of N Lombard St and N Interstate Ave. It was talked about a lot in interviews as the most avoided spot on Lombard for pedestrians and for auto traffic, and was by far the clear winner for the most unpopular portion of the study area in the marketing workshop, as shown in the word cloud below.

What is Your Least Favorite Area of Lombard?



In the short term, focusing on ways to improve crossings, lower the speed limits, and narrowing the vista of drivable pavement by striping on-street parking would help address some of Lombard's challenges.

Over the long term, the street is ripe for a road diet because of its traffic counts, potentially going to a 2 lane, or 3 lane configuration with amenities like narrower lanes, on-street parking on both sides of the street, and crossing sanctuaries for pedestrians. Another reason to be organized as a business association is that lobbying for these kinds of street changes requires an organized and vocal presence for a period of years.

A good example of a 5 lane to 2 lane conversion with similar traffic counts occurred on La Jolla Blvd in San Diego, pictured below. Images courtesy of Dan Burden, Director of Innovation and Inspiration at Blue Zones, LLC.

La Jolla Blvd Before



La Jolla Blvd After



Images Courtesy of Dan Burden, Consultant that Helped Visualize and Implement These Changes

When we asked the community what words they wanted to see describe N Lombard St in the future, their answers are shown to the right.

Stakeholders want a street that is a *destination*, that is *inviting*, and that reflects their *community* spirit. The recommendations around improving district experience will help meet those goals. The more all groups can work together to create an outward-facing, well lit, interconnected business district, the more welcoming it will be.

N Lombard St is the spine of the Peninsula, and with a little work, it can go from being an invisible pass-through place to a street that loudly, and proudly, shows the world how much the Peninsula has to offer.

A word cloud of positive urban attributes. The words are arranged in a dense, overlapping manner. The most prominent words are 'SAFE', 'WALKABLE', 'DIVERSE', 'FRIENDLY', 'INVITING', 'PEDESTRIAN', 'VIBRANT', 'DESTINATION', 'COLORFUL', 'GREEN', 'CLEAN', 'COMMUNITY', 'JOBS', 'FAMILY', 'BIKEABLE', 'ACCESSIBLE', 'AFFORDABLE', 'CONVENIENT', 'COMFORTABLE', 'AWESOME', 'HAPPY', 'LIVE', 'SAFE', 'ROADS', 'PARK', 'BIKE', 'FRIENDLY', 'CALMER', 'EASY', 'ACCESS', 'VIBRANT', 'LOCAL', 'SLOWER', 'TRAFFIC', 'BEAUTIFUL', 'UNIFIED', 'ECONOMICALLY', 'BICYCLE', 'FRIENDLY', 'CITY', 'STREET', 'FLOW', 'NOT', 'POTHOLES', 'CHARMING', 'LOVELY', 'FRESH', 'PAINT', 'SMOOTH', 'INTERESTING', 'ART', 'HEAT', 'AFFORDABLE', 'GREENER', 'BETTER', 'TRAFFIC', 'FLOW', 'PARKING', 'HISTORIC', 'LIGHTING', 'PARKS', 'MIXED', 'EDGY', 'CULTURAL', 'UNIQUE', 'PROUD', 'FOOD', 'WELCOMING', 'WELL-KEPT', 'ENERGETIC', 'AIRPORT', 'SIGNS', 'STRESS-FREE', 'BIKWAYS', 'NEIGHBORLY', 'ELECTIC', 'INCLUSIVE', 'YOUNG', 'BUSTLING', 'PROMOTION', 'BETTER', 'URBAN'. The colors range from dark red to light green.

APPENDIX A: WORD CLOUDS

Included in this appendix are the word clouds that came out of the marketing workshop. This data was transcribed from flipcharts collected during the marketing workshop. In these word clouds, the more frequently a word was mentioned, the larger it appears. The less frequently it was mentioned, the smaller the word.

[illegible]

CH2: WHAT WORDS DESCRIBE LOMBARD IN THE PAST?

SCARY VIBRANT HISTORIC
AFFORDABLE TROLLEY LOST POOR
BYPASS CRIME WORKING-CLASS
DANGEROUS CHARM
STREETCAR
NEGLECTED
DIVERSE ECONOMY
LESS DIVERSE
CHEAP
BLACK LACKING
ISOLATED
FAMILY CRACK
THOROUGHFARE WWII
BAD NEIGHBORHOOD
BEAUTIFUL OLD HOUSES
FAST-PACED
LESS CONGESTED
60S HEYDAY
LESS GRAFFITI
NONENTITY SHOOTINGS
THEATER INCLUSIVE
ROUGH
FUNKY
SLOWER SPACIOUS
BETTER BUSINESS MIX
GREAT NEIGHBORHOOD
MYSTERIOUS
CLOSED OFF
TURNOVER
NOT DIVERSE
BUSINESS SAVVY
LONG-TERM RESIDENTS
CULTURAL
BORDER
DESOLATE
UNVISITED
DRUGSTORE
GANGS
HIGH
TOUGH UNKNOWN
OPPORTUNITY
HOMOGENEOUS
BEAUTIFUL BUILDINGS
SAME BAD SCHOOLS
SMALL BUSINESS BARS
HIGH-CRIME
DIVERSE
THOROUGHFARE WWII
BAD NEIGHBORHOOD
BEAUTIFUL OLD HOUSES
FAST-PACED
LESS CONGESTED
60S HEYDAY
LESS GRAFFITI
NONENTITY SHOOTINGS
THEATER INCLUSIVE
ROUGH
FUNKY

CH3: WHAT WORDS DO YOU MOST WANT TO HEAR DESCRIBE LOMBARD?



What makes a neighborhood great?

neighborhood great safety community local business art creative prosperity home-improvement coffee health welcoming connections being casual bars shopping local takes transit environment landscaping green river respect local urban farming affordability business clean air design skateboarding schools alternative family friendly gardening beer music diversity perception parks outdoors social equity family-friendly security services change wakeup walkability drugs light rail weed accessible voice in portland

OB2: WHAT PLACES GIVE AN EXPERIENCE YOU WOULD LIKE LOMBARD TO GIVE AND WHY?



OB3: IF LOMBARD WAS A PERSON, WHAT IS IT FEELING?



A word cloud graphic with the words "SAFE", "PROUD", "HEALTHY", "SECURE", "AUTHENTIC", "INCLUDED", "INSPIRED", "CONNECTED", and "HAPPY" in large, bold letters. Smaller words like "SPECIAL", "PROSPEROUS", "APPRECIATED", "COMFORTABLE", "RESPECT", "PERSONAL", "CREATIVE", "LISTENED TO", "ENERGIZED", "COMMUNITY", "HAPPY", "POSITIVE", "CALM", "PERSISTENT", "TRUSTED", "GROWTH", "VIBRANT", "SMALL", "CONTENT", "PART OF PORTLAND", "VALIDATED", "TESTED", "CELEBRATED", "THEY MATTER", "SELF-SUFFICIENT", "LIEKHAUGS-TES", "CULTURAL", "ARTS", "SUSTAINABLE", "MYERS", "EXCITED", "BELIEVED", "OPTIMISTIC" are scattered around the main words.



RE3: LOMBARD'S MOST POPULAR EVENTS?



RE4: WHO DOES NOT RELATE TO LOMBARD?

pearlites

identity walkers late-night don't live here new portlanders historic community musicians families now north portlanders fashionistas college foodies suburbanites no shopping teens coffee lovers no publicity families with young children yuppies west hills rich seniors

run-down oregonians lake oswegoans st. john's residents visitors trendsetters preppies portland students pedestrians people

cyclists

[illegible]

EN4: WHAT AREAS OF LOMBARD DO YOU AVOID?

