



Building an Equitable Economy

Lents Town Center Phase II

Community Conversations Meeting 2 Summary

Prepared for:

Prosper Portland

Prepared by:

JLA Public Involvement

March 2019

Overview

On February 25, 2019, Prosper Portland and public involvement consultants hosted the *Community Conversations Meeting 2* at the Wattles Boys & Girls Club, 6:00pm – 8:00pm. The meeting reconvened a similar group of key stakeholders who were invited to the *Community Conversations Meeting 1* and extended this meeting to the broader Lents community. Among those invited included Lents key stakeholders and representatives from community-based organizations specifically serving community initiatives in Lents.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Share feedback from public Open House
- Gather community feedback on prioritization of investments:
 - Share possible public benefits for each area of the development program (housing, public and commercial space) and their estimated costs
 - Ask for feedback on preferred public benefits
- Share next steps in the decision-making process, and how community will be kept informed of final decisions

42 participants attended the event.

Engagement Format

The *Community Conversations Meeting 2* was designed to be a semi-formal workshop for participants to learn about possible development options and share their feedback a small group format, facilitated by project staff. A short presentation framed subsequent small group discussions, but participants were able to drop in (and leave) when they liked. Comment forms were available to solicit additional input.

Food was catered from a local vendor and on-site child care was provided for the duration of the meeting. Translation/interpretation services were not requested before the event; live, Spanish interpretation was provided by Prosper Portland and JLA Public Involvement staff, and assisted by meeting participants, throughout the event.

Participants were welcomed by Prosper Portland staff and encouraged to tour the display boards, showing project background information and investment priorities within housing, commercial space, and public space- as identified from the previous open house discussions.

After participants had some time to tour the boards, Alison Wicks from Prosper Portland and Allison Brown, consultant from JLA Public Involvement, welcomed participants and gave a brief overview of the meeting's purpose, goals, and format. Alison Wicks reviewed information heard at the public open house and how it informed the current possible alternatives and options that Prosper Portland was presenting on the meeting display boards; a corresponding set of handouts were available at each table to assist during small group discussions. Alison explained how feedback will be used in decision-making going forward and emphasized that Prosper Portland was interested in learning "what are [your] priorities for investment?"

Allison Brown, JLA Public Involvement, then explained the format for the evening: small group discussions to talk about priorities and possible trade-offs.

Meeting participants were then grouped into small groups between 5-10 people. Project staff used the *Investment Priorities* handout to facilitate the conversation.

The *Investment Priorities* guide listed community identified values and potential public benefit ideas that came from previous public involvement efforts (focus groups, Community Conversations Meeting 1, and the February 11 Open House). Financial and organizational considerations were attached to each value and public benefit ideas, with the goal of facilitating discussion of the development tradeoffs within housing, commercial, and public space. Two key questions for discussion among each development type were:

- *Which added public benefit would meet the needs of the community the most?*
- *What do you feel is the most important public benefit to include in the development program?*

After about 30 minutes of discussion, each of the five groups had a staff member or volunteer report back key discussion highlights to the larger group. Key themes included:

- Concerns about displacement and ideas for equitable development
- The importance of affordable housing, particularly family-sized, mixed, and ADA-accessible and the importance of a balance of market rate housing.
- Interest in activating public spaces but with ongoing maintenance and management
- Developing pedestrian-scale commercial spaces that included more food options, makerspaces, and other specific ideas
- Feedback on outreach process and methods

After each group reported out on the outcomes of their discussion, the public involvement staff, Prosper Portland, and Portland Housing Bureau staff answered additional questions from participants. There were several concerns and perspectives expressed at the end of the meeting; project team members made themselves available to listen to and respond to specific community member concerns.

Outreach and Notification

Stakeholder groups included neighborhood associations, various Lents-serving community organizations, nonprofits, and business associations. Organizations, stakeholders, and community members were notified of the focus groups through the following methods:

- **Email invitations.** An invitation was sent to all existing stakeholders and those who had signed up to the project email listserv. The email invitation was made as a 'shareable' email invitation that could be circulated by invitees.
- **Project website.** Meeting information was prominently posted on the Prosper Portland website.
- **Social Media.** Meeting information was posted on Prosper Portland social media pages.

Key Themes

The following are overall key themes, as gathered from staff facilitating small group discussions:

- **Commercial:** Community members were in support of keeping the Green Lents Tool Library as well as offering specific ideas of other types of commercial space. Many of these ideas were similar to previous community engagement forums; library, makerspace, grocery store, more food options, and a used/new bookstore were among some of the ideas discussed. Community members suggested that 92nd Ave could be the Main Street of Lents, and that commercial development along this street should be at a *pedestrian-scale*.
- **Public Space:** Community members expressed support for a pavilion and flexible public space. Many supported the continuation of the farmers market. Public bathrooms and landscaping were of interest, but it was important that if these amenities were introduced, that there was a plan/program for ongoing maintenance and management.
- **Housing:** Affordable, *family-sized* (2-3 bedroom) housing continued to be a frequently mentioned as top community priority. There were concerns that the thresholds for affordable housing were not at the median household income level for Lents, but for the greater Portland area. Community members wanted more information on the current composition of affordable and market rate units in the current development. In addition, more information was desired on the option of Prosper Portland assigning a portion of the property to Portland Housing Bureau. Community members were in support of the default option to develop units within the City of Portland Inclusionary Housing Policy mandate. Some community members wanted Prosper Portland to support a market-rate project with only affordable units as required by the Inclusionary Housing Policy.
- **Equitable Development:** Community members continued to express their concern that development in Lents should be for the people who currently live in Lents; as in previous meetings, fears of displacement and gentrification were brought up. Community members felt that low-diesel construction practices were important as well as development that prioritized community-based contractors and workforce.
- **Process-related feedback:** There was expressed frustration with the public involvement process and concerns that the multicultural and multilingual outreach was not enough based on Lents demographics. Some participants were skeptical of the actual influence or power they have as a stakeholder within the decision-making process. Some community members asked that future meetings include more visualizations of development concepts for participants to respond to. Many community members were unclear with how the cost calculations were derived and over what timespan. Community members hoped that Prosper Portland would continue to keep the community abreast of project updates and process.



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Appendix A: Small Group Discussion Report Back

Small Group Discussion Report Back

The following are summarized points shared from each small group discussion, transcribed by JLA Public Involvement staff. There were four English-speaking and one Spanish-speaking small group discussion. The following small group discussion summary points were shared by project staff who facilitated those conversations:

- Using inclusionary housing policy going forward
 - o Mix of affordable and market rate
 - o Question: *What proportion of 2-3 bedrooms are available?*
 - o Question: *If property goes to PHB, what happens to the rest?*
- Grocery store for community
- Continue Tool Library
- Pavilion and plaza – *how will it be maintained? For example, how will the bathroom be maintained?*
- Low diesel construction
- Partner with community-based builders and workforce
- Inclusionary housing- not too many \$\$ PP for affordable
- Interest in all public options
- Love farmers market
- Housing: family-sized units
 - o *How many? What already exists? We need more info!*
- More food options
- Lents Library
- New/used bookstore
- Public bathrooms
- Landscaping with water?
- Game space?
- What does “flexible” affordable housing mean?
- More outreach! *Was homeless/houseless community reached out to?*
- 92nd as Main St. for Lents
 - o Pedestrian-scale business potential
 - o Makerspaces? Clothing exchange?
- More visualizations of site in meetings
 - o Conceptual mapping of Lents
- Make clear inclusionary housing is mandatory – not optional
- Make sure Lents community is not displaced
 - o *Any anti-displacement impact analysis for development?*
- ADA-accessible units
- Mix of market and affordable
- *What is the integration of people living there?*
- Love grocery store
- Love Green Lents
- *Can schools fit in?*
- *How does housing affect school?*
- Favor pavilion – flexible space
- Online participation

- Keep sharing outcomes/process
- Low income renters of color have not been included in PDC/PP projects
 - o Do these voices matter?
 - o Repeating past missteps?
- Portland Housing Bureau – “State of Housing” has info on neighborhoods and demographics



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Appendix B: Investment Priorities Comment Form

Investment Priorities Comment Form

Participants were provided an *Investment Priorities Comment Form* to submit additional feedback on what added public benefit (within housing, public space, commercial space, and equitable development) they felt was most important. A total of 15 comment forms were collected. Each development category asked participants to mark their response to the following questions: *Which added public benefit would meet the needs of the community the most? What do you feel is the most important public benefit to include in the development program?*

Below are the responses and additional comments:

HOUSING

# of responses	Added Public Benefit Option
10	Palindrome Communities provides Inclusionary Housing units per City of Portland's Inclusionary Housing Policy
5	Affordable units build by Palindrome Communities are family-sized units, 2 bedroom & 3 bedroom units (\$\$\$\$)
1	Prosper Portland assigns a portion of the property to the Portland Housing Bureau for affordable housing development (\$\$\$\$\$)
<p>OTHER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure housing has parking and is ADA accessible. - 92nd - Front units should have street side doors. - 20% low income rate/80% market rate. - Important to have mixed market-rate with plenty of market rate. Is mixed-use possible? Aesthetics and public art is important for a large housing development. - Keep your promise. Abide by the original agreement. - SOME affordable housing - Why are we spending public money on corporations like Palindrome anyway? Make the whole development public housing. - Build a village for the homeless. - Area for homeless shelter - Balance - not all affordable 	

PUBLIC SPACE

# of responses	Added Public Benefit Option
8	Pavilion (\$\$)
2	Public Bathrooms (\$\$)
2	Hardscaped Treatment (\$\$)
4	Plaza construction (\$\$\$\$)
2	Permanent public easement (\$\$\$\$\$)
3	Ongoing Operations & Maintenance (\$\$\$\$\$)
<p>OTHER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any maintenance is welcome! - Shared space for use by public events/activities, NOT JUST HOUSING. 	

- Benches & water feature
- Space for farmers market

COMMERCIAL SPACE

# of responses	Added Public Benefit Option
6	Renovated commercial space (\$\$\$)
10	Green Lents Tool Library remains, in smaller footprint (\$)
2	Tenant improvements for eligible businesses (\$)
OTHER:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Live/Work - concentrate pedestrian oriented main street on 92nd Ave. Is the public plaza in the best location and configuration? Need to program different types of retail on 92nd, compared to Foster. - Grocery Store (x5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Or restaurant ready space/possible conversion from res to retail as needed o Healthy, locals option (such a people's) o And vibrant businesses - I'd love all ground floor to be retail, food service, cop shop (?), outreach for the houseless - Maybe all possibly together - Mixed use property - A village for the homeless!!! 	

EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

# of responses	Added Public Benefit Option
3	Market units through partnerships with Lents-based organizations.
6	Low-diesel construction practices.
1	Flexible affordable housing programming.
8	Tenancing and programming that support communities of color,
OTHER:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have to breathe! - Hold summer ethnic performances or free films in new pavilion - Bio-diesel 	



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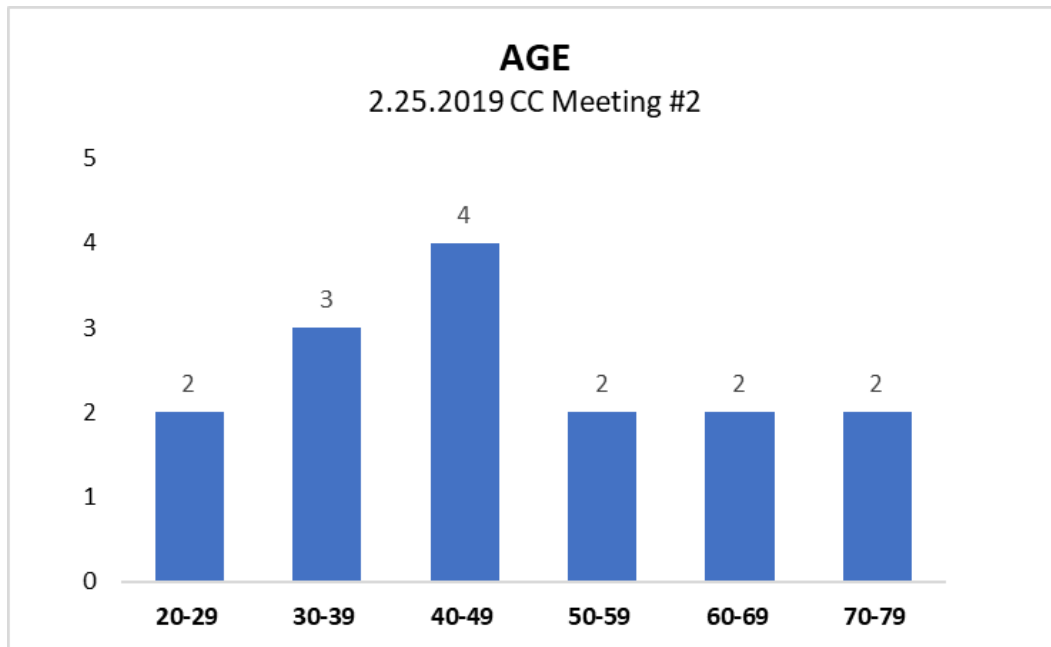
Appendix C: Demographic Questions Result

Demographic Questions Result

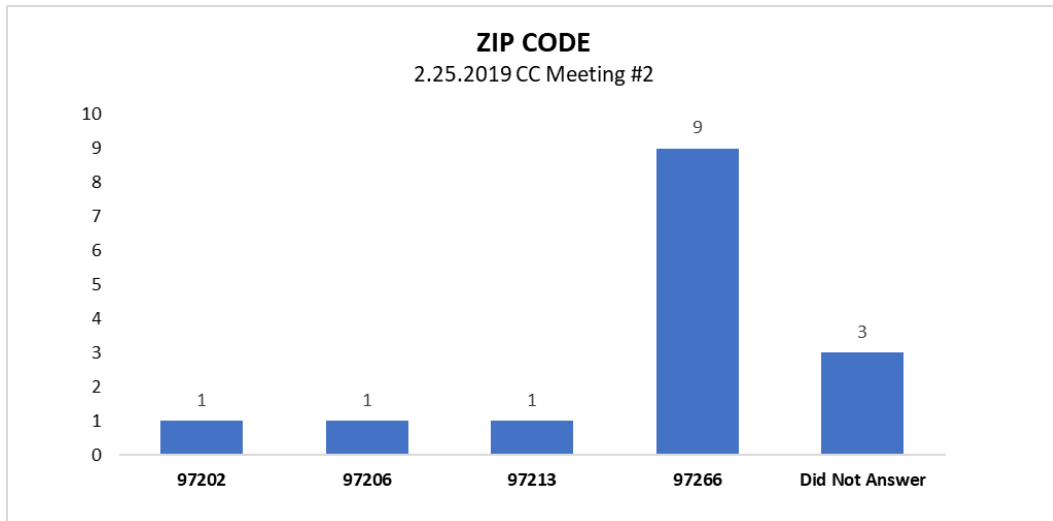
Participants were provided comment cards at the end of the meeting that included demographic questions. A total of 22 comment cards were submitted; 15 of the respondents included demographic information. Within this small pool of data, the majority identified as white with an almost even split between female and male, lived in zip 97266, preferred English as their primary language, and are between 30-49 years old. Income skewed below \$49,000 with the majority earning \$20,000 and less a year.

Below are the responses to the following demographic questions:

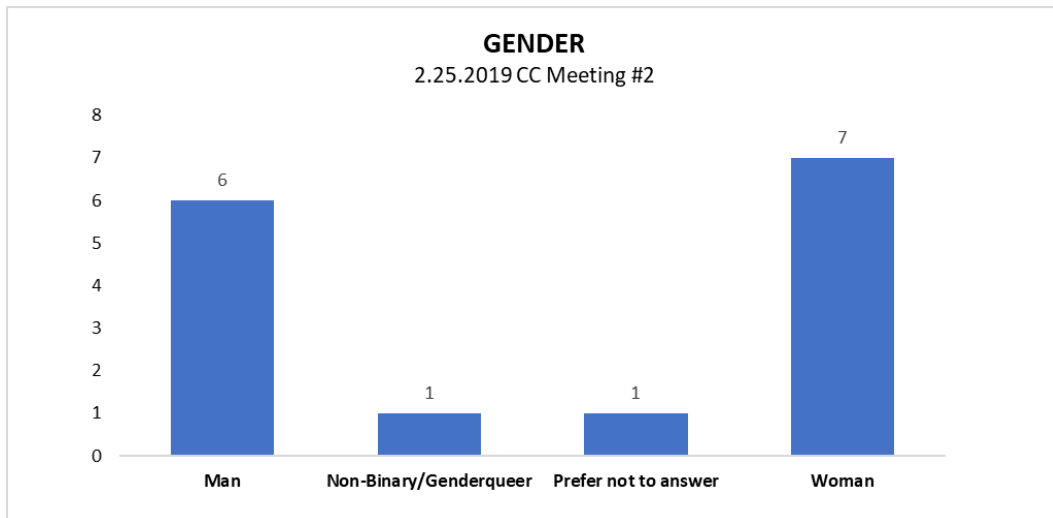
What is your age?



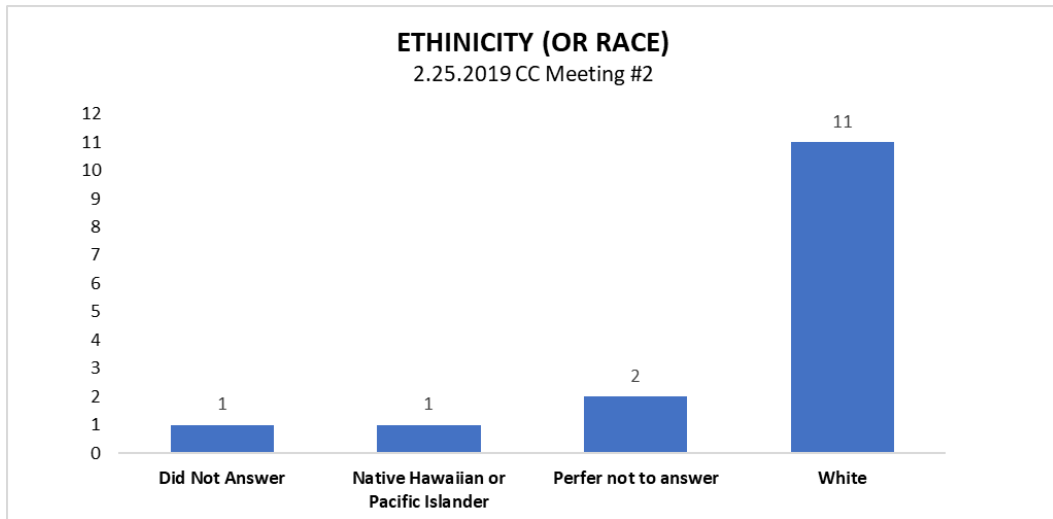
What is your zip code?



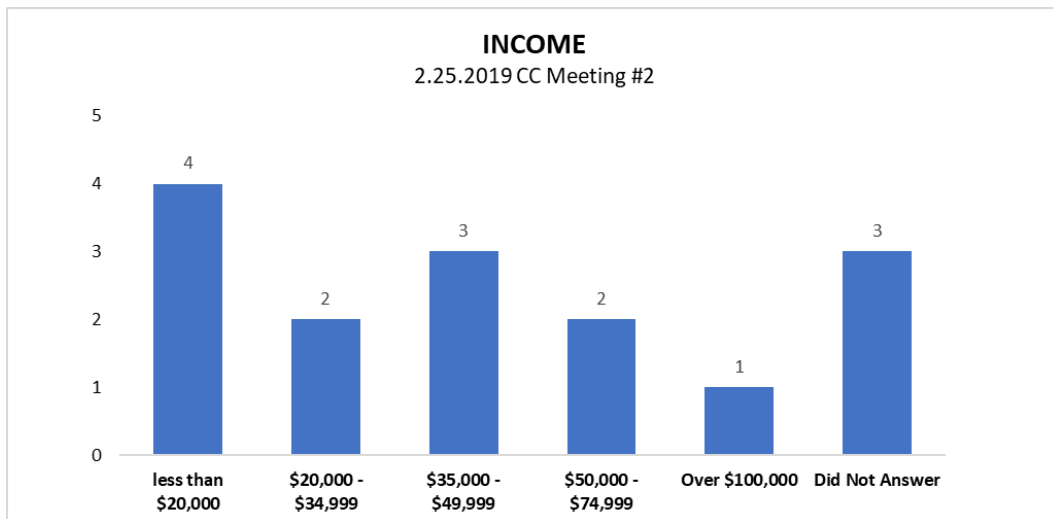
What is your gender?



What is your ethnicity (or race)?



What is your income level?



What is your preferred language?

