



Lents Stabilization and Job Creation Collaborative Summary

Background:

Lents and Powellhurst-Gilbert are diverse, low-income neighborhoods, with more children and single parents than other areas of Portland. In the Powellhurst-Gilbert area alone, the number of residents living in the area who self-identify as Black or African American and Native Hawaiian has increased more than 244% in the last ten years. Additionally, those residents who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino residents have increased 136% and Asian residents have increased more than 100 percent.

Residents are disproportionately under-served and face historical inequities measured in community investment. There is a historical pattern of employment and residential development allowed to occur within the Johnson Creek 100-year floodplain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Within these two neighborhoods, about 330 acres are designated by FEMA as flood hazard areas. The impacts from this flood hazard designation undermine new development and job creation, creating a financial hardship for hundreds of residents as a result of rising insurance costs. The periodic flooding of Foster Road and adjacent industrial land impacts the environmental health of Johnson Creek.

Project Goals and Benefit to the State:

The Lents Stabilization and Job Creation Collaborative is designed to enhance equity through community investment, and to serve as a model for improving community conditions in ways that can be replicated in other parts of the state. Few places offer the same potential to leverage actions toward the triple bottom line of sustainability – addressing economy, equity and environment – in one location. The project would build a foundation for improving community stability, equity, natural resource restoration and economic growth in flood-prone areas of the Lents and Powellhurst-Gilbert neighborhoods. Key goals:

- 400 single-family properties no longer in the floodplain (71 acres)
- 60+ acres of industrial land no longer in the floodplain
- \$105 million increase in employment property value
- 30 acres of additional natural areas for restoration

Oregon Solutions Will Add Important Value:

The project would be a multi-year effort to build a foundation for improving community stability, equity, natural resource restoration and economic growth in flood-prone areas of the Lents and Powellhurst-Gilbert neighborhoods. With the support of city agencies, the City of Portland has approved a comprehensive funding package in their just approved FY 2016–2017 budget. Funding includes matching funds for Oregon Solutions project management as well as funding for technical assistance and in-kind city agency participation.

Oregon Solutions will, in consultation with state and federal partners, identify stakeholders to participate in the process and to contribute to the success of the project. Stakeholders will include those representing under-served residents within the area, owners of under-utilized industrial land, and owners of businesses impacted by the flood hazard designation as well as the actual flooding that is disruptive to their commerce. Oregon Solutions will facilitate and manage the process with a leadership team. We will conclude with a Declaration of Cooperation memorializing commitments made by participants and identifying how to align resources in order to succeed.

April 2017