Humboldt Housing Infill Study

Housing Infill Opportunities and Potential Impacts on Student Enrollment

Prepared for the Portland Development Commission
by Winterbrook Planning

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WINTER BROOK

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Executive Summary

Over the last decade, Portland has experienced parallel trends of decreasing housing affordability and declining student enrollment in many of its public schools. Humboldt School in North Portland is an example of this trend. As housing costs within its attendance area have risen, enrollment at the school has fallen. The parallel rise in Humboldt neighborhood real estate prices and the drop in enrollment have both substantially outpaced city averages.

One solution to attract more families to the Humboldt neighborhood and to Humboldt School is to build new housing there that aligns with their interests. More so than other groups, families with school aged children seek larger, lower-cost units, closer to amenities like parks. Though undeveloped land within Humboldt is relatively scarce, there are infill opportunities available. At full build out of all existing vacant land in the area, the neighborhood has development potential for 181 units of new housing. Assuming current levels of household size and school participation, this housing would generate between 13 and 22 students, depending on housing type. Several vacant Humboldt-area properties that could be considered for redevelopment are listed at the end of this report.

Building affordable, family-friendly housing within the Humboldt attendance area would increase the pool of children, and potential students, living there. At the same time, the cost of housing is only one factor driving the changes in student enrollment. Other factors play a significant role, including shrinking household sizes, school quality and reputation, and a transfer policy that allows children to attend other schools within the district.

Lowering the cost of housing for a targeted sub-group—families with children—would likely help stabilize enrollment at Humboldt. Policy changes to stimulate housing that would attract families should be implemented. New housing unquestionably adds students to the system, and offsets enrollment losses due to other reasons. At the same time, serious efforts to change enrollment trends will require a multi-pronged approach that recognizes the role of shifting demographics, school quality and reputation, the District's transfer policy.

Organization and Methods

The purpose of this study, as stated in the PDC scope of work, is "to provide an overview of opportunities and constraints for infill of family-sized housing in these areas [Humboldt] and to help project staff and the community better understand the market feasibility for such development." The focus is therefore on this supply-side issue, or, more specifically, opportunities for family housing units in Humboldt Elementary attendance area.

Consequently, the report has been organized into sections that address the following:

1. Existing conditions within the study area. This outlines the current status of Humboldt neighborhood housing, summarizes conditions at the school, and summarizes recent trends in enrollment and housing costs.

2. Factors that affect local school enrollments. This also includes many non-housing factors.

3. Concepts of "family-friendly" housing. Attempts to define this type of housing, and presents a number of local examples.

4. Development challenges associated with the construction of family housing.

5. Quantification of the amount of new infill housing that could be built in the Humboldt neighborhood. Also estimates the number of Humboldt students that might be generated by this new housing.

6. Policy recommendations to encourage new family housing development in Humboldt.

7. Key sites that could be developed with family housing.

This report was prepared by Winterbrook Planning under contract from the Portland Development Commission. The key partners in this effort were Portland Public Schools and the Bureau of Planning, who assisted in providing information and feedback through the process.

Neighborhood Characteristics

The neighborhood that feeds to Humboldt Elementary School is located in inner North Portland. The attendance area for Humboldt students is bounded, broadly speaking, by Killingsworth Street on the north, Rodney Street on the east, Skidmore Street on the south, and Mississippi/ Albina Streets on the west. The school district's attendance area boundaries differ slightly from the city's Humboldt Neighborhood boundaries.

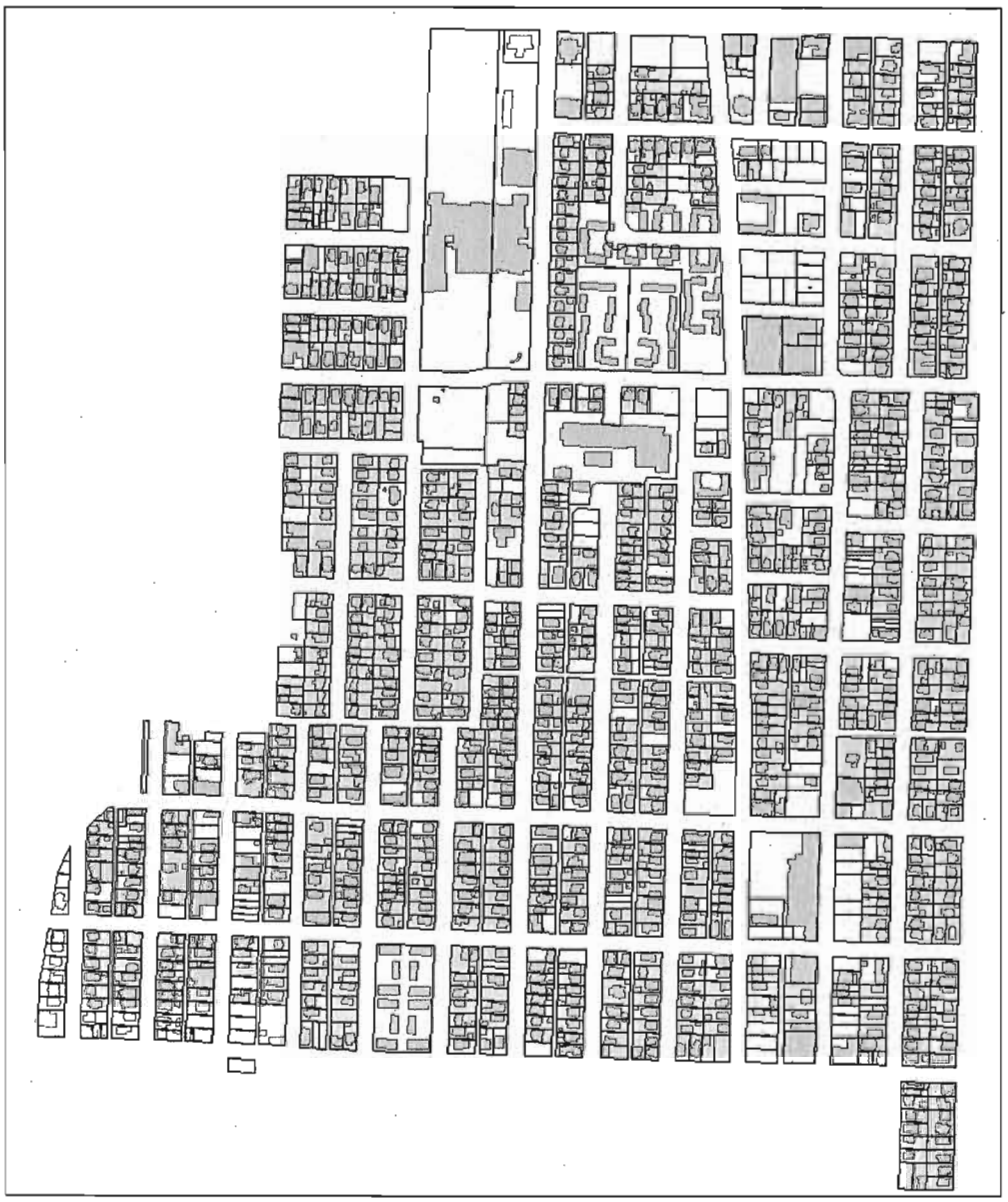


Figure 1. Humboldt Elementary attendance area

The Humboldt atttendance area is 255 acres in size, and has roughly 6,000 people living in 2,000 housing units. Land uses are divided 71 percent residential, 13 percent institutional (mostly school district land), 9 percent vacant land, 7 percent commercial, and 0 percent open space. The

large majority of residential land is platted in Portland's traditional, grid street system with mostly 50 foot by 100 foot individual lots. Urban levels of infrastructure—full sidewalks, streets, utilities—are present within the area.

Although there are the school grounds for Jefferson High School and Humboldt Elementary, no true neighborhood parks exist within the area. Humboldt does have two, very small pocket parks along North Albina Avenue: Albina Green and Albina Triangle. Two developed neighborhood parks are located north and just south of the neighborhood boundaries: Peninsula Park, at Ainsworth and Albina, and Unthank Park, at Shaver and Haight. Both of these parks have community centers associated with them.

Figure 2. Albina Green pocket park

According to 2000 Census data, Humboldt residents are twice as likely to live below poverty level as other Portland residents. Humboldt also has a higher proportion of rentals than the citywide average: 48 percent of Humboldt residences are rentals, 44 percent are owner occupied. Portland Police reports show a higher incidence of reported offenses per capita—a standard but imperfect measure of crime—than other areas of the city.

Humboldt's attendance area contains a variety of valuable community assets:

- Jefferson High School
- Portland Community College-Cascade Campus (gym building)

- Multnomah County Library, North Portland Branch
- Oregon Department of Human Resources, Employment Division
- Albina Head Start
- Children's Community Clinic
- Ethos Music Center
- Lifeworks NW
- Mississippi Health Center
- Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs
- Salvation Army Community Center & Pool

The neighborhood is well served by transit (Bus lines 4, 44, and 72), and is in close proximity to downtown Portland.

Humboldt's housing stock is typical of inner north and northeast neighborhoods. The neighborhood is mostly built-out; there is relatively little vacant land. Housing in older inner eastside neighborhoods such as Humboldt was largely constructed in the housing boom of the early 20th century. More than 80 percent of the attendance area's single-family housing was built prior to 1940.

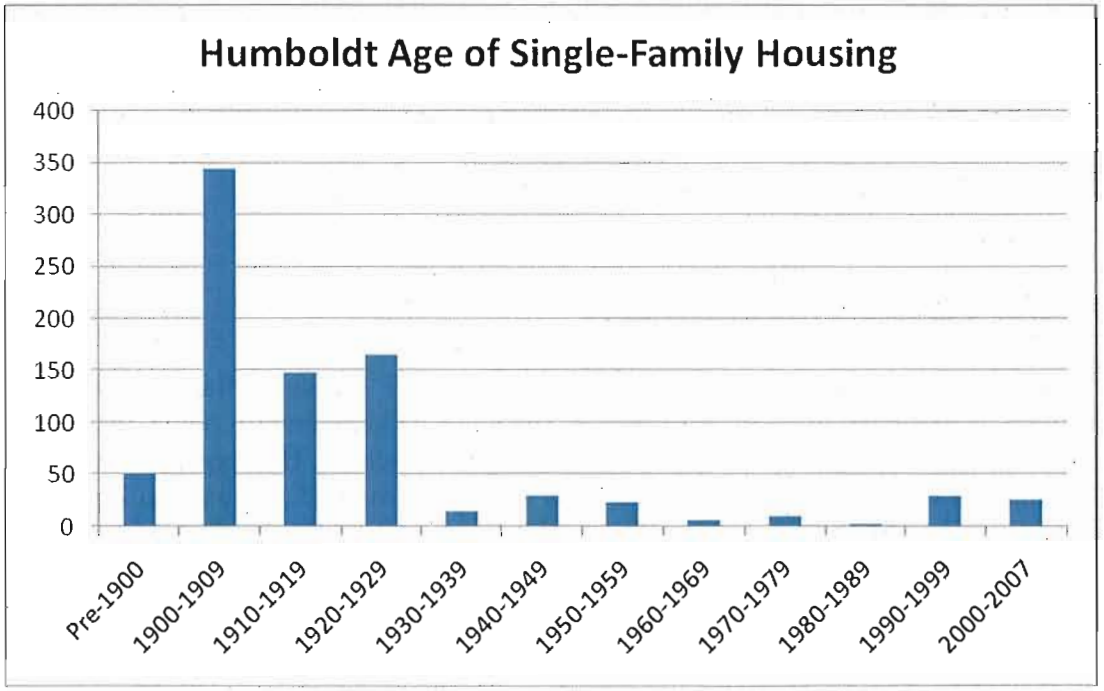


Figure 3. Age of Housing

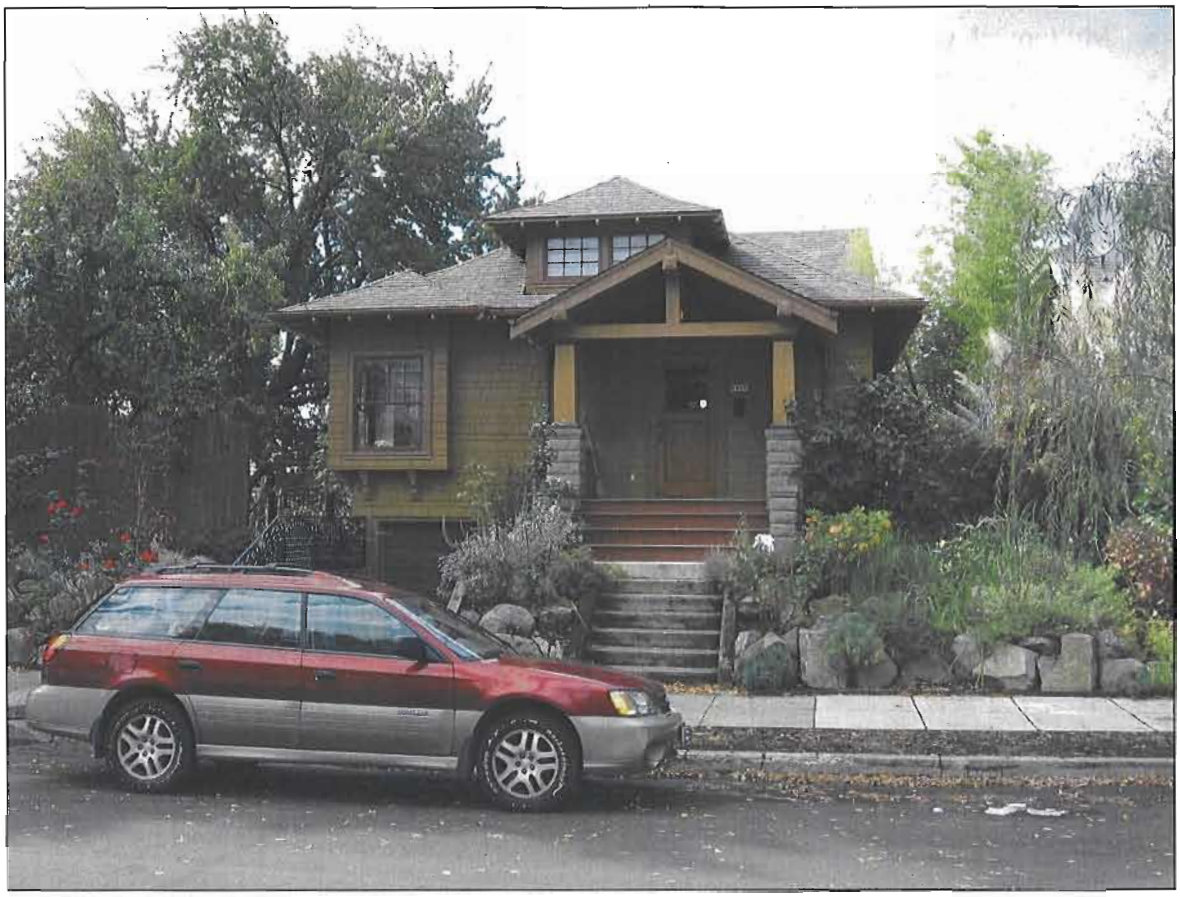


Figure 4. 1920s-era house in Humboldt

Humboldt School Characteristics

Humboldt Elementary School is a pre-kindergarten through 7th grade Portland Public School. The building, constructed in 1959, is located at 4915 North Gantenbein Avenue, just south of Alberta Street. While it has historically been an elementary school, Humboldt is in the midst of transitioning to a K-8 structure. A 6th grade class was added in 2005, 7th grade in 2007, and an 8th grade class is planned for 2008. Humboldt neighborhood students feed to Ockley Green School for 8th grade, then to Jefferson High School.

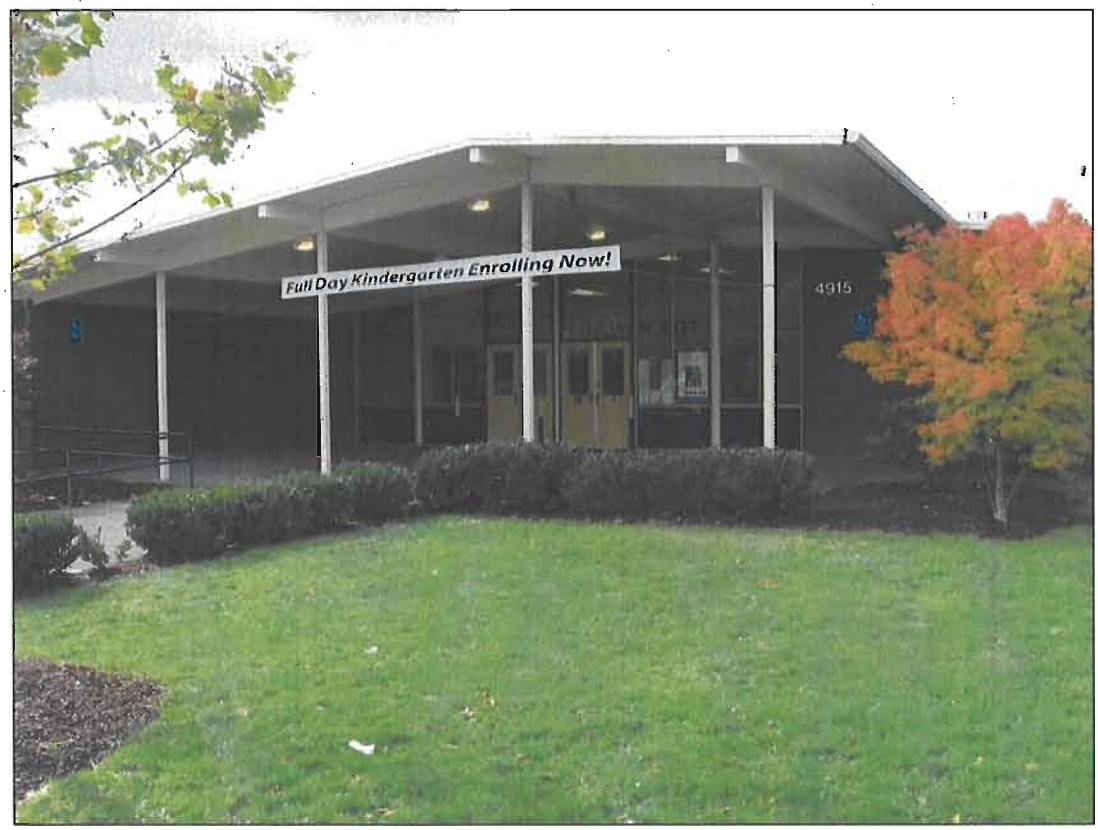


Figure 5. Humboldt Elementary School

In the 2007-2008 school year, Humboldt's student enrollment was 235 children. The school's neighborhood capture rate, that is, students living within the neighborhood who actually attend Humboldt rather than another District school, is 44 percent. The other 56 percent of Humboldt school-aged neighborhood residents attend a different Portland Public School. Humboldt's capture rate is substantially lower than the average for elementary schools in the district, although capture rates for other inner city elementary schools are likewise quite low. Shoring up enrollment at Humboldt are 98 students who transfer in from other neighborhoods.

Humboldt students are more racially diverse than other students in the district. African American students make up a much larger percentage of the student body at Humboldt than the District average (60% vs. 16%). Hispanic students are likewise twice as prevalent at Humboldt compared with the District average (24% vs. 14%). Unlike most Portland schools, white students make up a relatively small percentage of the total student body (11% vs. 56%).

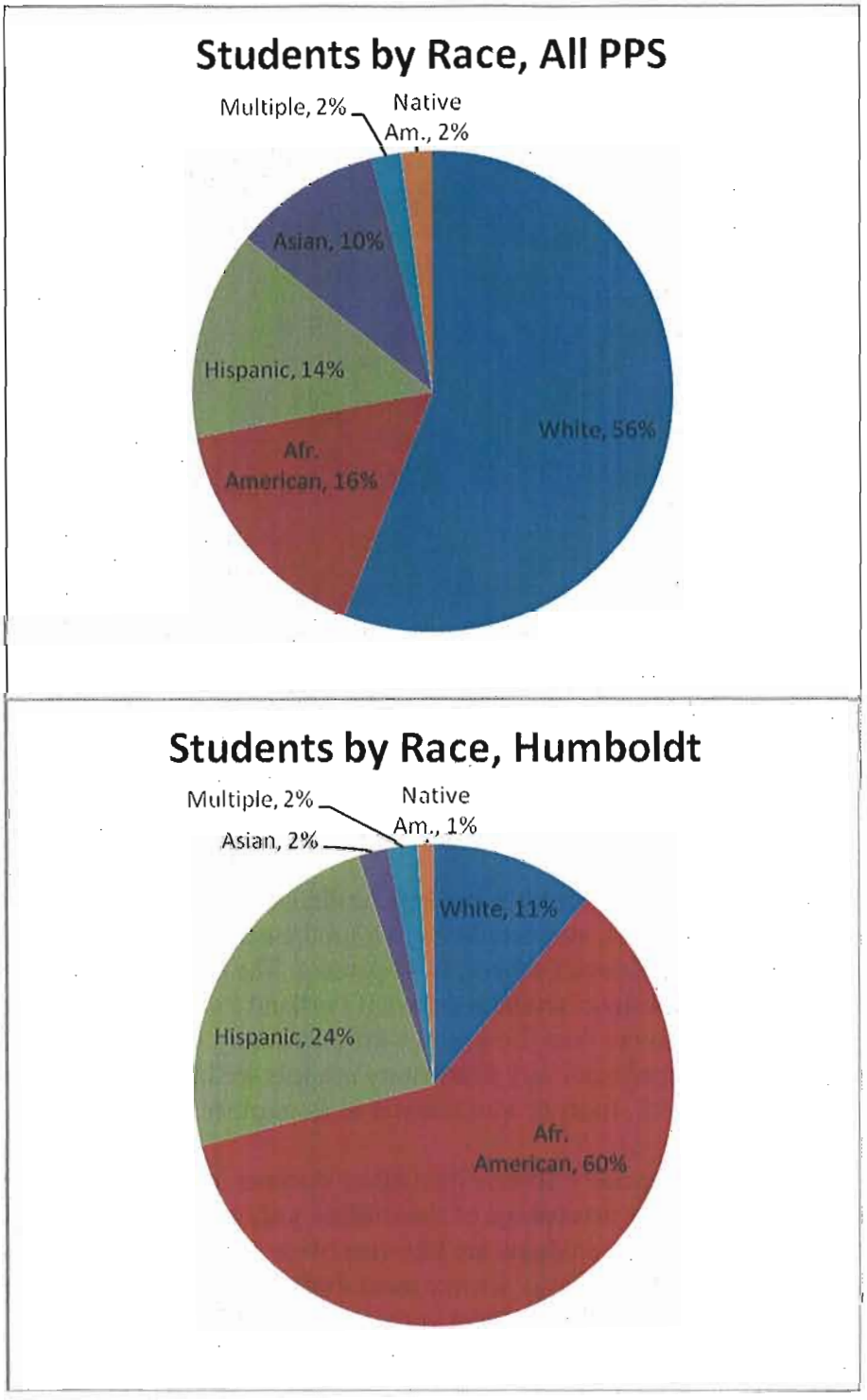


Figure 6. Students by Race, All PPS and Humboldt

Humboldt is the highest poverty school in the District. The standard school-based measure of family poverty is how many students qualify for free or reduced school lunch, which is based on family income. At Humboldt, the figure is 96 percent. For comparison, the District-wide figure is 45 percent.

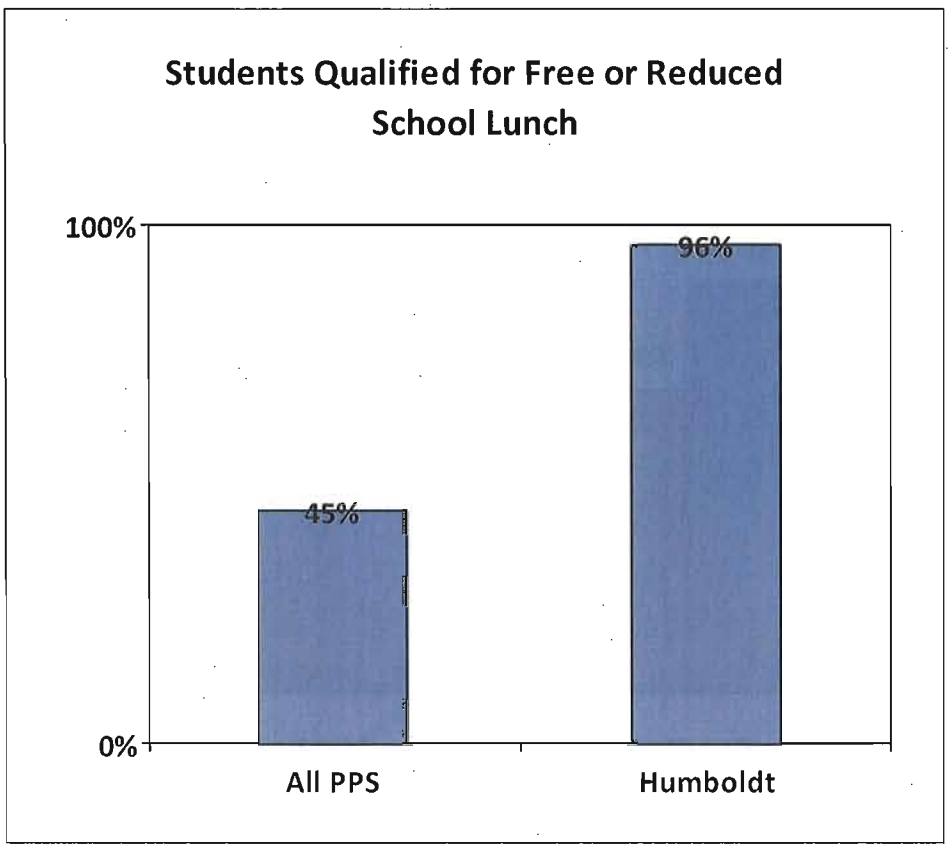


Figure 7. Student poverty indicator

The increasing affluence of neighborhood residents has not changed the economic status of Humboldt students. The percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch at Humboldt has been steady, not changing appreciably since 1995.

Humboldt students perform below the district average academically. Last year, in an annual test of reading and math skills, the percentage of students District-wide in grades 3 through 5 who "met or exceeded assessment benchmarks" on standardized tests was 80 percent in reading and 75 percent in math. At Humboldt, the same figures were 59 percent and 51 percent.

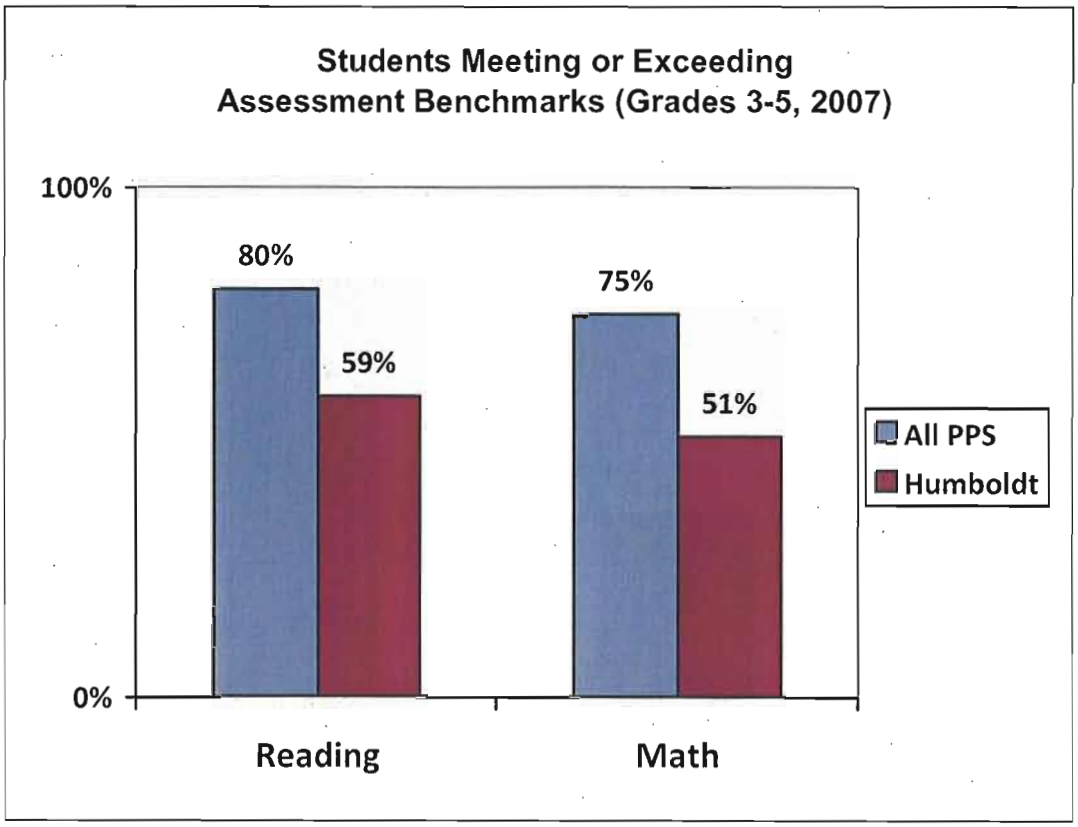


Figure 8. Student performance on standardized test

Despite these challenges, Humboldt has seen improvements in curriculum and student acheivement. It was recently named a "Beacon School" by the Oregon Department of Education for having demonstrated excellence in early childhood reading instruction. Several community and business partnership programs are already in place at the school, including reading programs with Start Making A Reader Today (SMART) and Mentor Graphics.

Enrollment Trends

Over the last 50 years—but more significantly in the last decade—Portland Public Schools have experienced decreasing student enrollment. Some individual schools have maintained enrollment levels, but enrollment district-wide has slipped. During this the last 10 years, K-5 enrollment has declined 15 percent.

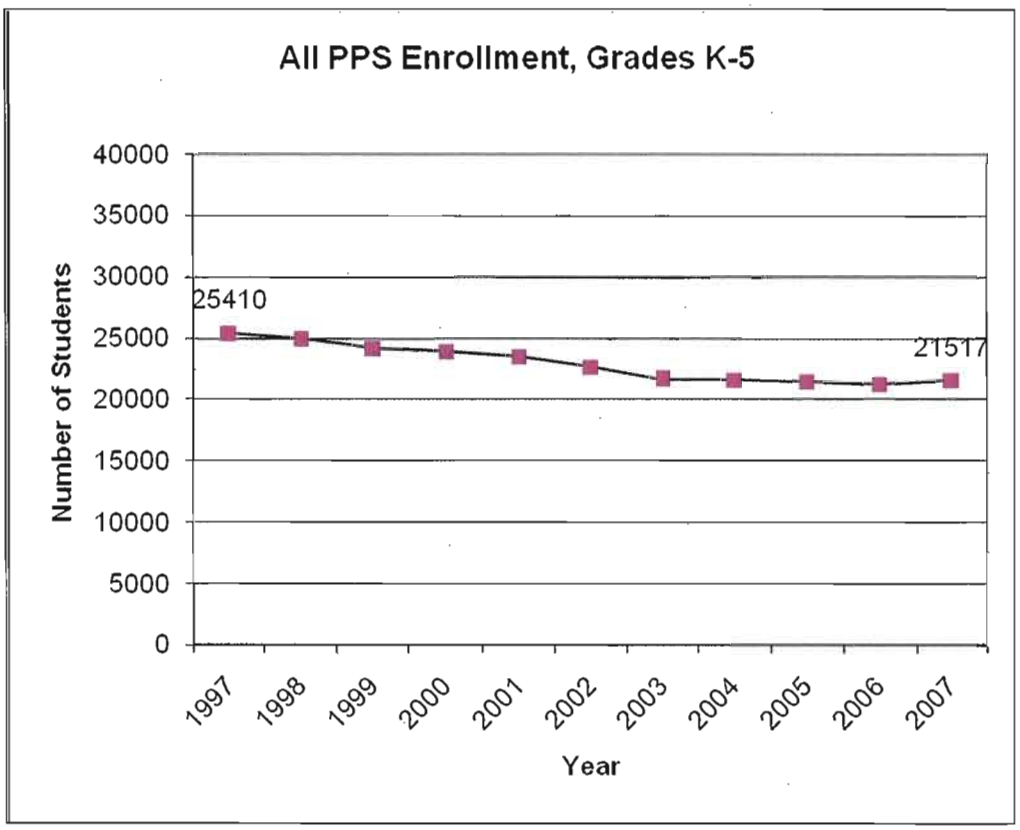


Figure 9. PPS K-5 Enrollment

The enrollment changes of the last decade continue historic trends of falling enrollments. District enrollment peaked in the late 1950s at around 80,000 students. Since then, the numbers have declined. In the current year, 47,000 students attend Portland schools. The last decade has seen a particularly steep drop, especially given the increasing number of new housing units created within city limits. 2007 saw a very small increase in District enrollment, the first occurrence of an increase in many years.

Humboldt Elementary is also losing enrollment, but it has done so a rate more than three times greater than the district average.

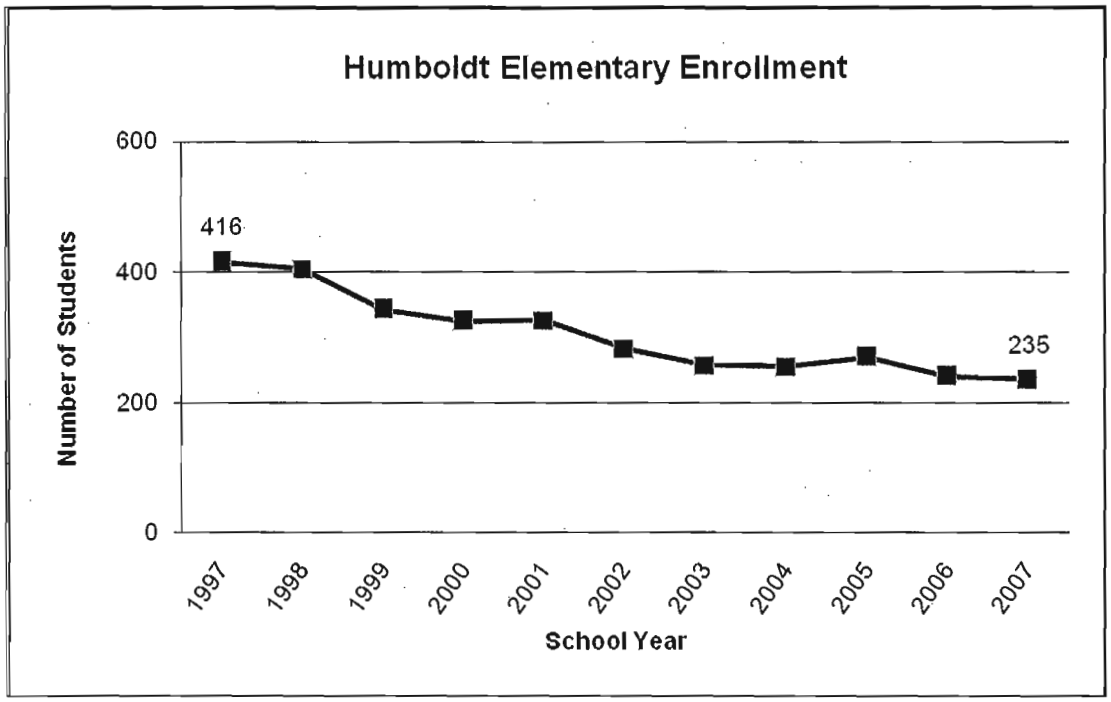


Figure 10. Humboldt Enrollment

The addition of 6th and 7th grade classes to the school in recent years masks an even steeper decline. Humboldt's K-5 attendance is 202 students. Just counting K-5 students, Humboldt's enrollment has dropped 51 percent over the 1997-2007 timeframe.

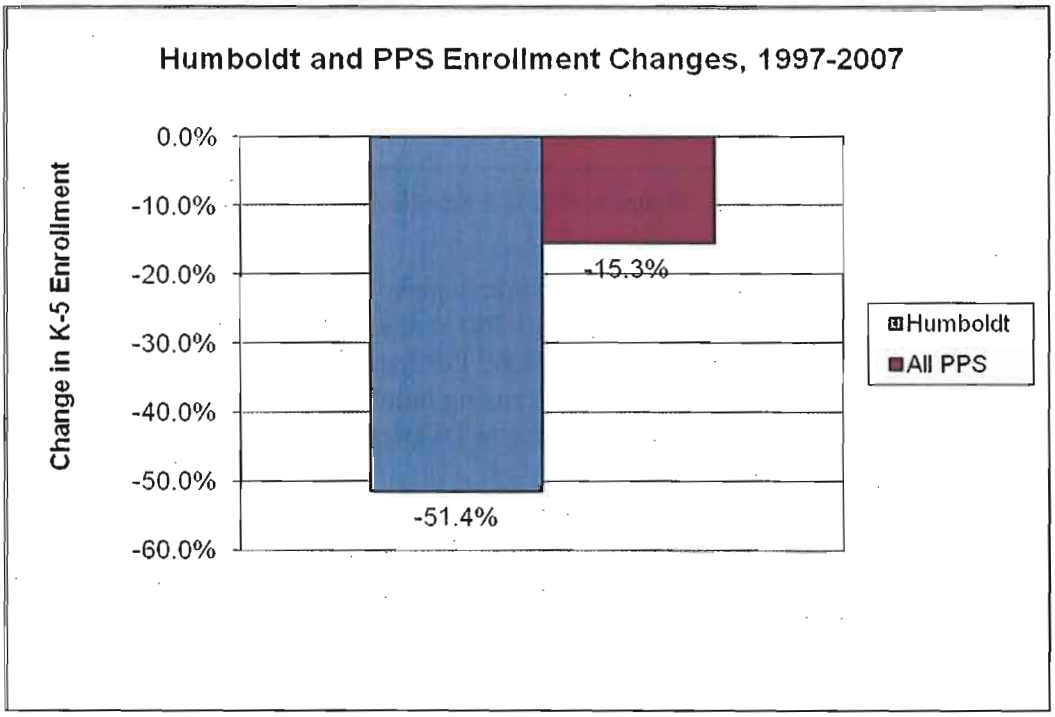


Figure 11. Change in K-5 Enrollment, Humboldt and All PPS

Demographers estimate that Humboldt's enrollment will continue to fall until around 2010. At that time, enrollment is forecasted to stabilize at around 225 students.

Housing Costs

The cost of housing in the Portland metro area has increased over the last decade. The cost of housing within the Humboldt attendance area has also increased.

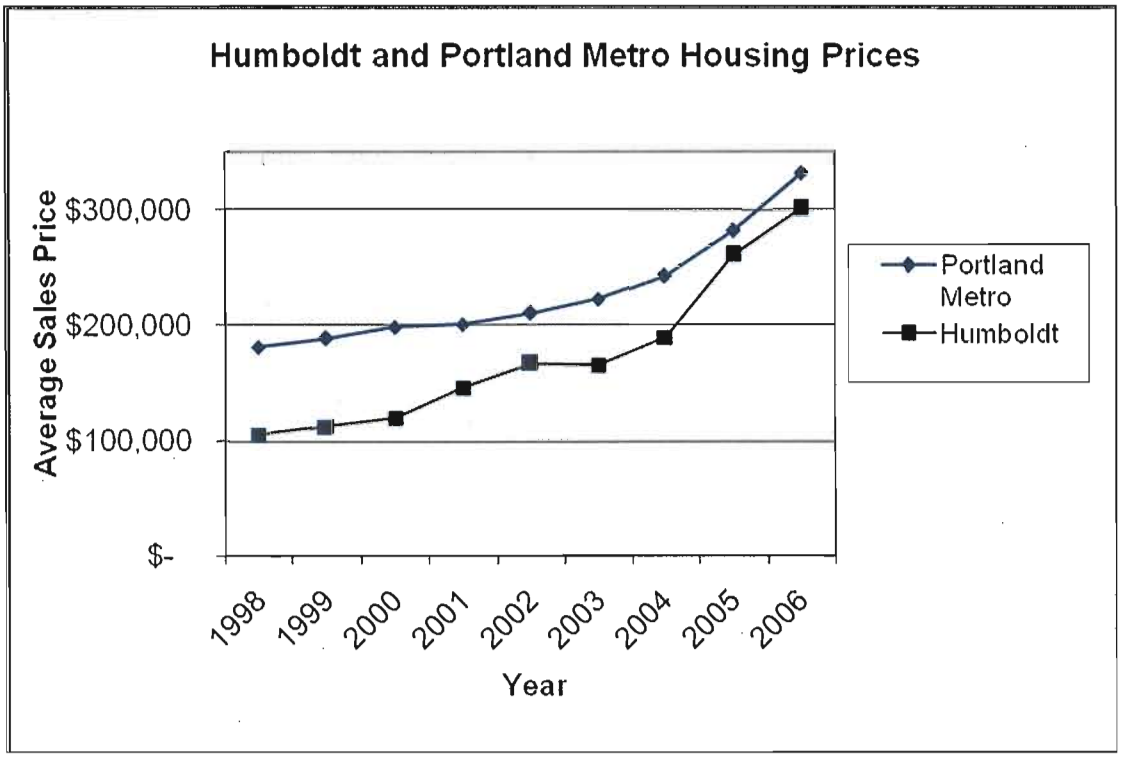


Figure 12. Change in Housing Prices, Metro Portland and Humboldt

The graph above shows that prices have climbed quickly. The typical house in Humboldt has sold, and still sells for less than the regional average. However, the price gap is narrowing.

Prices have increased rapidly in Humboldt in recent years. Humboldt lagged behind the region until about 2001. Since then—except for a small dip in 2003—there has been a dramatic run-up in prices in the neighborhood, at a rate more than double the regional average.

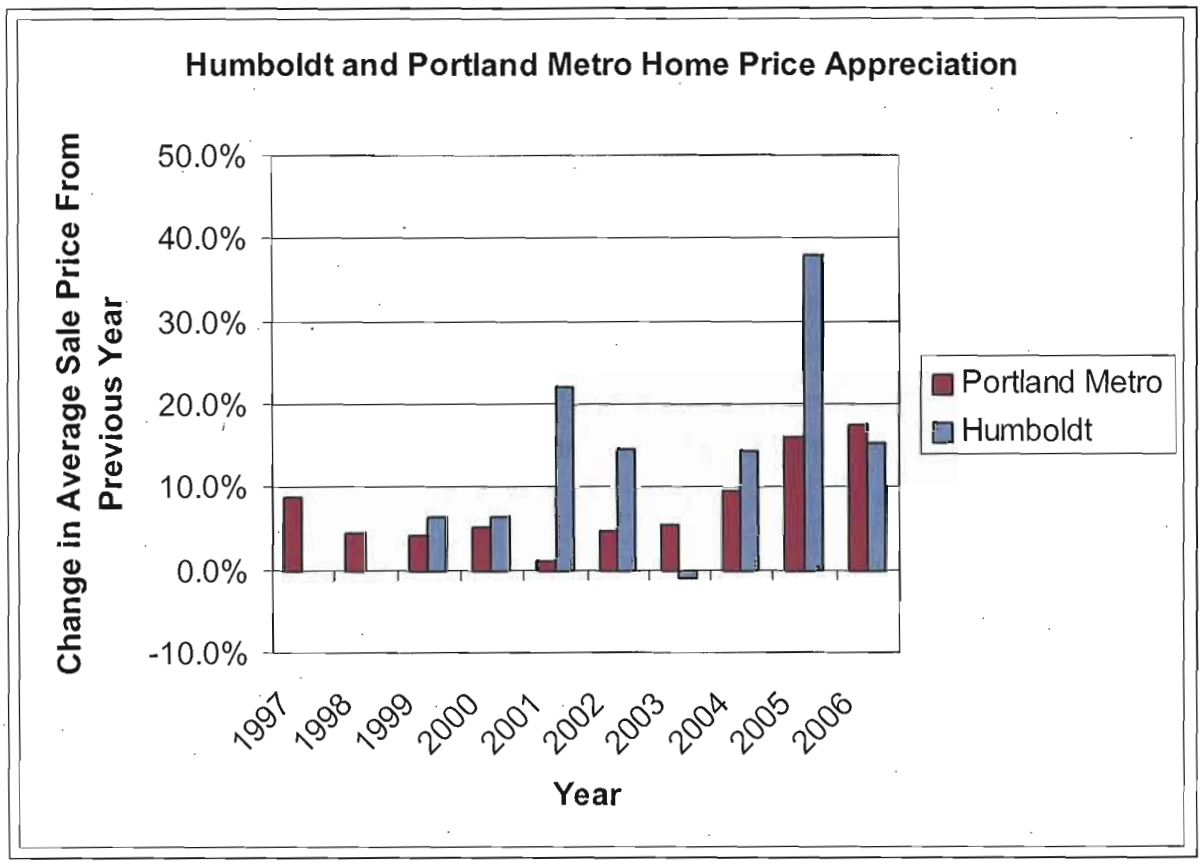


Figure 13. Price appreciation, Portland Metro and Humboldt

Factors Affecting Enrollment

There exists a clear correlation between decreasing enrollments and decreasing housing affordability, as shown in the information in the two previous sections of this report. However, it would be an oversimplification to attribute the entire decline in school enrollment to a single factor. Declining enrollment everywhere in the District began around 1960, well prior to the last decade's rapid run-up in housing prices. Even today, the Humboldt neighborhood is a relative bargain when compared with other areas of the region. Parallel trends of more expensive housing and lower school enrollments are real, but numerous other factors also affect enrollment within a district and within a particular school.

Broadly speaking, enrollment at a particular school is influenced by two categories of factors: the presence of school-age children in a neighborhood, and parents' decision to enroll their children in the neighborhood school.

1. Presence of School-Age Children

The quantity of children living within the attendance area for the school is the first factor that influences school enrollment. An adequate "supply" of school-aged children living within the attendance area boundary feeds the neighborhood school. Approximately 72 percent of K-5 students in the District attend their neighborhood school. The presence of large numbers of children within an attendance area is likely to result in higher enrollment at that school.

The focus of this report is on this supply-side issue—opportunities for increasing the number of affordable, family-friendly housing units in Humboldt Elementary attendance area. Increasing the supply of family housing will likely increase the number of children living in Humboldt, and these children could then attend their local school. Family housing opportunities provide a counterweight to other powerful forces such as demographics (smaller household sizes) and school policy (*e.g.*, transfer policy, school reputation).

The density of school children in a given geographic area is influenced by many factors. In addition to housing affordability, the presence of children within the Humboldt attendance area is determined by:

Size of Attendance Area—The land area within the attendance area boundary contains a fixed number of existing units. Based on zoning, there are also limited opportunities for creation of new housing units. Though the district could theoretically enlarge the geographic size of an attendance area to draw in more housing units, this would come at the expense of another attendance area.

Household Size—Following national trends for cities, the number of children living in Portland has dropped. The share of Portland households with children fell from 27% of total households in 1990 to 25% in 2000. Portland has more housing units and slightly more people than a decade ago, but fewer Portland households have children than in the past, in part because of lower birth rates. As existing houses sell to new owners, or units are converted from rentals, new occupants are more likely than previous occupants to have smaller families, or no children at all.

These trends are particularly pronounced in the Humboldt neighborhood and the inner North/Northeast Portland geographic area that feeds to Jefferson High School. Births to parents residing within this Jefferson High School cluster are down substantially. Births to families in the Jefferson cluster dropped 18 percent between the time periods 1990-1994 and 2000-2004. District-wide, the drop was 9 percent.

Also, as traditionally African-American neighborhoods such as Humboldt have gentrified, there is evidence that its residents are re-locating to other parts of the metro region. In 1990, the Jefferson cluster was home to 46 percent of the region's African-American births. In 2004, this share was down to 18 percent, while the Beaverton, David Douglas, Reynolds, and other non-PPS districts saw sharp gains.

Several District-wide demographic factors push toward higher enrollments—new Asian and Hispanic families, mothers having children later in life—but none of these are sufficient to offset the trends toward smaller families and smaller household sizes in general.

New Housing—New housing within an attendance area typically correlates to an increase in students. First, a new house increases the quantity of housing units within an attendance area, and second, families with children are statistically more likely to live in newer housing. Unlike some fast growing suburbs, older neighborhoods of Portland's east side have seen relatively little new housing development in recent years. Older neighborhoods such as Humboldt were largely "built out" by 1930, with lower levels of infill development thereafter. Therefore, their housing stock is mature, and they have limited vacant land. New development in these neighborhoods tends to be small-scale infill on vacant lots, or redevelopment of existing units.

On average since 2000, Humboldt has added 13 new housing units to its attendance area each year. New apartment buildings may create a significant spike in the count of new multi-family units, but they occur rarely. For example, the 48-unit apartment building located at 204 N. Killingsworth was completed and opened in 2001. In the five years following, only two more multi-family units were created.

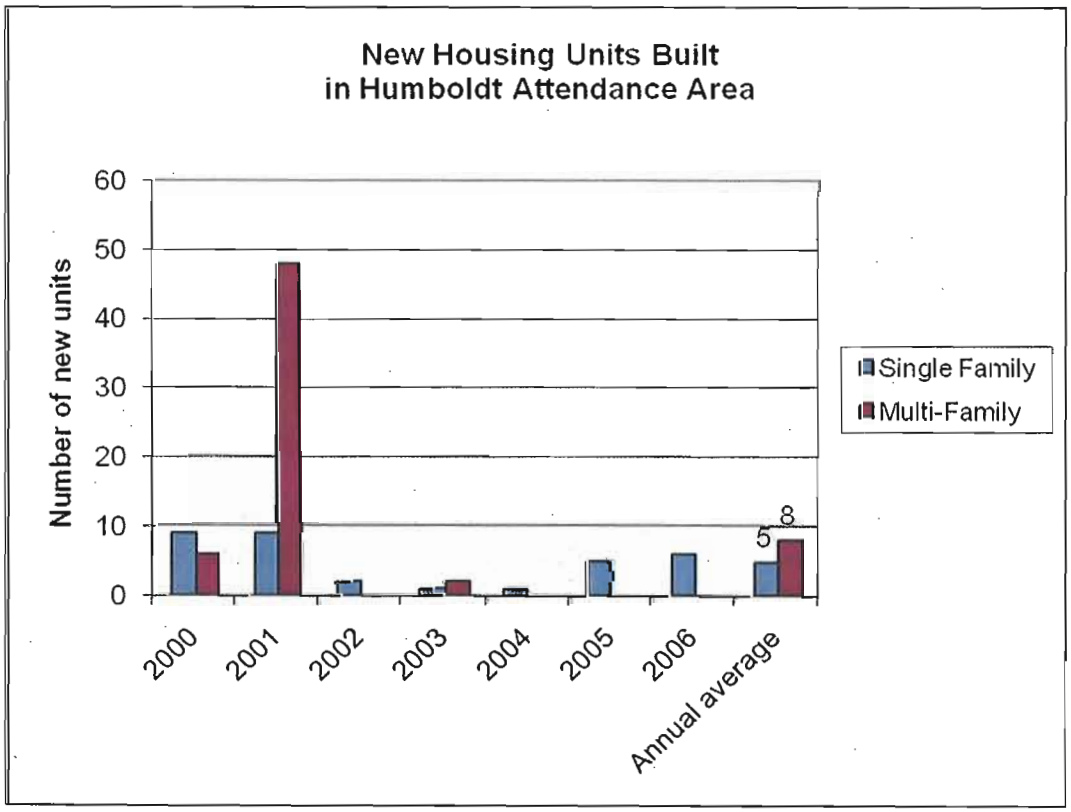


Figure 14. New Housing in Humboldt

Humboldt Gardens, a new 130-unit multi-family complex at North Williams Aveune and North Sumner Street, is under construction and will be ready for occupancy in 2008. This Housing

Authority of Portland development replaces Iris Court, a 101-unit complex demolished to make way for the new development. Because a majority of units at Humboldt Gardens were sized and designed with families in mind, and because the units are subject to income restrictions, the development is expected to house a significant number of children.

Housing Type—The presence of school age children in a house is very strongly correlated with what kind of a dwelling unit it is. Families with school age children typically choose to live in single-family houses, and larger units with more bedrooms. Conversely, studio apartments and condominium units such as those recently built in the Pearl District or South Waterfront generate very few children.

Studies have shown that student generation rates vary widely depending on type of housing, its size, whether it is rented or owned, and if it is income-restricted. In Portland, renter-occupied, single family houses generate the most students per unit, while larger apartment complexes (10+ units) generate the fewest students.

PPS Student Generation Rates, by Type of Housing (2000 Census data)

Housing Type	*Students per unit*
Single-family, renter-occupied	0.41
Single-family, owner-occupied	0.33
Multi-family, 2-9 units	0.20
Mobile home	0.27
Multi-family, 10+ units	0.09
Average, all housing types	0.27

Families with children are more likely to live in newly-built houses. Older homes are significantly less likely to have school age children than newer homes. Because newer houses are typically larger, they are more attractive for families with multiple members.

PPS Student Generation Rates, by Type and Age of Housing Unit (existing housing, Fall 2006)

Housing Type	*Students per unit (K-12)*
Single-family, built 2000-2005	0.40
Single-family, built 1990-1999	0.41
Single-family, built before 1990	0.26
Multi-family, built 2000-2005	0.09
Multi-family, built 1990-1999	0.09
Multi-family, built before 1990	0.11

As noted earlier, the single family housing stock in Humboldt is quite old. Within the single family category (which is the largest contributor to student housing), 83 percent of Humboldt's housing stock was built prior to 1930. Therefore, these structures are statistically less likely to house families with children.

Cultural expectations of what constitutes an acceptable house for families with children have changed over the last 50 years. A typical house in Humboldt—a three bedroom, one bathroom bungalow—would have been sufficient for a family with multiple children in 1950. More recent family preferences, however, tend toward larger houses with more bedrooms and bathrooms. These houses are less common in Humboldt than in other neighborhoods, and certainly less common than in newer suburbs. The age of housing could make the neighborhood less appealing to families with children, and more appealing to childless couples and singles. Individual preferences and cultural expectations differ, though, so this will not be true of all families. Immigrant families, for example, typically live in much closer quarters than native born families, and some families value historic architecture or walkable neighborhoods over square footage.

Housing affordability—In general, lower-income households have more children in them than wealthier households, and these families are much more likely to send their children to public schools. As wealth increases, fewer children are present and more of them attend schools out of the neighborhood. With other factors held constant, expensive housing depresses the number of children in a neighborhood.

As an example, a recent student-generation rate analysis in Hillsboro showed that income-restricted multi-family housing generates more than six times as many students than market-rate

multi-family housing—1.02 vs. 0.17 children per unit. These income-restricted units even generated twice as many students as single-family detached dwellings (1.02 vs. 0.55 children per unit). Some of this difference may be specific to Hillsboro's demographics and its distinct student population. Nevertheless, income-restricted housing is a strong draw for families with children.

The counterbalancing factor to high prices depressing enrollment is that some families will often pay higher prices to live in areas where the schools are well-regarded. This explains in part how local school enrollment has been relatively steady in wealthier neighborhoods areas such as Eastmoreland or Lake Oswego, which have also seen sharp increases in housing costs.

2. Decision to Enroll

The second primary factor affecting enrollment is actual participation. In addition to having a sufficient number of children living within the attendance area, parents must actually decide to send their children to Humboldt. This parent-child decision to attend the neighborhood school is not directly related to housing. Therefore, it is beyond the scope of this report. However, it must be emphasized that for any particular school, this decision affects enrollment, perhaps to an even greater degree than the presence of children in the neighborhood. Getting children within attendance areas to actually attend their neighborhood schools may ultimately have a larger impact on enrollment than trying to attract new families with housing.

Non-housing related factors affecting attendance are:

School quality and reputation—The perceived quality of a particular school or school system may have a significant influence on a parent's choice to enroll their child. This influences the family's decision for the children to attend the neighborhood school, as well as the choice to buy or rent housing in particular attendance area.

Humboldt students underperform their peers on district-wide assessment tests. One reason for lower scores on these tests may be that Humboldt serves a large number of students from economically disadvantaged families. Poverty typically correlates with diminished school performance. As noted earlier, Humboldt is the highest poverty school in the District, with a rate of students who qualify for free of reduced school lunch that is more than double the District-wide average. Compounding the problem is that because of its size and Oregon's school funding formula, Humboldt has fewer teaching resources for enrichment programs (music, art, P.E.) than other schools.

Private school transfers—The District estimates that 85 percent of children living within PPS boundaries attend a Portland Public School. The other 15 percent of children attend private schools, state charter schools, or are home-schooled.

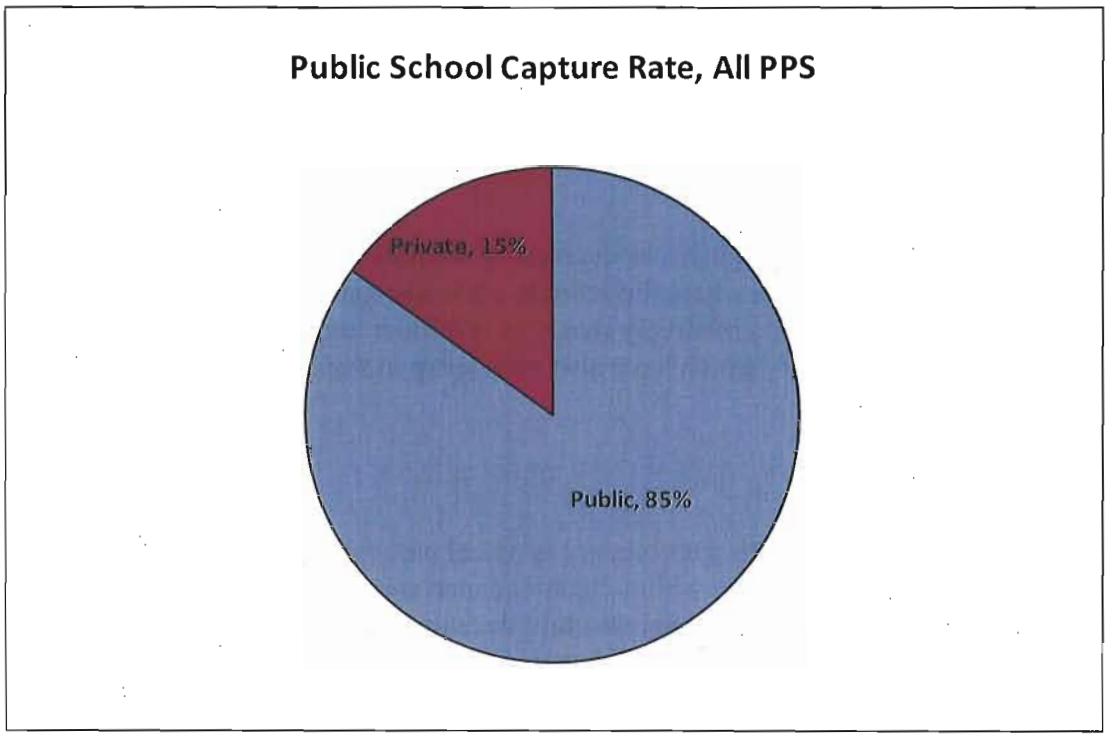


Figure 15. Public School Capture Rate

Within Portland, the public school capture rate is higher in areas where incomes are lower, since wealthier families have more financial resources to send their children to private schools. Public school capture rates are nearer to 95 percent for the Jefferson High School cluster, where incomes are generally lower than the city average.

Portland's public school capture rate is comparable to other urban school districts in the West (Denver, Minneapolis, Spokane) and higher than some others (Sacramento, Seattle, San Francisco).

Historically, Portland families' rate of public school participation has fallen only slightly in the last decade. Student movement from public to private schools makes only a small contribution to the observed drop in district enrollment. There has been no observed flight away from public education in the Portland school district.

Public school transfers—Portland's relatively open transfer policy allows students to transfer outside their attendance area boundaries, if they can obtain a slot in another public school. Humboldt's neighborhood capture rate is only 44 percent. In other words, less than half of the school-age children who live in the Humboldt area go to their neighborhood school. This is rate is significantly lower than the 72 percent district average for elementary schools.

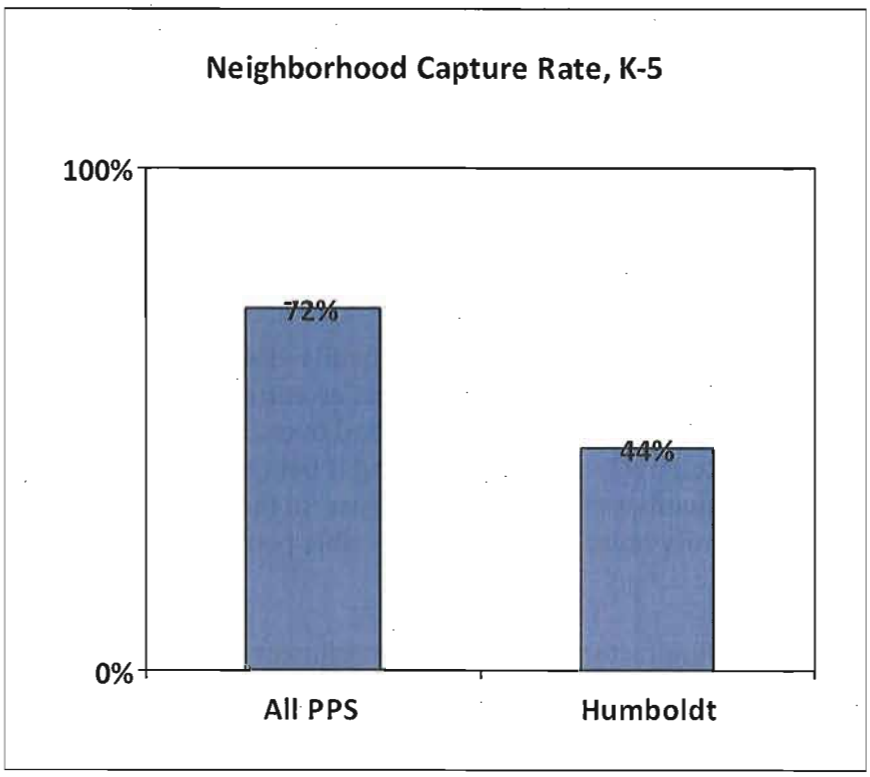


Figure 16. Neighborhood Capture rates

In other words, of the 308 potential Humboldt students living in the neighborhood, 171 decided to attend school elsewhere in the district, *i.e.*, they were "exported" to other public schools. Attendance at Humboldt has not declined more precipitously in recent years because the school "imports" 98 children—42 percent of the student body—from other attendance areas. The number of children coming in to Humboldt has not changed significantly in the last 15 years.

Humboldt neighborhood children attend a variety of other District schools. Elementary schools that receive the most Humboldt neighborhood children are immediately adjacent to the attendance area or close by—Boise-Eliot (40 students), King (21 students), and Self Enhancement Academy (12). At the same time, 45 children leave the neighborhood to attend a "focus option" program, such as an arts magnet or language immersion. The range of schools is also widely distributed geographically, with students attending schools in all five quadrants of the city.

Likewise, there is no clear pattern to the outside neighborhoods that send their children to Humboldt. The distribution of children of these children is more focused geographically, with students coming in from mostly other North and Northeast Portland attendance areas. Only one student transferred from a west side attendance area. The largest contributing neighborhoods are nearby—King (14 students), Woodlawn (13), Rigler (9), and Chief Joseph (9).

Increasing the percentage of neighborhood kids attending Humboldt would have a dramatic enrollment impact, compared with trying to achieve the same gains by building new housing. A one percent increase in Humboldt's current capture rate, from 44 to 45 percent, would increase

enrollment by three students. Generating those same three Humboldt students through creation of new housing would require the construction 26 new single family homes, assuming current student generation and neighborhood capture rates. (26 houses x 0.40 students per house x 0.70 only K-8 x 0.44 neighborhood capture rate = 3 Humboldt students. See following section for a discussion of the calculations.)

Summary of Enrollment/Housing Relationship

There is no doubt that new housing, and particularly family-friendly housing, attracts families into the public school system and has a positive impact on enrollment. About 12,000 housing units were built in Portland between 2000 and 2005, and over 2,300 PPS students lived in the new housing in fall 2006. Relatively little new housing is being constructed in Humboldt, which typically sees only a small number of infill units per year. In the long run, Humboldt enrollment would benefit from new family housing, and a large, stable pool of children living in the neighborhood.

At the same time, non-housing factors have pushed enrollment in the other direction. Among these are the decline in the number of households with children and shrinking household sizes. These demographic shifts have swamped the gains from new housing. Fewer Portland households have children, and those households with children have fewer of them. There are multiple and interconnected reasons for the shrinking pool of children in the neighborhood, and declining enrollment at the school. These include increasing real estate prices, a shift away from rental housing, more childless families living there, school quality and reputation, and the lure of suburban schools and neighborhoods.

The District's transfer policy presents another challenge for Humboldt because 56 percent of neighborhood children transfer out. If children continue to transfer out of Humboldt at current rates, any enrollment impacts from new housing will be seriously diminished. This is especially the case for market-rate housing, since newer neighborhood residents are typically wealthier, and wealthier people are more likely to transfer to a private school or a different neighborhood school.

New housing in the Humboldt neighborhood is subject to these reduction impacts. The estimated enrollment impacts of new housing can be expressed (roughly) as a formula:

New Housing Units
x
K-8 public school children per unit
x
Neighborhood school capture rate
=
New Humboldt students

Some schools in the district have stabilized enrollments, even in the face of smaller household sizes and increased housing costs. These neighborhoods have done so through some combination

of family-friendly housing stock, well-regarded school programs, and a sizeable number of transfer students. Attracting and retaining families—through housing—is vital for maintaining or increasing enrollment at Humboldt.

What is "Family-Friendly" Housing?

If the goal is to attract and retain families with school age children by providing them with housing choices that fit their needs, those preferences must be identified. Families with children express housing preferences differently from other demographic groups, and are typically attracted to housing types and neighborhoods with certain characteristics. Neighborhoods with these characteristics are also more likely to retain families with children. These preferences are culturally-based, and may change over time.

Survey research about what kind of housing has historically attracted and retained families with school age children reveals that most people with children express preferences for the same kinds of things. Individual preferences vary, but in general, families want housing that is:

1. Affordable
2. Large enough to accommodate children
3. Close to quality schools
4. Close to public amenities, such as parks or community centers

Several regionally-relevant preference surveys show a similar list of factors that support families with children. In a Canadian survey, 450 young families from Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal rated the following attributes as "extremely important" to them.

- Safe dwelling unit
- Safe neighborhood
- Privacy
- Sufficient indoor space
- Outdoor space
- Proximity and quality of amenities such as schools and parks

A 2006 Portland study, funded by PDC and performed by Ferrarini and Associates, assessed the market for family-oriented ownership housing in the Central City and the Pearl District. This study focused more narrowly on building features rather than location. Respondents desired:

- Three bedrooms
- Two full bathrooms
- Convenient parking
- Soundproofing
- Private outdoor space
- Washer/dryer

A Housing Authority of Portland workshop on family housing design identified the following features as important in family housing:

- Front doors with porches or stoops
- Large rooms
- Outdoor storage
- Spacious back patios or balconies
- First floor bathrooms
- Variety of unit types and floor plans

The construction of housing units with these characteristics make it much more likely that families with children will occupy them. In addition, new housing is more likely than existing housing to contain school children.

Portland families with children overwhelmingly choose detached single family units over other kinds of housing. More than 80 percent of Portland school children live in this housing type. In the Canadian survey described above, more than 80 percent of respondents expressed a desire to live in this housing type, regardless of their current living situation. However, the study also found that families were willing to accept higher densities in exchange for family amenties, like proximity to parks or child care facilities.

Family-Friendly Design Examples

The Portland area has numerous examples of new and re-developed housing that has attracted significant numbers of families with children. Because the structure of single-family housing is fairly well understood, these examples focus on multi-unit buildings.

Humboldt Gardens

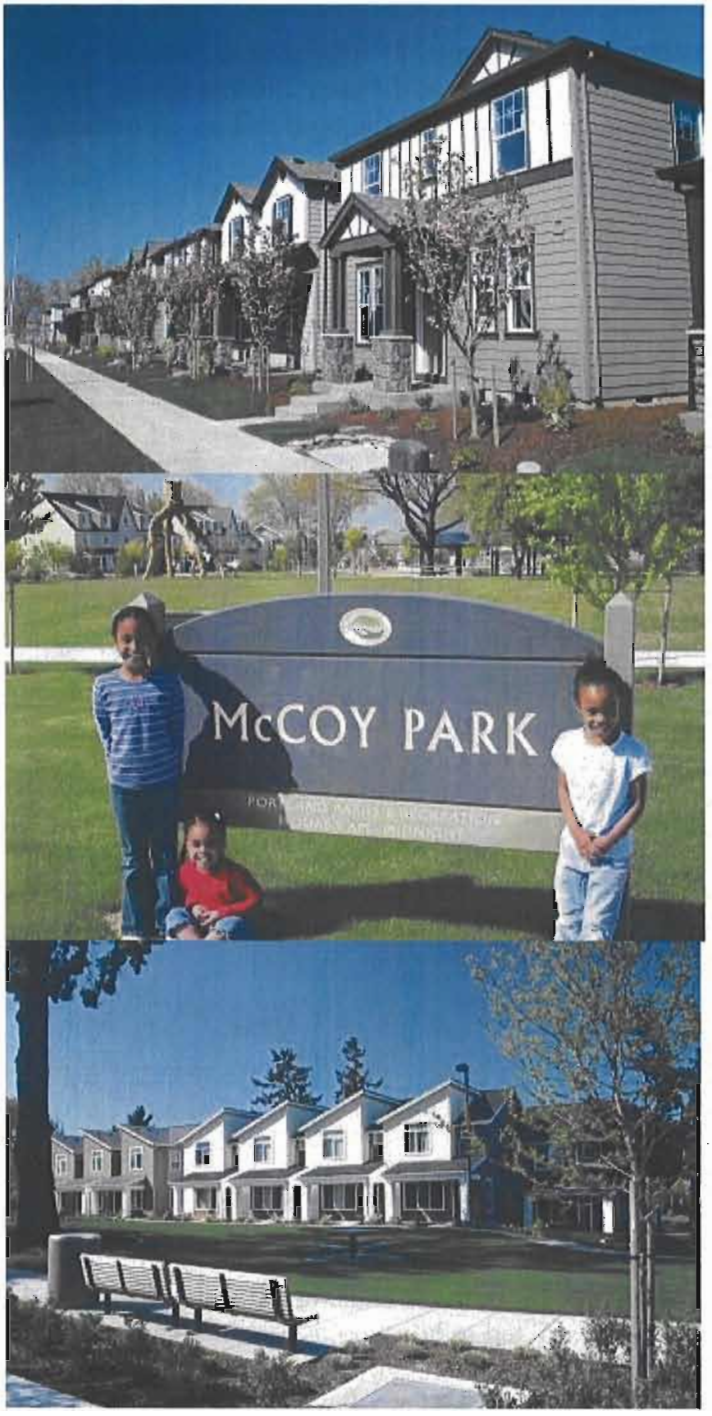
Figure 17. Humboldt Gardens under construction along Vancouver Avenue

Figure 18. Humboldt Gardens site plan

Humboldt Gardens is a federally-funded (HOPE VI) redevelopment project a short distance from Humboldt School on North Vancouver Avenue. The project was initiated by the Housing Authority of Portland. The project will consist of 100 rental units for very low income households (30% of area median income) and 30 ownership units (up to 60% of area median income) A primary objective for the design was to create family-oriented housing. Residents participated in numerous planning meetings with the project's designers to discuss important amenities.

In the final design, 74 of the project's 130 units are at least two-bedroom units. Some of the family-oriented units have small, private back yards. A small, pocket park was incorporated into the development. The project includes an office for the city's Office of Neighborhood Involvement, a Head Start classroom, and a satellite Portland Police Bureau office. The re-development replaces the old Iris Court, which had 101 mostly one-bedroom units. The school district anticipates a modest bump in enrollment at Humboldt Elementary in the 2008-2009 school year, when the project is occupied.

New Columbia



New Columbia is an 850 unit HOPE VI redevelopment project in North Portland, opened in 2003. It replaced the World War II-era Columbia Villa housing development on the same site. Portland's first new elementary school in many years, Rosa Parks Elementary, was constructed as an anchor to New Columbia. (The District closed nearby John Ball Elementary.) The new

school is integrated into the housing development and is physically integrated with the adjacent University Park and Community Center and Regence Boys & Girls Club. Recently, the school won a national award for "schools as centers of community."

The housing units at New Columbia are predominantly occupied by low-income families with children, though there are also a wide variety of housing types at different income levels. The New Columbia development has strong pedestrian connectivity throughout and incorporated a grid-like pattern of streets that reduced traffic speeds and volumes.

Leander Court

Leander Court is a recently completed Rose Community Development Corporation building project in outer Southeast Portland. The development contains 37 housing units, mostly 3 and 4 bedroom apartments. The housing is also income-restricted to households making less than 50% of median family income. Development costs were $7.4 million. Virtually all the units are occupied by families with children. Though it is within Portland city limits, the location of the building means that its residents feed to the David Douglas School District.

Peninsula Park Commons, North Lot

On North Albina Avenue, a few blocks north of the Humboldt neighborhood, this infill project consists of three family-sized units on the former site of a garage.

Figure 19. Peninsula Park Commons, North Lot, infill site

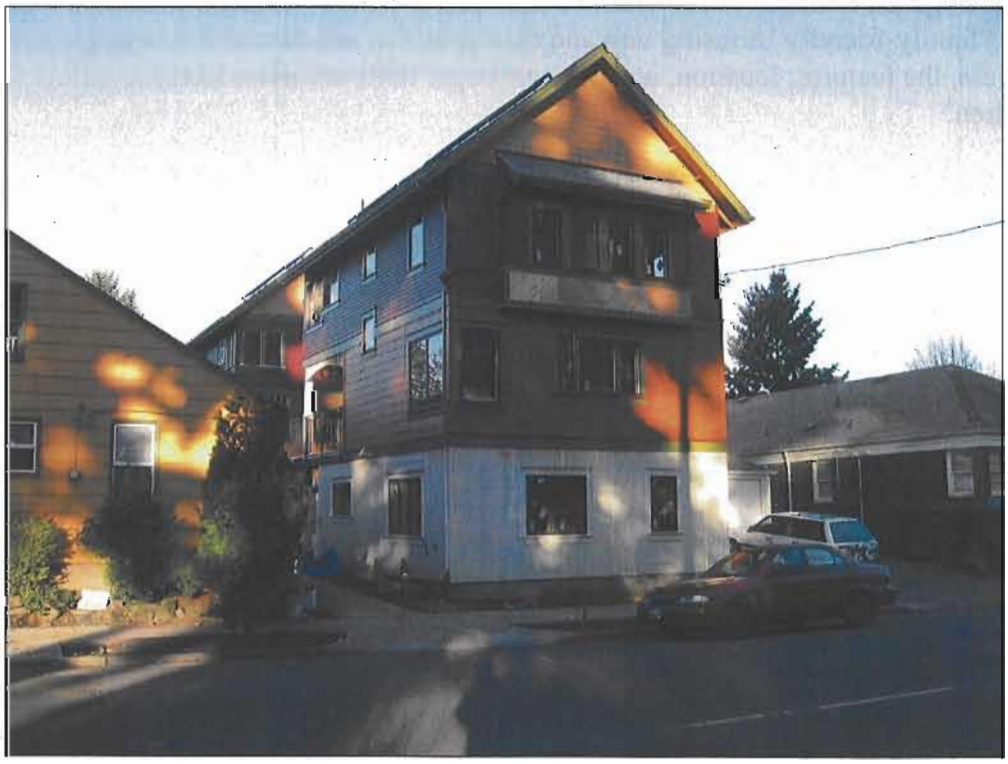


Figure 20. Peninsula Park Commons, North Lot, under construction.

This infill project was largely made possible by a Portland zoning code provision that no off-street parking is required if a property is within 500 feet of a transit street. (Portland City Code 33.266.110.B.3.) The new infill buildings will be part of an existing housing arrangement comprised of nine individually-owned condominium units with shared storage, outdoor space, and a community room.

Development Challenges

The tensions between different development objectives are substantial. As expressed through actual purchasing decisions and the results of survey research, families prefer larger units with some private open space and proximity to amenities. In a developed urban setting, it can be difficult to reconcile these needs with the policy and economic imperatives of smaller, higher-density housing units.

Government housing policy has traditionally promoted quantity over type. Many programs focus on the number of new housing units developed without regard to what kind of unit. Smaller units (studios and one-bedroom apartments) are easier to finance and build because they are cheaper to construct, and demand for them is high. Housing policies that encourage the construction of larger, affordable, family-friendly units are less common.

Complicating the equation for housing developers who are trying to support family friendly housing is that it is equally unlawful to discriminate against families without children as it is to discriminate against families with them. For example, it would be illegal to build a three-bedroom, "family-friendly" housing unit and then refuse to sell or rent it to a single person. Nevertheless, the features, location, and price of larger units are more likely to attract families with children.

Build-out Analysis

Based on the methodology outlined below, Humboldt's attendance area has the development potential for 181 dwelling units on its vacant land. Of these potential units, 30 would be single family and 151 would be multi-family.

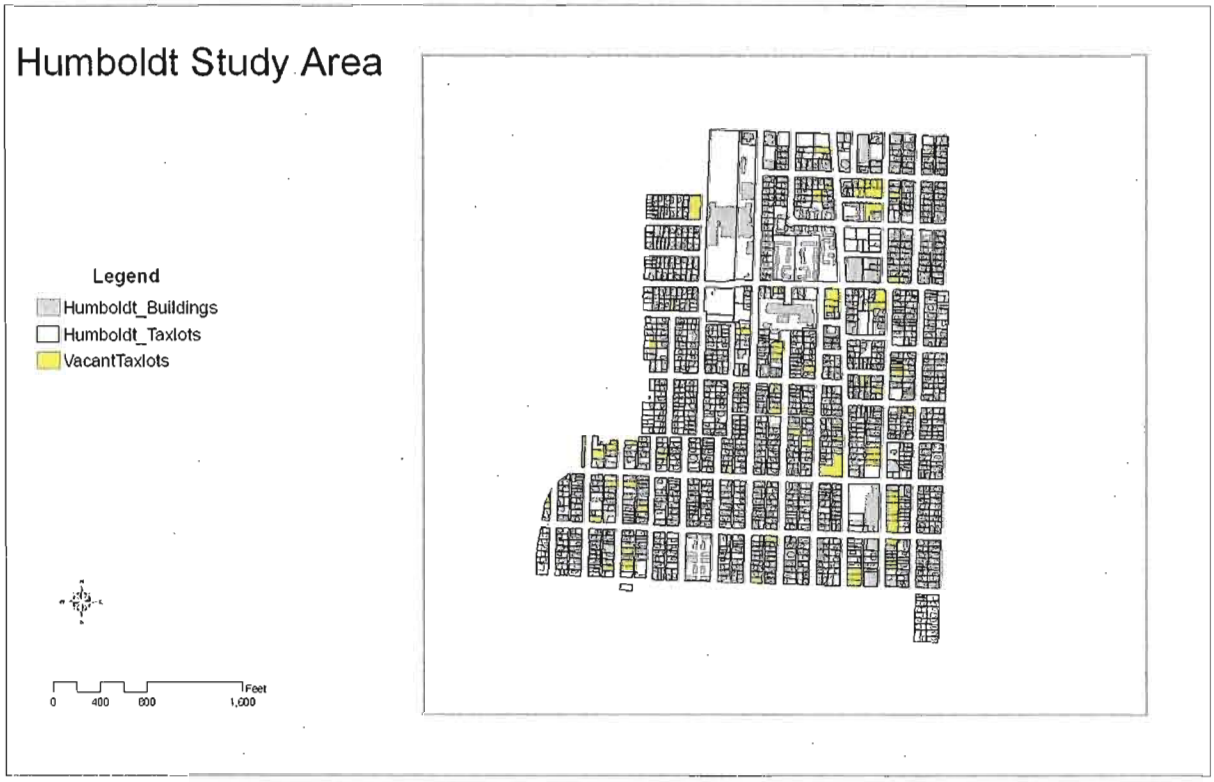


Figure 21. Vacant land within Humboldt.

Methodology

This exercise identified all vacant tax lots in the attendance area, and calculated the development potential of all those lots if they were to be developed. Although it is unlikely that every vacant parcel in the area will be redeveloped even over a 20 to 40 year timeframe, the outcome shows a hypothetical "total build-out" scenario for the entire neighborhood.

Residential re-development will also occur on lots not designated at vacant. However, if these projects are one-for-one replacements, they do not increase the number of units. Moreover, it is very difficult to determine which existing housing units are likely candidates for redevelopment.

Density of new development was based on existing zoning. Estimates are reflective of the density of existing development at the high end of the scale, even where somewhat higher

density development could be allowed, as for example, under a conditional use or planned development review process.

The methodology can be described as follows:

1) Identify and map tax lots with zero improvement value – these are classified as "vacant";[1]
2) Field check vacant lots to remove lots with development under construction;
3) Consolidate adjacent vacant tax lots into "sites" for purposes of potential dwelling unit calculation;[2]
4) Estimate potential dwelling units per site, based on plan designation and zone densities:
    a. R2.5 – Single Family Designation. 1 dwelling unit per lot.
    b. R2 – Multi-Family Designation. 21.8 dwelling units per acre.
    c. R1 – Multi-Family Designation. 43 dwelling units per acre.
    d. UC – Commercial Designation. No dwelling units assigned.
    e. IR – Commercial Designation. No dwelling units assigned.
    f. EX – Mixed Use Designation. 21.8 dwelling units per acre.
    g. NC – Mixed Use Designation. 21.8 dwelling units per acre.
    h. None – Undefined Designation. 1 dwelling unit per lot.
    i. OS – Open Space Designation. No dwelling units assigned.

Potential Housing Units

The table below shows estimated potential dwelling units by plan designation in the study area. As shown, there are 60 sites consisting of 93 vacant taxlots in the study area. These sites comprise a total of 10.4 acres. These sites provide a total of 181 estimated potential dwelling units, with the majority located in R1 and Mixed Use (EX and NC) designated areas.

Humboldt Sites and Estimated Potential Dwelling Units

Plan	Sites	Lots	Area (sq. ft.)	Acres	Estimated Units
R2.5	20	27	121,708	2.8	27
R2	4	4	9,636	0.2	4
R1	13	21	88,850	2.0	80
UC	8	10	51,782	1.2	0
IR	1	1	19,949	0.5	0
EX	6	17	95,177	2.2	45
NC	3	6	46,976	1.1	22
None	3	3	15,072	0.3	3
OS	2	4	5,479	0.1	0
Total	**60**	**93**	**454,629**	**10.4**	**181**

[1] Data provided by PDC; GIS mapping by Winterbrook. Improvement value by Multnomah County Assessor, 2007 data.
[2] Note: Adjacent taxlots defined as "sites" in this analysis may have different ownerships. Assessing the ability to purchase and/or consolidate individual taxlots was not in the scope of this analysis.

Student Generation

Using the housing unit estimate shown above, the next step is to estimate the number of new Humboldt students this housing might generate. To do so, we make the following assumptions:

1. New single family units will generate school children at the district-wide average for newly-built single family units. This figure is 0.40 students per unit.

2. New multi-family units will generate school children at a range of values. The rate is likely to fall somewhere between the district wide average for smaller apartment buildings (0.20 students/unit) and, if they are income restricted, a rate equal to that for single-family units (0.40 students/unit).

3. New students will be evenly distributed in age. Because Humboldt is only K-8, high school aged children are discounted. Enrollment by grade level is roughly equal district-wide. Therefore, the number of school children generated is multiplied by 9/13ths, or 0.7.

4. Humboldt's neighborhood capture rate of 44 percent will remain constant.

The final result under these assumptions is that 181 new dwelling units can be anticipated to generate between 13 and 22 new Humboldt students.

Potential Humboldt Students from New Housing

				low	*high*
Single family housing units	30		Multi-family housing units	151	151
Student generation rate, K-12	0.40		Student generation rate, K-12	0.20	0.40
K-8 only	0.70		K-8 only	0.70	0.70
Neighborhood Capture rate	0.44		Neighborhood Capture rate	0.44	0.44
Potential Humboldt students	3.70			9.30	18.60
	low	*high*			
Total Humboldt Students	13	22			

To be clear, this new student estimate is highly dependent on numerous variables. The following changes to the model could drive the numbers significantly higher:

- New development is at higher densities than anticipated.
- Currently developed land re-develops with a net increase in densities.
- New development is largely or exclusively income-restricted.
- Humboldt's neighborhood capture rate increases, even slightly.

Still, by extrapolating current trends into the future, and making the assumptions outlined, the result at full build out of the neighborhood is 181 additional housing units and 13 to 22 new Humboldt students.

Policy Actions

Housing and Land-Related Policies

Policy makers have several options for promoting the development of new housing units that would have a positive impact on enrollment at Humboldt Elementary.

1. **Create a Kid-friendly Park**

The Humboldt attendance area is park-deficient. Families in particular express a preference for neighborhoods with parks. Building a new park would improve the attractiveness of the neighborhood for this segment of the population. Although land for new parks is scarce, development could be in coordination with the Portland school district on existing land around Humboldt or Jefferson schools. Kid-friendly features such as a play structure or a water feature would be a visual invitation to families with children. Even if the park were a draw for families outside the neighborhood, it would potentially have value as a tool for familiarizing this group with the Humboldt neighborhood.

2. **Provide Incentives for Family-sized Units**

Housing policy and finance could create targeted incentives for two and three bedroom units. Grant programs that promote shared housing that incorporates families could be encouraged. In general, the most effective housing type for generating students is a three-bedroom, income-restricted, rental unit. Programs that target or subsidize development similar to this could be established. PDC could potentially acquire vacant parcels outright to promote this. A list of vacant parcels that have the greatest development potential is listed later in this report.

3. **Selectively Increase Density**

Humboldt is a mature inner North Portland neighborhood. Lots are mostly built out at current densities, vacant land is scarce, and development potential is limited. Some infill opportunities are available. To counter the scarcity of developable land, increasing densities in certain areas could encourage redevelopment of occupied but underutilized parcels. Zoning regulations already provide for higher densities in many residential areas via the "a" overlay, the parking exemption for sites close to transit routes, and planned development provisions. Further changes to zoning that would allow smaller lot sizes or higher densities might spur new development. Stormwater and impervious surface impacts from higher density development could be offset by implementing common green or other open space provisions.

The Vancouver-Williams corridor is an example of an area that has seen new residential redevelopment in recent years, and could potentially absorb higher density housing. At the same time, some existing residents have opposed recent infill projects in the area.

4. Other Regulatory Recommendations

The city could make other changes that might spur new development attractive to families. One example is that currently, courtyard-style "shared court" development is only allowed in multi-family zones. (Portland City Code 33.654.120.G.2.a) Expanding this development option in single family zones might expand opportunities for development of properties in Humboldt that are currently vacant or underutilized.

Other Policy Actions

1. Market Humboldt to Families

Humboldt's population has experienced considerable turnover (*i.e.*, gentrification) in the last decade. Both the Humboldt neighborhood and its elementary school are competing with other neighborhoods and schools for a shrinking number of children. The neighborhood and its school would benefit from a marketing program that aims to attract families to the neighborhood, and then encourages neighborhood children to attend their local public school. Such a marketing program could focus on the neighborhood's considerable assets: walkability, proximity to services, historic architecture, etc. This marketing program could reach out to families that already live in the neighborhood, to retain them as their children age or they have more children.

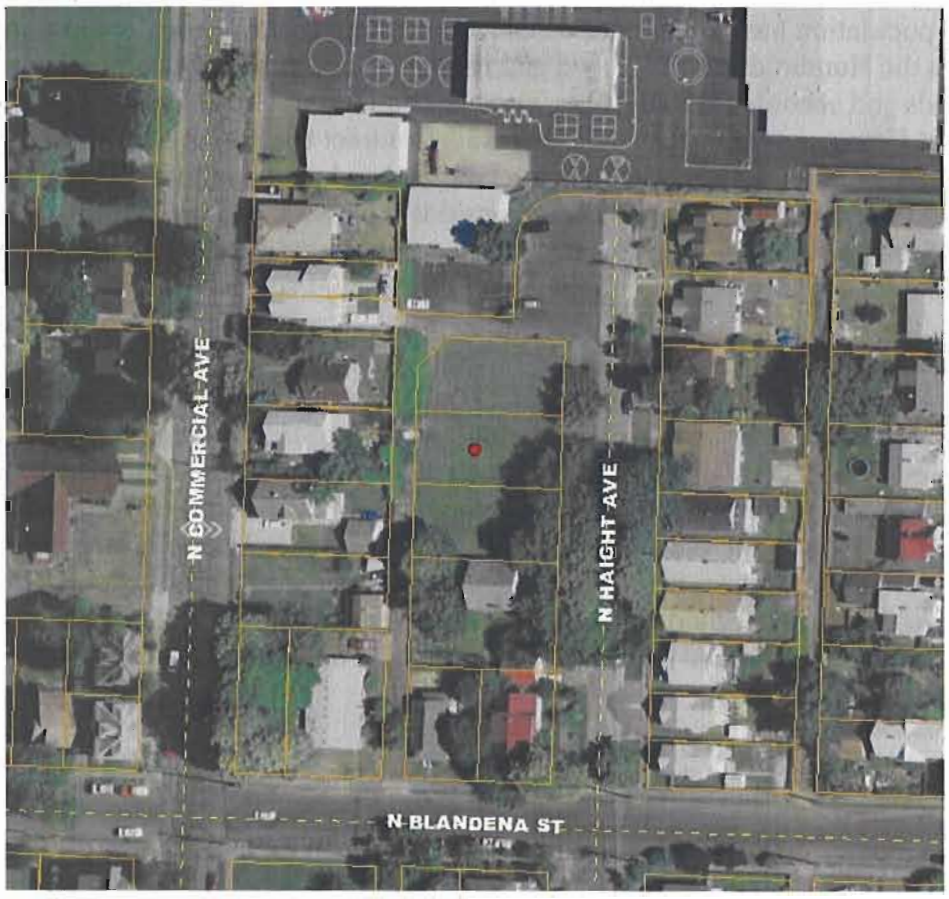
2. Focus on School Quality

Humboldt Elementary has made strides in recent years, but it lacks certain programs that would help it stand out as an attractor to new families. School funding formulas, in which the money is apportioned per student, makes it difficult for schools with low enrollment to provide enrichment programs that might help the school stand out from its peers. For example, Humboldt has no dedicated librarian, or teachers for physical education, music, or art. The school also recently lost its Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) after-school program for funding reasons. Re-investing in these programs and teaching positions would bolster the case for families to send their children to Humboldt.

Key Potential Redevelopment Sites

There are a number of vacant sites within the Humboldt attendance area that could be developed for housing. These sites were chosen because they were vacant, large enough to accommodate multiple housing units, and zoned for some kind of residential use. **None of these properties are currently for sale.** A prospective buyer would have to negotiate with the current owner to actually purchase and develop the property. Still, this list represents an inventory of the most attractive sites in the Humboldt area for development of housing.

N. Haight School Site



Site Address: 4803 N. Haight Ave.

Site size: 14,800 square feet.

Zoning: Residential 2.5, "a" overlay

Improvement Status: None, vacant land

Ownership: Portland Public Schools

Assessor Real Market Value, 2006: $270,000

Development Notes: Haight dead-ends into school property, abuts mid-block alley, which allows rear-access parking. Max development potential using common green and "a" overlay provisions would be 8 units. See concept plan sketch.

Development/Acquisition Priority: High

Site photo:

Sample Development Concept:

To demonstrate the viability of family-friendly housing in the area, Winterbrook Planning prepared a development concept for the North Haight site that would be allowed under existing zoning.

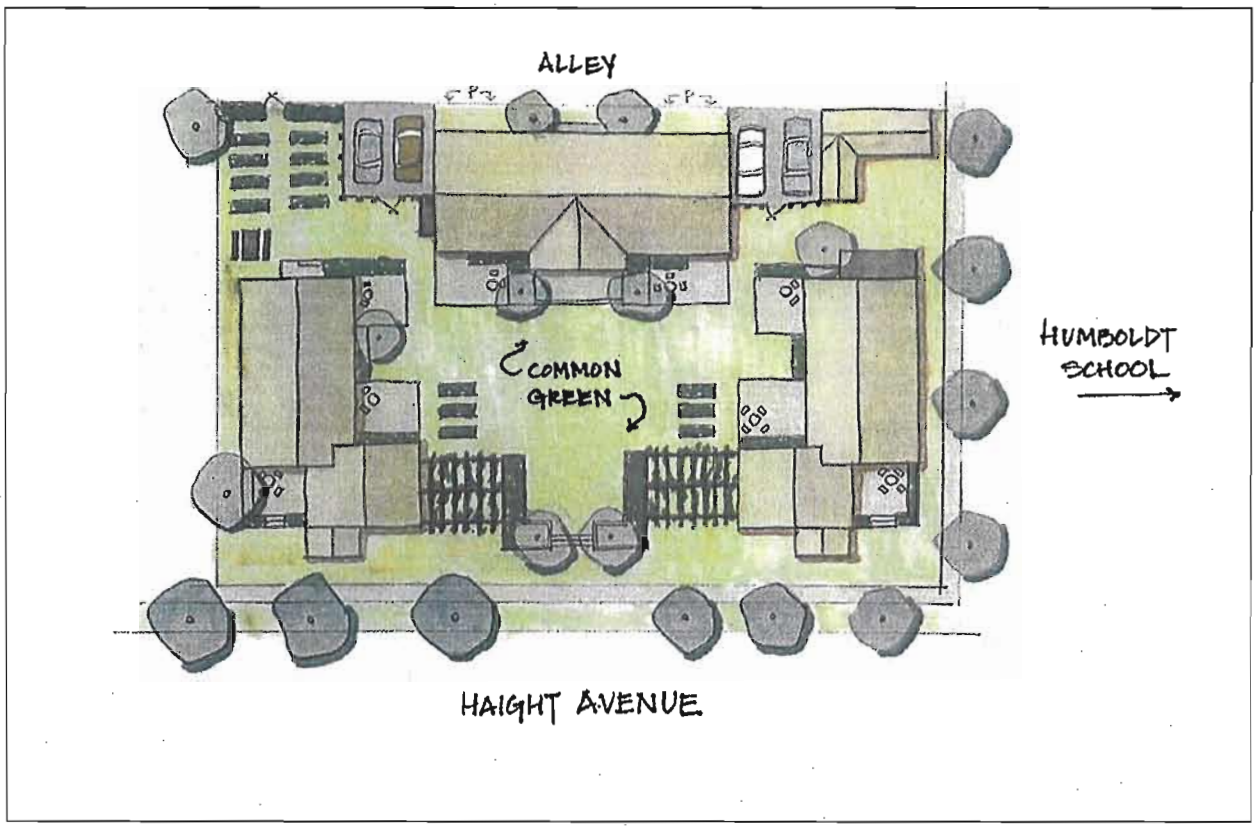


Figure 22. N. Haight site development concept

This development concept consists of one duplex and two triplex homes arranged around a Common Green (Portland City Code 33.654.120.D) with vehicle access at the rear. This example takes advantage of three vacant lots adjacent to Humboldt School, on a quiet, dead-end street with alley access and nearby pedestrian connections. The common green provides an elevated semi-private space for families, with small terrace patios for each unit forming a transition from homes to courtyard and common gardening, play, and activity areas. The home cluster has a pedestrain orientation on tree-lined Haight Avenue, a quiet street that serves as an extension of the common green.

Most lots in this area have only one unit per lot. However, the R2.5 zone with the "a" overlay allows up to three units per lot so long as the overall density doesn't exceed 1 unit per 1,600 s.f. In this example, after adjusting for the common green, a maximum potential density of 8 units would be permitted. The common green provision is also employed here to offer a courtyard feel and opportunities for family interaction and child play in a larger semi-private space.

The site is well suited for child friendly development. Nearby streets are local service streets, including Haight Avenue, which is a dead end. Alleys, open space and informal footpaths provide safe, pedestrian connectivity. The site is in close proximity to schools, community centers, transit, and services.

Community Church of God Site

Site Address: 4405 N. Vancouver Ave.

Site size: 27,000 square feet.

Zoning: R2.5

Improvement Status: None, vacant land

Ownership: Community Church of God

Assessor Real Market Value, 2006: $507,300

Development Notes: Parking exemption for transit applies; Density up to 11 units, Frontage on three streets; Skidmore is designated bike route

Development/Acquisition Priority: High

Site photo:

Anctil Site

Site Address: N. Williams and N. Skidmore

Site size: 31,750 square feet (all 4 lots)

Zoning: Central Employment (EX), except for northernmost lot, which is Residential 2,500

Improvement Status: Parking lot, vacant land.

Ownership: Thomas & Suzanne Anctil (Anctil Heating & Cooling located across N. Williams)

Assessor Real Market Value, 2006: $412,000 (4 lots combined)

Development Notes: EX height limit = 65 feet; Residential uses allowed; Parking exemption applies; Frontage on two streets; Skidmore is designated bike route; Pedestrian, ground floor window, and transit street entrance standards apply.

Development/Acquisition Priority: High

Site photo:

OAME Site

Site Address: N. Williams Ave. and NE Mason St.

Site size: 34,300 square feet (5 lots)

Zoning: Central Employment (EX) ("residential uses are allowed but not intended to predominate")

Improvement Status: Vacant land.

Ownership: Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs

Assessor Real Market Value, 2006: $721,000 (5 lots combined)

Development Potential: Height limit in EX = 65 feet; Residential uses allowed; Ground floor window, transit street entrance, and pedestrian standards apply; Parking exemption for close to transit applies (44-Mocks Crest)

Development/Acquisition Priority: Medium

Site photo:

Salvation Army Site

Site Address: N. Williams and N. Emerson

Site size: (7 lots)

Zoning: R1

Improvement Status: Vacant land (playing field)

Ownership: Salvation Army (located across Emerson)

Assessor Real Market Value, 2006: $

Development Notes: Parking exemption for close to transit applies (44-Mocks Crest), frontage on 3 streets

Development/Acquisition Priority: High

Site photo:

North Portland Bible College Site

Site Address: N. Alberta and N. Gantenbein

Site Size: 17,300 square feet (2 lots)

Zoning: CN2, Neighborhood Commercial 2

Improvement Status: Vacant land

Ownership: North Portland Bible College (building located on south end of block)

Assessor Real Market Value, 2006: $91,000 (2 lots)

Development Notes: Parking exemption for close to transit applies (44-Mocks Crest); Residential uses allowed; Across from Humboldt School and Humboldt Gardens

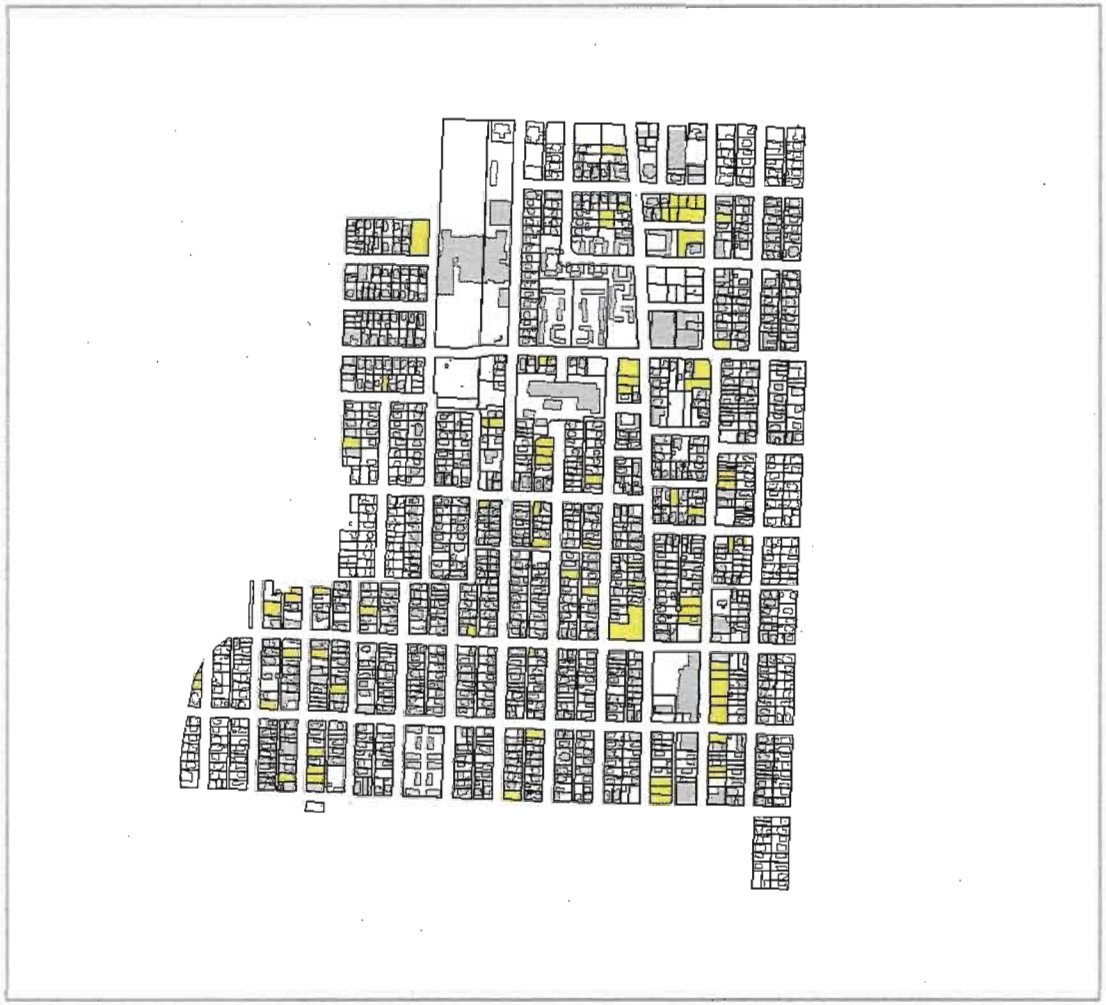
Acquisition/Development Priority: Medium

Site photo:

Humboldt Study Area

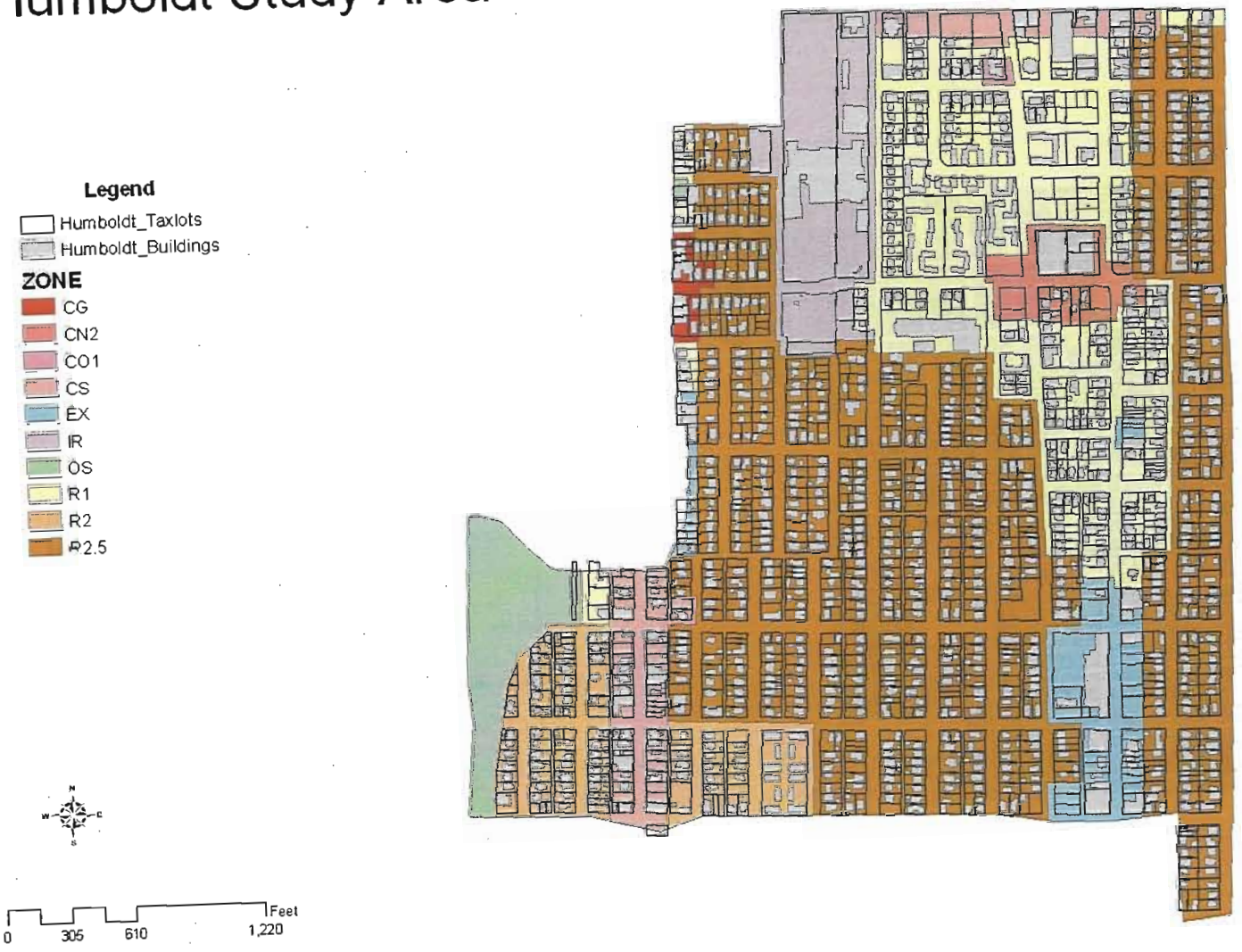
Legend

- Humboldt_Buildings
- Humboldt_Taxlots
- VacantTaxlots



0 400 800 1,600 Feet

Humboldt Study Area



Haight Avenue Site Context

Nearby Family-friendly Amenities

Quiet and safe streets

- Nearby streets are local service streets, several are dead-ends, including Haight Avenue
- Alleys, open space and informal footpaths provide safe, pedestrian connectivity
- Potential Living Street (Woonerf) nearby at Commercial Ave.

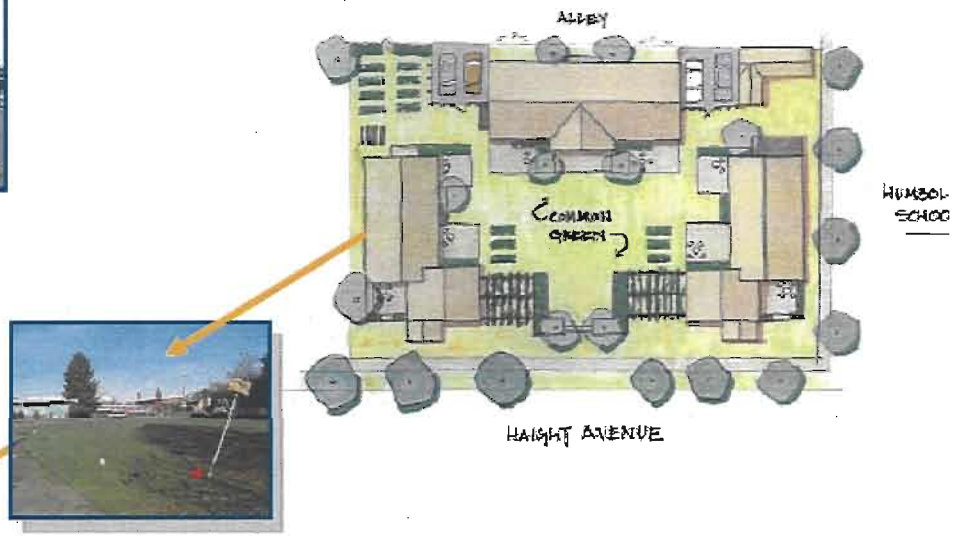
Other transportation access:

- Bike Routes: Vancouver/Williams, Albina, Killingsworth
- 2 frequent service bus lines: 4 and 72
- 1 standard service bus line: 44
- Interstate Max
- Proximity to I-5

Amenities within walking distance:

- Open Space:
  - School District Open Space (e.g., Kerby St.)
  - School playground
  - Albina Green
  - Albina Triangle Plaza
  - Pocket park in Humboldt Gardens
- Daycare (Albina Head Start Day Care, Salvation Army Child Care Center, Peninsula Children's Center, Village Child Care)
- Library (North Portland)
- Community Center (Peninsula Park)
- Schools (Humboldt, Jefferson, PCC Cascade)
- Services/shopping (along Albina, Williams, etc)

Sample Family Friendly Development Concept



Family Housing with Common Green:

One duplex and two triplex homes arranged around a Common Green with vehicle access at the rear off an alley. This example takes advantage of three vacant lots adjacent to Humboldt School, on a quiet, dead-end street with alley access and nearby pedestrian connections. The common green provides an elevated semi-private space for families, with small terrace patios for each unit forming a transition from homes to courtyard and common gardening, play, and activity areas. The home cluster has a pedestrain orientation on tree-lined Haight Avenue, a quiet street that serves as an extension of the common green.

Zoning Provisions Utilized:

In this example, the 2.5a zone allows up to three units per lot so long as the overall density doesn't exceed 1 unit per 1,600 s.f. Adjusting for the common green, this leaves a potential density of 8 units. The common green provision is also employed here to offer a courtyard feel and opportunities for family interaction and child play in a larger semi-private space.

Sources

Enrollment information contained in this report is from Portland Public Schools data. Demographic information and analysis is drawn from reports authored by Portland State University's Population Research Center. Building permit, tax assessor, and development history information was provided by Portland's Bureau of Planning. Special thanks to the following individuals for their contributions: Charles Rynerson, Portland State University, Dona Lehr, Portland Public Schools, and Debbie Bischoff, Portland Bureau of Planning.

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