

**Washington County Health and Human Services
Downtown Tigard Brownfields and Public Health
Final Report**

September 2014



Project Description

For several years, the City of Tigard and community members have envisioned a more vibrant and prosperous downtown. The downtown Tigard vision envisions the area as a walkable mixed use urban village with improved access to public space, trails, and transit. While some progress has been made in achieving this vision, there is still a need to assess some downtown properties for potential environmental issues. The city is undertaking the Tigard Brownfields Initiative to proactively address this key obstacle to achieving the downtown vision.

Downtown Tigard's residents include high numbers of children, seniors and Latinos. Many of these people live in the limited residential development in the downtown area which is primarily low-income multi-unit housing. For those living in this area, the prevalence of high traffic corridors surrounding the downtown and older, underused buildings creates barriers to accessing necessary services. Many residents have to cross major highways to reach full service grocery stores, healthcare and other essential services.

Washington County Health and Human Services (WCHHS) partnered with the City of Tigard to utilize the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Action Model to solicit community input on redevelopment in downtown Tigard. The goals of the project were:

Goal 1: By September 2014, Washington County Health and Human Services will support equitable community engagement and the provision of the public health perspective in City of Tigard's Brownfields Initiative.

Goal 2: By September 2014, Washington County Health and Human Services will build capacity for public health involvement in local brownfield and land revitalization efforts.

Activities Conducted

To conduct the community engagement, WCHHS staff utilized the ATSDR Action Model questions to guide discussion at already established community meetings. Initial outreach was done by having informal, one-on-one coffee meetings with community leaders. These meetings were intended to build trust, educate on land-reuse in Tigard and gain participation in a brownfield advisory committee. One of the challenges with this process was that many of these community leaders were already extremely overextended and did not have the capacity to participate in an advisory committee role. Although this caused a minor set back with the initially proposed project activities, WCHHS staff used these brief, one time meetings as a way to discuss the benefits of community engagement within city planning activities and to gain entry into community meetings within these organizations.

WCHHS successfully facilitated 3 community engagement events at: Metzger Elementary Parent Service Organization meeting, Greenburg Oaks tenant meeting, and The Knoll at Tigard meet the manager event. Through this outreach, feedback was

gathered from 38 people living within and adjacent to the downtown redevelopment area including low-income seniors, parents, and people with disabilities. Staff encouraged participants from these sessions to remain engaged in city planning efforts by applying for the city advisory committees. Applications were made available at all sessions. WCHHS used the information gleaned from this engagement to provide recommendations to the City of Tigard on land reuse as well as valuable feedback on continuing to keep vulnerable populations engaged in this process.

Outcomes

The community shared numerous concerns regarding Tigard’s downtown. The majority of the concerns were related to safety. Community members were very concerned with lack of sidewalk connections and safe crossings to get downtown. Many residents travel along roadways covered in blackberry bushes or over railroad tracks to reach the downtown. Another concern was a lack of appealing, affordable things to do downtown. One mother said, “I just walk through downtown, I don’t spend time there because there’s nothing to see”. The library was the greatest draw for most to the downtown area including seniors and families with small children. Many expressed concern that the library is closed on Thursday.

Figure 1: Word Visualization of Community Issues



When asked what community members would like to see in downtown Tigard to make it a healthier community most expressed the need for more sidewalks. One man said, “spend less money on trees and more money on sidewalks”. Generally people do not feel safe walking to and from downtown, particularly at night. More focus on safe walking routes to the downtown including connected sidewalks and street lighting will enable community members to better utilize assets such as the Fanno Creek trail and the Tigard Library. Another recommendation to consider is the development of an affordable full service grocery store closer to the downtown. Most participants in the

community engagement sessions reported using Winco for groceries, which is not easily accessible by walking. To address this lack of access to healthy, fresh, affordable food the City can consider incentivizing full scale grocery stores to develop in this area or provide economic development assistance to small corner stores to provide healthier and more affordable options.

Figure 2: Word Visualization of Community Desires



Lessons Learned

Through the community engagement process WCHHS determined that using the term “land reuse” resonated more with the community than attempting to talk about “brownfields”. Time was limited in many of the engagement sessions and it was difficult to educate on the concept of brownfields without specific examples, while at the same time allowing for enough time for meaningful discussion. Additionally, WCHHS learned that it took a lot more time than anticipated to get community leaders on board. As an outside organization groups were much more reluctant to partner and it took a lot of convincing to conduct engagement in their organizations. Staff learned that it can be hard to enter a community when there may already be some distrust built due to previous engagement conducted by the City.

Strategies for Tracking Health Benefits

The City of Tigard was recently awarded funding from the EPA’s Brownfield Assessment program. Through this opportunity WCHHS hopes to continue to stay involved in Tigard’s downtown redevelopment by serving in an advisory capacity. WCHHS is committed to continuing to share health data and best practices for healthy community design with the City and will advise on community engagement efforts to ensure equitable engagement is conducted and the health concerns of the community are considered.

Challenges/Success Stories of LPHA involvement in Brownfield efforts

One of the greatest challenges of this project was that WCHHS did not have already established relationships with many of the social-service agencies in Tigard. While there is vast experience with community collaborations in other cities throughout the county, it was more limited in Tigard. Although this presented a lot of barriers up front to gain trust and convince community leaders to work with WCHHS, the result was many new valuable contacts within low-income housing, schools and religious organizations that can be leveraged in the future.

Collaborations

Through this funding opportunity WCHHS developed new or strengthened existing collaborations with the following organizations and groups:

- City of Tigard – Sean Farrelly, Planner
- Community Partners for Affordable Housing – Sheila Greenlaw-Fink, Executive Director
- Good Neighbor Center - Jack Schwab, Executive Director
- Metzger Elementary PSO
- St. Anthony’s Catholic Church ESL Program – Bob and Derene Meurisse
- Tigard City Center Advisory Commission – Elise Shearer

Recommendations to Improve Future Funding

In the future it would be helpful to provide more structure and guidance on the ATSDR Action Model. For example, the HIA program provides a detailed toolkit on the HIA process which provides useful guidance as the LPHA moves through the assessment. More success could also be had by encouraging LPHAs to narrow the focus of their RFP to a specific site rather than a broad geographic area; this may lend itself to a more robust engagement process.

Attachment A: Tigard Brownfield Initiative Community Engagement Notes

Metzger Elementary PSO (4/8/14) – 10 people

- Playground
- Community Center
- Outdoor plaza like Beaverton has
- Sidewalks and pedestrian crossings (have to cross major streets to get downtown 217, Greenburg, Hall – need safe pedestrian crossings)
- Sidewalk on 80th
- Appealing affordable vendors
- Grocery store
- Spend less money on trees and more money on sidewalks to get downtown
- It's hard to go downtown because it's not easy to get to. Have to load kids into the car to go use Fanno Creek trail

Greenburg Oaks Apartment Complex (6/3/14) – 5 people

- Bus stops and sidewalks to get to key destinations
- Dog park closer (the existing one is too long of a walk)
- Hold events on the weekends in the open parking lots downtown
- Community gardens
- Walking group to familiarize people with Tigard and get people to meet their neighbors
- Family oriented events and spaces (“I just walk through downtown, but there's nothing to see”). It's hard because the library is closed on Thursday, kids want things to do.
- Safe Crossings – blinking yellow light at Greenburg gives people false sense of security, cars don't stop. Crossing Main at drycleaners is difficult
- Cars fly through the viaduct on Commercial, there are no sidewalks there and scary people at night with no lighting
- No street access to Metzger Park
- Lighting – many places are scary at night because there isn't lighting (Park by library, Commercial Park is scary)
- Tenants are crossing the railroad tracks to get downtown. It's dangerous
- More ways to get seniors out
- Make a nature path through the wetland by Winco (similar to Fanno Creek)
- Public art
- Colorful flowers
- Music and parades
- Places to get bike fixed
- There used to be places to buy groceries downtown (Safeway, Albertsons)
- Reasons people going downtown: pick berries along Fanno Creek, go eat at Max's, go to the library, access the transit center, dog park

- Ways to keep people involved: send reminders and invitations about events, offer food, place flyers in apartment complex, they would use things online

The Knoll at Tigard tenant meeting (6/5/14) – 23 people

- Feelings about public space:
 - Where is it?
 - Will it get flooded in the winter?
 - Keep coyotes away (there are a lot at Max's Fanno Creek)
 - Seats – older people need resting place
 - Accessibility – curb cuts
 - Horseshoe pits
 - Concern about gang kids
 - Symposium coffee kiosk offering hot and cold drinks
 - Instead of creating a public space you should use the money to keep the library open on Thursdays
 - Old people won't use public space
- Downtown not very pedestrian friendly
- Nothing happens – the City's been making plans for so long Vision 2020, Vision 2030
- To get to Fanno Park have to walk down Hall or the railroad tracks
- Sidewalks would be nice on the Knoll side of the street
- Drinking fountains
- No hills
- Sidewalk on Scoffins so can get to Rite Aid
- Long distance to safe crossing
- Can't walk safely to library – no sidewalks, lots of traffic
- Many go to the library – wish it was open on Thursdays
- Have to drive to grocery store, can't walk (most go to Winco)
- Need to be able to get to new shopping center by Costco – bus doesn't drop off close by
- Hot topics: sidewalks, feeling safe
- Offer a downtown shuttle to get from one end to another
- Concern about light rail – where will it be?
- First aid station
- Covered walkways for businesses along Burnham
- Streetlights on Main Street
- Hard to walk down Hall because of berry bushes and not much shoulder
- Lots of noise at the Knoll – fire department noise, traffic noise
- The Knoll get's very hot, not very good insulation