



Broadway Corridor

Report 4

Construction Workers Focus Group Report



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12/3/18

New Song Community Church



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Executive Summary

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that among adult men (ages 20 and older), Hispanics continued to have the highest employment-population ratio (77.1%) where Blacks had the lowest (63.3%). Among the major race and ethnicity groups, Hispanics and Blacks continued to have considerably lower earnings than Whites and Asians. And, among employed men, Hispanics were more likely to work in the construction industry (20%) than were Whites (13%), Blacks (7%), or Asians (3%) (“Historical comparability of occupation and industry data from the Current Population Survey,” Labor force statistics from the Current Population Survey (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 6, 2016), www.bls.gov/cps/cpsoccind.htm).

Given these statistics, this focus group was a good representation of the active groups in this industry in Portland and DMA. With 15 participants who fit the description of trades, union & non-union workers, and contractors, 80% identified as Hispanic and 13.33% identified as Black or African American. This report summarizes the key findings from the discussion where diversity was not limited to racial/ethnic makeup but also included income levels, gender, and age. The discussion revealed a consensus around the importance of their jobs and their pride in their work, which springs from the ability to care for their families and, in the case of participating construction company owners, the ability to care for their employees.

The two contractors present were minority women business owners who had negative experiences working with government agencies and had to deal with both racism and gender inequality. Job security was the main concern for many participants; access to training, benefits (“I know that the day I have an accident will be the end.”), and well-paying jobs is difficult. Out of all the participants, only two made more than \$25 per/hour and had benefits, regardless of the type of work, years of experience, and training received.

Most of the participants, workers and contractors, were non-union and when asked about trade trainings, many of them didn't have a clear understanding about the benefits and instead viewed it as time-consuming. They preferred to spend time working and earning money. The non-union participants viewed unions as being restrictive ("too many rules") limiting their access to jobs and to work ("I can't work] many more hours than just eight hours a day"). Contractors saw unions as expensive for a small business, and they preferred to pay their employees more instead.

In general, there is a lack of understanding about the benefits union offer as well as the wage and benefits gap. Almost all the participants have kids, support their families in the U.S. and help extended families both in and out of the U.S.

Participants expressed a high interest in having the opportunity to either work at the Broadway Corridor Project and/or have an opportunity to bid on a contract. One of the participants expressed how proud he would feel if his work contributed to building the Broadway Corridor. This participant specifically used the word "orgullosa," a word that has a more profound meaning than just being proud. It means dignity, self-respect, a total reverence and devotion for the job they do.

Regarding downtown Portland, participants expressed that they didn't like to go there because of traffic, the homeless population, and parking. They didn't feel attracted to downtown, and they didn't feel safe. Feeling safe didn't correlate to increasing police but instead to solving the homeless situation in downtown. There was also strong support for more diversity in the process of building the Broadway Corridor including actual construction, the people on the committees, and in the final outcome such as the businesses involved, and the activities being held.

Introduction

The 34-acre Broadway Corridor Project, which encompasses the downtown Portland U.S. Postal Service property, is a people-centered development project that will permanently change Portland's downtown landscape. Through the project, Prosper Portland and Portland Housing Bureau seek to promote social equity and to authentically engage the community early in the process, ultimately maximizing the project's community benefits.

Historically, urban development projects have long excluded disengaged and underserved communities. Prosper Portland acknowledges that its past includes measures that have negatively impacted low-income residents and people of color through gentrification, displacement, and other policies. Recognizing that development brings change, project leaders are focused on ensuring that this change benefits all Portlanders, especially those communities that haven't benefited from previous development projects. To maximize Broadway Corridor community benefits, it is vital for the project owners to understand the experiences, needs, and challenges of the various communities that will be impacted by the project.

Prosper Portland contracted with Lara Media Services to support public engagement activities for the Broadway Corridor Project with a focus on involvement efforts with disengaged Portland residents who don't traditionally participate in public meetings and who don't feel they benefit from large-scale development projects. As part of this scope, Lara Media Services conducted three focus groups, two roundtable sessions, and surveys at three locations with various target audiences:

- Focus Group with Low-Income Residents in the Broadway Corridor Study Area, 8/7/2018
- Focus Group with Individuals with Disabilities, 11/6/18
- Roundtable Discussion with Communities of Color, 12/1/18

- Focus Group with Construction Workers, 12/3/18
- Roundtable with Business Owners, Displaced Residents, and Faith Leaders, 12/13/18
- Pop-Up Surveys:
 - Union Station, 11/30/18
 - Rose Quarter MAX Station, 12/4/18
 - Hollywood Library, 12/6/18

Purpose

Focus groups, roundtables, and pop-up surveys have been used to hear from community members who are often underrepresented in traditional public engagement forums and/or who provide a perspective we are missing. These perspectives improve the project and move it toward more equitable outcomes.

Focus groups and roundtables typically presented similar questions to participants, with some variation depending on the project status. Findings will inform the public benefit priorities, development plan, and interim activation strategies for the Broadway Corridor.

The purpose of the roundtable meeting with Construction Workers was to:

1. Learn and understand the needs and challenges of people who work in construction and live downtown.
2. Identify the resources and tools they need to thrive and access better work opportunities.
3. Motivate them to actively participate in the Broadway Corridor process.

Methodology

Broadway Corridor Focus Group for Construction Workers

Date: December 3, 2018

Time: 6 to 8 PM

Location: New Song Community Church
220 NE Russell St, Portland, OR 97212

A focus group was the selected research method. A facilitated discussion used a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the motivations, challenges, and equity issues of this specific group, obtain data and build a connection that will kindle their participation in the project process.

Lara Media Services recruited the participants and focused on both union and non-union workers and contractors. The focus group lasted almost two hours and generated a combination of quantitative and qualitative data through a survey and discussion. Victoria Lara, a bicultural and bilingual community leader, moderated the focus group. A total of 15 participants took part in the focus group; an audio recording and subsequent transcription captured their comments.

Participant Demographics

*For a full demographic report please see the appendix

	Most Common Groups	Percentage
Racial/Ethnic Identity	Hispanic, Latino/a/x	80%
	African American	13%
Gender	Male	80%
	Female	20%
Age	18-24	53%
	25-34	27%
Household Annual Income Before Taxes	\$40,000 to \$49,999	33 %
	\$50,000 to \$74,999	20%
	\$20,000 to \$29,999	20%
Disability	No	86%
	Vision difficulty	7%
	Independent living difficulty	7%

Concept Results



DISCOVERY

- ◇ Union Station as Public Square
- ◇ Neighborhood Scale
- ◇ Culture Alleys
- ◇ Pocket Parks
- ◇ Community Market



NATURE

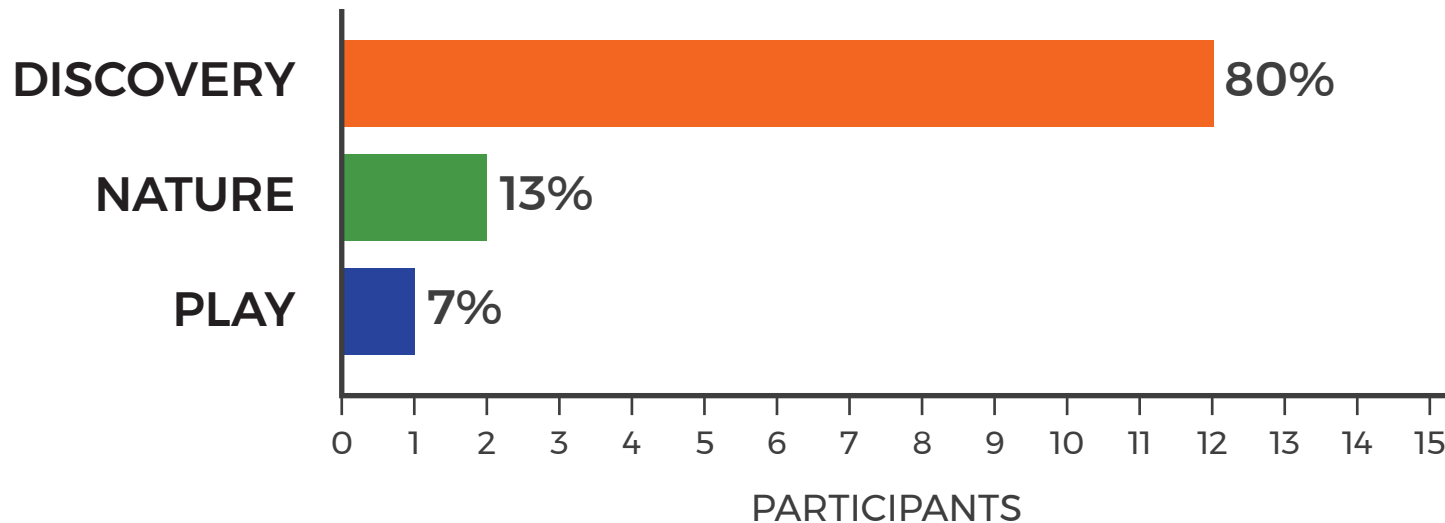
- ◇ Green Heart
- ◇ Breaking the Grid
- ◇ Variety of Gathering Spaces
- ◇ Green Jobs
- ◇ Iconic Architecture



PLAY

- ◇ Resiliency through Community
- ◇ Community Health & Wellness
- ◇ Active Recreation
- ◇ Woonerf (Living Streets)

8. Which concept do you like best?



9.1 From this concept (DISCOVERY), which elements did you like? (select all that apply)

Discovery elements	Participants	Percent
Union Station as a Public Square	6	26%
Neighborhood Scale	3	14%
Culture Alleys	6	26%
Pocket Parks	4	17%
Community Market	4	17%

9.2 From this concept (NATURE), which elements did you like? (select all that apply)

Nature elements	Participants	Percent
Green Heart	1	50%
Breaking the Grid	0	0%
Variety of Gathering Spaces	0	0%
Green Jobs	1	50%
Iconic Architecture	0	0%

9.3 From this concept (PLAY), which elements did you like? (select all that apply)

Play elements	Participants	Percent
Resiliency through Community	0	0%
Community Health & Wellness	0	0%
Active Recreation	1	100%
Woonerf (Living Streets)	0	0%

What elements do you think are missing?

- *“Somewhere to see a view of Portland”*
- Spanish: *“Que hubiera suficiente parking y menos tráfico”*
English: *“Sufficient parking and less traffic”*
- *“Community soccer field”*
- *“Bike riding trails”*
- *“An indoor facilities or covered areas for sports”*
- *“Community centers”*
- *“More kids indoor play structure”*
- *“I think there need to be like an indoor recreational center”*
- *“Shelters”*



Word Cloud Analysis

An analysis of the roundtable discussion recording and transcription produced a word cloud with the most frequently spoken words that reflected the participants' challenges, needs, and motivations.



Main Findings

The focus group participants reflected and shared their opinions regarding the Broadway Corridor. Lara Media Services recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed participant input on the Broadway Corridor using the following categories: Building Massing/Connectivity/ Parcel Configuration/Street Plan, Commercial Affordability, Community Center/Open Space/Parks, Housing, Tenants, and Workforce. These categories best address the more vital aspects of the project and help summarize participant input to more fully understand their attitude toward the Broadway Corridor Project proposed by Prosper Portland.

These groups consisted primarily of construction workers; five people owned their own business. Only two participants said they knew about the Broadway Corridor before this focus group. The focus group participants reflected their hopes for having better access to contracts for business owners, better jobs, and better wages for workers. The participants expressed their content with living in their current homes. Most participants identified living in Southeast Portland and viewed their living arrangements as satisfactory in comparison to living downtown because they felt safe and welcomed where they currently reside. Out of the 15 participants, only one expressed interest in living downtown. Participants view the Broadway Corridor as a project that should serve families rather than individuals. Many mentioned amenities that benefited families such as community centers, soccer fields, and other family-friendly options.

The participants' main interest and concern had to do with workforce. This entire group consisted of minorities; diversity and representation were important factors for all. Given the chance, they would welcome the opportunity to work on a project such as the Broadway Corridor and would take pride in having had the opportunity to impact such a big project and better their community. The contractors would especially appreciate seeing an effort to employ more diverse businesses and to support such businesses throughout the process. Regarding workforce, participants

mentioned wages, benefits, and training as being vital factors in allowing them to work to their best of their abilities. When talking about training, all the participants expressed that they knew how important training is for their jobs, but most of them had been prepared and guided either by more experienced workers or by their family members with more experience on the job. As mentioned before, they lack awareness of union training programs and believe that those trainings are lengthy and constrain them from making the money they need to fulfill their present needs. They view that time invested there as time that will prevent them from providing for their families now.

Building Massing/Connectivity/Parcel Configuration/ Street Plan

The participants expressed that they were concerned that none of the Broadway Corridor models showed access to parking. They said that parking is one of the most important needs in downtown Portland. Most of the participants shared their concern about the many homeless individuals that are in Portland. They said that they don't feel safe going to some areas with their families, especially their kids, parents, and grandparents.



“With parking, they should make parking specific, if they make parking for parks it should just be for that so people don’t take advantage of it for other things.”

“I don’t like going to downtown Portland because there’s no parking so I don’t go to community events, if there was parking then I would go.”

“For me it’s not safe [downtown], the situation with the homeless is exploding. I was in downtown with my wife not too long ago and there was a lot of homeless. The homeless situation is exploding and you can feel intimidated by them.”

Community Center/Open Space/Parks

Many participants spoke of wanting the Broadway Corridor to be family-friendly. Instead of opting for large entertainment centers, participants want community centers that act as learning and training centers. The theme of diversity appeared throughout the focus group discussion. In parks, open space, and community centers participants want to see visible results and a visual representation of the diverse communities in Portland.



“I’m a business owner so I want to make sure Prosper Portland is considering and setting goals to make sure small businesses help build this, I would like to see technical assistance for businesses that would be helping with this/participating. I would like to see help for people considering to start a small business because there’s not enough small businesses out there for people’s needs. In terms of selecting one of the concepts, I think they’re all good (the concepts), I want a representation of the diverse communities of the different cultures. Making sure we have a concept where everyone is welcome and a concept that has a little piece of everybody.”

“More community centers for the kids.”

“If you want to bring more families then I think making somewhere where they can hang out where they don’t have to spend money if they don’t have money.”

"I feel like they should put more shelters there because there's a lot of homeless people, people wouldn't be scared anymore, it would lessen drug use, it would help small businesses. I mean we have playgrounds everywhere already."

"A workforce center, for people that are doing affordable housing. Where they can offer training for people starting a career, different types of internships, etc."

"It would nice to have like a soccer field there like for playoffs like a community thing. We could have big games there, it would be cool to have kids play their final game there, put them in the spotlight."

Commercial Affordability

Participants voiced their concerns about wanting to keep rent for business and other related business resources and opportunities affordable and targeted towards minority and women owned businesses. Small businesses add value to and better our communities, but to enable participation small and minority-owned businesses in the Broadway Corridor, space must be affordable. The presence of having small and minority-owned businesses will ease the project's integration into the community and help strengthen the community.



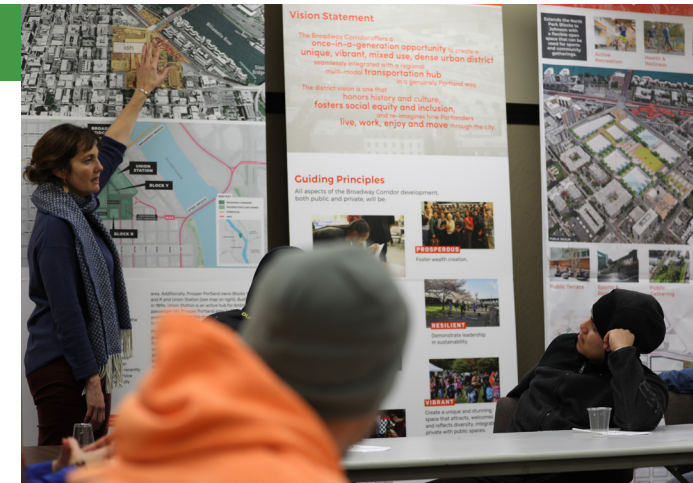
"They need to make it for people who can afford it."

"Making sure activities that will be offered like art museums are affordable, not targeted for other folks like high income individuals not people who live in downtown Portland. Making sure it's

being built for low income individuals not just high-income especially if there will be affordable housing. Is it going to include everyone or just those high income individuals? Making sure it's for everyone."

Housing/Tenants

Participants expressed that these kinds of projects should have a stronger commitment from projects owners to have a large diversity representation in the future tenants and housing models. They said housing and tenant opportunities should be offered to all and not only to high-income individuals. They think that when these projects are planning the types of businesses, housing and activities that will be there, it should include everyone's needs and backgrounds if this project wants to offer opportunities and access to all.



"A funland, somewhere you can take your kids and family. And doesn't cost you a fortune. Just fun things to do not just being at home like bowling. Something like the Saturday market, we have a flea market but it's really old."

"I think just having a place that's really diverse with all and feels welcoming is a big part of it. Make it feel comforting for all, because in Portland there's a lot of diversity and cultures so it should reflect that diversity."

"Encourage that there's a lot of participation where minorities can have their business there because we tend to hire people who look like us and give opportunities to people who look like us so I would encourage Prosper Portland to really be involved in the process to give access to this

kind of contractors, and make sure that what happened to participant 14 doesn't happen and they mentor until the end."*

**Please see Workforce section for more context about Participant 14 "*

"[For a small business like mine to participate] I would need to know someone would be making sure and checking that we are getting paid on time and that everything is turning out ok."

"I think it would be good if the city of would encourage more diverse participation [from business owners, workforce, etc.]"

Workforce

When asked what would improve their work situation all participants mentioned insurance and higher wages. A few of the participants mentioned they are still being paid with cash. Some of them mentioned access to training to learn more and to be better prepared. Both union and non-union workers said that they would jump on the opportunity to work on a project such as the Broadway Corridor but wanted fair wages and diversity among the workforce. Business owners voiced their own need to have Prosper Portland involved throughout the whole process, from hiring to completion, to ensure a rewarding experience, especially for minority and women-owned businesses. They mentioned access to business development tools as well. Despite significant improvements in access to apprenticeships and trainings, minority workers still learn their trades from their parents and grandparents and through self-teaching.



**“I think it would be great to give minority women and everyone an opportunity. I had one opportunity working for the city of Portland and I hated it. They belittled me, talked down on me and I just wanted it to be over. They ended up shortening my pay by \$10,000 and it just makes me sick thinking about the job. After that I didn’t want to be involved in any of their projects. No one paid attention or listened to me when I complained. I didn’t like that I didn’t get the respect.”*

“I just think it’s exciting, something new for the city, somewhere new to go to and explore. I would like to participate in the project if I had the opportunity and would be “orgullosa” to have participated. I could go and show others, my kids that I build this building, I did that.”

“It’s going to be a big project for construction so I like that it’s an opportunity for jobs.”

Comments on training:

“I don’t have time to waste, <no puedo esperar> my family needs food, rent, and I need to send money to Mexico, take care of my parents. I need to work now, I can not go to school to learn this, anyway I learned very fast here. I need to work and work a lot.”

“I think a lot of it has to do with our background. A lot of us are first generation so a lot of us grew up working with our parents (in their countries of origin) and not knowing about these types of programs. It’s also time consuming.” (talking about Union apprenticeship programs)

“I worked with my husband and helped him and through that I learned and then the boss saw how I worked and started paying me cash. These last two years I’ve been helping other people start working in painting and I’ve become a leader to start training. It’s not the same going to a training than to actually do it yourself.”

Conclusion & Recommendations

This was a successful exercise since it reached the two main goals of the engagement plan:

1. to create deep and intentional awareness of the Broadway Corridor Project throughout Portland, particularly among those who are traditionally disengaged residents; and,
2. to authentically and successfully engage target audiences so they feel empowered to share input and express their opinion and thus maximize the project's community benefits.

This group's main goal is "...to get ahead" by working hard. They are asking for the opportunities to have access to work and good jobs and hope this project could help them to provide a better life for their loved ones. Out of 15 participants, eight said they would not feel safe with more police in the area. Feeling safe and having strong diversity representation will invite them to feel part of Portland community, especially with a project as big as the Broadway Corridor.

The Broadway Corridor Project should go beyond working with minority-owned business to fully integrating them into the project long-term and offering support from start to finish. The project should focus on making diversity a requirement when implementing and activating the final plans of the project, in terms of both people working on the project and the people using, living and working in the Corridor once development is complete. This focus group supports the intention and the commitment of the project owners to make the Broadway Corridor Project an equitable opportunity for all. The Corridor will become an equitable opportunity if the participants' opinions and thoughts are heard and truly account.

Our recommendations to continue engaging with this group are:

- Further research needs to take place about the people, their standard of living at the center, invest on education, training and the income redistribution mechanisms that will facilitate prosperity to the Broadway Corridor target audiences.

Workforce and Training

There is a clear disconnect between the Broadway Corridor Project target audience needs and existing training programs. We recommend Broadway Corridor Project owners partner with unions and building trades and review the possibility of offering a more dynamic and innovative model of training that provides access to these groups and adapts to their vital needs of taking care of their families.

- We recommend innovative ways of training business owners, managers, administrators that are more likely to oversee diverse teams. They need to be trained in a culturally responsive way and they need to develop new ways to assess worker performance with new types of culturally responsive analytics,
- Enhancing inclusiveness is a long-term process, which will require long-lasting commitment among all stakeholders, not only from the public sector; we recommend including large businesses and civil organizations to mobilize resources and make a clear effort on the utilization of local, people of color, women to make Broadway Corridor an authentic equitable opportunity.
- Enable people from a variety of circumstances and backgrounds to gain access to resources and better opportunities.
- Develop a new way to engage young people using new digital platforms, and innovative way to reach them which can enable connections and help unlock greater potential for accessing talent for new workers.

- Develop a community pipeline where unions and employers can get access to new workers and to expand their search for new recruits to non-traditional environments.

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the most fundamental driver of economic value creation; investment from all stakeholders is necessary to actively support small businesses. We recommend establishing a united effort among all stakeholders to invest in them, creating smaller opportunities for them to work on smaller projects now and in this way start preparing to work on the Broadway Corridor in the future.

We recommend developing incentives for projects and developers that support the growth and productivity of small business. Investment into business training and preparedness is also recommended.

Offer incentives for local businesses that mostly employ local workers and use M/WBE utilization, and local procurement requirements;

Housing

We recommend that Prosper Portland establish a certain number and ensure that a certain percentage of housing units are not only affordable for a range of income levels but are also adapted to the needs of disadvantaged groups. We recommend that Prosper Portland partner with the Housing Bureau and invest in programs that focus on housing assistance funds as well as education programs targeted to low-income families.

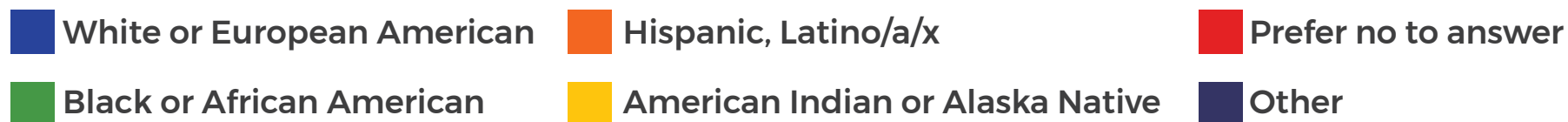
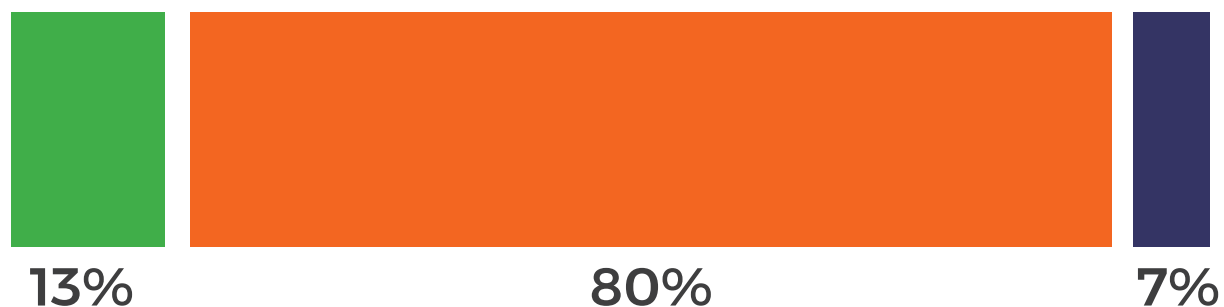
Extended Research

We recommend extended research to have a better understanding of Portland's demographic changes and the individuals the Broadway Corridor Project is targeting to better serve them by understanding their needs. As well as:

- To explore how cultural identity plays a role in the way people of color see and relate to work to design ideal and comprehensive workplaces.
- To understand the role small businesses, play in relation to trust and support with urban development projects and communities of color.

Appendix

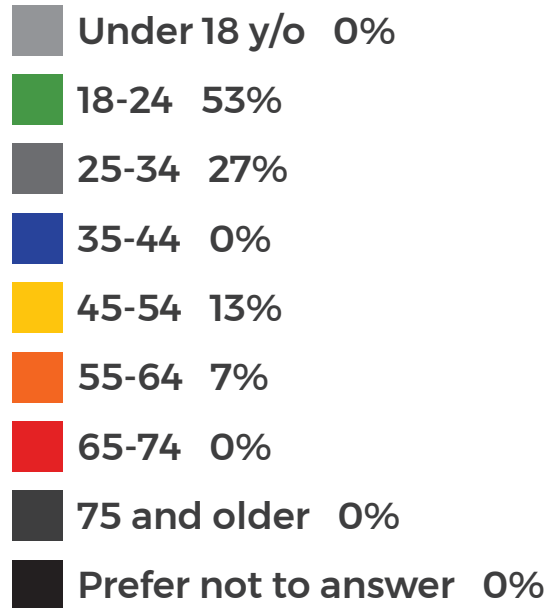
1. When asked to identify your racial or ethnic identity, how do you identify?



2. How do you describe your gender?



3. Which of the following ranges includes your age?



4. What is your Zip Code?

97266	19%	97080	7%	97060	7%
97230	13%	97233	7%	97008	7%
97217	13%	97006	7%		
97030	13%	97236	7%		

5. Which best represents your household annual income before taxes?

Income	Percentage
Less than \$10,000	13%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	0%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	20%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	7%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	33%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	0%
\$150,000 or more	0%
Don't know/ Prefer not to answer	0%

6. What is your education experience?

Education experience	Percentage
Less than high school	0%
Some high school	13%
High school / GED	67%
Some college or an Associate or 2 year technical degree	13%
Bachelor's degree	0%
Post graduate work	0%
Post graduate-degree	7%
Prefer not to answer	0%
Other	0%

7. Do you live with a disability?

