

ANOTHER HOUSING
CRISIS?

Reclaiming Black Identity in the
Albina District of Portland

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Abstract

ANOTHER HOUSING CRISIS: Reclaiming Black Identity in the Albina District of Portland

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This thesis aims to address the connections between racial tensions and the gentrification of the Albina district, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, and the inaccessible housing stock and lack of social infrastructure within the city, leading to the displacement of black residents. Portland is known widely as a state that has fostered social turmoil and tensions between the two racial groups. Sadly, racism has been entrenched in Oregon's history for nearly two centuries, maybe more than any state in the north. In more recent times, the city has repeatedly undertaken "urban renewal" projects that discriminated against the small Black community that existed here. In tracking this problem, this thesis examines the history of the Black community in Albina by looking at the correlation between planning and upward mobility. In addition, this document studies the current conditions of three neighborhoods within Albina, and proposes policy measures and a design implementation to set a framework for residents and community leaders to use as a tool for the equitable development of Portland's Black Community.

ANOTHER HOUSING CRISIS?

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Most of all the residents of the Albina district .

FOR MY MOTHER,

Who has guided me throughout my life and encouraged me to find my own identity within myself and not be defined by others.

Who, although I am still very stubborn, has taught me to keep an open mind and not see things in black and white.

THANK YOU

PREFACE

“ The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend twenty years proving you do. Somebody says your head isn't shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art. So you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more

thing.”

- Toni Morrison

The common goal of urban planning is to create physical settings that would help bring about a more prosperous, efficient, and eq-

uitable society. While many planners were successful at doing this, some may say it is the “only” planning practice that is heavily steeped in racial biases which formed many colonial settlements¹ because of the creation of hard-lined divisions in the name of the territory, religion, social authority and the control of the capital. Fredrick Olmsted, Ebenezer Howard, Le Corbusier, and other famous urbanists advocated for housing, parks, schools, economic prosperity, preservation, and infrastructure reform. But, what if I was to say that even though it had a positive effect on the majority of the population, meaning the white affluent to middle-class, it also had detrimental effects on African-Americans and lower class citizens. Housing proj-

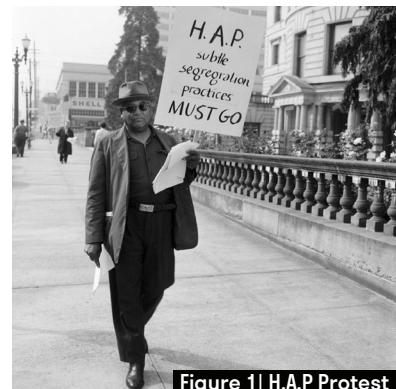


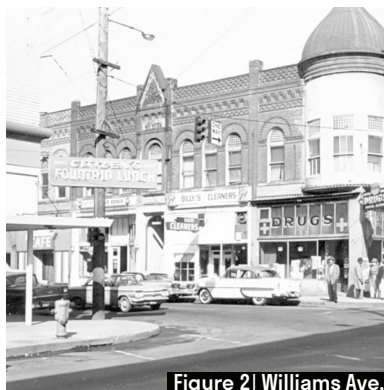
Figure 11 H.A.P. Protest
Huge Ackroyd, *NAACP Picketing City Hall*, 1963, Photograph, 1280 x 1621, The Ore. Portland, https://www.oregonlive.com/history/2018/01/in_oregons_civil_rights_years.html

ects throughout the 19th and 20th centuries were used to separate undesirable residents from the ruling class. Urban infrastructures such as parks, long avenues, and highways like Rock Creek Park in Washington, DC were used to make physical barriers between affluent and poor neighborhoods. Schools are the gateway to economic opportunities and the rigor with which they are conducted can ei-

ther ensure upward mobility or generational poverty. Stores and local businesses once prohibited minority ownership leading to a loss in revenue for both the business owners and the economy.

This thesis aims to address the connections between racial tensions and the gentrification of the Albina district, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, and the inaccessible housing stock and lack of social infrastructure within the city, leading to the displacement of Black residents. Portland is known widely as a state that has fostered social turmoil and tensions between the two racial groups. Sadly, racism has been entrenched in Oregon's history for nearly two centuries, maybe more than

any state in the north. When the state entered the union in 1859, for example, Oregon explicitly forbade Black people from living in its borders, being the only state to do so. In more recent times, the city has repeatedly undertaken "urban renewal" projects (such as the construction of the Emanuel Hospital) that discriminated against the small black community that existed here.²



Oregon Historical Society. *The Vibrant Albina Neighborhood*. 1962, Photograph, 400x261, Black Past, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/albina-portland-1870/>

01. Introduction

“ Why does it take an influx of white New Yorkers in the south Bronx, in Harlem, in Bed Stuy, in Crown Heights for the facilities to get better?”

- Spike Lee



Figure 3 | Aerial of Albina

City of Portland Archives, *Aerial of Albina Rail Yards, Photograph, 1958*, 2400 x 1914, Vintage Portland, Portland, <https://vintageportland.wordpress.com/2016/08/>

INTRODUCTION

It is almost impossible to gain a consensus on the identity of a neighborhood. Neighborhoods are dynamic places that can be both cherished and taken for granted, but more importantly, they are where communities are founded and sustained for generations. Most professionals agree with the concept of neighborhoods having both geographic (place-oriented) and social (people-oriented) components—components that can be categorized within each definition for economics, urban planning, real estate, politics, education and so on. Community is what we strive for, as it is a form of social infrastructure that supports

the entire ecosystem of a neighborhood and provides its character. Vibrant is the word that residents and visitors use to describe the harmonious rhythms of a community advocating for themselves and their own identity.

The neighborhood of Albina rests along the edge of the Willamette river that separates Northwest Portland from Northeast Portland and with that separation there is a major cultural shift. The two separate ecosystems of the city are anchored by two commercial zones, downtown Portland and the Lloyd District which generate most of the revenue for the city. But unlike downtown Portland that blends into the rest of the existing fabric to the area, the Lloyd District

was created by strict zoning regulations that led to the destruction of multiple communities, including the Albina District. This shift in zoning led to the downfall of this district, a historically black area, carved out to make way for the emerging need to commercialize identity and culture for others to enjoy. This is the story of Albina amongst the gentrification fever that started in the 1940s and has yet to pass.

City of Portland Archives, *The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project*, 1961, Photograph, 2400 x 1906, Vintage Portland, Portland, <https://vintageportland.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/albina-neighborhood-improvement-project-circa-1961/>



Figure 4 | People of the Neighborhood

PROBLEM

Before the 1940s, urban planning had evolved into a means for systematically anticipating and achieving adjustment in the physical environment of a city consistent with social and economic trends and sound principles.³ This meant that a city could bring about a prosperous and just society in the manner of urban planners like Olmsted and Burnham. After World War II something drastic happened. Middle to upper-class white Americans began to purchase cars and move to the suburbs in waves. The urban core was being depopulated. Cities were losing their tax base, buildings were being abandoned, and neighborhoods were falling

victim to blight.⁴ While most of the population made it out before the cities downfall, the majority of minorities were stranded with nowhere else to go. City planners desperate to save the cities they loved saw the light in the Housing Act of 1949, making urban renewal a legitimate project for federal funding. With cash in hand, redevelopment agencies conducted slum-clearances according to the HOLC maps to make way for their “forward-thinking” master plans. Vibrant ethnic neighborhoods like the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Albina District, and Boston’s West End were washed away to make way for capital builders that would reinvigorate the city.

This was a time when

egregious acts of urban vandalism, such as slum clearances populated most urban planning history. Lewis Mumford believed that America's cities were suffering from urban cancer and only slum clearance could force it into remission. Architects and postwar planners had drunk the Corbusian Kool-Aid⁵ driven by racially charged fear and a superiority complex that was too intoxicating to see the damage being done. In opposition, Jane Jacobs wrote the *Life and Death of Great American Cities* that advocated for the elimination of the physical interventions that have long plagued planning practice and the preservation of the tattered existing city fabric. After the overturn of the old regime the "Jacobsians"

took over and looked for new methods of making cities work by connecting to other professions and academics. They also tend to have minimal allegiance to planning.⁶ This brings us to the first flaw of Jacobsianism, the loss of identity within and by means of urban planning. It is not only the loss in the identity of the residents of Albina but also the loss of the planner's own identity of "place" making through which we see a fragmented and botched response to current planning issues. The second flaw is urban planning's loss of professional agency through transferring authority to grassroots organizations. Shocking as it seems, this invites "not in my backyard" ideals in addition to planning is based off

one's own self-interest rather than the interest of the whole community. Plus, most grassroots organizations do not have a planning background and while they may have good intentions this could lead to some serious issues involving goal setting and ideal outcomes. The third flaw is in contradiction of the two but it is important to state, while the public lacks the knowledge and expertise to make informed decisions about planning, then what happens when a group of citizens envisions a good idea that planners should have had? Some planners claim they are too busy slogging through the bureaucratic maze, issuing permits and enforcing zoning codes, hosting community get-togethers,



Figure 5 Construction Potentials: Postwar Prospects and Problems a Basis for Action

and making sure developers get their submittals in on time and pay their fees.⁷ Planners have become a caretakers rather than being advocates and visionaries for what a city could be rather than what it is. Urban planning and policy and even education must understand analyze, and influence the variety of forces -- social, economic, cultural, legal, political, ecological, technological, aesthetic and so forth -- shaping the built environment.⁸ As one author puts it, we are far from this ideal today.⁹

Julian Archer, *Construction Potentials: Postwar Prospects and Problems a Basis for Action*, 1943, Illustration, 525 x 429, Places.com, <https://placesjournal.org/article/jane-jacobs-and-the-death-and-life-of-american-planning/>

APPROACH

This project starts off where most slum clearances occur, in marginalized, low-income communities where minorities predominantly reside. The Humboldt and King neighborhoods are situated in the historically black district of Albina and straddle both sides of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. The neighborhoods were chosen due to their significance in the history of slum clearance within the Albina district in Portland, Oregon. The area has been subject to 3 major clearances within the 320-acre area and is on the brink of its next major overhaul coming in the design done by the ALBINA Rising organization and the I-5 widening by the City of Portland. The Humboldt and King neigh-

borhoods, like many other dilapidated areas, are in the process of trying to find the balance between development for economic vitality and maintaining neighborhood identity. The City of Portland has started to create pockets of “place” or public attractions through the acquisition of old building stock owned by minorities that can no longer afford them. While one would hope that these place making strategies would provide affordable services to existing residents instead they end up as boutique hipster attractions in the service of tourism and upper middle class citizens. Portland wants to create the next great cultural center similar to NW Goldberg neighborhood and Soul City but has struggled over the years to

make amends for its past indiscretions.

In an attempt to re-configure planning strategies within the Albina district, this thesis will approach the redevelopment of the historically ethnic neighborhood as a cultural hub for its native residents and their needs. Talking about urban planning in America often involves African Americans discussed only as victims, usually with regards to segregation, gentrification, or urban renewal.¹⁰ As important these stories are, it is as equally important to talk about African Americans as agents and creators in the history and future of urban planning. If we feel that cities have changed in the renewal and revitalization since Jane Jacob’s time, and

in these processes have lost their authenticity, we are reacting to more than just a measurable change in the built environment: a larger than usual number of buildings torn down, replaced, and renovated beyond recognition in the renewal and revitalization since Jane Jacobs' time, and in these processes have lost their authenticity, we are reacting to more than just a measurable change in the built environment: a larger than usual number of buildings torn down, replaced, and renovated beyond recognition.¹¹ A mix of machine shops and small factories, butcher shops and dry cleaners, and homeowners and tenants were crushed first by old residents moving out, businesses failing to meet competition, and landlords aban-

doning low-rent properties, and then by new waves of boutiques, condos high rise development, and gentrifiers. Underneath it all, the rootedness that connects people to place was made weak by new forms of mobility.¹² Blaming these changes only on gentrification minimizes and oversimplifies the collective investment at stake. What is this competition among cities to create destination culture aimed at transitioning traditional cities to creatures of commercial consumption through non-traditional performances and innovative bars. In the case of smaller cities like Portland, why would they want to be excluded from these global games?

Thus, this thesis is an examination of the collective

efforts made to transition Portland and indeed the Albina district into destination culture and the affects this effort has had on its Black residents within the Humboldt, Boise and King neighborhoods. What is being proposed is a change in urban planning practices and policies with an introduction to social infrastructure in the hopes of reviving Albina's identity and reverse the effects of destination culture. This thesis will draw from the existing context and ethnic roots of two halves of Albina stitched together by Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. It will do so through the proposed policy and planning implementations suggested in this document.

02. The Story of Albina

“ We are now about
to penetrate a country
... on which the foot of
civilized man had never
trodden ”

- Meriwether Lewis



Figure 6 | Man Painting a House

City of Portland Archives, Painting Mrs. Johnson's home, 1962, Photograph, 1920 x 1909, Multnomah County Library, Portland, <https://gallery.multicolib.org/image/albina-neighborhood-improvement-project>

INTRODUCTION

Portland, Oregon, has been celebrated throughout history for its planning achievements, starting with the city's inauguration into U.S. society at the Lewis & Clark Exposition in 1905—an expensive demonstration to prove that the city was a safe and sound place to conduct business by mounting a major civic enterprise. Much like their colonial ancestors, Portland residents in the 1800s were not accustomed to sharing territorial wealth and resources with people who were considered outsiders. The Black Exclusionary law of 1857 was the first racially charged law to be written into Oregon's constitution, one that prohibited Black Americans from remaining

in the state. This law was not abolished from Oregon's history until the late 1920s, but this was not the only egregious, racially biased law to be written in Portland's books. Some remained all the way up until the 1960s and other methods like back-door dealings continued all the way until the early 2000s. The formation of African American ghettos in West Coast cities involved more than increased Black migration and heightened white racism; the ghettos resulted from a combination of prewar and postwar public policy decisions and real estate industry practices, and white hostility.¹³ By the end of both periods areas like the Albina district were primed with the title “blighted” and fed to city planners as the new course

of action for urban renewal practices. This is the story of Albina, an urban vessel populated by a community that has endured countless injustices throughout history but still rises up after every wave to defend their identity and right to exist.

WAVE 1: THE VALIDATION OF RACIAL BIAS

Stuart McElderry notes in *Building a West Coast Ghetto*, the term “ghetto building”, which resulted from a combination of prewar and postwar policy decisions, real estate industry practices, and white hostility.¹⁴ McElderry periodized the process of “ghetto building” that can be classified as 3 stages or waves: 1910-1940, the 1940s,

and the 1950s. These stages inevitably led to the area to become the essence of what white American planners called “blighted.” That led to the urban renewal efforts that we have seen from the 1960s until present day, this is the first stage.

Albina was originally a company town controlled by the Union Pacific Railroad before its 1891 annexation to Portland. Between 1910 and 1940 more than half of the Black population of 1,900 was squeezed into Albina.¹⁵ The majority of Portland’s Black workforce since early migration were railroad men and chose to settle themselves and their families close to their work sites partly because the railroad was one of the only forms of transportation Black

Americans could take other than using their feet. In 1919, the Portland Realty Board adopted a rule declaring it unethical for an agent to sell the property to either Negro or Chinese people in a White neighborhood—a practice whose purpose relied on introducing Black residents into previously white neighborhoods to lower property values. By the 1920s, Oregon had gained an unruly reputation as a hostile place for Blacks with the solidified presence of the largest Ku Klux Klan chapter west of the Mississippi River. The Klan was a visible and intimidating force in Oregon politics and society. For example, Walter Pierce was elected governor in 1923 with KKK support and from 1932 to 1942 he was Oregon's congressman in the U.S.

House of Representatives. In addition, Oregon had formalized its practice of racial discrimination early on in the twentieth century. Two cases, *Taylor v. Chon* and *Allen v. People's Amusement Park* contained identical circumstances of racial discrimination against a Black individual. Both lost in Oregon Supreme Court confirming and stationing the practice of racial segregation in public place and services – a ruling that would remain in place until the legislature passed an anti-discrimination law in 1953.¹⁶ In addition to the countless exclusionary laws, Black Americans in Portland resisted such activities through multiple strategies, such as combating the biggest chapter of the KKK west of the Mississippi river

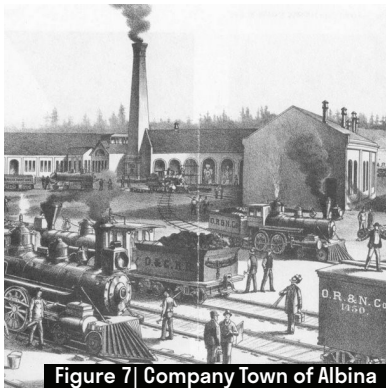


Figure 7 | Company Town of Albina

Cafe Unknown, *The Oregon Railway & Navigation Company's shops at Albina, 1880s*, Drawing, 1032 x 607, Cafe Unknown, <http://www.cafeunknown.com/2006/11/forgotten-portland-one-of-my-favorite.html>

with the first NAACP chapter west of the Mississippi River, organized in 1913. Before the Great Depression, there was a small Black community in northwest Portland, with Black-owned businesses such as cafes, barbershops, and the Golden West Hotel, but most did not survive the Depression.¹⁷ Similar to the efforts being made in Albina today to restore a sense of collective identity within

the district, when amenities were not accessible to Blacks because of discrimination or lack of affordability, individuals in the Black community filled the gap.

The Great Depression was the worst economic emergency the United States has faced, and as with virtually all economic slumps, it hit the housing sector first. The National Housing Act of 1934 was enacted to help stabilize the real estate that had depreciated during the Great Depression and to re-finance the Urban Mortgage Department. Trying to stimulate the market, the Hoover administration also created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) and the Home Owners Loan Corporation

(HOLC) which oversaw the disbursement of loans to homebuyers and improvement projects. What the act did not account for was the creation of the term “redlining,” a practice that includes the systematic denial of various services by the government agencies and local governments, as well as the private sector, to minority residents, more specifically Black Americans and their neighborhoods and community. Racially biased maps were drawn and color-coded first by HOLC and then by the FHA, and these were later adopted by the Veterans Administration. These color codes were designed to indicate safe areas to insure mortgages, and others that were financially risky. Anywhere designated with the color red, which was

predominantly where Black Americans lived, indicated to both appraisers and governments that they were considered blighted and too risky to insure mortgages. To accompany this, the FHA wrote the Underwriting Manual, which stated that “incompatible racial groups should not be permitted to live in the same communities.” It also argued that highways would be a good

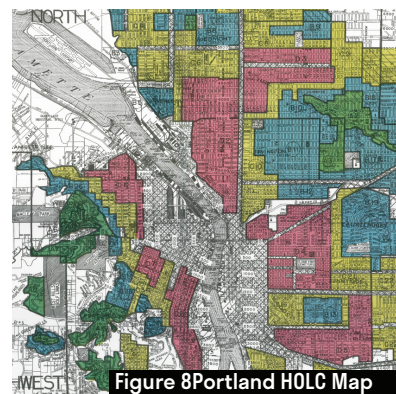


Figure 8 Portland HOLC Map
Home Owners Loan Corporation, Pittmon's Map of Portland, 1934, Drawing, 920 x 680, Next City, Philadelphia, <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/portland-racist-history-haunts-modern-earthquake-safety-policy>

way to separate Black neighborhoods from white ones. Even though segregation had been prominent in American culture, these were the first federal measures to approve state practices in segregation. In Oregon, Black Americans were stuffed into the Albina district during the time period between 1910 and 1940 due to multiple federal and local rules and regulations, and general hostility towards Blacks. Towards the end of the 1930s, congress passed the second Housing Act that made federal funds available to cities interested in building public housing, but Portland did nothing. Public housing did not guarantee integrated residential patterns, it promised an alternative to the dilapidated and overpriced homes offered by slumlords

or for better term landlords. Portland, having most of its conservative politicians' business interests or properties in mind, rejected public housing in 1938 by a vote of 32,000 to 18,000. Black residents rallied and established a housing campaign in conjunction with the NAACP from 1938 to 1939 for civil rights and the right to good housing, forming the Oregon Commonwealth Federation (OCF). It died in a house committee due in large part to opposition from the Oregon Apartment Association.¹⁸ By 1940 the Albina district was home to roughly 60 percent of Portland's residents due to redlining practices and racial covenants set in both the private and the public sector.



Figure 9 | Vanport City

Oregon Historical Society. *Aerial View of Vanport, 1945*, Photograph, 1000 x 803, The Oregon Encyclopedia, Portland, <https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/vanport/#.XvUIT0dlBEY>

WAVE 2: THE 1940S & THE LACK OF ACTION

The 1940s was a turbulent time with racial tensions at their highest. White Americans felt they were being spied on by Asian American residents. In addition, Oregon suffered from the loss of its workforce due to the draft. Out of state laborers were migrating into the state and most of them not from the Aryan race. The war had pushed Portland to its limits and the Vanport flood exposed

all of the cracks in its urban planning policies and practices causing the city to burst. World War II initiated the second stage in the development of Portland's Black ghetto.¹⁹

World War II

The Second World War transformed the West, just as it transformed the nation and the world. The arrival of thousands of Black people in a city like Portland changed social relations and local racial dynamics.²⁰ The population multiplied from about 2,000 people in 1940 to as high as 22,000 in 1944. WWII transformed Portland into the center of the wartime shipbuilding industry, recruiting many Black shipyard workers, many of them with families, from all

over the country. With the large influx of new residents, racial conflicts began to rise and Portland experienced another housing shortage and need to support the tens of thousands of migrant workers that came to work in the shipyards. Portland was forced to face the question of housing, a topic the city had resisted for years, with its main complaints aimed at publicly subsidized housing. The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 changed every city's perspective, it became everyone's patriotic duty to house defense workers; well at least temporarily house them.

Vanport City

The formation of the Black community in the Albina District was shaped by two

major events: the labor migration during World War II and the 1948 flooding of Vanport City, the largest single wartime development in the United States and Oregon's second-largest city. A few months after Pearl Harbor, the first trainloads of defense labor arrived in Portland, bringing roughly 23 thousand Black Americans and 100 thousand white Americans to work in the shipyards and aid in the Pacific war effort. Housing was another arena of racial conflict, it was where stock, like defense housing, was being paid for by federal dollars, dollars that in most white politicians' minds should be for the white working class. In the fall of 1942, white homeowners, businessowners, community clubs, and parent-teacher organizations staged a protest in response to a rumor that the government planned to build housing for Black shipyard workers.²¹ Therefore, the Housing Authority of Portland, restricted Black families to certain areas like Vanport and Guild's Lake which were both located away from the city's white residential areas. Until Vanport, no area within Portland had been designated as a "colored." In response to the need for housing HAP hurriedly built Vanport in 1942-1943 on marshland. Two factors contributed to this development. First, HAP received funds and instructions from the FHA to build additional units. Second, Edgar Kaiser -- the son of the California industrialist Henry J. Kaiser,

Oregon Historical Society, *Vanport Flood of 1948*, 1948, Photograph, 940 x 658, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Portland, <https://www.opb.org/news/article/vanport-mosaic-festival-flood/>



Figure 10 | Vanport Flood 1948

whose three Portland-area shipyards employed most of the city's growing Black labor force -- circumvented the foot-dragging HAP and secured permission and funds from the U.S. Maritime Commission to build enormous projects adjacent to the Columbia River.²² Vanport and Guild Lake were the only wartime housing projects where HAP allowed Blacks to live, the rest of the overflowing Black workforce were funneled into Albina and within both racial segregation was enforced, solidifying racial attitudes towards Black tenants. By 1943, Portland's post war residential pattern was set, the majority of the city's Blacks lived in public workforce housing or Albina. When the war ended, many Portlanders were

questioned where the Black workers would live if the city chose to close its wartime facilities. Many did not have to wait long to learn HAP's true intentions. Before the war HAP and Portland's business and political leaders already had formulated plans to eliminate wartime projects like Vanport. In a speech by the American Society of Planning Officials, the head of the Portland City Planning Commission, Arthur D. McVoy, jokingly expressed the desires of city leaders, stating, "If any of you feels that your city needs some extra population after the war, let us know. I think we can fix you up."²³ The nation was on the brink of a housing shortage in the early postwar years, and the lack of building materials and shifting populations

prevented HAP from carrying out its plans. By 1946, Portland's housing market was strained, a Portland Gas & Coke company surveyed the area and stated the Portland would need to build at least 3,699 units every year for the next decade to sustain its growth. Closing any HAP facility would have spelt disaster for Portland's Black residents who were laid off after Portland's white workforce of the prewar population.²⁴ In addition, those who did remain heavily reliant on public housing, by 1948 33 percent of Vanport's population were Black Americans. Those who could find housing in Vanport or Albina tried other tactics to buy homes in white neighborhoods called the "white front" tactic, where white Americans bought

homes in segregated neighborhoods on behalf of Blacks. To prevent this, the Portland Planning and Housing Association in January 1948, persuaded HAP to eliminate segregation at Vanport and Guilds Lake, sadly this victory was lost later that year.

On May 30, 1948, a dike west of Vanport collapsed, and the Columbia River, swollen from heavy rains and snow melt, destroyed what one Portlander described as the project's "tissue paper homes."²⁵ The flood in 1948 leveled the city of Vanport, killing 15 people and displacing over 5,300 families, approximately 1,000 of them Black. President Truman declared Vanport a disaster area and signed a 10 million dollar emergency

relief bill to replace Vanport. HAP had other ideas. To them, the flood was an opportunity to eliminate wartime public housing, shortly after the flood HAP tried to secure another 50 million dollars in federal loans and grants for Portland construction companies to build private housing stock instead of public ones. Their argument was that, unlike rental public housing, homeownership encouraged "responsibility and good citizenship and was more representative of "the American Way." In the end, the Vanport flood only intensified housing segregation and the unequal distribution of state services.



Oregon Historical Society, *Residents of Vanport Evacuate From Their Flooded Homes*, 1948, Photograph, 500 x 322, Portland Observer, Portland, <http://portlandobserver.com/news/2019/may/22/vanport-mosaic-honors-confronts-past/>



Figure 11 | Effects of the Vanport Flood

WAVE 3: THE 1950S & SLUM CLEARANCES IN THE AGE OF WHITE FLIGHT

The postwar period was something else altogether. The urban core was being depopulated as middle-class white Americans upon return from the war bought cars and moved to the suburbs in record numbers. Cities were losing their tax base, buildings were being abandoned, neighborhoods were falling victim to blight. Planners and civic leaders were increasingly desperate to save their cities.²⁶ Similar to the last wave of ghetto building, the government swooped in and with a wave of its hand the 1949 Housing Act was born with the Title I provision that made urban renewal a legitimate planning practice for federal funding.

During this decade, the pattern of racial transition in Albina neighborhoods that would last 50 years was first established: almost in checkerboard fashion, when Black residents settled in, White residents would move out.²⁷

With planners becoming concerned about the future of cities in the age of white flight, the passing of the 1949 Housing act was a curse disguised as a blessing. The Title I provision declared urban renewal as a valid form of planning and therefore if planners prepared master plans with slum-clearances as the main course of action, the government would be there with federal funding. Postwar urban plans thus abetted some of the most egregious acts of urban

Cmerique Archive/Getty Images, *House Hunters*, 1965, Photograph, 3582 x 2811, Getty Images, <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/full-length-image-of-a-family-of-four-holding-hands-while-news-photo/3205122?adppopup=true>



Figure 12 | White Flight

vandalism in American history. Of course, they did not see it this way.²⁸ The Albina District experienced three major clearances from the 1950s to the late 1980s. The first of those was the construction of the Memorial Coliseum which happened between the 1950s and 1960s. In November 1956, the citizens of Portland and the City of Portland voted to build the 3.1-acre glass palace using Title 1 funds from the 1949 Housing Act. In this process, 467 housing units were destroyed, 224 of them “non white.” Not only were homes leveled but community landmarks and businesses as well, including the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church and the medical office owned by local civil rights activist Dr. DeNorval Unthank.

The residents and business owners that were displaced by the first clearance were then hit by the planned construction of the Minnesota Freeway, also known as Interstate 5. The I-5 erased 125 homes and multiple businesses that operated along Minnesota Ave. Urban renewal projects and freeway construction continually pushed African American residents North and East, making the African American community more highly concentrated along Union Ave. (Now Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.).²⁹ This also added to the line of separation that was beginning to occur by forcing the community to choose either the North or East quadrants of Albina. These two major clearances

led to the separation of community members. It also signified the separation of Portland’s Black community from the city itself, which was predominantly white. In addition, these renewal projects coincided with Portland’s elimination of historic streetcar lines and interurban railways, which traditionally transported residents to Downtown from the Albina district³⁰ and vice versa. In combination, these changes suffocated the already struggling Black owned businesses and pushed out most of the Black workforce from the downtown.

Portland’s most egregious instance of forced removal manifested during the Emanuel Hospital Urban Renewal Project between

1967 and 1973. In January, 1967, the PDC (Portland Development Commission) sent a Survey and Planning Grant Application to HUD using findings from a study called The Hamilton Report. The report recommended that the hospital campus expand into the surrounding neighborhoods to maintain its presence within the area. 10 days later, the PDC approved the project to expand the campus by 55.3 acres. A total of 101 properties were lost along Williams & Russell Ave due to the expansion of Emanuel Hospital between 1963 and 1969. Opposition grew between 1970 and 1971 when a group of residents displaced by the project, known as the Emanuel Displaced Persons Association (EDPA), brought

two petitions to city council asking the city to fairly compensate the residents that were displaced by the hospital. They felt that \$5,000 dollars (around 30,000 dollars today) on top of the price of their home was not enough. HUD voiced EDPA's grievances about the Relocation Plan and withheld the approval of the plan until further discussions could be had between the EDPA and Emanuel Hospital Board of Directors. The relocation destroyed 188 homes and multiple Black owned businesses.

The aftermath of all this destruction showed during the 1980s when real estate prices plummeted, banks began predatory lending toward first-time home

buyers, and crime rose dramatically. Later in the 1980s Albina was dubbed "crack alley" with the influx of crime and depleted housing stock. As a sign of the economic collapse of the real estate market, Albina residents from this period were often able to sell their cars for more money than their homes.³¹ From the 1950s to the 1980s the population had dropped by 27 percent and home prices were sliced in half.

ALBINA TODAY

Today Albina is a hotbed of new visions for the district. One of those visions is related to the Alberta Arts District or Mississippi Ave. Both initiatives advocate for historic preservation of existing buildings within

the neighborhoods that were designated significant enough to reinvest funds; thus providing infrastructure for planning a new historic conservation district. While these were attempts to restore what was lost of the Albina community these efforts led to the gentrification of the neighborhood. Gentrification is a common practice, not unique to Portland, involving the process of renovating and improving a house or district so that it conforms to middle-class, or in this case trendy/touristy, taste. Portland has been capitalizing on the big city small town atmosphere since the 1990s when revitalization began. There are multiple streets that amplify main streets with boutique shops walking

distance from a craftsman air bnb and for those city lovers, downtown is just steps away. While these planning attempts have introduced revenue into the city it has done little to help Portland's Black community in Albina. Most of the shops are too costly to afford and with the rise in housing it is virtually impossible for Black Portlanders to live in these areas.

The newest project that has been brought to the City of Portland is the Albina Rising project. The project is spearheaded by Rukaiyah Adams and aims to honor the neighborhood's past by transforming what exists today into a socially and economically inclusive community of residents, businesses, artists, makers, and visitors.

While this project has good intentions, so far the visioning tells a similar story to what Portland experienced during past urban renewal projects. While the left corner of figure 14 shows what is existing currently in Portland today, figure 13 shows that the Albina Rising project plans for the Lloyd and Boise neighborhoods includes the clearance of residential homes and businesses to make way for higher density housing. While this could include opportunities to include more affordable housing to circumvent the displacement that would happen, Portland Policy and funding is in no way prepared to do so. So this leads to the question, how do we help Albina?



Figure 13 | Aerial of Albina Rising

Albina Rising, *Top View of Project*, <https://www.albinavisioninc.com/>



Figure 14 | Aerial of Albina

Google Earth, *Top View of Albina District*, 2019

03. Policy

“ You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas.”

- Shirley Chishom



Figure 15 | March for Jobs & Freedom

The Oregonian, *The March for Jobs and Freedom*, 1963, Photograph, 450 x 358, The Oregonian, Portland, https://www.oregonlive.com/entertainment/erry-2018/06/daobb631be373/photos_of_north_williams_ave_t.html

INTRODUCTION

Through the use of policy changes and a design implementation this thesis aims to reclaim space and preserve the Black cultural and social ties to Albina. Brandi Thompson Summers writes in her book *Black in Place*, about the influence of public domains, arguing that streets have been used to commercialize minority cultures by the use of aesthetics. In her view, cultural tourism is a common trait in most major cities. The whole concept revolves around the idea of seeing and unseeing to provide the desired outcome, which is to show that a city is “diverse” and therefore it is progressive and accepting of all. The hard truth of this narrative is that

the built environment has been spatially reorganized to show Black people, but not residents. Brandi calls it the representation of achievements (front of house) and not the struggle (back of house), which is an injustice to the city’s residents. This form of design can be seen in the Chinatowns, little Italy’s and international districts within a city, these examples of culture have been used to condense minority populations and profit from them.

Her main focus was the street, where there are competing narratives of cultural infrastructure to raise capital and develop land within a city. She argues that this conflict is evident in the fact that: “there’s this

emplacement of blackness on the street that is favored more over Black people actually existing in the city and in the neighborhood.”³² In a sense, the use of cultural symbolism through aesthetics is often not an effort to make Black residents feel more at home in their neighborhood, but to use that symbolism to draw newcomers who want the “Black experience.” In this book, three short case studies from the were done in Barrio, Logan, San Diego, CA, H Street, Washington, DC, and Harlem, New York, NY that are in the process of being gentrified. These studies were done by both Brandie herself and the Urban Displacement Project.

The story is the same for all three neighborhoods,

at some point in time, each area was deemed desirable (meaning urban and affordable) and therefore caused an influx of development and newcomers. Today the neighborhood surrounding H Street is 40% gentrified. Similar to Albina, H street started the process of being gentrified after a riot over civil rights. After the riot ended only 75 percent of storefronts along H street were vacant. Properties started to become devalued and the streets were heavily policed. H Street’s residents began to rebuild and with that came new business and interest in the area. Once developers caught wind they started buying up properties and eventually the city planned to put in a streetcar line along H Street and this is where H-Street stands today.

A lot of its original residents, which were Black Americans, have been priced out and now it is home to dozens of luxury apartments buildings, a bevy of new bars, restaurants, and coffee shops, and that conspicuous harbinger of neighborhood change -- a Whole Foods.³³

Similar signs of change have been seen in both Barrio Logan and Harlem. Barrio Logan is similar to Albina because it runs alongside the waterfront, making it a prime location for new developments. Sadly, while development is not a bad thing, using it to commercialize culture as “authentic” when it is actually a distillation of stereotypes is extremely troublesome. When culture is commodified to appeal

to wealthier audiences it tends to price out the minority business owners and residents that were being referenced to begin with and this is the case with both Barrio Logan and Albina. There is also an important discussion, as mentioned in previous statements, about the commodification of culture as an experience for people who are not a part of that particular group. Barrio Logan is a predominantly Hispanic neighborhood, and is now populated with a host of new breweries, galleries and cafés. As a result, this traditionally working-class, Mexican American community is being re-branded as the latest hot spot for cutting-edge arts and “authentic” local culture.³⁴ As for Harlem, one of the most famous historic

black neighborhoods in the US, it has been rezoned. Current plans will transform it from “a low-rise boulevard lined with hair salons and buffet-style soul food restaurants into a regional business hub with office towers as high as 29 stories, more than 2,000 new market-rate condominiums, as well as hotels, bookstores, art galleries and nightclubs.”³⁵ This phenomenon is similar to the Albina rising project that includes up-zoning to the zoning standards of downtown Portland.

PROPOSING POLICY FOR A EQUITABLE TOMORROW

To discourage this from happening in Albina, policy changes have been categorized into 4 sections,

development, housing, planning, and community.

DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development policy is primarily focused on mitigating displacement through the use of incentives and higher regulations on private development. The first policy would be to instill displacement strategies to prevent the migration of residents due to increased annual median income (AMI). Such strategies are categorized into the three P’s: Protections, Production, and Preservation. Protection measures must be taken to stabilize rental rates and a resident’s right to return, which is a policy that sets the framework for residents to come back to the area from which they were displaced.

Inclusionary zoning is also a displacement strategy for planners to ensure that residents do not become displaced in the first place. The next policy would be to balance out unequal development. For the most part, Portland is mostly private development, and developers more often than not tend to find loopholes in current policy to slip past affordable housing regulations. Therefore, it is important for Portland to decrease private development and increase public development to allow for more affordable housing opportunities. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), federal support for low-income housing has decreased 49% from 1980 to 2003.³⁶ In

addition, there is constant competition between developers and affordable housing agencies for land acquisitions. For example, the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) is always looking for opportunities to purchase land that can be used for housing development, but it faces tough competition from private developers and many landowners want to close the deal quickly, which requires APAH to maintain more liquidity up front.³⁷ Housing Authorities struggle to gain enough capital to make bigger offers to win over properties, so the strategy is to limit private development or increasing restrictions on housing developers to include affordable housing.

The last two revolve around Black owned businesses and ways to incentivize developers to support not only the businesses but also the residents that run them. Due to the multiple slum clearances that happened, Black owned businesses were displaced numerous times causing great economic strain. The same strain still happens today but within commercial retail spaces. Typically new businesses cannot afford top dollar commercial spaces to rent from and seek older buildings with cheaper rent. The sad part is that most of these old buildings are being leveled to make room for new luxury apartments with ground floor retail. One program aims to aid in preventing minority businesses from

being displaced are legacy business programs. For example, San Francisco established the Legacy Business Preservation Fund. The city controller's analysis of this measure estimated it would cost the city about \$3.7 million in the 2015-2016 fiscal year. He also estimated that, if the city were to fully fund the proposed legacy business grants, the cost to the city would increase every year, reaching a cost of between \$51 million and \$94 million annually within 25 years. By investing in minority-owned businesses, cities are able to also increase their own capital and eliminate displacement. Incentives can also be used to increase affordable housing development. Density bonuses are one way that cities can distribute

incentives that promote affordable housing by allowing developers to build additional units if the project includes subsidized housing. By increasing the allowable density in a given location, density bonuses allow developers to increase profits and can improve the feasibility of underutilized sites. They result in affordable housing without requiring public subsidies. (Home for all websites) Density bonuses are typically used in inclusionary zoned areas.

- **Charlene's Tot & Teen Shop**
- **Melody Amusement Record Store**
2713 N Williams Ave, Portland, OR 97212



- **Freedom Bank of Finance**
728 NE Killingsworth St, Portland, OR 97211



- **Urban League of Portland**
5329 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Portland, OR 97211
4128 NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Portland, OR 97211



- ● **Maxy's**
NE Martin Luther King Jr Blvd & NE Fremont St,
Portland, OR 97212
4603 N Williams Ave, Portland, OR 97217



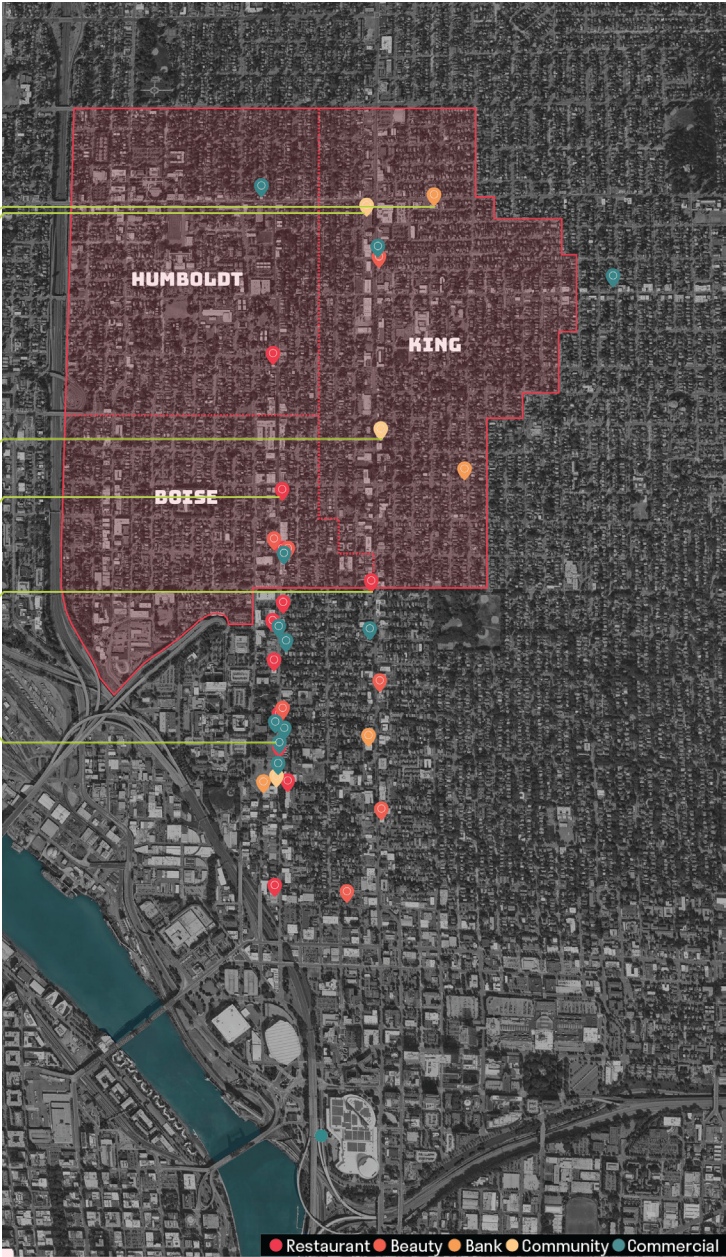


Figure 16 | Black-Owned Businesses

HOUSING

Housing policy for Albina is primarily focused on retaining and expanding housing opportunities through the preservation of existing housing stock and an increase in supportive measures such as subsidized housing requirements and rent control. In Portland, there are no housing requirements that address residents in need of housing that are 30% AMI and below, which is the majority of Black Portlanders. The first of the proposed policy changes for housing is to re- envision the residential area of Albina. Portland has long been a proponent of subdividing the single-family lot to allow for more density through residential infill projects. The intent was to transform single-family zoning (R7, R5, and R2.5) zones into duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes, or the addition of accessory dwelling

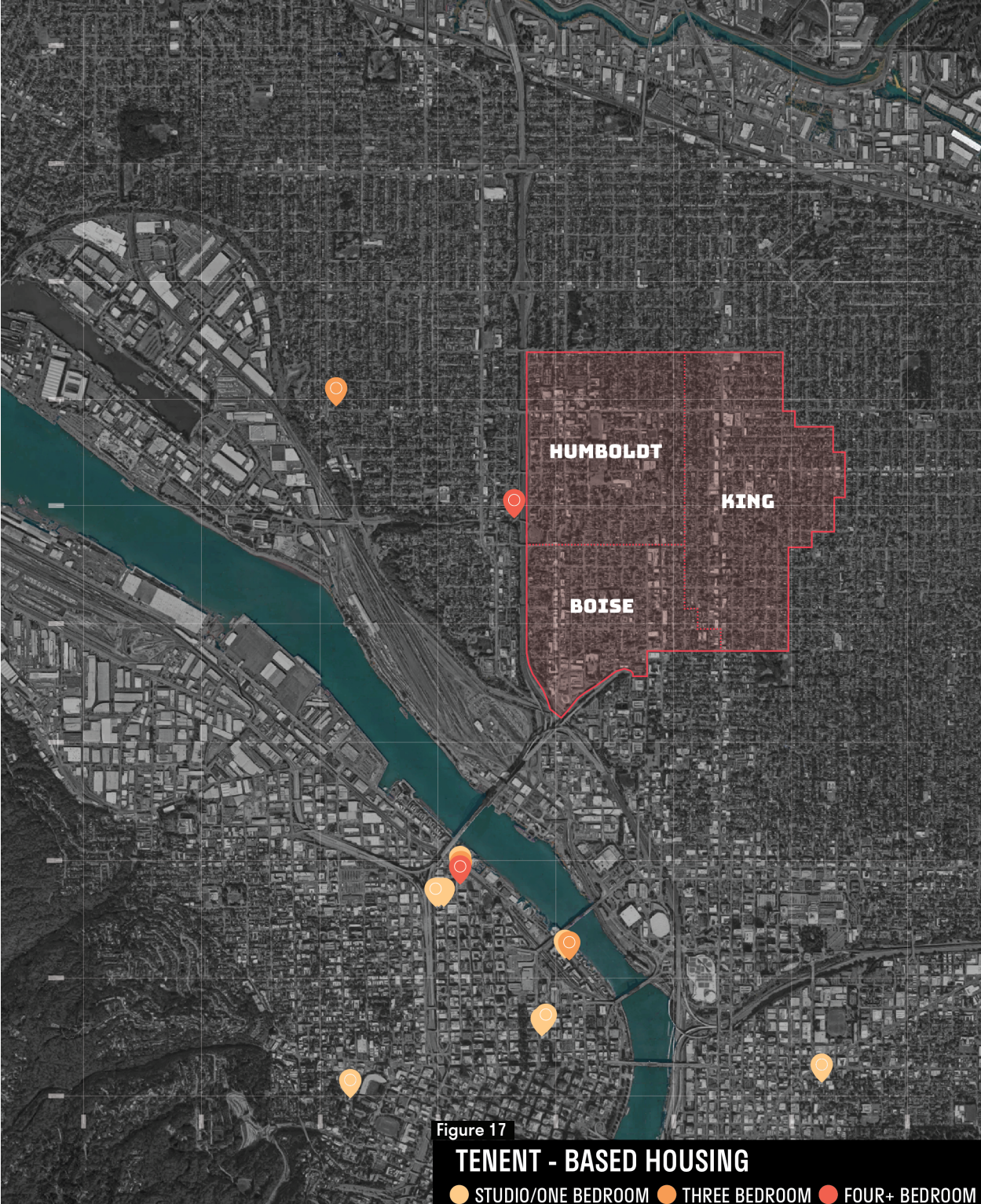
units to a single-family home. This will provide greater opportunities for density and affordable housing. In addition, subdividing a single-family home can help eliminate unoccupied homes and provide landlords some stability with their property. The second policy is to update the already existing subsidized housing requirements. As it stands today, areas zoned for multifamily units with 20 units or more require developers to either: pay into the housing fund, dedicate 20% of units to renters with 80% or below AMI; or dedicate 10% of units to renters that are 60% or below AMI. In conversation, Brandon Spencer with the City of Portland, pointed out that developers have chosen to build 19 unit buildings in more desirable areas to avoid the affordable housing requirement. This thesis would advocate to initially make the policy a requirement for any unit

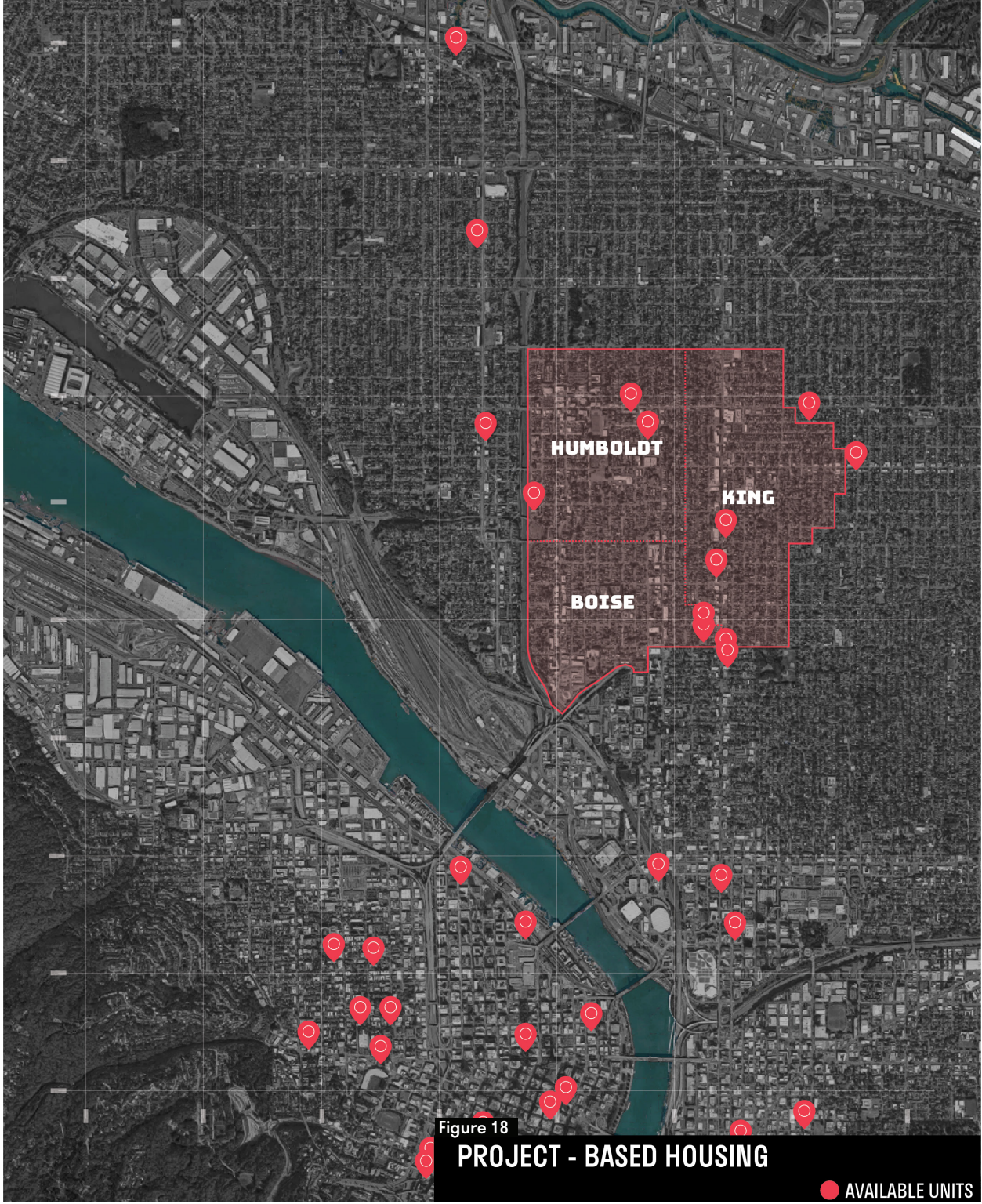
number and then over time if the market still remains unaffordable to people living below 60% AMI then the measures should adjust to current market conditions. Currently in Portland, there are no housing requirements that address residents in need of housing that are 30% AMI and below, which is the majority of Black Portlanders.

The third policy change would be rent control. Rent within any city is dependent on the area's annual median income, although it presents some issues. When new residents enter a lower income neighborhood and are of a higher income that will drive the AMI up, even though the majority of the area's residents are of lower income. Rent control can combat that by placing a maximum price, or "rent-ceiling," on

what landlords may charge tenants.³⁸ Controls can prevent the shortage of affordable housing stock. While the traditional form of rent control is a standard cap, there have been experiments where rental rate can evolve based on the demographics of a neighborhood. Portland's caps only allow hikes at 7% for the year, however it would be interesting to consider basing rent not off AMI but on the percentages of AMI in a neighborhood. If the majority of residents are below 30% AMI there should be a control in place to prevent rent from going up due to the minority of renters that are of a higher income. The last policy proposed for housing is to increase the acceptance of Section 8 housing vouchers. More

often than not, landlords will turn away renters with Section 8 vouchers lessening their opportunity to find a home. Even without that limitation the number of units available to voucher holders in Albina is still low, about 178 units. While efforts such as Inclusionary housing standards require multifamily zoning, it does not provide affordability for the 30%. Section 8 housing vouchers are one of the ways in which to make housing affordable. But tenant-based housing is out of the site area and of the Project-based housing there are only 178 units, 82 of them being 1 bedroom or SROs—which does little to help Portland's Black families.





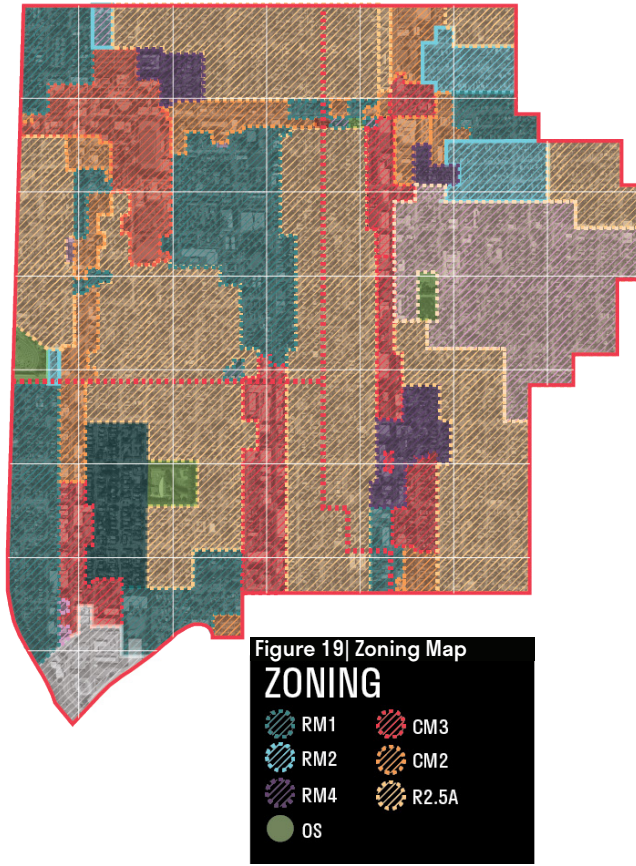
Planning

The proposed planning policy is primarily focused on rezoning the area and reducing traffic loads to restart communication between the neighborhoods, while promoting mixed income. The zoning in Albina seems to be patched together due to the uneven development within the area. The first policy would be to re-zone Albina to correctly identify zones for housing and community activity, similar to downtown Portland. The second course of action would be to re-envision the corridor by turning Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. into a low traffic street. In 1981, a Berkeley urban design professor by the name of Donald Appleyard published a book called *Livable streets*. In it, he describes

the effects of car traffic on the street dictated how friendly neighbors were to each other. Further, as traffic volume increases, the space people considered to be their territory shrank. Appleyard suggested that these results were related, indicating that residents on heavy street had fewer friends and acquaintances precisely because there was less home territory (exchange space) in which to interact socially.³⁹ By comparison, the light traffic street was a closely-knit community. Front steps were used for sitting and chatting, sidewalks for children to play and for adults to stand and pass the time of day, especially around the corner store, and the roadway was utilized by children and teenagers to play more active games like

football. Moreover, the street was seen as a whole and no part was out of bounds.⁴⁰ The heavy street had little or no activity at all. This research suggests that in order to reinvigorate Albina and create the cultural corridor it needs, traffic loads should be reduced.

Another policy that needs to be addressed is mixed income development. As a strategy to confront urban poverty, mixed-income development responds largely to one critical factor: the social isolation of the urban poor, and in particular Blacks. This isolation was largely a product of the loosening of racial discrimination in housing markets in the suburbs and other parts of cities in the 1960s and 1970s. While this was



positive in many ways, it led to an exodus of black middle-class and working-class residents from urban neighborhoods.⁴¹ It is important to have a mixed income neighborhood because when there are high concentrations of both low and high income residents it allows for the opportunity to have healthy amounts of affordable housing and revenue to reinvest back into the neighborhood. The last planning policy proposed is the addition of green space to add to the already existing park system. Parks within the area are the major places where neighbors gather, it is important to reinforce that by reclaiming space on the car dominated MLK Blvd.

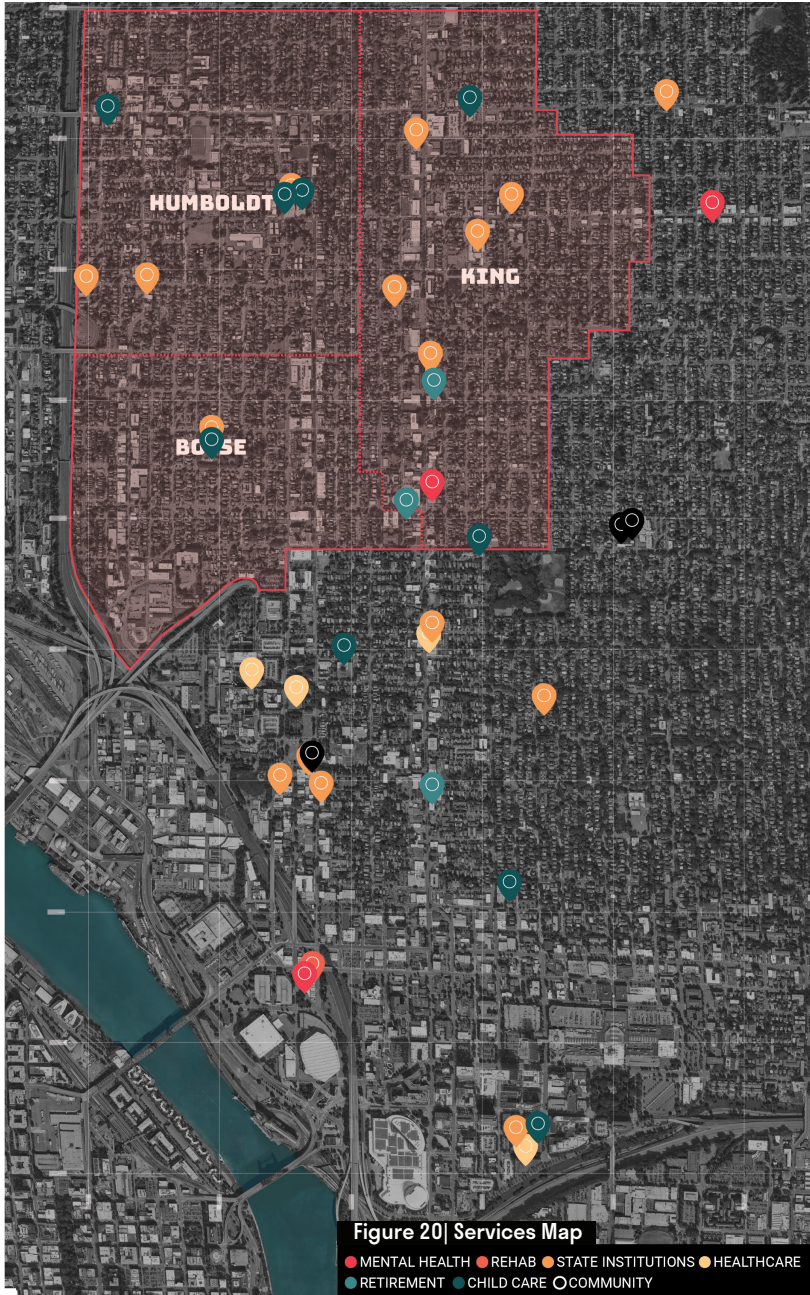
COMMUNITY

The proposed community policy is primarily focused on promoting upward mobility through the implementation of workforce development, housing, food security, and community development. Workforce development has been an overlooked flaw related to affordable housing. Section 3 of HUDs design standards for project-based development requires that recipients of certain HUD financial assistance, to the greatest extent possible, provide training, employment, contracting and other economic opportunities to low- and very low-income persons, especially recipients of government assistance for housing, and to businesses that provide

economic opportunities to low- and very low-income persons.⁴² Thus far, Section 3 has not fulfilled its promise to expand economic opportunities available to low-income Americans.⁴³ There are some ways to remedy this by enhancing HUD's monitoring of compliance with section 3, requiring all affordable housing developments to provide low-income residents with job training. The second policy is to require just-cause evictions, even if tenants have job security, landlords still have the power to evict tenants without any grounds.

After conducting a quick survey it is apparent that Albina while hosting an assortment of grocery options is considered a

food desert to low income residents. The only affordable stores are Safeway and two food banks. In order to combat this, some of the green spaces mentioned in the planning section will be plots of land dedicated to community gardens for residents to grow affordable food. Lastly, this is not so much a policy but a standard requirement for all entities involved with helping low income communities, that community outreach must be a process that continues throughout the entire project. It will be important to collect and organize community concerns to better understand and address them, instead of making assumptions.



TRANSFER DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

In addition to the policy changes mentioned, there is the discussion of air rights. “Air rights” refer to the transferable allowances of buildable space between the city and the sky that could be built up. Selling “Air Rights” can aid in efforts to not only preserve culturally significant buildings, such as the 1st Baptist Church of Albina, with a historically Black congregation, to be retained, but also to preserve the historical ties to old Albina. This could help with upkeep costs, easing financial pressure and landmark transfers. They can also aid in District Transfers, a proposal done by SITU studio, encouraging selling air rights to finance shared amenities that

could fund individual owners and communities. Therefore local Black homeowners and business owners can reinvest into their property without the aid of loans or state funding.

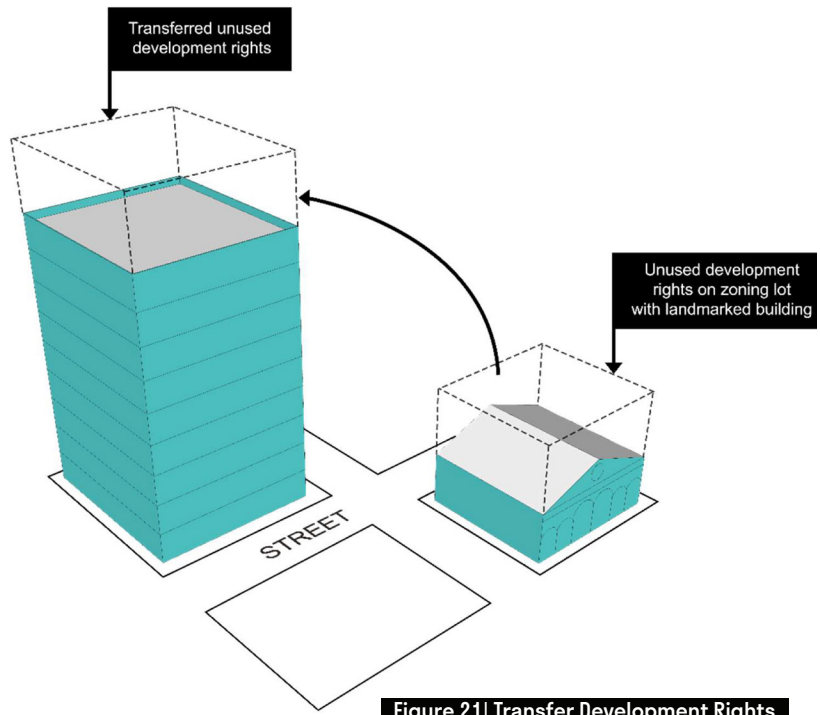


Figure 21 | Transfer Development Rights

Zaheer Allam & David Sydney Jones, Transfer Development Rights, 2019, Illustration, 3092 x 2672, MDIP, Australia, <https://www.mdpi.com/2413-8851/3/1/38/htm>

Main Street

Some of these policy changes are an adaptation of the Main Street Program, which enables communities to grow by leveraging local assets. In order to participate in this program there has to be a community visioning that provides a framework for future change. There are three tiers to the Main Street Program: Performing Main street, Transforming Downtown, and Exploring Downtown. To advance through each level participants must highlight 2-3 transformation strategies to help reach a community’s vision. Some examples include; creating incentives for economic vitality; designing for physical and visual assets to set the commercial districts apart;

supporting the community’s unique characteristics; and organizing partnerships for community involvement. Once transformation strategies are in place, they will be able to be implemented and through that comes the benefits of new jobs, business and economic stability and opportunity for the area’s residents.

Main Street America, *Main Street America Logo*, Illustration, 804 x 496, Main Street America, Chicago, <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>

Figure 22 | Main Street Logo



04. DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION

“ Never be limited by other people’s limited imaginations.”

- Dr Mae Jamison



Figure 23 | School Board Protest

Oregon Historical Society, *African American Community Protests School Board*, 1982, Photograph, 864 x 612, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, <https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/african-american-community-protests-school-board/#.XvV9CedIDb0>

INTRODUCTION

The goals of this thesis is to showcase Portland's Black community by establishing a framework within the built environment. This allows for the promotion of social infrastructure to ready the area for reinvestment in the community. By restarting communication between both sides of MLK Blvd. We open up the opportunity to create a unified front that can address community needs and advocate for its residents. The proposed design implementation recognizes MLK Jr. Blvd as a mixing zone where all three neighborhoods, Boise, King and Humboldt intersect. Currently it is a four lane road dominated by traffic with commercial strips on both sides catering

towards cars. The sidewalks are almost entirely devoid of public life except for a couple of people using non-protected crosswalks to cross the street. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Is the main divider of the three neighborhoods and with the policy changes proposed and with an adaptive framework, this thesis aims to stitch back together the community by weaving social infrastructure and support systems into the built environment to create a sense of place and home

SITE LOCATION

The urban fabric of Albina today provides a record of the growth and dispersal of Portland's Black community before and after the decades of urban renewal. This thesis focuses on 3 neighborhoods that highlight three stages of gentrification; King (Gentrified), Boise (Gentrification in-progress), and the Humboldt neighborhood (Early-stage). These neighborhoods are also home to the majority of Black residents still living in Albina. It is important to focus on areas where Black populations are currently living because that offers up a better opportunity to retain the residents that are already there, instead of trying the right to return approach which anticipates

the resurgence of the Black populations in historic locations.

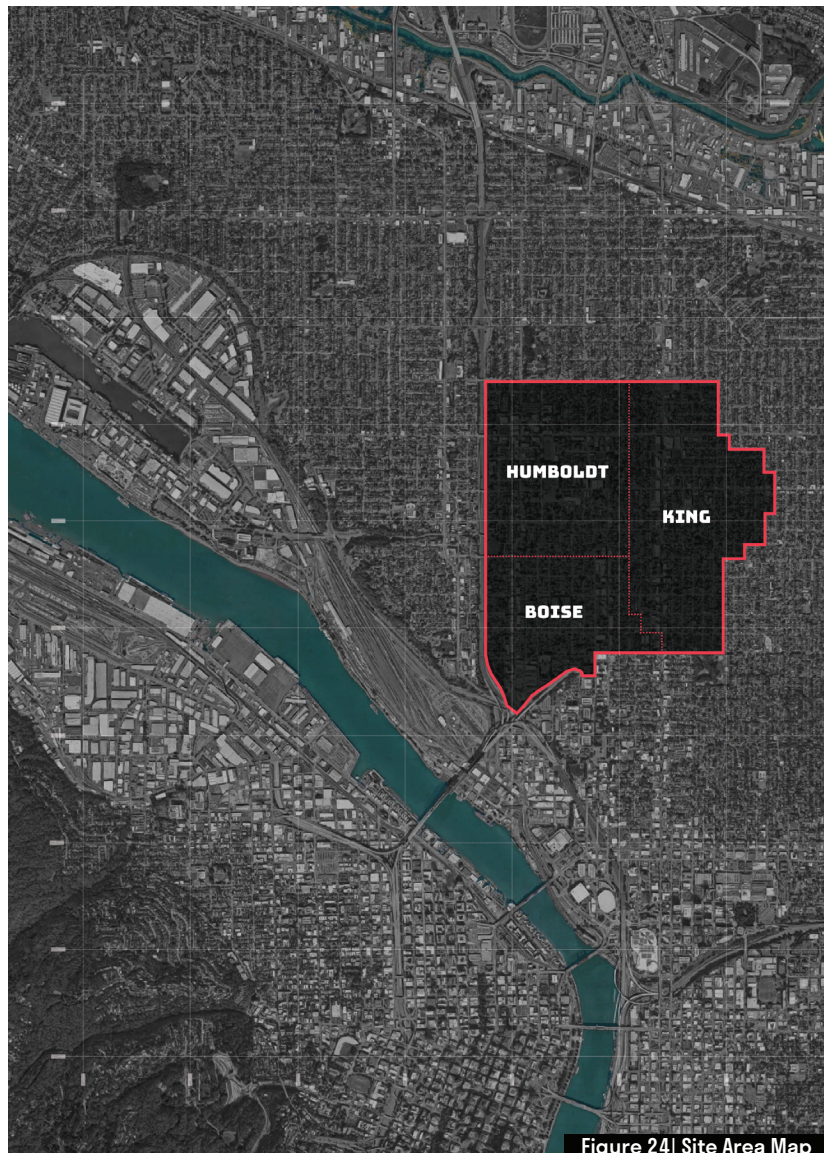


Figure 24 | Site Area Map



Figure 25 | Zoomed in Aerial

BLACK-OWNED BUSINESSES

While the urban fabric has changed due to renewal efforts in Albina so has its economy. The early 1900s was the golden age for Black businesses that was quickly snuffed out by the Great Depression—only to regain traction during the 1940s until 1960 when business owners met the next wave of economic strain caused by urban renewal. Businesses were forced to move from Williams Ave. To Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., The next physical sign of displacement of not only residents but business owners as well. With the loss of long time patrons, a lot of Black businesses today have changed from a community support

system of barbershops, corner stores and banks to restaurants serving authentic Black cuisine not only to bring a sense of home to the community but to accommodate the ever exploitative Portland foodie.

What is needed today is the restructuring of that support system to not only allow Black-owned businesses to thrive but to create a more diverse commercial center for a wide range of economic opportunities for minorities. Through the use of legacy businesses, owners that have been displaced multiple times will be able to be nominated into the program and receive the support the business needs to retain its place along MLK Blvd.

HOUSING

Affordable housing has been a source of frustration in the Black community for some time. According to the current State of Housing Report of Portland Oregon, a majority of Black residents within Portland make under 30% AMI (Annual Median Income), which is between 26 and 30 thousand dollars compared to Portland's average AMI of around 53,000 dollars. While efforts such as Inclusionary housing standards requiring multifamily units, this policy does not provide affordability for the 30%. Section 8 housing vouchers are one of the ways in which to make housing affordable. However, as you can see in figure 27, tenant-based housing is out of the site area and of the Project-

based housing there is only 178 units, 82 of them being 1 bedroom or SROs, which does little to help Portland's Black families. It is important to take policy measures to ensure that Section 8 vouchers holders have protection against biases and that there is affordable housing available for people with or without vouchers.

UPWARD MOBILITY

Within Albina there are three elementary schools, one school for special education, one middle school and one high school. Having multiple schools feed into the next can cause additional strain to already over-burdened educational

systems. Overcrowded classrooms can cause stress on teachers as well as students by increased noise levels, less individualized focus per student, and greater complexity in the classroom. What causes the most distress among parents and teachers is that already struggling students fall further and further



Figure 26 | Zoomed in Maps

behind. Transportation is another factor that affects upward mobility, as an unreliable transportation system can cause strain on work relationships if bus lines run late or there is an overcrowded bus.

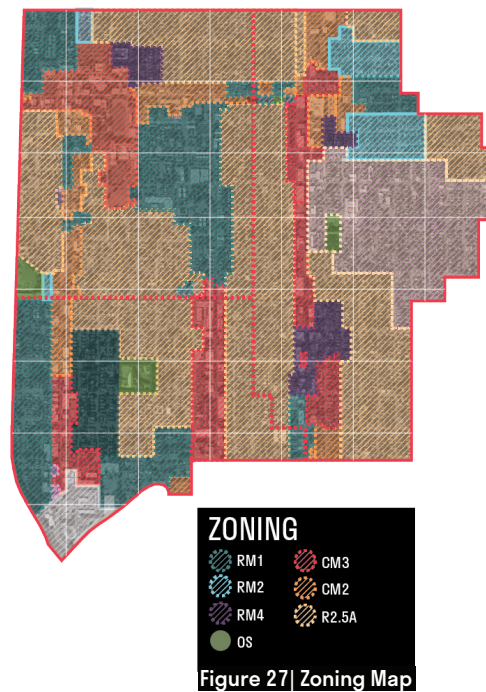
It is also important to address upward mobility in a location where there is a densification of poverty. Infrastructure within the built environment can determine the success of a neighborhood and its residents. Providing the opportunity to reduce strain on transportation and schools are just some ways in which to aid in neighborhood development. Other options are educating residents and offering up ways to prosper closer to home while allowing for less reliance on government funding. We can

see communities advocate and provide for themselves by allowing full ownership of their environment.

ZONING

Zoning plays an important role in the revitalization of a neighborhood. If an

area is a patchwork of different zoning regulations it provides more of a challenge to define key areas to implement change. By looking at historical and current contexts, cities can determine clear zones that foster community development.



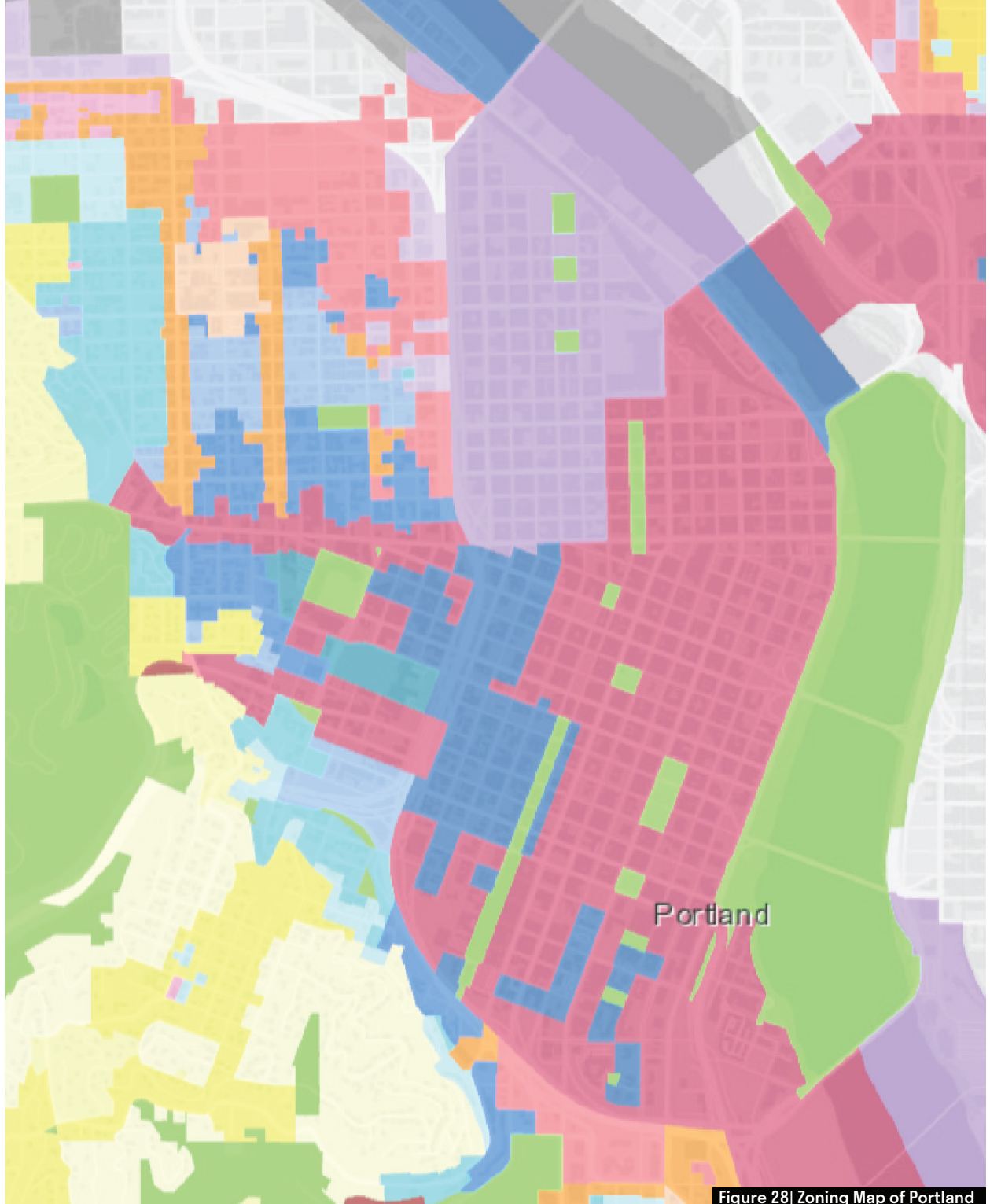


Figure 28 | Zoning Map of Portland

SITE PLAN

This site plan highlights the 4 anchoring points to support Albina's Community; Heritage Park, an equitable business core, a place for community outreach and a center for the advocacy of the neighborhood's needs. Heritage Park creates a venue for residents to showcase their successes within the community, where events can occur such as concerts, picnics, family reunions, block parties,

and the like. It is the public front porch of the Albina community. By creating an equitable business core, Black residents will be able to have access to amenities that are affordable and economic opportunities for Black workers and business owners. Lastly, the community outreach center was specifically chosen because it was one of the sites for the Urban League. It will set the precedent by recognizing Albina's history and creating a space for the community to voice its

needs and work with city leaders to address them.

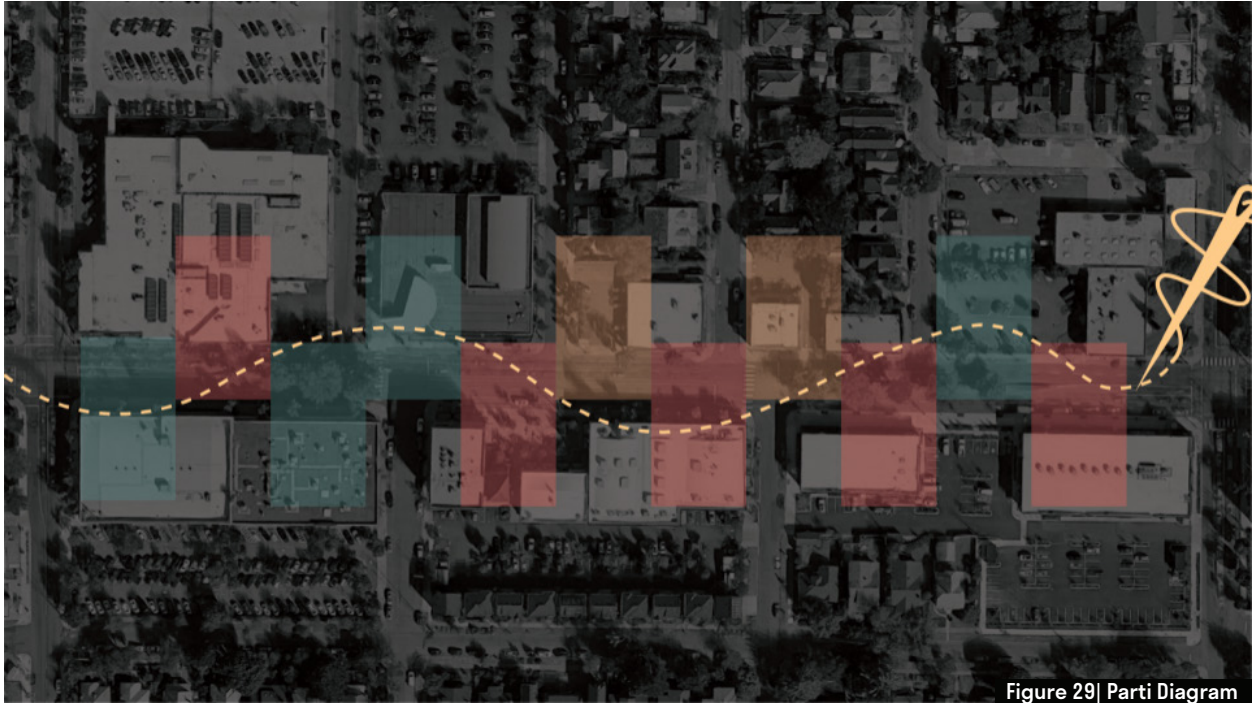


Figure 29 | Parti Diagram

KILLINGSWORTH

EMERSON

ROSELAND



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

MARTIN LUTHER KING BLVD.



CENTER FOR ADVOCATES



EQUITA

KILLINGSWORTH ST.

EMERSON ST.

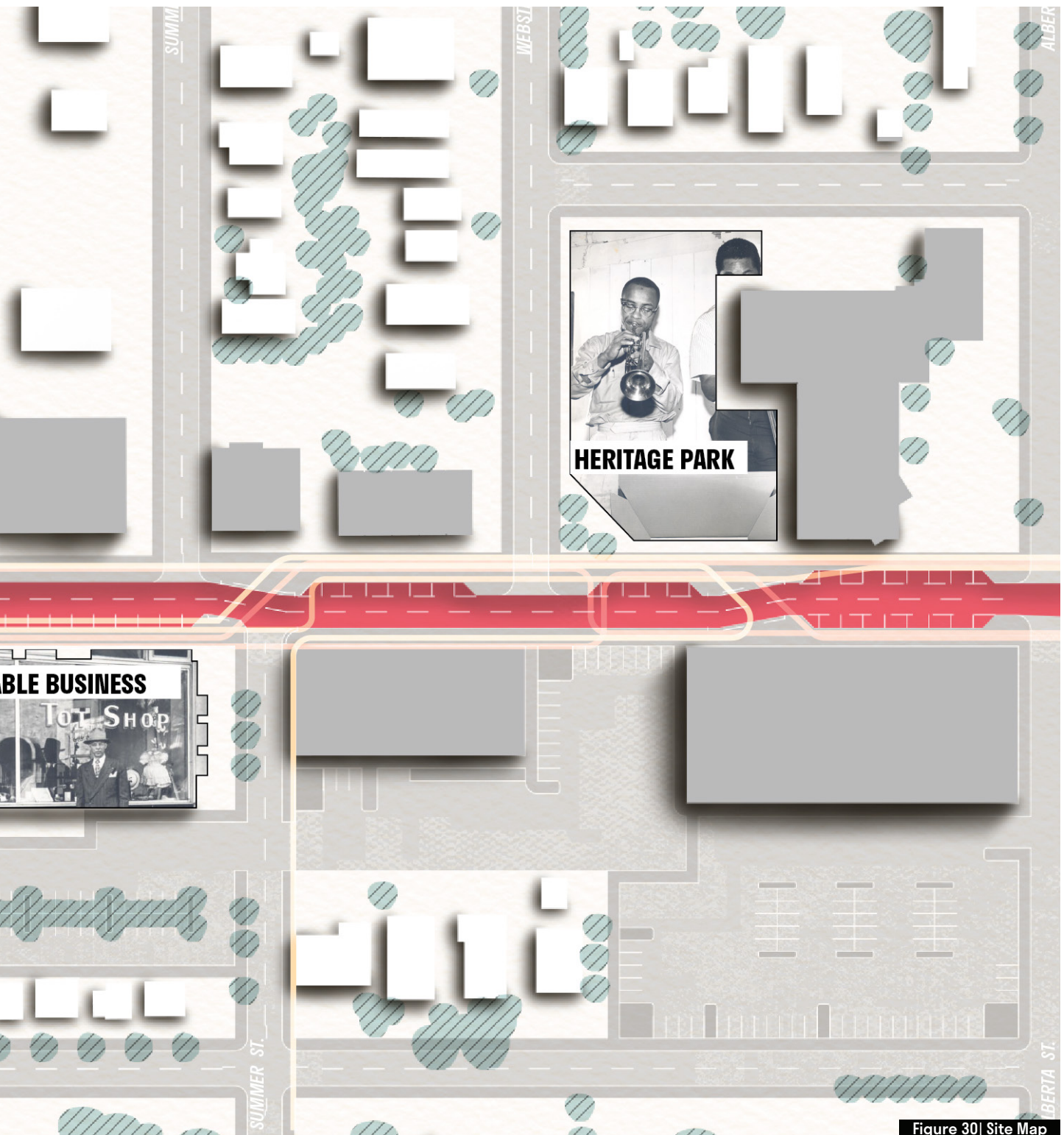


Figure 30 | Site Map

PROPOSED ZONING & RE-ENVISIONING THE STREET-SCAPE

With the inclusion of mid-rise zoning it allows for densification along the street without contributing to displacement. It does this by using existing buildings and open land via surface lots and the setting for further development. With that, new parks would be put in place to reinforce the idea of green spaces as a place for people to gather. Also, by allowing for minimal up-zoning we can prevent the issue of a large influx of new residents inflating rental prices.

In addition to the rezoning measures, Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd will now be a two lane road to minimize traffic loads and promote more

social interaction. At given moments the road gives way to the community to allow people to congregate and move freely between both sides of the street, similar to Donald Appleyard's study. By allowing the road to be influenced by the urban fabric it runs along, it provides more natural transitions from the sidewalk to the street. These moments are highlighted by parklets, scrambles and informal crossings. The parklet's explicit function is to be adaptable. As stated previously, urban and cultural context changes over time, and it is important to create space that can be adapted to changing conditions. At this moment, MLK Jr. Blvd. is a car dominated street and parking is the main focal point of the street that tends

to bleed into public space. By creating an adaptable space, parking can change over time to community space that supports local business whether that be a small food truck or the extension of an existing business. It also allows people space to gather for informal conversations that will jump start communication between the neighborhoods again. The scramble intersection transfers the ownership of the street from the car to the pedestrian by allowing community members to move freely from one side of the street to another. By doing this it increases local interaction between adjoining neighborhoods and strengthens community connections. Informal crossings are an adaptation

Jason Kotte, *Social Interactions on Three Streets*, 2019, Illustration, 1000 x 594, <https://kottke.org/19/01/creating-livable-city-streets>

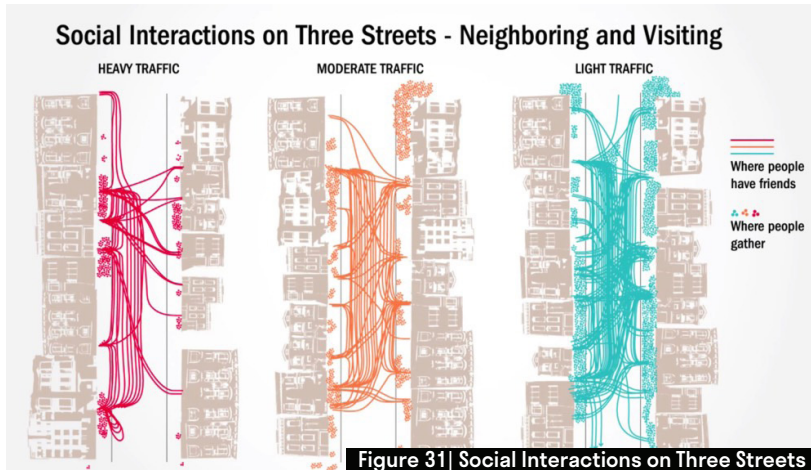


Figure 31 | Social Interactions on Three Streets

Jason Kotte, *Home Territory on Three Streets*, 2019, Illustration, 1000 x 594, <https://kottke.org/19/01/creating-livable-city-streets>

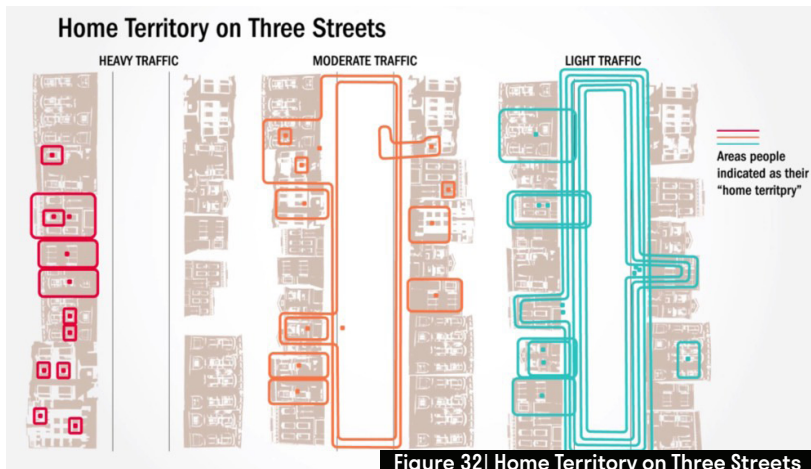
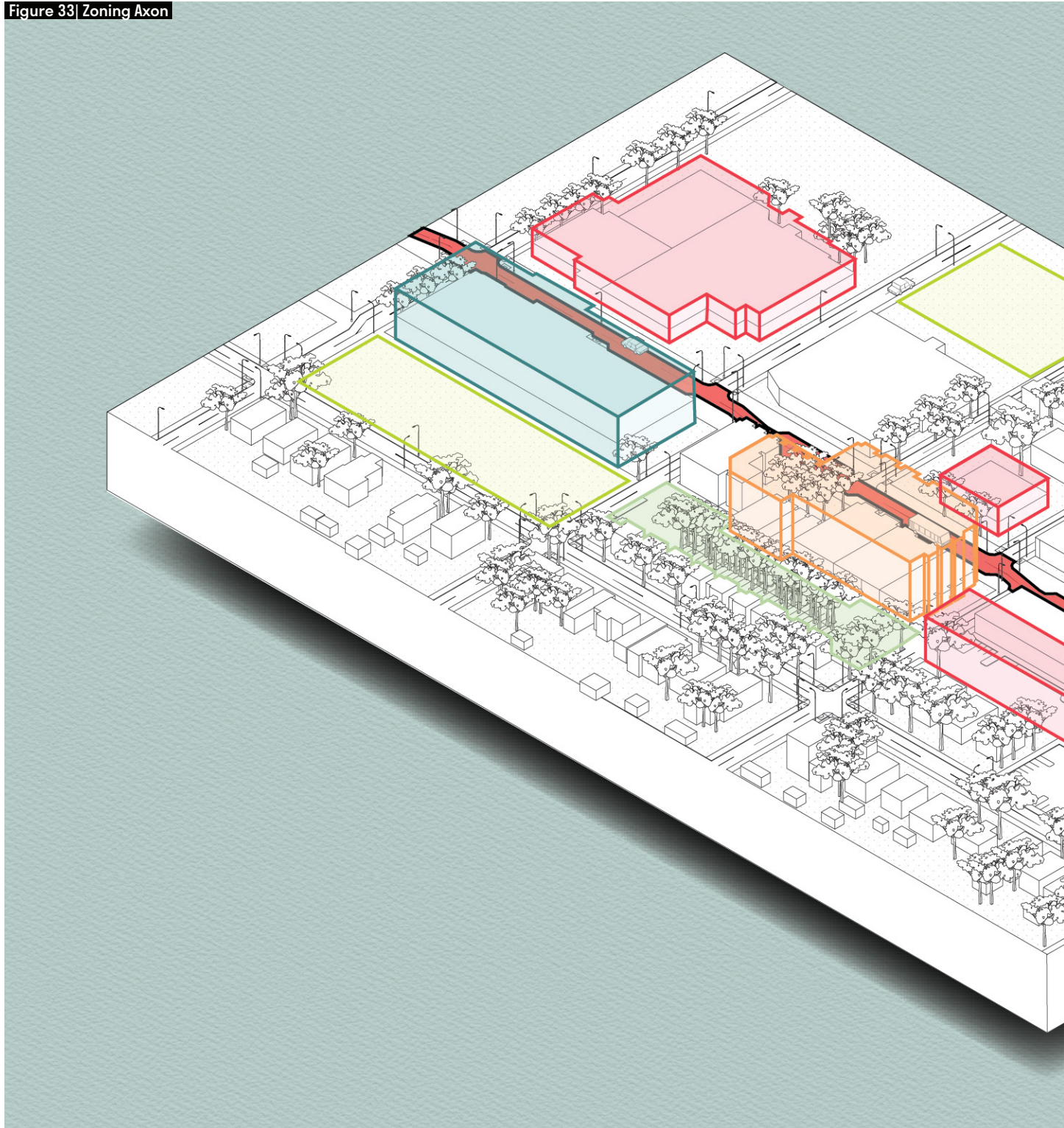
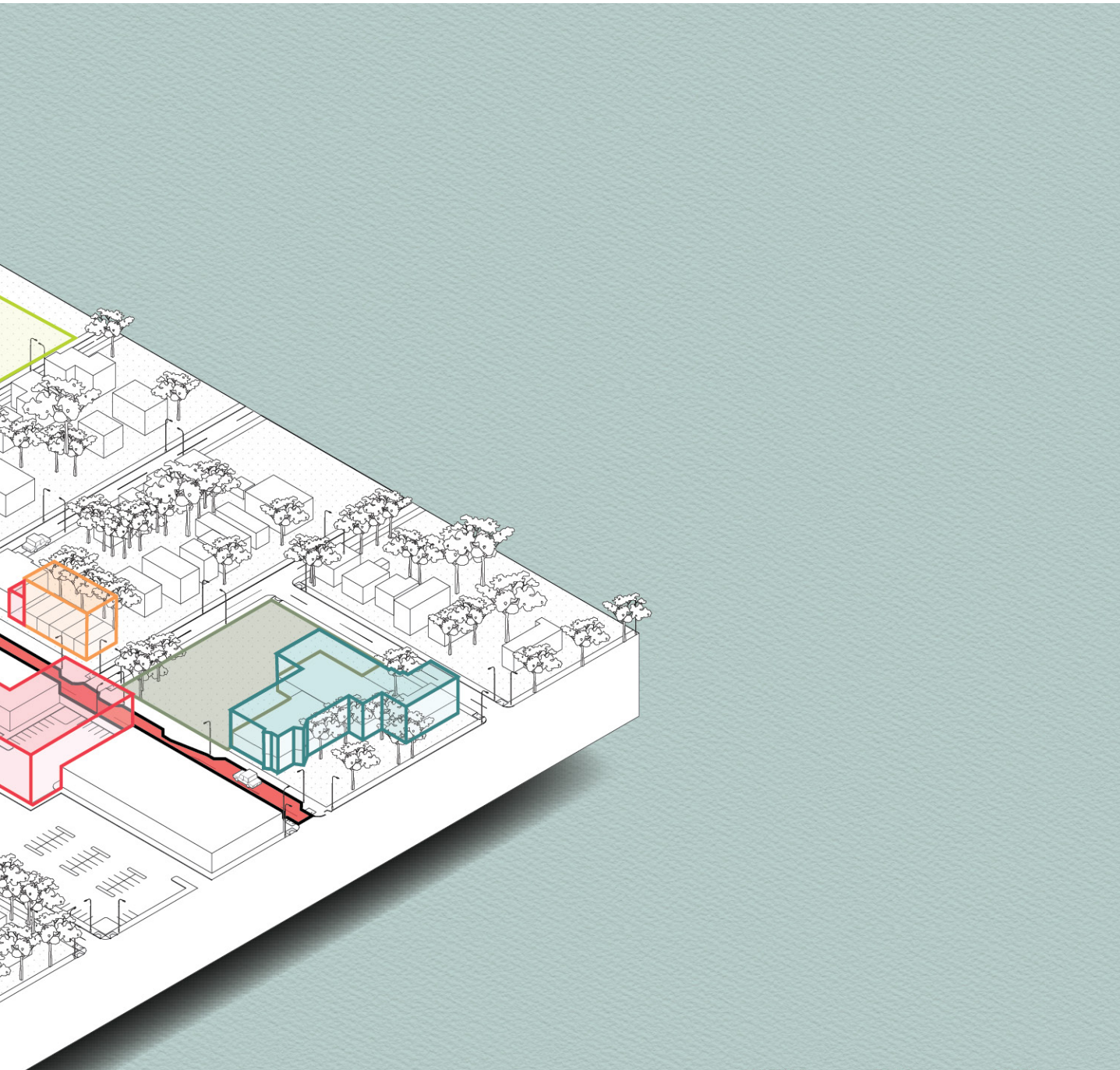


Figure 32 | Home Territory on Three Streets

of the already existing crosswalks. They provide additional protection for pedestrians by pushing out towards the street and making cars aware of crossing patterns. The depth of the sidewalk also gives way for public life amenities such as benches, street trees (sustainable infrastructure) or informal activities such as buskers.

Figure 33 | Zoning Axon





COMMUNITY



BUSINESS



HOUSING



CULTURE
PARK



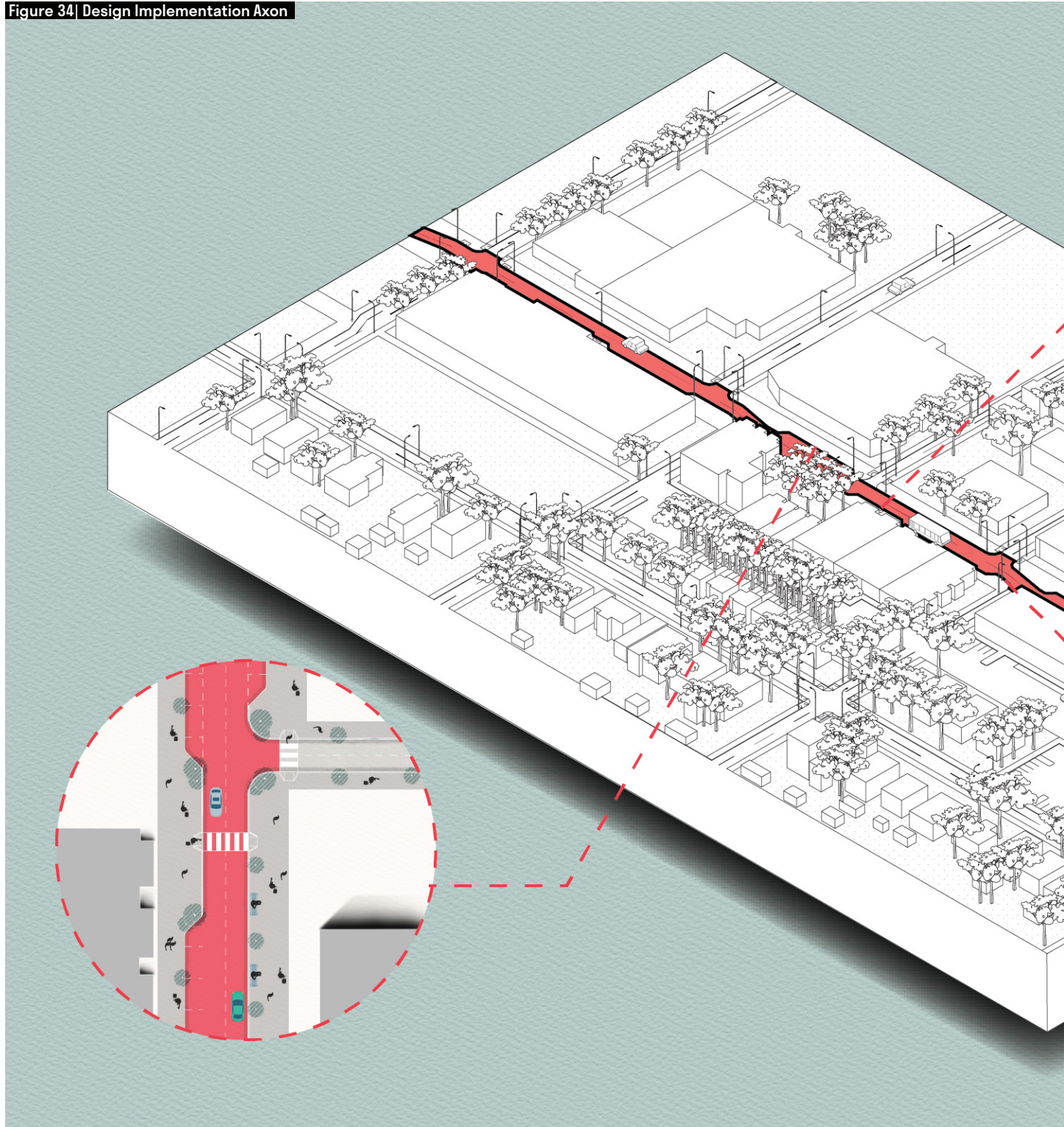
FOOD
SECURITY

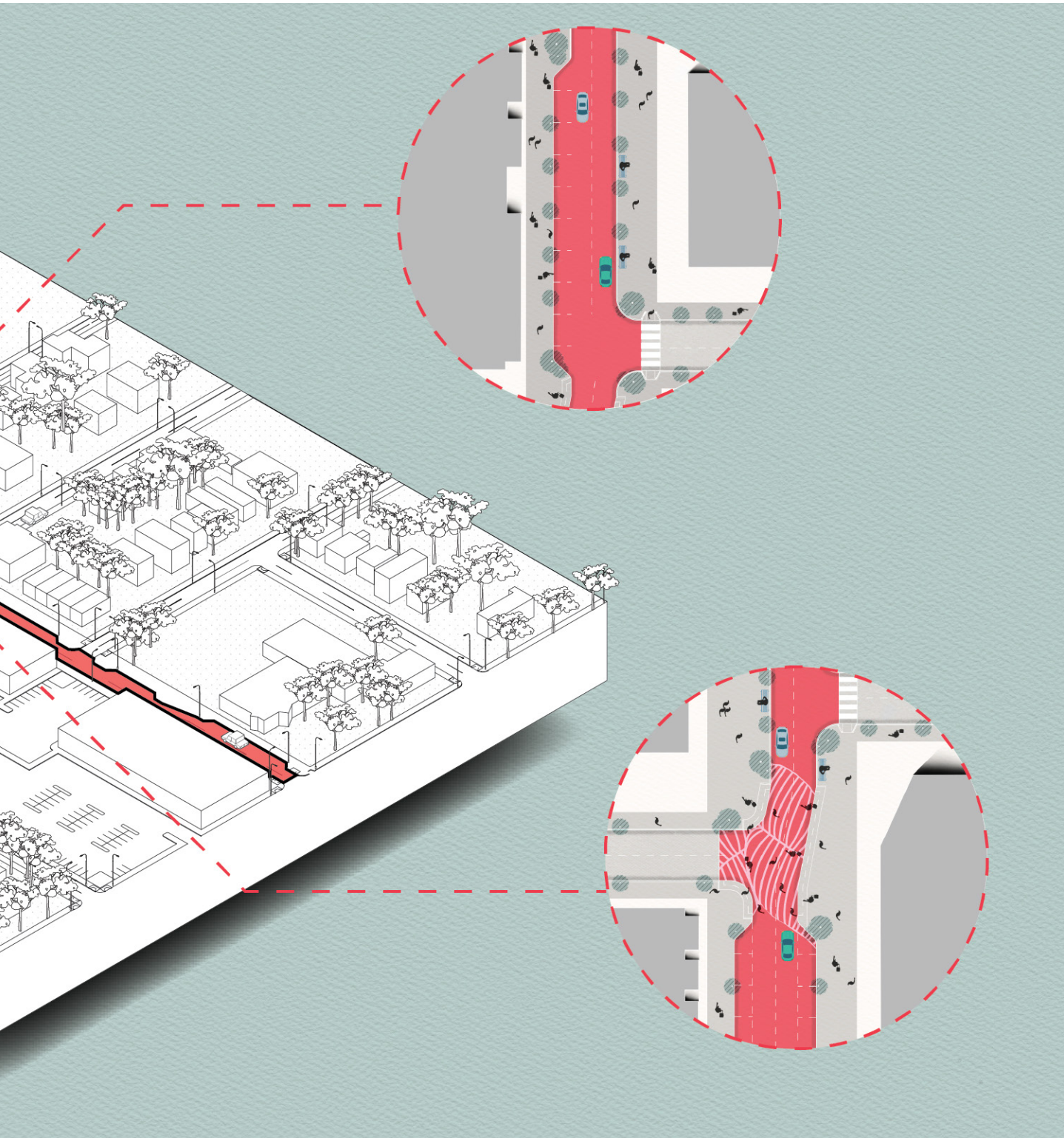


GREEN
BUFFER



Figure 34 | Design Implementation Axon





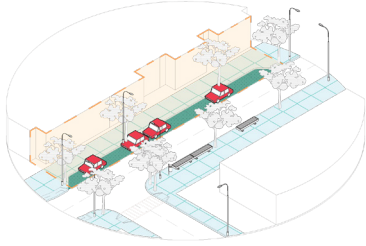


Figure 35 | Parklet Diagram - Cars

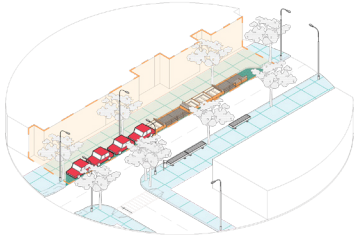


Figure 36 | Parklet Diagram - Cars/Park

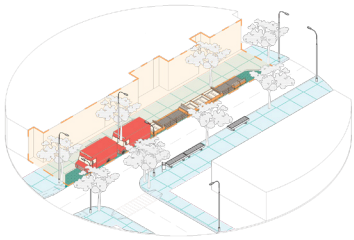


Figure 37 | Parklet Diagram - Truck/Park

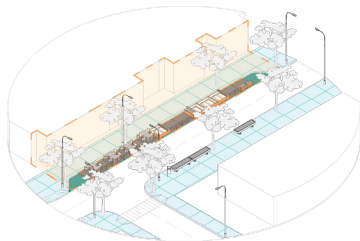


Figure 38 | Parklet Diagram - Park

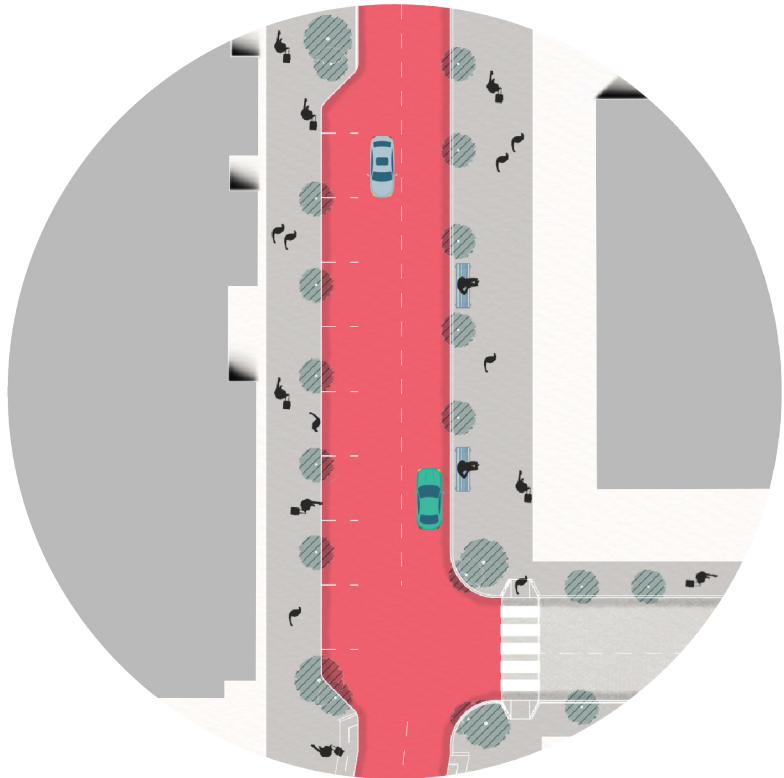


Figure 39 | Parklet Plan

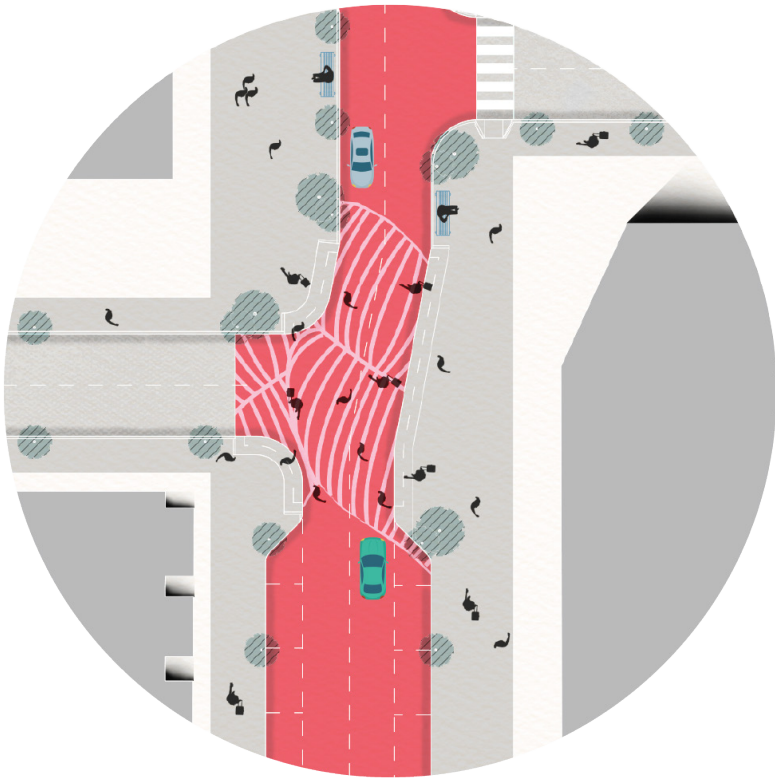


Figure 40 | Scramble Plan

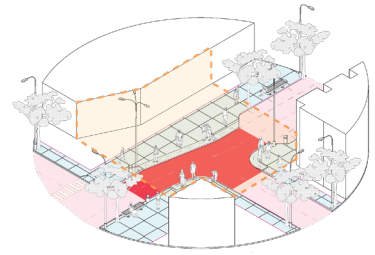


Figure 41 | Scramble Diagram - Wait

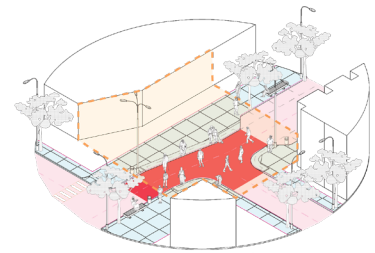


Figure 42 | Scramble Diagram - Walk

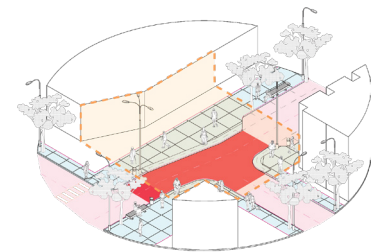


Figure 43 | Scramble Diagram - Go

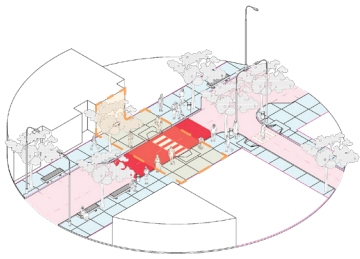


Figure 44| Push Out Diagram - Wait

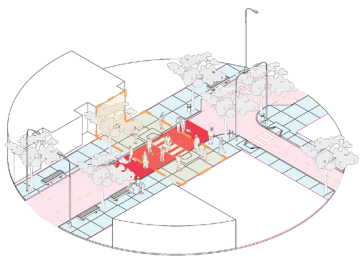


Figure 45| Push Out Diagram - Walk

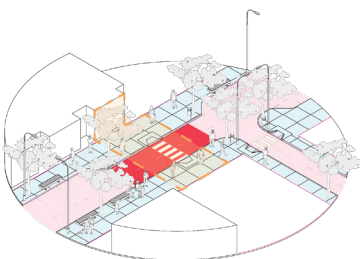


Figure 46| Push Out Diagram - Go

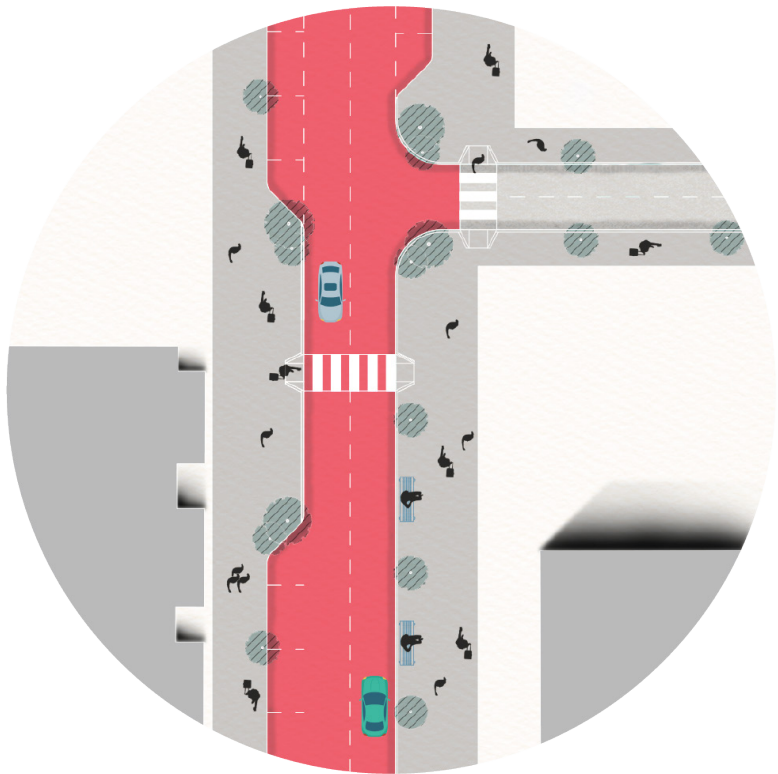


Figure 47| Push Out Plan

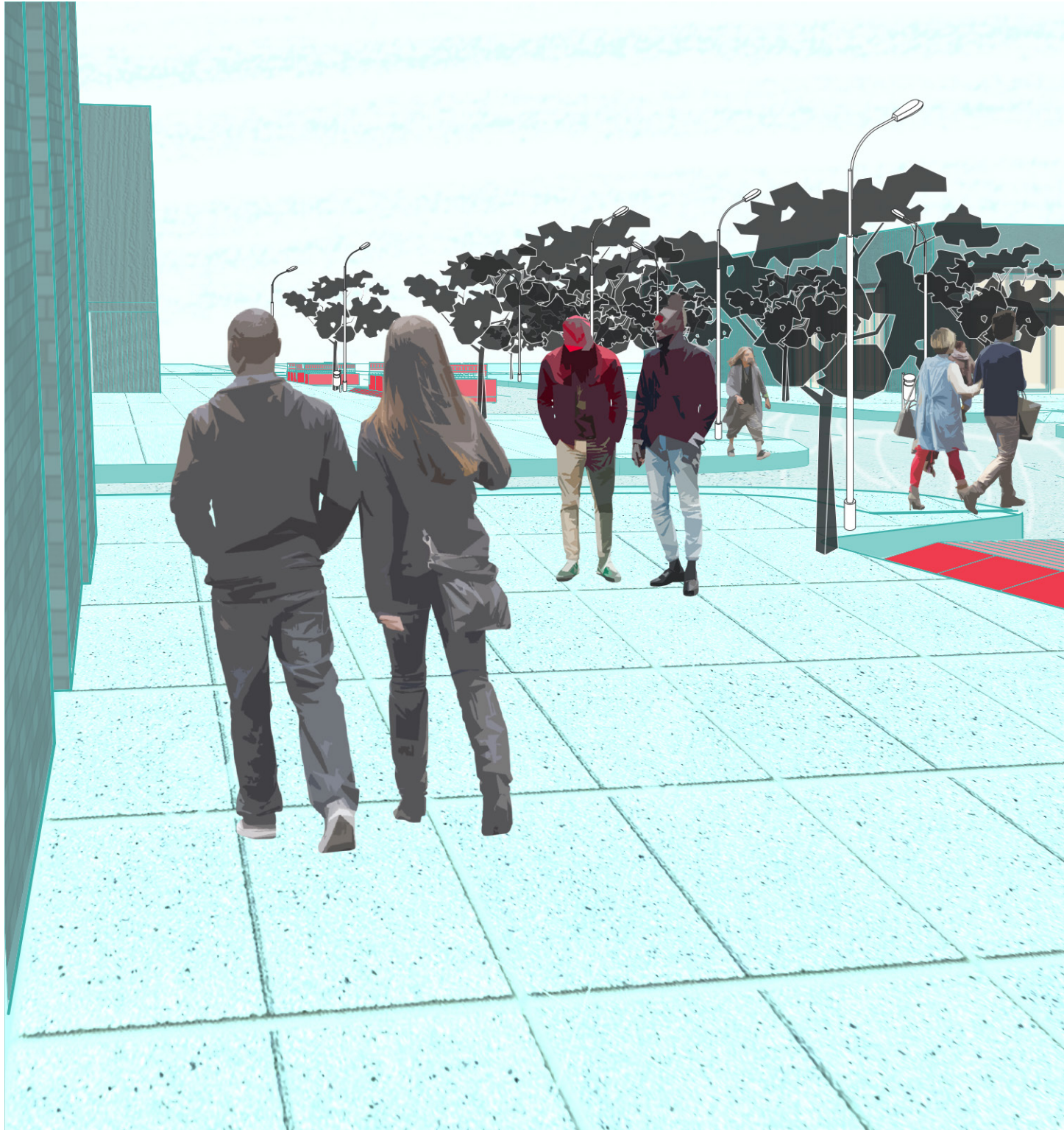
FINAL THOUGHTS

The goal of this thesis is to address the connections between racial tensions and the gentrification of the Albina district, a predominantly Black neighborhood in Portland, Oregon, and the inaccessible housing stock and lack of social infrastructure within the city, leading to the displacement of Black residents. By looking at the context of an area from all angles including history, future planning efforts, and policy, planners and designers alike will be able to have a deeper understanding of the communities they serve. This study has highlighted the various ways in which urban renewal has negatively impacted these

communities and others like it. It is clear that action needs to be taken both by the community and city planners to ensure security of all residents. Both sides will need to work together to ensure that.

This is a dynamic project in the sense that in accordance with the main street model, visioning and design for this area must be influenced by the community. It is not for any person to say, “this is how you should conduct your everyday routines and functions given their urbanistic opinion” . This is an evolving document that can lead to eventual success of this community that advocates for equity and the return of the street back to Albina’s residents as an identifiable place to

call home. Looking forward this proposal should be presented to Albina residents in order to develop an all-encompassing vision for the people. This thesis is the start of a conversation for professionals to recognize the indisputable need to and take action within the built environment—action to promote equity, action to end displacement, and action to make neighborhoods a home for all.



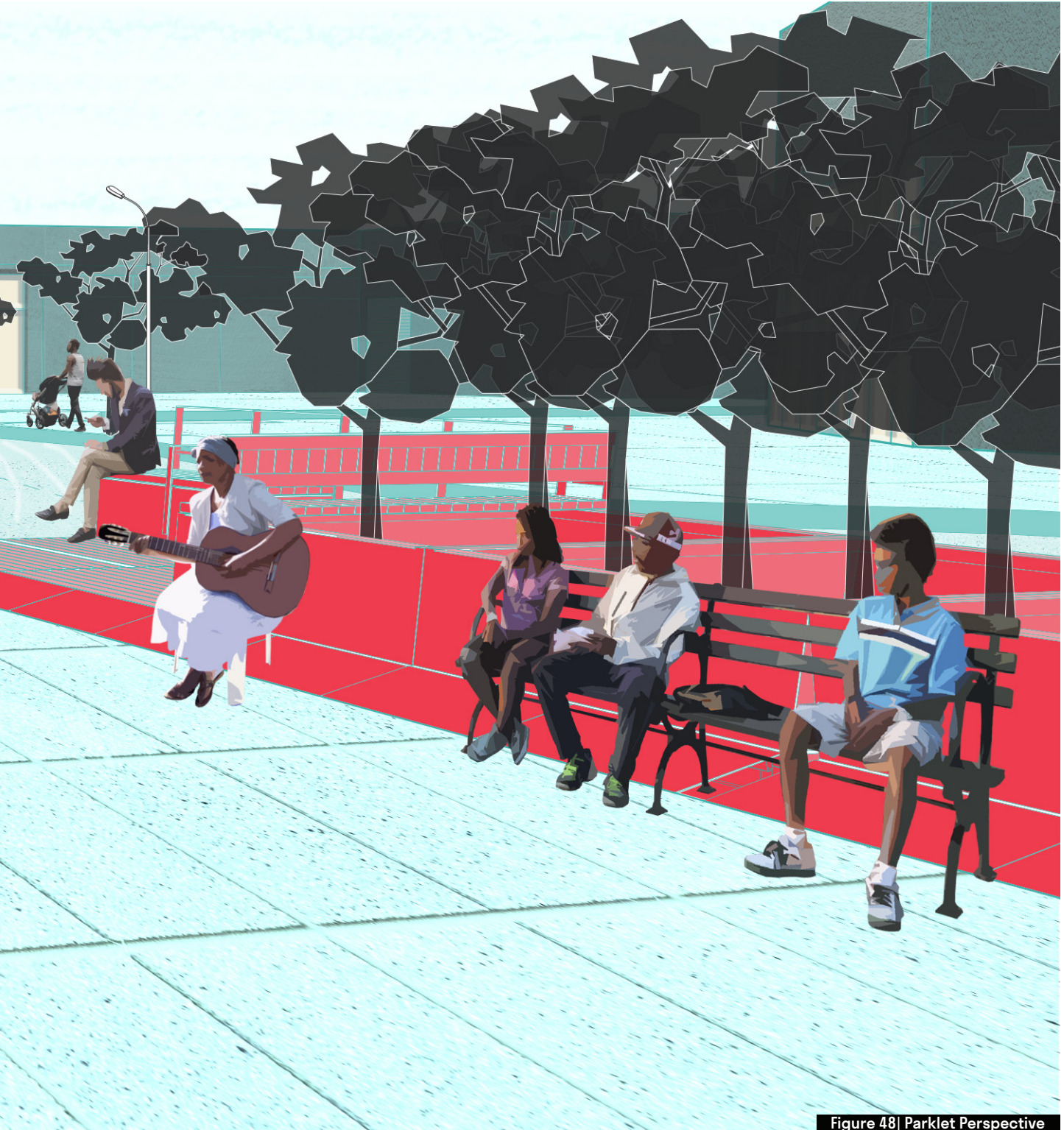


Figure 48 | Parklet Perspective



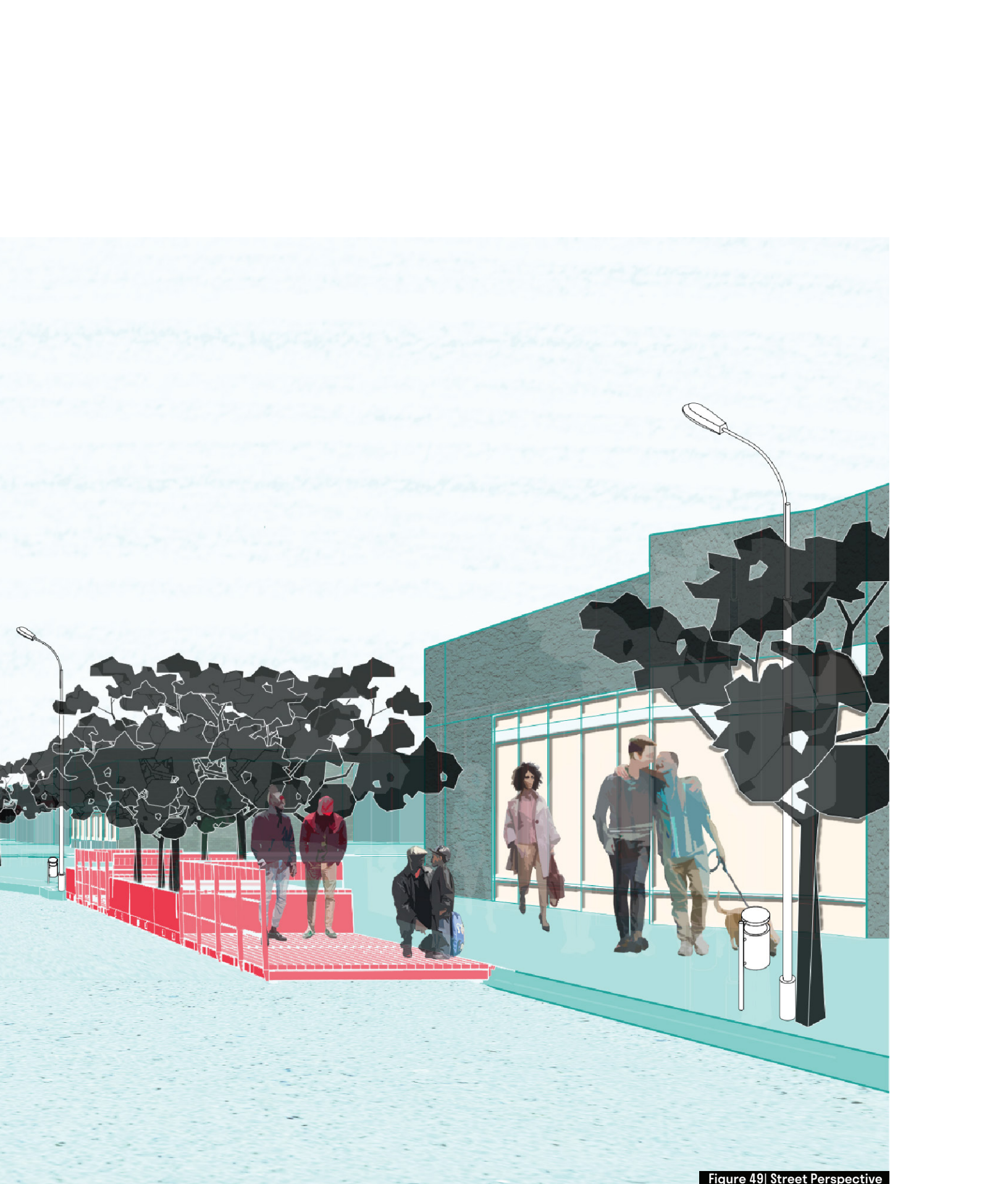


Figure 49 | Street Perspective



MAIN STREET, LOOKING SOUTHEAST

Oregon Historical Society, *Main Street*,
Photograph, Oregon Encyclopedia, Portland,
[https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/
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Figure 50 | Main Street

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FIGURES

Fig..1 H.A.P Protest | Huge Ackroyd, *NAACP Picketing City Hall*, 1963, Photograph, 1280 x 1621, The Ore. Portland, https://www.oregonlive.com/history/2018/01/in_oregons_civil_rights_years.html

Fig..2 Williams Ave | Oregon Historical Society. *The Vibrant Albina Neighborhood*. 1962, Photograph, 400x261, Black Past, <https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/albina-portland-1870/>

Fig..3 Aerial of Albina | City of Portland Archives, Painting Mrs. Johnson's home, 1962, Photograph, 1920 x 1909, Multnomah County Library, Portland, <https://gallery.multcolib.org/image/albina-neighborhood-improvement-project>

Fig..4 People of the Neighborhood | City of Portland Archives, *The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project*, 1961, Photograph, 2400 x 1906, Vintage Portland, Portland, <https://vintageportland.wordpress.com/2018/06/15/albi>

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Fig..6 Man Painting a House | City of Portland Archives, Painting Mrs. Johnson's home, 1962, Photograph, 1920 x 1909, Multnomah County Library, Portland, <https://gallery.multcolib.org/image/albina-neighborhood-improvement-project>

Fig..7 Company Town of Albina | Cafe Unknown, *The Oregon Railway & Navigation Company's shops at Albina*, 1880s, Drawing, 1032 x 607, Cafe Unknown, <http://www.cafeunknown.com/2006/11/forgotten-portland-one-of-my-favorite.html>

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Fig..10 Vanport Flood 1948 | Oregon Historical Society, *Vanport Flood of 1948*, 1948, Photograph, 940 x 658, Oregon Public Broadcasting, Portland, <https://www.opb.org/news/article/vanport-mosaic-festival-flood/>

Fig..11 Effects of the Vanport Flood | Oregon Historical Society, *Residents of Vanport Evacuate From Their Flooded Homes*, 1948, Photograph, 500 x 322, Portland Observer, Portland, <http://portlandobserver.com/news/2019/may/22/vanport-mosaic-honors-confronts-past/>

Fig..12 White Flight | Cmerique Archive/Getty Images, *House Hunters*, 1965, Photograph, 3582 x 2811, Getty Images, <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/full-length-image-of-a-family-of-four-holding-hands-while-news-photo/3205122?adppopup=true>

Fig..13 Aerial of Albina Rising | Albina Rising, *Top View of Project*, <https://www.albinavisioninc.com/>

Fig..14 Aerial of Albina | Google Earth, *Top View of Albina District*, 2019

Fig..15 March for Jobs & Freedom | The Oregonian, *The March for Jobs and Freedom*, 1963, Photograph, 450 x 358, The Oregonian, Portland, https://www.oregonlive.com/entertainment/erry-2018/06/dacbb631be373/photos_of_north_williams_ave_t.html

Fig..16 Black-Owned Businesses | Sourced by author

Fig..17 Tenant-Based Housing | Sourced by author

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Fig..19 Zoning Map | Sourced by author

Fig..20 Services Map | Sourced by author

Fig..21 Transfer Development Rights | Zaheer Allam & David Sydney Jones, *Transfer Development Rights*, 2019, Illustration, 3092 x 2672, MDIP, Australia, <https://www.mdpi.com/2413-8851/3/1/38/htm>

Fig..22 Main Street Logo | Main Street America, *Main Street America Logo*, Illustration, 804 x 496, Main Street America, Chicago, <https://www.mainstreet.org/home>

Fig..23 School Board Protest | Oregon Historical Society, *African American Community Protests School Board*, 1982, Photograph, 864 x 612, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, <https://oregonhistoryproject.org/articles/historical-records/african-american-community-protests-school-board/#.XvV9CedIDb0>

Fig..24 Site Area Map | Sourced by author

Fig..25 Zoomed in Aerial | Sourced by author

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Fig..27 Zoning Map | Sourced by author

Fig..28 Zoning Map of Portland | Sourced by author

Fig..29 Parti Diagram | Sourced by author

Fig..30 Site Map | Sourced by author

Fig..31 Social Interactions on Three Streets | Jason Kotte, *Social Interactions on Three Streets*, 2019, Illustration, 1000 x 594, <https://kottke.org/19/01/creating-livable-city-streets>

Fig..32 Home Territory on Three Streets | Jason Kotte, *Home Territory on Three Streets*, 2019, Illustration, 1000 x 594, <https://kottke.org/19/01/creating-livable-city-streets>

Fig..33 Zoning Axon | Sourced by author

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Fig..35 Parklet Diagram - Cars | Sourced by author

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Fig..46 Push Out Diagram - Go | Sourced by author

Fig..47 Push Out Plan | Sourced by author

Fig..48 Parklet Perspective | Sourced by author

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Fig..50 Main Street | Oregon Historical Society, *Main Street*, Photograph, Oregon Encyclopedia, Portland, <https://oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/union/#.XvWyaedIBEY>

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