

# PDC

## PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

**DATE:** October 13, 2010  
**TO:** Board of Commissioners  
**FROM:** Bruce A. Warner, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Report Number 10-93  
NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue Green Street Pilot Project Briefing

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

None – information only.

#### SUMMARY

This briefing provides an update on the NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue Green Street Pilot Project (the Project). The Project is a public-private partnership in the Gateway Regional Center Urban Renewal Area (URA) intended to attract redevelopment by improving street infrastructure and to promote sustainability through the advantages of green streets, as outlined in the Gateway Green Streets Master Plan. The briefing will highlight the connections among the Gateway Master Street Plan, Central Gateway Redevelopment Strategy, and Green Streets Master Plan to promote sustainable development and provide necessary connectivity for growth in the central Gateway area. The briefing also highlights collaboration between property owners and City agencies to achieve mutual goals.

### BACKGROUND

The presence of “super blocks” (blocks much larger than traditional city blocks) and lack of connecting streets in the Gateway Regional Center URA is a deterrent to effective redevelopment. This pilot project implements strategies outlined in several plans developed throughout the years to integrate and create a true street grid with shorter blocks and connecting streets.

Previous actions taken by the Portland Development Commission (PDC) Board of Commissioners (Board) in relation to the Project include approval of the Gateway Master Street Plan in 2004, followed by an amendment to this plan in 2009. The Central Gateway Redevelopment Strategy adopted in 2007 identified strategies to implement the Master Street Plan. No subsequent action will be required from the Board.

The Project is important to the URA because it represents the initiation of street connections in the Central Gateway area and will serve as a catalyst to development by installing necessary infrastructure in a sub-standard street. The Project also provides a model of achieving street improvements through public-private partnerships using Local Improvement Districts (LIDs) to obtain necessary rights-of-way and project funding. In addition, the Project promotes PDC’s sustainability goals by being the first green street in the Gateway URA. Finally, the Project will

provide residents with a safer street and improved access to recreation through connections with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) multi-use path nearby.

NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue was selected for improvements because it leverages a planned multi-family private development that would implement the Master Street Plan by installing a street connection between NE 97<sup>th</sup> and NE 99<sup>th</sup>. As will be described at the briefing, given the developer's intention to build green and to underground utilities, PDC staff included the Project in the Utility Underground Study, conducted by Kittelson & Associates for the Foster-Woodstock Streetscape Improvement Project, to determine feasibility and cost analysis (see Attachment B for the Draft Executive Summary). The full Draft Study is attached to the Report for the Foster-Woodstock Streetscape Improvement Project.

The LID consists of eight parcels (5 different property owners). There is a large public right-of-way for the I-205 multi-use path owned by ODOT on the west side of the street. PDC staff applied to the Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) and was awarded a *1 Percent for Green* grant and a *Watershed Investment Fund* grant totaling \$417,000. Of the \$1.17 million estimated Project cost, the BES grant portion is 36 percent, PDC's portion is 27 percent, and the LID's portion is 37 percent.

Early in 2010, PDC staff and the Portland Bureau of Transportation LID Administrator met with property owners to gauge interest in forming an LID. Responses were favorable. Property owners recognized the value of a public-private partnership, which would provide a 60 percent cost reduction should property owners be required to fund the Project alone. Council formally approved the LID formation on May 26, 2010.

Because this Project requires a complete tear-out of the street, and the intentions of the adjacent development is to build green, staff added it to an undergrounding study conducted by Kittelson and Associates. The study will be presented in conjunction with the Project briefing.

### **Public Benefit**

The current condition of the street is poor. It has no sidewalks, numerous potholes, poor street grade, no designated parking, and inadequate stormwater management. There is improvised parking next to the I-205 multi-use path that has become a haven for vehicle vandalism and car prowls, creating a physical and psychological hazard for residents, as well as staff working at the nearby Glisan Care Center.

Street improvements will install sidewalks, street trees, and bioswales, and will re-grade and pave the street, creating an organized and managed street that will promote pedestrian safety, manage stormwater on-site, improve water quality, improve property values, and promote redevelopment.

### **Financial Impact/Feasibility**

The Project is estimated to cost approximately \$1,168,276. PDC funds are included in the FY 2010-11 Budget and forecast. The cost breakdown is as follows:

BES grant funds:	\$ 417,000	36%
PDC funds:	\$ 317,331	27%
LID funds:	<u>\$ 433,945</u>	<u>37%</u>
	\$1,168,276	100%

### **Public Participation and Feedback**

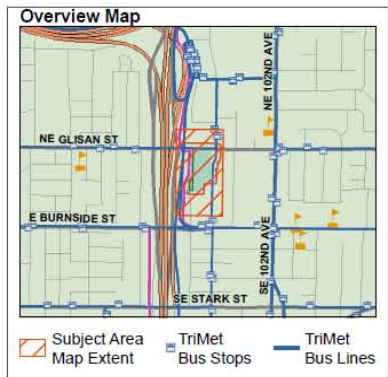
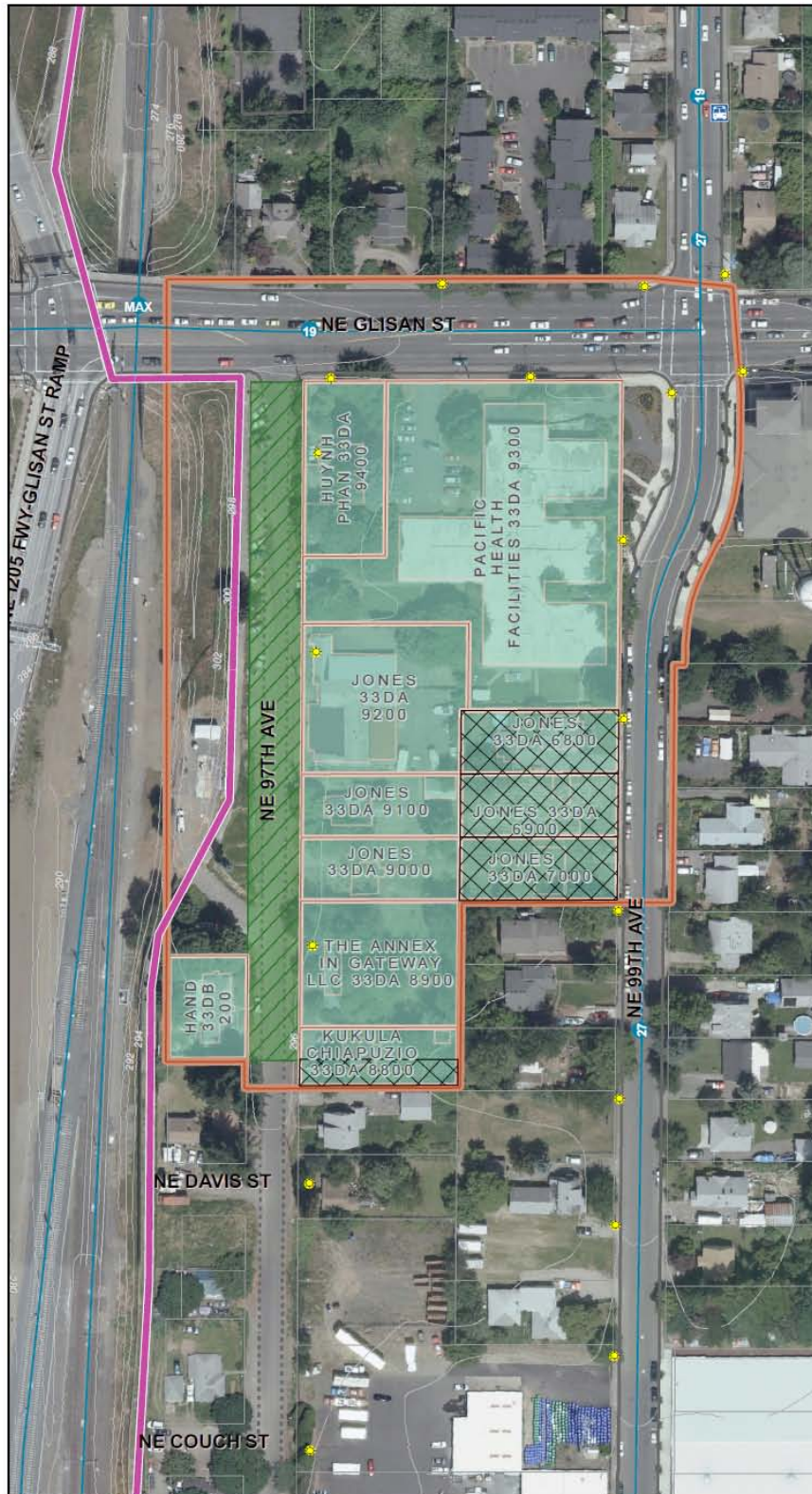
The Gateway Regional Urban Renewal Advisory Committee and the majority of the property owners forming the LID support the pilot project. At the first hearing of the LID petition on April 28, 2010, nearly ten people - a mix of property owners and people who work at the adjacent Gateway Glisan Center - testified before City Council in strong support of the LID petition, and Council unanimously supported the LID formation. Glisan Care Center staff envision the new improved street will provide a safer and more social environment for their residents – allowing residents to walk safely down the street and access the multi-use path.

To date, no opposition has been received.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

- A. Project area map
- B. Kittelson & Associates, Inc. *Utility Underground Study – Revised Draft*, Executive Summary, dated October 5, 2010

# NE 97th Avenue Green Street LID Map

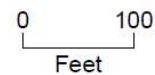


### Subject Area

- Local Improvement District Boundary
- Area of Improvement
- Taxlots in LID
- Taxlot or Portion of Taxlot Exempt

### Existing Conditions

- Building Footprints
- Existing Off-Street Path
- 2 ft Contours
- Existing Curbs
- Existing Edge of Pavement
- Street Lights
- TriMet Bus Stops
- TriMet Bus Lines



Plot Date: 2/18/2010



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## TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

### Utility Underground Study – **REVISED DRAFT**

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**Date:** October 5, 2010 Project #: 11110

**To:** Sue Lewis, Portland Development Commission

**From:** Charles Radosta, P.E.  
Jerry Baarspul, P.E., Baarspul Consulting, Inc.

**cc:** Rich Newlands, City of Portland  
Dan Layden, City of Portland

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The decision to underground overhead utilities ultimately comes down to who pays for the conversion and the willingness to take on these expenses. Oregon Administrative Rules regulate payment for the conversion when work is done within an undergrounding district. The creation of an undergrounding district provides the authority to require adjacent property owners to connect to the new underground system, regardless of their expense to upgrade their private property's electrical system to comply with current regulations. The creation of a new undergrounding district is a political process that involves City Council approval and amendments to City Codes.

When undergrounding is done without an undergrounding district, then the work is commonly paid for by the local jurisdiction if the agency can justify the expense and is willing to pay for the undergrounding plus the required improvements on private properties (assuming the private property owners agree to have this work done on their property). An exception to this is when there is 100% cooperation from the adjacent property owners to pay for their own upgrades, in which the local jurisdiction only needs to pay for the undergrounding work within the right-of-way. Typically, the local jurisdiction would pay for the undergrounding infrastructure including all trenching, conduits, vaults, etc. while the local utility would pay for pulling the wires, installing the appurtenances, and providing connection points within the right-of-way for the adjacent property owners.

The primary benefits to undergrounding the utilities are aesthetics and safety. This report discusses overarching issues associated with converting overhead utilities to underground utilities and also examines three proposed projects in greater detail for consideration of

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undergrounding their existing overhead utilities. All three projects are outside of any pre-existing undergrounding districts in the City of Portland.

Project estimates to underground the utilities per the conceptual-level designs of the projects and the information provided by the various utility companies range from \$500 to \$850 per foot, with the variability in pricing due to the complexity of the project and the ability to install the underground facilities in conjunction with roadway improvements.

On NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue, it appears that a majority of the adjacent property owners agree with the proposed overhead to underground conversion; however, NE 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue would be a localized undergrounding roadway section without defined long-term plans to expand undergrounding beyond this street segment.

SE Ramona Street has multiple adjacent property owners that have not been contacted specifically about this effort; their level of cooperation for converting from overhead to underground service connections is unknown at this point. Many of these houses are early 1900s vintage and the conversion costs to upgrade these individual properties could be expensive. On the other hand, SE Ramona Street is within an area that could someday become an undergrounding district.

If the Lents Town Center area were converted from overhead to underground utilities, creating an undergrounding district is the likely outcome which requires local jurisdiction approval and may take a few years to fully enact. Undergrounding in Lents will be more expensive than at the other two locations because the work would be done without other roadway improvements and will impact recently improved sections within the Lents district. While it is possible to place all underground utilities behind curbs, the size of the underground vaults and potential constraints to long-term growth of street trees may preclude this from being the desired option in Lents as well as in other areas. Along with the \$850 per lineal foot cost for the conversion, there is an additional \$575 to \$950 per lineal foot cost to convert the 115kV high voltage lines passing through this area making full undergrounding within this district feasible but likely not practical due to the excessive costs.