

Date: October 7, 2019

To: Moey Newbold and BCDI Neighborhood Identity Team

From: Monique G. López and Hector Benavides

Subject: Bend Central District Neighborhood Identity

BACKGROUND

The Bend Central District (BCD) Initiative is a project of Central Oregon LandWatch to build broad and effective support for policies and programs that promote a Bend Central District neighborhood that is inclusive, dense, mixed-use, and well-served by safe and environmentally friendly mobility options. Beginning in June 2019, the BCD Visionary Board began working with Pueblo Planning to conduct primary research and outreach to learn about the neighborhood identity. Additionally, informational interviews were conducted with eleven individuals who are connected to the BCD and represent a diversity of backgrounds, interests, and perspectives. Priority populations for research where residents and business owners of the BCD and adjacent neighborhoods (Orchard & Larkspur Neighborhood), with an emphasis on marginalized populations who would not normally be engaged in the planning process.

Using the information gathered during the research phase, Pueblo Planning worked with Visionary Board members to gain a better understanding of the neighborhood in order to guide the prioritization and design of placemaking projects and future development. This memo will focus on neighborhood identity considerations for development and provide a neighborhood identity statement that creatively describes the Bend Central District.

Process & Purpose

Pueblo Planning worked with the BCD Visionary Board's Neighborhood Identity Team to locate key outreach locations to reach populations who live, work, and pass through the BCD. Additionally, Pueblo Planning worked with the Neighborhood Identity Team to determine the specific questions that would be asked of the community members and co-design the portable engagement tool. The purpose of the pop-up engagement was to:

- identify and engage various populations in the BCD;
- provide an opportunity for community members to tell their individual stories of their connection to the BCD; and
- transform these individual stories into a narrative of place to promote community cohesion and resilience.

A total of ten target populations and corresponding locations were identified and of that list, seven populations were engaged in the process.



POP-UP ENGAGEMENT POPULATIONS AND LOCATIONS

	Target Population	Location
~	Pedestrians	Franklin Underpass
~	Latinx	Colima Market
×	Renters	Albertsons
×	HS Students	Bend High School
~	Families/Homeowners	Orchard Park
~	Elderly	Council on Aging
~	Light Industrial Workers	7–11
~	College Students/Transit Riders	Hawthorne Station
•	Transient Residents	Bottle Drop
×	Short-term Residents	BCD motels

[✓] Indicates communities engaged.

NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY STATEMENT

The Neighborhood Identity statement is a reflection of the words, symbols, stories, and values shared by community residents who live, work, and/or play in the BCD and surrounding neighborhoods. The Neighborhood Identity Statement paints a picture of what people experience and their connection to the BCD. The following Neighborhood Identity Statement format is inspired by the poem "Where I am From" by George Ella Lyon, an American author and poet from Kentucky. "Where I am From" is a poem template that has been used by many to describe where they are from, what makes it unique, and develop a visual representation, through descriptive language, for the identity of place and what shapes it.

[✗] Indicates communities identified, but not specifically targeted for engagement at the specified locations. However, some of these populations were present at the engagement activities completed.



Where I'm From

I am from a place of nostalgia, comfort, joy, and passion, from people who live in the analog openly and authentically.

I am from dreamers, makers, entrepreneurs, risk-takers, hard workers using their hands and imagination, from where everyone has a mountain view and ponderosa pines stand tall.

I am from a central crossroads where all walks of life meet, from an inclusive welcoming space where people sleep under bridges, in cars, and all types of sheltered spaces.

I am from busy streets filled with the smell of cars in traffic, tunnels, bridges, and crosswalks few and far between, from people waiting for busses and most passing through and not stopping.

I am from train horns, bottles clinking, the laughter of teenagers on their lunch break, and music on summer nights. I am from people on bikes and foot exploring, from kombucha, spirits, and a river just out of reach.

Soy del sonido del Español y del sabor de pan dulce, de los dulces picantes llenos de recuerdos del hogar que conectan a la próxima generación con un lugar nunca visto.

(I am from the sound of Spanish and the taste of pan dulce, from sweet and spicy candy filled with memories of home connecting the next generation to a place never seen.)

I'm from metal, wood, industrial buildings that remain constant in an ever-changing city, from magical blue and gold time-traveling family movie nights.

I am from strip malls that are home to small business owners who know your name and story, from large parking lots ready to transform and tons of potential.

I am from elders who built the foundation of place and newer generations growing roots, from neighbors old and new who roll up their sleeves to make this place home.

I am from ceded lands with traditions connected to seasonal movement and sacred life-sustaining game, roots, and berries, from walking among you because we are still here. I am from the Bend Central District.



GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Pop-up engagement and community interviews shaped our description of the BCD's and neighboring communities' identities. As a result, we were able to develop a cohesive narrative of the BCD and develop a Neighborhood Identity Statement. The Neighborhood Identity Statement helped inform the five common themes that emerged in conversation with residents that should be taken into consideration as guidelines for development moving forward in the BCD. The themes centered around the BCD is a place for both nature and industry, diversity, makers, connecting, and remaining.

A Place for Nature and Industry

Shelly; Lives and Works in BCD- "I think that one of the things that make the BCDI really uniques is sort of an old Bend vibe, as far as it is really industrial and there are some cool buildings that I'd hate to see go away..... I'd like to see maintain a lot of the look and feel of the people that have been in that district for a long time, but kind of build some of the greenery and the lighting and sidewalks and infrastructure around them and have it be more of an eclectic industrial feel rather than to turn it into something it is not."

Sandy; Blockbuster- "People really love being able to recognize places. Year after year people can come back and know we are still here and know they can drive up and down Third Street and see the same businesses and see the same buildings. And I think that's really important....kind of who we are. I hope we don't outgrow that."

Anna; Root Cellar- "You know what is another really special thing about this area that I couldn't believe when I got here? I can walk out my back door and I can see the mountains. I get a mountain view from this humble spot and that just feels very democratic, like the way it should be in Bend, Oregon. We should all have a view."

The look and feel of the BCD is a combination of both the industry and nature. One thing we heard repeatedly is how people fondly described the industrial building stock- the mixture of metal warehouses of different shapes and sizes includes landmarks like Miller Lumber and several Quonset huts. Commercial buildings line Third Street with unique shapes including the Red Oak Square, which has a funky 70s vibe, and the Platypus Pub building, which was originally built as a Nazarene Church in 1950. Part of the love for these buildings comes from a deep sense of nostalgia. However, community residents agree that there are plenty of industrial and commercial buildings that lack character, have an unappealing "big box" vibe, and appear "bland." Additionally, when asked what people love about the neighborhood, trees were always mentioned and the ability to see the snow-capped mountains from surprising spots in the BCD.

Throughout the United States, it is currently a trend to transition industrial sites to commercial and residential areas. However, in order to avoid transitioning the BCD in a generic way that looks like it could be in any other city, it will be important to better understand the nuanced landscape, history, and community's connection to the existing building stock in the BCD. As a next step, doing a community-led building inventory assessment can give developers a better



sense of the different typologies of buildings there are in the district and which typologies are revered and should influence future designs for the district. If possible, keeping and improving upon the existing building stock will be an important aspect of maintaining the character of the neighborhood. When new buildings are designed, incorporating facades that maintain the industrial feel through the use of materials, textures, and colors can help the new buildings integrate cohesively into the neighborhood. In addition to the exterior character, allowing for light industrial use to continue to exist, in the form of affordable mixed-use development, will ensure that the essence of the neighborhood remains. Ultimately it is the people, not the building facades that contribute to the neighborhood vibe. Increasing the urban tree canopy will further enhance some of the strongest elements of the BCD. Additionally, this a great opportunity to retrofit existing buildings and build new buildings in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner and provide space for emerging green technologies.

Developing in a manner that maintains mountain views in public places (such as plazas, small pocket parks, community gardens, etc.) will help to preserve the democratic notion that Bend's "million-dollar" view is available to be accessed by everyone. Additionally, densifying the existing tree canopy can not only add to the existing natural beauty of the District but can also help reduce noise and slow down traffic, two of the biggest issues community members brought up that they would like to see improved. Lastly, Bend is situated in a high desert, so planting of landscapes that are native and thrive in this climate is imperative to maintaining not only the identity of place but ensure sustainable landscaping.

A Place for Diversity

Tim; Neighborhood Resident- "I would call it [Bend Central District] kind of a crossroads that is this interesting shared space. [I hope] That people value it and see that value in it as kind of this crossroads where this full mix of the community moves through it and see this potential for making it a very welcoming and used space in a way that it hasn't been in the past."

Rev; Neighborhood Resident- "This neighborhood specifically is like a comfort zone. It's where I used to live. I lived right here under the bridge. I was there for a year and a half, so I come here for comfort."

The BCD is positioned as a crossroads within the broader Bend community— a rail line, the Highway 97 parkway, and large streets like Third Street and Greenwood connect many parts of the city. The BCD is also a crossroads for a diversity of people, from ethnic and racial diversity to socio–economic diversity. While people who are experiencing houselessness are pushed out of downtown and other parts of Bend, the BCD with its bridges, tunnels, motels, places to park, and the nearby bottle drop, becomes a safe place for those that are experiencing houselessness and helps support their economic opportunities and need for a place of refuge. Additionally, the BCD and adjacent neighborhoods are home to a substantial Latinx population, primarily of Mexican descent, and a concentration of Latinx owned businesses that provide cultural items and food and goods and services for this community.

Ensuring that these populations continue to feel, and actually are, welcomed in the community will maintain the richness of diversity that makes this place unlike other parts of Bend.



Development can support these populations by providing supportive transitional housing for those experiencing houselessness and working with these populations to design public spaces that support their needs and create spaces where those comfortably housed and those facing housing insecurity can coexist. Additionally, there should be an effort to ensure an affordable and rent-stabilized housing stock and commercial spaces for the Latinx community to continue to thrive. Development should intentionally incorporate the Latinx community in the design elements (i.e., colors, symbols, etc.) that are meaningful to their culture and reflect home and contribute to a sense of belonging. Lastly, the building stock should also allow for a diversity of function that includes different types of economic opportunities, spaces for people with different cultural backgrounds, and social spaces that you do not have to pay to partake in that are inclusive of old and young.

A Place for Makers

Brad; Oregon Spirit— "Particularly these three blocks, where Oregon Spirit is in the middle of the Bend Central District, I love it because this is where Bend has always made stuff. This building that we are in used to be a feed store and it really was a key part of the commerce of Bend 40-50 years ago and this area is a part of that.....I believe that every community needs to make something. It doesn't have to be the whole community, but I really do think that Central Oregon needs to be producing something and selling it to the outside. And I really see this area as part of that."

One particularly unique feature of the BCD is that it is a place where there is an incredible amount of skilled people, from artists to welders, to tailors, to woodworkers, to libation specialists, to culinary experimenters— all of whom have made the BCD their business home. Being centrally located, with lots of space and fairly affordable rents, the BCD is the perfect space for creative entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams. The BCD has a long history of contributing to the commerce of Central Oregon.

Any future development should intentionally incorporate the building stock and space to allow for the making of custom goods. This will require mixed use zoning that allows for light industrial use. In addition, maintain rents that accommodate creatives and makers so they are able to take a chance and try out their ideas.

A Place for Connecting

Carrie; Orchard District Resident- "I think there are already a lot of locally owned businesses that I hope are able to continue residing in this area. I would love for the walkability to improve. That would just kind of allow them to thrive in a way that encourages more patrons and gives more of a sense this is the place and space to walk and shop and gather. And it would be great if that can happen in a way that can preserve the folks that already do reside here and work here and kind of improve upon that."

Alison; Utilitu- "The fact that there is a brake place around the corner from me...literally drop my car off at the brake place two blocks over and got to walk back to work when my brakes got



done and then got to have this amazing conversation about pit bulls with the guy who owns it. Right, so I don't want the humanism to leave this neighborhood."

Damaris; Los Panchitos- "My aunt comes here because of the candy. She says, 'my kids never tried my childhood candy.' It's really special to know that you can connect them with their roots even though they know they are not where their parents were raised and I think it is really special that they can experience what their parents experienced. So many memories."

There are several types of connections people spoke of during the interviews and pop-up engagement. The most common type of connection people shared was the desire to have better mobility options in the BCD so that there is greater connectivity between people and access to the district and adjacent neighborhoods. If transit and active transportation connections do not improve, the BCD risks becoming an exclusive insular place. Future development must support improving connectivity through the bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and support improving transit accessibility and frequency.

In addition to mobility connectivity, people talked about the existing human connections that exist in the BCD. These connections are important and meaningful in creating a sense of place and belonging. People build relationships with small business owners and there is a sense of a close-knit community. *Ensuring that future development supports existing local businesses and they are not replaced with larger corporate chains will be important for keeping this sense of connection.*

Lastly, for many members of the Latinx community, many of the businesses in the district allow them to connect to their culture and memories of where they grew up and allows them a way to send remittances, thus forging an economic connection to family members in other countries. They are able to share these memories with their children who may not have a connection to their parents' homeland besides the cultural goods and foods. These spaces are important for fostering a sense of belonging and for keeping people connected to their cultural identities and home communities. Ensuring that development intentionally includes spaces for Latinx businesses and incorporating the Latinx community in the design of these spaces in a manner that reflects their cultural roots and homelands (i.e., symbology, colors, landscaping, etc.) will be important to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of this community.

A Place for Remaining

Will; Nash Wood- "I'd like to see it develop and I'd like to see it be more bicycle-friendly, pedestrian-friendly. I'd like to see more casual restaurants and things of that nature. But, I also understand that with that comes a gentrification issue where rents increase and people like me might not be able to exist in the confines of that. But this is downtown Bend it's got to go somewhere. It just can't be a bunch of metal buildings. If there was an opportunity to maintain my workshop, have a showroom, and then around me some other businesses. You'd probably have some other apartments, businesses....and down below in an ideal world I'd have my workshop, showroom, and be able to continue my business."



New market rate housing and commercial spaces may not be affordable for the existing residents and business owners. There is a great desire to improve the district to be more walkable, bikeable, and develop in a healthy manner, but there is a great amount of concern that when these investments are made the BCD will no longer be recognizable due to gentrification and displacement.

Incorporating existing business owners, makers, artists, and residents in the design process can lead to development that meets the needs and goals of the community. Additionally, developing financial, policy, and programmatic mechanisms to include existing residents and business owners as future tenants and owners will be key to enabling people to remain in place and thrive. Lastly, affordable housing policies and programs that include accommodations for people experiencing and transitioning out of houselessness, from temporary shelters to transitional housing to permanent supportive housing, will be an important part in maintaining the diversity of the neighborhood and ensure people who currently call the BCD home are able to remain in place.

CASE STUDY- ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

A more expansive approach towards mindful urban transformation is embodied by nine principles developed by Place Lab, part of the University of Chicago's Arts + Public Life initiative, which grew from their experience with artist-led, neighborhood-based development on Chicago's South Side.¹ Seen as an articulation of "Ethical Redevelopment," which they define as the value shift from "conventional, profit-driven development practices to conscientious interventions in the urban context," these principles are evolving and non-definitive, yet comprehensively constructed to help cross-city networks and cross-sector collaboration achieve this shift.² The principles are summarized as follows:

- 1. Re-purpose + Re-purpose: An approach that's about resource availability and ingenuity—start with what you have and recognize existing local assets and latent value in the discarded and overlooked.³
- 2. Engaged Participation: Engage with a multiplicity of people who will share in the transparent negotiation and implementation of your place-based vision. The work is for many, with many, and, ultimately, by many.⁴
- 3. Pedagogical Moments: Leverage structures and moments for exchanges and transfers of knowledge across identities, roles, practices, disciplines, generations, and localities to capitalize on opportunities to teach, learn, and cultivate new talent.⁵

¹ "Ethical Redevelopment." Place Lab, University of Chicago, https://placelab.uchicago.edu/ethical-redevelopment.

² "Ethical Redevelopment." *Place Lab*, University of Chicago, https://placelab.uchicago.edu/ethical-redevelopment.

³ "9 Principles of Ethical Redevelopment." *Place Lab*, University of Chicago,

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- 4. The Indeterminate: Believe in your project but resist believing there is only one path to achieve it. Leave room for the unexpected and unanticipated. Keep an open approach that allows new opportunities and ideas to present themselves.⁶
- 5. Design: Design does not stop at the surface. Design can recalibrate what a community comes to consider sacred and cherished while reinforcing the comfort or identity of the home. It can inform thinking that asks about connections that could happen between one house and another, one neighbor and another.⁷
- 6. Place over Time: Hot, hip spots come and go. Trendy locations fall short of connecting "need" with "space." To be an anchoring space in a city, people have to be willing to spend time there, to visit and return in response to offerings that are authentic to the spirit of the place.8
- 7. Stack, Leverage, + Access: Demonstrating capacity and good ideas permit access to greater resources. Leverage the attention garnered by the work to amplify it. Let the work attract more believers. Proof of infrastructure is persuasive.⁹
- 8. Constellations: A project taps into a particular kind of power when it refuses to be singular, when it takes up space and assembles visionaries, believers, implementers, collaborators, and evaluators from disparate corners. A vibrant constellation or a rich ecosystem is responsive to the pairings and groupings that suddenly emerge.¹⁰
- 9. Platforms: A platform is a mechanism to propel work forward—it creates conditions of multiplicity, compounds ideas, expands relationships, germinates opportunities, and widens access. It develops space for people to gather and commune. Don't just create the thing, create the thing that makes the thing.11

Far from being rules or directives, these principles are designed to move and inspire and speak directly to motivated people that are engaged, or in the process of being engaged, in mindful transformative work. Yet with all place-based work there are pitfalls. To reimagine, transform, and truly revitalize means to draw in and collaboratively build a common community vision for a future not yet realized, but which all involved see themselves in. As Theaster Gates, director of Place Lab reminds us, "You recognize that place-making isn't something that happens exclusively through redistricting or the creation of a cultural district; it happens in the hearts and minds of the people who make a place a place".12

⁶ "9 Principles of Ethical Redevelopment." *Place Lab*, University of Chicago, https://static1.squarespace.com/static/56aa853d25981d66ccbcdfd2/t/5790f7c61b631be8a7a255fd/1469118407300/EthRed_9Pbooklet.p

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¹⁰ "9 Principles of Ethical Redevelopment." *Place Lab*, University of Chicago,

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12 Gates, Theaster. "Place Project Spreads Artistic Model of Resident Engagement to New Communities." Knight Foundation, John S. and

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BCD Initiative Guiding Principles

- 1. DEVELOPMENT: Catalyze vertical, mixed-use development that supports existing residents and businesses. Provide space for new housing with affordable options and living wage jobs within walking distance of community services, parks, schools, Hawthorne Transit Station, Historic Downtown Bend, and other amenities.
- 2. TRANSPORTATION: Create safe, vibrant¹, and complete² streets for people traveling through and within the district by foot, bike, car, transit, assisted mobility, or other modes. Improve transportation connections through the heart of Bend and between districts by addressing barriers such as the BNSF Railroad, Greenwood Ave, and Third Street.
- 3. PLACEMAKING: Develop a [descriptor TBD by neighborhood identity process] sense of place unique to the BCD that builds on the existing Maker's District and surrounding community's cultural and socioeconomic diversity, retains historical context and landmarks. Extend Bend's quality of life to the center of the city with mountain views, public art, cultural amenities, and attractive, green and civic public spaces for the community to gather.
- 4. COMMUNITY: Build upon the diversity, culture, and history that make the BCD unique to establish a healthy, resilient, accessible, and connected urban neighborhood where people from a variety of socioeconomic, cultural, ethnic, and generational backgrounds thrive.
- 5. EQUITY: Begin to repair historical inequities by supporting development, policies, and programs that elevate the needs of marginalized communities in this area with a specific focus on the Latinx community, the houseless, and the indigenous communities.
- 6. ECONOMY: Encourage small-scale manufacturing, homegrown businesses, and entertainment as part of neighborhood revitalization as demonstrated in The Maker's District. Anticipate future needs for growing a strong local economy by responding to housing, workspaces, transportation, and human services needs such as childcare, education, healthcare, and more.
- 7. BUILDINGS: Become a model for economical use of land, high-performance design, and contemporary building practices that ensure long-term efficiency by using environmentally sustainable and socially responsible building practices, adaptive reuse of existing buildings and materials, and self-sufficient energy and waste systems throughout the district.
- 8. CONTEXT: Understand, respect, plan, and design within the land's context which is situated in the high desert bioregion and is the ceded territory of the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

¹ Vibrant: Alive with activity.

² Complete Street: A 'Complete Streets' approach integrates people and place in the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of our transportation networks. This helps to ensure streets are safe for people of all ages and abilities, balance the needs of different modes, and support local land uses, economies, cultures, and natural environments. See BCD Revitalization Report Appendix D