

VANCOUVER  
(IN-LAW SUITE)

INDUSTRIAL  
(BATHROOM)

WILLAMETTE RIVER

COLUMBIA SLOUGH (WORKSHOP & COMPOST PILE)

FOREST PARK  
(BACK YARD)

ALBERTA  
(CRAFT ROOM)

# PORTLANDNESS

## A CULTURAL ATLAS

HAWTHORNE  
BOULEVARD  
(TEEN ROOM)

WEST HILLS  
GREAT ROOM)

DOWNTOWN  
(THE OFFICE)

PSU  
(LIBRARY)

SE INDUSTRIAL  
(BATHROOM)

SELLWOOD  
(THE ATTIC)

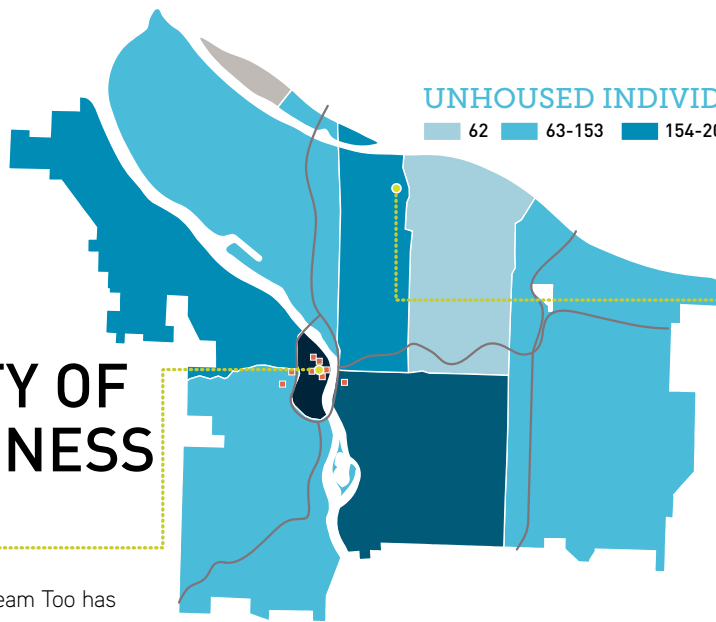
MULTNOMAH VILLAGE  
(MASTER BEDROOM)

DAVID BANIS &  
HUNTER SHOBE

## UNHOUSED INDIVIDUALS (2013)

62 63-153 154-205 206-305 306-474

Shelter Other site



### DIGNITY VILLAGE

In 2001, advocates and homeless Portlanders camped under the Fremont Bridge and refused to disperse. The campers negotiated with city authorities. Eventually they accepted relocation to a permanent site next to the

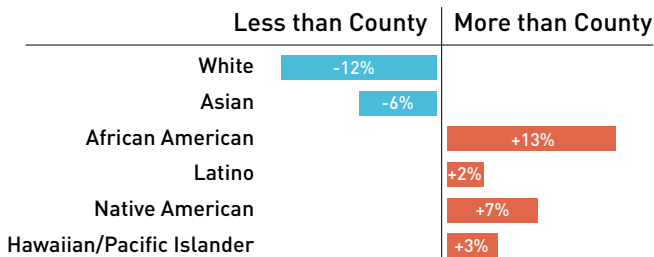
city's composting facility, near the Portland airport. Oregon Revised Statute (446.265) allows each Oregon municipality to establish two campground sites for use in providing transitional housing accommodations. Dignity Village is one of these. In its thirteenth year, Dignity Village is a successful model of democratic community that provides housing to about 60 residents. But the site's remote location means it's invisible too and forgotten by most Portlanders.

# THE INVISIBILITY OF HOMELESSNESS

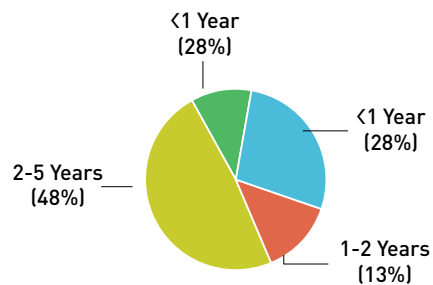
## RIGHT 2 DREAM TOO

Since the fall of 2011, Right 2 Dream Too has provided fifty people with a sheltered and safe place to spend the night. Unlike other shelters and transitional housing in the city, R2DToo allows pets and housing for couples. The city does not want to establish a transitional housing site at such a visible location.

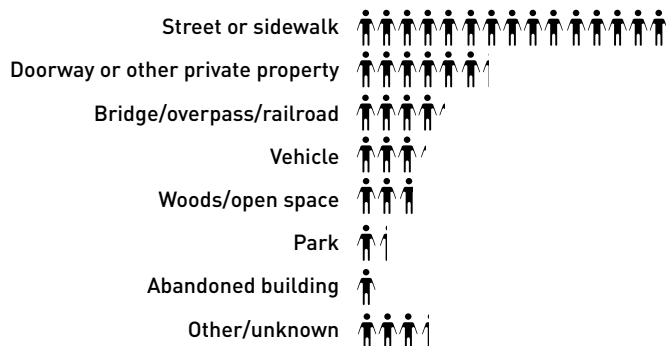
## Race (compared to Multnomah County)



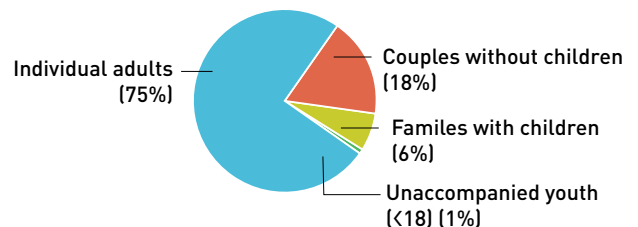
## Length of Time Experiencing Homelessness



## Unsheltered Sleeping Location



## Household Composition





Right 2 Dream Too, 2014



Doors used as fence, Right 2 Dream Too, 2014

Right 2 Dream Too is a community whose existence has generated strong reactions from the city of Portland, the Old Town neighborhood, surrounding businesses, and the greater public. Those who oppose the encampment located at West Burnside Street and Fourth Avenue suggest that such a place doesn't belong in downtown Portland, or at least, not in this particular place.

The land that Right 2 Dream Too resides on is privately owned and has a curious history. In the early 1980s its owner bought the building and opened an adult bookstore. The store closed in 2007 when the building, demolished the following year, was deemed unsafe. In 2011 the same owner attempted to fill the now vacant space with a food cart pod, but the city didn't allow this either and issued a fine for hosting food carts on an unpaved surface. The owner was restricted from paving a new lot because of zoning codes, and the lot remained empty.

Then in Autumn 2011, as Occupy Wall Street protests were beginning, houseless individuals in Portland unconnected with the protests set up tents on the lot. This was partially in response to a rhetorical question proposed to the public by the owner inquiring as to why, if a business would not work on this lot, shouldn't the houseless sleep there. Responding to this invitation, Right 2 Dream Too officially began on October 10, 2011. As of this writing, it remains on the same site in essentially the same presentation.

This space illustrates that there are alternatives to traditional channels for addressing homelessness. The centrality of this place has been critical to its sustainment. One reason is that within a

quarter-mile radius of the site there are no less than ten different services used by those staying at Right 2 Dream Too and the larger houseless population in the city. For example, there are emergency shelters and missions; meal handouts at several locations; laundry and showering facilities; and clinics that offer medical assistance such as check-ups, mental health and substance recovery support, and job and skills training. For many, survival and their next steps to stability are contingent upon their proximity to these resources.

Right 2 Dream Too is also a resource for those who find themselves on the street for the first time and in need of direction in navigating unfamiliar circumstances. Its members make up a large support network containing a wealth of information about surviving on the street. It's an invaluable resource for those new to being houseless. Because of Right 2 Dream's visibility within downtown, it is a critical hub for resource support.

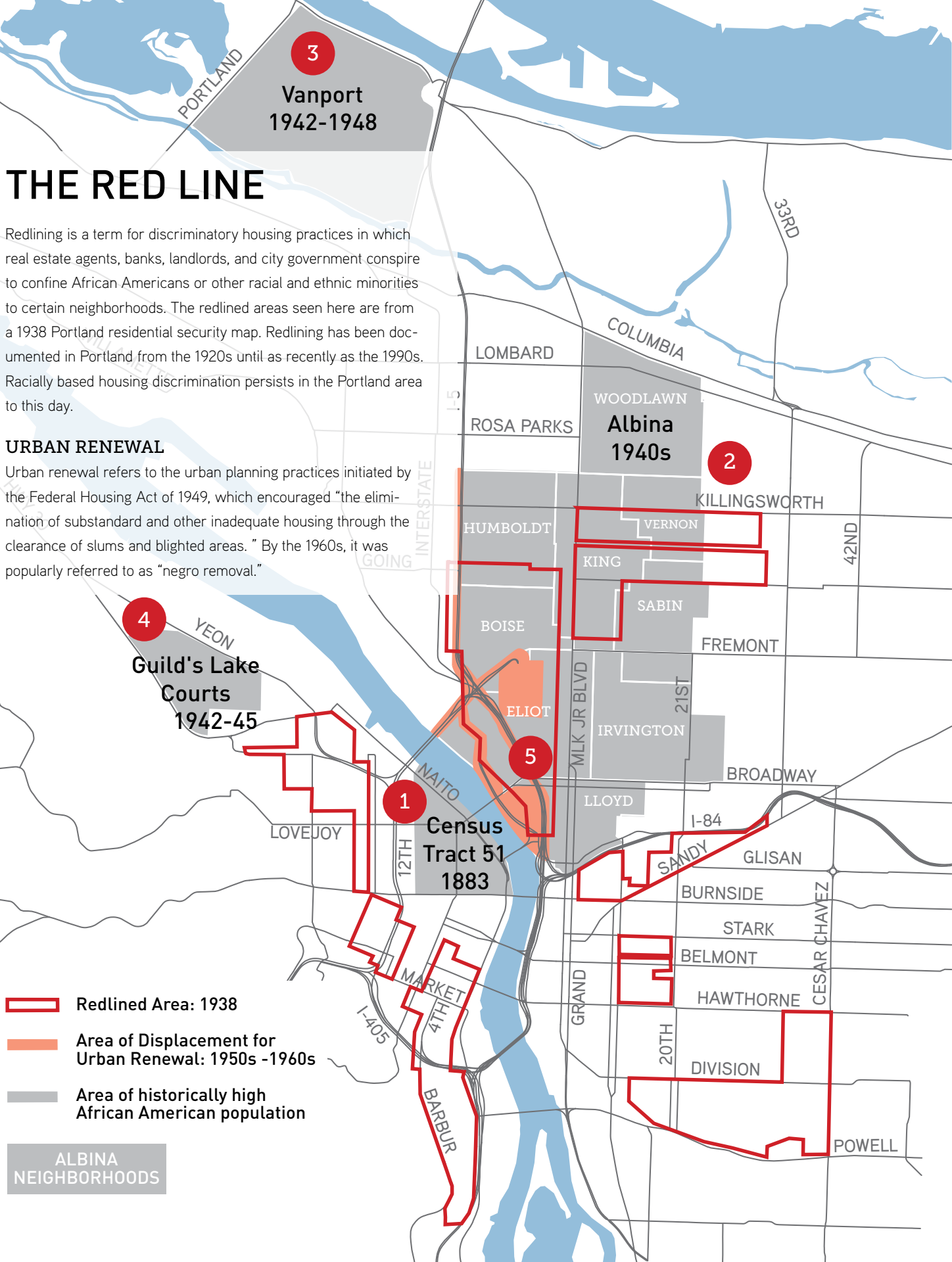
This space is a visual reminder that homelessness continues to be an issue in Portland. There simply aren't enough housing units and transitional housing spaces to shelter everyone who needs it. Right 2 Dream Too is not only a space that shelters the houseless looking for undisturbed sleep; its physical infrastructure—the doors that bound the place—projects statements of hope for the users of the space. Painted on these doors are calls for justice regarding issues such as social equality through affordable housing. The visible occupancy of this space draws attention to the severity of the issue and has been critical to its social support. There might not be a perfect place for Right 2 Dream to be located, but this community is certainly deserving of a place.




# THE RED LINE

Redlining is a term for discriminatory housing practices in which real estate agents, banks, landlords, and city government conspire to confine African Americans or other racial and ethnic minorities to certain neighborhoods. The redlined areas seen here are from a 1938 Portland residential security map. Redlining has been documented in Portland from the 1920s until as recently as the 1990s. Racially based housing discrimination persists in the Portland area to this day.

## URBAN RENEWAL

Urban renewal refers to the urban planning practices initiated by the Federal Housing Act of 1949, which encouraged "the elimination of substandard and other inadequate housing through the clearance of slums and blighted areas." By the 1960s, it was popularly referred to as "negro removal."



-  Redlined Area: 1938
-  Area of Displacement for Urban Renewal: 1950s - 1960s
-  Area of historically high African American population

ALBUINA  
NEIGHBORHOODS

## 1 CENSUS TRACT 51 1883

In the late 1800s, the arrival of the Northern Pacific Railway and the Portland Hotel brought service and labor jobs to Portland's black residents. In 1900, the majority of the 1,105 African Americans in Oregon resided in Census Tract 51 in Northwest Portland. Black social life centered around the Golden West Hotel on Northwest Broadway.

## 2 ALBINA 1940s

The town of Albina was annexed to Portland in 1891. More than half of Portland's black population lived in Albina by 1940. It was home to the thriving jazz district known as Jumptown. After World War II, black shipyard workers displaced from temporary housing relocated to Albina, still limited in their housing options by racial discrimination. Most of the neighborhoods of Albina remained majority African American until the late 1990s or early 2000s.

## 3 VANPORT 1942-1948

During World War II, Portland's African American population increased significantly as people from all over the country were drawn to jobs in the shipyards. Two major housing projects were erected to house the influx of workers and their families: the independent town of Vanport and Guild's Lake Courts in Northwest Portland. These were racially mixed communities. Both decreased in population after the war, and Vanport was wiped out in a 1948 flood.



Arial view of Vanport 1943

## 4 GUILD'S LAKE COURTS 1942-1945



Guilds Lake Courts Housing Units 1944.  
Portland City Archives.

## 5 ELIOT & LLOYD NEIGHBORHOODS Late 1950s-1960s

In the late 1950s, residents of the Eliot and Lloyd neighborhoods were displaced by Portland's Coliseum Urban Renewal Project, which demolished over 1,500 homes and businesses. In the late 1960s, the wrecking crew moved farther north up Williams Avenue, demolishing the heart of the Eliot neighborhood's black business district for an Emanuel Hospital expansion that never occurred. In both cases the rationale of the Portland Development Commission (PDC) was that these areas were "blighted."



Antigentrification, N Mississippi and N Shaver, 2009

## REDLINING AND GENTRIFICATION

### PAST: 1890–1990

The Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in Portland in 1883 and became one of the major employers of Portland's African American residents. Some found housing in Albina or other scattered parts of the city, but the majority lived in Northwest Portland, which was where the first black churches and black-owned businesses were located.

Racially based housing discrimination is first documented to have occurred in Portland with a 1919 rule of the Portland Realty Board that said it was unethical to sell property in a white neighborhood to a black or Chinese person. In 1935, the Federal Home Loan Bank Board asked the Home Owners Loan Corporation to create "residential security maps" for cities across the nation, such as the one for Portland shown on the previous pages. The term redlining, coined in the 1960s, refers to the red lines on these maps that marked the neighborhoods where banks were advised not to give loans. These were almost exclusively inner-city neighborhoods that were home to racial and ethnic minorities, particularly African Americans. Redlining came to refer more widely to the policies and practices of governments, landlords, real estate agents, and banks that restrict minorities to certain neighborhoods while preventing any financial investments in those same neighborhoods.

In the 1950s urban renewal came to Portland. The first to be affected were the majority-black Eliot and Lloyd neighborhoods, which were demolished for the construction of Memorial Coliseum and Interstate 5 in the mid to late 1950s. In 1970 the population of

Boise was 84 percent black at a time when Portland as a whole was just 6 percent black. This was the heaviest concentration of African Americans in any neighborhood in Portland history and reflects the fact that Portland was one of the most segregated cities in the country.

Home ownership in the Albina neighborhoods had increased throughout the '60s and '70s, but assessed property values were low, and, despite the gains of the Civil Rights movement, banks continued discriminatory lending practices and refused to issue loans for properties in the neighborhood. This led to an increase in neglectful absentee landlords and predatory lending practices, with a corresponding decline in the quality of housing. It was this combination of racism, neglect, and the aftereffects of urban renewal that truly brought the "blight" the city had supposedly targeted over the preceding decades. In the 1980s the economic recession, the crack cocaine epidemic, and gang warfare hit the Albina neighborhoods hard. Those who could afford to leave the neighborhood did. The trend of increased home ownership was reversed, and the Boise neighborhood lost population, both black and white. By 1990 nearly one quarter of the housing units in the Boise neighborhood were vacant.

### PRESENT: 1990–2012

When the recession ended in the early 1990s, the city of Portland targeted the neighborhoods of Albina—especially Boise and Eliot—for "redevelopment," which turned out to be a slightly more politically correct form of renewal's displacement. The Albina

Community Plan of 1993 proposed the light rail-line on North Interstate Avenue as well as a network of bike routes through the neighborhood. It encouraged dense, multiuse development and the creation of local businesses. As plans for the MAX Yellow Line went forward, the PDC created the Interstate Urban Renewal Area in 2000. The plan, as adopted by the city, specified that increased tax revenues from rising property values in the area were to be used to benefit existing residents and protect against gentrification and displacement. However, during the post-9/11 recession, the plan's eighteen antidisplacement projects and small business assistance programs were suspended. Only one, the New Columbia housing development, was actually carried through. As the MAX line went in and other parts of the plan were implemented, property values did indeed begin to rise, and Boise's population increased.

The North Mississippi Avenue Historic Conservation District and Williams-Vancouver, which had been targeted in the plan, evolved into hip shopping and entertainment districts. The sudden appearance of four-story condominium buildings, boutique shopping, and bars was heavily subsidized by tax breaks to developers and grants to property owners. Since 2001, the PDC has given out \$606,000 in storefront improvement grants to thirty-eight businesses along Williams and Vancouver alone. As of February 2012, 68 percent of the sixty-two retail spaces on black Portland's former Main Street had been there for less than five years.

The revitalization in Boise has led to a drastic demographic shift in the neighborhood. The number of black residents steadily decreased through the years, inverse to the rise in the number of white residents. The number of people aged eighteen to thirty-four increased while the number of children under age eighteen decreased. With the influx of new residents has come tension. In 1999, right around the time when Boise made the switch from majority black to majority white, neighbors organized to oppose the construction of new low-income housing units in the neighborhood.

As development on Mississippi peaked and leveled off, the stretch of Williams through the Boise neighborhood seemed to become one big construction zone. At least three big market-rate residential developments were initiated within a few blocks of each other in 2012. The recently completed Albert Apartments at North Williams and Beech, which was opposed by the Boise Neighborhood Association, received a \$1 million transit-oriented development tax break but contains no low-income units. Some developers who want to build in Boise have admitted to keeping their plans under wraps to avoid opposition.



Street art made to look like a city sign, 2009

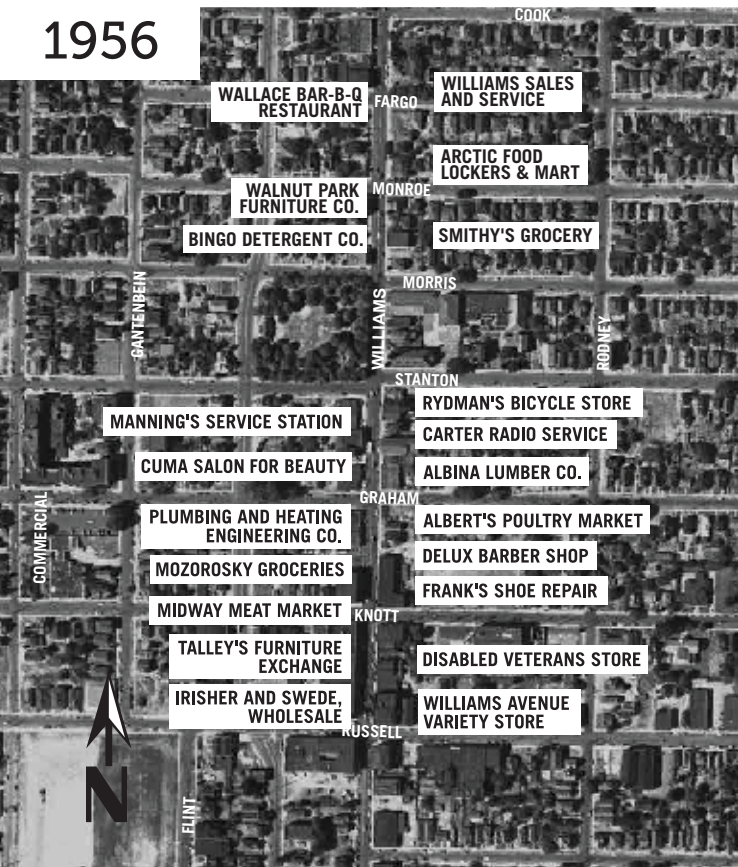
Perhaps partly because of this secrecy of the private developers, many residents feel they have little or no opportunity to influence the drastic reshaping of their own neighborhoods. It's the unmeasurable loss of such intangible things as a close-knit, mutually supportive community that's the greatest damage done by gentrification and that can be the hardest to restore as people who lived within a few blocks of each other find themselves on opposite edges of the metro area. Even as African American residents leave Albina by the thousands (7,700 between 2000 and 2010, according to the US Census), finding more affordable housing in Beaverton, Gresham, Vancouver, or East Portland, many institutions and businesses important to the black community remain in inner North and Northeast: restaurants, salons, barber shops, Jefferson High School, Portland Community College, and churches that have been there for over a hundred years. In order to shop and connect with friends and family, black Portlanders find themselves facing a long drive or bus ride. Churches spend mornings collecting their dispersed membership. Several have relocated or opened satellites.

Longtime residents who do remain in Albina might find themselves feeling unwelcome in their own homes. In addition to complaints about black bars and clubs, North and Northeast Portland neighborhood organizations have reported increased neighbor complaints about the noise from Sunday morning church services.

2013



1956



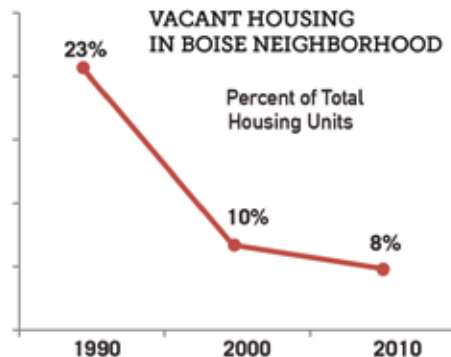
# AND THE BOTTOM LINE

In the last five years or so, the section of North Williams Avenue between Fremont and Shaver has transformed from a row of empty lots and warehouses to a destination where condo dwellers live above gourmet foods, boutique shopping, and varieties of bars previously unknown to Portland (bike bar, deli bar, or oyster bar, anyone?).

Almost sixty years earlier and about six blocks south, a business district of a different nature was experiencing its heyday. This was the section of "black Portland's Main Street," demolished in the late '60s for the expansion of Emanuel Hospital, which ran out of funding and left a gaping empty lot for four decades.

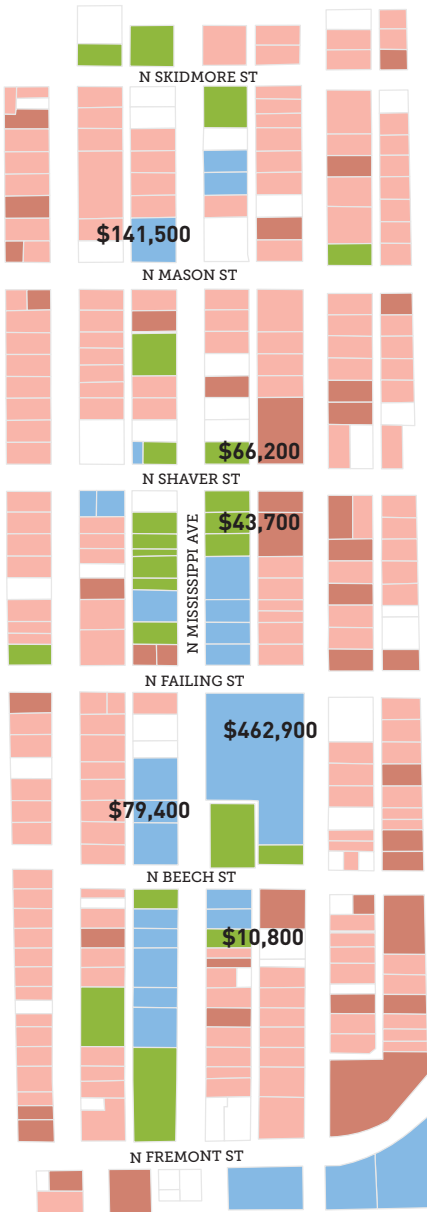
The North Williams Avenue of the 1950s was the type of walkable local business district that the North Williams of today is designed to be, but with a difference: back then, it was the kind of neighborhood any working-class person could live and shop in. Now such neighborhoods are more and more of an expensive privilege. How did North Williams go from Mozorosky Groceries to New Seasons? From Midway Meat Market to Chop Charcuterie? From Delux Barber Shop to Akemi Salon?

Those sixty years saw North Portland shaped by racism, disinvestment, and neglect followed by urban renewal and rapid gentrification. The Boise neighborhood, where both Williams and Mississippi are located, went from a thriving majority-black, majority-homeowner community to a neighborhood of abandoned houses and gang activity to a place where the young, white, and childless compete for scarce and increasingly expensive housing.





1996

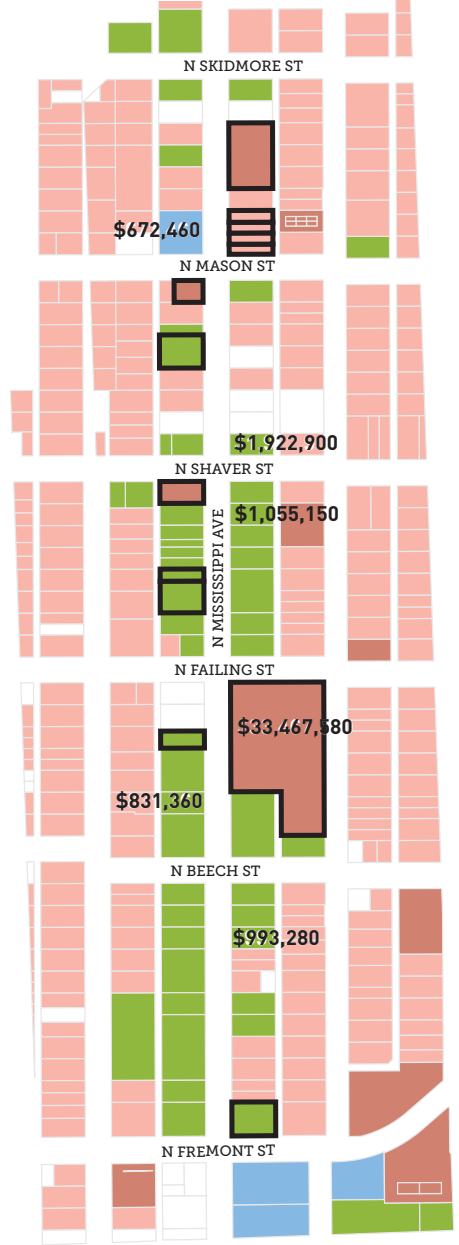


## N Mississippi Avenue

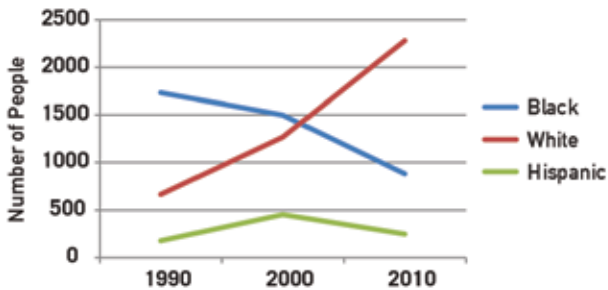
North Mississippi Avenue was the Boise neighborhood's first commercial street to have developers seeing green. Assessed property values today are as much as ninety times what they were in the 1990s. It's no coincidence that the demographic make-up of the neighborhood has changed so drastically.

- Commercial
- Industrial
- Multi-family Residential
- Single-family Residential
- Vacant
- Built since 1996

2012



CHANGE IN RACE AND ETHNICITY OF RESIDENTS



CHANGE IN AGE OF RESIDENTS

