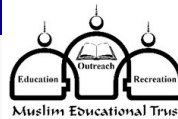


A publication by Muslim Educational Trust in collaboration with
Home Forward and Metro

Affordable Housing Update



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Community Conversations: Impact along the SW Corridor

As work on the SW Corridor Trimet light rail expansion project gets under way, folks at Home Forward and their community organization partners are hard at work raising awareness about the project and gauging impact and projected consequences upon communities, families, and youth who live in close vicinity to the SW Corridor Light Rail Project.

Fall and Winter community conversations revolved around better understanding the SW Corridor communities, raising awareness about the project, getting feedback from grassroots community members regarding the projected impact, as well as spreading the word about the overall process and logistics involved in applying for affordable housing, rent versus ownership options, various establishments under construction, and other various resources that may be helpful to the families, youth, and individuals who inhabit affordable housing units.

These conversations took form of focus group discussions that proved effective in giving these communities an outlet to learn about resources available to them as well as voice any concerns or challenges they may face.

Spring and Summer conversations went a step further to specifically address employment and healthcare

needs for SW Corridor residents, as well as design elements to take into consideration when repairing, renovating, or building new units.

April 6, 2019 witnessed a gathering of around 20 women and youth who broke down into small groups to address current challenges they face in terms of employment and healthcare. The group primarily spoke Somali and our interns served as interpreters at this gathering.

In the area of employment, participants identified language, transportation, and the lack of technical skills and child care to be barriers in their pursuit of a meaningful job. This forced them into working in the areas of housekeeping, janitorial work, or child care. Just like all new Portlander communities, participants expressed their desire to want a better job towards financial independence. When asked who they would turn to for information and resources, they identified their community organization or case manager.

In the area of healthcare, the majority has Oregon Health Plan as their insurance carrier. They only visited the doctor in case of illness or child wellness. They predominantly wanted to learn more about what it takes to live a healthy lifestyle, manage their diet and stress level, exercise more to be better able to

take care of themselves and their families. Caring for their elderly parents was also on their mind.

July 8 and 20 witnessed another small group discussion gatherings that revolved around a holistic exploration of the design elements of the home and how these can be enhanced to better meet the needs of their residents. These sessions were held at MET (where the group was primarily Arabic-speaking) and Stevens Crossing (where the group was primarily Somali-speaking), respectively. Participants received nominal gift cards and Trimet passes to compensate their time and participation in this effort.

Design elements involving the kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms, living space, and outdoor space were all addressed. Ms. Julie Livingston, our workshop facilitator did an excellent job mobilizing the small group discussion through visuals shared with each group. Specific findings from these conversations are shared next.

For more information, please call our office at (503) 579-6621 or visit our website at www.metpdx.org.



Get in the know: Exploring Employment & Healthcare Needs of Affordable Housing Residents

Participant Questionnaire:

About the SW Corridor:

- Are you aware of the SW Corridor changes and Tri-Met's plan to bring a Max line along I-5 corridor?
- What do you think are some opportunities and what are some challenges that may come up once Max line is built in this area?

Employment Needs:

- If you're currently employed, please raise your hand
- If you're interested in a better job, please raise your hand
- If you are not employed but are interested in finding a job, please raise your hand
- In your words, please describe a definition of a meaningful/ideal employment
- If you needed help and assistance in obtaining your ideal job, who would help you?
- Are you aware of resources in this area that can help with job search?
- What are your strengths?
- What are your barriers?

Healthcare Needs:

- If you currently have health insurance, please raise your hand
- If your health insurance is affordable, please raise your hand
- What are some of the examples of accessing your health providers?
- In your opinion, what is a healthy life style?
- To promote healthy life style, in your opinion, what type of activities, workshops or services would be most helpful to you?
- How to take care of stress?
- What do you currently do to practice healthy life style?
- Who wants to learn about health life style?

Thank you for your input and participation!



Get in the know: Exploring & Rethinking Home Design Elements to better meet the needs of Affordable Housing Residents

Goal: How do we create flexible housing designs that meet the needs of diverse populations?

Small Group Reflections:

- What are the major differences between living spaces that we call "home" in the USA compared to your home country?
- Describe the ways that you would like your interior home spaces to be organized? Which rooms should be close to one another? How do the interior spaces flow from one use to another?

Large Group Reflections:

- Kitchen design improvements
Prompts: counter space, ventilation, room to gather for women, ability to open/close visibility to living/dining room space
- Bathroom design improvements
Prompts: "jack & jill" layouts; ritual foot washing
- Outdoor spaces
Prompts: gardens, play areas, screening, privacy



Continued from Page 2: Rethinking Home Design Elements among diverse populations
For more resources, please visit: www.metpdx.org/index.php/resources/affordable-housing

Community participants include about 60 participants from both workshops combined who comprise New Portlanders from Somalia, Iraq, Syria, Palestine, Sudan, and India.

Participants reported the following General Feedback:

- Accommodating an extended family, multi-generational dwelling
- Because modesty is observed, privacy is of utmost importance.
- Include convenience stores in close vicinity to apartment complexes.
- Accommodate bigger families and more bedrooms
- Include washer and dryer inside the units instead of communal ones.
- Include storage space in attic and outdoor balcony
- Facilitate public transportation as well as school bus routes
- Good schools in the vicinity are important
- Include better sound insulation and better heating

Kitchen Improvements:

- Better ventilation needed, preferably a window or balcony that opens; glass can be foggy to ensure privacy.
- Have a separate closed-out room for the kitchen that is not in the middle of the living space and that is separate than the dining area
- Include space for a table with chairs for family members
- Have a private entrance to the kitchen so that the ladies of the house can freely enter and exit the kitchen without having to go through the living room.
- Include slip-free rubber flooring and floor drain in the kitchen

Bathroom Improvements:

- Include elderly-friendly showers/shower doors
- Include a window with foggy glass that opens
- Have slip-free rubber flooring
- Include plumbing for a rinser next to the toilet
- Include a drain on the floor



Living Room & Bedroom Improvements:

- Ceiling height is adequate
- Include a ceiling fan in the living room and the bedrooms.
- Include more closet space
- Include larger bedrooms with wider doors if possible
- Make sure the bedrooms are close together and also close to the bathroom
- Have at least one bedroom, one bathroom, and a small living space on the ground level for the elderly in the fam

Exterior & Outdoor Space Improvements:

- Design each unit differently so that not all homes in the neighborhood look the same.
- Include various design elements and shapes that reflect world cultures
- Include more front and back yard area for gardening with private entries
- Include more space for children to play if a public park is not within walking distance
- Include 1-2 good-size balconies
- Increase parking spaces close to the home



Community Resources

How do I find affordable rentals?

- Research and check favorite websites regularly
- Sign up for e-newsletters if available (example: top of Home Forward's website home has a link to sign up)

- Dial 211 toll free
- www.211info.org



- www.oneapporegon.com



HOW TO FIND AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO OWN:

- [Habitat for Humanity](#)
- [Proud Ground](#)

OTHER RESOURCES:

- [Community Partners for Affordable Housing CPAH](#)
- [Washington County Housing Services](#)
- [The City of Portland: Planning and Sustainability](#)
- [Neighborhood House](#)
- [Community Alliance for Tenants \(CAT\)](#)
- [Momentum Alliance](#)
- [Unite Oregon](#)
- [Islamic Social Services for Oregon State](#)
- [Guidance Residential](#)
- [Health Care for All Oregon](#)



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www.metpdx.org**

About this Project

The Muslim Educational Trust (MET) was founded in 1993 to be a source of healing and unifying for our Portland community, both Muslim and non-Muslim. MET is dedicated to the betterment of our society, and strives to achieve its purpose through education, cooperation, networking, and programs which benefit Muslims and non-Muslims in the greater Portland metro area. In this spirit, a collaboration was formed this Fall 2018 with Home Forward and Metro to address the needs, challenges, and opportunities that community members face when it comes to affordable housing especially around the SW Corridor where the anticipated Trimet expansion has raised concerns over affordability of housing in the vicinity, which will directly impact families in our community, both Muslim and non-Muslim.

Serving the community through excellence in education and community building since 1993

This publication is made possible by a partnership between MET and Home Forward (a federally-sanctioned housing authority for Multnomah County), made possible by grant funding from Metro and the Federal Transit Administration.

Next Steps...

Two major follow-up meetings are scheduled as follows this Fall 2019 to share a summary of all efforts carried out within this collaboration that started in Fall 2018, as well as the outcomes of these efforts:

Progress Report Meeting at Metro on Thursday, October 17, 2019, followed by:

Home Forward Board of Commissioners Meeting at Multnomah County on November 19, 2019.

A final report is also in the process of being compiled to include all the findings of our workshops, presentations, and focus group discussions conducted over the course of this



project since Fall 2018 till present.

Our team here at the Muslim Educational Trust is most grateful for this collaboration and feels blessed to have acted as a liaison between Home Forward/SW Corridor Project and the impacted grassroots community, most of whom are New Portlander immigrants and refugees.



Meet our Team



Left to Right:
Ms. Iman Mahamud and Ms. Ayni Amir,
MET Interns and Community Volunteers



Ms. Julie Livingston, Home Architectural Design Workshop Facilitator oversees focus group discussion
July 8, 2019 at the Muslim Educational Trust

