



## **Prioritizing Equity & Inclusion: Updating the City of Salem's Comprehensive Plan**

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Willamette University  
Salem, OR  
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## Introduction

In response to the revision of the Comprehensive Plan in the City of Salem, undergraduate students in the course SOC 358 “Social Change & Resistance” designed this report. The class has explored equitable city planning strategies as a mechanism of social change.

This report (1) lays out the background of what a social justice lens could look like in city planning, (2) provides two comparative examples of inclusive housing and transportation in other cities, and then (3) describes the interactive workshop we hosted. The workshop was a test of interactive, accessible visioning practices and featured urban planner James Rojas. Rojas is an expert in reaching out to low-income, Latina/o/x neighborhoods. He helps people understand public planning and the importance of lived experience to the planning process.

We hope that this report may serve as a reference for the City of Salem Community Development Department, City Councilors, the Comprehensive Plan Stakeholder Advisory Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to listening to the community and as the city moves forward with the visioning phase of the Our Salem: Comprehensive Plan, we encourage you to keep doing the tough and reflective work of planning the best and most inclusive Salem possible.

“As students who live in Salem we have immersed ourselves in what an equitable and inclusive Salem could be.”

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## Section 1:

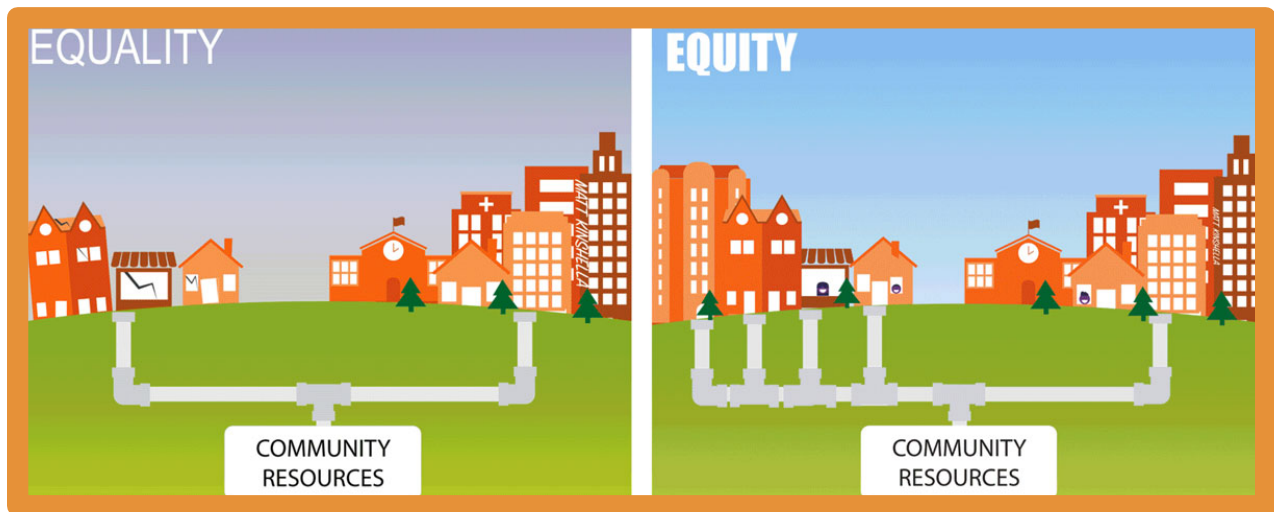
# Understanding & Implementing a Social Justice Lens

## Definition

A social justice lens is an envisioning of an equitable world while advocating for underrepresented and overlooked communities. When cities use this lens, the hope is that there will be a distribution of equitable resources, opportunity and access.

This lens should acknowledge and promote the *equity* amongst each community, not to be confused with equality. Equality suggests “sameness”, which implies that everyone is starting from the same place and have similar background. Equity rather recognizes “fairness”; it is this recognition of differences, and historical and systemic barriers which make way for people to have access.

For example, a social justice lens illuminates historical patterns of wealth inequality and economic segregation, leading to solutions that go beyond the equal distribution of services. Implementing a social justice lens requires the accounting of different barriers that groups have encountered, as well as understanding and acknowledging the historical disparity of resources and advocacy. A social justice lens can lead to the “government enact[ing] policies that address the resulting disparities” within low income communities along with communities of color (City of Portland, 2). This approach offers a way to critically understand the historic and current oppression within society which, aggregated together, determines a community’s economic status, schooling and much more.

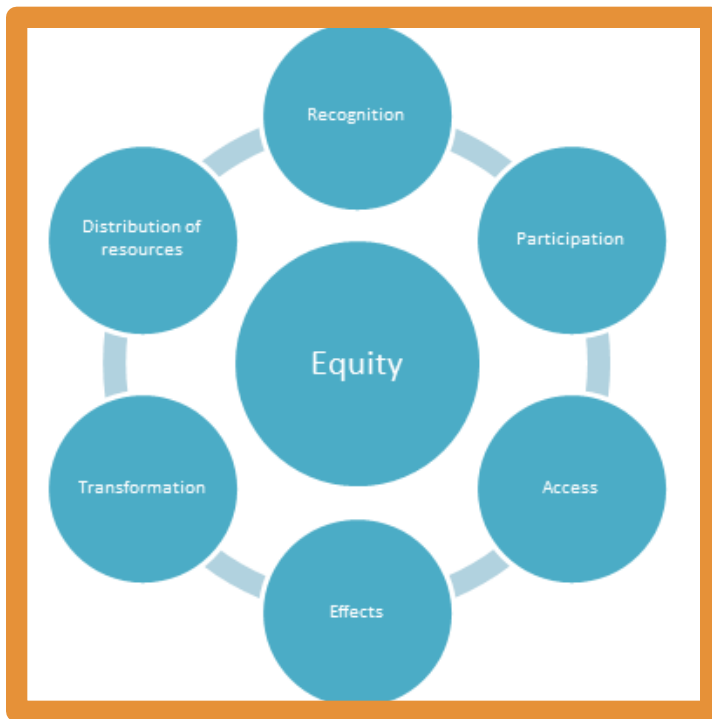


(Matt Kinshella, <http://culturalorganizing.org/the-problem-with-that-equity-vs-equality-graphic/>)

## Steps

A social justice lens framework is dependent on changing the structures and institutions of a city; the changes made cannot merely be surface level in order to have meaningful impacts within the community. The implementation of a social justice framework into city planning consists of:

- 1) A recognition of the historical treatment towards marginalized groups, by the city and their policies; the first step to change is recognition.
- 2) Accounting for the barriers marginalized groups have encountered and recognizing the disparity of access, resources, agency and advocacy must then shape how policies are written and implemented. This recognition would then aid the City of Salem in distributing equitable resources to groups who have experienced the deprivation of resources like affordable housing, quality healthcare and a comprehensive education.



3) This would also include the promotion of cultural, racial and income diverse neighborhoods and schools. A social justice lens calls for the acknowledgement of equity amongst and within the community.

4) We suggest the examination of how one's own privilege informs a proposal or an idea; with the asking of, who is and will be impacted by this decision?

5) Programs that ensure access and opportunity for all community members to employment, food, housing, clothing, education, recreational opportunities, a safe and healthy environment, and social services, must be supported both with allocation of funds and through the use of thought and time put into these programs ([fcgov.com](http://fcgov.com)).

(Six lenses of equity. Copyright 2014 by Amelia M. Kraehe)

6) Further, the active engagement and involvement of all community members is crucial in creating a diverse, inclusion and equitable city; the voices and experiences of marginalized groups and communities of color are necessary factors when attempting to structurally transform a city. The exclusion of these groups within city politics is a detriment to the overall progress of the City. The implementation of a social justice lens towards city planning is not an easy or quick process -- but it is a necessary one in order to move forward towards a more just and equitable community for all.

## Goals

By implementing a social justice framework that centers equity, the City of Salem has the opportunity to integrate social justice knowledge into the governmental decision making process to “maximize opportunity to create racial equity and/or minimize harmful impacts for communities of color” (Brooks et al. 2016: 10). By doing so, the City of Salem would foster racial equity and benefit all people living in Salem, Oregon. Through setting goals and assessments with a social justice framework, equitable outcomes can be achieved and measured. Similar to Portland’s Racial Equity Toolkit (2016), the City of Salem’s framework should include “desired outcomes” or results that are equitable and a “community indicator” or a way in which results can be measured (Brooks et al. 2016: 11). Below are the desired goals/outcomes for implementing an equitable, social justice framework:

- Strive to end racial and economic disparities within government in Salem, Oregon. By doing so, the future of Salem would benefit from and include fairness in hiring and greater opportunities for marginalized people within the city.
- Strengthen public outreach and engagement as well as access to city services through a social justice framework and support and/or change existing services to implement a social justice and equitable framework.
- Eliminate racial inequalities throughout government through collaboration with communities and institutions (Brooks et al. 2016: 4).

While these are *desired* and broadly stated outcomes, it is essential to actualize these goals with measurable action and policies. These goals are not sufficient by itself; while setting these goals are important in the implementation process, it is necessary that these goals be actualized via policies and actions.

Through an evaluation of the implementation of these goals, it is crucial that these are tracked and measured overtime; ideally, to increase effectiveness of these goals.

## Assessments

When creating goals to support social change, it is important to assess the possible outcomes before implementing them so as to not miss a foreseeable problem. In order to do this, one could assess data comparing different cities that may have implemented the same or similar changes, not forgetting to account for any city-specific problems that may not have arisen in the other city’s situation. For example, each goal like attracting businesses should be interrogated for possible unintended consequences like gentrification.

Additionally, “surveys, service level tracking, and impact assessments are excellent tools for measuring success” (Brooks et al. 2016: 20), according to the City of Portland’s Racial Equity Toolkit. Any data gathered must be looked at through a sociological lens which views personal experiences within the context of broad social structures that support inequalities and local institutions that respond to and sometimes perpetuate them. Concrete assessment can also enable more precise comparisons between cities. City changes like business development and the displacement of people can be tracked in a way that keeps race injustice in mind, and emphasizes equity instead of equality—like simply adopting the goals of another city.

Looking at social and especially racial injustices fosters ideas of resistance to normative culture and move toward collective social change. With these data and examples of assessments of goals, it is possible to hold the corresponding government or policy makers accountable for their action or inaction.

The City of Portland's Racial Equity Toolkit (Brooks et al. 2016: 20) laid out questions that policy makers must ask themselves when assessing goals:

1. How will impacts and performance be documented, evaluated, and reported? What methodology will you use?
2. What are your messages and communications strategies that will help advance racial equity?
3. How will you continue to partner and deepen relationships with communities of color to make sure your proposal is working and sustainable for the long haul?

## Best Practices

The best practice for having a social justice lens is to create a racial equity toolkit. Cities such as Portland, Oregon created one in order to further work towards making the city more equitable for people. Various bureaus in the city came together to collaborate on this effort. Those include the Office of Equity and Human Rights (OEHR) and the Office of Neighborhood Involvement (ONI) (Brooks et al. 2016: 4). Racial inequalities that have been created in our society are sustained over time. In order to try and make racially equitable change, committees need to be formed along with programs and policies that aim to break down systems and processes perpetuating inequalities. Portland is a city that can serve as an example for Salem. Below are the priorities of Portland's racial equity toolkit:

- Ensure that government actions and decisions are crafted to achieve truly equitable outcomes,
- Engage communities of color in decision-making, understand the root causes of existing disparities and how the City's actions can make these better (or worse)
- Use data to identify current racial disparities and those most impacted by our actions
- Identify inequitable consequences or burdens on communities most impacted,
- Identify needed strategies and resources to ensure equity in our actions and decision making.
- Identify how progress on racial equity will be tracked and measured over time, and how to report back to stakeholders

It is essential that the creation of a racial equity toolkit is not only inclusive of residents voices throughout the process, but also that it be iterative. Giving residents various and continuous ways to voice their perspective and thoughts will only strengthen the city. A toolkit is a starting place, and will require to be updated and improved upon as time passes and situations and disparities within the city change.

## Section 2:

# City Case Studies - Housing and Transportation in Madison & Tacoma

## Introduction & Complete Neighborhoods

Cities across the nation have envisioned and implemented Comprehensive Plans, all with varying success. In light of the City of Salem revising their Comprehensive Plan, we find it important to look at other city's plans. Information about the successes and failures of other Comprehensive Plans can be analyzed to make more informed decisions as to what will work best for the City of Salem. In this report, Tacoma, Washington and Madison, Wisconsin were chosen for analysis because of the shared characteristics between these two cities and the City of Salem. We focus on transportation and housing; two priorities that came out of the "Our Salem: Today" Phase One workshop and online survey. Therefore, this report analyzes housing and transportation as laid out in Tacoma and Madison's Comprehensive Plans.

Transportation and housing also relate to the idea of a *complete neighborhood*. A complete neighborhood provides a community with stores, activities, community centers, and more, within close proximity to the residents and is linked together through accessible transportation networks (sidewalks, bike lanes, active transportation options). This concept is echoed by the "20-minute neighborhood" and revival of mixed zoning. Both Tacoma and Madison use this idea to integrate housing and transportation into their Comprehensive Plan. The City of Salem should use the ideas already tested by similar cities to create the most effective Comprehensive Plan possible and this report offers an outline of successful tactics.

## City of Madison Overview

This section outlines the demographics of Madison, Wisconsin as well as how they compare to the demographics here in Salem. The similarities between these cities makes it possible for the goals of Madison to be translated to the Comprehensive Plan here in Salem. The City of Madison is the capital city of Wisconsin; same as Salem, Oregon.

In the City of Madison:

- The estimated median household income in 2016 was \$61,284 (it was \$41,941 in 2000).
- The estimated per capita income in 2016 was \$36,181 (it was \$23,498 in 2000).
- The mean housing prices in 2016 for all housing units: \$280,072.
- Madison's median gross rent in 2016: \$1,008.

In the City of Salem:

- Estimated median household income in 2016: \$51,945 (it was \$38,881 in 2000), which indicates that the two cities have experienced similar growth.
- The mean housing prices in 2016 in Salem for all housing units: \$243,442.



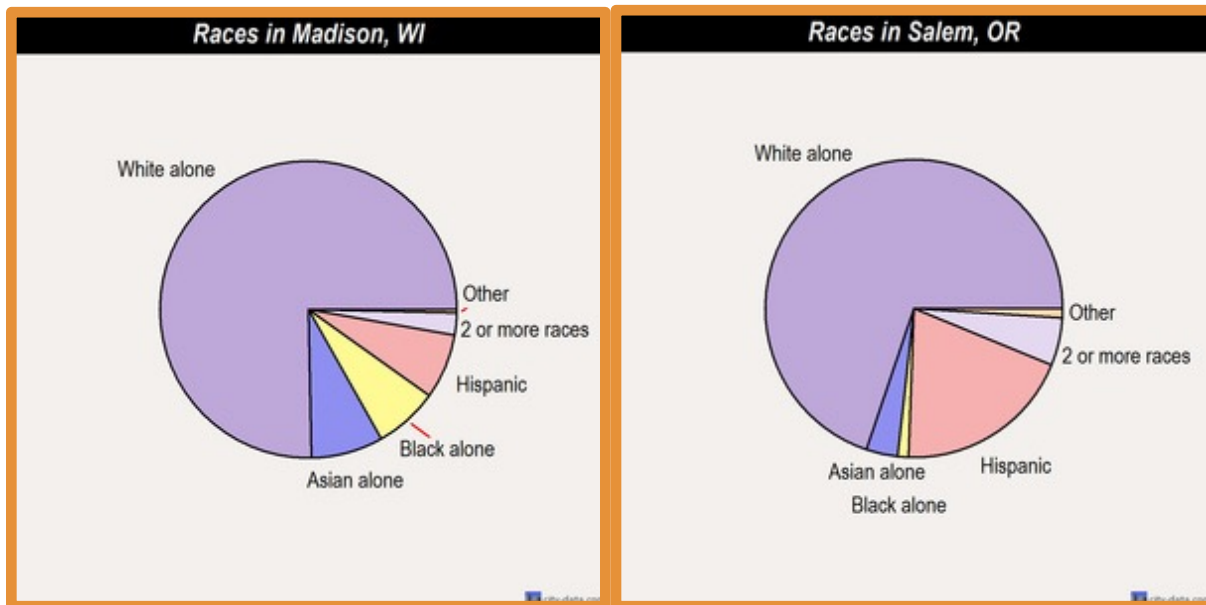
- Salem’s median gross rent in 2016: \$891.

Both Madison and Salem have younger populations, with Madison’s median resident age being 31.2 years and Salem’s median resident age being 35.9 years. For transportation in Madison, Public Transport ridership has increased 46 percent since 1990 (outpacing 32 percent population growth since 1990).

Both cities have a continually growing population. Madison has a high quality of life, which has helped its population grow nearly 11% from 2000 to 2008. By 2030, Madison is projected to have a population of 270,000, up from the city’s 2017 population of 255,214 (World Population Review). Salem has had a population growth rate that falls around 2% annually for the last several years.

The racial demographics of Madison and Salem are also similar, in terms of ratio of white people to people of color.

Racial Demographics in Madison, WI and Salem, OR:



(city-data.com, 2019)

Madison WI was 75.2% white in 2016. Salem Oregon was 68.8% in 2016. The racial minority groups are different across both cities but there are similar needs for affordable housing and access to transportation across these communities (City-data.com, 2019).

The 2018 Comprehensive Plan is the City of Madison’s second Comprehensive Plan. They are mandated to be done every ten years and they have produced good results in the past. For example, the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Madison put forth their first Comprehensive Plan. Since then, there have been different improvements within the city, and what failed to improve was detailed by the people of Madison through the Imagine Madison feedback system. Imagine Madison

is an online and in person reporting system that was created to get feedback from people in Madison. After getting Imagine Madison feedback from over 15,000 people, the City of Madison has used these responses in their central planning process for the 2018 plan (Cityofmadison.com, 2018).

Based off of the Imagine Madison process, the City of Madison has set out to improve their housing and transportation through two main goals:

Goal 1: Madison will be comprised of compact, interconnected neighborhoods anchored by a network of mixed-use activity centers.

Goal 2: Madison will have a safe, efficient, and affordable regional transportation system that offers a variety of choices among transportation modes.

## Housing in Madison

The guiding goals for housing in Madison are that: (1) Madison will be a safe and welcoming city of strong and complete neighborhoods that meet the needs of all residents. (2) Madison will have a full range of quality and affordable housing opportunities throughout the City. The vision for housing in Madison as laid out in the city's Comprehensive Plan is broken down into 8 key strategies to help achieve their goals (Imaginemadisonwi.com, 2018).

### HOUSING STRATEGIES:

1. *“Create complete neighborhoods across the city where residents have access to transportation options and resources needed for daily living.”*  
The idea of a “20-minute neighborhood” encourages mixed use zoning for housing and businesses as well as transit access throughout all neighborhoods.
2. *“Support development of a wider mix of housing types, sizes, and costs throughout the city.”*  
Include “missing middle” housing types. Supporting lower priced or lower maintenance accessible housing options with connections to transit.
3. *“Increase the amount of available housing.”*  
Review building codes to allow for more units and different types of units. Partner with housing developers. Explore adjusting current height and density requirements.
4. *“Integrate lower priced housing, including subsidized housing, into complete neighborhoods.”*  
Distribute affordable housing across the city. Partner with nonprofits to prioritize affordable housing growth and pursue different funding options.
5. *“Provide housing options with health and social services for residents who need it most, including residents experiencing homelessness.”*  
Continue existing programs for resident services and support organizations that work to serve these communities.
6. *“Support the rehabilitation of existing housing stock, particularly for first-time homebuyers and people living with lower incomes.”*

Provide incentives for rehabilitation, maintenance, and enhanced accessibility and sustainability of housing.

7. *“Support neighborhood-scaled schools that offer amenities and services to the surrounding area.”*

Support development of neighborhood-scaled schools that serve the community while fitting within the context of the neighborhood. A vision for school to be a distribution hub for community resources.

8. *“Ensure access to food that is affordable, nutritious, and culturally specific.”*

This is the intersection of food justice and complete neighborhoods. Support initiatives for neighborhood-serving grocery stores moving into underserved established neighborhoods. Identify public and private spaces suitable for community gardens as well as expand existing gardens. Improve access to fresh foods by encouraging and facilitating the equitable distribution of farmers markets and farm stands. Encourage initiatives that support the emergency food system and facilitate donation of near-expired, but high-quality, foods.

For each of these strategies the city did an assessment of the current disparities. Many of the strategies came back to the idea of complete neighborhoods. If all people have access to basic necessities in their neighborhoods that can be the start of a foundation that offers an equitable playing field to all. The most important question to remember is: Complete neighborhoods for whom?

## Transportation in Madison

The largest goals for Madison regarding transportation are to (1) increase access to transportation and to (2) integrate transportation in and out of the city in an equitable and efficient way. These goals are important when comparing Madison and Salem because similar issues are present in both cities. In the City of Madison Comprehensive Plan, they combine the transportation and land use sections. This seems to be a successful attempt to create a more inclusive and holistic plan that recognizes the connectedness between these two aspects of a city. The planning of transportation and land-use in this way allows for more integration of city needs and will likely lead to a better city after implementation. The overall goals of implementation for the City of Madison regarding transportation are as follows.

### TRANSPORTATION STRATEGIES:

1. *“Improve transit service, especially to peripheral employment and residential locations, with a focus on reducing the travel time for transit dependent populations.”*
  - a. Career opportunities are lost by those who cannot use public transportation to get to their place of work. This not only hurts the individual, but also businesses.
  - b. Use a social justice lens to solve these issues by ensuring communities of color, who depend more on transportation the most, are able to get to their jobs.
    - i. Transportation must run earlier and later
    - ii. Need more direct routes
    - iii. More places need to have stops

2. *“Implement bus rapid transit (BRT) to improve travel times, enhance reliability, and increase ridership.”*
  - a. New facility for busses is needed to have quality maintenance of buses
  - b. New infrastructure/rebuilding existing infrastructure that prioritizes busses over car use/parking
3. *“Ensure all populations benefit from the city’s transportation investments.”*
  - a. Racial minorities do not always have access to transport payment subsidizes
    - i. People need better access to reduced passes, solution: make available at more places and online
    - ii. Work with other federal/state agencies to increase access to reduced price transportation
    - iii. Greater outreach to community organizations to achieve equitable results
4. *“Improve access to transit service to nearby cities, such as Milwaukee, Chicago, and Minneapolis.”*
  - a. Intercity bus terminals and rail connections
  - b. Increased accessibility through cooperation with bus companies and the University of Wisconsin, Madison
5. *“Concentrate the highest intensity development along transit corridors, downtown, and at activity centers.”*
  - a. Interconnection between different parts of the city
  - b. Creating density minimums to increase development in areas with existing transportation corridors
  - c. Creating activity centers and public spaces that are people focused, not car focused
6. *“Facilitate compact growth to reduce the development of farmland.”*
  - a. Restricting development that leads to urban sprawl
  - b. Creating complete neighborhoods which can only happen with access to quality transportation
7. *“Maintain downtown Madison as a major activity center for the region while improving access and Inclusivity.”*
  - a. Increase periphery growth for transit to connect the city more
  - b. Create a better park and ride systems with leapfrog development
8. *“Expand and improve the city’s pedestrian and bicycle networks to enable safe and convenient active transportation.”*
  - a. Connect and create new networks for green transportation methods like bikes and walking
  - b. Reconstruct existing networks to include bike lanes and sidewalks
9. *“Implement new technologies to more efficiently use existing transportation infrastructure”*
  - a. Become a “Smart City”
    - i. Use technology to enhance parking systems for high activity hours
    - ii. support green transportation and autonomous vehicles
  - b. Partner with institutions, including University of Wisconsin, Madison to support quality transportation practices

(Imaginemadisonwi.com, 2018)

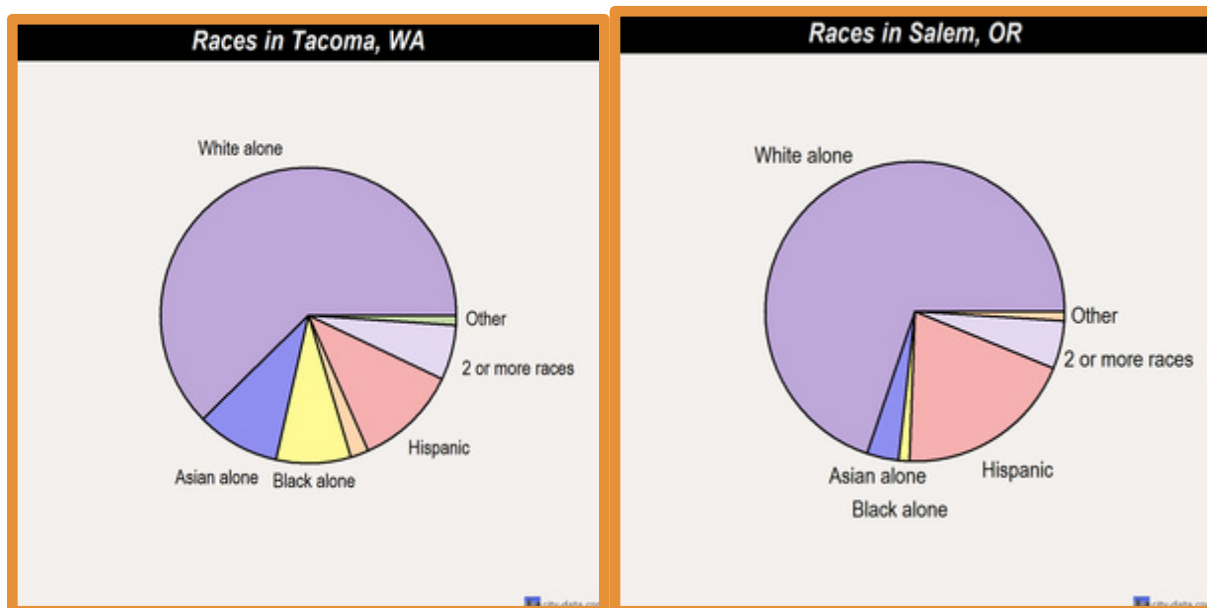
## City of Tacoma Overview

The City of Tacoma shares several characteristics with the City of Salem. Agriculture and technology are major industries in both Tacoma and Salem. The cities have relatively similar populations and size, although the City of Tacoma has a slightly larger population and area than the City of Salem.

- Tacoma has a population of 213,418 people and an area of 62.34 mi<sup>2</sup> as compared to Salem's population of 167,419 and area of 48.45 mi<sup>2</sup> (U.S. Census Bureau).
- Both cities have comparable growth rates, with an annual growth rate of 1.48% for Tacoma and 2.06% for Salem (World Population Review).
- In terms of housing prices, the median value of housing units from 2013-2017 was \$227,200 for Tacoma and \$201,900 for Salem.

The racial demographics for the cities are also somewhat similar when comparing the ratio between white people and people of color.

Racial Demographics in Tacoma, WA and Salem, OR:



(city-data.com, 2019)

Roughly 60% of Tacoma's population is white and about 68% of Salem's population is white. While the racial makeup of the cities are different, they both have a majority white population and similar needs to ensure equitable access to transportation and affordable housing.

## Housing in Tacoma

Tacoma created a Comprehensive Plan for their city in 2015. It is updated regularly, the most recent changes occurring in late 2018. Tacoma began the process of formulating a Comprehensive Plan for

their city by requesting input from community members through survey responses, focus groups organized for underrepresented communities, listening sessions, open house meetings, and community meetings. Based on the feedback from these methods of outreach, Tacoma created a plan prioritizing the areas most often emphasized by respondents.

Tacoma's housing goals involve (1) creating access to a variety of types of housing, (2) providing resources for equitable and physically-accessible housing, (3) focusing on new housing near services and transit, (4) increasing affordable housing, and (5) building more housing for lower income families and households with special needs.

#### STEPS TO FULFILL HOUSING GOALS:

1. *Encourage new and innovative housing types that meet the evolving needs of Tacoma households and expand housing choices in all neighborhoods.*
2. *Foster inclusive communities, overcome disparities in access to community assets, and enhance housing choice for people in protected classes throughout the city by coordinating plans and investments with fair housing policies.*
3. *Coordinate plans and investments with programs that prevent avoidable, involuntary evictions and foreclosures.*
4. *Evaluate plans and investments for the potential to cause displacement in areas with concentrations of communities of color, low- and moderate-income households, and renters.*
5. *Locate higher density housing, including units that are affordable and accessible, in and around designated centers to take advantage of the access to transportation, jobs, open spaces, schools, and various services and amenities.*
6. *Ensure that at least 25% of the 2040 housing targets are affordable to households at or below 80% of Pierce County AMI.*
7. *Prevent homelessness and reduce the time spent being homeless by ensuring that a continuum of safe and affordable housing opportunities and related supportive services are allowed and appropriately accommodated, including but not limited to transitional housing, emergency shelters, and temporary shelters.*
8. *Encourage a variety of ownership opportunities and choices by allowing and supporting the creation of condominiums, cooperatives, mutual housing associations, limited equity cooperatives, land trusts and sweat equity.*
9. *Pursue incentives and mechanisms to enlist the private market as a partner in the provision of affordable housing units.*
10. *Promote innovative development techniques to better utilize land, promote design flexibility, preserve open space and natural features and conserve energy resources.*

(City of Tacoma, 2015-2019)

#### AFFORDABLE HOUSING ACTION STRATEGY:

##### Actions Taken

1. Increased funding for homelessness mitigation, shelters, and transitional housing.
2. Implemented a tax incentive for multifamily housing.

### Progress So Far:

1. Successfully diverted 4,986 people from homelessness during the period of January 2017 to December 2018, exceeding goal of 2,200.
2. Added 150 affordable housing units by December 2018, falling short of goal of 300 additional units. (City of Tacoma, 2015-2019)

## **Transportation in Tacoma**

The vision for Tacoma is to be a place with the amenities of a big city while maintaining the feeling and charm of a small town. The city is surrounded by a number of neighboring communities which include the cities of Ruston, Fife, Lakewood, and more. Each of these adjacent cities shares borders with Tacoma. Therefore, it is important to incorporate the travel patterns of residents and businesses from these other cities which may commute to Tacoma for work, school, or business purposes. As such, Tacoma's transportation system aims to support its diverse residents and visitors who utilize various modes of transportation.

To support Tacoma's vision, the Transportation Master Plan was created in collaboration with stakeholders and the general public where an outreach program ensured input from community members. In this plan, Tacoma's transportation system offers multimodal transit options for all users and is designed to promote healthy living and sustainability. In planning its transportation system, the city has been highly cognizant of public health and climate change. In efforts to reduce pollution, it is a priority to maintain existing infrastructure and to utilize technology to make the transportation system more efficient. This includes the need to increase multimodal transport options including public transit, bicycling, and walking that promote healthy lifestyles. The Transportation Master Plan of Tacoma is guided by 6 goals.

### **TRANSPORTATION GOALS:**

1. Intergovernmental Coordination and Citizen Participation  
To provide the best service to all users of the regional transportation system, the city will proactively work to develop strategic partnerships at the state, regional, and local level.
2. Community Preservation  
To best support the living environment of its residents, the city will protect natural and well as neighborhood assets.
3. Multimodal System  
To improve and maintain good public health, reduce the environmental impact of transportation, and increase the livability of the city, Tacoma will create a well balanced transportation network that provides mobility options, accessibility, and economic vitality.
4. Environmental, Fiscal Stewardship and Social Accountability  
To support sustainability both environmentally and fiscally, as well as social equity, the city will strategically design and fund its transportation system.

5. Transportation Demand Management

To ensure overall effectiveness and efficiency of the multimodal transportation system, the city will implement transportation demand management strategies and programs.

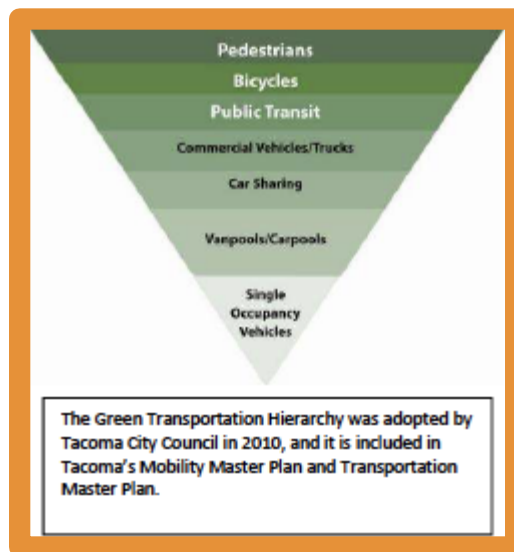
6. Land Use and Transportation

To support Tacoma's land use vision, the city will build a transportation network that incorporates and respects land use requirements.

(City of Tacoma 2015:54-66)

In support of these goals, Tacoma's Transportation Master Plan utilizes several concepts such as the Green Transportation Hierarchy, 20-minute neighborhoods, Mixed Use Centers (MUCs), the layered network, and modal priority networks to turn vision into reality.

The **Green Transportation Hierarchy** prioritizes pedestrians at the highest level over single occupancy vehicles at the bottom level (City of Tacoma 2015:68). Essentially, the hierarchy pyramid is designed as a cheat sheet for prioritizing greener methods of transport including walking, bicycling, and public transport. Car sharing, carpooling, and single occupancy vehicle usage is at the bottom of the pyramid indicating a need to reduce these methods for a greener City of Tacoma.



This green hierarchy directly feeds into the idea of the **layered network** and **modal priority networks** (66-92). Recognizing the challenge for single roadways to meet the demands and accommodate too many modes of transport at any given time, Tacoma applies the concept of a “layered network” where streets are envisioned as interconnected systems working in conjunction to serve multiple modes of transport and all kinds of users. Each layer in Tacoma's layered network is designed optimally for a specific mode of transportation and is referred to as a **modal priority network**. In this framework, each street type is expected to accommodate and serve its intended users as effectively and efficiently as possible. For example, a street for pedestrians, cyclers, and



public transport users would perhaps look like good sidewalks, a buffer between bicycles and traffic, and a bus priority lane.

**20-minute neighborhoods** is an idea that relies on the success of the pedestrian priority network that would ensure key destinations such as hospitals, schools, and food sources are kept within 20-minute walk radius of residents (70). Similarly, **mixed use centers** are envisioned as dense urban villages that are walkable, attractively designed, and rich in amenities (35). In support of Tacoma's vision, the Transportation Master Plan integrates neighborhood design with the layered network transportation system.

The final function of the Transportation Master Plan is to produce a list of projects that will guide how the City of Tacoma will allocate resources and balance investment priorities for transportation. Projects are categorized by type. Below are some example projects from the list (108-109).

Transportation Master Plan Project List:

- Pedestrian/Bicycle/Trail Projects
  - Shared use bicycle and pedestrian trails
  - Sidewalk completion in 20-minute neighborhoods
  - Pedestrian access to transit projects
  - Bicycle lanes and protected facilities
- Transit Projects
  - Partnership with Sound Transit on light rail extensions
  - Speed and reliability improvements
- Tacoma Rail Projects
  - Track replacement
  - Railroad grade separations
- Comprehensive Plan Neighborhood Action Strategies
  - Improvement of streets to include curb, gutter, and sidewalk
  - Street lighting, furniture, and public arts
  - ADA improvements (City of Tacoma 2015:108-9)

## How could these strategies be implemented in Salem?

The practices used in Madison, Wisconsin and Tacoma, Washington could be implemented in Salem through the use of similar tactics. Salem could use community visioning practices that are centered on racial equity and social justice. Salem could be intentional about directly including marginalized communities in their imaginative planning processes.

The concept of mixed-use/complete neighborhoods appear across the Comprehensive Plans of both Madison and Tacoma. Many transportation and housing issues are addressed by combining

services, housing, and transportation through mixed zoning. Access is greatly increased when members of all communities have bikeable and walkable neighborhoods supported by accessible and reliable public transportation.

Inequities occur when transportation and housing are considered as separate entities because they must work together to function effectively. Tacoma and Madison's Comprehensive Plan's address this issue of separation by integrating transportation and housing into a cohesive plan. By explicitly linking transportation to land use, Madison and Tacoma have designed multimode transportation systems that are foundational to the concepts of the mixed-use neighborhood, the 20-minute neighborhood, and "urban villages." With many new housing bills being passed on the state level, Salem has an opportunity to incorporate partnerships with pre-existing organizations and government programs into the implementation of their Comprehensive Plan. Overall, Tacoma, Washington and Madison, Wisconsin provide case studies for successful comprehensive city plans that the City of Salem can use to reference when creating and implementing an equity-based Comprehensive Plan.

## Section 3:

### Testing an Interactive & Accessible Workshop



*James Rojas believes that everyone is an urban planner.* Based on this perspective, he aims to empower individuals and communities to envision their “ideal community,” as a means of helping them create positive change. Rojas himself is an urban planner, artist and community activist. His urban designs and art installations help to explain the influence of U.S. Latino culture on urban design and sustainability. He also works to include and bolster the influence of low-income Latina/o/x voices in urban planning. He has facilitated over 400 interactive workshops around the world. He also developed the *Latino Urban Forum*, a group that combines raising awareness of the impact of urban planning on low-income Latina/o/x communities with advocacy. ([http://www.placeit.org/bio\\_james\\_rojas.html](http://www.placeit.org/bio_james_rojas.html))

### Ideas Behind the Methodology

“If you ask people what they want, they will say ‘more parking.’ If you ask people what they need from their community, they have completely different answers.” - James Rojas

James Rojas’ approach to city planning aims to help community members challenge the inaccessible nature of formal city planning. Instead of asking community members to conform to formal urban planning rituals and language, Rojas works to create safe, non-competitive, and nurturing spaces for people. In a more open, collaborative environment people can share their experiences and imagine a community formed by the needs of the people living within it. This method intentionally focuses on the personal experiences of community members, which Rojas argues reveals the core values that are essential to creating healthy and successful communities.

This contemporary approach to city planning uses emotions, memory, visual/tactile stimulation, and personal experiences to transform the ideas of community members into concrete aspirations. Through the use of childhood memories and past experiences, we are prompted to reveal the ideal parts of life that we hope to see active in our own spaces, our future experiences, and the lives of future generations. Additionally, the collaborative effort and hands-on experiences allows us to think beyond words, and problem solve in creative ways to identify the different aspects of community that we want to include in our own surroundings. By highlighting the physical connection that we have with movement and landscape, Rojas has cultivated a city planning method that not only incorporates community member input, but also opens our mind to a better understanding of what it is that we really need from a community.

Workshop methodology varies depending on the audience and its relationship to city planning. For example, Rojas sometimes asks participants, “When did you first realize you were Latinx in the US?”

This question allows participants to reflect on what it means to be a part of a Latinx community and how their values might be better captured by the landscape. Below is a description of the workshop methodology used on February 28, 2019 at McKay High School.

## Workshop

The workshop was split into two parts. Part one prompted a self-reflection. Individuals were asked to build their favorite childhood memory. People took 5 minutes to create models on an 8x10 piece of paper. Then each person took a minute to share their story with the rest of the group. Participants were asked what themes they heard that were common to more than one story: nature/outdoors, parks (soccer field), and family from siblings to grandmother's house. Then participants were asked, what didn't they tell stories about? Businesses and shopping, cars and transportation, television, etc.

As you can see in the photographs, participants used a random miscellany of playful, colorful objects to build their favorite childhood memory. Objects were used to encourage spatial and visual thinking beyond words (especially if there are language barriers) and highlight the physical connection people have to the landscape and movement through it. The icebreaker is meant to build empathy and validation between participants and in the group as a whole. Participants often realize they are experts on their own environments when focused on personal stories and memories.



Playground

Part two builds on the trust and comfort established in part one to create a safe environment for idea generation, consensus building, and collaboration. Participants were asked to clear off their 8x10 pieces of paper and add them together into small groups. Rojas created teams of 5-6 people and asked them to build their ideal community. The prompt could be interpreted as place-based such as neighborhoods, parks, and housing or as issue-based such as health, sustainability, equity, and mobility. After working in small groups for 15-20 minutes. Each team then presented their creations to the larger group so every idea circulating at the workshop is shared with equal value. Finally, the groups came together to analyze and synthesize the experience by interpreting what was built, generating comprehensive lists of ideas, and establishing collective values. The details are described below.



Soccer Field



Abuela's House

## Illustrative Examples of Ideal Salem

After the participants were comfortable and trust was established, Rojas split the attendees into small groups and asked them to work together to build a vision of their ideal Salem. This exercise provided illustrative examples of the needs and concerns of the community.

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The first group built a vision of salem that included: a stream, an art center, a comprehensive bus system, biking and walking paths, parks complete with edible fruit trees and vegetable gardens, grocery options, plenty of housing with access to the library, gym, school and green spaces.

When describing their vision of the city, the group stressed the importance of access to services for all people who live in or near Salem. They mentioned how so many of the green spaces in Salem were only accessible to the people who lived near them. They talked about how the ideal Salem would include a comprehensive public transport system. The white straws in the photo above represent bus access to the entire city at any time of day or night.



A second group built a vision of Salem that was centered around neighborhoods. This group talked explicitly about the idea of complete neighborhoods and their model includes different neighborhoods, noted by the different sheets of colored paper (photo below). Each of the neighborhoods had housing represented by the hair curlers, grocery options represented by the green eggs and building blocks, and green space represented by the leaves. This sort of complete neighborhood setup speaks to the specific issues that the group talked about such as food deserts and walkability.

The second important piece of their model was the focus on transportation. They built bike paths running through each neighborhood, depicted with popsicle sticks. They include walking paths that connect each neighborhood to the central park, depicted with the yellow, pink and orange pipe cleaners. Finally, they highlighted the importance of connectivity to the areas surrounding Salem with the red pipe cleaners which represent bus lines that connect the deeper parts of Salem to the surrounding communities like Keizer and Independence.



After all of the groups had presented their vision of an ideal Salem and had described their creations, Rojas asked the gathered community members to think about the common themes across all of the group's visions. The common themes were:

- Accessibility and proximity
- Nature and sustainability
- Public services like community centers
- Shared spaces that were nurturing

These illustrative examples demonstrate the values of participants and are important to consider in regards to a vision for the city. Participants were also asked to think about what they *did not build*:

- No bridge
- No cars or parking
- No strip malls and few businesses (only grocery stores and food trucks)
- No industrial spaces, no Amazon, no incinerator or pollution-intensive industries
- No highway

Rojas described what groups did create as a better balance between people and nature. He argued that when designing an ideal city people are forced to think about their core values like harmony with nature. Exercises like this give people license to be imaginative and think big about Salem.

Rojas ended the workshop with the question: How do you see your surroundings differently after this exercise?

- Participants now saw the built environment (individual houses and lawns) as a deliberate choice
- Highlighted transportation difficulties within Salem and between Salem and other cities
- See designing cities as really about building opportunities for community
- Think cities would be different if they included underserved communities in the planning conversation
- Clarified what was missing in their community (proximity to green space)
- Move past centering the practical (banks) and into centering what matters
- Importance of mixed-zoning in the future
- Think about not only the presence of green spaces but who is welcomed into those spaces
- The city spends a lot of time attracting businesses, but little time attracting community spaces and transit

## Recommendation

We recommend that Phase 2 visioning events include an accessible and interactive component like this that moves beyond planning jargon and language differences. For example, an exercise might use a long sheet of butcher paper and mixed media (colored paper, markers, etc.) to explore how people get to and from work, school and other services. Or sidewalk chalk could be used to create a “mural” of how we want to use green spaces.

## Next Steps

The following community groups and people have requested that the City of Salem contact them in relation to Phase 2: visioning. These groups are either interested in being invited to visioning events or would like to invite the City of Salem to an event they are planning for the summer/fall.

<b>Community Organizations/Groups</b>	<b>Contact Name</b>	<b>Email</b>
Mano A Mano	Levi Hernandez	levi@manoamanofc.org
LUS (Latinos Unidos Siempre)	Sandra Hernandez-Lomelli	sandra@lusyouth.org
PCUN	Martha Sonato	marthasonato@pcun.org
CAUSA	Alonso Oliveros	alonso@causaoregon.org,
Salem Keizer Coalition for Equality	Annalivia Palazzo-Angulo	apalazzo@skcequality.org
RJOC	Jan Montes	proyectopoderoregon@gmail.com
Enlace	Amador Aguilar	enlace3c@gmail.com



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