

Portland's Caring Community



A Caring Economy

with a Social Lens View

of Inclusion & Equity

A Caring Economy

Caring economics provides us with the opportunity to think about prosperity at the community level. Unlike mainstream economics' focus on goods and services, caring economics values our work and desire to end poverty, overcome injustice and create a peaceful, harmonious world.

Per **Prosper Portland**, the economic and urban development agency for the City of Portland, healthcare is one of Portland's top five clusters. It is viewed as "critical in a market like Portland, where limited resources require targeted investments to growing traded sector industries and improved access to quality employment opportunities." See **Attachment**, Healthcare and Hospitality Workers in Old Town.

In addition to supportive care and shelter housing, the **Oregon College of Oriental Medicine** is in Old Town as well as social services ranging from **Allied Health Services** of Portland, a medication assisted treatment provider, to the **P:EAR program**, creative mentoring of homeless youth and **Mercy Corps North- West**, "working together to build more just, productive and resilient communities in the Pacific NW." **The Gladys McCoy Health Department Headquarters** with over 500 employees relocated to Old Town.

Social Enterprises

There are opportunities to develop the whole range of neighborhood-serving businesses which do not yet exist, starting with healthy food, as part of economic development and job creation programs that serve all those who live and work here - approximately 9,000 people. Central City Concern offers work placement services to its clients and has social enterprises engaged "in mission- appropriate business models that generate income for the agency. Frequently, successful client graduates are employed by these businesses." We need more of this approach to business development.

Excerpt from Portland's Caring Community, A Guide to Old Town Chinatown's Housing Landscape, January 2018, Ruth Ann Barrett

1. Annual Mean wages, Hospitality

Occupation title (click on the occupation title to view its profile)	Employment	Employment RSE	Employment per 1,000 jobs	Median hourly wage	Mean hourly wage	Annual mean wage
Bartenders	9,040	7.2%	5.050	\$10.65	\$12.16	\$25,290
Dishwashers	6,290	6.9%	3.513	\$10.53	\$10.77	\$22,400
Hosts and Hostesses, Restaurant, Lounge, and Coffee Shop	3,650	11.3%	2.038	\$10.13	\$10.65	\$22,160
First-Line Supervisors of Housekeeping and Janitorial Workers	1,850	13.2%	1.032	\$21.07	\$22.15	\$46,080
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	14,140	6.0%	7.898	\$11.24	\$11.96	\$24,880
Baggage Porters and Bellhops	270	29.6%	0.150	\$10.93	\$11.43	\$23,780
May 2016 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates	Oregon					

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The Social Lens of Inclusion and Equity

We need to have our leaders see Old Town and its residents through a different lens; a more people-oriented lens that respects the residents who live here and recognizes healthcare and social enterprises/ entrepreneurship as measures of economic vitality.

Looking at housing through a “humanistic lens in discussions dominated by designers, social scientists, and policy analysts” is what the author, Nicholas Dagen Bloom does in his authoritative book, [Affordable Housing in New York](#). He shares stories and draws attention to New City’s remarkable achievements. **The view of supportive housing as an achievement is the hallmark of a caring community and one that prioritizes safety.**

Overall we need leaders and City staff to look through a social lens, rather than a physical form one. Little attention has been paid to conducting social and environmental impact studies of proposed redevelopment projects on our neighbors, especially poor ones.

The lack of due diligence performed for a City/County shelter proposal is an excellent example of this building-focused planning model. The new shelter would increase the ratio of shelters to rental units/condos at the North end of the neighborhood and in the New Chinatown Japantown Historic District. With the addition of this 200 bed low barrier shelter, the ratio of sheltered to renters/ owners would go from a problematic one-to-one ratio to an untenable two-to-one ratio.

A humanistic lens supports the City’s inclusion and equity policies being applied consistently and with compassion and respect. Over the years that I have lived in this neighborhood, City officials and employees have failed to challenge the lack of representation on the part of our neighbors in testimony, meetings, and letters. Renters, residents in supportive care programs, shelter residents, condo owners - are not been found at the decision-making level. Decisions have been made for the residents not with them or by them.

Because of Old Town's rootedness in the homeless population, the factors of most importance to the neighborhood related to our day-to-day experiences are the following:

- 10% increase in homelessness from 2015 to 2017;
- crisis in access to mental health services;
- an opioid epidemic; and
- threats of reductions in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, SSI, SNAP, tax "reform" and other programs aimed at cutting "entitlements" at the national level.

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ATTACHMENT

Healthcare and Hospitality Workers in Old Town

Healthcare was selected as one of five economic clusters by Prosper Portland based on “local employment concentration, historic and future growth, global reputation and brand, and middle-wage job accessibility. It is the primary sector in Old Town Chinatown.

However, our neighborhood is best known as the “entertainment” district. There is an Old Town Hospitality Group with nearly 40 members listed. It is not the primary industry/sector.

Hospitality is not equated with “middle-wage job accessibility” cited in the Prosper Portland’s strategy as highly desirable. Excerpt from Portland’s Caring Community, A Guide to Old Town Chinatown’s Housing Landscape, January 2018, Ruth Ann Barrett

Hospitality full-time minimum wage workers have an annual mean wage of less than \$25,000 per year. Many do not earn enough to qualify for even 60% MFI below market subsidized units at a rent of \$775 per month.

If the City Council’s 25-25 workforce development strategy for the creation of 25,000 new jobs and the Youth

SummerWorks program are applied to The Caring Community in meaningful ways, a “weakness” becomes the City’s best opportunity for improving the economy of our neighborhood.

An affordable housing rental strategy for the neighborhood would at least look more closely at those already working in the neighborhood as prospects for new housing to maximize the number of people who live AND work in the neighborhood as part of reducing commuting and carbon. The current strategy by the Old Town Community Association (OTCT), supported by Prosper Portland and part of the Five-Year Plan focuses on market rate housing and is predicated on the assumption that we have “too much” affordable housing at 700 units in the neighborhood.

From Attachment E, Portland’s Caring Community, A Guide to Old Town Chinatown’s Housing Landscape, January 2018, Ruth Ann Barrett

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