



Four key topics related to the OTCT/Pearl District  
Task-Social Services Recommendations, Draft, 2,  
February 12, 2019  
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- The Root Cause
- The Basics
- Collaboration
- Social Enterprises

## The ROOT CAUSE

“Improve the capacity of neighborhood residents to support community-wide efforts to address the **root causes of homelessness/houselessness** and the systemic solutions to meeting the needs of our most vulnerable populations.”

As to “root causes” we\*, offer a quote from Father Greg of Homeboy Industries. He knows what he is talking about having experienced it ourselves as residents, some of people of color, some of us seniors, some of us disabled, some of us sick, some of us healthy, many of us low income renters in affordable housing.



“This place wants to stand against forgetting that we belong to each other. It’s at the root of all things wrong with this world. It’s born of the notion that there might be lives out there that matter less than other lives.”

We in the Caring Community want this neighborhood to stand against forgetting that we belong to each other.

We want representation, not tokenism.

We want generosity without the strong scent of noblesse oblige, a justification for privilege.

We need inspiration and hope from our leadership then education and training.

Reality is relative. Let’s use metrics that help define the problems and point to successes within this service-based ecosystem\*\* - moving homeless folks into housing and, if appropriate, supportive care.

\* We are band of residents living in affordable housing who mainly talk with each other, survey our neighbors and write comments and reports on issues raised in our conversations and attendance at meetings held in our neighborhood.

\*\* \*(in general use) a complex network or interconnected system.

## The BASICS

The **last point** in the OTCT Pearl District Task Force - Social Service recommendations is the most important and where resources should be focused with the Harbor of Hope a start.



“Expand hygiene services available to people who are unsheltered including bathrooms, showers, garbage service, property storage.”

(and not included in list, laundry, bedding, clothing, access to healthy food, and a safe place to lay ones head).

In our *Guide to the Housing Landscape* we emphasize the importance of paying attention to basic needs and cite Maslow's hierarchy of needs. And it is no accident that the second level addresses safety. Safety for all of us. [See Attachment A.](#)



## Collaboration

"In performing the research for this paper, we found the need for the owners/chief executives of organizations to talk to one another - executives of **housing properties** in the healthcare sector (supportive care and shelters) and the fledgling residential real estate sector."

-Guide to Housing Landscape, Old Town Chinatown

In our *Guide to Housing Landscape* we recommended collaboration and found a similar desire in the social service recommendations under the topic, *Enhanced Services*, and among "non-profit service providers...ongoing information sharing about programming, coordination of services, collaboration on program innovations, and problem solving."

Collaboration is a term rarely used in official documents about homelessness.

### Landowners/Service Providers

The landowners in our housing sector don't talk with each other. Many collect rent from us. Nearly all enjoy tax exempt status and/or tax subsidies. Many compete for resources both public and

private to support basic services, including housing, to their clients.

### Professional Staff and Volunteers

Those working in the field would benefit from mentoring, leadership training and time to participate in collaborative, problem solving sessions with their peers - other professionals providing services to the housed and the unhoused. We need designated leaders who serve as spokespersons for what is being achieved across the system - communicating successes and challenges and reporting from pooled data - mashups if you will.

### EcoSystem

It is hard to believe that given the size of the housing problem, overlaid with a drug crisis, mental health challenges, and the widening gap in income (most obvious in the two neighborhoods forming this Task Force - [see Attachment B](#)), the people in this neighborhood who hold sway over the lives of so many of our residents representing governmental, public, and private organizations - don't even meet with each other regularly.

A significant number of people in this neighborhood derive income from the service ecosystem. They are part of what some may call an industry - one that is more competitive than collaborative. The ecosystem requires collaboration at all levels - executive, staff, volunteers and clients, residents, and business owners, especially real estate executives, all of whom are part of the ecosystem. In manufacturing it would be called a supply chain.

We need leaders who serve as spokespersons for what is being achieved across the many organizations involved and in business they would be industry leaders. Metrics are determined for the system (see Attach C, PSU Capstone Study) and all ecosystem members contribute.

From each organization, we need communications people to meet quarterly and determine how they can bring forward key messages that require frequency and consistency to be effective in a sea of information and on highly commercialized platforms. This is called partnership marketing and it includes co-sponsorships.

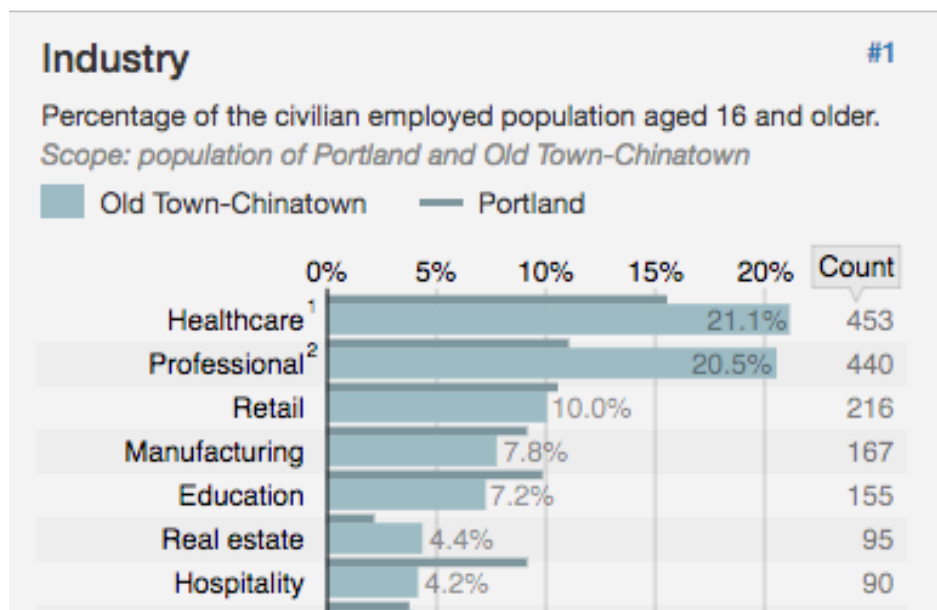
## Social Enterprises

*“Expand opportunities for low barrier to entry employment.”*

In the *Guide* we address the need for a caring economy and ask for economic analysis that yields actionable information as to where in the system there are substantial problems and what external issues need to be addressed with resources in order for goals and objectives to be met.

### Job Creation

Job creation is key for the segment of homeless folks who can work (%) and in the *Guide* we recommend **expanding social enterprises**. There are opportunities to develop a whole range of neighborhood-serving businesses (there are none), starting with healthy food, as part of economic development and job creation programs that serve all those who live and work here - well over 9,000 people, daytime population\* a large number of whom are either employed in providing services (health/social services) or, as residents, on the receiving end of the services they provide.



### Residents and Employees - The invisibles

There thousands of folks, both residents and employees we know very little about in terms of demographics, their experiences of living and working in the neighborhood, and what they need to feel part of a caring community. Their voices are not moved forward by the establishment, tokenism is the fashion of decision-making boards and committees, and it is unfortunate if there is a desire to build community and the pencil folks can't make this size of date time population work, instead focusing solely on tourism and visitors.

\* Prosper Portland, 2018 Demographic data

## ATTACHMENT A

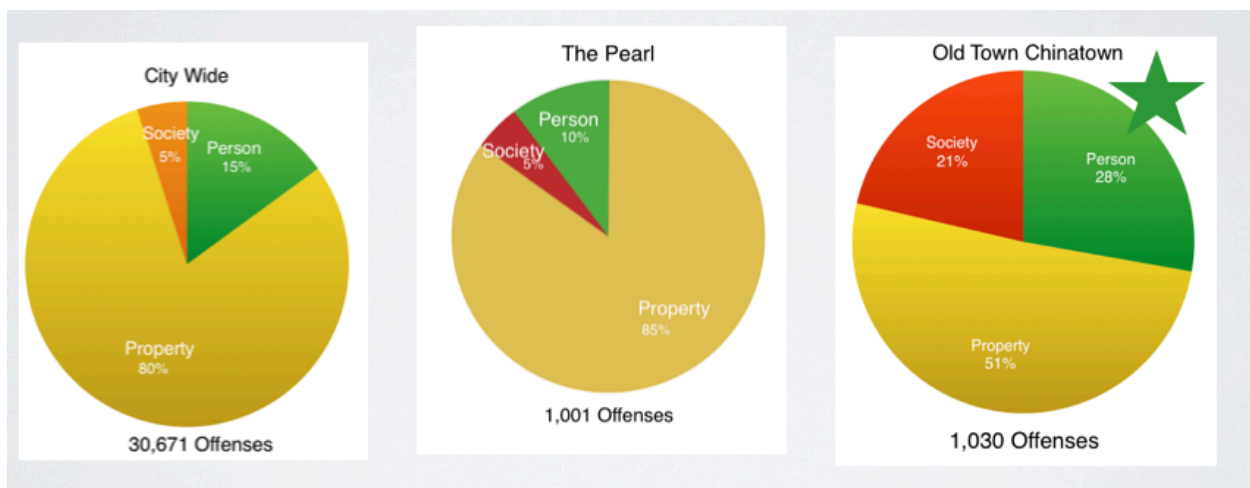
### Livability and Safety

From the *Guide*:

“Because of its rootedness in the homeless population, the factors of most importance to Old Town that are 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
- constant threats of reductions in benefits - Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, SSI, SNAP, tax “reform” and other programs aimed at cutting “entitlements” at the national level.”

From the document, *Two Neighborhoods Old Town Chinatown and the Pearl*



## ATTACHMENT B

### Income



These two neighborhoods have some things in common, but the most glaring difference is income. The question that arises is when the term, resident is used in this and other reports, who exactly are we talking about? We recommend using the term, community members, in

future documents and being specific when possible.

What else does the Pearl have that Old Town does not?

**RENTERS-OWNERS**

Population renter and owner occupied

Neighborhood	Population	Population Renters	Median Household Income rank	Owner Occupies	Renters 2010/ Population	Owners
Old Town Chinatown	3,922	2,278	61	181	58%	5%
The Pearl	5,997	3,644	25	2,333	61%	39%
	9,919	5,922		2,333		
		60%		24%		

<http://www.portlandonline.com/oni/>  
2010 U.S. Census

As to renters, 49% of renters in Portland are cost burdened and that includes a number of those in affordable housing in Old Town at 60%MFI and with a 9% increase in rents this Spring thanks to HUD many will not qualify at the 60% level.

And what does Old Town have that the Pearl does not?

**GROUP QUARTERS**

Old Town	The Pearl
1,463	20
37%	0%

All Group Quarters  
Percent Institutionalized to Population



## ATTACHMENT C

### Metrics

Benefits of knowing about homelessness are included in PSU's Capstone Study and should provide direction to the OTCT/Pearl Task Force for measurement needs:

- Cost Estimates of Homelessness in Multnomah County
- Understand cost saving of prevention efforts
- More conscious choices about limited dollars (across all partners)
- Identify who is costing the most and why
- Better coordination of services
- Quantity how much is being spent on health care and law enforcement (by neighborhood)
- Project estimated costs into the future

The community issues around drug addiction and mental illness are considerable for not only those on the street, but those living in supportive care, yet the magnitude of the drug crisis is buried in the story of the housing crisis and for Old Town addiction and recovery is rooted in the neighborhood.



What you may learn AFTER you rent an apartment in Old Town: "In the early 1970s Portland's Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood was populated largely by older men living in shabby, crime-ridden single room occupancy (SRO) buildings. The rent was cheap, the drug of choice was alcohol and Portland's street inebriate problem was one of the worst in the nation." (CCC website)

Q: So, what about Portland's street inebriate problem that now includes a panoply of drugs? Still one of the worst in the nation? Primarily a housing issue? Part of the assaults/drug traffic?

A:



We would like to take this opportunity to emphasize the vision that we have for our community, Portland's Caring Community:



And emphasize the principles that we are expecting in the organizations that are most interested in developing Old Town and/or play a role in the quality of life of all of us who live and work here - housed and unhoused.

They are:

- inclusiveness
- transparency
- trust
- respect
- sustainability

These are called out in the document, *Cultural Heritage Tourism, Partners for Livable Communities* and are basic and required for successful community development efforts.

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EarthSayers.tv, Voices of Sustainability

March 5, 2019

Documents referred to in this paper are available for download at  
[PDXCaringCommunity.com](https://www.pdxcaringcommunity.com).

<https://www.pdxcaringcommunity.com/three-must-read-documents>