

Encore Regional Convening

Portland, Oregon | November 30, 2016

Ecotrust's Billy Frank Jr. Conference Center

Portland Regional Convening Report

From Encore.org
to the
November 30th Co-conveners and Participants

December 2016

ENCORE.org

Co-Convening Organizations

JVENCorps
A PROGRAM OF JVC NORTHWEST

MFS Metropolitan Family Service
Moving Lives Forward.

Bridge Meadows

life by design nw

AARP[®]
Real Possibilities

sage[®]
Senior Advocates for Generational Equity

Portland State UNIVERSITY
Institute on Aging

Elders in Action[®]
EST. 1968

SOCIAL VENTURE PARTNERS
ENCORE FELLOWS

Overview

The Portland region, like much of the country, is experiencing rapid growth among its older population. People are both aging in place and moving here to retire. What opportunities does this “aging boom,” or “experience dividend,” represent? What are the challenges? How might people of all ages work together to create a more age-friendly, equitable region?

On November 30, 2016, nearly 100 leaders from nonprofits, government, higher education, philanthropy, and community volunteer efforts gathered for a day-long event to discuss these questions.

The event was co-convened by Encore.org, a national nonprofit that is focused on tapping the talent, skills and life experience of the rapidly growing older population to solve significant societal problems; along with the Portland-area programs and organizations listed on the cover of this report.

The pages that follow offer a window into the conversations during the day. Selected materials from the event are posted on the web at <http://conference.encore.org/regional/>.

The day at a glance

PLENARY, 8:45 am-10:30 am
Including breakfast, keynotes, and a networking opportunity with 100+ leaders.

- Hear from national and local leaders
- Explore inspiring ideas
- Connect with each other

WORKING SESSIONS, 11:00 am-3:30 pm
Assessing Portland's encore- and age-friendly ecosystem, lunchtime conversation, information on national efforts, and topic-focused working groups.

- Continue the conversation
- Map the current ecosystem
- Shape what's next

Plenary Sessions (8:45 am – 10:30 am)

The morning sessions gave all 95 participants an intensive opportunity to learn more about age-friendly and encore-related efforts across the region and around the country. A group of older adult volunteers and program leaders from Bridge Meadows, Experience Corps, and IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization) began the day with stories about what their work means to them. Alan DeLaTorre, who co-coordinates Age-Friendly Portland and Multnomah County, gave a short talk focused on the region's changing demographics and how local age-friendly efforts are responding.

Ann MacDougall and Marc Freedman of Encore.org placed Portland's innovative programs within the context of a national movement. Eunice Lin Nichols, leader for Encore.org's Generation to Generation Campaign, invited participants to join this new national effort to involve even more older adults in contributing to the well-being of younger generations. Finally, leaders from the co-convening organizations offered brief highlights of how their efforts are engaging experienced talent and helping solve social problems in the region.



Early evaluation results (with 40% of participants responding) suggest that all of these presentations were well-received. One person commented: *"It was great to 'meet' the co-conveners, and get a sense of the tremendous scope of engagement already happening. It was a bit overwhelming, though, to receive so much info in such a short window."* Another said *"It was a room full of amazing people from many generations with a lot of experience and a powerful desire to make the world a better place. What's not to love?"* One major critique, however, was of the lack of racial diversity and sector diversity (beyond nonprofits, government, and higher education).

The plenary sessions ended at 10:30 am, and were followed by a 30-minute networking break. Participants who had planned to attend only for the morning sessions left at this point in the program.

Networking Break

During the networking break, participants were encouraged to meet someone new and also to use brightly colored sticky notes to post "hot topics" they were interested in pursuing later in the day. Among these were "preparing and motivating organizations to involve older adult volunteers," "role of older adults in addressing divisions in our communities – race, immigration, gender, political," and "fighting ageism in the workplace."



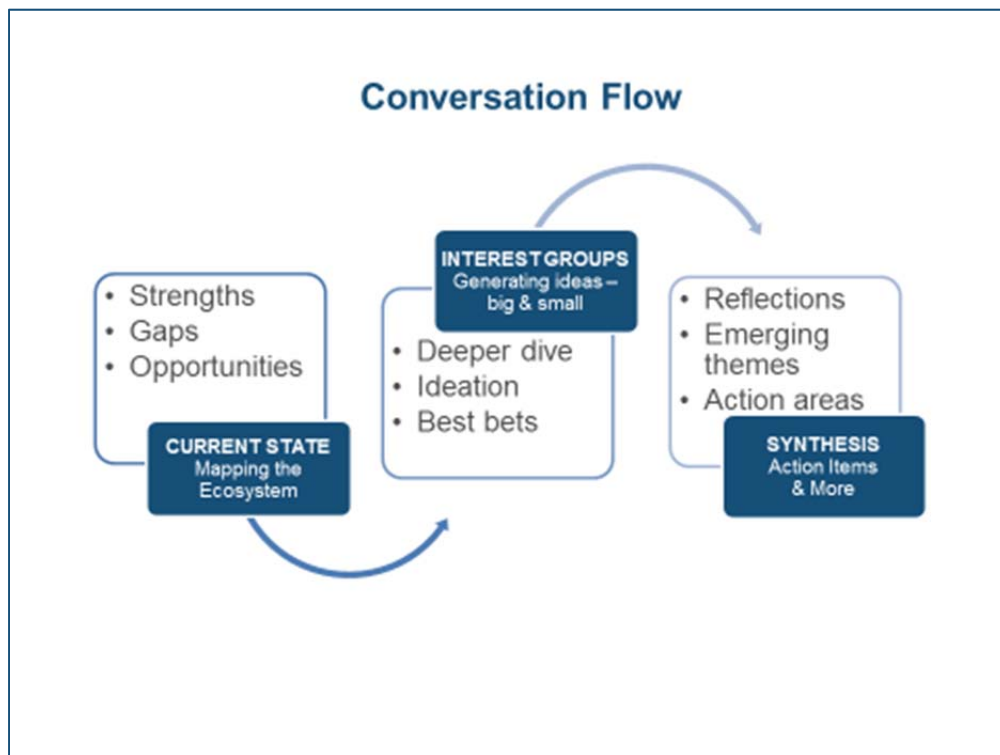
Working Sessions (11:00 am – 3:30 pm)

During the remainder of the day, participants engaged in three major activities:

1. Mapping strengths, opportunities, and gaps in Portland’s current “ecosystem” for age-friendly and encore efforts;
2. Joining in one of seven interest groups (formed based on earlier hot topics and the ecosystem mapping) to generate ideas for action; and
3. Reporting out from discussions and reflecting on the day and next steps.

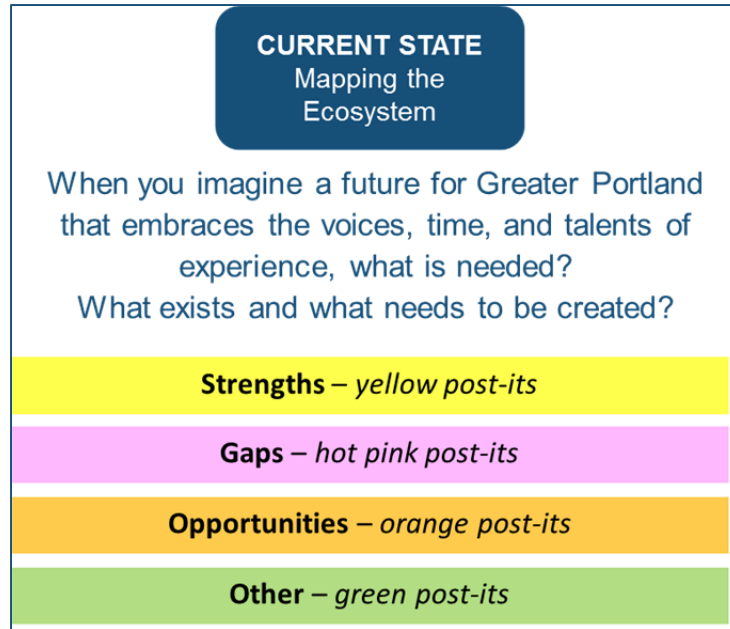
The graphic below shows the flow of conversations from 11:00 am through the end of the day. The overarching questions that guided the group were:

*When you imagine a future for Greater Portland that embraces the voices, time, and talents of experience – What is needed?
What exists and what needs to be created?*



Current State: Mapping the Ecosystem

To build a picture of what exists, what doesn’t, and what opportunities the current situation offers, participants spent about 30 minutes brainstorming alone or with people at their table to generate ideas on color-coded sticky notes as shown below. People were asked to identify strengths, gaps, opportunities or “other” items in three categories: *Recruiting and Using Talent, Connectors, and Solving Social Problems*.



The group then did a “gallery walk” – looking at the picture that had been created – followed by participants offering reflections about what they observed.

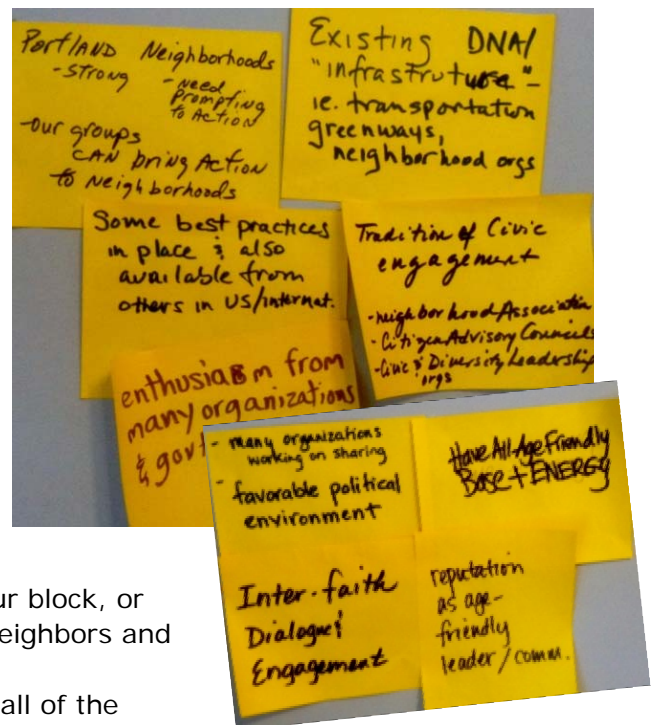
One key reflection was that, looking across the wall of sticky notes, there was a sea of pink (gaps) in the central area of Connectors. There were many assets/strengths (yellow) in the area of Recruiting and Using Experienced Talent, and many opportunities (orange) throughout!

Some strengths people noted were:

- Many organizations working on sharing.
- Favorable political environment.
- Reputation as age-friendly leader.
- Existing DNA/Infrastructure – transportation, greenways, neighborhood orgs.

In the “other” category (green), people listed ideas such as:

- Extend AmeriCorps concept to general society – require a year or so of community service. That could bring generations into more contact with each other.
- We need to know everyone who lives on our block, or on the floor of our building. We need our neighbors and they need us.
- Continued need to connect and coordinate all of the great existing efforts within our community.
- Election results put more emphasis/need on local actions.



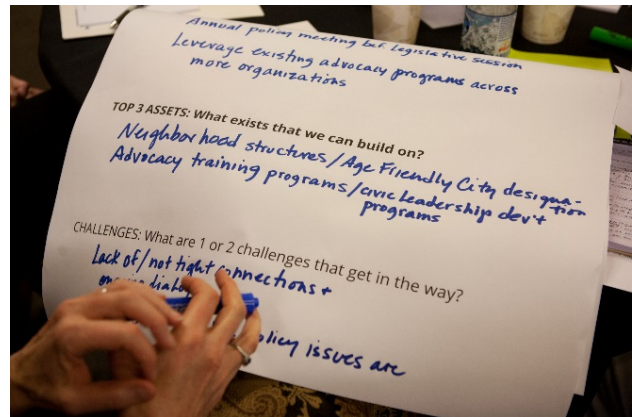
The ecosystem in sticky notes



Interest Groups: Discussing Ideas for the Future

During lunch, a few of the event organizers used the hot topics and the ecosystem mapping to identify frequently-mentioned areas of interest and common themes. The following topics emerged, each of which attracted a group of between 5 and 12 people:

- Ageism
- Aging in Community (including concerns about affordable housing and gentrification)
- Bridging Divides (e.g. across race, income, generations)
- Collaboration and Alignment
- Funding
- Joint Advocacy
- Organizational Capacity



Groups had about an hour to clarify their topic, brainstorm ideas for action, and pick 3 “best bets” to bring back to the full group. A separate report from these interest groups is posted at <http://conference.encore.org/regional/> (Interest Group Report-Out Notes).

Reporting and Reflections

Once each group had created a poster with their “best bets,” these were posted on the wall for another gallery walk, allowing all participants to see the other groups’ ideas. Then, one person from each group reported on their discussion.

The event ended with a few participants offering reflections on the day’s experience, and with thank-yous for the high level of engagement and enthusiasm throughout the day.



Post-Convening Follow-Up

A post-convening survey went out to all participants a few days following the event. Just over 40% of participants (40/95) responded.

In response to the question “Overall, would you say that your experience at the convening will help you to take action, alone or with others, to help transform Portland’s aging community into a force for social good?” – all but one person said “yes” (17 responses) or “for the most part” (20 responses).

Respondents offered specific follow-up actions, either in their organizational or individual roles:

- Trying to figure out where Generation to Generation may be housed and how Age-Friendly Portland and Multnomah County can be involved to ensure success.
- It helped our organization think through our potential in bringing intergenerational work to what we do.

Report from the Portland Regional Convening

- Continue with my organization's efforts to address ageism, and work on getting an Encore Fellow working with my organization.
- Interact with other co-conveners.
- Consider ways I can do more to support work around intergenerational approaches.
- Connecting with a few agencies and organizations that were represented at the event.
- Will follow up with co-conveners and consider volunteering for future action.
- Visit Bridge Meadows.
- Decide where my talent and experiences would be a fit.
- Continue advocating at the local and state level for resources and policies to support aging in community.
- Explore opportunities to volunteer with other groups represented at this gathering.

Respondents also expressed the hope that co-conveners or other connecting entities would take action, including:

- Engage us further. Give me an opportunity to support future convening and then give others opportunity to bring their own assets and capacity forward to building together. And finally, and perhaps most important, I would hope for conveners to empower us to build our own unique well-coordinated asset for this initiative and our larger cause.
- Integrate the work of migrant and refugee organizations more into the work of an age-friendly city. There are a lot of young people from war-torn portions of the world who could really use an older person in their community who cares about their well-being, and a lot of older folks who want to express care.
- Keep meeting, even if it's a light-agenda regularly-scheduled lunch.
- To actively participate in recruitment, messaging, and collaborative opportunities.
- Reaching out to leaders in communities of color/faith communities who were not represented in the room.
- Create one or more "nodes" for ongoing conversation and collaborative action opportunities.
- I'm excited about the report Elders in Action said they would put together.
- Develop a collaborative nonprofit group with local business to move forward on several strategies
- Leverage Institute on Aging Committees (Civic Engagement, Housing, etc.) to continue work.
- Continue to provide a place for all resources and services to coordinate and expand offerings.
- Keep talking and acting together to maintain and build momentum; maximize resources and measure successes
- Continue these types of sessions to move these efforts forward in our community.
- Convene nonprofits who engage volunteers to continue the conversation about how to effectively involve older adults
- I hope the people in our Ageism working session who are writers will follow up on their plans to write targeted pieces for various age groups.
- Share with Metro, Multnomah county and Multnomah county leaders and staff.

High energy and enthusiasm was evident throughout the day and in the detailed post-event survey responses. We look forward to what's next!