

Ankeny West:

Food carts were popularized in Portland during the ‘great’ recession and helped bolster the economy, create affordable dining options, and enhance the vitality of streets for locals and visitors. As the urban core continues to densify and surface parking lots, home to many food cart pods, are developed, innovative ideas are essential to preserve this aspect of Portland’s culture. Concepts such as “The Culinary Corridor” move food carts into the right-of-way, freeing up developable land in the city core. Simultaneously, the City has been planning for The Green Loop, a bike and pedestrian-friendly linear park around the Central City that will create a safe, accessible, and sustainable urban experience. With both projects reimagining the use of the right-of-way, Friends of the Green Loop saw an opportunity to locate future food cart pods along the Green Loop.

The Alder Street Food Cart Pod was one of the largest and oldest food cart pods in Portland, employing around 300 people, the majority of whom were BIPOC and/or immigrants. The parking lot occupied by the food carts was recently developed, and while the ground floor of the new building had been reserved for a food hall, a new location needed to be found for the carts themselves.

Working with the Mayor, City Council, and Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), The Friends of the Green Loop identified Ankeny West as the new home for the Alder Street food carts and the site of the pilot program for The Culinary Corridor. The site is only a few blocks from the previous location, still in the central city core and close to offices and tourist attractions. Also positioned at the southern end of the North Park Blocks, the site provides the opportunity to combine food cart and park programming and the occasion to strengthen the crossing of West Burnside Street, creating a stronger link to the park blocks for bicyclists and pedestrians.

When the project opened in July 2024, it was the first time a food cart pod was successfully located in the public right-of-way. This impactful intervention has set a precedent for alternative uses of the right-of-way and is a big step towards Portland’s urban planning goals of supporting active transportation, economic vibrancy, and equitable investments to entrepreneurs.