Action Plan for an Age-Friendly Portland

Prepared by:

The Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council

October 8, 2013

The Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council, 2013

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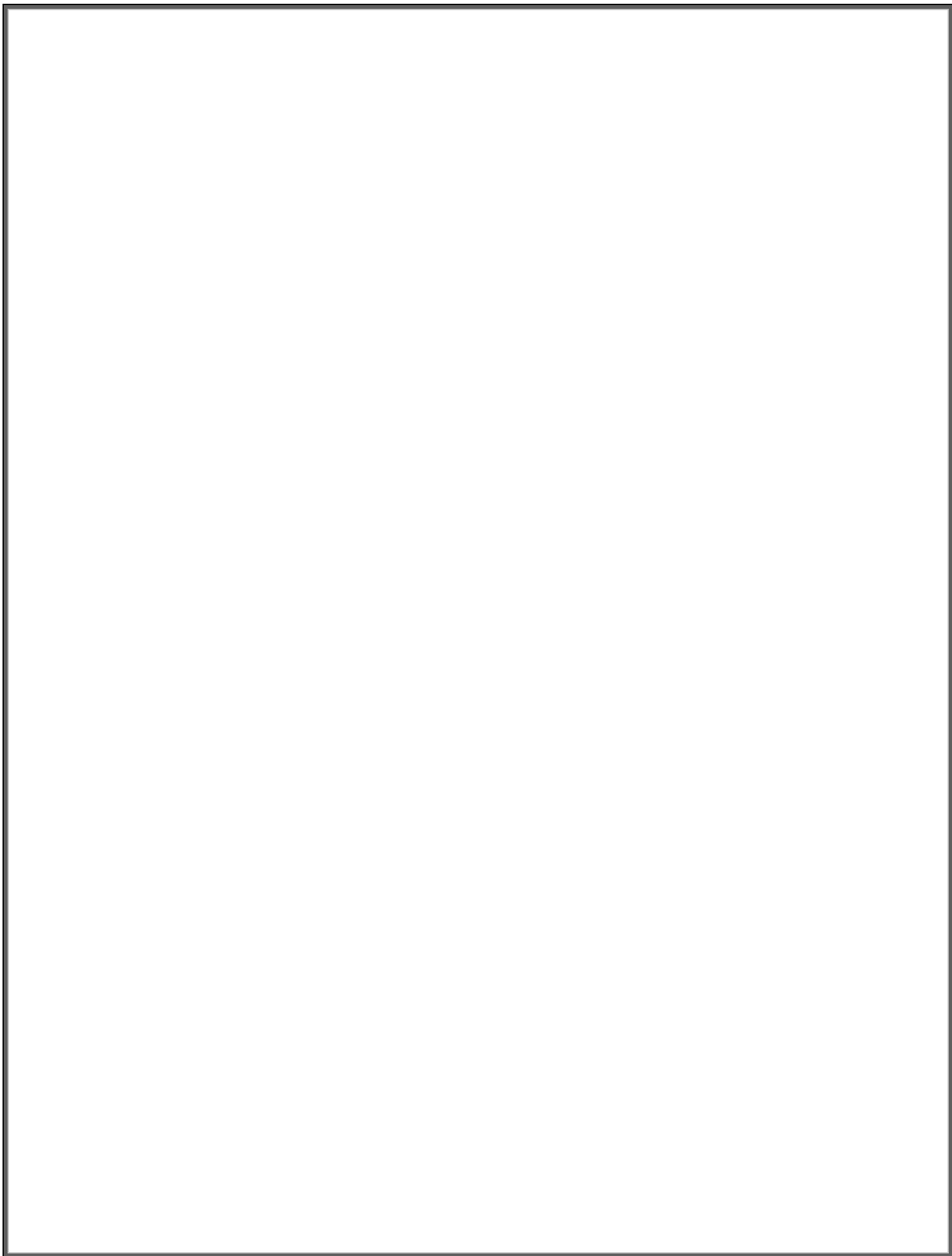The Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council, July 15, 2013

Standing (left to right): Scott Robinson, Metro; Jay Bloom, Bloom Anew; George Hocker, Commissioner Nick Fish's office; Amy Dailey, Corporation for National and Community Service; Doug Adams, Intel Encore Fellow, PSU Institute on Aging; Deborah Stein, City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability; Bandana Shrestha, AARP Oregon; Margaret Neal, PSU Institute on Aging; Pamela Huff, Terwilliger Plaza.

Seated: Leslie Foren, Elders in Action; Alan DeLaTorre, PSU Institute on Aging; Lauretta Slaughter, Urban League.

Not pictured: Jerry Cohen, David Hanson, Mary Hanlon, John Mullin, Julie Wilcke.

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Goal

The goal of this Action Plan is to enhance Portland, Oregon's age friendliness. As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO),[1] an "age friendly" city:

- has structures and services that are accessible and inclusive of older people with varying needs and capacities
- emphasizes enablement rather than disablement, and
- is friendly for people of all ages and abilities

The action steps that comprise this plan are intended to move Portland toward future development and activities that foster not only physical environments but also social and service environments that meet these criteria, making Portland a community for all ages.

Why Is This Important?

The populations of Portland, the state of Oregon, the U.S., and the world are all growing older due to increasing life spansalong with rapidly declining birth rates. Before the year 2050, there will be more people over the age of 60 than under the age of 14. Population aging will shape local, regional, national and international economies and policymaking unlike any other demographic shift witnessed to date.[2]

Proportion of Total Global Population Under 14 and Over 60
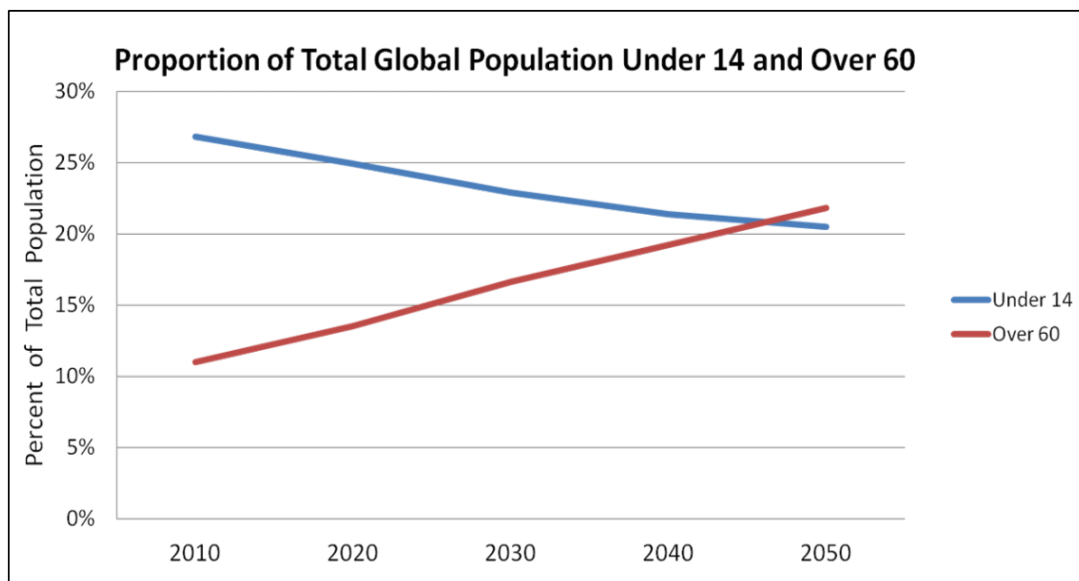
www.agefriendlyworld.org/ageing-trends

In the Portland area, between 2010 and 2030, Metro[3] projects a growth of 106% in the number of those aged 65 and older compared to an increase of 34.6% in the region's population overall.

As shown in the table below, over the next two decades both the number and the proportion of older adults in the Portland metropolitan area are projected to increase at greater rates than in the state of Oregon or the U.S. as a whole. Portland is also expected to experience growing diversity among its aging residents.

Projected Population Growth in the U.S., Oregon, and Portland Area, 2010 to 2030[4]

Category	United States	Oregon	Portland-Vancouver MSA
Number of persons aged 65+ in 2010	40,267,984	533,533	251,000
Proportion of persons aged 65+ in 2010	13.0%	13.9%	11.1%
Number of persons aged 65+ in 2030	72,092,000	881,957	518,100
Proportion of persons aged 65+ in 2030	19.3%	18.2%	17.0%
Growth rate in number of persons aged 65+ from 2010 to 2030	79.0%	65.3%	106.4%
Growth rate in proportion of persons aged 65+ from 2010 to 2030	48.0%	31.0%	53.3%

Planning for our aging population is critically important to address both the opportunities and challenges of taking advantage of the resources, skills, and experience of older adults and fully including them in the civic, social, and economic fabric of the city.[5]

History of the Age-Friendly Portland Action Plan

In 2006, the Institute on Aging at Portland State University (PSU) began collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) in the WHO's Global Age-friendly Cities project. This entailed conducting research on Portland's age friendliness. Portland, the only U.S. city in the original WHO study, was one of 33 cities in 22 countries selected for this research that culminated in the WHO's [Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide](#) (2007).[6] Locally, the research was guided by community members representing public, nonprofit, and private stakeholders, including older adults themselves, and who comprised an Advisory Council for the project. The research led to the publication of a Final Report and [Summary of Findings](#) (2007)[7] that detailed Portland's age-friendly features, barriers, and suggestions for making the city a better place for people of all ages and abilities.

In 2010, the City of Portland partnered with the PSU Institute on Aging to apply for membership to the WHO's [Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities](#)[8], which was created to provide cities around the world with opportunities to collaborate to advance their cities' age friendliness. In June, 2010, Portland was one of the original nine cities accepted for membership in the Global Network. One year later the City Council officially accepted the WHO's certificate of membership into the Global Network.

Requirements for membership in the WHO Global Network of Age-friendly Cities include conducting a baseline assessment of the city's age friendliness (completed in Portland in 2007), developing an action plan for enhancing the city's age friendliness (the present document), implementing the plan, developing indicators of progress and then monitoring progress. Since completing the baseline research, the PSU Institute on Aging, in collaboration with the members of the Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council, has conducted and consulted on further research concerning Portland's age-friendly features and barriers. PSU Institute on Aging staff also served on former Portland Mayor Sam Adams' Portland Plan Advisory Group and various committees charged with informing the development of the Portland Plan. The culmination of that work was a section (pages 24-25) within the Portland Plan titled "Portland is a Place for All Generations."[9] Several strategies and specific actions within the Portland Plan for achieving this aspirational goal were listed, including the creation of an age-friendly city action plan. The present document fulfills that charge.

Presentation of the Certificate of Membership in the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities to City Council, June 8, 2011. From left to right: Jerry Cohen, State Director, AARP Oregon; Vicki Hersen, Executive Director, Elders in Action; City of Portland Commissioner Randy Leonard; City of Portland Commissioner Amanda Fritz; Portland Mayor Sam Adams; Margaret Neal, Director, PSU Institute on Aging; Alan DeLaTorre, Project Manager, PSU Institute on Aging; City of Portland Commissioner Dan Saltzman; City of Portland Commissioner Nick Fish.

In 2012, the WHO began a partnership with the AARP national office to manage new age-friendly efforts in selected U.S. states, including Oregon, as a part of a pilot program. The AARP Oregon staff is working with the Age-Friendly Portland effort as well as with other age-friendly-related initiatives in the state.

Since the beginning of the WHO Age-Friendly Cities project in Portland, an Advisory Council composed of members from the public, private, nonprofit, and university sectors has guided the work. This model, unique among the WHO age-friendly efforts, has been characterized as the City-University-Community model. Although the Council's membership has changed over time, PSU faculty and staff from AARP Oregon, Elders in Action, and Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services have been involved from the outset. The Council has provided invaluable guidance, meeting regularly and providing input from a variety of stakeholder perspectives. (See the inside cover for the members and organizations represented on the 2013 Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council and a photograph of members in attendance at the July 2013 meeting.)

How the Action Plan Was Developed

The Action Plan was developed by the members of the Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council, with members representing a range of public and private organizations (see inside cover) coordinated by Drs. Margaret Neal and Alan DeLaTorre, Portland State University (PSU) Institute on Aging. The Action Plan was developed based on:

- A baseline assessment of Portland's age friendliness conducted as a part of the WHO Global Age-Friendly Cities project conducted in 2006-2007[10]
- Multnomah County's Task Force on Vital Aging report titled *Everyone Matters: A Practical Guide to Building a Community for All Ages* (2007)[11]
- Community forums held to discuss features and priorities related to Portland's age friendliness
- Findings from a PSU Master of Urban and Regional Planning student workshop project titled "Toward an Age-Friendly Portland"[12]
- The City of Portland's *Portland Plan* (2012), including the subsection "Portland is a Place for All Generations"[13]

Credit: Elders in Action

Ten domains of action are included in this Action Plan. They encompass both the physical and the social environment. These 10 domains are derived from the original eight domains of age friendliness identified by the World Health Organization, differing only in that two of the eight have been divided into two components each. (The WHO combines areas 5 and 6 into one domain, and areas 9 and 10 into another.)

1. Housing
2. Transportation
3. Outdoor spaces and buildings
4. Respect and social inclusion
5. Civic participation and volunteerism
6. Employment and the economy
7. Social participation

8. Communication and information
9. Community services
10. Health services

Woven within and across the domains are the importance of intergenerational linkages, considerations of safety and security as well as the promise of new technology. Action items are specified for each domain, as are potential partners for implementing them. As described in the "Next Steps" section at the end of the document, members of the Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council will meet with these potential partner organizations to discuss the action items proposed, confirm organizations' willingness to collaborate, make refinements to action items as needed, identify an accountable organization for each item to facilitate implementation, and set timelines and indicators of progress.

The lists of potential partner organizations associated with the action items are not intended to be all-inclusive. Many more organizations and individuals are likely to participate. In particular, it is vitally important that older adults themselves be involved in decisions about actions and priorities. The philosophy of "nothing about them without them" is a central tenet of the WHO age-friendly cities initiative and of this Action Plan.

How the Action Plan Can Be Used

This Action Plan is intended an advocacy tool. It pulls together in one place a set of strategies intended to help Portland's City Council, City of Portland bureaus and Multnomah County departments, Metro, and local private and nonprofit sector organizations and individuals move our city and region toward development and activities that foster age-friendly physical, social, and service environments that are friendly for people of all ages and abilities.

This is an agenda for action. It will continue to evolve as new knowledge and understanding are gained and technological developments emerge. For reasons of practicality and usability, the Action Plan is not comprehensive. Rather, it is hoped that the action items suggested will lead organizations and individuals young, old, and in between to work together to implement not only these items but others as well that will contribute to creating a community that truly is a place for all ages.

Action Area 1: Housing

Background: Housing is considered to be a universal human right.[14] Local research and planning activities suggest that in order to house our aging population and make Portland friendly to people of all ages and abilities, it is important to assure a full range of housing options that are planned and built to be accessible, affordable, healthy, secure, located near amenities and services, and to facilitate social interaction.

***Action Item 1.1 – Provide Education to Consumers, Planners and Developers*:** Age-friendly housing must be better understood on both the supply and demand sides.

- ✓ Educate residents who are looking for housing and those who desire to stay in their existing homes about options and costs so that they can find the best fit with their current and, ideally, their future needs, whether they are looking for affordable or market-rate housing or they are seeking long-term care services and supports.

- ✓ Offer streamlined guidance to planners and developers regarding best practices for age-friendly housing and technical assistance for completing age- and ability-appropriate housing (e.g., zoning and building codes, resources for answering questions).

- ✓ Offer suggestions for home modifications to increase accessibility.

Potential Partners: AARP Oregon, PSU Institute on Aging, Portland Housing Bureau, Home Forward

***Action Item 1.2 – Improve Accessibility*:** Policy efforts that lead to inclusive and accessible housing are critical for our city as we all continue to age.


Credit: Douglas M. Adams

- ✓ Adopt policies, offer incentives and implement programs to enhance aspects of age-friendly policies and programs in the City's Comprehensive and Consolidated Plans.

- ✓ Review and strengthen policies that pertain to tax abatements, local and statewide structural code, fair housing, green building, urban renewal, visit ability (minimally, having at least one no-step entrance, interior doors providing 31.75 inches or more of unobstructed passage space, and a toilet on the main floor), and affordability to increase the availability of accessible housing for older adults.

Potential Partners: Portland Bureaus of Housing, Planning and Sustainability, Transportation, and Development Services

Action Item 1.3 – Encourage Innovative Approaches to Housing Older Adults:
Because of Portland's reputation as a leader in urban planning and smart growth, the city has a unique opportunity to advance the planning and development of sustainable housing and communities for residents of all ages.

- ✓ Encourage demonstration projects, design competitions (the image included is an example of "lifelong design" in a courtyard housing model developed for a Portland competition), innovative approaches to shared housing (e.g., accessible accessory dwelling units, shared single-family homes), and intergenerational housing and all-age communities. Bridge Meadows (see next page) is an award-winning example of intergenerational living which makes use of the wisdom and experience of older adults in mentoring foster families.
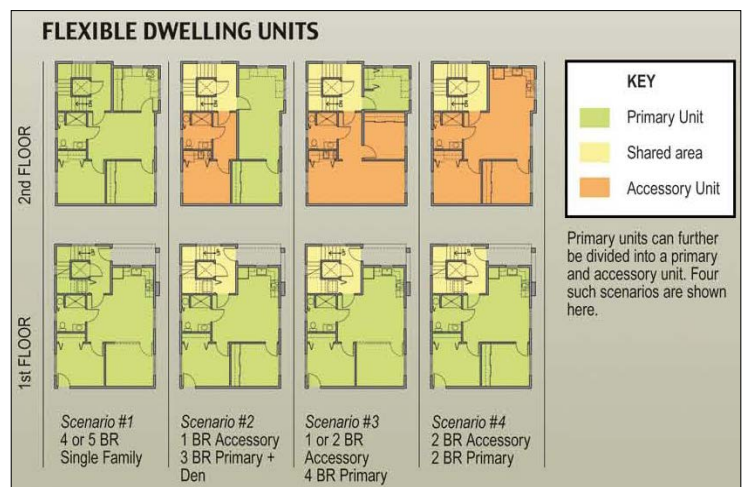
Credit: City of Portland

Potential Partners: AARP Oregon, PSU Institute on Aging, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Action Item 1.4 – Advance Opportunities for Aging in Community: Portland is a city of neighborhoods, each with their own geographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Opportunities to age in place should be available in each of Portland's neighborhoods to provide ample choices for community-residing older adults as well as to foster healthy, connected neighborhoods.

- ✓ Review and strengthen City code that regulates development practices in order to remove obstacles to co-housing and other housing models that meet the needs of older adults who want to continue to live independently in their neighborhoods.

- ✓ Foster the creation of private and public outdoor spaces for social interactions in and near housing developments, particularly in East Portland and other parts of the city that are park deficient.

- ✓ Work to prevent the negative effects of gentrification on vulnerable older adults (and their supportive networks) in Portland neighborhoods, which have resulted in part from increased housing values and development strategies such as urban renewal, capital projects.

- ✓ Take advantage of existing and emergent technologies to assist people to age in place at home, such as unobtrusive monitoring of activity to identify changes in health, digital technologies that help people stay in touch with family and friends, and other assistive technologies.

Potential Partners: Portland Bureaus of Housing, Planning and Sustainability, Transportation, and Development Services, Oregon Center for Aging and Technology (ORCATECH) Council members, including OHSU, Intel, PSU

Action Area 2: Transportation

Background: Transportation is vital to older adults' mobility, quality of life, and independence. It takes many forms, including private automobiles, public transit and paratransit services, community transportation options, bicycling, walking, and other emerging modes (e.g., small electric vehicles). Historical development patterns affect our transportation choices, and areas within Portland hold differing challenges and opportunities. Transportation planning is critically important to creating an age-friendly community, including the need to locate transportation infrastructure in close proximity to housing that meets the need of a range of citizens, as well as to services that are necessary for accomplishing daily activities.

*Action Item 2.1 – Improve System Planning and Investments***:** Coordinated transportation planning efforts are required in our city and region, and providing specific transportation options for older adults and people with disabilities is an area of focus for public, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations.

Credit: John Schneider
www.protransit.com/pics

- ✓ Identify and prepare for aging-related trends that affect all modes of transportation serving Portland, including agencies at the local (e.g., Portland Bureaus of Transportation, Environmental Services) and regional levels (e.g., TriMet, Metro, Ride Connection).

- ✓ Dedicate appropriate funding to create an accessible and integrated transportation system that meets the needs of a rapidly aging population.

Potential Partners: Portland Bureau of Transportation, TriMet, Metro, PSU Institute on Aging and Center for Urban Studies

Credit: Ride Connection

Action Item 2.2 – Promote Active Transportation for All Ages and Abilities: Active transportation[15] promotes active aging and is a fundamental aspect of a healthy, age-friendly city.

- ✓ Develop and implement policies that lead to environments that are non-auto-centric, safe, and developed to facilitate physical activity and convenient local access.

- ✓ Ensure that active transportation infrastructure (such as bus shelters, benches, traffic signals, signage) is available in all areas of the city.

www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/aug/04/life-cycling-outdoor-chattanooga/

- ✓ Build transportation infrastructure to human scale, with universal design principles (above and beyond required minimum accessibility standards), that lead to safe, healthy, efficient, and well-maintained systems.

Potential Partners: Portland Bureau of Transportation, TriMet, Metro, Ride Connection

Action Item 2.3 – Target Community-Based Solutions: Current transportation systems are focused in two areas: public transit and private automobiles. Both modes are growing more costly, and constraints regarding system capacity and environmental sustainability abound. Additional transportation options are needed in order to create a reliable, safe, equitable, accessible, and affordable system.

- ✓ Improve the range of accessible transportation options. Prioritize investment in parts of the city, such as East Portland, where there are notable deficiencies in active transportation infrastructure.

- ✓ Foster the use and availability of alternative transportation options that are community oriented, such as car-share programs[16] and local cooperatives.

  Potential Partners: Office of Neighborhood Involvement, individual neighborhood associations, Ride Connection, TriMet, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Metro

www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=24241

Action Item 2.4 – Implement Educational Programming: People of all ages can benefit from learning about transportation options, whether they are using them or not.

- ✓ Promote educational opportunities for all adults – whether they drive or not – that teach them about alternative transportation options. All Portlanders would be well-served to learn about the rights, responsibilities, and tendencies of users of all modes of transportation, including pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and transit riders.[17]

Credit: Ride Connection

- ✓ Encourage families, friends, and health care professionals to learn how and when to intervene when someone is no longer a safe driver.[18]

  Potential Partners: AARP Oregon, Portland Bureau of Transportation, Ride Connection, Metro, TriMet

Action Area 3: Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

Background: Portland's physical environments contain some of the most and least age-friendly features of the city. Although natural features and green spaces are among the most important and valuable aspects of Portland, older buildings and sidewalks, or a lack of sidewalks, can create barriers for people to function and meet their daily needs. Outdoor spaces and buildings are places where we spend substantial amounts of time and, therefore, they require considerable attention.

Action Item 3.1 – Improve Existing Natural Features and Green Spaces: Identified as one of Portland's top age-friendly features in the original baseline age-friendly assessment, natural features and green spaces represent amenities that are truly unique to our city, state, and region. However, accessibility is still lacking in older and underdeveloped parks, and the distribution of these amenities is not equitable.
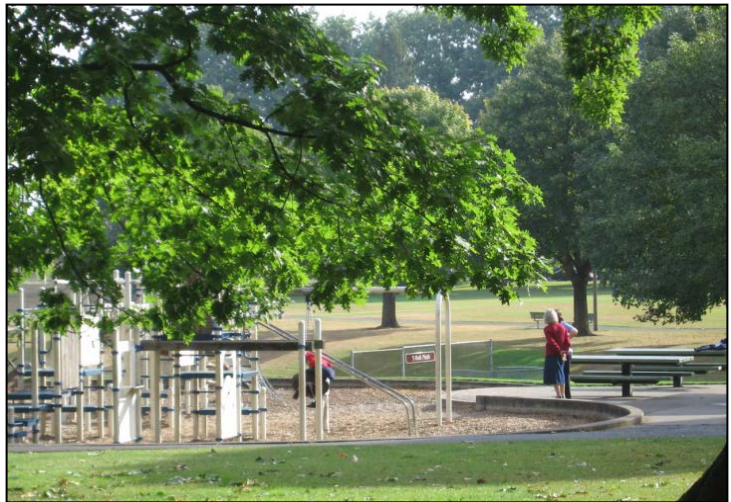
Credit: PSU Institute on Aging

- ✓ Improve the accessibility of natural features and green spaces by providing bus routes, sidewalks, clear and safe pathways, and legible way-finding signage to the amenities, along with benches, water fountains, exercise stations, and recreational programs.

- ✓ Ensure that one-time and occasional events adhere to accessibility standards and are inviting to people of all ages and abilities (e.g., movies in the park, festivals).

- ✓ Create additional parks and green spaces in underserved areas such as East Portland.

Potential Partners: Portland Parks and Recreation, TriMet, Metro

Action Item 3.2 – Foster Gardening and Local Food Production: Gardening spaces are limited – especially for those in multifamily housing – even though gardening contributes to physical and social well-being.

- ✓ Educate individuals on how to garden and produce their own food.

- ✓ Develop opportunities that allow people to garden in their homes, apartments (e.g., balcony gardens), and neighborhoods (e.g., community gardening plots).

Credit: Susan Rodiek
www.asla.org/2010awards/564.html

- ✓ Encourage gardening among older adults, as it contributes to one's well-being socially (e.g., interacting with other gardeners), physically (e.g., helps people meet their recommended activity levels), culturally (e.g., ability to grow produce not commonly found in local stores) and perhaps, financially (e.g., saving money on produce).

- ✓ Create and disseminate guidelines on how to build raised beds gardens that are appropriate for people with mobility impairments (e.g., wheelchair users) and those who cannot bend or squat.

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Health Department, Portland Parks and Recreation, Metro

Action Item 3.3 – Create Accessible Social Spaces: Besides work and home life, Portlanders of all ages and abilities use public spaces, whether they are indoors or outdoors. To date, although many of these spaces meet federal accessibility requirements, they still have barriers to use.

- ✓ Create a list of best practices for designing and constructing social spaces that pay particular attention to details such as type of flooring and paving (e.g., no

tripping hazards), lighting (e.g., no glare), amenities (e.g., benches with arms) and legible way-finding signage.

✓ Require that building addresses and signage be present and legible to those with limited vision (e.g., larger font size, non-glare surfaces).

✓ Ensure equitable distribution of accessible social spaces throughout the city.

http://site-furnishings.columbia-cascade.com

Potential Partners: Elders in Action, PSU Institute on Aging, Portland Bureau of Development Services, Office of Equity and Human Rights

***Action Item 3.4 – Establish Additional Age-Friendly Businesses/Organizations*:** Elders in Action coordinates an Age-Friendly Certification Program that educates and assists businesses in better serving their customers, no matter their age or ability.

✓ Improve the age friendliness of public, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations so older adults have the ability to contribute to organizations and society at large.

✓ Educate businesses on the value of having an age-friendly business.

Potential Partners: Elders in Action, Portland Business Alliance, Venture Portland, Portland Development Commission

www.eldersinaction.org

*Action Item 3.5 –Contribute to Portland's Accessibility Transition Plan***:**
The City of Portland is required to identify accessibility improvements that are needed to bring the City into compliance with federal regulations.

- ✓ Ensure resources are set aside so that accessible improvements can move from being identified as noncompliant to compliant.

- ✓ Monitor future compliance and be proactive about making sure all new construction is compliant with accessibility standards.

- ✓ <u>Potential Partners</u>: City of Portland Office of Management and Finance, Portland Bureau of Development Services

Credit: John Schneider
www.protransit.com/pics

Action Area 4: Respect and Social Inclusion

Background: Middle-aged and older adults are often isolated and ignored in the United States, and Portland is no exception. At a time when our city – and the rest of the world – is aging, it is critical to identify real opportunities to integrate aging Portlanders into activities and communities in a meaningful way, both to stem social isolation and its deleterious effects and to take advantage of older adults' skills, talents, and resources.

*Action Item 4.1 – Reduce Social Isolation among Older Adults***:** Social isolation and disengagement from social interaction can be harmful to people of any age, but older adults and people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to the effects of isolation.

Credit: Bridge Meadows

- ✓ Implement housing policies, services provisions, and community-generated approaches to ensure that those of all ages and abilities remain connected and thriving in their communities.

- ✓ Foster the ability of older adults to contribute to communities through new and existing programs (e.g., AARP Experience Corps, Encore Fellows, Boomers and Babies, and RSVP Senior Corps).

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services, Office of Equity and Human Rights, AARP Oregon, Elders in Action, Encore Fellows program, Senior Corps, other nonprofit and faith-based communities

*Action Item 4.2 – Improve the Language used Pertaining to Aging and Older Adults***:** Language matters! In the field of gerontology there has been a move away from terms such as "senior citizens" and "the elderly." Terms such as "older adults" and "elders" are generally viewed more positively. There is a need to change how we speak (and think) about the aging process and older individuals.

✓ Use language that is preferable to other adults, such as "honored citizens"- a term utilized by TriMet.

✓ Instead of "long-term care," use "long-term living."

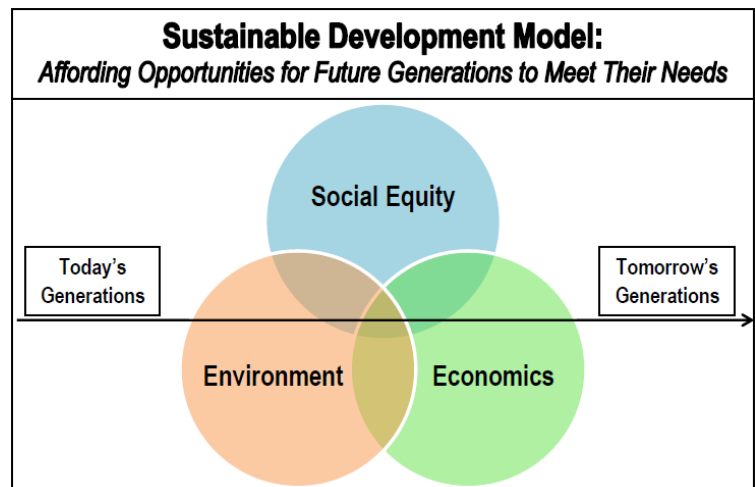✓ Develop new ways to include older adults in the social fabric of the city.

<u>Potential Partners</u>: Elders in Action, Office of Equity and Human Rights, Multnomah County Office of Diversity and Equity, PSU Institute on Aging

http://trimet.org/fares/
honoredcitizen.htm

Action Item 4.3 – Advance Civil Rights, Equity, and Social Sustainability for Older Adults: Numerous efforts in Portland aim to increase opportunities across classes and groups of people in a sustainable and equitable manner, but more are needed.

✓ Remove barriers and conditions that prevent minority, low-income, limited English proficiency and other disadvantaged groups from receiving access, participation, and benefits from City and County programs, services, and activities, as stipulated in Portland's Title VI (Civil Rights) Program Plan and by Multnomah County's Equity and Empowerment Lens.

Sustainable Development Model:
Affording Opportunities for Future Generations to Meet Their Needs

Social Equity

Today's Generations

Tomorrow's Generations

Environment   Economics

Credit: Alan DeLaTorre

✓ Develop and share best practices for improving the accommodations for people with disabilities at public meetings (e.g., captioning), including a list of vendors/service providers capable of improving access during such meetings.

✓ Collaborate with the Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights – a new City agency charged with providing education and technical support to City staff

and elected officials – as well as Multnomah County's Office of Diversity and Equity to recognize and remove systemic barriers to fair and just distribution of resources, access, and opportunity. Older adults are not explicitly detailed in either effort and should be addressed.

✓ Encourage equity and sustainability by considering the aging of the population – one of, if not the biggest demographic trends over the next several decades.

Potential Partners: Office of Equity and Human Rights, Multnomah County Office of Diversity and Equity, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services, Multnomah County Multi-Ethnic Action Committee, Elders in Action, PSU Institute on Aging

www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/MentalHealth/Recovery
/Wellness/HealthyLiving/HealthyLivingOlder.aspx

Action Area 5: Civic Participation and Volunteering

Background: In order for Portland to achieve its goal to be a healthy, thriving city, it is necessary for citizens to engage in volunteer and civic activities. Older adults represent one of the few types of resources that are increasing, and it is important to both consult elders during citywide processes and encourage older and younger people alike to work together toward the end of improving the city's health and sustainability. Opportunities for civic engagement and volunteering are needed if Portland is to continue to be a place that fosters a high quality of life for people of all ages and abilities.

*Action Item 5.1 – Foster Meaningful Involvement of Older Adults in Citywide Processes***:** Citizen participation is required in urban planning processes in Oregon, yet meaningful involvement of many of Portland's different communities has been challenging. New approaches are needed to engage older adults in a manner that utilizes their skills, experience, and wisdom, especially those whose voices are rarely heard: older adults of color and those living in poverty. Central to the WHO age-friendly cities effort is the involvement of older adults in policymaking, often referred to as the "Nothing about them without them" approach.

- ✓ Convene aging organizations, groups, and individuals who have been advocating for an age-friendly Portland to strategize about ways to increase the involvement of older adults in civic affairs and policy making, especially those in traditionally underrepresented groups.

www.eldersinaction.org/about/

- ✓ Develop a best-practices guide to be used by City offices outlining ways to encourage and facilitate the involvement of older adults in civic affairs and policy making, especially older adults in traditionally underrepresented groups.

- ✓ Educate older adults, who have first-hand experience and knowledge of aging-related issues, about existing policies, systems, and strategies for effecting change so that they can engage effectively in shaping future policy and decision making in Portland; current organizations such as Elders in Action and AARP Oregon are doing this, but additional training is needed.

- ✓ Actively encourage older adults to participate in civic affairs and advocacy, including individuals who have been historically underrepresented and unheard.

Potential Partners: AARP Oregon, Elders in Action, Multnomah County Multi-Ethnic Action Committee, Disability Services Advisory Council, Office of Neighborhood Involvement, East Portland Action Plan

Action Item 5.2 – Optimize the Skills and the "Renewable Resource" of Older Adults: Older adults are often frustrated in their attempts to find meaningful engagement opportunities that utilize their talents, experience, and expertise beyond writing a check, stuffing envelopes, or one-day projects.

- ✓ Develop and share best practices for engaging older adults in the work of the nonprofit sector, especially in the development of a continuum of paid to unpaid compensation, such as greater use of stipends, training, transportation support, fellowships, and internships.

- ✓ Create a web-based portal that identifies community-wide opportunities for engaging older adults in the social sector and provides an orientation to the sector.

Potential Partners: Grantmakers of Oregon and Southwest Washington, Hands on Greater Portland, Metropolitan Family Services, the Nonprofit Association of Oregon, Encore Fellows program, Elders in Action

Action Area 6: Employment and the Economy

Background: Portlanders of all ages and abilities wish to find quality, gainful employment. In fact, older workers have substantial contributions to offer to employers and have the ability to innovate and become successful entrepreneurs.

Action Item 6.1 – Improve Access to Employment Opportunities and Reduce Ageism: Being an older adult does not equate to not needing to work. The baseline age-friendly study revealed that ageism exists in many work environments in Portland and that many older adults have a great need to earn income.

✓ Provide support to older adults who wish to work and/or begin new businesses. Older adults have emerged as leaders in both private and social entrepreneurial activities in the United States.

Credit: PSU Institute on Aging

✓ Develop an approach to fostering employment for older adults with existing organizations, as well as providing paths to innovative entrepreneurial activities, including businesses at home.

✓ Share best practices for hiring older adults and people with disabilities. The City of Portland is considered a model employer and is improving its hiring practices for people with disabilities.

✓ Educate businesses on the value of older workers and debunk stereotypes and myths that exist. Research has shown that older workers contribute substantially to businesses and organizations.

www.equality.ie

Potential Partners: City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights, Office of Management and Finance, Portland Business Alliance, Venture Portland, Encore Fellows Program, Small Business Association, AARP Oregon

Action Item 6.2 – Improve Portland's Age Friendliness in an Effort to Attract and Retain Highly Educated, Engaged Older Adults/Residents: Based on a recent study by PSU faculty[19], Portland attracts and retains highly educated people aged 40 and older more than other similarly-sized metropolitan areas.

- ✓ Continue to carry out age-friendly research, dissemination of findings, and implementation of age-friendly policy and practices.

- ✓ Embrace the value of older migrants and develop an engagement strategy.

Potential Partners: PSU Institute on Aging, Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability

Action Item 6.3 – Create an Age-Friendly Portland that Caters to Visitors: Age-friendly infrastructure is good for the citizens of Portland and also for visitors who come to Portland for work, recreation, or vacation.

- ✓ Promote Portland as a visitor destination for people with disabilities and older adults who may be searching for easy-to-use facilities and welcoming, age-friendly environments. Learn from other cities (e.g., San Sebastian, Spain) that have taken this approach.

  Potential Partners: Elders in Action, Travel Portland, PSU First Stop Portland
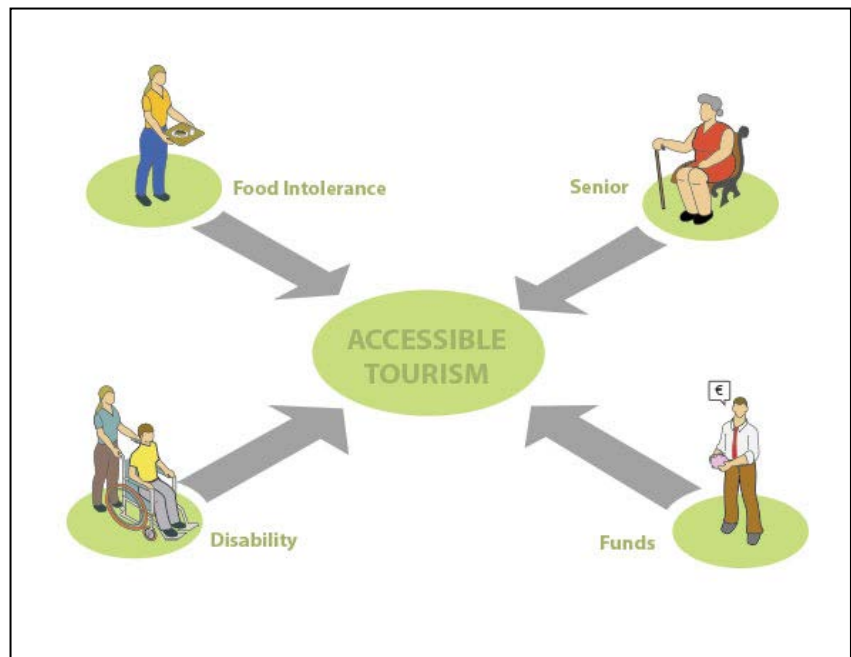
www.italia.it

Action Area 7: Social Participation

Background: Older adults are not homogeneous in their interests and desires for activities outside of the home. Therefore, a range of social participation strategies and approaches are needed for this growing population. Opportunities exist for social participation in a variety of settings – e.g., faith-based organizations or higher education. Organizations such as Elders in Action serve as a clearinghouse for information, but many activities are not readily available to older adults, are not of interest, or are not designed to support the specific requirements of older adults who are frail or have special needs.

Action Item 7.1 – Create a Directory of Age-Friendly Activities: Older adults who live in Portland, as well as those visiting from within or outside the region, should have access to information where they can find the various age-friendly activities that exist in Portland. Although an online directory exists (www.adrcoforegon.org), dissemination is needed and a print version would be helpful.

- ✓ Issue information ranging from cultural activities (e.g., museums, theater) to health-related programs (e.g., food preparation, fitness) to life-long learning opportunities (e.g., free classes, presentations) to faith-based organizations and places of worship.

- ✓ Detail the accessibility of venues, and provide information on how to request accommodations.

Credit: Portland State University

- ✓ Prepare a print directory for use by people of all ages and abilities and as an amenity for those traveling to Portland as tourists and visitors.

Potential Partners: Elders in Action, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services, Travel Portland/Visitor Information Center

Action Item 7.2 – Celebrate the Lives and Experiences of Older Portlanders: Portlander's personal and family histories and the histories of special places should be celebrated and recorded so that future generations have the ability to learn

directly from people who have lived through our city's growth and transformations or who have come from other places and bring traditions and stories to their new home.

✓ Initiate intergenerational exchanges and programs that include storytelling, oral histories, and written histories as ways to pass along knowledge and experience.

Potential Partners: Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Elders in Action, Portland Public Schools, PSU Institute on Aging

Action Item 7.3 – Support Neighborhood-Based Efforts for Older Adults: Portland is a city of neighborhoods with volunteer neighborhood associations, cultural organizations, an Office of Neighborhood Involvement, and myriad organizations and events.

✓ Help neighborhood associations, formal and informal groups, and city agencies focus on involving older adults of all cultures in social activities, as well as be intentional in learning about and from the older adults within their geographies.

✓ Encourage neighborhood associations to appoint representatives from various generations and cultures, including both younger and older adults.

✓ Offer neighborhood association and districts coalition offices the option of supporting village organizations[20] such as the Eastside Village in Portland.[21] Block-level coordination of aging support and knowledge should be added.

http://eastsidevillage.wordpress.com/PDX
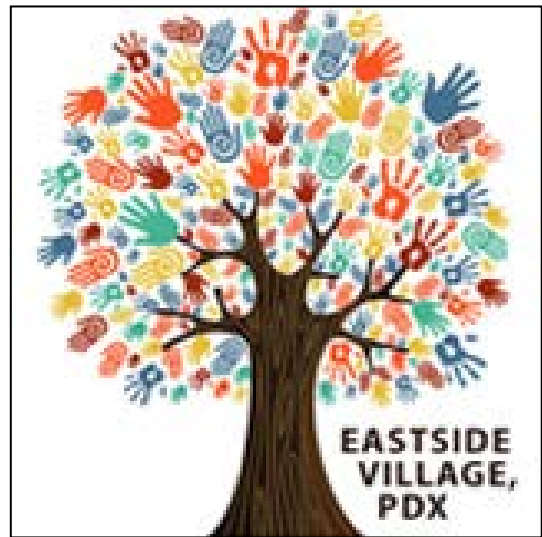
Potential Partners: Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services, Village PDX/Eastside Village, East Portland Action Plan and Diversity and Civic Leadership Partners

Action Area 8: Communication and Information

Background: Communication and access to information in today's society can be challenging. People of different ages have varying levels of comfort, ability to use, and access to the various types of media that are used. Although communicating exclusively through digital formats is increasingly common, print media or community information areas (e.g., pin boards, pamphlets, displays) are preferred or required by many older adults. In order for Portland to be an age-friendly city with respect to communication and information, it is important to provide information in a range of ways that are easy to find, improve online resources and formatting (e.g., create websites that are age friendly), utilize existing organizations to disseminate information and opportunities for engagement and activities, and provide educational opportunities for learning new technologies and media.

Credit: PSU Institute on Aging

Action Item 8.1 –Maintain Clearinghouses for Aging-related Information:
Information about services, events, social activities, and other issues that concern older adults in Portland is vast. Elders in Action serves as a clearinghouse for information about services and engagement opportunities for older adults, and Multnomah County has a 24-Hour Helpline – with a real person on the end of the line who provides that information (**Phone:** 503-988-3646; **TTY:** 503-988-3683). This hotline is viewed extremely positively by older adults, who greatly appreciate the accessibility of information and the personal touch.

"Life changes, and sometimes you need a little help."

✓ Maintain and promote the 24-hour hotline and the Aging & Disability Resource Connection (ADRC) website (www.adrcoforegon.org), which features a robust directory of services, agencies, and opportunities geared to older adults and people with disabilities, to ensure that information about events and services that are available and that may be helpful to older adults is current and useful.

✓ Maintain and promote the 211info phone number (dial 211), text option (text zip code to 898211) and website (211info.org), which is available in every Oregon county and provides free information on more than 7,000 nonprofit, government and faith-based health and social services programs in Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services

Action Item 8.2 – Improve Online Resources and Create Standards for Age-friendly Media: Online age-friendly interfaces are not very common although guidelines are available.

✓ Distribute a list of best practices and standards for online communication. This list will be helpful to consumers and producers of information alike.

✓ Ensure that all City websites follow best practices and standards for online communication.

Potential Partners: Elders in Action, Office of Equity and Human Rights, Office of Management and Finance, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services

Action Item 8.3 – Improve the Dissemination of Information through Existing Organizations: Many organizations are underutilized and underappreciated when it comes to the aging network.

✓ Promote faith-based organizations, neighborhood associations, and senior centers as places where information exchanges can and should be concentrated.

✓ Provide educational opportunities to improve the skills of older adults and service providers on procedures for communicating through print, electronic and social media.

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services, Elders in Action, AARP Oregon

www.web.multco.us/ads

Action Item 8.4 – Launch an Age-Friendly Educational Campaign: What does "age friendly" mean, and why does it matter? How can we become more age friendly, and how can individuals contribute to the effort? These questions surround the push to make cities around the world age friendly, and Portland is primed to take the initiative to the next level.

- ✓ Launch an educational campaign that: highlights the fact that our city is aging in an unprecedented fashion; creates an understanding that aging is an issue that affects everyone; provides examples of what "age friendly" is (e.g., respecting and valuing older adults, visitable housing, intergenerational mentoring); and highlights opportunities for community support and action. (See "What is a Caregiver Campaign" for an example.[22])

Potential Partners: Elders in Action, AARP Oregon, PSU Institute on Aging, Office of Equity and Human Rights, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services


http://unitedfrontmn.org/caregivingnow/

Action Area 9: Community Services

Background: Community services are vital to the functioning of an age-friendly city as they support the day-to-day needs of all Portlanders, no matter what their age or ability may be. Vital community services include grocers and vendors of healthy foods, government services, retail outlets, arts and culture destinations, entertainment venues, beauty and hygiene services, etc. Community services should recognize the needs and opportunities that pertain to older adults and they should be in close proximity to housing and transportation options.

Action Item 9.1 – Improve Emergency Preparedness and Systems for Ensuring the Safety for Older Adults and People with Special Needs: Portland is vulnerable to natural disasters, from earthquakes to volcanic eruptions to strong storms. In addition to emergency preparedness, appropriate approaches for dealing with vulnerable populations (e.g., people with mental health disorders such as dementia) need to be integrated into training and procedures.

- ✓ Improve the existing plan for dealing with vulnerable populations in emergency situations by strengthening the mechanisms for coordinating Portland's response systems with those of other local and regional agencies.

- ✓ Engage a broad range of community members – including older adults and people with disabilities – in emergency preparedness training.

- ✓ Improve knowledge of mental health issues and procedures and practices for dealing with people with such conditions as dementia in emergency situations.
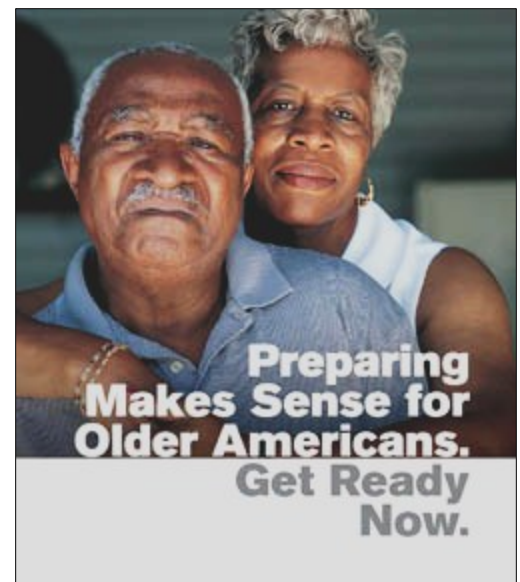
www.co.baldwin.al.us/

Potential Partners: Portland Bureau of Emergency Management, Portland Police Bureau, Elders in Action, Office of Neighborhood Involvement, Multnomah County Aging & Disability Services, private-sector information technology organizations

Action Item 9.2 – Improve the Age Friendliness of Neighborhood Centers: People of all ages need safe, welcoming places that encourage physical activity, social inclusion and interaction, as well as safe and convenient access to goods and services required in daily life.

- ✓ Identify locations in Portland that lack adequate services and infrastructure to meet the needs of older adults (e.g., sidewalks, curb cuts and safe crossings; government services; fresh and affordable food) and address deficiencies in order to meet the City's goal of becoming more equitable.

- ✓ Reduce barriers to providing affordable, accessible housing within town centers and neighborhood centers.

- ✓ Ensure that libraries are age-friendly hubs and that neighborhood schools are transformed into multi-functional facilities to meet the needs of a range of residents of all ages.

Potential Partners: Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, Portland Bureau of Transportation, TriMet, Elders in Action, Multnomah County Library and school districts

Credit: Portland Oregon Visitors Association

Action Area 10: Health Services

Background: Health services are particularly important for older adults due both to normal aging processes and to disease-related challenges that often occur later in life. In Portland, Oregon, and the U.S. as a whole, major changes in health care are being undertaken, including Oregon's Health Care Transformation efforts and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. In fact, the push to include "health in all policies" is occurring globally and locally and is considered an innovative, systems-change approach by the National Association of County and City Health Officials.[23] It is essential that the City of Portland, in conjunction with Multnomah County and the State of Oregon, determine how to shift from a model of acute care that depends on large-scale medical institutions to a preventive and proactive model that values home and community-based care, as well as a range of supportive health policies and approaches.

Action Item 10.1 – Improve Older Adult Wellness and Preventive Health Care: The scientific evidence points to the importance of inter-professional health provider teams, management of chronic illnesses, preventive approaches to health care, and a focus on human function.

www.raritanvalleyymca.org/cms-view-page.php?page=silversneakers

✓ Foster opportunities for information technology, coordination of care, and care innovations in the delivery of health care to older adults, including partnerships among individuals, private, governmental, and other community organizations.

✓ Integrate hospitals and long-term care settings into neighborhoods so that those receiving care are in accessible neighborhoods and supportive and healing environments that promote health and well-being.

✓ Collaborate with health agencies in improving the delivery of services to individuals, as well as advocating for policy changes that take an upstream approach to improving the health of populations (e.g., walkable neighborhoods, access to fresh foods).

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Health Department and Aging & Disability Services Division, regional Coordinated Care Organizations (i.e., Health Share Oregon, Family Care, Inc.), private-sector information technology organizations

Action Item 10.2 – Improve the coordination and delivery of care across health, housing, and social services settings

✓ Initiate discussions with regional Coordinated Care Organizations, appropriate government and private health, long-term care, and social services providers to identify mechanisms for coordinating service delivery, improving quality of care, and reducing costs of care.

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Health Department and Aging & Disability Services Division, Health Share Oregon, Family Care, Inc., private-sector information technology organizations

Action Item 10.3 – Integrate active aging as a fundamental aspect into the Age-Friendly Educational Campaign (see Action Area 8):

The concept of active aging is a fundamental component of age-friendly communities. Active aging results from a variety of physical, social, psychological, physiological, and economic factors, as well as experiences accumulated throughout the life course[24]. Older and younger Portlanders alike should understand how these factors influence how we age.
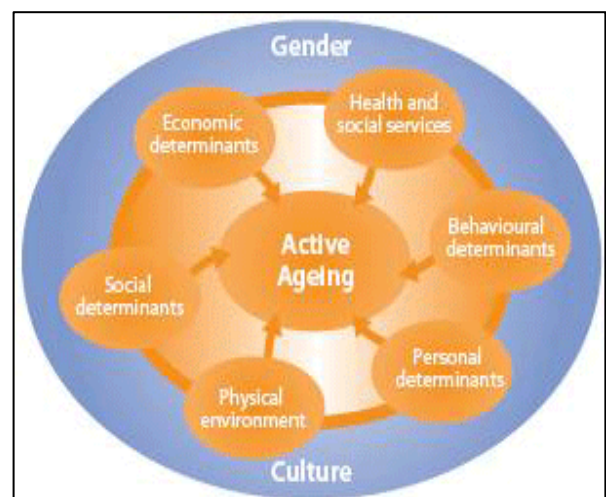
Credit: World Health Organization

✓ Educate and empower individuals of all ages and abilities to positively affect their own health and well-being through engaging in healthy behaviors (e.g., being physically active, eating healthy foods, staying engaged) as well as understanding and working to improve the social conditions that influence how well people age.

✓ Utilize the World Health Organization's Tool Kit or similar tools for promoting active aging.[25]

✓ Offer an array of chronic disease self-management programs and programs to increase physical activity for older adults throughout the city.

✓ Explore strategies for reducing barriers to accessing City recreation programs, such as cost.

Potential Partners: Multnomah County Health Department and Aging & Disability Services Division, Health Share Oregon, Family Care, Inc., Portland Bureau of Parks and Recreation

Credit: City of Portland

Next Steps

Following acceptance by City Council of the Action Plan, Portland State University's Institute on Aging will serve as a collective impact "backbone" organization,[26] continuing to coordinate the Age-Friendly Portland Advisory Council and convene members and other regional stakeholders to advocate for, coordinate, and monitor age-friendly development and policymaking efforts. The Advisory Council will undertake several overarching areas of action to guide future efforts across the 10 domains of action identified in this plan:

- Meetings will be convened with the organizations identified as "Potential Partners" in each of the items of the Action Plan by members of the Advisory Council to explain the action items proposed, confirm organizations' willingness to collaborate, identify other organizations that should be involved, make refinements as needed to the action items, identify an accountable organization for each item/sub-item, and set timelines.

- Priorities for action will be set in concert with the partner organizations.

- Measurable and meaningful indicators for monitoring progress over time will be established.

- An implementation guide will be prepared detailing, item by item, the accountable organizations, the indicators to monitor progress, and timelines for accomplishment.

- An educational campaign will be developed that describes age friendliness, including active aging strategies, and how Portlanders can work together to make our community a place for all ages.

- The Advisory Council will keep abreast of technological, policy, and other developments as they emerge and update implementation plans accordingly.

- An age-friendly Portland website is under development and will be finalized for the purpose of information sharing about the project.

- Outreach will be made to the other municipalities in the Portland metropolitan region, and discussions will be held concerning how we can work together and coordinate our various age-friendly-related efforts (e.g., Clackamas County's engAGE project, Clark County's Aging Readiness Plan, the work of Washington County's Vision Action Network) to enhance the age friendliness of our region as a whole.

  o As a part of this outreach, strategies for creating and maintaining a regional, interagency, linked age-friendly data monitoring system will be explored. Such a system would be useful for the purposes of providing evidence of program and intervention effectiveness to policy makers, tracking service consumption patterns, and gathering older adults' feedback.

- New private-public partnerships will be explored for the purpose of building and strengthening the economic sustainability required to assure Portland's age friendliness in the future. To achieve success, the effort to become more age friendly must both involve and be beneficial to government and private entities without overly relying on either group.

- Funding will be sought for coordination of the effort, demonstration projects, including possible partnerships with other U.S. and international cities, and research to examine and monitor the outcomes achieved overall and to understand how best to make individual areas of the city more age friendly.

  o Portland is a city of neighborhoods that have unique geographies, social, and economic characteristics (e.g., hilly versus flat, transit-rich versus transit-poor), issues and opportunities that influence the actions that should be undertaken in particular areas.

Moreover, research is needed to provide evidence of how each of the action domains influences the age friendliness of a community and to design and test additional interventions to improve communities, making them better places for people of all ages and abilities.

Examples within several disciplines include:

- o Social sciences: respect and social inclusion and social participation
- o Public administration and policy: civic participation
- o Business: employment, cost/benefit analyses of age-friendly infrastructure
- o Engineering, architecture, and urban planning: the built environment
- o Sustainability: equity, green spaces and natural features
- o Public health: community and health services, physical environments, social participation, communication and information

- Outreach will be made to the other counties in the Portland metropolitan region, and discussions will be held concerning how we can work together and coordinate our various age-friendly-related efforts (i.e., Clackamas County's engAGE project, Clark County's Aging Readiness Plan, Washington County's Vision Action Network's work) to enhance the age friendliness of our region as a whole.

  - o As a part of this outreach, strategies for creating and maintaining a regional, interagency, joined-up age-friendly data monitoring system will be explored. Such a system would be useful for the purposes of providing evidence of program and intervention effectiveness to policy makers, tracking service consumption patterns, and gathering older adults' feedback.

- Finally, new private-public partnerships will be explored for the purpose of building and strengthening the economic sustainability of public-sector initiatives and enhancing our region's friendliness for all.

Conclusion

Portland's population is aging. To take best advantage of the generally overlooked opportunities presented by an older population, improvements in the physical and social environment are needed. This Action Plan is designed to identify areas in which modifications can be made to ensure that Portland is an age-friendly city – a community for people of all ages and abilities.

Credit: Bridge Meadows

Endnotes

[1] World Health Organization (2007). *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide.* Retrieved from:
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[4] Sources: United States: 2010 estimates are from U.S. Census Bureau's (2012) *The Statistical Abstract of the United States*, and 2030 projections are from U.S. Census Bureau's (2008) *2008 National Population Projections*; State of Oregon: 2010 estimates are from U.S. Census Bureau's (2012) *The Statistical Abstract of the United States*, and 2030 projections are from U.S. Census Bureau's (2005) *Interim State Population Projections*; Portland-Vancouver MSA forecasts are from Metro's (2009) *20 and 50 Year Regional Population and Employment Range Forecasts*.

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[14] Source: United Nations. *The universal declaration of human rights*. Retrieved from: https://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/.

[15] Source: Metro (2013): Active transportation refers to non-motorized transportation modes, such as bicycling and walking, that are well integrated with public transportation. People are more active when they ride a bike, walk or take public transportation. Retrieved from: http://www.oregonmetro.gov/index.cfm/go/by.web/id=30078; Image retrieved from: http://www.bikelansing.org/mmatc).

[16] The Eugene Car Co-op has been called the first car-sharing group in the U.S. Image and reference retrieved from: http://www.ollswang.com/home/eugene-car-co-op).

[17]Ride Connection's Ride Wise program is one example of an education program for older adults and people with disabilities; the nonprofit agency offers one-on-one and group training. Retrieved from: http://www.rideconnection.org/ride/Services/RideWise.aspx.

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[20] Source: Village-to-Village Network: http://www.vtvnetwork.org/. Villages are membership-driven, grass-roots organizations that, through both volunteers and paid staff, coordinate access to affordable services, including transportation, health and wellness programs, home repairs, social and educational activities, and other day-to-day needs, enabling individuals to remain connected to their community throughout the aging process.

[21] Source: Eastside Village PDX: http://eastsidevillage.wordpress.com/. The Eastside Village, PDX service area will cover all or part of 13 Portland neighborhoods: Buckman, Kerns, Laurelhurst, Sunnyside, North Tabor, Montavilla, Hazelwood (west of 122nd), Hosford-Abernethy, Richmond, Mt. Tabor, Mill Park, South Tabor, and Powellhurst-Gilbert (north of Powell).

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