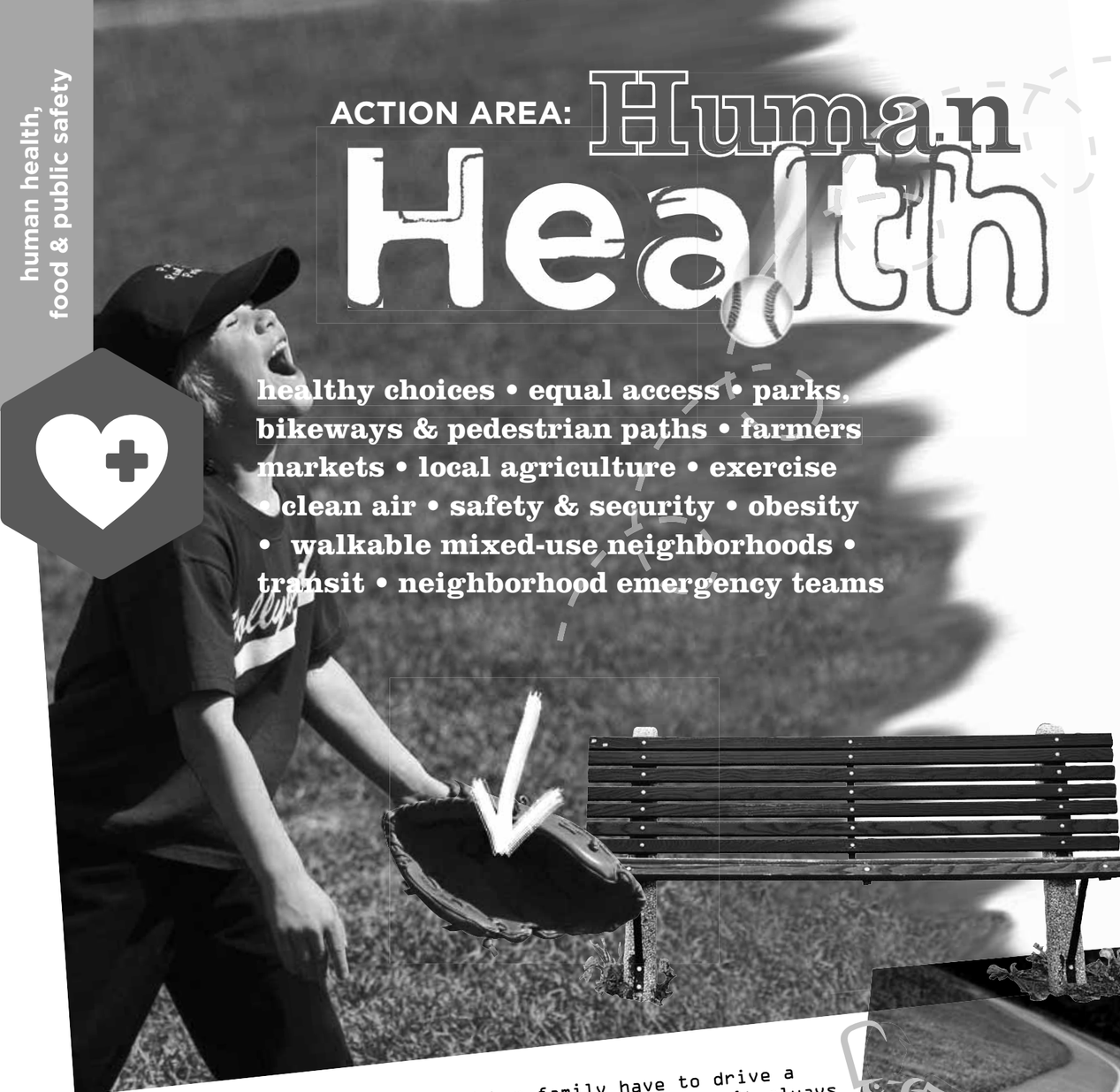
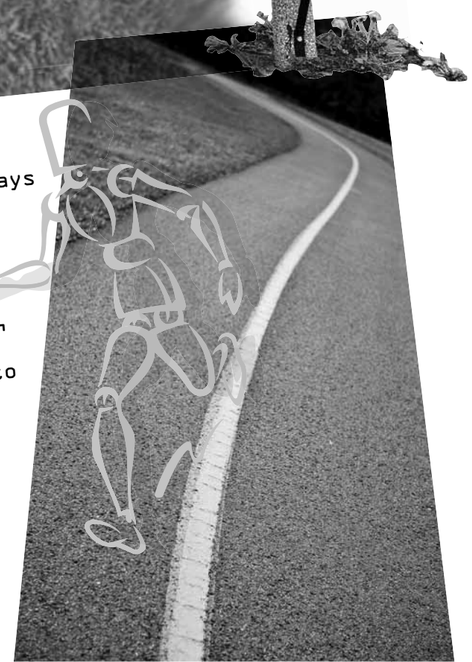
ACTION AREA: Human Health

healthy choices • equal access • parks, bikeways & pedestrian paths • farmers markets • local agriculture • exercise • clean air • safety & security • obesity • walkable mixed-use neighborhoods • transit • neighborhood emergency teams



Living in East Portland, **Aksana** and her family have to drive a long way to get to the grocery store. This means there isn't always enough fresh fruit or vegetables in the house to prepare healthy meals as often as Aksana would like. With no park or greenspace nearby and living on a busy road, Aksana also worries that her kids won't get enough exercise to stay healthy. Attending a recent community meeting, Aksana was pleased to find out that the City's future plans for her neighborhood included sidewalks, traffic calming and more street trees. These are all things she thinks will make it easier for her children to play outside and for the family to walk for short errands.

East Portland Action Plan at http://www.portlandonline.com/bps



Food & Public Safety

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Although Portlanders are generally healthier than our regional neighbors and other Americans, we are not all healthy, and our rates of chronic disease are rising.
We need to act now to provide Portlanders with the infrastructure and services that will provide all of us with the opportunity to make healthy choices and live healthy lives.

Human health is a community issue, not just a personal one because healthier people have greater opportunities to learn, play, think and innovate.
It is important to ensure that all Portlanders have equal access to opportunity in all aspects of their lives.

Health is also a community issue because the place we live in can affect our health.
Maintaining a system of parks, bikeways and pedestrian paths and supporting walkable neighborhoods makes it easier to incorporate exercise into daily life.

Supporting mixed-use neighborhoods with good access to frequent transit can help reduce vehicle use, which helps keep our air and water clean.

Supporting a system of farmers markets, providing community garden spaces (particularly for those who live in apartments or houses without garden space) and supporting the development of affordable, full-service grocery stores across the city will make it easier for Portlanders to make healthy food choices. Providing a community that is safe, secure and welcoming is important to human health too because it can reduce stress, which will help people feel more comfortable.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

Many of the City's existing policies help promote and protect the health of Portlanders by supporting the creation of bikeways and pedestrian paths, walkable mixed-use neighborhoods and a strong transit system.

Unfortunately, these community features are not evenly distributed across the city. Addressing the disparities in access for Portlanders is one of the most important things we can do to address health.

Adult and Teenage Obesity

Obesity can lead to increased risks for a number of chronic diseases. Healthy People 2010, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has set a national target of 60 percent of adults and 95 percent of children and teenagers at a healthy weight.

Status: 10% of the County's teens are overweight or obese, and an additional 10-15% are at risk of becoming overweight or obese.

Status: More than half (53%) of the County's adults (18 years or older) is either overweight or obese (body mass index greater than 25 and 30, respectively).

Source: Multnomah County Public Health, Community Health Assessment Quarterly, Fall 2008.

Access to Neighborhood Parks

Approximately 76 percent of Portland's population lives within one half mile of a developed park or a natural area; however, given sidewalk conditions in East and West Portland, many Portlanders may find it difficult to walk to their local park.

Status: 76% of Portlanders live within one-half mile of a park.

Target: 100% of Portlanders live within one-half mile of a park.

Source: FY 2009-10 Adopted Budget - Parks, Recreation and Culture http://www.portlandonline.com/omf/index.cfm?c=50324&a=245910 (page 28)

Emergency Response Time

Fire incidents decreased 22 percent over the past 10 years, but medical incidents increased 40 percent. Emergency response times for both fire and medical emergencies do not meet the Bureau of Emergency Communications' target times. In 2007-2008, response times for emergency calls were well over one minute longer than the City's target time.

Source: City of Portland, Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA), 2007-08.

Crime Rate

Since 1998, Portland per capita crime rate has decreased by 55 percent for person crimes and 34 percent for property crimes.

Grocery Store Access

Sixty percent of Portland households are within a half mile of a full service grocery store.

GROCERY STORE ACCESS

Most Access
Hollywood
Lloyd District
Old Town/Chinatown
Pearl
South Burlingame
Sullivans Gulch
Vernon
Woodland Park

Least Access
Arnold Creek
Forest Park
Glenfair
Healy Heights
Linnton
Northwest Heights
Pleasant Valley
Sunderland
Sylvan Highlands
Wilkes

Most access equals 100% of households in neighborhood within one half mile of a full service grocery store. Least access equals 0% of households in neighborhood within one half mile.

Farmers Market Access

Status: 7% of the population lives within a quarter-mile of seasonal farmers markets.

Community Garden Access

Status: 15% of the population is within a quarter-mile of a community garden.

Over 1,300 people are on the waiting list for garden plots.

Source: City of Portland, Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, in-house GIS analsyis. 2009. Portland Parks and Recreation, Parks 2020 Vision, 2007.

Water Quality

Portland's primary water supply is surface water from the Bull Run Watershed near Mount Hood. Because of its outstanding water quality and level of protection, the Bull Run has been listed among a handful of outstanding sources of water in the United States for more than a century.

The Columbia South Shore Well Field, which is the largest groundwater supply in Oregon, is Portland's secondary water source. Groundwater wells augment drinking water supply in summer and early fall as needed depending on weather. (This is when people use the most water and there is typically little rainfall.) The wells began serving drinking water to customers for the first time in the summer of 1985.

All water supplied by Portland's water system meets or surpasses federal and state drinking water standards.

Life Expectancy at Birth

The life expectancy of Oregonians is the same as for all Americans; however, the life expectancy of Portlanders is slightly lower. Who has the highest life expectancy in the world? Those living in Macau, China.

Portland (Multnomah County)	**77.3 years**
Oregon	**78.1 years**
Seattle (King County)	**81.0 years**
United States	**78.1 years**
Vancouver, BC	**81.1 years**
Macau, China	**84.4 years**

Note: Life expectancy data comes from many sources that may use different methodologies.

Sources: http://www.dhs.state.or.us/dhs/ph/chs/data/arpt/06v2/chapter6/table653.pdf; http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/data/chi2009/HealthOutcomesLifeExpBirth.aspx; https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2102.html; http://www.sightline.org

Consider...

1. **Is it safe to walk or bike in your neighborhood? What would make it safer? More sidewalks? More signalized intersections on busy streets? More designated bikeways on side streets? More bike parking? Lighting?**

2. **What types of parks and open spaces are needed in your community? More active recreation fields and courts? More green spaces? More natural areas and trails? Why do you like to go to the park?**

3. **How easy is it to get fresh fruit and vegetables in your neighborhood? Can you walk or bike to a grocery store? Would you want a farmers market in your neighborhood? Would you want a community garden to grow your own vegetables?**

Read more...

Portland Plan Background Reports
Human Health and Safety • Food Systems • Infrastructure Condition and Capacity • Urban Form

Related Reports and Projects
Multnomah County's Health Impacts of Housing in Multnomah County

Links to all listed reports and projects are provided at the end of this handbook.