Civic Engagement



civic engagement • diversity & social equity • block party permitting • neighborhood organizations & community groups • curbside bike parking • volunteerism • voter turnout • sense of safety • community events



As more people participate in community events, volunteer for local organizations and speak up in official forums, more voices will be heard and new ideas shared. Civic engagement supports the ability of our community to cultivate inclusive public decision-making processes.

As Portland's population continues to grow and become more diverse, civic engagement will be essential to improving equity. A strong civic life can help nurture socially cohesive and safe neighborhoods.

Participation in neighborhood organizations, neighborhood clean-ups, block parties and other local initiatives is responsible for much of what makes Portland special. Events such as Sunday Parkways, National Night Out and installations like curbside bicycle parking are just a few of the things that bring us together and improve our quality of life. Community groups, whether focused on shared interests and concerns or location, deserve credit for many of Portland's proudest achievements.

Increasing the sustainability, health and economic vitality of Portland will only succeed if people become more engaged with government, nonprofit, charitable, social and grassroots initiatives in the community and people feel safe and secure in the City.

## HOW ARE WE DOING?

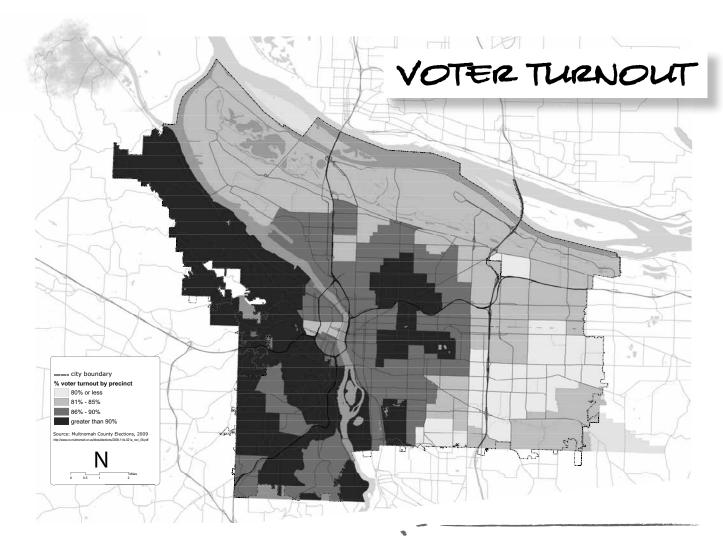
Portlanders have a long history of participating in civic and community life. It is evident in our high rates of volunteerism and voter turnout.

#### Volunteerism

Of the 51 largest cities in the United States the Portland metropolitan statistical area (MSA) ranks second in its rate of volunteerism.

Status: Nearly 39% of Portland adults participated in a volunteer activity in 2008, compared to 26% of adults in the U.S. Portland volunteers contributed a total of 75 million hours of service in 2008.

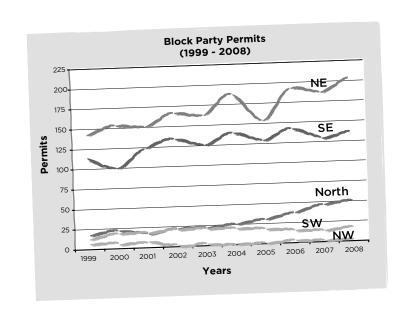
Source: Corporation for National Community Service. http://www. volunteeringinamerica.gov/OR/Portland



## **Block Party Permitting**

The rate of block party permits is a useful indicator in understanding the level of social cohesion at the neighborhood level. The highest number of block party permits were issued in Northeast and Southeast Portland (which include East Portland), with steady increases in permits in North Portland since 2003.

Source: Portland Bureau of Transportation



# Consider...

1 How should Portland increase the number and diversity of people involved in activities in their community?

2 What could be done to foster stronger social ties and a greater sense of community identity?

### Read more...

## **Related Reports and Projects**

Diversity and Civic Leadership Program • Voices from the Community: The visionPDX Input Report • Public Involvement Best Practices Program • Youth Engagement Manual • Service Efforts and Accomplishments, 2007-2008

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

