

environmental portland

Environmental Portland includes both the natural areas within and around Portland, as well as our commitment to sustainability and environmental preservation. Environmental Portland addresses areas including transportation, our rivers, our parks system and our lifestyles.

The following statements reflect our values and how they apply to Environmental Portland.

In 2030:

Protection and restoration of the natural environment is integrated into every aspect of civic life, guiding our decisions and public policy.

All Portlanders have equitable access to public resources such as public transportation, bike and walking paths, community gardens and access to locally-grown, healthful food.

This access allows each of us, regardless of location or economic status, to choose environmentally sustainable lifestyles.

Our healthy streams, rivers and forests support a diversity of native plants and wildlife.

Greenspaces and parks are plentiful throughout our city and the vibrant Willamette River is a hub of community activity.

We are a model of a sustainable city, and as such we proactively address key issues including transportation, development, energy and water use.

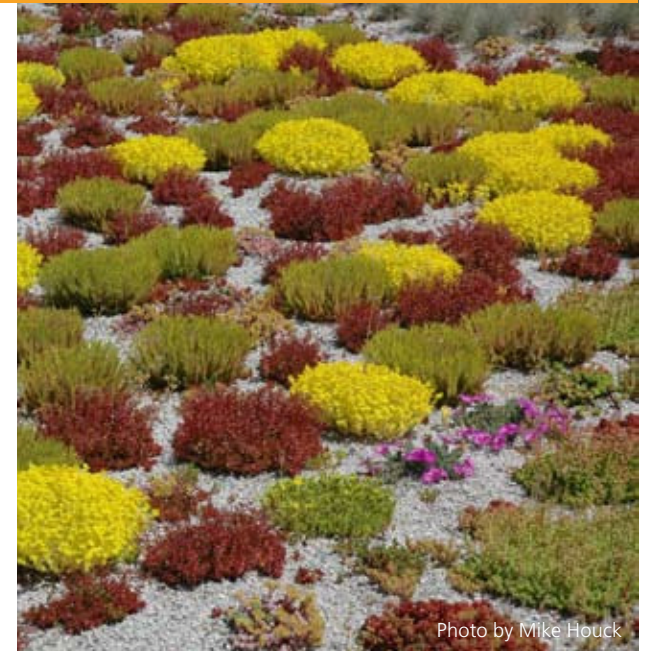


Photo by Mike Houck



Photo by Thomas Le Ngo



Photo by Mike Houck

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Imagine the possibilities for the Environmental Portland of 2030. Here's just one possible story. What will the story look like for your neighborhood, your community?

Justin's Day

Justin wakes up early, but not early enough to catch his housemates. He and three of his friends bought their old bungalow a few years back, when the City of Portland offered incentives for groups of people to buy older houses originally designed for single families. For the City, this meant more population density with existing housing stock and conserving resources. For Justin and his friends, it meant being able to gain equity in a home while living in a convenient, close-in neighborhood, something he would not have been able to do on his own.

Justin takes a quick shower, barely realizing how different the experience was from the people living in the house 30 years earlier. His water is heated by solar panels on his roof; the shower is short, to preserve drinking grade water; and this water, along with that from the kitchen sink and gutters, is captured in a cistern below the ground to be used as "greywater" for flushing the toilet and watering the garden. This is now standard practice – not only does it save money, but it also makes much better use of a valuable resource.

After a quick run in one of his neighborhood parks, he bikes off to work. Justin is one of many people in the region employed in the clean energy field. He helps people adopt energy-efficient practices in older houses as well as install renewable energy systems in homes and neighborhoods. Today, Justin reviews plans developed by one neighborhood association to site small-scale wind turbines in their district, then leads a public meeting with nearby residents about the project.

Justin ends his day with a meeting with City officials and businesses about creating an "Energy Zone," an area of town that would be a net exporter of energy to other parts of the city. While many folks are already living environmentally responsibly, and new developments meet high standards on green building and energy use, the growth of the city has made carbon-neutrality a moving target. Pilot projects like this have been known to inspire others to action. Justin is glad to be creating a positive future in Portland, knowing that his work motivates others to do the same.



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Considering our values and the trends our community faces, we provide some direction for Environmental Portland in the statements below.

Visualizing Environmental Portland

1. A commitment to nature and the environment is one of the things that unites Portlanders – from daily purchases to long-term projects, we consider the environmental implications of the decisions we make.
2. Every Portland resident lives within a short distance of a park or greenspace.
3. We have many pocket parks, community gardens, rooftop public spaces and other alternate open spaces in addition to our large city parks.
4. The city has developed and implemented a policy of zero net loss of green and open spaces.
5. In addition to protecting green and open spaces within the city, commitment to good planning for growth has ensured that natural areas, farms and outdoor recreation are still nearby and easy to access outside the city.
6. Some brownfield sites are regenerated into greenspaces and wildlife habitat.
7. The urban tree canopy has continued to expand.
8. Portland maintains healthy rivers, streams, wetlands and ponds.
9. The Willamette River is now clean enough to swim in and it provides abundant wildlife habitat and safe fishing.
10. There are public and private incentives for local, organic food production.
11. Portland continues to excel in recycling, which now diverts almost all waste products into new uses, saving energy, landfill space and creating new products.
12. Our community has prepared for resource scarcity, and we do not suffer from changes in access to oil, water, food or electricity.
13. Portlanders enjoy some of the cleanest air and water in the country.
13. Our city has developed educational opportunities that make ecological, sustainable lifestyles accessible for all Portlanders.

“[We need] a cleaner Willamette River area. The Willamette is a beautiful centerpiece to Portland’s scene and it should be valued as such.”

“I absolutely love the park systems. It is so amazing to have such a large selection of high quality and enjoyable parks. It makes the city seem very open and uncongested.”

“It is important for me to live in a community that promotes recycling and sustainability. It gives me hope for the future. Our environment is paramount to me.”

