

social portland

Social Portland considers individual and community health and well-being and how we relate to one another. It covers the civic life of Portland from processes for engaging communities in public decision making to partnerships in public safety.

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

In 2030:

We are a community whose members care about and are committed to our individual and collective well-being.

We view our diversity as a vital community asset, whether they are differences of race, ethnicity, sex, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, belief system, political ideology, ability, socio-economic status, educational status, veteran status, place of origin, age or geography.

We facilitate the inclusion of all Portlanders in our democratic processes and in community decision-making.

Because we are actively engaged in the governance of our city, we have confidence that our leaders' decisions advance the common good.

Portlanders have equal access to education, employment, health care, safety, and housing, and our basic needs are met.

Health is a priority for our community and health care is available to all.

All Portlanders feel safe on our neighborhood streets and in our downtown, and our community members work with a responsive police force to solve problems.

Portlanders create, appreciate, and have access to a variety of art culture, reflecting our community's heart and soul.



Photo by www.portlandground.com



Photo by Thomas Le Ngo



Photo by Stacy Davis

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

The Story of Juan and Sumaya

Juan and Sumaya came from different continents, he from South America and she from Africa. Although political unrest in their home countries brought them both to Portland, they didn't realize they had so much in common until they met at Portland's civic leadership center – a gathering place that unites diverse cultures and communities and forms a hub of civic engagement.

Having spent several years in a refugee camp as a child, Sumaya struggled with English and with schoolwork when she first came to Portland. Fortunately, the civic leadership center housed many independent cultural organizations with bilingual and bicultural tutors, who helped her catch up on homework. Juan was also enrolled in a tutoring course, and soon not only were both students able to speak English, Sumaya was also speaking Spanish and Juan had learned a few phrases in Somali.

A few months ago, Juan and Sumaya were elected by their peers to serve on an advisory council for Portland Public Schools, an example of Portland's efforts to involve youth in local government. Today they are visiting the offices inside the center with multilingual flyers about an upcoming meeting designed to connect parents to their children's schools. It is a familiar role for Juan and Sumaya, who also serve as unofficial ambassadors to new immigrants and refugees, organizing monthly "Welcome to Portland" gatherings at the center. At these meetings, newcomers get to know their adopted city and neighbors who live nearby.

Several City offices have moved into the center, bringing local government closer to the community. City employees and neighbors can often be seen chatting over coffee or tea in the center's many informal gathering spaces or visiting local businesses.



Photo by Belen Sainz--Lopez

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

Visualizing Social Portland

1. The City of Portland has invested in accessible gathering spaces where its diverse community members can interact and communicate.
2. As in generations past, Portlanders find unique ways to solve problems collectively because the City of Portland encourages public deliberation and considers public decisions from multiple viewpoints.
3. Responding to the increasing diversity of its residents, the City of Portland has developed civic engagement mechanisms that allow for broad participation.
4. Neighborhood associations have a strong voice, as do identity-based groups whose members cross neighborhood boundaries.
5. Structural barriers to public involvement have been addressed and all Portlanders actively participate in civic life.
6. Government has ensured accessibility and equity in all public programs.
7. Basic needs of community members are met, allowing Portlanders the opportunity to succeed and to express their full ingenuity.
8. Individual, community and environmental health are among the highest in the nation because they are considered a public priority.
9. Health care is available to all and Portland is committed to sustaining the adequacy, viability and excellence of local health care systems.
10. The police force is reflective of Portland's diversity and officers work collaboratively with the entire community to resolve conflicts and keep the city safe.
11. Both the urban core and our neighborhoods are healthy, clean and crime-free spaces to live, work and play.
12. The variety and breadth of artistic and cultural activities showcases our city's commitment to creativity and innovation.

"Keeping Portland small enough to remain a community where every voice can be heard is important to me."

"Portland is diverse! Different cultures are welcomed here, including the disability community!"

"[In the future,] the social conscience of the city has shifted from focusing on surface issues to really addressing the class and race issues that exist."



Photo by Mike Houck