Portland 2030:
A vision for the future
By the people of Portland, Oregon
What was visionPDX?

visionPDX was an extensive public engagement process to develop a shared vision for our community for the next 20 years and beyond. This was the largest public engagement process Portland has completed to date, and one of the largest in North America – over 17,000 Portlanders weighed in with their opinions over two years and their comments became Portland 2030: a vision for the future. This booklet captures some of the key pieces of that document.

How can I use the vision?

The vision can be a strategic guide for decision-making. It can serve as a set of values that businesses, projects, nonprofits and governments can use to guide their own work. It can be discussed by neighbors and adopted by boards. The vision can provide a foundation for new actions, as it will do in the Vision Into Action Coalition, or set the tone for long-range planning efforts, as it is doing with the Portland Plan (see page 16). How do you think the vision can be used?
Portland’s Vision for 2030

Shaped by the Willamette and Columbia Rivers, Portland connects people and nature to create an international model of equity and sustainability.

We are a city of communities. Our distinct neighborhoods and vibrant downtown are safe, energizing civic and cultural spaces.

Our diverse population, innovative businesses and forward-thinking leaders work together to ensure livability for all.
Portland’s values
These were the top three values we heard …

Community
Connectedness and Distinctiveness

We value a strong sense of connection in our communities. Building trust and relationships leads to a better quality of life. We value our local and small-scale political, social, economic and cultural environments. Our varied neighborhoods make Portland a special place.

- We seek to preserve and protect the qualities that make us unique.
- We value public spaces where neighbors can interact.
- We value civic awareness and involvement, volunteerism, and local decision-making.
- We love that Portland offers many big-city amenities, but has kept its small-town feel.

Equity and Accessibility

We value the right of every person to have access to opportunities for meeting basic needs and improving health and well-being. We believe that all residents should be able to use our systems to access jobs, services, housing, education, transportation options and passive and active recreation without physical, social or economic barriers.

- We believe in innovative approaches to creating economic opportunity beyond addressing basic needs.
- We value the ability of all Portlanders, regardless of background, to find living wage employment.
- We believe that the benefits and burdens of growth and change should be shared fairly among our communities.
- We believe that all residents and groups should be fully involved as equal partners in public decision-making.

Sustainability

We value taking responsibility for actions that will affect our long-term future. Sustainability means meeting the environmental, social, cultural and economic needs of the present while ensuring the similar needs of future generations. Sustainability indicates care and respect for the ecosystem as well as for the people within it.

- We prioritize the natural environment in policies and decisions
- We consider how the choices we make affect other people in our community now and in the future.
- We believe that working towards sustainability does not have to harm the economy but gives us a competitive advantage.
These were also strongly expressed values …

**Accountability and Leadership**
We value transparent and fair processes. We value decision-makers with integrity who are connected to the community and consider the common good when making choices. We value leaders who inspire others to act towards a common goal.

**Inclusion and Diversity**
We value fostering respect for and promoting interaction among all individuals in our community, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, belief system, political ideology, ability, socioeconomic status, educational status, veteran status, place of origin, language spoken, age or geography. By doing this, we will have richer relationships and make better decisions for our future.

**Innovation and Creativity**
We value imagination and original thinking to introduce and test new ideas, products and services that benefit the community. We believe that many solutions can be found to seemingly intractable problems through collective and creative problem-solving.

**Safety**
We value communities that are safe, crime-free and work in partnership with public safety efforts. We value a caring community that seeks to support those in need of help or assistance. We prepare for emergencies and support development and maintenance of infrastructure – sidewalks, roads, bike paths, sewer and water lines, power lines, urban tree canopy, etc. – that will support safe and healthy communities.
Built Portland covers the physical and structural parts of our city, such as buildings, houses, parks, open spaces, transportation and roads. Built Portland considers what we want our communities to look and feel like, how we get around and what role our downtown serves in the region.

**In 2030:**

- Our city is compact, green, dynamic, and accessible to all Portlanders.
- We innovate in the areas of transportation, public art, architecture, and design while maintaining a healthy infrastructure.
- Decisions about how and what to build are thoughtfully made and incorporate diverse viewpoints and priorities.
- Our distinctive neighborhoods are built around hubs and exist in relationship with a thriving downtown, which is the center of the metro region.
- Our built environment is a mix of the reassuringly old and strikingly new.
- We value our public, open and natural spaces as well as our safe, comfortable streets.
- People in all parts of Portland get around easily on foot, bikes, wheels and public transportation.
- We have access to and can afford to live in a variety of housing choices geared to our diverse populations.
Visualizing Built Portland

How might our values apply to Built Portland?

1. Public transportation systems create a system-wide web, connecting neighborhoods to one another as well as providing easy access to and from the central city.

2. Portland provides incentives to protect historically viable architecture while encouraging creative design for new structures.

3. Communities and transportation systems are designed to promote ease of access to work, services and play while ensuring carbon neutrality.

4. All new development meets green building standards, while many existing buildings have been renovated for efficiency.

5. Portland promotes dense development in neighborhood centers and along retail corridors and has encouraged well-designed infill development.

6. Portland encourages high population density while incorporating parks, environmentally protected areas, street trees, community gardens, green spaces, waterways and pathways.

7. Portlanders also have easy access to forests, natural areas and farms immediately beyond the urban area.

8. Portland continues to be the model American city for multiple modes of transportation, including pedestrian and bike paths, light rail, buses, trams, trolley, and car sharing. We maintain the road system for all users.

9. Portlanders thrive in neighborhoods that provide goods and services within walking distance from residences and workplaces.

10. Portland recognizes the value of diverse, mixed-income neighborhoods. Families with children can still live throughout Portland, regardless of their income.

11. The transportation system is built to handle industrial and commercial activities and to provide an effective freight system.

12. East Portland is an integrated part of Portland, while maintaining its distinctiveness.

“Keeping urban neighborhoods safe and convenient is extremely important to the vitality of Portland.”
In 2030:

- Portland businesses use their innovation and independence to become environmentally, socially and economically sustainable.
- In our vibrant downtown and neighborhood hubs, businesses reflect their communities’ values and help to define and support their unique local identities.
- Portlanders support and protect the viability of local businesses to enhance a feeling of community, preserve the uniqueness of neighborhoods and allow for creativity among Portlanders.
- Commercial, industrial and other business activity creates local jobs while connecting to regional and global economies.
- Partnerships between government, business and education prepare all Portlanders for quality jobs.
- Equitable access to both quality education and the supports we need to succeed enables us to earn living wages and fully utilize our differing abilities and talents.
Visualizing Economic Portland

How might our values apply to Economic Portland?

1. Portland is the global model for sustainable business practices.

2. Local incomes rise due to industry, education and government collaboration to increase skills of low-wage workers and the unemployed.

3. Portland attracts and cultivates innovative, creative and entrepreneurial talent that continuously sustains and renews our economy.

4. Portland fosters the development of small and large businesses that support our core values, enhance neighborhood viability and draw on local talent.

5. Portland provides incentives for business and cultural activities to settle and stay in the city center.

6. Portland’s distinctive neighborhood stores provide a diverse array of products and services for local residents, so that they can obtain daily goods and services within walking or biking distance of their homes.

7. Portland sees economic development as an inclusive effort with diverse strategies designed to bring prosperity to all segments of the population.

8. Portland has invested in mentorship and support programs for small businesses, allowing them to grow and thrive.

9. Brownfields are restored in an environmentally sustainable manner to support economic and community health.

“I’d like to see Portland bring in green technology business, as well as keep its manufacturing and biotech endeavors.”

“I’d like to see more jobs closer to where I live so I wouldn’t have to leave my boy with my sister when I’m at work.”

“I believe that Portland should emphasize protecting the middle class (which is rapidly evaporating in the U.S.) and lead the country in finding ways to encourage small business to tap into our most valuable resource, our well-educated, alternative-thinking young adults.”
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 a 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.
Visualizing Environmental Portland

How might our values apply to 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.

14. Our city has developed educational opportunities that make ecological, sustainable lifestyles accessible for all Portlanders.

“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.”

“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.”

“[We need] a cleaner Willamette River area. The Willamette is a beautiful centerpiece to Portland’s scene and it should be valued as such.”
Learning Portland considers not only schools, but also practicing an ethic of lifelong education. Learning Portland recognizes that education happens on both the individual and community levels and that it is strongly linked to economic prosperity.

**In 2030:**

- Portland has established itself as a world-class educational community.
- Built on the understanding that education is vital to the social and economic health of the city, Portland is committed to, and nurtures, all forms of learning.
- Children and young people are valued and understood to be the future of our society.
- Elders are likewise revered for their wisdom and offered opportunities for both teaching and learning.
- We hold an unwavering commitment that all young people are afforded high quality education while providing diverse ways to learn and achieve.
- Lifelong learning guides our education through an integrated system of early childhood education through high school, college, professional and community education and beyond.
- Education and learning are the foundation for achieving our individual and community goals.
- Our schools are multiple-use facilities and integral components of our neighborhoods and communities.
How might our values apply to Learning Portland?

1. Every Portlander has the opportunity to achieve individual educational goals, and Portland provides an educational environment that ensures that anyone has the ability to obtain higher education degrees.

2. Portlanders cherish our free public school districts; quality public education is readily available to every pre-K–20 student.

3. The public and private sectors jointly provide a pre-K–20 educational enterprise that serves the intellectual, cultural and economic needs of the region, the city and its people.

4. Portland’s higher education institutions serve as incubators of intellectual, economic and creative ideas.

5. The arts are integrated into all pre-K–12 education as a commitment of Portland to develop and foster creativity and innovation.

6. Portland provides adequate training for its future economy by investing in programs that prepare young people for the workforce.

7. Teachers are valued and supported in the schools and in community.

“I think great cities start with great schools.”

“[My vision for Portland:] All children attend their neighborhood school and there are NO segregated classrooms.”

“My future Portland…is famous across the nation for its successful educational system: students flourish here and feel respected, no matter their race or economic background.”

“I want middle class families to flock back to PPS because it offers creative and substantial academic programs.”
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.

**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, regardless of race, ethnicity, sex, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, belief system, political ideology, ability, socioeconomic status, educational status, veteran status, place of origin, language spoken, 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.
**How might our values apply to 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.”
visionPDX was a city-sponsored, community-led project initiated by Mayor Tom Potter in 2005. Driven by a volunteer 40+ member Vision Committee and involving scores of community groups and individuals, visionPDX set high standards for the inclusion of community in government decision-making.

When Mayor Potter launched visionPDX, the project was not only charged with creating a vision document. Equally important was the process of engagement, which Potter felt was a necessary component of effective community governance.

Community governance recognizes that ownership of community problems, solutions and opportunities (e.g., homelessness, drug crimes, development, schools etc.) rests with the entire community — and that effective progress on these issues requires the cooperation of many stakeholders.

The purpose of visionPDX was:

• To invite community members to plan for the future of the city. There had not been a broad look at the current state and direction of Portland for 15 years.

• To open up government to all Portlanders, particularly to underrepresented groups and communities.

From 2005-2007, visionPDX engaged around 17,000 community members through events, discussions, interactive theater, one-on-one conversations and questionnaires. In 9 different languages, community members were asked the following questions:

1. What do you value most about Portland and why?
2. What changes would you most like to see in Portland right now?
3. Imagine Portland 20 years in the future and all your hopes for the city have been realized. What is different? How is our city a better place?
4. As you imagine the Portland you’ve just described, what are the most important things we can do to get there?

These questions were deliberately open-ended, allowing community members to write as little or as much as they desired. Some people wrote only a few lines and others wrote many paragraphs, but over the next year, each one of their answers was read, re-read and thoroughly analyzed by community volunteers as well as City staff working on the project.
**visionPDX results**

In addition to the values and directional statements listed in this booklet, visionPDX led to several full reports available on the visionPDX web site (www.visionpdx.com).

**Final Vision Document**

The vision document is the broad perspective of our findings — a “30,000 foot view” of Portland in the future — and includes more information such as environmental trends, community challenges, in-depth information on the visionPDX process and more.

**Voices from the Community: The visionPDX Input Summary**

This report is the most direct reflection of community input. Over 300 pages in length, it summarizes all of the 21,000 pages of data read by visionPDX volunteers, encapsulated by the visionPDX Drafting Committee, and organized by staff to make it accessible for readers. The data are summarized in nine main areas: economy, education, environment, government, health, public safety, social issues, transportation and urban livability. Along with a general summary, there are areas of agreement, areas of disagreement, and a host of practical strategies and ideas. Also included are hundreds of quotes from the actual surveys, in which Portlanders speak directly to their hopes, concerns and visions for the city’s future.

**Community Engagement Report**

This report serves the purpose of highlighting visionPDX’s emphasis on community involvement, with vibrant stories of community engagement over the two visionPDX engagement phases, along with some principles of community involvement to pass on to other projects.
What happens next:

The Portland Plan

Building on the work of visionPDX, the City’s Bureau of Planning has launched an inclusive, city-wide effort to guide the physical, economic, social, cultural and environmental development of Portland over the next 30 years. Collectively referred to as “The Portland Plan,” these planning efforts – including an update of the City’s Comprehensive Plan, a citywide economic development strategy, a new plan for the downtown area and many others – will set the policies and strategies needed to implement the vision over time.

Looking back 30 years, plans like the Portland Downtown Plan of 1972, Portland’s Comprehensive Plan in 1980 and the Central City Plan in 1988 dramatically shaped Portland’s downtown, transit system, public places, air and water quality and more. The result? A thriving, vital city that continually ranks among the most desirable communities in which to live. Our core plans, however, have become outdated. The Portland Plan now provides us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to shape Portland’s future through policies grounded in our shared values.

This planning process will offer many opportunities for discussion and decision-making over the next two years. You can get involved by signing up on the Portland Plan web site at www.portlandonline.com/ portlandplan.

The Vision into Action Coalition

While the Portland Plan presents a unique opportunity to implement the vision through public policy, it will not respond to all elements in the vision, nor will it produce immediate actions. To initiate and support community-based action, City Council established a Vision into Action (VIA) Coalition. The VIA Coalition will begin its work in March 2008, led by a 15-person Steering Committee made up of community members from diverse backgrounds. These community leaders will be accompanied by five City Commissioner-appointed members and supported by City bureau representatives.

The VIA Coalition Steering Committee will first work to create a framework for community-led action that will help guide vision implementation. Vision into Action aims to launch 2 – 3 large-scale Coalition projects within the first year. They will also oversee a Vision into Action community grants program, funded by the City of Portland.

With roots in many communities and perspectives, the Coalition will facilitate ongoing collaboration between government and the people it serves and build community ownership of the vision through education and outreach.
get involved

There are many opportunities for involvement in this new action phase of the VIA Coalition, whether it is through becoming a Coalition member, applying for an action grant or volunteering in one of the Vision into Action projects. Thirty organizations, several government bureaus and many individuals have already become involved.

You can be a part of achieving widespread community awareness of and support for our community vision, ensuring that it is widely used to shape Portland’s future. Join us today!

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