



Photo of Southwest Waterfront Greenway in Portland, OR. / City of Portland



WILLAMETTE PARTNERSHIP

Portland

Health and Outdoors Opportunities Assessment

More Access to Green Space, Better Health

Did you know your zip code determines more of your health than your genetic code? Where and how we live in and around Portland makes a difference in how long we live and the cost of our healthcare. When more people have access to trees, trails, parks, and other natural areas, there are measurable improvements in mental health, physical activity, social cohesion, air quality and other social determinants of health (See Fig. 1). **This report summarizes how partners in Portland can plan, build, and maintain green spaces in ways that promote better health.**



Figure 1. Social determinants of health refer to the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, and work. Health organizations are increasingly looking upstream to these determinants to create community wellness, prevent chronic disease, and increase health care effectiveness.

COMMUNITY HEALTH NEEDS FOR PORTLAND

In the Portland metro area, 15 hospitals and four counties collaborated to create a single Community Health Needs Assessment (called [Healthy Columbia Willamette](#)). The community health needs for the Portland Metro Area include:

- **Connected Communities¹**
- **Culturally-Appropriate Services**
- Environments that Support Health
- **Essential Community Services (jobs, education, transport)**
- **Housing**
- **Systemic Discrimination and Disparities**
- **Lack of Teen Physical Activity**

¹ Bold needs were identified by both the Healthy Columbia Willamette Collaborative's Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and the Multnomah County Health Department's 2016 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP)

- Asthma
- Depression
- Diabetes

OPPORTUNITIES TO LINK GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE TO HEALTH

In 2015, the Portland area’s seven nonprofit hospitals spent \$10 million on community health improvement. Hospitals and the county health department are already spending money on activities such as:

- Providence St. Vincent’s support for Promotores to deliver culturally-appropriate services via virtual health clinics.
- Adventist Medical Center’s support for community gardens and health fairs/podcasts that focus on chronic conditions.
- Providence Portland Medical Center’s collaboration with the Oregon Community Foundation to support students in Centennial School District with behavioral health needs.
- Kaiser Permanente supports Sunday Parkways, which links traffic-free routes between city parks for families, and Zenger Farms Partnership for Health, which links community farms with health organizations.

Rank	Hospital	Total Allocated for Community Health Improvement
1	Oregon Health and Science University	\$4,536,273
2	Kaiser Sunnyside Medical Center	\$2,200,393
3	Providence Portland Medical Center	\$1,650,990
4	Providence St. Vincent	\$1,364,492
5	Adventist Medical Center	\$1,055,465
6	Legacy Emanuel	\$795,550
7	Kaiser Westside Medical Center	\$733,464
8	Shriners Hospital for Children	\$441,586
9	Legacy Good Samaritan	\$201,898

With slight adjustments, more and better access to green space could create even better health outcomes. Some recommended actions could include:

- Collaborate with community benefit programs that focus on culturally-relevant services, behavioral health, and chronic disease to connect disadvantaged communities with more green space, natural areas, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, etc;
- Connect long range planning, urban forestry, and other City ordinances and programs to health objectives such as increasing physical activity, reducing asthma, and reducing depression;
- Focus efforts in parts of the City where green space and health needs overlap (e.g., East, North, and Northeast Portland);
- Support tracking health improvements from community activities (e.g., Living Cully, Jade District Greening, and Friends of Trees); and
- Incorporate green infrastructure and health considerations into housing and transportation solutions.

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