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# The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities



Dr. Margaret B. Neal & Alan DeLaTorre

Institute on Aging | College of Urban and Public Affairs | Portland State University

Presentation to Portland's Planning and Sustainability Commission

March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2012

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# Introduction and Context

- Institute on Aging at Portland State University established 1969
- PSU motto: *“Let Knowledge Serve the City”*
- IOA located in the School of Community Health, College of Urban and Public Affairs
- IOA mission: *“Enhance understanding of aging and facilitate opportunities for elders, families, and communities to thrive”*

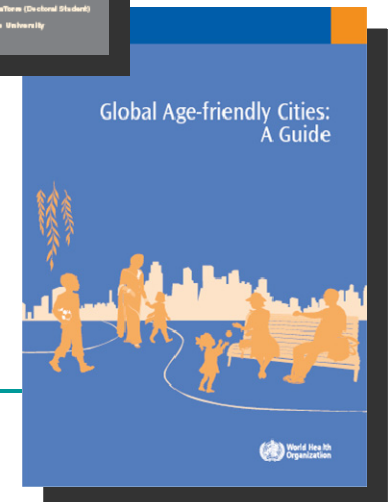
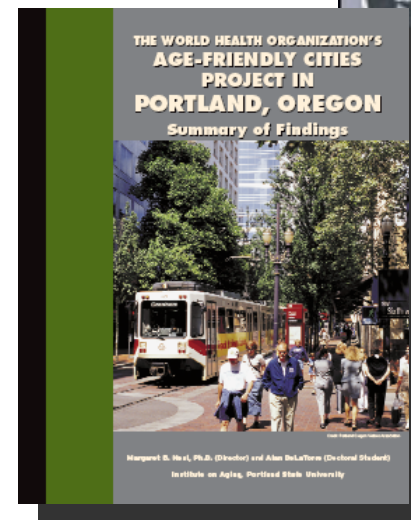
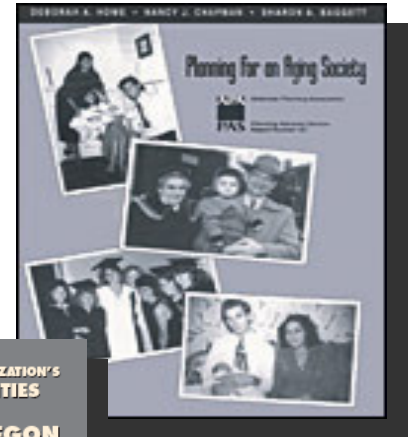


Photo credit: Adam J. Benjamin

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# Background: Relevant IOA Research

- ***Planning for an Aging Society***  
(APA PAS Report # 451, 1994)
- \*Report to Metro: ***Age-Related Shifts in Housing and Transportation Demand*** (2006)
- \*WHO ***Age-Friendly Cities*** project in Portland (2007)
- \*WHO ***Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities*** (2010-present)
- \*Metroscape article: ***Planning for an Aging Society*** (2012)



\* <http://www.pdx.edu/ioa/recent-publications>

# Overview of Portland's Age-Friendly Efforts:

- ❑ **Fall 2006:** Portland (via IOA) invited to participate in WHO's global Age-Friendly Cities project
- ❑ **Spring 2007:** Project completed, participated in meeting re: findings in London, England
- ❑ **Fall 2007:** Launched findings on Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, *International Day of Older Persons*
- ❑ **2008-present:** Continued dissemination findings and building of partnerships
- ❑ **Spring 2010:** Applied for WHO's Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities
- ❑ **Spring 2011:** Received official acceptance into the WHO Global Network
- ❑ **Fall 2011:** Attended 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities – Dublin, Ireland
- ❑ **2012 :** Development of Action Plan and Indicators for an Age-friendly Portland



London – March, 2007



Presentation of Certificate of Membership  
June, 2011

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# WHO Age-Friendly Cities Project in Portland, Oregon



# Research Team – Portland State University

- **Margaret Neal, Ph.D.** - Principal Investigator, Director, Institute on Aging
- **Alan DeLaTorre** – Project Manager, Doctoral student, Urban Studies

## Local Project Advisory Team

- **Sharon Baggett** - Portland State University, Institute on Aging
- **Jay Bloom** - Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services
- **Ken Calvin** - Senior Representative and Advocate
- **Nancy Chapman** - Portland State University, School of Urban Studies and Planning
- **Jerry Cohen/Joyce DeMonnin** – AARP Oregon
- **Carlos Crespo** - Portland State University, School of Community Health
- **Vicki Hersen** - Elders in Action
- **Lydia Lundberg** - Oatfield Estates
- **Neal Naigus** - Portland Community College
- **Grady Tarbutton/David Hanson** - Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services

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# Study Objectives

- **For WHO:** to identify concrete indicators of an age-friendly city and produce a practical guide to stimulate and guide advocacy, community development and policy change to make urban communities age-friendly
- **For participating cities:** to increase awareness of local needs, gaps and good ideas for improvement in order to stimulate development of more age-friendly urban settings



World Health Organization



# Age-Friendly Collaborating Cities



## AMERICAS

Argentina, La Plata  
Brazil, Rio de Janeiro  
Canada, Halifax  
Canada, Portage La Prairie  
Canada, Saanich  
Canada, Sherbrooke  
Costa Rica, San Jose  
Jamaica, Kingston  
Jamaica, Montego Bay  
Mexico, Cancun  
Mexico, Mexico City  
Puerto Rico, Mayaguez  
Puerto Rico, Ponce  
USA, Portland

## EUROPE

Germany, Ruhr  
Ireland, Dundalk  
Italy, Udine  
Russia, Moscow  
Russia, Tuymazy  
Switzerland, Geneva  
Turkey, Istanbul  
UK, Edinburgh  
UK, London



## AFRICA

Kenya, Nairobi

## SOUTH-EAST ASIA

India, New Delhi  
India, Udaipur

## EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

Jordan, Amman  
Lebanon, Tripoli  
Pakistan, Islamabad

## WESTERN PACIFIC

Australia, Melbourne  
Australia, Melville  
China, Shanghai  
Japan, Himeji  
Japan, Tokyo

Credit: BC Ministry of Health



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# An Age-Friendly City:

- A World Health Organization designation
- Defined as a city that:
  - *is “an inclusive and accessible urban environment that promotes active ageing”*
  - *“emphasizes enablement rather than disablement”*
  - *“is friendly for all ages, not just age-friendly”*

# Portland – “The Capital of Good Planning<sup>1</sup>”

- Some urban planners have viewed the Portland region as “the poster child for regional planning, growth management and other innovative urban planning policies<sup>2</sup>”
- Planning for older adults has received insufficient attention in relation to the rapid aging of society



**\*Photo credit: Portland Oregon Visitors Association**

<sup>1</sup>Carl Abbott (2000). *Greater Portland: Urban Life and Landscapes in the Pacific Northwest*

<sup>2</sup>Mayer & Provo (2004). In Ozawa (ed.) *The Portland Edge: Challenges and Successes in Growing Communities*

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# Study Methods

- 33 cities in 22 countries followed the “Vancouver Protocol,” which focused on qualitatively evaluating age-friendly features and barriers to age-friendliness within cities
  - In each of the 33 cities, 8 focus groups were conducted with:
    - **Older adults** (60+, lower & middle income)
    - **Informal caregivers** (as a proxy for frail/disabled)
    - **Providers of service** (public, private, and voluntary sectors)
-

# Population and Sample

- Initial study focused on the entire city of Portland after much debate
- Convenience sample included 8 focus groups and 55 participants
- Participants recruited from low- and middle-income neighborhoods based on census tracts with 14% of households at or below poverty

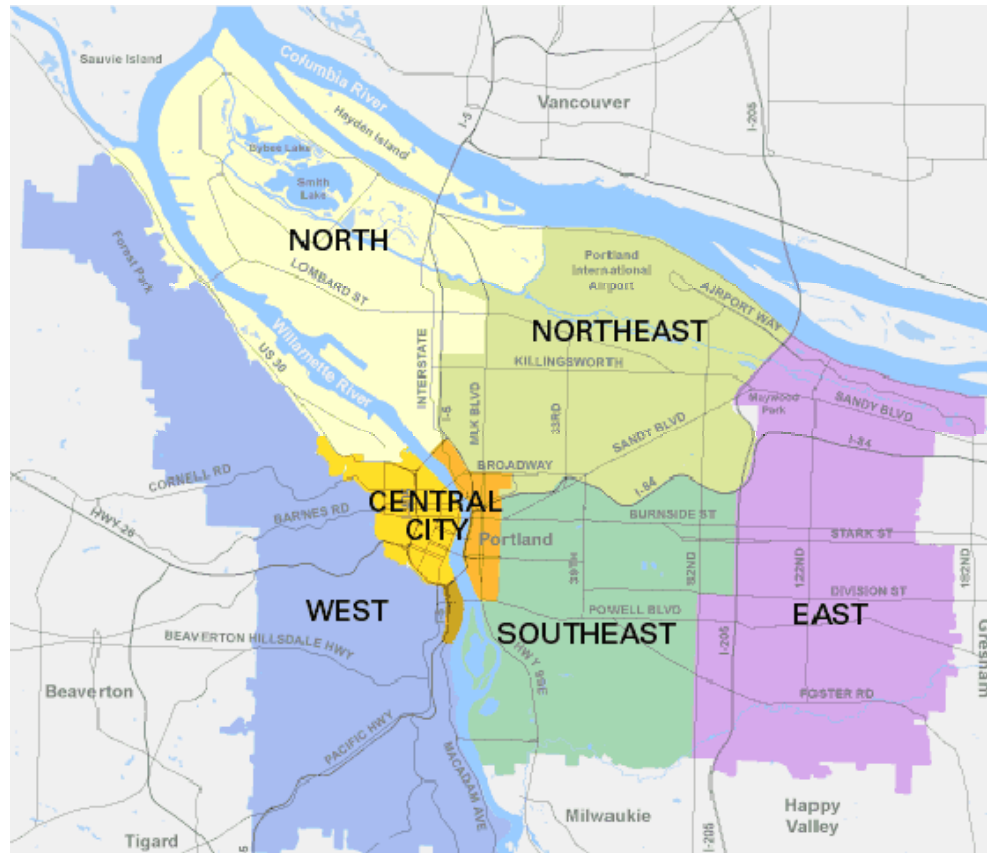
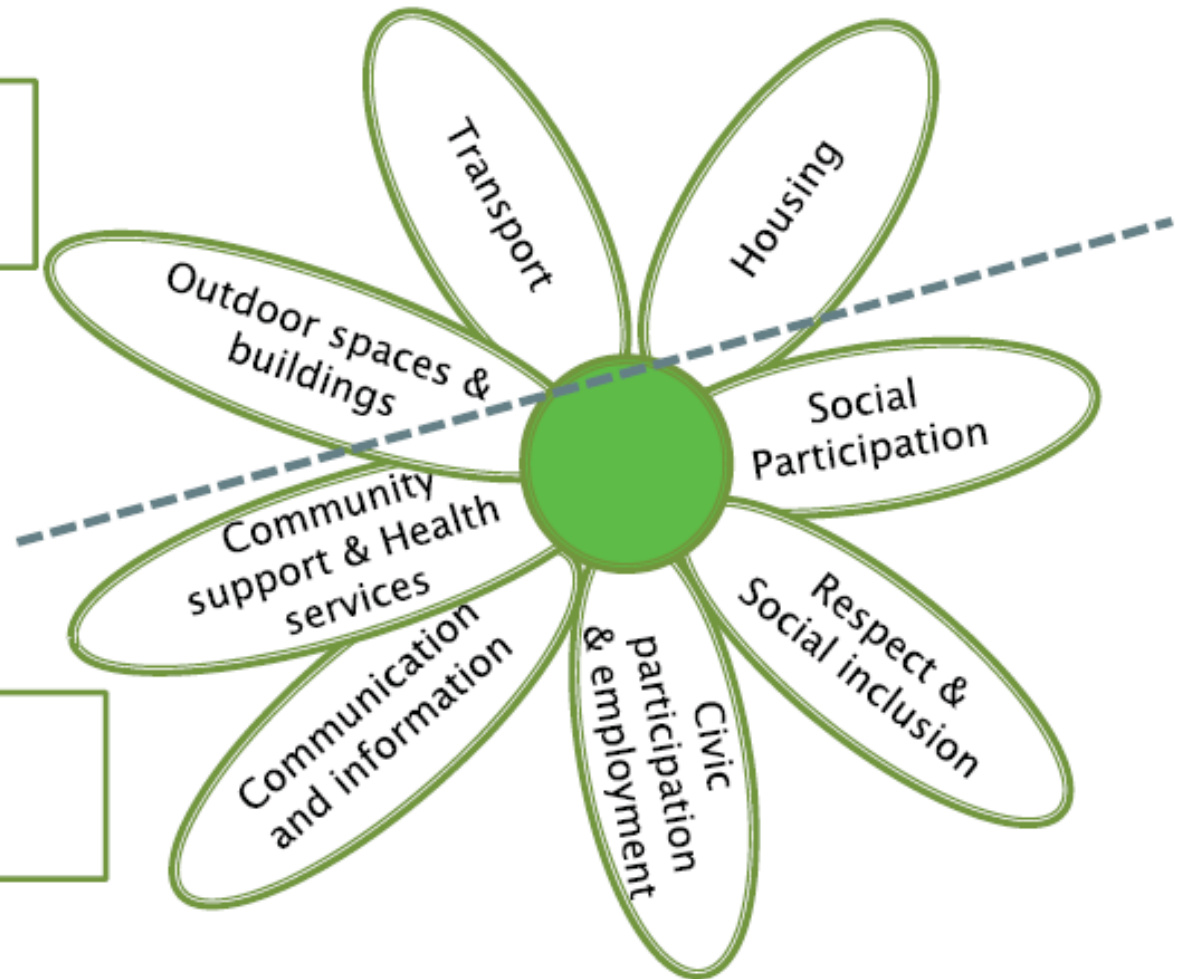


Photo: City of Portland

# Age-Friendly Cities: Eight Domains

**Built  
Environment**

**Social  
Environment**



Source: Suzanne Garon,  
University of Sherbrooke

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# Select Findings

## Outdoor Spaces & Buildings

Even more natural features & green spaces were desired, with attention toward accessibility



## Housing

More affordable & accessible housing was suggested (e.g., infill development such as below seen as inadequate)



“A reporter [called] me and [told] me he was writing an article about new homes in the Portland area, brand new construction built to be accessible, and I laughed and said it would be a very short article.” – Design Expert

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# Select Findings (cont.)

## Transportation

Regional transportation options were considered age-friendly, but improvements were suggested



## Social Participation

Many educational and social opportunities were noted, but additional options were desired



[www.pdx.edu](http://www.pdx.edu)

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# Select Findings (cont.)

## Respect & Social Inclusion

Language and inclusion matter! Terms such as “honored citizen” and “long-term living” were preferred, and organizations were encouraged to consult and listen to the advice of older adults



## Civic Participation & Employment

Employment and volunteer opportunities for older adults, especially those with lower incomes and less education, were advocated





# Select Findings (cont.)

## Communication & Information

Opportunities to learn how to use technology were seen as important, but services should not assume access and proficiency by all



## Community Support & Health Services

Connecting necessary services to people was seen as critical to making Portland age friendly



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# Post-Research Efforts

- Suggestions based on the findings given to **VisionPDX** (Mayor Potter's visioning efforts)
  - Joined **Healthy Aging Workgroup** formed by service providers (public health and aging) to advise the City based on recommendations in VisionPDX
  - New Mayor Adams initiated the **Portland Plan**, overseen by the City's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
    - Appointed IOA researchers to the Portland Plan Advisory Group (PPAG)
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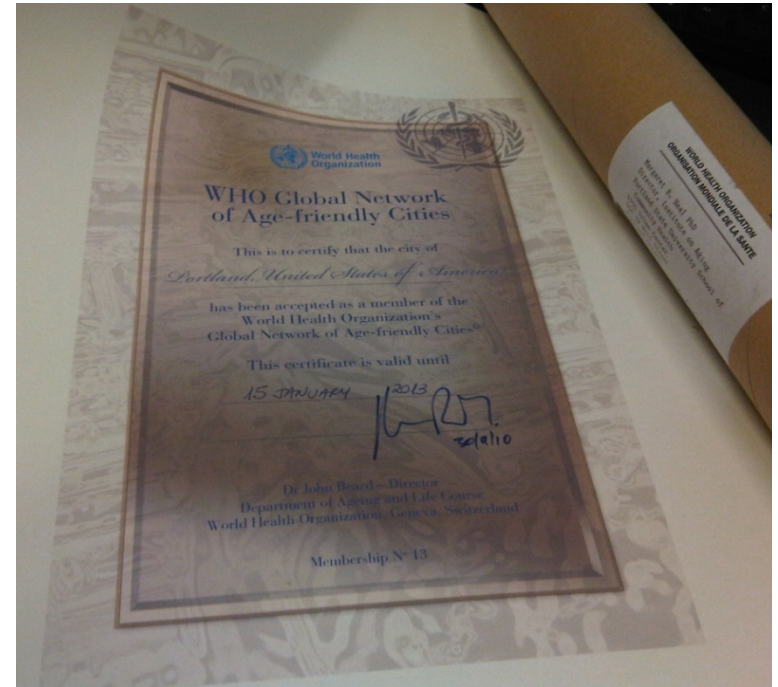
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# Barriers

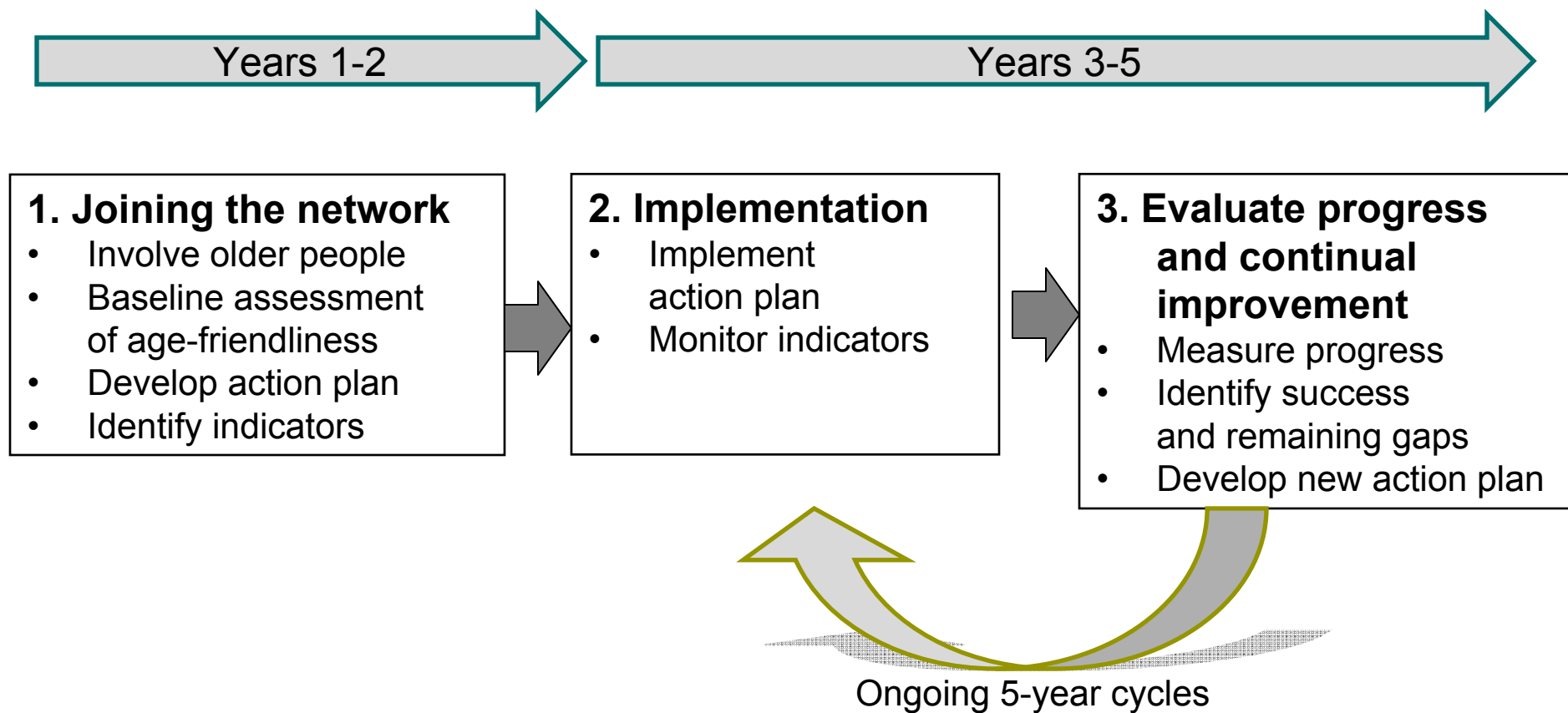
- Competing agendas of stakeholders (e.g., elected officials, researchers, private sector)
    - Planning for older adults varies in priority (e.g., compared to education, economic development, homelessness, bike friendliness)
  - This university-government partnership model is imperfect and evolving
    - “Where’s the champion, where’s the torch?” - The university can do the research and provide advice; the government must implement the plans
    - Additional neighborhood-level research needed; funding required
  - Transitions in government leadership
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# Moving Toward an Age-Friendly Portland

- 2010-11: Applied for and accepted into the WHO Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities
- Advisory group created composed of representatives from:
  - Elders in Action
  - AARP Oregon
  - PSU Institute of Portland Metropolitan Studies
  - Multnomah County Aging and Disability Services
  - Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
  - Offices of Mayor Adams, Comm. Fish and Fritz
  - Coalition for a Livable Future
  - Native American Youth & Family Center
  - Urban League
  - United Way
  - Bloom Anew
  - Metro (invited)
  - OHSU (invited)
  - Portland Business Alliance?



# WHO Proposed Cycle for Members of the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities<sup>©</sup>



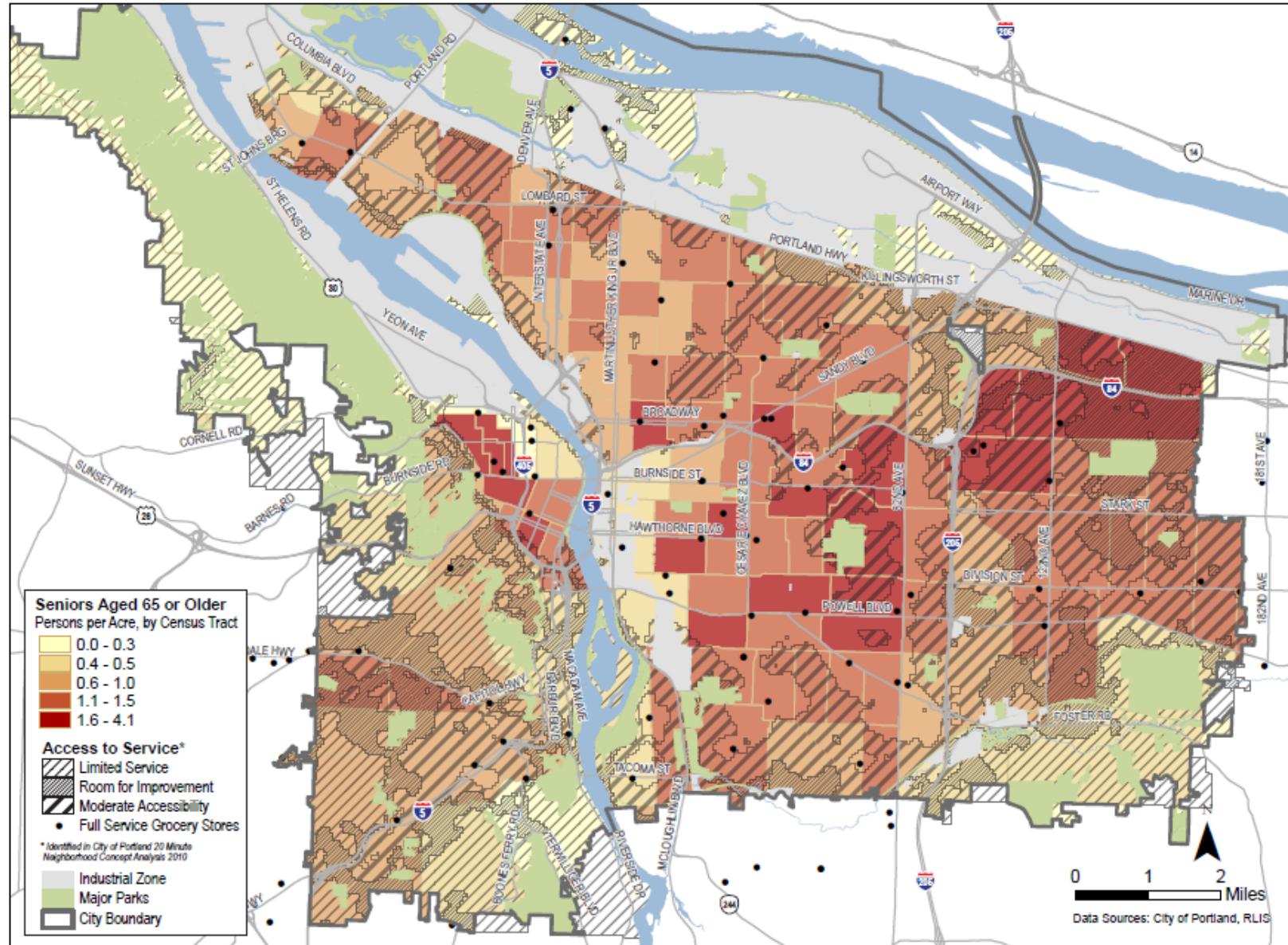
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# Current and Future Activities

- Research funding being sought in order to augment the baseline data concerning Portland's age friendliness
  - Working with BPS to improve the Portland Plan:
    - Developing ongoing partnership with IOA and WHO's Global Network
    - Working toward a 5-year Action Plan on Aging in Portland
    - Current partnership with BPS staff and a PSU MURP workshop project focused on creating an Age-Friendly Portland
  - April 7<sup>th</sup> – AARP and Elders in Action are hosting a mayoral candidate forum on “Creating an Age-Friendly Portland” and IOA will collect data via community forum
    - Doubletree (Lloyd), 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
  - Working with PSU's Institute of Metropolitan Studies/ Greater Portland Pulse in development of indicators of progress
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# An Age-Friendly Portland Indicator

Density of Seniors Aged 65 or Older in 2010 and Access to Service in Portland



Source: DeLaTorre et al. (2012)

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For more information please contact:

Dr. Margaret B. Neal  
Director/Professor  
Institute on Aging  
Portland State University  
503.725.5145  
[nealm@pdx.edu](mailto:nealm@pdx.edu)

Alan DeLaTorre  
Project Manager  
Institute on Aging  
Portland State University  
503.725.5236  
[aland@pdx.edu](mailto:aland@pdx.edu)

Questions?

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