

Wilsonville

engAGE MAPPs

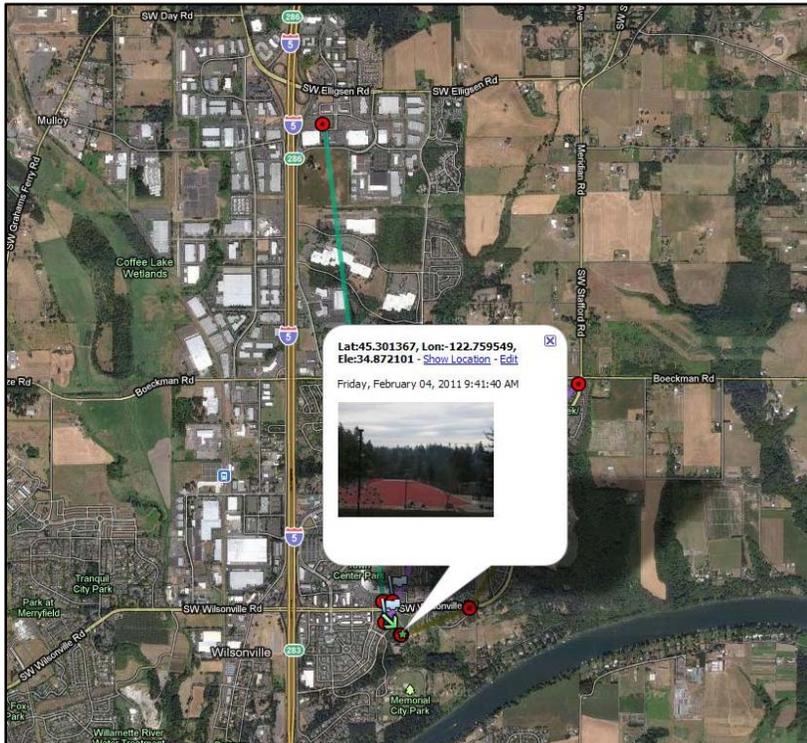
COMMUNITY REPORT



This report was generated by Deborah H. John, Ph.D., Extension Family and Community Health Faculty, OSU Extension Service, Clackamas County, OR. The report includes data collected during the engAGE in Community MAPPs processes and is provided to the Wilsonville Community to support the community's engAGE in Community initiative.

Wilsonville *engAGE in Community* MAPPS Report

Wilsonville is primarily located in Clackamas County; northern section of the city is in Washington County. Originally founded as Boones Landing, the community became Wilsonville in 1880. The city was incorporated in 1969. At the recent census, the population grew to 19,509. Slightly less than 90% of residents are white, with Hispanics (10.4%) as the largest minority group.¹ Located within the Portland metropolitan area the city includes the community of Charbonneau, a planned community on the south side of the Willamette River. The city is bisected by Interstate 5 (east/west) and the Willamette (north/south), which can contribute to neighborhood isolation. Public transportation is provided by the city's South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART); includes Wilsonville Station operated by TriMet, a public agency that operates mass transit across most of the Portland metro area. West-Linn-Wilsonville and Canby school districts provide public education; Clackamas Community College and Pioneer Pacific College have campuses in the city.²



engAGE in Community

Clackamas County Social Services and Extension Family and Community Health have partnered with communities across the County to assess resources and residents' perceptions of current and future resources required to improve the livability or 'age-friendliness' of communities within Clackamas County. Information gathered from and by local residents will be used to develop an *engAGE in Community* strategic plan. Within local communities, the project objectives are to (1) provide data to inform 'age-friendly' multi-sector planning efforts, (2) assess

and increase community capacity, resources, and relevance for evidence-based 'age-friendly' practices, (3) provide basis for current and future actions, and (4) share results with community audiences. This report is a brief summary of Wilsonville's *engAGE in Community* MAPPS (Mapping Attributes: Participatory Photographic Surveys) activities.

Relevance for Wilsonville Community

Clackamas County and County communities are aging, which may burden the current individual, family, and community resources and affect the ability of County residents to age actively and

successfully in their residence and/or community of choice. In Wilsonville it is no different; since 1990 the percent of residents, both women and men, between 40 and 64 years of age who live in the community has increased significantly. Estimates are that by 2015 more than 40 percent of adults living Clackamas County and County communities will be over the age of 50, a trend that for Wilsonville is no different (see chart 2, page 2). Planning for an older population in the future requires local input with an understanding the current community supports and barriers to place-based aging as well as a commitment to change – increasing supports and removing barriers so that all community residents have the choice to live well and age in their residence and community of choice.

Population Distribution by Age and Gender for Wilsonville for 1990 vs. 2005-09

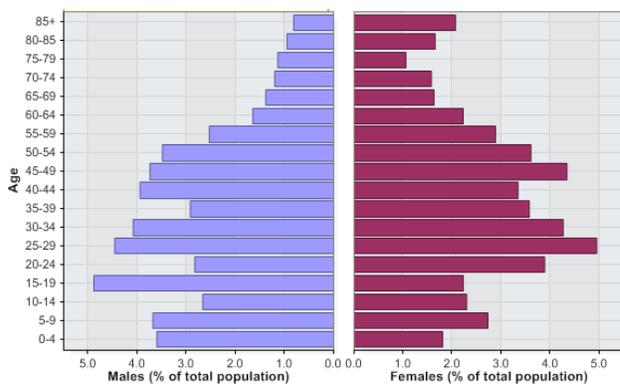


Chart 1

Source: Oregon Communities Reporter³

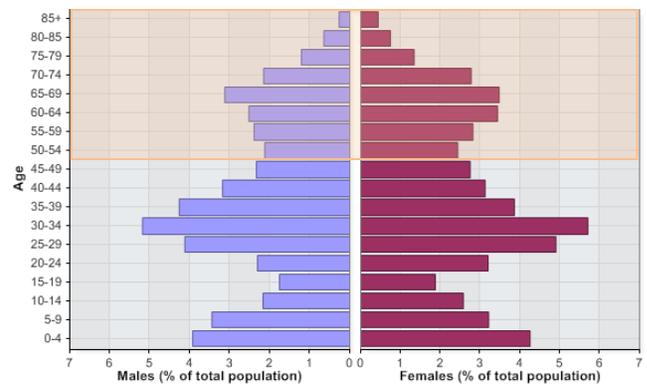


Chart 2

Methods and Preliminary Themes

An *engAGE MAPPS* team (n=9) comprised of local residents with an interest creating a more ‘age-friendly’ Wilsonville community volunteered to individually photograph and map the features of the area that they perceived as either opportunities for or obstacles to place-based aging for Wilsonville residents. Over 80 photographs were taken. Together, the Wilsonville *engAGE MAPPS* team discussed the photographs during a focus group meeting and the most relevant 50 photographs were mapped and included in the presentation for the larger community conversation. Over 50 local residents attended and participated in a community conversation held at the Wilsonville Community Center in March 2011. The conversation was facilitated by Dr. Deborah John, OSU Extension faculty in Clackamas County. During the 2.5 hour dinner and conversation, each of the photographs were displayed; participants discussed the community feature in terms of its ‘age-friendliness,’ that is as supporting or hindering one’s capacity to live and thrive in the community regardless of age or ability.

Physical Environment – 88 references

The physical environment is rich with natural and built amenities providing supports for and challenges to age-friendliness. Two obvious features of the physical environment, the Willamette River and Interstate 5 (I-5), bisect and segment the community affecting the experience of residents across all physical environment topic areas (i.e. transportation, housing, and outdoor spaces and buildings) as well as the social and service environments. Residents report that Wilsonville is a “commuter community” and explain that many people commute daily to Wilsonville to work in the using the transportation network of roads and railways. The city is home to several technology companies including Mentor Graphics and Xerox, the city’s largest employer. Wilsonville also houses many regional distribution and manufacturing sites adjacent to I-5 such as Coca Cola and Rite Aid.⁴ The economic emphasis on industry does contribute to certain built environment supports that are shared by residents and commuters.

Transportation 40 total references/28 barriers

- One of the more telling indicators of a physical environment challenge is the route maps created by the MAPPS team. The route maps (see Figures 1-5, pages 6-7) capture, in a visual way, how residents navigate regions of the local community segmented by I-5 and the river. The route maps reflect a strong dependence on a personal automobile to access the resources across the community with some neighborhoods supporting active transportation (i.e. walking/bicycling) and/or public transit.
- Transportation supports include: free public transportation provided by the city’s South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART); Wilsonville Station light rail operated by TriMet; neighborhood improvements that support walking and bicycling, such as signage, crosswalks, sidewalks, and bike lanes.
- Transportation barriers include: limited free SMART routes; low SMART ridership likely due to restricted time and destination options for older residents and others who do not/cannot drive themselves; lack of seats or shelters at transit stops; lack of neighborhood connectivity across active transportation supports; pedestrian and bicyclist safety concerns, including automobile traffic congestion, speed, and absence of traffic calming features; and no local taxi cab service. When faced with the inability to drive one self, older residents (and others) encounter less than optimal or no viable transportation choices, which makes living in Wilsonville and the surrounding area more difficult across the life cycle.

Housing 17 total references/7 barriers

- Affordable 55+ housing and assisted living facilities, a community attribute that when absent results in disturbed family and social networks when a community member is no longer able to live independently, are available.
- A number of local planned residential communities were identified as “model[s] of what there should be more of” because of features such as garden space, nature trails,

neighborhood safety, walking/public transit access to community resources, green and sustainable design, and other features supporting independence and community.

- Housing features that were identified as barriers to Wilsonville’s age-friendliness include: absence of enough affordable and accessible housing to support the current and future needs of an aging society; land use plans and policies that affect residential development (i.e. support development of modular/mobile home communities, smaller single occupancy residences, low density multi-family residences, and universal design); lack of connectivity between neighborhoods because of environmental attributes like the river and major roadways.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings 31 total references/14 barriers

- Supports and/or built environment improvements that support age-friendly livability include old town, city-supported parks, library, and community center, including senior services, and community commitment to environmental health and ecosystem sustainability.
- Improvements to outdoor environments and natural landscapes (i.e. parks, trails, benches, bridges, signage, structures, etc.) are supported by local and regional public and private industry resources, improving availability, accessibility, and affordability of nature, active recreation and play spaces for all residents.
- Outdoor spaces and building features that were identified as barriers to community livability for all ages include: accessibility and pedestrian safety; discontinuous, disconnected, and/or non-destination roadways, sidewalks, and paths that limit use for non-vehicular transportation; neighborhood isolation and land-use planning challenges related to being located in more than one county and sectioning resulting from the interspersing of incorporated areas with unincorporated land.
- Additional points focused on how to resource new features and/or improvements to outdoor spaces and buildings, like continuous sidewalks and pedestrian safety supports, community gardens and farmers’ markets.

Social Environment – 38 references

The social environment emerged as being supported through various built environment features and community organizations. One attribute of Wilsonville that was reported as a detriment to social environment of the community is, “people who come here come to work and they have lunch and then they go home.” Many of the community features and social, cultural, and civic participation attributes that support and enrich the social environment require a critical mass in order to be sustainable.

Respect and Inclusion (6 total references/1 barrier)

- Wilsonville residents reported that respect is demonstrated for all community members; yet, supporting inclusion for all individuals, regardless of age and ability difference, in every

situation is difficult. Residents report that more outreach opportunities and supports for seniors, people with ability and/or sensory differences would create a more age-friendly community.

Social Participation (10 total references/1 barrier)

- Wilsonville is rich with social and cultural opportunities for all ages and abilities. Some barriers to an age-friendly social and cultural environment include a physical environment that limits accessibility for some and an absence of critical mass to support the economic costs of some social and/or cultural resources.

Civic Engagement and Employment (4 total references/0 barriers)

- Volunteer organizations and opportunities for civic engagement through volunteerism were referenced as a necessary resource. Organizations such as 'Elders in Action' and faith groups were identified as important venues for civic engagement.

Service Environment – 25 references

Wilsonville seems to be well resourced in the area of healthy lifestyle services. However, barriers were identified in both health and medical services and communications that influenced the ability of residents to age-in-place.

Health Care and Medical Services (4 total references/0 barriers)

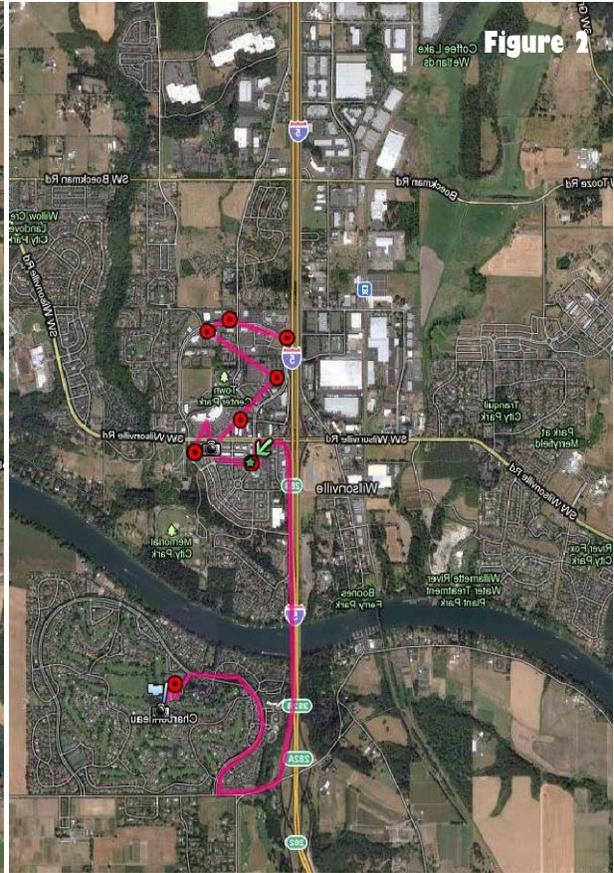
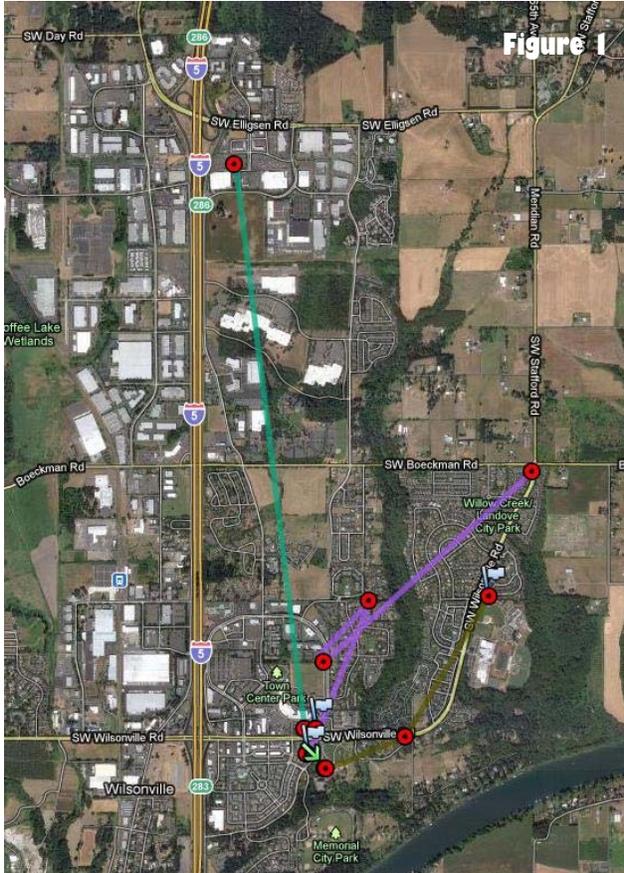
- Local health care and health-related services, like medical, dental, health therapy, vision, pharmacy, ambulance, and alternative health services are available but reported to be under-utilized by local residents.
- Home health care and medical supply outlet is desired for those who need these services, which would improve the age-friendliness of the community.

Communication and Information Networks (3 total references/1 barrier)

- Community residents had a hard time articulating how information was communicated and received among local folks. An informal network of bulletin boards, email lists, newsletters, and the local newspaper supported community communications.
- Participants acknowledged that finding current information about community resources or events can be difficult and is influenced by increasing costs and changes in information technologies that require specialized equipment and skills.

References

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey
2. Wikipedia, retrieved on May 3, 2011
3. Oregon Communities Reporter, retrieved on May 15, 2011 from <http://oe.oregonexplorer.info/rural/OregonCommunitiesReporter>
4. Wikipedia, retrieved on May 3, 2011



Figures 1-5 represent the routes navigated by local residents as they mapped the attributes of the Wilsonville Community using participatory photographic survey methods. Circles and cameras identify the location of photographed points of interest related to the physical, social, and service environments.

