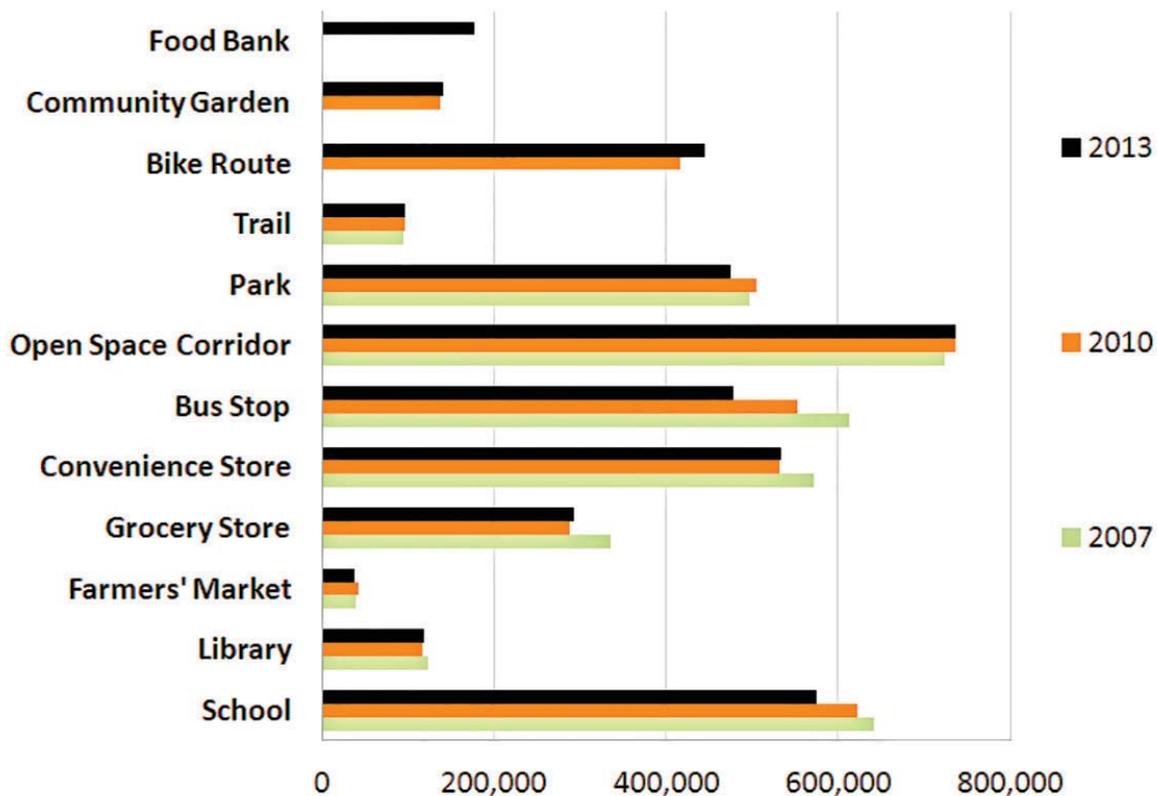


Pierce County Environmental Health 2014



Land What's in Our Neighborhoods?

Number of Pierce County residents living in a census tract within ½ mile of a:



Data Sources: Pierce County Geographic Information System, Pierce Transit, and U.S. Census. Census tracts are geographical areas used by the U.S. Census.

Fewer Pierce County residents lived near bus stops in 2013 than in 2007, due to Pierce Transit reducing its service area. They also reduced bus and shuttle service from more than 840,000 hours in 2007 to less than 600,000 hours in 2013.

WHY CARE?

Access and benefits

- Living closer to healthy food retail is associated with better eating habits and decreased risk for obesity and diet-related diseases.¹
- U.S. adults with access to neighborhood parks are nearly twice as likely to be physically active as those without access to parks.¹
- Driving less, walking and taking the bus more, reduces air pollution and polluted stormwater runoff.²
- Trees, parks, community gardens, and other green open spaces help improve air and water quality,

retain stormwater, reduce flooding, capture carbon dioxide, regulate climate, and provide a wide range of physical and mental health benefits.³

Human health impacts

- Increased physical activity reduces risks for heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, depression, breast and colon cancer, and other diseases.⁴
- Walking your dog can improve your physical, mental, and social health.⁵
- Increasing the number of pedestrians and bicyclists, dedicated bike routes, and trail systems help improve both pedestrian and bicycle safety. It also helps reduce traffic congestion and vehicle emissions.

- Improving water and air quality reduces risks of many chronic diseases, including heart disease and cancer.

Who's most vulnerable?

- People living in low-income neighborhoods, communities of color and rural areas with limited geographical and financial access to healthy foods, grocery stores, parks, transportation options, and other resources.⁶
- Children, elderly, and ethnic minorities are most at risk of fatal and serious injury collisions involving pedestrians.⁷
- Transit dependent people, including seniors, people with disabilities, low-income adults, youth and children unable to access transit due to Pierce Transit service cuts, costs, ability, age, and other accessibility limitations.⁸ Pierce Transit reduced their service hours by 43% and raised fares twice since 2007,⁹ and cut their service area.
- The 19% of adults who don't eat vegetables daily, and 35% who don't eat fruit daily in Washington State.¹⁰

Economic impacts

- Estimated Washington State 2004 physical inactivity costs are almost \$200 million for direct medical costs, over \$9 million for direct worker's compensation costs, and over \$4 billion for lost productivity, including time missed from work.¹¹
- Nearby open spaces, parks, trails, and trees improve property values property tax revenues.¹²
- Using your car less will save you money, especially as gasoline prices rise.
- Making urban roads more bike-friendly yields air pollution, safety, physical activity, and other benefits 10-25 times the cost.¹³
- Shoppers may spend more time and money in business districts with high quality trees.¹⁴
- Healthy food retail stimulates economic activity.¹⁵

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Policy actions

Local, regional, and national efforts to design and build communities with healthier land use, recreation, education, and transportation options:

- A 2005 Growth Management Act amendment requires communities to adopt and implement plans and strategies to promote physical activity.
- Pierce County Countywide Planning Policies included this requirement in 2012, to guide county and cities' comprehensive plan updates.
- Complete Streets and other policies help make it safer and easier for people to walk, bike, and take transit to where they live, work, learn, pray, and play.



Ruston Way Waterfront Trail

- Park Oriented Development also helps make cities healthier places.

Personal actions

- Share your vision of what you want in your neighborhood with your mayor, council members, planning commission, planners, and others.
- Support libraries, parks, schools, grocery stores, farmers' markets, community gardens, and other resources you want to thrive in your neighborhood.
- Grow food in your garden, planters, community gardens, and other places! Share it with friends, neighbors, and local food banks.
- Find a nearby parks, trails, and bike routes for you, family, friends, and dog to enjoy together at www.discoverparks.org/ and www.piercetrips.com.

Emergency Food Network harvested more than 100,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables at the organic Mother Earth Farm for local food banks in 2013.¹⁵

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- 4 Impact of the Built Environment on Health fact sheet, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2011.
- 5 Between Pets and People: The Importance of Animal Companionship, Alan Beck and Aaron Katcher, 1996.
- 6 The Grocery Gap: Who Has Access to Healthy Food and Why It Matters, Treuhaft & Karpyn, PolicyLink and The Food Trust, 2010.
- 7 The Gray Notebook, Washington Department of Transportation, February 2011.
- 8 Growing Transit Communities Existing Conditions Report VI: Transportation, Puget Sound Regional Council, May 2013; Pierce Transit's Summer 2012 Report to the Community.
- 9 Pierce Transit's 2011 Report to the Community.
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