

# SMART SURFACES

## OREGON PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The **Oregon Public Health Association (OPHA)** has focused on building awareness about climate change and health, as well as developing partnerships that lay the foundation for future climate and health work in Portland and across Oregon.

### HIGHLIGHTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### Climate and Health at the 80th Annual Conference and Meeting

At OPHA's Annual Conference and Meeting in October 2024, there were two breakout sessions focusing on climate and health. Dr. Vivek Shandas provided one of the keynote presentations titled "Heat, Health, and Housing Opportunities," which earned positive feedback from attendees in the conference evaluation.

#### Climate and Health Events for Awareness-Building

OPHA partnered with the Oregon Rural Practice-based Research Network ([ORPRN](#)) and the Oregon ECHO Network ([OEN](#)) to hold a town hall entitled "Surviving the Heat: Healthcare Providers Unite" on Earth Day in April 2025. Topics included recognizing the signs of heat exhaustion/stroke, outlining strategies for prevention, and connection to resources. The town hall was free, with a special focus on healthcare providers, and provided CME credits. This set the stage for further collaboration, with another town hall/webinar focused on climate and health planned for spring 2026

#### Development of the "Living Cully Heat Resilience Resource Guide"

The main focus of this year has been OPHA's partnership with [Verde](#) and [Climate Adaptation Planning and Analytics \(CAPA\) Strategies](#) to conduct community engagement and develop the "Living Cully Heat Resilience Resource Guide" for the Cully neighborhood in Portland. Cully is one of the most [diverse](#) neighborhoods in Portland, has minimal tree canopy coverage ([19.9%](#)), and experiences some of the [highest](#) temperatures in Portland during extreme heat events.

Temperatures in Portland reached 116 degrees Fahrenheit during the 2021 Heat Dome Event, which was directly linked to [72 deaths](#) in Portland (one of the highest concentrations of heat-related deaths were in the Cully neighborhood). This partnership between OPHA, Verde, and CAPA Strategies resulted in four community outreach efforts (one tabling event, an online survey, a focus group in English, and a focus group in Spanish) to hear people's experiences and needs related to extreme heat. Verde and CAPA will turn this community data into a resource guide for Cully residents, to be completed, translated into three languages (Spanish, Vietnamese, and Somali) and printed in December 2025 and distributed at community events in spring 2026.



OPHA Board members and a partner from Verde Northwest at CullyFest on September 13, 2025

## NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Through the Smart Surfaces grant, OPHA has been able to strengthen or form new partnerships.

- While OPHA had a loose relationship with ORPRN via a Board Member employed at ORPRN, collaborating on the education and awareness events through the Smart Surfaces grant has solidified this relationship and set the stage for future collaborations. This collaboration also initiated at least one new individual membership with OPHA and relationships with 2024 Townhall climate expert presenters from across the country.
- OPHA has also developed new relationships with Verde and CAPA Strategies, organizations with deep community connections and experience in the Portland climate research space. This connection has been vital for conducting outreach and developing a resource guide that is grounded in community experiences and wisdom. Verde, in particular, is a trusted partner in Cully and was able to provide key support in engaging Cully residents and uplifting community voices. This partnership has laid a foundation for future community-based climate and health work in Portland and can serve as a model for engaging with communities across Oregon.
- OPHA Board Members have also started connecting with the Portland Smart Surfaces Coalition, a collection of city partners focused on climate infrastructure and the built environment. While this relationship is new, OPHA is excited to strengthen this partnership and explore ways to collaborate at the intersections of city infrastructure and public health related to climate change and extreme heat.
- Generally, the Smart Surfaces grant has also strengthened OPHA's relationship with APHA and other affiliates through grant recipient calls and in person meetings at the APHA Annual Meeting Smart Surfaces gatherings.

## SMART SURFACE POLICIES

OPHA has begun engaging with the Portland Smart Surfaces Coalition to collaborate on city-level policies. This is new work, so OPHA is looking forward to what these new relationships will bring. OPHA's work with Verde and CAPA Strategies has laid the foundation for future awareness campaigns and policy efforts. In addition to the community resource guide, OPHA, Verde, and CAPA Strategies have discussed potential next steps, including:

- Engaging city counselors to establish a dedicated cooling center during extreme heat events (lack of a dedicated cooling center emerged as a need from the community outreach).
- Adding a call-to-action in the resource guide to support Cully residents in advocacy efforts.
- Leveraging the resource guide into awareness and education materials to engage city and state policy-makers (Representatives for Oregon House Districts 44 and 45 have interests in public health and emergency management, respectively).
- OPHA will also explore advocating with partners for an Extreme Heat Awareness Week at the city, county, and state levels.



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