

# Urban Planning and Civic Space

When the City of Portland undertook the process of developing its first zoning code in 1919, the newly formed City Planning Commission involved citizens who were property owners through a fairly extensive process of public hearings in 29 different neighborhoods. On average, six citizens were chosen to represent the interests of the neighborhoods. As Abbott (1983) notes, while this was a form of citizen involvement, the committee members themselves were carefully chosen and appointed by the Planning Commission to represent large land and mortgage holders and substantial businessmen. Abbott (1983) summarizes the ways things were done in planning and public projects in the early 1900s,

what brought this generation of civic leaders together on one project after another was the assumption that planning was properly organized by the substantial citizens of a city. Portland's civic leaders recognized no clear distinction between public concerns and the interests of banks, landholders, utilities and corporations. Wealthy businessmen and their allies in the professions repeatedly took the initiative in ordering the physical growth of the city through private committees and semi-independent commissions. With minor variations, their same role was apparent in the first steps toward a park system, the promotion of comprehensive urban design, the provision of harbor facilities, the response to the housing shortage of 1918, and the establishment of land use planning and zoning as a municipal function. (Abbott, Planning p. 48)

There was opposition to the initial zoning code regulations by smaller property owners and real estate brokers because the laws were seen as benefiting the few land tycoons at the expense of the middle-class landowners. The Anti-Zoning League, a “citizen” group was formed led by realtor Fred German. The first public referendum for the zoning code was narrowly defeated in 1920. In order to resolve conflicts between elements of the business community, the City formed a new committee in 1921. Mostly meeting behind closed doors, they hammered out differences among real estate, building, and labor interests. A new revised code was put up for a public vote and passed in November 1924.

At several other points, the City, operating through the Planning Commission updated its zoning code. This process was usually led by business and other vested interests. In 1951 the City hosted 150 public meetings to receive public testimony about revisions to the zoning code once more. In 1955 a “citizen’s” advisory committee met for 14 months to revise the zoning code. Committee members represented the First National Bank, Mortgage Bankers Association, Association of Building Owners and Managers, Apartment House Association, Portland Chamber of Commerce, and Portland Realty Board. The advisory committee included what the City referred to as representatives of the “general public” including Lamar Newkirk, business editor of *Oregon Journal*, Dr. U.G. Dubach of Lewis and Clark College; Jalmar Johnson, associate editor, *Oregonian*, and Ruth Richardson, an attorney representing the Federated Women’s Clubs. The chairperson of the committee, in a self-congratulatory moment, referred to the diversity of the committee. “It appeared,” he said, “it would be

difficult to find common ground for such a wide divergence of public opinion as the committee represented. (Prichard, 1956).”

The proposed new city-wide code was finally published in the local Daily Journal of Commerce in July, 1958. There were public hearings throughout the city and all protests were responded to and many changes were made to the final code. While this was an extensive form of public involvement, the protests were home owners and more often businesses or developers looking out for their own self interest. There were neighborhood-based organizations and no citizen groups that represented the “public interest.” The city code was finally adopted in July, 1959.

In the period after World War II, residents did occasionally organize to resist change in their neighborhoods, although the types of actions were limited to the appearance of one or several home owners at public hearings, court actions, or collective actions that were limited in their effectiveness or duration. Also, most actions, or least any with effective outcome, were in the well to do neighborhoods. For example, in 1954 three owners resisted expansion of the Hollywood business district by filing a suit to reverse the zoning changes authorized by the City of Portland. Also in 1954, Laurelhurst residents in inner southeast Portland fought approval of a 14-story apartment structure. A homeowner group declared that the only resident in the area who approved of the proposed apartment was the wife of the mayor, Mrs. Fred L. Peterson. In 1963 residents in the Sylvan area joined together to fight a rezoning approved by the Multnomah County Planning Commission to build a shopping center in their area.

(\*transition needed and dates) The local citizen movement to take more control of civic decisions was propelled by new federal and state laws that gave them more legal

stature. Many of these new rules and regulations were created in the mid 1960s to mid 1970s, and rules affected who could be involved (Economic Opportunities and Model City citizen involvement requirements) and how (e.g., Environmental Impact Assessments). By the end of the 1970s federal laws, many of which had trickled down to state and local levels, required citizen participation in a wide range of federal programs.

The state government also took an interest in citizen empowerment. The implementation of a statewide land use system in 1974, placed citizen participation as its first goal. The goal read, "To develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process." (Land Conservation and Development Commission, 1976) The program instructed every city and town and some special regional districts to develop a comprehensive plan, development of which were to be an open public process, not a closed door, professionally or elite-driven one. The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC), established by legislative act to oversee development of the local comprehensive plans defined the general goal of citizen involvement broadly. It was to be widespread, two-way and provide opportunity for citizens to influence the process. Local agencies were suppose to provide technical information in understandable form, provide adequate feedback from elected officials and agency staff, and to fund or support citizen participation in land use planning decisions. LCDC also required cities and towns to establish local citizen advisory committees. This last requirement proved to be another very important factor in the development of Portland's neighborhood system, as it created an incentive to use the energy of spontaneously growing grassroots efforts at the neighborhood level, and it provided an unquestionably legitimate right for

neighborhood associations to be involved in critical land use decisions.

The public hearings held around the state to help shape Oregon's land use law were also an unprecedented outreach effort that provided an instant free adult education program on land use, zoning, and planning for Oregon's citizens. Arnold Cogan, one of the road runners who led the outreach effort recalls mailings of 100,000 pieces and a journey during 1974 to 35 communities with more than 100 people at each meeting, all to help establish the land use operating rules. Fourteen committees back at the Capitol then hashed over the findings, and their findings went back out to over 100,000 citizens.

Around the state, citizens were drawn into the act of creating comprehensive plans for their communities throughout the 1970s. While the comprehensive plan was the stated end product of the process, probably the more important accomplishment was to create a governing ambience of process and grassroots involvement, and a precedent for the role of government as a provider of civic education. In addition to the education on land use and planning provided by government, nonprofit organizations trained citizens in how to be good and effective citizens.

Not only the state, but Portland's civic elite ran afoul of citizen action, as the fight over Portland's Downtown Plan, the result of a 3-year planning process between 1969 and 1972, a fight that also illuminates the changing dynamics among citizens, planners, and the civic elite. In 1968 some downtown businessmen, "accustomed to getting their own way (Abbott, 1983, p. 217,)" got together and formed the Portland Improvement Corporation (PIC). Their goal was to come up with ways to revitalize downtown Portland which was suffering many of the same ills as downtowns in other cities. Their focus was on better traffic circulation and parking. The PIC included bank chiefs,

executives from major retailers, and power brokers Ira Keller and Glenn Jackson. At this point they assumed that, like prior civic groups, composed of local luminaries, they would run the show. They were in for surprises from the other side of the river.

Across the river in the Irvington neighborhood several housewives routinely gathered for coffee and conversation. These women included Betty Merten, Elaine Druckeman, and Deenie Rosuch. Elaine and Deenie's husbands were both Reed College professors involved in the Learning community. One day in 1969 the women discussed their concerns about air pollution in Portland. Betty Merten recalled later how they went to the phone book to figure out who was in charge of Portland's air quality. They located two agencies, the Columbia Willamette Air Pollution Agency (CWAPA) and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. Without much sense of how do things, they then set about to make sure Portland's air pollution didn't get any worse.

The original three women in the kitchen soon expanded to include several other women from the neighborhood babysitting group, including Beth Wieting, Alike Anderson, and Elsa Coleman. They showed up unexpectedly at meetings of the CWAPA. The members of CWAPA were used to having private meetings. As Merten later recalled, a member asked them who they were, and she responded by saying, "we're not any group; we're just housewives who care about the quality of the air."

Merten's continued activism around air pollution led her and others to protest a proposed 13-story parking structure that Meier and Frank wanted to build in downtown Portland. They received good media coverage when they showed up wearing surgical masks and carrying placards that read, "smog kills." They suggested that instead of

another parking garage downtown needed a plaza, “a central open space at the city’s heart for people to enjoy—flanked by non-polluting transit (Bonner 2001a).

In 1980 the proposed alternative use of this centrally located downtown block became a cornerstone of Portland’s Downtown Plan. Instead of a parking lot, eventually the City build Pioneer Courthouse Square, a 1-square block plaza that is affectionately known as Portland’s living room.

Not everyone loved the idea of turning the parking lot into a plaza. Businessmen were convinced that it would attract transients and other “undesirables.” (Lansing, 203, p. 419) When it looked like the businessmen would have their way, and Portland would lose \$1.5 million in matching federal funds secured for the project, a newly formed group, the Friends of Pioneer Courthouse Square, embarked on a campaign for the citizens of Portland buy the plaza literally one brick at a time. Citizens purchased over 47,000 bricks and raised \$750,000. Amid much celebration, Pioneer Courthouse Square was dedicated in the spring of 1984.

But, this did not end the downtown planning saga. Richard Ivey from CH2M/Hill recalled that in 1968, independently of the process established by Portland Improvement Corporation, he had broached the subject of a downtown plan to Lloyd Anderson, then manager of his firm’s Portland office. Referencing the protests by Merten and others, he recalled telling Anderson, “Boy, there is a lot of agitation about the parking garage downtown. You know, this would be a good time for the City of Portland to have a real plan for downtown (Bonner, 1995).” Ivey then went to PIC and pitched a proposal to develop such a plan. At the same time, the City’s planning director, Lloyd Keefe, also wanted to develop a downtown plan, but had no money to support the process. With

some wheeling and dealing, a team was put together of city and county planners, and with financial support from the PIC the plan was off and running.

This planning process was not the traditional affair run by civic elite, professionals, and elected officials. While there was ample participation from business interests, politicians, and technocrats, the process included a citizen advisory committee of over 30 members and a paid assistant. Indeed, Ivy recalled that the Downtown Committee, made up of the “important” downtown people, did not do much more than listen as presentations were made to them (Bonner, 1995).

The citizen’s committee, on the other hand, was very active. It gathered information from more than a thousand Portlanders through town hall forums, neighborhood meetings, and questionnaires printed in the newspapers. (Abbott, 1983). Citizen involvement to this extent, and especially in the high stakes arena of downtown was new to Portland. Ivey recalled receiving a first draft of goals established by the citizen advisory committee that was so “badly written (Bonner, 1995).” that he almost rejected them. Instead he rewrote them, without changing the basic content. In this way the advisory committee made an invaluable contribution for the vision of downtown. The revised vision included with the complete plan draft in February (1972), became a set of moral principles. Politicians could differ about their specific applications but found it difficult to object to the goals themselves (Abbott, 1983, p. 219).”

The Lair Hill neighborhood and Corbett-Terwilliger neighborhoods in southwest Portland was a stopover neighborhood first settled by Jewish and Italian families and then in the 1960s by hippies and artists. This area had been considered a target for urban renewal as early as 1951. The 1966 Community Renewal Program listed it as eligible for

rehabilitation, but not as a first priority urban renewal area. In 1970 PDC Chairman Ira Keller described the area as, “just awful—like something you’d find in the Tennessee mountains. It’s worse than Albina (Urban renewal project, p.5).”

A small neighborhood trapped between the I-5 freeway and several major arterials, Lair Hill viewed by the Portland City Council and Portland Development Commission as a “clearance type urban renewal” area with “few buildings which merit preservation or enhancement. (abbot, p. 183).” The future of the neighborhood in the 1960s and early 1970s was tied to the housing needs of students from nearby Oregon Health Sciences University and Portland State College. A 1970 grant application from Portland to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development called for clearance of 143 buildings to be replaced by new apartment housing for faculty and students of these institutions. PDC imagined a student village with shuttle busses running to the Medical and Dental Schools and Portland State (City Club, 1971). In a dramatic error of judgment with cascading consequences, the City and PDC did not feel compelled to have much contact with residents about the future of the neighborhood. The two bodies contended that a “Project Area Committee (composed of residents) was not required for a clearance project and expressed the view that any sort of resident participation in planning an area that was to be a clearance project would be useless and self defeating (City Club, 1971, p. 59).”

From some political points of view Lair Hill and Terwilliger neighborhoods, along with Goose Hollow to the north and west, were merely populated with those troublesome youth and hippies. In 1968 Lair Hill Park had been targeted by City Commissioner Ivancie in his war on drugs and unconventional activities. In fact some

residents were convinced that designating the area as an urban renewal district was a part of that battle. After all, before discussions about urban renewal the Bureau of Buildings had targeted buildings in the neighborhood for code violations, leading to the abandonment of many.

But, new directions came from the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) mandated the creation of representative resident and business groups in urban renewal areas that used federal funds, a step that forced PDC and the City to recognize and work more closely with residents and businesses. As a result an industrial real estate broker who presumably did not like the City's approach called a meeting in the Lair Hill that resulted in the formation of the Hill Park Association. Then, with help from local architects William Church and William Kleinsasser, the Association requested that the City of Portland help it create a unified plan for their neighborhood. The City initially rejected this proposal, offering instead more public hearings. Fate intervened, as funding for urban renewal in the area was lost when Richard Nixon was elected president in 1972. Lair Hill combined forces with the Corbett and Terwilliger neighborhoods to the south and eventually were provided planning assistance from the City to develop their "unified plan." In 1977 the City Council designated Lair Hill as one of the first historic conservation districts in Portland--a far cry from its designation as a derelict area populated by hippies and other desirables.

The battle over the soul of Lair Hill and Corbett-Terwilliger neighborhoods was a major catalysis for the formation of Portland's neighborhood citizen participation system. As a consequence of the heated and relentless actions of residents in these neighborhoods, to have a voice in urban renewal policies, the City Council, in particular

Commissioner Lloyd Anderson, forged proposals in the early 1970s that led to the formation of the City of Portland's Office of Neighborhood Association.

Abbott (1983) has described the dramatic change in Portland's planning since the civic reconstruction period, as a "down home rewrite of Jane Jacobs (p. 206)." He notes neighborhood activists started as early as 1968 to argue for their own version of revitalization. "Rather than reacting against unwanted changes, neighborhood groups in the late sixties planned and advocated improvements in public services and coordinated changes in land-use regulations and public facilities (Abbott, 1983, p. 191)." When the City of Portland Planning Bureau struck a deal with the Northwest District Association to develop a cooperative plan for northwest Portland, in 1969, it launched a planning process that by the year 2000 had led to at least 50 individual neighborhood plans, eight historic district plans, 8 environmental area plans, and another 15 special area and district plans. The plans themselves were remarkable testimony to a new era of planning in Portland, but the process was at least as revolutionary, in terms of local government providing a widespread civic learning vehicle for residents and activists. Although no reliable numbers exist for the total number of citizens involved in planning processes, it is safe to say it is was in the tens of thousands. In one area alone, Albina, the planning process involved 6000 citizens.

The creation of comprehensive plans for Portland was a labor intensive process that went on for four years, from 1976 to 1980. The Portland Committee for Citizen Involvement (CCI) was formed by the City Bureau of Planning in January 1976 and drafted a citizen participation report outlining procedures for citizen involvement in the comprehensive planning process adopted by the City Council in the following March.

The CCI hosted a meeting to which representatives from neighborhood associations, civic groups, and trade organizations were invited to discuss Portland's planning process. There were several proposals under consideration, and the Portland Bureau of Planning staff sponsored or attended close to 60 meetings to talk about the problems and benefits of each one. In March 1977 a recommendation was presented to the Portland Planning Commission at a public hearing, and on May 4 a comprehensive planning process was adopted by City Council.

But citizen complaints about the process soon made it apparent that some amendments were needed. Citizen concerns centered around lack of time for citizen review, an apparent lack of policy coordination, and insufficient neighborhood-based planning. In response to these complaints the CCI invited neighborhood associations and other interested groups to attend a November 1977 meeting to record their concerns and to suggest changes to the planning process. The CCI then recommended process revisions to the Planning Commission and the Bureau of Planning staff. During December, January, and February the staff worked with citizens to iron out differences, and a revised planning process was adopted by City Council on March 22, 1978.

The amended process added three important elements: (1) Each of the City's neighborhood associations would receive a "neighborhood planning kit" to allow them to record localized problems and concerns which they would like to see addressed in the comprehensive plan, (2) the first draft of the Bureau of Planning recommendation would include elements of other city policy proposals relevant to the comprehensive plan, and (3) after completion of the first draft plan, an additional six months would be provided for citizen review prior to formal public hearings. In April 1978 all alternatives for each

district were published in a publication, “City Planner: District Editions” and distributed to over 33,000 people. Included with each edition was an opinion poll asking respondents to check their most important goals or qualities from a list of 32 and to rate the alternative that they felt would best achieve their desired outcomes. The results of the opinion polls and an analysis of other responses, including testimony from a series of town hall meetings hosted by the Planning Commission in late spring of 1978, were considered by the City along with adopted or proposed city policy and state and regional requirements in the preparation of the first draft of a comprehensive plan—the Discussion Draft. The Discussion Draft Comprehensive Plan in January 1979 marked the beginning of the second major citizen involvement effort in the development of Portland's Comprehensive Plan. During the January-to-June review period, the Discussion Draft was the subject of over 80 staff-attended neighborhood, business and service group meetings, two citizen conferences and nine Planning Commission-hosted town hall meetings. The *Recommended Comprehensive Plan* adopted by the Planning Commission on November 8, 1979 was submitted to the City Council in January 1980. The City Council considered the Planning Commission's recommendation at public hearings beginning in February 1980. On October 16, 1980, the City Council passed the *City of Portland Comprehensive Plan* (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1980).

While the ostensible reason for the comprehensive planning process was to create a plan for the City, one of the most enduring results was the education of thousands of citizens in the art and sciences of planning, and to create a civic story with citizen activism at its core.

Planning by citizens in the late 1980s and 1990s was defined by two driving

forces: the bureaucratization of the planning process and the increasing importance of a regional perspective. Both brought new challenges and opportunities

In the early 1970s, when citizens and grassroots groups took hold of Portland's planning regime, most of the activists and political and business leaders hardly gave much thought to the suburbs. The City of Portland dominated the region; the suburban towns of Gresham and Beaverton were small, barely distinguishable, areas. In the late 20<sup>th</sup> in Portland the suburbs grew, but unlike most other American metropolitan areas that growth helped create a new regional government agency, Metro, with a primary goal of managing the region's growth.

Central to understanding the role Metro plays in planning in the Portland metropolitan region is the urban growth boundary (UGB). Metro defined the regional UGB in 1979, as required by statewide land using planning guidelines for municipalities and metropolitan regions. Portland UGB incorporates three counties and all or part of 24 municipalities. Legislation added in the 1990s requires that UGBs have a 20-year supply of developable land in several categories (housing, commercial, industrial, etc.). Whether to keep this supply of land within the UGB through infill and densification, or to expand the UGB, has become a planning lightning rod for the Portland region. The citizen involvement infrastructure and strategies developed in Portland to deal with neighborhood livability issues have not always proven adequate for handling broader, regional issues. Neighborhood associations have often pitted themselves against regional goals, reflecting an unwillingness to be engaged beyond their boundaries at the expense of what they consider basic livability issues. These include zoning or building codes and design standards that allow for building on small lots, allowing apartments or "granny"

apartments in existing homes, and other methods for increasing density in essentially single family residential neighborhoods.

In the 1990s, there were many battles throughout the city that reflected the implications of increased regional planning. One that illuminates the battle lines was the evolution of the southwest Portland community planning process. It started straightforwardly enough, following in line with other neighborhood and district plans. The Southwest Community Plan was the fourth community-wide plan to update the city's 1981 Comprehensive Plan, following community plans for Albina, outer southeast and the Central City. A 19-member citizen advisory committee was created in 1994 to help shape a plan that was to be completed by 1997. But, the committee and other vocal residents begin to disagree with City planning bureaucrats over the application of its overlay zoning process. The overlay zone was created during the Albina Community Plan, and adopted in 1993 as one way to increase housing density to meet regional housing needs and still keep growth within the urban growth boundary. Although many citizens openly resisted it, the controversial "A Overlay Zone" finally made it into that plan, and the Outer Southeast Community Plan. The A Overlay, or Alternative Design Density Zone, was intended to foster owner-occupied dwellings and preserve housing, focus development on vacant sites, and encourage development in keeping with neighborhoods' desired character. In return for submitting plans to design reviews, developers would get density bonuses, allowing them to put row houses or town houses on infill lots -- often in single-family-dwelling neighborhoods -- that had been vacant for 5 years.

The contention between southwest Portland neighborhood activists and City

planners dragged on for months. Two major drafts of the plan, thousands of volunteer hours on the part of residents, and an estimated City expenditure of \$1.5 million, including salaries for the equivalent of as many as six full-time staff members over several years resulted in the cancellation of the draft plan in 1998.

This stalled the planning process, but did not kill it. Indeed, city planners greatly modified it as they reevaluated their assumptions about density requirements in southwest Portland. Finally, in 2001, a plan was accepted and adopted by the City Council. Reflecting on the process, Commissioner Erik Sten referred to it as, “almost Shakespearean.” “And,” he added, “all’s well that ends well (Christ, 2001, p.C2).” Mayor Katz regarded the process as notable for the way in which community and City officials and planners learned to resolve differences, and for the City’s retreat from density goals which had angered some neighborhood activists.

While some citizen activism in this period still took place at the neighborhood level, increasingly activism was directed at the regional level. Metro’s role in developing a planning framework for all municipalities and jurisdictions in the Portland area became a central arena for activism. In 1994, the Metro Council adopted the Region 2040 Growth Concept that defined goals for how to accommodate anticipated growth until the year 2040. Metro’s public involvement process to develop the plan was long and extensive. Over a 2-year period, numerous public hearings and workshops were held, the project was publicized on cable TV and through the news media, over 25,000 newsletters were mailed to area households, and hundreds of presentations were made to local governments and civic organizations. Over 500,000 copies of a tabloid outlining the alternatives and the trade-offs involved in selecting different growth management

strategies for the region were mailed to every household, resulting in over 17,000 citizen comments and suggestions. The feedback strongly favored higher densities, smaller lots, and transit-oriented development, all of which were incorporated into the 2040 plan. In December 1994, after 2 1/2 years, the Metro Council adopted the Metro 2040 Growth Concept at the urging of local governments, citizens, and business interests (Metro 2000b).

The 2040 planning process was also the first major undertaking of the newly formed Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF). For the first time the Portland region had a grassroots organizations that examined issues from a regional and multiple-issue perspective. Among other things, CLF is credited with assuring a place for an affordable housing strategy in the regional plan.

In addition to conflicts during the 1990s among the more provincial domains of the region's empowered neighborhood associations, the planning bureaucracy, and new civic players such as the Coalition for a Livable Future representing regional issues, other civic organizations from the left and right emerged to challenge the status quo. Activists who had rearranged civic life in Portland during the civic reconstruction period now found themselves under attack as insiders.

The Portland Organizing Project (POP) was one such organization. It was created in the early 1990s by 18 church organizations. It was a Saul Alinsky-style organization that acted as an advocate for low-income neighborhoods in north, northeast, and southeast Portland. While POP was in agreement with some interest groups, POP remained outside existing coalitions, emphasizing its perspective that economic plans even as proposed by growth management groups were not sufficient to change the basic

power structure. POP's agenda in the mid 1990s included securing more resources for affordable housing and an "enforceable mandate" to ensure that future inner-city renewal projects provided for an income mix that reflected the city's population, a job training program aimed at "family wage/benefit" jobs, and a \$1 million investment in a community bank. One of its most striking victories was to reduce sewer fees for low-income residents of outer east Portland. While its agenda was not that different from other citizen advocacy organizations POP used more confrontational tactics. The group retreated from the public eye for several years, and then in 2002 remerged as the Metropolitan Alliance for the Common Good, with a new focus on reforming Oregon's campaign finance laws and overhauling Oregon's tax structure (Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good, 2002).

But, the most substantive challenge to Portland's and Oregon's late 20<sup>th</sup> century planning regime has come from property rights organizations. Throughout the 1990s, property rights organizations challenged Oregon's land use laws, by pushing for legislative measures and creating initiative petitions. One of their most successful initiatives was Measure 7, passed by voters in 2000. The law, later over-turned by the State Supreme Court, would have amended the Oregon Constitution to require the government to reimburse property owners for any loss in land value due to laws or regulations. Then, in 2004 a land use reform bill was passed, Ballot Measure 37. The law enacted by Measure 37 allows property owners whose property value is reduced by environmental or other land use regulations to claim compensation from state or local government. If the government fails to compensate a claimant within two years of the claim, the law allows the claimant to use the property

under the regulations in place at the time they purchased the property. Then in 2007, Measure 37, was modified by Measure 49 which modified the more extreme elements of Measure 37 limiting development on high-value farmlands, and precluding use of the regulation for development of commercial and industrial developments reserved for homes, forests and farms. Currently, the Big Look Committee, appointed by the governor is assessing how to re-tool Oregon's land use system.

In the Portland area, one of most heated public debates involving the newly empowered property rights groups occurred when the City attempted to rewrite its environmental zoning code to meet requirements of the listing as endangered several species of salmon that migrate through Portland waterways. The City used its by now familiar process for developing the plan. The Planning Bureau developed the preliminary scientific and planning data to create planning options, then appointed a citizen advisory group made up of neighborhood activists, environmentalists, business leaders, and representative of the real estate and development communities. When the draft report was issued, it was immediately attacked by Oregonians in Action and United We Stand, “an educational foundation with the general mission to work for better government, lawful policy, and respect by government agencies for constitutional principles (Portland Stream Scheme, 2002). Under pressure from these groups and property owners who feared that additional restrictions on their property would remove their building rights or devalue their property, the Planning Bureau was forced to withdraw its draft plan. These confrontations between the established planning regime and established citizen interest groups and the new interest groups present a challenge that as Abbott (2001) notes forced the planning bureaucracy into more direct political discussion and actions.

In 2008 the City of Portland began the labor intensive process of updating its comprehensive plan from 1980, as required by state law. Maybe I don't need anything? Or just put this in as footnote.

## **Civic Space**

In post World War II Portland, Portlanders were in love with their automobiles, while civic leaders and engineers planned freeways and expressways and vacant land in the central city was paved over for parking lots. Robert Moses came to Portland in 1943 and laid out a blueprint for the future of Portland, one hatch marked with freeways and thoroughfares slicing and dicing the city into areas separated by high speed cement rivers. Freeways completed during this period, such as Interstate 5, tore through minority and poor neighborhoods, such as Albina, with little collective resistance. It was a good time to be a road engineer, a poor time if you were African American. Portland was proud of its largest mall, Lloyd Center; for a short period of time the largest mall in the country. It was a sign of progress. Teenagers spent their time driving between drive-in restaurants and drive-in movies, or cruising downtown streets to be seen. Adults spent their time at home in front of that marvelous new invention, the television, or often in private clubs. Nearly a quarter of all civic associations were temples, lodges or clubs.

During this period, civic leaders in Portland took pride in early urban renewal projects such as the South Auditorium project that required the demolition of 382 buildings and the relocation of 1,573 residents and 232 businesses. The project

effectively terminated one of Portland's Jewish and Eastern European enclaves, and dispersed a sizable gypsy population to the outer reaches of southeast Portland.

Most of the “third places” were run-of-the mill taverns and bars. The colleges in town did not spawn districts with student and faculty hang outs. Before the wave of coffee houses and music clubs in the late 1960s, the young people and students in Portland had only a few unique choices, such as Café Espresso, owned by Walter Cole, later a locally famous cross dressing entertainer. At Paul Hebb’s 13th Ave Gallery in Sellwood (near Reed College), there were jazz and jug band performances, poetry readings, and “open mike diatribes.” The Folksinger provided espresso drinks and the opportunity to listen to the live music of Lightning Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, and local bands such as the P.H. Phactor Jug Band. The coffee shop was almost unheard of. The Polk City Directory listed four in 1956.

There were 24 private clubs in 1955 with 16,000 members, most of them were specialized or exclusive. The Arlington club, one of the most exclusive, was described as a “pillar of dignity with its members enjoying club life without female interference. Activities are chiefly card and other games, traditional men’s club chatter in lounges, man-style meals in the club dining room and library browsing.”

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, City of Portland leaders tried to control public space as a way of honing in on young civic activists and "hippies." While the civic leaders could do little to prohibit youth from travel between cities or frequenting alternative businesses or spending time on college campuses, city officials and police could home in on parks and open spaces that became known as places for counter-culture residents and travelers to congregate. In the late 1960s the parks, once seen as places to

channel youthful energy away from delinquent behavior, became disputed civic places where the clash between generations was most visible.

In August 1968 the Portland City Council passed an ordinance (#127194) making it illegal to be in any city park between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. While the new ordinance applied to all parks, it was evident the law was aimed at one park in particular, Lair Hill Park, which had become a magnet for hippie youth. The adjoining neighborhood afforded cheap housing, a “psychedelic” supermarket, a natural foods store, a location midway between Lewis and Clark College and Portland State College, as well as the first community switchboard (Contact Center, which later moved to downtown). It had all the elements needed to create a hippie ghetto.

In the summer of 1968 there was also fear in the air in several west coast cities of massive hippie invasions. The hippies were seen as on the move like herds of elk or migrating birds. One person testifying in support of the new park curfew also circulated a petition “to halt the influx of hippies into our city.”

There were protests against the ordinance in Lair Hill park. A spontaneous act of civil disobedience took place the night after the ordinance’s passage. Denise (Brooke)\* Jacobsen, a local resident, and later a founder of the Northwest Film Study Center (now a professor at Portland State University) walked into the park after 11 p.m. and swung on a swing, with a companion, and were arrested. Some of the activists found ways around the curfew. One could be issued a permit to use the park after hours. One such permit issued to David Ewen, reprinted in an underground press, described his permitted use as “for the purpose of swinging, teeter-tottering, using the merry-go-round and slide, walking, sitting, and standing and running. (As I was strolling, 1968, p. 8).”

The clash over use of public parks reveals one aspect of the civic transformation during the civic reconstruction period. It can also be seen through the emergence of new cafes, community centers, and drop-in centers. In the late 1960s and early 1970s cafes, dance and music clubs, switchboards and drop in centers, popped up. The established civic order continued to meet at its private clubs, or in taverns and night clubs many of which catered to an exclusive audience that did not include women, minorities and disenfranchised youth.

While Portland has always seen new businesses come and go, a distinct quality of some of these new establishments was their lack of focus on capitalist outcomes. Many of the places, such as the Fairview Café, the Charix and the Agora coffee houses were as much about practicing democratic methods of work as they were about turning a profit--a good reason why so many failed. Others, such as the Crystal Ballroom, while intentionally created to turn a profit, rarely did, and ran aground as city officials attempted to close them as public nuisances. These ephemeral establishments were important places, where youth, the “underground,” and other disenfranchised people could mingle with others like themselves.

The Crystal Ballroom was one of the few places with a long history of catering to young people and the disenfranchised. During the psychedelic period it was thought of as the heart of one of Portland’s alternative or psychedelic neighborhoods, but long before that it served as a social nexus for young people in the 1920s who wanted to dance illegally; in the 1950s for African Americans to listen to their music; and even for Portland’s large gypsy population to host their own celebrations. After several attempts during the late 1960s the city was able to force the Crystal Ballroom to close, making its

psychedelic phase one of its shortest, but most lively periods. (Hills, 1997).

Some of the “alternative” places that appeared in the late 1960s were initiated by progressive churches in Portland which on their own or through Community Action Programs, attempted to respond to young people’s needs. The community action agency organized to serve inner northeast Portland, a predominantly African American community, opened the Albina Youth Opportunity School to provide a drop-in place and a job and social service referral center for young Black people, one of the few institutions from those days that still operates. In 1965 the First Congregational Church in downtown Portland opened the Catacomb Coffee Shop which operated for less than a year. The Koinonia House, operated by the Portland State College Campus Ministries, opened the Agora Coffeehouse. It was closed in the summer of 1968. (Charix, 1968).

In the summer of 1967 the Unitarian Church in downtown Portland opened the Charix Coffeehouse, which offered young Oregonians the chance to see local underground bands for a couple of years. It, like the Agora and Catacomb, failed to meet minimal financial goals, but it was a unique social institution. While it was ostensibly a coffee shop it was also a social service agency. As one of its founders, Nana Feldman, one of the managers, noted, “In the very beginning the Charix aided in providing housing. Although later the Merchants of Warm and HIP (two ad hoc services for youth) provided the service (Charix, 1968). The City of Portland attempted to close down the Charix, as with the Crystal ballroom, because of suspected drug use and dealing on the site. Feldman remarked that the only trouble they had was from Preacher Ray, an evangelist who tried to convert kids. He called someone a dirty name and got hit in return. “An ex-Marine and Gypsy Joker (motorcycle gang)”, she explained, “had a small

swinging session, some straight hoods dropped a tear gas bomb into the basement and there was a near riot (Charix, 1968).

There were many other short lived cafes and music and dance clubs during this time, including Arbuckle Flat Coffee house and Alice's Restaurant. Some lived through several name changes and incarnations, as though the place itself was possessed by the need to gather the young and the underground. The Centenary Wilbur Church in Southeast Portland played such a role in the civic reconstruction and since then. It housed the Ninth Street Exit, started in the early 1970s, which then became the Pine Street Theater, that became the LaLuna in the 1990s, and finally closed in 1999.

As with other experimental organizations during this period, cafes and coffee shops also attempted to achieve multiple goals. Instead of only operating a business, utilizing the basics of business management, these businesses performed social services, operated on democratic communication principles, and indirectly performed personal and collective therapy. For example, Portland Youth Advocates operated one of the early community switchboard operations in the Lair Hill Park area, which later become the Contact Center, a multi-service operation in downtown that operated for ten years. During this time Portland Youth Ministries operated a coffee shop (Arbuckle Flat), started a free school (Open Meadow, which still exists), a graphic design and printing program, an art gallery, an information and referral service, a performing art marathon, and a summer youth diversion program. At many times the staff felt estranged from what they called the establishment and expressed disdain for the "system," and the operations were all run on labor-intensive collective decision making processes, which at times overpowered the need to make decisions. At one point an executive director of Portland

Youth Advocates wondered, “whether we are trying to perform a service or create a model government (Horowitz, 1981, p.49).

The rise and fall of the Fairview Café illustrates well the dynamics of fledgling organizations during this period that attempted to maintain goals of profit and social change. The Fairview Café was an outgrowth of the Learning Community, an alternative school and intentional community founded by Reed College faculty and students. The café opened in the summer of 1971 using \$2500 loaned by one of the founding members. With that venture capital they bought a small café in the pensioner hotel neighborhood in the north part of downtown Portland. It remained open for a short eight months, during which time it attempted to run a restaurant while rewriting the rules of capitalism. No one ever received payment, other than food on the job. To the degree possible people worked as much, when, and with whom they wanted to. Out of the 25 primary employees, only four had any restaurant experience. There were four primary goals for the restaurant collective: to provide “non-alienating work”, to support the people that worked there, give back profits to the community it served, and lastly, in the parlance of the time, to “serve the people,” (the oppressed). As one of the founders noted, it was a combination of goals much more complex than the simpler conventional goal of American business: to make money. He also noted that most of the workers (who were also the “owners”) felt guilty about the conflict between making money and serving the people. “We really,” he noted, “wanted to prepare the food and give it away.... The most fun I ever had was one night when we gave away the meat loaf (Waskow, April 11, 1972, p. 7).” The restaurant also operated as a “collective” which if it worked properly would also be a “consciousness raising experience,” allowing people to set their own schedules

and generally make individuals as free as possible. The restaurant drew customers mostly from the immediate neighborhood--pensioners, homeless and the near homeless. To many patrons the restaurant seemed a weird anomaly, but the food was cheap. "What joined our seemingly various customers," one of the founders, declared, "was that—students, longhairs, workers, or pensioner---were poor and they were outsiders." But at night when the restaurant closed, the workers, unlike the pensioners, could leave. "We didn't have to live in the neighborhood," Waskow explained, "we didn't even want to spend our waking hours there...we wanted to go home and do other things. So despite ourselves, we ended as invaders (Waskow, April 25, 1972, p. 11)."

While young people battled for use of civic spaces and parks, and creating their own "third places," citizen activists also began to fight back against the domination of an auto-centric city. This pitched battle can be illustrated by citizen's role altering the State's plan to expand Harbor drive along the Willamette River in downtown Portland.

In 1968 the Oregon State Highway Department proposed the widening and re-locating Harbor Drive, a major arterial that ran through the edge of the central business district along the Willamette River. The building that at one time housed Portland's Public Market, now owned by the Oregon Journal newspaper, had been abandoned. In 1969 a City Club (Davis) report warned Portland of the impending project. This report recommended that the "primary consideration of any riverfront plan should be...varied public use of land; esthetically pleasing environment; and easy and attractive pedestrian access to the esplanade and the river itself." The Club also recommended that "no action . . . should be taken to reconstruct Harbor Drive until adequate studies of alternatives have been completed and public hearings held (Abbott, 2001, p. 137)."

An alternative use for Harbor Drive attracted Allison and Bob Belcher and Jim Howell who formed, in July 1969, Riverfront for People, a group with a goal of supporting the closing of Harbor Drive and the designation of the area as a park. In August, Riverfront for People announced their plans to hold a picnic in the desolate scene of Harbor Drive. Doug Baker, an Oregon Journal columnist, announced the event (Bonner, 2000) as a festive occasion to celebrate an alternative to the “Oregon State Highway Commission’s concrete mystic mazes.”

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 250 adults and 100 children showed up for the picnic on the waterfront, and at least partly as a result of outpouring of citizens, Governor Tom McCall instructed his nine-member Intergovernmental Task Force to prepare for a public hearing, possibly as soon as mid September, on three options for Harbor Drive: a cut and cover plan which would bury Harbor Drive; a plan for the relocation of a six-lane Harbor Drive along Front Avenue; and a plan simply to straighten and widen Harbor Drive after the demolition of the Oregon Journal building. At the time State Highway Engineer Forrest Cooper stated that the Task Force had ruled out any possibility of closing Harbor Drive, as projections show 90,000 trips per day in the corridor by 1990. He also said taskforce members favored the “cut and cover” plan (Bonner, 2000).

In the meanwhile Riverfront for People organized another block party and announced plans to circulate a petition for a downtown riverfront park. In response to the rising voice of citizens, the Governor’s taskforce conducted an all-day Public hearing to discuss options for Harbor Drive. The architect members Riverfront for People presented drawings of a riverfront park, along with a petition with 2500 signatures urging the Governor’s Taskforce to stop plans for road expansion and consider a park.

At his point McCall abandoned his inter-governmental taskforce and requested \$7 million in federal highway funds for the development of the riverfront and urged the creation of a citizens' advisory committee to help plan the project. In January 1971, the State Highway Commission held a hearing on the closure of Harbor Drive and in November of the same year the Portland City Council passed an ordinance to close the road.

## **Virtual Civic Space**

One of the striking elements of the civic reconstruction period was the attempt by activists, dispersed by graduation from college and pushed on by economic necessity, to recreate communities and continue the social energy of idealism through gatherings. During the early 1970s there were particular gatherings and conferences that became the springboard for the organizational stage of social movements. In 1974, for example, over 800 activists from cities, towns and rural areas around the Pacific Northwest met in Ellensburg, Washington, at the Alternative Agriculture Conference, an event that is often regarded as a pivotal event in the evolution of the Northwest's extensive organic farming and natural foods movement. Other more amorphous conferences brought together activists across a variety of issue interest areas such as the Global Village Conference held in 1973 at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and in 1976 the Leap Year Conference in Portland, Tools for Transition conference in Seattle, and the Community Strengths Conference in Portland, also in 1976.

One of the more extraordinary events during this period was organized by author

Ken Kesey. The Bend in the River (BITR) conference was funded through the Oregon Humanities Council. The intent of the gathering was to bring together Oregonians to envision what Oregon could or should be like in 2010. Leading up to this statewide conference in Bend, Oregon, in 1975, Kesey, along with Kesey's followers, the Merry Pranksters, and young activists, held meetings in over 20 communities around the state to elect delegates and develop a slate of local concerns to take to the conference. By some measures the conference failed, for the slate of suggested civic innovations developed at the state-wide conference were not acted upon. But the conference served the need to bring together new social activists. In a reflection about BITR soon after Kesey died in 2002, one of the local organizers (Darling, 2001) summarized Kesey's intention as more art than politics. "Bend in the River," he said was like "the Twilight Bark in '101 Dalmatians.' It's how you find out that everyone's still out there and what they're thinking tonight. And that you're not alone. Kesey [called] it "the stammer of truth" that comes when folks are just saying it plain, not through speechwriters and press releases and television. He [called] it the politics of affection. (p. 3)

The final event in Bend attracted over 500 activists from around the state and made a memorable connection between the wild 1960s and the organizational-bent 1970s. It was where Senator Wayne Morse gave his last public speech, and where Kesey's band of followers, and admirers--such as Rolling Stone photographer Annie Liebonitz, natural health advocate Andrew Wild, and alternative press guru, Paul Krasner, mingled with some of Oregon's future political leaders such as Oregon's current Secretary of State Bill Bradbury.

Innovative forums like Bend in the River were instigated to facilitate social

networking. It was not always easy to find like minds and “comrades” with similar interests. One of the tools of the organizer’s trade during this period were the instant directories for participants at gatherings. In the years before computers, email, and the Internet, it was more difficult to meet people, keep them organized into collective organizations and continue to share information and visions. Instant directories, sometimes referred to as people-to-people indices, were printed and distributed at the conferences or soon after. A typical entry included name, address and telephone number, and a description of the person’s projects, resources, and interests. Typical entries from a people-to-people index at a gathering in Portland in 1974 included: Lloyd Marbet, interest: stopping nuclear power, Carol Smith, interests: video projects and calligraphy, Joseph Miller, interests: stopping logging in sensitive areas, including Portland’s water supply.

While some conferences and gatherings were eclectic, designed to “network” activists across interest and issue boundaries, others were designed to bring forth specific new issues and activists, such as the Oregon Energy Fair (Portland 1977), the Women in Solar Energy and Appropriate Technology conference (Seattle 1978), and the Women and Energy Conference (Portland 1980).

There is a de facto monument to the end of the car-centric planning and development era on one of Portland's aesthetically-deficient bridges. At the east end of the Marquam Bridge which channels Interstate 5 traffic through Portland, there is a ramp that goes nowhere that was meant to feed traffic on to the Mt. Hood freeway, a freeway stopped by concerted resistance from the Southeast Legal Defense Fund and other citizens, and ratified by Governor Tom McCall, and Mayor Neil Goldschmidt. From the

top of the Marquam bridge one can also see another icon of the revolt against pavement, Riverfront Park, turned from a thoroughfare, Harbor Drive, into a park, through the concerted efforts of Riverfront for People, and Governor Tom McCall, and Mayor Neil Goldschmidt. Nestled in the core of downtown, yet another symbol of the shift, Pioneer Square, destined in the 1970s to become a parking lot, but through the concerted efforts of citizens turned into Portland's "living room."

As late as 1970, transportation plans for Portland focused on the development of freeways, expressways and thoroughfares. The 1990 Transportation Plan issued in 1970, called for the implementation of over 50 transportation improvements, in excess of \$600 million in public expenditures, to accommodate population growth and traffic. By 1990 most of the larger projects were not built, or even under consideration.

The Downtown Plan in 1972 is usually pointed to as the turning Portland in planning. Led by Portland's youngest mayor, Neil Goldschmidt, the plan helped reverse the trend of a decaying central city (mild as compared to other cities across the country) and growth of the suburbs. The Plan was the basis for Portland's downtown revival, and it was deeply rooted in citizens' advisory committees. Through this mechanism, citizens were consulted extensively on all projects, including the development of McCall Waterfront Park, the revival and design of the downtown core, and the development of the light rail system. A bus mall (Portland Mall) was created downtown to speed up services and act as a transfer point to other lines. It also tied downtown with other regions together along a north-south axis. Any citizen was free to join any of the subcommittees on topics such as parking, waterfront development, housing and retailing. The Downtown Plan was updated in 1980 to address changes related to scale and design of

development. It had 3 key elements key to the nurturing of civic space: pedestrian amenities, a mix of densities and activities and land uses, especially retail and housing with greater reliance on public transportation.

In 2008 when Portland embarked on its comprehensive plan process the two elements that were highlighted as crowning past glories and models for the next stage were the closing of Harbor Drive, and the creation of Pioneer square as a plaza instead of a parking lot. In both cases it was citizens who led the charge for these iconic changes in planning; from a downtown design based on automobile access and parking and intensive highway development.

While many of the early actions to "de-pave" Portland, increase alternative transportation modes, such as bicycles, and bring nature back into the city, were often battles won block by block or neighborhood by neighborhood, a sense of the movement to reclaim streets and create a greenspaces system began to take hold in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The neighborhood association activists were clamoring for traffic calming in the neighborhoods and for solutions to congestion. While neighborhood associations sometimes opposed bicycle advocates when it came to removing on-street parking to add bike lanes, there were also points of agreement. This neighborhood movement for more livable streets and neighborhoods culminated in November 1991 at a Neighborhood Congress on traffic issues, attended by 300 people. Several task forces were established, and two years after the congress, they presented a planning document, "Reclaiming Our Streets." The plan contained many ideas of how to improve traffic problems in neighborhoods and included many bicycle transportation improvement elements

(Reclaim City's Streets, 1993).

Civic spaces "ooze" out in Portland, even through cracks in the pavement and as remedies for the treatment of storm water. Even designing stormwater systems in Portland has taken on an element of reclaiming space for civic life. While the primary purpose of Portland's Green Streets initiative is to treat storm water runoff, the greenstreet designs, including rain gardens at schools and other public settings, also create streetscapes and urban greenspaces that buffer the edges between paved surfaces and pedestrian and bikeways.

In the 1950s there were public markets in Portland. Three markets replaced one large one built along the river, on the site of the current Riverfront park that operated between (1933--1942) But, the markets disappeared in the 1960s and 1970s. One market rose, the Portland Saturday Market, an open air crafts market, initiated during the Civic Reconstruction period by a handful of entrepreneurial citizens. It is now home to 400 crafts-people, a routine stop on every tourists trip through Portland, and draws over 750,000 shoppers annually to shop, eat, and listen to music. And in the mid-1990s, farmer's market were reborn, riding on the crest of Portlander's love affair with locally grown organic food. There are now 19 farmer's markets. While providing healthy and locally grown food for consumers, the markets also furnish premier civic space, arenas where citizens of all class and race can mingle.

Food and civic space is also linked in Portland through the popularity of community gardens, community supported farms, and urban farm education centers. There have been community gardens in Portland since 1975. Today there are 32 sites with over 1000 garden plots. As of January 1999, there are over 1000 CSA farms across

the US and Canada. In the typical CSA members purchase a share of the farmer's output for the year and either pick up or have fresh produce delivered weekly. Today in the Portland area there are at least 25 such operations, serving between 15—30 families each. Zenger Farm is one of several urban farm education programs in the Portland area where food, outdoor education and creating community go hand in hand. The farm hosts educational programs for over 600 K-12 students every year and sponsors an immigrant farmer site where immigrants maintain farm plots and teach others about farming techniques from their native countries.

Portland is also known as pub brew capital of America. That may say a lot about the nature of fun in a drizzly climate where there is less than a tenth of inch of rain on 225 days of the year, but it may also reflect the dramatically altered nature of third places in Portland. There are about 600 brewpubs in Portland, that is 46 per capita, more than any city in America. This might by itself not be all that important from a social capital or civic space point of view but Portland has also given birth to innovative brewpub spaces that are undeniably part of the rich civic space of Portland, at least in part due to the McMenemy brothers. The brothers have opened more than twenty pubs and entertainment center that imitate community as much as they do drinking. In their own words, they "came to understand the power of art, live music and history to draw people of all backgrounds together under one roof, reinforcing a sense of community.

Ultimately, the most important realization has been that the essence of a pub is its people.

Children, grandparents and the whole of the neighborhood should feel comfortable at a pub, whether that spot is three stools in a rustic shed or a 38-acre estate." At the Edgefield Lodge, the 38-acre estate, one can choose between several restaurants and bars,

watch a movie in the small theater, wonder the onsite vineyard, and stay overnight in the hotel on site. Or you might come to a social event they sponsor such as the annual Grateful Dead music festival, or use the space, as many NGOs do for a unique conference setting.

City Repair exemplifies the grassroots effort to reclaim public or civic space from domination by the automobile and paved surfaces. Since the first intersection repair project in 1996, there have been dozens of projects sponsored by the all-volunteer staff of City Repair, or spin-offs and clones. They explain their philosophy of reclaiming or repairing intersections as an act of creating public space, Intersection Repair "is the citizen-led conversion of an urban street intersection into public square. Streets are usually the only public space we have in our neighborhoods. But most all of them have been designed with a single purpose in mind: moving cars around. With an Intersection Repair, that public space is reclaimed for the whole community. The intersection of pathways becomes a place for people to come together. The space becomes a place - a public square." (<http://www.cityrepair.org/ir.html>, retrieved, 11/11/08). Placemaking in Portland has become a common enough nomenclature that a recent job opening at the regional government, Metro, was titled "Deputy Director of Planning and Placemaking."

Portland, along with Seattle, are also among the most coffee-shop strewn urban landscapes in the country. In the 1950s there were no more than 6 establishments that went by the name of coffee shop. Even as late as 1980 there were only 28 coffee shops (before Starbucks hit the scene). today there are at least 150 Starbucks, and around 50 locally owned coffee shops in the Portland area, about 1 coffee shop for every 200 people.

During the Civic reconstruction period in Portland activists were dependent on organizing gatherings and conferences to organize civic actions and to share information. There was no Internet. An organization that had access to a computer, a telephone wats line or mimeograph machine was rare. The mail or "snail mail" system was the fastest method for disseminating information. During that period, activists devised pre-computerized systems for social networking referred to as people-to-people indexes, paper directories of gathering attendees, listing their skills, knowledge, resources, and interests. Activists who organized these efforts were known as networkers. Today's activists network using social network spaces like Myspace and Facebook, blogs and twitters. In the previous period, finding information and finding people with common interests was a complex and clunky choir. Today's activist's information problem is more likely to be a selection or filtering process. Too much information rather than too little is the central problem.

Portland activists today can participate in neighborhood based actions through Internet services such as Portlandneighborhood.com (<http://community.portlandneighborhood.com/>) or Metblogs, part of a national network of blogs focused on specific localities (<http://portland.metblogs.com/>), or News4Neighbors (<http://www.news4neighbors.net/>). Other sites such as Blue Oregon and Portland Independent Media Center provide electoral and campaign organizing for activists, and most every NGO in Portland at least has a www site.