**Building Sustainable Communities Through Community Governance**

**The Story of**

**Portland, Oregon**

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Foreword

The Peculiarity of Portland

**Carl Abbott**

Portland, Oregon is a middle-sized city with an outsized reputation for innovative government and good planning. From beginnings in the ferment of the later 1960s, residents of the city and metropolitan area have crafted an unusual set of institutions for guiding public policy. The result by the 1990s was to make Portland an example–or warning–to other cities.

As he revved up his presidential campaign, Al Gore offered glowing accounts of Portland as the city where improving quality of life makes everyone a winner. A professor of architecture has called Portland “America’s most successful management and urban design model . . . the product of enlightened judgment applied over many decades to wisely accommodate growth within a beautiful landscape.” [Roger Lewis, arch. Prof., U Md]. Portland is “way ahead of most other places in the country” says another expert [Bruce Katz of Brookings Institution].

But if Al Gore likes it, we can be sure that George Will does not. He thinks that Portland is strangling in traffic congestion and drowning in housing price inflation. Free marketers from the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute and the Pacific Research Institute for Public Policy and Portland’s own Cascade Policy Institute agree with the indictment.

Other critics claim that Portland is not so special after all. What’s all the fuss about? asks D. J. Waldie, the chronicler of the hypersuburb of Lakewood, California.. Portland is nothing but a junior Los Angeles, Waldie claims, growing up to be just like its big brother in the Southland. For Waldie, by the way, that’s a compliment, since LA “answers to most people’s longing for a community.” From the other capital an Orange Empire, new urbanist architect Andres Duany, with somewhat selective memory, writes that Portlanders never let visiting urbanists in on the nasty little secret that their suburbs look–well–suburban. Miami, he says, has it all over Portland as an epitome of good city making.

So what will it be? Is Portland a planner’s paradise or a Potemkin village? Is it a good faith effort at shaping a livable metropolis or a faked-up facade that hides serious problems of social inequity and overregulation.

I’ve argued elsewhere that Portland’s positive accomplishments in planning, growth management, community preservation, and environmental conservation outweigh the negatives. For the past thirty years, Portlanders have tried to redefine and bridge a fundamental divide in urban and regional planning. Builders of modern cities have long been torn between the preference for "going out" or "going up"--for lowering the overall density of metropolitan settlements or for increasing the intensity of land use. In the Portland case, environmentalism as an urban planning goal draws explicitly on the thought of Frederick Law Olmsted and Lewis Mumford, with their visions of cities and towns interlacing with the natural and cultivated environments in a democratic regionalism. Portland's eclectic urbanists borrow the insights of Jane Jacobs and William S. Whyte to assert the value of civic interaction in public spaces.

Such conceptual and practical choices are common to every American metropolis. They are central terms in our planning and policy vocabulary. Yet Portland may be one of the few cities that has actively reconciled their inherent tension–a major reason why our middle-sized city has an outsized reputation. It does have a strong and vibrant downtown. It has preserved its older neighborhoods and commercial districts without suffering a zone of abandonment. It is growing compactly within a carefully monitored Urban Growth Boundary. It is investing in public transportation to keep the center and edges tied closely together. In short, metropolitan Portland comes close to matching the now standard model of good urban form–in part by reconciling the interests of “urbanists” and “”environmentalists” within a single political consensus and coalition. The result, in simplest formulation, is a metropolis that is stronger at its center than its edges, whether we measure that strength in political clout or the allocation of investment.

Portland is able to offer up these accomplishments because its citizens have been working hard and self-consciously at the job of city-making for a long time. Like Moliere’s character who is delighted to discover that he has been speaking prose for years without knowing it, Portlanders now discover that they were conserving downtown and neighborhoods and open space long before they realized what they were doing is “smart growth.”

Portland fifty years ago was nothing to write home about–or to attract visiting journalists, curious architects, and chamber of commerce delegations from around the country. It had inert leadership, a status quo mind set, and few attractions except its surrounding landscape. Richard Neuberger, then a journalist and later a U.S. Senator, told readers of the Saturday Evening Post in 1947 that the town had a “split personality. It can’t quite make up its mind whether to be a swashbuckling industrial giant . . . or a landed squire pruning rosebushes and meditatively watching salmon ascent to their mountain spawning grounds.” As late as 1970, Neal Peirce wrote that “if any west coast town could be said to have a monopoly on propriety and an anxiousness to keep things as they are, it is Portland, a town of quiet wealth, discrete culture, and cautious politics.

The first steps toward changing this dowdy and unimaginative city into national pace-setter came in the late 1960s. The Model Cities program of 1968-69, which trained and empowered a generation of community leaders. At the same time, middle class activists who were frustrated with the never-ending war in Southeast Asia turned their energy to local politics. New environmental concerns–symbolized by the first Earth Day in 1970–brought others into the fray.

The issues that activists introduced thirty years ago are still on our agenda–neighborhood revitalization, downtowns for people, environmentally sustainable development. For the city of Portland, these are issues that the administration of Mayor Neil Goldschmidt advanced in the 1970s, the administration of Bud Clark in the 1980s, and the administration of Vera Katz in the 1990s. At the regional level, these issues are the raison d’être of regional transit and planning agencies–Tri-Met and Metro--which also date from the 1970s. They are central to the Oregon statewide planning system established in 1973.

The recent history of Portland is very much a story of politics. In some vocabularies, “politics” is now a nasty word. It Portland it retains its positive implications as a process for finding, defining, and acting on the common good. As Portland has worked through issues of growth and planning, its residents have made “deals” that bring different groups and interests together around opportunities for mutual benefit.

The Downtown Plan of 1972–Portland’s near mythic success story–was a response to typical problems of “urban crisis.” Downtown parking was inadequate, the private bus system was bankrupt, and a new superregional mall in the affluent western suburbs threatened the end of downtown retailing. In reaction, technically sophisticated citizen activists worked with city officials, downtown retailers, property owners, neighborhood groups, and civic organizations to treat previously isolated issues (parking, bus service, housing, retailing) as part of a single comprehensive package. The resulting Downtown Plan of 1972 offered integrated solutions to a long list of problems that Portlanders had approached piecemeal for two generations. It was technically sound because its proposals were based on improvements in access and transportation. It was politically viable because it prescribed tradeoffs among different interests as part of a coherent strategy. Its success led to a follow-up Central City Plan from 1988 and a Central City Summit from 1998. Each iteration built on the previous, but also introduced new problems, concerns, and solutions. The result is a downtown core that has added 45,000 jobs since the start of the 1970s. There is a burgeoning housing market on the edges of the business core, and nearly every important civic facility is located in downtown or adjacent districts–museums, university, theaters, sports arenas, convention center, gathering places for protest and celebration.

Framing downtown planning has been a powerful alliance between downtown business interests and residents of older neighborhoods. At the same time that downtown was struggling, older neighborhoods in the 1970s were at risk from institutional expansion, schemes for large scale land clearance and redevelopment, concentrated poverty, and racial inequities. Many cities understand this situation as a zero-sum competition in which downtown businesses and homeowners battled over a fixed pool of resources. In Portland, the two interests came together in a lasting political marriage around housing and public transit.

Portland has built a strong bus system, a downtown bus mall to speed traffic and facilitate transfers, and roughly fifty miles of light rail lines running east, west, and north from downtown. Better public transit improves air quality, enhances the attractiveness of older neighborhoods, and brings workers and shoppers downtown. In turn, a vital business center protects property values in surrounding districts and increase their attractiveness for residential reinvestment. Middle-class families who remained or moved into what are now “hot” inner neighborhoods patronize downtown businesses, and prosperity supports high levels of public services. Neighborhood planning can focus on housing rehabilitation, housing infill, and amenities to keep older residential areas competitive with the suburbs.

A political bargain with neighborhood activists accompanied direct investment policy. After a series of testy confrontations about zoning and land development between neighborhoods and city hall in the late 1960s, the new Goldschmidt administration decided to legitimize and partially co-opt neighborhood activists by incorporating independent neighborhood associations as secondary participants in public decision making. The city’s Office of Neighborhood Involvement (established in 1974 as the Office of Neighborhood Associations) provides city funds to neighborhood associations and monitors their conduct for openness, but does not dictate issues or positions. The acceptance and financial support of voluntary neighborhood groups has offered a partial alternative both to confrontational tactics from the grassroots and to top-down management of citizen participation from city hall. Despite arguments over specific issues, downtown and neighborhoods to this day see mutual interest more often than opposition.

Portland is also a metro area where city and suburbs talk to each other. . . and sometimes agree. In particular, Portland and several key suburban cities agreed in the later 1980s to share the benefits of a multi-spoke light rail system. The cities of Gresham to the east and Hillsboro and Beaverton to the west see that light rail links to downtown Portland offer strong development potential for secondary activity centers. With visions of Walnut Creek, California and Bethesda, Maryland glimmering in the future, leaders in these communities have chosen to pursue a role as outlying anchors on radial transportation lines rather than as beads on a beltway.

A final alliance brings together urbanist and environmentalist, advocates of urban vibrancy and lovers of rural quiet. Portlanders have managed to create an urbane metropolis at the same time that many residents see easy access to the natural environment as its greatest asset. The city is carefully “placed” within its landscape, and residents of the region wrestle with reconciling complex and contradictory claims to the use of its rivers, valleys, mountains, and biotic communities.

In the 1990s the two goals came together in a powerful “livable future” coalition.

There is strong public involvement in both grassroots environmentalism and neighborhood conservation. Small waterways, wetlands, and natural spaces in the Portland area benefit from more than seventy-five “Friends of . . .” organizations. Friends of Forest Park, Friends of Fanno Creek, Friends of the Columbia Slough, Friends of Elk Rock Island, and similar organizations monitor development pressures and advocate for restoration programs. At the same time, Portland hosts nearly a dozen community development corporations and has a national reputation for its network of nearly 150 city-sponsored but community-controlled neighborhood associations.

The framework is the statewide land use planning system, adopted in 1973-74. Local communities are required to prepare comprehensive plans that are compatible with state planning goals. One of these goals requires the definition of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) around urbanized areas. The UGB is intended to include a twenty-year supply of developable land, and to expand slowly and carefully to meet the needs of growth (think of it as a skin around a growing urban organism). For the Portland region, the UGB is administered by Metro, the nation’s only elected regional government. Created by referendum in 1978, Metro and its council directly represent the residents of the metropolitan area (not local governments, as is the case with the “council of governments” found in most metropolitan regions).

The Portland region debated the proper location of the Urban Growth Boundary in the late 1970s and considered its possible expansion in the early 1990s in the Region 2040 plan. In Portland style, this was a broadly participatory process that utilized the input of nearly 20,000 citizens. Because some communities and interests felt that their concerns were not adequately accommodated, Metro revisited the issue at the start of the new century and arrived at an expansion that satisfies–if not necessarily pleases–both the Metropolitan Homebuilders Association and the land use watchdog group 1000 Friends of Oregon.

What makes Portland stand out is the reinforcing effect of an unusual set of political institutions, commonly shared goals, and a civic culture that believes in the possibility of good government.

We have already noted the unusual institutions. Activist neighborhood associations are formally recognized by the City and function, at their best, as a sort of loyal opposition. Metro stands out nationally as an elected regional government whose powers were actually expanded by a home rule charter in 1992. The Oregon land use planning system gives the regional growth management tools that are unavailable in most other regions.

Government is honest and politics is open to broad participation. Weak political parties, nonpartisan local elections, and an absence of ethnic block voting mean that elections are fought on personalities and issues. Citizen activists can emerge as successful politicians and newcomers with interesting ideas get a hearing. The civic culture encourages study committees, team play, and compromise. Public life takes place around a big table. Some of the seats are reserved for elected officials and heavy hitters from the business sector, but anyone can sit in who accepts the rules (politeness is important) and knows how to phrase ideas in the language of middle class policy discussion (the goal is to do “what’s good for the city”). Conversely, radical new voices may be ignored until they learn to play the game middle-class style.

In many policy areas, early success stories have built a constituency and a value bias toward further action. For example, Portlanders have made three distinct decisions against freeways. They decided to rip out the six lanes of Harbor Drive in favor of a downtown waterfront park in 1972. They choose to abandon plans for a radial freeway in 1975, rejecting a massive community-killer in favor of maintaining affordable housing. And in the 1990s, they mobilized the weight of public and professional opinion against a beltway through the western suburbs that would have helped electronics industry commuters but blown a gaping wound in the Urban Growth Boundary. The list of consensus issues can be extended: Neighborhoods are good–although there are plenty of conflicting ideas about what a good neighborhood looks like. Green is good–both the metaphorical green of sustainable development practices and the literal green of open space and trees

Steve Johnson’s book takes us into the middle of this intersection of values and institutions. Drawing on more than three decades of experience as a Portland community activist and developing a massive data base about the growth and transformation of civic institutions, he traces the community roots and foundations for Portland’s emergence as a widely admired city. He demonstrates that the Portland’s political culture has been open to new ideas and issues, incorporating the energy of activists into both new and existing institutions. The result has been a metropolitan region where the enthusiasm of the 1960s and 1970s has been maintained and adapted to the needs of the 1980s and 1990s–and, we hope, to the new century.

**Chapter One**

Introduction

Portland is known as one of the *greenest* cities in America, a reference to its commitment to greenspaces, sustainability policies and programs, and smart growth planning regime. Portland has been named the best bicycling city in America, best walking city, and the city with the best sustainable policies and programs. There are more than 20,000 artists in the Portland area, 8th highest per capita in American. It is considered one of the top three places for impendent film makers. There are more Peace Corps alumni than any other city in America. The Center for Business Women's Research determined Portland to have the most women owned businesses in an American city.

It has also become one of the most favored destinations for the creative class--young, well educated, entrepreneurial young people.. In 2007 there were twice as many people in the 25-39 age group moving into the city as leaving. In all, 23,454 young adults moved in while 12,125 moved out. The fourth highest net migration in America. What lures them to Portland are not job opportunities but elements of its *greenness* such as bike-friendliness, growth management policies, mass transit, and social tolerance, intellectual diversity and entrepreneurial opportunity. Also mentioned are local recreation opportunities, the music and art scenes, and other "consumption opportunities," for instance, well-brewed beer.

While Portland was awarded at least one livability award as early as 1976 (Liu 1976), the story of Portland as a "success story" and as a draw for the creative class grew dramatically in the 1990s. Writing in The *Atlantic Monthly*, Philip Langdon (1992,p. 134) characterized Portland as "a paragon of healthy urban development at a time when most American cities find themselves mired in seemingly intractable problems." *Business Week* (October 25, 1991, p. 136), in an evaluation of administrative effectiveness and efficiency, reported that "Portland is on the cutting edge of quality in municipal government." In *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine* (October 25, 1991), Lynn and Matthews reported, "Portland is a West Coast success story. High technology and manufacturing keep expanding. Yet office space, utilities, housing and taxes are lower than in California ... Portland's squares, parks, walkable downtown and new light-rail transit system make the city a favorite" (pp. 42-43). According to the *Economist*, Portland is a planning paradigm that cities from New York to San Francisco are trying to emulate. It has revived its historic district, wrestled its Willamette River waterfront from the grip of ... "the demon auto," built a successful mass-transit system and nurtured some of the best architecture in North America ... urban delegations from dozens of American cities--and also ... from the British cities of Manchester and Leeds--regularly troop through Portland, looking for inspiration (September 1, 1990, pp. 24-25).

The causes of Portland's sustainability achievements and attractiveness for the young creatives has been assigned to enlightened leaders, *above average and handsome* planners, the landscape, and trickle down creativity from the growing silicon forest industries in and around the city. I argue there is another reason, and that is Portland's 40 year long investment in community governance. Citizens played a critical role in most all the elements that have made Portland a Mecca for the young creatives and its sustainability achievements.

Robert Putnam has described Portland as a "civic puzzle." While the rest of the country suffered declines in civic involvement over the last 40 years, Portland bucked the trend and achieved high levels of civic involvement. This book connects the dots. While civic and business leaders played critical roles in the *greening* of Portland, it was the grassroots that played the role of early implementer. Citizens, acting alone, but more often through collective action, occupied civic space like pioneering plants in a clear-cut. When the baton was passed effectively, community leaders who understood their role as facilitators of the *wisdom of citizens,* were able to implement policies that moved Portland toward its livable and sustainable future.

Over the last forty years the city has created a civic story that has changed the vocabulary and grammar of civic life. Citizens in Portland expect to be involved. Americans for the Arts, a national arts advocacy organization, recently noted that the city's informal civic culture is one of its most important characteristics:

People, including newcomers, feel they can get involved and have impact--in politics, community development, planning, and in the cultural scene. Access and participation are easy and welcomed. Coffeehouses and cafes--the meeting places of creatives--are ubiquitous. New organizations, coalitions, and movements--from political action committees to environmental coalitions, social justice organizations, and cultural entities--are constantly springing up [and] suggest several critical "infrastructural" attributes--in addition to its beautiful setting and moderate climate--that contribute to Portland's attractiveness to creatives.

If you ask a Portlander, or an outsider, about the origins of its reputation, if they know it at all, they will most likely identify a leader. They may know that in the 1970s Mayor Neil Goldschmidt was responsible for instigating investments in the light rail system MAX, or that Congressman Earl Blumenauer led the way to invest in multi-modal transportation options. They are not likely to know about the ground work of the Southeast Portland Legal Defense Fund in stopping the Mt. Hood Freeway that freed up money for the development of MAX, or about a handful of students and a professor at Portland State University who led the charge in the early 1970s to have the bicycle taken seriously as a commuting option. They will also assume that sustainability jumped onto the civic stage in the late 1980s after the Brundtland report, and publishing of Our Common Future, and not know that grassroots organizations sewed the seeds of sustainability in the Northwest twenty years before.

This revisionist historical perspective is important to correct as part of a thorough history of a community, and to give adequate dues to unsung heroes and groups. But, it is also important to correct this view of history because it teaches us about how change takes place in a community. Placing too much emphasis on leader's role in a community implicitly teaches citizens that leaders lead and the people follow; not that people lead and Leaders follow. A typical history of Portland, such as Jewell Lansing's *Portland: People, Power and Politics*, while admirable, is only part of the story. Lansing credits "the people" at many times for critical public policies and civil projects, nonetheless, the history is laid out as a series of regimes, and a hopscotch pattern of good and bad leaders. I argue that Portland's history, at least from the mid-1960s to the present, is better understood as a symbiotic relationship between civic leaders and the grassroots.

In the early 1970s metropolitan Portland looked virtually identical to other U.S. metropolitan areas (including Seattle) in civic terms. Two decades later, Portland suburbs were roughly two to three times more civically active than comparable suburbs elsewhere, and Portland proper had become roughly three to four times more civically active than U.S. cities of comparable size. For example, in 1974, 21 percent of Portlanders attended at least one public meeting on town or school affairs, compared to 22 percent for residents in comparable cities. By the early 1990s, the figure for the rest of the country was 11 percent, whereas in Portland it had risen to 30-35 percent (Putnam and Feldstein (2002). Today there are about 3000 civic organizations in Portland, 350 environmental ones (compared to ten in the 1950s). One out of fifteen citizens in the metropolitan Portland area, population 2 million, are significantly involved in public life.

Portland's rise in civic stature is extraordinary by any standard. It is even more astounding if you picture Portland in the 1950s, a strikingly dull and derivative city, only a restaurant or two above a logging town. Civic Portland circa 1950s is summed up by a photograph of Portland's Redevelopment Board, a predecessor to the Portland Development Commission, Portland's urban renewal agency: all white men, sitting around a rectangular table, in suits and ties, ashtrays lined up like today's water bottles. It was a Pleasantville kind of place, if you were male, white, Christian, and patriotic.

Civic life in the 1950s in Portland was dominated by traditional civic organizations: fraternal and benevolent organizations, women’s clubs, voluntary and charitable organizations, ethnic cultural groups, and direct social service organizations. The predominant civic activities of these traditional civic organizations were acts of charity and community service. Traditional civic organizations had minimal impact on political participation and decision making in the community. The formal mechanisms for citizens involvement in political decision making were limited to elite and professionally driven city commissions and boards, traditional political party organizations, and formal public hearing processes.

But, something happened in Portland in the late 1960s to the mid-1980s, what I call the civic reconstruction period. Traditional civic organizations lost their position as primary vehicles for community involvement. The rights of citizens to participate in public life were codified, and the repertories of actions and opportunities for involvement were expanded. It was both an exciting and disturbing period for Portlanders, as close to revolution as mild Portland had accommodated. The *changing of the guard* during this period was a generational transaction as baby boomers entered civic life in Portland, displacing civic institutions and practices. Rather then joining established institutions, members of the baby boomer generation in Portland created new ones. Less than 20% of all civic organizations in Portland in existence in the 1950s, exist today.

During the populist pluralist period, mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, new institutions and practices took hold. Civic life incorporated the broadest cross section of citizens in public policy deliberation, and the practice of involving citizens in all manner of public policy debates and formation was taken for granted. During this time Portland fully embraced a populist or participatory view of democracy.

By the mid-1990s, while many civic institutions and practices endured and prospered, there was a recognition of some of the "excesses of democracy." The City faced more instances of policy gridlock, in part brought on by the rise of privitist, anti-government, and NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) challenging organizations. But as Friedland and Siranni have argued, civic challenges like these have often been met, as they were in Portland, through civic innovations. For example, when faced with too many well-articulated public or citizen interest groups, activists in Portland created the Coalition for a Livable Future, a federation of 60 (now 100) NGOs representing environmental, social justice, food security, and affordable housing interests. Rather than fighting among themselves, CLF helped forge policies that represented multiple interests under the common rubric of creating a socially just and environmentally sustainable region.

Even after a deep exploration of how Portland created a community governance model of the polis, there may be questions about why in Portland. Was it something about the landscape or people? It may go back to that historical anecdote repeated in a variety of ways that pioneers on the Oregon Trail, reached a juncture. There was a sign at the juncture. It was written, "this way to Oregon," pointing north, while the sign pointing south to California, merely had a picture of gold. Those that could read the sign went to Oregon, while those that wanted to get rich went south. Abbott has also delineated some of the character of Portland and Oregon politics that might explain this civic puzzle, including: weak political parties, nonpartisan city and county elections, ethnic groups with limited political salience, and weak labor unions. He also speaks to some of the weaknesses of the political milieu, including that Oregon is always a place where strong individualism tempers and challenges strong communitarians, that the civic movement is fragile, always under challenge not from machine politics but from the values of privatism, and lastly that with all its virtues, the Portland style tends to muffle radically dissenting voices who are unwilling to work on the “team.” There is an inability to hear new ideas until they fit the mold. Some of these place specific characteristics may temper the universality of the Portland story, but the underlying premise is hopefully still valid, that a healthy civic life is an essential element of creating a socially and environmentally sustainable community.

**Organization of the book**

This book is organized both chronologically and by theme. Chronologically, Portland's civic life since World War II is broken up into three periods (1) traditional civic life, from the end of the war to the mid-1960s, (2) the civic reconstruction period, from the mid-1960s to mid-1980s, and the populist pluralist period from mid-1980s to the present. The civic reconstruction period is the heart of this study, and the lengthier section of the book. To understand how Portland became what it is today, the transformation of civic institutions and practices initiated during this period is key; while one world died, another was born. The popular pluralist period delineates a period when Portland most fully embraced its democratic reforms, and community governance institutions and practices became the norm. By the mid-1990s some of the enthusiastic embrace of governing through the "wisdom of crowds" weakened, precipitated by policy gridlock from too much articulated interested and citizen power, and challenges from outside challenging groups. But, also in the 1990s the community responded to policy gridlocks and community governance failures with civic innovations.

The thematic structure of the book is based on an analysis of Portland's civic infrastructure. The National Civic League in their Civic Index Project defines civic infrastructure as "the formal and informal processes and networks through which communities make decisions and attempt to solve problems (National Civic League 2007).” The definition is expanded and detailed by the way this study is organized (see below). I also utilize "public involvement" as a broad term incorporating the wide variety of practices or civic actions employed in a community and the interface between governing institutions and civil society institutions.

Each chronological chapter provides first an overview of civic life at the time, the civic narrative, followed by a profile of state of civic organizations, direct and representative democratic venues, and the depth and breadth repertories of civic actions. While the prominent analysis of civic life is based on the civic intuitions and practices, each chronological chapter also describes the changing state of civic space. Habermas (1989) linked the birth of modern liberal democracy in the 18th century to the emergence of public spaces, such as coffeehouses, clubs, salons, societies, and voluntary associations, and a press that enabled the public to serve as the bearer of public opinion. He also links the current trend to privatize public space to the diminished role of civic space. Civic spaces are an extension of the community. When they work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. If their civic role is functional , they can be the settings where celebrations are held, where exchanges both social and economic take place, where friends run into each other, and where cultures mix. When cities and neighborhoods have thriving civic spaces, residents have a strong sense of community. When such spaces are lacking, people may feel less connected to each other. If civic spaces are inadequate, civic life will suffer. If urban design emphasizes gated communities and private or semi-private spaces over public, and does not include plentiful locales where people can mix across class or cultural boundaries, then, when citizens must come together to solve community problems, it will be much more difficult.

Each chronological chapter also has a section that follows important policy issues over time: urban planning, the environment, housing and community development, and transportation. This in-depth analysis serves the purpose of understanding the symbiotic relationship between the grassroots and civic leadership. Additionally, another section, Building Civic Infrastructure, follows the evolution of women's organizations in civic life, neighborhood revitalization in Portland's largest minority community, Albina, a case study of civic environmentalism, the origins of one of Portland's most successful watershed restoration efforts, Johnson Creek. Lastly, the radical shift in transportation policies, dominated by the automobile in the 1950s, and now by a multi-model strategy, is explored through the evolution of the bicycle transportation movement in Portland.

The conclusion to the book encapsulates what can be learned through this in-depth analysis of one communities civic infrastructure and its role in creating socially just and sustainable communities and an analysis of the challenges Portland faces. Entering the 21st century Portland faces new challenges. The reconstruction of Portland’s civic life 30 years ago was instrumental in bringing about one of the most democratic and civically involved communities in America. Today, Portland faces new challenges of a more diverse population, an empowered citizenry that at times is at times at odds with local government, and pressures of growth and development. The region's successes has also seeded some of its challenges.

**Chapter Two**

**The Post World War II**

**Civic Life of Portland**

**The Civic Narrative**

In 1893 Portland’s population was 100,000. When there were things to be done in the City it was easy enough to bring together a handful of men and just do it. For example, in the early 1890s the Group of 100 was formed to “examine the finances of the city.” The Group of 100 was a who’s who of the downtown power elite, the Honorable H.W. Corbett as chairman. An Oregonian editorial paternally referred to the group’s ability to exert a moral influence on the community “[as] such an influential body of citizens can have.” The Civic Improvement League in the early 1900s sponsored the creation of the Edward Bennet Plan for Portland. The Initiative One Hundred in the early 1900 pushed for parks development in Portland.

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)

World War II brought large changes to Portland, when the population grew from 305,000 in 1940 to 410,000 in 1945, due in large part to cheap electricity from the Columbia River, and easy, but inland, access to the Pacific ocean, which made it the perfect center for the creation and repair of war ships. While World War II unsettled civic life in Portland, when the war was over civic life in Portland settled back into old and familiar routines. “Government agencies, real estate investors, and different sections of the city reasserted their separate agendas for public action as the postwar boom made the pursuit of self-interest respectable after years of sacrifice for the home front.” During World War II and after the Portland Area Postwar Development Committee led the way in creating a vision for the city’s future, including by bringing Robert Moses to town to help shape the vision, a vision filled with highways.

Richard Neuberger, a representative voice of that period through his writings in Saturday Evening Post and other journals, in 1947 described Portland as a “combination of the rustic and the metropolitan. Jerked by the war from an Arcadian existence among flowers and first, it looks back longingly on the not-so-distant days when Columbian blackmails nibbled in front yard and no factory smoke shrouded the spectacle of four quiescent volcanoes squatting in year-round snow cloaks on the horizon.

Urban renewal, a tool the city has used to spectacular effect in the last three decades, was suspect in the mid-1950s: a city commissioner at the time was quoted in the *Oregon Journal* as describing it as "the very essence of communism." A photograph of Portland's Redevelopment Board (a predecessor of the current urban renewal agency, the Portland Development Commission) sums up the power structure of the city then: a group of men in suits and ties sitting around a rectangular table, on which ashtrays are lined up like today's water bottles.

In the 1950s and most of the 1960s, citizen involvement was achieved by rounding up the usual elites, professionals, and elected officials. PSU urban planning professor Carl Abbott summarizes the process of neighborhood planning between 1957 and 1967 in his book *Portland: Planning, Politics, and Growth in a Twentieth-Century City*:

City Planning Commission reports make no reference to neighborhood groups or citizen involvement. They were prepared by city employees for their colleagues in city hall. ... During Terry Schrunk's first three terms as mayor [1957-1972], planners worked from the top down, applying professional values and expertise to small-scale problems and informing local residents of the resulting proposals.

Racial minorities and women were underrepresented in most city-authorized commissions, boards, and committees. In 1960, women--though traditionally quite active in clubs throughout the 1950s and 1960s--made up only 29 percent of the city's civic body membership, and they tended to be channeled into specific niches. Of the total of 120 women on civic boards in 1960, about half served on five commissions: arts, metropolitan youth, zoo, Pittock Mansion, and Japanese Garden commissions--all valued civic institutions, but hardly comparable to more powerful commissions such as planning, Portland development, and housing, on which only ten women served out of a combined roster of fifty-three. Civic actions were for the most part polite and unimaginative. In 1961 several neatly dressed women, members of the Portland Garden Club, formed the Beauty Brigade and “marched” on city hall to oppose auto ramps coming off of two bridges in downtown Portland. As late as 1967 a City Club report on race in Portland identified only one civic body, other than the emerging Model Cities Program, that had black representation: the Metropolitan Relations Commission, which the City Club committee accused of being a public relations arm of the mayor's office.

Women did have a critical role in civic life. They were the de facto social service workers. In the 1950s and early 1960s one of the most dominant forms of civic associations was women’s clubs. There was a virtual army of women roaming the civic byways in those days: 600 women's clubs, with at least 18,000 (about 1 out of 10 women in Portland) members involved in civic activities (Salute, 1962).

However, under the surface of everyday civic life in Portland there has always been a dreamer, schemer, and radical underbelly. This may be explained as Schwwantes theorizes by the place of the Pacific Northwest in the westward expansion. . As documented in *Utopian Societies of Puget Sound*, the northwest drew dreamers to its thick woods and isolated valleys and islands, founding communes and intentional communities in the 19th century that could easily be mistaken for much later communes in the 1960s. The bounty of the northwest represented opportunity for those who believed they were on a mission to tame the wilderness, and for others it represented opportunity, a second change to start over, a place to accomplish great things.

The *Firebrand* was a journal briefly published by Portland anarchists in the late 19th century that featured shocking articles advocating free love and radical dismissals of some laws and mores. In Portland, in the 1890s, radicals in Portland, as Schwantes notes, “pursued their goals openly, preaching their gospel on busy street corners, and mingling freely with potential converts. Reform study groups such as the Academy of Socialism and the Firebrand and Social Science Clubs of Portland, abounded in the new Northwest, and debates among anarchists, socialists, single taxers, and others became a popular form of entertainment.” the Firebrand family, those publishing the journal and others loosely affiliated with the group, trying to make ends meet, also attempted to live off the land in the countryside near Portland. “They spend days in the nearby mountains picking wild blackberries to can for winter survival…. Between canning provisions and tending the cow, chickens, and cats, they set type and edited copy.” (Schwwantes, p. 283).

There were also political reformers that early on had a tremendous impact on the Oregon political system. During the progressive era Oregon became well known as a “political experiment station,” because of its role in pioneering the use of the initiative, referendum, direct primary, recall, and direct election of U.S. senators—measures that became known as the “Oregon system.” The Oregon system was pushed through by William S. U’Ren and the People’s Power League, a group also advocating the single tax system based on Henry George’s best selling book, Progress and Poverty.

Robert Johnston has made a strong case for looking at Portland’s history as a series of struggles between the traditional civic elite, and alliances of lower middle class—small property-holders and shopkeepers, lower-level white collar workers, artisans and skilled workers, what he refers to as the “radical middle class.” Johnston documents the influence populist movements had on Oregon politics, and Portland in particular. There were several key City elections when the coalitions of middle class and those of the white civic elite clearly came to the foreground. Will Daley, one of the architects of Oregon’s direct democracy experiments, won election to the Portland City Council in 1919. As president of the Portland Central Labor Council in Portland he was the first labor official elected to the Portland City Council. Daly was cast as a socialist by the establishment. An Oregonian article described his contribution to the city in the following way:

“a resume of socialistic plans and rosy dreams...design in more or less remote future to make of Portland a rainbowed haven of little work and abundant ease. Assessing the property owner, and not the tenant, for water; charging the general taxpayer and not the water fund for the installation of fire hydrants; installing a municipal garage collection system; fixing a $3 [per day] minimum wage for unskilled labor, and water metering the city—all were shown to be a part of the Daly socialistic propaganda.” (r. Johnston article, p.?)

Then in 1917 he ran for mayor against the popular and colorful George Baker. He only lost the election by 2000 votes out 0f 48,000. As Johnston notes Daly was brought this close to being a Portland mayor by an alliance of working and small businesses. In a plot that has repeated itself through Portland’ s history, a mysterious break in at Day’s house revealed that he was a socialist, a fact that the Oregonian made sure the public new about, and a likely reason why he lost the election to Baker. At least three times during Portland’s history, the police or other appointees of the city managed red squads and subversive watchdog programs.

Not all of Portland’s civic organizations have been peace loving, charitable or progressive. Anti-Catholic nativists surfaced in Portland after World War I. In the statewide primary of 1918, such groups as the American Patriotic Association, the American Patriotic League, and the Oregon Federation of Patriotic Societies were active in the election. The key issue was free and compulsory education, a way of prohibiting private Catholic schools. The Klu Klux Klan was active in this anti-Catholic movement. The Klan also for a time controlled Multnomah County Republican organization. In the 1922 election, 12 of 13 Klan-backed legislative candidates won nomination. Two Klan-backed candidates were elected to the Board of County Commissioners. (Demarco, p. 115)

How a community treats its challengers is a good test of its civic nature. Portland’s has been sometimes innovative, sometimes shaky, and sometimes frightfully narrow minded and down right prejudicial and bigoted. The City created a red squad, alluded to earlier, during and after World War I, to “watch” the subversive threats of socialists and union activists. Similarly, after World War II, the City established a red squad to monitor organizations that might be plotting revolution. Then, once again, fearing the worst, the City of Portland Police established a subversives watch program within the Portland Police, during the 1960s and 1970s to watch over subversive blacks, Native Americans, Youth, or anyone who seemed to hang a flyer on a telephone pole. While the act of establishing such taskforces and its breadth or impact can tell one a lot about the community, what is also fascinating is that the function of archiving such ephemeral data, in a twisted way, is an invaluable function for historians. The files kept, and in some cases still preserved, are remarkable historical records of organizations that might not otherwise even make it to newspaper content.

**Civic Organizations**

In the 1950s, the civic world in Portland was dominated by fraternal and benevolent associations, private clubs, ethnic cultural groups, and women's clubs. When business organizations (trade and professional) and labor organizations are added, the three sectors account for 80 percent of all civic organizations in Portland. Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythians, Job daughters, Elks, and Loyal Order of Moose were spread across the city. There were at least 20 Masonic lodges, and 22 Independent Order of Odd Fellows lodges. A prevalent venue for civic life in Portland is illustrated by the abundance of clubs, lodges, and temples. Nearly a quarter of all civic associations were temples, lodges or clubs. Three types of civic organizations, advocacy organizations, arts, and social services, that grew dramatically toward the end of the twentieth century, were barely in existence in the 1950s. As late as 1960, the three types of groups only made up only about 20 percent of the total number of civic organizations.

Advocacy oriented civic groups also were few and far between. In 1960 there were only 31 advocacy social service organizations, environmental groups, neighborhood associations, and identity interest organizations. Out of the 31 groups classified as advocacy, eight were political parties or political party organizations such as the Republican Women’s Federation of Oregon. There were three civil rights organizations: The Anti-defamation League of B’nai Brith, The National Association for Advancement of Colored People, and the Urban League. Also, by 1960 Portland supported a branch of the American Civil Liberties Union and one of the National Conference of Christians and Jews. There were a few organizations that had a global outlook: the United Nations Association, United World Federalists, Global Aid, Inc., and the World Affairs Council.

For the most part, to be involved in civic life in Portland during this period a citizen was a volunteer and most likely a women whose volunteer effort was subsidized by their husband. There was little chance of being employed as a citizen activist other than as an elected official. In effect, there were no "vocations for social change."

**Civic Opportunities**

**Direct Democracy**

Direct democratic venues in Portland were limited to public hearings, a rare public demonstration, and the state initiative petition and referendum system. Locally, the initiative petition system was used by citizens six times during the 1950s. The most important initiative petition during this period that might have made a difference in civic life was an anti-discrimination ordinance which was defeated.

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.

**Civic Opportunities**

**Representative Democracy**

During the late 1950s and early 1960s there were 60 City of Portland civic bodies (advisory committees, commissions, and boards). In this period a majority of the citizens appointed to civic bodies were members of municipal boards and commissions. Seventy percent of the appointments to civic bodies (770/1154) were municipal board and commission appointments. This means in all likelihood that 30 percent or less of the citizens involved in local government through these forms of representative democracy were “citizens at large.”

Commissions of various sorts drew mainly upon the civic elite and the business and professional classes. During 1959 and 1960, for example, the City Planning Commission included two lawyers, two corporate CEOs, an architect, a bank executive, a college professor, and a public school administrator.

Citizen advisory committees tended to fall into two categories: technical advisory groups and civic elite committees. An example of the former was the Air Quality Control Advisory Committee which had seven members appointed by the mayor and ratified by the city council. As a description at the time said, “These members are skilled and experienced in the field of air quality control, including physicians, registered professional engineers, industrialists and commercial building owners (City of Portland, 1965).” Examples of civic elite commissions included the Forest Park Committee, and the Japanese Garden Society, both which helped secure major public park developments and both of which drew mostly upon the civic elite for their membership.

While it would be difficult to exhaustively analyze membership of the civic bodies at this time in terms of minority representation, it is a safe assumption that there were very few minority representatives. In fact a 1967 report on race in Portland (City Club, 1967) identified only one civic body that had Black representation. This was the Metropolitan Relations Commission, which the City Club committee accused of being a public relations arm of the Mayor’s office.

A review of the types of issues that the City of Portland had created civic bodies to work on reveals the narrow relationship between the City and its citizens. Public hearings and direct contact were the expected mode of communication. In addition to the Forest Park Committee of Fifty, and the Air Quality Advisory Committee, the only other citizen advisory work around environmental issues was a committee overseeing the development of Hoyt Arboretum.

By the late 1960s, the City did have several citizen advisory committees on transportation issues, including a Mass Transit Advisory Committee and a Downtown Parking Plan Advisory Committee. Also, the City was forced to consider involving a broader cross section of citizens in public policy deliberation because of federal regulations in the Model Cities Program which governed citizen participation. The City established citizen-based committees in the Model Cities areas of northeast and southeast Portland and a citywide governing body for Model City projects, the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee (PMSC). The citizen advisory committees that ran the programs in northeast and southeast Portland were not appointed but elected to their positions—an unprecedented innovation of direct democracy for the City .

**Repertories of Civic Actions**

In the 1950s the repertoire of civic actions was relatively limited. News coverage about civic organizations focused on election of officers, education forums, fundraising, benefits, and honors and awards. Scant mention is made of the type of civic actions that came to dominate during and after the civic reconstruction period, the late 1960s and 1970s. Advocacy, neighborhood actions, participation in hearings, or conducting studies were rare. There were several groups that lobbied the state or city for school bond measures and tax reform. Another group had been created to oppose the city’s first urban renewal area in the south part of downtown. The American Association of University Women pushed the state to enact stronger billboard restrictions on highways. The Oregon Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers and the League of Women Voters both advocated for the rights of the handicapped. The Moreland Commercial Club organized resistance to the siting of a Fred Meyer department store in southeast Portland and an unnamed group of citizens resisted the siting of a Little League baseball field in their southeast neighborhood. A group of students from several universities had also organized to lobby the state for more higher education funding. The League of Women Voters showed up with several strong advocacy roles, including a controversial stand in opposition to the loyalty oath rule for students applying for National Defense Education loans. The Faith Lutheran Church conducted a 5-month study on how white congregations to bring other races to their church. The Portland Women’s Research Club sponsored a lecture on “Racial Problems in the North.” The Urban League, working with the Civil Rights Division of Oregon, helped organize a conference on intergroup relations and, working with the City of Portland, organized a week of events on equal opportunity. Both the City Club and the local chapter of the National Association of Social Workers advocated for handicapped rights.

Only two groups showed up that used studies or reports to advocate positions: the City Club and League of Women Voters. The League issued a report on the need for the Columbia Basin Agency Committee to have more responsibility in allocating water resources in the Northwest, and the City Club published a study backing a tax plan for the City of Portland in the May election. The Portland Council of Churches announced a plan to establish a church planning commission to work with the City of Portland on pressing matters in urban areas. There was only one hearing that involved a civic organization, when the Loyal Order of Moose applied for a liquor license.

Civic organizations worked on a variety of health and social issues. The American Legion produced place mats for the Veterans Hospital. Delta Zeta sorority put on a fashion tea to raise money for hearing aids for the deaf. The American Business Women’s Association provided scholarships for nurses in training. The Friends of the Aged sponsored a dinner and bazaar at the Odd Fellows Hall. The Fairlawn Hospital Guild hosted a “Hats and Fashions” tea to benefit Fairlawn Hospital. The Boy Scouts held its annual clothing drive to assist Goodwill Industries. One high school girls group sold “seal” lilies to benefit the Oregon Society for Crippled Children. Another high school group, Teens Against Polio, collected dimes in the annual March of Dimes. The Lion’s Club in the Hollywood neighborhood collected the largest amount of blood in the region for the American Red Cross. The Order of the Amaranth reported that its members had contributed 5,768 hours volunteering at hospitals. The Kiwanis raised money for retarded citizens. The Girl scouts helped to build a trail and camp. The Oregon Federation of Women’s Clubs had selected its family of the year, while the Portland Women’s Club had set its agenda for the year to focus on patient welfare. The Oregon Nurses Association was lobbying the State of Oregon for better health programs in schools. The Oregon State Emblem Clubs presented a station wagon to the crippled Children and Adult Association. The Daughters of the Nile were sewing clothes for the Shriner’s Hospital.

Civic association’s interest in international affairs centered on Christian missionary work and anti-Communism efforts. The typical format seems to have been talks with slides from visiting missionaries or other travelers relating their experiences overseas. The Central Bible Church sponsored a talk on experiences in a Russian slave camp, and the Wood Village Presbyterian Church sponsored a speaker on “The Rise of Communism and the Economic Challenge of A Re-ordered and United Europe.” A speaker at the Stone Open Bible Church spoke about Guinea as a battleground between communist and Western ideologies. The Christian Crusade Rally featured a controversial evangelist who came to accuse some churches of siding with the communists.

The most important issue in the civic sector related to better government was about taxes, largely because there was a critical local tax measure on the ballet that year. The City Club published a report on the proposed tax plan, and others held forums to discuss it. Also, since it was a general election year, several civic organizations, including the YWCA and Republican Women’s Federation of Clubs, sponsored candidate fairs. The American Legion sponsored a slate of boys to attend a statewide conference established to promote understanding of government.

The preponderance of educational forums as a civic action of choice was also a character of traditional civic life. An examination of topics of the civic forums reveals that domestic health and social problems topped the list, with subjects such as children and families, mental health, crime prevention, and juvenile delinquency. Forums on international topics were dominated by reports about missionary work and the cold war. Urban renewal and transportation issues were rare. Only four forums focused on the environment--three on water resources and one on the dangers of radiation. Political topics were noteworthy but scarce. In addition to candidate forums and some general ones on citizenship, better government, and taxation issues, forums on race issues were sponsored by the Urban League and Portland Women’s Research Club.

There were some exceptions to the rule. A National Wildlife Week coordinating group sponsored a national speaker to talk about the importance of water to local wildlife and fisheries. The Campfire Girls ran a tree planting project. An ad hoc citizens’ group organized to support a tax measure for Portland Parks. Both the League of Women Voters and Kiwanis Club sponsored talks about Columbia River issues. The American Waterworks Association held a conference in Portland with a field trip to the Bull Run Watershed (Portland’s water supply). In the crime and safety category the big issue was civil defense. The Seventh Day Adventists and the Banfield Business and Professional Women’s Club both sponsored presentations about civil defense preparedness. Urban renewal was showing up as an urban planning and design issue, for the Rotary Club sponsored a talk on the subject, as did the Eastside Commercial Club.

One of the areas of civic activity in 1960 that subsequently diminished almost completely was a focus on what might be called self-improvement. Civic groups sponsored educational discussions about such things as working on old cars (Boy Scouts), building bridges for friendship (Federation of Business and Professional Women), nautical skills (Girl Scouts), how to live a long life (Kiwanis), the voice of optimism (Optimist Club), boy-girl relations, selling ideas, and charm (YWCA).

**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 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 Expresso, 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 Lightening Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, and local banks 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.”

**Community Issues**

**Planning**

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.

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.**Community Issues**

**Environment**

There have been environmental conservation organizations in Oregon for over 100 years. The Audubon Society of Portland was created in 1902. Other chapters of national groups including the Issak Walton League have long histories in Oregon, and at least one group without national affiliation, the Oregon Wilderness Coalition (now the Oregon Natural Resources Council) dates back to the 1940s. However, for much of Oregon’s history, environmental stewardship (at times defined loosely) was carried out by business and industry associations such as the National Streams Coalition, recreation and outdoor groups, and the traditional interest group triangle of government agencies, labor unions, and industry associations acting on behalf of their own corporate and business sector interests.

In Portland, in the 1950s, there were only three environmental groups with a public interest agenda. Keep Oregon Green was an education association formed by lumber companies and the State Forester in the 1940s to combat forest fires. The Audubon Society whose primary civic actions were organizing birding expeditions, made an occasional foray into lobbying to protect bird populations. Probably the most politically active environmental organization was the Izaak Walton League, one of the few environmental groups with a national membership base. These and other groups participated in actions such as establishing a National wildlife week and sponsoring a national speaker to come to Portland to talk about the importance of local wildlife and fisheries. The Campfire Girls had a tree planting project. An ad hoc citizens’ group organized to support a tax measure for Portland Parks. Both the League of Women Voters and Kiwanis Club sponsored talks about Columbia River issues. The American Waterworks Association held a conference in Portland with a field trip to the Bull Run Watershed (Portland’s water supply). In addition to the Forest Park Committee of Fifty and the Air Quality Advisory Committee, the only other citizen advisory work on environmental issues was a committee overseeing the development of Hoyt Arboretum.

One of the few environmental issues that gained considerable attention within the Portland region was the creation of the 3000-acre Forest Park, today one of the largest natural parks within a city in America. This came about because of a research project initiated by the Portland City Club in 1945. The resulting report, *Municipal Forest Park*, (City Club, 1945) recommended the acquisition and development of a vast forested area in the far reaches of northwest Portland.

Since the City Club did not implement its recommendations, the Western Federation of Outdoor Clubs held, in 1947, a series of meetings to initiate the process for establishing this city park. The federation created the Forest Park Committee of Fifty. Thoronton T. Munger, retired from the U.S. Forest Service, was nominated to be its first leader.

What today would be called a stakeholder committee, the Committee of Fifty consisted of representatives of such outdoor and conservation groups as the Oregon Federation of Garden Clubs, Multnomah Anglers and Hunters, Oregon Audubon Society, Trails Club of Oregon, and the Izaak Walton League. There were representatives from school and youth groups, such as the Catholic Youth Organization, 4H clubs, Boy Scouts of America, Campfire Girls, and Girl Scouts. Other representatives came from labor unions (e.g., Portland Industrial Union Council), business groups (e.g., Portland Chamber of Commerce), and social service groups (e.g., Portland Council of Social Agencies).

The Committee of Fifty worked with the Bureau of Parks, but independently of the City of Portland bureaucracy. It was, in effect, what would later be called a “friends” group, a voluntary organization working in close partnership with the City to develop or maintain a public amenity. At this time there were several similar civic bodies, such as the Japanese Garden Society and the Arboretum Committee. The members on these committees were selected because of their interest, influence, and in the case of the Forest Park Committee, because of their ability to represent other organizations.

The Interest in Forest Park was an exception. For the most part in this period, environmental challenges and environmental actions took place away from Portland in Oregon’s wild rivers, mountains, and the coast. At the same time Portland, in the Willamette Valley, served as headquarters for environmental actions. Collective environmental actions were guided by quickly forged associations with little experience, resources, or organizational structure. And, for the most part these environmental organizations focused their attention on the saving of specific places to be saved and developed no over-all vision of state-wide or region-wide conservation strategies.

The movement to secure Oregon beaches as public domain in the mid and late 1960s is exemplary of the environmental actions during this period. In 1965 the Highway Commission proposed to construct a four-lane extension across the NestuccaSpit, an often visited natural area. Some local residents opposed the highway route and formed a group, Citizens to Save Our Sands (SOS), while others, supported the Highway Commission’s plan. When public hearings took place in the Valley activists came in force, including members of the Sierra Club, Western Outdoor Clubs, and Isaac Walton League. Local coastal groups, such as the Pacific City Boosters, resented the Portland activists for “sticking their noses into our business.” (Judd and Beach, p. 122.) During the mêlée two new groups formed, one of which, the Citizens to Save Oregon Beaches supported an initiative giving landowners one year to establish that the public did not have rights to vegetated sections of the beach. The two citizen groups, Save our Sands and Beaches Forever, didn’t last long, but they moved an environmental issue to the forefront and established a precedent for the tension between “urban” or “valley” environmentalists and local residents. As Judd and Beach (2003)note the “defense of public rights to beaches helped transform Oregon environmental politics from a series of local controversies into a statewide dialogue on the Oregon way of life (p. 119).”

**Community Issues**

**Housing and Community Development**

Affordable and quality housing has been a reoccurring theme in Portland's history. It was a torch first brought to the public attention in 1918 by Jessie Short, a Reed College professor who was deemed by the Portland Police Department as a “communist and a dangerous radical.” (Abbott, p. 110). As Abbott noted, “as was true elsewhere in the US, the social reformers whose greatest concern was the amelioration of slums were excluded from the mainstream of the developing planning profession and pushed to form their own alliances.(Abbott, Planning p. 122).

The two agencies that played the most critical role in Portland’s housing and urban renewal efforts were the Housing Authority of Portland (HAP) and the Portland Development Commission (PDC) and its predecessors. Both agencies have always been directed by appointments by the Mayor and City Council, and operate in a semi-autonomous fashion. The history of HAP goes back to 1938 when the City Council held hearings to determine if the City should establish an agency to operate under the rules established by the U.S. Housing Act of 1937. The proposal was opposed by the Oregon Apartment House Association, the Portland Realty Board, the Portland Home builders Association, and the Portland Chamber of Commerce. When the City Council put the proposal to a vote of the people in the November 1938 election it was defeated. Finally, in 1941, facing a severe housing shortage as workers moved to Portland to work in the shipyards, the City Council established the Housing Authority of Portland. The first HAP board consisted of a banker, the wife of the *Oregon Journal* founder, a real estate operator, and labor union leader.

During the war period, HAP build 18,500 units, at its peak housing 60,000 people. (City Club, 1966). During the war the HAP commissioners and city leadership in general favored public housing, most often the HAP board was divided. In 1950 when the temporary housing from the war was turned over to HAP for liquidation, the board divided into pro- and anti-public housing factions, and great bitterness and public controversy followed. In fact, following the war, Mayor Riley appointed members to the board who were opposed to public housing which undermined HAP’s attempts to build new public housing or deal with the existing buildings.

Housing issues were central to growing civic action about race segregation policies in the City. By the late 1940s and early 1950s an increasing number of civic organizations were willing to stand up against racism. These included the American Civil Liberties Union, a special commission on race relations formed under the Portland Council of Churches, the Interracial Commission Inc., the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Anti-Defamation League, the Council of Social Agencies, Federated Jewish Societies, Neighborhood House, Fellowship of Reconciliation, International House, the Portland Christian Youth Council, the Vanport Interracial Committee, the Committee to Aid Relocation (from Vanport), the Communist Party, and the CIO and A F L. The Portland chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was chartered in 1914, was involved in housing discrimination cases during and after the war. It wrote letters of protest and threatened boycotts, neither the NAACP or other groups advocated protests or stronger actions (Alexander and Painter, 1978).

It wasn’t until 1963 that the NAACP, emboldened by civil rights actions in other parts of the country, used picketing as a strategy. HAP invited 1963 President John F. Kennedy to Portland to open the Northwest Towers in northwest Portland, a federal housing project, but it was forced to cancel his visit when the NAACP threatened to picket because of discrimination against Blacks applying to rent apartments. Local leaders, including Senator Wayne Morse, labeled the NAACP’s actions as “reckless,” even though the NAACP tried to make clear that they were not picketing the president, but the housing authority. Mayor Shrunk requested that the recently formed Portland Commission on Intergroup Relations investigate the charges of the NAACP. The Commission found no illegal forms of discrimination but also indicated that there existed de facto discrimination. In fact, as late as 1966 the Northwest Towers housed only two black residents and 178 whites. Only the Columbia Village, Dekum Court and Iris Court could be said to have been somewhat mixed, while the ironically named, Peaceful Village, accommodated 65 white residents and 1 black.

The City Club was one of the few established civic groups that brought up the hushed issue of racism in housing policy. The Club brought to the foreground explicit and implicit segregation housing policies in the city. It discovered, for example, that the Apartment House Owner’s Association declared that they had no policy prohibiting renting to negroes, claimed it had received no applications for rental of apartments, and that Blacks would be welcomed in a segregated project. The City Club also reported that until 1952, the doctrine that an African American presence depressed property values was the official position of the Portland Realty (Portland Planning Bureau, 1993). The City Club (Plankinton, 1945). also described organized resistance by citizens to Blacks moving into the Montavilla District in outer southeast Portland because of that a public housing project would be built in the neighborhood.

In 1956 the Urban League of Portland (Urban League, 1956) issued a report, “Nonwhite Neighbors and Property Prices in Portland, Oregon and Residential Attitudes Toward Negroes as Neighbors.” For the times, it was an innovative and solid report from a survey and analysis of real estate data to determine the extent of housing segregation and Portlanders attitudes towards Blacks. The report lauded Portland for some progress in employment, access to public accommodations and amusement, but criticized it for the lack of progress in its housing policies. “To our racial minorities,” the report concluded that, “freedom of selection in the housing market is still a dream that is constantly denied them” (Urban League, 1956, p. 1).

In this context, in 1955, Mayor Fred Peterson established an advisory committee on urban renewal but did not break from traditional membership policies. Most of the members were leaders from established interest groups and a few social service agencies. The interests of citizens in the affected areas were represented through public hearings, not by appointments to civic bodies.

The Portland Redevelopment Advisory Board, which replaced the advisory committee reflected the elite stature of membership and interest group representation of traditional pluralism. Bankers, building contractors, real estate interests, Chamber of Commerce, engineers, along with government bureau representatives made up the bulk of the membership. The only group on this board that might be said to have represented the people most affected by urban renewal efforts was the Urban League of Portland.

The City further solidified its urban renewal role in the 1958 election, when Mayor Terry Shrunk asked for approval of the Portland Development Commission along with a taxing capacity to fund PDC’s operation. It was brought before the voters accompanied by extensive media coverage its first urban renewal project, the proposed South Auditorium Project. A coalition of 35 organizations showed support for the project, including the City Club, Multnomah Labor Council, and the Portland Realty Board. However, there were no groups who could represent the residents of the area that would be relocated, mostly elderly Italians, gypsies, and Jews. The measure passed, along with a tax allocation bonding measure of $5 million for the South Auditorium project.

The Auditorium project required the demolition of 382 buildings and the relocation of 1,573 residents and 232 businesses. The equation for housing in the project changed over time. The 1957 plan called for housing to assist the elderly, single working people and students attending Portland State College. In the 1958 plan the call for housing was dropped. In 1961 housing was re-introduced into the plan, but the proposed affordable housing was minimal. A citizen group sponsored an initiative campaign to repeal Portland’s Urban Renewal Act and to put a hold on the South Auditorium Project, but never made it past the drawing board. An Oregonian editorial characterized the group’s initiative as trying to turn back the clock and the Auditorium project as a “monument to civic progressiveness (Harmful effects, 1956), p. 56).

One civic enterprise that grew out of the South Auditorium Urban Renewal Project had tremendous impact on the development of the south part of downtown and eventually, in the 1990s, the Portland State University district. This civic action also illustrates the shift in civic actors and practices that would dominate in the civic reconstruction period.

The South Auditorium Project affected Portland State College (now Portland State University) by removing affordable houses and apartments used by students. In the late 1950s Portland State College had formed a plan to obtain property to expand its campus--a plan backed by the Portland Development Commission, City Council, and Planning Commission. This plan was for acquisition and demolition of properties within the proposed university boundaries. It did not call for maintaining residential housing for students, other than two apartment buildings considered too expensive for purchase. It wasn’t until several students, Stan Amy, John Werneken, Anthony Barsotti, and several others, tired of being displaced, took action, eventually forming College Housing Northwest (CHNW).

CHNW was founded in 1969 as an outgrowth of a Portland State University urban studies class. The class was examining the need for student housing at or near the University's downtown campus. At that time, PSU was considered by the Oregon Legislature as a commuter campus, and the enabling legislation did not permit student housing. A group of students in the urban studies class saw an opportunity to meet the resulting substantial need for housing by acquiring several old apartment buildings from the Portland Development Commission. CHNW immediate purpose was to prevent the demolition of the apartment buildings and to preserve their use for PSU students. The students who created CHNW convinced the University and the State Board of Higher Education to allow them to operate the buildings as independent student housing. After securing two $5,000 loans as seed money, the student board of directors was elected, a president was selected, and renovations began. The original buildings have since been recognized as a permanent part of the University campus and the University has provided substantial funding for their renovation and rehabilitation. CHNW now operates 1,410 housing units in 18 buildings on or near the campus.

There was also a ripple effect from the South Auditorium Project in the adjoining neighborhoods of Lair Hill, Corbett and Terwilliger. Residents feared that their neighborhoods would be next, so that organized to resist urban renewal. Their actions played a major role in instigating the City of Portland to create its neighborhood involvement system in the 1970s.

**Community Issues**

**Transportation**

Planning and building highways, a popular civic pastime of the 1950s, as with other civic issues, drew spotty broad civic involvement. The overall plan for highway development in Portland was created during the 1940s when the Portland Area Postwar Development Committee brought Robert Moses to Portland to help it create an economic vision for the city that would capitalize on the wartime economy. Moses created the Portland Improvement Plan in 1943, a scheme, as grand as all of Moses’ plans, that included vast investments in highways. Moses’ plan was never fully realized, but nonetheless provided a starting point for many highway plans after that, *including Portland/Vancouver Metropolitan Area Transportation Study*. It suggested the construction of 30 highways, including several freeways.

Planning these freeways in Portland in the 1950s involved citizens only at the last minute, when plans were announced and citizens were shown detailed drawings of how they were inevitably, not optionally, going to be affected. There were citizen protests in the 1950s and early 1960s, but the collective actions were impromptu and often with little effect. The activists were those most directly affected, and they had relatively little power to influence the State highway department. The force and effectiveness of opposition to highway projects depended on the class or race of the most affected population. The Minnesota (I-5) freeway, that tore 5 miles through inner northeast Portland, with Portland’s largest concentration of African Americans, had very little organized resistance. But, freeways that were to be built near or through more affluent neighborhoods met with staunch resistance. The Willamette Heights Protective Association, for example, was formed in the early 1960s to oppose a highway connecting Route 26 with the soon-to-be-built Freemont Bridge, that would have abutted wealthy upper-middle class Willamette Heights neighborhood. The Association brought out 200 people to meetings, even though the highway project only directly affected 50 homes. The connector was never built, although it stayed on the books for another decade and re-emerged later in the form of another project, I-505.

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**Women's Organizations and Collective Action**

In the 1950s and early 1960s one of the most dominant forms of civic associations was women’s clubs. The most common activities of the 600 women’s clubs and auxiliaries were supporting specific social institutions or causes and raising money for scholarships. For example, Delta Zeta sorority put on a fashion tea to raise money for hearing aids for the deaf. The American Business Women’s Association provided scholarships for nurses in training. The Oregon State Emblem Club presented a station wagon to the Crippled Children and Adult Association. The Daughters of the Nile made clothes for the Shriner’s Hospital. The American Association of University Women sponsored a talk about bridging the high school and college education curricula. The Seventh Day Adventists and the Banfield Business and Professional Women’s Club both hosted presentations about civil defense preparedness. Women’s groups set up self-improvement workshops such as the “Building Bridges for Friendships” put on by the Federation of Business and Professional Women. The YWCA organized workshops for high school young ladies such as Boy-girl relationships, selling ideas, and charm, while the Girl Scouts touted one on “How to Live a Long Life.”

A few women’s organizations took part in the political side of civic life. In 1960 the Women of B’nai B’rith sponsored anti-bigotry forums. The Portland Women’s Research Club presented a forum on Racial Problems in the North. The American Association of University Women (AAUW) laid out an agenda for the year that included legislation for the United Nations, federal aid for schools, an end to wage discrimination because of sex, and liberalizing international trade agreements. The AAUW also pushed the state to enact stronger billboard restrictions on highways. The Portland Women’s Club focused on patient welfare. The Oregon Nurses Association lobbied the State of Oregon for better health programs in schools.

It is also evident from membership rosters of citizen advisory committees, commissions, and trade and professional licensing boards during this period that women were poorly represented. Of the 711 members of all the civic bodies, 591 were men (71 percent). Women made up only 8 percent of the boards, 10 percent of the citizen advisory committees, and 26 percent of the commissions. While this last figure may seem high for the times, it should be noted that women served on commissions that were considered women’s domain: arts and culture and human services. Of the 90 women on commissions during this period, 58 served on the Arts Commission, Metropolitan Youth Commission, Zoo Commission, Pittock Mansion Commission, and Japanese Garden Commission. On the more powerful City Planning Commission, Portland Development Commission, and Housing Commission there were 10 women and 43 men.

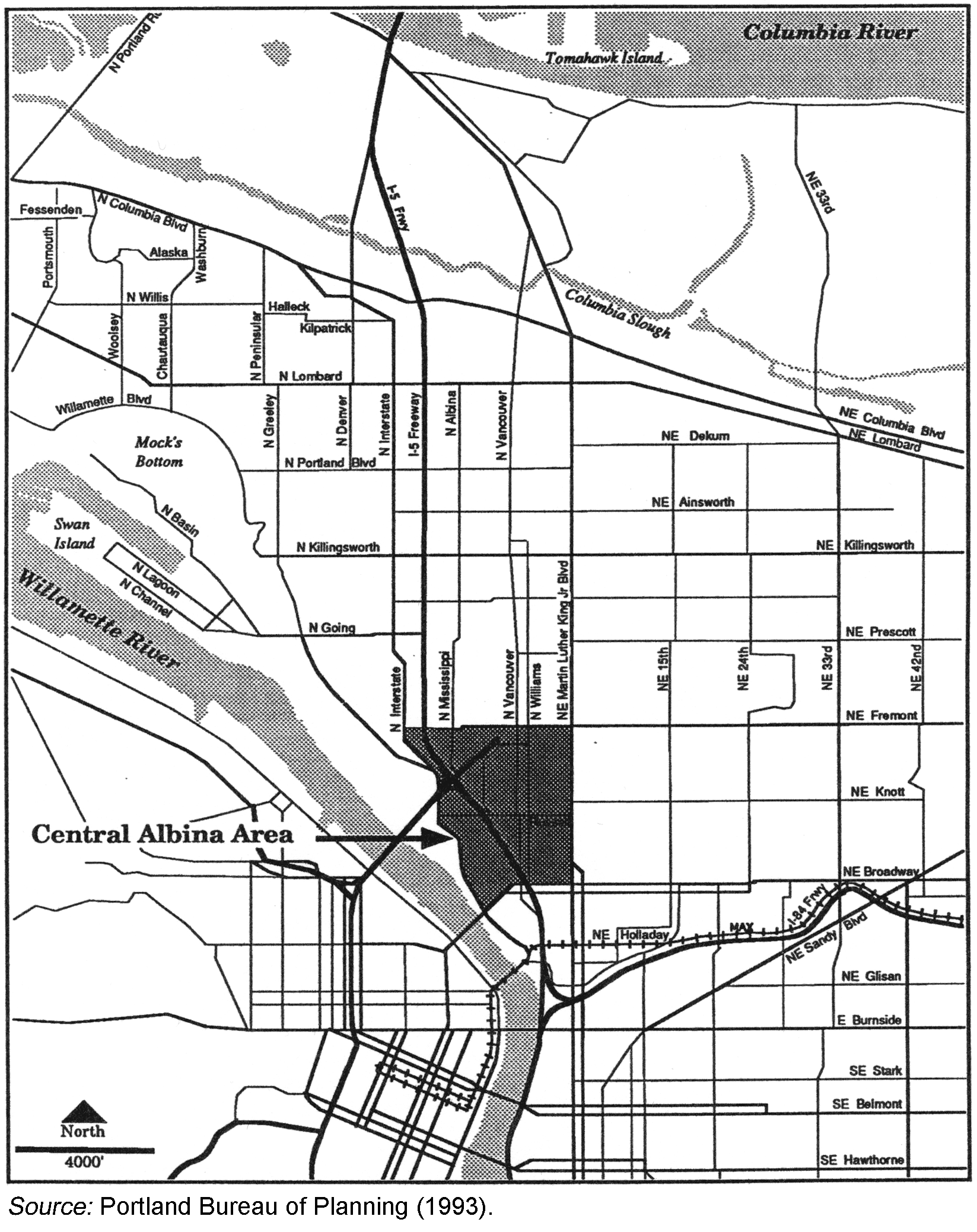
**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**The Albina Story: From the Big Flood to War on Poverty**

The story of public involvement in Albina provides a rich case example for developing a chronological understanding of the transformation of civic life in Portland that parallels in many ways the history of other poor and minority urban neighborhoods in America since the 1950s. Urban renewal is at the heart of the story, as Albina’s geographical relationship to downtown and persistent problems of blight placed it in the middle of urban renewal efforts starting in the 1950s. The civic life of Albina was transformed through War on Poverty Programs in the 1960s and 1970s, economic revitalization efforts in the 1980s, and comprehensive neighborhood planning processes in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Traditional civic organizations played a significant role in Albina’s civic life, but, new civic groups played the most pivotal roles. Traditional civic organizations lacked the capacity to provide leadership development or teach the civic skills needed in the community. It was through the process of new organizations hammering out public policy for the future of Albina that its citizens gained the knowledge and learned the civic skills they needed to share power and take control of their neighborhood. In effect, civic institutions, repertoires of civic actions, and democratic institutional relations were rebuilt from the ground up.

Figure 60: Northeast Portland in 1983



Prior to the 1960s, there were only a few advocacy organizations in Albina, namely, the Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), and the Albina Neighborhood Council. In the late 1990s, by contrast, redevelopment efforts in Albina had involved over 150 organizations. As with the evolution of civic life in Portland in general during the past 40 years, Albina moved from having a skeletal civic infrastructure with few citizens involved in civic life to a rich one populated by thousands of citizens versed in public policy, and a broad range of civic organizations.

Albina was a separate incorporated city on the east side of the Willamette River, across from downtown Portland, from 1887 until it was consolidated with Portland in 1891. At the time Albina was a classic stopover neighborhood, where immigrants of various nationalities settled down and started businesses. A major railroad yard nearby along the east bank of the Willamette River provided jobs for the new arrivals.

The history of the Albina community might have been very different if not for World War II and the creation of Vanport, a planned community built and financed by Henry Kaiser for workers at the growing Oregon Shipbuilding Corporation. When Pearl Harbor was bombed, the shipyards became the nation’s largest producers of Liberty Ships. Kaiser ran help wanted ads in eleven states which encouraged both Black and White workers to emigrate from the East and South, a movement that pushed Portland’s population up by 160,000 people. The recruitment effort brought together a diverse group of workers, about 25 percent of whom were Black. It is estimated that between 20,000 to 25,000 Blacks migrated to Portland between 1940 and 1950.

To contend with the in-migration of so many workers, the Housing Authority of Portland proposed building 4,900 apartment units and a dormitory in Albina. White residents of Albina objected to the plan, one of the earliest public involvement actions in the area. A gathering of 500 Albina residents presented an alternative solution to the housing problem of Black workers.

“If it is necessary to bring in large numbers of Negro workers, locate them on the edge of the city,” urged the President of the Central East Portland Community Club. “It would be much better for all concerned. If they are allowed to fan out through the city it soon will be necessary to station a policeman on every corner (Abbott 1983, p. 129).”

Kaiser stepped in at this point with an alternative proposal, the construction of a massive housing project of at least 6,000 units north of Albina along the Columbia River. Vanport, built between 1942 and 1943, and eventually it became the largest wartime housing project in the United States. At its peak, the population reached 40,000.

Many shipyard workers remained in Portland after the war, including about 10,000 Blacks, many at Vanport. Since it was easier for Whites to relocate in other areas of the city, Vanport soon became, by Portland standards, a Black community, with a Black population of 35 percent.

In May 1948 a devastating flood destroyed Vanport’s housing and community facilities, and literally turned it into a lake. Approximately 17,000 people were made homeless by the Vanport flood, and Albina was chosen as the place to resettle them. By 1950, Blacks resided in all except one of Portland’s census tracts, but, half of them remained in Albina.

In the 1950s, several key events marked the history of Albina. At this time, Blacks were primarily concentrated in an area located just north of the Broadway and Steel bridges, in the proximity of a sports arena, the Memorial Coliseum. This area was becoming highly vulnerable to development pressure because of its position relative to the growing downtown and nearby Lloyd commercial district. Several redevelopment projects targeted for inner north and northeast Portland in the late 1950s and early 1960s had devastating impacts on Portland’s Black community. As much as any neighborhood in the city, the central Albina area, now called the Eliot neighborhood, suffered at the hand of urban renewal, or “Negro removal” as skeptics called it in the 1960s (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1993, p. 109).

By the late 1950s, outside pressures for redevelopment, along with deteriorating conditions within the community, led residents to begin to organize to resist another relocation. The organization that would prove to play a critical role in urban renewal efforts in Albina in the 1950s, the Albina Neighborhood Council, was founded in 1934. The Council was one of 15 neighborhood councils formed in Portland in the 1930s. The councils were promoted by the Community Chests and Councils of America to provide a grassroots base to the operation of Community Welfare Councils, the coordinating bodies for agencies that received Community Chest (or later United Good Neighbor) funding. The guiding principle of the councils was, “that neighborhood councils exist to foster cooperation and participation of the organized forces of the neighborhood in a program of child welfare (Neighborhood Councils, 1934, p. 3).” The special focus that originally promoted the development of the councils in Portland (and around the country) was the rapid rise in child delinquency. The types of groups the committee suggested should be represented on councils were: women’s clubs, parent teachers associations, lodges, civic clubs, churches, schools, and neighborhood improvement leagues (Neighborhood Councils, 1934). For about 15 years, neighborhood councils were funded by the Community Chest.

A 1948 survey of the local neighborhood councils revealed that the Albina Neighborhood Council was made up of 4 teachers or school administrators, 10 clergy, 4 caseworkers, 10 recreation and group workers, 1 health worker, and ten at-large members, for a total of 39 active members. In a meeting of the councils remaining in 1946, the secretary of the Council of Neighborhood Councils reflected that “lay people were no longer coming to the meetings, and the councils had become just paid representatives of neighborhood agencies” (Neighborhood Councils, 1946). By the mid-1950s, there were only five of the original councils remaining: Southwest, Northwest, North, Central Eastside, and Albina.

In 1959, the remaining councils held a meeting at which Albina Council representatives the Reverend Cortlandt Cambric, Eddit Harris, and Mary Rowland led a discussion about how the Albina area was “ being hit on all sides, first the Lloyd addition, then the ER [proposed Exposition-Recreation facility] site and now the Eastbank freeway” (Neighborhood Councils, 1959). A primary concern was the inadequacy of relocation services. They felt that the Portland Development Commission, Portland’s newly formed redevelopment agency, and the mayor’s office had been fairly responsive to displacement issues, but that Federal funds restricted relocation services. The city could not spend Federal resources on relocation in the cases of proposed housing or development projects. Likewise with highway development projects proposed in the area, the Oregon State Highway Division did not have authorization to fund relocation services. At the end of the meeting, a Displacement and Relocation Committee was established with several other neighborhood council representatives as members. The committee requested that the city support a central relocation office and support passage of a bill (Senate Bill 313) which would allow the State Highway Commission to help with relocation of displaced residents. (ONI Archives #5)

The Albina Neighborhood Council also turned to the Portland Development Commission (PDC) for assistance. When John Kenward, Executive Director of PDC, spoke at an Urban League workshop to discuss the future of the Albina neighborhood, Council representatives expressed interest in obtaining assistance from PDC to explore the possibility of obtaining funds from the Federal government for an urban renewal conservation and rehabilitation program (Albina Neighborhood Improvement Project, 1961).

In October, 1960, the Reverend Cortlandt Cambric was made chairman of the 18-member Neighborhood Improvement Committee (ANIC) to work with PDC on developing a grant application to carry out Albina’s first urban renewal efforts. In November, the committee held a public meeting at the Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church, attended by 500 people, to announce the new project. The committee surveyed over 300 homes in the area to see if they would participate in the program, one that might include Federal Housing Administration (FHA) home improvement loans if the area became an urban renewal project. The grant application was submitted to the Housing and Home Finance Agency in August of 1961, and approved in October of that year (Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee, 1961a).

This first urban renewal activity in Albina was very grassroots in nature. The Albina Neighborhood Council itself was still active, although its leadership was caught up in the activities of the ANIC. The council’s membership roster listed 45 representatives from a variety of organizations, including churches, schools, PTA groups, city agencies, and other neighborhood and community organizations (Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee, 1962). The Eighteen member ANIC committee were all local residents, including representatives from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA), Federated Women’s Clubs, Urban League, Principals of Eliot and Humboldt Schools, and eight property owners in the area. At the regular meetings, there were also representatives of the local Girl Scout troop (which planted flowers as a community project in Albina), Portland Police, Portland Planning Commission, the Metropolitan Youth Commission, and the NAACP.

In October 1961, with funding from the Portland Development Commission, the Albina Neighborhood Improvement Center was established to assist Albina residents in obtaining benefits from the new program. The Center initially had four full-time staff members.

The Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee began to function as a more general purpose neighborhood association. For example, at a regular meeting in 1961, they reviewed the conditional zoning change petition of the Brunswick Corporation for a proposed bowling alley. Not wanting to speak for the neighborhood, the committee deferred approval of the project until they could survey the residents themselves. In other ways, even though ANIC itself had specific and limited projects to carry out under the federal grant, citizens, nonprofit organizations, and agency staff began to use it as a platform for Albina issues in general. Citizens expressed their worries about the coming freeway bridge (what would be the Fremont Bridge) to be built across the Willamette River that would land on the eastside in Albina. School administrators came to discuss the importance of school levees, and the Metropolitan Youth Commission came to talk with the members about youth issues (Albina Neighborhood Improvement Committee, 1961b).

ANIC’s work in Albina seemed to be moving the community in a positive direction, helping residents hold their homes and stem the tide of displacement. However, there were other forces at work as well. Displacement was a way of life for Blacks. Over 150 persons were moved to make room for the Memorial Coliseum, and another 300 were moved to make room for the East Bank-Minnesota Freeway. As the right-of-way supervisor for the State Highway Commission noted about relocation (as much noting their familiarity with being displaced as their human nature), “We have less trouble with Negroes than with any other class of people (Lattie, 1963).”

In December 1962, the City Planning Commission submitted the Central Albina Study as part of Portland’s Comprehensive Development Plan. The plan focused on an area of about 300 acres south of ANIC’s target area, home to 7,000 persons, about 70 percent of them Blacks. The report concluded that the “Central Albina area bears most of the characteristics of a district in an advanced state of urban blight.” Once again, Albina residents faced a “Negro removal” project proposal. If the city were to apply for urban renewal money from the Federal government, it would be for clearance and removal. The only other urban renewal project to date, the South Auditorium project, at the south end of downtown on the other side of the river, had forced the displacement of about 1600 people. This proposed displacement was 4-5 times as extensive as that and involved a single class, Blacks.

It was clear that while PDC and other agencies of the city were pleased with the progress of the citizen-based effort led by ANIC, they did not believe the same policies and actions could be applied fruitfully to all areas, such as the area the Central Albina Plan had designated as “blighted.” Land in the more blighted area of Albina was in demand for industrial and commercial use for the expanding downtown office district, by light industry, for warehousing, and by expanding institutions such as hospitals, the state university, and shopping centers (Portland Planning Bureau ,1993).

As Abbott points out, at this point in Portland’s history, planning followed traditional lines of thought about the progression of inner city blight and replacement rather than conservation and rehabilitation. Neighborhoods in the inner city inevitably declined, the “end product of a long slow process of erosion.” Also, as he notes, “Planning agencies ignored the opinions of Northeast Portland citizens in their treatment of the heart of Albina south of Fremont (Abbott ,1983, p. 186).” When residents requested that the ANIC Improvement District be expanded to include the “blighted” area, the request was denied.

In 1964, the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) was created by Congress to lead the charge of President Johnson’s War on Poverty. In Albina, both the Albina Neighborhood Council and the Community Council (previously, the Community Welfare Council) conducted an inventory and survey of agencies in the Northeast in order to develop a single proposal from Albina to secure OEO funding. In October 1964, a neighborhood service center for Albina was proposed, and an Albina Community Action Plan drawn up. The action plan was submitted to the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee, Portland’s newly formed overall coordinating body for OEO actions. In February 1965, the Albina group, referring to itself as the Albina Citizens War on Poverty Committee (ACWPC), was recognized as the official representative for OEO programs in Albina (Portland Planning Bureau, 1993).

The formation of the ACWPC, under the guidance of the Community Council, followed an inter-agency track to develop the Albina plan to combat poverty. The members of the original group were for the most part agency representatives, not lay citizens. It was expected that each participating agency would submit its own ideas and needs that would be consolidated into one overall application to the Federal OEO office. There were several well established agencies involved, including: the Greater Council of Churches, YMCA, YWCA, Albina Neighborhood Council, and the Portland Housing Authority (Gerald A. Frey, personal communication, November 11, 1964).

OEO’s now well-known guidelines for developing local civic infrastructures to carry out the war on poverty stated that the local plans were to be “developed and conducted with the maximum feasible participation of residents in the area (Economic Opportunity Act). However, the plan originally adopted by the ACWPC was mostly developed by the interagency group established by the Community Council. In establishing the first official board of directors, ten members were a part of the original committee, representing agencies, ten members were elected as representatives who lived in the target area, and ten more members were elected from across the city to bring experience and expertise to the board. Five member slots were left open in order to potentially increase the residential representation (Gerald A. Frey, personal communication, November 11, 1964).

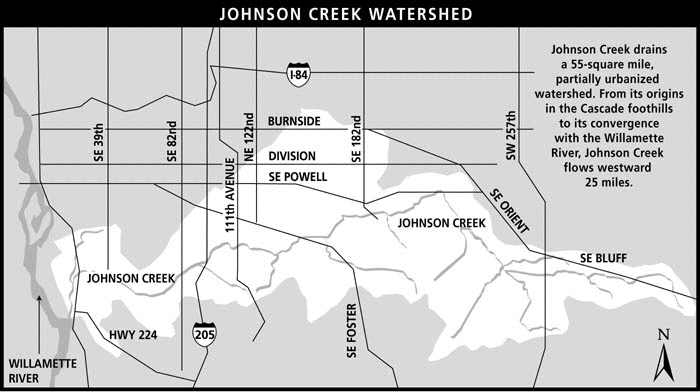
The development of a Neighborhood Service Center, later renamed as the Model Cities Multi-service Center, was the cornerstone of the OEO program in Albina. It provided free legal service, family counseling service, a Planned Parenthood program, Urban League Job Development and Training Program, Housing Department, Community Services section, and vocational counselors (Portland Planning Bureau, 1993).

The new programs established in Albina as a result of successful application to the Federal Program did rely on local residents to serve on committees that guided policy and as staff to run the programs. While the application for start-up funds was an inter-agency creation, once the programs were initiated, the programs tended to operate in isolation from other agencies, guided by principles and program goals established through the federal funding (Jordan, 1977). As often was the case, the story of Albina changed as federal programs shifted. The Albina War on Poverty was phased out and replaced by the Model Cities Demonstration Project that took root in Albina with an application to the federal program in April 1967, which marked another stage of development.

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**Environment: The Case of Johnson Creek Watershed**

The story of a small urban stream in southeast Portland, beset with innumerable environmental problems that for decades defied technocratic solutions provides a rich illustration of how the transformation of civic infrastructure contributed in critical ways to determining solutions to intractable environmental problems. Johnson Creek was beset by many of the usual problems of urban streams such as poor water quality, degraded habitat, and the effects of attempts to control or alter natural flooding. These conditions made the creek a thorn in the public eye for decades. Several government agencies took on the task of solving the issues that plagued Johnson Creek producing 46 reports and/or plans over a 50-year period.



Citizens created a storm of protest at various times, contesting the science, the cost, and government itself. One agency, Metro, proposed a solution to the creek’s problems, only to find itself under attack by a fledging citizen group that tried to eliminate the agency. Today, the watershed is considered an asset by most watershed residents, most all K-12 schools in the watershed have a curriculum that involves understanding the creek and caring for it. Real estate ads, a good indicator of success, can boldly describe proximity to the creek and one of Portland's premier pedestrian and pedestrian trails, the Springwater Corridor trail that parallels the creek for a great distance. Their have been over 180 restoration projects since the mid-1990s investment of millions of public work monies, and between the Johnson Creek Watershed Council, and government employees, between 6-8 FTE (full time employers) who work on monitoring the creek's health and restoring it. This success story provides a graphic illustration of how civic infrastructure most grow and change to accommodate civic and environmental problems.

Johnson Creek is a tiny watershed, a drop in the sum of the Columbia River basin, that flows through southeast Portland. As compared to large ecosystem management enterprises, it may seem insignificant. It is, after all, a 54-square mile watershed. But, this small creek flowing from the foothills of the Cascade Mountains to its confluence with the Willamette River just south of downtown Portland, Oregon, has an allure that seems out of proportion to its size. Novelist David Duncan dedicated his novel, *The River Why* (Duncan, 1988), to Johnson Creek. A feature in *Doubletake* magazine (Donahue, 2000) gave it the dubious distinction as the “ ’73 Chevy Impala of rivers.” The creek figures as a primary inanimate character in another, prize-winning nonfiction book, *Shot in the Heart*, written by Mikal Gilmore about his notorious brother, serial murderer Gary Gilmore (Gilmore, 1994), whose story was also told by Norman Mailer in *An Executioners Song.* Gilmore grew up along the banks of the creek and first learned to shoot a gun near the location of a reconstructed wetlands.

The creek has been, and continues to be, both loved and loathed by the citizens of Portland. It is probably best known as the creek that floods, a degraded stream with nearly intractable pollution problems. The creek has resisted easy remedy for many years. The dozens of reports written over the past 50 years have offered detailed plans for solving the perpetual flooding problems or, more recently, for bringing back fish populations to address the recent endangered species listings in the lower Willamette River basin. Public agencies have repeatedly come to bat and struck out. In the case mentioned previously.

Within the watershed, home values in one six block area jump from under $150,000 to over $350,000 (1999). The creek stretches from rural areas still dominated by farms to decaying older suburbs to upper middle class inner city neighborhoods. Johnson Creek winds its way through backyards and parking lots and shopping malls. To organize these various constituents into one with a shared vision stretches the capacities of deliberative democracy.

With a total population of about 175,000 residents, the watershed ranges in population density from 5,000 to 6,000 people per square mile in the urban areas to sparsely populated, farming areas in the upper watershed. All but three percent of the residents live within the urban growth boundary, the growth management boundary set by the regional government to contain urban sprawl.

There are three distinct stages in the history of Johnson Creek watershed management. The first stage might be referred to as the reclamation and degradation stage. Little is known about what the creek looked like before white settlement, although the earliest descriptions depict a stream lively with fish, deeply forested, and, even then, renowned for its flood events. It was first settled by a few pioneers who quickly logged large stretches of the watershed for use in supporting the booming growth of Portland. As land was cleared, farms were moved in. The farmers enjoyed the bounty of a flooding creek and encouraged limited flooding in order to add the top soil that drifted from the uplands portions of the watershed.

The first public works project in Johnson Creek was proposed in 1928, when farmers in the floodplain area requested approval for bend and channel corrections. A plan was drawn up, but no work done as the Great Depression hit America. However, the depression also brought the Works Progress Administration (WPA), the Roosevelt Administration's make-work program, and with it the first major construction projects along Johnson Creek. Hundreds of men were put to work and millions of dollars were spent on channelizing the creek between 1933 and 1936. Fifteen miles of creek were riprapped, and rock work was used to keep the creek in place. The WPA project did have limited success in reducing flooding for about ten years, but as further development took place, flooding began to occur more frequently.

As farmers moved out of some reaches of the creek, residences and businesses took their place. With more residential and commercial investment inside the floodplain, flooding became a greater concern. In 1949, residents within the floodplain filed incorporation papers to create a local service district, the first of several to correct the flooding issues. In 1950, the U.S. Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to investigate flooding in Johnson Creek, and the watershed entered its second stage of planning, one dominated by a single issue—flooding—and the proposal of large scale, hard engineering solutions.

Anecdotal reports on extensive fish populations indicate the stream was probably still relatively intact during this period (up to the 1960s), but widespread logging and the direct dumping of sewage and industrial pollutants into the creek resulted in significant degradation (Vetter and Sutphen, 1998, Seltzer, 1983). In 1958, the Corps of Engineers released its plan for the creek. The total proposed cost, including the local share, was $1.1 million. The original boundaries of the Johnson Creek Water District were modified to correspond to the Corps’ proposed work. In 1960, the first tax election was held for the district. The measure passed and taxes were collected until 1964. In that year, the residents of the district challenged the continuation of tax assessments and voted to dissolve the district. The Corps of Engineers shelved their plan, allowing five years for another local sponsor to come forward.

At that point, yet another agency came to the plate. In 1969, the Soil Conservation Service presented a plan to create three retention ponds in the upper part of the basin to mitigate up to a 100-year flood event. It was a more comprehensive plan than simple flood control and included revegetation. Once more, however, the citizens of the district voted down the plan.

In 1969, a new agency, the Metropolitan Service District (MSD), came forward to assume the role of local sponsor of the Johnson Creek project. MSD was a new kind of agency for the Portland region, a regional government designed to carry out services best administered across existing jurisdictional or operational boundaries. In 1972, section 208 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act amendments established a procedure for establishing area-wide waste treatment plans in pursuit of goals to improve water quality. Responding to these new guidelines, MSD and the Corps of Engineers delivered a revision of its older study. The revised cost for remedying problems in Johnson Creek now stood at about $3.4 million.

In 1976, hearings were conducted on the MSD/Corps plan. Once more, residents rallied to force MSD to abandon their plan and, once again, the Corps of Engineers shelved their plan and again allowed an additional five years for a local sponsor to emerge. At this point in the history of Johnson creek, solutions for solving creek problems were dictated by a top down, engineering approach with little civic involvement. When citizens were involved it was after the fact. Additionally, solutions were limited by lack of knowledge about how urban streams functioned. The streams were seen as something to control and overcome, not as an ecosystem that provided vital economic services. While living in a neighborhood was taking on new meaning during this period through grassroots neighborhood activism, living in a watershed was still a vague concept.

**Conclusion**

The capacity of civic institutions and practices in Portland in the 1950s and early 1960s was best suited to maintain power for the predominately white male leadership, and, through the vast array of women’s clubs, to provide volunteer social services. There were relatively few nonprofit social service organizations and only a handful of social or environmental advocacy organizations (30 in total). The news generated by activities of civic organizations during this time was about fundraising, benefits, honors and awards, and election of officers. As new social and political issues emerged in Portland such as civil rights, air and water pollution, congestion, and maintaining housing stock, traditional civic groups were ill-equipped to play a vital role. Traditional civic organizations did not make room for several key populations, namely, women, minorities, and young people. The City's citizen participation through appointments to citizen advisory committees or commissions was, for the most part limited professionals and the white male elite. By the mid-1960s there were signs of change, especially in inner northeast Portland as the city struggled to find ways to accommodate new federal guidelines which called for maximum participation of citizens in distribution of funds designed to help cities deal with inner-city problems.

Citizens did not have equal capacity to conserve their neighborhoods or respond to wider community crises. With a weak public interest civic infrastructure, the environment was “protected” by public and private business sectors that closed their eyes, most of the time refusing to imagine there might be a limit to the resources of “Eden.” With a few exceptions, such as expansion of Forest Park, urban environmental issues, for example, saving a small stream like Johnson Creek, was considered idealistic fantasy. Urban streams were thought of as nuisances that needed to be overcome, for the most part relegated to underground pipes.

**Chapter three**

**Portland's Civic Reconstruction Period**

**Civic Narrative**

In 1967 at a panel discussion on the protests of youth held at the annual meeting of the Mental Health Association in Portland, Ace Hayes (age 27), predicted coming revolution and bloodshed. He told the audience, “You have to use violence...that means there are people in this room who will be killing each other shortly.” Ace represented a perspective that was hard for most to understand. Portlanders were used to seeing young civil rights activists involved in civil disobedience and student war protesters, but still a declaration like Ace’s was difficult to assimilate. The only context Portlanders had for coming to grips with this “generation gap” was the previous decade’s difficulty with juvenile delinquency. But Ace's "delinquency" was informed by politics with an edge.

The language, music, fads, or mores of young people have always been an assault on the previous generation. But, in Portland in the 1950s it was assumed that the young would take up wherever the previous generation left off. They would join civic organizations, buy into the American dream, and after a short period of “sewing their oats,” live conventional lives.

There **was** alarm at the rise of juvenile delinquency. In Mayor Dorothy McCullough Lee’s reign (1949-1952) Portland experienced a growing problem with teenage gangs battling police and making downtown streets unpleasant at night. By the mid-to-late 1950s juvenile delinquency in Portland had risen to new heights, if not in actual incidents, at least in the perception of its citizens. In December, 1956 the police reported that November had been the worst month for juvenile crime in Portland's history (Youth crime rate, 1956).

The concern about juvenile delinquency in Portland resulted in the creation in 1958 of a Metropolitan Youth Commission, the focus of which was to coordinate efforts to work with youth and to quell juvenile delinquency problems. However, neither the Metropolitan Youth Commission nor the citizens of Portland were prepared for what happened to its young people in the 1960s.

The popular assumption was that youth were rebelling because of new role models portrayed on television, in movies, and most of all, through rock and roll music. The juvenile delinquents--like the popular movie that made James Dean a star—seemed to be rebels without a cause. Their actions were not political, and those committing illegal or violent actions were few. For every rebel, it was possible to point to many more youth who played by the rules. The key difference in the later1960s, as illustrated by Ace Haye’s declaration of revolution, was that a political philosophy, however skewed or incoherent, lay behind his statements and actions. Ace was a rebel *with* a cause.

Protests and demonstrations by young people had been few and far between in Portland’s history. "Protests" by students in the 1950s were more understandable, if somewhat unmannerly, such as the 150 male students who rampaged through a women's dormitory at University of Oregon upon hearing that the women had resolved not to go on any dates during homecoming (Del Mar, 2003). Following World War II there were occasional protests by Portland college students about Truman’s compulsory military service policy, and the few protesters were monitored carefully by the Portland Police “Red Squad.”

Portlanders tried to reassure themselves that youth such as Ace were in the minority, but increasingly it was difficult to overlook the strange behavior of young people. In the mid-to-late 1960s it seemed that strangely dressed youth were everywhere, hippies as they were called, or called themselves. A series of articles in the *Oregonian* (Barry, 1967) attempted to explain the new phenomenon. "The beats, also known as hippies,” one article explained

are seriously working toward an intellectual goal--Zen, a form of Buddhism--and have made their way of life a cult or religion....they are essentially in revolt against the established institutions in society and like the beats are opposed to work...they rent apartments (pads) usually in rundown dwellings...in the pads the beats sit around on the floor legs crossed discussing, Zen, Christ, Martin Luther, searching for the God within...police say they found in some of the pads they raided complicated lighting devices that had been designed to project psychedelic patterns on walls, floors and ceilings. Some of the pads hit in the raids still had Christmas trees...while “freaked out” (high on drugs) some beats have been known to engage in some pretty sordid sexual activities (p. 16).

Portlanders were well aware of the hippies and the counter culture in 1967-1968. Special issues of *Life* magazine and other popular magazines carried graphic portraits of the lives of hippies and the values of the counter culture. While the epicenter of the counter culture was San Francisco, the Interstate Freeway (I-5) that stretched from Vancouver, BC to Los Angeles, served as a conduit for hitchhiking youth who moved from city to city, including Eugene, Portland, and Seattle. The college students and dropped out youth knew how to find their kind in any city. There were college campuses (Portland State College and Reed College in Portland), particular neighborhoods that might be found by looking for “head shops,” selling drug paraphernalia, food co-ops, mini versions of the Height Ashbury neighborhood in San Francisco, and dance clubs and coffee shops, that were advertised via posters on telephone poles.

There was also fear that innocent young people would be dragged into this other life. It was seductive. Even an undercover police officer in Portland had to be “saved from drifting into the beat life (Magmer, 1967).”The very phrase hippie and counter culture was applied profusely during this period to describe anything new or unconventional. Francis Invancie, in a campaign for a City of Portland commissioner’s seat, dubbed his opponent, Tom Walsh, “king of the hippies” for his support of, among other things, stopping the Mt. Hood Freeway. An activist Mitzi Scott (Bonner, 2001b) recalled that when Neil Goldschmidt celebrated his successful bid for mayor in (1972) a businessman, George Rives, attending his reception commented

A houseful of hippies. Loud music, you know, and so on. And George Rives says - I'll never forget it - he says, "Oh, my God," he says, "If my friends from the Arlington Club could see this, their worst fears would be confirmed. Now, he meant it in a funny way, okay? He laughed. We all laughed. It was hilarious. But you know at the time I mean, I think that's how a lot of downtown business people - and maybe others, as well - viewed Neil. Oh, my God, you know, ACLU, former Legal Aid attorney, this fast-talking guy is going to be our mayor, and what is going to happen to this city?

**Civic Organizations**

The most dramatic shift in the population of civic associations was the rise of advocacy groups. While in 1960 there were only about thirty, by the early 1970s there were over 180. Within that area social service agencies emerged that also took on issues and allied with specific populations of people. In 1960 four organizations could be described in this fashion: American Friends Service Committee, Tri-County Community Council, Oregon Institute of Social Welfare, and Oregon Council on Alcohol Problems. By the early 1970s the number had risen to 43.

There are several reasons for this explosion of civic groups that mixed direct service and advocacy. The federal War on Poverty programs facilitated the creation of direct service organizations with a political agenda. Community action programs (CAP) such as East CAP, Albina Community Action Center, and Snowcap all provided direct services while supporting the causes of poor and minority populations. Similarly, the Legal Services Corporation promoted a new type of direct legal service that blurred the line between direct service and advocacy. Hotlines and switchboards emerged, a new type of social service agency, that provided information about social services and also were involved in direct services and were involved in advocacy actions. In addition, specialized health services, such as the Women’s Health Clinic and Fred Hampton People’s Health Clinic, provided direct service while also taking up the health concerns of minority and undeserved populations.

Almost half of the new advocacy groups were place-based, another key civic innovation in this period. Citizens organized through neighborhoods. But, identity politics also accounted for some of the growth in the advocacy sector. New minority organizations, included the Urban Indian Coalition and women’s organizations that pushed for women’s rights, took the place of more traditional civic women’s clubs.

Other responses to social problems account for growth in the sector, including consumer affairs (e.g., public interest research groups such as the Oregon Student Public Interest Organization and Common Cause), housing (Citizens for Decent Housing), and class action law (Legal Aid offices). Issues of war and peace were also important in the civic sphere, as America continued its unpopular war in Southeast Asia. At least 12 organizations were created to protest the war or support draft resisters.

Finally, within the advocacy sector lay the roots of the environmental movement. Twenty-four of the new groups were environmental, and their targets varied. Groups were formed to promote recycling (Recycling switchboard and Portland Recycling Team) and others to pursue environmental lobbying (Northwest Environmental Defense Center and Oregon Environmental Council), while others such as Rain and Sun, were the predecessors to the multi-issue sustainability groups of the 1990s.

It was also a period of organizational experimentation: collectives, urban communes, switchboards, experimental theater companies, democratically run businesses, community owned and operated radio stations and liberated media organizations sprung up, in part as response to the inhospitality or lack of capacity of traditional civic institutions and practices. While efforts to organize lasting new organizational structures faced high rates of failure during the reconstruction period some of the groups confronted multiple problems. Activists attempted to do it all simultaneously: change themselves, the group, the community and the planet while working with no entrepreneurial capital nor much organizational management knowledge.

By contrast most traditional civic organizations set more straightforward goals. A civically minded woman providing volunteer assistance to help the needy was not expected to simultaneously confront her inner struggles, working relations, and measure actions in terms of how to create systemic change that would alter the conditions of those she was helping.

Many organizations landed on the civic scene, blew through on the winds of change and disappeared. But many of those that “disappeared,” or failed to achieve their largest dreams made lasting change in Portland’s civic life. One of the clearest snapshots of the ephemeral nature of these collective experiments, ironically, is contained in the subversives files collected the City of Portland Police Bureau. The police officers attended meetings, tore down flyers from telephone poles, collected mimeographed newsletters, attempting to find subversives. There were at least 20 files about committees, suggesting the temporary nature of the collective action, such as the Committee for Solidarity with People of El Salvador and the Committee to Defend the Right to Protest, The Committee Against Political Repression, the Committee for the Removal of All Racial Images of the Divine, the Committee of Ten Million, the Committee to Defend James Daniels, the Committee to Defend the Right to Protest, the Committee to End Corporate Fascism in the Oregon Press.

There wasn’t a clear distinction between profit and nonprofit enterprises. In fact most activists starting new organizations or businesses during the early part of this period had no knowledge of the subtle distinctions between corporate and nonprofit law. The one thing that was usually known was that if the group was nonprofit, you could mail things at an inexpensive rate. As with the nonprofit or voluntary organizations, these businesses bore names that were far fetched, idealistic and hopeful: Aardvark, Atlantis Rising, Divine Gift, Longhair Music Faucet, Luminary, Mongoose, Phantasmagoria, Good Earth, The Hobbit, and Power to the People Volkswagen. Many lived only for months or at the most a few years.

In the 1960s and early 1970s the first social activists’ organizations were loose collectives, volunteer organizations, or experimental structures that survived through passion and sweat equity. The civic infrastructure in Portland before the civic reconstruction period did not supply many jobs for idealists with new civic goals. The nonprofit sector in Portland, as in the rest of America, was miniscule compared with today’s. In 1969 there were only about 70,000 nonprofit organizations in the entire country, compared to over 1.4 million by the end of the 20th century (National Center for Charitable Statistics 2008). Additionally, there was not a substantial funding base for nonprofit and volunteer organizations. In the Portland area, in 1960 there were 31 private foundations. While that number doubled by 1972, it was small compared to the total in 1999 when there were 268 foundations. In 1960 the City of Portland budget (City of Portland, 1960) offered only one position involved in citizen participation, an outreach worker for the newly formed Portland Development Commission. In 1960 there were fewer than 20 nonprofit (and voluntary) arts organizations in the Portland area. A study of the economic impact of the arts conducted in 1965 found a total of 248 people employed in the arts, including individuals and artists working in the schools or public agencies. In 1960 there were only a handful of organizations that could be considered environmental, and six of the 10 such groups listed in the City Directory were business associations. In the public sector the selection wasn’t much better. There was an air pollution control authority with five employees and a sanitary authority with six employees. Most of theses jobs were hardly what one could call “environmental,” since they engaged in hard engineering with little environmental perspective.

In this context, “Baby Boomer” activists who wanted to create social changes had two options: volunteer within existing civic organizations (that tended not to be hospitable to new forms of civic actions) or create new civic organizations from scratch. Whereas citizens in traditional Portland could financially afford to be involved in civic life through voluntary efforts, many boomer activists sought ways to “walk their talk” either through creating their own organizations that focused on critical issues or creating workplaces that allowed them to “walk their talk” while creating positive social change.

One of the more important public programs that influenced how civic activists from the 1960s were integrated into the new civic life was the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA). During the late 1970s CETA supported innovative civic projects in the nonprofit and public sectors, provided staff for emergent organizations, and provided the first “real” jobs for many civic activists.

CETA was signed into law near the end of 1973 and replaced the previous federal employment and training program in July 1974. It lasted until the fall of 1983, when it was replaced by the Job Training Partnership Act. It was one of five major domestic “block grant” programs that emerged between 1966 and 1975. In total it was a $55 billion federal investment in employment and training, and it was sometimes compared to the Works Progress Administration or Civilian Conservation Corps (CETA/Public service employment briefing, 1978).

There were several programs under CETA--Title I, Title II, Title VI--each one with a different focus depending on the current administration’s policies. In relation to the civic reconstruction in Portland, Title II and Title VI programs, intended to create jobs in the public and nonprofit sectors, had the most impact. Tile VI in particular was innovative. Judy Phelan, director of CETA Title I and II, during the mid 1970s, said Title VI was “the fun program to administer (One city hiring program, 1975, p. G4). She explained that Title VI did not require participants to live in areas of the city hardest hit by unemployment, so projects were granted funds on the merit of the program’s contribution to the community as much as on their contribution to lowering unemployment.

CETA subsidized jobs in the Portland area was a small number, about 1300 in 1978-1980, while the employment base for Portland during this time was about 295,000 (Macgregor, 1981). The program’s 1979 budget was $7.2 million. These figures might suggest that CETA did not have a large impact on the job market in Portland, but, CETA did have a large impact on new organizations and programs. During this period 134 nonprofit organizations had subsidized CETA positions. Out of that 134 over 90 were organizations that had formed since the late 1960s. These 90 new organizations accounted for 230 of the 1000 positions in all the nonprofit organizations with CETA employees. For organizations with mostly volunteer staff, or no more than 10 paid staff, the subsidy was significant. In many cases the new CETA positions outnumbered the existing staff at the nonprofit organizations.

One of the most innovative CETA projects, and one that characterized the failures and successes of the CETA era, was the Northwest Revitalization Project (NRP). The NRP was the result of a planning project undertaken by the Northwest District Association, one of Portland’s most active neighborhood associations, and Friendly House. Today if one walks down the trendy streets of Northwest 23 rd and 21 st avenues or past block after block of remodeled Victorian homes, it is difficult to imagine Northwest Portland in need of revitalization. However, in the 1960s this area of town was known more for its enclaves of impoverished students and its share of the homeless and the elderly poor. By the late 1970s, 23rd Avenue had a few new shops, but it was for the most part a mix of older homes in need of repair and shops, such as drug stores, shoe repair shops, and greasy spoon restaurants. Quality Pie was a notorious institution—a place where students, young hippie activists, and derelicts could hung out together in the wee hours. On the edges of northwest Portland, especially in the north, smaller homes and rundown apartment buildings looked destined to be razed.

In 1978 the Northwest District Association (NWDA) developed a Social Action Plan, a multilevel plan addressing the physical and social needs of the neighborhood. NWDA, working with Friendly House, a social service agency dating back to the settlement house movement of the 1930s, decided to implement its social action plan through a grant from the City of Portland’s CETA special projects program. The grant funded 31 positions, with a total budget for one year of $371,00, a budget that far exceeded the budget of NWDA budget (which at the time had one staff member) and was 1.5 times the budget of Friendly House, the project’s fiscal agent. The objectives of the program were wide ranging, from physical revitalization projects such as developing a bike path to developing a framework for a neighborhood development corporation, to development of a library on neighborhood self-help topics (community self-help was a federal program buzz word under the Carter Administration).

The project faced many obstacles, starting from the fact that the project hired 31 people in a 2 week period in order to meet the federal grant timeline. As one of two project coordinators, Christine Bauman, (Bauman, 1979) explained it,

The project was an experiment in human dynamics. We were not one or two workers in the middle of a staff of “regulars” able to fit into the continuous functioning of an agency. We were a group of approximately 30 people, housed under one roof, starting on the same day and all experiencing various individual crisis stages at approximately the same time. In addition we were also becoming an entity unto ourselves, a group, an unintentional family, experiencing the developmental stages and growth pains that any group must go through (p. 8).

As Bauman also noted, many of the new CETA employees were social activists with a strong passion for social change. One of the workers described a typical work day and expectations for the project,

The day is eaten away with introductions and explanations. There are a lot of coffee breaks in between. I suppose the important looking people felt we needed time for the information to soak in. From what I could tell we were going to be moving mountains, righting wrongs, and creating justice and harmony throughout. We were here to do good things.

David Dumas secured land for community gardens. Andrea Vargo, Marcia Ruff, and a neighborhood-based board of directors started a credit union. Other organizers sponsored cleanups, garage sales, festivals, and a bicycle rodeo. Rory Taylor ran a tool lending library and skills exchange. Other staff helped Portland Sun build a solar greenhouse and researched the feasibility of roof-top gardens on several neighborhood buildings.

As with many emergent civic enterprises during this period, social change took place out in the community, within the organization, and inside the participants. In a final assessment of the project, Bauman (Bauman, 1979) reflected on this process,

The difficulties of beginning an unintentional community are immense…We weren’t all there for a common purpose. Some wanted a job for the money, some were into neighborhood development, some were interested in developing particular career skills. We came from different backgrounds and value systems including academic, social service, skilled and unskilled labor forces, promote making enterprises, communes, etc. We also had different expectations of what the work environment should be: authoritarian vs. democratic management hierarchy vs. group consensus, sharing feelings vs. keeping one’s personal life separate, becoming personally committed to the task vs. working 8-5 and that’s it (p. 11).

**Brave New World: Experiments in Collective Organization, Enduring Organizations, and Enduring Effects**

Many organizations from the Civic Reconstruction period have been long gone, while some have endured carrying the characteristics of their origins into the present.

For example, KBOO, a community radio station with origins in the early 1960s still operates with modified democratic working conditions established during its founding; Outside In, a support center for young people, also started in the turbulent 1960s, has endured and thrived, recently moving into a well capitalized new building; and the Portland Saturday Market, an arts and crafts fair started in 1973, is now a multi-million dollar operation, still emanates a "hippie" culture from the 1970s, while also being listed in most tourist guides to Portland.

The origins of KBOO radio trace back to 1961, when a former Pacifica Radio station volunteer in the Bay Area, Lorenzo Milam, filed for an FCC license in Seattle, bought a used transmitter, and set up a studio and launched KRAB, a listener-supported station for Seattle. He became known as the "Johnny Appleseed" of community radio. Blessed with a significant personal inheritance and a penchant for humorous station names, he also helped start a "KRAB Nebula" of 14 community radio stations (Sussman and Estes, 2004), including KTAO in Los Gatos, California; KCHU in Dallas; WORT in Madison, Wisconsin; KUSP in Santa Cruz, California; KPOO in San Francisco; KDNA in St. Louis; and KBOO in Portland. With the help of Lloyde Livingstone, who wanted to make classical music available on the radio, Milam and volunteers, established KBOO. It was the city’s first community radio station, and one of a very few in the nation at the time.

In the beginning KBOO was as much a “hippie potluck” as it was a radio station. One of its broadcasts reported that (KBOO is back, 1968):

Ben fixed the Seattle transmitter—Ben’s wife had a baby too. But now we can play Margaret’s Wednesday afternoons of Indian classical music and Lowell’s newest jazz and rock records and Jean Shepard musing over the dog pack who made off with the ham and the general confusions of the world’s best volunteer staffed, listener supported ratio station.”

The report also noted that “contrary to rumor, you can get KBOO, FM 90.7. What it takes is moving the radio around, and aiming the antenna the other way to cut our interference, or maybe taking it off all together, and probably turning the AFC off, and maybe getting a new radio or moving to Government Camp where it comes in really well (p. 4)."

Today KBOO is a community venue for voices, and often unusual points of view rarely heard in other media, especially on one station--reggae, Afro-Caribbean, jazz, hip-hop, gospel, blues, punk, salsa, country, bluegrass, rock, folk music, electronica, norteña, "bizarre music," African and other international music; African American culture and politics, Islamic culture and politics; perspectives of gays, lesbians, and other sexual identities and lifestyles; language programming in Spanish, Farsi, Yiddish, Dutch, Cantonese, Japanese, Hindi, Hawai'ian Pidgin, and Italian; Irish music and culture; programming for bikers, New Agers, environmentalists, prisoners, and labor activists; left-wing news analysis, talk radio, and Latino and Native American news.

Sussman and Estes (2004) argue that if a city is defined by its unique historical, social, cultural, political, and physical attributes, as opposed to being merely a reproduction of standardized "growth machine" development, then KBOO is working hard at resisting homogenization and at making Portland a place that celebrates its diversity and the edgy political, social, and artistic culture for which it is known.

The Portland Saturday Market was the brainchild of two women, Sheri Teasdale and Andrea Scharf. Both were artists living in the area who had sold at the Saturday Market in Eugene; and they wanted to create a similar style of market in downtown Portland. Beginning in December 1973, the two visited everyone they could think of in the city to sell their idea: an open-air market of all handmade food and craft items. They formed a committee of supporters and incorporated under Oregon law as a mutual benefit corporation thereby making PSM a nonprofit organization that is not tax-exempt. The founders could have set up the market as a for-profit venture, but they envisioned a market where craftspeople would share the cost of running the market collectively and would keep whatever profit they personally made. It was to be a market for the members, governed by the members. Scharf and Teasdale were able to apply for a startup grant from the Metropolitan Arts Council, which gave PSM $1,000. But they still didn’t have a location for the market. Local entrepreneur and visionary Bill Natio offered them a parking lot inner northwest Portland. The PSM moved to its current site under the west ramp onto the Burnside Bridge in 1976, and started staying open on Sundays the following year. Things have changed a lot from the early days. PSM today has 10 employees, over 400 members and generates an estimated $8 million in gross sales annually. It has become a central economic engine for the historic Old Town/Chinatown neighborhood and attracts an estimated 750,000 visitors to this area each year.

Many things have changed since the beginnings of Outside In, including drugs of choice among alienated youth and attitudes toward drugs. In the beginning more typical of the times, a sign hanging from the door of Outside In read, “We are tired of treating Orange freak outs. For your own safety and our peace of mind, we suggest you boycott Orange acid, and wedges (STP).” (signed, Dr. Spray and staff) (Colby, 1968).”

Outside In was started by Dr. Charles Spray, Arnold Goldberg and Mary Lu Zurcher in 1968 after they became alarmed at the widespread and sometimes dangerous use of drugs. Outside In was born when *Newsweek* and other sources, were proclaiming that hoards of hippies were going to leave San Francisco’s Haight Ashbury District and invade Portland. Spray and his associates decided to establish a clinic to work with the young, hippies, dropouts and runways or castaways. They received a $6,000 grant from the U.S. Public Health Service to operate a clinic for 6 months. In March 1969, the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to give Outside In county support if the clinic could come up with its own matching funds. However, the Portland City Council denied it a solicitation permit. The following year, the City granted the permit saying it considered Outside In to be Portland's leading organization in helping drug addicts. At the time Spray contended that the City Council gave in because it wanted to foist Portland’s drug problem onto someone else. He noted that “it is always one of the problems that when one recognizes a problem before everyone else and tries to do something about it that when it is recognized you are perceived as part of the problem (Colby, 1968, p.TV4).”

The clinic located itself in downtown Portland, strategically near the Charix, a coffee shop in the basement of the First Unitarian Church that had been set up by a community action programs (Hub-CAP) as a place for youth in the “hip” community to hang out, listen to music, and deal with the “problems they encounter when dropping out of society (Colby, 1968, p.TV4).” The clinic served a population estimated at 6,000 during the late 1960s, including the nomadic hippies who traversed the I-5 corridor connecting the Bay Area, Eugene, Portland, and Seattle.

From the start Outside In relied on the work of volunteers.--although not even the activists could always be counted on. One announcement in an underground newspaper lamented the lack of people helping to establish and maintain the clinic. The article (Wells, 1968) noted that

Outside In has been open for a month, has treated a couple hundred members of the “hip” community free, and still hasn’t finished building because this community hasn’t come up with people willing to work….Call Mary Lou to volunteer. Better yet, just show up, ready to work. If the “hip” people can’t do a simple thing like this, all the kids in Lair Hill had better stop bullshitting about community (p. 5).

In the mid-1990s, however, Outside In struggled to keep all its programs afloat. In 1996 a budgetary crisis forced it to close its primary health clinic for a month. It reopened in early January 1997 with assistance from Oregon Health & Science University and the Portland-based National College of Naturopathic Medicine.

Today, with an infusion of capital for a new building from the Paul Allen Foundation and a federal grant, Outside In’s future is assured. Always innovative, and at times controversial, Outside In now offers acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and naturopathic medicine, in addition to conventional Western medicine.

**Gone but Not Forgotten:**

**The Learning Community and Terrisquirma**

Some experiments in collective action flared into being and then disappeared but not without leaving traces behind. Typical of those experiments were the Learning Community and Terrisquirma.

The Learning Community, an experimental institution of higher education formed at Reed College in 1970 typifies the successes and failures of ventures that tried to change it all—individuals, communities, the planet. Reed College has long been considered Portland’s most unique college. A world unto itself. Long before Portlanders knew about hippies or Beatniks, they labeled “different” people as “Reedies.” In the late 1960s at Reed College (as elsewhere in the country) younger faculty and students attempted to make changes in a curriculum they considered antiquated. A primary objective was to give more voice to students and more power to younger faculty in a system controlled by seniority. A critical issue raised by students and younger faculty was the need to incorporate Black studies in the curriculum and, in effect, to change the basic humanities canon of the college. In the summer of 1966, Howard Waskow and Randal Snodgrass, both part of the younger faculty crowd, started a program they called Upward Bound--a program aimed at giving disadvantaged minority high school students a head start in the transition to college. This program did not sit well with some faculty and became the wedge that separated Waskow and others from the senior faculty and administrators. In the second summer of the program, some faculty felt “mortified by the behavior of these unruly kids on their campus (White, 1995, p. 49).” As a result, Waskow and Snodgrass were relieved of their duties.

In the summer of 1967 Waskow, Snodgrass, and several others met at a ranch in Montana belonging to Jon and Deayne Roush. Jon was a key figure in the formation of the Learning Community because he was on leave from Reed College, and working for the Carnegie Corporation, a philanthropic foundation that funded and supported innovative experimental education projects around the country. This first meeting at the Rousch ranch was followed by subsequent meetings in Portland, as the loose group began to define an educational institution that would meet needs unmet at Reed. In an interview in the 1990s John Laursen, another Learning Community member, compared this stage in the learning community’s development to the 1992 presidential candidacy of Ross Perot: a blank slate onto which everyone could project his or her own vision of the future (White, 1995, p. 57).” The group considered many elements for their learning community, including: a people’s plant nursery, an ecology bookstore, an organic garden at Reed, opportunity to be trained as air pollution index readers, and formation of informal groups to discuss social sciences and humanistic psychology, and politics and economics of ecology.

In 1970 the group submitted a proposal to the Carnegie Corporation. The community at the time consisted of about 30 members with plans to expand to 200 to 300 members on two sites, one urban and one exurban. The group experimented with new forms of democratic decision making. Roush (White, 1995, p. 75) wrote that “the community will be governed in all important aspects by the community as a whole. Every member of the community will have a voice, for example, in decisions about admitting new members, about “curriculum” and about the budget (White, 1995, p. 75).”

One of the most important, although indirect, effects the Learning Community had on Portland was its decision to purchase homes in the inner northeast section of Portland. In 1970 and the following years members of the Learning Community bought homes in the Irvington neighborhood in northeast Portland. By the fall of 1970, there were about 65 people living in 11 houses in the Irvington neighborhood. Along with others such as the Terrisquirma group, they formed, in effect, the forefront of the urban pioneers who resettled parts of the inner city, rather than moving to the suburbs.

During 1970 and 1971 Learning Community members were occupied with fixing up their houses, working out operating rules, and designing new curricula, as well as engaging in entrepreneurial efforts that they expected would furnish long-term funding for the school. The group organized a pottery studio, published a newsletter with a printing press they had found, operated by John Laurson, developed classes such as The Phenomenology of Perception which was intended to study the philosophic presuppositions and implications of Gestalt theory. One student recorded his classes for the year: linguistics, psychoanalysis, psychology, economics, violoncello, piano, and music pedagogy. He was also given credit for working in the community--a fundamental, although sometimes controversial, part of the Learning community curriculum.

In 1970 Learning Community members devoted some of their energy to various political events. Members engaged in protests against the war in southeast Asia. They also engaged in the People’s Jamboree’s music festival that became known as Vortex, a music event initiated by Governor Tom McCall to quell a rumored invasion of thousands of activists to protest the American Legion convention in Portland.

By late 1971 tensions between individuals in the community, lack of funding for its programs, and the inevitable drifting of members toward new stages in their life resulted in its dissolution. The corporation was dissolved in 1973.

Though short lived, the Learning Community was a microcosm of the struggles many new organizations faced during the reconstruction period. Starting from scratch with little funding base, dealing with multiple levels of change from the personal to the global, making decisions and carrying out tasks with idealistic, but cumbersome decision making process, meant that the many new programs and projects became experiments rather than lasting institutions. While the Learning Community itself disappeared, its legacy has continued over the years by providing an ambiance of experimentation and the sense that anything was possible, and by establishing the trajectories of participants future lives. The Waskows went on to run a successful restaurant, the Indigene, the first of Portland’s local and organic restaurants, while Judy Wolfe started the Bread and Ink restaurant, still a vibrant part of the Hawthorne business district. One of the most important, although indirect, effects the Learning Community had on Portland was its decision to purchase homes in the inner northeast section of Portland. They also, in effect, led the way to Portland's resettlement of the urban core through their communal efforts.

**Terrasquirma**

Terrasquirma, like the Learning Community, was a collective created in the early 1970s that attempted to do the near-impossible: change the world while changing the community and themselves. Terrasquirma (Spanish for earth worm, standing for the down-to-earth or grassroots nature of the enterprise) lasted seven years between 1972 and 1979. It was based on a national Quaker organization, the Movement for a New Society (MNS), whose goal was a nonviolent revolution in America. MNS itself was part of a much larger communal movement in the United States. A 1970 *New* *York Times* suggested that there were at least 2000 communes at that time in the United State. Historian Robert Gottlieb (1993) observed that thousands of urban and rural communes were organized in the United States, in part as a consequence of the collapse of the New Left. Activists, discouraged by the failure of direct political action (at least at the national level) attempted to build utopian communities in towns, cities and remote rural areas.

The three goals of MNS were to challenge, to heal, and to find alternatives. It carried out its actions through workshops that trained individuals in nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience. As one of the founders of Terrasquirma, Scott Burwin, later recounted, “The core belief of the group, was that its all connected: your personal relationship, politics, lifestyle, everything. We tried to pull it all together in a nice, neat package (Patterson, 2000, p. 164).”

In 1973 the Terresquirma group bought a house to carry out its dream of creating a microcosm of the nonviolent and down-to-earth lifestyle it hoped for in the greater society. The group collectively owned the home in northeast Portland, as a land trust, one of the first, if not the first, land trusts in Portland

Like the Learning Community, Terrasquirma embarked on alternative business enterprises where it demonstrated its work and cultural values. Several of the members started Sunflower Recycling Cooperative, one of Portland’s first recycling businesses, and one of the first in the country that focused on collection of household waste. They hoped to educate customers about the connection between their own personal consumption and the degradation of the environment around them-- a practical alternative to a throwaway lifestyle. Sunflower offered a local, community-based, worker-controlled solution to global ecological problems. Other Terrasquirma members started Olive Press, a feminist oriented publishing enterprise, Freemont Community Market, a firewood coop, and a food buying club. Others worked for one of the many other new cooperatives, such as Wapato Produce Co-op and the Portland Community Warehouse.

The women in Terrasquirma founded a rape relief hotline, providing Portland women for the first time with a place to talk about a forbidden topic and get support in their crisis. As with many of the new enterprises, the Rape Relief Hotline workers had few models to emulate. They worked without substantial funding, and managed the operation using democratic communication values.

By the mid 1970s Terrasquirma began to disintegrate. As one of its members, Lee Lancaster, later recalled, “your self definition gets to be so alien from the mainstream culture that it becomes a real tension (Patterson, 2000, p. 187).” The strength of the actions of Terresquirma members was also its weakness: They found it hard to prioritize activities, and without direction, the consensus approach to decision making led to paralysis.

But, Terrasquirma achieved some success in accomplishing its three goals: to challenge, heal, and find alternatives. Demonstrations at the Trojan Nuclear Power Plant and support of Native American activists at Wounded Knee had challenged the system, Sunflower Recycling helped lead the way to alternatives to wasteful consumption, and the Rape Relief Hotline had helped heal.

**Civic Opportunities**

**Direct Democracy**

The institutionalization of Portland’s neighborhood system in the 1970s brought an unprecedented number of organizations and individual citizens directly in contact with the workings of local government. While citizens were not appointed to govern neighborhood associations—the officers were elected at annual general meetings--they did represent their respective neighborhoods in public policy deliberations. The neighborhood system was a direct, face-to-face, democratic innovation and supplemented the appointed and representative forms of citizen participation that had been evolving through the citizen advisory committee structure of the city.

Neighborhood-based organizations dated to the 1930s in Portland but the tidal wave of neighborhood-based organizations in the mid-to-late 1960s came about for a variety of reasons. One of the central causes was the creation of Model Cities programs at the federal level, which called for “maximum participation of citizens” in distribution of funds designed to help cities deal with inner-city problems. The Portland Development Commission was asked to administer the physical portion of the federal Model Cities Program, and in that regard to establish or support existing organizations in the target areas. In Portland those target areas were northeast and inner Southeast Portland. In 1968, in Southeast Portland, the Southeast Uplift program was established and, in the same year, a citizens Planning Board was formed to over see Model Cities programs in northeast Portland.

Other neighborhoods began to organize during this period to address housing and transportation issues. For example, opposition to the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway in southeast Portland and the proposed I-505 freeway in northwest inspired citizens to organize neighborhood associations. One of the critical events that inspired the City to take a proactive strategy to support neighborhood-based activism was the reaction of citizen activists in the Lair Hill Neighborhood, a residential area just south of downtown, to a proposed urban renewal designation. This led City Council, in particular City Commissioner Lloyd Anderson, to seek a more equitable way for citizens in neighborhoods such as Lair Hill and the Model Cities neighborhoods to be involved in planning processes and urban renewal.

The major step in that direction came in 1971, when the Portland Planning Commission recommended to the City Council the creation of district planning organizations (DPOs) that might help coordinate citizen participation. To shape this proposal the Council in 1972 created a Neighborhood Development Taskforce. It had 16 members who mostly came out of the fledgling neighborhood movement, although it was led by a prominent businessman, Ogden Beeman. This group submitted a plan to City Council at the end of 1972 that recommended a two-tier system by which Neighborhood Planning Organizations (NPOs) would handle matters affecting only one neighborhood and District planning Organizations would handle cases involving more than one.

The NPO’s primary domains, as it was understood at the time, would be social services and land use. From the beginning, the authority of NPOs was unclear. In the original plan it was described this way:

While all plans and proposals subsequently approved by the planning organizations may not obtain City Council or agency approval, neither will City Council, Agency plans or proposals be funded and/or approved that do not have the approval of the neighborhood or District involved. (Office of Neighborhood Associations 1994.p. 6)

The Planning Commission slightly reworked the formula by adding “unless overall city policy, articulated by the City Council and approved by the majority of the neighborhoods is involved (Office of Neighborhood Associations 1994, p. 7).”

The Taskforce’s recommendations were accepted by the City Council in 1973, at which time, Mayor Neil Goldschmidt added to the scheme a new proposal, the funding of a central Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA) to operate out of the City Hall and coordinate neighborhood organization activity. During 1973 a citizen advisory committee hammered out an ordinance that would define the Office of Neighborhood Associations, the DPOs and NPOs, and their relationship to the City. The advisory committee held over 30 meetings and public hearings during the year. One of the critical issues that arose was citizen hostility to the district planning tier. Activists viewed it as an intermediary level that would erode the power of the more truly grassroots neighborhood associations. The activist perspective prevailed, so that in 1974 the formation of the Office of Neighborhood Associations was designed to be a direct facilitator between the neighborhood associations and City Hall.

The determination of the structure of the neighborhood system was a critical juncture in the civic history of Portland. If the model of district planning organizations had won out, it is more likely that a form of appointed or representative democracy would have prevailed. If neighborhood associations wanted the recognition from the city that came from funding and authority, there were minimal requirements--such as open meetings, agreed upon boundaries, and annual election of officers. Nonetheless, they operated independently of government control. These directly democratic meetings were run by whomever showed up. Eventually, District Coalition Offices with governing boards made up of representatives from groups of contiguous neighborhood associations were formed to provide a decentralized method for delivering assistance and services to the associations and for encouraging dialogue, and brokering of differences, among neighborhoods.

The ordinance adopted by City Council in 1974 spelled out the rules and responsibilities of citizens and local government like no other document to that time. Neighborhood associations were given right of review for issues regarding “livability” in their neighborhoods and the right to review City budgets related to improvements in their neighborhoods. The ordinance also opened the way for the City and its citizens to engage in neighborhood-based planning. It spelled out the powers of neighborhood associations in general terms:

Any neighborhood association shall be eligible to recommend an action, a policy, or a comprehensive plan to the city and to any city agency on any matter affecting livability of the neighborhood, including, but not limited to land use, zoning, housing, community facilities, human resources, social and recreational programs, traffic and transportation, environmental quality, open space and parks. p.5)

In just 2 years, neighborhood associations had gone from unofficial status (at least outside Model Cities areas) to semi-official status with a stake in land use and social services issues, to having a legitimate stake in almost any activity in the association’s geographic area of town. The number of neighborhood-based organizations grew rapidly during the 1970s so that by the end of the 1970s there were over 75 neighborhood associations, and a small army of activists was now outfitted with legitimacy and authority. During this time, through the new direct democratic venue of neighborhoods, and through establishing more citizen advisory committees, the City of Portland created an open door policy that changed the expectation of citizens’ relationship to their local government.

Neighborhood associations in Portland may have been resigned to bake sales and adversarial protests if it had not been for state and federal changes in operating rules between citizens and local government. Some of the earliest active neighborhood associations were created or at least enhanced or empowered in inner Northeast Portland, where the “maximum participation feasible” rule applied for receiving federal urban revitalization monies. In southeast Portland, never officially declared a federal Model Cities area, but so designated by local government through the creation of Portland Action Committees Together and Southeast Uplift to work on urban social needs and physical blight, agencies working with new neighborhood associations likewise had more of a voice in policy and planning deliberation. As important, or perhaps more important in the long run, was the development of statewide land use planning goals established in 1974 that among other things, called for the creation of local community-based organizations to represent the interests of residents in comprehensive planning processes. The powers of associations to assist in allocation of federal funds, and to work as a partner with government in creating neighborhood or district plans to meet state requirements gave neighborhood associations a share of governing power.

While neighborhood associations were not new in themselves in the civic reconstruction period, as Abbott (1985) noted, “the positive character of their agendas was a significant departure. 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.”(p. 191)The neighborhood activists changed the fundamental rules of planning in Portland, in both process and content. Engineers or planners could no longer work at isolated drafting tables and plan the highways or public work projects. Additionally, the neighborhood activists changed the urban renewal priorities of the city, from abandonment and leveling to rehabilitation.

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, including rules developed for Model City programs and environmental impact review laws. 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 1973, 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 were 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. For example, the Center for Urban Education and Governor Tom McCall’s office sponsored forums in Portland for citizens to learn how to effectively participate in Oregon’s new statewide planning laws.

Also, in 1973, the state established a comprehensive Open Meetings Law that set standards for citizen advisory committees, neighborhood associations, and other public meetings. A Public Records Act, adopted during the same legislative session, provided for public access to records and information of governing bodies and agencies. Citizens, indeed, had more official status and powers then they ever had before.

Neighborhood resistance to the development of freeways was one of the driving forces that led to Portland's neighborhood system. A map drawn in 1956, which was an update of the Portland Improvement Plan, crafted by Robert Moses, projected a Portland with a “great heart pumping fast-flowing traffic in all directions (This is how Portland’s traffic, 1956).” The plan included the Mt. Hood Freeway, but also the Johnson Creek Expressway, Multnomah Expressway, Sunset-St. Johns Expressway, Burnside Expressway, Laurelhurst Freeway, and Freemont Expressway, none of which were ever built.

The I-505 freeway controversy was one of the issues that forged the activism of northwest Portland and in many ways was a critical underpinning for neighborhood activism and the creation of Portland’s neighborhood system. In 1971 the Oregon Environmental Council, two neighborhood associations, and businesses and individuals sued to stop acquisitions for the planned freeway. This moved the State to try a different approach. Richard Ivy, working with the consulting firm of CH2M-Hill, was hired by the state to secure neighborhood approval for the plan. He created an innovative method for involving citizens in examining routes for the freeway and its overall design. At public meetings citizens were provided “do-it-yourself” packets to design the freeway. Ivy hired Mary Pederson to act as citizen participation coordinator for the project. Later Ivy (Bonner, 1995) recalled,

We hired Mary Pedersen, who had been the staff director of the Northwest District Association (NWDA), and she did a wonderful job for us in mobilizing the citizens and representing the district. We brought her right inside the program and paid her half time [she was only being paid half-time by NWDA]. But she could not be co-opted. I mean, it never occurred to me or anyone that because we were paying Mary that she would in any way be on our side if she and [NWDA] thought differently.

In February 1974 the City Council approved a compromise route for I-505 that retained the residential edge of Northwest Portland. It was far from the original design that would have brought the highway near the pricey Willamette Heights neighborhood.

The hiring of Mary Pederson to coordinate citizen participation for the I-505 freeway project also precipitated a move toward the institutionalization of Portland’s grassroots neighborhood movement. In 1969 the Portland Development Commission created the Northwest District Association (NWDA) to represent the interests of northwest Portland as PDC laid plans to acquire and clear several blocks of land there at the request of Good Samaritan Hospital and the Consolidated Freightways company. When PDC held its first meeting to discuss the plans in May, 1969, 450 people showed up, and a chaotic meeting ensued. Eventually, NWDA separated from PDC and became one of the first strong new-wave neighborhood associations, still under the direction of Mary Pederson. The NWDA talked the City Council into allocating $75,000 for the neighborhood to develop a comprehensive neighborhood plan, a process that became a model for other neighborhoods. Later, when Mayor Neil Goldschmidt sought someone to head the new Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA), he turned to Mary Pederson. She left NWDA in 1974 to become ONA’s first director.

In Southeast Portland the Mt. Hood Freeway is often regarded as one of the most critical events that shaped neighborhood politics and Portland’s progressive planning policies. Since the early 1960s policy makers in Portland and state highway planning agencies had taken for granted that there would be a freeway through southeast Portland. It was included in the 1966 Comprehensive Plan and met the approval of influential Portlanders on the Planning Commission, City council, Multnomah County Commission, Chamber of Commerce, and the editorial board of the *Oregonian*. Even, Commissioner Neil Goldschmidt, who later, as mayor took decisive action that resulted in the death of the freeway, at first felt it was inevitable.

The proposed freeway ran into resistance by southeast Portland residents in 1969 as the state begin to purchase property in the right of way. Two citizens, Al and Kayda Clark, a couple in their mid-thirties, helped form the Southeast Legal Defense Fund and took the matter to court, claiming that proper procedures had not been used to select the project. The suit took 4 years to wind its way through the court system, when the U.S. District Court ruled in favor of the citizens.

Resistance to the project led the authorities to temper the project. The first change in the City of Portland’s approach to the Mt. Hood Freeway came from Commissioner Lloyd Anderson who wanted a stronger environmental impact assessment. Through his insistence the City hired architectural firm Skidmore, Ownings and Merrill (SOM) to develop a more thorough impact analysis. As part of its work, SOM held public meetings for citizens to help design a freeway that would have the least impact on livability. The SOM consultants tried to transform the identity of the project from freeway to transportation corridor, providing citizens with a way of examining it in the context of broader transportation planning concerns. However, SOM’s impact statement also made it clear that the freeway “would not relieve congestion and would be obsolete by the time it was completed (Young, 1999).”

In 1974 Judge James M. Burns ruled that the proposed Mt. Hood Freeway highway could not be built without a new hearing because the state had made up its mind on the route before it held its public holding in May 1969. The Multnomah County Commission also adopted a resolution in opposition to the freeway. The Burn’s court decision and county action delayed the construction timeline, and firmly introduced the possibility that the freeway could be stopped.

With a construction moratorium in place, the State Highway administration, under the leadership of George Baldwin, attempted to pressure the city into making a decision about how it would use the allocated federal funding, or else lose it. The Governor’s Task Force on Transportation, established in 1973, begin maneuvers to take advantage of the Federal Air Highway Act of 1973, which allowed local governmental jurisdictions to transfer monies already committed for construction of highway facilities to mass transit projects. The task force’s negotiation allowed the Portland region to keep most of the $500 million allocated for the Mt. Hood Freeway--a pivotal move to in the fight against the freeway. The negotiation opened the door to Portland’s 20-year investment in light rail options and other alternative transportation options.

It wasn’t until October 1975, however that the last of the proponents were silenced, when an initiative petition organized by the construction unions, the Portland Chamber of Commerce and the City of Gresham (a suburban community that might benefit the most from the freeway) was ruled not valid based on a suit by the Oregon Environmental Council, Northwest Environmental Defense Center and neighborhood groups. While the Mt. Hood Freeway might have been built without the timely leadership of Neil Goldschmidt, Lloyd Anderson, and Multnomah County Commissioners, it was individual citizens and then organized citizens through neighborhood groups and citizen interest groups who led the charge.

Having lost the Mt. Hood Freeway the State was determined not to loose its proposed north-south highway loop on the far east end of the city. In fact, one of the conditions for the State surrendering the Mt. Hood Freeway was that the Multnomah County Commissioners would not oppose the I-205 freeway project. In addition to being part of the political compromise already achieved between the State and local officials, the route for I-205 ran through poorer neighborhoods where activism was low or nonexistent. The most rampant opposition came from Maywood Park, a middle class neighborhood, that in 1974, along with the Oregon Environmental Council, Sierra Club, and the newly formed interest group, Sensible Transportation Options for People (STOP), filed a suit to stop the freeway. When the suit failed Maywood Park’s residents were so disenchanted with its government’s behavior that it seceded from the city of Portland and became a separately incorporated city.

In some neighborhoods housing was the key issue that drove the creation of grass-roots neighborhood organizations. This was true for the Irvington neighborhood in inner northeast Portland, the Corbett Terwilliger-Lair Hill and Goosehollow neighborhoods in southwest and downtown, Buckman in southeast, and the Northwest neighborhood.

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 Teriwilliger 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.

**Civic Opportunities**

**Representative Democracy**

The creation of Portland's neighborhood system was the critical democratic innovation of this period, but at the same time the City of Portland also involved citizens through increasing representative democratic venues. The number of citizen advisory committees more than doubled from 27 in 1960 to 56 in 1972, and taskforces jumped from 5 to 25. Both citizen advisory groups and taskforces were often short lived, compared to boards and commissions (only 8 of the 56 citizen advisory groups, and none of the task forces were around in the 1960s). But, in the 1970s more people served on citizen advisory committees than any other type of civic body. In fact, when taskforce appointments, which also tended to attract a wider cross section of citizens, are added to the citizen advisory committee appointments, the total is more than the combined appointees on commissions and boards (972 vs. 810). The growth of these groups represented a change in the interests of citizens, their desire to be involved in public policy issues, and the willingness of the government to offer room at the table for a broader range of citizens.

**Repertories of Civic Actions**

Civic organizations in Portland in the 1950s were designed to accommodate a limited range of civic actions and practices. The traditional civic organizations from that period were not adapt at providing the repertories of actions that arose in the 1960s and 1970s. Public interest research, issue campaigns, demonstrations, initiative and petitions, and court actions, to name a few of the civic actions that took hold, were not part of the reparatory of traditional civic organizations.

Public interest research became a mainstay of the new advocacy organizations. While the City Club of Portland had employed its own version of public interest research for decades, new groups like the Oregon Student Public Interest Group (OSPIRG), inspired by “Nader’s Raiders,” began using research for advocacy rather than exploratory purposes. In 1971, after Ralph Nader spoke on several Oregon university campuses, OSPIRG secured funding through the State Board of Higher Education. This allowed student activists to perform educational and research functions, as long as they were not involved directly in lobbying activities. Steve McCarthy (Wells 1972), the first director of OSPIRG summarized the group’s task in terms of how to make citizen participation effective: “Citizen participation in government is important,” he wrote, “but nobody is going to be able to do so unless they have real information. So our feeling is that the real impediment to citizen participation is that governments are very good at packaging information and presenting it in ways that nobody can understand (p.7).”

Issue campaigns also proliferated during this time. Citizens launched campaigns to support the right of women to choose abortions, ban cigarette advertising, stop freeways, support childcare programs, and protect wilderness. Legal Aid offices pursued action in the courts to defend renters and the rights of the Krishna Society to preach in public malls. Peace groups demonstrated, hosted teach-ins and strikes on campuses and created blockades to prevent radioactive shipments from moving through Oregon. Other protesters demonstrated against the proposed dredging of a bird refugee area on Ross Island in the Willamette River; the construction of a high-rise building in downtown Portland (the KOIN Tower), the selection process of the annual Rose Festival Princesses as demeaning to women, and the appearance of navy ships during the festival as supportive of the war effort in Southeast Asia. Petitions circulated to stop the building of nuclear plants, to secure better apartment building repair agreements for renters, to stop the building of a freeway in southeast Portland, and to legalize marijuana.

Activists, elected officials, and professional staff at public agencies all had a steep learning curve during this period, seeking to understand and implement new governance laws such as the Open Meetings Law, statewide citizen involvement goals in land use planning, and federal requirements for citizen involvement in environmental impact analysis processes. Activist groups like the Oregon Environmental Council regularly sponsored workshops and published articles explaining such things as “What’s an Impact Statement?,” or “the public process involved in land use decision making.” In addition to the education on land use and planning provided by government and nonprofit organizations trained citizens in how to be good and effective citizens. For example, the Center for Urban Education and Governor Tom McCall’s office sponsored forums in Portland for citizens to learn how to effectively participate in Oregon’s new statewide planning laws.

Changes in the civic world are evident by the type of educational forums civic groups hosted. In the 1950s civic groups sponsored more classes on self improvement topics than any other. By the 1970s self improvement topics were displaced by political topics. By the early 1970s anti-Communist forums had been replaced by antiwar or pro-peace forums.

By this time the City of Portland's public involvement structures were maturing. There were rules and processes in place to which citizens, bureaucrats, and elected officials were now accustomed. An increasing number of citizens had come up through the ranks, understood how the political system worked, and were now in effect a part of the system. There was a growing body of knowledge about effective citizen involvement, as well as a growing number of citizens who had developed these civic skills. Starting in 1983 Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Program, the largest of Portland’s neighborhood coalition offices, with support from the Oregon Community Foundation, sponsored an annual leadership conference where citizens and bureaucrats shared their knowledge and skills (Van Horn, 1984).

**Civic Space**

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 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 or 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 20th, 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 the 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).

**Community Issues**

**Planning**

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, Aliki 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).”

**Community Issues**

**Environment**

Today, Portland is known as one of the leaders in community sustainability policies and programs. As Portney (2003) notes, “the role of sustainability oozes out of every ounce of the city’s government operations, and affects the way the government is organized and function (208).” While many of the cities sustainability programs, such as its green buildings program, emerged in the 1990s, the roots to the cities sustainable vision date back to the civic reconstruction period. Several groups that focused attention on neglected issues, such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and recycling, or by focusing attention on the multi-issue nature of environmental concerns.

The first wave of environmental groups in Oregon coincided with the National environmental policy act in 1969, that requires citizen involvement in environmental impact assessments, the first Earth Day celebration also in 1969, and in Oregon with the enactment in 1973 of progressive state-wide land use laws. During this period, roughly from 1968 to 1975 some of Oregon’s older first wave environmental groups were created including the Oregon Environmental Council, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Environmental Defense Center at Lewis and Clark College, Stop Oregon Liter and Vandalism, and the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG).

One of Portland’s first renewable energy groups, Portland Sun, promoted solar energy and energy conservation, while another group, Rain, promoted appropriate technology, decentralized self-reliance, simple living, and the equivalent of today’s green building design. The foundations of the region’s organic and sustainable agricultural movement can be traced to the formation of Tilth in 1974.

In those days a multi-issue perspective on environmental issues, a main tenet of today’s sustainability movement, was not an easy sell in the environmental movement, let alone the general public. Environmental groups tended to think narrowly in terms of wilderness protection. Saving wild places “out there” not in the city was the primary environmentalist’s agenda. Only a small group of activists made a connection between energy production, green infrastructure in urban areas, organic farming, and healthy communities.

Groups like Sun, Rain, and Tilth were environmental in the broadest sense of the word, but unlike the mainstream of the environmental movement, they focused as much on urban as rural life. Even Tilth, which was the first northwest regional group to support organic farming, also supported community gardens in cities. Tilth eventually developed one of its most successful programs in Seattle which almost exclusively focused on bringing agriculture back into the city and supporting the rapidly evolving whole foods movement. All three groups were started in 1974, soon after the OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) cartel’s oil embargo, when Oregonians like all Americans, got used to waiting in line at gas stations and worried about energy shortages. The sudden effect of far-away decisions about oil on the everyday life in America brought home the notion of the relationship between global problems and local solutions. The production of energy based on limited fossil fuels, was seen as the tipping point that might lead society to a healthier, more equitable, ecologically balanced planetary life. In the 1970s the growth of energy research and development and public education programs was unprecedented. Energy politics took on a nearly religious undertone. Tom McCall, the governor of Oregon during this period, became known nationally as a leader in innovative solutions to the country’s energy crisis. He was informed by people like Joel Schatz who became known as governor McCall’s “whiz kid” and “energy guru,” as he headed the Office of Energetics-- or on some occasions referred to as the “office of consciousness change” or the "governor’s think tank" (Meeker, 1974). Schatz toured the state with colorful charts explaining esoteric concepts like energetics, a term borrowed from ecologist Eugene Odem, to explain Oregon’s economy as a flow of energy inputs and outputs. One article referred to it as “cosmic economics (Meeker, 1974).” Schatz and his wife Diane also produced wall-sized posters in Brugel like-detail, of what community life could be like if we followed the path of appropriate technologies, renewable energy, and simpler, less consumptive lifestyles.

The State of Oregon continued the work started by Schatz and company, although more modestly, through the State Department of Energy. During this period countless small groups started up to provide workshops on wind energy, alternative energy-efficient housing (or “shelter” as it was affectionately referred to) and to either educate the public about soft energy paths or convince politicians and businesses to invest in alternative energy futures. One directory published in 1975 documented at least 25 new organizations that focused on energy education (Rain, 1975).

In the last forty years recycling has become a central part of the environmental movement, and the entry level act of a sustainable lifestyle. Portland’s recycling efforts can be traced back to the fall of 1970 when Jerry Powell, a student,started a recycling center on the Portland State University campus called the Portland Recycling Team (PRT). In 1974, Scott Burgwin and Doug Longhurst, who were also involved in the experimental community, Terrasquirma, set up a PRT recycling outpost in southeast Portland. To Burgwin and Longhurst, recycling epitomized the Quaker-inspired philosophy of the Terrasquirma community. As Alexander Patterson (2002) notes, “to global ecological problems, it offered a local, community-based, worker controlled solution. By emphasizing conservation and thrift, recycling even recalled Quaker simplicity (p. 178).” Recognizing that to obtain a sound level of recycling at the household level, it would be critical to overcome the costs of collection and separation, Burgwin and Longhurst developed a household collection service that customers could subscribe to if they were willing to separate their waste at its source, that is the household. The Portland Recycling Team did not agree with their direction, so in 1974 Burgwain and Longhurst created their own recycling service, the Sunflower Recycling Collective. They faced multiple problems in establishing their business. They thought their mission was as much about educating people about the global ecological crisis as running a business. “To Burgwin,” As Patterson (2002) notes, “the nonviolent revolution would be brought about by building collective, egalitarian institutions that would help the local community recognize its own capacity to change the world (p. 179).”

Egalitarian entrepreneurs like Burgwin and Longhurst also faced an uphill battle in starting a new industry with little business experience or capital. Then in 1975, Richard Duncan, a professor of systems science at Portland State University helped the group establish a business plan. Duncan was driven by some of the same ideological challenges that inspired Sunflower, and he proposed what he called the Ore Plan. While this plan did not provide a magic solution to the problems of business practices or capitalization it did provide a rational method for assessing costs, monitoring and documenting outcomes of experimental methods for source separation and collection, and widely disseminating the Sunflower or Ore Plan model. Duncan published articles about the plan, attracting media attention and endorsements from Oregon Governor Tom McCall and U..S. Senator Mark Hatfield.

Meanwhile recycling efforts in Portland grew by leaps and bounds. Another program, Cloudburst Recycling, was created in northeast Portland, and in 1972 the Oregon Environmental Council (OEC) established the Recycling Switchboard to help Portlanders find the best way to recycle all manner of materials. In 1973 the Switchboard was taken over by the Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality, and it is still in operation today, operated by the regional government agency, Metro.

In 1982 Roger Van Gelder, one of Sunflower’s early volunteers, noted that traditional waste haulers had begun accepting recyclables to keep customers from switching to Sunflower or Cloudburst. “The effect of Sunflower really can’t be underestimated,” said Van Gelder “Since we’ve been recycling and competing with garbage haulers, they’ve started doing recycling, too (Collette, 1981, p. 69).” The early innovators were idealists, wanting more to create positive changes then make money. While Cloudburst, Sunflower and PRT all still exist, the companies have not grown in proportion to the magnitude of the current marketplace of recycling, Still these entrepreneurs did manage to change Portlander’s attitude toward waste.

The natural foods movement in the Pacific Northwest can be traced back to the formation of the Tilth association in 1974 (Musick, 2004). While the movement started as a distinctly rural focus, it seeded a change that can be seen in the widespread use of organic and locally grown foods in restaurants, successful natural foods stores in cities, urban farmer’s markets and urban-based community support farms.

The people who started the Tilth Association first met on July 1st, 1974 at a symposium in Spokane entitled “Agriculture for a Small Planet.” One of the featured panelists, Kentucky farmer, poet, and writer Wendell Berry described the loss of the traditional farm economy and the destruction of rural communities. He was blunt in detailing the impending collapse of rural America, and he linked the "drastic decline in the farm population" with "the growth of a vast, uprooted, dependent and unhappy urban population....Our urban and rural problems have largely caused each other,” he said. "My point is that food is a cultural, not a technological product. A culture is not a collection of relics or ornaments, but a practical necessity, and its destruction invites calamity. "If we allow another generation to pass without doing what is necessary to enhance and embolden the possibility of strong agricultural communities, we will lose it altogether. And then” he concluded, “we will not only invoke calamity, we will deserve it."

Berry’s words had a profound impact on several activists and would-be farmers at that symposium. A few days later, after returning home to Kentucky, Wendell wrote a letter to the new friends he had made in Spokane. In it he said, “Your symposium…proves the existence of a thoughtful and even knowledgeable constituency for a better kind of agriculture.” He raised the challenge of bringing this constituency together and suggested the “possibility of holding another kind of agricultural symposium…one that would bring together the various branches of agricultural dissidence and heresy.”

Wendell Berry’s letter, written on July 4, 1974, was like a match thrown on dry tinder, and it sparked a flurry of organizing throughout the region. Woody and Becky Deryckx, Gigi Coe, Michael Pilarski, and Mark Musick began working together to plan what was to become the Northwest Conference on Alternative Agriculture, which was held in Ellensburg, Washington on November 21-23, 1974. More than 800 “agricultural dissidents and heretics” from throughout the Northwest (and as far away as California, Arizona, South Dakota, Ohio, and North Carolina) came together to build the foundation for a new agriculture. Many of the people who first met in Ellensburg went on to play vital roles in our region’s sustainable agriculture movement.

Over the next few years, people in the region hosted ten follow-up conferences, including “The Politics of Food & Land,” “The Nooksack River Encampment,” ”Living the Revolution,” “Natural Living & Agriculture,” and “The Leap Year Conference on Regional Federation.”

On August 22, 1977 more than 70 representatives from around the region met at Pragtree Farm near Arlington, Washington to formally incorporate the Tilth Association. One of the first projects was publication of Binda Colebrook’s (1977) *Winter Gardening in the Maritime Northwest*, which has had a significant impact on local farmers and gardeners, greatly expanding the range of herbs and vegetables now grown year-round in our region. It also inspired Steve Solomon to start the Territorial Seed Company to make available the many Asian and European varieties described in Colebrook’s book.

The seed was sown by these ragtag, "back to the landers," environmentalists, and social activists that would eventually grow into a multi-million alternative to industrial agriculture, and to creating a unique northwest cuisine based on organic, fresh and local foods.

**Community Issues**

**Housing and Community Development**

During the 1970s the City invested a majority of its HCD funds on housing rehabilitation. Also, Mayor Neil Goldschmidt and new leadership at the Portland Development Commission had made inroads into the investment and development communities, facilitating a growing investment in older neighborhoods. The Albina area slowly attracted reinvestment. There were also other national trends affecting the attitude toward inner-city neighborhoods. The Victorian and bungalow housing stock of inner northeast and other older neighborhoods in Portland were reconsidered by potential homeowners, because of both a shift in aesthetic values and the rising costs of new construction in the 1970s (Abbott, 1983, p. 202).

In 1978, Portland received a $12-million grant from the federal Economic Development Administration and was designated a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy city. In 1979, Mayor Neil Goldschmidt created the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to oversee the economic development strategy. There was a federal requirement that the City seek participation from minority representation. The first round of selections for the EDAC did not set well in the community because of a perceived failure of representation of Blacks on the committee. When Goldschmidt stepped down as mayor (1979) to take a post with President Carter’s Administration, the planning process was inherited first by Connie McCready, who was appointed for the remainder of Goldschmidt’s term, and then in 1981 by Frank Ivancie, the next elected mayor. By now there were accusations that the funds had been wasted and little of it utilized in northeast Portland.

In September 1980 a coalition of six Black organizations filed suit against the City over the committee’s membership structure and then boycotted the open elections for minority appointments. The boycott of the EDAC membership structure was organized by the Black United Front, and backed by Albina Fair Share, the NAACP, Albina Women’s League, and Oregon Association of Colored Women’s Clubs. The Black United Front (BUF) and Albina Fair Share (AFS), two new groups, brought leadership and a more confrontational style of civic discourse to Albina politics. The boycott forced the city to reorganize the committee (Citizens view, 1979; Black organizations, 1979)

AFS, organized in 1978, was modeled after the Saul Alinsky school of direct action organizing. The AFS built its membership through door-to-door canvassing and conducted direct action campaigns to focus attention on lingering housing and unemployment problems among Blacks and poor Whites.

Typical of the combative nature of AFS was a meeting in the Eliot neighborhood in 1979. Appointed Mayor Connie McCready threatened to walk out of the meeting when AFS members demanded that she take a stand to preserve housing in the Eliot neighborhood and retain limited commercial zoning on NE Union Avenue. Several residents representing the neighborhood association did their best to support the mayor and separate themselves from AFS and BUF representatives (McCarthy, 1980).

In 1980 an ad hoc coalition, the Community Economic Development Task Force--led by Steve Rudman with the Rain Community Resource Center, an appropriate technology and community development advocacy group--lobbied the city to provide more citizen participation in the process for allocating block grant funds. This coalition was made up of seventeen groups from around the city, several from northeast Portland, including the Eliot Neighborhood Association and the newly formed Black United Front. At a hearing about block grant funding in 1980, the coalition organized a demonstration that included a rendition of “people with low-incomes need a place to live” to the tune of a song from West Side Story, performed by the Northwest District Association, the most active neighborhood association in Northwest Portland. Beverly Stein, from the Ratepayers Union, who would later become the Chair of the Board of Commissioners for Multnomah County, requested that money be set aside for self-help programs. The Task Force advocated for the same self-help project fund, as well as for funds to be allocated for housing projects that would demonstrate appropriate technology and energy conserving strategies to help poor people cope with rising energy costs (Citizens hit, 1981).

The coalition had its way, for the city established a self-help demonstration fund that community organizations could apply to, and Rudman himself became director of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD).

**Community Issues**

**Transportation**

While citizen activists battled against freeway development and parking lots, a quiet revolution that did not garner much attention was brewing at Portland State University. Today, Portland is known as one of the most bike-friendly cities in the country, and accommodating the bicycle commuter is a critical component of the region's multi-modal transportation policy. In the late 1960s and early 1970s this would have seemed to be a remote and fanciful idea.

The effort to establish a place for the bicycle in Portland’s transportation system can be traced back to 1970, and the creation of the Portland State University Bicycle Lobby. The lobby was founded by Sam Oakland, an unorthodox professor of creative writing who refused to be called professor and who brought attention to bicycling as a legitimate transportation alternative with great enthusiasm and, in some cases, contentious certainty (Frazier, 1971).

In November 1970, Oakland organized one of the first of many bike rallies. 400 bicycle enthusiasts gathered on Swan Island in North Portland to draw attention to a four-point petition that Oakland had written. The petition called upon the city to create bike lanes on major thoroughfares and bridges; bike parking facilities near schools, department stores, supermarkets, restaurants and in city garages; bike racks on city busses; and the consideration of bike lanes and parking facilities in plans for future developments within the city (Bike rally, 1970). Today, facilities have been built and Oakland’s four points are integrated into Portland’s planning process. However, he probably had no idea it would take 25 years. In March 1971, the Bike Lobby, as it became known, sponsored another bike rally. Over 1,200 bicyclists participated, led by Portland City Commissioner Neal Goldschmidt (1,262 Make bicycle ride, 1971). Later to become mayor, Goldschmidt was just the first of several mayors and city commissioners who were avid bike riders, a notable political trend that certainly helped move the bicycle agenda along over time.

There were other cities around the country building extensive bikeways, including Chicago, Milwaukie, and college towns such as Eugene, Oregon, and Davis, California, where bikes outnumbered cars. In the Portland of 1970, the Police Bureau estimated there to be about 180,000 bicycles, or about one for every two persons. Sam Oakland estimated there to be about 400 people riding bicycles into downtown Portland on a daily basis (Frazier, 1971).

The Bike Lobby, along with the Oregon Environmental Council, worked at a state level during 1970 and 1971 to secure funding for bicycle facilities. The groups lobbied to have a two-cent increase in the cigarette tax to be distributed for bikeways, a bill they referred to as “pennies for parks.” The groups also helped draft a bill that would set aside money from the state’s highway fund for bicycle path development. The Bike Lobby organized rallies in Salem during 1971, including one where 200 bicyclists traveled the 50-mile distance between Portland and Salem to advocate for the bills. While the “pennies for parks” proposal never made it to committee in the legislature, the bill to set aside funds from the state highway fund did (Frazier, 1971).

Representative Don Stathos, a Republican from Jacksonville in southern Oregon, sponsored House Bill 1700, which became known as the Bicycle Bill. Stathos presented the bill as both an anti-pollution measure and a way to curb congestion in cities. He, like others, also advocated that the bicycle should be considered a legitimate commuting vehicle. He cited examples in Chicago and Washington, DC of bicycle commuters being able to arrive at their destinations faster than did commuters in automobiles (Seymour, 1971).

The Bike Bill, the first designated state funding for bicycles in the country, passed in the 1971 legislative session (Portland Office of Transportation, 1996). It only passed by one vote and that one vote came from a representative who had promised Stathos his vote but was hiding in the men's room to avoid casting his vote. Don found him and "dragged" him to the House floor (Rex Berkholder, personal communication 11/26/2006).

The bill called upon cities and counties receiving state highway funds to expend a minimum of 1% of the revenues on construction of new bike and pedestrian pathways, to retrofit existing roadways to accommodate bicycles and foot traffic, and to accommodate bicycle and foot traffic in new construction. An important element of the law that would prove to be contentious later stated that cities and counties were not required to expend the 1% each year. They could instead set aside monies in a reserve fund for up to ten years. By the fall of 1971, the first new bikeways were proposed in the Portland area and Eugene. The first one proposed in the Portland metropolitan area was along an abandoned railroad right-of-way that connected the suburban towns of Milwaukie and Oregon City. The project proved difficult to materialize because of property ownership disputes and the desire of the Oregon Department of Transportation to reserve the railroad right-of-way for possible future expansion of state highway 99E. In fact, it took until 2000 for the authorization to be finally granted to build the proposed trail (Keller, 1971).

The City of Portland’s response to the passage of the new Bike Bill was to conduct a study of the state of bicycling and develop a preliminary plan for future facilities construction through the Bureau of Street and Structural Engineering. The plan called for the construction of 75 miles of recreational trails and the dedication of 105 miles of city streets as recommended bike routes for commuters. This latter part of the plan has proven to be the most contentious throughout the development of bike policy in Portland. As noted by the City Engineer at the time, any proposal for setting aside space on busy streets for bicycles would mean eliminating parking, which would raise opposition from local residents (Hansen 1971).

In November 1971, the City of Portland created the first citizen committee to examine bicycle programs in the city, the Bicycle Path Task Force. Sam Oakland was appointed as its Chair and Ray Polani, Assistant to the Vice President of Pacific First Federal Savings and Loan, its Vice Chair. The other members were Elizabeth Barker, representing Sensible Transportation Options for People (STOP), the region’s first alternative transportation advocacy organization; Clyde Blake, Jr., a Portland State University student; David Hyard, senior planner with the Port of Portland; Glenn Gregg, Vice President of Lewis and Clark College; Tomas Kerrigan, a lawyer; Karen Kruzich, a high school student; Linda Spence, a housewife; Larry Winter, Associate Superintendent of Portland Public Schools; and Marlene Stahi, representing the Downtown Planning Committee. The charge of the committee was to develop a short-range plan for more immediate expenditure of state highway funds to be implemented in 60 days, to propose a test program to use to measure the impact of bicycle plans, and to develop a comprehensive bicycle plan for Portland, all by the end of 1972 (Committee to formulate bicycle path, 1971).

The Bicycle Path Task Force presented its draft plan in February 1972 to the city’s Department of Transportation engineering staff for comment and revisions. When the revised plan came back to the task force in March, there were several revisions that were met with strong disagreement. Two of the disagreements were about specific bike path options, but the most divisive issue was about the placement of bicycles in the city’s transportation policy. It was, as Oakland noted, a deeper philosophical issue. The feasibility of the bicycle as a legitimate vehicle for commuting was in doubt by the city’s engineers. Oakland, commenting on the revisions, summed it up by saying that, “as long as the bicycle continues to be considered a toy for recreational use only, we’re not going to get anywhere with paths in the city.” The committee members were responding to a specific memo written by Don Bergstrom , a city traffic engineer, in which he stated that he did not feel Portland should advocate the use of the bicycle as a commuting device, but instead should emphasize its use for recreational purposes (Bike lobby yells foul, 1972). The difference in practical terms was not insignificant. A focus on recreational uses would direct the plan to devising separate paths leading to recreational points of interest. A focus on bicycle commuting, on the other hand, would direct funding from the state to making changes in existing roadways and thereby secure efficient bike routes to downtown and other employment centers, as well as to shopping, the same destination points as autos or mass transit.

One of the most contentious aspects of securing bike routes on existing roads, then and now, is the removal of parking areas to accommodate bike lanes. The state Bicycle Bill was not clear on the issue. Securing funding through highway funds, rather than, say, from the budget for parks, did orient bikeway development as a transportation option. Nonetheless, the prevailing attitude was that bicycling was a recreational activity, not an alternative mode of transportation competitive with the automobile. Some cities and counties tied use of their bike funds to other recreational and park acquisitions, such as funds from the Willamette River Greenway Program, that could be used to acquire trail property along the Willamette River. By so doing, bike funds could be used for building the pathways themselves (Green 1971a). This central disagreement over the place of bicycles in transportation policy was in part the result of lack of expertise about bicycle transportation policy and bike path construction. State Highway Department staff was assigned the task of developing the state’s bicycle plan, yet lacked this specialized expertise. As one engineer said at the time, “it is like the blind leading the blind” (Green, 1971b).

Soon after the presentation of the Bicycle Path Task Force report, Oakland resigned from the group, attributing the decision to his desire to work at a national level on securing highway funds for mass transit. Setting aside the philosophical differences about the role of bicycles in Portland’s transportation future, the task force forwarded the bicycle facilities plan to the traffic engineer’s office (Sam Oakland quits, 1972). It passed through the city bureaucracy again and on to the city council, where it was finally adopted as the *Bicycle Facilities for Portland: A Comprehensive Plan*, in April 1973 (Bicycle Path Task Force, 1973).

There were several specific bicycle projects undertaken during 1972 and 1973, including four new bike routes and several curb ramp projects. Out of a budget of $40,661, only $22,964 was spent in the first two years on actual projects, and over half of that on one bike path in northeast Portland. The remainder was spent on administration, including $5,000 on the bike plan itself (Bicycle Path Task Force, 1973). The inability of the city to make effective use of its bike funds would become, over time, a contentious issue. In 1973, in order to continue the work of the Bike Path Task Force, the city council created a permanent seven member Citizen’s Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The energy crisis of the early 1970s, and specifically the oil embargo in 1974, had a significant and lasting impact on bicycling policy, especially the on-going debate about the bike as a “toy” versus serious alternative mode of transportation. By 1974, there were 60 miles of bikeways constructed statewide, with another 48 miles under construction and 70 miles in the planning stage. However, as important as the completed bike projects was the change in attitude at both the state and regional levels. James McClure, the State Transportation Commission’s bicycle route engineer, accepted the public’s demand for commuter routes and school routes for bicycles in metropolitan areas, and referred to them as “utility” routes as opposed to recreational. With this change at the commission level, and because of rising fuel costs, recreational bike routes such as one proposed for the Oregon Coast were dropped in favor of a more intense focus on improving bicycle transportation in metropolitan areas (Harvey, 1974).

As bike programs were initiated around the state, it also became clear in areas like Portland that there needed to be a coordinated effort to create a network of bike paths that linked different cities and counties. In 1974, the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) produced a bike plan for the Portland metropolitan region (Columbia Region Association of Government 1974). The development of the CRAG plan depended on citizen input throughout the process. CRAG helped create bicycle citizen advisory groups throughout the region to help design the plan, including: Bicycle Advocates of Clark County, City of Gresham Park Board Advisory Committee, Clackamas County Citizens’ Advisory Committee for Bikeway Planning, East Multnomah County Citizen’s Advisory Committee, the Forest Grove Bikeway Group, Greenway Path Committee of Beaverton, Lake Oswego Bicycle Group, Tigard Area Pedestrian Pathway Committee, and the Washington County Bikeway Task Force. In effect, through this planning process, CRAG helped create a civic infrastructure for bicycling advocates that would remain in place long after this initial planning phase as cities and counties implemented bicycling programs.

Also indicative of the changes precipitated by the combination of persistent lobbying on the part of bicycle advocacy groups and the energy crisis, CRAG’s bikeway planning assumptions no longer followed the recreational trail model (Columbia Regional Association of Governments, 1974). In their guidelines the change in perception is notable, including the understanding that “a regional bicycle pathway system will provide the facilities for an alternative transportation mode, thus furthering the opportunity for a balanced transportation system (p. 6).”

While some progress was being made in changing public and professional attitudes toward bicycling and building bicycle infrastructure, not everything about Portland’s program was progressing smoothly. As part of its expanded bike program, by 1974 the City of Portland had a person assigned the task of overseeing the bicycle program. But, the program was nomadic, as it never had a neat fit within any bureau. It started first under the Department of Public Works, then moved to the Bureau of Planning, and then back to the Department of Public Works under the Bureau of Street and Structural Engineering. Additionally, it was not clear what role the citizen advisory committee played, nor how it fit within the government structure. Richard Hofland, the first manager of the program, interpreted his job as serving as staff for the Bicycle Advisory Committee, thereby with more of an allegiance to the committee than to bureau management.

In a memo written to the director of the Bureau of Street and Structural Engineering, he assessed some of the problems he faced in overseeing the bike program. He noted that in the three years, , since the Bicycle Bill had passed, the City of Portland had received $137,000. In that same period, less than $41,000 had been spent, and only $14,000 of that amount on the actual construction of bike facilities. Administration, planning and engineering had consumed 66% of the funds. Hofland suggested a revised arrangement that would place the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) in a more authoritative decision-making role. Hofland’s suggestions did not sit well with the bureau, and tensions increased between Hofland, the BAC, and Hofland’s boss, John Lang. Lang felt the role of the BAC was to be advisory only and the Bike Program manager worked under his direction, not that of the BAC (Richert-Bob, 1978).

Hofland quit his position as Bike Coordinator in the beginning of 1977 and, by mid-1977, it was evident the city was dramatically reconfiguring the Bike Program. Feeling as though they had little purpose or power, BAC members quit one by one until no one showed up at meetings and the BAC was formally disbanded. Several factors contributed to this disintegration, including bureaucratic haggling, but a primary reason for the demise of the program stemmed from the philosophical differences between bicycle activists and the city engineering staff, as well as some of the political leaders. The bike program had been placed under the domain of the engineering bureau of the city because it was considered an issue of transportation infrastructure. From the onset, the bike community had advocated for more than structural solutions. The BAC, and the bike community in general, wanted to see more emphasis on education and safety issues, as well as retrofitting existing roadways to accommodate the “utility” bicyclist. The city argued the designated state highway funds were restricted by law and could not be used for the kinds of things for which Hofland and the BAC advocated. The BAC countered that the state itself had been using highway funds for bicycle education programs, but were unable to persuade the City (Richert-Bob, 1978).

In January 1978, City Commissioner Connie McCready proposed a new bicycling advisory structure. As evidenced by its name, the Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee’s charge would include pedestrian as well as bicycle considerations. This did not sit well with the bicycle community. Once again, activists felt this was yet another way to treat the bicycle as a toy and keep bicyclists off of roadways. John Kirkpatrick, an employee with Portland Public Schools, speaking at a public hearing, pointed out that “bicycles and cars got along better together than do pedestrians and bikes, and that combining the latter two groups was not a sound practice.” He added that “a bicycle lane on the street is cheaper to build than a bike path, and that pot of gold the city receives from 1 percent gasoline tax revenues would be better spent on educational and instructional activities for bicyclists then on bike pathways” (Henninger, 1978).

Despite opposition from some activists about combining pedestrian and bicycling concerns, the Citizens’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CBPAC) was established in spring 1978. However, the CBPAC, or CAC, as it became known, was given a different charge, one that reflected the wider view of activists about bicycling as a serious alternative mode of transportation. In addition to reviewing and prioritizing physical improvement plans for the bicycle and pedestrian network, the CAC (Portland Bicycle Program 1981) was:

To establish the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation by:

* Improving the safety and suitability of city streets for bicycling
* Providing increased opportunities for secure bicycle parking
* Expanding programs for bicycle safety education
* Increasing public awareness of the bicycle as a means of transportation as well as recreation

A new full-time Bicycle Program Manager was hired and by the fall of 1978, the CAC had drafted a new bike plan. While the committee was to provide guidance on both pedestrian and bicycle matters, the emphasis of the $250,000 plan was on bicycle projects, not pedestrian pathways. The plan was accepted by the city council, and in 1979 the bike program was taken over by the Office of Transportation (Portland Bureau of Transportation, 1979).

During this time, bicycle advocates also influenced the City of Portland’s three year long Comprehensive Plan process. The original Comprehensive Plan, approved in 1981, at least made mention of bicycles under “Alternative Urban Travel” in the transportation section (Goal Six). It stated: “Provide support for alternative forms of urban travel, such as bicycling and walking.” Additionally, the Public Rights-of-Way section spoke more directly to bike pathways, retrofitting bikeways on streets, and new construction: “Include physical construction standards necessary to assure access and safe passage for bicyclists in design and construction of all new or reconstructed streets, especially on those streets designated as bicycle pathways in the Arterial Streets Classification Policy as private or federal funds become available Portland (Portland Planning Bureau, 1980).”

Likewise, the City of Portland had adopted two other policies that incorporated bicycle elements. The Arterial Streets Classification System, adopted in 1977, designated a network of bicycle pathways, “intended to establish and encourage safe, convenient and pleasant routes for bicycling within neighborhoods and districts, longer distance commuting, recreational trips and for access to public transit (Portland Transportation Bureau ,1977).” The Energy Conservation Policy, adopted in 1979, drew attention to the bicycle as a way to meet energy conservation goals: “the consumption of non-renewable fuels for transportation shall be reduced through actions which increase the efficiency of the transportation system operating within the city. These actions will encourage individuals to choose the method of travel which is the most fuel-efficient for the purpose of the trip; promote the energy efficient movement of goods; and provide incentives for the use of fuel-efficient vehicles (Portland Planning Bureau, 1980).”

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**Women's Organizations**

In the late 1960s and early 1970s many new women’s groups emerged, although traditional women’s organizations held their own in terms of number and membership. For example, the League of Women Voters’ membership declined only slightly from 700 in 1962 to 600 in 1972. The American Association of University Women’s membership increased slightly between 1962 and 1972, from 653 to 700. Likewise the National Council of Jewish Women went up from 600 members in 1962 to 725 in 1972. Of course, the population in Portland had also increased, which helps account for their numbers.

But, the figures demonstrate that while some women marched into the halls of power, most continued to carry out their traditional roles through traditional civic organizations. A special insert on women’s clubs in the Oregon Journal, (Solute to Women, 1969) summarized the contribution of women as “typified by club women in a number of ways. Usually they raise funds from bake sales, rummage sales or book sales with proceeds earmarked for hospitals, schools, nursing homes, or any of a thousand other places where there’s a need.” The editors also noted that, “along with self improvement the professionally oriented women is concerned about her community. Climbing the business ladder is vertical, but alert and aware women are constantly challenged to reach out horizontally to help others.”

The domains of traditional women’s organizations and emergent feminist organizations were separate for the most part, but not always. In August 1972 a gathering of women’s organizations called the Feminist Fare was representative of the cross-over between traditional women’s groups and new ones. The Fare, which created tables for information distribution, entertainment, and workshops and plays, included traditional and new women’s organizations, including the Abortion Information and Referral Service, the International League for Peace and Freedom, Council of Jewish Women, Oregon Council for Women’s Equality, the National Council of Negro Women, the League of Women Voters, and YWCA.

In this period, indeed, women woke up, often one by one, to the inequalities of their status in society and to the power of women working together. They gathered together in collectives, consciousness raising groups, and kitchens. Sally Landauer recalled how in 1967 she and Vera Katz, (two-term mayor of Portland in the 1990s) had their “a-ha!” moment while on their knees, waxing Vera’s kitchen floor, and wondering, “why are we doing this (Bonner, 1994)?” Betty Murten, a founder of Sensible Transportation Options for People (STOP), among other social causes, also remembered one of those moments:

It was a time of beginning to think globally and act locally. A lot was cooking in those kitchens. What's interesting to me sociologically now is that we were probably the last generation of married women who had the luxury of being supported by our husbands, and we were all educated, so here was this incredible resource that the country doesn't have any longer. Families need two incomes, and so we don't have this incredible reservoir of volunteer energy and intelligence today (Bonner, 2001a).

Women banded together in political organizations and through political causes that sometimes took them across class boundaries. Women’s bookstores, health clinics, and hangouts such as the Mountain Moving Café, became important places for women to meet as women. Bonnie Tinker, a founder of the Bradley Angle House, one of the first shelters for battered women in the country, recalled how her own awakening to political consciousness through the peace and non violence movement, was expanded by contact with women who had been abused in their marriages or families, so that she was made aware “that oppression was not just a theoretical construct, but that there were real material consequences to living without money or education and suffering from violence (De Mar, 2003, p. 236)." Since the feminist awakening happened for some on many levels at once, from the macro or global to the micro or personalist political, women like Tinker found themselves raising their own consciousness, while trying to push others and society in a feminist direction--an exciting but difficult surge of activities to sustain.

There were also many more new women-oriented or women-only organizations with a political orientation than there were in traditional civic Portland. In the early 1970s Portland had a chapter of the National Organization for Women, as well as the Portland Area Women’s Political Caucus, a statewide political action group that worked to promote women’s issues and feminist candidates. Other women’s political organizations included: the Progressive Women’s Association, the Council for Women’s Equality, and the Women’s Legislative Council. At least one traditional civic organization, the YWCA, turned with the tide of the women’s movement by opening the Women’s Resource Center that provided direct services for women. The state of Oregon created the Governor’s Committee on the Status of Women and a separate advisory committee on the problems of inequalities in employment, the State Advisory Council on Sex Discrimination.

Women were also storming the bastions of male power. The Portland City Club was beseeched by members of the Women’s Political Caucus and others to change its male-only membership rule. While many City Club members resisted, some such as prominent lawyer Sidney Lezak, supported the women, and resigned in protest. Sally Landauer (Bonner, 1994), one of the organizers who had confronted the City Club’s men recalled years later the action as both earnestly important and fun:

So the Wednesday Winos became POW (Politically Oriented Women) or, as some of the men in the City Club called it, Penis Oriented Women. We picketed the City Club for at least two years. Every Friday we marched around the front of the Benson Hotel (the hotel did not appreciate it!). That was where the City Club met even then. We carried our signs. We marched.

Finally in 1974, and after several rejections, the City Club voted to allow women full membership status. In 1982, Pauline Anderson was elected as the Club’s first woman president. With an ironic sense of enfranchisement, also in 1974, the League of Women Voters passed a motion to allow men to join.

It took years for other exclusively male clubs to follow the City Club’s lead. Some groups were forced to change. In 1987 the National Rotary Club was forced by the U.S. Supreme court to admit women. In 1989, the Royal Rosarians, Portland’s “goodwill ambassadors,” associated with the 100-year-old Rose Festival accepted women after the Portland City Council passed a resolution that forced them to change. The University Club and the Arlington Club, the traditional meeting place of the civic elite, granted women full membership rights in 1990.

Women-only health services, such as the Women’s Health Clinic, unheard of in Portland in the early 1960s, were founded during this period, and abortion was heating up as an issue, with both sides founding political action organizations. In 1972, the anti-abortion groups Oregon Right to Life, and Oregon Birthright, were formed. The Women’s Health Clinic and the Abortion Information and Referral Service provided referrals for women wanting abortions. As more women entered the workforce, childcare also became a critical issue. While the number of childcare providers only increased from 22 in 1960 to 30 in 1972, by 1972 there were groups lobbying for childcare programs such as Community Coordination Child Care. By1985 there were over a 100 providers.

Yet, this period of differentiation, consciousness raising, and organizational experimentation was littered with “failures.” As with other new organizations such as Terrisquirma, and The Learning Community the new ventures were multi-level transformations, demanding on both the personal and professional level, attempting to turn a profit or make a go of it while conducting ongoing on-the-job therapy. Programs endured as long as possible, or in many cases served an entrepreneurial goal, inspiring or instigating changes at more enduring institutions. Portland State University, through its continuing education division, created a women’s program that began in 1967 and closed up shop in 1978. Its evolution was similar to other women’s organizations from this period. The intent of the program was to “help women who were seeking growth and development, who were searching for a more meaningful sense of ‘self-attainment,’ who were seeking professional guidance (McDermott, 1986).” As women’s needs changed, the program adapted, so that by the end, instead of teaching consciousness raising and feminist separatism, the program was teaching courses such as “In the Mainstream.”

By the early 1970s the change in women’s status was noticeable in the make-up of civic bodies in the City of Portland, but not dramatic,. In the 1960s only 120 of 711 appointments on civic bodies were women (17 percent). Between 1970 and 1979 279 of 1009 appointments were women (28 percent). The largest increase was in board licensing board memberships, followed by commission appointments. In all likelihood the changing board makeup reflected the increasing number of women in the workforce. The number of women on commissions increased because several commissions which formed during this time, such as the Commission on Aging, were in social service areas, where women have always been prominent.

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**The Albina Story: From War on Poverty to Early Signs of Gentrification**

The War on Poverty and OEO programs were only the first of a series of activities that radically changed Albina’s civic structure. The Albina War on Poverty was phased out and replaced by the Model Cities Demonstration Project that took root in Albina with an application to the federal program in April 1967. In this phase of the evolution of Albina’s civic infrastructure, the definition of citizen participation was critical. As with the previous War on Poverty guiding principles, Model Cities guidelines called for participation by residents in the affected areas. The issue faced from the outset was to balance relationships with agencies and the implementation of a rational and comprehensive plan that relied more on traditional planning methods with the need to involve residents of the neighborhood.

In 1968, during one of the early meetings of the newly formed Citizen’s Planning Board (the oversight committee that would coordinate Model City activities), Dean Gisvold, a committee member, offered an amendment to the Citizen’s Planning Board by-laws. He stated, “any person shall have the right to be heard during any meeting of the board subject to the discretion of the chairman (West, 1970, p. 68).” The chairperson, E. M .J. Baskett, emphasized the principle behind this rule by saying, “I want this really understood. We want people to talk at these meetings. The name of the game is citizen participation.” (West, 1970, p. 68)The emphasis on citizens participating would prove to be a very challenging endeavor, and made Portland’s effort unique. By way of contrast, Seattle’s application and formation of a community development agency (CDA) was based more on inter-agency cooperation. The Seattle director of the effort viewed this as a strategic political move, arguing that it was necessary to build on the strengths of existing agencies and develop cooperation between them to exert power in poor neighborhoods (West, 1970).

Portland’s original application for Model Cities Planning funds identified a series of problems in the proposed model neighborhood with respect to citizen participation: a lack of groups oriented toward participation, a lack of interest in planning or understanding of the area’s problems among the existing groups, a lack of communication between groups interested in community improvement, and a lack of citizen involvement within the same organizations.

To remedy the situation, the applicants proposed a Citizen Participation Coordinating Committee made up of representatives of established groups in the area. These groups were to gather additional input from neighborhood residents through block organizations. In this plan, citizen participation was to be the result, not of efforts by the CDA, but of interest and commitment of resources on the part of the citizens themselves. In this plan, there was to be an oversight committee “made up of one, two or three key representatives from public and private organizations representing the broadest interests in the various fields of health, education, housing, manpower and economics, recreation and culture, crime reduction, social services and public assistance, and physical improvements and public facilities (West, 1970, p. 72).”

The application to the federal government was successful. However, it was returned with a harsh critique of the organizing structure, including substantial criticism about the involvement of local residents. The federal reviewers argued that Portland had not done an adequate job of explaining how neighborhood people would have any influence over the lead board’s decisions. It went on to say that “Portland’s citizen participation proposal is mostly at the level of informing residents rather than involving them. It limits itself to design in structures without explaining the relationship of these structures to each other and to the entire planning process. The important aspects of training, financial assistance and technical assistance (to citizens) are not considered. The failure to consider the use of low-income citizen groups as avenues for implementing the program is a serious omission for a city that establishes for itself the goal of developing for each individual a full sense of participation...by not doing for him, but allowing him to do for himself (West, 1970, p. 74).”

The neighborhood leadership also voiced its opinion. On December 15, 1967, a delegation of Black leaders appeared at city council to request broader responsibility and greater control over the program. On the following Sunday, 500 people attended a meeting at which a sixteen member committee was established to review a citizen’s proposal for the reorganization of the citizen participation structure of the Portland CDA. It recommended a new form of citizen participation that would not rely on traditional structures and specific leaders. The group’s statement read, in part, “Resistance to traditional patterns of dealing with city hall through long-established neighborhood organizations, PTAs, churches and federal and local governmental agencies was expressed in the decisive defeat of a proposal to have the director of the Albina Neighborhood Service Center (OEO) be chairman and presidents of neighborhood improvement groups the nucleus of membership of a committee to work out citizen participation guidelines (West, 1970, p. 75).” Already, the recently established OEO committee structure was regarded as establishment, and not representative. At the meeting, it was proposed that the open assembly election would be responsible for establishing a citizens governing board made up of elected residents and representatives from assembly committees, and that it would function as the CDA, having the right to approve all plans and policy. The proposed CDA was to be a free-standing nonprofit organization.

Other misgivings about the process surfaced in Albina. A rumor that the mayor was considering appointment of Rev. Paul Schulze, who was White, as director of the new CDA, brought up issues of race and representation. Schulze had been director of the Portland Council of Churches and director of community action programs in Albina, once again a member of the “old guard.” The mayor responded to demands that others be considered from the neighborhood, but when two of three persons recommended refused the position, the mayor fell back on Schulze. There were two neighborhood meetings held after the announcement of Schulze. At the first meeting, after considerable debate, his appointment was approved by those present, but, at a second meeting, the participants, in effect, asked for a recall by signing an agreement stating that, “all permanent appointments for positions of planning and coordination be rescinded until a duly elected citizens board representing the Albina target area approve (sic) such appointments and plans (West, 1970, p. 78).” The mayor responded by denying the recall, but also stating that he would consider more grassroots control. The appointment stood, and the next task was to create the governing committee now known as the Citizen’s Planning Board. As a compromise between the neighborhood and city hall, the Planning Board was given the power to veto decisions made by the mayor and city council, but could not initiate decision-making processes. Residents had reversed the proposal in the original application and had achieved at least negative control over the substance and implementation of planning through their representatives on the Citizens Planning Board. West (1970) contends that it wasn’t forethought on the part of leaders in regards to holding the plan to high levels of citizen participation, but rather a lack of resistance by other OEO organizations that led to the incoming director being a proponent of citizen participation.

On March 2, 1968, elections were held under the League of Women Voters supervision. The election was announced on television, radio, and in newspapers. Even a sound truck circulated through the neighborhood urging voters to cast ballots. Two candidates canvassed their district. By day’s end, 1,781 residents out of a total of about 28,000, or 6.4 percent, voted. Of the 16 elected from the neighborhood, nine were Black. The mayor then appointed six Whites and five Blacks. The final composition of the board was described as: five unemployed women (two Black women from community organizations), a Black contractor, a White roofing contractor, two White bankers, two Black businessmen, two Black social workers, a Black deputy sheriff, a White lawyer, White printer, four clergymen (two Black), three elementary school teachers (two Black), a White educational administrator in a suburban school district, a Black housing director (in Albina), a Black job placement counselor at the Albina Neighborhood Center, and a White assistant commissioner of the Oregon Bureau of Labor. Twenty-three of the 27 were residents of the model neighborhood. Then the difficult work of the Citizen’s Planning Board began in earnest. Although city hall faded to the background, the mayor and city council had the power to make final decisions in the process.

A key figure in the evolution of the citizen participation elements of the planning process was Tad Masaoka, the HUD agency liaison specialist for Portland, who operated out of HUD’s San Francisco office. He emphasized the importance of the role of the Citizen’s Planning Board in directing the program, and at the first formal meeting of the board, stated that they could “have the staff’s head on a platter” (West, 1970, p. 88) if the staff did not perform well. West contended that Masaoka “was the only person connected with the program who saw clearly the extent to which its success depended upon the effective use of residents as a base of power.”

This was easier said than done. Charles Jordan, who later served as director of the Model Cities Program, in an assessment of OEO programs, recalled this sudden provision of power to citizens who had not previously held positions of leadership as problematic (Jordan, 1977). The Planning Board established eight committees to develop different elements of the over-all Model Cities Plan. The committees lacked a knowledge of the planning process, were unclear about how they fit into the over-all process, and were harmed by factionalism and irregular attendance. The support staff for the CDA, under the new director, was relatively small and mostly made up of staff on loan from other agencies. Overall, there was also a lack of solid data on which to base the plans. The staff attempted to develop plans with direction from the committees, but underestimated how little they knew about the neighborhoods. In the end, committee-generated plans were based on anecdotal data and needs assessments, a process that would pass muster with the city’s official planning bodies such as the Portland Development Commission. The situation was further compounded by the director’s conflicting directives that stated staff should be both advocates of the citizens’ desires and needs as well as negotiators between agencies and citizens (West, 1970, p. 92).

The committees took different directions and had different types of problems. The Legal, Health and Social Services Committee begin to rely more on agency relations and cared less about how lay citizens were involved. One of the most contentious arenas took place in the Housing and Physical Environmental Working Committee. Here, the issue of displacement and the continuing threat of urban clearance were brought to the table. The Institute for the Study and Solution of Community Problems from Eliot School, a grade school in central Albina, tried to gain approval for a ruling that would force PDC, or any agency, to have a high level of buy-in from neighborhood residents for proposed projects. This proposal precipitated heated discussions that nearly led to fist fights as Blacks argued that they did not want Whites moving into the neighborhoods after improvements had been made. Consequently, some White residents stopped participating in committee work (West, 1970, p. 131).

The underlying critical question for the committees was to what degree they had final authority. In the end, would the committee work stand on its own, and what would the relation be between the sub-committees and the oversight committee, the Citizen’s Planning Board? In the final analysis, would completed work be evaluated and then approved or disapproved based on political or technical merit by the City Council or other agencies?

With a looming deadline for completion of an integrated comprehensive plan, the committee work was arduous and riddled with conflicts, lack of clarity as to roles, and a disorganized planning process. It was clear that the existing level of expertise of the CDA staff was insufficient to pull off completion of a plan before the pending deadline in December. After several weeks of excruciating negotiations, Shultze was replaced by an outside consultant from Portland State University’s Urban Studies Center, Kenneth Gervais. Through a round-the-clock effort, Gervais was able to complete a draft of the comprehensive plan by the deadline in December. To do so, Gervais took the work out of committees, relied on the Citizen’s Planning Board for decision-making, and, in effect, moved the process from one of open assembly neighborhood involvement to a more rational planning process. A final plan was submitted to HUD in April of 1968.

This arduous and rancorous experiment in citizen participation in a poor area of town was unfolding against the backdrop of increased violence and rioting in American cities, with disenfranchised citizens taking messages of empowerment to the streets. Portland was not immune from civil unrest. While the Model Cities committees wrestled with developing a plan for revitalizing Albina, Black activists were taking to the streets. In July of 1967, a “riot” broke out in Irvington Park when the public was invited to see Eldridge Cleaver from Ramparts, the Black Arts theatre from San Francisco, and a SNCC (Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee) photo exhibit. Black youth were unhappy with community leadership, including leadership from northeast Portland. A delegation of youth at this time told Mayor Shrunk that many of the “clergy had sold out to middle class standard” and lost touch with people on the street. The Society for New Action Politics (SNAP), during a public hearing, told City Council that: “Negroes serving on social agency and Office of Economic Opportunity boards in Albina are Uncle Toms. ‘Uncle Tomism’ seems to be running rampant over there right now.” When Charles Jordan was flown in from California to be interviewed for the director of the new Model Cities program, Black Berets broke up an interview session, demanding that someone be hired from the local neighborhood (Portland Planning Bureau ,1993, p. 127).

As in other communities across America during this period, more radical elements of the civil rights movement pushed the more gradualist agenda of the mainstream. In Portland, groups like SNAP, Black Panthers, the Black Education Center, the Fred Hampton Free Health Clinic, and the Oregon Black Caucus rattled the cages of the mainstream black community. In 1972, NAACP refused to send a delegate to the state-wide meeting of the Oregon Black Caucus because of the Caucus’s separatist stand (NAACP, 1972).

Some older Black civic organizations were recycled to fit the times. In 1970, the OEO coordinating association of citizens, Albina Citizen’s War on Poverty, was reconfigured as Albina Citizens Together, which continued as representative to the Portland Metropolitan Services Committee (PMSC), until PMSC’s demise in 1977. By this time, the importance of representation of the Albina community in planning and service delivery was a foregone conclusion. All but one of the 37 members of the board were from North and Northeast Portland. The board make-up also reflected the growing leadership in Northeast Portland, as many of the local representatives were also representatives of social service programs, schools, and Black-owned businesses (Albina Citizens Together, 1970).

The Model Cities Program continued until 1974. In the five years of its operation, the program had spent $18.4 million. There were some concrete outcomes, such as: the King Neighborhood Facility (still serving as a central office for several neighborhood programs), the Albina Health Care Center (defunct), the development of the Cascade Campus of Portland Community College, and the Albina Art Center (Portland Planning Bureau, 1993, p. 133).

However, the physical outcomes only tell a part of the story. Charles Jordan, director of the Model Cities Program and later the city’s first Black City Commissioner, reflected on the lessons and legacy of the OEO War on Poverty and Model Cities programs when, in 1977, Portland’s city-wide coordinating body, the Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee, was dissolved. Jordan argued that the programs’ laudable goals of involving residents of poor neighborhoods in determining their fate caused at least two difficulties. “For one thing,” Jordan suggests, “the established agencies which served the poor, and which had largely failed to help them, were not drawn into the network of new agencies set up with OEO funds…These existing agencies should have either been incorporated into the new network of anti-poverty agencies, or dissolved. But they weren’t, and the result was and is a wasteful duplication.” The second difficulty was related to the relative inexperience of the new anti-poverty workers and agencies. “Suddenly, after years of exclusion, they were at the center of attention. They had to help plan new programs, run them, and evaluate the results. Yet the communities into which the funds were poured had little experience with such an undertaking (Jordan, 1977, p.4).”

In reflecting on the net results of initiatives from those days, Jordan alludes to programs that continued and then points to what he thought was the most enduring outcome. “Finally, the philosophy that citizens must participate in running the agencies which affect their destinies was spread and firmly implanted in the communities of the poor, as well as in the community as a whole. This means that there are leaders now who will consistently speak for the poor, leaders who won’t be excluded from participation in government decisions, or in other decisions which affect them. These leaders have come, and will continue to come, from among the poor themselves. This is the real and ultimate benefit which has come from the War on Poverty. The war itself has obviously not been won. But citizen participation by the poor is here to stay (Jordan, 1977).”

In a related appraisal of outcomes from this period, Darrell Millner, Director of Black Studies at Portland State University, noted that citizens in Albina had become more knowledgeable about the workings of city bureaucracy. In a forum piece in the Oregonian in 1976, he remarked that “many of those who stepped up the status ladder did so as a result of skills and professionalism gained by working in war on poverty programs” (Olmos, 1976).

In 1970, a key civic organization was formed, the Albina Ministerial Alliance. It surely wasn’t the first entry of Black churches into civic life, but marked the emergence of a religious group that had both direct service and advocacy goals. The Albina Ministerial Alliance had its roots as the Union Minister’s Fellowship which traced back to the 1930s. But in 1970, it was reorganized under the leadership of the Rev. John H. Jackson and began to play a more critical role in the social and political life of Albina. The Alliance stepped in several times to rescue or support social programs. For example, the Alliance took over the Head Start Program in 1977 when The Portland Metropolitan Steering Committee closed its doors. One of the characteristics of the Alliance was spelled out by the Rev. John Garlington, Jr., pastor of the Maranatha Church and Alliance President during the 1980s, when he said that he made no distinction between the social-action and religious aspects of the Alliance. This close relationship between religion and social action has remained a strong and unique characteristic of civic life in Albina (Colby, 1984).

Albina might have been slowly winning the war, reversing the trend of disinvestment and displacement, but it still lost battles. In 1967, needing to expand, Emanuel Hospital announced it would be requesting federal assistance to expand its 19-acre hospital campus. The Portland Development Commission had kept the Emanuel Urban Renewal Project out of the Model Cities Planning process to assure the institution it would be able to expand its services (Abbott, 1983, p. 196). A grassroots organization, the Emanuel Hospital Displaced Persons Organization was formed to combat the development, and a battle ensued that included street demonstrations and political finagling, but, in the end, the land clearance for the hospital expansion resulted in the loss of 188 houses.

Portland’s overall neighborhood public involvement system was evolving during this time. The neighborhood-based organizations in Albina created during the 1960s played a critical role in how the direct democratic venue of Portland’s neighborhood system evolved. One of the earliest of the post 1960s’ neighborhood associations in Portland was the Eliot neighborhood. The Eliot neighborhood had been the site of contentious dialogue during Model Cities committee work when the residents demanded to have more say-so over any plans for their neighborhood, especially any of those that might involve displacement (West, 1970, p. 132). The various organizations active in the Eliot neighborhood coalesced in 1971 to form the Eliot Neighborhood Association. Membership in the Neighborhood Association was open to all residents, with meetings being held regularly and association officers elected by the general membership. At this time, PDC paid a professional consultant to assist the residents in developing their plan, and a Neighborhood Development Office was established to provide residents with information and services. Elements of the neighborhood plan were reviewed and approved by the neighborhood association, the Model Cities Physical Environment and Housing Working Committee as well as the Model Cities Citizen Planning Board (Citizen Planning Board, 1973). The creation of the Eliot Neighborhood Plan in 1973, a part of the Comprehensive Development Plan for the Model Cities District, was one of several model community plans. It was a planning model that would be replicated both for its content and process, a collaborative effort between the city and neighborhood activists. In the eleven years since the first urban renewal plan, the City of Portland had developed a new civic planning process, the Albina neighborhood had a stable neighborhood association structure, and an indigenous civic leadership.

By 1977, by some accounts, things were looking up in Albina. An *Oregon Journal* piece from 1977 titled “Fix-up Fever Spreading” begins with this declaration: “With firebomb urban demolition a thing of the past, and more acceptable methods of neighborhood change picking up momentum, a new wave of optimism is sweeping Portland’s Albina territory.(Crick 1977, p. 9)” The article stated that lending institutions reported an increase in investment into the area, $17 million into five ZIP code areas starting from N. Williams Avenue (although this area also included a part of Alameda to the east that was an upper-middle-class neighborhood). Looking to the future, Warren Chung, president of the Northeast Business Booster Association, boasted, “you haven’t seen anything yet” (Crick, 1977).

The period from 1978 to 1984 witnessed a turnover in civic organizations in Albina. Several older groups died out, including the Albina Action Center and Albina Arts Center. New groups such as the Black United Front and Albina Fair Share, as well as the first community development corporations, were created during this period. The Black United Fund, modeled after a national foundation begun in 1974, was created to channel funds to projects focused in the Black community.

The other issue that gained significant attention during this period was political representation from the Black community. The BUF successfully lobbied to have minority representation on the Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) and the Portland School Board. A coalition including the Black United Front, Albina Ministerial Alliance and the Citizen’s Party, a chapter of a national political party movement, supported legislation at the state level intended to bring a focus on social and political issues of the Black community. In 1985, the Oregon Assembly for Black Affairs, established in 1977 to improve the status of Blacks in Oregon, created a task force to investigate the state of Black representation on civic boards, commissions, and advisory groups in the City of Portland. By the mid-1980s, the group forced Mayor Bud Clark to survey all city commissions, boards, and committees to determine the representation of minorities, and subsequently to implement a more structured set of rules to assure minority representation (Henry, 1985).

By this time, the citizen involvement structure for the City of Portland was both maturing and breaking apart. On the one hand, there were rules and processes in place with which citizens, bureaucrats and elected officials were now accustomed. An increasing number of citizens had come up through the ranks, understood how the political system worked, and were now in effect a part of the system. There was a growing body of knowledge about effective citizen involvement, as well as a growing number of citizens who had developed these civic skills. Starting in 1983, Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Program, the largest of Portland’s neighborhood coalition offices, with support from the Oregon Community Foundation, sponsored an annual Leadership Conference where citizens and bureaucrats shared their knowledge and skills (Van Horn, 1984).

On the other side of things, there were an increasing number of bureaucrats who had learned what it took to be effective advocates for their causes. While perhaps not crystal clear, the rules and regulations were at least more defined than they had been in the 1960s. There were rules governing neighborhood associations, including adherence to Oregon’s public meetings law, first established in 1972. There were rules established by the LCDC governing citizen involvement in the development of land use plans. Other city bureaus, including the Bureaus of Transportation and Planning, issued extensive process guides for citizen participation in transportation and planning issues. Additionally, the City of Portland, under the auspices of the Office of Neighborhood Associations, fully implemented Bureau Advisory Committees to provide direction to every bureau in the city. This vastly increased the number of citizens involved in the workings of city hall.

At the same time this growing army of citizens—versed in the new ways of doing things and comprising a kind of intermediary civic sector to address various community problem-solving venues—was a reality, there was also a growing number of citizens who felt unrepresented by this newly established civil order of things. In 1986, for example, a controversy developed in north Portland when a citizen activist declared that an established neighborhood association did not represent the neighborhood and wanted the city to recognize an alternative organization. The city refused, siding with the existing structure (Oliver, 1986). This type of challenge became prevalent during the latter 1980s and 1990s.

An increasingly divisive issue that would play a critical role as Albina and other inner city neighborhoods gentrified, and as regional plans called upon these neighborhoods to support their share of density and affordable housing, was the balance between renters and home owners. At a public hearing in the 1990s Albina planning process, one outspoken home owner from the Piedmont neighborhood in northeast Portland, reacting to a proposed affordable housing zoning overlay, bluntly stated a common viewpoint about increased density and renters by saying, "If it's so good, why not go city-wide? I'm sure everyone would appreciate as much as I do the joy of having a low-income renter living in their neighbor's garage." He added, "Don't legislate slums for homes (Pearlman, 1992).

As early as 1976, the Black middle class began moving out of Albina and into more affluent middle class neighborhoods while new “urban pioneers” were moving in. Younger families and single people looking for affordable home buying opportunities were beginning to resettle parts of Albina. In addition to new White settlers, a pattern repeated itself as new immigrants moved into the area from southeast Asia and Latin America. Once again, the area was becoming a stop-over neighborhood (Olmos, 1976).

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**Environment: The Johnson Creek Watershed**

In 1977, soon after the failure of the Metropolitan Service District and Corps of Engineers' plan, J. Emery published a telling document, *Why Nothing has Happened: A Case Study of Johnson Creek*, through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (Emery, 1977). In it he outlined several obstacles to designing a workable plan for Johnson Creek, including the tangled web of agency jurisdictions and the narrow definition of the “problem” as flooding. The flooding problem was perceived by many as of interest only to those few who were flooded, and therefore came with a simple answer: “You built in harm's way, so put up with it, or move.”

In 1979, MSD merged with the Columbia Regional Association of Governments (CRAG), an agency created to develop an orderly planning process for the Portland metropolitan region. The new agency, Metro, became the first and only elected regional government in the United States. In 1979, soon after the formation of Metro, it passed resolution 79-35, designating the Johnson Creek basin as an area impacting the orderly development of the region. Metro submitted its plan to form a Local Improvement District (LID) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as part of an urban stormwater management plan for the region. In 1980, the Metro Council approved the recommendations of a Johnson Creek Task Force and passed two ordinances, one approving the interim development controls and the other establishing the Johnson Creek Local Improvement District. The estimated costs of the three-part plan were about $10 million.

Because Metro was relying on federal Clean Water Act monies which came with requirements for citizen participation, the agency was more deliberate in its attempts to involve the general public. During 1980, 32 meetings were held in the Johnson Creek basin to educate the public about Metro's plan. An information center was established at Metro to answer questions about the plan. Portending the trouble to come, Metro received over 50,000 calls in a four week period, mostly negative. Then a public meeting was held at a high local school to accept public testimony. It was attended by an “unruly” crowd of over 700 people and was halted by the Fire Marshall at 11:15 p.m. when the crowd exceeded the capacity of the auditorium. A second large public hearing was moved to the Memorial Coliseum Exhibition Hall because of its larger capacity and the ease with which to make security arrangements. In the week preceding the meeting, Metro councilors had received threats. Both plainclothes and uniformed police were on hand.

It was during this period that the first citizen groups formed to focus on Johnson Creek. The Up the Creek Committee (UTCC) was formed to oppose the LID and Metro plan. The temperament of the group was strident and anti-government. The UTCC’s criticism included a dispute over the boundaries for the LID and the accuracy of the cost analysis, as well as a challenge to Metro's ability to levy taxes. Fundamentally, the UTCC' viewed this as an example of government jamming a solution down residents’ throats.

Disregarding the rising opposition from citizens, Metro decided to go ahead with its plan. This plan was to cost in excess of $10 million and would, as perceived by many citizens, benefit only a few: less than 1500 property owners out of 35,000 households. Metro's justification was based on the $1.5 million annual costs paid out for reconstruction of public infrastructure following flooding.

The Up the Creek Committee next re-formed with a larger goal and another name, Enough is Enough in Oregon. Their goal was now to collect enough signatures to put a ballot measure before voters in the entire state to dissolve. While Enough is Enough failed to collect the required signatures, it did have an impact. A measure to provide Metro with a tax base for financing its operation went before voters and was soundly defeated. As with every agency preceding it, Metro abandoned its Johnson Creek plan.

However, Metro did fund one more Johnson Creek program. Ethan Seltzer, who had written his Ph.D. dissertation on Johnson Creek, was hired to initiate a more education-based Johnson Creek program. Initially, Seltzer wrote a summary, similar to Emery's, analyzing why so little had been accomplished in the watershed. In this report, he determined that the environmental problems were perceived by residents to be political or institutional, not physical. Also, citizens did not agree on the basic definition of the basin’s boundaries and, therefore, on who should be involved or, more importantly, pay for solutions to Johnson Creek problems. Perhaps most importantly,

Seltzer determined that citizens were as much outraged about the process as the content. They perceived Metro to be a government beget by government that was forcing a solution on them.

Seltzer also contended that the plans were not based on social ecological communities of the basin. There didn’t exist a single community of interest, but rather multiple ones. While some residents were concerned about the flooding, it was a minority. Others were more concerned with maintaining their lifestyle, one that, although within reach of the expanding city, was decidedly rural in nature. To these residents, government intervention meant that life would change for the worse. While not environmentalists, this was a group more interested in maintaining the amenities, however damaged, of the stream and its surrounding area. It would still take a while for residents and planning agencies to understand the concept of ecosystem management, much less gain an appreciation for the differing cognitive maps of the watershed. Seltzer’s assessment was accurate, but way ahead of its time.

In the last day’s of Metro’s foray into Johnson Creek, Seltzer published a brochure about the creek in positive terms, highlighting its physical and cultural assets. It might have been the first time any government agency or, for that matter, private citizen had published a glamorous portrait of the creek. Seltzer also published a “do nothing” option assessment as a way of documenting the consequences of taking no action. He demonstrated that even the “do nothing” approach was costly to both individuals in the floodplain and other taxpayers.

It is also important to note that during this timeframe (1980 -1984), two other citizen groups formed. In 1980, a short-lived group, Responsible Action for Tomorrow (RAFT) formed to support the Metro plan, but it was not organized in time or with enough support to counter the vociferous Up the Creek and Enough is Enough crowd. A bit later, another small group was forged that included Seltzer in its membership, as well as others he met while conducting outreach in the Johnson Creek area. Initiated in 1984, it was named the Tideman Johnson Corridor Committee because it focused on one particular natural area of the creek, the Tideman Johnson Park canyon. Its purpose was to help raise people's interest in the creek as an amenity. The small citizen group, Friends of Johnson Creek, built momentum to carry the cause of Johnson Creek forward, providing tours, publishing articles, and soliciting continued government interest in the watershed. While flooding was still considered an important issue for the Friends, it was the creek as an asset that was of most interest. After all, Johnson Creek was one of the last free-flowing creeks in Portland, with some riparian open space and native fish populations, albeit fragile and diminishing. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the cause was still considered futile enough that will both humor and determination the Friends group sometimes referred to themselves as the Johnson Creek Marching band. It would take a law suit in another watershed, knew knowledge about watersheds, the creation of a bike and pedestrian trail that paralleled the creek, a dedicated congressional leader, and even Mother nature with a 100 year flood to turn the tide.**Conclusion**

Civic life was dramatically reforged during the Civic Reconstruction period. While traditional civic life still hung on, as witnessed by the fact that traditional civic organizations still made up 30 percent of the total population of civic organizations in the early 1970s, they were rapidly becoming irrelevant, as new types of organizations were formed, in the most part by baby boomers coming of age, with new issues on their mind, and new definitions of civic actions.

Advocacy groups, less than 5% of the total number of civic organizations in 1950s, accounted for almost twenty percent by the early 1970s. The largest segment of this growth was neighborhood associations, accounting for 40 percent of the new advocacy groups. Identity rights and environmental organizations also began to show up, accounting for about a quarter of new advocacy groups. Another critical element of the growth of advocacy organizations was the emergence of social service organizations with advocacy goals.

In part the demise of Portland's traditional civic organizations is explained by their lack of interest or capacity to work on the issues of the day, such as the environmental crisis, and lack of capacity for providing civic skills appropriate for the time such as public interest research, neighborhood actions, issue campaigns, voter initiatives and petitions, demonstrations, and court actions.

In the 1970s, the City of Portland embarked on a path to incorporate a greater cross section of citizens into public policy deliberations. While the number of boards and commissions remained fairly constant, the number of citizen advisory committees more than doubled, from 27 in the early 1960s to 56 in the early 1970s. In the 1970s, there were more citizens appointed to citizen advisory committees than to any other form of civic body. The increase in the number and breadth of citizen advisory committees, the increase in the total number of citizens involved in these representative forms of democracy, along with the advent of Portland’s experiment in direct democracy through the neighborhood involvement system, provided citizens with a richer environment for participation than had existed in the 1950s and early 1960s. Ordinary citizens, not only the civic elite and high-level professionals, were asked, to contribute their time to help in more of the technical, professional, and political affairs of the city.

While Portland didn't burn at its core like many cities in America during this period, there was an unruly quality to young Portlanders. Their civic actions such as demonstrations were not in the repertoire of traditional civic actions. The migration, and seemingly if not actual, spread of "hippies" everywhere was disturbing to the mild-mannered typical Portlander. One visit to an inner city park like Lair Hill in the late 1960s might convince some Portland citizens that the world was coming apart. The City of Portland Police Bureau created a s subversives watch group that monitored these *radicals*, including future commissioners and mayors. Then in 1972, one of those "hippies" (although *real* hippies would have not seen much common ground) Neil Goldschmidt was elected Mayor, complimenting a maverick governor, Tom McCall, who stood stridently at the Oregon border, asking people to visit but not stay. The new mayor welcomed the young activists into civic life, codified and to some degree co-opted the energy of the social movements through give them a voice at the civic table, in particular through the neighborhood involvement system. He also listened carefully to the grassroots opposition to paving paradise with parking lots, and through the 1972 Downtown Plan, and later the city comprehensive plan (1979-1980) created a new planning regime that involved citizens upfront, and re-directed the auto-centric community toward more Jane Jacobs approach to urban planning.

It was a period of daring but fragile organizational experimentation. The organizational landscape was littered with failures as young people attempted to create organizations, such as the Learning Community, that attempted to change themselves while creating democratically-operated organizational forms, while also saving the planet. Many organizations "failed" and some such as Outside In and the Saturday Market endured, while others such as Rain and Sun and passed away but *paved* the way for Portland's sustainability and green narrative in the 1990s.

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.

Women made in roads into the political structure of the city, pushing their way into male bastilles such as the Portland City Club, and created literally hundreds of organizations and programs that catered to women's interests and needs.

Environmental organizations grew and prospered, but it was still difficult for citizens, and even environmentalists, to focus their attention on greenspace within the city. The primary environmental activities, directed from groups stationed in the city, was to preserve forest and farm land out there, beyond the urban growth boundary.

Chapter Four

Popular Pluralism

and Innovation

**Civic Narrative**

Citizen governance in Portland hit its peak in the 1980s. The City created more citizen advisory committees during the 1980s than any other decade. In the 1980s there were 76 civic bodies (46 new ones) working on social issues. The more contentious types of civic actions, such as demonstrations and protests, peaked in the mid-1970s. Activists who were on the streets in the late sixties and early seventies were more likely by the mid-1980s to be presenting testimony at public hearings, involved in local neighborhood battles, or deliberating public policy by sitting on citizen advisory committees. During the 1980s citizens in Portland pulled off a “velvet revolution.” Bud Clark, a neighborhood activist from northwest Portland, was elected mayor in 1985. At about the same time (1981—1986) Margaret Strachan, another neighborhood activist from northwest Portland, became a city commissioner. Strachan’s commitment to civic democracy was evident in how she developed a process for updating and expanding the City’s Downtown Plan of 1972, and the Central City Plan. To a gathering of planners she emphasized that “the process we’re using turns the traditional planning role upside down. It starts with citizens, is driven by them, is controlled by them and approved by them. The planner serves as guide, skilled professional, and pencil for the public (Hovey, 1998, p. 43).”

While the 1980s can be viewed as the pinnacle of citizen governances, by the end of the century there was a sense that some parts of the fabric of civic life in Portland had unraveled. During the 1990s the number of citizen advisory groups declined, and the City withdrew from two of its most innovative, but cumbersome, democratic innovations, the bureau advisory committee structure and neighborhood needs reports.

It is also notable by comparing news about neighborhood actions in the mid-1980s and the late 1990s, a rather astounding difference is notable. In the mid 1980s three fourths of the news about neighborhood action was positive. Neighborhood associations were described as saving neighborhoods, hosting block parties, and involved in positive encounters with government through sanctioned planning processes. In the late 1990s the opposite was true. Two thirds of the news about neighborhood actions was negative. Headlines referred to neighborhoods as battle zones: “Battle of Boise,” “Long dispute over fire station resolved,” “North Portland opposes Jail,” “Two of Portland’s victories for NIMBY movement,” “Southeast neighborhoods unsatisfied with city services.” The neighborhood system, established to provide the city with intermediary organizations, had instead spawned outside challenging groups.

In the late 1980s and 1990s, community activism which focused on limiting the powers of government through dismantling public programs was on the rise; so were activists and activist groups that viewed government as an obstacle, rather than a partner in achieving individual and community benefits. Empowered individual citizens and citizen groups used the initiative system to undermine representative government process, forcing politicians to spend more time acting on legislation presented by outside challenging groups rather than their own agenda.

During this period civic innovations also emerged in the public and nonprofit sectors to respond to the complexity of empowered citizen groups, and the consequent need to re-establish community consensus about a common vision for the community. In the early 1990s the City of Portland embarked on an ambitious process to re-involve the public in the future of Portland by creating a 40-member policy committee, the Portland Future Focus. In recognition of the need to repair the relationship between citizens and governing structures in 1994 the City of Portland re-evaluated Portland’s 20-year old neighborhood involvement system through the creation of the Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement. When Portland once again elected a populist mayor Tom Potter, in 1994, the neighborhood system was revisited through the Portland Vision and Community Connect programs initiated by the mayor. To avoid some of the pitfalls of over articulation of interests by citizen-interest organizations, the Coalition for A livable Future was created, a coalition of 60 groups focused on constructive dialogue about managing growth in the region.

**Civic Organizations**

During the late 1970s and 1980s the growth of new civic organizations and civic bodies continued, although at a slower pace than during the civic reconstruction period. Traditional civic organizations were displaced from the center of civic life in Portland. New types of civic organizations, in particular citizen interest and advocacy organizations, focused on political issues, come to dominate the civic sphere, and carried out their role in the community with new civic practices. Robert Dahl (1994) refers to this new form of civic democracy as popular pluralism. By the mid-1980s traditional civic organizations that in the 1950s dominated civic life in Portland, made up less than 25% of all civic organizations. It was also a period of relative organizational stability, at least compared to the civic reconstruction period. In the early 1970s 80% of the organizations were less than 15 years old, whereas by the mid 1980s it was the reverse. This stability was not constant among all types of organizations. For example, women’s organizations and arts organizations both had high birth rates indicating a period of innovation and experimentation. However, by the late 1980s many women’s organizations died out; but as explored later in this chapter this wasn’t always organizational failure so much as it was acceptance of the feminist agenda.

By the end of the 20th century, there were more advocacy organizations in Portland than any other type, while traditional civic organizations had basically disappeared, accounting for 10 percent of the total civic population. There was also a return of more contentious civic activity in the news, including tree sitting in ancient forests, eco-terrorist activities in defense of animal rights, and hotly contested anti-abortion activities. Reports of neighborhood actions were down from the mid-1980s and the news tended to be more negative than positive as some of the Cities formal civic planning processes turned contentious. Conservative groups showed up in the news more often in the 1990s, utilizing the types of civic actions that had been developed by more progressive organizations in previous decades.

**Civic Opportunities**

**Direct Democracy**

One of the most telling ways that the City of Portland opened the policy door in the 1980s and let citizens in was through the development of Budget Advisory Committees (BACs). At least 25 percent of the appointments to citizen advisory committees during the 1980s were on BACs. When Mayor Neil Goldschmidt initiated the process in 1974 there were only five BACs. It wasn’t until 1980 that the City Council formally adopted goals and guidelines for them. In 1983, another resolution further refined the roles and functions of the BACs by requiring the budget division of the City to analyze and incorporate BAC reports into the budgeting process, prior to their submission to the City Council. As with other citizen advisory committees, the goal of establishing citizen participation was central to the BAC process. Committee size was set at between 8 and 15, and appointments were to be made that “respected diversity of viewpoints, minority representation, geographical balance and special bureau-related knowledge (Office of Neighborhood Associations, 1989).”

The process of involving citizens through the BACs was supplemented by the Neighborhood Needs Report system also created during the 1980s. The system allowed neighborhood associations to submit reports to ONA which contained the prioritized needs for public works projects established by the neighborhoods. The City bureaus were expected to return the needs requests with either approval of the projects or explanations about why they could not currently be undertaken or if they might be undertaken in the future.

The BAC process was labor intensive and represented the epitome of the City’s investment in citizen democracy during this period. Not all bureaus responded warmly to this process, and eventually the BAC process was modified, allowing bureaus to have more control over how citizen advisory processes were established. But during the 1980s the BAC innovation underscored the City’s commitment to representative participation by more citizens.

During the 1990s, the City of Portland decided to re-evaluated aspects of its citizen involvement programs. In October 1994, it created the Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement to re-examine Portland’s 20-year-old neighborhood associations system. The City took painstaking care to make this task force of 25 members representative of stakeholders and neighborhoods. The staff considered representation interests such as average citizens, business persons, homeowners, renters, schools, human services, nonprofit specialists, churches, environmental activists, arts, youth, home builders/developers, women, and people of color.

The Task Force, unlike commission-level appointments or elite forms of citizen governance, was to be a cross section of citizens. This goal was disputed during its formation, because there were now established (or “professional”) activists, and others who were considered (or considered themselves) outsiders. The citizens on the Task Force were seasoned neighborhood activists, who on average had been involved in the neighborhood system for over six years, and some of the Task Force members had chalked up as many as 12 and 15 years of experience. The Task Force also contained representatives from the nonprofit and philanthropic community, and from the Hispanic, Black, and Asian communities. While this array might not have represented all interests in the community, it did so much more than any civic body in the traditionalist era of the 1950s. The diversity of the Task Force fostered dynamic and sometimes contentious dialogue, as members and general public participants argued over basic, direct democratic principles. A chief concern of the Task Force was determining the degree of autonomy the neighborhood system should have from government bureaucracy. As originally designed, the neighborhood associations had been independent of the city government, a situation that had created civic innovations and a sense of ownership, but also at times conflict of interests, since the associations and district offices received most of their funding from the City. The Neighborhood District Coalition offices distributed throughout the city were overseen by citizen boards, whose members were appointed by the neighborhood associations from their respective areas of town. The board members considered themselves to be charged with guiding the actions of paid staff members, even though the staff’s paychecks came from the City. In the end, the Task Force was unable to come up with anything better than to change the name from Office of Neighborhoods Associations to Office of Neighborhood Involvement and to include neighborhood business associations under its umbrella (Neighborhood Involvement Task Force, 1995).

The neighborhood system has both detectors and advocates. When Randy Leonard was elected as a City Commissioner in 2002 he drew an outpouring of criticism from long-time neighborhood activists, when he attempted to retool ONI as a service bureau. Some have assumed that the neighborhood system has had its day, and others (Witt 2000) have argued that changes in Portland’s neighborhood involvement system in the 1990s undermined its effectiveness as a democratic institution. One of the key elements on Portland’s neighborhood system which received high marks in *The Rebirth of Urban Democracy* (Berry, Portney, Thomson 1993) was the balance between administrative support, including financial aid for staff at neighborhood district offices, and the independent authority of neighborhood associations and district offices to act free of political influence. Witt argued that this tenuous balance created conflict that finally erupted in at least two incidents that resulted in the City of Portland rearranging its administrative structure so that the district office staff worked directly under the city’s Office of Neighborhood Involvement, thus diminishing the autonomy of the offices. In addition to this change, Witt pointed out two other critical changes that adversely affected Portland’s neighborhood involvement system as an independent direct democratic process: (1) the dissolution of the Bureau Advisory Committee (BAC) program, that had allowed neighborhood activists to sit on advisory boards which oversee bureaus, and (2) the decision to include neighborhood business associations and other interest groups as officially recognized neighborhood organizations deserving of support from the Office of Neighborhood Involvement.

Throughout the 1990s citizens remained active in their neighborhoods, protesting developments that would affect the quality of life in their neighborhoods through public meetings, hearings, neighborhood planning processes, demonstrations, lobbying, voluntary action to secure open space and community facilities, and court actions. Citizens acted in several ways, sometimes as individuals and sometimes through neighborhood associations, citizen interest groups, and ad hoc coalitions. The civic dialogue about neighborhood issues was organized by government, as in the case of the City of Portland developing a plan for southwest Portland or the creation of urban renewal districts in southeast and northeast Portland. Sometimes the process was amicable, sometimes not. The planning process in southwest Portland was brought to a grinding halt by activists upset with proposed density increase, while in Gateway (northeast Portland) citizens worked in harmony with regional planning agencies.

**Civic Opportunities**

**Representative Democracy**

Citizen governance in Portland hit its peak in the 1980s. There were more civic bodies of all types and greater membership on civic bodies than any other period, including the 1990s. In total there were only 10 more licensing boards and commissions in the 1980s than in the 1970s. On the other hand, in the 1960s there were 32 citizen advisory committees and taskforces, whereas in the 1980s there were 131.

The slow rise in the number of boards and commissions was evenly paced. As the population grew the city became more complex and a few new boards and commissions were added. But the growth in citizen advisory committees and task forces cannot be simply explained by increases in population growth and social complexity. Rather it was a result of more citizens wanting to be more directly engaged in civic life through deliberative democratic processes, not just charity and community service, and local government’s acceptance of this radical change in governance.

The numbers alone tell us only that the number of civic bodies had increased. Many of the areas of interest in the city had remained constant after 1960. The great exception to this is the number of civic bodies working on social issues. In the 1960s Portland had only 15 civic bodies focused on social issues, including two on education, two on health issues, one on decent literature and films, one on animal care, one on youth, one on human rights, and two on Model Cities programs in northeast Portland. In the 1970s, 20 new civic bodies were created to work on social issues, with health (7) crime and safety (7) accounting for most of the additions. In the 1980s there were 76 civic bodies (46 new ones) working on a large range of social, including childcare, disaster response, volunteerism, comparable worth and pay equity, a “crack” cocaine epidemic, emergency needs and homelessness, help for the mentally ill, internal police issues, refugee resettlement, and problems of street prostitution. In some cases civic bodies were created to work on specific and timely issues. Almost half of the 46 new civic bodies formed during this time (20) dealt with crime and safety issues.

While the number of civic bodies, and their membership numbers increased during the 1980s, they declined during the 1990s. The total number of bodies decreased slightly, although the number of citizen advisory committees and commissions stayed the same, licensing boards and task forces declined. But, this lack of change in the total number of civic bodies masks the fact that there had been substantial change in the make-up of civic bodies. Only 23 of the 85 citizen advisory committees in existence in the 1990s had been formed before then (3 in the 1970s and 20 in the 1980's.) Thirteen of these 23 surviving committees were budget or bureau advisory committees, and by the mid-1990s most had been dissolved or re-organized. In the 1990s, the City Council decided to give its bureaus discretion on how to establish citizen advising processes. Some bureaus created ongoing advisory groups, while others focused more on involving citizens directly through neighborhood associations, public hearings, or special committees and task forces.

**Repertories of Civic Actions**

By the mid to late 1980s the vocabulary of civic life in Portland had changed dramatically. Instead of talk about fashion shows and dance benefits, citizen activists discussed vigils, teach-ins, sit-ins, marches, strikes, mobilizations, protests, resistance, rallies, encampments, boycotts, activities that traditional civic organizations did not have in their repertoire. Civic organizations were working on issues such as scenic rivers, alternatives to nuclear power, recycling, air quality, and billboard removal, most of which fell outside the domain of traditional civic organizations.

In this period traditional civic activities--fundraising, election of officers, and honors and awards—received less attention than newer types of civic actions, such as public interest research, initiatives and petitions, demonstrations, and neighborhood-based actions.

The types of civic actions undertaken by civic organizations between the early 1970s and the mid-1980s reveals how contentious activities, such as demonstrations, declined while neighborhood-based actions, citizen participation through hearings processes, and participation in civic life through appointed civic bodies, rose. Some of the decline of more contentious civic actions is explained by the end of America's war in southeast Asia. But, in general, it seems that the activists who were on the streets in the early 1970s were more likely by the mid-1980s to be presenting testimony at public hearings, involved in local neighborhood battles through neighborhood associations, or deliberating public policy by sitting on citizen advisory committee. It would appear that some portion of the contentious activity of challenging groups had been channeled into more civil structures and practices.

While the late 1970s and 1980s was a rosy time for public involvement in Portland by the mid-1990s there was a sense that some parts of the fabric of civic life in Portland had unraveled. Responding to this decline in civic actions and practices the local government as well as the nonprofit sector responded with several key civic innovations.

In the early 1990s, the City of Portland invested in a strategic planning process called the Portland Future Focus. A 40-member policy committee was created, in the words of its chairperson, Hardy Myers, “to think about our city as a whole, think about where we’re heading, where we would like to head and steps we can take to get there (Ames, 1990).” This kind of visioning process, also adopted by other cities and counties in the Portland region, is an increasingly popular way to bring together diverse communities of interest to develop consensus about a vision for the community. In the past this vision setting may have taken place behind closed doors amongst the civic elite, but new strategic planning process like the Portland Future Focus are more open and democratic. The membership of the Future Focus reflected the changing landscape of the civic world. While business and labor interests were represented, it was also populated by citizen interest groups and social service and environmental activists. On the 31-member committee sat 9 business representatives, 14 from government and schools, 1 from labor, and 16 from issue interest groups or neighborhood associations.

The Oregon Solutions Program, another civic innovation, grew out of the State of Oregon’s Sustainability Act of 2001. First situated in the executive branch of state government, but since January of 2002 it has been a program of the National Policy Consensus Center at Portland State University. Oregon Solutions has promoted a new style of community governance based on the principles of collaboration, integration, and sustainability. Oregon Solutions develops community partnerships among private, public, and nonprofit organizations to creative innovative solutions to critical social and political problems.

As an example of how Oregon Solutions works is illustrated by their intervention in a contentious planning issue along one of southeast Portland's up and coming commercial districts, Division Street. Oregon Solutions assisted a neighborhood coalition of businesses, residents, community based organizations, and the City of Portland in reaching agreement on the scope of a transportation and land use plan for Division Street in southeast Portland. The long-term vision for the project is to merge environmental needs, cultural needs, business needs, and community needs into one program for this ‘green street’ meets ‘main street’ initiative. The partners include DivisionVision (the neighborhood coalition), the Transportation Growth Management program, Metro, Mirador/7 Corners Localization Initiative, Southeast Uplift, the Portland Department of Transportation, and the Portland Bureau of Planning. In this case they provided technical assistance and become a broker between the various interests. Oregon Solutions also provided key assistance to an innovative eco-agricultural park, Zenger Farm in southeast Portland. The Friends of Zenger Farm proposed to develop an education center on land owned by the City as part of its Johnson Creek watershed restoration efforts. The Friends had secured the land, a broad base of local support but did not have the clout to gain corporate, private foundation, and individual donations. Oregon Solutions helped the Friends by developing a capital campaign to restore farm buildings so they could be used for education programs.

Another important civic innovation in the mid-1990s was the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF), a coalition of 60 special interest organizations—in effect a multi-issue public interest organization. It's members include environmental organizations: local civic environmental organizations and local chapters of national groups, affordable housing advocacy organizations and community development corporations, urban design associations, religious groups and churches; and grass-roots social justice organizations. The CLF conducts most of its work through seven working groups on affordable housing, economic development and urban revitalization, government investment and finance, transportation reform, urban design, national resources, and environmental justice, The CLF is a self-correcting, self-learning organization that attempts to affect the regional dialogue about urban growth through a variety of self-teaching and public education activities. It has used a variety of forms of outreach and education to meet its goals, including sponsoring speakers, hosting workshops, creating urban design charettes, sponsoring field and canoe trips, taking advantage of regional “teachable moments,” slide shows, preparing white papers, organizing conferences, coalition and working group meetings, one-on-one conversations, and testimonies. The CLF provides a vehicle through which interest groups can leverage their individual power into a stronger single voice by developing shared policy statements and carrying out civic actions. The CLF also allows interest groups to learn about the perspectives of other interest groups, In this way, a way to overcome the democratic deficiencies of single-purpose interest groups.

Shortly after Mayor Tom Potter took office in 2005 he created a program that became known as VisionPDX that was a visioning process for the city led by a 40 member committee. From 2005 to 2007 VisionPDX engaged about 17,000 community members through events, discussions, interactive theatre, one-on-one conversations and questionnaires. In 9 different languages, community members were asked the following questions:

* What do you value most about Portland and why?
* What changes would you most like to see in Portland right now?
* Imagine Portland 20 years in the future and all your hopes for the city have been realized. What is different? How is our city a better place?
* As you imagine the Portland you've just described, what are the most important things we can do to get there?

As part of the visioning process the Vision into Action Coalition chose 12 community groups to receive Community Action Grants as a way of creating multi-media responses to

the community vision articulated through visionPDX. Projects funded included expansion of a newspaper run by the homeless community, a day labor's workers rights education program, a social justice theater project, a oral history healing project for Cambodian refugees, and a multi-cultural food and music festival.

The VisionPDX process was followed by Community Connect project led by an 18-member workgroup of volunteer community members. Community Connect engaged nearly 1,400 Portlanders to get their ideas about how the City can better support its communities, and it conducted national research to identify innovative models and best practices. The Plan builds on a trend begun in 2005 through the ONI BAC process to broaden the City’s existing neighborhood-based system to more fully engage the diversity of our communities. One of the driving forces behind the Community Connect project was a demographic factor that Portland's aging civic involvement infrastructure, particularly the neighborhood system was not adapt at handling. According to the Urban Institute, Oregon saw a 108% increase in its foreign-born population between 1990-2000. Foreign-born now account for 13% of Portland’s population.

In the 1990s Portland State University (PSU) adopted a new curriculum that has dramatically altered civic life in Portland, as well as student and faculty relationships to the community. The sweeping change in PSU's education requirements came about as a way to face several issues. The university was facing funding cutbacks, a high drop out rate, and the need to establish itself as a unique university in Oregon's only large urban area. The university refocused its core undergraduate requirements so that students and faculty partnered with the community itself as a learning laboratory. In the span of just a few years, community-based learning became one of the central pedagogies of the school. Community-based learning is spread throughout the campus, and at each year of the undergraduate program. The undergraduate requirements end with a Senior Capstone course that brings groups of students from different majors together with a faculty facilitator and a community partner. Each Capstone course must include a final product that directly responds to a community partner-identified issue or need. Today, PSU offers over 200 Capstone courses annually, involving over 2,500 students. Diverse community partners include K-12 schools, organizations focusing on environmental issues, immigrant population centers, neighborhood organizations, arts agencies and small and large businesses, among others.

While the capstone is a critical component of the revised education requirements, the reform goes far beyond that. The administration and faculty have embraced community-based learning throughout the undergraduate experience. Every year, 8,000 students work in the community, selecting from 1000 different community partners. At the heart of this innovative curriculum is learning, not volunteerism. While PSU students perform valuable community service – contributing $4-6 million annually in volunteer time – the university assesses outcomes as measured by decreased drop-out rates, assessment of the learning environment by students and faculty, and, in the long term, the continued involvement of students in civic life. This last measure is determined, in part, from the students’ experiences. When graduates of PSU are asked if they plan to continue their engagement, the strongest determinant is their sense of efficacy, i.e. whether what they did made a difference. This need for efficacy was tempered by the degree to which they felt trust in public institutions. If trust and efficacy were lacking, then students tend to look out only for themselves, leaving the work of protecting the commons to someone or something else (Morgan and Williams 2003).

Looked at from the community's perspective, PSU's education reform improves the health of Portland's civic infrastructure. Students graduating from the university not only are in a good position to land good jobs, they are also good citizens who contribute to the community through lowering the transaction costs of government. Since PSU students also tend to enter the job market in the Portland area, the impact in terms of civic life in Portland is decisive.

The university has always played a vital role in the civic life of Portland, and now even more so. PSU students played a important role in defining Portland’s neighborhood system by demanding a role in urban renewal efforts near the university. Students initiated a housing program that has grown into College Housing Northwest, a multi-million dollar housing corporation for student housing in downtown Portland. Portland’s nationally known bicycle transportation program had its birth in the PSU Bike Lobby in the early 1970s. And, the first recycling businesses in Portland were student-led: Cloudburst, Sunshine Recycling, and Portland Recycling Team. In 2008, PSU was received its largest single gift, a $25 million bequest from the Miller Foundation to develop the university as a center of the efforts to make the region environmentally and socially sustainable. A central component of the new initiative is development of partnerships with community partners.

**Civic Space**

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 build 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 McMenamin brothers. The brothers have opened more than twenty pubs and entertainment center that imamate 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.

**Virtual Civic Space**

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 watts 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 electorial and campaign organizing for activists, and most every NGO in Portland at least has a www site.

**Community Issues**

**Planning**

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 20th 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 lightening 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 refereed 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 Alinksy-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 20th 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.

**Community Issues**

**Environment**

**Overview**

In terms of total number of environmental organizations, between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s there was not much growth. There were about 30 environmental groups in the early 1970s, and combining the number that were born, and those that died, there was only a net increase of 4 groups. However, from the late 1980s to the early 2000s there was an explosion of the number of groups. By 2004, there were 350 environmental organizations in the Portland metropolitan region. This growth is due to several factors. For one thing, sustainability as an over-arching concept and umbrella, beginning in the early 1990s, instigated the creation of many new organizations. Many of these groups had multi-faceted concerns, similar to the groups such as Rain in the early 1970s. Also, nearly one third of the new groups were small, place-based and for the most part volunteer organizations, e.g., watershed groups and *friends* of places and streams. In part the rise of these groups was a recognition that the wall between the built and natural environment, even Portland's urban growth boundary, created an artificial boundary, one that assumed urbanized areas had "throw away" ecologies. In fact, up to the 1990s State inventories of biodiversity in the region tended to by-pass the Portland area, as though there were no environment to be assessed.

**Country in the City**

Until the 1980s the environmental movement in Oregon focused on preservation of the wilderness that was “out there,” not in the city where one had to live at times in order to be an activist. Urban-based environmentalists spent weekdays in meetings with other activists and driving the hour-long commute to the state capital, Salem, to present testimony, while spending weekends or vacations in the Pacific Northwest wilderness. They thought that the city, for the most part, was a lost cause. Interestingly, a plan for the development of city parks created by Frederick Olmsted in the early 1900s called for more parks, open space and green corridors within the city, but in 1919 the City Planning Commission instead of bringing the country into the city, had decided to find ways, including the building of “civic” roads, for citizens to experience nature outside of the city.

While the mainstream environmental groups continued their work on air and water pollution and preservation of wilderness, smaller groups began to take shape that focused on specific places, “friends of” and watershed groups. Another unique characteristic of this new wave of environmental groups was their consideration of close to home issues: country was brought into the city. Wilderness preservation out there was not the only green infrastructure that gain environmentalists interest. In the Urban Natural Resource Directory published by Audubon Society of Portland in 1995, over 75 friends of and watershed organizations were identified.

But, today Portland is known for its progressive greenspaces program, managed by the regional government, Metro, and the urban reforestation efforts of Friends of Trees, the City of Portland’s Urban Forestry Program and Bureau of Environmental Services. It is also the home to over 75 “friends of places” and streams and watershed groups. Looking back into Portland’s history, this is a triumph of the visions of Lewis Mumford and Olmsted over that of Robert Moses who proposed a maze of freeways to create a modern city.

Oregon’s land use laws, initiated in the early 1970s and implemented slowly over the next decade, protected farmlands and forests from urban encroachment, but the urban landscape was for the most part left to builders and activists concerned with social justice, community development, housing, and other urban issues. Goal 5, of Oregon’s 19 goals for planning requires local governments "to conserve open space and protect natural and historic resources for future generations" (Oregon State Planning Goals, 1994, p. 300). However, the state prescribed no methods for inventorying natural resources or for deciding how local jurisdictions should balance economic and environmental considerations when reviewing developments. While local municipalities might take inventories of parks and publicly owned lands, they would not likely have or be apt to create an inventory of natural resources within urban growth areas.

Citizens came to the rescue. Mike Houck, considered by many the leader of the urban environmental movement in Portland, points to two important events in the evolution of Portland’s greenspaces program. He and Joe Poracsky, a geography professor at Portland State University, in the mid-1980s, held informal seminars on urban natural resources, and then pooled their resources to hire a an aerial photographic service to fly over the entire region as one step in creating an inventory of its natural resources. It was a seat-of-the-pants-operation, as Houck recalls,

I put $20,000 from [the Portland] Audubon[Society]up, to cover the cost of this, and fortunately didn’t have to actually cut the check because we raised the $20,000 from a variety of parties…This was May of ’88 and ’89, and Joe then, had a graduate student, Paul Newman, who digitized all that information. Put it into a geographic information system which then went to Metro, which showed where all the remaining green spaces in the region were. So that was the first time that we had a true indication of what was left on the ground with respect to natural areas. (Sinclair, 2000)

In addition to pushing for better science and data about the urban natural landscape, Houck and others led the charge to protect the Portland region’s remaining open spaces and corridors. Some of the first acts bordered on the edge of unacceptable civic behavior yet were also creative and effective. For example, Oaks Bottom, a 160-acre wetland on the Willamette River, had been acquired by the City for a park, but the City was considering turning the site into either a motocross course or a yacht harbor. Houck employed a campaign of stealth politics and public education to keep Oaks Bottom natural. First, he made 40 "Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge" signs and placed them throughout the property. Then, at countless public meetings Houck's advocacy inspired conservationists, key politicians, and even reluctant business interests to believe that this riparian wetland represented a "providential gift" (Bruce, 1999). Using his favorite political action, Houck led scores of field and canoe trips to introduce citizens and politicians to the 140 species of birds nesting near the central city. In 1988 Mayor Bud Clark, who became a heron enthusiast after a Houck canoe trip, led the City Council in designating Oaks Bottom as a wildlife refuge (Bruce, 1999).

Soon after Oaks Bottom was secured as a natural area, a local foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust, awarded him a grant to set up a Metropolitan Wildlife Refuge System. In a speech to the Portland City Club in 1989, he called on his audience to renew an old mission, not invent a new one. He noted that Natural corridors were essential for enhancing biodiversity, but as Olmsted and Mumford had argued before him, such an interconnected system of natural landscapes also enhanced human life. It was, Houck argued, a way to link people together. He went on to say, “we need to cultivate--or renew--a feeling of the landscape. We need to rediscover what living here means to us on an intuitive, visceral level (Bruce, 1999, p. 297).”

After Houck's City Club address, Metro's planning staff investigated the possibility of linking the region's natural areas with a series of greenways, and completed a study of regional parks which found "there was no regional coordination in natural area parks and preserves" (Metro, 1992, p. 42). In response to these concerns, Metro hired Joseph Poracsky to map the region's natural lands. The study team mapped 3,600 natural sites totaling 119,000 acres in a 602-square-mile area. After Poracsky found that only 8.5 percent of the natural land acreage was protected, he co-wrote a position paper, that set the guidelines for what became a Metro initiative, Metropolitan Greenspaces (Houck & Poracsky, 1994).

Metro worked closely with Houck in promoting its new program. The agency provided Houck with office space to conduct public outreach and network development after he helped the agency obtain a $1.1-million grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior to establish the Greenspaces Program--one of two national demonstration projects. Houck remained “on loan” from Audubon and the Wetlands Conservancy from 1989 to 1992. He maintained his independence from Metro so that he could continue to serve as an advocate and critic of the Greenspaces Program (Howe, 1998). In 1991 the first greenspaces brochure introduced the concept of linking "a mosaic of natural areas into greenspaces, preserving wildlife habitat and crafting greenways for animals, plants, and people" (Metro, 1991).

In July 1992 Metro completed the Greenspaces Master Plan. The plan sought to protect and restore the "green infrastructure" through land acquisition and regulation (Metro, 1992). It took 3 more years of consensus building, however, before voters passed a $138.8-million bond measure to fund a natural land acquisition program. Since that time Metro has purchased over 8,000 acres in the Portland metropolitan area (Metro, 2004c).

**Sustainability**

In the early to mid 1990s, the sustainability movement began to take shape. While the roots of sustainability can be traced back the Earth Day period, the two singular global events that marked the beginning were the Brundtland Report, “Our Common Future,” published by the United Nations in 1987, which bridged environmental and development communities by emphasizing, that “attempts to maintain social and ecological stability through old approaches to development and environmental protection will increase instability. Security must be sought through change….we are unanimous in our conviction that the security, well being, and very survival of the planet depend on changes, now.” One of the outcomes of the meeting was the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, with two years of preliminary meetings and a culminating international conference, referred to as the Rio conference in June 1992.

The activists at the center stage of sustainability are generalists or systems thinkers. It is not **one** issue that fuels their activities, but the relationship between the issues. The group that most exemplifies center stage sustainability thinking is Ecotrust, not afraid to cast a systematic look at all angles of sustainability, and promote a conservation economy with its various types of capital (natural, social, human and bioregional). Sustainable Northwest hosts the premiere sustainability event in Portland (and draws regionally and nationally), its annual Sustainable Northwest Conference, and solutes pioneers and role models through its Founders award. Other groups that look at sustainability through a multiple lens perspective include the Northwest Earth Institute, the International Sustainable Development Foundation, Oregon Solutions, the Institute for the Northwest, World Stewards (Columbia Gorge bioregion but with deep roots in the Portland area), and the Pacific Green Party that uses sustainable practices as a key part of its party platform.

Many of the environmental and sustainability groups think globally while acting locally, a noble sentiment that may at times seem futile given the immensity of global environmental problems. That has not kept groups from coming up with unique ways to act on global issues. The Cool Portland Campaign, Greenhouse Network, and Climate Trust have all embarked on creative efforts to stem global climate change. For example, the Climate Trust was created in 1997 to act upon state of Oregon legislative (HB 3283) that requires new energy facilities build in the state to avoid, sequester, or displace a portion of their previously unregulated carbon dioxide emissions. The Trust provides a way for gas-fired power plants to meet their state requirements by providing funding to the Trust to fund projects that will mitigate the carbon emission of the plant. It is also of note that the sustainability and environmental movement in Portland is unusually global in reach for an urban area not classified as a global city. Out of the 350 groups, 57 or 16% of the groups are regional, national or international in scope.

An important strategy of the sustainability movement is to create choice for consumers who want to live sustainable lifestyles. The power of choice as a political action is evident by the importance placed on certification processes as mentioned, and financial options such as the Resource Conservation Credit Union, Shore bank, Progressive Investments, Earthshare, organizations that allow people to invest in socially responsible companies or donate to environmental and sustainability causes. There are also groups that focus on supporting people to take actions individually and in small groups that support sustainability goals. The Northwest Earth Institute has become a model for the use of study and action circles for helping people learn about and support each other in choosing lifestyles that bring us closer to a conserver economy. Since 1993, the Institute has facilitated 1,210 courses involving over 12,000 people in the Portland metro area. Other groups focused on lifestyle politics include: Global Action network, Earthday Everyday Oregon, EarthSave, and the Sustainable Living Project (OSU Extension Service). Directories providing options likewise have helped citizens make sustainable choices such as: Chinook book, and Re:direct, and the Portland Greenmap: Resources for Community Sustainability.

The pivotal founding event of the organic or sustainable agriculture movement in the Northwest can be traced back to the 1974 Tilth-sponsored conference that drew over 800 grower and food distributor wannabes to Ellensburg, Washington (\*see page). In 1984 Oregon Tilth separately incorporated and led the effort to create an organic farm certification program in the Northwest, that to eventually led to national certification standards. As of 2002 Oregon Tilth had certified 220 farms (up from 181 in 1998) as organic.

Community supported farms, or CSAs as they are often called, are relatively new in the Northwest. The first CSAs can be traced back 30 years in Japan when a group of women concerned about the increase in food imports and the corresponding decrease in the farming population initiated a direct growing and purchasing relationship between their group and local farms. This arrangement, called "teikei" in Japanese, translates to "putting the farmers' face on food." This concept traveled to Europe and was adapted to the U.S. and given the name "Community Supported Agriculture" at Indian Line Farm, Massachusetts, in 1985. As of January 1999, there were 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. Other hybrids of the CSA model have emerged in recent years. Or-ganic Direct, Organics to You, and Urban Organics all deliver organic produce to residences or places of employment.

Teaching the next generation about healthy food and the joys of growing one’s own food has its advocates in the Friends of Zenger Farm, a sustainable farm and environmental education center in outer Southeast Portland, the Student Alliance of Garden Entrepreneurs (SAGE), and other garden education programs in public and private schools such as the Environmental Middle School, and Growing Gardens (for adults and children).

Portland’s recycling efforts can be traced back at least to the early 1970s with foundation of Portland Recycling Team (\*see page). Today, many aspects of recycling have been institutionalized by local government or privatized. Also, new specialized organizations and businesses have been created. The Rebuilding Center and Environmental Building Supplies have brought new choices for consumers interested in using less, wisely, or reusing. Free Geek focuses recycling efforts on used computers, today’s equivalent of the spent refrigerator on back porches. The School and Community Reuse Action Project (SCRAP) provides recycling goods for strapped schools. **Community Issues**

**Housing and Community Development**

During the populist pluralism period the focus of citizen activism in the inner city neighborhoods was the Bureau of Housing and Community Development, the city bureau charged with distributing funds from HUD’s Block Grant program, and the buzz word was “self help.” In 1980 an ad hoc coalition, the Community Economic Development Task Force--led by Steve Rudman with the Rain Community Resource Center, an appropriate technology and community development advocacy group--lobbied the city to provide more citizen participation in the process for allocating block grant funds. This coalition was made up of seventeen groups from around the city, several from northeast Portland, including the Eliot Neighborhood Association and the newly formed Black United Front. At a hearing about block grant funding in 1980, the coalition organized a demonstration that included a rendition of “people with low-incomes need a place to live” to the tune of a song from West Side Story, performed by the Northwest District Association, the most active neighborhood association in Northwest Portland. Beverly Stein, from the Ratepayers Union, who would later become the Chair of the Board of Commissioners for Multnomah County, requested that money be set aside for self-help programs. The Task Force advocated for the same self-help project fund, as well as for funds to be allocated for housing projects that would demonstrate appropriate technology and energy conserving strategies to help poor people cope with rising energy costs (Citizens hit, 1981).

The coalition had its way, for the city established a self-help demonstration fund that community organizations could apply to, and Rudman himself became director of the Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD). By 1983 the self help program had funded several demonstration projects in the Albina area. One RUNT (Responsible Urban Neighborhood Technology) was a demonstration housing project that used energy-conserving technologies in home renovation while providing space for a community garden and farmer’s market in a vacant lot across the street. In 1984, the local Self Help Program received a National Merit Award from HUD (Abandoned house, 1980).

The new direction in urban renewal toward economic development and housing also brought Portland its first community development corporations (CDCs), long after CDCs had taken root in Eastern cities. The creation of CDCs in Portland—there were 27 at the peak in the mid 1990s —was a citizen-initiated movement. The first CDC, Reach, was born out of a series of meetings organized by activists and activist organizations, including the Center for Democratic Education, headed by Mike Barnes, and members of the Community Economic Development Task Force. The activists convened a Community Congress in March 1980 and created a Self Help Community Development Plan. The congress was attended by 200 people and established as one of its primary goals the creation of a CDC to serve inner southeast Portland (Fisher, 1980).

Community development corporations (CDCs) and affordable housing advocacy organizations that started in the 1980s as a grassroots movement became an industry in the 1990s. By the mid 1990s, 27 CDCs operated in Portland, especially inner northeast and both inner and outer southeast Portland. The path from grassroots to industry, however, wasn’t an easy and smooth one.

REACH Community Development Corporation, the oldest and largest CDC in the Portland area, generated in 2003 a $3 million annual budget and owned 600 units of housing on 70 properties. But REACH like many grassroots enterprises started with more passion than know-how. It operated on a lean budget in the early years and made many mistakes, taking on projects for which there was little money. The organization entered the 1990s in the red and spent much of its time refinancing and restructuring debts, and borrowing money to repair its original housing investments.

REACH’s community development work took off when it broadened its work from individual housing restorations to neighborhood action plans. In 1989, REACH created its first neighborhood action plan for the Brooklyn neighborhood in southeast Portland, which was followed by two similar action plans in the Clinton Street area and one in the Belmont Street area, both in southeast Portland. In all three projects REACH proved an able community organizer and helped to revitalize both commercial and residential components of the neighborhoods. For its efforts on the action plans, the organization was presented with the Volunteer Action Award by President Clinton and its action planning process was adopted by the City of Portland’s Bureau of Housing and Community Development as the Target Area Designation Program (TAD).

By the mid 1990s, the isolated efforts of CDCs and affordable housing advocates had coalesced into an industry professional organization, the Community Development Network, with 100 members and affiliate members. There was also a statewide Association of Oregon Community Development Organizations. Several groups were created that provide funding and technical assistance to community development corporations including the Housing Development Center and the Neighborhood Partnership Fund. Portland maintained local office of the national Enterprise Foundation, which supports community development work through research and funding programs. In addition to building or renovating houses and apartments, community development groups have been created to buy and hold lands to keep housing affordable (Portland Community Land Trust, and Clackamas Community Land Trust). Another group, the Portland Housing Center, provides services to help low-income people make housing investments.

In addition to restoring and building housing units in Portland, community development and affordable housing advocates developed considerable political clout during the 1990s. In 1990, Gretchen Miller Kafoury, a former state legislator, ran for City Commissioner on a housing platform, and coordinated the City’s housing policy in the mid-1990s. She was followed by one of her administrative assistants, Eric Stein, who successfully ran for City Commissioner in 1997. During Kafoury’s administration, the City created a $30-million Housing Investment Fund to support affordable housing. Housing advocates also created local, regional, and statewide advocacy organizations that have had some success in lobbying for financing of affordable housing, preservation of existing low-income housing stock, or development regulations that require affordable housing quotas.

While the nonprofit housing industry boomed in the 1990s, it could not prevent--and in fact in some ways directly or indirectly influenced--gentrification that took hold in many Portland neighborhoods. A booming economy and population growth had a dramatic impact on poor neighborhoods. From 1990 to 1999, the average home price in the Portland region rose 97 percent from $96,000 to $186,600 (Abbott and Gibson 2002). In some areas where redlining had a negative impact on housing values, prices increased by 150—200 percent. As a result of this gentrification nonprofit housing organizations found themselves in direct competition with private developers, a situation that forced organizations to refocus their efforts more on strategies for preservation of low-income housing.

Since community development corporations also consolidated their efforts or went out of business, due in part to changes in housing strategies and financing from the federal government, local government, and private foundations, and in part because there were too many CDCs in the region. Northeast Portland CDCs in particular were hard hit. Also as the CDCs succeeded, and housing demands increased in the inner city, organizations found themselves increasingly priced out of the market for the mainstay of their projects, old houses and empty lots.

Another consequence of gentrification in inner-city neighborhoods in the 1990s was that some CDCs were not viewed as welcome partners. In Boise, an inner northeast neighborhood, a local CDC was forced to withdraw an affordable housing project when the neighborhood association (now run mostly by Whites, in an area previously dominated by African-Americans) opposed it. The neighborhood association went on to formulate a land use policy that favored homeownership and opposed expanding the stock of subsidized rental units.

Today the Community Development Network (CDN), an association of nonprofit organizations working on affordable housing and community development in Portland, Oregon has twenty core members, and 82 affiliate members. The 82 affiliate members include financial institutions, government agencies, insurance companies, educational institutions, foundations, advocacy and service organizations, construction companies, architectural firms, and other interested organizations and/or individuals. The core members are responsible for over 8,000 affordable housing units in Portland.

**Community Issues**

**Transportation**

At the regional level, the Metropolitan Services District (MSD) assumed its predecessor’s (CRAG) role in pushing for increased use of the bicycle as an alternative mode of transportation. Using a $174,000 grant from the federal government, it conducted a campaign to increase people’s awareness of bicycling as a safe and efficient mode of transportation (Hayes, 1982). During the 1980s, the Citizens’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee had focused on developing bicycle corridors. This was a labor-intensive effort, with each corridor guided by a separate citizen-led task force, along with the involvement of neighborhood associations in the designated areas. Now that the notion of separate recreational bike pathways had dissipated, the brunt of the planning effort was on modifying existing roadways to accommodate a bike lane. The bicycle was now in direct competition with the automobile, taking up road and parking space.

The process for selecting, designing, and implementing corridors was a straightforward, rational process. The CAC established criteria for the potential corridors. Staff then sought volunteer activists in the neighborhoods to serve on task forces. The citizen task force identified alternative routes. Staff then analyzed the alternatives and reported back to the task force. Then the task force submitted their report to the CAC for review. In the meantime, the task force also organized public forums in the affected neighborhood to gather additional comments. In this way, the task force in each planning area chose a recommended route and presented it to the CAC. The task force, together with the CAC, produced an analysis of the chosen route, listing advantages and disadvantages. The analysis was discussed at additional public forums, and the CAC would then approve the final recommendation and forward it to city council (Portland Bureau of Transportation, 1983). Not all residents in the city were enamored with having precious road space taken up by what they viewed as under-utilized bike lanes. One resident living along a proposed route in Northeast Portland responded, “If my house is robbed, and it proves to be a bicyclist who cased the neighborhood, I shall sue the bicycle committee, the people involved, the City of Portland, the State of Oregon, and the federal agency involved for 3 1/2 million ” (Clark, 1987). Other residents along the proposed Knott Street corridor raised stiff opposition as well, creating lengthy delays.

By 1987, out of the 22 proposed bike corridors, only nine had been completed. Once again the bicycle community, and specifically the CAC, was feeling frustrated. That year the CAC proposed a re-orientation of the committee’s goals. In a letter to in-coming Commissioner Earl Blumenauer, Marc Labadie, the new Chair of the CAC, said the committee needed to redefine its goals. He told the Commissioner, “We feel that the focus of our efforts has become narrowed over the past few years, limited to the implementation of a bicycle corridor system.” He went on to say that the CAC was developing a new mission statement to reflect a return to the wider scope of activities, which had been pursued in the past (Blumenauer, 1987). The new commissioner was an avid bicyclist himself, so the CAC got his attention. In 1989, the Office of Transportation published the Alternative Transportation Program Guide (Portland Transportation Bureau, 1989) as a way of refocusing the program to embrace a broader scope for the transportation system of Portland. The plan was still about building bike corridors, but it also included educational or “encouragement activities.” Unfortunately, due to budget and time constraints, these activities were postponed. And because of the adamant resistance by some residents to adding striped bike lanes at the expense of on-street parking, the plan focused more on techniques to make major traffic routes safer through the use of signage, spot hazard improvement (including modifying inlet grates), and connecting existing bikeways.

Under Commissioner Blumenauer, the Bicycle Program was renamed Portland’s Alternative Transportation Program and administered by the Department of Transportation’s Engineering Division. The seven member Citizens’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee still provided oversight to the program, and the primary funding source continued to be from state gas tax revenues, plus some additional grant revenues. By 1990, the program consisted of one full-time and one part-time staff position and an annual budget of $161,416 (Coalition pushes pedal power 1991). While the name was mostly a slight of hand trick, the program did eventually expand, and the notion of alternative modes of transportation took on new meaning. A new advocacy organization, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), was created in 1990 that was to have as much influence on biking as the original bike lobby did in the early 1970s. Oakland had dissolved the Bike Lobby in 1975, and there had been no strong outside advocacy group since then. Much of the energy of activists had been spent on the Community Advisory Committee. The Bicycle Transportation Alliance quickly grew into a strong advocacy organization. BTA initially focused on a goal that had been around for some time, namely to persuade Tri-Met, the regional transportation authority, to facilitate bike travel by installing bike racks on busses. To this end, BTA gathered 5000 signatures on a petition and by 1992 had convinced Tri-Met to begin installing the bike racks on all buses. With that success in hand, BTA initiated its Bicycle Friendly Portland campaign. Its first goal was to make bridges safer for bike commuters. This resulted in a Bridges Access Study which at first opposed by the BTA board, viewing it as a action to deflect their more comprehensive concerns and plans. BTA eventually embraced the plan as it led to important improvements to bridges for bicycle traffic, a key to increasing ridership. Although the exclusive bicycle bridge fantasy of the original Bike Lobby did not come to pass, vast improvements occurred when the Hawthorne Bridge was being repaired and modified in 1998 (Bicycle Transportation Alliance, 1992).

BTA provided a new, independent organizing structure outside of the long-standing, quasi-public Citizens’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and the Office of Transportation’s Bike Program. BTA’s goals were also broader than creating bike corridors. In an interview in 1995, Rex Burkholder, one of BTA’s founders, said, “this whole effort is about our lifestyle. It’s about kids riding to school. It’s about riding to the store. It’s not about building bicycle lanes. It’s about building a better way of life (Burgress, 1993).” There were also increasing disagreements between motorists and bicyclists, and bicycle advocates and neighborhood residents and associations. The bicyclists were viewed by some as idealists who didn’t live in the real world. At one contentious meeting about the Lower Northeast Corridor Bike Route, Commissioner Bogle called the bicyclist advocates “elitists” and the request for a bike route in northeast as “a draconian attack on the rights of “normal” citizens.” He went on to implicate the bike advocates as people “who must not have to take children to daycare…or attend meetings before or after work.” He also hit a nerve when he accused the BTA of thinking they could solve the world’s problems by getting people out of their cars and onto bicycles (Lindberg, 1990).

In 1993, BTA, tiring of the slowness of bureaucratic implementation of bike plans, decided to take its case to court. As early as 1991, BTA had hinted at this possibility. In a letter to Commissioner Blumenauer, Burkholder indicated that “the city is also in violation of state law in that it is not spending the required 1% of its Highway Trust Fund receipts.” Burkholder went on to quote Kris Ochia, the Alternative Transportation Coordinator, as saying that only 60% of the minimum funds are spent each year. “This has been going on for years,” he continued, “and may become the basis for legal action against the city (Rex Burkholder, personal communication, March 26, 1991).” The final straw, from BTA’s point of view, was the lack of accommodation for alternative transportation facilities at a new sports arena being built on the eastside of the river — the Rose Quarter. They took the case to court where it dragged on for two years. The BTA finally won the case at the Oregon Appeals Court, a ruling upheld by the Oregon Supreme Court. This case was important because it clarified the intent of the legislature so that local governments could not find ways around spending money for bike improvements.

The court system wasn’t BTA’s only venue for civic action. BTA, working with the city, organized a Bike Fest in 1994, closing the Burnside Bridge to host an event attended by 15,000 people. Also in 1994, the city sponsored the first Bike to Work Day to draw attention to the practicality of bike commuting. Finally, the city was host to Pro Bike\*Pro Walk ‘94: an International Symposium on Bicycling and Walking. Attended by 400 transportation planners, engineers, citizen activists, and government officials from North America and around the world, the event drew attention to Portland as a bike friendly community (Marsh, 1994).

Bicyclists had other conditions working in their favor as well. 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 was one, culminating 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).

In addition, shifts in state and federal programs, along with new regulations, aided the bicycle movement. In 1991, the Oregon State Land Conservation and Development Commission’s Transportation Planning Rule (Goal 12) required all jurisdictions in the Portland metropolitan area to prepare a plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita by 20 percent over the next 30 years. That same year, Congress passed the Inter-Modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) which called for increased spending on bicycle travel and allowed cities more flexibility in spending highway funds on alternative modes such as bicycling, walking, and transit. ISTEA provided an additional $7 million annually to Oregon during the 1990s for bike and pedestrian trail development (Richards, 1992).

In 1994, the Bicycle Program staff embarked on yet another planning process, this one more comprehensive and well funded. The program received funding from the Transportation and Growth Management Program, a joint program of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, which, in turn, received its funding from ISTEA and Oregon Lottery Funds. The Bicycle Master Plan, overseen by a 13 member Bicycle Master Plan Steering Committee, took 2 1/2 years to complete and involved over 2,000 citizens in an intensive, citizen-based planning process (Portland Office of Transportation, 1996).

The process commenced with 12 two-hour public forums. Additionally, presentations were made for 25 other nonprofit organizations and neighborhood associations. Input was gathered at other large events such as the Regional Rail Summit and Portland Bike Show. While the Master Plan was being written, an additional nine meetings were held, attended by 500 citizens. The completed comprehensive plan, adopted in 1996, includes bikeway network elements as well as plans for end-of-trip facilities, bikeway design and engineering guidelines, and educational programs to promote the use of bicycles.

In 1995, *Bicycling Magazine* honored Portland as the most bicycle friendly community in America. In a column acknowledging the award, local columnist Jonathan Nicholas, an avid bicyclist and organizer of the state’s largest annual bicycle event, Cycle Oregon, acknowledged BTA as the driving force behind the award. While BTA can undoubtedly lay claim to helping create a bicycle friendly community, BTA’s work was only possible, as this long and tangled story reveals, because of the foundation laid by previous citizen activists (Nicholas, 1995).

In 1975, only 200 cyclists per day were using the Hawthorne Bridge. By 1995, this number had increased to nearly 2,000. A survey conducted in 1997 estimated there were 12,447 daily bicycle trips on all the bridges from downtown Portland. By 1998, Portland had completed over 150 miles of bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards, and off-street paths. Tri-Met’s entire bus fleet was equipped with bicycle racks. There were 1,400 publicly installed bicycle racks and 190 bicycle lockers (Portland Office of Transportation. (1996).

In addition to the detailed Bicycle Master Plan, the city’s Comprehensive Plan had been amended so that the 1999 version had its own detailed bicycle goal (Portland Planning Bureau, 1999), whose goal was to "Make the bicycle an integral part of daily life in Portland, particularly for trips of less than five miles, by implementing a bikeway network, providing end-of-trip facilities, improving bicycle/transit integration, encouraging bicycle use, and making bicycling safer."

To many cyclists, by the time the Bicycle Master Plan was completed, the goals of establishing the bicycle as a serious alternative to the automobile had been accomplished. While much work was left to be done, the bicycle was no longer treated as a recreational toy, but rather was now regarded as an alternative mode of transportation. However, not all cyclists felt things were moving fast enough or had gone far enough. While the Bicycle Program had been incorporated into the governmental structure of the city, and BTA had become an established political player, some bicyclists were on the outside, ready to fight for a larger cause.

In 1993, a new bicycle group, Critical Mass, came to the foreground. *Willamette Week* compared them to Earth First: “The scrappy ranks of Critical Mass are to the mainstream BTA members what Earth First is to the Sierra Club (Veerman, 1994), p. 25).” The local Critical Mass group was inspired by a San Francisco group of the same name, founded in 1992, which begin to stage events on a monthly basis. They would hijack lanes of traffic at the peak of rush hour, just to give motorists a taste of their own medicine. The first San Francisco “bike-ins” attracted hundreds of bicyclists and grew to upwards of a thousand. The organizers hosted large picnics in parks that had the appearance of sixties “be-ins.” After the be-ins. the cyclists would spread out throughout the city, immobilizing traffic and creating gridlock (San Francisco Cyclists get Word, 1997) .

The Critical Mass viewpoint is pro-bicycle and anti-automobile, a vision shared by BTA. It is the methods used to reach these goals that separate the two groups.

The first Critical Mass events held In Portland were in cooperation with BTA and other bike groups. However, BTA began to distance itself from the group as some Critical Mass members became more belligerent and used tactics that BPA could not wholeheartedly support. In June 1993, a Critical Mass rally on the Broadway Bridge turned ugly as some of the members blocked traffic, including an off-ramp for the Interstate Freeway. Several Critical Mass members were arrested. One member, Sara Stout, described their organizing events as “planned coincidences” and “free-form” (Veerman, 1994, p. 25).

Critical Mass views the BTA as conservative. By being obedient to the letter of the law, they feel BTA allows the status quo of auto-rule to prevail on our roads. Other members dismiss the idea that they even *are* an organization. Participants, some of whom call themselves “massers,” are quick to explain that Critical Mass isn’t an official association. In fact, they participate in what they call a “xerocracy,” which means anyone can print suggestions for routes and then encourage the masses to follow (Veerman, 1994, p. 25).

Critical Mass has continued its controversial protest rides and bike-ins, one Friday a month, plus special events like an annual Halloween ride in which members dress in costumes and take over lanes of traffic. In November 1998, 18 Critical Mass members were arrested while blocking traffic in downtown Portland. In reaction to an Oregonian article taking aim at the tactics of Critical Mass, several “non-members” of the group responded in ways that reflected their adamant and anarchistic stand. Caffeine Jones, a Critical Mass “non-member,” put it this way:

To any citizen who felt the Critical Mass was rude to them: That's the point! The Mass is angry at air pollution. It is asking you to stop driving your cars before emphysema and El Nino kill us all. There is an internal debate within the Critical Mass. Do we anger drivers and risk confrontation? Do we be polite and forget the First Amendment and be ignored by stinking auto drivers, just like every other day? About children in the Mass — most parents who take their kids keep it safe and don't try to direct traffic. However, parents take risks with their children all the time. Enviro-clown band Pepto Dizmal puts it like this: 'Do you think your kids are safe in that SUV?/You're just poisoning their breathing air -- that's what I see/when I pass you in one less car (B4).' (Critical Mass Bike Riders Speak, 1999)

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**Women's Organizations**

The organizational development phase of the women’s movement in Portland started in the early 1970s, and measured by the number of feminist-oriented organizations, reached its heyday in the late 1970s and 1980s. Women-published directories and yellow pages document a wealth of innovative new feminist enterprises. Women created media production groups (Changing Women Media Project), self defense programs (Defend Ourselves, Sunnyside Methodist Church), gathering places for women to meet without men (Arbuckle Flat), law assistance centers for women (Community Law Project, Women’s Collective), women-centered publishing houses (Olive Press), a credit union (Oregon Federal Feminist Credit Union), and art galleries (Woman’s Art Project). Women also created support and services for groups such as the Lesbian Parenting Alliance, laborers (Coalition of Labor Union Women), radical (Radical Women), Socialists (Socialist-Feminist Coordinating Committee), Native Americans (United Indian Women), vegetarians (Vegfem), human services (Women in Human Services), transitioning (Women in Transition), and employed (Women Employed). Instead of a handful of politically operative women’s groups as there had been in 1960, by 1978 there were at least 60.

Traditional women’s groups continued to function, but suffered declines in membership. The League of Women Voters hit an all time low membership in 1976, 300 members. And it was not alone. The membership of the Oregon Congress of Parents Teachers and Students dropped from 112,000 in 1965 to 37,000 in 1976. The Daughters of the Nile dropped from 5,000 in 1962 to 4,000 in 1976. Some groups, such as the Delphians, admitted that they were not just declining, but actually dying.

In addition to declining membership, traditional women’s groups noted changes in how women wanted to participate in community life. “The job market,” the director of the Oregon Federation of Women’s Clubs noted, “is one of the primary causes for the decline and change in how women are involved (Hofferber, 1976, p. C1). She observed that community work remained important, but added that more groups were involved in fundraising than service, because “working women just can’t allocate the time for service.” There was a new model for the active woman in the community. The director of the Women’s Resource Center at the YWCA summarized it this way: “I think there are women who have a greater influence with the world and are not afraid of showing their strength. Traditionally women settled for having impact in their own small groups, but these women see that their influence can reach further (Heltzel, 1976), p.C2).” While, there were more members of women’s traditional civic groups, younger women in particular were not joining , and instead attended other forums, such as the Oregon Council for Women’s Equality conference that drew 1400 women in 1976. By the mid 1970s the League of Women Voters no longer avoided the feminist or women’s rights label, and took on issues that most directly affected women. Likewise the AAUW, with its 470-member base, began to take on issues with women-specific content, such as helping the YWCA’s resource center develop a job bank geared toward employment for women. Other traditional women’s civic organizations also responded to the expanded causes of women by adopting new issues. In 1985 for example, the Legal Secretaries Association sponsored a workshop on social issues as part of a campaign against domestic violence. Women’s clubs, the mainstay of Portland’s civic life in the 1950s, found it difficult to maintain their membership during the 1980s and 1990s. For example, the Oregon Federation of Women’s Clubs saw its membership base decline from 1538 members in 1984, to 916 in 1994, to an all-time low of 277 in 2003. The number of clubs statewide fell from 37 in 1994 to 21 in 2003.

In addition to women’s clubs, other traditional women’s groups suffered membership losses, or just ceased to exist. Only a handful of the larger organizations survived, such as the American Association of University Women, YWCA, and the League of Women Voters. These organizations tended to more flexible, taking on issues of the day, appealing to younger people, or creating services specifically for “liberated” women.

Beginning in the 1980s, women’s groups increasingly faced challenges from conservative citizen interest groups that opposed abortion, and gay women faced similar challenges. In 1985, mail bombs were sent to four local abortion clinics, phone lines were cut at the Feminist Clinic, and there was an arson attempt at the Lovejoy Clinic, which provided abortions. In 1987, the Oregon Citizen’s Alliance (OCA) was formed after the Portland City Council voted in a no discrimination policy for gay city workers. Throughout the 1990s the OCA tried repeatedly to pass laws to limit the rights of gay women and men. But, by the late 1990s, Portland was home to a sizable gay community. “It's common street knowledge that Portland is the lesbian capital of the nation," said Ann Mussey, assistant professor of women's studies at Portland State University. "I also have trans (gender) students and activists tell me that this is a very trans-friendly place, even more so than San Francisco (Sullivan, 2004, p. A6).”

By the end of the 1990s, many of the women-only organizations created in the late 1970s and 1980s had died. Their demise is due more to institutionalization than a failure of the women’s movement. A directory to women’s organizations published in the late 1970s listed over 100 nontraditional women’s organizations. By the end of the 1990s less than 30 of those groups were still in existence. While some groups simply failed, many others transmutated into other organizations or found their agendas institutionalized. For example, there were a number of birthing centers created during the 1970s. Now, birth centers exist in many hospitals. Expectant mothers can choose between at least 50 locations in the Portland area that have midwives.

Specialization also occurred within the feminist community. There were many more business and professional organizations or services aimed at women. For example, Portland Oregon Women on the Web (POWW) provides a forum for women involved in Web-related technology to network, exchange job and business leads, form strategic alliances, mentor and teach, and learn skills to help each other succeed in an increasingly technical workplace and world. Advocates for Women in Science, Engineering, and Mathematics (AWSEM) advocates for young girls to pursue education and careers in science, engineering, math, and technology. Also, the Portland-Vancouver, Washington area has the highest percentage of women-owned businesses in the country (Center for Women’s Business Research 2008). There are an estimated 100,000 women-owned firms in the Portland area, generating $24 billion in sales and employing 196,000 people.

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**The Albina Story: Home to the Creative Class**

In 1989, the City of Portland embarked on its most ambitious planning effort yet in Albina, the Albina Community Plan. Costing over $1 million, the plan involved nearly 4,000 citizens. At least 140 meetings were held over a three year period in addition to public hearings before the city Planning Commission and city council. The study area of 19 square miles included all or part of 13 neighborhoods: Kenton, Arbor Lodge, Overlook, Piedmont, Humboldt, Boise, Eliot, Woodlawn, Concordia, King, Vernon, Sabin and Irvington. The plan was designed to set the course for land use and transportation, as well as public service. Michael Harrison, the lead planner for the city, stated at the outset, "This is the most ambitious planning effort that the city has ever taken on, and I think it's the most ambitious planning effort that any American city has taken on, in terms of trying to deal comprehensively in an action-oriented plan that's very strategic in its focus…It deals not just with land use, but family services, education, job-training and the public safety spectrum." The Oregonian described it in musical terms, “The Albina Community Plan is like a musical score, suggesting orchestration for dozens of public and private agencies from the Portland Public Schools to police, from the Coalition of Black Men to the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs, from the Portland Development Commission to the City of Portland (Baker, 1992).”

The complexity of the undertaking is reflected in the lay-out of the action plan which relates each action step to an implementer, be it nonprofit organization, private enterprise or government agency. In total, 96 government agencies, nonprofit organizations and private companies are listed. Additionally, several categories of implementers appear in general terms, including lending institutions, local realtors, tribal government, business associations, and unions. An examination of the implementer also reveals just how much the civic infrastructure of Albina and the City had changed since the 1950s. Of the 41 nonprofit implementers, only five existed in 1960: American Institute of Architects, National Association of Colored People, Boy Scouts, Urban League and United Way Portland Bureau of Planning 1993).

In order to ensure the process fit the guidelines for democratic planning, the Planning Bureau compiled a detailed process plan summary that included all the steps involved in the Albina planning process and its implementation. The summary detailed the technical stages of data collection and map making, workshops and public hearings, and various planning commission and city council briefings. The Planning Commission itself held additional special interest group presentations as it deliberated on the plan during the spring of 1992; and the Planning Bureau continued workshops in the community (Portland Bureau of Planning, 1989).

Complicating the landscape even further, the City of Portland’s Historic Landmarks Commission was in the midst of creating Historic Districts in the city and corresponding citizen advisory councils to monitor the designated areas. Eight of the districts were in north and northeast Portland: Kenton, Mock’s Crest, Irvington, Eliot, Piedmont, Woodlawn, Mississippi, and Russell. Seven of the districts were eventually approved (Sullivan, 1992).

There were many controversial elements to the plan, but none more so than the issue of housing density. The Affordable Housing Overlay was an option that raised emotionally-charged issues about renters as neighbors, as well as feeding the controversy around increased density. The overlay proposed to relax some restrictions of the zoning code to allow auxiliary rental units to be built in homes or garages, and to allow higher densities for developers who agreed to keep some units at "affordable rents." Many residents feared these provisions would create low-income ghettos, and they demanded the overlay — if it were to be applied at all — should be on a city-wide basis. The difficult challenge of devising an acceptable policy on the affordable housing overlay rule delayed by several months the final review of the plan by the City Planning Commission (Pearlman 1992).

Once a draft plan was created by staff at the Bureau of Planning, working with the various citizen-based committees, public forums were held in the spring of 1992 to accept other testimony from citizens. All in all, the Planning Bureau staff attempted to incorporate 650 requested changes to the plan (four times the expected number). In the end, 450 amendments were added before the plan was presented to the city Planning Commission (How to Improve, 1992).

By fall of 1992, when the report went to the Planning Commission, criticism from the community had simmered. In fact, one of the most pointed criticisms at these hearings came from an architect who felt the process had overly favored the direction of citizens. Gary Papers, a representative of the American Institute of Architects, said he was “disappointed that the commission has responded so consistently to NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) testimony…the proposed zoning allows inner city neighborhoods to remain at low suburban density with commercial services geared to pass through auto traffic….the area will do none of its share to absorb the population increase expected in the metropolitan area in the next twenty years (Pearlman 1992).”

The last episode in urban renewal and the building of civic infrastructure in Albina revolved around the construction of a north-south light rail system, connecting downtown to north Portland. Options for the placement of the route emerged in 1992 during the Albina planning process. Albina residents, stakeholders, and city planners debated routes along Martin Luther King Blvd. (previously Union Avenue), Williams Avenue, I-5 (the Minnesota Freeway) and Interstate Avenue. In the end, a route paralleling Interstate Avenue triumphed, taking pressure off the heart of Albina. In 1999, TriMet, the regional transportation authority and the Portland Development Commission created the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Advisory Committee to oversee the development of an urban renewal plan for the Interstate Corridor, and subsequently created four working committees to create action plans related to: economic development, community livability, housing, and transportation.

By now, the routines of establishing public involvement are well established, including months of painstaking work to create principles and practices. This may take a long time since operating rules are brokered between citizens and government agencies, not devised beforehand by the convening agency.

The operating principles for the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Advisory Group reflected the experience of decades of process planning:

* Working Group members are expected to regularly attend and be active participants in meetings and in the community participation process.
* Working Group members are expected to share information with their neighbors, organizations, constituents, etc. and to bring those viewpoints back to Working Group deliberations.
* The public will have opportunities to comment and ask questions before any committee action.
* Divergent views and opinion are expected and are to be respected.
* The power of the Working Group to affect Urban Renewal Advisory Committee recommendations and City decisions is in seeking agreement among its diverse membership and interests.
* The Working Group will strive to reach consensus in all recommendations. In the event consensus cannot be reached, a vote will be taken, and a majority and minority report will be presented to the Advisory Committee.
* The Working Group process will focus on results and outcomes; members will assist in facilitating the process to achieve results.
* Open communication and willingness to work together to find common ground is the key to developing effective strategies.
* It is the responsibility of all who attend meetings to be respectful of previous Working Group actions and decisions, which will be shared briefly at the beginning of each meeting (Working Group, 1999).

As with the changes noted earlier in examining groups existing in the 1960s as compared to the late 1980s and early 1990s, it is interesting to note the evolution of civic organizations during the 1990s. While there are a number of familiar civic organizations from the Albina Plan days, there are also many new groups. The 90 people involved with Intestate Urban Renewal committees represented 69 different government agencies, private businesses or nonprofit organizations. Out of that 69, at least 29 (42%) are community-based organizations founded after 1991.

The emergence of each organization carries its own particular tale, but perhaps the one most pertinent to understanding changes in the civic structure in Albina and greater northeast Portland is the growth of housing and community development groups. There were eight organizations on the Interstate Advisory Committee or sub-committees whose focus is housing and community development issues. Several other groups not specifically serving on the committees are also playing a significant role. The Portland Housing Center, founded in 1991 to provide assistance to first-time home buyers, along with the Portland Community Land Trust, received $900,000 from the city for home buyer assistance programs. Another $200,000 went to the Portland Housing Center and Northeast Workforce Center’s Eviction Prevention and Financial Assistance Program. In contrast to the earlier reluctance to forge a community development corporation in Albina in the 1960s, caused by the community’s fear of intrusive city authority, the City of Portland now eagerly embraces the civic organizations that serve as intermediaries in public-private partnerships.

And public-private partnerships are not the only venue in Albina. The Community Alliance of Tenants is part of a new coalition of organizations, the Interstate Alliance to End Displacement, the members of which come from within Albina as well as the surrounding region. The Coalition urges direct actions, more akin to the tradition of Black United Front and Albina Fair Share. In an invitation to organize against the displacement that might result from the creation of the Interstate Urban Renewal District, the Coalition called upon the past to draw citizens into the struggle:

The Portland Development Commission's plan to move forward with construction of the Interstate light rail while freezing other projects in the Interstate Urban Renewal Area has residents worried that history will repeat itself. The residents are concerned about housing displacement, which is caused by real estate prices rapidly outpacing incomes. The city is currently investing millions of urban renewal dollars in light rail, which is fueling the real estate market, with no program in place to protect residents from displacement. Despite the Portland Development Commission's attempts to improve its image, this plan reminds many residents of the negative legacy of past large scale public projects in the Interstate Corridor, such as the Memorial Coliseum, the I-5 Freeway, and Emmanuel hospital, which displaced hundreds of residents and businesses. (Hop Hopkins, personal communication, October 26, 2001)

It is also worth noting another civic player in the politics of urban renewal in Albina—the Coalition for a Livable Future (CLF), a coalition of 60 progressive organizations focused on the environment, housing, social justice, transportation, food and agricultural sustainability, and community development. CLF helped organize the anti-displacement coalition by funding a full-time organizer position for Albina. What is especially significant about their involvement is that the group brings a multi-issue perspective as well as a regional perspective, linking neighborhood-specific issues such as density to regional livability goals.

A thorough examination of public involvement in the Albina area of northeast Portland over the course of the past 50 years reveals a remarkable evolution in the civic infrastructure of the community. Urban renewal efforts in the 1950s were dominated by a narrowly defined set of civic players, many representing downtown interests.

Contrast this with the planning processes of the 1990s, where 221 different public, private and nonprofit organizations claim a place at the table—98 nonprofits, 43 government agencies and schools, 30 businesses and business associations. Nor is it simply a matter of numbers of groups or the limited nature of the interests represented back in 1960. The members of the first Redevelopment Advisory Board might have had difficulty imagining a landscape where 4000 citizens are directly involved in a single community planning effort (the Albina Plan), a world where private nonprofits serve as contractors for redevelopment services and an umbrella group (Coalition for a Livable Future) leverages money from a private foundation to organize residents to resist displacement. The rehabilitation of blighted neighborhoods, while an important achievement of urban renewal, is probably not as profound as the transformation of civic infrastructure and the institutionalization of civic practices that incorporate a broader range of citizens.

The revitalization of Albina worked, and is often the case, too well. Alberta and Mississippi streets, once thought of as the heart of the degraded area of Albina are now the central collectors for the creative class. Indicators of the neighborhood's rise abound: Starbucks and other coffee shops, restaurants serving local and organic northwest cuisine, hip music venues, and a monthly art walk on Thursday nights that attracts so many people there has been the need at time to bring in extra police to handle the crowds. House prices has sky rocked, and no surprise, many of the indigenous population, mostly African American, have once more been displaced. In a word, revitalization has brought on a severe case of gentrification.

The tension created through the successful revitalization of the Albina neighborhood has also spawned a creative civic innovation, the Restorative Listening Project, run through the City of Portland's Office of Neighborhood Involvement. Judith Mowery, a professional mediator, working with local neighborhood activists John Canda and Celeste Carey, initiated the project, rooted in restorative justice, similar to the type applied in the truth and reconciliation commission after the end of apartheid in South Africa. The goal of the project is to have white people better understand the effect gentrification can have on the city’s longtime black and other-minority neighborhoods by having minority residents tell what it is like to be on the receiving end. Since the project began in 2007, 15 African Americans have presented their experiences and some 225 people have attended at least one session. There are systemic economic inequities at the heart of the revitalization and subsequent gentrification in Albina, but the Restorative Listening Project is providing a pathway to bridge the tattered history of Albina with a more hopeful future.

**Building Civic Infrastructure**

**Environment: The Johnson Creek Watershed**

One of the pivotal acts the changed the course of the Johnson creek watershed happened in the early 1990s, in a nearby watershed, the Tualatin River basin, when citizens successfully sued their local water agency for not enforcing federal Clean Water Act requirements. The suit resulted in a perpetual fund to be administered by a local community foundation and distributed through a nonprofit watershed group, the Tualatin River Watershed Council, for the purposes of stream restoration. Given the history of citizen activism in Johnson Creek, the City of Portland decided to take the upper hand before citizens decided to literally follow suit in the Johnson Creek watershed. In 1990, the city brought together a group of citizens and multiple agencies to form the Johnson Creek Corridor Committee.

The City of Portland’s Bureau of Environmental Services (BES) was the designated agency in this round. It was one of BES’s first large program initiatives under its newly expanded mission as a water resource protection agency. Prior to 1990, the City of Portland had separate sewerage, stormwater, and neighborhood nuisance bureaus. These were combined to provide the city with a more focused structure to manage sewage, stormwater, and what remained of the city’s natural stream systems. BES has been accused many times since then of being a two-headed agency, one dominated by civil engineers used to thinking in terms of pipes and systems who are often at odds with a smaller group of more environmentally-oriented staff charged with planning for and managing urban streams and their related greenspaces.

The first meeting BES held to discuss plans for Johnson Creek nearly knocked another agency out for the count once again. Staff came prepared with a quality presentation and professional facilitators to run the meeting, but the citizens, jaded from their previous experience, dominated the agenda. However, BES moved slowly forward, working with the JCCC and contracting with an environmental engineering firm, Woodward Clyde Consultants, for $2 million to develop the technical information for the planning process.

One of the ongoing problems in Johnson Creek, as with most watersheds, is the regulatory morass of managing a system that crosses jurisdictional and regulatory boundaries. To ensure consistent and effective efforts in Johnson Creek, at least five state, two federal, and 18 local government agencies or departments must coordinate their efforts. At the time of 1998 Johnson Creek Summit, it was determined that 46 different plans existed to address housing, transportation, water quality, economic development and flood control in the Johnson Creek Watershed, and produced by a multiplicity of agencies.

The watershed is regulated through broad water quality legislation like the Clean Water Act and more specific regulations directed at agriculture, industry, construction, wetlands, water diversions, and stormwater discharge. State agencies are generally responsible for monitoring and enforcement of these areas. Local governments designate land use and establish zoning, enforce erosion regulations, and perform some monitoring and enforcement duties. Local governments can also directly affect watersheds through their management of stormwater, sewage treatment plants, transportation, and drinking water systems. It is within this regulatory context that the Johnson Creek Resource Management Plan was conceived and laboriously worked out over a four-year period. The plan was only the first step in the development of other inter-agency plans, including the final restoration plan completed in 2000.

The JCCC was convened in 1990 and met monthly for almost five years. In addition to these monthly meetings, several special committees met regularly during this time: land use, outreach, restoration and enhancement committees, as well as nine separate stream reach groups,. The original committee had 36 members, including representatives from three counties, four cities, four other regional and state agencies, including the already tarnished Metro, now represented by a water resources specialist. The Bureau of Environmental Services assigned a full-time person to work with the JCCC, let out a $2 million contract to develop technical information about the watershed, and contracted with a professional facilitator to shepherd the process along.

The first document produced by the committee consisted of a mission statement and a set of guiding principles which took several months to hammer out. While some of the document focused on resource management goals, the guiding principles document was about group process: working rules, a definition of the type of consensus decision-making that would be employed, and even one entire page on the manner in which letters and policy statements would be written or represented through the media. The shadows of past fumblings lingered overhead, as everyone moved cautiously forward.

In September 1992, the JCCC published its first public document*, A Johnson Creek Vision: A look at the future of the Johnson Creek Watershed*. (Johnson Creek Corridor Committee, 1992) The document described the resource management plan process, and provided the first glimpse of data (with still relatively primitive Geographic Information System (GIS) coverage of the watershed) and an outline of the problems. It then provided a very optimistic vision for the future. The JCCC imagined a time in the future when:

Visitors to Johnson Creek and its tributaries find a clean, usable creek where they can safely wade in sparkling waters, and where the fish and wildlife is restored and maintained. Salmon and steelhead continue to return each year. Recreation opportunities are viable in the corridor. The historic flooding problems are minimized.” (p. 2)

It is interesting to note that while flooding is still mentioned, it is the last item, and the solution to flooding is now presented as a problem that will be *minimized*, not solved.

There was another important difference between the JCCC plan and previous efforts to plan and resolve problems in Johnson Creek. The citizen and government committee insisted that while the planning and studying move forward, both the participating agencies and voluntary citizen groups should begin work immediately through what were then called early enhancement projects and public education programs. The public agencies and consultants were sometimes skeptical about the enhancement projects. It seemed to them like putting the cart before the horse. How could one implement specific restoration projects before even knowing the nature of the problem? However, the enhancement and education projects were critical in overcoming the force of inertia inherited from 40 years of “do nothing” in Johnson Creek, and the projects become an important way of identifying the wider constituency of communities that had a stake in the outcome.

When it came time to finalize and publish the Resources Management Plan, several crises emerged. First, there was no precedent for the City of Portland in publishing a Resources Management Plan. Exactly what weight would the report carry? Was the report to be approved by an official body of the city, as well as other jurisdictions? Were the recommendations just that, or were they recommendations with accompanying regulatory authority? At one point, this problem came to a head over a torturous debate about a recommendation regarding the scope of powers of the proposed watershed council. It was suggested that the watershed council have regulatory power through its monitoring of the effectiveness of regulations in the watershed that were already in place or might be developed to correct the stream's problems. Such a function of the council was perceived as usurping the responsibilities of government agencies. The jurisdictions and public agencies had their own regulatory responsibilities. Was the watershed council to be equipped with the capacity to monitor the regulatory agencies themselves? The word “monitoring” was once debated over the course of several meetings without reaching conclusion. The parallel authority that council members referenced was that of neighborhood associations in Portland. Since they have authority to review conditional land use cases in their respective neighborhoods, why shouldn't a watershed council have a similar review capacity for water issues? In the end, the Johnson Creek Watershed Council did not gain specific authority. However, eventually, a multi-jurisdictional technical advisory group that included lay citizens was formed and given more authority by respective agencies and jurisdictions.

Publishing a draft of the report before becoming a public document also raised a thorny issue of representation. When the draft was shared by one committee member with her manager back in county government, the manager took one look at the sections most pertinent to his jurisdiction and refused to sign on. It became clear that one of the responsibilities outlined in the guiding principles had not always been followed. The representatives were to be assigned the power to represent their agency or citizen group and to be in constant communication with their group in order to assure that decisions of the committee were in fact supported by the agency or group. Political pressure had to be applied in this instance in order to obtain the necessary sign on.

The Resources Management Plan (Woodward Clyde Consultants, 1995) presented the most complete portrait of the watershed to date. A voluminous technical document of over 600 pages accompanied the plan itself, along with the most detailed computerized GIS maps of the watershed. The plan itself was multi-faceted. Gone were the days of single focus solutions. The plan called for bank protection options, enforcement of environmental protection zones, in-stream controls, flood proofing, sediment control regulations, public acquisitions of flood prone properties, enactment of best management practices, regional and onsite filtration facilities, bridge and culvert modifications to increase fish passage, public education and stewardship, and the creation of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council. Closely paralleling the development of the Resources Management Plan, the City of Portland’s Planning Bureau had also developed the Johnson Creek District Plan, a plan that, unlike the Resources Management Plan, did have regulatory teeth. The District Plan, based on detailed resource inventory data analysis, created new overlay zones of protection (the P zone) that restricted development near streams and conservation zones (the C zone) that provided a buffer to protect the P zones.

Interestingly, during the course of developing the Resources Management Plan, the Corps of Engineers once more decided to get involved, and proposed their own plan to correct problems in the watershed. While focused on hard engineering solutions to flooding, the plan did include soft engineering components. Nonetheless, the JCCC voted to refuse acceptance of $1 million in federal funding offered by the Corps of Engineers because it did not incorporate ecosystem management principles.

One of the critical outcomes of the Resources Management Planning Process was the recommendation that a permanent group be formed to provide citizen-based leadership in creating a stewardship ethic in the watershed. The Johnson Creek Watershed Council (JCWC) grew out of the JCCC. The JCWC received an initial grant from the State of Oregon Governor's Watershed Enhancement Board, as well as contributions from the different jurisdictions in the watershed. Today, the council has about 100 dues-paying members and an annual operating budget of approximately $75,000. Its mission is to “inspire and facilitate community investment in the Johnson Creek Watershed for the protection and enhancement of its natural resources.” To achieve this mission, the council participates in public policy process, local natural resources technical advisory committees, watershed education and restoration projects, and raises funds for special projects.

There were three coincidental events in the story of Johnson Creek that dramatically influenced its unfolding. A rail line that had facilitated settlement in the watershed's early history was underused for years. It was first constructed to facilitate the building of electrical generating dams on the Clackamas River. Later, it was used as a transit line known as the Springwater Line. In the early 1990s, a group of citizens, some of whom were also working on watershed issues, created the Friends of Springwater Corridor to advocate for transforming the line into a pedestrian/bike trail. The Friends collaborated with the 40 Mile Loop Land Trust, a trails advocacy group, and the City of Portland’s Parks Bureau. Together, they succeeded in securing federal transportation financing with local matching funds to purchase the railway line. Today, the 25-mile trail is one of the region’s most widely used pedestrian and bike trails, estimated at more than a million users annually. Because the trail parallels the creek and provides access to some of the creek’s more intact natural areas, it has served both to educate citizens throughout the region about the watershed and create a broad constituency who support stewardship and restoration efforts along the creek.

The second event was the emergence in 1997 of an urban renewal district in the heart of Lents, the neighborhood most affected by flooding. The Lents Town Center Urban Renewal District had its roots in an earlier initiative begun in 1995 and sponsored by the City's Bureau of Housing and Community Development that designated it as a target area for reinvestment to address the social and economic decline. Though the creek was a primary impediment to redevelopment in Lents because of periodic flooding, planners more versed in inner city and downtown development projects were reluctant to enter into the watershed planning process during the early stages of planning for its redevelopment. However, members of the watershed council, along with a growing number of staff at BES whose work focused on the Johnson Creek Watershed, brought the issue forward. They forced the Urban Renewal Committee and the Portland Development Commission (PDC), the City of Portland's bureau for economic development, to consider ecosystem management among its goals. It also became apparent to PDC and businesses in the area that the Bureau of Environmental Services had become a major property owner in Lents. BES had been using its willing seller program to purchase flood-prone properties, financed with federal and local funds. BES had purchased over 40 acres near the heart of the proposed urban renewal district.

While relations have remained tense between watershed advocates, redevelopers, and business interests, consideration of watershed issues has been incorporated into the planning process. One primary reason for this somewhat forced “marriage” between redevelopment and watershed interests, comprising the third pivotal event, was the impact of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). In successive years—1998 and 1999—the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) listed winter Steelhead trout and Chinook salmon, respectively, as “threatened” species that travel through the lower Columbia River. This listing included Johnson Creek’s populations of winter Steelhead and fall Chinook. The ESA listings have elevated the restoration plans for Johnson Creek to a new tier. Regardless of the seemingly insurmountable odds of assuring species survival in a steam as beleaguered as Johnson Creek, the public agencies in the region are required to come up with a balanced plan to allow orderly growth in the region while not forcing the federal government to take more drastic measures in regards to ESA. The listings forced planning efforts in Johnson Creek to focus on stream conditions that enhance fish survival. While flooding is the issue that drove the process for so long, more and more it is now the Endangered Species Act.

The last chapter of the Johnson Creek story to date involves the intervention by one of Oregon’s U.S. Congressional Representatives, Earl Blumenauer, in response to a flood that brought Johnson Creek to the foreground along with other streams in the region. 1996 brought with it one of the worst flood events the region had ever experienced. Almost all the streams in the Willamette River basin experienced their highest flood stages since 1964. Until 1996, that was the flood that was used to gauge a 100-year flood event. Once again, Johnson Creek was in the headlines as residents drove their cars through flooded streets and experienced extensive damage to homes and businesses. Because of the extensive flood damage, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was involved. FEMA provided immediate relief assistance. It also facilitated local public efforts aimed at finding ways to avoid flood damage in the future. FEMA, in discussions with Congressman Blumenauer, suggested additional funds might be available to acquire properties in the Johnson Creek floodplain or for education programs to help residents and businesses avoid future flood repercussions.

FEMA wanted assurances of local support for this type of effort. In order to showcase the Johnson Creek Watershed as a potential model for this type of intervention, Blumenauer set out to organize a convocation of public agencies, nonprofits and citizen activists, calling the event the Johnson Creek Watershed Summit. The summits, first hosted in 1998, have become a vehicle, not only for local agencies to demonstrate a unified front to FEMA, but also for facilitating the completion of the restoration plan for Johnson Creek. Comparing the festive and engaged atmosphere of the summits to those cantankerous meetings of the 1960s and 1970s speaks volumes about the change of heart and mind in the community. Over three years, more than 700 people attended the summits, representing 40 government agencies, 33 nonprofit organizations, and 12 schools. Cantankerous citizens are now a rare breed and no security force is on hand.

The vision statement crafted by participants at the second summit reflects the ecosystem management approach that has evolved over time :

The Johnson Creek basin will become a healthy, safe, and vibrant watershed by effectively planning for and managing growth, promoting sustainable economic development, and respecting and enhancing the natural functions and benefits of the creek. This will be achieved by a well-organized, well-equipped, motivated watershed-community (including a multi-jurisdictional coalition) ready and willing to work cooperatively and take specific actions which will improve watershed health and livability in the region (Johnson Creek Watershed Council, 1999)

One result of the summits, with the Bureau of Environmental Services serving as lead agency, has been the completion of the Johnson Creek Restoration Plan (Bureau of Environmental Services, 2001). The plan divides the creek into 58 sections, or reaches, and lists the opportunities for restoration within each area depending on the values, functions, and opportunities available. The plan uses eight consolidated “target functions” to characterize intended goals within selected stream reaches. These targets establish a way to quantify expected benefits and measure improvement over time. The eight functions include: in-stream complexity, priority outfalls, pipe crossings, impervious surfaces, fish barriers, inundated properties, floodplains, and corridors and habitat patches. The restoration plan has been developed with the full cooperation of all jurisdictions and agencies involved. The structure includes an Inter-jurisdiction Committee made up of representatives of agency technical staff and a Political Leaders Committee that allows elected officials from the watershed to discuss political and funding issues. In short, the multi-functional approach is a far cry from the single focus days of the 1960s and 1970s, as is the price tag, estimated at $75 - $100 million.

Between 1990--2000 there were at least 75 site specific restoration projects in the Johnson Creek Watershed. These projects range from the $1.2 million Brookside Project, a constructed wetlands designed to remove some flood waters from the troubled Lents area, to small riparian repair projects along short stretches of the creek. Almost all the projects have involved voluntary citizen participation in the planning, design, and implementation and, very importantly, in the long-term management and care of the sites.

At this point in time, a small moment in the life of the watershed, how do we measure progress? It is a key issue because progress, in the short term, may be evasive. First of all, how much has planning and restoration cost? Some direct costs are known. The City of Portland spent $1.8 million on consultants to develop the Resources Management Plan. The Bureau of Planning spent about $700,000 to develop the Johnson Creek District Plan. Since 1990, the Bureau of Environmental Services has had a varied number of staff working on Johnson Creek issues, with a minimum staff commitment between 1990 and 2000 of $2 million (Maggie Scandarian, personal communication, December, 2003). The Johnson Creek Watershed Council has had an annual budget of about $75,000 for six years, constituting an additional $500,000. In the most recent iteration of the restoration plan for Johnson Creek, the City of Portland spent an additional $2.7 million. To date, the Cities of Portland and Gresham, plus Metro, have spent about $21.8 million to acquire 450 acres of land in the floodplain or uplands in the watershed. Other agencies have also contributed to the cause through grants and contracts. For example, Metro manages funds from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which are distributed throughout the region for watershed education and restoration projects. There have been 21 projects funded in Johnson Creek with a price tag of $700,000, including both the Metro and local sponsor share. All told, the minimum cost for restoring Johnson Creek was $30 million between 1990 and 2000.

But, Measuring the success of the human and physical capital investments in tiny urban watersheds such as Johnson Creek only by the physical outcomes misses key evaluative elements. Indeed the tangible benefits from these sizable investments might be considered laughable if the wrong benchmark is using for evaluating progress. After all, at this time, returning fish are still being counted one by one. The creek still floods. Sediment still rolls down the stream, burying gravels essential for returning salmon to lay their eggs. Yet a major shift in orientation toward stewardship of the watershed has occurred. This way of measuring success would include the value of watershed resident knowledge of the watershed, the “eyes on the stream,” and the subtler community-building aspects of stewardship. It will take decades to see marked improvement in the actual health of the stream. But, the efforts of public and nonprofit organizations have accomplished as much or more. Changing the cognitive map of the residents, building a constituency of stream stewards, and changing the political climate and infrastructure are no small feats. The role of government in solving problems has changed from a technocratic and engineering role to one where process facilitation and community education is at least equally important. The investment of government agencies is soft, measured as much by shifts in attitudes, gained through new knowledge and skills, as it is in the physical public works outcomes. This shift requires putting faith in a stewardship ethic as much as it does trust in scientifically valid data that inform residents of progress achieved.

Although not a clear measure of progress, we can observe cognitive changes of residents in the watershed. A survey (see Figure \*) conducted by the Bureau of Environmental Services illustrates how the investment in nurturing a stewardship ethic has had positive returns. Especially notable are the percentage of people (80 percent) who would not dump anything down a storm drain and the percentage (55 percent) who would plant native plants.

**Figure \*. Portland percentage who definitely would or already engage in stewardship activity**

Many citizens in the Johnson Creek Watershed have in effect graduated from a multiyear ecosystem management certificate program. Through helping to write resource management and restoration plans, by learning how to work in groups to build consensus, through involvement in a wide variety of trainings and workshops, and through participation in hands-on restoration projects, citizens in the Johnson Creek Watershed know their place in the watershed, as well as their role in its management. Over time, active citizens have learned hydrology, mapping of floodplains, native plant landscaping, agricultural practices, erosion control, zoning, and group facilitation. They can talk about riparian zones, anadromous fish, bio-engineering, and the importance of woody debris in streams.

The shifting attitudes relative to the creek can be seen through the media’s coverage of it. An analysis of coverage of Johnson Creek issues by *The Oregonian* between 1990 and 2000 shows a trend toward more positive stories about Johnson Creek than negative ones. Figure \* shows that, with the exception of 1996 when flooding was the big story, there has been growth in positive stories about Johnson Creek. Instead of seeing the creek as a nuisance, the creek is increasingly regarded as an asset.

Figure **: Johnson Creek: Oregonian News Coverage: Positive and Negative**

So, in the end, while the price tag has been steep and the physical improvements in the creek minimal, the payback in the form of civic infrastructure has been immense. Between 1990 and 2000 there were over 1,000 watershed events, including public meetings, regular JCCC and JCWC meetings, restoration projects, tours, workshops, and cleanups. A total between 6,000 and 8,000 citizens were engaged in the restoration of the stream. These citizens invested at least 100,000 hours, which exceeds the 75,000 hours of public agency staff time and represents, at a conservative rate of $10 per hour, an in-kind contribution of $10 million.

In the Johnson Creek Watershed the complexity of social, political, and economic issues has led to new forms of civic responses and new types of civic collaboration. Problems like watershed restoration cannot be solved by regulatory procedures only, but require collaborations across sectors and between citizens and government. We cannot assume that pre-existing stocks of social capital can serve as an adequate foundation for building capacities in new and more complex problem arenas. It is difficult to imagine the traditional civic infrastructure that existed in Portland in the 1950s facilitating either the planning or the implementation processes applied to the restoration of the Johnson Creek Watershed. On the governmental side, agencies were separated by specialties and bureaucratic boundaries that compounded the problems. New civic infrastructure and public processes, such as the technical and political advisory groups and the Johnson Creek Watershed Council, had to be developed in order to address the complex set of issues that would result in a workable restoration plan. It was not pure science that drove the process, but rather scientific and technical knowledge embedded in a social process. The Johnson Creek Watershed planning process fits neatly within Judith Innes’ (1998) communicative planning theory, in which information becomes gradually embedded in the understandings of actors in the community through processes in which participants collectively create meanings. In the conventional model of planning, plans are developed by presumably neutral experts who work outside and apart from the political and bureaucratic process through which policy gets made, and their work does not become embedded in the institutions’ or the players’ understandings. Policy becomes “intellectual capital” or shared knowledge only if there is thorough and repeated discussion about the meaning of the information, its accuracy, and its implications (Gruber, 1994; Innes et al., 1994). Information does not influence policy unless it corresponds to a socially constructed and shared understanding within the community of policy actors. If, however, the meaning does emerge through such a social process, the information changes the actors and their actions.

The watershed restoration effort brought together a cross-section of the population as rich as any effort of traditional civic associations. During the multi-year effort to restore Johnson Creek, there were many times that citizens were planting trees together one day and deliberating public policy the next. Public works projects like the Johnson Creek Watershed restoration effort are today’s version of Skocpol’s (1999) classic civic life. Work in the watershed combines social activities with community service and mutual aid. It is where a broader group of citizens, including those working through issue interest groups, learn the essential civic skills of basic democratic process that are transferable to other civic ventures.

The story or narrative of the watershed has been changed. How to live with and benefit from the stream is imbedded in the community and public and private stories of agencies and residents. A couple of stories illustrates this point.

Along one particular stretch of the creek, several neighbors had vociferously complained about deteriorating WPA rock work that resulted in several houses losing their yards, a loss that threatened the homes themselves. Rather than engineer a hard solution, i.e. another wall, at a large expense, the city invested in the process of relationship-building through a series of informal barbecues and hired environmental engineers to work with the neighbors on designing softer bio-engineering techniques for rebuilding the wall. The neighbors learned about the techniques, and helped in the design and construction of the bio-engineered “wall”, which consisted mostly of streamside planting of willow and other vegetation. A group of planners from a local conference of the national American Planning Association just happened to tour the site soon after a moderately large flood event in which the wall had performed well by holding the bank in place. One of the neighbors, an individual who had been adamantly anti-government as well as skeptical of this new bio-engineering technique, greeted the planners and took them on a tour of what she called “our” wall (meaning the neighbors’). The change in perceived ownership represented by the use of “our” was a profound one, indeed, in the relationship between citizens and government here.

One additional anecdote illustrates the changed watershed consciousness. In the fall of 2000, an engineer, working to shore up a sewer trunk line that passes through the creek in a natural area of the stream, decided on his own to move heavy equipment downstream to remove a beaver dam. When the nearby residents found out about the incident, they reported it the Bureau of Environmental Services. The resident beaver family and its dam were a source of pride in the neighborhood, and a site used for environmental education programs. The story spread quickly and was covered by two major newspapers, television, and radio. A gathering was convened at the site the following week, attended by no less than 25 people and representing eight agencies. The city commissioner in charge of BES publicly apologized for the incident and the “rogue” engineer was eventually let go. In 2007 the City completed a $1.5 million project in the same stretch of the creek, remedying the damaged sewer line while expanding the natural floodplain and adding riffles and pools to increase fish habitat.

If the Johnson creek narrative was still embedded in the past, when the stream was considered to be a liability, something to overcome, and not as an asset; if there were no "eyes on the stream," and an embedded stewardship ethic in the watershed, as well as in the bureaucratic culture of local government, the beaver incident, or as one resident referred to it, "beavergate," would have passed without much notice; the beavers would have been displaced or relocated like a slum dweller. Instead the beavers now co-exist within a restored and relatively natural reach of the stream.

**Conclusion**

By the mid 1980s traditional civic life had been firmly displaced. While traditional civic organizations still made up about a quarter of the population of all civic groups, they accounted for less than 5% of the civic news. Portland's center of attention had irrevocably shifted. The fitting iconic figure was Bud Clark who had risen from grassroots neighborhood activism to become mayor He was accompanied by Margaret Strachan, another neighborhood activist from northwest Portland, who became a city commissioner in 1981.

From the early 1970s to the mid-1980s there was also a significant drop in contentious forms of civic actions, in particular demonstrations and voter initiatives and petitions. In part this is explained by the end of the fervent demonstrations in the 1970s about America's war in Southeast Asia. At the same time the civic table had been enlarged. Through the neighborhood system and citizen advisory groups there were more ways for activists to be involved.

Citizen advisory groups took on a wider array of social issues in the 1980s than in any other period. There were twice as many committees working on social issues in the 1980s as there were in the 1970s (75 compared with 33). Membership on all citizen advisory committees increased. In the 1980s there were almost twice as many appointments to citizen advisory committees and task forces as there were to city commissions and boards.

While the 1980s can be viewed as the pinnacle of citizen governances, by the end of the century there was a sense that some parts of the fabric of civic life in Portland had unraveled. During the 1990s the number of citizen advisory groups declined, and the City withdrew from two of its most innovative, but cumbersome, democratic innovations, the bureau advisory committee structure and neighborhood needs reports.

It is also notable by comparing news about neighborhood actions in the mid-1980s and the late 1990s that there is a change in civic temperament. In the mid 1980s three fourths of the news about neighborhood action was positive. Neighborhood associations were described as saving neighborhoods, hosting block parties, and involved in positive encounters with government through sanctioned planning processes. In the late 1990s the opposite was true. Two thirds of the news about neighborhood actions was negative. Headlines referred to neighborhoods as battle zones: “Battle of Boise,” “Long dispute over fire station resolved,” “North Portland opposes Jail,” “Two of Portland’s victories for NIMBY movement,” “Southeast neighborhoods unsatisfied with city services.” The neighborhood system, established to provide the city with intermediary organizations, had instead spawned outside challenging groups.

By the end of the 1990s, there were more advocacy organizations in Portland than any other type, while traditional civic organizations had basically disappeared, accounting for only 10% of the total civic population. There was also a return of more contentious civic activity in the news. The news reflected a new type of civic action on the edge of legality--similar to the onslaught of street demonstrations in 1972--such as tree sitting in ancient forests, eco-terrorist activities in defense of animal rights, and hotly contested anti-abortion activities. Reports of neighborhood actions were down from 1985 levels, and the news tended to be more negative than positive as some of the City’s formal civic planning processes turned contentious. Conservative groups showed up in the news more often, utilizing the types of nontraditional civic actions that had been developed by more progressive organizations in previous decades.

Overall the growth of civic bodies in Portland was stagnant between the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, the total number of bodies decreased slightly. The number of citizen advisory committees and commissions stayed the same, while boards and task forces decreased. There were 51 fewer citizen advisory committees working on social issues in the 1990s than in the 1980s. Some committees were created in the 1980s to focus on social issues, such as rising crime rates. However, it also seems reasonable to deduce from the decrease in positive news about neighborhood actions and changes in policy about involving citizens on bureau advisory committees, that the City of Portland pulled back from its wholehearted endorsement of direct democratic processes and the representative form of public involvement citizen advisory committees.

At the same time there were signs of civic renewal through the appearance of civic innovations designed to remedy some of the shortfalls of civic institutions and practices. The Futures Forum in the early 1990s was created to bring together a cross section of leaders and citizens to create consensus about a vision for the community. Other communities in the suburbs, including Hillsboro, and Washington and Clackamas Counties, likewise created vision groups to build common ground between multiple governmental, private, and NGO stakeholders. The Coalition for a Livable Future was created to bridge progressive interest groups concerned about urban growth management under one umbrella. The Johnson Creek Watershed Council, and others like it in the region, were created to bring together citizens, organized groups, and government agencies to build consensus and work together to solve difficult environmental issues. Mayor Potter's VisionPDX and Community Connect programs attempted to create a new Portland civic story, grounded in Portland's growing diversity, new comers, and young creatives raised in the post-Internet age. While failing to meet some of their loftier goals, the programs revealed the varied voices of 21st century Portland, and once again revealed Portland's flexible and innovative civic leadership.

**Chapter Five**

**CONCLUSION**

**The Community Narrative**

In the course of 35 years Portland rewrote the story of itself. It changed from a city in the boondocks, generating scant attention from the outside, run by a few self-selected *white guys*, with a derivative art and cultural scene, to a city that regularly claims accolades for its livability, sustainability, rich culture, and progressive politics. There have been many theories about the causes of this transformation, all with some merit, including enlightened civic and business leaders, the landscape, smart planners and planning innovations. In this book I have presented another view of Portland's evolution that highlights the critical role ordinary and extraordinary citizens have played, through a wide array of tried and true as well as novel civic institutions and practices.

It is important to understand the evolution of Portland's civic history as a story or narrative because the civic actions I have documented are not just singular acts of success (or failure) in the history of a community, but add up to a story that the citizens believe in, and that is relayed to the world that now attracts new citizens who move here because of the story.

Every community has a narrative. It may have many narratives over time, one that may even be determined by what *outsiders* say about a community. It might be a story that is self-fulfilling, damaging, limiting, expansive, or innovative. The nature of a community’s story is critically important to understand when setting long-term sustainability goals. To give an extreme example, the story of Las Vegas -- the get rich, ”sin city” of glamour and excess – does not include elements of environmental sustainability such as the carrying capacity of the Colorado River, etc. Portland’s story, by contrast, even if part myth, is about environmental sustainability and public involvement. The story is a construction of social knowledge: part rational science, part experiential knowledge. A healthy civic story will lower the cost of governance by spreading the responsibility for maintaining the commons between citizens, NGOs, and the private and pubic sectors. Much as Native American stories taught their people about sustaining the natural world for future generations, a good community story is one that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable. The goal of the best kind of community story is to maintain or restore an habitation pattern that is sustainable.

Bradshaw Hovey, in an article in the journal of Utopian Studies, says that, within the planning profession, and beyond, Portland is seen as a practical demonstration of how good planning, effective citizen participation, and regional growth management can produce what is commonly referred to as a good "quality of life." While this part of the Portland story is well known, Hovey's understanding of the role of story, as a tale developed and told by the residents of a community, is important to understanding the thesis of this work. Hovey (1998) says:

It is important to keep in mind that Portland's story about itself--or any community's story about itself--is more than a concatenation of events, outcomes, and key players. In Portland's case, at least, it is also partly a myth or legend which carries a message about what kind of people Portlanders are, what the community values and what it opposes, about the right and the wrong way to do things in Portland, what it means to be a member of the community, and ultimately, what kind of a city they collectively wish to be. (p. 69)

It is important that we get the story, or history of our place, correct for the sake of the historical record, but it is also important because it provides a blueprint for how change takes place. Too often the story we know is based on regimes of electoral politics or the impact of key leaders. While these stories may have validity, they also diminish the importance of individual, lesser known citizens and the role of an active citizenry. If we collectively believe that contributions to civic life and change are implemented by leaders then we may falsely assume that power only resides in a few gifted individuals or individuals with inherited social capital or financial resources.

It is also true that without leaders, such as Neil Goldschmidt (Mayor of Portland, 1973--1979) and Tom McCall (Oregon Governor 1967—1975) these civic innovations may never have taken hold or had as much impact in the community. This points to the symbiotic relationship that exists between leaders and citizens. A healthy civic life is dependent on both.

Portland's exemplary civic path may be explained by its ability to generate civic innovations. While the civic order was in upheaval, as clearly indicated first by social movement unrest in the late 1960s and early 1970s and then by a dramatic organizational ecological shift that followed, the emergent political leadership of Portland took advantage of the rising tide of civic activism. Rather than resisting the new forms of collective behavior, they incorporated the activists into a larger civic umbrella. This study confirms Sirianni and Friedland’s (2001) thesis that civic innovations in many communities around the country emerged from the initiative of state actors and were sustained through governments working with committed professional community advocates and citizen groups.

In the 1950s and before, citizen involvement in Portland meant bringing together the usual cast of elected officials and civic elite. After the reconstruction period in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Portlanders learned to expect much more—not just to elect politicians to represent their interests but to be provided the opportunity to be involved in public policy on an ongoing basis.

In 1960, the City of Portland budget reflected only one position at all involved in citizen participation, an outreach worker for the newly formed Portland Development Commission. Today public involvement is a core service of the City. The most obvious nexus is Portland’s 30-year-old Office of Neighborhood Involvement. In 2002, this office had a $8-million budget, at least $1.2 million of which focused on direct involvement of citizens in public policy issues. But public involvement is also dispersed throughout the bureaus of the City. In one recent study conducted by the City to find ways to cut costs, 122 staff were described as public involvement positions, amounting to $8 million in general operating fund expenditures (Brian Hoop, personal communication, January 2003).

The change agents in the late 1960s and early 1970s were not always greeted with open arms. Hundreds of activists were *stalked* by the Police Bureau’s secret subversive watch program. Activist, Tom Walsh (in 1999 director of the metropolitan transit organization, TriMet) was referred to as the “king of the hippies.” In the early 1970s, downtown business interests were focused on increasing parking in downtown and showed only moderate interest in plans to create Pioneer Place, a public space now thought of as Portland’s living room. Likewise, civic elites like Ira Keller had little interest in preserving neighborhoods such as Lair Hill which he described as, “just awful—like something you’d find in the Tennessee mountains. It’s worse than Albina (Urban renewal project, p.5).” At that time, in a dramatic error of judgment with cascading consequences, including the genesis of Portland’s neighborhood movement, the City and PDC did not feel compelled to have much contact with residents about the future of that neighborhood.

The transformation of civic life in Portland since the 1950s was shaped by wave after wave of challenging groups, the mobilization of constituencies that often coalesced as issue interest groups or whose agendas were institutionalized as formal government programs. At any given time, the organizational form taken by the mobilization depends on the existing civic infrastructure, the repertoire of actions that are available and effective, and the encouragement or flexibility of the established political powers. The formation of new groups to challenge the status quo or bring innovative new ideas to the forefront is an essential democratic civic act.

There are many stories throughout this study of the catalytic innovations of everyday citizens and grassroots organizations and collective actions. Portland’s citywide neighborhood system was signed into law by Mayor Goldschmidt, but it was inspired by the collective actions of countless citizens who resisted freeways and demolition of neighborhoods. Portland’s radical departure from building freeways to investing in light rail can be traced to a handful of individuals in southeast Portland who stopped the Mt. Hood Freeway. The revitalization of downtown would have played out very differently without citizens like Betty Merten, who disagreed with the business leaders in the early 1970s who wanted more parking in downtown. Without Waterfront for Citizens there might be a freeway along the Willamette River in downtown instead of a Portland’s premier civic event area, Waterfront Park. The resettlement of Portland’s inner city neighborhoods, such as Irvington in northeast Portland and the Lair Hill and Corbett Terwilliger neighborhoods in southwest Portland, were first resettled in the late 1960s and 1970s by impoverished students and idealists, such as the members of Terrisquirma and The Learning Community. The creation of Portland’s first community development corporations and an affordable housing movement can be traced back to a community congress organized by citizen activists. The creation of a Portland-region wide greenspaces program and the movement to restore Portland area watersheds and wetlands was initiated by activists using state-of-art computer mapping technologies and street theater actions to draw attention to the value of green infrastructure. Portland’s reputation as a city with a green or sustainable development outlook can be traced to grassroots collective actions. For example, Portland’s highly developed recycling programs started with the “hippie” efforts of Sunflower, Cloudburst, and Portland Recycling Team. The Pacific Northwest sustainable agriculture and natural foods movement dates back to Tilth’s convocation of sustainable agricultural activists in the early 1970s. The region’s movement away from fossil and nuclear fuels to soft energy options would probably not be so advanced without education and activist groups such as Rain and Sun.

**Civic Infrastructure**

I have examined Portland's civic history since World War II using both a chronological and thematic approach. The historical approach illuminates the decisive moments and collective actions that created the civic Portland of today. The examination of Portland's civic infrastructure provides a way of evaluating the health of civic life. I do not contend that my analysis represents a completed theory or approach. It is a work in progress. However, some of the most important elements have been revealed.

**Opportunity and efficacy**

Citizens need opportunities to be involved. In Portland, the opportunities are numerous and widespread; but opportunity needs to be accompanied by investment in the human capital of citizens. If citizens have opportunity to be involved in local decision-making, planning, and public policy, but do not have civic skills and knowledge to be **effectively** involved, then the bureaucrat’s nightmare of time and cost delays and policy gridlock may come to pass.

In Portland, traditional civic life declined because traditional groups either died or became irrelevant. Less than 20% of the civic groups of the 1950s were still in existence in 2000. Over time, they either failed to be inclusive, adaptive, or innovative, and, at some point, no longer served as the sources of civic skills and knowledge acquisition for citizens desiring to effectively participate in the civic life of the community.

Information, thanks to the Internet, about community affairs is much more readily available. But, information alone isn't sufficient. Citizens have to know how to use the information, and they need civic skills such as how to facilitate participatory group process, or present public testimony. Additionally, there is a values question. If citizens are empowered, for example through a structured and empowered neighborhood involvement system such as Portland's, to represent their own self interest or only their immediate neighbors, without a broader or deeper understanding of city-wide, regional, or even global interests and perspective, then the result can be an over-articulated civic arena.

**Engaged schools and universities**

The civic health of a community depends on an education system that nurtures good citizens as well as wage earners. It is a public good that lowers the cost of governance. One promising direction in civic education is Portland State University’s (PSU) community-based learning curriculum. Every year, 8,000 students work in the community, selecting from 1000 different community partners. At the heart of this innovative curriculum is learning, not volunteerism. When graduates of PSU are asked if they plan to continue their engagement, the strongest determinant is their sense of efficacy, i.e. whether what they did made a difference. This need for efficacy was tempered by the degree to which they felt trust in public institutions. If trust and efficacy were lacking, then students tend to look out only for themselves, leaving the work of protecting the commons to someone or something else (Morgan and Williams 2003).

**Facilitative leadership style**

Portland's civic renaissance was fueled by a symbiotic relationship between citizens and government. The leadership in Portland during the early 1970s, and at several points since then, has been more facilitative than paternalistic. Universities also have a key role in maintaining a healthy civic infrastructure by virtue of nurturing public servants who know how to facilitate effective citizen involvement. Today’s public servants or bureaucrats need a new suite of skills and knowledge that allow them to tap the “wisdom” of citizens. Typical graduates of universities come away with specialized knowledge, but often lack the skills and knowledge to work with citizens. An engineer may know how to build a road, but not how to work with community members to build roads that meet a multitude of livability goals citizens deem important.

**Civic space**

Civic spaces are an extension of the community. When they work well, they serve as a stage for our public lives. If their civic role is functional, civic spaces can be the settings where celebrations are held, where exchanges both social and economic take place, where friends run into each other, and where cultures mix. When cities and neighborhoods have thriving civic spaces, residents have a strong sense of community. When such spaces are lacking, people may feel less connected to each other. If civic spaces are inadequate, civic life, including citizen participation, will suffer. If urban design emphasizes gated communities and private or semi-private spaces over public, and does not include plentiful locales where people can mix across class or cultural boundaries, then, when citizens must come together to solve community problems, it will be much more difficult.

**One Shoe Does Not fit All**

In Portland there are many types of citizens, and many type of citizen-based organizations. The boundary between private citizen, NGO staff, volunteers, local government bureaucrats, and elected official, meanders. During the Popular Pluralist period, the Mayor, Bud Clark came up from the ranks as both the owner of a popular third Place, the Goose Hollow Inn, and as a board member of a neighborhood association, while the coordinator of the neighborhood district office where the Mayor lived, Margaret Strachan, became a city commissioner. The most recent female city commissioner, Amanda Fritz, got her feet wet so to speak, as a watershed restoration activist. Additionally, many of the City of Portland advocate bureaucrats were first NGO staff members or volunteers.

There are in Portland, and most any community, what I've come to call *professional citizens*, those that meander across these boundaries, and dedicate their life through paid and voluntary positions, to being effective citizen advocates. These are the citizens often appointed to advisory groups because of their high level of skill and knowledge about public processes and specialized knowledge of an issue, e.g. transportation planning, health care, etc. The commitment of these “professional” citizens is substantial. An appointment to a citizen advisory committee might last months, even years, and involve frequent meetings, a substantial commitment to learning technical information, and the willingness and ability to mediate with other stakeholders over contentious issues. This tier of public involvement plays a vital role in the health of a community’s civic life. “Professional” citizens provide knowledge and perspectives because of their day-to-day work within interest groups or NPOs that extends the capacity of local government agencies. While these citizens often provide valuable and objective information to the local public policy debate, they may also have invested interests and be a part of the establishment in ways that your average citizen are not.

Beyond the tier of the truly dedicated citizens there are *occasional citizens*, who may not have the time or dedication that professional citizens have, but are as centrally important. Their involvement in civic life is not as easily assured. To involve this broader base of citizens a community needs a constantly changing suite of public involvement processes and tools. Civic innovations, such as citizen juries, community benefit agreements, appreciative inquiries, and issues forums, need to be explored and implemented to continually involve the broader spectrum of citizens, and to keep the core of professional citizens from thinking too much alike.

**The Demographics of Public Involvement**

A healthy civic infrastructure also needs to make room for a variety of population groups.

**The Young--**Public involvement institutions and practices need to evolve to accommodate the culture of the young. The collapse of traditional civic life in Portland’s history reflects this need. When the established civic institutions refused to accommodate the new ways of the young ***–***the baby boomer “graduates” of the social movements of the 1960s ***–*** those young people created their own institutions that, over time, replaced many of the traditional ones. These “boomer” institutions may themselves be challenged by today’s youth, especially the “digital natives” who grew up immersed in global electronic media. These digital natives may be impatient with old style face-to-face involvement such as neighborhood meetings.

**Elder--**At the opposite end of the age spectrum are the elders of a community, now an especially large number with the graying of the baby boomer generation who possess both wealth and slack resources. Elders need to be incorporated effectively into civic life, and efficacy is the key word here. Elders’ place at the civic table should not be a purely honorific one. As with any society, there needs to be a means to transfer wisdom. Wisdom involves a longer civic narrative timeframe that can be difficult to incorporate into everyday civic life. There is an alarming distancing of young and old activists due to the differential use of the Internet by the young and old for civic involvement.

**New comers--**One of the challenges for many communities, including Portland, is the inclusion of increasing numbers of newcomers from other states and nations. How can the civic narrative and infrastructure adapt to incorporate these groups? Many immigrants to the Portland area have been drawn by the story or myth that the city has created, but they may not understand the elements of this story as translated into rules, regulations, policies, and mores. Then there are the many newcomers who arrive without much knowledge at all of the prevailing narrative. In effect, the community needs a “welcome wagon” process to enroll people into the community’s storyline while also continually adapting the storyline to new input and perspectives.

**Disadvantaged--**A community, like society, is, as Martin Luther King said, judged by how well it treats its most disadvantaged. The disabled, poor, and minorities demand unique and innovative venues for effective public involvement. What may be under-appreciated is just how many may see themselves as “disadvantaged.” A robust public involvement process is multi-leveled and flexible, accommodating people who are better at writing than speaking, those who think in terms of stories rather than numbers, and those who learn by doing as well as by studying manuals and policy documents.

**challenging groups--**One of the clear historical lessons from Portland’s civic story is that because the established order of civic institutions closed the door to young people in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the young created new civic institutions. The “insiders” did not listen to the new challenging groups, let alone learn from them or alter their institutions or civic actions. As a result, the older institutions began losing members, and the attention of the community.

**Diverse population--**A civic infrastructure that includes a diversity of perspectives is good and just, but there are more important reasons to advocate for diversity in public involvement venues. As Surowiecki (2004) argues in *The* *Wisdom of Crowds*, diversity, along with independence and decentralization, are the three basic elements that allow for the wisdom of groups to emerge. In several examples, he illustrates that groups made up of only “smart” people don’t come up with the best solutions to problems. If you assemble a diverse group of people who possess varying degrees of knowledge, you're better off entrusting major decisions to them rather than to only one or two people, no matter how smart. The more influence we exert on each other, the more likely we will believe the same things and make similar mistakes. Diversity contributes not only additional perspectives; it is also easier for individuals to say what they truly think.

**Why is it Important?**

The complex suite of issues we must address to reach environmental and social sustainability at the community level necessitates a community governance structure that harnesses the wisdom of a broad cross-section of its citizens, the “wisdom of crowds, or wisdom of citizens." Portland's civic history over the last thirty years reveals how when civic leaders and advocate bureaucrats are able to facilitate the wisdom of its citizens, a community can solve some, not all, intractable community problems. Portland's form of community governance may provide a model for the future when citizens will have to be routinely involved in creating socially and environmentally sustainable communities.

A metaphoric way of understanding this form of community governance is to think of the *hardware* and *software* components of a community. Public and private sector players have build America, at least until recently, using a hardware model, large public works enterprises, such as roads and sewers. These still need to be constructed, and engineers will still have jobs, but some of the solutions to community problems are software problems. For example, municipal waste was addressed by creating ever better incineration technology. Today, citizen involvement in recycling is an essential part of the solution and could be called a “software” solution. Or consider the issue of stream pollution: the old government structure could deal fairly handily with “point pollution”— pollution that had a single source. One located the source and remedied the situation by working with the single polluter. Non-point pollution, by contrast, is caused by the actions of thousands of residents in a watershed. Facilitating the solution to non-point pollution requires a very different approach and leaders and bureaucrats who have the ability to facilitate collective responses. To solve community issues from a long-term sustainability perspective, then, we need to move from “hardware” to “software” solutions. Other examples would include community policing and neighborhood watch, flex car options and car pooling, tool lending libraries, and providing some forms of health through maintaining and enhancing social support networks.

**Challenges for Portland**

Civic life in Portland, as in most communities, is increasingly influenced by and conducted online. Citizens are also turning to the Internet to obtain government information. 97 million or 77% of internet users have gone online to search for government information and to communicate with government agencies. Portland is considered to be one of the more wired communities in the country. An August 18, 2005 front page story in *The* *Oregonian* reported that “Portland’s drive to take the internet out of the office and into the streets has won a high-profile endorsement from Intel, which named the city one of America’s most technologically advanced." The digital natives, those who can't remember a time without the Internet, take to the new civic life, like sixties social movements took to the street, creating blogs, online electoral and issue campaigns, and novel uses of social networking space. But, there is a considerable gap between the aging activists and the young. A difference in discourse and organizing venue that needs to be bridged.

For the health of local civic life, the Internet poses a local-to-global set of problems. As Robert Putnam noted, “Technologies like the Internet mean that our connections with people around the country and around the world are getting closer, while our ties to our neighbors across the street are weakening” (Putnam 2002). Citizens access more national news online than local, and some evidence suggests that long distance social networks are strengthened at the expense of local social networks.

In terms of the quality of democratic dialogue that takes place on the Internet, in particular in the “blog world,” Stephen Bates at the Annenberg School of communication notes that the Internet prompts more knee-jerk reactions than deliberative responses . He goes on to note that "when there is more interesting discourse, you can tell it's people who just love to hear the sound of their own voices. They're not really listening to other people. It gives people a way to respond instantly and often angrily and aggressively without taking the time to mull something over."

The very nature of organizations and how individuals relate to one another is being changed by the Internet. Some trends impacting local civic life include: the fluid nature of organizational membership; an increase in intra-organizational membership; and "membership" in organizations online that solidifies affinity groups at the expense of exposure to different perspectives. There may also be an increase of expressive forms of citizen participation at the expense of more deliberate dialogue, while at the same time individuals may gain more power as individuals and be able to foster weak ties at a distance.

Though Putnam has thoroughly documented the decline of civic life in America, it is sometimes forgotten that his critique is not solely about the declining number of citizens involved, but also the nature of that involvement. He noted that collective action has declined more rapidly than expressive forms of individual action (e.g. letter writing). "There is," he said, “more single issue blare and declining civility (Putnam 2000, p. 46).”

In the *Wisdom of Crowds,* Surowiecki (2004) points out some key distinctions between “wise” crowds and unruly mobs. It is not enough just to ask for citizens opinions; the communication process has to be structured to gain the generalized wisdom of the citizenry. We too often confuse opportunity for citizens to publicly express their opinion with true and effective citizen participation. Fortunately, there are a growing number of practitioners and theorists who are developing deliberative democratic processes to capture the wisdom of citizens. Communicative planning theory promotes citizen participation in which knowledge is socially constructed. Participatory research focuses attention on the need to include citizens early in any process when the ground rules, original questions, data selection, and analysis typically narrow the scope for participation into simplistic choices between limited number of options. Other civic process models attempt to balance power differences and make use of different types of knowledge. For example, Participatory rural appraisal--ways of utilizing local knowledge and analyzing and including that “data” in assessments and implementations, and Beneficiary assessment –processes that focus on experience of the recipients or those effected ***–*** are two examples. Organizations such as the Kettering Foundation, Center for Deliberative Democracy, and the American Democracy Project have developed creative processes to involve citizens in substantive dialogues rather that rudimentary public processes like public hearings.

Portland has built an exceptional civic infrastructure over the last 40 years, but as the city enters the 21st century the next test will be whether the collective vision can hold steady with a more diverse population, the divisive tactics of special-interest-group politics, and a civic life that is carried out as much in the virtual blogsphere as it is in face-to-face neighborhood meetings. The ferment of civic activism of the previous generation has changed both the “vocabulary” and “grammar” of civic life–-the goals and values that are commonly accepted and the ways that decisions are made. If this is true, Portland represents a challenge not only to Putnam’s thesis of a decline in civic participation but also to his worry that such declines erode the shared goals and patterns of trust that are often called “social capital.” Structural explanations do not seem to clarify Portland’s rich civic life. Portland is quite similar to Seattle, Denver, Austin, and Columbus in demographic structure and economic base, but it ends up with a very different style of public life. What does seem to account for Portland’s distinctiveness is learned behaviors. Early successful examples of participatory action encouraged other activists and bred institutions that in turn embedded and reinforced particular styles of action. In effect, Portlanders in the last 35 years have learned about the rewards and problems of active citizenship through practice. Nevertheless, the underlying challenge for progressive Portland is whether the efflorescence of civic activism will be limited to a single generation. In places such as Birmingham and Chicago, the “civic moment” faded after a few decades as problems seemed less urgent. New groups with new issues did not find the progressive consensus open to their concerns and had little interest in celebrating past accomplishments.

Will Portland’s habits of planning and a larger habit of civic activism carry its own momentum? Will newcomers care to learn the Portland style? Can a particular political culture or style be transmitted across generations? Will the institutionalizing of activism perpetuate or dampen the fervor of reform? Is the civic infrastructure created since the 1960s robust enough to accommodate the interests and needs of a changing community? Will what Putnam calls the “Portland anomaly” fade or continue in the 21st century (Johnson and Abbot, 2003).

It is necessary to develop more effective ways of engaging people in community problem-solving in partnership with government and that requires a software solution that harnesses the wisdom of a diverse cross-section of citizens. The complex problems we seek to resolve demand “face time” that enables citizens to strengthen social capital and bridge disparate communities and perspectives. We also need to understand and access the capacities that the revolution in information technology provides. One need only spend time perusing the first encyclopedia on the planet created by everyone rather than a handful of experts – Wikipedia – to understand the potential of global “idea agoras” and “wisdom of crowd” software. Remember, on the popular television show, “So You Want to be a Millionaire?,” the audience is right 91% of the time. And the “experts?” They clock in at 65%.

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