

## Civic Structures—Post WW II—1960s

### 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 ballot 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 Structures--1960s--1970s

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 these 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. Title 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 23rd and 21st 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 hang 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).

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 oversee 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 began 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, Owings 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 hearing 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, began 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 Terwilliger neighborhoods to the south and eventually were provided planning assistance from the City to develop their "unified plan." In 1977 the City Council designated Lair Hill as one of the first historic conservation districts in Portland--a far cry from its designation as a derelict area populated by hippies and other desirables.

The battle over the soul of Lair Hill and Corbett-Terwilliger neighborhoods was a major catalysis for the formation of Portland's neighborhood citizen participation system. As a consequence of the heated and relentless actions of residents in these neighborhoods, to have a voice in urban renewal policies, the City Council, in particular Commissioner Lloyd Anderson, forged proposals in the early 1970s that led to the formation of the City of Portland's Office of Neighborhood Association.

#### 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.

## Repertoires 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 repertoires 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 Instructure—1980s—1990s

### 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.

### Repertoires 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. Its 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?
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- \* 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?
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- \* 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.