

CHAPTER VIII

ANALYSIS

Portland's forty-year effort to increase community involvement in civic life and local decision making offers a rich and valuable case study of how a community can move toward greater participatory democracy. This final chapter circles back to what Thomson (2001) identified as a central question for academics and practitioners who are seeking to bolster civic society: "[W]hat forms of organizations and activities have the potential to bridge the yawning gap between citizens and their governments..." (Thomson 2001 2).

This section answers this study's three primary research questions based on the Portland experience:

1. What structures, program elements, policies, and practices did Portlanders find over time are necessary to encourage and support greater community involvement in local decision making and civic life?
2. What dynamics helped or hindered the evolution of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system?
3. What does the Portland experience tell us about what it takes to sustain and preserve the advances toward greater participatory democracy?

The overall finding of this study is that a significant advance toward greater participatory democracy and community governance in a community requires a comprehensive strategy that involves many more people in civic life in their community, that builds community capacity to organize and be involved in local decision making, and

changes local government culture to significantly improve the willingness and ability of city leaders and staff to work in partnership with community members and organizations.

Structures, program elements, policies, and practices: Portlanders, in the 1970s, decided that the minimum community involvement required by law—i.e., formal public notices and public hearings—was not adequate. A number of Portland city leaders and staff and community members had a vision in which city government, neighborhood associations, and community members would work together as partners to shape Portland's future. They created Portland's formal, citywide neighborhood association system, supported it through ONA, and instituted bureau budget advisory committees (BACs), the Neighborhood Needs Process, and a neighborhood planning program to give community members a voice in major city government decisions. To increase the likelihood that neighborhood associations could help shape city government decisions, city agencies were required to give neighborhood associations 30-days notice of city decisions that affected their communities. Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system became nationally known through the work of the Tufts University research team in the late 1980s. Despite the loss of some of these programs in the 1990s and early 2000s, Portland's neighborhood association system and the city office created to support it—ONA/ONI—endured. Over the decades during which the system has been in place, Portlanders have come to expect that city government (and other local institutions) will make some effort to involve the community in important decisions.

Even though Portland has involved the community at higher levels than most cities, Portland neighborhood and community activists, for years, have complained that

city leaders and staff do not genuinely involve the community in ways in which the community significantly can affect the outcome of processes, that the city does not involve community members early enough, and that city community involvement processes too often are not well designed and implemented and are not effective at reaching out to and involving a broad diversity of people in Portland—especially people from historically under-represented groups.

Two important review processes—2003-04 Public Involvement Task Force (PITF) and 2005-08 Community Connect— together established an overall strategic plan that finally has provided a road map for significantly improving participatory democracy and community governance in Portland. The PITF focused on what it would take to improve the quality and consistency of city government community involvement. Community Connect took a broader view and identified three primary goals: to involve more, and more diverse, community members in civic life, build community organizing and involvement capacity in the community, and ensure that community members have an impact on local government decision making. Community Connect reinforced a number of the PITF recommendations under its “Goal 3.”

Portland’s experience reflects many of the academic theories found in the literature and shows how these different theories need to be combined in a larger strategic effort to achieve greater participatory democracy. Key elements needed to move toward greater participatory democracy are described below.

Increase “breadth” and “depth”: Berry et al established a basic framework for participatory democracy that includes two key elements: breadth and depth. They suggest

that “The breadth of a participation effort is the extent to which an opportunity is offered to every community member to participate at every stage of the policy making process,” and that “the depth of a participation effort is the extent to which the citizens who choose to participate have the opportunity to determine the final policy outcome by means of the participation process.” (54-55). These elements are very much at the heart of the PITF recommendations and the Community Connect goals of involving more people and ensuring they have a greater impact on decision making.

Build Social capital: Putnam and Feldstein make the case that increasing social capital is vital to expanding local democracy...”interpersonal connections and civic engagement among ordinary citizens” are “essential to making participatory democracy work.” They also assert that a community needs both “bonding” social capital within groups and “bridging” social capital between groups. These concepts are central to Community Connect Goal One which focuses on getting more people involved in the civic life of the community in a variety of ways—not just forcing them to go to a neighborhood meeting or serve on a city task force. Community Connect recognized that getting people connected to other people in their community is an important gateway to their possible future involvement in community organizing and projects and more structured involvement activities. Putnam and Feldstein’s concepts also are reflected in the shift in the Portland system to supporting people organizing with other people with whom they have a shared sense of community or identity (bonding social capital) and then helping neighborhood and community groups network and work together (bridging social capital). Mayor Potter sought to improve basic involvement by community

members through funding to support expanded neighborhood association communications and especially the creation of the Neighborhood Small Grants Program. The Neighborhood Small Grants Program pushes resources out into the community and gives community members a reason to get organized and work on something they care about. Participation in the program builds awareness and relationships in the community and has led to a number of subsequent partnerships between community organizations that first got to know each other through the grant process.

Support Different Types of Organizations: Warren also argues for the need to build social capital and strengthen the social fabric of local communities by starting with whatever institutions exist in each community, then bridging social capital across communities, and then developing “mediating institutions capable of intervening successfully in politics and government” (19-20). Warren’s argument is reflected in the approach developed by Interwoven Tapestry in the early 2000s and the Southeast Uplift DRC and DCLC, in which different groups in the community are supported in organizing within their communities, building on existing structures (like immigrant and refugee “mutual assistance associations”), and developing strength within their own organizations before linking up with other neighborhood and community organizations.

Chaskin argues that “neighborhood governance” requires “the engagement of neighborhood-level mechanisms and processes to guide civic participation, planning, decision making, coordination, and implementation of activities within the neighborhood, to represent neighborhood interests to actors beyond it, and to identify and organize accountability and responsibility for action undertaken.” He further argues that individual

neighborhood associations and other community-based organizations “operate within a local ecology of organizations and inter-organizational relationships” and that a range of associations and organizations may claim to speak for parts of the community. Smock asserts that different community organizing models (including the traditional neighborhood association “civic model”) each have their strengths and weaknesses. She argues that one size or type of community organizing model will not work for everyone and in every situation. Chaskin’s and Smock’s arguments are reflected in the significant shift in Portland’s community and neighborhood association system away from the traditional model centered on neighborhood-associations to a system that recognizes and works with a broad array of neighborhood and community organizations that fit the needs, culture, and capacity of the communities they serve.

Build and sustain a city wide system of community organizing vehicles: Berry et al state that a citywide system of neighborhood associations advances participatory democracy by providing community organizing vehicles that community members can use when an important issue or crisis arises. The Portland experience has shown the value of a city-wide system of independent, community-controlled organizing bodies. Participation in individual Portland neighborhood associations ebbs and flows according to the energy and needs of each neighborhood over time, but having established community organizing bodies provides a forum for community members to come together to discuss issues and to organize themselves to take action. ONI is now expanding this concept to ensure similar ongoing organizing capacity for non-geographic communities as well.

Support community organizing: Most community members do not have the experience, skills, and confidence that would help them effectively engage in local decision making processes. Neighborhood activists long have asserted that they need more support if they are going to expand their outreach to the community and ensure that volunteer-run neighborhood associations are open, welcoming, and effective. Community Connect Goal 2 identifies the need to build capacity in the community by supporting the development of strong community leaders, healthy, well-functioning community organizations and linking community groups together to increase their power and effectiveness.

Smock describes the value of the traditional community organizing approach in which organizing staff reach out to community members and help them develop leadership skills and other skills of effective advocacy. Since the founding of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system in the 1970s, different system reviews have recognized the need for leadership training and technical assistance to help build strong leaders and effective neighborhood and community organizations. Early on, ONA supported leadership training and technical assistance to neighborhood associations through its contracts with the neighborhood district coalitions. ONA/ONI staff also at different times provided training workshops directly to community members. A central aspect of the DCL Program is leadership training for people of color and immigrants and refugees. Over the years, a number of system reviews have called for the development of an ongoing, robust, community leadership training program—e.g., a Citizen's Academy—in Portland. ONI and its neighborhood and community partner

organizations—with apparent support from Mayor Hales—plan to develop a city-wide leadership training program that would be open to community members from all of Portland’s different geographic and non-geographic communities.

Portland’s experience has shown the importance of ensuring that community leaders and organizations receive support in many areas including, outreach, community organizing, visioning, fundraising, meeting management, advocacy, and dispute resolution. ONI, in 2013, is working with the neighborhood district coalitions and other groups to develop best practices materials in all of these areas. These materials also will provide valuable material from which to design training workshops. ONI is beginning to provide similar support to other non-geographic communities and community organizations.

Establish a multi-tier structure of community organizations: Putnam and Feldstein emphasize the need for people to be able to come together in organizations that allow them to have face-to-face communication with other community members. They also advocate for an approach in which smaller groups are “nested” together in larger organizations or coalitions to help them share information and ideas and build their power.

Portland’s experience has shown the value of a multi-tiered structure in which independent neighborhood associations are grouped together in districts which are served by neighborhood district coalition offices. The neighborhood district coalitions provide a forum for neighborhoods to come together and share information and work on issues that transcend the boundaries of any one neighborhood association.

The 1972 DPO Task Force members discussed the idea of creating a citywide tier that would allow neighborhood associations to come together to work on citywide issues. Thomson advocated this idea again during the 1993 Neighborhood Congress. A city-wide tier never has been implemented in Portland. The felt need continues to exist, however, and over the decades, neighborhood activists have attempted to create citywide bodies to work on policy issues a number of times—the Citywide Land Use Group (CWLUG) is the only one that has endured. In lieu of creating a formal citywide body, neighborhood activists often organize temporary ad hoc groups to advocate on citywide issues. Community organizations that serve and advocate for non-geographic communities in Portland naturally tend to organize at a citywide level and, while they still have the challenge of reaching out to and including different sub-groups within their broader community, their basic organizational focus already is citywide.

Many system reviews have emphasized the value of periodically convening community and neighborhood activists from across the city to give them the opportunity to develop relationships and share information. ONA/ONI has organized neighborhood association summits in the past, but not since 2004. Community Connect recommended convening regular neighborhood and community summits that would bring together the full spectrum of community organizing efforts in Portland.

Support a central agency to coordinate and support the system: Portland's experience has shown the value of having an agency within city government that is dedicated to community empowerment and that serves as a bridge between city government and community groups. Attempts to redirect ONI's focus away from

community empowerment and toward the delivery of human services or other city services has shown the importance of formally establishing and protecting the community empowerment focus of this entity. Adequate funding of this agency and the overall system also is very important. During the 1990s and early 2000s, when funding for ONI and the system stagnated, little progress was made in evolving the system. The significant new resources dedicated to ONI and its neighborhood and community partner organizations under Mayor Potter, showed that major advances require a commitment of adequate resources to get the job done. The ONA/ONI experience also has shown the important role of staff people with strong social justice and community process skills in ensuring that the system stays true to its values and fulfills its potential.

Support Government Capacity and Culture Change: Leighninger found that democratic governance efforts generally take two forms: permanent neighborhood structures, and temporary organizing efforts that include “citizen involvement” and “public engagement processes such as visioning processes, community budgeting, deliberative dialogues, and advisory groups. Sirianni and Friedland argue that “deliberative democracy” depends on city leaders and staff and community members “deliberating about public problems and solutions under conditions that are conducive to reasoned reflection and refined public judgment.”

The Portland experience has shown the importance of establishing clear principles and policy requirements in city government that identify community involvement as important and an integral part of the work of city government. The PITF and Community Connect highlighted the need for programs dedicated to involving the community in

certain important government decisions, including the city budget process, capital improvement project identification and implementation, neighborhood planning, and community policing. PITF also emphasized the importance of effective community process design and implementation and evaluation and sharing of lessons learned to improve community involvement across city government over time.

Create a “Think Tank” to Identify and Advocate for Best Practices: The PITF and Community Connect recommended the creation of a body that would think strategically about community and neighborhood involvement and would share best practices and advocate for reforms and improvements. This body could be within city government, or a local foundation, or university. The City Council’s creation of PIAC in 2008, for the first time, established in Portland an ongoing body with the charge and capacity to examine community involvement practices in city government and to develop proposals for improvement. Many past recommendations to improve city government community involvement now are moving forward because of PIAC. In the past, an attempt was made to create a “Center for Public Participation” at Portland State University, but the effort failed when ongoing funding could not be found. PIAC’s status as an independent board/commission within city government and the funding of staff support for PIAC through the City’s “overhead” model makes it likely that PIAC will continue to play an active role in improving city government community involvement.

Value of an Overall Strategic Plan: The significant changes in Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system that currently are underway are due in great part to the clear vision and guidance provided by Community Connect and the PITF

report. These documents represent much of the important learning about effective community involvement Portlanders have achieved over the past forty years. These documents attempt to cover all the important elements needed to move Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system toward greater participatory democracy and strong community governance. These documents continue to guide progress toward achieving that vision through clear and comprehensive goals, strategies, and action steps. The PITF and Community Connect carry added weight because they were developed through open, inclusive, and credible processes that included both city staff and community members.

Cities that implement some of the elements described above—such as creating a system of neighborhood associations, or implementing a creative community budgeting process, offering a citizen academy, or implementing occasional innovative community involvement processes—are likely to see improvement in some aspects of their community involvement. However, Berry et al warn that city leaders who open up their processes to greater community involvement sometimes leave community members more dissatisfied rather than less. Exposing community members to some open and inclusive decision making processes can raise their expectations that most of city government should function in the same way. That certainly has been the case in Portland. Over the last forty years, despite all of Portland city government's effort to involve the community, repeated reviews of the Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system have documented neighborhood and community activists continuing to call for better quality and more consistent community involvement.

The consistency of the complaints over the years indicate that Portland was stuck at an intermediate level on the path to greater participatory democracy. Portland had implemented a citywide neighborhood association structure, required basic formal public notification of public decisions, and offered many different community involvement opportunities. However, many people in Portland—especially people from historically underrepresented communities—were not involved in the basic civic life of their communities and not involved in the neighborhood system or other formal community involvement processes. Neighborhood associations and other community groups varied tremendously in their ability to and interest in reaching out and involving more people in their communities. Community and neighborhood activists continued to feel that the City was not involving them early enough in priority setting and decision making processes and not ensuring that they had an impact on the outcomes of these processes. The quality and consistency of community involvement processes across City government also varied dramatically from processes that were showcases of community involvement best practices to other processes that represented the very top-down and closed processes that Portland had been trying to overcome when it created its community and neighborhood involvement system in the 1970s.

The comprehensive strategy embodied in Community Connect and the PITF have provided Portland city leaders and staff and community members with a clear path to a higher level of participatory democracy and community governance. The coming years will show whether city leaders and staff and community members can work together and continue to ensure that Portland will be a leader in the nation in community involvement.

Dynamics that helped or hindered the evolution of Portland's System:

Kingdon's "multiple streams" theory of public agenda setting explains many of the factors that influenced the original creation of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system in the 1970s, the stagnation and decline of the system in the 1990s and early 2000s, and the dramatic reform of the system after 2005.

Kingdon asserts that three separate "streams" flow through the government agenda setting system—problems, policies, politics. When these streams come together, problems are more likely to be addressed or proposals moved forward. Policy entrepreneurs and elected officials can play important roles in either creating or taking advantage of open policy windows and moving changes forward.

Problems: Problems are identified through indicators, focusing events, feedback on existing programs, and redefinition of conditions as problems. The frequent studies of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system played an important role in identifying, repeatedly, what was working and not working in the system. In some cases, studies were done but did not lead to change—such as Strachan's 1992 report and the subsequent 1993 Neighborhood Congress—because they did not cross other "streams" at the time.

Other studies did lead to changes. In the 1980s, the committee that studied challenges in the functioning of neighborhood associations led to the development of the first formal ONA Guidelines for neighborhood associations. Portland Future Focus early on identified the need to increase the involvement of historically under-represented groups. The 1995-96 Task Force on Neighborhood Involvement set the stage for the

renaming of ONA to ONI, called for the formal acceptance of alternative district structures, and initiated early efforts to recognize “communities beyond neighborhood boundaries.” The Public Involvement Task Force (PITF) developed a broad strategy for increasing the quality and consistency of community involvement by city government, which the Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) now is implementing.

Community Connect established a broad strategy for the entire system that helped shape the reforms under Potter and that continues to guide the system’s expansion today. The Urban League’s “State of Black Oregon” report was one of a number of studies that showed significant evidence of disparities between white Portlanders and Portlanders of color. These studies helped make “equity” the major framework for the Portland Plan and continue to influence the update of Portland Comprehensive Plan and the development of the City’s Title II ADA and Title VI Civil Rights plans. Many studies—even if they did not have an effect at the time—served as background for future studies that often raised similar issues.

Other “focusing events” like the intense conflict over a number of City projects in the late 1960s and early 1970s and again in the late 1990s and early 2000s gave city elected leaders and staff a strong incentive to find better ways to work with the community. The earlier conflicts led to the creation of Portland’s neighborhood system and ONA. The latter conflicts led to the creation of the PITF and Community Connect processes and set the stage for Potter’s election as mayor and the many system reforms he implemented.

Policies: Kingdon asserts that loosely knit communities of specialists, including researchers, analysts, and academics, often identify, raise, test, and refine policy alternatives. They engage in a process of “softening up the system” before moving forward. In Portland, these roles often have been played by neighborhood and community activists and sympathetic city staff people. For example, the idea for a neighborhood grants program repeatedly was recommended by different studies of the system over many years before Potter funded the Neighborhood Small Grants Program. Neighborhood and community activists and city staff kept bringing up the idea and researched similar programs in other cities to provide examples of how the program might work. Charles Shi brought up the idea of “communities beyond neighborhood boundaries” during the 1995-96 TFNI process. The Southeast Uplift DRC and DCLC discussed and evolved the concept over a number of years in the early 2000s. The Southeast Uplift DCLC developed and advocated for a number of different policy proposals to provide formal status and support for historically under-represented communities. ONI and the PIAC continue to develop, propose, refine, and advocate for different policies that implement the Community Connect goals and strategies.

Politics: Kingdon noted that elected officials often are more important than any other players inside or outside government at moving policy proposals forward. Other elements that affect the “politics” stream including arrival of a new administration, changes in community mood, and visible players—such as politicians and high level appointees—and hidden players—such as academic specialists, career bureaucrats, and government staffers.

Many of the greatest advances in the evolution of Portland's system are tied to this "politics" stream. Goldschmidt's election as mayor in 1972 allowed him to support the creation of Portland's formal neighborhood system, ONA, the bureau budget advisory committees, the Neighborhood Needs Process, and neighborhood planning. Potter's election in 2004 gave him the opportunity to implement many important, long-standing recommendations for improving the neighborhood system. Potter created new programs at ONI, established the Human Relations Office, and created a number of commissions. Potter's signature project—visionPDX—involved many groups that had never been involved with the City before and set a new standard for what good, diverse community outreach looked like. Adams' decision to assign responsibility for ONI to Commissioner Fritz, a strong supporter of neighborhood associations and community involvement helped protect many of the advances achieved under Potter. Adams also became a major champion of "equity" in City government policy and programs.

The Portland experience also shows that political leaders can use their political influence to prevent further evolution of the system or actually roll back previous advances. Katz, during her twelve years as mayor, allowed the system to drift and stagnate and dismantled parts of it. She also assigned responsibility over ONI to city commissioners who were not strong supporters of community involvement, and, in the case of Randy Leonard, were actively hostile to ONI's traditional community empowerment role.

Portland neighborhood and community activists have recognized the tremendous importance of having a political champion for community involvement on the city

council. In 2004, the Neighborhood PAC attempted, unsuccessfully, to organize to give neighborhood a greater voice in the political process. In 2012, a very diverse group of representatives of ONI's neighborhood and community partner organizations and other community activist groups gathered for a facilitated discussion to identify the skills and abilities they all wanted to see in city council members. Participants still plan to use the input from this meeting to develop a candidate questionnaire that they will ask all mayoral and city council candidates to complete. They then will make the results public to help community members consider which candidates best understand and support effective community involvement.¹³⁶ Other neighborhood and community activists have talked about developing a training or briefing they could provide to newly elected city officials to help them learn about community governance concepts and the City's community involvement policies and best practices.

Policy entrepreneurs: Kingdon asserts that policy entrepreneurs "play a major role in drawing attention to and defining problems." They work to advance their issues, concerns, and pet projects higher on the government agenda. They often work to "soften up the system" to make it more receptive to their ideas and look for opportunities to turn "problems" into "opportunities." Policy entrepreneurs both in the community and in city government have played a major role in shaping some major aspects of Portland's system. For example, in the 1970s, Mary Pederson played a major role in shaping the role of ONA, particularly in advocating for a role for district neighborhood coalition offices in

¹³⁶ The representatives of the different neighborhood and community organizations that participated in this event, had met and gotten to know each other through their participation on the ONI BAC and other ONI and City advisory committees and project. This event was a good example of how naturally and easily very diverse neighborhood and community groups could come together around a topic they all cared about: having a voice in local decision making.

providing organizing and other technical support to neighborhood associations (despite the fact that the City Council had dropped the district tier from the ordinance that created the early neighborhood system). Margaret Strachan led the focus group review of the neighborhood system in 1992 and then went on to advocate for and help organize the 1993 Neighborhood Congress. Rey España played a major role in seeding the idea that non-geographic communities need to be supported in organizing themselves first rather than forcing them to work through the existing neighborhood association system. España strongly influenced the development of what became ONI's DCL Program and ONI's current effort to seek to understand better and support other non-geographic communities as well.

Portland's experience has shown the value of frequent studies and evaluations to draw attention to what is working and what is not about community involvement in a community, the importance of having political champions on the city council, and the importance of giving policy entrepreneurs opportunities to share their ideas in settings in which people are likely to listen to them and help advocate for the implementation of their ideas.

Sustaining and Preserving Advances: Portland's experience also shows the importance of embedding advances toward greater participatory democracy to reduce the chance that they will be rolled back. Cooper (2011) notes that the long-standing cultural tradition in public agency leaders and staff is that the public has a fairly limited role in policy development and the day-to-day operations of government. Leighninger (2006) refers to this model as an "adult-child" relationship between government and the

community. The National League of Cities asserts that “Ensuring the effective governance of the community...requires different skills and attitudes than the ones taught in most public administration schools.” Gibson argues that a shift to more “citizen-based approaches” to governance needs to focus “primarily on culture change.”

Gibson argued that the challenge is to inculcate a “deeper and more firmly entrenched cultural ethos of civic engagement.” Cooper (2011) states that a more “citizen-centered” governance approach requires moving away from an emphasis on “particular participatory techniques, specific projects, and particular problems” and toward a broader “citizen-centered approach” that includes an adequate culture of engagement to “sustain and effectively employ” community involvement best practices. Stone (1998) argues that the culture reform requires altering subsystem relations and establishing “ and “institutional legacy” to ensure that changes last. He argues that the inner core of a subsystem rarely reforms itself and requires outside pressure to achieve and sustain reform.

On one level, embedding greater participatory democracy in a community involves raising the expectations of both community members and city leaders and staff for what good community involvement looks like. Portland for years has been known as a city that values public process—but complaints also arise that there is too much process or that processes are not well designed or implemented. In any case, Portlanders expect some level of community involvement in important decisions. Even critiques of Portland’s process-heavy culture chastise outsiders who run into trouble for not adequately involving the community, and for not understanding “the Portland way” of

doing things. Community members' perception that city council members had violated "the Portland way" and had stopped listening to the community helped fuel the strong community support for Tom Potter's successful run for mayor.

Community involvement practices, in addition to being embedded in general community and government expectations, need to be embedded in the policies, structures, and daily practices of city government leaders and staff. Fernandez and Rainey (2006) identified seven elements required to achieve lasting reforms in public sector agency organizational culture: Ensure the need, Provide a Plan, Build Internal Support for change and Overcome Resistance, Ensure top-management Support and Commitment, Build External Support, Provide Resources, Institutionalize Change, and Pursue Comprehensive Change. PITF recommended and PIAC is implementing many of these strategies for change.

Portland was successful early on in embedding aspects of its community and neighborhood involvement system in city government through the adoption of the 1974 and 1975 ordinances that established the formal neighborhood system and ONA, and established roles and responsibilities for neighborhood associations, city agencies and ONA. Important early community involvement programs like the BACs, Neighborhood Need Process, and neighborhood planning, although referred to in the early ordinances, all functioned for a time but then were discontinued. The City Council's adoption, in 1996, of the Public Involvement Principles and city government Outreach Handbook, had little effect on improving city government because no follow up occurred to be sure that they were used widely and consistently. Commissioner Leonard's unilateral effort to

refocus ONI on delivery of city services in neighborhoods led to ONI BAC's later revision of the ONI mission and goals to reflect the Community Connect goals.

PITF saw that the need to embed community involvement values and practices more deeply into city government was a major priority. PITF recommended a number of actions that later were recommended again by Community Connect. Some PITF recommendations focused on embedding community involvement in city government structures and policies. One was the creation of, and staff support provided for, PIAC as an ongoing body charged with improving the quality and consistency of city government. PIAC developed and the City Council later adopted new, revised community involvement principles for city government. PIAC members are working with BPS staff to develop new community involvement goals and policies for Portland's Comprehensive Plan that city staff would be required to follow. PIAC members plan to advocate for the City Council to require each city bureau to develop an overall community involvement policy that fits their particular bureau's work. The prominent role that "equity" played in the Portland Plan provided another important policy support for improving city government community involvement. The City of Portland Title II ADA plan and Title VI Civil Rights plan are examples of other legally binding policies that have a strong community involvement component. The adoption of community involvement values and best practices into formal city policy documents also has provided an opportunity for the City Ombudsman and the City Auditor to respond to and investigate complaints from community members and organizations about poor community involvement by city agencies.

The PITF also recognized the importance of inserting community involvement into the priorities and incentives for city employees. The PITF called for community involvement requirements to be included in the job descriptions of all city bureau directors and senior staff and that these requirements would be part of their performance reviews. PIAC members also began to institute measures to raise awareness of and track community involvement activities of city bureaus through the FIPIS form that city staff need to complete with every item going to City Council for approval. The PITF also began documenting city bureau community involvement policies, capacity, and practices through the Baseline Assessment survey.

In addition to embedding community involvement in policies and performance tracking, PIAC members recognized the importance of understanding and providing city staff with the support they need to be able to better involve the community in their work. PIAC members are beginning to develop best practices materials, including the Comp Plan community involvement manual, and plan to develop and offer a number of training workshops for city staff on different aspects of community involvement. The need to build skills and confidence in city staff, mirrors the similar need on the community side to provide community involvement best practices guidance and leadership training to community and neighborhood leaders.

PIAC also is fulfilling the role of the community involvement “think tank” that the PITF and Community Connect recommended. PIAC will be able to track and evaluate progress toward changing the culture and practices of city government and will be able to

continue to develop new policy and program proposals and advocate for their implementation to ensure that progress continues.

Future Research: Portland's ongoing efforts to support and expand community and neighborhood involvement offers many opportunities for additional research and learning. Some interesting possible study topics include:

- The ONI DCL Program is five years old. What has the program revealed about involving communities of color and immigrant and refugee communities in civic life and local decision making? How will the program evolve to include more groups or expand that funding and support ONI's DCL Program partner organizations provide to their community members?
- ONI is starting to learn about the needs of other non-geographic communities in Portland—such as youth, homeless, LGBTQ, renters, disability, and elders. What particular needs do these groups have regarding community organizing and engaging in local decision making? What capacity do they already have? What organizations or structures already exist to support them? What additional support might ONI provide that would help these communities become more organized and effective?
- The Public Involvement Advisory Council (PIAC) is a very unusual body and process that offers significant promise of achieving the deeper city government culture change that many researchers have said is needed to advance toward greater participatory democracy. A study of PIAC's role

in and effect on city government attitudes toward and practice of community involvement would be valuable, as would studies of different PIAC initiatives such as (1) the proposed new community involvement goal and policy language for Portland's Comprehensive Plan; (2) the implementation of PIACs recommendations for bureau budget advisory committees, (3) PIAC's effort to support all city bureaus to develop a public involvement policy, and (4) PIAC efforts to track and report on community involvement activities across city government.

- The Neighborhood Small Grants Program has been very popular in the community and appears to have catalyzed significant community creativity and build capacity in individuals and community organizations and encouraged the development of new relationships between community groups. A study that would document the effects and value of this program would help city leaders and community members judge the program's value and its long-term effects on individuals and organizations that have participated in the program.
- The East Portland Action Plan is viewed by many in city government and the community as one of the most inclusive and effective community involvement processes in Portland's history. A study of the process, impacts, and lessons learned from EPAP would be very helpful.
- East Portland neighborhood and community activists, ONI, and the City Council all are interested in exploring whether the experience with the

EPAP, EPNO, and EPN bodies in east Portland could lead to the development of a new, more inclusive and effective district-level entity that could serve as a model for the next generation of district level bodies in Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system.

Documentation of this process and an evaluation of its outcome would be valuable.