

CHAPTER III

ORIGINS AND EARLY YEARS—1970s

Portland's internationally-known citywide neighborhood and community involvement system is nearly 40 years old. Over that time, the system has evolved and changed to meet new community needs and changing political priorities. Many of the early goals, purposes, and key elements and challenges established during the founding of the system continue to be part of the system today. Additional elements and programs were added over time. Some endured and others did not. Some recommendations for improvements have been made many times, but still have not been implemented. Other changes were implemented and have strengthened and improved the system.

This section describes studies and documents that provide insights into the original thinking that shaped the origin and early years of the system. These early documents include a formal proposal by the Portland Planning Commission for the creation of community district planning organizations supported by city planning staff that would develop district plans for different parts of the City. The City Council responded to this proposal by created a District Planning Organization Task Force to study and make recommendations for a citywide neighborhood association system. In 1974, the Portland City Council adopted the first ordinance establishing Portland's formal neighborhood association system and the Office of Neighborhood Associations to support the system. A year later the City Council adopted a revised ordinance that eased some of the requirements of the 1974 ordinance. Mary Pedersen, the first director of ONA, prepared two reports on ONA and the neighborhood system—one in 1974 after the first

year of the new system and in 1979 as she was leaving her position as ONA director and a new Portland mayor was coming in. This chapter closes with a review of Portland Mayor Neil Goldschmidt's mayor's budget messages that accompanied the seven city budgets during his time in office and through which he stated his goals and priorities related to community involvement and city governance.

Origins of Portland's System

Before the 1970s, Portland's governance culture was very similar to that in other cities. Community members had little involvement or say in governance decisions. Reforms instituted during the 1970s set the stage for a dramatic expansion of community involvement in local decision making. Many of those early reforms and structures continue to shape Portland's system today.

In 2013, Portland has a vibrant downtown surrounded by older neighborhoods that are full of life, activity and character and strong housing values. Portland regularly tops national lists of desirable and livable cities. Portland was a very different city in the 1960s. The city at that time had a lot of older housing in need of repair, especially in Portland's older inner neighborhoods. Abbott (1983) writes that professional planners at the time took for granted that these inner neighborhoods were in decline and should be cleared and redeveloped rather than preserved and revitalized.

Abbott writes that "Changes in public tastes, political leadership, federal programs, and the housing market all combined to convince citizens, planners, and politicians that neighborhood change is not necessarily a one-way street leading to urban blight" (186). Neighborhood planning between 1957 and 1967, according to Abbott,

made “no reference to neighborhood groups or citizen involvement.” Plans were “prepared by city employees for their colleagues in city hall” (188).

Portland planning underwent startling changes from 1966 to 1972. Abbott credits the changes to “the emergence of active and often angry neighborhood organizations” that “made local residents the actors rather than the objects in neighborhood decisions.” Neighborhood activists had different values than Planning Commission members and staff and they were able to alter both the process and content of neighborhood planning in Portland. Abbott also credits a “change of generations on the Portland City Council in 1969-70.” New city leaders were “less committed to old policies and personnel” and while most did not “initiate the neighborhood revolution” they were “willing to respond to neighborhood requests.” The Federal government also had an impact through its demands that community members be included in city spending decisions through the Community Action program of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Model Cities program, and the Housing and Community Development program (190-191).

The Birth of Portland’s Neighborhood System

Portland city planners, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, faced increasing opposition from neighborhood activists who organized groups to oppose urban renewal and other city planning projects.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, community activists in northwest Portland had organized to oppose an urban renewal plan to clear 16 blocks of northwest Portland to allow expansion of Good Samaritan Hospital. Community activists, in 1969, quickly organized themselves and created the Northwest District Association, one of Portland’s

early organized neighborhood associations Hovey (2003). describes how these activists were able to convince the city council to allow the development of a plan for the larger neighborhood. Community activists worked with sympathetic city planners and other community members to create the Northwest District Plan, which the City Council adopted in the early 1970s. Hovey writes that the early community organizing and neighborhood planning by the NWDA set the stage both for Portland's subsequent style of urban planning and the creation of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system.

Community activists in other parts of the city also were organizing to oppose City urban renewal and other redevelopment projects and to advocate for their own approach to revitalization of their neighborhoods. City planners determined that a major reason neighborhood activists were organizing to oppose change was that "they have not been given the opportunity to become fully involved in affecting change" in their neighborhoods (Portland. Planning Commission 1971 1). City planners also found that their efforts to involve residents in neighborhood and district planning were hampered because they did not have "staff who could stimulate and coordinate the citizen participation" as did the staff of the Model Cities program in northeast Portland.

City planners responded by proposing the creation of a formal district planning program that included the formation of District Planning Organizations in the community similar to programs developed in other cities at the time (i.e. San Diego and Fort Worth) (Pedersen 1974 2). The Portland City Planning Commission approved the planners' proposal in April 1971 and forwarded it on to the City Council.

The City Council supported the idea and appointed the District Planning Organization (DPO) Task Force in January 1972 to review the proposal and recommend steps to implement the proposal. The DPO Task Force submitted its report to City Council in December 1972.

Together these two proposals shaped much of the early thinking that influenced the purpose, scope, and structure of Portland's neighborhood involvement system. Many of these original elements still exist today—40 years later—while others have been altered or dropped.

1971 Planning Commission Proposal for District Planning

City planners and Planning Commissioners recognized an increasing ability and inclination of neighborhood activists to oppose and block land use planning and urban renewal projects in Portland. Planners hoped a district planning program would channel neighborhood opposition into more constructive involvement and begin to give community members a greater voice in shaping their communities.

Planners had had some experience and success at the time involving citizens in developing plans in the Model Cities Program area in northeast Portland and some other parts of Portland. Planners had found that residents and independent neighborhood associations had the capacity to play a constructive and meaningful role in local planning projects. Hovey asserts that the experience of city planners working with the Northwest District Association (NWDA) to develop the Northwest District Plan significantly shaped planners thinking about the potential for broader involvement in land use planning in Portland.

In April 1971, the Portland Planning Commission approved a proposal, developed by city planners, to create a formal city district planning policy and program. The essence of the proposal was the creation of district planning organizations (DPOs) that would represent community interests and provide a formal vehicle by which community members and city government leaders and staff could work together to develop comprehensive plans for districts across the city. The proposal also represented a significant shift of decision making responsibility and authority away from City staff and agencies to the community—at least on issues with a local versus citywide impact.

The Planning Commission Proposal for District Planning asserted that:

“Recent years have seen an increasing awareness on the part of the citizens of Portland concerning the issues that are affecting the environment of their city and specifically their districts and neighborhoods. Too often this concern has been expressed by opposition to some governmental action or opposition to planning that had been developed without their participation. Groups have formed spontaneously to oppose change because they have not been given the opportunity to become fully involved in affecting change. It should be apparent that if the City is to prepare itself for the changes that must be made, it must redirect the powerful force of citizen involvement from its present role of opposition to the much more meaningful task of creation” (Portland. Planning Commission 1971 1).

City planners and Planning Commissioners hoped that the district planning program would encourage citizen participation in the planning process, clearly define the City’s role and commitment to the community, and allow “growth and change” to “take place in a logical and orderly manner” (Portland. Planning Commission 1971 2-3). The primary focus for each DPO in the proposal was to develop a comprehensive plan for the DPO’s district. (The City of Portland did not have a formal city-wide comprehensive plan

at the time. The Oregon State Legislature passed SB 100 in 1973, which required every city to develop a comprehensive plan.)

Key elements of the 1971 proposal included:

Creation of community-based district planning organizations (DPOs):

Neighborhood groups in an area could choose to request that the Planning Commission and City Council approve the creation of a formal DPO for their district. The initiative to create a DPO lay with the neighborhood groups rather than the City unilaterally establishing DPOs across the city.

A DPO proposed by neighborhood groups would need to meet specific standards to receive City Council approval:

- “the organization is representative of the district” (3-4)
- The organization “evidences stability”
- The district boundaries are “logical”
- The district needs planning assistance, and
- The City is able to “budget to meet this need for planning....” (5).

Clarification of roles, responsibility, and authority: The proposal identifies four key players in the development of district comprehensive plans: the DPOs, city planners, the Planning Commission and the City Council. The proposal emphasizes that “each is reliant on the other three” in the planning process (2) and expresses the hope that a clear understanding of this interdependency “will build bridges between government and the citizens” and “discourage conflict for authority....” The planners who prepared the

proposal also expressed the hope that a better understanding by the DPOs of what the “City can and what it cannot implement” will help discourage “unrealistic demands” (2).

The proposal recommends a significant decentralization of some land use planning decision-making from city planners and officials to the community. The DPOs were to be the source of opinions and ideas for the planning process and to act as “district organizers” and a community forum to develop opinions and ideas within their districts. The proposal explicitly states that City planners were to serve as facilitators and advisors but not decision makers.

A significant element in this proposed shift of decision making power was that issues and conflicts that primarily affected the area within the district should be resolved “among those who are immediately affected by the decision”—not by City leaders and staff. City Council and the Planning Commission often had found themselves “arbitrating issues that are purely local in nature.” The proposal maintained that Community members are much more likely to understand potential costs and benefits for themselves and their community and to help achieve compromises and resolve trade-offs if they are included in the decision making process. The report suggested that community members that are not included in this process likely will focus only on perceived costs to themselves. The proposal recommended that “planning issues that do not cross district lines or that have little or no city-wide implications should, whenever possible, be resolved within the district before reaching the Planning Commission and City Council” (2).

Development of district comprehensive plans and city staff support: The primary focus of the DPO’s activities would be to work with the City to develop a comprehensive

plan for the district. The city would commit to provide “a specified amount of technical planning assistance to the DPO” (4), which would include “basic data on population, social factors, land use, building conditions, and neighborhood facilities” and would conduct “other field surveys normally associated with a district plan” (5). City planners also would help the DPO develop “goals and objectives” and “specific plan proposals for the district” and would propose “alternatives to the DPO and call their attention to emerging problems and conflicts” (4) and act as a liaison with other city agencies to test ideas and get their feedback on the proposed plan. The proposal clearly states that city planners would act in the role of “technical advisor” but that “plan decisions are always made by the DPO” [emphasis in the original].

The DPO would be responsible for communicating regularly with the Planning Commission and City Council during the development of the district plan, and would be responsible for reaching out to the community, especially to distribute the draft plan widely in the community before the DPO formally approves it and forwards it on to the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission would review the plan based on the following criteria:

- “Is it desirable from the standpoint of implementation over a reasonable period of time?” (4)
- “Is it truly representative of district needs and desires?”
- “Is it in harmony with city-wide plans?”

City commitment to implement and follow district plans: The proposal suggests that a district plan developed by the DPO and approved by the Planning Commission and

City Council would serve as a “guideline for district development” and will include “a list of priorities and a timetable for implementation.” The City would make a “firm commitment to implement the plan in accordance with the” established “priorities and timetable....” in the plan (3).

The proposal suggests further assurance that a formally adopted district plan would become the “City’s development plan for the district” and that “[n]o city action can be taken contrary to the plan or purposes of the plan unless the plan is formally amended at a public hearing” (5).

In exchange, the City would expect that the DPO would support the City’s efforts to implement the plan (3).

The 1971 Planning Commission proposal embodied some very important values and principles that would become key features of Portland’s future community and neighborhood involvement system. One of the most significant was the proposed shift of significant decision making power from City government to the community. City planners had recognized that neighborhood activists had the capacity to participate effectively in city government decision making processes—and the ability to block city government driven projects. City planners also recognized that community members could bring value to government decision making. They maintained that community members had the best understanding of the needs in their community and the implications of different policy and program alternatives. They also recognized that more lasting (and implementable) decisions would be made if representatives of different interests in the district worked together to identify their interests, identify and explore alternative

approaches, wrestle with tradeoffs, and work out agreements on solutions—rather than having the Planning Commission or City Council try to impose a solution on the district that had no common buy-in within the district. The DPOs also would take on the responsibility for convening and engaging their community members and soliciting community input into the process. As part of this shift of decision making power, city planners recast their role from acting as “professional experts“ planning for the community to being “facilitators” who would help convene and support a community-driven decision making process.

City planners also recognized the importance of only supporting the creation of DPOs where community members showed they had the interest and energy to participate in them rather than trying to impose a citywide system all at once. DPOs only would be created where community members wanted them and would participate in developing a comprehensive plan. While City planners proposed that the DPOs focus primarily on the task of developing a comprehensive plan, Hovey (2003) has shown that neighborhood association comprehensive plans at that time could include a wide range of community revitalization and development strategies and activities.

City planners also recognized that, in order to attract community members to volunteer the significant amount of time and effort that would be required to develop a comprehensive plan and maintain a cooperative relationship with community activists, the City needed to commit to taking the input of community members seriously and complying with and following the resulting comprehensive plan.

City planners also recognized the importance of establishing basic standards that DPOs would need to meet in exchange for the formal decision making power and the city staff support they would receive. These basic standards included being representative of the community, having the organizational capacity to function as a “stable” organization over time, and that having “logical” boundaries. The need for basic standards, representation of the community, organizational capacity, and relevant boundaries would continue to be important and recurring issues throughout the history of Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system.

1972 DPO Task Force Report

City Council adopted the Planning Commission proposal to create and support a system of district planning organizations in April 1971. In January 1972, the City Council created the “DPO Task Force” to develop more detailed recommendations for the creation of a formal neighborhood involvement structure and system. The Oregonian reported that the DPO Task Force members included representatives of “the Planning Commission, Housing Authority of Portland, Portland Development Commission, neighborhood organizations and the general public” (“Schrunk appoints 16 to aid area plans,” January 27, 1972).

While the Planning Commission’s 1971 proposal had recommended the creation of a system of district planning organizations to facilitate comprehensive land use planning across the city, Mayor Terry Schrunk asked the 1972 DPO Task Force to look more broadly and to make recommendations for the creation of a citywide system of formally recognized neighborhood associations.

As part of his broader charge, Mayor Shrunk asked task force members to define the purpose of neighborhood associations, identify the scope of activities they would undertake, the means for financing neighborhood organizations and source for funding neighborhood projects and activities, criteria and procedures for recognition of neighborhood organizations, and methods to ensure communication between neighborhoods and the City Council (Portland. District Planning Organization Task Force. *Task Force Report*. 1972 Attachment Number Two).

The creation of the DPO task force took place during a time of major changes in Portland. New city council members like Neil Goldschmidt, a young lawyer with a history of working with community groups⁶, came into office with big ideas to revitalize downtown and the neighborhoods, involve community members in government decision making, and to reform local and regional governance structures. Goldschmidt and others also campaigned for a variety of major governance structure changes in Portland and the region, including consolidation of city and county services and the merger of the City of Portland and Multnomah County.⁷

⁶ The *Oregonian*, in its endorsement of Goldschmidt for mayor in 1972, noted that “Mr. Goldschmidt certainly is understanding of and empathetic with the problems of youth, the poor, the minorities, among whom he worked for several years as a lawyer and head of the Albina legal Aid office” (“Neil Goldschmidt for Portland’s mayor.” Editorial. *Oregonian* 7 May 1972).

⁷ While, city-county consolidation was never implemented, the city and county did divide up many local services, with the county taking on most of the responsibility for human services in Portland and city government taking on responsibility for physical infrastructure such as streets, water, sewer, and parks. In 1978, Oregon voters approved Measure 6 which replaced the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) with an elected regional government called Metro. In 1983, the City of Portland and Multnomah County agreed to divide up the services each government provided to their overlapping jurisdictions, according to the strengths of each jurisdiction, as a way to use their limited resources most efficiently. The agreement allowed the City of Portland to provide urban services (e.g. sewer and water) to urbanizing areas in unincorporated Multnomah County and allowed Multnomah County ease its financial problem by cutting services that the City already was providing within the City limits. The County agreed to take the lead on human and health services, justice services, libraries, assessment and taxation, elections, corrections. The City agreed to focus on police, neighborhood parks, land use planning, transportation,

At the state level, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 100 in 1973, and in 1974 the new state Land Use and Conservation Commission (LCDC) adopted statewide planning goals to guide the new state planning system. “Goal 1 Citizen Participation” set ambitious goals for community involvement and required local governments to involve community members “in all phases of the planning process.” Portland’s formal system of neighborhood associations would become a key element of Portland’s strategy for meeting the community involvement requirements of Goal 1.

The DPO Task Force started work in May 1972. The task force members created five working committees and met 37 times in meetings open to the public. Task force members also “held 11 open meetings throughout the city,” which they advertised through “posters and mailings to community groups, people who attended meetings, and those requesting information” (Portland. District Planning Organization Task Force. Attachment Number Five).

The task force members adopted some basic principles to guide their work. These principles included:

(1) “Citizens’ organizations of this community have the ability and willingness to deal responsibly and constructively with issues affecting the livability of the city.” Task force members emphasized that any meaningful effort to create a formal structure to involve community members in government decision making must be grounded in the assumption that citizens have “the ability and willingness...to play an important role in the working of their government....” They noted that the historical involvement of

sewers, water, and fire service (Portland. Office of the City Auditor. *Urban Services Policy and Resolution A*, March 2013 1-4).

community members in state governance and the more recent involvement of “citizen initiated neighborhood associations” in Portland gave evidence that community members were willing and able to participate (Portland. District Planning Organization Task Force. 2).

The task force defined “livability” as “the quality of the physical environment as well as the range of opportunities for employment, recreation, education, health care, social services and cultural activity” (2).

(2) “A formalized structure established for citizen or neighborhood involvement must encompass both community development (physical factors) and personal development (social factors).” Task force members noted that community members and individual task force members repeatedly had emphasized that physical and social factors are interrelated and to separate them “at the basic level of citizen or neighborhood involvement is a mistake” (2).

(3) “To be most effective, a two-tiered structure for citizen or neighborhood involvement is the optimum condition.” The task force members believed that the best structure would include both strong neighborhood associations and that these neighborhood associations would join together to form and participate in strong district organizations. The task force members envisioned that “neighborhood associations will deal with local issues and districts will handle broader issues and add ‘clout’ when appropriate” (3).

(4) “Given a two-tiered system, the larger areas (districts) should be pre-defined and the smaller areas (neighborhoods) should be defined by citizens in that area.” They

lauded the “initiative taken by citizens in forming their own groups based on neighborhood interests and common concern” and insisted that government should not discourage this development by imposing a new structure “for its own convenience” (3).

Task force members reemphasized the point argued by the 1971 Planning Commission report stated that “Many matters of purely local concern and impact can best be considered and studied by those immediately affected” (3).

They also recognized that “city agencies and government” needed a “functional structure to deal with multi-neighborhood problems and needs.” To meet this need, task force members envisioned “the organization of committees or task forces by the groups directly involved to handle inter-neighborhood and inter-district problems, thus insuring maximum inter-group cooperation while preserving the identity of the neighborhood or district organizations” (3). Task force members recommended that community members would set neighborhood boundaries, but that city planners would set district boundaries.

(5) “Any structure recommended should take maximum advantage of existing groups and associations and be capable of fitting into present or changed structuring of local government.” Task force members recognized that a number of groups and associations had formed in recent years to serve the “interests of their neighborhoods.” They recommended that “any new plan adopted by City Council” should enable these existing groups to continue to function constructively, to the extent possible (3).

(6) “District and neighborhood planning organizations must be delegated the proper authority by City Council to enable meaningful participation at all levels.” Task force members argued that the City Council needed to grant district and neighborhood

organizations “more than token authority” to ensure the viability of participation by grassroots organizations. “Much of the quality in neighborhood participation can be lost if that participation is reduced to ‘after the fact’ reaction” (3-4).

The DPO Task Force members submitted their final report in December 1972. Their report responded to the questions posed by Mayor Schruck and recommended the creation of a two tiered formal structure that would include neighborhood level organizations that would focus on local issues and district level organizations that would respond to issues that crossed neighborhood lines. The task force members also suggested that some sort of third tier “Council of Districts” be established to provide the City Council with input on multi-district or citywide issues.

The DPO Task Force members structured their recommendations to respond to Mayor Schruck’s original questions to the group. The recommendations included the following:

Purpose of Neighborhood Organizations: Task force members recommended that the purpose of neighborhood organizations include three elements: “To preserve and enhance the livability of Portland through planned, coordinated community development, “to enhance the lives of area citizens by optimizing the quality, availability and delivery of community services and to do this while protecting the rights of all citizens” [emphasis added] (4).

They proposed that a formal structure for neighborhood associations could meet the needs of citizens, city agencies, and the City Council in a number of ways. Citizens would use the structure as a forum for and vehicle to work together to express and discuss

“their opinions, needs and desires that will have an impact on their community’s development and services.” City agencies would have a vehicle to receive “opinions, needs, desires, and recommendations” from citizens and community groups that would help city agencies carry out their assigned missions “in a way most beneficial to the community.” City Council would have “an improved method for decision-making and assignment of priorities for all programs affecting community development and personal development of citizens.”

Scope of Activities for Neighborhood Organizations: Task force members emphasized that the scope of activities for neighborhood organizations should extend beyond a role in land use and comprehensive planning—as recommended by the 1971 Planning Commission proposal. Task force members recommended a scope that included three primary areas of activity for the proposed NPOs. NPOs would develop a comprehensive plan “for their neighborhood”—that would include “physical, social and economic planning”—with assistance from “city agencies involving the NPO and DPO.” Once the City Council adopted a neighborhood comprehensive plan, it would become “the basis for City and neighborhood action programs.” The plan would be updated by a similar collaborative process from time to time. NPOs also would work on behalf of their neighborhoods with “all governmental and private agencies” on any matters of interest to the neighborhood. NPOs also could identify areas of neighborhood interest and need and work to meet them using resources available within the neighborhood (4-5).

Sources of funding for NPO activities: Task force members recognized that “one of the frustrations that neighborhoods encounter is the unavailability of resources

for needed programs.” Task force members suggested that neighborhoods seek funding from federal, state and local government agencies, apply for grants from foundations, and access volunteers (e.g., VISTA and professional pro bono assistance) as well as leadership training offered by different organizations in the Portland area (Attachment Number Six).

Formal criteria and procedures by which the City would recognize

neighborhood organizations: Task force members proposed the following approval criteria and process for formal recognition of neighborhood organizations:

Community initiated: The task force members recommended that the recognition process should be activated either by a “group of citizens” in an area, or by the DPO, if it “recognizes the need for an additional NPO to make plans for an unorganized area in their district (6).

Community involvement in NPO creation: Whether the process would be initiated by community members in an area or by a DPO, open meetings would held to discuss the proposed creation of a new NPO. The meetings would be “well advertised” and “all eligible groups should be notified” (6).

Open membership: NPO members must be open at least to any resident, property owners, and licensed business in the area, as well as a representative from “any nonprofit organization located in the area” (6).

NPO establishes own governing process: Community members would establish their own governance structure and operating policies for the NPO.

NPO sets own boundaries: Community members would establish the boundaries for the NPO, however, “only one NPO should exist in any geographic area”—no overlapping boundaries (6). Task force members included in their final report very detailed guidance for community members on how to establish the boundaries of a new neighborhood association (Attachment Number Seven).

Proposed NPO submitted to DPO and City Council: By means of “a minimum of three open meetings” community members would adopt policies and boundaries for the proposed NPO. They then would forward this information on to their local DPO, which then would recommend that City Council recognize the new NPO. If no DPO had been created for the area, community members would take their proposal to create a new NPO directly to City Council (7).

Annual Report on each NPO: Task force members recommended that the coordinator for a DPO file a “brief annual report to City agencies and City Council to keep them aware of the activities of each NPO” (7).

Annual elections to ensure NPO representativeness and accountability: Task force members recognized the need to “ensure representation” by each NPO of the various views of people in the neighborhood and that the NPO was accomplishing the purposes identified by community members. They maintained that a requirement for “annual free and open elections” of the leadership of the NPOs would “serve as effective citizen tools” to meet these goals (7).

Funding to support basic NPO operating expenses: Task force members recognized that NPOs would need funding support to carry out basic functions including:

“organizing effectively,” notifying “all segments of their community,” and preparing a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood. To ensure adequate funding support, the task force recommended:

Communications support: City funding for the DPO headquarters would provide “the coordinator, supplies, machinery, mailing expenses and secretary to aid the NPOs in communication with residents, property owners, and businesses;”

Planning support: Task force members recommended that every NPO have the right to “planning staff assistance from the City and the DPO coordinator to develop a neighborhood comprehensive plan” (8).

Task force members recognized that “many neighborhoods will want to do more” than just the communications and planning activities. NPOs can pursue funding and resources from other sources (government agency, foundation, volunteer, etc.). Task force members also noted that “any neighborhood which desires to completely fund itself”—and not take any City funds—“has the option to do so” (8).

NPO Authority—mandatory involvement in plans and programs: Task force members recommended that—once the City Council has recognized an NPO or DPO--no city or private agency shall write physical, social, or economic plans or programs for the neighborhood or district without first involving the planning organizations involved” (8). They also recommended that the City Council and city agencies not fund or approve plans or proposals “that do not have the approval of the neighborhood or district involved.”

Protection of minority viewpoints and conflict resolution: Task force members asserted that, at any level of involvement of NPOs or DPOs with City Council and city agencies regarding the development of plans, programs, and proposals, “the rights of the minority views present must be protected.” They further assert that minority viewpoints “should be heard and considered” and that people expressing these views “shall have the right of appeal to the appropriate body” (9).

Task force members maintained that this process would serve as a “viable method for conflict resolution” because it would assure that “all views will be heard by the neighborhood, district, and city agencies” and “guarantees that the rights of the individual shall not be bypassed” (9).

DPO purpose, structure, and governance: Task force members recommended that DPOs be formed by the neighborhood associations within a district boundary. Each DPO would be governed by a board made up of representatives from and elected by each neighborhood association in the district. Neighborhood associations would have an equal number of representatives on the DPO board (7).

Planning Commission staff would establish the district boundaries within which DPOs could be established. Task force members suggested that each district be reasonably similar in “terrain, land use, and population“ and include between 30,000 and 40,000 people. District boundaries should follow “natural and man-made barriers whenever feasible” and consider existing neighborhood organization boundaries. Task force members suggested that the new district boundaries could influence future

redrawing of legislative district boundaries, especially if the city-county consolidation (proposed in the 1970s) were to proceed (Attachment Number Seven 5)⁸⁹

Task force members recommended that DPO's be responsible for reviewing and forwarding to City Council proposals for new NPOs in the district and organize, communicate, and coordinate neighborhood activities within a district. City agencies were to use district boundaries for district planning when feasible.

Each DPO would have a headquarters office funded by the City. The DPO board would hire a full-time DPO coordinator and a part-time or full-time secretary. The secretary would provide clerical support, answer the telephone, and type correspondence, minutes, fliers, etc., for neighborhood associations and the DPO. The DPO coordinator's duties would include: **Communication support:** Task force members viewed the role of the DPO coordinator mainly to support the flow of communications throughout in the

⁸ Portland's population in 1970 was 382,619. Based on this number and following the DPO Task Force proposal, Planning Commission staff would have created between 9 and 13 districts in Portland in the early 1970s. Applying the same district population criteria to Portland's 2010 population would result in the creation of 15 to 20 districts. Instead, Portland's formal neighborhood associations have been grouped into seven neighborhood districts that range significantly in size from Central Northeast Neighbors (CNN) with a population of 45,423 (2010 U.S. Census) and eight neighborhood associations to Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Coalition with a population of 151,183 (2010 U.S. Census) and 20 neighborhood associations.

[Portland Population 2010: 583,776 (Source. U.S. Census 2010; <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/41/4159000.html>] ; this population data, divided up by neighborhood association and neighborhood district coalition is available on the ONI website at: <http://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/28387>)

[Portland Population 1970: 382,619 [Source U.S. Census 1970; <http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0027/tab20.txt>

⁹ **Rethinking the size and distribution of Portland's NAs and District Coalitions:** Over the 40-year history of Portland's neighborhood system, neighborhood activists, coalition leaders and other community members, periodically have questioned whether the number of neighborhood for each coalition should be made more even and whether large coalitions should be split into more than one coalition. The idea of making the number of neighborhood associations per coalition more equal runs up against the fact that under Portland's current system neighborhood associations themselves choose the coalition with which they want to affiliate. Only neighborhood associations that border a different coalition could make the move under the current rules. Changing the number and size of district coalitions would be a significant change to Portland's current system.

system (11); **Information and referral for city staff and neighborhood:** “liaison between the neighborhood and city staff by serving as an information source;” **Local planning:** “Primary function of the coordinator is to involve NPO and DPO with agencies’ staff to expedite plans/programs on a local level;” **Neighborhood organizing:** “Aid neighborhood people in organizing;” **Training:** “Hold workshops at the community’s request to teach them skills;” and **Conflict Resolution/Forum:** “Be a forum to the community by helping them use conflict creatively” (Attachment Number Eight).

Each DPO headquarters would be located in a facility in the community, preferably selected by the DPO board members. The headquarters facility should be easily accessible by community members (e.g. centrally located and “...preferably on a bus line”). The headquarters should be equipped with “...with telephone, space for secretary and coordinator, supplies, maps,....” and “...if feasible, a meeting hall” (Attachment Number Eight).

City-wide “third tier” of community involvement to address multi-district/city wide issues: The task force members considered the need for a “third tier” (in addition to the neighborhood and district tiers) to advise City Council and individual city agencies on citywide or multidistrict issues. They affirmed that issues should be dealt with by community members and the City at their level of impact—e.g., neighborhood issues at the neighborhood level and district issues at the district level. They considered whether another organizational level was needed to provide similar community input on city-wide issues. However, task force members were not able to agree on whether to

include a formal “third tier” in the formal involvement system or what approach would be best. The DPO Task Force report presents some of the different ideas task force members suggested and discussed but does not recommend a particular course of action. The possible methods of addressing multi-district issues considered by the task force members included:

City Council: City Council deals with multi-district issues by “setting priorities for city-wide expenditures and formulating policy guidelines for city-wide social, physical and economic planning” after “receiving recommendations from all DPOs.” Under this option, existing appointed city commissions would continue to make recommendations to City Council on multi-district/citywide issues in addition to input from the DPOs. Task force members also discussed an alternative that would eliminate all the existing commissions and rely instead on input primarily from the DPOs (9-10).¹⁰

City Council advised by expanded city commission system and DPO appointments: This alternative envisioned an expansion over time of appointments of community members to city boards and commission (such as the Planning Commission). Task force members expected that many of these community members would have gained valuable expertise from participation in their neighborhood organization’s planning activities. DPOs were expected to play a major role in either appointing community members directly to serve on boards and commissions or by recommending appointments to the City Council. DPOs would forward proposals to these city boards and commission, which would review them “before recommending priorities and policies

¹⁰ The idea of eliminating city boards and commissions and relying on input from DPOs instead shows the high expectations some people had for the role that DPOs could play in providing community input on a very broad array of policy issues.

for city-wide issues to the City Council. City agency staff would assist the members of the boards and commissions in developing these recommendations (10).

City Council advised by Council of Districts: DPOs would appoint community members to serve on a new “Council of Districts.” This new “third tier” (in addition to neighborhood and district tiers) body would be solely responsible for advising the “City Council on questions of city-wide priorities and policies.” The Council of Districts could be spurred to give this advice either upon a request from the City Council or from two or more DPOs. Task force members considered that the development of such a city-wide community council might “evolve naturally through cooperative efforts of various DPO’s” (10).

The task force members reported that they had split on whether to recommend the creation of a third-tier District Council (60 percent for and 40 percent against). Other task force members and members of the public had suggested that the alternative of expanding the membership of community members on city boards and commissions through DPO appointments or recommendations might also be possible in the future (10).

Communication is central to the system—different forms and methods:

Effective communication within the community and between city government and the community was an important focus in Mayor Schruck’s charge to the DPO Task Force. Task Force members determined that communication and coordination was needed between a number of different elements and levels of the system. Task force members also recommended ways in which these flows of communication could be achieved. They identified needed flows of communications that included communication between:

- Neighborhood residents and their neighborhood organizations
- Neighborhood associations (one to another)
- Neighborhood residents and organizations and their DPO board
- Neighborhoods and DPOs and city agencies.
- Neighborhoods and City Council.

Task force members viewed the role of the DPO coordinator mainly to support the flow of communications throughout in the system (11).

Task force members suggested that neighborhood residents and their neighborhood association could communicate through “mass mailing of minutes, flyers advertising meetings, open meetings,” and a district newsletter. The DPO and DPO staff would help cover the cost of and assist neighborhoods in these communications on request (11).

Task force members expected neighborhood representatives on DPO boards to be responsible for keeping their neighborhood association informed on district activities. They suggested that a district newsletter would help with this communication (11).

The DPO coordinator would facilitate communication between neighborhoods and districts and city agencies by providing city agency staff involved in “plans or programs for a neighborhood” with contacts in the neighborhood and helping neighborhood residents identify whom to contact in city agencies and the process to use to “resolve a problem or concern the neighborhood may have” (11).

Task force members recommended that communication between neighborhoods and districts and City Council could be supported if City Council members were to assign

staff to act as liaisons with DPO coordinators and neighborhood and district boards (12). They suggested that the need for communication between City Council and neighborhoods might be minimal “if agencies, departments, and Council respond satisfactorily to neighborhoods’ planning.” They anticipated that neighborhood representatives and residents naturally would be drawn to City Council meeting by issues of special interest to their neighborhoods (12).

Task force members also asserted that “As citizens become involved ‘before the facts,’ there will be fewer protestors reacting against changes planned without their knowledge and consent, and a more creative role will be played by neighborhood organizations” (12).

The 1972 DPO Task Force report asserted some key principles that members believed were essential to the success of a citywide community involvement system. One was the premise that community members are willing and able to participate with city staff in planning, program development and decision making. Others were that community members should be allowed to work on any issues that they believe affect the livability of their community, that an effective formal neighborhood association system should have both strong neighborhood associations and strong district level organizations, and that these neighborhood and district organizations also need to have some real power and influence.

The task force members established that the purpose of a formal system of neighborhood associations should include giving community members the ability to enhance the livability of their communities (as they define it), to help express community

needs to city government leaders and staff to improve city services to the community, and to protect the rights of all citizens.

Task force members also maintained that the system should include basic criteria and a clear process by which the city formally would recognize neighborhood associations. They recommended that proposals for the recognition of neighborhood associations—or Neighborhood Planning Organizations—should be initiated by community members. They recommended that groups forming a new neighborhood association involve their community members in the design and approval of the neighborhood association’s governance process, policies, and boundaries. Task force members also recommended that membership in neighborhood associations be open and that only one neighborhood association be allowed in a particular area—no overlapping boundaries. They also recommended that neighborhood associations hold regular elections to ensure that they are representative of and accountable to the people in their neighborhood.

Task force members recommended that neighborhood associations be allowed to form District Planning Organizations (within boundaries set by Planning Commission staff) to help neighborhood associations address issues that cross neighborhood boundaries and to give city agencies a structure to work with for planning and program development. They proposed that DPOs would be governed by representatives of the neighborhood associations in the district, but that the City provide funding to establish and staff a district office in the community for each DPO. The district office staff would include a coordinator and clerical support position who would provide an array of support

services to community members and neighborhood associations to ensure their ability to be involved. A primary focus of the district staff would be to support communications within and between community members, NPOs, and DPOs, and city leaders and staff. Other services would include information and referral for community members, support for NPO and DPO involvement in city agency planning and programs, neighborhood organizing, training and skill building for community members, and conflict resolution. City planning staff would be available to help NPOs and DPOs develop comprehensive plans for their neighborhoods and districts.

Task force members maintained that NPOs and DPOs needed to have real power. They recommended that city and private agencies be required to involve NPOs and DPOs in the development of plans or programs that affect their neighborhoods or districts and that the City Council and city agencies not fund or approve plans or programs that did not have the approval of affected NPOs or DPOs.

Task force members also emphasized the need to protect the rights community members with minority viewpoints to be heard and to have their ideas considered in the system and to have a right of appeal of NPO and DPO decisions. They believed that these protections would help resolve conflicts and guarantee the rights of individuals.

Task force members recognized the possible need for a third tier in the structure to give community members a mechanism to consider and provide input on multi-district or citywide issues, but they could not agree on how this should happen.

The City Council adopted the DPO Task Force report and soon moved to implement the Task Force members' recommendations.

1972 Portland Downtown Plan

At the same time that Portlanders were beginning to design a new neighborhood association structure, they also were helping rethink the future of Portland's downtown. Abbott reports that the 1972 Downtown Plan represented a turning point in city planning in Portland and in the involvement of community members in determining the future of the city. Abbott reports that "Businessmen, planners, and citizens collaborated to develop a new downtown plan between 1969 and 1972" that represented a "new orthodoxy" that reversed much of the City's earlier vision for urban planning. The process also was unusual in that a Citizen's Advisory Committee set the basic goals for the plan rather than "outside experts." These goals approached "the downtown area in terms of pedestrian uses and needs"—as a "people's place" rather than early visions that focused strongly on automobile movement into and out of the downtown (Abbott 208).

Abbott writes that "planners with the engineering firm CH2M-Hill...actually conceived the downtown planning process and brought the participants together in 1969 and 1970." Lloyd Anderson, who served as CH2M-Hill's "chief planner from 1964 until his appointment to the city council in 1969" and a few other key individuals transformed what initially had been proposed as a parking study for downtown into a proposal to "study the future functions of downtown Portland and to explore ways to accommodate them." In the fall of 1970, the "Urban Studies Center of Portland State University prepared an analysis of downtown's regional economic role" and developed "lists of problems and maps defining the blocks with significant opportunities for new development." They also "drafted preliminary goals and explored the implications of

different overall strategies”. Abbott reports that this list of goals “became the raw material for the Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC) that was finally appointed in May 1971” (Abbott 218-219).

Abbott reports that CH2M-Hill’s “overall work program” for the project “promised substantial citizen input.” After a “group of community activists and the local AIA chapter” complained to Mayor Terry Shrunck about delays in appointing a citizen committee, City Commissioner Frank Ivancie responded by appointing an “Interim Committee on Public Participation” to recommend “how to organize a full Citizen’s Advisory Committee.” The Interim Committee recommended that the CAC include “representation from neighborhood groups, downtown users, and civic and professional organizations” and recommended a list of individuals to serve on the CAC. Ivancie “accepted most of the names” and “passed them on to the Mayor for appointment” (Abbott 219).

Abbot asserts that the “invaluable contribution of the Citizen’ Advisory Committee was to rewrite and legitimize the list of fundamental downtown values.” The CAC quickly established its independence in the process and “defended its own prerogatives against incursions by the professional staff.” The CAC members also “gathered input from more than a thousand Portlanders with town hall forums, neighborhood meetings, and questionnaires printed in the newspapers.” The final version of the CAC’s goals “became a set of moral principles” that set the overall character and direction of the downtown plan (Abbott 219).

The City Council approved the Downtown Plan in 1972. The plan included four main parts, including the “statement of the citizens’ goals” for the kind of downtown Portlanders wanted, the “planning concept and the policy guidelines,” recommendations for project for the first phase, and a list of next steps for the process. Abbott observed that the “plan responded to the overwhelming sentiment from public meetings and questionnaires by trying to create a pedestrian atmosphere with interesting and active streets” (Abbott 220).

Abbott reports that “Neil Goldschmidt took office as mayor four days after the city council approved the *Downtown Plan*.” Abbott writes that the timing presented Goldschmidt “with a politician’s dream—a detailed agenda of projects for which there was wide approval and deep support and to which most of the opposition had been neutralized.” Abbott maintains that the *Downtown Plan* meshed with Goldschmidt’s “goals for neighborhood revitalization and regional planning as part of an overall growth strategy.” It also “appealed to his established supporters among neighborhood associations and civic activists” and allowed Goldschmidt to “develop new ties with Portland businessmen.” Abbott writes that “In return, Goldschmidt contributed his extraordinary political sense for picking the best sequence of projects and finding the means for implementation” (Abbott 223).

Neighborhood System Structure and Requirements--City Ordinances (1974-1975)

Mayor Neil Goldschmidt took the first step toward implementing the 1972 DPO Task Force report in April 1973 when he set aside \$104,000 in the city budget to create a “Bureau of Neighborhood Organizations” to help coordinate the implementation of the

report's recommendations. Mayor Goldschmidt assigned responsibility for overseeing the creation of the neighborhood system to City Commissioner Mildred Schwab. In September 1973, Commissioner Schwab hired Mary Pedersen, former director of the Northwest District Association (NWDA)—the influential neighborhood association in northwest Portland—to facilitate the development of an ordinance to establish the formal neighborhood system. Pedersen went on to serve as the first director of the City's Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA).

Pedersen describes the development of the 1974 Ordinance in her report on the ONA's first year of operation. She reports that the first draft of the ordinance "was based on the Task Force Report, but was more explicit and added provisions for the proposed bureau" (Pedersen 1974 4). The draft "specifically required citizen participation in all city projects and programs affecting neighborhood livability." A section on district planning organizations described how they would be formed by neighborhoods and "stipulated that any matter affecting the livability of more than one neighborhood would be considered by the DPO" while "matters affecting the livability of just one neighborhood would be considered" by the appropriate neighborhood planning organization (NPO). The draft included a formal process for recognizing neighborhood associations (modeled on a process used in Eugene, Oregon), and established the functions of a city agency that would support the neighborhood system. The draft also included a map of proposed district boundaries. Pedersen took the draft out into the community for discussion and comment at over 30 community meetings (4).

Pedersen reports that the first draft of the ordinance “raised a storm of questions.” Neighborhood association leaders worried that DPOs “could turn out to be ‘another layer of bureaucracy’ between neighborhood associations and City Council” and would “usurp” neighborhood association “review of issues” and reduce neighborhood association “influence at City hearings.” Critics also thought the role of the city bureau that would support the system was too strong. They also criticized the proposed district boundaries because they were based on census tracts, and could constrain the ability of neighborhood associations to establish boundaries that made sense for their communities. Neighborhood leaders wanted neighborhood associations to be the primary focus of the new system, not DPOs. Pedersen revised the draft ordinance based on this feedback (4).

Pedersen reported that the second draft of the ordinance responded to many of the criticisms. The revised draft “began by setting out the process for recognizing neighborhood associations, and spelling out their functions.” Recognized neighborhood associations were given more control over the formation of a DPO board and what functions it would take on. ONA’s role “changed from one of conducting citizen participation to coordinating the effort” (5). Pedersen reports that a “whole new section on accountability was added” that required neighborhood association to include “clauses in their bylaws to guarantee the rights of both non-participants and participants who expressed points of view dissenting from the majority.” The draft also stated clearly that “no one would be denied the right to participate directly in the decision-making process of the Council” (5). Neighborhood associations also were given a voice in DPO “administrative decisions, such as the hiring and firing of staff and the disbursement of

funds” through a requirement that affected neighborhood associations and the city commissioner in charge of ONA would have to both agree with these decisions (5).

Pedersen reported that the “second draft included so many ideas garnered from the citizen review that it met most objections of most citizens.” City Council held a couple public hearings on the proposed ordinance and made additional changes before adopting the final version. At the hearings, City commissioners prohibited overlapping neighborhood association boundaries to ensure clarity about which organization represented an area (“Council modifies neighborhood association law.” *Oregonian* January 25, 1974). City commissioners also insisted that language be added to ensure that “applicants for zone changes would be notified of neighborhood meetings” at which their proposals would be reviewed.

Another significant change was the elimination of the entire section on DPO’s. Commissioner Frank Ivancie proposed this change “in a surprise move” at the city council hearing to approve the ordinance. Pedersen reports that the proposed deletion “struck a chord in the hearts of the other commissioners”...“for now.” Pedersen wrote that because citizen input already had led to a shift in emphasis away from the DPOs and to the neighborhood associations, this change “could be absorbed with only minor changes to finish off the language of the ordinance” (Pedersen 1974 5-6).

The Portland City Council adopted the ordinance on February 7, 1974, and Portland’s neighborhood system and the Office of Neighborhood Associations were born (Portland. City Council. *Ordinance 137816*, Feb. 7, 1974.).

Calls for Greater Flexibility: During the first year implementation of Portland's new neighborhood system, some neighborhood leaders and groups complained that the requirements for neighborhood associations to achieve formal city recognition were too difficult for volunteer community organizations to meet. They asked the City Council to revise the 1974 ordinance to reduce the number of requirements and include greater flexibility, especially in the provisions that set out the formal "recognition" process for neighborhood associations including guidelines for the organization's bylaws. Some groups suggested modifications while others suggested eliminating this section of the ordinance. They also raised concerns about the ordinance language on "membership, dues, and boundary delineations" (Goetze. *Oregonian*, November 9, 1975).

Some community members called for ONA to be abolished. They raised concerns that ONA Director Mary Pedersen was creating a self-perpetuating bureaucracy with too much power. Some said they wanted to continue receiving community support from the City through existing programs, including Portland Action Committees Together (PACT)—which had led the fight against the Mt. Hood Freeway in SE Portland and the Portland Development Commission (PDC). The *Oregonian* reported that federal decisions and funding changes were shifting PDC's focus away from PDC's previous support for community involvement to "physical improvements." The *Oregonian* also reported and that "During its 1972-73 peak year, PDC's project field services included about two-dozen staff members, pared to 17 for the 1975-76 fiscal year." PDC had provided "Southeast Uplift (SEUL) with \$23,000 to coordinate its groups and [had] five district offices—one each in North Portland and Southeast and three in Northeast." The

paper reported that “PACT, with activities directed at low-income groups only, has three staff slots and about \$26,000 for community organization activities in a half-dozen neighborhoods (Goetze. *Oregonian*, November 9, 1975)..

At a city budget hearing, City Commissioner Connie McCready, who had questioned ONA’s role and structure from the beginning, moved to abolish ONA and proposed an entirely new structure. McCready proposed the creation of “a coordinator of citizen participation with five district offices staffed by a minimum number of city employees in order to encourage volunteer efforts.” The *Oregonian* reported that McCready explained that her proposal sought to provide “equal access and information to as many people as possible, regardless of group affiliation. The *Oregonian* quotes McCready saying, “We are unfairly expecting neighborhood associations to express the views of all in an area.” She opposed city funding for neighborhood associations because she believed “that would call for city regulation.” McCready suggested that opposition to the City hiring staff in district offices indicated “a negative assumption about city actions or motives. The *Oregonian* quotes McCready as saying: “If this is so bad, then we’d better change the system, not find loopholes in it.” ONA Director Pedersen responded that “staff hired through a neighborhood contract, reviewed by the City Council [would] provide more citizen control over district offices and activities than direct city appointment” (Goetze. *Oregonian*, November 9, 1975)..

Some City Commissioners argued for modifying instead of rolling back Portland’s new formal neighborhood system and advocated for specific changes to address their concerns. City Commissioners Frank Ivancie and Charles Jordan requested

that the ordinance include “a statement of non-discriminatory membership and elimination of the ‘recognition’ section” that many neighborhood groups had objected to. Ivancie also advocated for language in the ordinance that would establish policy in neighborhood associations to protect dissenting opinions and provide for a formal grievance process. Jordan proposed substituting “minimum standards” for “requirements” and proposed referring to neighborhood associations as “‘eligible’ rather than recognized” (Goetze. *Oregonian*, November, 14 1975).¹¹

The Portland City Council adopted a revised ordinance on November 26, 1975 that provided more flexibility to community members organizing their neighborhood associations and responded to particular concerns raised by City Council members (Portland. City Council. *Ordinance 140905*, November 26, 1975).

The formal policies and structure established by this 1975 ordinance remained unchanged for 13 years (until the adoption of the first ONA Guidelines in 1987) and significantly shaped the form and activities of Portland’s new community and neighborhood involvement system. Many of the elements in the 1975 ordinance continue to exist and guide Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system 40 years later.¹²

¹¹ In another example of the rocky beginnings for ONA, the *Oregonian* reported that a majority of city council members (not including Neil Goldschmidt and Mildred Schwab) voted on November 13, 1975 to remove ONA’s status as a separate city “bureau” and incorporate ONA staff in with the staff members in one of the city commissioners offices. Despite this attempt to demote ONA’s status, ONA/ONI would continue to function as a distinct city agency throughout its 40-year history. Although Portland city government, in 2013, continues to include city agencies that are referred to as “offices” and as “bureaus,” the Portland City Charter and City Code do not establish any formal distinction between a “bureau” and other “divisions, or other administrative units” of city government (Portland City Charter Sec. 2-301 and Portland City Code Sec. 3.06.020).

¹² The formal structure and aspects of Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system can be found in Portland City Code 3.96—Office of Neighborhood Involvement.

Some elements included in the 1974 Ordinance but dropped from the 1975 Ordinance—such as minimum requirements for neighborhood association bylaws and boundaries and district level bodies—would reappear later in either revisions to the City Code or in the ONA/ONI Standards (first adopted in 1987). The following section identifies major elements established by the 1975 ordinance and discusses some of the primary changes from the 1974 ordinance to the 1975 ordinance.

Summary of Key Elements of 1975 Ordinance

This section describes the major elements of the 1975 ordinance and the significant changes from the 1974 ordinance (Portland. City Council. *Ordinance 140905*, November 26, 1975).

Need for ONA and a formal neighborhood system: The City Council formally justified the creation of ONA and the neighborhood association system based on the need to “assist and broaden channels of communication between the people of Portland and City officials on matters of neighborhood livability....” In the 1975 ordinance, the City Council recognized that the “eligibility requirements” for neighborhood associations to receive city assistance included in the 1974 ordinance had been “too rigid and inflexible.” The City Council stated that the 1975 ordinance contained “less stringent requirements for organized groups seeking to obtain city assistance in communicating with city government.”

Purpose: The 1975 Ordinance stated that its purpose was to “provide standards and procedures whereby organized groups of citizens seeking to communicate with city officials and city bureaus on matters concerning neighborhood livability may obtain

assistance from staff in so communicating and to provide certain minimum standards for said organizations in order to insure that the broadest possible means for citizens' organizations to communicate with city government may exist."

Both the 1974 and 1975 Ordinances sought to ensure that neighborhood associations would not prevent individuals or groups from making their views known in City decision making processes. Both ordinances included the statement: "Nothing in this chapter shall limit the right of any person or group to participate directly in the decision making process of the city council or any city agency."

Minimum Standards: The 1975 Ordinance defined "neighborhood association" as "any group of people organized for the purpose of considering and acting upon any of a broad range of issues affecting the livability of their neighborhood" (3.96.020). To receive city support, a neighborhood association was required to: not limit membership "by race, creed, color, sex, national origin or income;" not charge membership dues; to have and follow a written procedure "by which dissenting views on any issue considered by the neighborhood association" would be "recorded and transmitted" along with any recommendations to the City; to have and follow a written grievance procedure through which "persons may request the association to reconsider a decision which adversely affects the person or causes some grievance;" and to keep a current copy of the neighborhood association's bylaws on file with ONA (3.96.020 and 3.96.030).

Any neighborhood association that met the minimum standards could request assistance from ONA and would be eligible to carry out all the functions of a neighborhood association listed in the ordinance. ONA also would include the

neighborhood association and its contact information on the formal list of neighborhood associations which was used by city agencies for notice and community outreach purposes (3.96.080).

Accountability of NAs: The 1975 Ordinance attempted to ensure that neighborhood associations would be open to and reflect a diversity of opinions in the community by requiring neighborhood associations to “follow a written procedure by which dissenting views on any issue considered by the neighborhood association shall be recorded and transmitted along with any recommendations made by the association to the city.” The ordinance attempted to ensure some transparency and credibility for neighborhood association decision making process by requiring that neighborhood associations include with their formal recommendations to the City, “a record of meetings held including a record of attendance and results of any vote.” The ordinance also required neighborhood associations to provide notice of their elections and neighborhood planning efforts and to follow state open meetings and public records laws.

Functions of NAs: Neighborhood associations that met the minimum standards in the ordinance would be eligible to: Recommend actions, policies, or a comprehensive plan for the neighborhood to the “city and to any city agency on any matter affecting the livability of the neighborhood....” The ordinance reinforced the broad scope of this function by affirming that neighborhood associations could make recommendations on topic areas that included, but were not limited to, “land use, zoning, housing, community facilities, human resources, social and recreational programs, traffic and transportation, environmental quality, open space and parks.”

The ordinance also gave eligible neighborhood associations a formal role “in determining priority needs of the neighborhoods,” and in reviewing “items for inclusion in the city budget” making “recommendations relating to budget items for neighborhood improvement.” (These provisions provided the basis for ONA’s development of the Neighborhood Needs process and the bureau Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) program.)

The ordinance also gave eligible neighborhood associations the opportunity to enter into contracts with city bureaus to manage projects in the community (3.96.040).

Responsibilities of NAs: The ordinance sought to ensure that neighborhood associations would be open and transparent to their community members, would give community members the opportunity to get involved, and would consider, record, and report dissenting views from within their communities to the City.

The ordinance required neighborhood associations to notify affected individuals and groups of neighborhood associations elections and of any neighborhood association “planning efforts as they are about to begin.” The ordinance also required neighborhood association meetings and records to be open to the public and required them to comply with state open meetings and public records laws.

The ordinance required neighborhood associations to work collaboratively with city agencies when appropriate. It required neighborhood associations to work with affected city agencies when neighborhood associations engaged in planning activities that affected the livability of their neighborhood, and to cooperate with city agencies “in

seeking outside sources of funding for neighborhood projects affecting neighborhood livability” (3.96.050).

Responsibilities of City Agencies: The ordinance similarly required City agencies to provide notice to neighborhood associations and to work collaborative with these community organizations. The ordinance required City agencies to notify a neighborhood association of and involve it in all planning efforts that would affect the neighborhood.

The ordinance also established an “early warning” provision that required city agencies to notify affected neighborhood associations when the city agency planned to make a policy decision that would affect the neighborhood’s livability. The ordinance required that the city agency provide notice “30 days prior” to the decision, unless waiting 30 days would injure “public health or safety “ or cause a “significant financial loss to the City or to the public.” In these cases, the ordinance required city agencies to provide “as much notice as possible.”

The ordinance also required the City and city agencies to hold a public hearing in a timely fashion when a neighborhood association submitted a neighborhood-association-developed comprehensive plan for its neighborhood. The ordinance required the City to send any proposed amendments to neighborhood comprehensive plans to the “affected neighborhood association for consideration and for a response before final action is taken.”

The ordinance also required City agencies to cooperate with neighborhood associations “in seeking outside sources of funding for neighborhood projects” (3.96.060).

ONA Functions: The ordinance established ONA and authorized the hiring of a director and other employees approved by the City Council.¹³ The ordinance directed ONA to “assist Neighborhood Associations, or individuals” in a number of ways, when requested, “to facilitate citizen participation and improve communications.” ONA’s specific functions were established to include:

- Event notification: “Notify interested persons of meetings, hearings, elections and other events;”
- Information clearinghouse: “Provide for the sharing of information and maintain a list of reports, studies, data sources and other available information;”
- Referral services: “Provide referral services to individuals, neighborhood associations, city agencies and other public agencies;”
- Neighborhood contact list: “Keep an up-to-date list of neighborhood associations and their principal officers;”
- Project coordination assistance: “Assist neighborhood volunteers in coordinating projects on behalf of neighborhood livability;”

¹³ At the time the City Council approved the 1975 Ordinance, the *Oregonian* reported that ONA full-time staffing included the director (Mary Pedersen) and a secretary. ONA also employed two other individuals half time. Two temporary positions were funded through “federal public employment funds” (Goetze. *Oregonian*, 6 November 1975).

- Promotion of involvement with neighborhood associations: “Encourage individuals to work with existing neighborhood associations where possible;
- Printing and mailing: “Assist in reproducing and mailing newsletters and other printed matter when written material is supplied by a neighborhood association;”
- Liaison: “Act as a liaison while a neighborhood association and city agencies work out processes for citizen involvement;”
- Referral to city agencies: “Assist in contacts with city agencies on behalf of neighborhood associations or other interested individuals;” and
- Education regarding citizen participation: “Assist in educational efforts relating to citizen participation in city government” (Portland. City Council. *Ordinance 140905*, November 26, 1975 3.96.070).

The ordinance gave the Commissioner-in-charge of ONA responsibility for the administrative management of ONA.

Although the 1975 ordinance did not restore a formal district level tier to the neighborhood system, the ordinance did authorize ONA to disburse funds to “any district office which may be established with city funding” but required that ONA only engage in “the hiring and firing of staff in the district offices” and similar administrative matters related to any district office “only after consultation between the neighborhood associations affected by these decisions and with the approval of the commissioner in charge (3.96.070).

Enforcement of Minimum Standards for NAs: The ordinance stated that, if a neighborhood association violated the minimum standards a person in that neighborhood or the commissioner in charge of ONA could ask ONA to “suspend any assistance to the Neighborhood Association.” ONA was responsible for “initiating a mediation process” to resolve the problem that was to continue for 30 days. If at the end of that time “satisfactory resolution of the problem” was not achieved, the ordinance gave the commissioner in charge of ONA the authority to make a final decision in the matter (3.96.080).

ONA Accountability: The ordinance stated that ONA recommendations and actions were subject to the approval of the commissioner in charge of ONA. Any individual directly affected by an ONA recommendation or action was allowed to appeal to the city council by filing a written notice of their appeal “with the city auditor within 14 days after receiving written notification of the Commissioner’s decision” (3.96.090).

The 1975 Ordinance dropped some items from the 1974 Ordinance that community members had found difficult to comply with. Some of these requirements, although not included in the 1975 ordinance, over time, would be found to be important and would reappear in future versions of the Portland City Code and formal guidelines and standards for the neighborhood system. This section describes some of the primary changes from the 1974 to the 1975 Ordinances.

Membership: Both the 1974 and 1975 Ordinances envisioned that membership in neighborhood associations would be open and inclusive. The 1974 Ordinance declared that the membership neighborhood associations must be “open to residents, property

owners, business licenses and representatives of nonprofit organizations located within the neighborhood boundaries.” The 1975 Ordinance replaced this language and instead prohibited neighborhood associations from limiting membership based on “race, creed, color, sex, national origin or income.” (Later revisions to the City Code and formal guidelines for neighborhood associations would define who should be eligible to be a member of a neighborhood association and would require neighborhood associations not to discriminate in any of their actions or activities.) Both the 1974 and 1975 Ordinances prohibited neighborhood associations from charging membership dues.

Boundaries: The 1974 Ordinance included a number of provisions related to neighborhood association boundaries. Boundaries were to be set by each neighborhood association (not by the City) and were to “reflect the common identify or social communication of the people in the area.” The ordinance prohibited overlapping boundaries and required neighborhood associations to seek help from an arbiter and the commissioner in charge of ONA to resolve boundary disputes. The 1975 Ordinance dropped any mentioned of neighborhood association boundaries. Requirements related to neighborhood boundaries would reappear in City Code and formal guidelines for neighborhood associations in the future.

Community support: The 1974 Ordinance required a neighborhood association seeking recognition from the City to show that it had developed “goals, bylaws and procedures for notification,” circulated these “throughout the neighborhood” and that people eligible for membership in the neighborhood association found them acceptable. The 1975 Ordinance dropped this specific requirement, but continued to require that each

neighborhood association have formal bylaws on file with ONA, and to provide notice to the community of neighborhood association elections, meetings, and planning efforts. The 1975 Ordinance no longer required neighborhood associations to reach out to their community and get support for their initial goals and governance structure and processes.

Recognition letter: The 1974 Ordinance established a formal process by which the commissioner-in-charge of ONA would send a neighborhood association a formal letter when the City recognized the organization. The 1975 Ordinance dropped this language and instead stated that neighborhood associations that met the minimum requirements could ask for city assistance and could carry out the functions listed in the ordinance.

NA accountability: The 1974 Ordinance stated that “Neighborhood associations shall be accountable to their people of the neighborhood they represent” and are “responsible for seeking the views of the people affected by proposed policies or actions before adopting any recommendations.” The City Council dropped this language from the 1975 Ordinance, but retained requirements that neighborhood associations notify the community of its meetings, elections, and actions, record and transmit dissenting views and have a written policy by which people could file grievances with the neighborhood association. Tension would continue to exist throughout the history of Portland’s neighborhood system between expectations (by city leaders and staff and some community members) that neighborhood associations should reach out to and solicit and reflect the views of their community members and the limited capacity and/or willingness of neighborhood associations leaders to do so.

Enforcement: The 1974 Ordinance allowed people or entities eligible for membership in the neighborhood association, or other neighborhood associations to recommend that the City suspend recognition of a neighbor association that “consistently violates its own bylaws” “until new officers can be elected or until the problem is otherwise resolved.” The 1975 Ordinance redirected enforcement action to from violations of a neighborhood association’s bylaws to violations of the “minimum standards” and only allowed “a person from that neighborhood or the Commission-in-Charge” to request suspension (3.96.080). The 1975 Ordinance added a requirement that ONA immediately initiate a mediation process to try to resolve the problem. (In future years, a formal grievance process would evolve that would include opportunities to file a grievance and appeal grievance decisions at the neighborhood, district, and ONA levels. The grievance process would become the primary trigger for ONA/ONI to consider enforcement action against a neighborhood association or district coalition.)

Future City Code revisions and formal guidelines and standards adopted by ONA/ONI (starting in 1987) would build on and expand the requirements and guidance for the neighborhood system. These future policies would include definitions of who is eligible to be a member of a neighborhood association and reinstate requirements related to neighborhood boundaries. While establishment of a formal district-level organizational tier was dropped from the 1974 ordinance and not included in the 1975 ordinance, ONA moved ahead to contract with community controlled organizations as one of its major mechanisms to deliver support services to neighborhood associations.¹⁴

¹⁴ The City Council would approve the establishment of a formal district-level tier of organizations in the neighborhood system in the future.

The 1975 Ordinance also softened or dropped some of the 1974 Ordinance's language and requirements that neighborhood associations reach out to and involve and be accountable to their community members. However, the question of how representative neighborhood associations should be or could be has continued to be an issue throughout the history of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system.

The 1974 and 1975 ordinances set the initial framework and culture for Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system. This early framework incorporated many important elements needed to encourage greater participatory democracy.

The system preserved the independence of neighborhood associations from city government. City government would have no control over what neighborhood associations chose to work on, the positions they took, and decisions they made. Neighborhood associations were free to challenge and oppose city proposals and decisions if they chose to. The ordinances empowered neighborhood associations to work with the city on any issues they determined affected the "livability" of their community.

The ordinances also codified a formal exchange agreement between city government and the community. Neighborhood associations agreed to meet minimum requirements for openness, non-discrimination, and protection of the rights of community members. In exchange, city government agreed to recognize and treat them as formal partners in decision making. City government agreed to open its doors to neighborhood associations and to notify them of and invite them to participate in planning and decision making processes that could affect their neighborhood. City government also committed

to reviewing and responding to neighborhood-association-initiated plans and project proposals. City government went even further by offering active support to help build the capacity of neighborhood associations to reach out to and involve their community members and to interact with city government in constructive and meaningful ways.

Given the history of both conflict and collaboration between city agencies and neighborhood organizations in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the ordinances sought to encourage more cooperative interactions and relationships between neighborhood and city agencies by requiring them to let each other know when they are engaging in planning or projects relevant to the other and cooperating on efforts to raise additional resources from outside sources.

The system also created a city agency—ONA—dedicated to supporting—not controlling—the activities of neighborhood associations. ONA’s focus was on community empowerment, not on serving the community involvement needs of particular city elected officials or city agencies. ONA’s role was to provide a wide range of support services intended to help community members get involved and to empower them to make a difference in their communities. ONA served as a bridge to help city government and community members work together more effectively—not to do community involvement for city agencies.

The ordinances recognized the potential for a group of people with one point of view to dominate a neighborhood association, even though other people in the neighborhood may feel differently. The ordinances made a special effort to protect dissenting viewpoints and make sure they are heard in decision making processes. The

ordinances also attempt to ensure that community members would be notified of what the neighborhood association was doing in their name and of opportunities to participate in discussions and elections.

The ordinances sought to ensure that city agencies would provide meaningful opportunities for community members to get involved and have an impact on decisions made that affected their communities. Some of the key elements included notification and early warning (30-day advance notice) requirements intended to let neighborhood associations know about upcoming city decisions and actions, and requirements that city agencies consider community-driven recommendations and proposals and respond to them in a timely fashion.

The ordinances also sought to ensure community involvement in some very important decision streams in city government, including the identification of neighborhood needs in capital project planning and program priority setting, development of the city budget, and the development of neighborhood and district comprehensive plans. To ensure that community input would be respected, the ordinances required the city to follow any comprehensive plans developed with the community and involving the community in any proposed changes to the plans.

District level bodies—a major element of the 1971 Planning Commission proposal, the 1972 DPO report, and the original draft of the 1974 ordinance—were not included as a formal tier in this initial structure, partly in deference to neighborhood association concerns that district bodies would dilute the neighborhood association voice and influence in decision making. However, some people continued to believe that

district bodies could play an important role in supporting community organizing and involvement on the front lines in the neighborhoods and could serve as valuable forums for community members to convene and discuss issues that transcended neighborhood boundaries. Portland had experience with district level support offices through the community offices set up under the Model Cities program and PDC's community support activities (for example, the PDC-supported Southeast Uplift office in inner southeast Portland). While the ordinances did not establish a formal district-level tier, the 1975 ordinance did authorize ONA to create, fund, and staff district offices and required ONA to consult with the neighborhood associations in a district on any administrative (particularly staffing) decisions related to their district office. Mary Pedersen, ONA's first director, moved quickly to begin to fund community-governed district offices to deliver community involvement support services in different parts of Portland. The City of Portland has continued to provide the bulk of its support for neighborhood associations through city-funded community-governed district coalition offices since that time.

While, the 1974 and 1975 ordinances set the basic structure and direction for Portland's new community and neighborhood involvement system, ONA's implementation of these ordinances helped bring the system to life. The next section reviews the contents of two reports that describe the system's early activities, programs, successes, and challenges.

Early ONA Reports--1974 and 1979

Mary Pedersen, ONA's first director, provides valuable insights into the initial years of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system in two reports she

prepared—one which she completed in 1974 after the first year operation of the program and the other in 1979, as she was leaving as ONA director and in anticipation of a new mayor taking office.

Pedersen reported that significant neighborhood organizing by community members in the 1960s and early 1970s in different areas of Portland and the distrust that existed between neighborhood activists and city officials during that time significantly shaped the initial focus and structure of the system. Pedersen reported that neighborhood activists and community members were concerned that the city officials and staff would choose and control staff assigned to support neighborhood associations and possibly exploit community volunteers for the City's own objectives. Community members questioned whether citizen participation would be "token or manipulative." City officials questioned neighborhood activists' intentions. "Were neighborhoods really going to be political?" "Was the City funding its own revolution?" "Would neighborhoods use funds "efficiently and accountably?" "Would neighborhoods try to take over City policy making?" (Pedersen 1979 11).

The City Council members ultimately identified the overall objective of the system as improving "communications among citizens and between citizens and City officials on matters affecting neighborhood livability." They also set objectives for ONA that include establishing "a circle of neighborhood offices around the city," assisting "neighborhood groups to organize where they do not already exist" and "providing technical assistance to them," and coordinating "the new budget advisory committees" (Pedersen 1979 11).

Pedersen reported that during the first five years of the program Portland “acquired a national reputation for having a successful program for citizen participation.” She notes, however, that the limitations of the system “are more easily visible here” (Pedersen 1979 3).

From its creation, ONA’s focus was on empowering the community and community organizations versus directing or controlling them. Strong advocacy by neighborhood activists shifted ONA’s role from the latter to the former during the development of the 1974 Ordinance. Pedersen says it “changed from one of conducting citizen participation to coordinating the effort” (Pedersen 1974 5).

Program Elements and Philosophy: In her 1979 report, Pedersen identified the major activities of Portland’s broader community involvement program as:

City government consultation with neighborhood associations: The City of Portland consults neighborhood associations “on policy matters or planning which will affect the livability of their area” (Pedersen 1979 3).

City Budget Process: ONA recruits community members to serve on “citizen budget advisory committees” (BACs) and provide input that helps city agencies develop their budget proposals to the city council. ONA staff help coordinate the work of the BACs. City Council appoints the BAC members (Pedersen 1979 4).

Neighborhood Needs Process: ONA coordinates a “neighborhood needs process” that gives neighborhood associations the opportunity to forward requests for projects and services to city agencies.

Neighborhood outreach to the community: Neighborhood associations are reaching out to communicate and consult with their community members “on important issues and projects.”

Neighborhood self-help projects: Some neighborhood associations have initiated innovative “self-help projects,” including creation of a “credit union, several tool banks, and a nonprofit housing corporation” (Pedersen 1979 4).

Pedersen stressed that the variety of approaches included in Portland’s diversified involvement system gave “opportunities for participation to more citizens.” The combination of “neighborhood based and citywide efforts was believed to be more stable and more complete.” Pedersen notes the strength of having standing neighborhood associations in place and “organized and ready to respond to needs as they arise” versus community members having to create a new organization each time an issue arises. Pedersen writes that the citizen budget advisory committees were important because the BAC members became “well informed about bureau activities and goals” and, thus, were able to provide meaningful input as they review proposed agency budgets. She stressed that neighborhood associations and budget committees need “lead time” and “coordination” and support. She also noted that “volunteers are more effective when they have at least a minimum of staff support” and when they have a physical “home base”, such as “an office supplied with phones, maps, reference materials, files and conference space....” (i.e., a district office) (Pedersen 1979 4).

Pedersen reports that a shared governance philosophy guided Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system at its creation. This philosophy

maintained that “both volunteer citizens and City staff have much to contribute to the process of making neighborhoods more livable.” City staff bring their “technical capacity” and ability to access resources, while their key limitation often is that they focus only on one policy area. Neighborhood volunteers bring “their familiarity with the overall neighborhood systems as they actually work, their contacts, and their willingness to help.” City council members bring their “overall citywide view” that crosses the needs of any particular neighborhood or group of neighborhoods, as well as their ability to make “important decisions about funding and goals”. Pedersen said ONA staff saw a need to help citizens and city staff develop a spirit of partnership by putting them in “contact with each other, developing communications” and “mediating where necessary” (Pedersen 1979 5).

ONA program services and activities: The central ONA office and its five to six staff people provided a number of services that supported the formation and effective operation of neighborhood associations. Pedersen reported that the number of neighborhood associations formally recognized by the City doubled between 1974 and 1979, from 30 to 60. Pedersen wrote that, as ONA Director, she consulted with neighborhood groups on organizational development issues and shared information from other neighborhood associations and their rights under the new system. Each neighborhood group then established “its own structure and procedures for notification of meeting and other events” (Pedersen 1974 6).

In addition to ONA’s primary activities, described in more detail below, ONA also maintained a list of neighborhood association contact people to assist city agency

community involvement efforts and provided information and referral service to “agencies, neighborhood associations and other nonpartisan groups...” (Pedersen 1974 6).

ONA’ primary activities included supporting a wide array of communications and notification efforts, coordinating the City’s new budget advisory committee program and Neighborhood Needs program, and negotiating and administering contract agreements with district offices.

Communication: Communication between community members, and between community members and city government, was a primary purpose for the creation of Portland’s neighborhood and community involvement system. Pedersen reported that, during its first five years, ONA worked to improve ways for “citizens to consult with each other on their concerns; express these concerns to the City;” and “for City bureaus to communicate to and work with citizen volunteers” (Pedersen 1979 13). Examples included:

Citywide newsletter: ONA helped community members find out about involvement opportunities by producing a monthly newsletter, “Neighborhood Intercomm,” which included a “calendar of major public hearings” and brief descriptions of “current programs at the city” (Pedersen 1974 6).

Communication within the community: ONA also assisted neighborhood groups in communicating with their residents and community members. Neighborhood associations used a variety of methods to get the word out to their community members and to learn about their opinions, including flyers or newsletters distributed door to door, mailing newsletters to interested people, door-to-door surveys hand delivered or mailed,

regular neighborhood association meetings, and special planning conferences, meetings and workshops to encourage information sharing and dialogue among community members (Pedersen 1979 13-14). ONA supported these efforts primarily by helping neighborhood associations print and mail newsletters and fliers. ONA reimbursed neighborhood associations “for hand distribution at the same rate as a non-profit mailing” (Pedersen 1979 13).

Neighborhood communications did not necessarily reach all the residents in a neighborhood. Pedersen reported that, in 1974, only a few neighborhood associations had “prepared mailing lists including 18-20% of neighborhood households and businesses.” “Most neighborhood associations’ mailing lists, however, include several hundred addresses.”

Local news media also helped get the word out into the community. In 1978, the major daily Portland newspaper, the *Oregonian*, “included one page of neighborhood news three days a week.” Local newspapers also have printed a “neighborhood meeting calendar” “for the past three years.” “Special events have been covered by the television stations” (Pedersen 1979 18).

Communication from the community to city government: Pedersen reported that Portland’s city government continued to provide traditional opportunities for public comment—public hearings, individual or group testimony, and letters to city council. Community members could submit petitions to create a local improvement district (LID). Some city agencies used postcard surveys to assess public opinion. In 1978 and 1979, the City funded studies of citizen opinions of City bureau performances. The 1978 study

included “an exercise where citizens could practice budget cuts according to their own values.”¹⁵ City agencies used different combinations of mailings and town hall meetings or hearings to engage with the community on specific planning and other governance issues.

Notification of city government actions: Notification or “early warning” by the city government to neighborhood groups was intended as an important tool to alert these groups to proposed actions that might affect their communities and to give community members a chance to get involved and voice their opinions and preferences.

The 1975 ordinance required city agencies to notify “all neighborhood associations affected by planning efforts that are about to begin.” The ordinance also required city agencies to give neighborhood associations 30-days notice of “pending policy decisions affecting neighborhood livability.” The ordinance waived the 30-day notice requirement in cases in which 30 day notice might “injure the public health or safety, or would result in a significant financial loss to the city or to the public,” but required city agencies to provide “as much notice as possible...” (Portland. City Council. *Ordinance 140905*, November 26, 1975 3.96.060). In response, the Portland Planning Commission took formal action to revise the procedures by which city agencies notified neighborhood associations of zoning matters to ensure “longer notice time” (Pedersen 1974 6).

Pedersen identified some important strengths and weaknesses in the newly-created formal notification process. She wrote that the City sent “legal notices of zone

¹⁵ The Portland City Auditor continues to commission an annual survey to assess community member opinions on city government performance.

change requests and conditional use permits” to property “owners within 400 feet of the property in question, “two weeks before hearings are held.” Property owners also received “notices of variance requests for minor changes in regulations”—such as requests for changes to fence setback requirements—if they live “within 150 feet one week before the hearings.” Pedersen remarked that non-owner residents (e.g., renters) did not necessarily receive these notices, which indicated that a significant segment of the community was not included in this outreach. Neighborhood associations and their district offices also received these notices, and Pedersen reported that “[B]usinesses and other civic groups, and sometimes renters and the general public hear of these proposals” through their neighborhood associations and district offices (Pedersen 1979 16).

Pedersen noted that neighborhood groups continued to complain that notice periods were too short and did not give adequate time to respond. Even thirty-days notice was not enough for neighborhood associations that met only once a month. Pedersen wrote that this notice process periodically is “criticized because neighborhood associations often do not have time to call a meeting to review the proposals.” She noted that hearing officers regularly grant “a one-month delay if a neighborhood board or office can justify the need for more time.”

Pedersen reported that the Bureau of Planning, at one time, agreed to send neighborhood offices notices of “pre-application meetings” on major proposals. Notice of this early stage of the development process, sometimes gave “the applicant and a neighborhood group” time “to begin rational discussions” (Pedersen 1979 17).

Pedersen reports that neighborhood associations had asked that “the neighborhood office and two officers of the neighborhood group be notified...to provide a back-up system, in case of leadership turnover or vacations.” She writes that the “Auditor’s Office, which mails legal notices, has been reluctant” to make this change. Pedersen notes that additional notices would be a “good investment” because “lack of notice can lead to delays in hearings or startup of projects” (Pedersen 1979 17).¹⁶

Collaboration between City agencies and neighborhood groups: Pedersen reported that some city agencies worked with neighborhood groups to get the word out into the community about agencies programs and opportunities. City agencies sometimes paid the printing and distribution costs for neighborhood newsletters that included city agency outreach information. Pedersen wrote that neighborhood associations could help city agencies save money and time and increase the effectiveness of their outreach by arranging meetings with citizens and often coordinating the work of volunteers. She reported that some city/neighborhood association projects included: neighborhood cleanups, mapping current land uses in a neighborhood, signing up neighborhoods to take care of street trees, fund raising to purchase park land and pay for park facilities and improvements, neighborhood-hosted crime prevention meetings (Pedersen 1979 18).

City Agency Budget Advisory Committees: Mayor Goldschmidt began to require city agencies to involve budget advisory committees (BACs) as soon as he took office in 1973. Witt writes that the Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) program, established “in

¹⁶ Neighborhood leaders and community members voice many of the same criticisms of Portland’s formal notification system in 2013. A number of studies have called on the city to expand its notification strategy to include more affected and interested people to give people more time to understand and respond to the notices.

1975 with initial support and backing from Goldschmidt,” “was intended to offer citizens direct and unprecedented access to what had historically been the exclusive province of City Council members. This feature of Portland’s citizen involvement program served to complete the City’s pledge to more fully incorporate direct citizen participation in the City’s agenda making process.” ONA was charged with supporting the BAC program (Witt 2000, Appendix B 378).

Witt describes the BAC program as follows:

The BACs were to consist of citizens drawn from a pool of applicants screened by the ONA and reviewed for final selection by City Commissioners following consultation with their operating bureaus. The BAC makeup was to include minority representation, a diversity of viewpoints, incorporate geographic diversity among its members as well as special occupational knowledge. City employees could not serve as members on any BAC, and care was taken to insure BACs were not captured by special interest groups. Each BAC received staffing support from an “in-bureau liaison” made available to answer questions and provide background information as well as to provide facilitation in BAC deliberations. Keeping track of correspondence, minute taking and photocopying were also to be carried out by the bureau liaison (Witt 2000, Appendix B 378-379).

In 1973, Mayor Goldschmidt “appointed citizens to review the budgets of four City bureaus” under his administrative control. During the 1974-75 budget process, Goldschmidt required every City department and “every major bureau” to create a budget advisory committee with community member participation. ONA staff were “charged with coordinating the appointments, orientation and activities of the Budget Advisory Committees” (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. BAC information sheet [no date—appears to be from the mid 1980s]).

In 1979, Pedersen reported that the BACs "...have experienced some difficulties, but intelligent suggestions have been made by committee members, saving tax dollars or getting more returns for each dollar spent" (Pedersen 1979 12). "In 1980, the City Council adopted a resolution formalizing the Citizens' Budget Advisory Committee process and a set of guidelines" that defined and clarified the BACs functions and responsibilities (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Associations. BAC information sheet [no date—appears to be from the mid 1980s]).

Neighborhood Needs: Mayor Goldschmidt also initiated a pilot program shortly after he took office in 1973 by which neighborhood associations could identify their needs for capital improvement and city agencies were required to consider whether they could meet the requests. One of ONA's early objectives was to assist this process, and subsequently ONA staff took over coordination of the program. In 1975, ONA expanded the process to include any type of need, not just capital improvement needs (Pedersen 1979 12).

By 1979, Pedersen reported that "The need report process has stabilized with approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the neighborhoods reporting needs each year. The percent of Need Reports lost in the process has been reduced from 16% in 1975 to 2% in 1979" (Pedersen 1979 12-13).

Neighborhood Field Offices: Neighborhood activists had rejected the idea of city-run and staffed district offices proposed in 1971 by the Planning Commission and in 1972 by the DPO Task Force. The City Council did not establish a formal district-level tier of organizations in the 1974 or 1975 ordinances, but did authorize ONA to fund district

offices to help it carry out its mission and provide support services in the community to neighborhood associations.

After the City Council created ONA in 1974, Pedersen reported that the “City Council approved a plan to try out field offices in three areas of the city, where staff resources from federal or other funds”—such as the federally-funded Model Cities program office in northeast Portland and the similar PDC-funded Southeast Uplift office in southeast Portland—were not available. Pedersen moved forward to establish district offices that would be controlled by neighborhood associations but funded by the City. Pedersen reported that she used a contract-for-services model for these offices that followed a similar model used by Multnomah County to contract with community non-profits to provide human services to community members. ONA began with two contracts with neighborhood associations for district offices in North Portland and in West-Northwest Portland (Pedersen 1979 12).

During 1974, Pedersen worked with neighborhood association representatives to set up these decentralized offices. She reported that “at least two of the three offices will be established by a contract for services, where the City will pay an agreed sum to the neighborhood associations in an area in return for services in citizen participation”. Neighborhood representatives were to hire a “staff person and part-time secretary to perform the functions stipulated in the contract....” The Commissioner in charge of ONA was required to approve the hires (Pedersen 1974 7).

Pedersen (1974) notes that government contracting out of service delivery to non-profit organizations in the community was not new. What was new was “contracting with

incorporated neighborhood groups to provide services in citizen participation.” The city let neighborhood association representatives take the lead in setting up the district office and hiring staff, with “mutual agreement” from the ONA commissioner in charge (8).

ONA negotiated the contracts with representatives of the neighborhood associations in a district and then submitted the contracts to the City Council for approval (Pedersen 1979 12). Either the neighborhood district review board or ONA could terminate the contract if they thought the conditions of the contract were not being met. The annual review built into the contract provided a natural time for ONA or the district review board to renegotiate and change the terms of the agreement if needed (Pedersen 1974 9). The guidelines established in the “contracts became the foundation for developing a partnership” between ONA and the district review boards and district offices.

“[N]eighborhood review boards, composed of representatives from each neighborhood served in area,” hired the district office staff. The Commissioner in Charge of ONA retained the authority to review and approve or disapprove these hiring decisions. Pedersen reported in 1979 that neither of ONA’s commissioners in charge had vetoed any of the “neighborhood staff selections” (Pedersen 1979 12).

Under the contract model, district staff did not need to be civil service employees. Pedersen suggested that the responsiveness of district employees to the needs of the neighborhoods was likely to be greater than if they had been city employees, because neighborhood representatives had an equal say in hiring and firing decisions (Pedersen 1974 9).

By 1979, Pedersen reported that five neighborhood district offices were operating. ONA had contracts with four district offices in North, West/Northwest, Southeast (the former PDC-run Southeast Uplift office) and Southwest Portland. At the neighborhood district office in Northeast Portland, the Model Cities Program employees were “still covered by their civil service status, as requested by the neighborhoods” (Pedersen 1979 12).

Pedersen noted that the formal relationship between the city and neighborhood associations regarding the district offices expressed “the understanding that the neighborhood associations and the City are coequal partners in this effort” (Pedersen 1974 8). If either party refused to cooperate, “the experiment would fail.” She noted that “the two parties need each other’s assistance” and, therefore, “must share the responsibility and the authority” (8-9). This partnership was illustrated by the need for neighborhood and the city to agree on hiring and budget matters to be able to act (9).

The district offices represented an early priority for pushing resources out into the community rather than concentrating staff and activity in the central ONA office downtown. The focus of the district offices was intended to be on outreach and community capacity building, not political activity. The ONA contract did not allow district offices to use city funds to support or oppose candidates or ballot measures (Pedersen 1974 7).

ONA staff left advocacy to community members, rather than advocating for the community on issues before city agencies and decision makers. Neighborhood activists had made it clear that they did “not want to have to convince [ONA] staff of their point of

view” nor did they wish to leave representation of their views to ONA staff. They wanted to speak directly to city leaders and staff without ONA or any district bodies acting as filters or gatekeepers (Pedersen 1974 6).

Pedersen emphasized that neighborhood associations were different than other types of community groups that often focused on a specific policy area or on delivering certain services to the community. Neighborhood associations are general purpose organizations committed to serving the interests of the people in a particular geographic area and can respond to the full spectrum of the community’s experience. Each neighborhood association can define “neighborhood livability” in its own way according to the needs and priorities of its community members. The “neighborhood is the one place where an integrated pattern of living and working occurs” (Pedersen 1974 11).

System Strengths/Successes: Pedersen reported that the City’s new citizen involvement program was leading more people to get involved and have a voice in civic life in Portland. Neighborhood associations were involved in many different projects and activities that increased the livability of their neighborhoods. The BAC program, for the first time in Portland’s history, was giving community members a voice in shaping the city’s budget priorities. The Neighborhood Needs process was giving community members a way to get city agencies to consider projects that were high priorities in the neighborhoods. The city was sending city resources out to support community-directed neighborhood district offices that provided a wide range of communications and other organizing and organizational support to neighborhood organizations. Neighborhood associations also were experiencing higher levels of involvement in land use planning,

new planning efforts were beginning to “open a long-term role for neighborhood participation (Pedersen 1974 11).

Pedersen wrote that “Neighborhood associations are beginning to work out more constructive roles for themselves.” She noted that protest may still be needed in some cases, but that “protest alone cannot tackle all the problem facing a neighborhood.” She also found that many problems are addressed better at the community level, and that citizen action often can respond to community needs more swiftly than city government. Pedersen cited a wide range of examples of programs neighborhood associations had started including: recycling centers, tool-lending cooperatives, community gardens, a community tree-planting program, youth service centers, new parks and mini-parks, and housing rehabilitation (Pedersen 1974 11-12).

Challenges: Pedersen also noted several challenges:

Capital improvement planning: Pedersen said the city’s commitment to community involvement would be tested as the city moved forward with its capital improvement planning and further developed the new Neighborhood Needs process.

New state land use planning law: Oregon’s 1973 state land use planning law required local jurisdictions to develop comprehensive plans and comply with a number of state planning goals established by the state’s Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). Oregon State Planning “Goal 1: Citizen Involvement” required local jurisdictions to ensure that community members had the opportunity to “be involved in all phases of the planning process” and to “adopt and publicize a program for citizen involvement that clearly defines the procedures by which the general public will be

involved in the on-going land-use planning process” (Oregon. *Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines, Goal 1: Citizen Involvement*, 1974). Portland’s neighborhood associations provided a ready-made structure to involve community members in Portland’s mandated comprehensive planning process.

Representativeness: An ongoing critique of volunteer neighborhood associations is the degree to which they truly “represent” the priorities and views of their community members. Pedersen noted that “Neighborhood organizations are often challenged by questioning how representative they are.” She argues that “Neighborhood associations can represent citizen opinion, but the degree of representativeness depends on the quality and depth of participation” [emphasis added]. Pedersen suggested that the requirement that neighborhood associations present both majority and dissenting views would help encourage more balance. She also noted that a “wider range of viewpoints will reach City Council” if majority and dissenting views and “if neighborhood associations receive staff aid necessary to reach more citizens” (Pedersen 1974 10).

Limited capacity of community members to participate: Pedersen cautioned that the City’s new enthusiasm for involving community members in many different local government decision making process could exceed the capacity of community volunteers to participate (Pedersen 1974 7).

Level of participation should fit the decision to be made: Pedersen asserts that the “amount and quality of participation depends on the importance of the decision to be made, and the degree to which the participation is ultimately effective.”

Goal of better decision making: Pedersen argues that one of the major goals of increased community involvement was “more informed decisions based on more participatory process.” She also identified the need for coordinated city-wide planning efforts in capital improvements, housing rehabilitation, an arterial street study, transit planning projects, and cable television service (Pedersen 1974 13).

Recommendations for ONA: Pedersen also reported on program criticisms and suggestions shared by “budget advisory committees and other close observers of the neighborhood program” (Pedersen 1979 26). These recommendations included:

Performance Measurement: Community members recommend that a process be developed to review the effectiveness of neighborhood staff in the district offices.

Pedersen reported that ONA had developed, but not yet implemented a tracking system to compare requests for services by neighborhoods and the percent of services delivered (Pedersen 1979 26).

Tracking Savings to the City: Pedersen identified the need for a method to measure the savings to the City from funding the neighborhood and community involvement program. She noted that this question “rises each spring at budget hearings.” This question most likely was raised by City Council members (Pedersen 1979 26).

Neighborhood Needs: Pedersen noted that city agencies reported that they agreed to perform the work requested by 40 percent of the needs reports submitted by neighborhood associations. Pedersen suggested that additional investigation was needed to determine how often city agencies followed through and completed the work and how long this took (Pedersen 1979 26).

Training Program: Pedersen strongly advocated for the development of a leadership training program. “What [ONA’s] program lacks is a consistent, strong program for training new neighborhood leaders.” She noted that the 1978-79 ONA budget had included a small amount for a training program, but that half the funds were “frozen by budget constraints” and the other half was spent instead on a “citywide conference on economic development for the neighborhoods.” She said reduced funding in the 1979-80 ONA budget made it unlikely the training program would be developed in the near future. ONA had responded to suggestions from a “committee on citizen participation” and had prepared written materials, including “an information packet for neighborhood leaders,” “an updated list of neighborhood accomplishments,” and “a file of neighborhood leaders especially skilled in dealing with recurring problems or projects” who could consult with and advise other neighborhood leaders (Pedersen 1979 26-27).

Creation of an additional district office: Pedersen recommended a community organizing effort and the creation of a new district office to support neighborhoods in far northeast Portland (Pedersen 1979 27).¹⁷

Annual or Biennial Goal Setting: Pedersen recommended the establishment of an “annual or biennial process for goal setting” for ONA and the neighborhood and citizen involvement program. She noted that ONA largely had accomplished the initial objectives set by the City Council for the program. This regular process would help ONA “keep a perspective on neighborhood organizational needs” (Pedersen 1979 27).

¹⁷ This additional, sixth neighborhood district office—known as Central Northeast Neighbors—was funded by the City Council in June 1984 and opened for business in January 1985 in an old city fire station (“Open house drill welcomes neighborhood associations to firehouse offices.” *Oregonian* 9 April 1985).

Guidelines for BACs: Pedersen reported that guidelines for the BACs had never been “written into a city ordinance.” She described a recommendation that a study be done to determine whether the BACs “really do save the City money.” If the study finds they do, the BACs should be “legitimized by passing the appropriate legislation or council resolution” (Pedersen 1979 27).¹⁸

Recommendations for Neighborhood Associations: Pedersen reported that “several criticisms are heard of the neighborhood associations themselves...,” and she described a number of recommendations for improvements (Pedersen 1979 27-28). She writes that “Perhaps the most frequent criticisms of neighborhood associations are that they are not representative” (31-32). She argues that neighborhood associations “opinions on some subjects may be representative, but this is hard to prove.” She cites data that shows that the alternatives neighborhood associations “developed for the [citywide] comprehensive plan were in fact supported by opinion polls filled out by people who chose to do so, but the sample was a small one.” She notes that “it is generally concluded that a quicker and but reliable method is needed” (32).

Pedersen described some specific recommendations, including:

Soliciting neighborhood opinions: Pedersen notes that neighborhood associations have a hard time “sounding neighborhood opinion” on “important issues.” She describes a number of possible strategies neighborhood associations could use to improve their outreach, including door knob surveys, telephone surveys—as an alternative to going door to door, polls by city government or inclusion of additional questions to polls

¹⁸ The City Council adopted a resolution in 1980 that formalized the Citizens’ Budget Advisory Committee process and a set of guidelines that defined and clarified the functions and responsibilities of the BACs. (Portland. Office of Neighborhood Involvement. ONA Files. ONA BAC information sheet, no date).

conducted by city agencies; and inclusion of a few questions in the regular market surveys done by marketing firms (Pedersen 1979 28).

Pedersen suggests that some form of “‘interactive’ cable television system may eventually be the best method.” Her description of how the system might work gives insight into the role she thought neighborhood associations and community members could play in civic discourse and decisions making. The interactive system she described would allow “watchers to vote their opinion and see an immediate tally.” She suggested that such a system could play a vital role in helping community members communicate with each other and with government about important issues. She recommends that neighborhood association board members and other community groups could help prepare materials and develop questions to which community members would respond. Neighborhood leaders could be in the studio preparing materials based on the input coming in that could be used to develop testimony to present to government bodies. “Neighborhood associations can also work with cable companies to set up locations where people can meet, discuss the issues and vote, whether or not their homes are hooked up to the cable.” She recognizes that such interactive systems take several years to develop, but encouraged community members to think about how they would use such a system (Pedersen 1979 32).¹⁹

Community involvement in neighborhood association elections: Pedersen reports that neighborhood associations used a wide range of approaches to elect their board

¹⁹ In 2013, neighborhood associations are still talking about ways people can participate in community meetings without having to physically attend. One suggestion people are thinking about is allowing people to participate via Skype—a much lower cost method of remote interactive participation but still similar to the interactive cable TV concept described by Pedersen.

members and officers. At one end of the spectrum were elections “held at locations throughout [a neighborhood] for a week or at least one weekend.” At the other end of the spectrum were neighborhood association elections held “at sparsely attending meetings.” This very limited involvement of the community in a neighborhood association’s election “leaves the association open to the criticism that they are a ‘small clique.’” One recommendation was to include neighborhood association elections on regular local election ballots. Pedersen comments that this would not work because local elections occur every two years, while neighborhood elections occur annually “to compensate for high turnover and ‘burnout’” of volunteers (Pedersen 1979 28).

A city-wide forum for neighborhood presidents: “Neighborhood leaders have consistently seen the need for a city wide forum for neighborhood presidents” to share information and discuss issues related to the functioning of the neighborhood and community involvement system. Pedersen writes that “City commissioners or bureau chiefs may be concerned about the direction of such a forum” but notes that “citywide forums exist in many cities and are actually useful to assist in rumor control and to give advance notice of new opportunities for participation.” Pedersen remarks that a group called the “Portland Alliance of Neighborhoods” functioned for a while in Portland but was “issue oriented rather than program-oriented” and “never involved a majority of the neighborhood presidents.”

Pedersen reported that attempts to reach a citywide audience were complicated by the diffused nature of Portland’s system with its many neighborhood associations and district offices. Pedersen explained that most association meeting “agendas are crowded

with neighborhood or district concerns” and getting time on the agenda can be difficult. Also neighborhood association presidents are volunteers with a lot of demands on their time already. Pedersen suggested that “perhaps it would be a better job for neighborhood vice presidents.” Pedersen also suggested combined citywide meetings with social activities to help neighborhood officers “come to know each other better” and develop familiarity with each other that “might go a long way to building cooperation among neighborhoods” (Pedersen 1979 29).

Looking to the future: Pedersen closed her fifth-year report by noting that most neighborhood associations in Portland had evolved “well beyond the stage of merely reacting to city proposals.” Their closeness to the grass roots of their neighborhoods allows them often to be “aware of individual needs, sometimes before they become an observable pattern.” She argued that neighborhood associations also are able to refine solutions to fit “the specific nature of the problem as it occurs in their area.” She suggested that public officials could hope that citizen involvement would lead the public to support “their thinking” and them “at the polls” (Pedersen 1974 13).

Pedersen saw that neighborhood associations were “beginning to work collectively on smaller scale projects to satisfy other needs.” Neighborhoods are using town meetings as forums for assessing the needs and assets of their areas. They then are using public and private efforts to “begin programs which give hope for Portland’s future” (Pedersen 1974 13).

1970s – Mayor’s Budget Messages

One of the focuses of this study is to examine the dynamics that helped or hindered the evolution of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system. Portland mayors, under Portland's commission form of government, while they do not lead the administration of all city government agencies (as under the traditional strong mayor system), do significantly influence the development of the City's annual budget. The City's budget is a powerful policy tool that reflects the goals and priorities that the city council members are willing to back up with resources (not just rhetoric). Since 1973, Portland city mayors have included a "mayor's budget message" with each annual City budget. In these "messages," a mayor can state his or her goals and priorities for the city and highlight how he or she believes the funding choices in the budget help achieve these goals. Whether or not a mayor mentions the role of community members in decision making and comments on strategies to involve the community may indicate the importance that mayor places on community involvement and their willingness to use their influence to champion the cause of increasing and sustaining community involvement in city decision making. This section reviews the content of Mayor Neil Goldschmidt's seven mayor's budget messages during the 1970s.

The tradition of Portland mayors introducing the annual city budget with a "mayor's budget message" was started by Mayor Neil Goldschmidt with his first city budget as mayor in 1973. Prior to 1973, City of Portland annual budget documents were pages of numbers with little additional explanation or context to make government priorities and the decision making process transparent and accessible to the public. Goldschmidt instituted a new practice (which continues through the present in 2013) of

preparing a city budget with introductory materials that include a budget review committee statement, mayor's message, and a citizen's guide to the budget. Some subsequent Portland mayors have chosen to include extensive comments in their mayor's budget messages, while others kept their comments fairly brief.

This section reviews the budget messages Mayor Goldschmidt included with the seven city budgets adopted during his time in office in the 1970s (January 1973 to September 1979). His messages vary in length from eight to fourteen pages, and include statements about overall goals, challenges facing the City, his priorities and strategies, comments on the city budget process, individual bureau highlights, and some concluding remarks.²⁰

Goldschmidt was very consistent in the themes and priorities he stressed in his first six mayor's budget messages. In these first six messages, he emphasized his strong support for neighborhood revitalization, community involvement in decision making, and more effective management of city government as the primary solutions to the city's challenges.

Challenges: Portland faced major challenges throughout the 1970s. Goldschmidt stated that the City's livability was being threatened by "grave problems" that constituted "an inter-connected pattern of decay and neglect." At the end of his first term as mayor, Goldschmidt reminded Portlanders that in 1973, Portland faced "threats to the health of the City" including: "Our most productive citizens were steadily abandoning the City for

²⁰ Goldschmidt wrote the longest mayor's budget messages on average (10.6 pages). The average length of mayor's budget messages for all Portland mayor's from the 1970s to 2013 are: Goldschmidt --10.6 pages, Mcready--9 pages, Ivancie--2 pages, Clark--3 pages, Katz—9.75 pages, Potter—6.5 pages, Adams—5 pages, and Hales—4 pages.

the suburbs; our residential neighborhoods faced uncertain and unstable futures; downtown was declining as the economic center of the region; and increasing air pollution was creating a health hazard and threatening to prevent economic growth” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget* 1976-77 7).

Goldschmidt warned that the 1970 U.S. Census showed that “those persons most generally committed to making our neighborhoods fit for vital urban life are leaving the City. Families with children, families that participate in the life of our City and do things for themselves, make up a smaller portion of our population than ever before. They are being replaced by the young and the very old” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 5).

Portland’s vitality also was challenged by the economic conditions of the time. Goldschmidt repeatedly warned of the “darkening revenue picture” and a bleak “long-term financial picture” as the economy moved “into a deepening recession,” intensifying the “need for many City services.” Throughout the 1970s, Goldschmidt warned repeatedly that high inflation was eroding city government’s purchasing power every year at the same time that community members were increasingly interested in and demanding services (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-4 and FY 1976-77 7).

Goldschmidt writes that his first budget as mayor came “at a time of rapidly growing City responsibilities,” and he predicted that the “City’s functions will continue to expand dramatically.” Some of the areas he identified for expanded city involvement

and action included “economic development, a healthy environment, employment and social services” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 3).

Goldschmidt also warned that that Portland “City government’s ability to face these problems squarely and to provide leadership in solving them was seriously in question.” In the early 1970s, while City government was “able to deliver traditional services dependably, [it] was ill-prepared and ill-equipped to deal with the multiplying and complex problems of the future” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 7). Goldschmidt writes that the problems in city government included management and organizational, fiscal, and personnel weaknesses, a lack of “long-range planning tools to identify problems before they could become crises,” and “poor communications with our own citizens” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 7).

In 1973, Goldschmidt stated that the question was not “whether we will face new problems; rather it is whether we will be able to deal with them effectively” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 7).

Major Strategies/Priorities: Goldschmidt strongly committed to not allowing Portland to succumb to the same financial pressures and trends afflicting cities across the country. Goldschmidt recognized that “Many American cities are experiencing severe financial distress,” usually caused by “a loss of middle income, taxpaying families to the suburbs and a resulting population imbalance in the city between those who are the most in need of services and those who are most able to afford them” and lack of attention to “expensive capital investments in the city” including “housing stock, parks, streets, and

roads, and so on....” He asserted that “We in Portland are committed to the principle that the hard experiences of other cities need not be ours” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 5).

Goldschmidt led off his first mayor’s budget message with strong statements arguing for the need for “neighborhood improvement” and “vitality” and devoted nearly half of the eight pages of his first mayor’s budget to discussing his ideas for how to support community participation in neighborhood revitalization and local decision making and how to increase city services to respond to neighborhood needs and priorities (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74). In subsequent City budgets, Goldschmidt maintained his focus on “a concentrated program of neighborhood stabilization” to “preserve and protect the livability of Portland’s neighborhoods so that the families we now have in the city and those we would hope to attract will choose to make Portland their home” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 6).

Goldschmidt, in one budget message, stated that his overall strategy was “designed to accomplish one major goal: to ensure the people of Portland that they will have the opportunity, capability and confidence to decide their own future” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 7).

Goldschmidt’s vision included a strategy of city investments to encourage Portlanders to get involved and invest their own resources in their neighborhoods and the community at large. Goldschmidt wrote:

“Of course we cannot begin to meet all the needs or solve all the problems confronting the residents of the City’s neighborhoods. But at the

very least, the budget can stimulate our citizens to take action themselves to create the viable, healthy neighborhoods on which the future of Portland depends. This budget, then, represents “opportunity dollars” for our neighborhood residents. It tells them clearly that their government is committed to joining them in the tremendous effort required to assure that our City and its neighborhoods not only survive, but ultimately flourish” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 5).

Goldschmidt identified the creation of Portland’s new “concerted neighborhood improvement program” as an important step toward establishing “a structure in which citizens can plan their own neighborhoods and can more effectively seek and receive a response from their City Government.” He noted that “It is the first step in what we all hope will become a more participatory decision making structure which gives neighborhoods the leverage to shape their own environment” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 6).

Goldschmidt also argued that that “this concept of neighborhood organization will never work without adequate support” and recommended funding for the Planning Bureau to hire “five additional planners to work on plans in specific neighborhoods of the City and two planners to respond to the increasing demand for solution of zoning and other land –use problems” and to work on an “expanded effort to develop a comprehensive plan” for the city, especially in the areas of housing and transportation (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 6).

Goldschmidt recognized that “planning itself is not enough” and that “concerned citizens must find ways to make existing conditions more bearable by changing the quality of the environment” of their neighborhoods “by removing abandoned cars, enforcing building codes, eliminating nuisances and repairing streets and sidewalks.” He

noted that community members “attempting to make government respond to these problems often have trouble dealing with the City’s fragmented structure.” Goldschmidt created the “Bureau of Neighborhood Environment” to take on these issues and the city’s existing Nuisance Abatement function as well as noise abatement services. This new bureau was intended to develop “working agreements with other City bureaus” to help solve a neighborhood’s problems “swiftly” and to eliminate “excessive delay” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 6).

Goldschmidt stressed that “To ensure neighborhood survival, our City Government must demonstrate that it will respond when neighborhood residents call, that it will reward participation and involvement” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 5). He asserted that City government needed to “focus its attention on the services actually reaching our citizens, to assure that citizen priorities govern the allocation of resources to programs and that service quality rather than quantity be the measure of our effectiveness as a government” [emphasis in the original] (7). Under Goldschmidt, the City’s Office of Planning and Development (OPD) continued to review and comment on community project requests and “prepared information on all requested projects and distributed this material to interested neighborhood organizations” through ONA. OPD reviewed comments from neighborhood groups and incorporated community input into its review of capital project requests (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-4). Goldschmidt continued to support ongoing strengthening of the Neighborhood Needs process and other efforts by city agencies to identify and respond to community-identified needs.

Goldschmidt also expanded the City's role in providing human services in the community. He reported that federal revenue sharing funds, first available to Portland in 1973, brought with them "the responsibility for the development of realistic human resources services." Goldschmidt states that "We thus have an obligation to the disadvantaged citizens of our community to protect their interests. Planning for the youth and aged and revitalizing our neighborhood are now within the reach of these resources" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 5). In 1973, Goldschmidt created a new "Bureau of Human Resources" (BHR) that would establish "youth service centers throughout the City which will provide recreation, counseling and social activities to local youth" and a "youth employment program aimed at providing job opportunities for the poor and disadvantaged" (7).

Crime prevention also became an important element of Goldschmidt's neighborhood revitalization strategy. In 1973, Goldschmidt added "more than thirty additional [police] officers, primarily for patrolling our neighborhoods"... (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 7). Future budget messages referred to the value of federally-funded crime prevention activities which funded a "program of neighborhood meetings and public information to help citizens avoid becoming victims of burglary and robbery" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-7 – I-8). The BHR Youth Diversion Program also attempted to offer young people attractive options to getting involved in criminal behavior in their communities.

Goldschmidt saw the involvement of community members in the City's budget development as a very important part of his strategy to ensure that the City was serving the needs of the community. He also saw it as an important tool to help modernize the management of city government and to save money "through efficiency proposals initiated by the City's managers in a budget process where all City programs are thoroughly scrutinized and must be justified to dedicated citizen participants" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 5).

City Budget Process: Goldschmidt, for the first time, opened up and involved the community in Portland's annual process to develop the city budget. Goldschmidt noted that the City budget traditionally had been a "bookkeeping process that resulted in a thick document containing endless columns of numbers, unrelated to the concerns of our citizens." He argued that "In truth, it is a process of deciding how the City will spend its time, talents and dollars, in support of what we value and need." Goldschmidt asserted that the City budget "has to be comprehensible to citizens, for the budget represents a means to a series of shared ends: to maintain vital City services at a high level; to involve citizens in the decisions that affect their lives" and to protect the City's fiscal integrity, prepare for future problems, take advantage of opportunities and manage these efforts constructively [emphasis added] (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 8).

Goldschmidt wrote that the City budget needs to be grounded in "preserving this community's basic values" and identifies five critical elements of his budget strategy, including:

1. “Good citizens are the riches of the City.” That quotation from the base of the Skidmore Fountain [in the Old Town area of downtown Portland] reminds us that government cannot solve problems without the active, informed, continuing involvement of large number of our citizens. With such involvement we cannot fail.” [emphasis added]
2. “Healthy neighborhoods are essential to the success of the City.”
3. “Public programs and money should be carefully used to stimulate and reinforce the investment by our citizens of their private actions and money” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 8).

Other elements focused on the improving the capacity of City management staff and systems and the conservation of financial resources “against and uncertain future” (8).

Goldschmidt, in his mayor’s budget messages, year after year, celebrated the opening up of the City’s budget process “to increasing citizen participation” and noted that the process “has evolved into a tool for greater citizen input and management review” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 7)

Goldschmidt asserted that “the increased involvement of our citizens” in the budget process is equally important to the application of effective “budgetary and management techniques” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1978-79).

City agency “budget advisory committees” (BACs) were a central tool of Goldschmidt’s strategy to open up the city budget process and to improve decision making and accountability to the community. In 1973, Goldschmidt initiated the first five

BACs to help their respective bureaus “formulate their goals and objectives” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 4). The next year, Goldschmidt reported that the use of bureau “budget advisory committees” expanded and had an impact. All the city commissioners had established “citizen task forces” [BACs] to assist in the city budget process. “After a period of orientation regarding the agencies’ operations, the task forces met to review each bureau’s objectives and work activities prior to reviewing their budget submissions. In some agencies, task force comments resulted in substantially revised budget requests” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-4).

Goldschmidt also created a citywide budget review committee to review the input from the BACs and “all budget requests” and advise him on the development of his recommended budget for the city. The membership of this citywide committee included the director of the new Office of Management Services, one of Goldschmidt’s assistants, assistants from each of the other city commissioners, and two (later three) community members. This committee also held public hearings on the city budget (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1973-74 4). Goldschmidt repeatedly reported that the committee’s recommendations helped him with the difficult task of balancing the budget and enhanced the “thoroughness” of his recommendations (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-4).

In 1975, Goldschmidt reported that the “1976-76 budget process has been particularly gratifying for me. In particular, the citizen participation process which was begun two years ago as part of the budget process has demonstrated its value in opening a

two-way communication between the bureaucracy and concerned members of the public.” He noted that City Commissioners appointed “nine citizen participation task forces” in the late fall (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76).

“These nine task forces spent long hours reviewing bureau programs, plans, and priorities with bureau managers as indicated in their budget request submissions. Eight of the nine task forces produced written reports outlining specific programs which they recommended for funding as well as those activities in which staff reductions could occur” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 6).

Goldschmidt said that he “carefully reviewed each of these reports” and that they played an important role in shaping his final budget recommendations (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 6). By the time he resigned as Portland’s mayor, ten BACs were operating as part of the city budget process.

In 1975, Goldschmidt wrote that “I am pleased that most of the task forces reported that our [City] managers had taken great pains to assist the citizens in their work.” He noted that “A major recommendation of the task forces was the establishment of task forces on a year-round basis to guarantee a better informed project.” Goldschmidt wrote that he strongly supported “this proposal as another step in improving the value of the citizen task forces” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 7).

In 1977, Goldschmidt’s enthusiasm for the BACs continued:

“Our Citizen Budget Advisory Committees have been actively involved in the budget process, discussing bureau goals and priorities, and reviewing bureau budget submissions in light of those goals. I have had the opportunity to meet with the Task Forces for those agencies within the

Department of Finance and Administration and am extremely impressed with the efforts they have made. Many of their recommendations are reflected in this Proposed Budget, and I am looking forward to hearing representatives from each of the Task Forces during the April budget hearings” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 7).

Goldschmidt continually emphasized the importance of the city budget and its role not only as a “basic resource and expenditure control tool” but also as a “key management tool for the City to outline its policies, plans, goals and objectives” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 9).

Bureau Highlights: Goldschmidt, in his mayor’s budget messages, also chose to draw attention to specific budget actions related to individual city bureaus. Goldschmidt included a number of community involvement and neighborhood revitalization elements in his list of budget highlights.

Goldschmidt reported on the creation of the “program to support staff and other expenses for neighborhood associations” and the creation of ONA and procedures by which ONA would provide assistance to neighborhood associations, including the funding of district offices and “a central office, serving neighborhoods throughout the city” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-6). In 1975, Goldschmidt reported that ONA would take over the role of providing “neighborhood assistance in the area formerly served by the Model Cities Community Participation Program.” He said community input in the Capital Improvement Program process [i.e. the Neighborhood Needs program] would be continued. He wrote that “Intensive review of the capital programs of the City has demonstrated its effectiveness and responsiveness to citizen input and long-range planning programs. Duplication of agency efforts has

been reduced and citizen participation in the planning process has been increased” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 9). He also highlighted ONA successful implementation of district offices in the community “which are providing additional resources and information to citizens to enable improved and increased citizen input into City decision making” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 14-15). Goldschmidt also singled out the inclusion of particular capital improvements projects specifically to serve elders and youth, including “reimbursements to senior citizens for sidewalk and driveway repairs;” “neighborhood street drainage assistance;” “sidewalks for schools;” and “street paving and LID incentive projects...” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-6). In 1978, Goldschmidt reported that the ONA coordinator position for the BACs “will become a full-time position with responsibilities that extend to coordination of the budget task forces and follow-through work on the Neighborhood Needs Assessment Program” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 14).

Goldschmidt also reported that initially the Bureau of Neighborhood Environment was funded to expand its “complaint inspection program during the summer months.” Additional inspectors had been transferred to the bureau from other parts of city government to help “consolidate various inspection functions to simplify citizen contacts and increase efficiency” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-7). Over a number of budget years, the Bureau of Neighborhood Environment also received funds to continue the “implementation of the noise control program....” In 1978, the Bureau of Neighborhood Environment was funded to develop a comprehensive

system of “neighborhood condition standards” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 14).

The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission (50 percent funded by Multnomah County) developed a neighbor-to-neighbor conflict resolution and mediation program (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 11). and later expanded its “involvement in the areas of education, housing and equal justice” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 14).

City crime prevention programs continued to support the provision of “safe home and neighborhood environments” for youth. The Bureau of Human Resources received federal funding to support its Youth Diversion Program, and the city budget added funding to support a total of four youth diversion centers around the city. The City also created a “Youth Work Experience Program” to “provide constructive public employment to unemployed youth” and provided funds to “ensure that jobs are available to Portland’s children, regardless of family income—but according to local priorities” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1974-75 I-7 – I-8).

Youth continued to be served by the Bureau of Human Resources through its four youth service centers. These centers provided services to “juveniles” who otherwise would have “entered the criminal justice system as offenders.” The work of the BHR was coordinated with those of the Portland Police Bureau Youth Division which supported the youth service centers, schools, and parks. The City and County continued to support a joint “comprehensive program of services to the aging” and people with disabilities. Employment assistance and training and service programs in the community continued

through the City's participation in the federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Program (CETA). These funds also helped support other neighborhood improvements including ten miles of road paving and the installation of 900 additional curb ramps (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 8).

In 1976, Goldschmidt identified the need for the City to work more closely with the Portland Public Schools "so that each jurisdiction makes the most of its facilities and programs to increase the attractiveness and stability of our neighborhoods" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 19). The next year, Goldschmidt included "coordination with our public schools" as one of the "major critical issues of my second term" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 5). In 1978, he reported, "Approval by the City and the School Board to create a joint commission to target resources on the interrelationship between stable neighborhoods and good schools" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 7).

Summary Themes: In 1976, Goldschmidt reviewed some of the accomplishments of his first term as mayor. Goldschmidt said that in 1973 the City budget got a boost from the first year of federal revenue sharing. He wrote that "That year, we directed increased resources into citizen participation, neighborhood capital improvements, and management improvements," and the new Bureau of Human Resources began to assist "youth and senior citizens." Goldschmidt emphasized that "workable social programs can reinforce other City efforts, for stable and secure neighborhoods, sound schools, and reduced crime" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 8).

Goldschmidt reported that, since 1973, “we continued to invest in management, citizen participation, and neighborhoods....” He maintained that “our emphasis on citizen review of the budget and management improvement began to pay off” through the identified of reductions in city staff positions without “any significant reduction in services provided to Portlanders” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 9).

Goldschmidt claimed that his overall strategy during his first term “has paid off.” “Citizen activity is greater than ever; our air is cleaner; the rise in crime has been halted; urban neighborhoods are increasingly livable and secure; downtown business and investment are booming; best of all, people are returning to live and work in the City” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 9).

Goldschmidt identified “public safety” as the highest priority for the 1976-77 City budget, but emphasized his belief that the overall city budget continued the City’s “emphasis on citizen involvement and neighborhoods, the essential ingredients of the City’s future” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 10). Goldschmidt also continued to laud the efforts and impact of the “Citizen Budget Task Forces” (BACs) (14).

Portland voters elected Goldschmidt to a second term as mayor in November 1976. In his first mayor’s budget message of his second term, Goldschmidt listed the “major critical issues of my second term” the first of which was: “Implementing a neighborhood stabilization strategy to attract families back into our city and keep the ones who are here.” He also listed “Improving our housing stock through comprehensive

programs of inspection, rehabilitation, and new construction; “continued economic development through partnerships with the private sector; improved City “coordination with our public schools; “ the maintenance of basic services without new taxes or major fee increases; and the maintenance of “the fiscal integrity of our City government...” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1977-78 5).

In 1975, Goldschmidt emphasized his view of city governance as a shared responsibility between City leaders and staff and community members and shared his confidence that the City will be able to meet the challenges of the economic downturn and inflation “only by continued support of sound modern management practice and continued openness and dialogue with our citizens at every level of our activities (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1975-76 16).

In 1976, he celebrated the “hard budget decisions” over his first term that produced a City government that “is leaner, better managed, and in better touch with its citizens” and closes by stating that “While the problems still before us are immense, so are the opportunities. The unselfish commitment of Portlanders to work together over the past four years in pursuit of common goals has forged a reborn confidence” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1976-77 20).

In 1977, Goldschmidt asserted that this city budget “represents our commitment to a neighborhood stabilization initiative” and claims that “Its basic thrust is to assure Portland’s future livability by encouraging a balanced city population, a population of families who choose to invest their futures in this City. Goldschmidt warns that inflation continues to reduce the City’s purchasing power even as the City has saved millions of

dollars through staff reductions and efficiencies. Given the lack of growth in the City's tax base, Goldschmidt said that a proposal for revenue sharing by state government offers the best way to end the City's financial uncertainty (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1977-78).

In 1978, Goldschmidt reaffirmed that the City's primary objective is to "target our resources to preserve Portland's quality of life and to avert the urban ills that have plagued so many of our country's largest cities." He maintained that Portland is "finally on the threshold of achieving this objective." He said that while "inflationary increases in costs continue to outstrip increases in revenues, the new State Revenue Sharing Program now enables a 'hold the line' budget with few major program cuts and a limited number of new activities" (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 6).

Goldschmidt proposed to continue his commitment to "target resources to the goal of protecting Portland's quality of life..." and iterated the same six "critical issues" that he identified in his previous year's mayor's budget message (Portland. "Mayor's Budget Message." *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 6-7).

Goldschmidt reprised his familiar theme of identifying the "City's fiscal condition" as a "major constraint toward achieving our full potential," but notes that this fiscal year "will be the first year in the last four that major reduction in personnel and service levels will not be necessary...." While Goldschmidt states that "Today our City is winning in a fight, not only for her livability, but for her life. It is not a fight that is over; it is too early to proclaim victory. There is still work enough for all of us – to safeguard the gains that have been made and to carry on with the job of creating a future for

Portland that we want for ourselves and for our children” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1978-79 16).

Goldschmidt’s last mayor’s budget message—1979-80: Goldschmidt submitted his last mayor’s budget message in March 1979, a few months before he resigned to take a position in the Carter Administration as U.S. Secretary of Transportation. This message reads very differently than Goldschmidt’s other mayor’s budget messages.

Goldschmidt does not refer to community involvement in the budget process or city decision making anywhere in this budget message. The difference is evident right from the first sentence, which, instead of talking about the need to revitalize Portland neighborhoods or preserving Portland’s livability, states that “Legally, Portland must have a balanced budget.” The introduction goes on to say that the City has a dual responsibility to be a steward of “the public’s resources” while at the same time serving “the public good and the public’s needs.” The introduction mentions the “shared commitment of the City Government and the citizens to preserve Portland” and states that “‘Portland’ has come to represent nationally not just another name of another city, but a way of life and a civic culture which others can envy” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1979-80 4). Instead of emphasizing the strong need for community revitalization—as in his previous six messages—he instead talks about the need to manage and control anticipated growth and change in Portland.

Goldschmidt reports signs of “what restored health to our downtown and in our neighborhoods means” and warns that Portlanders must not “let our success consume us.” Goldschmidt cautions that while “enormous new investments have been proposed,

investments which will change the face of the City, bring us housing, jobs, and new economic vitality,” Portlanders “must have the capacity to control and guide the forces released by those investments so that they become part of Portland rather than Portland becoming part of them.” Part of the challenge “as we seek to accommodate those who would come here” is to “not destroy our neighborhoods” and to maintain strong basics services to serve all community members (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1979-80 4-5).

Goldschmidt emphasizes that “The goal of the budget is the same goal that has driven me since I became Mayor: to preserve those qualities and values which make Portland a special place to live. It is a budget which works hard to recognize the strong attachments we have for our city. It is a budget which seeks to manage the changes taking place in our community, to a shared better life for all Portlanders” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.” *City Budget*. FY 1979-80 5).

Goldschmidt states that his budget highlights “represent my view of the overriding responsibilities of City government and the priority needs of our citizens.” He grouped his primary budget highlights under the headings of jobs, maintenance of city service levels, emergency services, and energy supply. The only mention of community or neighborhood involvement is Goldschmidt’s report of new General Fund support for “one of the three neighborhood mediation centers currently staffed by three CETA positions and funded in the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission budget” to help remove “day-to-day neighborhood conflict resolution from the workload of our police patrolmen” and to “serve on a City-wide basis” (Portland. “Mayor’s Budget Message.”

City Budget. FY 1979-80 10). Goldschmidt also announces that the City will “develop its own information referral mechanism” and will fund a position in the Office of General Services to serve as a central information referral point for citizens.”²¹

Overall, Goldschmidt’s mayor’s budget messages show him to be a mayor who strongly and consistently supported community involvement in city government decision as an important element in his strategy to revitalize Portland neighborhoods and to preserve and enhance the livability of Portland overall. He opened up the city budget development process to include and then expand community input and supported the creation of city agencies and programs to support community involvement and to improve the quality of and services in Portland’s neighborhoods.

Observations from the 1970s

Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system was created in the 1970s during a time of great enthusiasm, challenge, and change in Portland. City leaders and neighborhood activists found common cause in the revitalization of Portland’s deteriorating neighborhoods and downtown. Portland’s leaders were open to decentralizing local decision making and implemented major new policies, structures, and programs intended to give community members a meaningful voice in shaping the livability of their communities. This section summarizes some of the insights of the this chapter related to the three main research questions of this study.

System Elements: During the 1970s, Portlanders thought a lot about the policies, structures, and programs that most would encourage greater participatory democracy in

²¹ This function later became a program within ONA/ONI.

Portland. Many of the system elements implemented during this time continue as major parts of the system forty years later.

Some important values and assumptions shaped the system's effectiveness at promoting greater participatory democracy. Community members were seen as willing and able to participate in local decision making and program development, and both community members and city leaders and staff were seen as being able to bring important value to the work of city government. It was recognized that community members often have the best understanding of local needs and the implications of different possible government policies, programs, and actions for their part of the city. Also, government policies and programs often are more effective and sustainable when their development includes people representing different interests in the community coming together to identify and reconcile their interests and priorities.

A number of city leaders and staff during the 1970s were open to decentralizing some local decision making away from Portland's tradition of top-down decision making prior to the 1970s. The city planners and Planning Commission members who developed the 1971 proposal for district planning organizations believed that a system of neighborhood organizations with a meaningful voice in local planning would help create better plans and would reduce the likelihood of the kind of conflict and unpredictability that was a regular feature of urban renewal, land use, and transportation planning efforts in Portland during the 1960s and early 1970s. Goldschmidt believed that involving community members in city government decisions and priority setting not only would

help revitalize Portland's neighborhoods and downtown, but also would help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of city government.

Many people recognized that community members and neighborhood organizations need to have some real power and impact to attract strong community participation. They also recognized that, to have an impact, community members need to be involved early in the development of plans, policies, and programs, not "after the fact" when most important decisions already have been made.

An effective decision-making partnership between government and community organizations and members also requires good communication. In the 1974 and 1975 Ordinances, the City Council declared that the primary purpose for creating a formal citywide system of ongoing neighborhood associations was to create a vehicle to facilitate communication between community and government. The scope of the needed communication later was described by Pedersen as including two-way communication within and between all parts of the system: neighborhood associations with their community members; between neighborhood associations, between neighborhood associations and neighborhood districts, between the community and city government agencies and leaders, and within city government.

System designers also saw the value and importance of developing a city-wide system of neighborhood associations recognized by city government that would be available on an ongoing basis to community members who decided to organize themselves to work on a particular issue or problem. Community members would not need to take the time to create a new organization for every effort.

Independence and community control of neighborhood associations also was seen as an important feature of the system. Community members were most likely to participate in organizations that they had a voice in shaping, and neighborhood activists aggressively advocated to protect the independence of neighborhood associations in the system as it developed. The importance of community ownership in the system also was reflected in the decision to extensively involve neighborhood and community activists in the development of the system. Neighborhood association independence also was reflected in the ultimate scope of what neighborhood associations could work on. While the initial 1971 Planning Commission proposal suggested that neighborhood associations and district planning organizations would focus primarily on developing neighborhood plans, the scope for the neighborhood system quickly grew to empower community members to use their neighborhood associations to work on anything that they felt affected the livability of their neighborhoods.

As a counterpoint to the need for neighborhood organization independence, many city leaders and staff, and some community members as well, saw the need for the system to ensure the protection of the rights of all citizens and that a variety of viewpoints would be welcomed and heard—not just those of the people who controlled a particular neighborhood at the time. This led to a formal exchange agreement—formal recognition, benefits and support for neighborhood associations in exchange for neighborhood association agreeing to structure and manage themselves in ways that were open and accountable to the city and the community. The system required neighborhood associations not to discriminate against individuals and to record and pass on to city

decision makers any minority opinions as well as the majority opinions or recommendations of their neighborhood association. The system also required neighborhood associations to hold regular elections, provide formal notice of their neighborhood meetings, and to have a formal process to resolve complaints.

Many individuals involved in the early development of the system recognized that, while neighborhood associations needed to be independent, effective community organizing and involvement requires support—community volunteers only can do so much on their own. The system recognized that assistance from paid staff would increase the effectiveness of organizing, communication, capacity building. ONA was created to provide a broad array of support to neighborhood organizing and communication efforts. Other city staff also were tasked with helping community members to be involved—including city planners who supported for neighborhood planning efforts and city staff who supported the individual city agency BACs and the Neighborhood Needs process. It also was important that community members controlled the staff in the ONA-funded neighborhood district offices to ensure that the top priority of these staff members would be the needs of the community. District offices also provided a community-controlled physical space in the community to serve a welcoming place for community members to “call home,” discuss issues, and work together.

Multi-tiered structure: A number of the reviews of the proposed and implemented system during the 1970s recognized the advantages of a multi-tiered system of neighborhood associations, district-level bodies, and some sort of a citywide body for community members. Neighborhood associations were envisioned to be the ideal places

to discuss and work on issues that affected a particular neighborhood. District level bodies were seen as an effective way to bring neighborhoods together to share ideas and resources and to discuss issues that affected more than one neighborhood in the district. A citywide body would offer the opportunity to broaden information and resource sharing even further and to give community members the opportunity to discuss and organize action on issues of citywide impact and importance. Some neighborhood activists initially opposed the development of a district-level tier of organizations out of concern that another layer in the system would dilute the clout of the neighborhood associations. District level bodies evolved anyway, largely because of ONA's decision under Pedersen to contract with district level bodies to deliver community involvement support services to their neighborhood associations. The formal role of district coalition boards later would be formalized in the 1987 ONA Guidelines. Witt documents that tensions continued to exist between neighborhood associations and their district coalition boards around the city to varying degrees for many years. Over the history of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system, community members periodically would attempt to create a city-wide body for neighborhood activists and community members—usually only with short term success.

The system structure also included the creation of a city agency—the Office of Neighborhood Associations (ONA)—to help support and coordinate the system. Early on, the decision was made for ONA to play a supportive, rather than directive, role. ONA would provide organizing, communications and other support to neighborhood associations, but would not control them. ONA also would provide some assistance to

help city agencies work constructively with neighborhood associations and community members, but would not do the community involvement work for city agencies.

Formalization of Roles and Responsibilities: The formalization of the roles and responsibilities of neighborhood associations, city agencies, and ONA through the 1974 and 1975 ordinances also was an important element of the system's early development.

Despite the strong advocacy by neighborhood activists that neighborhood associations be independent of city control, city leaders and staff (and many neighborhood activists) saw the need for neighborhood associations to agree to some basic requirements in exchange for the benefits of formal recognition and support from city government. The 1974 and 1975 ordinances set out minimum requirements that neighborhood associations needed to meet to be recognized formally by the city, as well the benefits and service they then could receive and the roles and responsibilities of city agencies and the new Office of Neighborhood Association (ONA) in supporting community involvement.

Neighborhood associations were required to have open membership, not charge dues, not to discriminate, and to file their bylaws with ONA. Neighborhood association were to be held accountable to their community members and the city through the requirement of regular neighborhood association elections, notification of elections and neighborhood meetings, compliance with open meetings and public records requirements, and the recording and transmittal to the city of discussion, minority viewpoints, and votes at neighborhood meetings when the organization took formal positions or adopted formal recommendations. Neighborhood associations also were required to have a formal

process to respond to complaints and grievances. (Some requirements discussed early on, such as requirements related to neighborhood boundaries, were dropped from the initial ordinances but would reappear in the 1987 ONA Guidelines.)

In exchange for meeting the minimum requirements, neighborhood associations became eligible for a range of benefits, including formal notification of city government policies, programs, and land use actions that might affect the livability of the neighborhood, support for neighborhood planning efforts, involvement in the city budget process, the ability to share neighborhood priorities for city projects, and a wide range of support services from ONA.

On the city government side, the system required city agencies to provide neighborhood associations with formal notice—at least 30 days when possible--of actions that would affect the livability of the neighborhood, formally involve neighborhood associations in any planning efforts that affected their neighborhood, and to following the provisions of any formally adopted neighborhood plan adopted by the City.

ONA's role was to support community involvement and the organizing and effective functioning of neighborhood associations—not to control neighborhood associations. ONA also helped city agencies work with neighborhood associations, but did not take on the responsibility of doing community involvement work for city agencies or city leaders. ONA's support for neighborhood associations included: communications support—including printing and mailing assistance, information and referral, leadership and skill training, organizing support, conflict resolution, assistance to help neighborhood associations work with city agencies effectively, and help organizing neighborhood

projects. ONA acted as an information clearing house, maintained the list of neighborhood association contacts, promoted involvement in neighborhood associations and public education about community involvement, assisted in conflict resolution, and enforced the minimum standards for neighborhood associations. ONA also managed the BAC program and the Neighborhood Needs Process and contracted with community-run district offices to provide assistance and support to neighborhood association in those districts.

Challenges: Some issues emerged early in the system's development that would continue to pose challenges to achieving an effective community and neighborhood involvement system for many years.

A major early (and ongoing) challenge was the expectation by city leaders and staff—and many community members—that neighborhood associations should be “representative” of their communities. Many city leaders and staff seemed to hope that the new neighborhood associations would become a “one-stop” source of information about what the people in a neighborhood wanted and cared about. Many neighborhood leaders—all volunteers—found it difficult to meet this expectation. Not all neighborhood leaders and their board members necessarily came into their leadership positions with the skills, time and energy, or even the desire to develop and implement effective outreach and involvement efforts in their communities. Most neighborhood associations also had limited resources and support to reach out and involve their community members.

Effective communication and outreach capacity clearly was a critical factor in a neighborhood association's ability to claim to involve and “represent” the views and

wishes of the people in their neighborhood. The City Council recognized that effective communication was a central task for the neighborhood system. In the early years of the system, ONA saw communication support as one of its major functions and provided some level of assistance to neighborhood associations with designing flyers, notices, and newsletters, and provided printing and mailing support. ONA also distributed its own newsletter about community involvement activities and opportunities. The *Oregonian* and local community newspapers also played a role in getting information out about community issues and events. Pedersen discussed in her ONA reports the desire to find innovative ways to involve more people more easily in neighborhood association elections, meetings and activities—one of these was the idea of establishing an interactive cable television system. The need for better outreach by neighborhood associations would continue to be a major challenge throughout the history of the system.

Adequate training for community volunteers was another challenge. Portland's new community and neighborhood engagement system depended very heavily on the ability of community volunteers to step up to create and then lead and manage neighborhood organizations, to analyze and advocate for issues, and to participate effectively in city decision making processes. Pedersen quickly recognized the strong need for ongoing leadership and skill training for community members and called for ONA to develop an ongoing training program for new neighborhood leaders.

Increasing numbers of city staff also began to try to engage community members on a wide range of projects and processes. Many needed to understand that community members have a limited capacity—in time, energy, and interest—to participate in the

rapidly growing number of city decision making processes that were looking for community input. City staff needed to have the skills and willingness to ensure that community involvement efforts were well thought out, well designed and supported, and reflected the true scope and needs a particular decision making process and its relevance to community members. The extent to which city staff received training and support in doing this is not clear.

Different reviews also identified the need for some sort of citywide tier or body that would bring community members together to share information and learn about and advocate together on issues that had citywide impact. Portland's initial system did not include a formal citywide tier. The next chapter describes some independent, community lead efforts to create citywide bodies in the 1970s and 1980s.

Reform Process: Many factors and individual players helped set the stage for the early development and implementation of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system. Abbott reports that "startling changes" from 1966 to 1972, included "the emergence of active and often angry neighborhood association organizations" that "made local residents the actors rather than the objects in neighborhood decisions;" strong requirements by the federal government for citizen participation in city policy and spending decisions through the Community Action Program of the Office of Economic Opportunity, the Model Cities program, and the Housing and Community Development program (190-91), and "a change of generations on the Portland City Council in 1969-70" that brought on leaders who "were more willing to respond to neighborhood requests." Abbott (1983) writes that by "1971 and 1972, active neighborhood

associations and planning committees were a presence that politicians and planning administrators could not ignore” and together constituted a citywide “neighborhood movement” (192).

The 1970s also were a time when Portland city leaders were thinking in new ways about local governance roles and structures. Goldschmidt and other leaders championed revitalization of neighborhoods and downtown, increased community involvement in local decision making, city/county consolidation, and new approaches to regional governance. In Salem, the Oregon Legislative Assembly passed Oregon’s land use planning law which required Portland and other local jurisdictions to develop comprehensive plans.

Policy entrepreneurs played an important role in the development of the ideas and proposals that led to the creation of Portland’s community and neighborhood involvement system. Hovey (2003) cites the role sympathetic city planners—who had worked with neighborhood activists on planning projects, such as the Northwest District Plan—played in advocating for a more formal role for neighborhood associations in city planning. City planners and Planning Commission members then developed the 1971 proposal to create the district planning organization system. This proposal then led Mayor Schrunk and the City Council to create the DPO Task Force which fleshed out a much more detailed set of recommendations for the creation of a city-wide neighborhood association system. Mary Pedersen, who was hired in 1973, worked with the community to develop the 1974 and 1975 ordinances and helped shape ONA’s early focus and

programs. Neighborhood activists, organized strong neighborhood association and pushed for greater involvement in local decision making.

Political champions also played a role. Mayor Terry Shrunck and City Commissioner Lloyd Anderson supported the creation of the DPO Task Force and the subsequent move to create the neighborhood system. Mayor Goldschmidt made neighborhood revitalization and citizen involvement in government decision making a major element of his strategy to save Portland from decline. Hovey reminds us that Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system grew out of a "broad based... nascent movement" that involved hundreds of community members and that Mayor Neil Goldschmidt did not create Portland's neighborhood association and land use planning systems on his own, but did serve a valuable role "as the avatar of a new public narrative about Portland, what it was becoming, and what it meant to live there." Goldschmidt's mayor's budget messages that accompanied the annual city budget indicate that involving community members in city decision making and the creation of a system of strong neighborhood associations were central to his plans to revitalize Portland. Goldschmidt used his political skills and power in the city budget process to support his vision by creating administrative structures (e.g., ONA, Bureau of Neighborhood Environment, Bureau of Human Services, etc.) and programs (e.g., Budget Advisory Committees Program, Neighborhood Needs Process), and by sending a strong message that he expected these structures to be effective and ongoing.

Embedding: One of this study's primary research questions is how reforms that advance toward greater participatory democracy can be sustained over time. Portland city

government's emerging openness to working with the community in the 1970s represented a dramatic departure from the City's previous top-down culture of governance. The literature suggests that achieving and sustaining a major culture change like this depends on a number of factors, some of which were enacted in Portland in the 1970s and others that were not.

Gibson emphasizes that "citizen-based approaches" to governance need to focus on lasting culture change within government (Gibson 2). Stone argues that many policy arenas are controlled by "semiautonomous subsystems" and that the day-to-day activities of these subsystems need to be altered to establish an "institutional legacy" to ensure that the changes are lasting. Stone asserts that fundamental reform requires sustained mobilization and the institutionalization of new practices and relationships. He argues that sub-systems rarely reform themselves and require some sort of external civic mobilization to achieve lasting change (Stone 6-8).

Fernandez and Rainey (2006) identified a number of common factors that together advance lasting organizational culture change in the public sector.²² They argue that resources need to be dedicated to support the change process and to support developing a strategy for change, communicating the need for change, "training employees," "developing new processes and practices," "restructuring and reorganizing the organization," and "testing and experimenting with innovations" (712).

²² Fernandez and Rainey identified eight factors to achieve local government organizational culture change, which include: "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."

The City Council's adoption of the 1974 and 1975 ordinances, which created ONA and Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system, placed the new system into city code, thereby creating an expectation that the system would be ongoing rather than a temporary experiment or pilot project. The ordinances also codified a formal statement of the need for and purpose of the system and laid out expectations, roles, and responsibilities for neighborhood associations, city agencies, and ONA.

The ordinances also mandated changes to city practices and procedures, including the introduction of formal notification requirements, the 30-day early warning requirement for city policies and projects that affected neighborhood livability, and community involvement in neighborhood planning, the city budget process, and identifying neighborhood needs related to capital and other city projects and services.

The City Council's creation and funding of ONA helped support the development of important community involvement capacity and infrastructure in the community. The ordinances established an incentive for community members to organize community-based neighborhood associations and to apply for formal recognition for their neighborhood associations to be eligible for the status, services, and support that came with formal recognition. The creation of these ongoing vehicles for community organizing and action created a citywide infrastructure to support greater community involvement. ONA's increased the level of organizing and capacity building by helping neighborhood organizations get organized, reach out to and involve their community members, along with a wide range of other support services. The increase in the number of community members and organizations also increased public expectations and

expanded the constituency that would advocate for city government to continue to involve the community in local decision making. ONA also provided support to city agencies to help them reach out to and work with neighborhood associations and community members.

Pedersen notes that a number of City staff people initially were enthusiastic about increasing the involvement of community members, but it is not clear how widely this enthusiasm existed through city government or how the extent to which city staff had the training, skills, and support needed to work effectively with community members. As the years would go by, community members repeatedly would complain that city leaders and staff were not really listening to the community or working with community member early enough and in ways that would be most meaningful.

The embeddedness of many of these early elements of Portland's community and neighborhood involvement system would be challenged and tested by changing leadership on the city council, success and frustrations with existing programs and structures, and evolving understanding of what constitutes a meaningful governance partnership between community organizations and members and city government.