Portland City at a Crossroads: Portland Civic Index Project

Portland (Or.). City Planning Commission

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PORTLAND — CITY AT A CROSSROADS

"Creating a Framework for Change"

PORTLAND CIVIC INDEX PROJECT 1989-90

FINAL REPORT
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PORTLAND — CITY AT A CROSSROADS

Introduction

Beginning in June, 1989 and continuing through May, 1990, a group of citizens from the Portland Metropolitan area met to study the future of the community through the Civic Index process established by the National Civic League. This report represents the results of this effort.

Ten Component committees assembled and analyzed data and presented their findings to a Synthesis Committee. The Synthesis Committee reviewed the work of the component groups and discussed alternative solutions. Although there was not total agreement on what the community might do, the Synthesis Committee did reach consensus on a number of critical issues. The results of these deliberations make up the findings and recommendations presented in this report.

The Civic Index Process in Portland

Through experiences with cities across the nation, the National Civic League learned that the processes that lead to decision-making are as critical to a community as its physical and economic assets. The League identified ten measuring tools against which to evaluate the health of a community’s “civic infrastructure.”

The ten components used to analyze civic infrastructure are:

- Citizen Participation
- Community Leadership
- Government Performance
- Volunteerism and Philanthropy
- Intergroup Relations
- Civic Education
- Community Information Sharing
- Capacity for Cooperation and Consensus Building
- Community Vision and Pride
- Intercommunity Cooperation.

The Civic Index provides a method for a community to identify its strengths and weaknesses in the manner that citizens participate and interact. The process measures the status of the ten infrastructure components. It does not contain an explicit method for solving problems. However, the nature of the process opens the door to creative, collaborative problem-solving.

The National Civic League distributes a publication entitled, “The Civic Index: A New Approach for Improving Community Life.” This booklet describes the ten component topics and provides a checklist to evaluate a community’s performance in each com-
ponent. Study groups used the checklists as a basis for surveys, interviews and other research undertaken in applying the Civic Index to the Portland area.

For nearly two years, more than 400 volunteers have contributed to the Civic Index. In September, 1988, at the invitation of Commissioner Earl Blumenauer, over 100 people attended a workshop with John Parr, President of the National Civic League. Parr introduced these Portland area citizens to the concept of the Civic Index.

Out of this initial workshop a committee representing local businesses, governments, non-profits, educational organizations and the media was formed. The group met through June of 1989 to structure the Portland's Civic Index process. Based on input from those attending the original workshop, the committee decided that the process should be volunteer-driven and should operate independently.

On June 9, 1989, journalist Neal Peirce was the featured speaker at an all-day conference on the Civic Index. Three-hundred people — again, representing a broad spectrum of government agencies, small and large businesses and non-profits — heard representatives of the community present a historical perspective on Portland, the National Civic League talk about the benefits of the Civic Index, and Peirce discuss the importance of far-sighted planning to a community's long-term health. Many members of the ten Civic Index component committees emerged from this June conference. These original members invited other community members to participate.

For six months, approximately 100 citizens devoted hundreds of hours to analyzing the ten components identified by the Civic Index. With the exception of a professional poll which fielded questions submitted by all ten component groups, all research design, surveys, interviews and written reports were undertaken on a volunteer basis by committee members.

The research culminated in February and March, 1990, with presentations to the Synthesis Committee. This 50 member group was composed of delegates from each of the ten study committees and other citizens new to the Civic Index process, with special background and interests. In sixteen hours of meetings, the Synthesis Committee heard reports from the component committees. With the help of facilitator Chris Gates, Vice President of the National Civic League, the Synthesis Committee added its own recommendations to the work of each component group.

Working from the recommendations produced both by the ten component groups and the full Synthesis Committee, a drafting committee identified major themes and recommendations and created a framework for those recommendations. In a fifth meeting, the Synthesis Committee discussed and developed the final recommendations.

An Implementation Committee has been formed to monitor and facilitate the recommendations of the report. It is anticipated that a status report on the implementation phase of the project will be provided participants in the Fall of 1990.
The Future of Portland

The image many of us carry about Portland — its size, demographics and role in the region — is no longer accurate. Portland is undergoing a period of significant change, change that will redefine our concept of our civic character.

Responding to Growth

The major change is growth. Other West Coast cities already have seen substantial population increases, and the Portland area is next in line. We expect to add half a million people to the metropolitan region by 2010. Think about it! We will add one and one-third new cities of Portland in 20 years. This growth will challenge traditional political boundaries and demand more intergovernmental and regional cooperation.

Growth has already:

• Created increasing ethnic and social diversity;
• Produced competitive suburban centers in Gresham, Beaverton, Tigard and Lake Oswego;
• Brought big city problems like traffic congestion, inadequate sewer service, gangs and fear, and conflicts between development and preservation.

Portland cannot respond to these challenges independent from its regional neighbors. The metropolitan region must enhance existing resources and develop new ones to accommodate growth and change.

The good news is that Portland has a strong tradition of citizen involvement, which has included easy access to community processes and leaders. Portland also shares the state's strong commitment to long-range resource planning. One factor reinforcing these progressive traditions has been the community's homogeneity. But the community no longer looks the same and we now find that large sectors of the community no longer have access to traditional networks and power structures.

Growth in population and development will bring increasing demands on institutions and services. These increases will test our ability to preserve air and water quality and our commitment to preservation of open spaces and wetlands. Our special quality of life is at stake.

With new growth, we find that essential elements of our economy have shifted. Major employers and corporate citizens have left the downtown core, new players are emerging in the suburban areas. Portland City Hall, businesses and residents are no longer the ultimate decision-makers. Suburbs have demanded and achieved an equal place at the decision making table.
The Civic Index participants found that citizens are more concerned about service delivery and access to decision making processes then they are concerned about government structure. Instead of addressing government structures, the Civic Index findings address community-wide changes necessary for growth.

The Need for a Community Vision

Participants in the Civic Index process did not attempt to design a new vision for the community. Instead, they identified specific actions and undertakings that will enhance the community’s ability to create such a vision — together, taking into consideration the very different needs of an increasingly diverse community.

With innovative land use and transportation planning, the metropolitan region has done an excellent job of managing growth to date. We have succeeded in avoiding much of the sprawl and congestion that characterizes other West Coast cities. Since Oregon has yet to experience the pressures and demands of growth, our success is a bit suspect. Our growth rate in the ’80’s was very slow. In the next 20 years, however, Portland is forecast to grow four times that of the entire state during the ’80’s. Are our institutions up to the challenge?

Today we are dealing with only part of our growth challenges. While we have directed development within the urban growth boundary, the community has not evaluated the impact of growth on existing urban systems. Such an evaluation requires a common vision and how our community — within and outside of Portland — wants to live. The vision we have now is tied to the pride we have in our physical setting. To succeed in the 21st Century, we need a vision transcending pride of place.

We commend the work of the Portland Development Commission, the Governor’s Economic Development Strategic Planning effort, the Central City Plan, Marketing Portland, Metro’s Futures Conference and Portland’s Future Focus. Building on these efforts and others, we believe a vision for Portland’s future must be developed.

To that end, the Portland Civic Index urges the community to take action on its three sets of recommendations. Portland is at a crossroads. We have not defined the role that Portland — our region’s traditional economic, cultural and higher education center — will play as the region expands. To succeed Portland needs a regional perspective. Its health requires the participation of all of its citizens. And it will be nurtured by good information, easily available, to citizens and institutions alike.
Findings and Recommendations

At the end of the Synthesis process, when all the discussion had been completed, three themes dominated the findings of the ten component groups: 1) The Regional Perspective: Planning for Our Future, 2) Citizen Participation: The Key to Leadership, and 3) Communication and Information Sharing: Seeing Ourselves Clearly.

The following recommendations speak to the nature of the Portland community’s workings and interactions — whether in the area of intergroup relations, information sharing, volunteerism or any of the other component areas. Our recommendations focus on immediate actions, but our objectives are driven by our desire for healthy long-term growth.

The Regional Perspective: Planning For Our Future

The metropolitan region is no longer a series of small, isolated communities. Suburban hubs are competing successfully for major industry, commercial development and residential construction. Suburban communities are dominating the growth trends. For example, the Beaverton School District is already the third largest in the state. This rapid development pressures existing institutions and infrastructure, from transportation systems to protection of rivers and streams; from county governments to water districts. Development — and resulting challenges — crosses jurisdictional boundaries. And government bodies that were designed to deal with small-town problems may lack the resources to deal with more broad-based issues.

If these institutions respond parochially, we may witness growth disasters instead of opportunities. Consequently, common goals are vital and increased cooperation is mandatory.

Findings and Recommendations

The Community Vision and Pride Committee found that, while many organizations and government agencies have produced their own “visions” for the future, none is shared by the community as a whole. The committee recommends to the community that:

1) Portland State University’s Center for Urban Studies analyze the region’s strategic planning activities, including those being undertaken by government, business and non-profit agencies. The analysis should identify commonalities and differences between the plans. The work should facilitate a regional effort to define the area’s vision.
The Regional Cooperation Committee commended the metropolitan region for successfully managing some major issues — like transportation planning — on a regional basis. In other service areas, particularly human resources, the committee found that virtually no regional cooperation exists. While lack of a unified vision inhibits our ability to cope with change, lack of regional cooperation prevents us from taking action on pressing urban issues. Furthermore, regional solutions will be more likely to succeed when guided by a legitimately-constituted regional body instead of ad hoc coalitions. Therefore, the committee recommends that:

2) **The residents of the Portland metropolitan region** need to increase regional problem solving. The Committee recommends that Metro act as a consultant for regional problem-solving efforts. Metro need not become the administrator of on-going projects, but by providing models, workplans and leadership, Metro can initiate and promote cooperation among the region’s governments in many issue areas.

3) **The metropolitan region** must prepare for additional regional authorities and/or institutions that will mandate regional solutions. This recommendation may result in additional responsibilities for Metro and/or the creation of new institutions.

4) **The metropolitan region** must continue to study the effectiveness of government structures, looking at Portland’s charter, Portland’s form of government and the division of responsibilities between counties, cities, special districts, Metro and Tri-Met. Such studies should measure the ability of government institutions to accommodate growth to cope with growth.

5) **Print media** needs to expand coverage of regional issues.

**Citizen Participation: The Key to Leadership**

*Synthesis Committee discussion revealed that, in many ways, the Portland community is at the national forefront of citizen involvement. From formal neighborhood associations to budget advisory committees, citizen participation is a strong community tradition.*

*However, our citizen involvement processes have assumed that all people could access the system easily and comfortably. This assumption is not accurate.*

*Today, we must work aggressively to involve new members of the Portland community. Youth, refugees, and an increasing minority population traditionally have not been involved in government decision-making. They are less likely than other citizens to become involved in community efforts. Furthermore, our institutions are not designed to include other special populations, such as the handicapped. Without broad-based citizen involvement, no government can address and improve the full spectrum of community problems.*
The Civic Index Synthesis Committee hopes that members of the region’s diverse groups will work together to solve community-wide problems, reversing the apparent trend that finds individual groups working on specific, isolated problems. Finally, the Committee members believe that a community priority must be the empowerment of low-income citizens to improve their lives and become role models for others in their communities.

Findings and Recommendations

The Leadership Committee found that citizens in Portland sensed an absence of leadership. The Synthesis Committee noted a particular lack of community leaders from the business community outside of the largest corporations.

Findings of the Citizen Participation, Volunteerism and Philanthropy, and Intergroup Relations committees indicated that cultural barriers inhibit many people from participating in the broader community — and that means a loss of future leaders who may have emerged through community activity.

The committee recommends that:

6) The City Club of Portland create an annual inventory of leadership training programs available in the metropolitan region. The first inventory should identify what training opportunities are not available. Programs to be included in the inventory would be those providing training in facilitation, volunteer management, consensus building, mediation, public speaking and parliamentary procedure. The inventory should identify programs that target minorities, at-risk groups and youth for community involvement. The committee further recommends that availability of such an inventory be widely publicized and promoted.

7) The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission should be supported in developing outreach programs for minority groups and members of other special populations to increase their involvement in community processes. Goals of the outreach program are to reduce cultural barriers that inhibit minorities and special interest groups from participating in our community, and to sensitize the majority community about existing barriers.

The need for business involvement in community activities was cited by the committees on Leadership, Volunteerism and Philanthropy, and Citizen Participation. The Synthesis Committee learned that Portland relies disproportionately on a few major corporations. “Small businesses,” are considerably less visible in community efforts.

It’s time to expand the resource base. Recognizing that not all businesses can give major cash contributions, the Synthesis Committee encourages small business to increase contributions of in-kind expertise and related resources to community efforts.
The committee recommends:

8) The business community, through the leadership of metropolitan region Chambers of Commerce and other business groups, should be encouraged to create a business recognition program that promotes civic participation and builds civic involvement models with a special emphasis on small business involvement. Model programs may help small businesses lend their expertise to non-profits, or provide in-kind contributions where needed.

9) The business community, through the leadership of the metropolitan region Chambers of Commerce and other groups, should be encouraged to create a model program to expand the community volunteer base and the level of philanthropic. Models for such programs are “Give 5” and the “Service Credit Program.”

Several component committees identified cultural barriers that effectively exclude minorities from becoming involved in community processes. The committees found that Portland’s majority community lacks awareness and understanding of its diverse minority populations. The community lacks commitment to build and empower strong leadership within minority communities. Racism and hate crimes have escalated at an alarming rate in Portland, and many resident minority citizens sense a lack of commitment by the majority community to address these problems.

In addition to recommendations addressing cultural diversity elsewhere in this report, the committee recommends that:

10) The metropolitan region public schools receive support to expand multi-cultural education for all youth in the area. The Portland Public School District has a multi-cultural curriculum that is earning national recognition that can serve as a model for other local school districts.

11) U.S. West be encouraged to work with other major employers to develop programs similar to its Pluralism Council. The Council’s mission is to improve understanding and sensitivity among ethnically diverse employees. It has created informational and educational programs promoting cultural awareness and respect for diversity.

The Committee on Civic Education learned that most students receive no formal education in local government processes, although the schools teach federal government process. Most students in public schools receive little information about community values and the importance of volunteerism and participation. Finally, few opportunities exist for students to learn leadership, to participate in meaningful decision-making and actually experience the democratic decision making process. The Synthesis Committee agreed that early exposure to community involvement creates enthusiasm for continued participation.
The committee recommends that:

12) **The metropolitan region governments** should establish ordinances requiring seats for at least two persons under the age of 21 on boards and commissions.

13) **The Portland City School liaison**, with the support of the Private Industry Council, and other public, private and non-profit organizations, should increase the awareness of existing mentoring programs. These groups should also review the need to create new opportunities for hands-on learning, like internship programs in businesses and government agencies.

14) **The League of Women Voters, the YMCA Youth and Government Program, the League of Oregon Cities and other groups** should work together with local school boards to incorporate local government educational programs into school curricula.

15) **Oregon Episcopal School and Catlin Gabel School** should be encouraged to share information with other schools about their student community service programs, to assist them in promoting volunteerism and community participation.

**Communication and Information Sharing: Seeing Ourselves Clearly**

All 10 component groups identified needs for better communication tools and broader exposure of local issues. Further, many excellent community resources are underused by the constituency for which they were created because of a lack of information.

In a changing community, neighborhoods need more information about adjacent neighborhoods, as well as changes occurring across town. With government institutions adjusting to new demands, citizens need better avenues of information to keep up with change. Finally, for a community to plan for its future, it must have an accurate picture of what the present looks like. For all these reasons, improved information dissemination has been identified as critical.

In many component discussions, members identified ways that commercial media can improve coverage of local issues, neighborhood news, and the changing nature of the Portland area. But the Synthesis Committee recognizes the availability of many other communication tools, both formal and informal, that can further the goal of better information sharing.

The committee looks to the commercial media, public and subscriber radio and television stations and public access television to improve local information. In addition, the committee recognizes the important contributions of church and neighborhood groups, employee and employer networks, government and non-profit agencies, schools and other organizations in disseminating information and affirming community values.
Findings and Recommendations

In such diverse committee reports as Information Sharing, and Cooperation and Consensus Building, members identified barriers to citizens' ability to learn about fundamental government issues and procedures.

To resolve these problems, the committee recommends:

16) **A regional information office** should be created to provide public information about service delivery at any level of government within the tri-county area and to refer inquiries to the appropriate regional government offices.

17) **An annual report** with information about services for city residents, a telephone directory, a summary of activity during the previous year and an update of the City's strategic plan should be produced by the Office of Finance and Administration. The committee also recommends that the annual report be widely disseminated.

18) **The City of Portland** should monitor the Computer Clearinghouse Network in the Office of Neighborhood associations and, within a year, make recommendations to expand its role as a community information network. Branches of the Multnomah County Library system are appropriate locations for terminals.

In discussions on Citizen Participation, Leadership, Cooperation and Consensus Building, Information Sharing and Intergroup Relations, the Synthesis Committee found that a great deal of valuable information on issues, organizations and opportunities is not effectively disseminated. This lack of dissemination reinforces stereotypes, polarizes situations, prevents creative problem-solving and creates other, often negative, results.

To create specific solutions to these problems, the committee finds that:

19) **The media** needs to be encouraged to cover issues, as well as events, providing fuller coverage of controversial decisions at all levels of government.

20) **The media** needs to be encouraged to dedicate time during news programs and with public service messages to acknowledge positive community contributions. Examples of such positive messages are the "A Time to Share" and "Positively Oregon" psa's on Portland television.

21) **Local newspapers** should carry detailed meeting notices of major government and community organizations. They should be printed in a specified section of the paper: An example of effective meeting notices are those produced by Metro for its Council and committees.

22) **Local media** should increase their use of the resources at Portland State University and our other academic institutions in the region for background informa-
tion. Better use of resident expertise will improve reporting and community understanding of issues.

The committee also recommends that:

23) **The Public Relations Society of American, Women in Communications and/or similar organizations** should be encouraged to lend their expertise to neighborhood associations, minority groups, community leaders, government agencies and others to develop media and public relations training. The training should emphasize use of non-commercial media, like church groups, newsletters, neighborhood associations and other informal networks, in addition to standard print and broadcast media, for improved information dissemination.

In virtually every component discussion, the Synthesis Committee recognized that the Portland community does not view itself as a cosmopolitan community composed of diverse nationalities, ethnic and divergent interest groups. To expand our civic perspective, we recommend:

24) **Local newspapers and broadcast media** should regularly report on minority populations and activity, highlighting unique cultural values within each community. The goal is to emphasize the advantages a diverse society brings to the Portland Metropolitan community.

25) **Ethnic and cultural organizations**, as well as government agencies, businesses and non-profits, should be encouraged to create public celebrations of ethnic diversity. In the absence of Neighborfair, the community should not lose sight of its diversity. Celebrations may include include a day-long event, a public information campaign, a speaker's bureau and other promotional activities.

During ten months of study and discussion, members of the Civic Index committees learned a great deal about our community. We gained a new appreciation for its strong traditions and institutions and developed a new awareness of future challenges. We now ask the community to join with us in confronting those challenges, to create a more positive future for all the region's citizens.

It is time for Portland and all other metropolitan governments to improve their commitment to regional problem-solving.

It is time to assure all of Portland's citizens that they will have equal access to government.

It is time for Portland's citizens to respond to community needs and not shirk involvement.

It is time to improve our knowledge of, access to, and information about the events and trends that will define our future.

It is time for our community, its leaders and organizations to step forward and accept the challenges identified by their constituents.
1. Civic Education

Mission: The Civic Education Committee focused on youth and evaluated the state of civic education through the public and private school systems. The Committee defined its component topic:

“Civic Education is the way in which we learn the lessons or modes of behavior that enable us to be part of the culture in which we live. Ideally, civic education must include an attachment to justice, a willingness to serve the community beyond self interest, and an openness to all those who share the rank of citizen.”

The Committee's definition emphasized governance, the knowledge and skills to participate in local government, and community values.

Method: The Committee gathered its information through interviews of educators, legislators, business and community leaders about the status and quality of civic education and conducted a focus group of students aged 13 to 18.

Findings: The Committee concluded that while Portland is making a commendable effort in the area of civic education, it falls short of preparing our youth to deal with future problems as an effective civic participant.

The current Portland public high school curriculum focuses more on the federal government. Curriculum should emphasize state and local government and involve critical thinking on how students can effect change in the community. A key problem is lack of curriculum materials for teaching local government.

Some private schools require community service, however, Portland area public schools do not. There is both support and opposition to requiring community service, but a third option could be volunteer service with school credit.

The State is currently preparing community service guidelines for public schools and both the State and the Portland School District are currently revamping the social studies curriculum.

Recommendations:

- Preparation of local governance course materials by the Portland Public Schools, working with the League of Women Voters
- Include enhancement programs in local governance curriculum
- Development of community service programs by the Portland Public Schools in conjunction with service organizations and government officials
- Continued efforts by schools to involve parents in school programs
- Resolve school funding issue to insure continued success of any school programs.
- Enhance voter registration drives targeted at young adults
- Add students to government advisory bodies
2. Community Information Sharing

Mission: The Community Information Sharing Committee discussed and reviewed the methods and manner in which information is shared by Portland’s government and its citizens. How our citizens perceive the City is based upon the information they receive from the media, their neighbors, and the government itself. How well the City is working for its citizens is directly related to the amount of information citizens can direct to their government. Communication is a two-way dialogue of information sharing.

Method: A survey conducted by the Community Information Sharing Committee in September of 1989. 75 people representing areas of interest throughout the city (i.e., churches, neighborhood associations, charitable institutions, minority groups, and the community-at-large) were mailed a survey seeking information about their method of receiving and transmitting information to and from their government. It also asked their performance rating of these sources.

A 1987 survey taken by City Auditor Barbara Clark of the City of Portland Bureau Directors on their public notification procedures.

A discussion with Boyd Levet of KGW Television regarding broadcast media attitude surveys.

Data obtained from the Civic Index benchmark survey conducted by Julie A. Williamson in November, 1989.

Findings: The commercial media are important ways for individuals to obtain information about civic affairs, but equally important ways may be church newsletters, neighborhood association notices or word of mouth.

Local newspapers and electronic media are influenced by advertising as well as time considerations, which interfere with the presentation of unbiased, accurate reporting.

There is a need for more “problem solving” avenues, more information from the media to allow citizens to deal with problems. Few people are aware of formal channels to provide input to local government. People would like more information about prospective decisions before they are made, not after.

Recommendations:

- Creation of a public office or specific personnel to give and receive information and provide assistance.
- Improve media coverage of neighborhood and community activities.
- Provision of more information to the media by elected officials on decision-making processes.
- More investigative journalism.
- More forums for discussion (include risks for government).
- Improve systems already in place, e.g. the city/school liaison program and the Blue Pages in the phone book.
3. Citizen Participation

Mission: The Citizen Participation Committee examined the levels of citizen participation in governmental and non-profit organizations. It identified the barriers to inclusion and recommended methods for expanding the base of citizen volunteers.

Method: The Committee reviewed citizen participation opportunities, conducted interviews of agencies, and developed a random sample survey.

Findings: The Portland area has a strong tradition of citizen participation in governmental and community affairs; however those citizens most active seem limited to a small group of traditionally influential people. The base of active participants must be expanded to reflect the changing demographics of the community. Further, those citizens need to work in an environment that encourages their contributions and acknowledges the unique perspective that motivates citizens to give of their time and resources to community efforts.

Recommendations:

• Increase the level of participation in local government issues

• Train professional staff in non-profits and governmental agencies to make effective use of volunteer bases and citizen involvement exercises.

• Provide opportunities for youth to participate in public service projects.

• Improve communication services and media coverage of local issues, undertakings with a goal to increasing the level of citizen participation and interest.
4. Volunteerism and Philanthropy

Mission

The Volunteerism and Philanthropy Committee reviewed volunteerism and philanthropy trends, examined barriers and developed future goals to broaden community participation. They defined their topic as follows:

“Volunteerism and philanthropy are active demonstrations of the spirit of sharing and caring which positively affect the quality of life in our community. The demonstration of these values through individual and group contributions supplements and compliments the efforts of the private, government and non-profit sectors to enhance livability in our community.”

Method:

The Committee held four large group meetings, with participants from the non-profit, private, government and foundation sectors. In addition to the group input, national and local trends were researched, a corporate survey was mailed and information utilized from the Civic Index Survey.

Findings:

Local trends regarding volunteerism and philanthropy reflect national trends. There is a direct relationship between those who volunteer and those who give. The typical individual giver in Portland is 45 years of age with some college or previous volunteer work, has lived in Portland 16 years or more, resides between the Willamette River and East 39th (45%) or North Portland (42%) and spends 1 to 6 hours once a week and 81% give to one or more causes, including church, causes, issues, etc.

The major source of contributions is individual not corporate. Also, the percentage of income contributed is not proportional to income; the largest incomes are not giving the largest percentages. There is a lack of broad corporate participation.

Recommendations:

Volunteerism

- Adopt a “Give 5” community campaign, promoting the value that every citizen should volunteer a specified number of hours per week.
- All private, government and non-profit organizations should promote and support volunteerism by encouraging professional volunteer management for more efficient recruitment, training and placement; and providing options for employees to volunteer.
- Promote the value and inclusion of volunteer curricula in school.

Philanthropy

- Provide specific information on individual and corporate giving.
- Develop corporate/individual/foundation giving programs
- Encourage corporations to include community involvement in their corporate objectives.
- Encourage small businesses to form coalitions to address community needs.
- Include employees in corporate decisions about contributions.
- Provide effective media coverage of corporation/individual giving and its positive effects to encourage and enable others to give.
5. Community Leadership

Mission: The Community Leadership Committee proceeded to identify the perception of leadership in Portland — the quality of leadership, group representation and availability of leadership training.

Method: The Committee mailed a survey to over 200 community leaders and activists, fielded questions in the Civic Index telephone survey, and carried on lengthy discussions about the issues surrounding community leadership.

Findings: The 400 person telephone survey indicated that the community believes civic leaders have a weak vision for the city (52 percent) or no vision at all (8 percent). Forty-nine percent of those responding said they believed that Portland’s leadership was doing a fair job of solving the city’s problems, with 31 percent giving the leaders a “poor” rating in problem-solving.

The Committee’s own survey found little consensus on who the leaders are. Respondents reported that minorities, followed by other sub-groups, are not adequately represented in community decision-making.

In its report, the Committee wrote, “The challenge is to find and develop leaders who transform the needs of the community into goals. Leadership in this manner is dynamic and interactive. Leaders and followers alike play a role in the process of refining community goals.”

Recommendations:

- Provide access to the political and social decision-making processes.
- Establish leadership skill-building programs which are accessible to the general public.
- Conduct and make accessible civic forums and town meetings on a regular basis.
- Encourage young people to address and participate in community affairs.
6. Cooperation and Consensus Building

Mission: The Cooperation and Consensus Building Committee assessed the capacity within the greater Portland region for both the inclination and systems necessary to present and resolve community issues through cooperation and consensus building.

Method: The Committee chose four issues to use as case studies. They were chosen to include a diverse range of topics, various sizes, complexity and timeliness. The committee chose:

- Establishment of a second Life Flight helicopter pad at Emanuel Hospital
- Creation of Pioneer Square
- Establishment of a teen clinic at Parkrose High School
- Closure of Jackson High School

Findings: The Committee identified three elements present in cases where issues were resolved successfully. They are:

- Existence of a person or group with clearly defined authority.
- Voluntary good will and a willingness to compromise.
- Clearly defined issues.

The Committee found that other than the public hearing process in a land use case, this community has no procedure for conflict resolution. By the time issues reach the hearing process, the sides are often polarized and there is little willingness to compromise or reach agreement.

Recommendations:

- Change the public hearing process to be more "pro-active, consensus-oriented", perhaps ombudsman process.

- Involve a non-profit organization with expertise in conflict resolution in both educational and implementation efforts.

- Widely publicize the Public Policy Dispute Resolution program as an avenue for conflict resolution.

- Develop a mediation committee with diverse representation.
7. Intergroup Relations

Mission: Effective civic infrastructure provides for the identification, expression and resolution of conflict while providing for continued and expanded civic participation. At the same time, communities must insure that all groups have the skills and opportunities to become actively and effectively involved.

Method: A survey instrument was developed based on the National Civic League’s leading indicators used to assess intergroup relations. Interviewees were perceived to be knowledgeable about local ethnic minority groups as well as the homeless, chronically mentally ill, seniors, the gay and lesbian population and the law enforcement community. In addition to the survey, personnel with the Portland Public Schools and the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission were also interviewed.

Findings: In the opinion of many minorities and people working with minority groups, the Portland community tolerates a high level of racism and cultural insensitivity. The report identified a number of cultural and economic barriers that prevent more minority group involvement with the dominant culture (who are also the decision-makers).

The implicit and explicit requirements for social and civic participation maintained by the ... Anglo-American world view represents a barrier to effective intergroup relations.

Unless social and civic leaders actively participate in a process like (the Civic Index), it is very doubtful that substantial change will occur. It is participation in the process that leads to change.

Recommendations:

- Charter and fund the Metropolitan Human Relations Commission to serve as a focal point for intergroup relations in the metropolitan area, to coordinate professional and volunteer activities and fund community public relations.

- Expand the school district’s multi-cultural, multi-ethnic education program.

- Police: recruit and hire more diverse officers and report and monitor hate crimes.

- Encourage neighborhood associations to seek a more diverse representation of their community.

- Request the city and county commissions to assume liaison/advocate responsibilities for identified groups.

- Develop leadership within all of our groups.
8. Government Performance

Mission: The Government Performance Committee focused its attention on three key areas: 1) The role of government and what it is expected to do, 2) What and how measuring tools are used, and 3) How form of government inter-relates with its performance.

Method: Three subcommittees were formed to review the respective areas. In addition to research, a survey of city managers was conducted and interviews of City, business and community leaders were conducted.

Findings: Subcommittee #1 found that Portland’s charter is much longer and more unwieldy than those of comparably sized cities.

Subcommittee #2 found that agencies do use a number of measuring tools and that the auditor reviews agency operations. There is no inherent mechanism to ensure that results of the measurements are fed back into the system.

Subcommittee #3 found that Portland is one of a very small number of cities that retains the unique commission form of government. In general, citizens believe Portland’s city government works well, if somewhat inefficiently.

Recommendations:

Subcommittee #1:
• Conduct a review of Portland’s City Charter with recommendations put to the voters.
• Survey residents to identify people’s expectations of city government

Subcommittee #2:
• Continue use of current measuring tools and surveys.
• Develop a tool to compare Portland’s services to that of other comparably-sized cities.
• Develop mechanism to incorporate the findings of tools.
• Determine whether measuring tools in use are the most appropriate.
• Develop incentives to provide better services and carry out tasks more efficiently.

Subcommittee #3:
• Carry out a study analyzing Portland’s current form of government to determine its inefficiencies, if any, and the estimated costs.
• Commission a study to examine costs of changing the form of government if such a change is determined to be needed.
9. Community Vision and Pride

Mission: The Community Vision and Pride Committee based its work on the philosophy that any community that doesn't have a commitment to leaving future generations something at least as good as they have received is not living up to its obligations. The Committee chose not to define a community vision but evaluated the long range planning and vision processes of various community organizations.

Method: The Committee utilized the Civic Index random sample survey and developed their own survey which was sent to civic, governmental, cultural, environmental, business, professional, neighborhood and educational organizations.

Findings: Both survey respondents replied positively about Portland's quality of life but felt there is a lack of strong vision in the community. There is acceptance and widespread use of planning and involvement mechanisms. While there is an environment for visioning, there is no process for community visioning.

As a framework for building a vision, the committee suggested five basic parts which would serve as interconnecting community values:

- Public safety
- Education/children
- Economic development
- Liveability/environment
- Happiness/culture.

Issues would be addressed in terms of these values.

Recommendations:

- Develop a single focus and shared process to create a community vision for the Portland metropolitan area.
- Utilize a framework of community values in developing the vision of the future.
10. Regional Cooperation

Mission: The Regional Cooperation Committee examined various existing models of regional cooperation in the Portland metropolitan area by examining major areas of service delivery by local governments. The committee attempted to understand where regional cooperation was important and how it might best operate, given the existing models of cooperation.

Method: The Committee interviewed knowledgeable people in the major service delivery areas selected (transportation, land use, environmental services, solid waste, criminal justice system, human services, parks and recreation, libraries, convention, trade and spectator facilities, and human services) and ranked the topic areas based on seven factors which promote cooperation.

1. Cooperation required for funding  
2. Legislation mandating cooperation  
3. Formal structure  
4. Existence of a crises  
5. Public pressure  
6. Media pressure  
7. Leadership (voluntary cooperation)

Findings: The Committee found that the biggest incentive for cooperation was access to funds, unavailable without the regional effort. Next, cooperation occurred when leaders were willing to commit time and resources to problem-solving when issues clearly exceed local jurisdictions. The committee found that the metropolitan region abounds in workable models of cooperation, and should be commended. The Committee further found, however, that as growth issues continue to dominate local government, more regional problem solving is imperative.

Recommendations:

• Institutionalize more regional planning to avoid crises management.

• Prioritize issues that should receive regional consideration that are not now.

• Be flexible when applying regional cooperation to allow it to respond to the issue or service directly, instead of making the issue mold to a bureaucratic structure.
Appendix "A"

SYNTHESIS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Karen Alvarado
G. B. Arrington
Wayne Ause
Patrick Borunda
Pauline Bradford
Channing Briggs
Rev. Paul Chang
Mike Conner
Patrick Donaldson
Daniel Dorn
Kim Duncan*
Tony Gerlilz
Ron Goodman
Terry Griffiths
Craig Honeyman
Gene Jenkins
Robert Jones
Boyd Levet
Raleigh Lewis
Catherine Lloyd
Ned Look
Christine Lowery
Donald MacGillivray
Bob Magid
Milt Markewitz

Tim McBride
Esther McGinnis
Lindsay McGrath
Susan Monti
Jeannette Pai
Mary Palmer
Shreeyash Palshikar
Frank Parker
Corrine Paulson
Jim Ridderbusch
Barbara Robles
Don Rocks
Myra Rose
Ron Rupert
Charles Sax
Pat Schmuck
Alfred Siddall
Cindy Stadel
Steve Telfer
Chris Tomlinson
Nohad Toulan
Carol Turner
Linda Wright
Ronald Yoder

*Chair
COMPONENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Neil B. Davidson
Betty Gega
Tony Gerlicz
Kim Jefferies*
Leanne McColl
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Loretta Young
Rachel Jacky
Susan Monti

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Michael Dolan
Diane Hess
Bob Magid
Kim Manley
Mary Palmer
Steven Rogers
Wendy Smith
Lianne Thompson
Bob Weil

Volunteerism and Philanthropy
Shirley Arce
Joyce Area
Donald Ballinger
Cindy Barrett
Patty Brandt
Pam Brewster
Bonnie Brunkow
Greg Chaille
Barton DeLacy
Elizabeth Dimon
Ingela Ekelof
Katrinka Easterday
Mary Ann Engel
Brigid Flanagan
Patty Foote
Norene Goplen
Mavis & Howard Holt
Bee Holzapfel
Pam Husband
Rachel Jacky
Kathy Johnson
JoAnn Marks
Michael Matteucci
Virgil Mills
Paulette Peynet
Phyllis Proppe
Grace Raymore
Jane Richardson
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Claire Rives
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Beverlee Smith
Paul Sunderland
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Scott Lieuallen*
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Cindy Stadel
Steve Telfer

**Intergroup Relations**
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Milt Markewitz
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Mary Ann Buchanan
Cynthia Hopson

**Government Performance**
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Sonny Condor
Valerie DeGroot
Ron Goodman
Richard Gray
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Appendix 'B'

THE CIVIC INDEX: A SUMMARY

The National Civic League believes cities and regions can exercise considerable control over their futures, but they need the appropriate tools. Central to the League's approach to the issue of civic excellence has been the development of the concept of "Civic Infrastructure". Analogous to physical infrastructure of a community - roads, bridges, buildings - civic infrastructure is equally important to the future of the community and equally in need of periodic maintenance and revision.

The League developed the Civic Index as a means to evaluate a community's civic infrastructure. The ten components of the Index serve as a description of the types of skills and processes that must be present for a community to effectively deal with its specific and unique concerns. Whether the issue is a quality school system, an air pollution problem, or lack of adequate low-income housing, the need for effective problem solving skills is the same. A community must have strong leaders, from all sectors, who are able to work together with informed, involved citizens to reach consensus on those issues that face the community and the region around it.

The Civic Index provides a method and a process for first identifying and recognizing the community's strengths and weaknesses and then structuring collaborative approaches to solving shared problems.

Following is a summary of the ten principal component areas provided by the Index. Answering questions within this framework allows citizens to evaluate their own local problem-solving capacity.

1. Citizen Participation.

Informed, participating citizens are the first requirement of a vibrant, strong community. A city without strong citizen participation is not so much a community as a shell that people inhabit. Without active participation it is difficult for a community to agree on what problems it confronts and to move forward collectively to solve them.

How well are citizens turning out for local elections?
Are there energetic, effective neighborhood and civic groups?
Do people have the feeling that their participation makes a real difference in outcomes — or do they feel they are simply pawns of a power structure operating behind the scenes?
Is the local political process perceived to be open to all citizens?
And how can one encourage citizen participation that leads to consensus rather than multiple vetoes and a form of civic paralysis?
2. **Community Leadership.**

The public, private and nonprofit sectors must all develop leaders who can cooperate with each other in enhancing the long-term future of a community. Each sector needs to develop and focus the skills of a sufficient number of leaders who can communicate and work together in serving the community. Leadership must be results-oriented, willing to take risks, and wiling to be self-critical. Leadership must be able to evoke response, elicit support among leaders and followers.

Do community leaders in fact represent and speak for the diverse needs of the community?  
Is the leadership results-oriented? Is it risk taking?  
Do the leaders communicate and work together?  
Are they willing to share power, take a long term view?  
Do they develop new leadership?  
In a crisis, do they have a forum for convening and taking action?

3. **Government Performance.**

While government cannot solve all community problems, it must be a positive force in addressing community needs and providing services effectively and efficiently.

Is the local government professional and competent?  
Is it open and accountable? Is it free of corruption?  
Do citizens feel access to public services is influenced by favoritism?  
And in a day of revenue shortages, with economic development issues ever higher on local agendas, is the local government entrepreneurial?  
Is it open, for instance, to new methods of service delivery?

4. **Volunteerism and Philanthropy.**

Increased social needs combined with limits in government resources call for a greater contribution of time, money and services, from individuals as well as community institutions.

If communities are to meet the dual challenges of increasing needs and dwindling resources, they will need comprehensive strategies to increase and maximize their philanthropic and volunteer capacities. A community's long and short term volunteerism and philanthropy strategies will include many things: target goals of per capita volunteer hours and average dollar contribution per capita, number of service projects completed, level of private sector support, and meaningful forums in which to express appreciation of volunteers.

5. **Intergroup Relations.**

As communities experience more ethnic, racial, socio-economic and religious diversity, programs are needed to increase communication and appreciation among groups and
within the community as a whole. Communities must ensure that all groups have the skills and opportunities to become actively involved in community affairs.

Does a community have programs to stimulate communication among diverse populations?
Are minorities integrated into community-wide activities?
Is the school system responding well to the increased diversity?
Does the community take its intergroup relations seriously enough to keep devoting attention to this priority?

6. Civic Education.

To develop and preserve a strong civic infrastructure, all citizens need to develop knowledge, values and skills to contribute to community life. A community's schools, churches, government and business can provide civic education to community members. Civic education in its simplest form is the way in which we learn the lessons or modes of behavior that enable us to be a part of the culture we live in.

Does the public school system offer a quality civics curriculum?
Do the school systems encourage youth to be involved in community service?
Do the public, the private and nonprofit sectors cooperate in promoting civic values in the community?


Whether it is the media, a civic organization, a university, or a school system, communities must have mechanisms for generating and sharing information, and educating the public on major issues. Community information sharing is a composite of all of these mechanisms. Without comprehensive and accessible information sharing, a community's ability to work towards cooperation and consensus, make balanced judgments, and head off contentious disputes is impaired.

How does the citizenry learn about the critical issues of the city and region?
How does one set the context for discussion and debate?
Does local government make information about services and processes available to citizens?
Does local media present a balanced point of view?


The growing number and complexity of problems faced by local communities demand that government, business, and the nonprofit sector work closely together in setting common goals and working together to achieve them. As disagreements arise in the community, neutral forums and processes are needed where all opinions can be heard and consensus encouraged.
Do leaders from all the sectors have forums or methods of getting together to discuss common concerns?
What organizations have emerged to link public, private, non-profit sections?
How can the consensus-building machinery be strengthened?


Communities that deal successfully with the challenges they face have developed a clear picture of where they want to go and also have a clear sense of their past. To establish vision for the future and pride in past accomplishments, there must be broad participatory strategic planning activities. When citizens are brought into the community vision-creation process they become invested; the community vision that emerges is theirs and they become stakeholders in their community’s future.

Has a vision for the community’s future been articulated? How?
Was it developed by one group or through a community-wide process?
Are there mechanisms for long-range community planning?
Is a community needs/future vision survey built into the community planning process?
How would most community residents rate their quality of life?

10. Intercommunity Cooperation.

Cutbacks in federal funds and destructive economic competition among regions are two factors driving neighboring cities, towns and counties to look for new avenues of cooperation. Local communities are no longer competing with each other as much as they are competing with other regions in the national and international marketplace. Individual communities need to cooperate with each other in planning for their future and addressing regional needs.

Are local governments working together to address and plan solutions for shared problems?
Does the community have a process whereby it can evaluate when regional cooperation is necessary and appropriate?
Does the community enter into regional cooperation agreements as needed?
How are intercommunity disputes handled?