

# **A Brief History of Civic Space in Portland Oregon Since World War II**

## **Including Origins of Café Society**

In post World War II Portland, Portlanders were in love with their automobiles, while civic leaders and engineers planned freeways and expressways and vacant land in the central city was paved over for parking lots. Robert Moses came to Portland in 1943 and laid out a blueprint for the future of Portland, one hatch marked with freeways and thoroughfares slicing and dicing the city into areas separated by high speed cement rivers. Freeways completed during this period, such as Interstate 5, tore through minority and poor neighborhoods, such as Albina, with little collective resistance. It was a good time to be a road engineer, a poor time if you were African American. Portland was proud of its largest mall, Lloyd Center; for a short period of time the largest mall in the country. It was a sign of progress. Teenagers spent their time driving between drive-in restaurants and drive-in movies, or cruising downtown streets to be seen. Adults spent their time at home in front of that marvelous new invention, the television, or often in private clubs. Nearly a quarter of all civic associations were temples, lodges or clubs.

During this period, civic leaders in Portland took pride in early urban renewal projects such as the South Auditorium project that required the demolition of 382 buildings and the relocation of 1,573 residents and 232 businesses. The project effectively terminated one of Portland's Jewish and Eastern European enclaves, and dispersed a sizable gypsy population to the outer reaches of southeast Portland.

Most of the “third places” were run-of-the mill taverns and bars. The colleges in town did not spawn districts with student and faculty hang outs. Before the wave of coffee houses and music clubs in the late 1960s, the young people and students in Portland had only a few unique choices, such as Café Espresso, owned by Walter Cole, later a locally famous cross dressing entertainer. At Paul Hebb’s 13th Ave Gallery in Sellwood (near Reed College), there were jazz and jug band performances, poetry readings, and “open mike diatribes.” The Folksinger provided espresso drinks and the opportunity to listen to the live music of Lightning Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, and local bands such as the P.H. Phactor Jug Band. The coffee shop was almost unheard of. The Polk City Directory listed four in 1956.

There were 24 private clubs in 1955 with 16,000 members, most of them were specialized or exclusive. The Arlington club, one of the most exclusive, was described as a “pillar of dignity with its members enjoying club life without female interference. Activities are chiefly card and other games, traditional men’s club chatter in lounges, man-style meals in the club dining room and library browsing.”

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, City of Portland leaders tried to control public space as a way of honing in on young civic activists and "hippies." While the civic leaders could do little to prohibit youth from travel between cities or frequenting alternative businesses or spending time on college campuses, city officials and police could home in on parks and open spaces that became known as places for counter-culture residents and travelers to congregate. In the late 1960s the parks, once seen as places to channel youthful energy away from delinquent behavior, became disputed civic places where the clash between generations was most visible.

In August 1968 the Portland City Council passed an ordinance (#127194) making it illegal to be in any city park between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. While the new ordinance applied to all parks, it was evident the law was aimed at one park in particular, Lair Hill Park, which had become a magnet for hippie youth. The adjoining neighborhood afforded cheap housing, a “psychedelic” supermarket, a natural foods store, a location midway between Lewis and Clark College and Portland State College, as well as the first community switchboard (Contact Center, which later moved to downtown). It had all the elements needed to create a hippie ghetto.

In the summer of 1968 there was also fear in the air in several west coast cities of massive hippie invasions. The hippies were seen as on the move like herds of elk or migrating birds. One person testifying in support of the new park curfew also circulated a petition “to halt the influx of hippies into our city.”

There were protests against the ordinance in Lair Hill park. A spontaneous act of civil disobedience took place the night after the ordinance’s passage. Denise (Brooke)\* Jacobsen, a local resident, and later a founder of the Northwest Film Study Center (now a professor at Portland State University) walked into the park after 11 p.m. and swung on a swing, with a companion, and were arrested. Some of the activists found ways around the curfew. One could be issued a permit to use the park after hours. One such permit issued to David Ewen, reprinted in an underground press, described his permitted use as “for the purpose of swinging, teeter-tottering, using the merry-go-round and slide, walking, sitting, and standing and running. (As I was strolling, 1968, p. 8).”

The clash over use of public parks reveals one aspect of the civic transformation during the civic reconstruction period. It can also be seen through the emergence of new

cafes, community centers, and drop-in centers. In the late 1960s and early 1970s cafes, dance and music clubs, switchboards and drop in centers, popped up. The established civic order continued to meet at its private clubs, or in taverns and night clubs many of which catered to an exclusive audience that did not include women, minorities and disenfranchised youth.

While Portland has always seen new businesses come and go, a distinct quality of some of these new establishments was their lack of focus on capitalist outcomes. Many of the places, such as the Fairview Café, the Charix and the Agora coffee houses were as much about practicing democratic methods of work as they were about turning a profit--a good reason why so many failed. Others, such as the Crystal Ballroom, while intentionally created to turn a profit, rarely did, and ran aground as city officials attempted to close them as public nuisances. These ephemeral establishments were important places, where youth, the “underground,” and other disenfranchised people could mingle with others like themselves.

The Crystal Ballroom was one of the few places with a long history of catering to young people and the disenfranchised. During the psychedelic period it was thought of as the heart of one of Portland’s alternative or psychedelic neighborhoods, but long before that it served as a social nexus for young people in the 1920s who wanted to dance illegally; in the 1950s for African Americans to listen to their music; and even for Portland’s large gypsy population to host their own celebrations. After several attempts during the late 1960s the city was able to force the Crystal Ballroom to close, making its psychedelic phase one of its shortest, but most lively periods. (Hills, 1997).

Some of the “alternative” places that appeared in the late 1960s were initiated by

progressive churches in Portland which on their own or through Community Action Programs, attempted to respond to young people's needs. The community action agency organized to serve inner northeast Portland, a predominantly African American community, opened the Albina Youth Opportunity School to provide a drop-in place and a job and social service referral center for young Black people, one of the few institutions from those days that still operates. In 1965 the First Congregational Church in downtown Portland opened the Catacomb Coffee Shop which operated for less than a year. The Koinonia House, operated by the Portland State College Campus Ministries, opened the Agora Coffeehouse. It was closed in the summer of 1968. (Charix, 1968).

In the summer of 1967 the Unitarian Church in downtown Portland opened the Charix Coffeehouse, which offered young Oregonians the chance to see local underground bands for a couple of years. It, like the Agora and Catacomb, failed to meet minimal financial goals, but it was a unique social institution. While it was ostensibly a coffee shop it was also a social service agency. As one of its founders, Nana Feldman, one of the managers, noted, "In the very beginning the Charix aided in providing housing. Although later the Merchants of Warm and HIP (two ad hoc services for youth) provided the service (Charix, 1968). The City of Portland attempted to close down the Charix, as with the Crystal ballroom, because of suspected drug use and dealing on the site. Feldman remarked that the only trouble they had was from Preacher Ray, an evangelist who tried to convert kids. He called someone a dirty name and got hit in return. "An ex-Marine and Gypsy Joker (motorcycle gang)", she explained, "had a small swinging session, some straight hoods dropped a tear gas bomb into the basement and there was a near riot (Charix, 1968).

There were many other short lived cafes and music and dance clubs during this time, including Arbuckle Flat Coffee house and Alice's Restaurant. Some lived through several name changes and incarnations, as though the place itself was possessed by the need to gather the young and the underground. The Centenary Wilbur Church in Southeast Portland played such a role in the civic reconstruction and since then. It housed the Ninth Street Exit, started in the early 1970s, which then became the Pine Street Theater, that became the LaLuna in the 1990s, and finally closed in 1999.

As with other experimental organizations during this period, cafes and coffee shops also attempted to achieve multiple goals. Instead of only operating a business, utilizing the basics of business management, these businesses performed social services, operated on democratic communication principles, and indirectly performed personal and collective therapy. For example, Portland Youth Advocates operated one of the early community switchboard operations in the Lair Hill Park area, which later become the Contact Center, a multi-service operation in downtown that operated for ten years. During this time Portland Youth Ministries operated a coffee shop (Arbuckle Flat), started a free school (Open Meadow, which still exists), a graphic design and printing program, an art gallery, an information and referral service, a performing art marathon, and a summer youth diversion program. At many times the staff felt estranged from what they called the establishment and expressed disdain for the "system," and the operations were all run on labor-intensive collective decision making processes, which at times overpowered the need to make decisions. At one point an executive director of Portland Youth Advocates wondered, "whether we are trying to perform a service or create a model government (Horowitz, 1981, p.49).

\* added Learning Community and Terrasquirma here. Although now as part of civic space some of the details may not fit, or some might be transferred elsewhere>

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

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

and Snodgrass were relieved of their duties.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The rise and fall of the Fairview Café illustrates well the dynamics of fledgling organizations during this period that attempted to maintain goals of profit and social change. The Fairview Café was an outgrowth of the Learning Community, an alternative school and intentional community founded by Reed College faculty and students. The café opened in the summer of 1971 using \$2500 loaned by one of the founding members.

With that venture capital they bought a small café in the pensioner hotel neighborhood in the north part of downtown Portland. It remained open for a short eight months, during which time it attempted to run a restaurant while rewriting the rules of capitalism. No one ever received payment, other than food on the job. To the degree possible people worked as much, when, and with whom they wanted to. Out of the 25 primary employees, only four had any restaurant experience. There were four primary goals for the restaurant collective: to provide “non-alienating work”, to support the people that worked there, give back profits to the community it served, and lastly, in the parlance of the time, to “serve the people,” (the oppressed). As one of the founders noted, it was a combination of goals much more complex than the simpler conventional goal of American business: to make money. He also noted that most of the workers (who were also the “owners”) felt guilty about the conflict between making money and serving the people. “We really,” he noted, “wanted to prepare the food and give it away.... The most fun I ever had was one night when we gave away the meat loaf (Waskow, April 11, 1972, p. 7).” The restaurant also operated as a “collective” which if it worked properly would also be a “consciousness raising experience,” allowing people to set their own schedules and generally make individuals as free as possible. The restaurant drew customers mostly from the immediate neighborhood--pensioners, homeless and the near homeless. To many patrons the restaurant seemed a weird anomaly, but the food was cheap. “What joined our seemingly various customers,” one of the founders, declared, “was that—students, longhairs, workers, or pensioner---were poor and they were outsiders.” But at night when the restaurant closed, the workers, unlike the pensioners, could leave. “We didn’t have to live in the neighborhood,” Waskow explained, “we didn’t even want to

spend our waking hours there...we wanted to go home and do other things. So despite ourselves, we ended as invaders (Waskow, April 25, 1972, p. 11).”

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

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

In 1973 the Terresquirma group bought a house to carry out its dream of creating a microcosm of the nonviolent and down-to-earth lifestyle it hoped for in the greater

society. The group collectively owned the home in northeast Portland, as a land trust, one of the first, if not the first, land trusts in Portland

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

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

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

paralysis.

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

While young people battled for use of civic spaces and parks, and creating their own "third places," citizen activists also began to fight back against the domination of an auto-centric city. This pitched battle can be illustrated by citizen's role altering the State's plan to expand Harbor drive along the Willamette River in downtown Portland.

In 1968 the Oregon State Highway Department proposed the widening and re-locating Harbor Drive, a major arterial that ran through the edge of the central business district along the Willamette River. The building that at one time housed Portland's Public Market, now owned by the Oregon Journal newspaper, had been abandoned. In 1969 a City Club (Davis) report warned Portland of the impending project. This report recommended that the "primary consideration of any riverfront plan should be... varied public use of land; esthetically pleasing environment; and easy and attractive pedestrian access to the esplanade and the river itself." The Club also recommended that "no action . . . should be taken to reconstruct Harbor Drive until adequate studies of alternatives have been completed and public hearings held (Abbott, 2001, p. 137)."

An alternative use for Harbor Drive attracted Allison and Bob Belcher and Jim Howell who formed, in July 1969, Riverfront for People, a group with a goal of supporting the closing of Harbor Drive and the designation of the area as a park. In

August, Riverfront for People announced their plans to hold a picnic in the desolate scene of Harbor Drive. Doug Baker, an Oregon Journal columnist, announced the event (Bonner, 2000) as a festive occasion to celebrate an alternative to the “Oregon State Highway Commission’s concrete mystic mazes.”

On August 20<sup>th</sup>, 250 adults and 100 children showed up for the picnic on the waterfront, and at least partly as a result of outpouring of citizens, Governor Tom McCall instructed his nine-member Intergovernmental Task Force to prepare for a public hearing, possibly as soon as mid September, on three options for Harbor Drive: a cut and cover plan which would bury Harbor Drive; a plan for the relocation of a six-lane Harbor Drive along Front Avenue; and a plan simply to straighten and widen Harbor Drive after the demolition of the Oregon Journal building. At the time State Highway Engineer Forrest Cooper stated that the Task Force had ruled out any possibility of closing Harbor Drive, as projections show 90,000 trips per day in the corridor by 1990. He also said taskforce members favored the “cut and cover” plan (Bonner, 2000).

In the meanwhile Riverfront for People organized another block party and announced plans to circulate a petition for a downtown riverfront park. In response to the rising voice of citizens, the Governor’s taskforce conducted an all-day Public hearing to discuss options for Harbor Drive. The architect members Riverfront for People presented drawings of a riverfront park, along with a petition with 2500 signatures urging the Governor’s Taskforce to stop plans for road expansion and consider a park.

At his point McCall abandoned his inter-governmental taskforce and requested \$7 million in federal highway funds for the development of the riverfront and urged the creation of a citizens’ advisory committee to help plan the project. In January 1971, the

State Highway Commission held a hearing on the closure of Harbor Drive and in November of the same year the Portland City Council passed an ordinance to close the road.

## **Virtual Civic Space**

One of the striking elements of the civic reconstruction period was the attempt by activists, dispersed by graduation from college and pushed on by economic necessity, to recreate communities and continue the social energy of idealism through gatherings. During the early 1970s there were particular gatherings and conferences that became the springboard for the organizational stage of social movements. In 1974, for example, over 800 activists from cities, towns and rural areas around the Pacific Northwest met in Ellensburg, Washington, at the Alternative Agriculture Conference, an event that is often regarded as a pivotal event in the evolution of the Northwest's extensive organic farming and natural foods movement. Other more amorphous conferences brought together activists across a variety of issue interest areas such as the Global Village Conference held in 1973 at Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, and in 1976 the Leap Year Conference in Portland, Tools for Transition conference in Seattle, and the Community Strengths Conference in Portland, also in 1976.

One of the more extraordinary events during this period was organized by author Ken Kesey. The Bend in the River (BITR) conference was funded through the Oregon

Humanities Council. The intent of the gathering was to bring together Oregonians to envision what Oregon could or should be like in 2010. Leading up to this statewide conference in Bend, Oregon, in 1975, Kesey, along with Kesey's followers, the Merry Pranksters, and young activists, held meetings in over 20 communities around the state to elect delegates and develop a slate of local concerns to take to the conference. By some measures the conference failed, for the slate of suggested civic innovations developed at the state-wide conference were not acted upon. But the conference served the need to bring together new social activists. In a reflection about BTR soon after Kesey died in 2002, one of the local organizers (Darling, 2001) summarized Kesey's intention as more art than politics. "Bend in the River," he said was like "the Twilight Bark in '101 Dalmatians.' It's how you find out that everyone's still out there and what they're thinking tonight. And that you're not alone. Kesey [called] it "the stammer of truth" that comes when folks are just saying it plain, not through speechwriters and press releases and television. He [called] it the politics of affection. (p. 3)

The final event in Bend attracted over 500 activists from around the state and made a memorable connection between the wild 1960s and the organizational-bent 1970s. It was where Senator Wayne Morse gave his last public speech, and where Kesey's band of followers, and admirers--such as Rolling Stone photographer Annie Liebonitz, natural health advocate Andrew Wild, and alternative press guru, Paul Krasner, mingled with some of Oregon's future political leaders such as Oregon's current Secretary of State Bill Bradbury.

Innovative forums like Bend in the River were instigated to facilitate social networking. It was not always easy to find like minds and "comrades" with similar

interests. One of the tools of the organizer's trade during this period were the instant directories for participants at gatherings. In the years before computers, email, and the Internet, it was more difficult to meet people, keep them organized into collective organizations and continue to share information and visions. Instant directories, sometimes referred to as people-to-people indices, were printed and distributed at the conferences or soon after. A typical entry included name, address and telephone number, and a description of the person's projects, resources, and interests. Typical entries from a people-to-people index at a gathering in Portland in 1974 included: Lloyd Marbet, interest: stopping nuclear power, Carol Smith, interests: video projects and calligraphy, Joseph Miller, interests: stopping logging in sensitive areas, including Portland's water supply.

While some conferences and gatherings were eclectic, designed to "network" activists across interest and issue boundaries, others were designed to bring forth specific new issues and activists, such as the Oregon Energy Fair (Portland 1977), the Women in Solar Energy and Appropriate Technology conference (Seattle 1978), and the Women and Energy Conference (Portland 1980).

## **Civic Space—Popular Pluralist Period**

There is a de facto monument to the end of the car-centric planning and development era on one of Portland's aesthetically-deficient bridges. At the east end of the Marquam Bridge which channels Interstate 5 traffic through Portland, there is a ramp that goes nowhere that was meant to feed traffic on to the Mt. Hood freeway, a freeway stopped by concerted resistance from the Southeast Legal Defense Fund and other citizens, and ratified by Governor Tom McCall, and Mayor Neil Goldschmidt. From the top of the Marquam bridge one can also see another icon of the revolt against pavement, Riverfront Park, turned from a thoroughfare, Harbor Drive, into a park, through the concerted efforts of Riverfront for People, and Governor Tom McCall, and Mayor Neil Goldschmidt. Nestled in the core of downtown, yet another symbol of the shift, Pioneer Square, destined in the 1970s to become a parking lot, but through the concerted efforts of citizens turned into Portland's "living room."

As late as 1970, transportation plans for Portland focused on the development of freeways, expressways and thoroughfares. The 1990 Transportation Plan issued in 1970, called for the implementation of over 50 transportation improvements, in excess of \$600 million in public expenditures, to accommodate population growth and traffic. By 1990 most of the larger projects were not built, or even under consideration.

The Downtown Plan in 1972 is usually pointed to as the turning Portland in planning. Led by Portland's youngest mayor, Neil Goldschmidt, the plan helped reverse the trend of a decaying central city (mild as compared to other cities across the country) and growth of the suburbs. The Plan was the basis for Portland's downtown revival, and

it was deeply rooted in citizens' advisory committees. Through this mechanism, citizens were consulted extensively on all projects, including the development of McCall Waterfront Park, the revival and design of the downtown core, and the development of the light rail system. A bus mall (Portland Mall) was created downtown to speed up services and act as a transfer point to other lines. It also tied downtown with other regions together along a north-south axis. Any citizen was free to join any of the subcommittees on topics such as parking, waterfront development, housing and retailing. The Downtown Plan was updated in 1980 to address changes related to scale and design of development. It had 3 key elements key to the nurturing of civic space: pedestrian amenities, a mix of densities and activities and land uses, especially retail and housing with greater reliance on public transportation.

In 2008 when Portland embarked on its comprehensive plan process the two elements that were highlighted as crowning past glories and models for the next stage were the closing of Harbor Drive, and the creation of Pioneer square as a plaza instead of a parking lot. In both cases it was citizens who led the charge for these iconic changes in planning; from a downtown design based on automobile access and parking and intensive highway development.

While many of the early actions to "de-pave" Portland, increase alternative transportation modes, such as bicycles, and bring nature back into the city, were often battles won block by block or neighborhood by neighborhood, a sense of the movement to reclaim streets and create a greenspaces system began to take hold in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The neighborhood association activists were clamoring for traffic calming in the

neighborhoods and for solutions to congestion. While neighborhood associations sometimes opposed bicycle advocates when it came to removing on-street parking to add bike lanes, there were also points of agreement. This neighborhood movement for more livable streets and neighborhoods culminated in November 1991 at a Neighborhood Congress on traffic issues, attended by 300 people. Several task forces were established, and two years after the congress, they presented a planning document, "Reclaiming Our Streets." The plan contained many ideas of how to improve traffic problems in neighborhoods and included many bicycle transportation improvement elements (Reclaim City's Streets, 1993).

Civic spaces "ooze" out in Portland, even through cracks in the pavement and as remedies for the treatment of storm water. Even designing stormwater systems in Portland has taken on an element of reclaiming space for civic life. While the primary purpose of Portland's Green Streets initiative is to treat storm water runoff, the greenstreet designs, including rain gardens at schools and other public settings, also create streetscapes and urban greenspaces that buffer the edges between paved surfaces and pedestrian and bikeways.

In the 1950s there were public markets in Portland. Three markets replaced one large one built along the river, on the site of the current Riverfront park that operated between (1933--1942) But, the markets disappeared in the 1960s and 1970s. One market rose, the Portland Saturday Market, an open air crafts market, initiated during the Civic Reconstruction period by a handful of entrepreneurial citizens. It is now home to 400 crafts-people, a routine stop on every tourists trip through Portland, and draws over 750,000 shoppers annually to shop, eat, and listen to music. And in the mid-1990s,

farmer's market were reborn, riding on the crest of Portlander's love affair with locally grown organic food. There are now 19 farmer's markets. While providing healthy and locally grown food for consumers, the markets also furnish premier civic space, arenas where citizens of all class and race can mingle.

Food and civic space is also linked in Portland through the popularity of community gardens, community supported farms, and urban farm education centers. There have been community gardens in Portland since 1975. Today there are 32 sites with over 1000 garden plots. As of January 1999, there are over 1000 CSA farms across the US and Canada. In the typical CSA members purchase a share of the farmer's output for the year and either pick up or have fresh produce delivered weekly. Today in the Portland area there are at least 25 such operations, serving between 15—30 families each. Zenger Farm is one of several urban farm education programs in the Portland area where food, outdoor education and creating community go hand in hand. The farm hosts educational programs for over 600 K-12 students every year and sponsors an immigrant farmer site where immigrants maintain farm plots and teach others about farming techniques from their native countries.

Portland is also known as pub brew capital of America. That may say a lot about the nature of fun in a drizzly climate where there is less than a tenth of inch of rain on 225 days of the year, but it may also reflect the dramatically altered nature of third places in Portland. There are about 600 brewpubs in Portland, that is 46 per capita, more than any city in America. This might by itself not be all that important from a social capital or civic space point of view but Portland has also given birth to innovative brewpub spaces that are undeniably part of the rich civic space of Portland, at least in part due to the

McMenamin brothers. The brothers have opened more than twenty pubs and entertainment center that imamate community as much as they do drinking. In their own words, they "came to understand the power of art, live music and history to draw people of all backgrounds together under one roof, reinforcing a sense of community.

Ultimately, the most important realization has been that the essence of a pub is its people.

Children, grandparents and the whole of the neighborhood should feel comfortable at a pub, whether that spot is three stools in a rustic shed or a 38-acre estate." At the Edgefield Lodge, the 38-acre estate, one can choose between several restaurants and bars, watch a movie in the small theater, wonder the onsite vineyard, and stay overnight in the hotel on site. Or you might come to a social event they sponsor such as the annual Grateful Dead music festival, or use the space, as many NGOs do for a unique conference setting.

City Repair exemplifies the grassroots effort to reclaim public or civic space from domination by the automobile and paved surfaces. Since the first intersection repair project in 1996, there have been dozens of projects sponsored by the all-volunteer staff of City Repair, or spin-offs and clones. They explain their philosophy of reclaiming or repairing intersections as an act of creating public space, Intersection Repair "is the citizen-led conversion of an urban street intersection into public square. Streets are usually the only public space we have in our neighborhoods. But most all of them have been designed with a single purpose in mind: moving cars around. With an Intersection Repair, that public space is reclaimed for the whole community. The intersection of pathways becomes a place for people to come together. The space becomes a place - a public square." (<http://www.cityrepair.org/ir.html>, retrieved, 11/11/08). Placemaking in

Portland has become a common enough nomenclature that a recent job opening at the regional government, Metro, was titled "Deputy Director of Planning and Placemaking."

Portland, along with Seattle, are also among the most coffee-shop strewn urban landscapes in the country. In the 1950s there were no more than 6 establishments that went by the name of coffee shop. Even as late as 1980 there were only 28 coffee shops (before Starbucks hit the scene). today there are at least 150 Starbucks, and around 50 locally owned coffee shops in the Portland area, about 1 coffee shop for every 200 people.

## **Virtual Civic Space**

During the Civic reconstruction period in Portland activists were dependent on organizing gatherings and conferences to organize civic actions and to share information. There was no Internet. An organization that had access to a computer, a telephone watts line or mimeograph machine was rare. The mail or "snail mail" system was the fastest method for disseminating information. During that period, activists devised pre-computerized systems for social networking referred to as people-to-people indexes, paper directories of gathering attendees, listing their skills, knowledge, resources, and interests. Activists who organized these efforts were known as networkers. Today's activists network using social network spaces like Myspace and Facebook, blogs and twitters. In the previous period, finding information and finding people with common interests was a complex and clunky choir. Today's activist's information problem is more likely to be a selection or filtering process. Too much information rather than too little is the central problem.

Portland activists today can participate in neighborhood based actions through Internet services such as Portlandneighborhood.com (<http://community.portlandneighborhood.com/>) or Metblogs, part of a national network of blogs focused on specific localities (<http://portland.metblogs.com/>), or News4Neighbors (<http://www.news4neighbors.net/>). Other sites such as Blue Oregon and Portland Independent Media Center provide electoral and campaign organizing for activists, and most every NGO in Portland at least has a www site.