

AN EVALUATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TECHNIQUES USING
ARNSTEIN'S LADDER: THE PORTLAND PLAN

By

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To my grandfather, Arthur Ginsburg

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIC	Community Involvement Committee
CPBPS	City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
DCL	Diversity & Civic Leadership Program
GIS	Geographic Information System
LGBTQ	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Questioning
PGIS	Participatory Geographic Information System
PP-GIS	Public Participation Geographic Information System
VE	Virtual Environment

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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While public participation provides citizens with the opportunity to be involved in the process of developing programs or policies, the extent of their participation is an important factor in determining the level of citizen empowerment within the decision-making process. However, researchers have identified many cultural factors that hinder citizen participation in the planning process, including a lack of education about planning issues, a lack of confidence in their ability to provoke change, and a lack of interest in participation (Albrechts, 2002). Additionally, without access to resources that provide information about politics, political issues, and the technical aspects of planning, citizens will be less likely to actively participate in the decision-making process (Jonsson, 2005).

This paper examines the relationship between policy-makers and citizens in the city of Portland, Oregon throughout the development of the Portland Plan, a broad visioning document until the year 2035. Specifically, this study will use Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation to evaluate the amount of "citizen control" within the process of determining a program or policy based on the public participation techniques

used at each of the four phases of the Portland Plan development process (Arnstein, 1969).

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This paper examines the relationship between policy-makers and citizens in the city of Portland, Oregon throughout the development of the Portland Plan, a broad visioning document that is designed to provide development guidance until the year 2035. Based on the core principles of prosperity, education, health, and equity, this roadmap for the future establishes specific policy goals and initiatives developed through best practice research and extensive citizen involvement from Portlanders. Using public participation literature, this paper analyzes and evaluates the public participation techniques used by policy-makers in Portland to develop the Portland Plan. Specifically, this study will use Sherry Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation to evaluate the amount of "citizen control" within the process of determining a program or policy based on the public participation techniques used at each of the four phases of the Portland Plan development process (Arnstein, 1969). The Portland Plan was touted as "the plan that Portland wrote," based on the extent of citizen involvement within the draft development process. Therefore, the author of this paper expects to find conformance to the higher rungs of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, and levels of citizen participation with "increasing degrees of decision-making clout" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

Though the United States upholds the ideal of public participation in the democratic process, there are still significant challenges to full citizen empowerment, particularly in the field of urban planning.¹ Extensive research has been conducted

¹ Sherry Arnstein (1969) described citizen empowerment in the following way: "It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes,

regarding the cultural, social, and environmental barriers that hinder citizen involvement, while other research discusses the negative consequences of public participation, such as increased cost and length of time spent carrying out the decision-making process (Irvin and Stansbury, 2004). Unfortunately, a lack of government transparency is a problem facing many countries around the world, where public bodies and institutions remain out of the reach of public control ("Corruption perceptions index 2012," 2012). In its most idealistic sense:

Public participation brings the government closer to the people. It enables citizens to set policy goals and priorities, oversee the actions of the politicians and administrators and hold them accountable for their actions, express points of view, share information and point to their needs and problems, get involved in the decision-making process and many others (Haruta & Radu, 2010, p. 77).

Why Portland?

The city of Portland, Oregon is best known for its proactive policies regarding the environment, transit-oriented development, regionalism and sustainable land-use practices (Gibson & Abbott, 2002). For example, Portland has one of the country's few elected multipurpose regional metropolitan governments called Metro, created in 1978 by combining a regional planning agency with the metropolitan service district (Gibson & Abbott, 2002). Metro's main responsibilities include structuring regional spatial planning and administering an urban growth boundary (UGB) to contain suburban development (Gibson & Abbott, 2002).

Portland's innovative business atmosphere and fast-growing high technology sector aided population growth in the Portland metropolitan region, which increased by

to be deliberately included in the future...it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform to share in the benefits of the affluent society" (p. 216).

26.6% between 1990 and 2000 (Gibson & Abbott, 2002, pg. 427). However, Portland continues to suffer from pressing challenges such as income disparities, high unemployment, a low high school graduation rate, and environmental concerns ("About the Portland Plan," 2013). In response to these challenges, the City Council adopted the Portland Plan in April of 2012.

Research Questions

Broad visioning processes as a best practice for community engagement clearly offer potential to large cities seeking to involve their citizens in determining the future of their city. Even with the challenges previously discussed, Portland still remains a model of livability and revitalization (Gibson & Abbott, 2002). However, can the city of Portland also be considered a model for their integration of public participation into the planning process? How do the public participation techniques utilized in the development of the Portland Plan conform to Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation? Why is citizen participation important and what changes will occur in the public participation process as modern technology becomes increasingly important in our daily lives?

Organization

The work will be presented in six chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review relative to public participation scholarship and practice, and a discussion of three major themes evident throughout academic writings about public participation in the planning process:

1. The cultural barriers that hinder public participation in the planning process;
2. A lack of resources that contribute to a lack of public participation in the planning process;

3. How building intellectual capital from the beginning of the planning process through institutional changes can enhance public participation in the planning process.

Chapter 3 includes a methodology used in the analysis of this study. Chapter 4 includes a narrative of the study area and details the analysis of public participation techniques based on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. Chapter 5 discusses the conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis. Chapter 6 discusses the implications of this analysis on planning policy and the future of public participation, as well as questions that have arisen during the research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Public Participation

Democracy's most well-known roots are in the city-states of ancient Greece and the Roman Republic. While democracy existed in more primitive forms prior to this, representative governments began to develop around 600 BCE (Jones & Platt, 1994). Citizenship was not usually extended to all citizens, such as women, but these models of governance have inspired political thinkers for centuries and inspired our modern concept of democracy (Jones & Platt, 1994).

The 18th and 19th centuries were an important time for the development of democratic institutions. For example, the United States and France both experienced revolutions which resulted in the adoption of the United States Constitution in 1788 and the establishment of universal male suffrage in France in 1848. Full enfranchisement of citizens in the United States finally materialized with the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and academics argue that the Civil Rights movement was instrumental in institutionalizing public participation, leading to President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs of the mid-1960s (Cogan, Sharpe & Hertzberg, 1986).¹

Open Government

Ultimately, the goal of open government is to enhance transparency of governmental processes and policy-makers.² Transparency International is a global coalition fighting corruption throughout the world, emphasizing open government and accountability. Specifically, this movement works with partners in government, business and civil society to put effective measures in place to tackle corruption in government and public administration.

Every year, Transparency International releases a Corruption Perceptions Index which scores countries on a scale from 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). Of the 176 countries and territories included in the 2012 index, Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand tied for having the lowest amount of perceived corruption, while Afghanistan, North Korea, and Somalia were perceived as the most corrupt countries in the world ("Corruption perceptions index 2012," 2012). The United States ranked 19th ("Corruption perceptions index 2012," 2012). Some of the richest countries in the world consistently receive high scores, while some of the world's poorest countries are consistently perceived to have the highest levels of corruption. Unfortunately, citizen participation in decision-making becomes less likely as the perception of corruption increases and private interests, rather than the public interest, dictate policy ("Corruption by topic: Politics and Government," 2012).

Academic Discourse

As noted above, there are three major themes evident throughout academic writings about public participation in the planning process. Based on relevant literature (Irvin & Stansbury 2004, Albrechts 2000, Verba 1967), these three themes include the following:

1. The cultural barriers that prevent public participation in the planning process
2. A lack of resources that contribute to a lack of public participation in the planning process
3. How building intellectual capital from the beginning of the planning process through institutional changes can enhance public participation in the planning process.

As described in Chapter 3 (Methodology), the author performed internet and archival research to gather literature related to these topics, and the literature was primarily

found in online academic journal articles. After this research was gathered, it was organized by this author and synthesized to develop these three themes. As the basis for future research in the field of public participation, these themes provide a more solid understanding of how modern public policy has developed regarding effective public participation in the planning process.

Cultural Barriers

Equal representation of the public is one of the most significant hurdles facing the process of citizen involvement. Typically, low-income members of society lack representation within the participatory process, which gives the middle and upper classes unfair representation and voices throughout decision-making. According to Irvin and Stansbury (2004), citizen participation committees are usually overpopulated with members of the top socio-economic group.

Irvin and Stansbury (2004) also assert that special-interest groups will be less likely to involve themselves in public participatory processes because elite groups that “dominate the decision making” have diminished the effectiveness of these public participatory processes (p. 59). Additionally, low-income citizens are unable to devote the time, energy, and resources to spending time in public meetings because they must provide for their families and Irvin and Stansbury’s research found that the core members of public participation committees are often full-time homemakers (and/or retired people) who represent the small nonelected elite that greatly influence public policy (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004).

Additional cultural, psychological, and socio-economic barriers have been identified within the current social system that prevents low-income groups from being

fully involved in the planning process. These barriers are related to the dominant styles of governance and include

- “a lack of education”
- “a lack of confidence in their ability to provoke change”
- “a lack of interest in participation”
- And “low social capital” (Albrechts, 2002, p. 335-336).

In addition to identifying these barriers, Louis Albrecht identified several possible strategies to remove these barriers. He stresses that the best way to reach these low-income groups is through holding meetings in more informal settings, such as community centers and churches. According to Albrechts (2000), planners must respect the customs, values, informal information channels, and language of different groups to reach out to more people and make them comfortable taking part in participatory processes.

Unfortunately, evidence shows that, when it comes to public involvement in land and water use planning, “Even though many individuals say that they are well informed on planning issues, it has been found that only a very small percentage of the population actively participates in the planning process. The average participant is well educated and a member of an organization” (Thelander, 1981, p. 326). According to Thelander (1981), educating the public and notifying them of planning issues are steps that can be taken to improve the participation problems frequently found in the planning process. Specifically, Thelander (1981) notes the importance of notifying and informing the citizens in a systematic way, in order to “cover a wide array of views by both organized and unorganized citizens” (p. 327). She also asserts that engaging the actors in a community early on in the planning process will help to incorporate different views and/or activities into each phase of the planning process (1981).

It can also be difficult to attract interest from the general public because “a modern hectic lifestyle and the massive flow of information” (p. 499) have been cited as reasons for the general lack of participation in planning activities (Jonsson, 2005). Jonsson (2005) writes, “The participants agreed that if something concrete were about to take place affecting the local environment or local life, people would be more likely to react and engage” (p. 499). However, because most people are uneducated regarding specific planning issues, they are not well-equipped to handle difficult technical problems that frequently arise. A main challenge to public participation in the planning process has been “to attract enough interest and readiness to participate among the public and stakeholders, especially in the long run” (Jonsson, 2005, p. 495). Human nature affects urban planning at its most basic level, presenting researchers and academics with intriguing, yet frustrating problems.

Public participation GIS (“PP-GIS”) and web-based public participation tools offer anonymity for people who are not as publicly outspoken as the primary stakeholders typically involved in the planning process. Public meetings tend to be dominated by certain stakeholders, which discourages participation from other segments of society. However, web-based public participation tools can be a fix for this common problem.

Kingston et al. (2000) argue,

With a Web-based system the public is at the end of a telephone line that enables them to make comments and express their views in a relatively anonymous and non-confrontational manner compared with the traditional method of making a point verbally in front of a group of relative strangers (p. 111).

Lack of Resources

Effective democratic participation requires certain resources to increase the likelihood that an individual will participate in participatory planning. These resources

can be of an intellectual nature, such as information about politics and political issues, knowledge of channels of communication and the rules of public participation and the skills to manipulate these channels (Verba, 1967). Because participation takes time, money, and effort, social resources are also important because individuals would be more likely to get involved if they have friends in organizations who are also participating in the democratic process (Verba, 1967).

Verba (1967) asserts that an individual's education of participatory structures is one of the most effective ways to elicit participation. Much of this education is gleaned from the cultural conduciveness of society. Inequalities in intellectual, material, and social resources and a more active cultural setting will change the likelihood of whether or not an individual participates (Verba, 1967). Additionally, "effective participation may depend on the availability of independent sources of technical skills and information for participants" (Verba, 1967, p.75). The low-income segment of society is affected most by this lack of resources, especially when it comes to technical information. Democratic participation will be most successful when there are ample channels available for various kinds of participation and decision-makers are receptive to the participation of particular groups (Verba, 1967).

Howard and Gaborit list the following three limitations on public involvement in the planning process: a lack of connections for people to interact with the environment being discussed; the lack of immersion within standard 2D models and presentations; and the lack of availability for the public to directly comment on planning projects (Howard & Gaborit, 2007). They believe these limitations explain why there is a lack of interest in urban planning from the public and propose that virtual environment

technology (VE) will facilitate and improve useful engagement by the public in the planning process as opposed to the traditional consultation process (Howard & Gaborit, 2007, p. 233). VE technology has the potential to reach more people because it is internet-based, and will also be more inclusive because people will have the opportunity to “visit the environment to observe the proposals, leave feedback on the environment, and...propose other alternatives by modifying the 3D model” (Howard & Gaborit, 2007, p. 235). Modification of the model is important to engaging the public in this type of participation mechanism and creating a more dynamic consultation process.

Kim (2005) describes three-dimensional urban simulation as an alternative way to provide the public with information related to urban design. Three-dimensional visualization and simulation tools have the capacity to act as a modern communication medium for collaboration. However, “due to the absence of [quantitative data], it is difficult to estimate the extent and capability of the 3D simulation tool and its advantages and disadvantages as an information delivery tool” (Kim, 2005, p. 41). Kim developed a 3D urban simulation tool designed for the City of High Springs, FL visioning process and surveyed members of the community to measure the effectiveness of the 3D urban simulation tool as an information delivery medium for the visioning process (Kim, 2005, p. 64).

His survey results indicate “the superiority of the 3D simulation tool in facilitating information flow...both the design students and the residents have evaluated the 3D simulation tool as a better communication medium than the 2D plan” (Kim, 2005, p.140). However, “although the 3D simulation tool has advantages that conventional methods do not have, there are several areas where the 3D simulation tools should be improved

to support seamless information flow and communications in public meetings” (Kim, 2005, p.148). According to Kim (2005), “the best way that a local government adopts this 3D simulation technology is to incorporate it with its planning information system such as the government’s current GIS system” (p. 164).

Unfortunately, the high cost of public participation is a disadvantage of public participation in the planning process (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Simply put, there are not enough resources to handle the time commitment that participatory processes require in order to have an efficient collaborative process. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) write, “An elaborate public participation process may in fact pull resources away from the agency’s mission and reduce on-the-ground results” (p. 58).

Irvin and Stansbury agree with Verba’s findings, emphasizing that if there are many competing factions and socioeconomic groups within the participatory group that require complex technical knowledge before participants can make decisions, participation will be ineffective and a potential waste of precious resources (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). While Irvin and Stansbury appreciate the advantages that public participation can bring to the planning process, they urge agencies to evaluate whether resources should be funneled toward participatory processes or implementation of planning projects. In their thinking, as government budgets are decreasing, public participation may be too costly and wasteful compared to top-down decision making.

However, there is evidence that technology-based participation techniques, such as social networking and virtual reality tools, can potentially engage citizens in a more meaningful way. Researchers Evans-Cowley and Hollander believe a lack of resources exists for which citizens can effectively participate in open dialogue and conversation.

Their research explains that a participatory environment that uses Internet technology and/or a virtual 3D environment “can be of critical importance in physical planning processes, providing a space for participants to interact with each other and to gain new insights into proposed new development or urban design guidelines” (Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010, p. 400). By making it easier for the public to directly comment on planning projects, technology and the Internet may be the key to creating more useful forms of public participation, which planners have not yet learned to effectively incorporate into the planning process (Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010).

Certain barriers do exist that may inhibit the success of technology-based participatory planning. For example, the general public may be limited by the implementation of high-tech software because they are unfamiliar with how it works, or the low-income segment of society may not have access to computers. However, Evans-Cowley and Hollander (2010) are optimistic that “planners are eager to find solutions and work on issues of equality in access and to find ways to engage with hard-to-reach groups” (p. 406).

Digital Divide

The “Digital Divide” is defined as the gap between those who can benefit from digital technology and those who cannot (“Digital Divide” defined,” 2010). According to the Digital Divide Institute, “the real issue is not so much about access to digital technology but about the benefits *derived from access*” (“Digital Divide” defined,” 2010). As stated earlier, there are many potential barriers to Internet usage, including economic, cultural, physical, organizational, and educational ones (Quay, 2001). Quay (2001) emphasizes that “electronic access is rapidly becoming not only the accepted but also the desired means to obtain information and services” (p. 15). However, urban

planners must keep in mind that “those on the other side of the digital divide may not be able to use...digital services fully. As planners design public participation programs, they should know how the digital divide may affect all of their clients” (Quay, 2001, p. 16).

Participatory Practices and Existing Institutions

Rydin and Pennington focus their article, “Public Participation and Local Environmental Planning: The collective action problem and the potential of social capital,” (2000) on how to redesign current institutions to induce cooperation between the public and governmental institutions in charge of making planning decisions. As Thelander discussed in her article, Rydin and Pennington argue that it is more effective and beneficial to include the public throughout the policy development process because it can help avoid disagreements and conflict later on during the implementation process. In their article, Rydin and Pennington (2000) write, “Public participation is a measure of the overall legitimacy of the policy process. A policy which has involved a wider range of parties is assumed to operate with a greater level of consent and this is, by definition, more desirable” (p. 154). Kingston et al. (2000) offer a similar sentiment:

Too often in the past the public have been seen as getting in the way of implementing and driving policy forward. It has often been the case, however, that a lack of public consultation has led to future problems within communities when they are ignored and not asked for their views (p. 115).

The collective action problem arises within public participation.³ In order to minimize the occurrence of free-riding on the participation of others, the public must feel that they have an incentive to mobilize, that their participation offers benefits to them, and that the process they participate in will yield significant results (Rydin and Pennington, 2000). Rydin and Pennington (2000) turn to public choice theory to help

identify questions about public participation in the planning process and examine participation as a collective action problem. Public choice theory helps to explain the problems associated with public participation. Rydin and Pennington (2000) describe, for example, that it is particularly difficult to mobilize large groups that do not have established social ties to disseminate information and incentivize participation in the planning process.

Utilizing social capital to balance the collective action problem is an idea supported by Rydin and Pennington, based on the work of political economist Elinor Ostrom.⁴ Based on the idea that knowledge shared throughout a social network, particularly at the local level, creates 'capital,' Rydin and Pennington (2000) feel that this can entice more community involvement and interaction. However, "the outcome of building social capital is dependent on the particular form of institutional design that is adopted" (Rydin, & Pennington, 2000, p. 163). Rydin and Pennington (2000) support a bottom-up approach to dealing with social interactions and increasing social capital in order to build an effective policy institution and foster spaces for local political debate.

Additionally, an "important factor affecting public participation in planning is how civil society is integrated (if at all) into formal planning and statutory planning bodies and procedures" (Alexander, 2008, p. 61). Civil society and its role in the planning process is a focus of Ernst Alexander, who discusses the institutions of civil society and cultural barriers that affect citizen participation. For example, Alexander (2008) asserts, "The institutionalization of state-civil society interactions in many particular domains reveals a highly selective and even discriminatory attitude toward different parts of civil society" (p. 66).

For example, Alexander (2008) believes that the administrative culture of society is at odds with civil society and citizen participation as a direct result of the institutionalization of planning bodies. He supports advocacy planning, which involves strong institutions and practices that provide channels for public participation, and specifically “strong advisory councils or boards made up primarily or wholly of public representatives” (Alexander, 2008). According to Alexander (2008), the planning system as a whole must develop in such a way as to make public participation practical in social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

Similarly, Gerometta, Häussermann, and Longo (2005) assert, “Civil society has been found to have potential for innovation towards needs-satisfaction, with institutional change allowing more effective action and the development of other socially innovative processes” (p. 2008). These researchers seek to offer ways to change current institutions that promote social exclusion in civil society, particularly of fragmented parts of society that do not experience social equity. Specifically, “When considering socially innovative governance to include civil society, [it is necessary] to find models adapted to targeting these current urban processes of fragmentation and social exclusion” (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005, p. 2015).

Gerometta, Häussermann, and Longo (2005) believe governmental institutions must do more to foster effective communication and deliberation of issues important to civil society. If this were the case, they believe that social innovation would be increasingly efficient in achieving the public interest, a belief that was also put forth by Rydin and Pennington in their discussion of creating social capital while dealing with the issue of the collective action problem.⁵ Unfortunately, “Forms of exclusion and

integration, which become visible in the social milieu of a local society and their available social capital forms, define participation of groups within the segment of the public sphere, which is the civil society” (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005, p. 2018). By including excluded groups in participation in the public sphere, “civil society is found to be a more valuable contributor towards more cohesive cities and governance arrangements that promote them” (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005, p. 2007). Creating social capital is important for creating social networks and establishing a more inclusive civil society.

Public Participation and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

The most recent literature related to public participation has begun to focus on the use of technology, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Participatory GIS (PGIS), to involve citizens in the decision-making process. In the article “Web-based public participation geographical information systems: an aid to local environmental decision-making,” Kingston et al. (2000) promote the idea that web-based mapping techniques facilitate public participation that is interactive and hands-on. Not only do these authors believe that “the use of a real decision-making problem is seen as the key to the proper development of Web-based GIS as this...helps to secure widespread public interest by being grounded in something real,” (p. 110) but they also stress the use of

a ‘dynamic map’ that is interactive and provides particular pieces of information about features on it, allows the user to elicit greater detail about issues and problems at hand such as the relative location of features and proposed developments, the spatial and topological relationships between objects on the map and simple measures of area and distance (Kingston et al., 2000, p. 111).

Additionally, web-based maps and public participation techniques are seen as more inclusive for many sectors of society. Specifically, “Individuals who do not have GIS software or cannot be physically present at a collaborative forum may be able to participate by taking advantage of Internet mapping sites or web-mediated collaborative decision making” (Elwood, 2006, p. 696).

Researchers believe that PGIS will lead to more bottom-up decision making and build on “effective participation and communication among experts and non-experts” (Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta & Painho, 2010, p. 173). Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta & Painho developed a PPGIS prototype, and conducted an experiment of this software in Canela, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The prototype was based on the principles of “information distribution, solutions through participation, transparency, and consensus building” (Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta & Painho, 2010, p. 175). Specifically, participants viewed spatial data and map layers, and discussed urban planning topics with other experiment participants by providing comments, suggestions, questions, and complaints directly on geospatial layers within a Web 2.0 system (Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta & Painho, 2010).

Of the 22 people involved in this experiment, 86% found the platform easy-to-use and understand and 100% felt that this platform can strengthen public participation in decision-making (Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta & Painho, 2010, p. 179). Overall, the authors are confident that PGIS “promotes communication among users, and most importantly, vertically – with decision makers – in a more interactive and straightforward way” (p. 180), and will be most effective when participatory practices such as this are integrated into existing institutional organizations (Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta &

Painho, 2010). Unfortunately, most citizens lack the technical skills that this sort of technology requires, and more empirical testing is necessary to support the claims made by Bugs, Granell, Fonts, Huerta and Painho in this particular experiment.

Unfortunately, a lack of resources can impede the PGIS and community empowerment process. Kyem makes a case for participatory GIS (PGIS) to emphasize empowerment of the public within the PGIS process. Empowerment is based on the building of human and social capital, which is supported by other researchers, including Rydin and Pennington (2000). According to Kyem (2004), "In the context of a PGIS application, this perception of empowerment would dictate the building of local capacities in such fields as management, tactical operations, and the analysis and uses of spatial data" (p. 9). Such empowerment should increase the likelihood of public participation within political or planning processes, as the public has greater access to demographic data, property data, master plans, etc. (Hanzl, 2007, p. 293).

However, PGIS projects are still relatively new and their recent implementation makes it difficult to tell whether or not there have been changes in local political structures and social institutions (Kyem, 2004). Hanzl (2007) believes that the potential of PGIS is related to its popularity and "a condition of efficiency of these forms of communication is continuous activity of responders and thus reliability of presented information" (p. 298). Hanzl also argues that many PGIS models only "show how computer tools may be used for visualizing [new] development and not for the constructive process of continuous public participation" (p. 303). The Digital Divide will continue to hinder GIS-based projects, but the following broad issues will strengthen individual access and inclusion in PPGIS processes: "service provision, access to data,

[the ability of an individual to create] a presence on the Internet; and [the ability of an individual to have] an influence in shaping the future of information & communication technologies” (Modarres, 2011, p. 5).

Kingston et al. (2000) concluded their article with three principles that should be considered by researchers in the creation of future PPGIS projects. These include:

1. “A web-based PPGIS should provide equal access to data and information for all sectors of the community;”
2. “It should have the capability to empower the community by providing the necessary data and information which matches the needs of the community who are, or potentially, participating;”
3. “A high degree of trust and transparency needs to be established and maintained within the public realm to give the process legitimacy and accountability” (p. 122).

Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation

In 1969, Arnstein published an article entitled, “A Ladder of Citizen Participation.” In this article, she developed a typology of citizen participation arranged as rungs on a ladder, with each rung corresponding to the amount of “citizen control” within the process of determining a program or policy. This article was published at a time when citizen participation was being institutionalized through legislation, such as the National Environmental Policy Act, and national rhetoric became increasingly concerned with the democratic ideal of active citizen participation in government. Arnstein saw citizen participation as citizen power, or

The redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (p. 216).

Arnstein (1969) highlights the fundamental point that “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless” (p. 216). Citizen participation is clearly not without significant obstacles, and Arnstein accepts that this limits her typology. For example,

On the powerholders’ side, [the obstacles] include racism, paternalism, and resistance to power distribution. On the have-nots’ side, [the obstacles] include inadequacies of the poor community’s political socioeconomic infrastructure and knowledge-base, plus difficulties of organizing a representative and accountable citizens’ group in the face of futility, alienation, and trust (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217).

While Arnstein lists eight levels or rungs on her proposed ladder of citizen participation, she recognizes that there are subtle distinctions within each rung that represent the wide variety of real world situations and experiences that shape the process of citizen participation.

Each rung is characterized by different objectives or conditions which highlight the extent of citizens’ power in determining the end product (Arnstein, 1969, p. 217). Arnstein outlines three main stages of citizen participation which encompass the eight rungs of the ladder (Figure 2-1). The three stages of citizen participation are nonparticipation, tokenism, and citizen power. The following are the eight rungs of the ladder (Arnstein, 1969):

1. Manipulation
2. Therapy
3. Informing
4. Consultation
5. Placation
6. Partnership
7. Delegated Power
8. Citizen Control

A graphic of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation is provided on page 33 of this paper. Nonparticipation includes manipulation and therapy. Tokenism includes the third,

fourth, and fifth rungs of the ladder: informing, consultation, and placation, respectively. Citizen power is the highest stage of citizen participation and includes the final three rungs of the ladder: partnership, delegated power, and citizen control. It is only possible to “move up” the rungs of the ladder if citizen involvement has changed a decision that would otherwise have been made by a governmental agency (Brooks & Harris, 2008, p. 142).

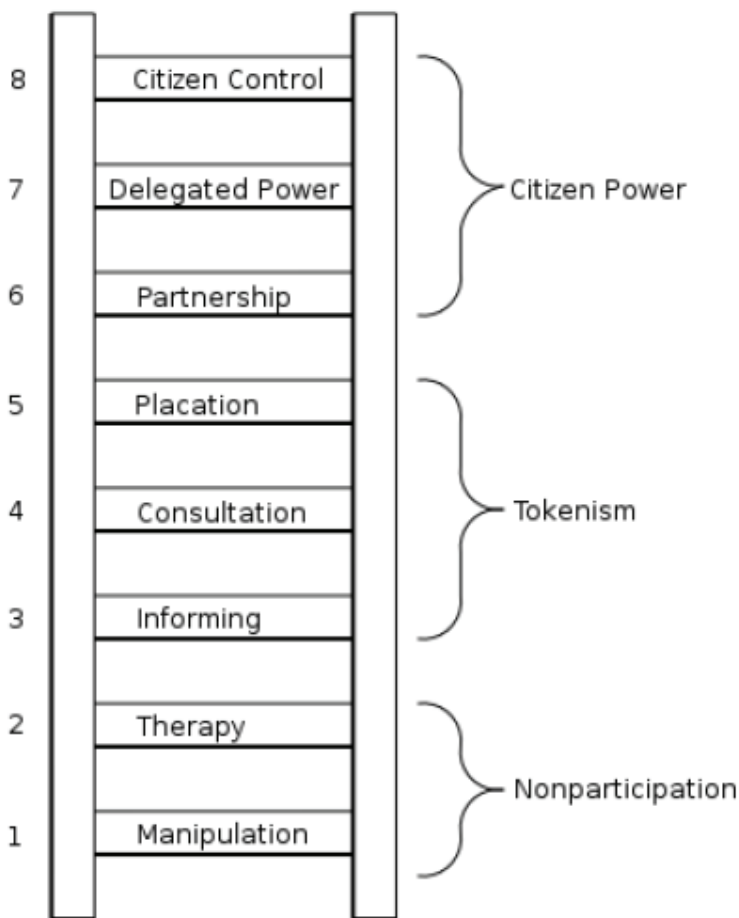


Figure 2-1. Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (1969)

Description of the Rungs on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

The first rung of the ladder, manipulation, involves influencing the public and gaining support through the use of propaganda. According to Arnstein (1969), at this level, "People are placed on rubberstamp advisory committees or advisory boards for the express purpose of 'educating' them or engineering their support" (p. 218). These bodies typically have no legitimate function or power (Arnstein, 1969, p. 218). As the second rung of the ladder, therapy assumes that the public is incapable of decision-making and those in power subject citizens to paternalistic education exercises, or clinical group therapy, as a form of enlightenment (Brooks & Harris, 2008).

The second stage begins with the third rung of the ladder, informing. At this rung, information flows from the public officials to the citizens with "no channel provided for feedback and no power for negotiation" (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219). The most frequent tools used for "participation" and communication during the process of "informing" include news media, pamphlets, posters, responses to inquiry, and meetings which discourage questioning and provide superficial and irrelevant information (Arnstein, 1969, p. 219). Consultation, the fourth rung on the ladder, provides for a two-way flow of information through meetings, hearings, and surveys. However, the public input gathered throughout this process is rarely taken into account. Arnstein (1969) categorizes this rung in the following way: "What citizens achieve in all this activity is that they have 'participated in participation.' And what the powerholders achieve is the evidence that they have gone through the required motions of involving 'those people'" (p. 219). The final level of tokenism is placation, where "citizens begin to gain influence through boards or committees, but they can still be outnumbered or overruled,

particularly when their opinions are unfavorable from the perspective of professional planners” (Brooks & Harris, 2008, p. 141).

The third stage of Arnstein’s ladder begins with the sixth rung, partnership. At this rung, “[Citizens and powerholders] agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses” (Arnstein, 1969, p. 221). Arnstein discusses some characteristics that effectively facilitate partnership, such as organized citizen leaders and groups within the community and financial resources for technicians. As the seventh rung on the ladder, delegated power exists when citizens can assure accountability of a program by achieving dominant decision-making authority over the plan or program (Arnstein, 1969, p. 222). Citizen control is the highest rung on Arnstein’s ladder. Arnstein (1969) writes,

People are simply demanding that degree of power (or control) which guarantees that participants or residents can govern a program or an institution, be in full charge of policy and managerial aspects, and be able to negotiate the conditions under which “outsiders” may change them. A neighborhood corporation with no intermediaries between it and the source of funds is the model most frequently advocated (p. 223).

Criticisms of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation

The appeal of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation lies in its simplicity and “ability to reveal, in pictorial form, the power agendas implicit in many institutionalized narratives and the differences in the forms and strategies of participation that are desired or result” (Collins & Ison, 2006, p. 2). However, there are criticisms of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. According to Collins and Ison (2006), “Arnstein’s ladder, with its focus on power, is insufficient for making sense of participation at a conceptual or practice level” (p. 2). Academics cite various limitations for Arnstein’s Ladder of

Citizen Participation, such as the assumption that participation is “hierarchical in nature with citizen control held up as the ‘goal’ of participation – an assumption that does not always align with participants’ own reasons for engaging in decision-making processes” (Collins & Ison, 2006, p. 2). Additionally, researchers emphasize the limitation that Arnstein herself cites, that each problem or decision is unique and can require different levels or types of participation that are not reflected in the broadness of the ladder. Collins and Ison (2006) have the following two critiques of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation:

First, at a conceptual level, Arnstein’s notion of participation is both devoid of context and, critically, has no means of making sense of the context in which the ladder is used. Second, in situations when the nature of the issue is highly contested or undefined, Arnstein’s ladder provides few insights into how participation might be progressed as a collective process between all of the stakeholders involved (p. 5).

However, in the case of the Portland Plan, the nature of the issue is neither contested, nor undefined. In this study, the Portland Plan draft development process provides the context for Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation, perhaps helping to establish its legitimacy among current academics as it relates to broad visioning processes as a public engagement tool. In this paper, this author relates the public participation techniques utilized in the development of the Portland Plan draft document to the public participation techniques that Arnstein describes at each rung of the ladder. While the Portland Plan draft process is very different from anything Arnstein described in her original article, both Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation and the Portland Plan draft process share the fundamental goal of involving citizens in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Background information for this research relied upon case study literature relevant to public participation techniques, barriers to public participation, and the concepts of open government and transparency. First, internet and archival research was performed to gather literature related to these topics, and was primarily found in online academic journal articles cited in this paper. After this research was gathered, it was read by the author of this paper and synthesized to develop the following three themes:

1. The cultural barriers that prevent public participation in the planning process
2. A lack of resources that contribute to a lack of public participation in the planning process
3. The connection between building intellectual capital from the beginning of the planning process and how institutional changes can enhance public participation in the planning process.

These themes established the framework for the various sections of the literature review in this paper, as well as the formulation of the overall research question, which was developed after this author had completed the literature review. This author then performed an internet search of the Portland Plan website (sponsored by the City of Portland) to retrieve the Public Participation Progress Report released after each of the four phases of development of the Portland Plan. The four Public Participation Progress Reports were reviewed in their entirety. Each Public Participation Progress Report specifies the approaches used by Portland Plan staff for public participation, as well as the opportunities, limitations, and lessons for the following phases related to each approach.

For the purposes of this study, these approaches were then organized by the stage and rung of citizen participation on Arnstein's Ladder of Public Participation. The organization was based on Arnstein's description of each stage in her original article, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," (1969) as well as the general discussion of Arnstein's Ladder in "Citizen Participation, NEPA, and Land-Use Planning in Northern New York, USA" by Brooks and Harris. By comparing the stage and rung of citizen participation on Arnstein's Ladder of Public Participation with the approaches used by Portland Plan staff for public participation in the development of the Portland Plan, it was possible to more effectively understand the potential extent of citizens' power in determining the end product, which in this case, is the Portland Plan.

Once the approaches were organized using Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, the study created a more solid understanding of the perceptions of participation within Portland Plan development. Therefore, the ultimate objective of this research is to categorize the public participation techniques utilized in the development of the Portland Plan, based on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. This categorization will attempt to determine the actual level of participation that Portland Plan staff derived from Portlanders, and whether the techniques utilized furthered the assertion that the Portland Plan was indeed "the plan that Portland wrote."

Limitations of research

One of the most significant limitations of this research is that, due to lack of time and financial resources, the author was unable to visit the city of Portland. Therefore, the author was also unable to question any of the citizens involved in the development of the Portland Plan draft document, as well as Portland Plan staff. Additionally, the

quantitative findings provided in the Public Participation Progress Reports do not account for duplications of Portlanders who, for example, attended multiple workshops or responded to multiple surveys. Therefore, the data related to the number of Portlanders involved in the Portland Plan draft development process is skewed and probably does not adequately reflect the number of “new” Portlanders contacted through the public participation outreach process.

CHAPTER 4
ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Background

Portland is located in Multnomah County, Oregon. Situated in the northwestern part of the state, Portland lies near the confluence of the Columbia and Willamette rivers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the total population of Multnomah County in 2010 was 735,334 ("Multnomah County, Oregon," 2013). Portland is the most populous city in Oregon at 583,776 residents ("Portland (city), Oregon," 2013). The racial make-up of Portland according to 2010 U.S. Census Data was 76.1% White, 6.3% African American, 7.1% Asian, 1.0% American Indian and Alaska Native, 9.4% Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin, and 4.7% are identified by two or more racial categories ("Portland (city), Oregon," 2013). Approximately 80% of the population of Portland is over the age of 18 and 10.4% of the population is over the age of 65 ("Portland (city), Oregon," 2013). There are 265,439 total housing units in Portland and the median household income is \$50,177 ("Portland (city), Oregon," 2013).

Table 4-1. Population Percentage: Portland vs. United States

Race	Population Percentage: Portland	Population Percentage: United States
White	76.10%	72.40%
African American	6.30%	12.60%
Asian	7.10%	4.80%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1%	0.90%
Hispanic or Latino	9.40%	16.30%
Two or more racial categories	4.70%	2.90%

Retrieved from Portland (city), Oregon (2013) and *Profile of general population and housing characteristics: 2010 demographic profile data* (2010).

visionPDX

In 2005, Portland Mayor Tom Potter launched visionPDX, a two-year community visioning project for the city. This project involved extensive community involvement to develop a shared vision for the future of Portland and the purpose of the project was two-fold: to invite community members to plan for the future of the city and to open up government to all Portlanders, particularly to underrepresented groups and communities ("Portland's Community Visioning Project: visionPDX," 2013). Development of the vision document was based on community involvement at events, discussions, interactive theatre, one-on-one conversations and questionnaires. Approximately 17,000 members of the Portland community were engaged through the aforementioned events/public participation techniques ("visionPDX history," 2013). A visionPDX community questionnaire was distributed to Portlanders, and their responses identified specific values such as community connectedness and distinctiveness, equity and accessibility, sustainability, accountability and leadership, inclusion and diversity, innovation and creativity, and safety, which shaped the vision of Portland's future in the final visionPDX document ("Portland's Community Visioning Project: visionPDX," 2013).

The next step of visionPDX was the Portland Plan. According to visionPDX:

The Portland Plan will serve to guide the growth and development of Portland over the next 30 years. It will serve as Portland's updated Comprehensive Plan and include updates to the city's Central City Plan, City-wide Economic Development Strategy, and Sustainability/Global Warming policies. It will make use of the broad outreach and engagement generation in the visionPDX process and will continue to involve the public around policy choices and strategies ("The Next Step: The Portland Plan," 2013).

Brief Explanation of the Portland Plan

Development of the Portland Plan began in 2009 with research regarding Portland's existing conditions on numerous topics, such as health and safety, economic development, and historical and natural resources. During the first phase of plan development, this research was reviewed by Portlanders through workshops, community presentations, and surveys. The second phase included events that provided public review of Portland Plan goals and objectives determined throughout the first phase. Phase two also involved a survey component. The third phase of the Portland Plan development process revolved around community fairs, meetings, and a speaker series where Portlanders identified the priorities and strategies that they felt were most important for the future of the city. The top goals that resulted from phase three were published for public review and comment in the spring of 2011. After each phase, Portland Plan staff released a Public Participation Progress Report. The introduction for each Progress Report states,

The purpose of this report is to document and evaluate the outreach and public participation activities... This document will help the Community Involvement Committee (CIC), staff, local decision-makers and the public at large review the work to date and provide an opportunity to reflect on lessons learned to improve the next round of Portland Plan outreach and engagement activities. Additionally, this report will serve as documentation for the Community Involvement Committee when they update the Portland Planning Commission on the City of Portland's public engagement process as it relates to state-mandated periodic review (City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability [CPBPS], 2010a, p. 1).

In addition, community advisory groups worked to identify best practices for the strategies and initiatives outlined in the Portland Plan. The Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) provided technical support and recommendations on each draft of the Portland Plan. The PSC also held three public meetings and a series of work

sessions to listen to public testimony on the proposed plan. The Portland Plan Advisory Group was appointed in 2009 to “pose provocative questions, challenge assumptions, prompt each other and staff to tackle difficult ideas to support the development of a smart and strategic plan, and provide advice to [politicians and planners]” (CPBPS, 2012a, p. 144).

One of the most important groups associated with the Portland Plan is the Community Involvement Committee (CIC). The CIC was appointed by the Portland City Council in July 2009 (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 2). Comprised of 16 community volunteers, including two Planning and Sustainability Commissioners, the CIC maintained oversight of public outreach elements of the plan, ensuring that as many citizens as possible were able to voice their opinions (CPBPS, 2012a, p. 144). In Phase 1, the CIC suggested four levels of public participation for the Portland Plan development process:

1. Notification;
2. Information;
3. Presentations; and
4. Interactive Activities.

Phase 1

Phase 1 activities took place between fall 2009 and March 2010. The four levels of participation utilized in Phase 1 were Notification, Information, Presentations, and Interactive Activities. Notification involves informing interested and potentially interested individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions about the Portland Plan and events related to its development. The approaches used for this level of participation were related to marketing and communications and included: Advertising; Direct mail; Community newspaper inserts; Emails to Master Mailing List (MML); print and other media (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 5). These approaches correlate with the third rung of

Arnstein's ladder, Informing, which is also the lowest rung of the second stage, Tokenism.

The Information level of participation described in the Public Participation Phase 1 Progress Report used the following approaches to distribute understandable information about the Portland Plan to interested and potentially interested individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions: Fact sheets and Background reports; Surveys; Brochures and informational boards; A Portland Plan website; Social media; and Local media (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 5). The fact sheets and background reports, surveys, and brochures and informational boards were distributed at seven Phase 1 workshops and public engagement events, and the Portland Plan website and social media outlets, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr, were updated with news, information, and events related to the Portland Plan. These approaches correlate with the third and fourth rungs of Arnstein's ladder, Informing and Consultation.

The third level of participation identified in the Public Participation Phase 1 Progress Report is Presentations. Portland Plan staff attended and presented at community and neighborhood meetings to provide overviews and updates of the plan, as well as to solicit questions and comments from Portlanders. Staff also sat at tables to provide information at special events carried out by organizations interested in learning more about the Portland Plan process. This level of participation comports with the fourth rung of Arnstein's ladder, Consultation.

Interactive Activities encompass the fourth level of participation discussed in Phase 1. The following outlets were used to provide a creative and informative option for public outreach: Workshops; Topical work sessions; Online and printed surveys; and

Special outreach activities to non-geographic groups (CPBPS, 2010a, p.7). The workshops included business-, youth- and Latino-targeted events, while special outreach activities to non-geographic groups were aimed at engaging communities that may not generally participate in these types of activities, such as low income communities, youth, immigrants, seniors and people with disabilities, and the LGBTQ community (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 7). These “non-geographic communities” differ from neighborhood associations “in that issues of primary concern may not be tied to the places where people live” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 8). This level of participation satisfies the fourth rung of Arnstein’s ladder, Consultation.

Public Participation Goals for the Portland Plan Process

The following five goals were evaluated for Phase 1 public participation: “build on existing relationships; engage broader/diverse groups with education and information and provide all interested with enough education so they can meaningfully participate; provide multiple venues and means for community involvement; involve as many people as possible; and with feedback and continuous engagement throughout Portland Plan development and implementation, ensure community members are being heard” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 11-13). The evaluations of these goals identified areas of improvement for the public participation efforts related to each goal and were based on both quantitative and qualitative measures of success, such as

- The number of workshop participants
- A description of a CIC member’s engagement efforts
- The number of outreach documents translated into a non-English language
- A description of the targeted efforts to reach the business community, etc.

Phase 1: Successes and Areas for Improvement

Throughout Phase 1, Portland Plan staff was able to maintain and carry over relationships that were established with community groups and organizations throughout the visionPDX process (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 14). Staff coordinated to contact and engage organizations with an existing interest in Portland Plan information, while developing new relationships with “senior groups, non-profit social service organizations and interest groups such as people with disabilities and the LGBTQ community” (p. 14) and some cultural/ethnic groups (CPBPS, 2010a). City agencies assisted Portland Plan staff in advertising upcoming workshops. Two areas for improvement specified for Goal 1 (Build on existing relationships) were the need for “more City bureau and partner agency assistance with outreach and engagement, as part of their own project outreach and outreach to employees” and the “need to build relationships with new groups, especially under-served and non-geographic issue-oriented communities” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 15).

The Phase 1 Public Participation Progress Report determined various successes related to Goal 2 (Engage broader/diverse groups with education and information and provide all interested with enough education so they can meaningfully participate). For example, Portland Plan staff held workshops during Phase 1, and

Many of these presentations and events organized in Phase 1 included the tailoring of presentations and materials provided to reflect language and communication preferences; e.g. Spanish language brochure and survey; large-print handouts for seniors and others who are visually impaired; a survey designed by youth for youth; and information in PowerPoint presentations and handouts reflecting specific interests of a targeted audience (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 15).

Media was an important component of Goal 2 public participation efforts in Phase 1, including newspaper articles in local publications, cable access TV coverage of Phase 1

workshops, and a Phase 1 survey which was included in the Winter 2010 *Curbsider* magazine that went to every household in Portland (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 15). The following four areas for improvement were specified for Goal 2: “Continue to produce meaningful materials translated into other languages, large print, Braille, etc.; provide simplified easy-to-understand educational materials to newcomers that highlight why they might want to participate; continue diverse media coverage e.g. Latino, Asian newspapers, KBOO radio, etc.; and expand outreach to renters” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 16).

Goal 3 (Provide multiple venues and means for community involvement) emphasizes successes in providing a variety of materials and types of events for public involvement, including non-traditional venues such as social media and the internet. The Phase 1 survey was available on the project website and through Facebook, Flickr, and Twitter. The following three areas for improvement were specified for Goal 3: “Need to better monitor/record/understand the number of first-time participants in Portland Plan events/activities; continue to offer food/childcare/translators [at outreach and engagement events]; and explore ideas and implement additional interactive tools for engagement” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 16).

Successes related to Goal 4 (Involve as many people as possible) were measured by the number of those in attendance in Phase 1 workshops, the number of people reached through community presentations and other outreach events, the number of completed surveys and views on the Portland Plan website, and the friends and followers of the Portland Plan social media outlets (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 17). While the workshops were successful in drawing hundreds of Portlanders, “those in

attendance were not representative of the socio-demographic characteristics of Portland as a whole” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 16). Additionally, Portland Plan staff intended to “continue to engage more people especially in non-geographic communities and first timers” in future phases (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 17).

Two specific public participation efforts were considered successful in relation to Goal 5 (Being heard as community members with feedback and continuous engagement throughout Portland Plan development and implementation): workshop polling and survey responses were provided online and as hard-copies for public review, and a diagram was presented online and at public events to illustrate how public input was being incorporated in the Portland Plan process and results (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 17). However, Portlanders still expressed concern about the transparency of plan development and the utilization of public input (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 17). Therefore, the following two areas for improvement were specified for Goal 5:

Continue to demonstrate to public in documents/information provided in each phase, how their comments are being incorporated from previous input – report results and findings from previous phases on website and in documents; and design and implement follow-up activities that incorporate previously received group input as part of specialized outreach to cultural/ethnic and other non-geographic groups (building relationships) (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 17).

Evaluation of Approaches Utilized in Phase 1 of Portland Plan Outreach

The Public Participation Phase 1 Progress Report also includes a table with an evaluation of approaches utilized in Phase 1 of Portland Plan outreach (Appendix A). The table includes columns for opportunities, limitations, and lessons for next phases based on the following approaches: workshops; overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic groups; special events; social media; marketing and communication; the

Portland Plan website; and local media (televised and audio). The limitations were especially significant, as they identified some of the most fundamental problems facing Portland Plan staff in the citizen engagement process. For example, resources such as staff capacity, time, and money are limited and restrict the number and type of presentations that can be held and led by Portland Plan staff. The ability to conduct outreach to non-geographic groups for special events was limited, making it even more difficult to draw people who are new or uncomfortable with public processes (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 18).

Internet access became a major limitation to outreach and engagement approaches such as online surveys, social media, and the Portland Plan website because not everyone has access or uses the internet. This limitation highlights the Digital Divide, discussed earlier in this paper. Modarres (2011) cites a 2010 Pew Research Center study which found that “Latinos and African Americans were more likely to use their cell phones to access the Internet, e-mail, and Facebook, than the white population,” while “whites were more likely to use their networked home computer to engage with online content” (p. 6). However, according to Modarres (2011), “Cell phones are not equal substitutes for access and full engagement with the digital world. The continuing danger of the digital divide, then, is found in the distinction between access to information and its creation” (p. 6).

Overall, “this phase has...focused on notifying and informing as many members of the public as possible of the Portland Plan process” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 25). In relation to Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation, Phase 1 did little to further the extent of citizen power beyond simply sharing information and knowledge with the

public and gathering input from those Portlanders that were involved in the “Consulting” participation techniques. Using the quantitative measurements, Portland Plan staff identified where they must make improvements in their outreach and engagement efforts for Phase 2. The majority of workshop attendees (75%) and online survey respondents (83%) identified as White/Caucasian (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 41). While these percentages reflect the overall racial make-up of the city of Portland (Table 4-1), they also demonstrate a larger problem with drawing minority populations into the Portland Plan development process.

Phase 2

Phase 2: Successes and Areas for Improvement

The approaches used in Phase 2 public involvement were the following: tabling at community events; workshops; overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations and town halls; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic and community groups; social media; marketing and communications; the Portland Plan website; and local media (televised and audio) (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 11). Throughout Phase 2, Portland Plan staff was successful in maintaining existing relationships and increasing the number of Portlanders involved through a variety of public participation approaches (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 3). However, “despite the successes, the demographics of participants continue to reveal gaps in engagement,” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 3) and Portland Plan staff worked to engage non-geographic groups of Portlanders through culturally appropriate venues. Similar to the Public Participation Progress Report from Phase 1, the Phase 2 Progress Report “recognizes constraints related to budget and staff capacity and [Portland Plan staff] have been working to

make the most of opportunities through engaging new and previously involved community members” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 4).

CIC members and Portland Plan staff reworded Goal 1 to more appropriately reflect desired public involvement outcomes: Build on *new* and existing relationships. Successes related to Goal 1 during Phase 2 highlight increased partnerships with other City bureaus and agencies. These new partnerships assisted in advertising workshops and the development of workshop content, particularly for the business community. Additionally, Portland Plan staff developed new relationships with arts-related groups, educational groups and institutions, the aging community, and the LGBTQ community. However, the Public Participation Progress Report from Phase 2 identifies similar areas for improvement related to Goal 1 as the Public Participation Progress Report from Phase 1: “continue to seek bureau and partner agency assistance with outreach and engagement” and “continue to build new and on-going relationships with under-served and non-geographic issue-oriented grounds including: cultural groups, faith communities, homeless communities, renters, and minority businesses” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 5).

During Phase 2, successes for Goal 2 (Engage broader/diverse groups with education and information and provide all interested with enough education so they can meaningfully participate) included: non-geographic community town hall meetings for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Questioning (LGBTQ) community and the arts community; Portland Plan staff participation and tabling at 32 city-wide community events; and distribution of a business-focused workshop and survey. Hard copies of Portland Plan materials were made available at 39 different outlets, including

public libraries, universities, neighborhood coalition offices, senior centers, etc. (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 19). Additionally, non-English Portland Plan informational brochures and Phase 2 surveys were translated into Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 6).

Most importantly, according to the Phase 2 Public Participation Progress Report, Portland Plan staff strengthened their relationship with the Diversity & Civic Leadership Program (DCL) (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 6). The following five member organizations comprise the DCL: the Center for Intercultural Organizing (CIO), the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO), Latino Network, the Native American Family Center (NAYA), and the Urban League of Portland. In June 2010, the Portland City Council approved a grant program in which “DCL member groups receive funds to conduct culturally-meaningful and appropriate public engagement for future Portland Plan phases” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 6).

However, the areas for improvement were primarily related to continuing outreach efforts to under-represented communities. One specific area for improvement that should be considered particularly important for Phase 3 public participation outreach plans is working to “improve marketing for services available at outreach events and workshops” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 7). Services that would allow greater participation from under-represented communities, such as language interpretation, child care, and Braille were underutilized (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 7). Another significant area for improvement involves the implementation of “frequent and regular analysis of survey and/or workshop demographics to better target communities under-represented and to refocus outreach efforts” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 7).

A specific Goal 3 (Provide multiple venues and means for community involvement) endeavor undertaken during Phase 2 was the creation of an interactive game titled, “What’s Your Big Idea?” in which Portlanders were able to provide feedback and discussion about their big ideas for the future of the city. Portland Plan staff implemented the use of this game during summertime community outreach events during Phase 2. Staff utilized the following venues to distribute the Phase 2 survey: senior centers supplied surveys and drop-boxes for completed surveys; workshops, neighborhood coalition meetings and offices; hosted presentations; *Curbsider* magazine; district liaisons; and the project website (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 24). Throughout Phase 2, social media such as Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and the Portland Plan website was used to advertise events and allowed staff to post comments and feedback from polling responses gathered at various Portland Plan events. One important area for improvement for Goal 3 was to “develop a new tool to determine the number of first time Portland Plan participants” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 8) in order to improve marketing and outreach to those without a high level of knowledge and involvement on Portland Plan issues.

The following quantitative measures were identified as Phase 2 successes for Goal 4 (Involve as many people as possible): 450 workshops participants; 6,500 general survey respondents; 228 business survey respondents; and approximately 1,000 attendees at Portland Plan presentations (p. 9). Also, the number of Facebook “friends” and Twitter followers increased. According to the Phase 2 Public Participation Progress Reports, the majority of workshop attendees (79%) and online survey respondents (85%) identified as White/Caucasian, which is similar to the demographics

identified as workshop attendees and survey respondents in Phase 1 (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 29). Interestingly, the percent of responses identifying that their household income was under \$20,000 rose from 9% to 14% between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 29). The percent of responses identifying that their household income was between \$20,000 and \$50,000 also increased between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 surveys, from 24% to 33% (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 29). However, Portland Plan staff still maintained that a major area for improvement for Goal 4 as the process moves into Phase 3 was to “identify new groups and communities that have yet to be involved in the Portland Plan process” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 9).

Goal 5 was reworded in Phase 2 as, “Acknowledge that Portlanders are being heard, and show how their comments are being incorporated into the Portland Plan” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 10). Throughout Phase 2, “Staff continued to utilize a master database of all written comments and event evaluations, which was also accessed by staff when developing direction setting and designing future workshops” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 10). Additionally, “in-depth research on equity within Portland Plan and previous Portland planning efforts was completed and then woven into Phase II materials and processes in response to equity concerns by various communities” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 26). A Phase 2 workshop evaluation question related to Goal 5 was: “This workshop has provided me with a sense that the City of Portland is listening to my concerns.” Of the 450 workshop attendees, 92% responded positively, of which 32% strongly agreed and 60% agreed (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 26). Unfortunately, Portland Plan process transparency continued to be a major concern voiced by Portlanders throughout Phase 2, and improvements related to Goal 5 will be made if the Portland

Plan staff “continue to report back and demonstrate to participants in workshops and events that previous input is being incorporated into current materials and proposals” (CPBPS, 2010b, p 10).

Evaluation of Approaches Utilized in Phase 2 of Portland Plan Outreach

The Public Participation Phase 2 Progress Report also includes a table with an evaluation of a new approach utilized in Phase 2 of Portland Plan outreach: tabling at community events. This approach has the potential to reach many people at once, especially those who wouldn't normally attend workshops. However, such community events are staff intensive and may be difficult for people with disabilities to access because they are typically held outdoors (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 11). An additional table includes the ways Portland Plan staff incorporated lessons learned during Phase 1 into the following Phase 2 approaches: workshops; overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations and town halls; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic and community groups; social media; marketing and communications; the Portland Plan website; and local news (televised and audio). Specifically, according to the CIC committee members, “efforts made to engage under-represented groups through outreach and engagement grants to organizations that serve these groups and by translating materials in other languages was a plus” throughout Phase 2 (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 15).

In Phase 2, Portland Plan staff held more workshops on weekends and in the evenings to hopefully increase participation from those who could not attend evening sessions. However, Portland Plan staff found that holding more weekend workshops did not increase the overall workshop attendance (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 12). In future phases,

Portland Plan staff planned to “provide more targeted outreach when offering interpretation and childcare services so that people take advantage of these services” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 12). During Phase 1, the public identified that they wanted up-to-date materials and presentations during each phase to “build trust and demonstrate that their voices are being heard” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 12). However, limited resources continued to hinder this process, as staff could not frequently update meaningful materials for specific community groups and no social media staff training took place. Additionally, Portland Plan staff focused on making sure that the format of future town hall meetings “meets the expectations of the public i.e. attendees have the opportunity to provide input directly” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 12). However, in relation to Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation, Phase 2 also did little to further the extent of citizen power beyond knowledge and information sharing with the public and gathering input from Portlanders that were involved in the “Consulting” participation techniques.

Phase 3

Phase 3: Successes and Areas for Improvement

Phase 3 lasted from September 2010 through May 2011. The approaches used in Phase 3 public involvement were the following: Portland Plan fairs; large employer brownbags; workshops; overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations and town halls; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic and community groups; social media; marketing and communications; the Portland Plan website; and local media (televised and audio) (CPBPS, 2011, p. 17). Specifically, Phase 3 public involvement efforts “focused on partnering with organizations, especially the Diversity and Civic Leadership (DCL) Program partners, to team up on outreach, improve communication of Portland Plan content and include more culturally

appropriate engagement of diverse communities” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 3). Portland Plan staff continued their involvement in tabling efforts at community-sponsored fairs, events, and presentations and implemented community fairs as an alternative to large workshops (CPBPS, 2011, p. 1). Unfortunately, the return rate for surveys was not as high during Phase 3 as for the first two phases. Staff and CIC committee members believed that a possible reason for low survey responses could be fatigue about the Portland Plan based on the following observations: “many people feel as though their voice has been heard, each phase of the Portland Plan offered less and less new information as it was refined, and Portlanders are ready to move on to implementation and the Comprehensive Plan” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 1).

The public involvement goals used to measure success in Phase 3 were the same goals used in Phases 1 and 2. Goal 1 (Build on new and existing relationships) efforts involved brown bag lunch presentations and business forums to gather feedback from the Portland business community. Portland Plan staff continued to maintain relationships developed prior to the Portland Plan process, as well as those developed with City bureaus and partner agencies during the process. The Goal 1-specific areas for improvement identified in Phase 3 are very similar to those areas of improvement described in the first two phases. These areas for improvement included: “continue to seek bureau and partner agency assistance with outreach and engagement” and “continue to build new and ongoing relationships with under-served and non-geographic issue-oriented grounds” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 7). Additionally, going into Phase 4, Portland Plan staff highlighted the need to “continue – and in some cases broaden – involvement with the City of Portland boards, committees and commissions” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 7).

Portland Staff collaborated with DCL during Phase 3 to encourage participation related to Goal 2 (Engage broader and more diverse groups with education and information and provide all interested with enough education so they can meaningfully participate). During Phase 3, the Portland City Council approved the grant program to provide DCL with the resources to involve their member groups in meaningful and appropriate public engagement efforts. The five DCL member organizations attended and provided information at Portland Plan fairs and events to, for example, “build community capacity and educate the community about key policy decisions that have a direct impact on their lives” (p. 8) or “educate and engage communities about the Portland Plan while learning ways to influence its design and content” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 9).

Specifically, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) participated in the development of a Portland Plan PowerPoint presentation for community members with limited English skills and the Latino Network collected participant survey responses at various venues, such as Latino-centric flea markets and faith-based organizations (CPBPS, 2011, p. 10). Additionally, the Native American Family Center (NAYA) collaborated with the Portland Youth and Elders Council (PYEC) to host work sessions and recruit community participation in reviewing Portland Plan Draft materials. The Urban League focused their outreach efforts using the following approaches: the development of a survey(s); neighborhood canvassing; various methods of advertising and notification; and a hosted meeting(s) with Portland Plan staff (CPBPS, 2011, p. 11). Portland Plan staff continued to distribute translated Portland Plan materials throughout Phase 3 and more than 400 people attended Portland Plan

fairs featuring local food, unique community booths, free childcare, and in some cases, bilingual staff volunteers and materials. There were no youth-specific surveys or events held in Phase 3. Portland Plan staff identified that further improvement related to this goal would involve targeted outreach to faith-based organizations and ethnic community organizations.

In order to achieve Goal 3 (Provide multiple venues and means for community involvement) efforts during Phase 3, Portland Plan staff held the “Portland Plan Inspiring Communities” series, a five-part lecture series in which “experts in the fields of economic development, environmental justice, education, community health and sustainable systems shared fresh perspectives on what strategies have worked elsewhere” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 13). Attendees submitted evaluation cards which provided the Portland Plan staff with important demographic information and feedback. Portland Plan staff continued to participate in community events throughout Phase 3.

Phase 3 saw lower overall involvement from Portlanders. Goal 4 (Involve as many people as possible) participation efforts drew the following quantitative levels: approximately 375 fair participants; approximately 217 survey responses; approximately 400 speaker series participants; and approximately 1,740 attendees to 79 Portland Plan presentations (CPBPS, 2011, p. A-10). However, Phase 3 was successful in increasing participation among the following racial or ethnic groups: Latino/Hispanic and Asian or Pacific Islander. While Asian or Pacific Islanders made up 4% of the race or ethnic group at Phase 1 and Phase 2 workshops, this particular group made up 10% of those in attendance at Phase 3 fairs. For the Latino/Hispanic community, this number rose from between 4-6% during Phase 1 and Phase 2 workshops, to 9% of those in

attendance at Phase 3 fairs. Two areas for improvement were identified for Goal 4 as the Portland Plan process progressed: “continue to engage more people, especially non-geographic communities and first-timers” and “develop new tools to better ensure and keep track of the number of Portlanders engaged at public events” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 15).

The successes and areas for improvement for Goal 5 (Acknowledge that Portlanders are being heard, and show how their comments are being incorporated into the Portland Plan) are particularly significant based on the Phase 3 Public Participation Progress Report. In November 2010, “staff convened discussion groups to share the preliminary language of the emerging strategies to ensure that communication was clear, concise, culturally sensitive, age appropriate, and inclusive” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 16). Additionally, Portland Plan staff posted survey results and citizen feedback from the Portland Plan fairs on the website. However, analysis of this feedback was “slow to be provided” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 16). According to the Progress Report,

simply posting the survey results and public comments from the Portland Plan fairs on the website did not clearly demonstrate to the public how their feedback was being factored into drafting of the plan (CPBPS, 2011, p. 16).

Evaluation of Approaches Utilized in Phase 3 of Portland Plan Outreach

The Public Participation Phase 3 Progress Report also includes a table with an evaluation of new approaches utilized in Phase 3 of Portland Plan outreach: fairs and large employer brown bags. Fair attendees were able to “browse and comment in writing or choose to engage with other participants and staff” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 17). Portland Plan staff felt that these fairs offered “too many opportunities [for attendees] to provide feedback in the way of eight surveys, mapping exercises, and staff facilitated group discussions” and saw this as a major limitation of this participation approach

(CPBPS, 2011, p. 17). While the large employer brown bags provided a new context for public engagement, Portland Plan staff cited the following limitations to this approach: “difficult to generate interest depending on purpose/timing in project (info sharing vs. feedback); requires interest/effort on part of firm/employer to proceed; and difficult to schedule...a critical mass of employees” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 18).

An additional table includes the ways Portland Plan staff incorporated lessons learned during Phase 1 and Phase 2 into the following Phase 3 approaches: overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations and town halls; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic & community groups; social media; marketing and communications; the Portland Plan website; and local news (televised and audio). Portland Plan staff sought to incorporate the lessons learned by continuing to follow up questions and feedback received at group meetings and using social media and the Portland Plan website to further communication with the public, as well as partner agencies. As Portland Plan staff transitions into Phase 4, they continued to build new and ongoing relationships with partner agencies and bureaus and under-served and/or non-geographic groups to reach as many Portlanders as possible (CPBPS, 2011, p. 27). Additionally, staff sought to continue to advertise events to engage the community in this process and strive to share analysis of public feedback in a timely manner (CPBPS, 2011, p. 27). However, the focus of Phase 4 will no longer be “collecting and vetting facts, determining directions and objectives, or vetting integrated strategies...as the process transitions into a more formal phase where the public engages directly with City decision-makers” (CPBPS, 2011, p. 27). Additionally, because the public participation techniques utilized in Phase 3 were similar (or, in some

cases, the same) as the techniques utilized in the first two phases, the extent of citizen power remained strongly correlated to the “Informing” and “Consultation” rungs of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Phase 4

Phase 4: Successes and Areas for Improvement

Phase 4 of the Portland Plan lasted from June 2011 to April 25, 2012, the day that the plan was adopted by the Portland City Council. The approaches used during Phase 4 public involvement include the following: various community locations for public hearings; workshops; overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic groups; social media; marketing and communications; the Portland Plan website; and local media (televised and audio) (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 19). During Phase 4, public hearings were held before the Planning and Sustainability Commission and the Portland City Council, making this “the most formal phase within the Portland Plan public involvement process” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 1).

Throughout this phase, Portland Plan staff continued to provide information at community-sponsored fairs and events, as well as presenting before “neighborhood and business associations, interest-based groups, and other community groups” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 1). CIC committee members made the following assessment of Phase 4: “[summertime public involvement] focused on providing information through tabling at community-sponsored fairs and events and presentations, but was not as dynamic in that there was not a draft plan to share nor was it appropriate for staff to take in community feedback” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 1). Unfortunately, the Proposed Draft was released to the community less than a month before the first public hearing before the

Planning and Sustainability Commission, and “providing information to the public on how to prepare testimony lacked both energy and materials until a few weeks before the first hearing” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 2).

Phase 4 continued to incorporate the public participation goals and measures of success. Goal 1 (Build on new and existing relationships) efforts involved tabling at 21 fairs and events, and Portland Plan staff maintained relationships by providing ongoing updates at meetings on the progress of the Portland Plan. Because the Proposed Plan took longer to publish than anticipated, “much of the engagement at the summer fairs and events and the Portland Plan presentations to community groups was limited to general information on the Portland Plan rather than opportunities to discuss content and how to testify before the Planning and Sustainability Commission, which would have made for a much more dynamic experience for the public” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 6). The Public Participation Progress Report for Phase 4 offers the following important area for improvement, which should be taken into consideration for the Portland Comprehensive Plan update and public involvement efforts following adoption of the Portland Plan: “ensure there is adequate time between the public release of a draft document and the corresponding public hearings and public comment period, while factoring in time for organizations to meet and coordinate an official response, as well as avoiding the holidays for the public comment period” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 7).

Adequate time for information dissemination was also an issue related to Goal 2 (Engage broader and more diverse groups with education and information and provide all interested with enough education so they can meaningfully participate). In addition to the translated version of the final brochure, “Informational brochures and the draft

versions of the Portland Plan and corresponding summaries were also provided in large print, but were not available for the Planning and Sustainability Commission hearings. Ability advocates voiced their concern that large print or html-friendly materials were not available in a timely manner” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 9). However, Portland Plan staff was successful in involving the “youth voice” during this part of the Portland Plan process, collecting 178 surveys through canvassing, small focus groups, and online (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 9).

Public hearings were one of the most significant venues used for Phase 4 community involvement related to Goal 3 (Provide multiple venues and means for community involvement). According to the Public Participation Progress Report for Phase 4, more than 68 people provided testimony at three Planning and Sustainability Commission hearings, while 180 examples of written documentation were sent to the commission (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 14). Unfortunately, some of the most notable participation at these hearings came from the Portland Commission on Disabilities (PCOD), who emphasized “their frustration about feeling largely unheard despite working with Portland Plan staff, and that their feedback had not been reflected in the version of the draft before the Planning and Sustainability Commission” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 15). Portland Plan staff then consulted with these groups to revise the draft before finally advancing it to the City Council.

Additionally, the Phase 4 Public Participation Progress Report cited the following area for improvement with application to the Comprehensive Plan Update and beyond: “consider the date and time of hearings, workshops and verify that the scheduling does not conflict with the local organizations’ regularly scheduled meeting” (CPBPS, 2012b,

p. 15). In relation to Goal 4 (Involve as many people as possible), there were approximately 1,360 attendees to Portland Plan presentations, and 700 Portlanders were contacted at community events (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 16). Portland Plan staff intends to continue to engage Portlanders in the Comprehensive Plan update through Facebook, Twitter, and Flickr.

Goal 5 (Acknowledge that Portlanders are being heard, and show how their comments are being incorporated into the Portland Plan) successes are based on the following quantitative data: “all public testimony received was responded to in staff memoranda to the Planning and Sustainability Commission and City Council; a master database was created with all written comments and event evaluations; and Portland Plan staff met with the Portland Commission on Disability and the Aging Friendly Cities Global Network to address gaps in the Proposed Draft” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 31). Additionally, staff responded to CIO feedback to address gentrification and displacement within the Portland Plan, and the draft language was later reviewed by the Equity, Civic Engagement and Quality of Life Technical Action Group (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 31).

Evaluation of Approaches Utilized in Phase 4 of Portland Plan Outreach

The Public Participation Phase 4 Progress Report also includes a table with an evaluation of a new approach utilized in Phase 4 Portland Plan outreach – various community locations for public hearings. Portland Plan staff varied public hearing locations to attempt to reach Portlanders outside of downtown Portland, and promoted the public hearings through local community groups to draw Portlanders who were potentially unaware of the process. However, staff identified limitations related to this approach. For example, public hearings “can conflict with local events in the targeted

geographic area, as well as community and interest-based groups in the near proximity (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 19). Additionally, the formal nature of public hearings may not be of interest, or may be intimidating and overly technical for Portlanders to provide testimony (CPBPS, 2012b). Another table includes the ways Portland Plan staff incorporated lessons learned during the first three phases into the following Phase 4 approaches: workshops; overviews at group meetings; hosted presentations and town halls; hard copy and online surveys; special outreach activities with non-geographic & community groups; social media; marketing and communications; the Portland Plan website; and local news (televised and audio). Portland Plan staff found that announcement distribution at numerous locations citywide did not result in an increase in participation (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 20). Additionally, staff noted that Town Hall events are more appropriate in earlier phases of a project (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 20). Phase 4 incorporated videos into the Portland Plan website to promote and summarize the plan, and public involvement through social media greatly improved throughout this process.

CIC committee members evaluated Phase 4 and “shared their disappointment in Phase 4 compared to earlier phases, partially due to the fact that the outreach was less focused on events (workshops, fairs, forums, etc.) that created a lot of anticipation” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 24). Additionally, “another CIC member emphasized the frustration with the Proposed Draft of the Portland Plan not being available until October 2012, when it was intended to be published in summer 2011” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 24). Finally, “many CIC members stated the timing of Phase 4 felt out of line compared with the previous phases and that the comment period did not give neighborhood or other organizations enough time to come together and discuss the plan and still have time to

prepare testimony” (CPBPS, 2012b, p. 24). In the fourth rung on Arnstein’s Ladder, Consultation, the public input gathered throughout this process is rarely taken into account. In this case, it was difficult for Portlanders to tell whether or not their input had been taken into account because they had such little time to review the draft

Portland Plan Public Participation Techniques and Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation

The approaches utilized in each of the four phases of Portland Plan Outreach correspond with a rung on Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation. All of the approaches correspond to the rungs Informing or Consultation, or a combination of the two. Additionally, these rungs are degrees of Tokenism. According to Arnstein (1969), “under these conditions [citizens] lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the *powerful*. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow through, no ‘muscle,’ hence no assurance of changing the status quo” (p. 217). The following tables list each approach with its corresponding rung, as well as specific examples of each approach to further clarify and describe each approach. For the purposes of this study and much like Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation, these tables list broad approaches and techniques that were specifically highlighted by Portland Plan staff in the Portland Plan Public Participation Progress Reports.

Table 4-2. Approaches Utilized in Portland Plan Outreach Compared to Rungs on Arnstein's Ladder

Approaches Utilized in Phase 1 of Portland Plan Outreach	Specific Examples of this Approach	Rung on Arnstein's Ladder
Workshops		Consultation
Group Meetings		Informing/ Consultation
Hosted Presentations		Informing/ Consultation
Hard Copy and Online Surveys		Consultation
Special Outreach Activities with Non-Geographic Groups		Informing/ Consultation
Social Media	Facebook Twitter Flickr	Informing
Marketing and Communication	Advertisements in community and ethnic newspapers Emails to Master Mailing List (MML) Use of <i>Curbsider</i> magazine Community newspaper inserts Web site	Informing
Local Media	Televised workshops Live and taped broadcasts	Informing

Table 4-3. New Approaches Utilized in Phase 2 of Portland Plan Outreach Compared to Rungs on Arnstein's Ladder

New Approaches Utilized in Phase 2 of Portland Plan Outreach	Specific Examples of this Approach	Rung on Arnstein's Ladder
Tabling at Community Events		Informing/ Consultation

Table 4-4. New Approaches Utilized in Phase 3 of Portland Plan Outreach Compared to Rungs on Arnstein's Ladder

New Approaches Utilized in Phase 3 of Portland Plan Outreach	Specific Examples of this Approach	Rung on Arnstein's Ladder Informing/ Consultation Informing/ Consultation
Fairs		
Large Employer Brownbags		

Table 4-5. New Approaches Utilized in Phase 4 of Portland Plan Outreach Compared to Rungs on Arnstein's Ladder

New Approaches Utilized in Phase 4 of Portland Plan Outreach	Specific Examples of this Approach	Rung on Arnstein's Ladder Consultation
Various community locations for public hearings		

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This section presents a discussion based upon the literature review and background information, as well as the analysis of the approaches utilized in each of the four phases of Portland Plan Outreach and how they do or do not correspond with a rung on Arnstein's Ladder Citizen of Participation.

Participation Techniques to Further Portland Plan Development

As discussed earlier, all of the approaches correspond to the Ladder of Citizen Participation rungs Informing or Consultation, or a combination of the two. According to Arnstein, citizens will feel as if they are "participating," but a limited one-way flow of information furthers a lack of assurance that citizen ideas and concerns are taken into account by policy-makers and Portland Plan staff. Public participation in the Portland Plan process was primarily used to develop and prioritize the values and objectives that Portlanders want their city to embody. This input was then gathered by Portland Plan staff to develop the Portland Plan Draft.

In this case, the following techniques were appropriate for informing citizens about this process and gathering broad-based citizen ideas and concerns: workshops, group meetings, hosted presentations, surveys, and tabling at community events and fairs. Because the Portland Plan is a broad visioning document, it is not surprising that the citizen input was also very broad and lacked the specificity that would give it increased depth and detail. Additionally, much of the work related to the development of the plan required a technical knowledge of planning-related issues, which limited overall involvement of the public. For example, during Phase 1 of the process, Portlanders ranked their top priorities for the city based on background reports developed by

Portland Plan staff, and staff used this input to develop a set of goals for public review in Phase 2. Therefore, staff's research and technical knowledge of the unique conditions facing Portland were instrumental in determining the direction of the Portland Plan draft.

Restraints on Public Participation

As the literature describes, a lack of resources can significantly hinder the participation process. In the case of the Portland Plan, staff lacked the following resources: staff capacity to host an increased number of public events; ability to “complete extensive and comprehensive outreach to all non-geographic groups” (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 20); time and capacity to engage typically underrepresented communities of Portland through special events (CPBPS, 2010a, p. 24); inability to “produce frequently updated meaningful materials for specific community groups” (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 12); and limited resources to train staff to incorporate social media in public involvement. Unfortunately, this focused the process on simply telling as many people as possible about the development of the Portland Plan. While education can empower citizens, it is important that they feel as if their input is being used by policy-makers to effectively further the process.

Also, researchers discuss the difficulty in attracting enough interest and participation among the public and stakeholders, especially in the long run. Public participation literature cites the inability of many citizens to devote the time, energy, and resources to spending time in public meetings (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Interestingly, even though Portland Plan staff held workshops on the weekends and in the evenings, this did not increase attendance. This can be attributed to various causes, and a limitation of this study is that the author was unable to establish contact with citizens in Portland to determine why this was the case. In the case of the Portland Plan, staff

identified a decrease in the number of survey responses during the final two phases, as Portlanders received less new information and raised issues of transparency regarding the use of their input in Portland Plan Draft development. It appears that Portlanders felt fatigue about the process, and became more interested in the product than the process in the later phases.

Critique: Transparency

Throughout the Portland Plan public participation process, Portlanders displayed an increasing demand for timely results of their participation. According to the Public Participation Progress Reports, citizens became frustrated with the level of transparency related to how citizen input was incorporated into the final draft. Simply providing Portlanders with quantitative results of the surveys did little to help them understand how this information was used and reviewed by Portland Plan staff. Additionally, Portlanders were given little time to review the Proposed Draft once it was released and the public lacked the time to comment and respond to any issues or concerns that they had with the document. It is understandable that this process was time-consuming for staff, but in order to establish “good” public participation, it is important to facilitate, interact, and connect with the public in a meaningful way.

Critique: Equal Representation of the Public

Overall, the results of the analysis support the literature in that equal representation of the public was one of the most significant hurdles facing the process of citizen involvement in the Portland Plan. Caucasian Portlanders dominated many aspects of the Portland Plan process, including representation at workshops and a higher survey response rate than any other demographic group. While staff translated Portland Plan informational brochures and surveys into four languages (Spanish,

Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese), budget constraints and the inability to host non-English characters on the website meant that information in languages other than English was not made available on the Portland Plan website (CPBPS, 2010b, p. 14). It should be noted that the demographic breakdown of survey response rates and workshop attendance mirrors the demographic breakdown of the city of Portland (Appendix B). However, based on the Public Participation Progress Reports, it was evident throughout the Portland Plan process that there were gaps in outreach that could not be overcome during this approximately two-year process.

Throughout the Portland Plan process, staff did become more sensitive to the needs of minority populations, due in large part to their collaboration with the Diversity and Civic Leadership Program (DCL). Respecting the customs, values, informal information channels, and language of different groups is a step in the right direction for greater inclusion of minority groups in the decision-making process. It is important to mention that much of the work done by DCL member groups fulfilled the Informing and Consultation rungs of Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation, but did little to further the extent of citizens' power in development of the Plan Draft.

Extent of Citizens' Power in Development of the Portland Plan Draft

On their website, Portland Plan staff assert, "Unlike past plans, the Portland Plan focuses not just on places but also on people. This broader and more inclusive approach, as well as its core principle of equity, is what will distinguish the Portland Plan from others of its kind" (Portland Plan, 2013). Through this research, it became evident to this author that "citizen power" was not the goal of citizen participation in the development of the Portland Plan. Arnstein believes that citizens begin to have influence in decision-making as they serve on public boards or planning committees

where they hold citizen veto power or final approval power. However, these options were not available to Portlanders, as the approaches and techniques used for citizen participation were primarily to inform the public, while also gathering their input. This education is an important step in developing policy. Even though citizens did not ultimately wield the type of citizen power that Arnstein reveres, Portland Plan staff made significant, concerted efforts to educate and inform the public, and involve them in the draft development plan as much as their resources would allow.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

The study described in this paper offers an interesting look at how the public participation techniques utilized in the creation of the Portland Plan correspond to rungs on Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation. All of the approaches correspond to the rungs Informing or Consultation, or a combination of the two. While Arnstein believes that these rungs do little to further the extent of citizen power in the decision-making process, it is important to consider the context of the Portland Plan process and the public participation goals that the City of Portland was trying to achieve through the creation of this broad visioning document.

One of the questions that this paper sought to resolve is whether the city of Portland can be considered a model for their integration of public participation into the planning process. On one hand, the public participation techniques utilized in this process were primarily to inform the public, while also gathering their input. No effort was made to involve public participation techniques that correspond to higher rungs on Arnstein's Ladder, thereby facilitating partnerships and delegating power to citizens. However, in this author's view, development of a broad visioning document does not necessarily call for such high levels of citizen power. For the most part, Portland Plan staff was able to gather the information that was needed from the public in order to perform the technical task of creating the Portland Plan draft document.

Therefore, it is the conclusion of this author that Portland can be considered a model for their use of public participation techniques that fall within the rungs of Informing and Consultation. Critiques can certainly be made regarding the unequal representation of the public throughout the process, or the lack of transparency of the

data collected, but these problems are not unique to Portland and their specific process of public engagement. There are many techniques available that can reach citizens in new and creative ways, but those in power must be willing to listen and provide open channels of communication between politicians and their constituencies.

As Haruta and Radu (2010) state, policy-makers must “determine whether the citizens are actually willing to act in the name of their rightful opportunity to be involved in policy making and whether the administrators are willing to react and positively respond to the public’s suggestions” (p. 80). Channels of communication go both ways, and citizens are more likely to participate in the decision making process if they feel as if their voice is heard and regarded by those in power (Verba, 1967). Working with limited resources, Portland Plan staff used a variety of public participation techniques to gather input from Portlanders. It is important to mention that Portland Plan staff remained acutely aware of their shortcomings and lessons learned throughout this process, which can influence the future initiatives in Portland that seek to incorporate public participation at a similar level.

Additional research regarding public participation will always be important to more fully understand the most effective ways to involve citizens in the decision-making process. Specifically, Portland will need to focus on reaching a greater number of minority citizens through informal channels of participation, such as church group or community meetings. Policy makers must also be sensitive to changing technology, as internet-based public participation tools, including online surveys, must be developed for the specific population that is being involved in the decision-making process.

Quite simply, public participation is important. By involving citizens in the growth and development processes that shape their communities, planners and policy makers are building relationships that strengthen communities and provide legitimacy for the democratic process on which our country was founded. While the process of citizen engagement is not easy, when executed effectively, it is rewarding not only for the people involved, but for the people yet to come.

Notes

¹ It is important to mention that “democracy is not an all-or-nothing affair...; it is a matter of degree, of the extent to which the principles of popular control and political equality are realized in practice” (Jones & Platt, 1994, p. 14). For example, “A key feature of democracy is the ability of citizens to organize and communicate with each other independently of the government, essential if they are to bring their continuing influence to bear upon government policy, and to gain effective redress in the event of any maladministration by public officials or the government’s agencies” (Jones & Platt, 1994, p. 14). In a democracy, the right to vote is one of the most important examples of public participation as the right to vote is not limited by a person’s wealth or race. In a direct democracy, the people represent themselves and vote directly on laws and policies, while a representative democracy is characterized by the election of representatives that create and implement public policy for the people. While representatives are “elected” in an oligarchy, they serve as a small, powerful class where people are given few opportunities to change policy and influence decision-making.

² According to Transparency International, “open governments” exemplify the following characteristics: politicians prioritize the public interest; democratic institutions are in place and active; and public interests, rather than private interests, dictate policy” (“Corruption by topic: Politics and Government,” 2012).

³ Rydin and Pennington (2000) write, “Public participation is conceptualized as a collective action problem, where non-cooperative behavior (such as shirking and free-riding) may impact on the effectiveness of the process” (p. 157). When incentives face individual decision makers, “it is rational for individuals to free-ride on the participation efforts of others, reaping the benefits without incurring the costs” (Rydin & Pennington, 2000, p. 157).

⁴ According to Rydin and Pennington (2000), “Used in its broadest sense, the term ‘capital’ refers to those goods or ideas with which something else can be created or established. Social capital, therefore, constitutes the pre-existing elements of social structures, which social actors can use to obtain their objectives” (p. 161).

⁵ Gerometta, Häussermann, and Longo provide three core dimensions to explain the term ‘social innovation’: “the satisfaction of human needs (content dimension); changes in social relations especially with regard to governance (process dimension); and an increase in the socio-political capability and access to resources (empowerment dimension)” (Gerometta, Häussermann & Longo, 2005, p. 2007).

APPENDIX A
 EXAMPLE TABLE FROM THE PHASE 1 PORTLAND PLAN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
 PROGRESS REPORT: EVALUATION OF APPROACHES UTILIZED IN PHASE 1 OF
 PORTLAND PLAN OUTREACH

Table 2. Evaluation of Approaches Utilized in Phase I of Portland Plan Outreach

Opportunities	Limitations	Lessons for Next Phases
Approach: Workshops		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attracts people who are civically engaged ▪ Workshops held around city and at different times make it more convenient for people to attend because there are multiple choices ▪ Postcard announcement of workshops to all single-family households, and other marketing communications efforts drew larger than normal crowds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hard to draw people who are new to/uncomfortable with public processes ▪ Hard to draw minority, lower income and non-English speaking populations; need to build relationships, communicate why folks should be involved and provide needed amenities e.g. interpretation services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertise earlier and to diverse audiences for broader participation ▪ Offer interpretation and childcare services, and make sure that advertising highlights this availability ▪ Hold more workshops on Saturdays (and potentially on Sunday afternoons) to enable people to attend who cannot attend evening sessions ▪ Locate workshops along transit routes and advertise accordingly ▪ Have hosts who can invite and accompany newcomers

Retrieved from the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability
 Portland Plan: Public Participation Phase 1 Progress Report (2010)

APPENDIX B
 DEMOGRAPHICS: PORTLAND VS. PHASE 1 WORKSHOP ATTENDEES AND
 SURVEY RESPONSES

Demographics: Portland vs. Phase 1 Workshop Attendees and Survey Responses

Race	Population Percentage: Portland	Population Percentage: Workshop Attendance	Population Percentage: Survey Responses
White	76%	75%	83%
African American	6%	2%	1%
Asian	7%	4%	2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	1%	<1%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	9%	6%	1%
Two or more racial categories	5%	4%	5%

Retrieved from the City of Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability Portland Plan:
 Public Participation Phase 1 Progress Report (2010)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Shayna Gershman was born in 1990 in Albany, NY, but she grew up in Coral Springs, Florida. She attended the University of Florida, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in political science with a minor in urban and regional planning. During her undergraduate career, she was an active member of the university's fencing team.

Shayna started her graduate coursework in urban and regional planning in 2010, and became a full-time graduate student in January 2012. She was a graduate research assistant in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, and a teaching assistant for the Planning Research Design course. Shayna graduated with her Master of Arts degree in urban and regional planning in August 2013. She hopes to work in the planning field, focusing on community engagement in the planning process.