

## **Community Vision and Strategic Decisions: The Case of City of Portland in Region of Oregon (U.S.A)**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the recent experience of case of the city of Portland in Oregon (Usa) exploring the process of community vision and strategic decision. The comprehensive community visioning with integrated strategy shows an increasing importance for the strategic planning.*

*This study focuses on some relevant questions:*

*Q1: How is the community vision and strategic decision of the city of Portland?*

*Q2: What are the lessons of this interesting case for other communities, cities and regions?*

*The paper intends to answer these questions. It offers a unique insight on the importance of the process to determine the community vision and the strategic decision. To our knowledge, before of this work, in international literature there are neither studies considering the case of strategic long-range planning on the city of Oregon, nor studies on its system of control. The main aim of this study is to bridge this gap, by analyzing this original and interesting case.*

### **1. Introduction**

Some studies have shown how the methodology of strategic planning (Porter M.1985,1991,1996,1989), Hax, Majluf 1996; Freeman, 1984; Mintzberger, 1994). This paper explores the challenges and the opportunities of a community vision in a long-range planning. Although some there are models of strategy (Senge 1990.1999; Pilotti 2005; Coda 1988; Grant 2016; Porter 1980,1985,1989,1991,1996; Riva 2007, Collins and Montgomery, 2005) only few papers are written to determine and analyze the system compressive community vision in long range planning. With this in mind, this paper attends to answer some relevant questions:

*Q1: How is the community vision and strategic decision of the city of Portland?*

*Q2: What are the lesson of this case for other community, city and region?*

*To answer the first question, we analyse the case of the city of Portland in Oregon. To answer the second question, we study the process of Oregon community vision. It represents one decisive tool to guide the land policy and to promote the integration of a local economic system in wider networks of innovation and production. The aim is to highlight the experiences of the excellence and to study the key elements of the process of community visioning in a long-range planning. Using a case study of Portland, the city in Oregon, the paper aims at exploring the following issues: What is the role of community vision in long range planning? What are the best methods and the phases of long range planning? How to manage sets of processes for community vision? The outline of this paper proceeds as follows. The second section provides some theoretical background. The third section shows case of Portland. In the fourth section, there is a discussion and the last section concludes.*

### **2.Theoretical background and methodology**

## 2.1 Theoretical background

In this section some scientific paradigm (Kuhn, 1970) are described on the problems and research questions of this research. Porter (1989) the diffusion of information systems allows to obtain information on the status of all processes including through internet - intranet systems. In addition, the public enterprises will no longer be present paper documents, but the entire communication will be in digital format. The importance of the processes for planning is to create information systems that encode: excellent practices, best solutions, methods of problem solving, practices used in other areas Senge (1990,1999) describe the model of system dynamic is relevant to study the evolution during the period. It is essential that the public body enhances citizen-customer satisfaction with various methods, and develop adequate procedures for will collect and use such information. Slack et al. (1992), the strategy should be compatible with the resources The resource requirements of some strategy must be consistent and compatible with the availability of the firm, relative to the amount and type of resources. Resources must not only consider financial ones, but also the skills and technical expertise. The implementation of a strategy requires an appropriate organizational structure and management systems; changes in strategy may also require changes in the organizational structure and management systems.

Kaplan and Norton (1992, 1998, 2001, 2003, 2004) describe the methodology of the balanced-scorecard is based on a set of prospects for the analysis of the results. This methodology is applied successfully in some city (such as the City of Charlotte in the United States, the city of Brisbane in Australia). The use of strategy maps is used to represent the relations of cause and effect between the various dimensions of analysis. Also, the pyramid of performance (allows you to analyze some of the dimensions of the public in accordance with analysis of the interconnections. From the vision, it is possible to determine the elements and actions to get the desired results. The process of implementation of the balanced scorecard is divided into several stages. Essentially is useful to develop a shared vision of the mission policy by the political core of the leaders of the public and to facilitate the implementation.

Mintzberg, (1994) describe the prospective is of planning is medium-long range. For this approach, every project of innovation is measured through the use of KPIs (key performance indicators) that can be correlated with the various areas of achievement. The purpose of the model is to measure the KPIs and control. The phases of implementation of the method KPIs are based on the selection of the processes to be monitored: it is important to identify the processes most relevant and important. You can assign a scale to define the various processes. Identification of KPIs: they can be divided into four broad areas: general indicators, cost indicators, quality indicators, service indicators. After the definition of KPI is important check robustness and evaluate a number of indicators.

Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), Nonaka et al. (2000) describe how organizational memory can be used to improve processes and procedures current or to train future employees and support them in decision-making. It is important to analyze the processes, to ask why they developed certain processes. Some Information systems are used to simplify the control of business processes through the analysis of their performance. Atkinson et al. (1997) describe the role of stakeholder approach is in direct connection with is a useful tool for the public authority to evaluate the results of policies. Sveiby (1998) analyzes the business navigator considers a number of factors such as the financial aspect, as customers, of human resources, processes, renewal and innovation. The intangible asset monitor is based on three dimensions: growth and innovation, efficiency, risk. Ames (1999), the governments can improve their performance in the processes through to the management of processes and the knowledge which is to create, receive, store, transfer and apply knowledge on the processes carried out. the processes of innovation and social adjustments are important: (the respect of the environment, the health and the safety, the labor relations, the community relations). Bryson (1999) describe how there are several models to improve the outcomes in a strategic community vision in a long-range planning analysis of the stages of planning and strategic control in PA; methods to improve the efficiency and productivity for the improvement of the services provided; analysis of patterns of self-assessments, the matrix of priorities and action plans for improvement and monitoring them; the construction of a management dashboard for monitoring activities. the development of benchmarking the quality of services provided to citizens by government to improve the practices of measurement and analysis on the satisfaction of the same recipients; Covey (2004) analyze the key issue is the role of proactivity and the strong culture The real problem lies in the operational mechanisms of verification of the results and allocation of resources.

The strategy is not a regulation, a plan, a set of programmed instructions, but rather it is the unifying theme that directs and makes consistent decisions taken by an organization or a person. Planning must take into account the possibility of satisfying all stakeholders in harmony with the environment. Collins and Montgomery (2005) analyze how the strategy is the foundation of objective, including policies and programs aimed at achieving these goals. Determination of long-term goals and implementation of policies and allocation of resources is necessary to achieve those objectives. Currently an increasing strategic importance is taking on the role of collaboration between different actors for development. He analyzes how the external and internal analysis permit to understand the situation and the problems. In the literature, there are some authors that believe the predominant internal analysis while others prefer the external analysis (Riva, 2007, 2010). Freeman et al. (2010) analyze the variables more important are service quality and the customer satisfaction of the citizen (Freeman et al. 2010); the relationship with the community, relationships with suppliers (collaboration). It is possible to determine the level of business performance. Relationships with suppliers (collaboration), measurable through the joint analysis of the projects, the level of vertical integration. Proponents of this model in part criticized the methodology of the balance scorecard James et al. (2015) study the organizing principle for sustainability is sustainable development, which includes the four interconnected domains: ecology, economics, politics and culture. Sustainability studies of sustainable development; the three pillars of sustainability are: environmental, society, economy. Grant (2016) describe how the data are analyzed to provide information about: a) satisfaction-dissatisfaction of the citizen-customer, b) compliance with the requirements. Each strategy includes an overall goal and supporting objectives, guiding long-term policies and a five-year action. The policies and actions in each strategy are grouped into strategy elements. Actions and policies in each strategy element share common themes.

## 2.2 Methodology

The empirical method of this analysis follows the logic of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), developing a case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1989). The techniques of strategic analysis oriented towards the questions which must be answered in order to develop a strategy and prepare a scheme to collect information for develop a proactive vision (Covey 2004; Grant, 2016). The key feature of analytical techniques based on scientific theories is the ability to solve complex problems and to select alternatives based on well-defined criteria. It is important that the objectives set by the management of the public are measurable and comparable and consistent with the quality policy and ensure the continual improvement.

## 3 The case of Portland

The city of Portland is in Oregon in United States of America. The Portland Plan (2012) uses more than 20 agency partners and thousands of residents, businesses and prosperous, healthy, educated and equitable. It provides a structure for aligning budgets and projects across numerous public agencies (Ames, 1999). The Portland Plan is based on two years of research on Portland's history and existing conditions, as well as analysis of local, national and global trends. The plan is based on facts, with objective measures and numerical targets for control. These facts and targets were discussed among thousands of Portlanders together with local and national experts provided additional perspective. City staff of the plan and partners searched for the best models and ideas.

The Portland Plan has some special aspects:

- a) the Portland plan focuses on a core set of priorities: prosperity, education, health and equity;
- b) better partnerships will drive change;
- c) strong civic infrastructure is essential;
- d) the Portland plan is a plan for people, not just land use.

The plan focuses were on guiding policies with an eye towards the year 2035, and a five-year action plan started.

The Portland Plan focuses on a core set of priorities: prosperity, education, health and equity.

The Portland Plan structure has three integrated strategies that provide a foundation for alignment, collective action and shared success:

- *thriving educated youth;*
- *economic Prosperity and affordability;*
- *healthy connected city.*

### A) *Thriving Educated Youth*

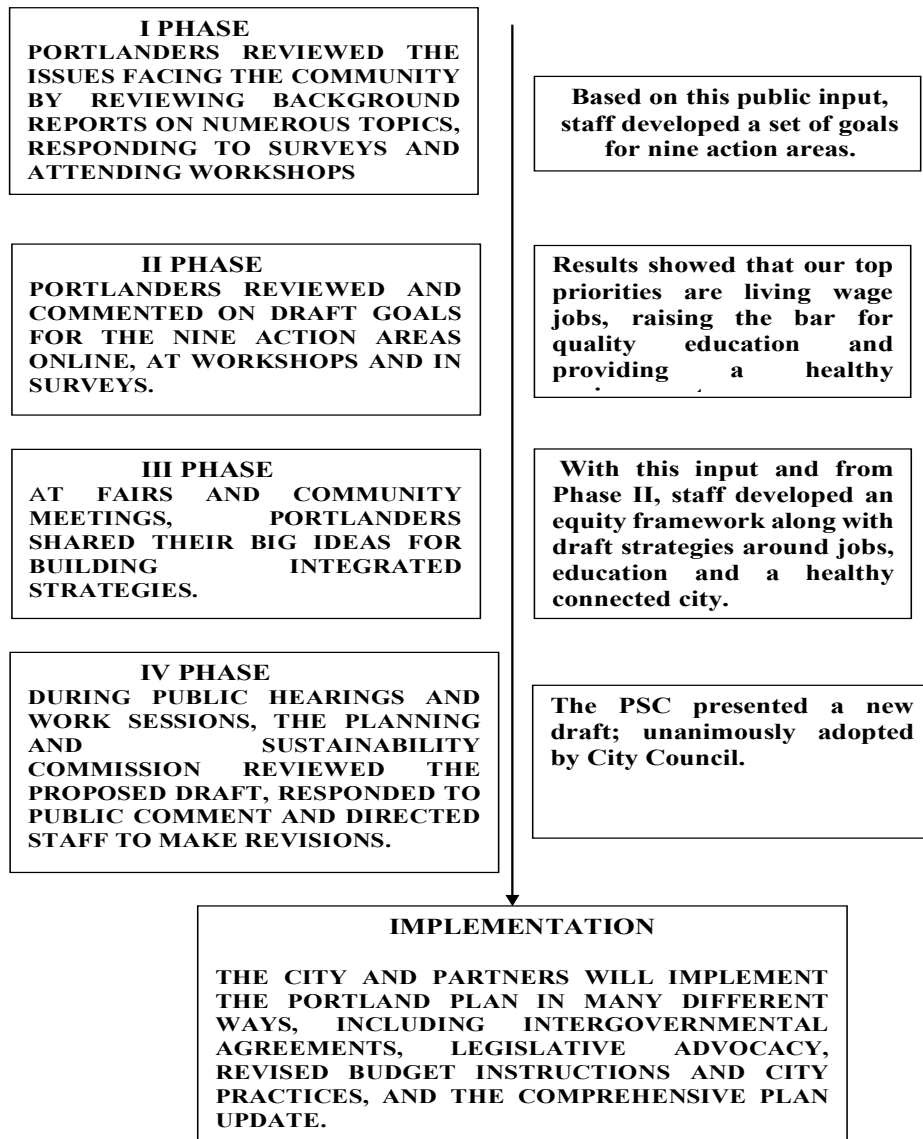
- A culture of high expectations and achievement for all Portland youth

- Shared ownership for student success
- Neighborhoods and communities that support youth
- Facilities and programs that meet 21st century challenges and opportunities

**B) Economic Prosperity and Affordability**

- Regional traded sector job growth
- Public and private urban innovation
- Trade and freight hub
- Growing employment districts
- Neighborhood business vitality
- Access to housing
- Education and job training
- Household economic security
- Decisions that benefit health and safety
- Vibrant neighborhood centers
- Connections for people, places, water and wildlife

The Portland Plan includes actions for the near-term as well as the next 25 years to help Portland:



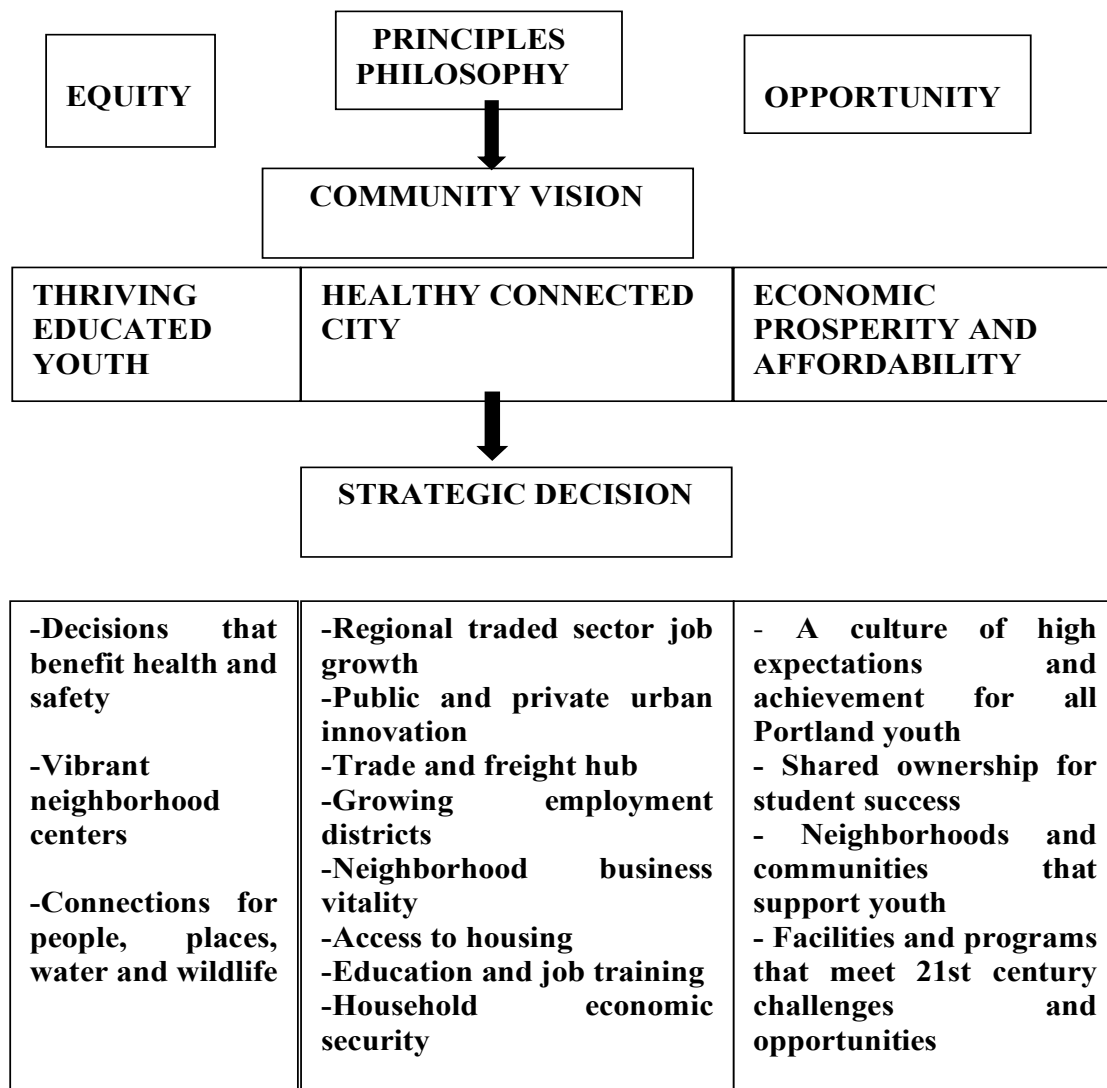
**Figure 3: Portland plan phases and the role of community visioning for the future of Community Visioning in Long Range Planning**

The plan’s goals and objectives provide big picture statements about what the strategies are designed to achieve. The purpose of the Guiding Policies is to help the City of Portland and partners to make long-term investments and budget decisions. The policies also provide the direction for the City’s Comprehensive Plan, the state-mandated land use, transportation and capital projects plan, as well as other local plans.

*C) Healthy Connected City*

- grow the economy and add more and better jobs.
- create housing and neighborhoods that are affordable for more Portlanders.
- reduce disparities in health, income and education.
- improve graduation rates and get people ready for jobs.
- improve the health of kids, adults and families.

This plan will help the City and partner agencies to work smarter and more efficiently towards these priorities. It does not assume there will be significantly more resources in the future.

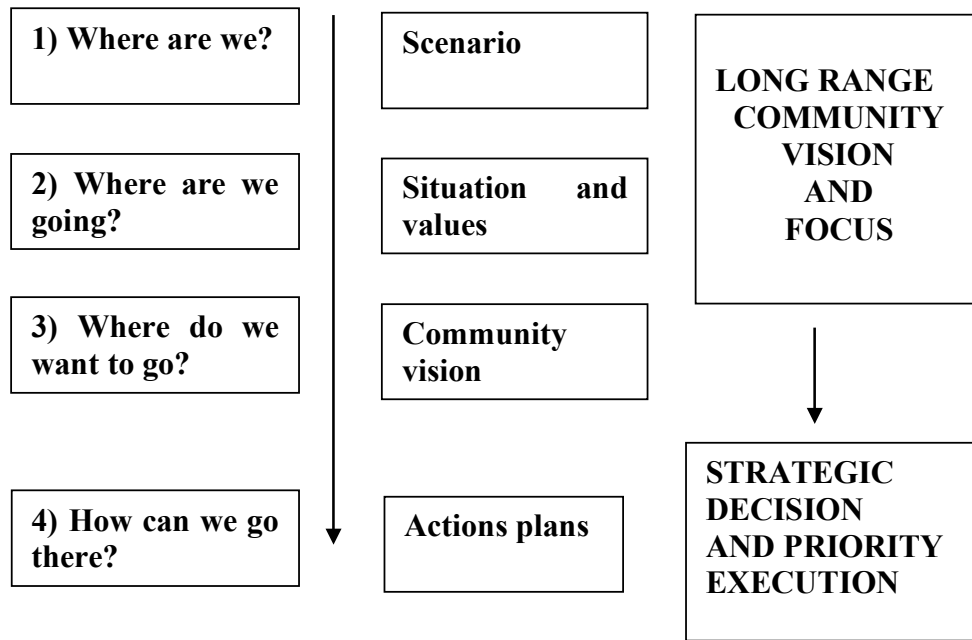


**Figure 2: Portland plan as a set of integrated strategies**

A competitive and innovative economy will drive success. Portland needs to maintain its role as a competitive West Coast trade gateway, support the expansion of local traded sector firms that provide stable living wage jobs and build on local expertise in sustainable technology industries.

**4. Discussion**

The Portland Plan is a plan for people. The Portland Plan’s approach is different from many past plans. The key question of the plan is: How are Portlanders faring today and how can we improve their lives and businesses over the next 25 years? It started with a focus on people, not land use. The Tomorrow city will be shaped by growth and diversity. Over the last 30 years, Portland has gained more than 200,000 residents (from 366,000 to 584,000). Most of this growth occurred in the 1980s and 1990s, when Portland annexed large portions of east Portland and some additional areas in west Portland. Portland’s diverse communities have not had, and many still do not have, equitable access to opportunities to advance their well-being. Advancing equity must be at the core of our plans for the future.



**Figure 3: Conceptual framework of Community vision and strategic decision**

The specific objective for 2035 in thriving educated youth are:

- 1) Success at each stage of growth:
- 2) High school graduation rate: Disparities in graduation rates among youth of color, immigrants and refugees, youth with disabilities and youth in poverty are eliminated.
- 3) Post-secondary participation and success:
- 4) Healthy neighborhoods:
- 5) Strong systems and partnerships:
- 6) Wellness:
- 7) Youth voice:
- 8) Learning environments:
- 9) Stable programs:
- 10) Lifelong learning:

The mission is providing businesses with a skilled workforce and continuing to create an environment that is an innovative urban laboratory.

**5. Conclusion**

The Oregon’s case might contribute to on community vision and strategic decisions. (Freeman and Strand 2015)  
 With reference to the first question (How is the community vision and strategic decision of the city of Portland?), we discover:

First, the public agencies that operate within Portland invest in activities related to prosperity, education, health and equity. quality education, parks, safe and affordable transportation choices and reliable energy sources. Portland Plan emphasizes integrated strategies with actions that align efforts and investments, have multiple benefits and improve efficiency. the Portland plan doesn't apply traditional bureaucratic silos. *Second*, Portland (Ames, 1999) is that organization in different phases of the Portland Plan is being developed through a four-phase process:

- a) analyze of the facts (where are we now?);
- b) setting direction (where do we want to go?);
- c) strategy building (how do we get there?);
- d) draft and final plan (what do you think of it?).

Portland's district presents actions and policies that respect the unique cultures, histories and the natural environment. The answer at the first question are consistent with past studies (Freeman 2010, Freeman and Strand 2015; Prahalad and Hamel 1994; Covey, 2004, Minzberger 1994 Riva and Pilotti 2017 e,f)

*For what concerns the second question (Q2: What are the lessons of this interesting case for other communities, cities and regions?), we discover:*

*First*, the strategic planning permits the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses based on a number of assumptions and it is important of *mapping the role of all stakeholders* (Freeman 2010) and *understand their contributions* about the strategic lines and relative projects correlated.

*Second*, the strategic vision should be linked to the *culture and value system* (Porter 1992; Mintzberger, 1987; Camagni 1996; Coda 1988). The insights from Oregon's experience might contribute to better understanding of the correct process of strategic plan for a city. It is important to understand the main functions and objectives for improving the quality of life and health, promoting the orderly development of the area, ensuring the safety and protection of the physical and cultural identity of the territory, promoting the improvement of environmental quality and social architecture of urban land (Riva 2009).

The answers at the second question are consistent with some relevant theory (Porter 1992; 1998, 2000; Camagni 1996; Farneti 1995; Pilotti 2011; Collins 2001; Riva and Pilotti 2017 a,b,c,d,e,f; Coda 1988). The results confirm about the usefulness of strategic proactive vision in planning for sustainability.

**The original contribution of this paper and the production of new knowledge in the field are:**

- a) to describe and propose a new original method of long term strategy and control;
- b) to give a new practical framework for long term strategy and control.

The limit of this study is to analyze only one case. Future research can study the impact of strategic vision on sustainability in different community and city. In summary, the Oregon case give a particular example of excellent city which improves persistently also for the passion for improvement

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