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16. Abstract

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Consequently, this report presents alternative management approaches and public interaction techniques designed to provide the Texas Highway Department
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A STUDY OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN HIGHWAY PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

by

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Research Report 148-5
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The contents of this report reflect the views of the author who is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the information presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of the Texas Highway Department or the Federal Highway Administration. This report does not constitute a standard, specification, or regulation.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to survey the literature and present a synthesis and analysis of concepts and techniques applicable to public participation activities in the Texas Highway Department.

Being involved and interacting with the people of Texas has always been a primary method used by the Texas Highway Department to determine the transportation desires and needs of the state. Having residency offices in almost every county enables Texas Highway Department personnel to achieve widespread and continued contact with large numbers of people. The district and Austin offices represent additional sources of contact. Every citizen of Texas has the right to appear before the Texas Highway Commission to make his views known at the highest level. In fact, delegations of interested citizens and officials are frequently the initiators of requests to the Commission for authorization of desired projects. In addition to these numerous interactions between the citizenry and the Texas Highway Department, the formalized public hearing procedures for years have served as official points of entry for public involvement in the highway decision making process. Structurally and operationally, responsibility for public participation activity is divided between the main office and the district offices. The new

personnel and expanded responsibilities called for by recent federal requirements have created a need for information regarding how main office and district office responsibilities can best be fulfilled.

Consequently, this report presents alternative management approaches and public interaction techniques designed to provide the Texas Highway Department with the capability of responding flexibly to varying public participation needs. In addition, research and theory pertinent to the implementation of participation techniques are surveyed and analyzed.

IMPLEMENTATION STATEMENT

Under the requirements of the Action Plan, public involvement activities are an integral part of systems and project planning. This report will be beneficial to: (1) main office personnel responsible for establishing guidelines for conducting public involvement; and (2) field personnel responsible for implementing the Action Plan at its operational level.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Texas Highway Department (hereinafter referred to as the THD) currently operates under two U.S. FHWA Policy and Procedure Memoranda that relate to public participation. The first of these, dated January, 1969, is entitled Public Hearings and Location Approval.[1] The more recent one is dated September, 1972 and is entitled Process Guidelines (Economic, Social, and Environmental Effects on Highway Projects).[2] The memorandum regarding public hearings (hereinafter identified as PPM 20-8) has the stated purpose of affording:

> . . . full opportunity for effective public participation in the consideration of highway location and design proposals by highway departments before submission to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. They provide a medium for free and open discussion and are designed to encourage early and amicable resolution of controversial issues that may arise.
>
> It provides for extensive coordination of proposals with public and private interests. In addition, it provides for a two-hearing procedure designed to give all interested persons an opportunity to become fully acquainted with highway proposals of concern to them and to express their views at other stages of a proposal's development when the flexibility to respond to these views still exists.[3]

The citations on the following pages follow the style of the Journal of the American Institute of Planners.

The THD follows the required procedures of PPM 20-8 and maintains an extensive file of hearing transcripts, legal notices and correspondence to document its compliance. The memorandum dealing with process guidelines (hereinafter identified as PPM 90-4) has the stated policy that:

> (1) Economic, social, and environmental effects be identified and studied early enough to permit analysis and consideration while alternatives are being formulated and evaluated.
>
> (2) Other agencies and the public be involved in project development early enough to influence technical studies and final decisions.
>
> (3) Appropriate consideration be given to reasonable alternatives, including the alternative of not building the project and alternative modes.[4]

One of the requirements for achieving compliance with PPM 90-4 was that the THD develop a document called the "Action Plan" which would describe the organization to be used and the procedures that would be followed in fulfilling the policy statements. The Action Plan was also required to conform to other Federal directives including PPM 20-8. Speaking directly about policy statement number (2), PPM 90-4 states:

> a. The President has directed Federal agencies to "develop procedures to insure the fullest practicable provision of timely public information and understanding of Federal plans and programs with environmental impact in order to obtain the views of interested parties" (Executive Order 11514). Policy and Procedure Memorandum 90-8 contains similar provisions. Interested parties should have adequate opportunities to express their views early enough

> in the study process to influence the course of studies as well as the actions taken. Information about the existence, status, and results of studies should be made available to the public throughout those studies. The required public hearings (PPM 20-8) should be only one component of the agency's program to obtain public involvement.[5]

The THD responded by producing a document entitled The Action Plan of the Texas Highway Department: Process Guidelines for Systems Planning and Project Development.[6] This document deals with all three policy matters discussed in PPM 90-4. The Action Plan was officially adopted by a Minute Order of the State Highway Commission and is now part of the operating procedure of the THD.[7]

Being involved and interacting with the people of Texas has always been a primary method used by the THD to determine the transportation desires and needs of the state. Having residency offices in almost every county enables THD personnel to achieve widespread and continued contact with large numbers of people. The district and Austin offices represent additional sources of contact. Every citizen of Texas has the right to appear before the Texas Highway Commission to make his views known at the highest level. In fact, delegations of interested citizens and officials are frequently the initiators of requests to the Commission for authorization of desired projects. In addition to these numerous interactions between the citizenry and the THD, the formalized public hearing procedures for years have served as official points of entry for public involvement in the highway decision making process.

Consequently, the emphasis placed upon public involvement in the Action Plan is an extension of rather than a departure from the historical relationship between the people of Texas and the THD. Chapter III of the Action Plan begins by stating that the goal of public involvement is to ensure that ideas from outside of the THD are given consideration from the early stages of the planning process and to ensure that the public is provided with information regarding projects with which they are concerned. It also states that flexibility in using public involvement procedures is a desirable characteristic for the THD.[8]

Structurally and operationally, responsibility for public participation activity is divided between the main office and the district offices. At the main office participation in systems planning is located in or coordinated through the Planning and Research Division, while participation in project planning is located in or coordinated through the Highway Design Division (see Figure 1). Responsibilities include:

> . . . monitoring of public involvement activities and project planning; reviewing reports and documentation; maintaining mailing lists for notification purposes; and coordinating environmental activities within the Divisions with those performed at the District level.[9]

At the district level a Public Affairs Officer is responsible for:

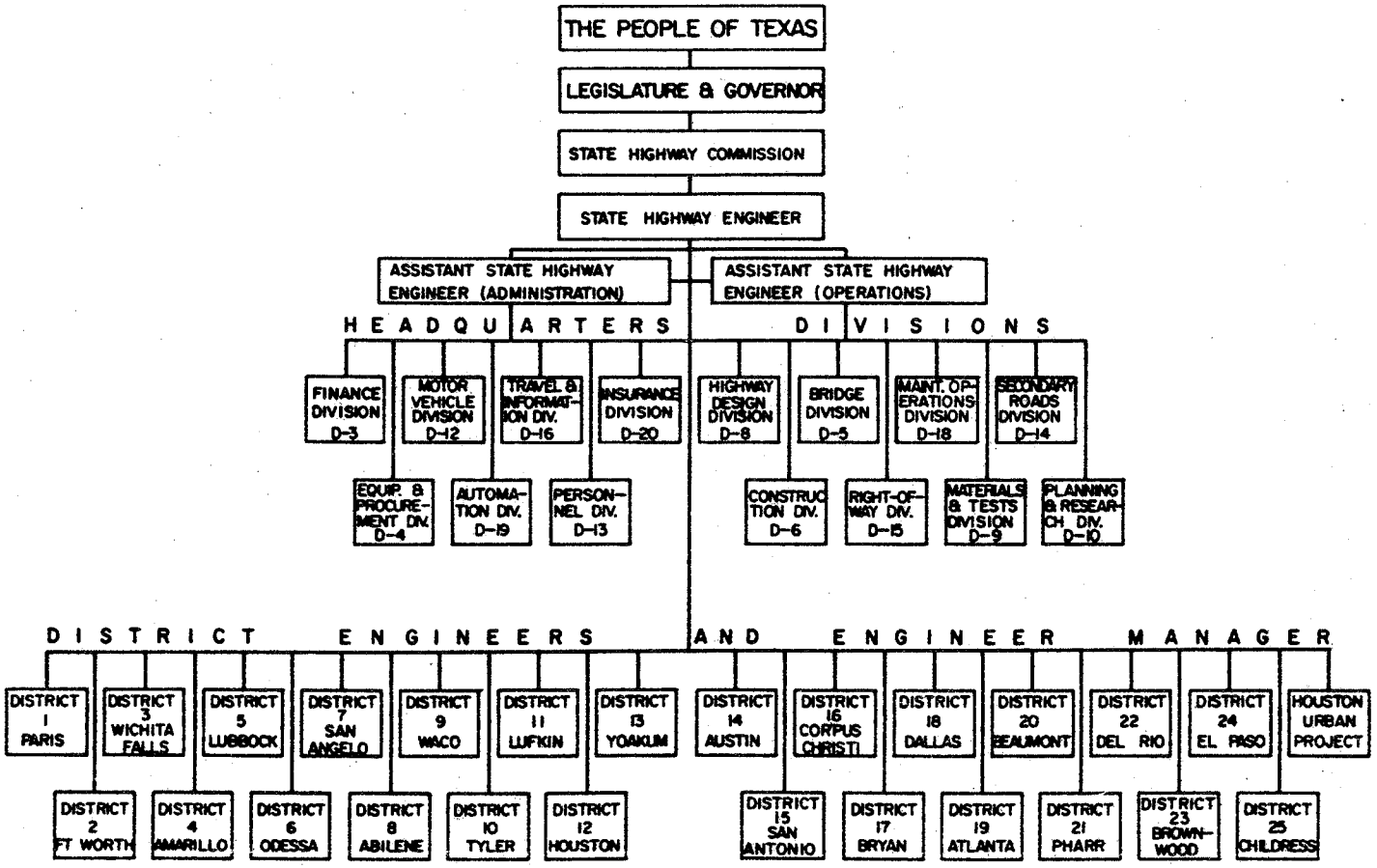


Figure 1. Texas Highway Department Organization Chart

Source: Texas Highway Department. The Action Plan of the Texas Highway Department: Process Guidelines for Systems Planning and Project Development, August, 1973, p.4.

> (1) preparing and disseminating information to the public explaining District activities; (2) receiving and organizing information from the public; (3) actively participating as a member of appropriate planning and project staffs; (4) assisting in formulating plans and preparing recommendations for the conduct of public involvement activities; and (5) assisting in maintaining the . . . file of individual projects . . . .
>
> These activities include the selection and implementation of appropriate techniques for use in the three phases of project development: (1) prehearing; (2) conduct of hearing; and (3) post-hearing. The Public Affairs Officer has primary responsibility for recommending and implementing the public involvement procedures . . .[10]

The degree of success the THD experiences in implementing citizen interaction depends heavily on the techniques used in prehearing, hearing and post-hearing activities and its understanding of the concepts and dynamics involved in participation.

Purpose of Study[11]

The new personnel and expanded responsibilities called for by the Action Plan have created a need for information regarding how main office and district office responsibilities best can be fulfilled. It is the intent of this report to survey the literature and present a synthesis and analysis of the concepts and techniques applicable to public participation activities in the THD. Alternative management approaches and public interaction techniques will be presented in order that the THD may be better able to respond with flexibility, a characteristic deemed desirable

by the Action Plan. It is not intended that the report serve as a step-by-step procedural manual, but rather as a general treatment of the subject matter.

Definition of Terms

Citizen Participation: A "citizen" is "a civilian as distinguished from a specialized servant of the state."[12] Since the focus of the study is on the involvement of people who are not state highway department employees, this is an operationally meaningful definition of the citizens whose participation or involvement will be examined. While it certainly is not impossible to raise issues that concern everybody, the definition can be narrowed to a more specific population. In this situation the relevant citizens are those to whom a measure of benefits or losses is about to be distributed, i.e. those people who will be affected socially, economically or environmentally by a highway project.[13]

Having suggested, in a general way, who takes part in citizen participation, the next task is to discuss how they take part. Participation is a combination of mental, emotional and physical activities. There is general agreement that it constitutes acts by the populace that are intended to have some kind of influence on those who have the authority to make decisions. The kind of influence discussed in the literature varies from giving

only general advice to allowing complete citizen autonomy in decision making.

One definition looks at participation "as mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation which encourages him to contribute to group goals and share responsibility in them."[14] Three points are important in this definition. Most importantly, a person is involved psychologically and has his ego invested in the outcome. Secondly, a person is motivated to contribute to a satisfactory resolution of the problem or opportunity. Finally, such involvement leads to a feeling of responsibility for the group's activities.

The crux of this definition is that citizens are integrally related to the resolution of an issue. Therefore, the simple giving of consent to a solution merely represents acquiescence and does not constitute citizen participation.[15]

The most often used forms of involvement include voting, attending hearings, writing letters, sending telegrams, calling elected officials and picketing. These mechanisms are used to provide the public with a wide variety of methods for challenging public decisions. Physical participation does not include what has been referred to as ceremonial or support activity where citizens take part by expressing approval or agreement for a decision made without their involvement.[16]

The literature is in general agreement that participation is an activity that takes place before a decision is made rather than after. In fact, a common mistake is to equate citizen participation with public relations. "'Public relations is concerned with selling the finished project, or with creating a climate favorable to its acceptance', a one-way process in which the citizen cannot be said to participate."[17]

To summarize, citizen participation describes the sector of the general public being considered as potential recipients in a distribution of costs and/or benefits that takes part in the decision by mentally, emotionally and physically interacting with decision makers before conclusions are reached.[18]

Notes

[1]U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, Policy and Procedure Memorandum 20-8, Transmittal 147, January 14, 1969.

[2]U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, Policy and Procedure Memorandum 90-4, Transmittal 259, September 21, 1972.

[3]U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, Policy and Procedure Memorandum 20-8, p. 1.

[4]U.S. Department of Transportation, FHWA, Policy and Procedure Memorandum 90-4, p. 2.

[5]Ibid., p. 4.

[6]Texas Highway Department. The Action Plan of the Texas Highway Department: Process Guidelines for Systems Planning and Project Development, August, 1973.

[7]Texas Highway Department. Minute Order, Minute Number, 67830, September 5, 1973.

[8]Texas Highway Department. Guidelines and Processes for Systems and Project Planning, pp. 11-14.

[9]Ibid., p. 12.

[10]Ibid.

[11]While there has been no conclusive empirical demonstration that increased public participation results in increased benefits, there are a number of popular factors favoring participation, including the following: (1) public involvement in public business is valued as an integral component of our political structure, (2) the THD historically has indicated its acceptance of public participation as a positive value by including citizen input in the determination of transportation needs, and (3) Department of Transportation directives require that the THD proceed on the basis that increased participation is beneficial.

[12]Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1967), p. 151.

[13]Melvin B. Mogulof, Citizen Participation: A Review and Commentary on Federal Policies and Practices (Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 1970), p. 2.

[14]Keith Davis, Human Relations at Work: The Dynamics of Organizational Behavior (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), p. 128.

[15]Ibid., pp. 128-129.

[16]Sidney Verba, "Democratic Participation," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, CCCLXXIII (September, 1967), 55.

[17]J. L. Grove and S. C. Proctor, "Citizen Participation in Planning," Journal of the Town Planning Institute (December, 1966), 414.

[18]Public Participation: This term will be used interchangeably with "citizen participation" and has the same meaning.

Public Interaction: A type of public participation in which officials and citizens engage in direct, two-way communication. This is as opposed to a situation in which citizens submit their recommendations to public officials without receiving immediate feedback.

Citizen Interaction: This term will be used interchangeably with "public interaction" and has the same meaning.

CHAPTER II

QUANTIFYING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Criteria for Participation in Decision Making

If public participation in decision making is deemed a desirable activity, how should it be applied? Robert Dahl has outlined three criteria by which to evaluate decision making situations in order to determine who should be allowed to participate and how much participation to allow. Dahl calls these criteria: 1) the Criterion of Personal Choice, 2) the Criterion of Competence and 3) the Criterion of Economy.[1]

By Criterion of Personal Choice he refers to the fact that individuals prefer to reserve decision making authority for themselves. When everyone acts in this manner, conflicts develop. There is no satisfactory way to distribute scarce resources, and those holding minority viewpoints lack protection from self-serving majorities. Since most people have minority viewpoints in one aspect or another of their lives, it is mutually advantageous to adopt certain agreements. These agreements are classified as either Mutual Guarantees, Consensual Associations or Autonomous Decisions and are intended to insure one's right to personal choice within defined limits.[2]

Mutual Guarantees are established in order to secure values (i.e. free speech) that individuals are not willing to entrust to

the discretion of others. Consensual Associations are formed in order that individuals with common values may associate for mutual protection from others. Finally, Autonomous Decisions are classified as those activities concluded in the private market place, an area of decision making in which it is presumed that individual decisions will rule. The willingness to accept these various forms of agreement is based on the belief that the benefits derived from the arrangement are greater than the costs incurred.[3]

The kind of interaction citizens have with decision makers is largely determined by the Criterion of Personal Choice. Because of the right to Personal Choice, citizens will attempt to protect their interests if they perceive them to be threatened by highway agency activity. Because this right has long been established and is highly valued, citizens are very sensitive to perceived attempts to reject their exercise of this privilege. Therefore, highway agencies must be very careful to avoid abrogating basic citizen rights when developing a project or even giving the impression that they are doing so. This can only be accomplished by being absolutely sure that all citizens who wish to do so are allowed to express themselves either individually or in groups and are listened to carefully and respectfully, especially when their neighborhoods and property are under consideration.

By applying the Criterion of Economy, alternative citizen participation mechanisms are evaluated in terms of resources used. For example, a key resource is time. Given that a particular public

involvement mechanism is satisfactory in terms of other factors, it must be satisfactory in terms of the time it consumes. This can be evaluated by determining the alternative uses of time which must be forgone. The amount of citizen participation desired is defined to be the point at which additional participation will no longer result in a net social gain.

The reverse of this concept has been experienced numerous times by highway agencies. Construction delays brought about by court cases, the San Antonio Park controversy for example,[4] and other forms of protest result in large cost increases that possibly could have been avoided by taking the time to engage in less costly pre-construction negotiation and community involvement procedures.[5]

Most people accept superior competence as a criterion for decision making in subject matters where significant differences in technical competence exist. Dahl calls this the Criterion of Competence. There are times when rational people willingly waive their personal right to make decisions in favor of someone more able, for example, relying on a doctor when sick. There are other times when, due to the fact that everyone is equally competent in an area or when the competence required involves value judgments, individuals insist on the right of personal choice.

The kind of interaction citizens have with decision makers is influenced by the kind of competence required and the way in which that competence is distributed among members of the population. Where competence in a given subject is evenly distributed among

those involved in an issue, there is room for direct participation through the exercise of Personal Choice. Where competence in a given subject is limited to a relatively small segment of the population, citizen participation in direct decision making is also more limited. In the latter instance citizen participation may be limited to: 1) deciding to invoke the Criterion of Competence; 2) selecting particular experts; and 3) exercising the right of final review of expert recommendations.[6]

In general, the public will not be inclined to interfere with technical decisions and findings. They are much more likely, however, to be interested in determining how these technical factors will be practically applied in their community.[7]

Levels of Citizen Participation

Very few people disagree with the idea that participation is a good thing. Many people, however, disagree about the amount of participation that is desirable. Often there is a great deal of confusion underlying these debates. This is due largely to the variety of attitudes and values that are not specified, but assumed to be generally understood and accepted. Reference to a commonly accepted citizen participation model would help alleviate some of the confusion. The use of a model's common categorizations and descriptions would channel discussion into areas of mutual comprehension. With a commonality of understanding the results should be more substantive than they have been in the past.

Coming to a clear understanding of the different levels of citizen participation would in no way insure that there would be agreement about the amount or kinds of participation that are desirable. It can be safely assumed that attitudes and values will continue to vary. However, a common operating base will help clarify the points of debate and illustrate the variety of ideological positions available. It will also provide a yardstick by which current and proposed THD programs can be measured and described. In this manner data can be accumulated and arranged to show a general picture of participation as it exists. As new participation programs are developed, this will suggest additional participation procedures from which to draw. In a comprehensive and continuing program, such as a highway project that creates a variety of citizen concerns, a typology will also help suggest the kind of participant structures that are most appropriate to the problem at hand.

Sherry Arnstein has drawn up a ladder of citizen participation that describes eight kinds of participation falling under the general categories of nonparticipation, tokenism, and degrees of citizen power (see Figure 2).[8] Unfortunately, Arnstein chose value-loaded labels that are somewhat distractive but her effort does provide a usable categorization of participation levels. It further describes the characteristics of each level and the pros and cons of its use.

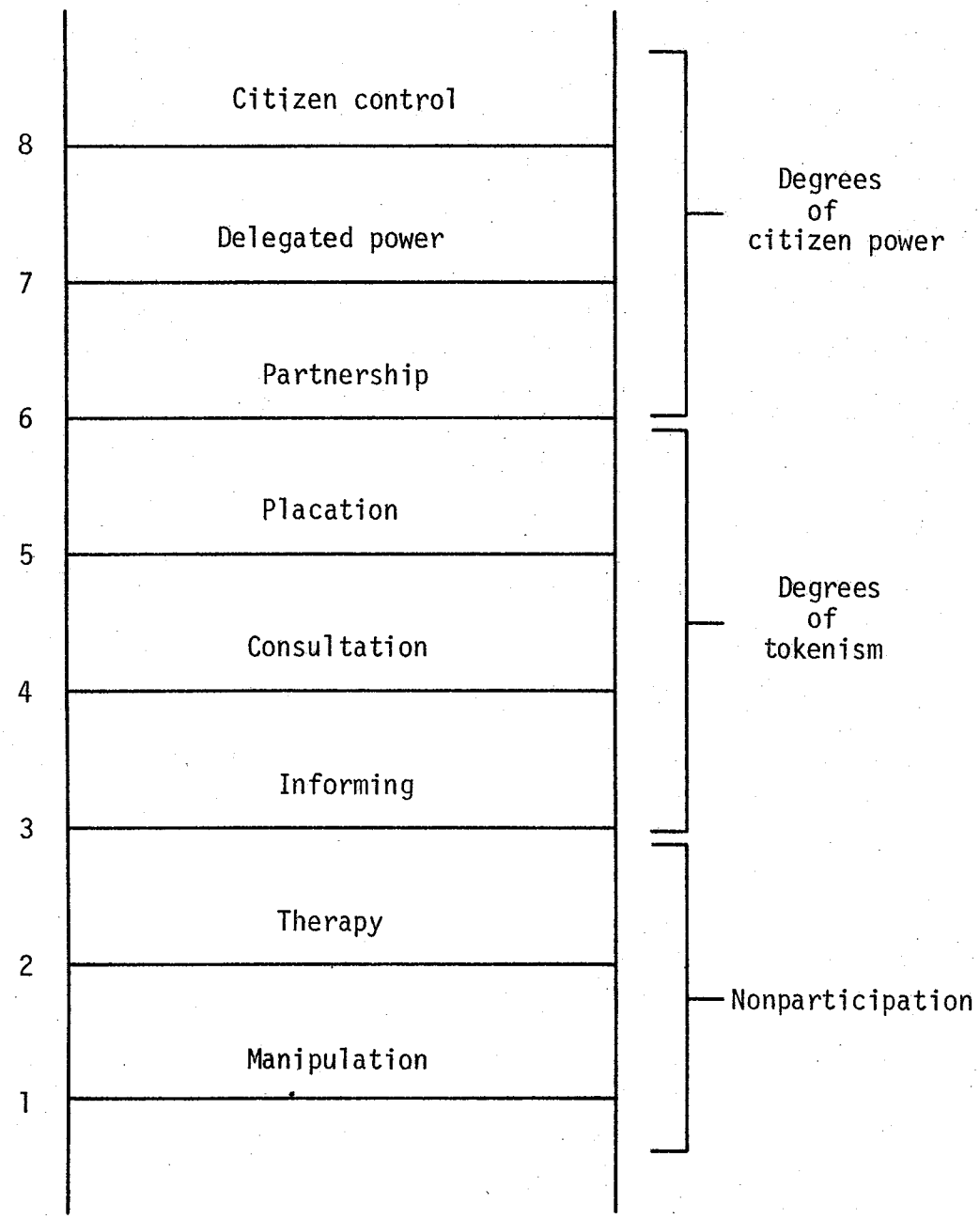


Figure 2. Eight Rungs on a Ladder of Citizen Participation

Source: Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXV, No. 4 (July, 1969), 217.

Nonparticipation

In the category of nonparticipation are the levels of manipulation and therapy. These levels are described as nonparticipating activities because they are really substitutes for actual participation. Rather than enabling people to get involved in planning and/or conducting programs, these activities are designed to provide a type of therapy for those who participate in order to educate or cure them.[9]

Citizen participation usually takes the form of manipulation when people are placed on advisory groups with the intent of educating them or engineering their consent to a proposal in which they have not been involved. Often, at this level, participants are really seen as public relations messengers who can be sold on a program and then sent out to convince others of the program's virtues. Participation used as a form of therapy is based on the assumption, "that powerlessness is synonymous with mental illness."[10] This approach is used most often when dealing with low income people who are judged to be poor because of their own incompetence. The emphasis is on dealing with the individual rather than allowing the individual to deal with those things around him that are contributing to his problems.[11]

Neither of these categories approaches participation from a positive viewpoint. They suggest a philosophy of elitism and deny basic principles of participatory democracy. Furthermore, they make

people mad. The belief that highway departments conduct these kinds of participant activities could inspire neighborhood confrontations. The rhetoric emanating from low income neighborhoods threatened by other socioeconomic factors constantly reflects a perception of this approach to participation and a willingness to combat it. Consequently, different levels of participation may be more appropriate.

Degrees of Tokenism

In the category of tokenism are the levels of informing, consultation, and placation. Informing and consultation are considered to be token participation because they allow participants to listen to and speak about issues under consideration but do not provide means to insure that their views are given serious consideration. Placation is considered a higher form of tokenism because it allows participants to advise decision makers but still reserves the right of decision making to those officially in charge.[12]

The informing level is the first at which any serious steps toward participation are taken. By giving citizens information about a program and their duties and options regarding that program, real power to participate is being provided. Too often it is only potential power because there is no viable mechanism for feedback, and therefore, no way for citizens to exercise their power. The informing level of participation is generally practiced by providing information through the news media and the distribution of printed

material. It also occurs in meetings when those officiating provide information but do not interact in any meaningful fashion with those in the audience.[13]

Consultation can be a significant part of meaningful participation. But soliciting the opinions of others is of limited significance if those opinions are not taken into account in the final analysis. Generally, consultation is practiced by taking attitude surveys, conducting neighborhood meetings and holding public hearings. There can be a critical weakness in this approach. In conducting surveys, meetings or hearings, the information discussed may not be related to all alternative choices. People may be asked if they are for or against a particular decision without consideration being given to how they might feel about a decision relative to other alternatives. For example, they are asked if they are for or against choice A, or whether they would prefer choice A, B or C; but all other alternatives or combinations of alternatives are excluded. This forces decisions that might not otherwise be made. It also distorts any priorities that participants might have.[14]

Placation is the first level at which the public has a chance to exercise direct influence. The normal practice is to place a few citizen representatives on policy boards and other decision making bodies. They are then able to speak, lobby and vote for their interests. This can be a very limited form of participation; however, sometimes those chosen to sit on boards are representative in name only. As a result, the needs, interests and problems of

those supposedly represented go unspoken. Even when representatives are well chosen, they are outnumbered by the authorities; therefore, participation of any consequence can be carefully controlled and if necessary, overruled. Placation can result in effective participation if sound, technical assistance is available to help participants plan and articulate their priorities. Assuming carefully chosen priorities, a concentrated effort by organized interests can produce results through minority members of a board or council. However, this has been the exception rather than the rule.[15]

Basically, these three levels of participation deal with communication. The sense of this category is that impartation of information is the essence of participation. There is the suggestion that exchange of information, either unilateral or bilateral, can be beneficial. There is also a decided disinclination to allow citizen involvement in final decision making. The consensus seems to be that it is best for authorities to make decisions provided they have secured input from the citizenry.

Degrees of Citizen Power

The category of degrees of citizen power includes the participation levels of partnership, delegated power and citizen control. These top rungs of the ladder are those that provide citizens the greatest amount of authority. The partnership level of participation involves negotiation and trade-offs between officials and citizens. The top two levels of participation are reached when voting

or managing control is obtained by those not in official positions of power.[16]

The partnership level of participation is reached when citizens and officials have negotiated a compromise situation in which power is shared. Agreements generally take the structural form of either joint policy boards or planning committees and include formal procedures for resolving disputes.[17] These agreements are then protected by the further stipulation that they will not be subjected to unilateral change. In order to maintain this partnership, certain resources must be available to citizen groups. The main requirement is that there be a well organized support group to which citizen leadership is responsible. This tends to keep the leadership both motivated and honest. It further provides leaders with a base of financial support in order to secure technical assistance and personal remuneration.[18]

Securing partnership is not easy. History indicates that power is seldom voluntarily shared by those who hold it. Acquiring power is a long and difficult process and keeping it is not easy. Consequently, this form of participation requires a good deal of commitment and financial support on the part of those who attempt to secure it.[19] There are also problems when citizens cannot agree on a course of action.[20]

Delegated power as a kind of participation takes two forms. The more common form exists in low income programs that have policy making boards which are composed of a majority of citizens and a

minority of officials. This approach is considered a good one since both groups maintain contact with and regularly interact with each other. Some sort of a balance is usually maintained due to the fact that the officials are more technically skilled and knowledgeable and are able, in this way, to compensate for their fewer numbers.

The less often used form of delegated power involves establishing parallel groups of citizens and officials. Both groups deliberate matters independently of each other and report their conclusions. The citizen group in this scheme has veto authority over decisions reached by the board of officials if differences cannot be negotiated. This approach has been limited in use to areas where past bitterness and mistrust preclude attempts at mutual effort.[21]

The final rung of the ladder is rather broadly termed citizen control. More specifically, this level of participation is meant to refer to those situations in which citizens have final decision making authority. That is generally the case when there is citizen control of funds and no possibility of withdrawal of the money by other interests. In any other context, federal grants or delegations of authority, for example, there is always the possibility that the vital resources will be removed if participation produces the wrong decisions. This is not to suggest that citizen control could be absolute in any sense of the word. No one has that kind of control nor would it be desirable.[22]

There are arguments against community control. It can lead to divisiveness in that it fosters separatism. It tends to splinter

government programs and agencies into smaller entities that are less efficient and more costly. Finally, it provides no guarantees that a few citizens won't band together and become more dictatorial than any government official ever thought of being.[23]

The distinctive characteristic of this third category of participation levels is that citizens have a direct role in the final decision making process. In addition to being informed and listened to, citizens vote on the outcome. Implicit in this approach is the belief that the power to participate on an equal footing is desirable. There is also a conviction that participation on this level must be gained by participants because it will seldom be given by those responsible for decision making. The core of this belief is the attitude that citizens have the requisite skills and abilities to make critical choices.

As Arnstein points out, this analysis is only an approximation to real world situations and glosses over many finer distinctions among participation levels. In reality, many more rungs can be distinguished, and many of the characteristics claimed for each rung will overlap in either direction. With this caveat kept in mind, the typology is beneficial in that it serves as a model against which to compare techniques and procedures for participation. Hopefully, it will serve to point out the implications of each approach in terms of both negative and positive characteristics and suggest participation level mixes that meet real needs.

Based on past performance, the highway department will undoubtedly aim its public participation techniques at the levels of informing, consultation, placation and, in some instances, partnership. At the same time, it is helpful to be conscious of the other categories and their implications in order to avoid the negative aspects inherent in each and to be aware of occasional opportunities present in the use of delegated power and citizen control.

Increasing Citizen Resistance

It is expected that resistance to highway development will grow. Unless the need for additional highway construction is perceived by the public, they will be increasingly inclined to question additional highway expenditures.

The belief that public agencies cater to special interest groups has been gaining strength in the last few years. Obviously, this point of view detracts from the concept that the highway department is responsive to the general public. Therefore, it becomes increasingly difficult for potentially affected citizens to accept the notion that inconvenience or loss suffered on their part is for the good of the whole. They are more inclined to think that they are being used for the benefit of other interests. As a result, they are more willing to battle the department in an effort to protect their personal interests. Given the many reasons for the development of this attitude on the part of the public, the highway

department must respond in order to maximize efficiency and success.[24]

A good deal of the difficulty in dealing with public involvement has been the relative speed and intensity with which attitudes toward citizen participation have changed. This has been complicated by the upheavals experienced in the larger social framework. The labor union movement and the civil rights movement facilitated the development of citizen involvement by devising new approaches to social change.[25] Early successes in these attempts provided people with an increased sense of power and effectiveness. Combined with this has been a growing awareness of environmental considerations and the prospect of rapidly accelerating urbanization. Seeing undesirable consequences and perceiving their newly discovered power, people have involved themselves in various forms of citizen activism.[26,27]

Basic Questions

There are many techniques designed to involve the community in planning and decision making processes. In order to somehow organize and integrate these techniques into a meaningful whole, certain questions must be addressed: "What is the role of community interaction in the overall location and design process, particularly with respect to incorporating community and environmental values into all aspects of the process? What specific interaction techniques should be used in a given context? When in the process

should each interaction technique be employed?"[28] By answering these questions progress will be made in clarifying the overall objective of the highway location and design process, developing an array of specific, well articulated objectives for community involvement activities and effectively using these objectives in handling the location and design process.[29] These topics will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Notes

[1]Robert A. Dahl, After the Revolution?: Authority in a Good Society (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970).

[2]Ibid., pp. 26-28.

[3]Ibid.

[4]For example, see John W. Giorgio, "Parklands and Federally Funded Highway Projects: The Impact of Conservation Society V. Texas," Environmental Affairs, I, No. 4 (March, 1972), pp. 882-901.

[5]For a theoretical discussion of the costs of individual and group decision making see James Buchanan and Gordon Tullock, The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1962), pp. 98-111.

[6]Dahl, After the Revolution?, pp. 39-40.

[7]For a discussion of how this may effect technical decisions see James J. Best, Public Opinion Micro and Macro (Homewood, Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1973), pp. 220-223.

[8]Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXV, No. 4 (July, 1969), 217.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., p. 218.

[12]Ibid., p. 217.

[13]Ibid., p. 219.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 220.

[16]Ibid., p. 217.

[17]Ibid., p. 221.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., p. 222.

[20]See Wilson A. Head, "The Ideology and Practice of Citizen Participation," in Citizen Participation: Canada, ed. by J. A. Draper (Toronto: New Press, 1971), p. 20.

[21]Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," p. 222.

[22]Ibid., p. 223.

[23]Ibid., p. 224.

[24]Hans Bleiker, John H. Suhrbier, and Marvin L. Manheim, "Community Interaction as an Integral Part of the Highway Decision-Making Process," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (1971), 16.

[25]Certain federal decisions have also helped. See Edward M. Katz and Herbert H. Hyman, Urban Planning for Social Welfare: A Model Cities Approach (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1970), p. 101, for a brief discussion.

[26]Urban Systems Laboratory, and the Federal Highway Administration. Proceeding of a Panel Discussion on Community Involvement in Highway Planning and Design (Cambridge, Massachusetts: M.I.T., 1973), p. 12.

[27]For a discussion of who some of these new participants are and how they got involved see John C. Bollens and Dale Rogers Marshall, A Guide to Participation: Field Work, Role Playing Cases, and Other Forms (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), p. 5.

[28]Bleiker, Suhrbier, and Manheim, "Community Interaction," p. 12.

[29]Ibid.

CHAPTER III

CURRENT THEORIES IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Misconceptions about Public Participation

There are certain assumptions relative to citizen participation that have no basis in fact. Foremost among these is the claim that the public knows what it wants and would speak with a unified voice if given the chance. A hard look at past experiences with citizen participation indicates that the public has a multitude of attitudes on any given issue. Furthermore, public opinion polls taken over a span of time show that attitudes change, sometimes very rapidly.[1]

There is also a general belief that residency in a given community or neighborhood makes one more qualified to render decisions. In certain instances residency bestows the right to decide, but it does not guarantee any particular qualifications. Nor, on the other hand, does the fact that some people object to an issue signify that they lack the intelligence to understand what is going on. Often opponents of an issue have an extremely clear idea of what they want and why they want it. Claiming that the opposition is ignorant of the issues merely increases barriers to compromise.[2]

Another misconception is that the best way to achieve citizen participation is to establish a formal citizen structure. The fact

that the vast majority of public programs require formalized citizen participation programs testifies to that assumption. The results of many of these programs do not support the intent, however.[3] Often, formal citizen groups take on a character of their own and become an entity unto themselves. As they become immersed in the formalities and procedures of organized bodies, they lose their original quality of representativeness. In some instances these groups become too demanding in that they require more attention and time than individuals are willing to commit. There is the lack of flexibility and open-endedness necessary to allow people to select their own level of involvement in an issue.[4]

A popular but suspect method for achieving citizen participation has been the use of neighborhood elections. The theory has been that representation at the smallest political level would provide for a more direct and unified input of citizen thinking. There are some fallacies in this approach. Neighborhood elections are subject to many of the same drawbacks of elections at higher levels. In addition, there are indications that so-called neighborhood representatives really don't represent the thinking or values of a majority of their constituents. It is hypothesized that the fact that they have become neighborhood representatives is indicative of characteristics and values in them that differ from the majority of their peers. There is the further drawback that the presence of elected representatives tends to inhibit the participation of neighborhood individuals. The point of view seems to be that since

elected representatives have the authority and responsibility for neighborhood affairs, they should take whatever initiative is required. This reduces the incentive that citizens might have in accepting responsibility for the well being of their neighborhood.[5]

Another misconception is that it is possible to have an equal partnership between elected officials and local citizen groups. This is very seldom the case. Because elected officials have legal responsibilities and obligations, there are many occasions when theirs must be the final decision. This does not preclude them from agreeing to a conclusion that is reached by participation but it does preclude them from waiving or transferring their authority to make decisions. The purpose of this arrangement stems from the need to have some level of decision making authority that decides issues which transcend the local situation.[6]

The final and, by no means, least significant of the myths is that the federal government has any kind of a unified conception of what it means or wants when speaking of citizen participation. So far, federal regulations have varied considerably and, sometimes, directly conflicted with each other. Basic to this problem is the general lack of common understanding or agreement of what constitutes acceptable or good public participation.[7]

Current Issues in Public Participation

There are several issues under debate concerning citizen participation activity. In the first place, it has been shown that

participation does not necessarily lead to greater equalization of power as it once was assumed.[8,9] Experiments have shown that those with requisite skills and knowledge tend to increase their power over those who have lesser skills in extended participatory situations. This suggests that the more a have-not person participates with others of a higher socioeconomic level, the more his position is jeopardized. The theory may explain why obtaining participation from low income individuals is so difficult. In addition, those having equal socioeconomic levels but lesser knowledge are at a disadvantage in negotiations with a more knowledgeable peer. Therefore, even a well educated person stands to lose in a situation of this nature. This would suggest that steps must be taken to insure that equal knowledge and skills be made available to all parties in a participatory situation in order to eliminate this inequity.

One way to equalize knowledge and skills is to establish advocacy planning. In an advocacy planning system the planner works within the goals and values of the group that he represents. It is his job to provide the knowledge and technical skills that the group lacks. In this way each interest in a participatory situation has relatively equal skills and knowledge available to it.[10]

The argument that participation should be begun fairly early in the incubation of a project, before positions have been firmly established, in order to achieve better acceptance, has also been challenged. If participation at this stage is merely informational, then nothing is really decided and the project is subject to future

litigation and appeal procedures. If participative decision making is attempted at this stage, there is the problem referred to by lawyers as ripeness. That is, because there are so many uncertainties at the early stages of a project, it is impossible to make many firm decisions. Therefore, it is very unlikely that anything significant can be accomplished.[11]

This would certainly suggest that participation would have to be an activity that began early and continued up to and through the stage of ripeness. By so doing it would be possible to involve people at the informational level by informing them about what is known from the very beginning and keeping them up to date as the project progresses. It would also be possible to involve people at the participative decision making level by working with them on tentative decisions in the beginning and continuing with more informed and firm decisions as information becomes more certain.

It is generally conceded that planning is a highly unstructured activity. That is, real decision making is conducted over a period of time through a series of informal conversations and consultations on an as needed basis that really doesn't conform to a schedule. It is claimed, therefore, that it is neither practical nor possible to construct a citizen participation framework that would effectively tie in with such a process. If so, it would be impossible to organize citizen input so that it would occur at those random times when it would be beneficial. Furthermore, since the public is extremely reluctant to revoke decisions that already have a

considerable amount of resources invested in their implementation, many agencies prefer to present the public with a fait accompli in an effort to preclude resistance. In other words, most planning is done on a very informal basis and, to the degree possible, it is done in-house.[12]

It would seem that this line of reasoning, rather than being a cogent argument against citizen participation, is a clear call for more involvement. Early involvement in the planning of a project would insure that citizens would have a choice before resources are expended implementing a decision. Even though planning may be informal and ad hoc, there is a framework of administrative and legislative requirements on which it is based. A citizen participation structure could be laid over that framework.

There is some criticism of the notion that the public will do what is in its best interest. What, asks Thomas Appleby, do we do when a particular neighborhood says it doesn't want blacks, low income public housing or public high school sites? Since, citizen participation is essentially a geographically based lobby that works for its own interest, those areas that are more successful at their participation efforts, for whatever reason, will garner a disproportionate amount of available resources.[13]

John C. Bollens and Dale Rogers Marshall point out that an increased number of participants will produce a greater number of opinions resulting in more conflicts than previously existed. As a result, decisions may never be reached or compromises may be adopted

that please no one. Even where there is little conflict, the quality of decisions will suffer because they are made by amateurs. Because participation prolongs decision making and produces inconsistency, it is inefficient. Participation emphasizes self-determination to the detriment of principles of equity.[14] These factors, it is argued, tend to produce divisiveness rather than coordination and comprehensive planning. If the approach to planning were to develop more fully, many public projects would never appear and those that did would be prohibitively expensive.

There are some half-truths and questionable assumptions in this series of criticisms. There is no doubt that the public will make some wrong decisions, but there is no known decision making structure that is free from error. That in no way should be allowed to preclude all citizen involvement in decision making. It is true that citizens will work in their own interest, but this is usually considered to be a strength, not a weakness. The problem of an unequal distribution of resources has always been present and certainly cannot be blamed on the possible increased future use of public participation.

While there are people who think that the confrontation of ideas and opinion is inefficient and undesirable, there are others who value such activity for the incomplete thinking it exposes and the innovation it generates. It should be pointed out that when value judgments are to be made there are no amateurs and no experts. When public participation is discussed, technical decisions and

social values are often lumped together. This can confuse issues. Public participation advocates do not maintain that everybody should be involved in the technical decisions concerning engineering or economic principles. They advocate that everybody should be involved in the value judgments concerning social benefits and costs and their distribution.

Representation can be a problem when working with public participation. A study of one government program requiring citizen participation concluded that so-called neighborhood representatives often hold entirely different values and attitudes than do their constituents.[15] When participative meetings are held, only a small and often unrepresentative proportion of those eligible attend and take part.[16] The result has been that one elite body substitutes for another in making decisions for the majority. This situation is made even more unrepresentative by the fact that neighborhood participants are usually elected by an even smaller voter turnout than are local public officials.

There is no doubt that more careful selection procedures are required in order to avoid this kind of problem. It seems that representative participation is too limited in degree and that direct participation is required. It may be that the economy obtained through representative participation and the comprehensiveness obtained through direct participation can both be retained by combining these forms of participation. In any event, better forms of representation can be approximated.

Some writers theorize that citizen participation may produce negative personal effects. For example, new participants, rather than experiencing personal improvement, become discouraged as they learn about the complexities of participation and perceive the extent of their own inadequacies. This can result in a reduction in their sense of efficacy and an increase in alienation and hostility. Instead of becoming more supportive of the social system, participants could become less supportive.[17] Undoubtedly, this is descriptive of some people. On the other hand, numerous studies of participation in on-the-job decision making tend to indicate that most people benefit from involvement.[18] It has been hypothesized that people find ego satisfaction and pleasure in problem solving, by working in cooperative groups and in determining their own rules of procedure. It has also been suggested that participation helps fulfill a person's need to be valued and appreciated.[19]

Theoretical Rationales for Public Participation

There are additional theoretical and practical reasons for providing for citizen participation. Both are implicit in the concept of participatory democracy and basic to an understanding of government. It has long been believed that each individual is responsible for his or her station in life. Hard work, enterprise, thrift and prudence are the values that one lives by in order to succeed. These values are also seen as mandatory qualities for good

self-government. By diligent observance of these values, one can acquire political benefits as well as economic security.[20]

As a result of this philosophy, what has been called the argument for democracy has developed. By this is meant that citizen participation is not evaluated as a means to an end in order to determine if it is a worthy process; rather, citizen participation is viewed as the process to follow no matter what the consequences.[21] Citizen participation is valued as a self-justifying end in itself:

> Participation is, in fact, the necessary concomitant of our faith in the dignity and worth of the individual. The denial of effective participation, including the opportunity to choose, to be heard, to discuss, to criticize, to protest, and to challenge decisions regarding the most fundamental conditions of existence is a denial of the individual's own worth and a confirmation of his impotency and subserviency.[22]

Although there are objective mechanisms for measuring economic costs and benefits, there are no objective ways to determine the equity of differing <u>distributions</u> of social benefits and costs. From a practical point of view, it is necessary to establish political mechanisms for making such social decisions. Political mechanisms will not necessarily provide equitable solutions. They will, however, provide a means by which social decisions can be made in an acceptable way to society. How each citizen participates and the amount he participates in making these choices will be largely a product of the political structure of which he is a part. That he does participate is important in order to maintain legitimacy for the process.[23]

Two basic theories have been advanced to explain how participation has practical benefits for our governmental system.[24] The first states that participation is desirable because participants achieve changes perceived to be improvements in the social system. As a result, people come to believe that they are able to operate within the structure. Whether or not the social system has been improved in any objective sense is a moot point. What is important is that the system be adaptable to new demands which, in turn, result in renewed support for maintenance of the general structure.

The second theory emphasizes that the benefits of participation accrue to the individual in the short run. In this view, also, the system does not necessarily change; what changes is the individual who interacts with the system. This interaction is seen as therapeutic for the individual because it socializes him by increasing his knowledge, skills and sense of personal and political effectiveness. This personal improvement results in increased support for the system in the long run.

Judith May develops the second theory as one of her four categories of citizen participation strategies used to achieve and maintain certain public goals. The first of these strategies is socialization or pattern maintenance, which is essentially described in the preceding paragraph.[25] The second is adaptation which takes goals as they are given and attempts to modify intervening conditions so that the goals may be reached. This is the case, for example, when people attempt to generate citizen support for and

involvement in an idea or issue already formed.[26] Participation has also been used to achieve personal and community integration. This involves getting people and communities with differing values, norms, beliefs and interests together for coordinated activity. It can also involve coordinating man and his resources. A primary need for integration is exhibited whenever an expressway is contemplated that directly affects several city neighborhoods.[27] The last category is goal attainment. Goal attainment becomes a problem whenever there is a conflict in goal orientation among two or more people or groups. Any coordinated activity requires a priority ordering of goals and consequent mobilization of resources for goal achievement. When that priority ordering is lacking, nothing can be accomplished until the disagreements have been resolved. Consequently, joint participation is used as a means for antagonists to resolve their differences.[28]

The unifying theme that runs through these categories is that participation is beneficial because it maintains support for and successfully educates and integrates people and ideas into the social system. For this to happen certain inalienable rights of participation are postulated. These include: ". . . -the right of effective speech - the right to be wrong - the right to be different - the right to influence decision-making - the right to contribute - the right to consume, with dignity (and) the right to a continuing share in this society's burdens and benefits."[29]

Charles Silberman has indicated that the failure to allow participation destroys dignity and creates hostility in those so treated.[30] Alienation is a word often used in this context. It is generally agreed that the loss of a sense of community and a feeling of inability to influence one's life are resulting conditions. Since citizen participation is believed to increase an individual's sense of efficacy and improve the ability to articulate needs, individual and community alienation thereby can be reduced.[31]

At first glance, these theories may not seem to be applicable to highway planning and decision making, but in many respects they are. The way people react to proposed highway projects may often reflect their attitude toward both themselves and general government activity.[32]

These attitudes can be particularly well expressed at the local level. Given fewer voters and a greater accessibility to those in charge, the local community provides people with a greater sense of power in the decision making process.[33] Since expressway construction has a decidedly local impact, it is expected that dissidents of the kind described above will appear. While they are undoubtedly in the minority of those who oppose highway construction, they are a force to be considered. People of this bent can distort an attempt at accurately reading neighborhood or community attitudes toward a project and thereby further confuse what is already a very complex issue. In the process, the issues that really need

consideration are shuffled aside. This can result in a loss to both the neighborhood or community and the highway department.

Participation can be used to avoid this problem by working with people to determine what they want. This can best be done by working with citizens to establish mutually acceptable goals, objectives and alternatives. Citizens with special skills will often contribute valuable information that had been previously overlooked. In addition, feedback regarding citizen reaction to proposed policies and building programs can be used to determine the extent and types of additional participation required.[34]

The importance of public involvement is being increasingly recognized by transportation officials. A recent Highway Research Board conference highlighted the following reasons for encouraging citizen participation in highway planning and decision making:

> Some of the desirable consequences of citizen participation are that it
>
> 1. Brings members of the community into the public policy and planning decision-making process;
> 2. Encourages public decisions that reflect the values, needs, and priorities of those who will be affected;
> 3. Exposes different socioeconomic, environmental, and transportation needs;
> 4. Surfaces alternative options and increases public understanding of both the options and the constraints of transportation planning;
> 5. Identifies the benefits and the disbenefits of alternative plans, recognizing that one group's benefits may be another's disbenefits; and
> 6. Offers a means of resolving the type of public opposition that has blocked transportation programs in many areas.[35]

There is a similarity between this list of highway benefits and the general benefits of participation discussed previously. While it might seem that participation in highway planning and decision making would require different qualities than would participation in other less technical activities, such a conclusion is not entirely true. The issue does not revolve around technical matters as much as it does policy decisions.[36] Frank Colcord, Jr., has developed the thesis that decision making processes for transportation planning and building are not consistent with other urban political practices. He is of the opinion that because of the need for highway construction, there has been a willingness to grant a great deal of autonomy to highway departments. Now that this need has been partially met, the propriety of such autonomy is being questioned. He claims that there is a growing demand that transportation policy be decided locally as are other urban issues. Colcord thinks that the divergence between this growing demand and current practice is a main source of present resistance to urban transportation planning and construction.[37] This subject will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

Notes

[1]Erwin A. France, "Effects of Citizen Participation in Governmental Decision-Making," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (1971), 2.

[2]Ibid.

[3]A. Donald Bouregeois, in "Citizen's Role in St. Louis Model Cities Program Described," Journal of Housing, XXIV (December, 1967), 613-614, describes ways in which formalized citizen participation programs are sometimes destroyed by their creators.

[4]France, "Effects of Citizen Participation," p. 2.

[5]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[6]Ibid., p. 3.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Mark Mulder, "Power Equalization through Participation," Administrative Science Quarterly, XVI, No. 1 (March, 1971), 35.

[9]Neither does decentralization insure democratization. See Phillip O. Foss, Politics and Grass: The Administration of Grazing on the Public Domain (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1960), p. 126.

[10]For a comprehensive discussion of advocacy planning, see Chapters Two and Seven of Earl M. Blecher, Advocacy Planning for Urban Development with Analysis of Six Demonstration Programs (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971).

For a particularly good critique of advocacy planning, see Marshall Kaplan, "Advocacy and the Urban Poor," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXV, No. 2 (March, 1969), 96-104.

[11]Joseph Sax, Defending the Environment: A Strategy for Citizen Action (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1971), p. 100.

[12]Ibid., p. 102.

[13]Harold Goldblatt, "Arguments for and against Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," in Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B. C. Spiegel (Washington, D. C.: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), pp. 37-38.

[14]John C. Bollens and Dale Rogers Marshall, A Guide to Participation: Field Work, Role Playing Cases, and Other Forms (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), pp. 10-11.

[15]Neil Gilbert and Joseph Eaton, "Who Speaks for the Poor," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXVI, No. 6 (November, 1970), 411.

[16]Goldblatt, "Arguments for and against Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," pp. 38-39.

[17]Bollens and Marshall, A Guide to Participation, pp. 10-11.

[18]Leonard J. Duhl, in "Planning the Physical Environment," Urban Research in Highway Planning, Bulletin 190 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1958), 21-22, argues that increased participation will reduce the build-up of hostility that often occurs when people are unable to take part in decisions that affect their lives.

[19]Victor Vroom, Some Personality Determinants of the Effects of Participation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), pp. 63-64.

[20]Wilson A. Head, "The Ideology and Practice of Citizen Participation," in Citizen Participation: Canada, ed. by J. A. Draper (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: New Press, 1971), p. 18.

[21]Goldblatt, "Arguments for and against Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," p. 35.

[22]Edgar S. Cahn and Jean Cahn, "Citizen Participation," in Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B. C. Spiegel (Washington, D. C.: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), p. 219.

[23]William G. Adkins and Dock Burke, Jr., Social, Economic, and Environmental Factors in Highway Decision Making - An Interim Report (College Station, Texas: Texas Transportation Institute, 1971), p. 31.

[24]Bollens and Marshall, A Guide to Participation, p. 10.

[25]Judith V. May, Citizen Participation: A Review of the Literature (Monticello, Illinois: Council of Planning Librarians Exchange Bibliography, 1971), p. 10.

[26]Ibid., p. 12.

[27]Ibid., p. 15.

[28]Ibid., p. 20.

[29]Edgar S. Cahn and Jean Camper Cahn, "Maximum Feasible Participation: A General Overview," in Citizen Participation Effecting Community Change, ed. by Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passett (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1971), p. 40.

[30]Charles E. Silberman, Crisis in Black and White (New York: Vintage Books, 1964).

[31]Douglas Harmon, Citizen Involvement in Urban Planning: The San Diego Experiment (San Diego, California: Public Affairs Research Institute, 1968), p. 1.

[32]Research to determine why people voted against flouridation and what kind of people they generally were showed that people who had feelings of helplessness and a lack of political effectiveness tended to vote and campaign against high status but relatively safe targets. In this manner, hostilities could be ventilated without incurring much risk of retaliation. This attitude seems to focus on any large or powerful organization no matter what it does or produces. People who operate in this manner accept the rationale that big organizations are primarily concerned with their own interests and control over people. There is little effort to discriminate between activities that are self-serving and those that serve society. See: William A. Gamson, "The Flouridation Dialogue: Is It an Ideological Conflict?," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXV (1961), pp. 536-537.

[33]Wayne E. Thompson and John E. Horton, "Political Alienation as a Force in Political Action," Social Forces, 38 (March, 1960), 191.

[34]Cahn and Cahn, "Maximum Feasible Participation: A General Overview," p. 16.

[35]Highway Research Board, Citizen Participation in Transportation Planning (Washington, D. C.: Division of Engineering, National Research Council, 1973), p. 4.

[36]Although Lisa R. Peattie in "Reflections on Advocacy Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXIV, No. 2 (March, 1968), 80-87, argues that the shift from political to technical decision making for public policy management has made it increasingly difficult for laymen to make choices.

[37]Frank C. Colcord, Jr., "Transportation and the Political Culture," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 32-42.

CHAPTER IV

DECISION MAKING AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Local Involvement

Local communities have supported the highway department in the vast majority of its plans and decisions. In fact, since the local community must request the highway department's services in order for a project to be undertaken, it would seem that the community decision making process and the highway department decision making process would mesh fairly well. However, current trends indicate that local political support of highway department efforts weakens if there is strong protest to a proposed project. The way this occurs works to the detriment of the highway department. As in the past, local political officials are still requesting highway projects at a greater rate than they can be built. Once the request is approved and publicized, however, the highway department becomes identified as the active agent in the project and, if the project is controversial, becomes the target for criticism. Given enough political pressure, local officials will either maintain a low profile and let the highway department face resistance alone or reverse their initial decision and request a suspension of the project.[1] In either event the highway department suffers the consequences of a bad political decision made at the

local level. Not only is this inefficient and wasteful of taxpayers' money, it also creates a reserve of resentment to be faced when the department next attempts a project in the same area.

That this happens in local communities suggests that there is something in their decision making process that is malfunctioning. For some reason mutually acceptable decisions are not being reached by local citizens with regard to urban transportation issues.

Colcord points out that the resolution of most urban issues is based on the principle of making decisions at the lowest political level and supporting the ideal of maximum citizen participation. Because the role of the local politician as a decision maker is valued and supplemented by participation of citizen groups, the non-elected professional (bureaucrat) is relegated to a subordinate role.[2]

Transportation policy making is an exception to this practice because it is a geographically broader operation than are local governments. There is general agreement that transportation is metropolitan or even regional in scope and cannot be dealt with comprehensively at the local level. Consequently, transportation planning and policy making operate outside of the normal channels of urban politics. This has the effect of shielding transportation policy from the direct influence of local political officials and citizens. Since policy is usually established by a semi-independent agency at the state level, it tends to be further isolated from local influence.[3]

This isolation is very much a product of the viewpoint that transportation policy is too comprehensive to be left to politicians and should rather be established by objective and skilled professionals. Consequently, bureaucrats are substituted for local politicians and citizen groups in policy making positions. This results in a loss of control by elected government officials, and therefore, a loss of control by voters.[4] This situation is beginning to change in some urban areas. As highway programs generate more controversies and mass transit demands mount, transportation is becoming more important as a local issue. The increasing awareness of the importance of intact neighborhoods, alternative transportation modes and environmental protection is changing the attitudes of some citizens regarding highway projects. As a result, some communities are beginning to demand that transportation policy be formulated in line with other urban issues and submit itself to more careful scrutiny by local officials and citizens.[5]

What is being suggested here is that local politicians and citizens should be and will be more involved in resolving their local transportation problems. Currently, technical criteria are established and then social, economic and environmental values are fitted within those confines. If Colcord is correct, the desire is growing that technical and hardware criteria be fitted into policy and value criteria.

In a paper presented to the Highway Research Board, Melvin Webber makes the same point in a slightly different way:

> Early in the development of transportation engineering and transportation planning, . . . ideas were implanted that have remained dominant and have contributed to the present malaise.
>
> 1. Transportation investments were seen as primarily capital investments, i.e., as investments in physical plant, in physical facilities, rather than in transport services.
>
> 2. The function of transportation facilities was seen as connecting geographic places, rather than as connecting people.[6]

Webber recommends that transportion be conceptualized in terms of service rather than physical facility. The most important question to be asked is what does the system do? This different approach to transportation planning is recommended largely as a result of the resurgence of pluralism, which insists that the principle of equity be maintained on an equal footing with the principle of efficiency.

In this sense, then, participation in transportation planning is like participation in anything else; it is an expression of personal value and choice. It does not require skilled technicians to make value and choice judgments. It requires skilled technicians to implement value and choice judgments once they have been rendered.

The Decision Making Process

Citizen participation is largely shaped by the surrounding decision making structure. The structure is made up of the organizational and institutional arrangements that are traditional to a community or agency. The decision making process is a function of that system and is conducted in a similar manner by both individuals and groups. The fact that many kinds of participation and numerous participants operate and interact makes the process very complex. The participants themselves influence and form the process by the way they play their roles, manage their resources, enlist others in fulfilling roles and react to feelings of motivation and self interest. Despite all of this complexity there is a general decision making procedure that is more or less descriptive of actual behavior. R. S. Bolen has devised an outline and describes the procedure from an agency, community and individual perspective:

Initial Premises

Process Steps

Process Step I. Structuring and defining ideas as proposals

a. Recognition of discrepancy between desirable and current conditions.
b. Identification of the case as potentially actionable.
c. Formulation of possible and realizable solution(s).

Process Step II. Identifying the Properties of Alternatives

a. Inherent merits of alternative solution(s) as identified by experts.
b. The values held by individual actors.
c. The anticipated effect on the resources of the individual actors and the collectivity.
d. The presumed effect on the position or status of individual actors in the social structure of the collectivity.
e. The presumed availability of social support for alternative courses of action.

Process Step III. Structuring the Decision Field

a. Identification of potential support and opposition.
b. Initial solicitation of support.
c. Initial negotiation informally offering the exchange of positive and negative sanctions.
d. Planning strategy for overt decision-making.
e. Organizing the necessary personnel and their sources.

Process Step IV. Engaging in the Overt Decision-Making Process (Possibly repeated at several levels or in other systems)

a. Acknowledgement of overt commitment and responsibility.
b. Involving the relevant audiences including manipulation of meanings.
c. Exchange of support and sanctions (including procedural and administrative facilitation or block).
d. Final negotiation.
e. Situated contingent action, committing the collectivity to course of conduct.
f. Legitimation.

Process Step V. Carrying Out the Consequences of Decision Process

a. Implementation by designated persons or organizations.
b. Final application of positive or negative sanctions (pay-off).
c. Appraisal of actors and power relations.
d. Appraisal of action and consequences.
e. Reappraisal of program.
f. Regeneration of process steps (if necessary as a result of appraisals).

Independent Variable Sets Influencing Decision Outcomes

Variable Set 1. Process Roles

a. Process role specialties
b. Process role measures
   Actor motivation
   Actor opportunity
   Actor skills

Variable Set 2. Decision Field Characteristics

a. Sociopolitical environment
   Formal structure
   Informal structure
   General policy structure

b. Decision unit character
   Source of power
   Accountability
   Group dynamics
   Group role

Variable Set 3. Planning and Action Strategies

a. Planning strategies
   Relation to decision focus
   Method strategies
   Content variables

b. Action strategies
   Reallocation of resources
   Institutional change
   Client change

Variable Set 4. Issue Attributes

a. Ideological stress
b. Distribution of effects
c. Flexibility
d. Action focus
e. Predictability and risk
f. Communicability

Dependent Variable

Decision Outcomes[7]

The highway decision making process conforms to this outline rather well as a self-contained activity operating on a state wide level. However, because the planning and decision making process is integrated into a state wide system that transcends the scope of local control, there are problems. While this arrangement provides the state highway department with an efficient organization, it also requires uniform policies and procedures that may not always suit the needs of local areas attempting to cope with unique situations.

Decision Making Conflicts

This is further complicated by problems that are generic to bureaucracies. By definition bureaucracies are established as hierarchical patterns of authority. Because of this relationship between levels within an organization, there is a tendency to extend this same structure to relationships with people outside of the organization. This can appear to be a very

logical, natural process. For example, because an agency is large and complicated, it must establish certain organizational rules and operating guidelines in order to run efficiently and fairly. As a result, bureaucrats are limited by those rules and guidelines in their interactions with others. This produces a situation wherein people who are not members of a bureaucracy find themselves having to conform to procedures that may have little relevance or logic to them. This establishes a hierarchical relationship in which the bureaucrat is stronger because he knows and establishes the rules, while officials and citizens, who are removed from the influence of their local decision making structure, are at a disadvantage.

One of the advantages of large, bureaucratic agencies is that they can afford to specialize. This allows them to focus a great deal of skill on particular problems or activities. For example, a highway department is made up of people with a variety of expertise who can team up to produce extremely good freeways. The drawback is that an agency is thereby limited to a fairly specific scope of activity when it deals with a community seeking to improve its overall transportation situation. Such a community can secure only a limited kind of assistance from the state highway department. In fact, there is no single source of assistance in comprehensive transportation planning and implementation. As a result, decision making is fragmented among local,

state and federal agencies. This can make it very difficult and frustrating for local urban governments and citizens to participate meaningfully since the decision process is outside their normal decision making framework.

Bureaucratic agencies tend to be viewed with suspicion because they represent authority and the status quo to people who are seeking to influence decision making. Therefore, there is a good deal of tension attached to any attempt to bring outsiders into a decision making process. This is largely due to the fact that people who seek to have influence are people who seek change. Most agencies find it more efficient to help people adjust to their life situation rather than attempt to change the conditions that produced it.[8]

There are several reasons for bureaucratic reluctance to opening up decision making processes. In the first place, it is felt that there would be a significant disruption of regular organizational procedures. In other words, the decision making structure would be disturbed. There would be a great deal of inefficiency and confusion created by the lack of controlled input and decision points. Additionally, there would be difficulty in determining truly representative points of view, especially if a particular issue generated a lot of controversy. Finally, many people object to any change in the status quo brought about by forms of representation acting outside of the formal political

process. According to this point of view, government officials have already been chosen to be representatives, and if they are not performing adequately, they should be removed from office.

Access to the decision making process by voting for a particular person at election time is often an inadequate technique. There are simply too many problems for candidates to address effectively each and every issue. Furthermore, if there are only a few candidates, it becomes impossible for every point of view to be represented. In addition, many issues will arise after the appropriate officials have been elected. Finally, candidates will never concur with voters on all issues. What happens, for instance, if candidate A is agreeable on fifteen out of twenty-five issues and candidate B is acceptable on ten of twenty-five issues? The obvious answer is to vote for candidate A, but that does not mean one should be compelled to forego the other ten issues.[9] There must be viable means for citizens to be involved in the resolution of issues in a more direct and timely manner. This is especially so since citizens are used to expressing more direct control and participation at the local level. Simply voting for city council members, who may or may not desire freeway extensions at a later date, and a governor, who appoints one member of the Highway Commission, is not sufficient. Nor, as Bolen's outline suggests, is this the usual decision making procedure.

Obstacles to Local Involvement

There seem to be several potential obstacles to local involvement in highway planning and decision making: (1) highway systems are broader than and therefore beyond the scope of local decision making processes, (2) highway officials are not elected and therefore are beyond the direct reach of voters, (3) the highway department exists to provide urban and rural highway systems designed as physical facilities for private transportation and does not serve as a comprehensive transportation service to be manipulated in the local decision making framework, (4) due to its size and complexity, the highway department may have difficulties interacting flexibly with local decision makers, and (5) highway planning and decision making is considered to be a highly technical and complex activity requiring trained and experienced personnel not generally available in local communities.

There are also problems of a policy nature: (1) there is a dilemma over the degree to which the needs of a neighborhood should be allowed to interfere with the overall benefit that a highway project is presumed to bring to a city or region, (2) there are uncertainties as to how each side of an issue should best be involved in planning, (3) there is a good deal of disagreement over whether or not citizens should be limited to providing information and opinions or be allowed to partake in final decision making, and

(4) there is great difficulty in devising a citizen participation system that will provide continuity over the total ten to twenty year life span that major projects entail.

The crux of the problem seems to be that highway planning and decision making alters the regular community decision making process identified by Bolen. This occurs because a relationship between it and the community is structured which effectively eliminates much of the community's control over its own decisions. This is intensified due to the fact that local areas have few alternatives when dealing with transportation matters. Their main source of assistance is likely the highway department. As a result, they are subject to rules, requirements and alternatives not of their own making. The reason for this has been discussed earlier; the point here is that as local officials enter into negotiations with the highway department, they make decisions and accept trade-offs that are not a product of the community decision making process. As a result, there are community sectors whose needs and/or wants are likely to be ignored. This situation is less likely to occur when normal community decision making process steps are followed.

Notes

[1]It has been suggested that local petitioning officials be required to take a more active role in the process. William G. Adkins and Dock Burke, Jr., in "Interim Report - Social, Economic, and Environmental Factors in Highway Decision Making," Study No. 2-1-71-148 (College Station, Texas: Texas Transportation Institute, Texas A&M University, October, 1971), p. 46, suggest that petitioners could be required to present a comprehensive evaluation of the potential impact of the project as a part of their official request for a highway improvement.

John Robinson, in "Citizen Participation and Environmental Considerations in Transportation Planning," Environmental Considerations in Planning, Design, and Construction, special report 138 (Washington, D.C.: Highway Research Board, 1973), pp. 33-34, describes the new process in California which requires a well-publicized public hearing and a state and local cooperative study when a project is initially requested.

[2]Frank C. Colcord, Jr., "Transportation and the Political Culture," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 33.

[3]Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[4]Michael Lash, in "Community Conflict and Highway Planning (The Case of a Town that Didn't Want a Freeway)," Highway Research Record, No. 69 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1965), 16, quotes Harold Laski: "Every degree by which he (the citizen) is separated from consultation about decisions is a weakening of the governmental process. Neither goodwill in the expert nor efficiency in the performance of his function ever compensates in a state for failure to elicit the interest of the plain man in what is being done. For the nature of the result is largely unknown save as he reports his judgment upon it; and only as he reports that judgment can the expert determine in what direction his plans must move. Every failure in consultation, moreover, separates the mind of the governors from those who are governed; this is the most fertile source of misunderstanding in the state."

[5]Colcord, Jr., "Transportation and the Political Culture," pp. 34-35.

[6]Melvin M. Webber, "Alternative Styles for Citizen Participation in Transport Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 6.

[7]R. S. Bolen, "Community Decision Behavior: The Culture and Planning," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXV (September, 1969), 302-303.

[8]Orion F. White, "The Dialectical Organization: An Alternative to Bureaucracy," Public Administration Review (January-February, 1969), 36.

[9]Charles S. Lindblom, The Policy Making Process (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 47.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTERISTICS AND BEHAVIOR PATTERNS OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants' Characteristics

The characteristics and behavior patterns of participants are of critical importance to citizen participation in highway planning and decision making. Bellush and Hausknecht note that:

> There is an 'inarticulate major premise' upon which the notion of citizen participation, as it is currently conceived rests: All individuals within a community have the necessary prerequisites or resources for effective participation regardless of their location within the structure of the community.[1]

This means that participants must be able to gather sufficient resources to form, maintain and operate an organization.[2] This, of course, suggests that participation is limited to those who have access to sufficient resources. There are actually a great variety of factors that influence one's ability to participate. Many of these influences also affect how one participates. For one thing participation of any consequence requires an association of like-minded persons.

The establishment of an organization requires that there be people with the capacity for forming themselves into a group. Psychologists call this capacity, morale, and describe it as a latent psychological condition that allows people to establish

organizational bonds. Related to this psychological capacity is the social condition called cohesion. Cohesion is a condition exhibited when a social group maintains its association over a sustained period. One prerequisite for successful participation then is morale-cohesion. The presence of this condition cannot always be presumed to exist among all populations.[3] It is likely to be scarce in neighborhoods and communities experiencing high rates of turnover.

While morale-cohesion is a necessary condition for effective participation, it is not sufficient. Participants must also have "the capacity for organizational behavior."[4] This means that participants must have experience working in and with organizations. With such a background it is expected that they will be able to perform organizational roles effectively. This, of course, skews successful participation in the favor of middle and upper-class populations.[5] Because of that likelihood and because of present socioeconomic conditions: 1) men have a greater tendency to participate than women do; 2) the middle class participates more often than does the lower class; 3) urban dwellers participate more often than do rural dwellers; and 4) those with more education are more likely to participate than are those with less education.[6]

Additional qualities required are leadership, knowledge and awareness. The success of citizen movements in the past decade has been directly related to excellent leadership, but that is not

enough. Knowledge of the political, economic and social structure of a community is essential to effective participation. Also, awareness of the relationships between a group's goals and the social structure and processes of a community is required in order to successfully achieve citizen participation goals.[7]

People who have a greater interest and concern in politics have a greater tendency to participate. There exists a positive correlation between interest in politics and knowledge about politics. The greater the level of sophistication of a person's knowledge and beliefs about politics, the greater is the likelihood that he will participate. People in higher socioeconomic levels are generally more sophisticated about politics.[8]

People who think of politics as involving major events, major personalities and critical questions have a greater tendency to participate than do others. Belief in the relevance of politics increases as age increases. Participation increases in the forties and fifties and begins to decline at the age of sixty. Participation also increases as integration into a community is achieved. People who have financial and psychological investment in a community take greater interest in maintaining and protecting those investments. Those people interested in social mobility may become politically involved in an attempt to improve their chances of moving upward.[9]

People with strong political party or candidate identification

receive more political input and have a greater tendency to participate. Those who are alienated and cynical have less of a tendency to become involved. Socially and economically deprived people are less inclined to get involved, but when they do it is usually to fight a proposed change. Social assimilation of ethnic interests and organizations has a tendency to decrease involvement by those groups.[10]

People who join voluntary organizations, as would be expected, are more active politically. They have a greater tendency to vote, express themselves on issues, communicate with officials and talk about politics. They have less of a tendency to feel alienated from social and political activity. "In general, membership in voluntary organizations is higher among: (1) whites than blacks; (2) Jews than Protestants; (3) Protestants than Catholics; (4) couples with children than couples without children; and (5) persons between 30 and 60 than persons under 30 and over 60."[11]

Low income blacks have a greater tendency to join organizations than do low income whites. Upper income whites are more likely to belong to an organization than upper income blacks are. Once they join a group, blacks are more likely to participate than whites. Blacks tend to join political and church groups more than whites do, while blacks and whites are about equally likely to join civic groups.[12]

Two kinds of political outlook regarding community concerns have been identified. The first of these is termed a community-regarding or public-regarding political ethos.[13] This point of view is generally held by the more affluent and better educated portion of the population. This ethos takes the position that one is responsible for helping maintain and improve the community. There is a propensity for attempting to influence policy for the good of everybody rather than for securing personal gain. These people are likely to have "a high sense of personal efficacy, a long time-perspective, a general familiarity with and confidence in city-wide institutions, and a cosmopolitan orientation toward life."[14] As mentioned earlier, they also tend to have the greatest amount of experience and skill in organizational activity.

The second viewpoint is that termed a private-regarding ethos.[15] People involved in this perspective tend to have a short-range view of life. They have a great deal of trouble in dealing with things in the abstract and feel more at home with concrete activities and actions. Most of these people are inexperienced and unsuccessful in dealing with government institutions. There is rather a tendency to be preoccupied with personal and immediate needs as they arise on a day-to-day basis. There is little organizational activity, with the exception of church, for some groups. Consequently, they lack experience and the skills necessary for achieving successful participation. This has resulted in a low sense of personal

efficacy in terms of dealing with other people. People of this kind tend to be objects rather than subjects in civic activites. They seldom initiate action on their own impetus.[16]

Despite their disinclination to get involved in civic action, private-regarding people are of some consequence when an activity is directly threatening to them. These people are organizable under the right circumstances. Low income neighborhoods and communities are capable of swift and concerted action in response to a perceived threat. Past urban renewal and poverty projects have taught them that they must react. This has a negative connotation in that it is a defensive action initiated to maintain a threatened status quo, rather than a positive action designed to secure better conditions. Whatever the reason for this attitude, it poses real problems for the highway department when making attempts to participate with these people.[17]

Among those who fall under the description of community-regarding or public-regarding, there are two further categorizations. These people tend to involve themselves in either expressive or instrumental groups. Expressive groups are those which fight for a particular issue in response to a perceived attack on a personal interest or value. Expressive groups are further defined by saying that they are composed of private and civic actors. The usual strategy of expressive groups is to provide their members with information regarding the issue at hand and to mobilize public

opinion in order to stimulate public action. Desirable public action includes petitioning, rallies and protest gatherings. Mobilization usually does not occur until after a threatening or otherwise undesirable decision or event takes place. The emphasis is on securing reaction from private actors, in response to specific actions that have taken place, in order to alter those actions.[18] These groups are familiar to highway departments as ad hoc neighborhood and community groups that rise in protest to an announcement of a specific highway location or alteration.

Instrumental groups are composed of people who are ideologically oriented and who pursue community issues on that basis. They are more policy oriented, concentrating their energies on creating general public awareness and understanding of issues. While these groups also eventually focus on specific issues, they generally select those that have a national significance and hold promise of establishing broad precedents. Because of the more general nature of their interests, they usually have greater resources available.[19]

Interaction Models

There are factors and characteristics that dictate how public-regarding individuals, both expressive and instrumental in orientation, perceive issues and subsequently react to them. This process has traditionally been described as an upward forming

consensus. Citizens are assumed to debate an issue until common agreement is reached which is then entrusted to elected representatives to transform into public policy. In turn, elected officials attempt to provide their constituency with all pertinent information regarding the issues being considered. Ideally, citizen input flows inward and upward from public values and priorities to public policy and law. The upward forming consensus model is shown on the following page.[20]

Thomas O'riordan has constructed a model of decision making behavior that challenges the traditional view. His description is especially appropriate to highway department planning and decision making since it may well help to identify why highway protests develop.

O'riordan postulates that there are psychological elements that hinder the public in clearly articulating their preferences when dealing with environmental choices:

(A) People rarely act until they are directly affected and threatened;
(B) People rarely help each other unless they are bound by a common cause or faced with a common threat;
(C) People become tolerant of gradually worsening situations and are able to develop a number of defensive social, psychological and behavioral mechanisms which help them to accept or avoid the full intensity of the deteriorating environmental impact;
(D) People are environmental gamblers discounting heavily any future uncertainties for the transitory pleasures of immediate gains;

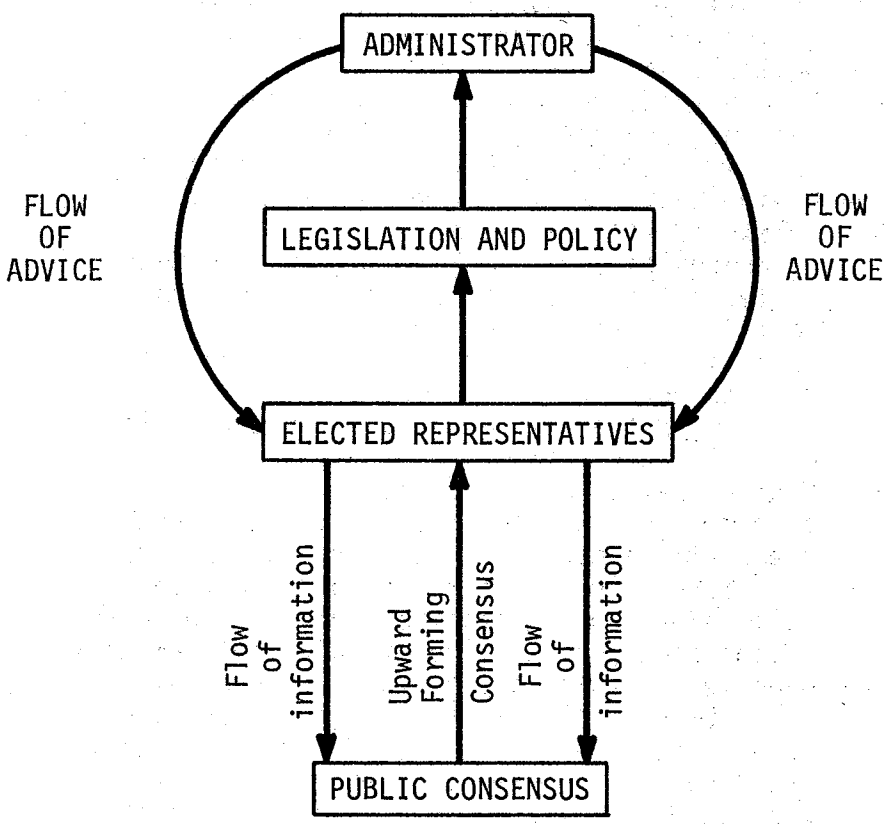


Figure 3. Upward Forming Consensus Model

Source: Thomas O'riordan, "Towards a Strategy of Public Involvement," in Perceptions and Attitudes in Resource Management, ed. by W. R. Derrick Sewell and Ian Burton (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1971), p. 100.

(E) People are schizophrenic with regard to the environment because they are usually unaware of the delicate interactions linking the various environmental subsystems, and will pollute on the one hand and yet demand increased environmental quality on the other;

(F) People are confronted with all sorts of personal and community problems in life and always delay the difficult decisions hoping that when they have to be faced, solutions will be easier to find and decisions easier to make. Thus people tend to leave the most complex decisions to the politicians and the experts, yet are surprised and not infrequently annoyed when they do not always come up with the right answers in the absence of a clear expression of public desires;

(G) People play a variety of roles in their economic, social, and political lives, and frequently a number of these roles conflict simultaneously. This tends to distort the rational reasoning process and may lead to an inconsistency of attitude toward environmental phenomena. For example, the president of a large paper mill polluting a river may also be a director of a local community organization pressing for an off-river swimming pool to protect his children from a possible health hazard.[21]

Essentially, according to this description, people are inclined to reserve their participation for those times when they can see a direct connection between it and their well-being. They are, therefore, not inclined to band together in an effort to anticipate and deal with remote problems in time. As a result, projects will often proceed into the implementation stage before the public feels the necessary motivation to involve itself. Since commitments and decisions have already been made regarding

the project, there is understandable reluctance to accept requests for last minute changes. If citizens are serious about their reservations at this late stage, they are usually forced to escalate their demands to overcome the momentum that has already developed in favor of the project.

O'riordan also postulated that the decision process is an aggregation of individual preferences accumulated through a selective process whereby information is taken in, interpreted, assessed and ranked. Individual preferences are then selected, narrowed, and listed in order of social preference. Information related to a current issue is presented selectively so that it is in agreement with present social, legal and institutional policy and legislation. The person who is the recipient of this information then further refines it so that is is agreeable to his definition of the problem. This process is affected by current popular thinking regarding resources, the person's cultural values, education and skill in learning and retaining information. His perception of the problem will also be influenced by previous experience, the complexity of the problem, the degree of contact he has with it and his particular collection of personality attributes (see Figure 4).[22]

Because of the variety and complexity of these factors, it is unlikely that the traditional conception of an upward forming consensus of citizen attitudes and values describes reality.

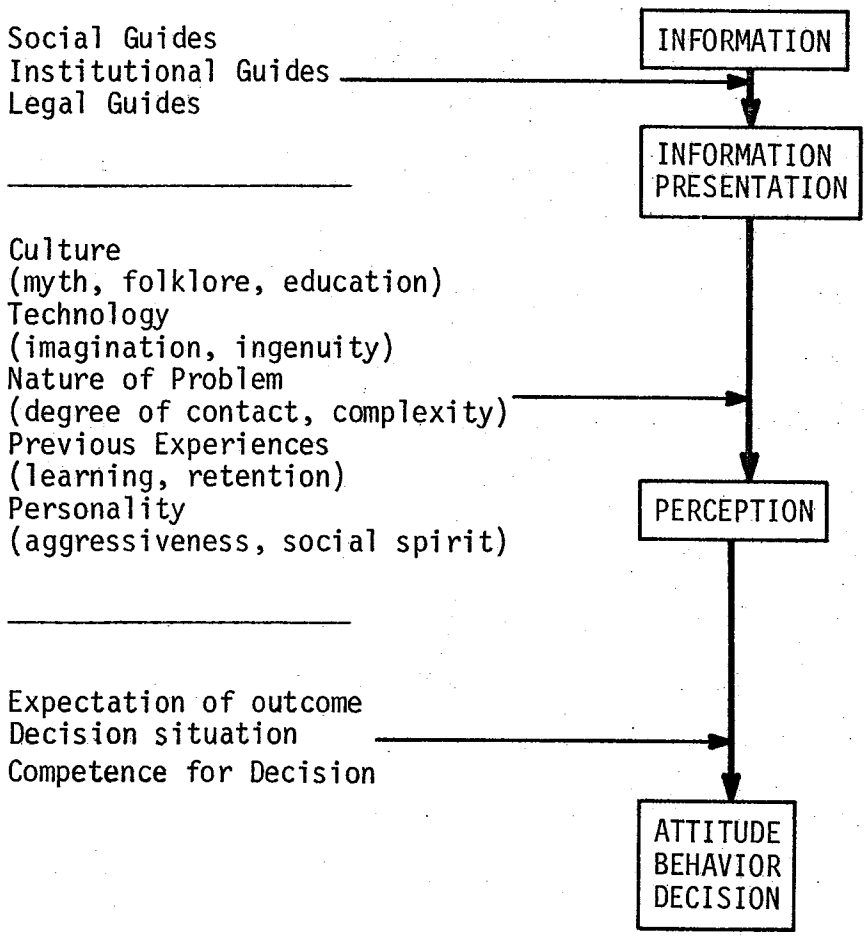


Figure 4. Factors Influencing Perceptions, Attitudes and Decisions

Source: Thomas O'riordan, "Towards a strategy of Public Involvement," in Perceptions and Attitudes in Resource Management, ed. by W. R. Derrick Sewell and Ian Burton (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1971), p. 101

There is simply no forum in which citizens can interact to resolve differences and produce unified public opinions. The likelihood is lessened because information channels between those who make decisions and those who receive them are marginally effective.[23]

Bolen hypothesizes that there is a consensus of opinion reached by a process of constant competition between decision makers and instrumental and expressive groups. This, in effect, reduces situations to a bargaining process between the decision makers and those particular groups or individuals who feel threatened by a decision or action. The position usually reached is that of a slowly evolved consensus established as groups move toward mutually advantageous positions, while acting under conditions of uncertainty. Those people who are not willing or able to achieve membership in either of these three groups simply do not participate. As has been said before, public interaction is limited to those who command the requisite resources and characteristics.[24]

Practices and Attitudes of Non-elected Public Officials

Citizen participation in planning and decision making is influenced to a large degree by the attitudes and practices of non-elected public officials. Friedman, Klein, and Romani conducted an empirical study (hereafter termed the Friedman study) of ninety-six officials in an attempt to obtain their attitudes in

this respect. There was a tendency for the officials to view themselves and their peers as focusing on a fairly limited, identifiable constituency. Most administrators conceived of themselves as policy initiators who tapped a wide range of information sources. The preponderance of this information was technical, however. Some of the respondents recognized a need to solicit their constituents' viewpoints although few actively solicited such viewpoints. The general attitude seemed to be that the officials were primarily trustees of public resources.[25]

Little difference in constituency relationships were discovered between those officials serving particular interests and those serving general public needs. Officials in agencies serving general public needs tended to seek information from interest groups less often, but were much more likely to if they could obtain expert advice.[26]

Further, the Freidman study placed upper level officials into three general role categories: politicos, administrators, and professionals. A politico was an official who established policy, protected the organization from the outside world and spoke for the agency to the outside world. Professionals primarily provided skills of a professional, technical or scientific nature, while administrators supervised agency departments and implemented programs.[27]

Freidman explained that politicos were in a role that required the widest range of contacts and produced the fewest constraints on sources contacted for input into decision making. They were less inclined to establish commitments to the organization, the bureaucracy as a whole, or the professions that predominate their agency. Therefore, they were the group most likely to accept and use a wide variety of policy and information sources. They also tended to respond directly to the consumers of the organization's product or service.[28]

Professionals were more inclined to restrict their interaction to professional associations. As a result, they generally sought information and policy advice from these groups. They also exhibited a tendency to respond to needs in their service or product area that have been determined professionally, regardless of whether the needs were also articulated by consumers.[29]

Administrators were generally confined to the internal activities of the organization due to the nature of their tasks. This obviously limited their frame of reference regarding information and policy resources. Since their world of operation was relatively limited, they tended to identify their agency and other bureaucracies as the logical source for guidance. This group was the least likely to reach outside of their agency for information.[30]

Public officials in lower-level agency divisions had certain

inhibitions regarding citizen participation. Because of their reliance on upper-level policy decisions and/or legal authorizations, they were disinclined to submit themselves to pressure from other points of view. They felt that passing citizen requests on to higher levels could result in expenditures of their own credit with the central office, especially if there is a substantial disruption in normal procedures. There was also the possibility that some officials used central office rules as an excuse to ward off requests that they personally deem undesirable.[31]

While the roles described above serve important functions, there are characteristics in them that suggest adjustments are desirable if citizens are to achieve greater access to decision makers in public agencies. It is certainly not expected that officials will change their roles; however, some structural adjustments may be considered. To the degree that these admittedly arbitrary role designations apply to real world situations, it would be judicious to be selective in the kinds of officials chosen to interact with the public. For example, personnel with characteristics similar to the politico model could be placed in positions that require extensive public interaction.

Since many public participation policies are implemented and enforced by federal agencies, the emphasis and direction that participation takes are partially influenced by federal officials' attitudes toward the role of federal intervention. Daniel Fox

suggests that there are three points of view regarding this issue: 1) the federalist, 2) the pluralist and 3) the pragmatic skeptic.[32]

The federalist point of view is that federal standards ought to be adjusted to place the greatest ability to intervene in local and state governments at the private citizen's level. Ideally, standards are broadly phrased requirements that are flexible, and therefore, provide the greatest opportunity for leverage. This is thought to be the best approach since open-ended standards "allow maximum freedom of decision and action to other levels of government, while preserving accountability to a rational definition of the national interest."[33]

Pluralists are defined as those officials who interpret our system as being one of interaction, confrontation and compromise among competing interests. These officials see their role as that of officiating the contest. They concentrate on the tasks of establishing ground rules, mediating negotiations and arbitrating disputes. Their over-all goal is to protect the rights of groups in order that the competition might continue on an even keel. The pluralists believe that standards should be responsive to change rather than used to effect it. In their point of view, standards should be used to provide maximum freedom for competition within a general framework of maintaining the public interest.[34]

Pragmatic skeptics are those administrators who consider people and problems more important than regulations and guidelines. They attempt to establish a more detailed and precise understanding of local conditions and needs than do federalists and pluralists. They advocate the use of guidelines, on an ad hoc basis, as their use is warranted in a particular situation; "standards provide the framework for strong or weak intervention in a local situation, depending on the position of bureaucratic, congressional and/or national constituency power at the particular moment."[35]

Flexibility in Participation Procedures

While federal laws and regulations are supposed to be uniform in coverage and consistent in intent, their implementation and enforcement will vary with administrations and among administrators. There is always room for interpretation and flexibility in emphasis. This is but one reason for maintaining a flexible program vis-à-vis federal participation requirements. The amount of flexibility depends, of course, on the type of federal officials that are involved. In any event, these typologies are of assistance in understanding the rationale used by various federal officials, and indicate the kinds of participation measures they seek to have implemented. The typologies also give some indication of the kind of federal-local relationship to expect under varying conditions.

An empirical study of highway effects discovered additional

factors highlighting the need for flexibility in participation procedures:

> 1. Considerable variations in highway-related concerns exist among geographically definable regions within the state . . . 3. There is some evidence that a difference exists in highway-related attitudes between individual citizens and local, organized groups . . .[36]

Since the highway department deals with a wide range of projects, adaptation of a specified sequence of actions involving the public and other agencies is undesirable for several reasons. The variation in size and complexity of these activities makes the use of standardized approaches to participation difficult. The formalized, two hearing (location and design) process has been illustrative of the problems inherent in attempting to fit a single process to a variety of situations. That this has been recognized is evidenced by the changes recommended in the revised Federal directive on public involvement and project approval. Also, the Action Plan instructions (PPM 90-4) repeatedly emphasize the need for flexibility.

There are differences in the characteristics of groups and individuals whose participation is expected. Socioeconomic factors such as level of occupational status, educational background, relative mobility, and income level, will result in varying behavior patterns and expectations with respect to highway department activities. Flexibility in involvement

procedures will be required in order to allow optimum participation by all levels.

There are a great number of demographic and philosophical characteristics that relate to citizen participation. Research and experience have identified attitudes and behavior patterns that describe participants, non-participants and public officials. These characteristics suggest certain models of interactive behavior on the part of citizens and officials. The great variety of characteristics and behavior patterns, in addition to providing insight into participation processes, indicate a need for flexibility in participation procedures, in order to solicit information and involvement both from participants and those who traditionally have chosen not to participate. The next chapter suggests means by which input can be secured from both groups of people.

Notes

[1]Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht, "Planning, Participation, and Urban Renewal," in Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning, ed. by Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), p. 279.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 280.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Richard Yukubousky, Citizen Participation in Transportation Planning - A Selected Bibliography (New York: New York State Department of Transportation, 1973), p. 8.

[7]Bellush and Hausknecht, "Planning, Participation, and Urban Renewal," pp. 281-283.

[8]Yukubousky, Citizen Participation in Transportation Planning - A Selected Bibliography, pp. 8-9.

[9]Ibid., p. 9.

[10]Ibid., p. 10.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 11.

[13]James Wilson, "Planning and Politics: Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal," in Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning, ed. by Jewel Bellush and Murry Hausknecht (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), p. 292.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid., p. 293.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 294.

[18]Edgar S. Cahn and Jean Camper Cahn, "Maximum Feasible Participation: A General Overview" in Citizen Participation Effecting Community Change, ed. by Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passett (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1971), pp. 105-106.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Thomas O'riordan, "Towards a Strategy of Public Involvement," in Perceptions and Attitudes in Resource Management, ed. by W. R. Derrick Sewell and Ian Burton (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1971), p. 100.

[21]Ibid., p. 101.

[22]Ibid., pp. 101-102.

[23]Ibid., p. 102.

[24]Ibid., p. 100.

[25]Robert S. Friedman, Bernard W. Klein, and John H. Romani, "Administrative Agencies and the Public They Serve," Public Administrative Review, XXVI (1966), 196.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., pp. 196-197.

[28]Ibid., p. 197.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 199.

[32]Daniel M. Fox, "Federal Standards and Regulations for Participation," in Citizen Participation Effecting Community Change, ed. by Edgar S. Cahn and Barry A. Passett (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 1971), p. 131.

[33]Ibid., pp. 131-132.

[34]Ibid., pp. 131-133.

[35]Ibid., pp. 132-133.

[36]Paul Weiner and Edward J. Deak, "Nonuser Effects in Highway Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 56.

CHAPTER VI

SECURING PUBLIC GOALS AND ATTITUDES

Basic Approaches to Citizen Input

The highway department has been directly affected by the publication of new federal and state requirements relative to participation. Basically, these regulations call for the gathering and exchange of information in a more open and detailed manner. To gather information from citizens about their preferences, highway planners either observe individual behavior or survey opinions and attitudes. This is done using two techniques: 1) behavior, as it relates to existing and simulated transportation systems, is observed and quantified in order to determine public preferences, and 2) opinions and attitudes about existing and hypothetical transportation systems are surveyed in order to obtain public preference.[1]

The highway planner is seeking to determine the operant and conceived values of those involved. Operant values are those which are exhibited by behavior patterns, and conceived values are those which are intellectually formulated. The two may not necessarily be consistent with each other. Operant values are obtained by monitoring behavior. Conceived values are obtained by studying the opinions and stated preferences of people.[2]

Transportation planners often use the first technique to make predictions about future transportation needs, and the main tool has

been the origin-destination survey, which provides statistical correlations between socioeconomic variables and actual travel behavior patterns. Using projected population distributions and characteristics, planners project future travel behavior. This data is used to determine plans and priorities for transportation development. Transportation planners favor the use of operant measurement since it best predicts future demand based on existing technological, economic and political parameters.[3]

There are, however, several advantages to monitoring behavior in a simulated transportation system. The subject goes through the complete evaluation and decision making process in the model environment. Because the process is contained completely within the model, it can be manipulated to reflect changes in different variables with minimal distortion from outside sources. The constraints can also be manipulated on a wider range than possible in real life and for much less cost. Because of the simulation involved, this approach is obviously geared to measure conceived value. Realistically done, however, it can approximate operant values.[4]

The technique of securing opinions and attitudes, regarding the present state of transportation systems, is primarily done through questionnaire-survey methods. This technique is flexible in that questionnaires can be designed to elicit operant or conceived values and to determine the extent to which these values diverge. A survey that obtains the reasons for making certain choices, when using the transportation system, may clarify operant values. A survey which

obtains information about dissatisfaction with available choices can illuminate the cause of the gap between conceived values and operant choice alternatives. Although these later approaches have not been attempted often, there are measurement techniques available.[5]

The last category of techniques is that dealing with obtaining preferences and values regarding hypothetical transportation systems. This approach provides the best opportunity for measuring conceived value since it allows present economic and technological parameters to be removed. This has proven to be of value because non-professionals have some difficulty in perceiving alternative system attributes when mentally confined by the existing system.[6,7]

While either of these techniques is relatively superior to the other for certain uses, both are subject to these weaknesses:

> 1. . . . (Each) fails to consider all effects;
> 2. . . . (Each) fails to solicit public cooperation and participation in evaluating the effects relative to each other in a manner that can be aggregated; . . .[8]

Principles of Interaction in Planning

In addition to improving participation techniques, strengthening the overall level of interaction between the highway department and the public helps in eliminating the weaknesses listed above. Toward this end Reno and others have suggested certain principles of interaction in planning. Some of the most frequently mentioned are summarized below: 1) Interaction should occur between all interested planning bodies and all potentially affected interest groups. Two

types of interaction are desired: a) information passed around to all groups should be consistent and accurate, and b) personal interaction should occur between individuals on all levels from all groups. The more important issues can be discussed productively in one to one situations to insure that real concerns are being communicated.[9,10,11]

2) Under normal conditions, nobody should be excluded from participation. Each individual should feel that he is either directly involved or well represented in each phase of the process. Admittedly, this is difficult when many people are involved but it is a vital step toward fostering a feeling of commitment. It is also critical in avoiding the development of a we-versus-they polarization.[12,13,14]

3) Officials, private groups and individual citizens should be allowed to limit their own depth of involvement. Mass participation efforts are not always appropriate. It will be necessary to develop formal and informal representatives who can speak for their group and, when possible, speak for groups which have banded together in a common interest.[15]

4) Meetings should be kept on a small scale as much as possible. Large meetings generally serve as a forum for public posturing and serve best as checkpoints to determine the progress of issue resolution. Attempts at inundation of opponents by amassing large numbers of witnesses are of little value in solving an issue. The

emphasis should be on small numbers of people sitting down and talking together. Once agreements are reached, public meetings can be held to formalize the negotiations.[16,17]

5) Two levels of communication should be made available for local officials and citizens. These include being made aware of the project as it progresses, through either the media, special newsletter or word of mouth, and having the opportunity to comment on it; and attending public meetings on an as-needed basis to keep up to date and to check items of particular concern. In order to facilitate participation on an as-desired basis, information should be kept up to date and made available to those who may step into the process at different points.[18,19]

6) In recognition of the difficulty of dealing with a project that has a long-term time horizon, sometimes in excess of twenty years, special steps have to be taken in order to motivate people to participate. The best procedure is to develop significant short-range projects that relate directly to the overall process. Committees might be established to examine the impact of the highway on a neighborhood five and ten years in the future so that action could be immediately begun to preserve and enhance the area during and after construction. For example, such action might include planting vegetation that matures in several years and serves as a sight and sound barrier. The implications that these short-range projects have for the future should be made clear, especially to groups or individuals potentially affected by long-range considerations.[20,21]

7) Officials and agencies must be willing to deal in an ad hoc manner with each other, local citizens and private groups. This is a convenient way to gather and maintain full information on rapidly developing and changing issues. Ad hoc efforts should be identified and integrated into an informal information delivery system. In this way, the activities of each group will be known to the other, and each group will be involved in some amount of community interaction.[22]

8) Strict compliance with state and federal civil rights laws and regulations should be maintained. If such protection fails at the local level, the result may be rapid polarization. In addition, minorities from a broad based geographical area may bring pressure at the state and federal level to defeat a proposed project. The process of protecting minority rights should be in operation at each stage of project development.[23,24]

9) Formal reporting strategies and procedures are critical. While informal communication systems are important, they can fail and cause a great deal of confusion and even mistrust. To avoid this pitfall, all groups and agencies should place a special emphasis on developing and maintaining a well devised communication system.[25,26]

10) It is equally important that certain kinds of things not be formally reported. These are the impressions and predictions regarding the values, strategies and future actions of others. People and agencies do not like to have their future actions decided for

them. Nor is it wise to jeapordize future position changes or major agreements by prematurely predicting or announcing them.[27]

11) The creation of interlocking groups helps to establish a web of trust. This can be accomplished by establishing overlapping memberships in groups and agencies at all levels. For example, representatives of neighborhood groups could be placed on the policy advisory committee of the local urban transportation planning process. A member of the policy advisory committee could, in turn, sit on the steering committee. This arrangement could be established for each level of the structure. In this manner, participants will be known to each other even though they normally work at different levels or different aspects of a project. Furthermore, members of each organization know that they have representation at other meetings. This procedure does not guarantee that anyone will trust or agree with everyone else, but it does improve communication and provide assurance that meetings are open to alternate points of view.[28]

12) Highway department personnel and private consultants may assist local officials, groups and individuals in developing the requisite technical data and engineering alternatives necessary to make informed decisions. This will help assure the highway department of receiving usable input from local participation. Ideally, state and local officials could assign personnel to run a cooperative participation process with each party contributing its particular expertise.[29,30]

13) All parties concerned must resist the temptation to succumb to self-serving statements; this includes citizens engaged in community leadership struggles and professionals and experts attempting to convince doubters by focusing attention on their accomplishments and the complexity of their work. Neither activity is calculated to provide conclusive evidence in support of an issue, and citizens with pressing concerns, regarding a highway project, may not be impressed with such activity, especially if conclusions extracted from those arguments are personally threatening. Instead, the emphasis should be on the interaction process. While this may not seem as personally gratifying, it may be more satisfying in the long run when the process is successfully completed.[31]

In implementing these principles, not all interacting groups will be on the same level or even have the same concerns. Decisions will be made at different community levels by different community groups. Decisions will also vary in scope, depending on the level at which they are made. Some decisions will be made at the neighborhood or block level and affect only the immediate area. Others will be made at the city or metropolitan level and affect only a few neighborhoods. The remainder will be made at the city level and affect the entire metropolitan area.[32]

Finally, there are degrees of technicality in decision making. Some decisions can be made with little or no technical assistance. Others require selected involvement by technicians in specific

areas of policy. Many decisions require the full time use of technical input.[33]

Goals

The purpose of these various methods for developing and exchanging information is to decide upon goals. One of the basic causes of current conflicts between the highway department and local neighborhoods and communities is a disparity in goal orientation. Often this disparity is present even when seemingly common goals are held. This can be a result of several factors; "a) there is a lack of agreement as to whether a goal should be regarded as a means or an end; b) there is a lack of agreement as to the end-goals which a mean-goal serves; or c) there is a lack of agreement as to the relative value that should be assigned to an end-goal."[34] Often disagreement over whether a goal should be regarded as a means or an end is exemplified by debate over whether or not a proposed expressway is considered the solution to a transportation problem or as only one means to the solution of a transportation problem. Lack of agreement as to the end-goals which a mean-goal serves is illustrated by the controversies that develop over the impact that a proposed expressway system will have on a neighborhood or community. Lack of agreement of the relative value that should be assigned to an end-goal is illustrated by the argument that the preservation of neighborhoods is more important than expressway development.[35]

No matter which individuals or groups are involved, the process of goal formulation has three basic components. These include, "establishment of the perimeter of concern, examination of alternatives, and final establishment of goals."[36] These components contain five formal steps:

1. Establishment of the perimeter of concern,
2. Establishment of the range of choice,
3. Examination of relationships of goals,
4. Relative evaluation of goals or sets of goals,
5. Establishment of goals as policy.[37]

The perimeter of concern is described as being bounded by the area of an individual's responsibility plus the area that will be affected when he carries out that responsibility. For example, when a government activity impinges on the lives of citizens with secondary effects, criteria should be established dealing with what the nature of these effects ought to be. In the case of the highway department, it is not adequate to establish a goal of getting people from one point to another. Because of the secondary economic and social effects on the area, economic and social goals should also be determined.[38]

Establishing the range of choice of goals involves using common sense. Obviously, a large variety of choices may exist in attempts to resolve an issue, and, given enough people, there will be a variety of solutions or goals suggested. As a matter of practicality, it will be necessary to reduce the number of goals to be considered to a manageable quantity. Only those goals which have a measure of desirability and a reasonable chance of succeeding should be given

serious consideration.[39] While it is impossible to determine empirically which goals have these qualifications, an estimate can be made by selecting those most often mentioned by participants.

The relationships among goals should be examined on a continuing basis throughout the goal forming process. As the process develops, new insights and objectives will change goal relationships. If this development isn't monitored, there is the likelihood that when completely unexpected and unintended results occur, they will remain undetected. The goal relationships will vary in that some may be means-goals of others; for example, additional highway construction can reduce accident rates. Some goals will be mutually incompatible and others will be mutually constraining. Instances of mutually incompatible goals are in evidence whenever a neighborhood or community resists a particular route location. Mutually constraining goals are exemplified by the desire to exclude highway construction in neighborhoods while increasing the use of private transportation.[40]

As goal relationships are examined, it also becomes desirable to begin evaluating the goals themselves. This, of course, is necessary in order that final selections of goals may be made. Beginning the evaluation process while goal relationships are still being considered has the advantage of reducing the number of goals to be analyzed because less desirable ones are eliminated from consideration. Attitude surveys become valuable at this point as a

mechanism for determining citizen evaluation of the potential choices. These surveys help identify a tentative hierarchy of goals.[41]

The final step is to establish selected goals as formal policy. This would be effected by the preparation of a goals statement subsequently adopted as policy guidelines. More than a list of policies, a goals statement should explain the rules by which priorities will be decided and also elaborate on the role that sub-goals will play in shaping decisions.[42] To be consistent, the rules and roles could be established through the same interactive process used to establish goals.

This process will not eliminate the complexity of dealing with individual, group and social goals. The process of determining and understanding goals is intricate:

> 1. Goals are relative to the activity, the future, and the environment with which individuals and society are confronted; 2. Goals imply ends and the meaning of accomplishing ends and also reflect purposive action and the striving to accomplish ends with reason; 3. Goals are dynamic and can be both the cause and the effect of action, . . .; 4. Goals have common and joint characteristics between and among individuals and groups, are partial reflections of the total society and are composites of shared and nonshared individual and group goals; 5. Goals reflect value systems - some highly qualitative and some with quantitative overtones - all based on conscious or sub-conscious assumptions and individual or collective motivations; and 6. Goals may be ordered or unordered, may reflect unity or disunity, may reflect society or the individual or composites of both, and when in conflict in a free and open society may result in confrontation, pressure, influence, bargaining, coaptation[sic], and coalition.[43]

Attitudes

Attitudes are primary determinants of individual goal priorities. Therefore, ascertaining the attitudes of citizens, relative to highway projects, helps reveal the goal hierarchy of individuals vis-a-vis highway development.[44] The term "attitude" has been used rather loosely and come to have a rather general popular meaning. As a result, there is often no common understanding of the term when preciseness is desired. Attitudes are different from expressions of need, desire, motivation and interest. The term "attitude" refers to more basic qualities than these. Shaffer defines attitudes as: ". . . enduring, learned predispositions to behave in a consistent way toward a given class of objects or situations."[45] Attitudes, then, comprise basic convictions and are hard to change. Opinions, on the other hand, are much less entrenched and, therefore, are subject to change; they tend to be more transitory beliefs, viewpoints and judgments. The confusion of these concepts often is apparent in the design and construction of attitude studies. Often researchers have been under the impression that they were collecting data on attitudes when really they were sampling opinions. This is especially inappropriate when decisions with long term implications are being made with input from such data. Often administrators and politicians conclude that the public just doesn't really know what it wants when, in reality, the right kinds of questions were not asked in the right ways.

Opinions should always be carefully evaluated because of their transitory nature. They are subject to influence by the social environment, especially family, social and professional organizations, religous affiliation and neighborhood. The pressure to conform socially is strong enough to override most temptations to disagree with majority consensus, no matter what individual opinions may be on a particular issue.[46]

This condition will not necessarily hold when an individual is potentially directly affected by an event. If the perceived or actual threat is significant enough, there will be a deviation from conformity. Therefore, an individual's behavior is not necessarily predictable, based on his expressions of opinion. This has been particularly true in instances involving new experiences. There have been observed differences between opinions regarding expressways as a concept and direct behavior regarding the nearby construction of an expressway.[47]

Attitudes, on the other hand, reflect more basic values concerning abstract elements not subject to lesser influences. These values include, "time, comfort, convenience, cost, prestige, aesthetics, and education" as well as others.[48] Attitudes are less subject to social influence and are defined as those elements that provide enduring motivational force. They are desirable items of knowledge since they are determinants of actual behavior and can therefore be used to make reasonably accurate predictions.[49]

The most desirable approach to identifying attitudes is to determine the relative significance of the elements of time, comfort, etc., to those who are involved in a project. Subjective techniques for attempting this are described later in the report. It has been fairly well established that people who associate with each other tend to have similar education levels, occupational interests, social attitudes and lifestyles. By discovering relationships between particular groups and attitudinal elements such as time and comfort, and determining how these kinds of groups react when presented with a particular situation, certain correlations and causative relationships can be identified. In this way predictions regarding both values and behavior can be made. Expected reactions to a project can be ascertained partially, and requisite adjustments and compromises carried out.[50]

Community Interaction Objectives

Bleiker, et al., have devised categories of community interaction objectives that attempt to provide an organized and comprehensive picture of the community interaction process (see Figure 5). In order to acquaint the public with highway department responsibilities and achieve public acceptance of them, the authors suggest two objectives: 1) establish and maintain agency and process legitimacy; and 2) maintain the validity of earlier decisions.[51]

By establishing and maintaining agency and process legitimacy, these authors mean achieving the reputation of being accepted by the

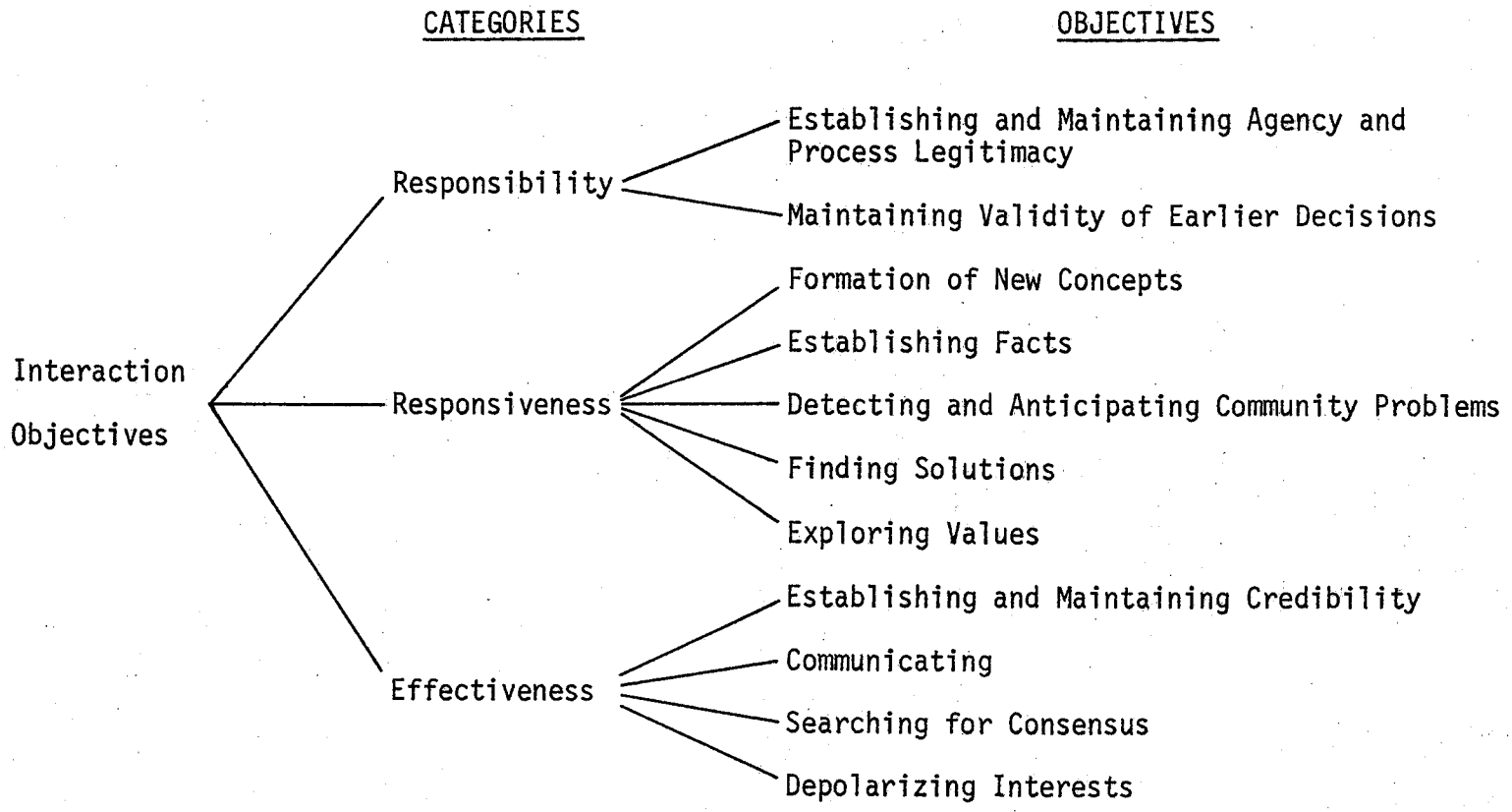


Figure 5. Categories of Community Interaction Objectives.

Source: Hans Bleiker, John H. Suhrbier, and Marvin L. Manheim, "Community Interaction as an Integral Part of the Highway Decision-Making Process," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 16.

community at large as being in compliance with the intent and letter of the law and, most importantly, that the law itself be accepted as correct and desirable. If there has been a loss of confidence in the agency on the part of the general public, this is the single most important objective for the highway department to pursue.[52]

The authors describe a second category of objectives as issues related to responsiveness. It is their thesis that effective community agreement on a desirable course of action will be facilitated if participants perceive the project as beneficial to their interests. This category of objectives is pertinent when there is a general feeling that highway responses are insufficient or inadequate to existing needs, for example, in urban areas where expressway proposals and projects have been contested. As the first category of objectives described a lack of confidence in the highway department, this one discusses the public's perception that there is a lack of solutions emanating from the highway department. It should be emphasized that perceptions are being considered at this point and not matters of fact. Even if the highway department is building the best possible urban transit mode, there is still a very real problem if the public does not agree and acts to hinder the department's work.[53]

There are two essential factors that seem to contribute most to this general feeling of lack of responsiveness:

1. People do not share the same values and, therefore, do not perceive the same problems. More specifically,

> highway professionals and laymen far too often perceive different phenomena when they appear to be looking at the same thing. 2. Any massive construction project in the urban setting is bound to be very disruptive and the highway agency, as well as any other single institution, is ill-prepared to deal with the many problems that result from this disruption.[54]

The third category of objectives is that of effectiveness. This term has two meanings in this context. First, effectiveness refers to the ability of the highway department to do its legally described and constituted task. Secondly, the term refers to the public's perceptions of the ability of the highway department. These two are intricately intertwined. No matter how effective the highway department really is, it will be hindered in its work if the public perceives its effectiveness to be less than desirable. As a result, highway department activity will be impaired and further criticism will occur.[55]

Achieving these objectives depends on properly using a variety of involvement or interaction techniques. A partial list of these techniques includes:

Techniques Used During Some Phases of Process

Using field work method
Holding and attending meetings
Operating field office
Mediating between different interests
Using advisory committees
Analyzing past and current plans made by or for particular community
Conducting background study
Reviewing local election issues
Collecting data
Mapping sociopolitical and environmental data
Illustrating final form of alternative in laymen's terms
Presenting public with range of alternatives

Techniques Used Throughout Process

Establishing overall process agenda and operating within it
Educating public about decision-making process
Monitoring communications media
Producing and releasing material for mass media
Dealing with public in highway agency offices
Listening for public's suggestions for alternative solutions
Establishing and maintaining contact with all actors and issues
Monitoring new developments affecting one or more of relevant urban systems
Monitoring actual impacts of recently built highways
Encouraging internal communication in highway agency
Hiring an ombudsman

Techniques Used for Special Purposes

Carrying out demonstration project
Conducting experiment
Initiating necessary legislation when constraints are too rigid
Providing built-in communications-effectiveness test
Employing community residents on project
Role-playing
Using sensitivity training and laboratory method
Looking for or becoming third party in negotiations between two interests
Hiring an advocate for community
Providing community with capability to deal with relevant nonhighway problems
Engaging in charette[56]

Obviously, not all of these techniques are included in each project. Their use varies with local conditions and needs. The way they are integrated into a project is critical. This is determined, to a degree, by the kind of management structure that is established to facilitate the public participation process. Alternative management approaches are discussed in the following chapter. In addition, four basic kinds of comprehensive public participation processes are described.

Notes

[1]Martin Wachs, "Basic Approaches to the Measurement of Community Values," Highway Research Record, No. 305 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1970), 93-94.

[2]Ibid., p. 94.

[3]Origin and destination studies and similar types of measurement techniques have limitations. An O-D study does measure driver values in terms of preferences for routes and other factors within existing parameters. However, it may be a biased measurement because it is limited to choices among existing alternatives. Therefore, opportunities to express preferences for other systems or to express dislike of existing inadequacies are precluded from the study. By planning transportation development on the basis of biased data, inadequacies may be self-perpetuating. For example, if past transportation systems were built on the assumption that the traveler's primary value was saving time, the system was designed to accomodate that wish. If operant behavior is measured on the same system today, it may be determined that travelers behave in such a way as to maximize their time saved. Therefore, it could be concluded that today's traveler has a primary interest in saving time. Given the original constraints, one really doesn't know if this is true or if a self-fulfilling prophesy is being perpetrated.

These surveys focus on the individual as a user of the system. They do not reveal much about the values of people who do not use the system but are still affected by it. Nor do they provide a measurement of the various values of a user as he changes roles from motorist to homeowner to parent. It may be that different responses would be forthcoming if individuals' values regarding transportation systems were ascertained from the point of view of the whole person rather than merely the motorist role. Effects on the social structure of the neighborhood, for example, could be measured as an operant value of non-system users for planning transportation systems. Ibid.

[4]The use of games is a major approach in simulation studies. The basic theory is that, given a set of realistic but controlled constraints, individuals will approximate what their actual behavior would be if the situation was real. For example, simple locational games have been devised that reveal values and trade-offs involving choices between proximity to services and avoidance of nuisances generated by service locations. More sophisticated games have been used to observe the choices made by people when having to balance out the benefits and disbenefits attributed to transportation systems. Closed circuit systems, motion pictures, photography and

other mechanical devices can be used with effectiveness in game simulation situations. Properly done, game environments place an individual in a life-like context in which he makes decisions based on his own point of view regarding the roles he must fulfull. Ibid., p. 95.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]One study dealing with citizen preferences for transportation planning criteria and decision making mechanisms determined that the subjects of the study held viewpoints that could be aggregated into a few basic categories. Those who owned homes placed more emphasis on environmental impact considerations as did those with greater length of residence in an area. Those who rented and were more transient tended to emphasize transportation efficiencies as a primary criteria. An excellent use of this type of research is the analysis of conflict situations that arise when transportation changes are proposed. Ibid., pp. 95-96.

[8]Paul Weiner and Edward J. Deak, "Nonuser Effects in Highway Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 55.

[9]Arlee T. Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures in the Transportation Systems Planning Process," Highway Research Record, No. 394 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 5.

[10]See Victor Vroom, Some Personality Determinants of the Effects of Participation (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960), p. 5, for a discussion of needs fulfillment.

[11]See Barry E. Collins and Harold Guetzkow, A Social Psychology of Group Processes for Decision-Making (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), pp. 20-21, for a discussion of the advantage of group over individual problem solving.

[12]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 5.

[13]See Collins and Guetzkow, "Group Processes," pp. 196-201, for a discussion of personal satisfaction at meetings.

[14]See G. A. De Cocq, Citizen Participation: Doomed to Extinction or the Last Foothold of Democracy? (Netherlands: A. W. Sijthoff-Leyden, 1969), p. 44, for a discussion of benefits of group participation to the whole community.

[15]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 5.

[16]Ibid.

[17]See Richard J. Bouchard, "Community Participation: How to Get There from Here," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Record, 1972), on the benefits of informal working sessions with citizens.

[18]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 6.

[19]See description of a coalition model in Erwin A. France, "Effects of Citizen Participation in Governmental Decision-Making," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971).

[20]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 6.

[21]For a philosophical discussion see Jiri Kolaja, "Two Processes: A New Framework for the Theory of Participation in Decision-Making," Behavioral Science, XIII, No. 1 (January, 1968), pp. 69-70.

[22]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 6.

[23]Ibid.

[24]See Louis A. Zurcher, "Selection of Indigenous Leadership," in Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B. C. Spiegel (Washington, D. C.: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), p. 90.

[25]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 6.

[26]See also Robert C. Seaver, "The Dilemma of Citizen Participation," in Citizen Participation in Urban Development, ed. by Hans B. C. Spiegel (Washington, D. C.: NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968), pp. 68-70.

[27]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 6.

[28]Ibid., p. 7.

[29]Ibid.

[30]See also Douglas Harman, Citizen Involvement in Urban Planning: The San Diego Experiment (San Diego, California: Public Affairs Research Institute, San Diego State College, 1968), p. 1.

[31]Reno, Jr., "Interaction Procedures," p. 7.

[32]Hans B. C. Spiegel, Neighborhood Power and Control: Implications for Urban Renewal Planning (New York: Institute of Urban Environment, School of Architecture, Columbia University, 1968), p. 153.

[33]Ibid., p. 154.

[34]Robert C. Young, "Goals and Goal Setting," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXII, No. 2 (March, 1966), 79.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 82.

[37]Ibid.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., p. 83.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Joseph Barry Mason and Charles Thomas Moore, "Development of Guides for Community Acceptance of Highway Location, Development, and Construction," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 46.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Margaret T. Shaffer, "Attitudes, Community Values, and Highway Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 187 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1967), 56.

[46]Ibid., p. 57.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Ibid.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Ibid., pp. 57-58.

[51]Hans Bleiker, John H. Suhrber, and Marvin L. Manheim, "Community Interaction as an Integral Part of the Highway Decision-Making Process," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 16-17.

[52]A three part program is suggested to achieve this objective: "(a) make the agency's responsibilities, authorities, programs, processes, operating procedures, and constraints known; (b) operate scrupulously within the intent and the letter of these; and (c) make this fact known."

The second objective of maintaining the validity of earlier decisions is essentially a matter of keeping the public informed as highway decisions evolve from past to present to future. This is especially important in dealing with comprehensive and long range planning decisions such as transportation network designing and timing. If conditions are such that a revised decision is necessary with respect to larger, long term choices, the highway department initiates the release of this information together with a rationale for the change. In this way, it can avoid the suspicion that changes are made for the convenience of special interests without much regard for genuine long range considerations. At the same time, the public is made aware of the feasibility and consequences of making such changes. Ibid.

[53]Ibid., p. 17.

[54]The authors suggest five objectives that, if reached, should serve to ameliorate a perceived crisis of solutions. The first of these is the formation of new concepts, which amounts to discarding preconceptions about a community and concentrating on studying it as a new and unknown quantity. Examples of techniques to use in achieving this objective include anthropological analysis and sociological field work. The second objective in this category is that of establishing facts. The foremost thing to be done in achieving this objective is to differentiate carefully between facts, which are items that can be determined to everyone's satisfaction, and concepts, which are points of view supported by various hypotheses and facts but not validated beyond dispute. The third objective is detecting and anticipating community problems, so that planners may better understand the implications of their activities and avoid actions that might have unintended results. The fourth objective is that of finding solutions. While community input may not produce fully developed solutions, it can provide beneficial alternative ideas that may secure local support more quickly than will highway department solutions. The fifth objective is exploring and determining community values, which is a basic reason for community interaction or involvement. Ibid., pp. 17-19.

[55]The first objective in this category is that of establishing and maintaining credibility; this is best accomplished if the highway department establishes itself as the most timely and accurate source of information regarding highway matters. Communicating is the second objective. While it is difficult for the highway department to carry on meaningful communications with all the different interests, it should seek to provide as many people as possible with the data and conclusions used by the highway department in making their decisions. The third objective in this category is searching for consensus, which is substantial effective agreement on the desirability of undertaking a particular project. The last objective of this category is depolarization of interests; that is, reducing the feeling that being for or against a highway is the only choice. Depolarization is best achieved by finding and dealing with areas of mutual agreement, which make it possible for groups to interact further on a more positive and open basis. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

[56]Ibid., p. 21.

CHAPTER VII

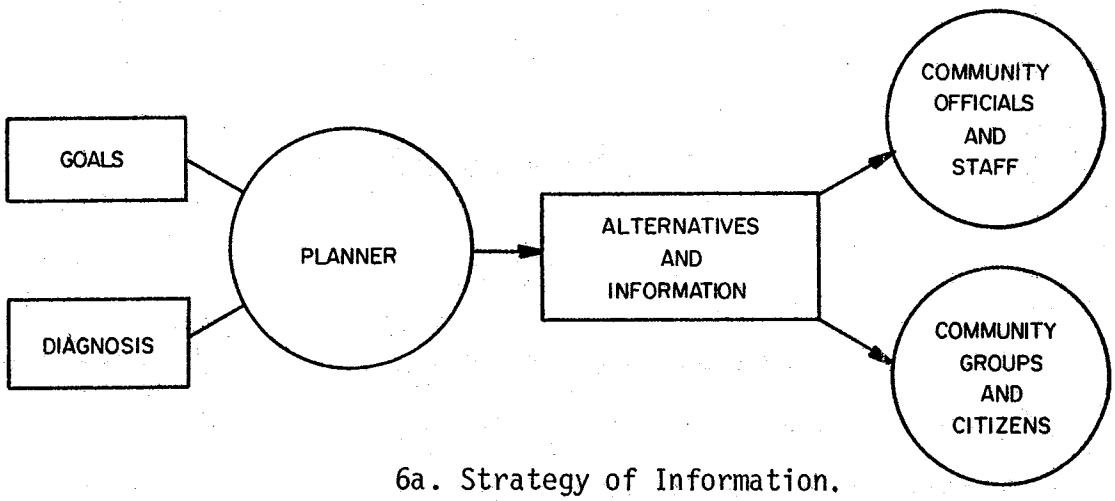
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION MODELS

Introduction

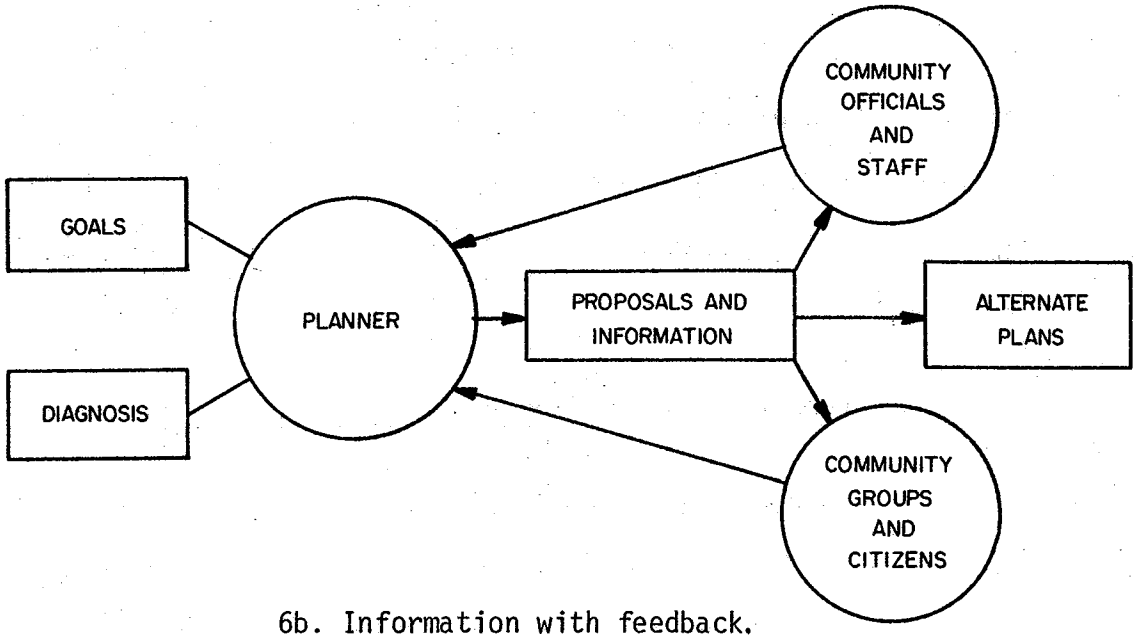
Texas Highway Department planning is conducted at two levels. The first level is systems planning which involves the development of coordinated highway transportation. The second level is project development which involves the siting, design and construction of specific highways. The development of public participation and process management models must be done in such a way that the needs of both planning levels are met. The models discussed in this chapter were selected because they are readily usable at both the system planning and project development levels of highway department planning.

Alternative Management Models for Citizen Participation

Highway planners are in a position to manipulate information for various ends. The reasons for choosing a particular approach will vary with many factors including the level of citizen involvement desired. Several management alternatives have been identified that are fairly descriptive of available approaches to citizen participation (see Figure 6).[1] Implementation of these strategies will depend on the purpose to be served at a given time. The significance of these



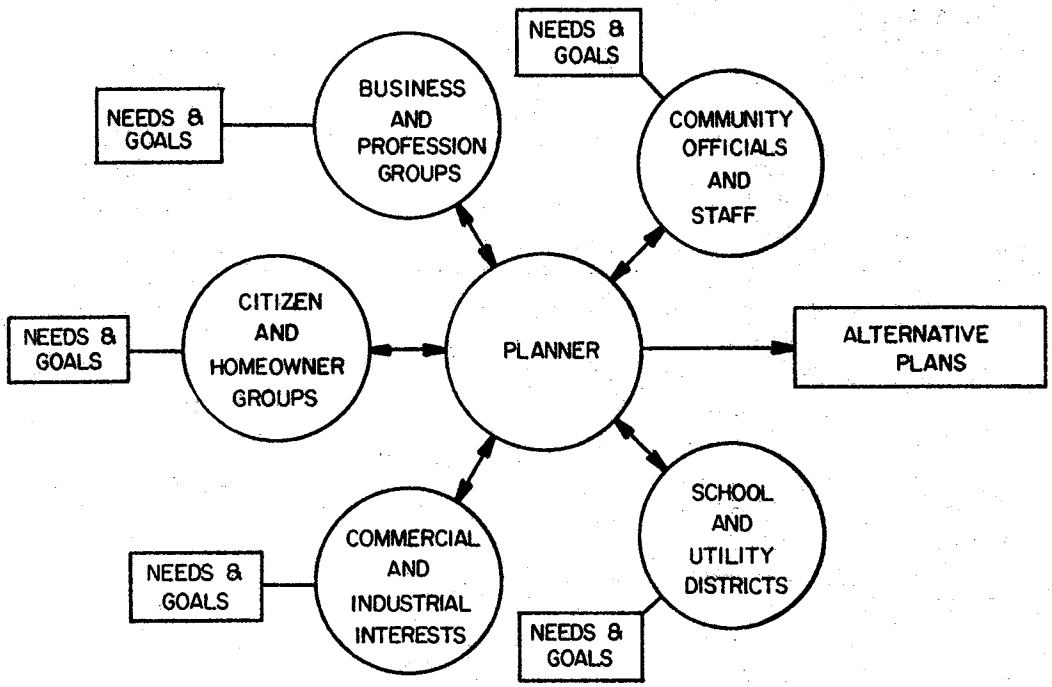
6a. Strategy of Information.



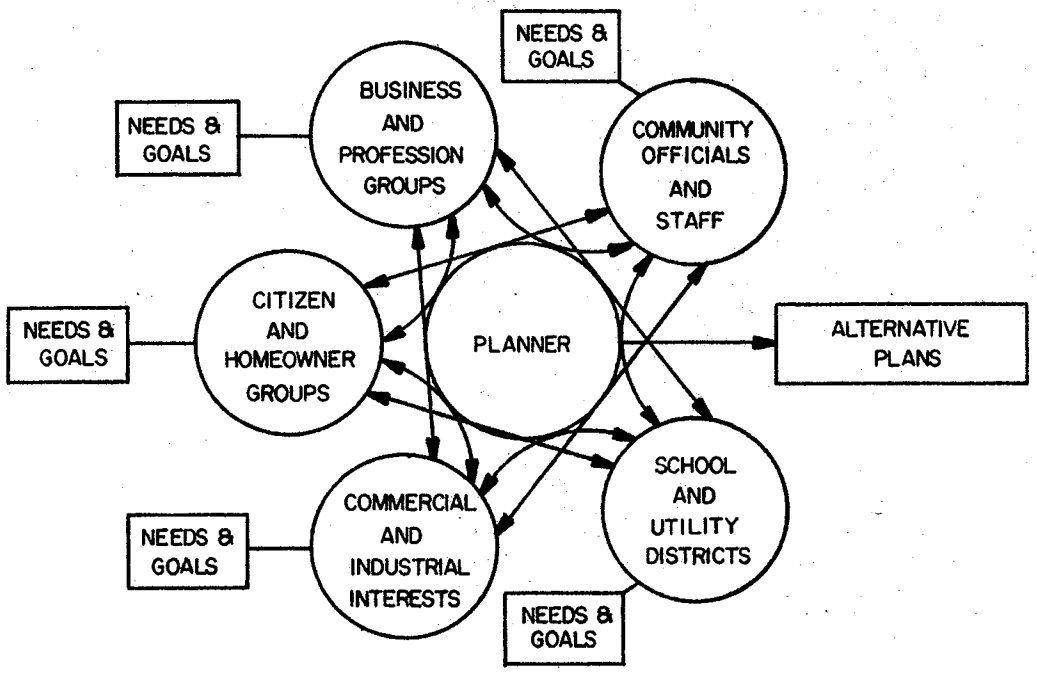
6b. Information with feedback.

Figure 6. Alternative Management Models

Source: Bruce Bishop, Clarkson H. Oglesby, and Gene E. Willeke, "Community Attitudes toward Freeway Planning: A Study of California's Planning Procedures," Highway Research Record, No. 305 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1970), 47.

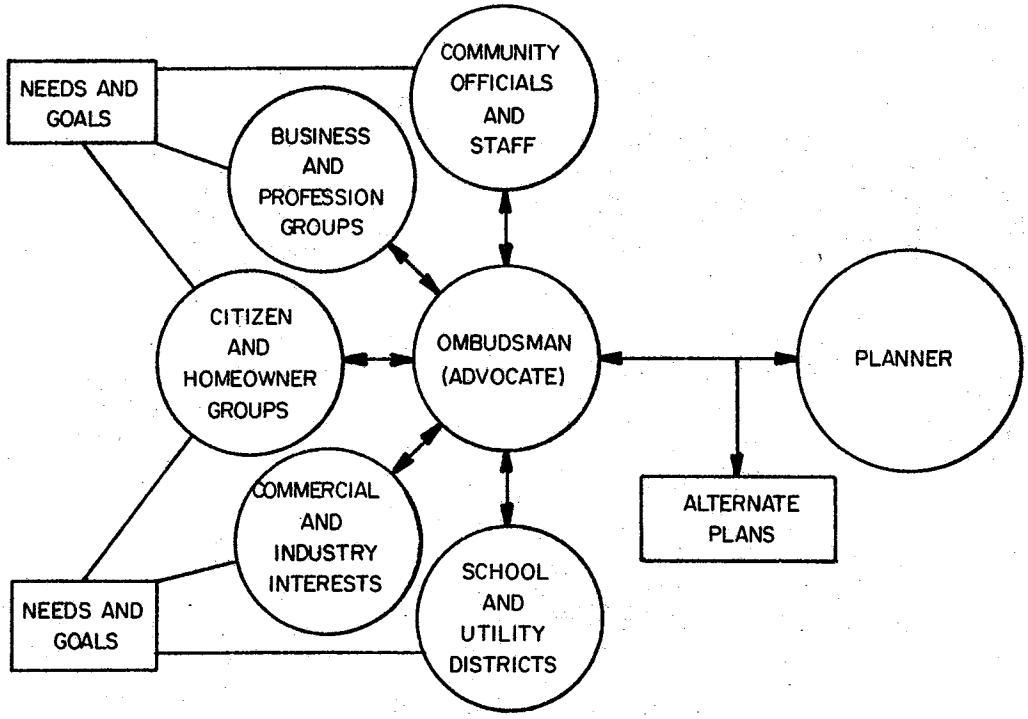


6c. The coordinator.

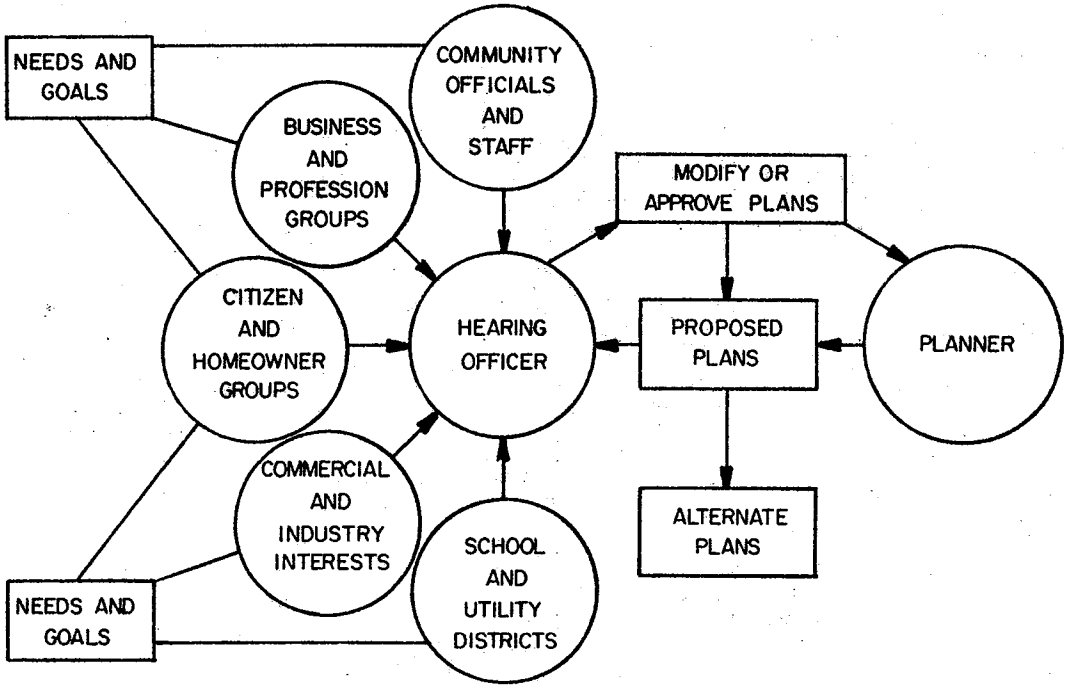


6d. The coordinator-catalyst.

Figure 6. (Continued)



6e. Community advocacy planning.



6f. Arbitrative planning.

Figure 6. (Continued)

models is that they show the basic involvement processes available between highway planners, community leaders and private citizens.

The strategy of information approach is so named because an agency is in complete command of the preparation of the plan and communicates with the public only to impart or gather information as it desires. This approach is used most often by people or organizations who believe that there are only objective and professional criteria by which a project ought to be developed and implemented. It is usually their conviction that outside interference is unnecessary and undesirable.[2] When pressed, these people or organizations will attempt to comply with public participation requirements by implementing the kinds of participation classifed by Arnstein as non-participation (See Chapter II).

The agency also controls the situation when there is an information with feedback structure. In this arrangement, planning studies are still carried out by agency planners. They develop alternative approaches and make final decisions. Alternatives and findings are presented to political officials and local citizens and their feedback is solicited. However, final disposition remains in the hands of the agency. It may choose to alter plans accordingly or ignore the feedback. Participation is strictly an advisory function in this structure; an arrangement Arnstein defined as informing and categorized as a kind of tokenism.[3]

The agency planner as a coordinator establishes contact with all the major community elements. In this role he determines their objectives, tests the various available alternatives and solicits feedback. However, interaction between the different major community elements is not encouraged. In this manner, the agency still maintains control of the information and, therefore, control of the situation. This model is somewhat analogous to Arnstein's description of consultation in that both seek citizen input before decisions are made.

The first category in which the agency encourages participation, as defined in Chapter I, in the planning process itself is that of coordinator-catalyst. In this approach the relevant interests are assisted in interacting with each other and the agency. The role of the agency planner in this situation is to make available the necessary methodological and technical expertise. He serves a continuing role of seeking to effect compromise when objectives and interests are in conflict with each other. Hopefully, the results of this process will be mutually acceptable and supported by most community factions. One mechanism for pursuing this approach is the use of a group workshop process participated in by elected officials, planning and engineering staff, representatives of business, industry, education and residents. The highway department district offices provide engineering and other technical input to the process on an as-needed basis.[4] The local political jurisdiction shares

expenses with the highway department. The preceding two models are somewhat analogous to the description of consultation given by Arnstein in that both seek input before decisions are made.

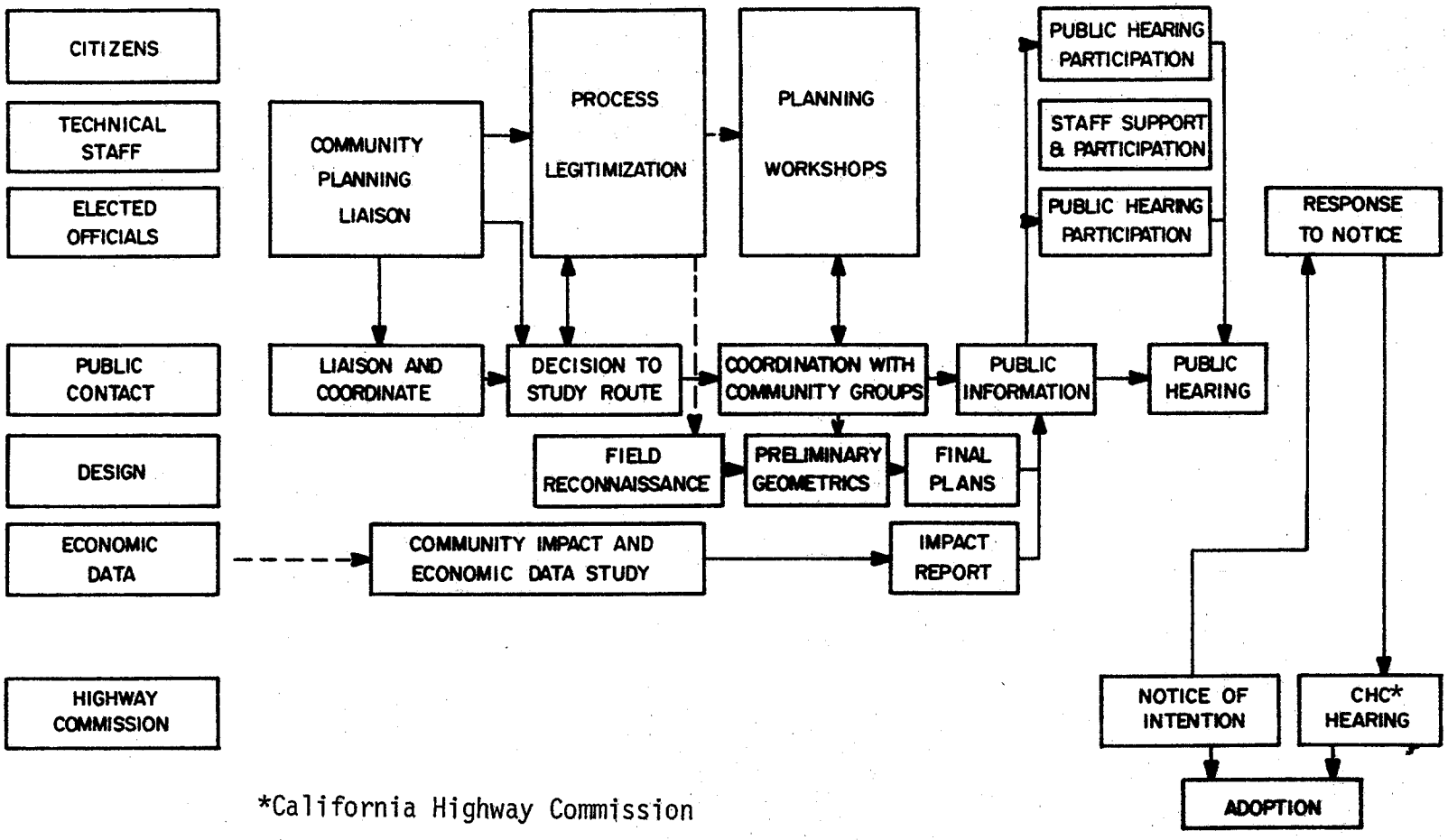
Community advocacy planning is a technique designed to assist citizens who have few resources. This does not mean only people with low incomes. For example, people of any economic class who do not have training or experience to evaluate complex and technical problems are lacking requisite resources. In this type of planning advocacy is provided through the offices of an ombudsman. The role of the ombudsman is to represent the views, preferences and values of those people potentially affected by a project. He works directly with the agency, serving as a go-between for the various interest groups involved in the project. The value of the ombudsman in this situation is that he has the ability to spend all of his time dealing with the situation, and therefore, acquires a sophisticated grasp of the problem. In addition, if his position is established as a separate state office, he is viewed as a voice apart from the highway department. This helps make his compromises and judgments acceptable to those who might suspect the objectivity of a highway agency.[5]

The final category is that of arbitrative planning. This approach provides for the position of a hearing officer who acts as an impartial judge when disputes occur. Again, as with an ombudsman, the independence of this position adds to its credibility.

Under this arrangement the hearing officer comes to a community at designated points in the planning process, at which times the highway department presents its findings and conclusions based on the work that has transpired since the previous hearing. Private citizens and groups then present criticisms, suggestions and counter-proposals for consideration. The hearing officer considers the evidence and renders his evaluation of the situation. Depending on the exact procedure, the hearing officer takes action that varies from making formal recommendations to a higher body to rendering an immediate ruling.[6] This model is similar to the second part of Arnstein's category of delegated power in that arbitration is the primary technique for resolving differences.

Coordinator-catalyst Role

The most likely of these categories to achieve the purpose and goals stated in the Action Plan[7] is that of the coordinator-catalyst (see Figure 7). There are four basic steps in this approach to highway planning at the systems level. A community planning liason provides continuous communication between the highway department and local communities. The liason's role is to become acquainted with the objectives of each community and with present and future traffic needs. This procedure is not limited necessarily to times when highways are contemplated, but can be a continuous process of interaction between the liason and individuals and groups in the community.



*California Highway Commission

Figure 7. Route Location Procedure with Coordinator-Catalyst Role

Source: Bruce Bishop, Clarkson H. Oglesby, and Gene E. Willeke, "Community Attitudes toward Freeway Planning: A Study of California's Planning Procedures," Highway Research Record, No. 305 (Washington, D.C.: Highway Research Board, 1970), p. 49.

The second step is to provide process legitimization, that is, to establish a positive relationship between local communities and the highway agency by adopting a mutually acceptable planning process and then working within its framework (See pp. 99-101 for another description of process legitimization). Process legitimization entails, "(a) identifying the participants; (b) determining the planning strategy, i.e., the ways the study will be made such as organization and involvement of participants; (c) establishing the study limits, particularly in choosing beginning and terminal points; and (d) developing the initial goals and objectives of the study."[8] In this step all participants become aware of the duties, responsibilities and privileges of each interest. The community planning liason provides an important service in maintaining clear communication between parties and serving as the process consultant if technical assistance is desired.[9]

In the third step, community socioeconomic and impact studies are conducted. The intent of these studies is that the local community defines its short- and long-range goals and comes to an understanding of what steps are necessary to meet transportation needs relative to its other objectives. This approach is most valuable if it is done at the beginning of the planning process. Once planning has proceeded very far, assumptions, values and goals are either implicitly or explicitly established and serve as constraints on serious attempts at conducting studies and

establishing formal goals. Successfully practiced, this procedure helps integrate the highway department into the community as a fellow builder and negates the image of the department as a community intruder. In order to participate fully in community transportation planning, the highway department would have to be willing to deal with other forms of transportation and consider the negative and positive aspects of each. Again, the community planning liason plays a significant role in these activities.[10]

Finally, planning workshops are used as a way to implement the planning strategy. By including relevant officials and private interests in these workshops, conflict resolution and coordination are likely to be implemented. This is believed to be the case, since the various interests would be placed in a context in which they would have to discuss their problems and priorities with each other and the highway department.[11]

Committee and Task Force Model

One means of implementing the coordinator-catalyst strategy is through a committee and task force model, which shares characteristics with Arnstein's category of degrees of citizen participation. In this model, the leadership and general citizenry are invited to participate in an open-ended citizens' advisory committee.[12] The committee is divided into task forces in order to allow all participants to be closely involved. The committee and

task force model was developed for and used by the Louisville and Jefferson County Air Board. While the model was developed for use at the project level, it is also applicable to systems level planning. Implementation of the model begins by identifying the community influentials, who are defined as those people in a position to exert the requisite force necessary to achieve community change.[13] This includes people who represent groups as well as those acting in an individual capacity. Some of these people have intensive influence, that is, they exercise force on a narrow range of community issues. Others are capable of more extensive influence, operating over a wider range of community issues. In addition, the influentials vary in the length of time they maintain their ability to exert influence. Some people are active in shaping community decisions over a long period of time, others have a relatively short tenure.[14,15]

After the general membership of a citizen's advisory committee is established, a steering committee and task forces are chosen. These positions are initially staffed by influentials, who have the interest and time to maintain active involvement. The basic responsibilities of the steering committee include establishing basic guidelines for task force operations, assigning specific topics of study to the task forces and reviewing and commenting on the work of the task forces at subsequent time intervals.[16] The citizen's advisory committee and task forces can be implemented by

integrating them into the urban transportation planning process outlined in the Action Plan.[17]

The committee and task force concept has two key ingredients that make it a viable approach for community-wide involvement and for efficient coordination with the highway department. The steering committee establishes policy and maintains direct access to the highway department; unlike Arnstein's degrees of citizen power category, the committee cannot bind the highway department by its policy. This reduces the number of groups and individuals with which the highway department has continuing direct contact and provides the local community with a unified and direct channel of communication. The task force arrangement is such that new task force committees can accomodate additional participants without exceeding an effective operating size. In this manner, everyone who wishes to participate can do so at the task force level. In addition, because it is freed from day to day work activity, the full citizens advisory committee can be made up of a much larger body of people and need not exclude anyone.[18]

The citizens advisory committee should continue to grow in membership through an open door policy. Individual citizens, who are interested, are allowed to participate simply by attending general meetings or, if they desire greater involvement, by becoming members of task force committees.[19] To meet developing technical requirements, the citizens advisory committee can acquire appropriate members as they are needed.[20,21]

The entire committee is very closely linked since all members belong to some task force. The task forces range in size from five to twenty-five members and are the motivating factor behind the committee. Generally, each task force concentrates its activities in certain areas although there is some overlap since the various aspects of a project are hard to separate completely. Occasionally, the larger task forces find it necessary to establish sub-committees to perform special tasks on a one-time basis. Usually these are informal operations that result in oral reports.[22]

When the task forces begin their activities, they determine specific goals and objectives. Their agenda consists of establishing short-range goals and objectives in order to accomplish the routine tasks of reviewing reports and responding to requests for studies as initiated by the steering committee. When new task forces are formed, they adapt the same procedures.[23]

In the intital phases of the project members of each task force meet with highway department representatives in question-and-answer sessions to orient themselves to the operating and planning procedures used by the department. In addition, the plans and rationale for the project are reviewed so that task force members have an understanding of the context in which they operate. The citizen's advisory committee of the Louisville and Jefferson County Air Board found that this was a very important meeting for creating a viable citizen group. In their experience, the basic

objective of the task force groups turned out to be that of acting as a link between the Air Board and the community.[24]

Once the task forces assimilate a basic understanding of the planning process and operating procedures of the agency, they begin to review the studies conducted for and by the highway department in preparation for the project. Again, highway department personnel sit in on these meetings and assist with technical explanations so that task force members acquire a fundamental understanding of the assumptions made and conclusions reached. Based on their own knowledge of the area, their orientation to planning and operating procedures and their familiarity with the technical studies conducted as of that time, the task forces may recommend additional studies that the highway department could undertake. They are also able to anticipate and introduce to the studies items of concern to local citizens.[25]

The task forces also make efforts to interact with other citizen groups. When applicable, interested citizen groups are visited by task force representatives in order to both impart and secure information. Invitations are extended to relevant groups to attend task force meetings. Because so many task force members are active in other organizations much of this activity occurs informally.[26]

Other advantages accrue to the persons using this model in addition to the ones already mentioned. Assuming that the committee

is listened to and that their recommendations are given satisfactory consideration by the highway agency, it is expected that the committee will present favorable testimony at public hearings and through the media. Because the highway department has listened to the committee throughout the preparation of the project, it will be aware of the majority of concerns to be expressed at public hearings and be prepared to respond to them satisfactorily.[27] Finally, this model has the advantage of being both comprehensive and specific. Because of its basic structure, it easily accomodates involvement from the whole community and attains some degree of balance since all interested factions are able to have input.[28] If there are areas or segments of the community that will be bearing a disproportionate share of the burden, they can be assisted specifically through the use of task forces designed especially to ameliorate the situation. This approach is beneficial in ensuring that individual neighborhoods and minority groups are not ignored in the general rush to complete a project generally thought to be beneficial to the entire community.

Community Survey and Organization Model

Task forces have only a limited amount of interaction with community members who do not belong to the citizen's advisory committee. There are community organization models that attempt to engage the entire community through already existing organizations.

There are several advantages to this approach. Since existing organizations are used it is not necessary to expend resources to establish new groups. Furthermore, it is easier to involve people since they will not have to make new commitments and add another meeting date to their calendars. It is not necessary to expend resources maintaining these organizations since they already exist for other purposes and have a life of their own. It can be assumed that the majority of people who are inclined to join in community efforts will already have done so and will therefore be reached most efficiently in this manner. This model is suitable for use with either systems or project planning. It can expand to include community-wide organizations when systems planning is being done and focus on groups representing a particular geographical area when project planning is undertaken.

Two basic principles facilitate the successful implementation of the community survey and organization model. One of them is the principle of non-advocacy and the other is intellectual honesty. The principal actor in this model is a sociologist who interacts between the planners and the community.

The sociologist remains a neutral figure when working with the community and must be able to convince them of his objectivity. He must be allowed the freedom not to support any faction during the development of a project. This is the only way in which open communication will be maintained. The principle of intellectual

honesty is involved in that in addition to being objective, the sociologist must also give the same information to all sides without withholding or distorting information to the advantage of anyone. The point here is that all potential for surprise must be removed from the proceedings. It is lack of knowledge and information that leads to anxiety, frustration, anger and mistrust. Therefore, by keeping everyone informed on an equal basis it is postulated that the overall relationship will be kept stable.[29,30]

There are two principal activities in this model. One is a community survey and the other is community organization. The information gathered from these sources will aid in providing a comprehensive and detailed picture of community desires. The community organization phase involves basic sequential steps that are intended to involve the community in a dialogue with agency planners. The first step is to identify the individuals and groups with which the dialogue is to take place. Secondly, contacts are made in order to determine fundamental problems and concerns. Finally, structures are devised whereby information can be exchanged between the community and the agency. This is done through a careful procedure to insure that accurate information is released and to avoid surprises.[31]

Determining which groups and individuals to contact is a responsibility of the agency sociologist. Since people in positions of formal leadership have significant influence on the opinions

and actions of the community, their inclusion in the dialogue is very important. As there are probably several hundred people who qualify as formal leaders, it is necessary to select a smaller number who are representative of the whole. This is done by selecting leaders from each of four categories of formal leadership. These categories are, "(a) productive or economic organizations such as manufacturing and service companies; (b) maintenance organizations such as schools and churches; (c) adaptive organizations such as research and planning groups; and (d) managerial or political organizations including elected offices and formalized pressure groups."[32,33] By selecting from each category in proportion to its part of the whole, representative formal leaders will be obtained in a ratio that reflects actual local composition.[34]

Determining the concerns of formal leaders is usually done by interviewing them at their offices during working hours. This method is desirable because it reduces the amount of time and trouble they must take and results in a greater willingness to be interviewed. Interviews should be loosely structured and questions broadly phrased so that the respondents are free to express their opinions. The topics covered should include, "1. Awareness of any controversy over the transportation plan; 2. Assessment of what should be done to meet present and future transportation needs in the area; and 3. Appraisal of the citizen groups that have been opposed to the project."[35]

All groups who have shown a previous interest in highway planning should be included initially, especially groups that have expressed anti-highway attitudes in the past. Sources of the names of such groups include the local news media, transportation agency personnel, local legislators and city officials. At the close of the first round of group meetings, each group should be asked to contribute the names of additional parties and individuals they think might be interested in joining. In all likelihood some will be named several times. The number of times groups and individuals are mentioned will help identify those whose involvement would be most desired.[36]

A critical aspect of the community organization process is the attempt to interact with anti-highway groups. Without successful involvement with these groups there will be controversy and animosity no matter how well satisfied the formal leadership and civic organizations are. It should be expected that initial attempts at scheduling meetings with some of these groups will be met with apathy, hostility and/or suspicion.[37] When this is overcome certain conditions regarding meetings should be kept in mind. It is important to keep attendance to a small number of people, six or eight at the maximum. The atmosphere should be as relaxed as possible in order to facilitate ease of exchange. A relaxed atmosphere is more easily achieved if the meetings are held in citizens' homes at hours that do not conflict with their work

schedules. Given these circumstances, the probability of obtaining a free and open dialogue involving substantial issues is increased.[38]

As an exchange of information begins to take place, a desire for subsequent meetings may develop to follow through on concerns that arise as the project progresses.[39] Once this stage is reached, meaningful community involvement has begun. Unlike Arnstein's degrees of citizen power, this involvement does not include sharing decision making authority. The agency should establish study groups of highway department personnel to work with the community.[40] The agency sociologist should brief agency members on the concerns and problems of the community, based on his interpretation of the previous meetings. The study groups are responsible for addressing specific issues regarding the proposed highway project and the relationship of those specific issues to the concerns expressed in initial meetings by the community groups. These community-study group meetings are structured in the same manner as are the initial meetings.[41]

Once study group-community meetings become established, the study group personnel begin a series of in-house meetings in order to keep each other informed of the direction their work is taking as well as the implication it has for the direction the project will take. At these meetings the sociologist evaluates the project alternatives in terms of his interpretation of <u>community</u> goals and objectives. To maintain interaction with the community,

decisions made by the study groups are passed on to the community groups promptly and clearly. This is accomplished by establishing clearly defined channels for releasing important information.[42]

Certain basic steps are taken so that these channels may be established successfully. "1. Ensure release of the correct information to the people; 2. Properly phase the release of information; 3. Acquire the initial reactions of the people; and 4. Assure due consideration to the opinions and alternatives offered."[43]

The most difficult of these steps is the first one, ensuring the release of correct information. In order to prevent the dissemination of distorted information, new developments and decisions are made available to key individuals and groups by personal contact, telephone calls and written notification. News released in this manner is then made available to the news media. This procedure helps assure that: "1. The message is not distorted; 2. No one is surprised by stories that ultimately appear in the news media; and 3. The procedure ensures the maintenance of a personal touch, a sense of personal involvement that is so characteristic of the earlier phases of community organization work."[44]

Properly phasing the release of information is also an important and delicate task. All groups display and maintain an internal status hierarchy. These hierarchies can be determined during the first few meetings with each group. When establishing

channels of information with these groups, it is important that the status hierarchies not be ignored. This is especially true with anti-highway groups that are already hostile to some degree. If those people with strong influence in a group are the last recipients of information, there is a possibility that they may resent such treatment and consciously or unconsciously react by criticizing the process. Properly phasing the release of information involves insuring that those highest in status in a group are the ones initially contacted through information channels.[45]

Serious consideration of community response to released information is important if it is desired that community groups continue to feel involved and integral to the project. The agency study group should be especially sensitive to the responses given by community group leaders, since their evaluation probably will reflect the consensus of the groups which they lead. These people must be encouraged to react and they must be convinced that their responses will be considered before final project decisions are made.[46]

The other principal technique to the community survey and organization model, the community survey, is an important check on the effectiveness of community organization, because not all or even most people belong to community groups. Therefore, they will not necessarily be represented by the community groups involved in the community organization process. Surveys attempt to ascertain

the basic goals and objectives of the entire community in terms of transportation planning. In addition, as has been mentioned earlier in this report, protest leaders do not always accurately represent the viewpoints of the people for whom they claim to speak. A well conducted survey helps determine both the wishes of those who do not belong to community groups and those purportedly spoken for by protest groups.[47,48]

The Location Team and Design Process Model

Manhein and Suhrbier, two of the authors of the community interaction objectives discussed in the preceding chapter, describe a location team and design process intended to satisfy some basic objectives at the project planning level. They recommend a four stage strategy; "1. Initial survey; 2. Issue analysis; 3. Design and negotiation; and 4. Ratification."[49] The theory is that initially the location team will not have complete understanding of the relevant community issues and problems. As it interacts with the community, the team will develop better perceptions of the issues.[50] Finally, as problems become more clearly articulated and meaningful alternatives are developed, serious attempts at equitable solutions can be made.[51] Throughout this process the location team acts as a community catalyst regarding community issues, while maintaining primary authority over engineering issues. The process is continued until either substantial, effective

agreement is reached on the part of all parties or it is determined that agreement can not be reached and the decision is passed on to higher authorities.

Location team membership is comprised of whatever combination of professionals are deemed necessary for studying alternative highway locations and designs. Members are selected by that agency which is in charge of the highway location and design process. Location team resources will be limited relative to the numerous issues and problems that a large project raises. An allocation of team members and skills will have to be made based on the priorities of the various activities and the skills of the team members. The first stage, the initial survey, of the model involves acquiring basic social, economic, political, transportation, and environmental data and developing an understanding of the interests, needs and desires of all potentially affected people. When this stage is completed the team should have the requisite information for developing initial alternative location plans. It should also be able to make preliminary estimates of what the significant technical, social, and political issues likely will be.[52]

Issue analysis involves the development of a clear understanding of issues through the technique of identifying and expressing existing, conflicting values. The main emphasis is developing a range of alternative approaches representing the various attitudes discovered during the initial survey. When these

different approaches are presented to each interest group, there likely will be a broadened understanding of the significance of alternative choices. In this way each group is helped to see the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and to express itself before the location team begins to narrow the choices.[53,54]

At this point in the model, the location team concentrates on alternative location sites. A wide range of sites is selected in order to evaluate all possible alternatives. In the course of presenting these alternatives to various groups, the team is developing personal interaction and gaining feedback in terms of perceptions, values and attitudes.[55] The end of stage two is reached when team members have gained an increased understanding of community issues but before community groups have adopted a particular point of view.[56]

Once technical and value issues are fairly well understood by all sides, development of more detailed alternative designs are begun. The objective is to establish substantial, effective agreement on a course of action of mutual benefit to all groups. Technical and community interaction efforts continue during this stage of the model. Additional alternatives and their potential impacts are also considered. However, the focus changes from a concern for developing many basically different alternatives to a concern for negotiating a few basic alternatives in order to begin resolving disagreements between the groups.[57] This is a

difficult process of interaction and compromise using the information developed earlier in the model.

During this stage of the model the criterion of equity in benefits as well as costs is applied. That is, care is taken to insure that those involved benefit to the same degree that they pay. While not easily applied,[58] this criterion should be a primary topic of discussion as community interaction efforts shift from an emphasis on determining issues and preferences to one of constructive negotiation. For the location team to achieve substantial agreement on a mutually desirable course of action, it must develop a negotiation arrangement that avoids polarization and encourages interaction between community groups.[59] The end of this stage is reached when substantial agreement has been obtained, an insurmountable impasse has developed, or location team resources have been depleted.[60]

The last stage, ratification, is merely a formal enactment of agreements already reached during the course of the process. If agreement has not been reached through community involvement procedures, there is very little likelihood that it will be reached during a subsequent public hearing.[61] Given a situation in which there is not substantial mutual agreement, the team presents its recommendations at the public hearing and elaborates on the strengths and weaknesses of each alternative. If, as is

likely, the public hearing does not result in substantial agreement, the location team submits a report containing a record of the negotiations and its best estimate of community preferences. If substantial agreement is reached among residents and local and state officials, a monitoring process should be established that records changes in conditions occuring between the date of project approval and the date of project implementation in order that such changes can be accomodated.[62]

Because the location team operates on a very unstructured basis it is necessary that it establishes and follows certain roles that provide identity and maintain credibility:[63]

1. Agent of the responsible decision-making authority. Generally, a state highway agency, or its equivalent, has the basic legal responsibility for designing and constructing highways.

2. Technical adviser to the decision-maker. In this role, it has a responsibility to develop alternatives and lay out their impacts.

3. Ombudsman and spokesman. The location team has a professional obligation to act as a voice for interests not represented in the political process.

4. Impartial negotiator. The location team is responsible for stimulating negotiation among interest groups who are in potential conflict.

5. Community adviser. The location team can help interest groups clarify their objectives by posing alternatives to individuals and groups. The team may help people to broaden their perceptions of the impacts of alternatives on themselves and others.

> 6. Impartial developer of alternatives and of factual information. Finally, there is the clear responsibility to develop a wide range of meaningful alternatives and to predict as accurately as feasible their full impacts on all interest groups affected.[64]

It should be emphasized at this point that one of the alternatives always to be considered by the location team is the decision not to build. The location team will also be involved in impact prediction. As the alternative approaches are discussed, some of the positive and negative impacts of each can be understood. The interest group potentially affected by the impact, the scope of the impact and the degree of certainty should be made clear to those involved. A distinction should be made between impacts that are empirically verifiable and those that are conceptual in nature. Finally, community groups should be involved in analyzing and understanding the impacts that potentially affect them directly.[65]

Evaluation is an activity conducted throughout the process of highway project location and design. The location team gains its evaluation data from information gathered during impact prediction studies, development of alternative solutions and community interaction activities. The main purposes of evaluation activity are to help:

> (a) identify significant issues and the uncertainties surrounding them; (b) assess the potential of alternatives to serve as a basis for community agreement by viewing the alternatives from the perspective of each identified interest and by identifying who would gain and who would lose

> if an alternative were implemented; and (c) guide the management of a location team by suggesting priorities for subsequent activities involving the development of alternatives, community interaction, and impact prediction.[66]

During the course of evaluation, emphasis is on insuring that all affected interests are represented, that equity of cost and benefit is approximated, that the community be enabled to exercise choice including the no-build alternative, that the project has technical, legal and fiscal feasibility and that the project is desirable from a public investment point of view.[67]

It is important to emphasize that the intent of community interaction is to assist the community in reaching its decisions, not to sell a highway project. Essentially, the entire location team - community interaction approach is one of management of a variety of involvement techniques according to certain activities, roles and strategies in order to achieve specified community involvement objectives.[68]

Summary

There are a variety of management structures available, capable of providing whatever amount of citizen involvement is desired. The coordinator-catalyst approach is the first level at which genuine citizen participation is attempted. The basic framework calls for providing community liason, process legitimization, socioeconomic and impact studies, and meetings where

interaction can be facilitated. This framework can be made operational through one or more of three basic kinds of models: 1) A committee and task force model, 2) A community survey and organization model, and 3) A location team and design process model. Because of the flexibility that participation requires, no single model is recommended as conclusively superior to the others. The appropriate approach or combination of approaches will depend on the particular combination of political, socio-economic and environmental factors extant at the time a project is contemplated.

Notes

[1]Bruce Bishop, Clarkson H. Oglesby, and Gene E. Willeke, "Community Attitudes Toward Freeway Planning: A Study of California's Planning Procedures," Highway Research Record, No. 305 (Washington, D.C.: Highway Research Board, 1970), 46-48.

[2]Ibid., p. 46.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 47.

[6]Ibid., p. 48.

[7]Texas Highway Department. The Action Plan of the Texas Highway Department: Process Guidelines for Systems Planning and Project Development (August, 1973), p. 1.

[8]Bishop, Oglesby, and Willeke, "Community Attitudes," p. 48.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 49.

[11]Ibid.

[12]For an account of a successful, long-term citizen's advisory organization see Aaron Levine, "Citizen Participation," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXVI (August, 1960), 195-200.

[13]For a comprehensive discussion of how to select community influentials see Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1963), pp. 61-111.

[14]Charles C. Schimpeler, Thomas H. Chastain, and Joseph C. Corradino, The Formulation of Effective Citizen Involvement in the Development of a Major Aviation Facility, presented to the Highway Research Board, Washington, D. C., January, 1973, p. 11.

[15]Community influentials are further categorized as direct and indirect influentials. A direct influential is one who is

consistently active in either (1) governmental organizations, (2) public agencies, (3) semi-public organizations or (4) private industry. His attempts to shape community affairs are continuous and overt. Some community influentials may be acting as representatives of others. In that event, the others are indirect influentials. As a rule, indirect influentials have a tendency to operate at an intensive level and are usually motivated by personal financial interest.

Once these various influentials are identified and categorized, an effort can be made to see that, "direct and indirect influentials including public officials and representatives of commerce and industry, who are influential in controlling development decisions; and those indirect influentials who, by reason of their personal stature and demonstrated interest, are effective in shaping policy on important community issues" are included on the committee, Ibid., pp. 6-9.

[16] Ibid., p. 11.

[17] See Texas Highway Department. The Action Plan, pp. 15-21.

[18] Schimpeler, Chastain, and Corradino, Effective Citizen Involvement, p. 11.

[19] See Melvin Tumin, "Some Social Requirements for Effective Community Development," Community Development Review, No. 11 (December, 1968), for a discussion of the difficulty caused by insisting on continuous participation.

[20] Schimpeler, Chastain, and Corradino, Effective Citizen Involvement, p. 14.

[21] The full committee meets very infrequently due to its size. Its sessions are limited to hearing reports from the highway agency and ratifying major decisions of significance to the whole committee. Because of the problem of assembling such a large group, ratification occasionally takes place by mail or telephone. The steering committee is selected from the full committee and made up of representatives of geographical areas in the community. The working arm of the steering committee is the executive committee which consists of three individuals from the steering committee, whose function is to carry out the tasks of communication, report writing and routine operating decisions.

[22]Schimpeler, Chastain, and Corradino, Effective Citizen Involvement, pp. 19-20.

[23]Ibid., pp. 16-17.

[24]Ibid., p. 23.

[25]See F. J. Lyden and J. V. Thomas, "Citizen Participation in Policy Making: A Study of a Community Action Program," Social Science Quarterly, L, No. 3 (December, 1969), pp. 631-642, for an empirical study of the contributions made by low income public participants on a long term basis.

[26]Schimpeler, Chastain, and Corradino, Effective Citizen Involvement, p. 25.

[27]Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[28]See Robert Dahl, "The Rituals of Participation," in Urban Renewal: People, Politics and Planning, ed. by Jewel Bellush and Murray Hausknecht (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1967), pp. 302-311, for a discussion of the benefits of having all influential segments involved in participation.

[29]Kenneth M. Travis and Stanley C. Plog, "Community Involvement in Transportation Planning: A New Approach," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 10.

[30]Donald A. Bouregeois in "Citizen's Role in St. Louis Model Cities Program Described," Journal of Housing, XXIV (December, 1967), 613-617, discusses some of the reasons for the existence of anxiety, frustration, anger and mistrust on the part of participants.

[31]Travis and Plog, "Community Involvement," p. 10.

[32]Ibid., p. 11.

[33]See Floyd Hunter, Community Power Structure: A Study of Decision Makers, for a detailed description of a selection procedure.

[34]Travis and Plog, "Cummunity Involvement," pp. 10-11.

[35]Ibid.

[36] Ibid., pp. 11.

[37] This is especially the case with low income participants. Davis R. Hunter details four reasons for this in, "Politics and Citizen Participation," The Slums, Challenge and Response (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1965), p. 177.

[38] Travis and Plog, "Community Involvement," p. 12.

[39] This can be expected even in low income neighborhoods. Urban Dynamics, Inc., in an undated report prepared for the Michigan Department of State Highways, contends that there is a substantial amount of leadership and organizational structure in inner city areas. It is asserted that both exist despite the general lack of citizen support on the part of low income residents. Urban Dynamics, Inc., "Highway Planning and Development as it Affects the Urban Community," Final Report, A Study prepared for the Michigan Department of State Highways (Detroit, Michigan: n.d.)

[40] There are several texts that attempt to describe how to work with the public in community efforts. Two examples are: 1) William W. Biddle and Loureide J. Biddle, Encouraging Community Development: A Training Guide for Local Workers (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), and 2) John C. Bollens and Dale Rogers Marshall, A Guide to Participation: Field Work, Role Playing Cases, and Other Forms (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973).

[41] Travis and Plog, "Community Involvement," p. 12.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., pp. 12-13.

[44] Ibid., p. 13.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Survey research will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter VIII.

[49] Marvin L. Manheim and John H. Suhrbier, "Community Values: A Strategy for Project Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D.C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 40.

[50]Michael Chevalier and T. J. Cartwright discuss perceptual factors as they influence an organization's understanding of issues in "Public Involvement in Planning: The Delaware River Case," in Perceptions and Attitudes in Resource Management, ed. by W. R. Derrick Sewell and Ian Burton (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1971) p. 117.

[51]See Christopher Sower, John Holland, Kenneth Tiedke, and Walter Freeman, Community Involvement (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1957), pp. 308-314, for a theoretical discussion of the development of public response to an issue.

[52]Manheim and Suhrbier, "Community Values," p. 40.

[53]Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[54]See Gordon J. Fielding, "Structuring Citizen Involvement in Freeway Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D.C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 23-36, for a description of another participation methodology that uses community evaluation of alternative choices.

[55]For a discussion of the potential difficulty in communication between bureaucrat and citizen see Orion F. White, "The Dialectical Organization: An Alternative to Bureaucracy," Public Administration Review (January - February, 1969), 32-42.

[56]Manheim and Suhrbier, "Community Values," p. 41.

[57]Ibid.

[58]For an example of how difficult it may be to determine that something is beneficial see Marc Fried and Peggy Gleicher, "Some Sources of Residential Satisfaction in an Urban Slum," Journal of the America Institute of Planners, 27 (1961), 305-315.

[59]For a theoretical discussion of the development of polarization see James S. Coleman, Community Conflict (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 10-14.

[60]Manheim and Suhrbier, "Community Values," p. 41.

[61]This is treated in greater detail in the next chapter. See also Halbert E. Gulley, Discussion, Conference and Group Processes (second ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), pp. 319-323.

[62]Manheim and Suhrbier, "Community Values," pp. 41-42.

[63]The need to maintain credibility is partially due to the separation of the public from direct contact with government. William C. Loring Jr., Frank L. Sweetser, and Charles F. Ernst discuss this in more detail in Community Organization For Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal (Boston: Massachusetts Department of Commerce, 1957), pp. 217-233.

[64]Manheim and Suhrbier, "Community Values," p. 42.

[65]Ibid. p. 43.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid., pp. 43-44.

[68]Ibid., p. 44.

CHAPTER VIII

SURVEY RESEARCH

Introduction

Survey research is an important component of citizen participation. Surveys are recognized as a main source of citizen input in Arnstein's category of consultation. Because of changing public values and the growth of special interest groups, public opinion is not as cohesive as it once was thought to be. As noted in Chapter III, in order to assess the values of all segments of society, especially those who are not represented by special interests, it is necessary to employ survey techniques. When discussing attitude assessment and goal hierarchies in Chapter VI, mention was made of the need for surveys for determining attitudes and goals. All techniques employ some basic methodological principles in order to assure that reliable data is gathered. The techniques vary according to the purposes to be served. Standard questionnaire approaches are valuable for most objective data needed. When values and attitudes are sought, the more sophisticated techniques of projection and desirability ranking are available for use.

This chapter describes basic survey methodology and gives examples of how surveys are conducted, and the kinds of data available through surveys. More sophisticated kinds of survey techniques, projective techniques and desirability rankings, are explored as

potential tools in highway planning and decision making. The intent of this chapter is to identify the benefits and methods of surveying as they relate to the needs expressed in earlier chapters.

Kinds of Data Obtained through Surveys

The kinds of information sought in surveys vary a great deal according to the project being contemplated. There are basic kinds of data, however, that are applicable in most situations. The following is given as a brief example of the areas that can be explored:

1. To aid in the delineation of "social unit" boundaries
    a. Location of normally used grocery store
    b. Location of workplaces of household members
    c. Location of frequently used recreational facilities
    d. Location of family place of worship
    e. Location of homes of frequently visited friends and relatives
    f. Boundaries of own neighborhood
    g. Boundaries of adjacent neighborhoods
    h. Boundaries of own community
2. To aid in the estimation of costs
    a. Monthly rent, if applicable
    b. Race of household members
    c. Number of children in household under 19 years of age
    d. Sex of head of household
    e. Annual household income
    f. Whether total financial support of household is provided by fixed source of income (pension, social security, welfare, etc.)
3. To aid in determining the general effect of freeway on movement within corridor area and into and out of corridor area[1]
    a. Number of automobiles the household has available for use

b. Number of household members able to drive
c. Whether household members generally drive, walk, take a bus, take a rapid (sic) to go to grocery, workplace, school, church, friends & relatives

4. To aid in assigning a weight to responses

a. Period of time at present address
b. Previous addresses within corridor area and corresponding time periods
c. Neighborhood or community organizations to which household member or members belong
d. Whether household (sic) has considered moving out of neighborhood recently
e. In general, how important neighborhood is to household members[2]

In addition to providing direct and valuable input into the highway planning and decision making process, surveys are a vital preliminary step to other forms of citizen participation.[3] Surveys can assist in determining neighborhood boundaries, lines of community interaction and other non-physical factors that must be analyzed from the beginning of a project. With information of this kind, it is possible to determine with greater preciseness exactly who is affected and to what degree. The highway department will be better able to resolve problems of representation in terms of who should be involved in participation in a particular project. In practical terms, this means knowing which people to contact and knowing more completely and accurately what their major concerns are.[4]

Survey Methodology

The first step in a survey.project of any type is developing a population sample. In many cases the population under study is too large to deal with individually. Therefore, an attempt must be made

to select a proportion that is representative of the entire group. That sub-group is referred to as a sample. The sample can be a highly accurate representation of the entire population if it is selected correctly. There are several strategies for selecting the sample. They vary according to the type of information desired.

The most basic sampling procedure is the simple random sample. In this technique each member of the population being studied is assigned a number at random. A table of random numbers is used to select the population members who will be interviewed. The key criterion is that each person has the same probability of being selected. This precludes the possibility of a systematic bias entering into the selection procedure. Given these conditions, the sample is considered representative, and the study findings can be projected accurately to the entire population.[5]

Another procedure is the stratified random sample. This approach differs from the simple random sample in that strata of given criteria are separated out from the population and random selections are made from each strata in proportion to its share of the entire population. The stratified random sample is useful when surveying populations that have significant ethnic, racial and religious groupings. In using this procedure, it is essential that the criteria by which strata are differentiated be carefully defined in order to maintain the integrity of the sample. Once these criteria are established and the strata are determined, the random numbering procedure used for simple random samples is applied. This approach

has the additional advantage of requiring fewer participants than the simple random sample to achieve the same level of accuracy. There is also a major drawback. Many political jurisdictions lack the necessary statistical data on population characteristics that are needed to determine the proportion of each strata existent in the population.[6]

A third procedure is the area random sample. As might be expected, this approach differs in that representative geographical areas are selected from which subjects are interviewed on a random basis. The validity of this procedure is dependent on the validity of the methods used to select the representative geographical areas. This approach is especially useful when particular geographical areas are going to be affected by a proposed project while others within the same political jurisdiction are not. Care should be taken in projecting the findings of this technique to the general population since geographical representation is not usually as accurate as simple and stratified random sampling.[7]

A fourth sampling technique is the problem group sample in which people are grouped according to particular types of problems or issues. The findings from this kind of sample cannot be generalized to the larger population. This approach is particularly appropriate in dealing with issues that affect a minority population more than they do the majority. By sampling potentially affected minority populations, it is possible to go beyond the claims and counter claims

of self-appointed spokesmen and determine the range of opinions and attitudes actually held by the entire sub-population.[8]

The second important step in implementing a survey project is developing the questionnaire. The key to developing a successful survey instrument is having clearly specified study topics in mind. Clearly delineated topics serve as a discipline, keeping a survey from wandering off of its intended track. Great care should be given to the semantics used in a questionnaire, especially if the instrument will be applied in varying socioeconomic and ethnic areas. A questionnaire written from a middle class perspective may be subject to misunderstanding in a lower class neighborhood and thereby produce distorted results. The wording of direct questions and statements should be carefully checked to avoid unintended interpretations. Often surveyors, thoroughly familiar with the subject matter and their own intentions, forget that their subjects do not have the same background of experience.[9,10]

If questionnaires are going to be machine tabulated, it is often desirable to establish an array of possible answers to each question and ask respondents to select the one most applicable to their situation. In this way the answers can be coded with greater speed and accuracy. There is some danger in using an array of answers since the surveyor is, in effect, controlling the kind of responses that can be made. This provides the opportunity for systematic bias to result. To avoid this problem, several steps should be taken. The array of answers made available should be based on empirical data,

which is accomplished by using a small sample of subjects to pretest the questionnaire with unconstrained responses. These answers can be used as a pool from which to select the coded answers. Care should be taken to ensure that the alternative answers are mutually exclusive in order to avoid forcing subjects to choose between two answers, both of which are partially applicable. As wide a range of responses as possible should be provided within the context of the subject matter. Lastly, there should be a provision for stating that none of the answers is appropriate and space allowed for non-programmed responses. If the array of answers is well selected, the number of narrative responses will be relatively few and easily evaluated and coded.[11]

The final step in the process of questionnaire development is the pretest. No matter how many precautions are taken, there are likely to be errors. The questionnaire should be pretested on a small section of the sample to be used in the survey. In this way, problems with interviewing procedures, wording, ordering of items, alternative answers and format can be discovered and corrected.[12]

The interviewers are the important link between those conducting a survey and those being surveyed. Extreme care should be taken in selecting and training these people since the quality of the results is partly dependent on the interviewer. Essentially, the best interviewers are those who accurately record what they see and hear without influencing the data. In most cases, this requires a formal training period to insure unbiased data. In addition, it may require

hiring personnel from outside the agency if those involved in the study have interests vested in the results.[13]

During the course of the survey, a full time supervisor is desirable. He ensures that the survey procedures are closely followed by the interviewers. He also reviews each questionnaire, as it is submitted, to determine that the work is being completed and correctly coded.[14,15]

Once a scientific sample is selected, insuring that respondents understand the questions and issues to which the questions relate is the next most persistent problem in survey methodology. Recently developed techniques have been implemented to reduce these problems. One of these, called the Connecticut Survey, is a procedure designed to provide subjects with the opportunity to complete the questionnaire at their convenience, thereby reducing the high rate of non-response and non-answer. The survey is mailed to the subject's home together with an introductory letter explaining the survey, asking the subject to complete it at his convenience and stating the date and approximate time when an interviewer will arrive to obtain the questionnaire and provide assistance, if it is desired. If the questionnaire has not been completed, the interviewer can obtain the necessary information while he is there. Further, portions of the data that require collection by personal interview can be taken care of at the same time. Because the data collection and home interview are combined, there is a fairly substantial reduction in cost.[16]

The New York Regional Plan Association devised a variation of the Connecticut Survey that is also of interest. In their variation, the participants received booklets explaining the proposed planning project about ten days before meetings were held. At the meeting, participants watched a half-hour television show that covered and illustrated the contents of the booklet. This was done to underscore major points and as a means of quickly orienting those who had not read the booklets. Television is only one of many mechanisms; casette systems, sixteen millimeter film and video tape systems are other fairly inexpensive and more flexible approaches. After the formal presentations, the participants were scheduled to spend a period of time discussing what they had seen and heard. At this point, each participant filled out a questionnaire. The questionnaires were anonymous but keyed to biographical questionnaires filled out earlier so that socioeconomic and biographical data could be correlated with the answers. The questionnaires were collected by the chairman of the meeting and mailed into a central location for coding and tabulation.[17] The chairmen were recruited through civic organizations, newspaper publicity and by agency members who used their personal contacts. The chairmen should have two qualifications for the job. They need to be interested and willing to work in a group process and they should be located in a fairly evenly distributed pattern so that they are close to all affected neighborhoods. There should be enough chairmen so that the meetings become neighborhood gatherings involving people who are at least somewhat familiar

with each other. The meetings should be kept small enough to allow for full participation by everyone who so desires. These meetings can be held on a continuing basis keyed to the major points in the development of a highway or expressway project if there is a demand for more interaction on the part of the neighborhood groups. If this is more than is necessary, the meetings can be called on a more flexible, ad hoc basis when members of each group and/or the highway department want more information.

The New York variation has the advantage of accomodating large numbers of people while still providing intimate involvement for all who want it. In addition, it is a two-way process. That is, through the use of the booklets and electronic media, the highway department can inform, educate and respond to questionnaire data previously submitted. Concurrently, public participants can question, advise and more closely monitor the work of the highway department.

There are some problems with the New York variation. It only works with those people who have the time, means, interest and ability to read the booklets and attend meetings. The experience of the New York Plan Association was that low income and minority groups did not participate very well. The reasons for nonparticipation on their part were probably many but the point is that their input and involvement will not likely be secured with this method. Additionally, there are middle and upper-middle class people who will not be able to attend because of employment, disability and disinclination

to get involved on such an intimate basis. Still, their involvement is important and will have to be secured through other methods.[18,19]

It was briefly mentioned at an earlier point in this report that attitude survey techniques are excellent ways of securing citizen participation because they help the surveyor determine the attitudes of all potentially affected people rather than merely those minority spokesmen who are most vocal:

> . . . One point is often raised in this regard by the minority spokesmen themselves. They say, "We do not pretend to represent everyone in the minority, but at least we care." The fact is, however, that in many cases the "institution" acts as though it thinks these minority spokesmen are truly representative. In addition, it may be said that, if, as the minority spokesmen say, what is important is caring, then the institution has a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to show that it too cares.[20]

This quote is not included to suggest that direct vocal representation of values and attitudes should be forgone. It is included, however, to point out the need for survey data against which to compare the demands of spokesmen.[21]

Projective Techniques

Because there is a tendency for people to express opinions when it is their attitudes that are sought, a variety of projective techniques have been developed that attempt to bypass direct questioning methods. These techniques are indirect in the sense that there is no correct answer. Therefore, the subjects are precluded from giving responses calculated to present an answer thought desirable by themselves or by those conducting the study. Projective techniques are

easily misinterpreted and require both skill and experience in their use. The following examples are included to illustrate the procedures used. Experienced personnel would be required to implement this participation technique.[22]

The most commonly used approach is the word association technique. The respondent is requested to say the first word that comes to him as he reads each word in a list or hears it spoken by the questioner. For example:

Word Association

1. Highway
2. Convenience
3. Accident
4. Pretty
5. City[23]

In this instance, a person will respond with either a positive, neutral or negative word. In response to the word highway, a person may reply with a neutral word like car, a positive word like pretty or a negative word like dirty. By looking at the responses and judging the attitudes behind them and comparing this with other responses, to see how they interact, experts can determine basic attitudinal outlooks toward various issues. Further evidence can be elicited by comparing the information obtained in this approach with two other basic projection techniques. They are the sentence completion and semantic differential techniques.[24]

The sentence completion technique consists of a series of partial sentences that are to be completed by the subject. The

sentences are constructed in a manner that allows the respondent maximum latitude in subject matter. For example:

Sentence Completion

1. I wish the city would _____.
2. Highways are _____.
3. On vacation _____.
4. Old buildings should _____.[25]

The theory is that the individual will expose his attitudes by the patterns that his responses take. As with the word association technique, it is the interaction of all responses that reveals attitudes.

The semantic differential technique requires the respondent to scale a series of nouns on a variety of dimensions:

City

Active/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/Passive
Strong/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/Weak
Cruel /_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/Kind

Highway

Sharp/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/Dull
Fast /_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/Slow
Large/_____/_____/_____/_____/_____/Small[26]

As is apparent, some of the relationships are more obvious than others although the less obvious have similar value in differentiating attitudes. The respondent is requested to mark one space between each of the pair of adjectives. For example, an individual who thinks of the city as very active will mark the space nearest that adjective. If the city is perceived as being more kind than cruel, a mark might be placed nearer that adjective. The theory is

that an individual's attitudes will be revealed by the pattern of responses to a series of these choices. Of interest are the nouns that are grouped together by similar description and scaling and the aggregation of individuals who have responded in a similar manner. This sorting technique makes it possible to discover relationships between particular groups and attitudinal elements and helps determine how these groups will react when confronted with a variety of situations.[27]

Once projection technique data is collected and sorted, socio-economic characteristics such as income, education and occupation can be correlated with responses to the various attitude items. In this way, statistical analysis can be conducted to determine if groups exhibiting particular characteristics and attitudes behave in statistically predictable ways to a significant degree. To the extent that they do, fairly certain predictions can be made regarding their response to project proposals. This would make it possible for the highway department to determine the major issues and considerations likely to accompany the selection of alternative route choices. Having this information beforehand will assist the highway department in avoiding the problem of running into totally unexpected opposition after the project has incurred considerable commitment and expense. It will also allow the highway department to forsee and accommodate future legitimate objections before they generate controversy.[28]

Desirability Rankings

Another approach to determining attitudes has been developed that is more direct than those described above. In this approach respondents are asked to assign a relative value to each of several factors relating to highway construction. Respondents make conscious choices between alternatives in terms of their desirability and importance. These choices are then weighted by combining the desirability and importance scores and ranking them ordinally.[29,30]

Respondents are then asked to rank working goals for highway planning on an ordinal scale. The following list is included as an example but should be enlarged and amended to meet specific needs:[31]

> 1. Social and aesthetic goals--landscape areas attractively; reduce air and water pollution; preserve historic sites and buildings; expand system of parks; . . .
> 2. Economic and fiscal goals--increase industrial expansion and employment opportunities; use land economically in highway construction; reduce vehicular operating costs . . .
> 3. Physical goals--place convenient entrance and exit points on major traffic arteries; have faster flows of traffic; provide more convenient access to shopping facilities; . . .[32]

Analysis of the ordinal rankings, in addition to revealing overall values and attitudes, allows researchers to look for similarities and differences in values and attitudes between various groups. After areas of agreement were identified, a follow-up series of rankings were obtained in order to determine desirable criteria for implementation of the working goals. Examples of criteria used are as follows:

1. Criteria for obtaining increased levels of aesthetics--maintain integrity of homogeneous land use areas as they exist and as they are planned for the future; incorporate parkway features in the roadways to contribute to open space and increased levels of safety and beauty; . . .

2. Criteria for obtaining increased economic and fiscal goals--initially acquire extra acreage to accommodate highway expansion; jointly (state highway departments and local agencies) purchase and develop freeway-recreation corridors; make multiple use of urban freeway rights-of-way for things such as commerce, recreation, and housing; . . .

3. Criteria for obtaining coordinated and comprehensive planning--make available advance information on roadway proposals to all agencies and organizations concerned or affected or both; have a highway engineer present on all community, regional, and state planning boards; coordinate all physical planning in the state through a statewide environmental planning commission; . . .

4. Criteria for obtaining increased levels of safety and health--have one-way lanes or reversible lanes or both in congested areas; eliminate multichoice route decisions; have roadway medians available for pedestrian shelters; . . .

5. Criteria for obtaining increased levels of efficiency--designate selected streets exclusively for bus movement; prohibit curb parking in congested areas; route trucks traveling into major areas into separate corridors; . . .[33]

The subjects of the study ordinally ranked both the working goals and the criteria. A forced-choice process was also used that required judgment of goals and criteria in terms of desirability and importance. These judgments were rendered on a numerical scale and then combined to give a desirability-weighted-by-importance index. For example, if a subject rated attractively landscaped areas as an 8, on a ten to one scale in desirability, and 3 in importance the desirability-weighted-by-importance index number would be 11. By comparing all index numbers it becomes possible to determine relative values and to establish a system of hierarchial goals (see Table 1).[34,35]

Table 1

Desirability-Weighted-By-Importance

Goal	Desirability Ranking (10 to 1)	Relative Importance Ranking (10 to 1)	Desirability-Weighted-by Importance Index
Attractively landscaped areas	8	3	11
Reduce air and water pollution	6	9	15
Preserve historic sites and buildings	2	6	8
Expand system of parks	5	1	6
Preserve and maintain open spaces	9	4	13
Reduce accident rate	4	8	12
Reduce noise levels	3	7	10
Preserve and enhance natural features of the land	7	5	12
Protect and accomodate wildlife	1	2	3
Preserve neighborhood integrity (highways do not split neighborhoods)	10	10	20

Source: Joseph Barry Mason and Charles Thomas Moore, "Development of Guides for Community Acceptance of Highway Location, Development and Construction," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 50.

The advantage of this index is its balancing of desirability and importance as criteria for goal formation. In addition to giving planners concrete citizen input in decision making, it also forces people to make hard but necessary choices. Public participants will be able and required to make their own compromises as they are faced with conflicting and often mutually incompatible choices. In effect, they will have the privileges and the responsibilities of participation.[36] The disadvantage lies in its arbitrary nature. Choices must be made that may or may not be the choices that respondents are interested in. When the results of all indexes are compiled, the resulting ordinal ranking may bear little relationship to the preferences of many of the respondents. There are no provisions for dialogue and interaction; decisions may be distorted due to lack of information. Finally, no provision is made for determining how the ordinally ranked choices will be implemented. For example, if preserving neighborhood integrity is ranked first on the index, it is not clear who will decide how it will be done.

Notes

[1]For a more detailed example see Raymond H. Ellis and Richard D. Worral, "Toward Measurement of Community Impact: The Utilization of Longitudinal Travel Data to Define Residential Linkages," Highway Research Record, No. 277 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1969).

[2]Edward R. Waxman, Urban Freeway Route Location: A Philosophy and Methodology, Report for the Regional Planning Commission, Cleveland, Ohio, June, 1969 (Cleveland, Ohio: Regional Planning Commission, 1969), pp. 17-18.

[3]See Diane Swanson, "Public Perceptions and Resource Planning," in Perceptions and Attitudes in Resource Management, ed. by W. R. Derrick Sewell and Ian Burton (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1971), 95, for a brief description of the benefits surveys have for public hearings.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Margaret T. Shaffer, "Attitude Techniques in Action," Highway Research Record, No. 305 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1970), 114.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[9]Ibid., pp. 115-117.

[10]See W. R. Derrick Sewell, "Integrating Public Views in Planning and Policy Making," in Perceptions and Attitudes in Resource Management, ed. by W. R. Derrick Sewell and Ian Burton (Ottawa: Queens Printer, 1971), p. 128 for additional criticisms.

[11]Shaffer, "Attitude Techniques," p. 117.

[12]Ibid., pp. 117-118.

[13]Ibid., p. 118.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Since the time of day and the day of the week are factors determining the kind of people who will be interviewed, it is also advisable that the supervisor carefully schedule the interviewers so that they are not always interviewing at the same time of day nor interviewing in particular geographical sections on a consistent basis. Failure to take account of these factors is liable to produce a bias, in that interviews conducted only in the morning will produce results that reflect the thinking of housewives rather than a cross-section of the residents occupying a neighborhood. In a similar manner, interviewers who spend all of their time in one area incur the risk of introducing the same type of biasing variable. Ibid.

[16]Charles F. Barnes, Jr., "Living Patterns and Attitude Survey," Highway Research Record, No. 187 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1967), 45.

[17]John P. Keith, ed., Public Participation in Regional Planning (New York: Regional Plan Association, 1967), p. 23.

[18]Once a survey is completed, there are several techniques of statistical manipulation that yield significant data regarding attitudes and values. In Chapter VI reference was made to the fact that by sorting responses and grouping people with like responses and then conducting tests of statistical significance, real differences between groups of people can be determined. In addition, it is possible to determine changes of statistical significance within a group. This is a desirable procedure when there is interest in discovering the effect of an expressway on a given neighborhood over a length of time or immediately before and after construction. This is done by taking two surveys, one at each of the periods of interest, using the same variables. The results are tested by using an analysis of variance procedure which determines if the difference in responses between the two testing periods is significant to any degree and, if so, how much. Finally, there is a procedure called factor analysis that is useful when one is attempting to determine why there are differences in the response scores of a group. This is especially appropriate when a number of different measures are being administered to a group and there is a need to know if the variation in responses are caused by significant or insignificant factors.

[19]One way of securing input from low income and minority groups is to conduct personal interviews. Charles R. Ryan, Brian P. Nedwek, and Edward A. Beimborn describe a survey that uses that format in "An Evaluation of the Feasibility of Social Diagnostic Techniques in the Transportation Planning Process," Highway Research Record, No. 410 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 8-23.

[20]Shaffer, "Attitude Techniques," p. 120.

[21]See also Neil Gilbert and Joseph Eaton, "Who Speaks for the Poor," Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXXVI, No. 6 (November, 1970), 411-416.

[22]Margaret T. Shaffer, "Attitudes, Community Values, and Highway Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 187 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1967), 58.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., p. 59.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Ibid., p. 60.

[29]Joseph Barry Mason and Charles Thomas Moore, "Development of Guides for Community Acceptance of Highway Location, Development, and Construction," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), 47.

[30]Subjects are chosen to be representative of all aspects of the community. The reputational approach has been used for this purpose. This technique involves the selection of a cross-section of people who are subsequently interviewed in order to determine who community influentials are. The initial cross-section of people is selected arbitrarily, usually by virtue of their position or occupation in the community. They are then asked to name the people who are most influential in terms of given criteria. Their responses are tabulated and those names most often mentioned are assumed to be the influentials of the community. It should be noted that influentials will vary according to the area of influence being investigated. Therefore, it is possible to get representation from professional, government and business interests as well as the three economic classes. This technique allows selected representation to be obtained also. This is helpful when there is specific interest in certain neighborhoods under consideration for expressway routing and more intensive input is desired on their part.

One study suggests that at least the following areas be represented in the reputational approach: ". . . labor relations, social planning, neighborhood development and redevelopment, race relations, employment and regional development, civic leadership, educational

planning, financial expertise, transportation planning, health planning, county and city government, environmental quality (including beautification, recreation, and conservation), real estate, public housing, law enforcement, traffic and sanitary engineering, and communication media." Ibid.

[31]For additional rating criteria see Gordon J. Fielding, "Structuring Citizen Involvement in Freeway Planning," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 23-36.

[32]Mason and Moore, "Development of Guides," pp. 47-48.

[33]Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[34]Ibid., p. 50.

[35]See G. A. Riedesel and John C. Cook, "Desirability Rating and Route Selection," Highway Research Record, No. 305 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1970), 16-25, for an alternative desirability rating process.

[36]Mason and Moore, "Development of Guides," p. 49.

CHAPTER IX

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Introduction

Public hearings have been and will continue to be part of the formal, mandatory process for highway planning and decision making. Their principal value is that they provide a legal verification that the public did, in fact, have an opportunity to acquaint itself with proposed highway projects and to express viewpoints. Beyond that, there is a good deal of criticism of public hearings as a viable process for conducting public business. A principal source of this criticism has been the confusion over what, exactly, should a public hearing be expected to accomplish. The traditional feeling has been that which is described briefly at the beginning of this paragraph. More recently, it has been suggested that public hearings should merely be a formal ratification of negotiations and agreements worked out between the highway department and local community interests at an earlier time. The answer probably includes both of these positions. A good deal of pre-hearing work will resolve many questions and concerns of citizens and better acquaint the highway department with local, neighborhood issues.[1] At the same time, there is room for a great deal of improvement in public hearings in order that they may better serve as mechanisms for the exchange of information and ratification of agreements.

Public Hearing Problems

There are certain basic conditions in operation at public hearings that make effective communication difficult for everybody. Because of the presence of other people, the speaker is subject to pressures he would not normally experience in more casual surroundings. Since a speaker is acutely aware of his surroundings, it is only natural that he will be concerned with his image and his ability to perform well. As a result, there is a tendency for actors in a public hearing setting to concentrate on social functions more than task functions. The net effect is that meaningful interaction becomes very difficult. Because language usage must be adapted to those in attendance, speakers alter their normal vocabulary somewhat and fluency decreases. Any self-doubts that the speaker may have had are verified and it becomes even harder to communicate well.[2]

Because of peer pressure, it becomes very difficult to modify one's position even when a better idea is offered. To accept modification of an idea may appear to others as a form of backing down and loss of nerve. The thought of losing respect in such a manner produces a rigid unwillingness to seriously consider other points of view. Even when a new thought has appeal, there is a tendency to accept it only provisionally and to repeat the strong points of one's original idea in an effort to maintain face. This tension reduces the chance that the public hearing body will integrate its

thinking into any sort of a cohesive whole that can be interpreted as an expression of public will.[3]

A great deal of tension may have already developed by the time the public hearing date arrives. If the public has very little or no information regarding the proposed project and there is a general opinion that freeways are undesirable in one's neighborhood, people will expect negative consequences and feed on each others fears. By the time of the hearing, residents of the entire area may be angry and suspicious. If not already organized, they become willing participants in any effort to combat the expressway. Those who have been accorded leadership roles have both their neighborhood and their new found status to protect. Because their anti-expressway behavior supports that status, they are reluctant to discontinue it when the opportunity arises. As a result, serious negotiation and compromise become very difficult once the public hearing stage has been reached.[4]

The context of the hearing itself further exacerbates matters. Often the physical arrangement is such that those in charge are seated at the front of the room, facing and separated from the audience. The implication being that there are two opposing sides facing each other. During the course of the hearing there is a temptation for people to interject inflammatory and sarcastic remarks, which sometimes are promptly rewarded with applause.[5] This may lead to a series of presentations of an increasingly negative nature once discussion is opened to the public. Because many people are

uncomfortable when addressing a group, they will prepare a statement beforehand to read at the appropriate time. These statements are often read with no consideration of what has been said previously. As a result, there are periods of tedious repetition with no real exchange being possible.[6]

A study conducted for the Virginia Department of Highways came up with findings and observations that may explain some of the reasons for the problems that public hearings experience. They discovered that plans for highway projects were not usually accessible to the community. Usually, the plans are available in several highway department locations which close at five o'clock. Therefore, people who work day shifts and are on wages are not able to study the plans prior to a hearing. Hearings under current federal and state regulations were felt to be too formal and technical. The opening statements required by federal regulation are usually composed in technical vocabulary that is beyond the layman's comprehension. Often, state engineers encounter this same problem when explaining the details of a project and the rationale for the choices that were made. The procedure of receiving testimony tends to be inhibiting to people, especially if they must step to the front of a room before they speak. Traditional engineering plans and schematics are confusing to people not used to reading them. Finally, legal notices were not effective in informing the public of future hearing dates. Attendance was better at hearings that had been promoted extensively by interested civic associations.[7]

Techniques for Improving Public Hearings

In order to improve the public hearing process, highway agencies should consider and use, as needed, various strategies and techniques beginning with prehearing activities and continuing through the post hearing period. There are several kinds of prehearing activities designed to increase public awareness and understanding of particular highway projects. As needed, highway agencies may choose to:

1) increase the amount of time elapsing between announcement and conduct of the hearing in order to allow more time for prehearing negotiations with affected groups and individuals;

2) correspond directly and personally with local neighborhood groups expressing a desire to discuss the project in advance of the public hearing;

3) send letters to all proprietors and residents within a specified distance of the proposed location, giving a brief description of the proposal;

4) arrange for the relevant plans and reports to be available for public inspection at convenient locations and times. This includes locations within the project area and times that accommodate wage earners. Department personnel may be detailed to these locations at certain times to explain and discuss the plans on an informal basis;

5) issue news releases whenever department personnel meet with organizations. The news releases could emphasize the main points made by the department during the presentation and serve as an educational device;

6) schedule spot announcements on radio and T.V. as the hearing date approaches;

7) schedule all hearings at night for maximum attendance;

8) erect signs at significant sites within the location area showing time, date and location of the hearing;

9) announce that department personnel will be present at the hearing site several hours in advance of the scheduled time to discuss the project informally, explain the maps and diagrams and answer questions;

10) hold a two-stage hearing procedure in some cases. Essentially, this would amount to scheduling two consecutive nights, the first of which would be devoted entirely to informal discussion and the second to the formal agenda;

11) place essential equipment such as microphones and tape recorders as inconspicuously as possible, because they can be intimidating. For example, microphones placed toward the back of the room would not force people to step out in front of everybody. Tape recorders, because they can be directly wired to microphones, do not need to be visible at all;

12) upgrade visual aids. Clearer illustrations would be more informative and would reduce unnecessary confusion and apprehension

more quickly. This is especially beneficial if hearing preliminaries are extensive and people have to wait a good while before they can begin to ask questions.[8]

There are certain approaches to the public hearing itself that deserve consideration. In general, it should be emphasized that hearings are conducted to exchange information, not force decisions.[9] It is desirable, however, to reinforce the fact that the information obtained in the hearing process does receive full consideration when decisions are made. For example, each person attending a hearing may be requested to complete a registration card. In this way, those desiring to formally testify can identify themselves. This also provides a mailing list for future contacts.[10]

Other hearing arrangements may include: 1) establishing maximum time limits for testimony; 2) providing pre-addressed envelopes to those wishing to submit written testimony; 3) devising standardized non-technological terminology to facilitate communication; and 4) devising simplified explanations of technical processes such as traffic counts and O and D studies used to explain department plans.[11]

There are beneficial post-hearing techniques available also: 1) highway agency personnel can remain after the hearing to discuss individual problems; 2) any suggestions or pertinent criticisms made during the hearing can be responded to with a personal letter explaining the highway agency's resolutions of the matter; 3) follow-up correspondence can be prepared and mailed advising interested

parties of final decisions; and 4) the department may conduct a post-hearing analysis to determine whether any particular aspect of the process can be improved prior to the next occasion.[12]

It has been said that the ideal public hearing is one that simply ratifies what has been agreed upon by all interested parties at a previous time. While this goal may never be reached, it is certainly possible to take steps that will reduce the number of disaffected parties remaining at the time the hearing is held.

Early contacts with individuals and organizations would facilitate pre-hearing meetings. Meetings of this type would usually be held with one organization or agency at a time. This would allow for the informal procedures and more relaxed atmosphere that generally accompany so called working meetings. Kept to a small number of people, such an approach facilitates the development of confidence and exchange of ideas. Even though consensus may not be reached, differences will narrow and the element of surprise will be eliminated from the hearing process. Once contact is established, follow-up meetings can be requested by either party to update information or deal with new developments.[13]

In some situations, it may be desirable to establish field offices. This will be especially true in large urban areas where project sites are located in low income neighborhoods. This step will allow low income residents to participate more easily. Such an office would provide adequate meeting space, allow for convenient display of project information and serve as temporary office space

for agency personnel working in the location area. It would also help communicate the agency's interest in involving and informing the public, and provide rapid and direct feedback on local response to both the overall project and specific decisions made during the course of operations. This kind of input would provide the agency and the affected groups with the necessary information to adapt or adjust situations as they arise.[14]

Notes

[1]California has initiated a new approach in which local officials sign a study agreement to pursue the potential benefits and costs of the highway they are formally requesting. At the same time, a public hearing is held to inform all interested parties. Because the hearing is held as a first step in the highway location and design process, there is ample time for extensive public participation. For more detail see John Robinson, "Citizen Participation and Environmental Considerations in Transportation Planning," Environmental Considerations in Planning, Design, and Construction, Special Report 138 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1973), pp. 32-34.

[2]Halbert E. Gulley, Discussion, Conference and Group Processes (Second Ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), pp. 320-321.

[3]Ibid., p. 321.

[4]Kenneth M. Travis and Stanley C. Plog, "Community Involvement in Transportation Planning: A New Approach," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), p. 9.

[5]For a theoretical discussion of how disagreement shifts to antagonism see James S. Coleman, Community Conflict (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 10-14.

[6]Travis and Plog, "Community Involvement," p. 9.

[7]L. Ellis Walton, Jr., and Jerome R. Saroff, "Proposed Strategy for Public Hearings," Highway Research Record, No. 356 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1971), pp. 27-28.

[8]Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[9]For a discussion of some difficulties of communicating information see Barry E. Collins and Harold Guetzkow, A Social Psychology of Group Processes for Decision-Making (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1964), pp. 183-185.

[10]Walton, Jr., and Saroff, "Proposed Strategy," p. 31.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Richard J. Bouchard, "Community Participation: How to Get There from Here," Highway Research Record, No. 380 (Washington, D. C.: Highway Research Board, 1972), 4.

[14]Ibid.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY

Basically, this report surveys the literature and discusses concepts and techniques relevant to highway agency planning and decision making. Because of the great variety of physical, social and political conditions in which highway planning and decision making takes place, flexibility is a desirable characteristic for participation procedures. Therefore, several management approaches and public participation techniques are described so that a highway agency can respond in an appropriate manner.

In this report citizen participation is defined as the process by which the sector of the general public being considered as potential recipients in a distribution of costs and/or benefits takes part in the decision by mentally, emotionally and physically interacting with decision makers before plans are formulated. This definition is chosen because it reflects a basic conclusion: citizens should be integrally related to the resolution of an issue and not merely acquiescent to an exogenously determined decision.

Robert Dahl contributes insight into the problems of deciding who should be allowed to participate in a given situation and how much participation is desirable. Dahl suggests three criteria for making these judgments: 1) the criterion of personal

choice, 2) the criterion of competence and 3) the criterion of economy. There are several issues underlying these criteria. The public will exercise its right to protect its own interests, especially when it appears that there is resistance to the exercise of that right. The amount of involvement desired is defined as the point at which additional participation will no longer result in a net social gain. In some instances, when special expertise is required, public involvement will be limited but not precluded. The public can still establish the values toward which experts direct their work and review and approve the recommendations put forth by experts. The conclusion to be reached is that participation cannot and need not be denied. Recent court cases and protest actions attest to that fact. Delays brought about by lawsuits and demonstrations have proven to be costly; more costly than need be if the public were adequately involved prior to the inception of projects.

There is little disagreement about the need for participation. Most disputes are concerned with the kind of participation that is optimal. Sherry Arnstein's categories of participation describe the various alternatives in a comprehensive manner. These categories break down into three basic groups: 1) nonparticipation, which is activities designed to cure the individual rather than allow participation, 2) degrees of tokenism, which is characterized by activities that allow public input but make no

provisions for implementation, and 3) degrees of citizen power, the level at which citizens have some direct authority.

The first level, nonparticipation, is objectionable because it assumes that people need to be treated rather than allowed to deal with the conditions around them that contribute to their problems.

The second level is important because it allows communication of values and ideas. It is limited in that there is no assurance that those values and ideas will be given consideration before decisions are made.

The third level is noteworthy because it provides the public with a direct role in final decision making. Its weakness lies in the fact that little consideration is given to the problem of resolving differences when two or more citizen groups are in opposition to each other.

There are aspects of the latter two levels that are best combined. Communication is vital but only effective if there are provisions for interaction between the public and relevant officials. Interaction can be implemented through adaptation of some of the participation forms described under degrees of citizen power. For example, joint policy boards or planning committees could be organized to consider citizen input. There could be formal procedures established to insure that citizens could express themselves, interact with the board or committee and be

informed of the disposition of the issue. Adaptation is recommended because there are significant drawbacks to control by autonomous groups. A major drawback being that a private group is less subject to citizen control than is a public body.

It is likely that public demand for involvement is going to increase. Public disillusionment with government is increasing and it is becoming more difficult for citizens to accept the notion that inconvenience or loss suffered on their part is for the good of the whole. This will likely result in a greater emphasis on the criterion of personal choice described by Dahl.

Demands for increased involvement can be expected to succeed because the labor union and civil rights movements have developed new and effective approaches to social change and public lobby groups, like Common Cause, are becoming more active.

Public participation is generally viewed as a positive force for the maintenance of our social system. Since there are no objective ways to determine a fair distribution of social costs and benefits, political mechanisms are necessary. While political mechanisms do not guarantee a fair distribution of costs and benefits, public participation in the distribution results in societal acceptance of the system.

Participation also serves as a socialization mechanism. People who are able to achieve changes in the system come to believe that the system works for them. At the same time the process of

participation increases their knowledge, skills and sense of personal and political effectiveness. The result is an increase in support for the system.

Participation can be supportive of highway planning and decision making. In addition to the general benefits mentioned above, participation increases general awareness of the problems and potentials of highway planning. The positive and negative aspects of particular projects can be more thoroughly examined and understood by concerned groups and opposition resulting from misinformation avoided.

The fact that there are many technical aspects to highway planning and decision making should not inhibit public participation. The issues debated to date have revolved around policy matters, not technical decisions.

Some of the community controversies generated recently are, in part, caused by the fact that highway location and design decisions are outside of the traditional community decision making process. Usually, political decisions are made at the local level and citizen input is encouraged. Because highway systems cover a broad geographical area, highway planning and policy making occur outside of the local political framework. Policy making is further separated from the local process because policy is decided by a semi-independent agency operating on a state-wide scale. Some observers think that local communities, now that their expressway needs have been largely met, will

begin to demand that decisions regarding transportation policy be made in the same manner as other local policy. More people are becoming convinced that participation in transportation is like participation in anything else; it is an expression of personal value and choice. It does not require skilled technicians to make value and choice judgments. It requires skilled technicians to implement value and choice judgments once they have been rendered. This is a significant change in attitude.

There are problems in securing public participation. Because highway agency officials are appointed, the public is unable to work its will through the traditional election process. The highway department is limited to one form of transportation and cannot respond to other local transportation needs. Because the highway department is large and a public organization, it is limited in its ability to interact flexibly with local decision makers. There are also unresolved policy issues. Consensus is seldom reached concerning such issues as the degree to which neighborhood needs supersede community needs, how each group should be integrated into the planning process, whether citizens should be limited to providing input or allowed to take part in decisions and how to maintain public interest in a process taking ten to twenty years.

Local communities are hampered in attempting to resolve transportation issues because highway planning and decision making alters the usual community decision making process. Because of their structural relationship with the highway department, local officials make decisions and accept trade-offs that have not been produced in the traditional political framework.

A number of behavioral studies have been conducted to determine the characteristics of people who participate as well as those who do not involve themselves in community issues. Essentially, the studies show that those with higher education backgrounds and middle class characteristics participate more than other people. The implication is that extra efforts will have to be made to provide less active participants with the requisite resources in order to secure their involvment. This is especially important because people do react negatively when directly threatened, despite their failure to take action at an earlier date. Given this behavior pattern, it would be more efficient to secure their interaction during the initial stages of a project.

Because of the variety of participant characteristics, the various kinds of role behaviors exhibited by government officials and the variation in public attitudes toward highways among different geographical areas and between individuals and groups,

flexibility in participation procedures is recommended. Experience with the formal, two-stage hearing process validates that conclusion.

Flexibility is only one of several principles of interaction that will facilitate public involvement. Care should be taken to insure that interested parties are neither excluded from nor pressured into a participation role. Meetings should be kept on a small scale to facilitate personal interaction.

Communication of information is especially critical. Communication should take place regularly through public and private media and periodically at public meetings. Officials and citizens should learn the importance of communicating on both an ad hoc and a formal basis. The development of both informal and formal reporting systems should reduce the number of communication gaps that occur. Because people do not like their future behavior decided for them, it is important that impressions and predictions about the activities of other people not be reported.

A major problem in securing public participation for highway development is the ten to twenty year time period involved. Development of short range projects designed to maintain the integrity and value of the neighborhood, when the highway is built, should result in participative continuity over the entire period. For example, a committee can be established to find a source of finance for maintenance and rehabilitation

of homes; normally a problem in neighborhoods scheduled for expressway construction.

Serious efforts must be made to maintain mutual trust and amicable working relationships. Particular care should be taken to comply with state and federal civil rights laws and regulations. Establishing interlocking committee memberships at all project levels and discouraging self-serving activities will also reduce friction.

To increase the value of citizen input, highway department personnel and private consultants could be made available to provide technical assistance. In this way, citizens would be informed of the technical variables pertinent to them and be better able to make informed decisions.

A primary reason for community interaction is to establish mutually acceptable goals. This involves three basic steps: 1) determining the full range of effects of an activity and formulating policy to control those effects; 2) examination of alternative choices; including establishing a range of choice among goals, examining relationships among goals, and evaluating goals; and 3) selecting goals which serve as formal policy and provide criteria by which priorities will be decided.

Personal attitudes generally determine goal priorities. Because attitudes are indicative of basic values and not easily swayed by minor influences, they also serve to predict behavior

reasonably accurately. By establishing the attitudinal correlations of people in varying educational levels, occupational interests and social attitudes, predictions regarding values and behavior can be made. In this way, a general concept of expected reactions to a proposed project can be acquired.

Community interaction can best be organized into three broad areas of endeavor. These are establishing and maintaining public understanding and acceptance of highway department responsibility, responsiveness and effectiveness. It should be emphasized that these are qualities to be earned through interaction with the public; not adjectives to be sold by a public relations department.

There are several models for management of public participation activities. The coordinator-catalyst role is one which permits genuine citizen interaction. This role includes four basic steps that would facilitate public participation in highway planning at the systems level. These steps include providing community liason, process legitimization, socioeconomic and impact studies, and meetings specifically designed to foster interaction.

The coordinator-catalyst role can be implemented through one or more of three basic models: 1) a committee and task force model, 2) a community survey and organization model, and 3) a location team and design process model. Because of the

need for flexibility mentioned earlier in this chapter, no model is deemed superior. The model or combination of models most appropriate for a given situation will depend on the political, socio-economic and environmental conditions in effect when the project is being considered. Ideally, the models chosen should reflect the preferences of the citizens to be involved.

Surveys are important tools for participation processes. In addition to providing a means by which attitudes can be determined, surveys can be used to determine the opinions and values of people not inclined to participate in other ways. This reduces the possibility of a vocal minority making inaccurate claims for its constituency.

Surveys can be conducted in two basic ways. The most common of these is the standard questionnaire which is designed to secure objective information. Projection techniques and desirability ranking are used when subjective data, such as values and attitudes, are needed. In no instance does surveying substitute for public participation activities. Surveys serve as a source of background information and as a check on the reliability of information coming from neighborhood and community representatives.

Public hearings will probably remain as a prominent part of the public participation process. If nothing else is accomplished, hearings serve as a legal statement that the public had an opportunity to participate. However, there are serious

questions regarding the viability of public hearings as a participative process. The public hearing environment is simply not conducive to clear and reasoned communication. Extensive participation must be accomplished prior to the public hearing. In addition, adjustments can be made and procedures smoothed so that the hearing process is more acceptable.

The purpose of public participation is to ensure that preferences and values of citizens are integrally related to the resolution of issues generated by governmental activity. To this end, it is important that a highway agency choose and implement public participation techniques that are appropriate to the particular physical, social and political conditions that pertain to a given highway system or project. Successful interaction between citizens and agency decision makers will further the accomplishment of their mutual objective: that governmental activity occur in the best overall interest of the public.

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