

# WHAT ROLE FOR CITIZENS?

Martha Curry, Battelle Human Affairs Research Centers

Citizen participation can and does take a variety of forms and will result in different roles for citizens in planning and policy-making processes. This paper describes and compares the citizen participation strategies used in two recent regional transportation planning projects in King County, Washington. The purpose of this analysis is to determine how citizen participation strategies differ according to the planning issue and its importance in the community and how such strategies provide different opportunities for citizens to become involved and to influence the planning process. The analysis and comparison focus on several key aspects of the programs: recruitment techniques, structure and process of involvement, and the citizen's role and impact on the planning process. The analysis finds that where the issue, such as the airport study, is important in the community a loosely structured, citizen-defined involvement program is more effective. Advocate planners are beneficial in this instance. For a nonsalient, or less visible, issue such as the countywide transit plan, a more tightly structured involvement program that emphasizes educating citizens is effective in stimulating citizen input. This strategy relies on planner-defined activities with all citizens playing the same role. The information for this analysis is based on a survey and study done in the Metro 1980 transit planning study and on involvement in the initial stages of the Seattle-Tacoma community involvement program.

•IN U.S. transportation planning (1), different strategies have been used to involve citizens. These strategies differ in the methods used to motivate citizen participation in certain roles and in the types of problems citizens deal with.

In the past several years, two transportation planning programs, having regional and local impacts, have been undertaken in King County, Washington. The Municipality of Metropolitan Seattle (Metro) 1980 transit planning study and the Seattle-Tacoma (Sea-Tac) airport master plan and vicinity planning study used different strategies to involve citizens in their planning and policy-making processes. This paper describes and evaluates some of the major differences between these two strategies and, specifically, examines whether and to what extent these differences have affected the citizens' role and ability to impact the decisions being made.

The two planning projects were attempting to solve problems that had different levels of saliency in the community. In both planning processes, some decisions were made prior to or without citizen involvement. This latter factor influenced the potential role for citizens and closed off some areas of decision making to their influence.

## MUNICIPALITY OF METROPOLITAN SEATTLE TRANSIT PLANNING STUDY

The Metro transit planning study was conducted during the fall of 1971 and spring of 1972 to develop a countywide bus transit system. It was initiated by Metro, which operates sewage treatment plants in the area, and by the cities of Renton and Bellevue and the Puget Sound governmental conference (PSGC). It was funded through an Urban Mass Transportation Act grant. This was the third attempt in the area; two rail rapid proposals to develop an improved, comprehensive public transportation system had been defeated in 1968 and 1970.

A team of consultants was hired by PSGC to conduct the 8-month planning study, and the citizen participation program was subcontracted to a local consulting firm. Almost \$139,000, or 20 percent of the total project funds, were allocated to the citizen participation program. This allocation shows a considerable commitment to providing citizens with an active role in the planning process. The issue of improved transit service in the area was, at the time, a fairly low-visibility issue. The policy makers wanted to maintain this low profile (to keep the issue from becoming politicized) since voter approval was needed for Metro to assume operating functions that included taxing power. This characteristic of planning was important in determining the strategies developed for involving citizens in the process.

In general, the Metro program was based on an advisory role for citizens (2). The program was designed and implemented to stimulate interest in bus transit among citizens in all parts of the Seattle metropolitan area but, at the same time, to channel citizen interest and input to this one mode of transit. To maximize input from individuals rather than from groups alone, the program was carefully structured to follow the major steps of the planning process. Thus, channels for input were well defined by the consultants. As a consequence, citizen participation was limited to a predetermined range of alternatives and ideas. This limited the options to explore new or different concepts. This tactic was justified by the consultants, however, as being necessary, in a practical sense, to prevent another failure such as the rail rapid transit bond issues. This strategy was efficient in obtaining citizen input directed to the actual issues being considered by the policy makers. However, this notion assumes that the parameters that are set by the decision makers are acceptable to all groups and individuals concerned and that the defined decision area provides the opportunity to develop the optimal plan from the perspectives of the citizens and the policy makers.

#### SEATTLE-TACOMA AIRPORT MASTER PLAN AND VICINITY PLANNING STUDY

The Port of Seattle and the King County Division of Land Use Management jointly sponsored an 18-month planning project (March 1973 to October 1974) that included an update of the airport master plan and the land use plan for the community surrounding the airport facility. This area covers 44 mi<sup>2</sup> (114 km<sup>2</sup>) of southern King County and has 137,000 residents. The project was funded by the two local sponsors, and matching funds came from the Federal Aviation Administration; the total amount was \$642,000. Most of the funds allocated for the Sea-Tac community involvement program (CIP) were in the form of in-kind services from the two local agencies, and a small amount was from the various consulting firms, who conducted environmental impact studies of the airport and urban development in terms of noise, air, water quality, and solid wastes. A total of \$48,834 was allocated at the beginning of the study for these services and materials, although some additional funds were provided for specific activities, e.g., \$10,000 allocated for a community attitudes survey.

Unlike the transit study, the airport project is focused on a visible and important issue for the community around the airport facility. As air traffic has increased and the airport has expanded, many people in the vicinity have been adversely impacted by the noise from airplanes. In the community attitudes survey (3), almost 20 percent of the residents sampled thought noise was the most serious problem in the community. Nationwide, 3 percent of the population cite noise as the major problem. Of the people sampled 79.1 percent indicated that the source of the noise problem is airplanes. These people live in the zones adjacent to the airport facility and feel the impact more than those who live farther away. As more residents have been impacted directly, they have actively sought some solution to the problem.

The zone 3 committee was formed in 1972 by citizens living in the aircraft approach pattern to solicit compensation from the Port of Seattle or changes in airport procedures to help alleviate the noise problem. Little progress had been made at the time that this study commenced, although the port commissioners had heard the citizens' case for acquisition of homes most heavily impacted by noise from the airport. Because of the

intensity of feelings against the port and to some extent against the county (4), opportunity for conflict resolution had to be incorporated into the citizen participation program. This was not necessary in the Metro study since few people showed strong feelings about the proposed bus transit system at the outset of the planning study.

The Sea-Tac CIP has not focused on developing a new or more comprehensive service. Major expansion on the airport recently was completed; therefore, citizens had limited opportunity to influence decisions directly relating to the size of the airport facility and its impact on the community. The land use plan being developed is an update of existing land use plans and is not reflecting any radically new or different service or structure.

This means that citizens have not been involved in developing a new system or service, as was the case in the Metro program, but that they have dealt with problems that directly affected them. This was not the case for many people involved in the Metro study.

Sea-Tac CIP differs in a number of ways from the Metro program. First, it was based on the concept of a partnership between the community and agency planners in decision areas that directly affect the community. Second, as mentioned above, CIP allowed for conflict resolution early in the planning process; therefore, the program structure was kept loose and flexible to allow citizens to air grievances and to explore a variety of alternative solutions to problems related to the airport and urban development.

Although different types of decisions were being made in these two planning processes, they both developed an ongoing citizen participation program for the duration of the planning period. Both were concerned with regional transportation issues although in both cases citizens were not given a direct role in making basic policy decisions regarding such issues as the operating agency, funding, and form and size of the transportation facilities that impact the local communities in which they are located. Citizens were given the opportunity, to different degrees, to influence middle-range policy or operational decisions that dealt with the more tangible aspects of the planning issues involved.

These two citizen participation programs present some clear differences in the scope and saliency of the problems to be solved and in the methodologies used to involve citizens. The rest of this paper will present a more detailed discussion and comparison of the two citizen involvement programs based on several specific points:

1. Recruitment methods and participation rates,
2. Structure and process of involvement, and
3. Citizen roles and their impacts on planning.

## RECRUITMENT METHODS AND PARTICIPATION RATES

### Metro

Because the Metro transit plan involved planning a transit system for a large part of the greater Seattle metropolitan area, participation was sought from residents from all areas of the county and in the city of Seattle. At the outset, it was anticipated that the voters would be called on to approve a local sales tax for transit; therefore, registered voters were selected as the primary client group for the participation program. From voter registration lists developed for school levies and local bond issues, a random sample of 10,000 regular voters was selected. These and the more than 300 identified community organizations received personal letters from the study sponsor, PSGC, inviting them to attend citizen meetings to be held during the planning study. Letters were sent before each of the five meetings and contained information on the previous meeting and the agenda, time, and location of the forthcoming meeting. In addition, notices of the meetings were placed in the metropolitan and local newspapers, on radio and TV, on buses, in stores and libraries, and in other public places.

To facilitate participation by residents of different areas of the city and suburbs, the 5 meetings were held at approximately the same time in each of the 10 geographic zones covering the area.

These efforts were somewhat successful in attracting residents to the meetings. Results from a survey conducted by Curry show that from 28 to 52 percent of the participants in the five meetings came in response to the letters to individuals and organizations. Another 25 to 34 percent came in response to notices in the news media. Of the respondents in this survey, 75 percent belonged to some kind of community organization, and 79 percent have lived in the area for more than 10 years. This possibly reflects the emphasis on regular voters who tend to be the more stable residents of an area [based on a survey of 4 percent of the citizen participants and of 10 of 12 planners in the Metro program (5)].

In addition to the general citizen meetings, a transit liaison committee was formed to serve as a link between citizens and the policy makers within PSGC and Metro. Fifty-four persons who were professionally involved in transportation policy, elected officials, or representatives of groups involved in transportation matters were selected by the agencies to serve on this committee.

A total of 1,300 citizens attended at least 1 of the 50 citizen meetings during the planning study. However, many people attended only one or two of the meetings. Based on the Curry citizen survey, 54 percent attended only one or two meetings, 19 percent attended three, and 27 percent attended four or five meetings (Table 1). Average attendance varied widely among the 10 districts and among meetings. Highest attendance came in the second and third meetings, which focused on alternatives and route selection. This attendance then tapered off in the last meeting, which dealt with detailed development of the preferred (and eventually recommended) plan.

Demographic information gathered by consultants (6) shows that the participants who attended each meeting represented a fair cross section of the population of the Seattle metropolitan area (Table 2).

### Sea-Tac

The impact of the airport facility and its activities and the impacts of rapid urban development in the airport vicinity were the two major factors considered and resolved in the Sea-Tac CIP study. Therefore, property owners were defined as the initial primary client group for the CIP. All the property owners in the airport study area received letters from the King County Division of Land Use Management, inviting them to attend the initial public meetings held to explain the purpose of the planning project. Attached was a short

**Table 1. Meeting attendance rate of survey respondents.**

| Number of Meetings Attended | Number of Persons Attending Meeting |            |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
|                             | Number of Persons Attending Meeting | Percentage |
| 1                           | 17                                  | 32.7       |
| 2                           | 11                                  | 21.2       |
| 3                           | 10                                  | 19.2       |
| 4                           | 9                                   | 17.3       |
| 5                           | 5                                   | 9.6        |
| Total                       | 52                                  | 100.0      |

**Table 2. Demographic profile of meeting attendees based on King County 1970 census.**

| Item            | 1970 Census (percent) |            | Meeting Attendees (percent) |
|-----------------|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
|                 | Population            | Work Force |                             |
| Sex             |                       |            |                             |
| Male            | 48                    | 61         | 62                          |
| Female          | 52                    | 37         | 38                          |
| Age, years      |                       |            |                             |
| 19 to 20        | 5.1                   |            | 0.7                         |
| 21 to 29        | 23.0                  |            | 14.9                        |
| 30 to 39        | 17.8                  |            | 22.3                        |
| 40 to 49        | 18.6                  |            | 23.9                        |
| 50 to 59        | 16.0                  |            | 19.0                        |
| >60             | 19.2                  |            | 18.0                        |
| Income, dollars |                       |            |                             |
| 0 to 4,000      | 8.2                   |            | 13.2                        |
| 4 to 8,000      | 15.0                  |            | 12.2                        |
| 8 to 12,000     | 26.0                  |            | 22.4                        |
| 12 to 16,000    | 17.0                  |            | 21.0                        |
| >16,000         | 31.0                  |            | 31.0                        |
| Mode to work    |                       |            |                             |
| Automobile      | 76.0                  |            | 74.6                        |
| Bus             | 14.0                  |            | 18.8                        |
| Walk            | 6.9                   |            | 2.9                         |
| Other           | 2.3                   |            | 2.1                         |

questionnaire asking whether the person was interested in becoming involved in the CIP or in being kept informed on the progress of the study. In addition, notices and articles were placed in local and metropolitan newspapers and in public places in the community. Contact was also made to known community organizations to encourage their participation in the project.

Two initial public meetings, at which the study team tried to explain the project, were held in different sections of the study area. The first meeting, in particular, generated a large and hostile crowd. Many questions were asked about the need for a study by the port to verify that there was a noise problem. This first contact with the public indicated to the planners that citizens were highly aware and critical of airport impacts and that there was a need to provide a flexible participation structure and an open atmosphere concerning information on the study.

At these meetings, citizens were encouraged to fill out questionnaires on the notices if they had not received them in the mail. Boxes were placed at the entrance to the meeting hall for depositing these questionnaires. Over 400 of these questionnaires provided the basis for a specific client-action group for starting the CIP. These people received a second questionnaire asking them to state their preferred area of activity and involvement. From this, two general activity areas were derived: airport and noise and urban development and water quality. These two areas provided a general structure for citizen activities in the CIP.

One of the goals of the CIP was to provide open access to information and involvement for all citizens in the airport vicinity who were interested in becoming involved or just informed about the study. Because many residents in the community were concerned and interested, a rather loose recruitment strategy was maintained, and more emphasis was placed on providing information. Unlike the transit project, planners in the Sea-Tac project did not have to drum up interest in the issues involved. There was more than enough interest in noise and water quality, and, to a certain extent, in county activities in the area.

Since most of the resources allocated to the Sea-Tac CIP involved in-kind services, there was a small budget for materials and activities (\$7,000). During the first 6 months of the study, there was only one full-time community planner, the CIP coordinator, assigned to the project and two part-time assistants. Later, one full-time planner replaced the two part-time assistants. As a result, information on the number and demographic characteristics of participants was not documented. However, participants for particular activities were mapped periodically by their mailing address, and this showed a fair distribution of the area, especially in the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the airport facility.

According to the CIP coordinator, 90 to 100 persons were consistently active on the 4 committees set up by the citizens. It is estimated that 200 to 300 citizens were actively involved in various phases of the program during the past 15 months. When the study was 1 year old, over 1,000 persons were on a regular mailing list for information about the progress of the project, and up to 2,000 members of the communities involved in the study were estimated to be highly aware of the project activities.

No set number of meetings were scheduled at the outset of the planning study, partly because of the length of the project and the loose structure of the CIP. Most meetings involved 5 to 15 citizens in small work sessions or activities. Bimonthly committee meetings drew 25 to 40 persons. The task force meetings were held once or twice a week for the past year; thus, over 100 work-activity sessions have been held. Two larger public meetings, for port discussion of acquisition plans for the area, have been held since the project began. In addition, five information-education meetings were held in seven community schools to explain the data collection phase of the environmental studies.

## STRUCTURE OF INVOLVEMENT

### Metro

As was indicated in the introduction, the Metro citizen participation program was very structured in regard to process and content. Exactly 5 meetings in each of the 10 zones were held at defined crucial points in the planning process: goals and objectives, alternative plans, tentative plans, recommended plan, and final plan. All followed the same agenda, meeting time, and format. Location and consulting team personnel were the only factors that varied from one meeting to the next within each zone.

The consultants began the program with a technical presentation on the topic of the meeting, and thus the citizens were provided with information regarding the technical aspects of the study. Small group discussions or work sessions followed in which citizens were divided into groups by a number assigned to them as they entered the meeting. All citizens participated in all of the activities; there was no division of labor (i.e., each group dealt with only a few specific issues).

This strategy tended to promote individual input rather than group input or coalition formation. It allowed each person to gain, at least, an overall understanding of the transit planning process but no in-depth knowledge of any one part of it. During these small group sessions, citizens were asked to discuss goals, to choose among investment priorities, and to develop preferred fare structure. Each group gave a report to the meeting, then each individual was asked to fill out a questionnaire to give planners their personal opinions on the topics of the meetings. The use of predetermined work tasks kept citizens focused on the parameters set by the policy makers. This control of the issues and information resulted in control of citizen responses; it directed citizen efforts toward those alternatives that were acceptable to the policy makers or the planning group. For example, all of the tasks dealt only with a bus transit system for the Seattle metropolitan area. Although this tactic provided the consultants with relevant information for their work, it limited citizen opportunity to explore other concepts of public transportation for the area.

Information and input from the citizen meetings were synthesized by the citizen participation consultant and sent to the planning consultants for incorporation into their development of a feasible and preferred system of public transportation. Written group tasks and individual questionnaires were designed to provide quantifiable information for input.

A team of consultants and staff persons from PSGC and Metro rotated to different areas for meetings. Rotation of planning staff discouraged development of continuing relationships between citizens and planners and promoted a more formal structure of interaction between citizens and consultants. Although both citizens and planners interviewed in this project thought that the planners were willing to discuss questions with citizens concerning the planning issues and tasks involved, the formal structure of the meetings provided relatively little opportunity for informal and continuing group interaction among citizens or between citizens and planners.

The link between citizens and decision makers in this planning process was indirect: The consultants gathered written input from citizens and then synthesized and interpreted it before presenting it to the policy makers. No citizens were involved in transmitting the information to the policy makers or in determining what information should be emphasized by the consultants in plan development. The transit liaison committee activities paralleled those in the citizen meetings, although there was more opportunity for discussion of the issues. Citizens participating in the meetings did take some active roles; primarily these were in the area of operational policy, as defined by the consultants and policy makers. This participation was satisfactory to a majority of the citizens surveyed but tended to prove frustrating to those who wanted to explore basic policy issues or other possible mixes of transit modes. In the survey of citizens and planners, 18 citizen respondents (35 percent) who had previous transportation planning or citizen participation experience stated that citizens' ideas and suggestions affected the plan development only to some degree or not at all. The seven who saw no citizen

impact thought that all the major decisions were made ahead of time and that citizens had little influence on the outcome of the planning process. The planners interviewed were in basic agreement with these citizens' perceptions: Six (60 percent) stated that citizens affected the plan development to some degree or not at all and that they primarily affected operational policy.

However, citizen influence in basic policy issues was not absent from the overall process. A citizens' lobby group, the citizens' transit committee (CTC), was formed by citizens who had been involved in the plan. This group, formed after the consultants had prepared their recommended plan for presentation to the Metro council, was more open to citizen-initiated activities and direction and was able to exert more direct pressure on the decision makers than were citizens participating through the formal citizen participation program. Although this group was set up to seek voter support for the transit issue, its members also successfully lobbied the Metro council for five policy changes and additions to the final plan. Specifically, these concerned the following:

1. No diesel buses,
2. Special fares for the elderly and handicapped,
3. A Metro pledge to seek (a) alternatives to the sales tax as a funding source and (b) removal of the sales tax from prescription drugs,
4. Retention and expansion of the trolley fleet in Seattle, and
5. A lower base fare of 20 cents instead of 25 cents.

There was substantial citizen influence in the final outcome of the operational aspects of the plan. But influence on basic policy issues was achieved from the CTC efforts more than from citizens working through the formal citizen participation program. This will be discussed further in the next section.

### Sea-Tac

The structure for involvement in this program provides some clear contrasts to that used by Metro. First, the program was administered primarily by King County planning staff and secondly by the Port of Seattle planning staff. The two agencies did not always share a common view of the role of citizens in the decision-making process, and this generated some difficulty in smooth working relationships between them. Second, the program first found out the concerns and interests of the community and then based the CIP around those priorities in relation to the issues treated in the planning project.

Sea-Tac CIP was placed under the management of King County and was assigned to the community planner for the Burien area, the large incorporated area that is adjacent to and most affected by the airport facility. The community planner became the project coordinator for the CIP and brought many existing contacts with various community groups and individuals. This provided an initial and continuing link between the community and the two agencies involved in the study. The county used area members of the Environmental Development Commission (EDC), the 104-member citizen body that was advisory to the county council, as initial organizers of the citizen activities and meetings. They were to work with several members of the zone 3 committee, who were organized to put pressure on the Port of Seattle to pursue compensation measures such as acquisition of impacted properties.

At the beginning of the study, a community office was set up to serve as a focal point of the CIP for the duration of the project. The establishment of the community office provided a visible sign of commitment to the community and served as a vital communication and activity center for the entire participation program. This was possible since the project focused on a smaller geographic area than that in the transit study.

The Metro program set up the transit liaison committee as a link between citizens and policy makers, and the Sea-Tac study initially designated that two citizens be selected to serve as voting members of the policy advisory committee. This committee was the main policy-making body for the project-related decisions and was made up of key policy makers from the two local agencies and the Federal Aviation Administration,

representatives from the four consulting firms, and citizen representatives. The citizen representatives were not chosen because they shared viewpoints of the two agencies. Rather, through the strength of the zone 3 committee's opposition to the port and the EDC commitment to citizen participation in county government, these persons were selected to serve on the policy advisory board. In the sixth month of the project, two additional members of the community were added to the policy advisory committee at the recommendation of the CIP members and staff.

Two committees were set up by the CIP staff to focus citizen efforts on the areas of primary concern: the airport and the urban development plans, i.e., the noise and water and land use problems. Citizens joined the group of their choice and determined their own priorities and activities. The CIP staff provided technical assistance and guidance and helped to prepare and transmit formal reports and communications between the citizens and the agencies.

Early in the project, citizens undertook a community survey of expressed concerns and an aesthetic survey of the area. Three half-hour video-tape programs on the environmental studies were produced by CIP staff and citizens and local audio-visual experts as part of a series of five educational-feedback programs. These classes were held in seven elementary schools and were set up and run by citizen members of the CIP.

One of the major inputs by the CIP was a definition of preferred futures for the community. Citizens were divided into four groups according to their stated interests and initially worked separately in defining community needs and desires and institutional constraints in the areas of urban development, water quality and drainage, airport planning, and noise abatement. These inputs were translated into program ideas that were then developed into program choices and combined into compatible program sets. From these, preferred alternative future plans were defined for the community by CIP participants. A newspaper type of tabloid was published and distributed through local newspapers, explaining the alternatives and asking for feedback on an attached questionnaire. Although the response rates were too low to ascertain any firm trends in community opinion, this activity did persuade the port and the county to define and articulate alternatives at this point in the planning process. In these activities and others, citizens gained a more thorough understanding of and experience in the process and the content of the planning project.

To provide maximum access to information on the project to the community, newsletters and fact sheets on various studies and phases of the project were sent to over 1,000 community residents and agency personnel by the CIP staff and volunteers. In addition, articles were placed in local newspapers, providing progress reports on the project. Displays were placed in local art fairs, in the library, and at schools to provide visible information on the project.

The strategy followed in this program was based on citizen determination of their own activities and input into the planning process. (This is in contrast to the Metro program.) To facilitate citizen access to the program, meetings were generally held in the evening in the local community office, local schools, or at a citizen's home. Meeting times, location, and agenda were flexible to meet the needs of the citizens involved, and this promoted sustained activity by a core of interested citizens. The Sea-Tac CIP and Metro strategies differed in that Metro was not flexible to citizen schedules and desires.

CIP structure seemed to be more flexible because the issues were highly visible and important to the community; therefore, citizens were initially motivated to seek effective ways in which to influence Port of Seattle and King County government policy-making processes that affected them directly. Citizen-volunteer activity was necessary to implement the program since project funds allocated to the CIP only provided for a small staff and minimal resources for surveys and educational programs. It was not possible in the Sea-Tac program, as it was in the Metro program, to conduct a low-profile program. Because of the intense concerns and opinions in the community toward the issues involved, there had to be opportunities for citizens to air their grievances and to develop working relationships with the agencies. This was based on mutual trust, something that has been achieved only partially.



## CITIZEN ROLES AND THEIR IMPACT ON PLANNING

### Metro

As stated previously, the citizen role in this program was for the most part to advise on basic policy. Through the group tasks and individual questionnaires in the citizen meetings, people had the opportunity to respond to basic policy issues such as the type of transit system and operating agency that had already been shaped by the policy makers. This helped the policy makers verify the political acceptability of their desires. Within the framework of the formal participation program, citizens played their most active role in the area of operational policy in such decisions as route design, fare structure, and scheduling of buses. When asked in the survey to explain the ways in which citizens' ideas and suggestions changed or influenced the plan, over 61 percent of the citizens and 90 percent of the planners mentioned physical aspects alone or in combination with financial policy, for example. Two of the planners stated that citizens did not really have any influence at all in determining the shape of the plan since basic policies that constituted the really important foundation blocks of the process were decided before citizens became involved. Specifically, citizen input in route selection was used and resulted in an increased number of routes connecting suburban communities and east-west sections of Seattle. Early development of improved service levels was given priority above original consultant plans to develop capital facilities.

As mentioned earlier, the CTC successfully lobbied for changes in basic policy issues of the proposed plan. This citizen influence, exerted outside of the framework of the formal participation process, was applied directly to the decision makers by citizens who had participated in the program and wanted to change the consultants' plan so that it could be accepted and supported by the citizen vote. Thus, the low-profile strategy of the citizen participation program did not last after the formal planning process was completed. Given a chance for more influence during the Metro hearings on the proposed plan, citizens initiated their own activities to make changes in some of the basic policy areas. The changes that resulted became, in effect, campaign promises that Metro has had to keep. This has presented some problems. The promise for no diesel buses has been hard to fulfill since there exist few alternatives to diesel-fueled vehicles at this time.

In summary, although the consultants and policy makers agreed about the appropriate role for citizens in the planning process, citizens active in the CTC did not stay within the parameters of this role. Rather, they wanted to make some of the perceived faults in the proposed plan visible and to press for changes. Probably, more citizen participation in the definition of their role would have promoted development of a recommended plan that would have more accurately reflected citizen desires.

### Sea-Tac

The citizen role is more difficult to determine in this program primarily because the two agencies involved did not agree on the appropriate role for citizens in their respective planning processes. Traditionally, the Port of Seattle has not incorporated citizen input into their planning and decision-making model. However, threat of litigation against the port by citizens adjacent to the airport and the waterfront facilities has caused the port to seek more input from citizens in the area. On the other hand, the King County Division of Land Use Management has had a substantial amount of experience in working with citizens in the past in updating area land use plans. Before the study was begun, it had established a community planner in the area and, thus, was developing ongoing relationships with individuals and groups within the community. The division has promoted a partnership working relationship with citizens concerning land use issues.

The existence of a community planner in the Burien community also provides a contrast with the Metro program, in which many communities had to be served by the

community planner program and there was no ongoing contact with these communities between the five meetings. The community planner served as a vital link between citizens and decision makers, sometimes acting as an advocate for community interests and at other times advocating the agencies' points of view to citizens. This provided citizens with more access to information about influencing the decision-making process. The four citizen representatives on the policy advisory committee produced a similar effect: The policy makers received direct input from citizens and were accountable to the community through the citizen representatives. The formal citizen participation program in the Metro study did not have this direct accountability. This came only when the CTC was formed and put strong pressure on the Metro council for changes in the recommended plan to make it acceptable for voter support.

Citizen activities in the Sea-Tac CIP focused on these activities of the project that directly affect the community: noise, water quality, and land use. In this program, citizens and CIP staff worked together to develop information and education programs for the larger community, surveys of community opinions, and translation of these opinions and concerns into recommended goals and programs for community and agency consideration. Although this same process was followed in the Metro program, it only involved public transportation and was done by the planners and not by the citizen participants.

Citizens influenced the planning process in the Sea-Tac project in several ways. First, initial citizen input indicated to the port that citizens were not willing to wait for 18 months for any action in resolving the noise impact problem. Thus, within the first 6 months of the project, the port started developing acquisition plans for areas immediately adjacent to the airport. Second, citizen activity in the CIP demonstrated to the two agencies the need for establishing an ongoing citizen participation process in the community. King County already has a community planner assigned to the area; the Port of Seattle has recently set up a community office initially to assist in the acquisition process and later to provide a link between the community and the Port of Seattle.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of these two programs reveals that, in fact, the design of citizen participation strategies tends to reflect differences in (a) the nature and scope of the issue, (b) the definition of the client group, and (c) the perceived role of the citizens.

The transit study represented a single focus, low-profile issue that was regional in nature. The client group was defined as registered, regular voters; their role as perceived by both policy makers and planners was advisory, particularly with regard to basic policy issues. The citizen participation strategy was designed to maintain a low profile, apparently to keep the transit proposal from becoming a political issue in the election campaign. The citizen's role was predetermined and was structured to obtain input that would fit within the defined parameters of the proposed transit plan. Some citizens who had participated in the formal participation program did pursue change in several of the basic policy issues through the CTC. This shows that the consultants' recommended plan was not entirely acceptable even to some of the citizens who had attended the citizen meetings. This seems to indicate that at least 30 to 40 citizens desired a larger role than was provided to them through the formal citizen participation program.

The airport study focused on several issues that were highly visible in their impacts on the local community; some of these were regional in nature and scope. The client group was defined as property owners and residents of zone 3, the noise-impacted area adjacent to the airport facility. The role of citizens was perceived as advisory by the Port of Seattle but was seen more as partnership by King County. The citizen participation strategy, as developed by the King County community planning staff, sought to direct already stimulated citizen interest and concerns into constructive input and influence on the policy-making processes of the two agencies. The CIP structure was flexible, so that community-defined concerns formed the basis of the program. The citizen's role was not totally predetermined, and citizens did achieve considerable in-

fluence over some basic policies such as acquisition efforts by the Port of Seattle and community planning efforts by King County. In this program, the community planner acted partly as an advocate for community interests and also as a communication link between citizens and the two agencies.

In both citizen participation programs, it was intended that citizens would primarily have a role in middle-range or operational policy decisions. Metro and the Port of Seattle had already tentatively formulated the major policies that shaped the outcome of the planning studies. However, in both cases, citizens attempted and succeeded in forcing changes in some of these policies (e.g., the no-diesel bus issue and the early acquisition issue).

Most significantly, in both cases, the citizens' efforts resulted in a commitment by the agencies to establish an ongoing citizen participation program in the community. This has important implications for developing citizen participation strategies and for determining appropriate roles for citizens in policy-making processes. In the two studies cited, citizens were seen initially as having a less influential role in basic policy issues than in operational policy or physical aspects of the planning process. However, as citizens gained knowledge of the planning issue, they wanted a more definitive voice in basic, nonspatial policy issues, not only in the planning study but also in the ongoing policy-making processes of the agencies concerned.

Through the transit citizen participation program, 30 to 40 citizens developed increased capabilities and expectations regarding their legitimate role in the policy-making process and, therefore, tried to influence policy through the CTC. Of these people from the CTC, 10 or more are now members of a Metro citizens' advisory committee, the ongoing citizen participation component of Metro transit.

Particularly, the residents who lived adjacent to the airport and became involved in the Sea-Tac CIP had more experience and knowledge about the Port of Seattle's activities and their impacts on the area. However, the CIP helped further train these and other citizens by channeling their inputs effectively into the policy-making process. As a result, more residents of the area have been put on the county's EDC, and the Port of Seattle has begun to establish an ongoing citizen participation program in the area.

These findings indicate that experience in citizen participation of any sort trains citizens for more responsible roles in policy-making processes. The task of planners and policy makers is to continue to develop more flexible strategies for citizen participation that allow participants to assume more responsible roles and to use their capabilities to their potential.

## REFERENCES

1. Citizen Participation in Transportation Planning. HRB Special Rept. 142, 1973.
2. S. Arnstein. A Ladder of Citizen Participation. *Journal, American Institute of Planners*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.
3. F. E. Fiedler and J. Fiedler. The Social Impact of the Seattle Tacoma Airport on the Community. *Seattle-Tacoma Airport Master Plan and Vicinity Planning Study, Element Rept.*, March 1974, pp. 9-10.
4. New County Citizens' Group Formed. *Highline Times*, Jan. 31, 1974.
5. M. G. Curry. A Concept of Citizen Participation: The METRO Transit Case Study. Department of Urban Planning, Univ. of Washington, Master's thesis, 1973.
6. Daniel, Mann, Johnson and Mendenhall, and Toner and Associates. *Citizen Participation for the Metropolitan Area Transit Plan*. May 1972.
7. Citizens' Report on Goals for Planning and Problem Solving in the Sea-Tac Communities, Where are we Going? Supplement to the *Highline Times*, *White Center News*, *Des Moines News*, *Federal Way News*, *King County*, Washington, June 1974.

## DISCUSSION

Virginia K. Gunby, Washington State Highway Commission

Curry's paper briefly reports on two typical single-function, ad hoc processes: One was slightly more comprehensive and loosely structured; the other was narrow and planner defined.

The language of the report is inappropriate when one considers the subject matter: People in the community become clients, and we train and recruit them. If these words and other planning jargon were used with citizens I know, such a program would be through before it was started.

I also would have preferred more analysis and less direct reporting, particularly on how each program could have been improved and on whose values and priorities were considered and whose were ignored. Changes in public policy should always seek to achieve greater equity. Did these programs recognize this purpose?

Washington has traditionally been a populist state in which citizens actively write initiatives and referendums and seek legal redress when they are displeased with their governments. My first reaction to participating in a discussion about a western port district or county or Metro transit was that it would not be relevant to the processes in more densely populated areas of the United States. We in the state of Washington are a few generations behind the rest of the country in transportation and land use planning. We are ahead on the critical concerns of the rest of the nation because our rate of growth, population, and urban density are less. In fact, critics in our area often exclaim that the Puget Sound region should benefit from the experience and problems of more complex areas so that we can be prevented from making the same mistakes.

The process of most public involvement programs seems to indicate and tell more about the governmental agencies' true feelings toward citizens than any reports or evaluations of the products. Curry has written the middle of two stories, for which I must share some beginnings and partial endings.

The Sea-Tac program was a first citizen participation effort for a port district that had a poor image in the area. [It had never involved citizens in any of its port development projects, including a mammoth 300-ft-high (91-m) grain terminal located on the Seattle waterfront that blocked all views of adjacent residences and spewed grain dust into the air.] The district's airport program is the first time a major airport in the United States has become involved in a joint planning effort with the adjacent community. (That in itself tells a great deal about the state of the art of airport planning.)

The surrounding community is unique, too, because it is the largest [137,000 people and 44 miles<sup>2</sup> (114 km<sup>2</sup>)] urbanized, unincorporated area in the United States that receives all its services from separate special districts or the King County government.

Community interests have focused around quality schools; the school district provides the boundaries of the local community. The area resisted any attempt to plan or incorporate as more land was developed until, after a recent expansion of the Sea-Tac Airport, the threat of a limited-access state highway through the community and a major water drainage problem became apparent. The symptoms grew into a public crisis, and government reacted with a public involvement program.

The port had a problem. The \$200 million expansion of this major airport had been completed and the surrounding community was threatening litigation over the noise impacts from larger jets landing and taking off.

The Sea-Tac effort started in March 1973, and in September 1973 the five-member, \$1/year port commission announced an interim land acquisition program to purchase 600 homes at an estimated cost of \$16 million. That request for funds from the Federal Aviation Administration has not been acted on; no purchases have been made. In fact, federal criteria will have to be changed before any money will be available for noise impacts. It is hoped that expectation levels have not been falsely raised, as so often happens with citizen efforts. The port has made no commitment to a continuing citizen effort in its airport planning, except to an advisory committee of users.

The Metro project was also developed after major decisions had been made or judged

to be out of bounds for public discussion. Metro also had another problem. Two previous rail transit elections that needed 60 percent voter approval had failed in 1968 and 1970, and the public consensus was that a third loss would rule these transit possibilities out permanently. Therefore, the aim of the Metro bus transit program was to develop positive voters who would vote for a 0.3 percent increase in the countywide sales tax. A carefully structured program of community meetings, with ad hoc groups of citizens, focused on the transit service in the local community and never on the plan for the metropolitan community. There were no discussions of how to coordinate local land use plans to transit system plans or any consideration of the impact of a rapidly expanding commuter highway system on transit ridership and operating costs. Many joked about the phony participation in minor technical problems, scheduling, and other issues, including the color of the buses. They did not participate in the broad policy and system conflicts and land use issues. Such participation might have been acceptable to some if there had been a guarantee that multimodal transportation policies and plans would be discussed elsewhere. To this day, they have not been resolved, and many major projects in the area are awaiting their resolution.

The 1990 Puget Sound regional transportation goals, policies, and plans have never been adopted by the Metro transit policy makers, and the fight between the transit operating agency and the regional planning agency continues.

The regional citizen's participation advisory committee, of which I was a member when the transit study was undertaken, observed a few of the Metro community meetings and sent recommendations on improving and broadening the process to discussions of more critical concern. Our suggestions were rejected by the consultant and never proposed to the Metro council.

Central city citizens felt left out of the process since most of the meetings were outside of the city and at times and places inconvenient for transit users. Others complained that the geographic areas were too large to be called a community and did not relate to a traditional community of interests or to a city. Some believed that the suburbs were given more meetings because there was a better voter turnout. Actually, Metro had reasoned that the central city residents did not need to be convinced of the need for transit because they would be relieved of a bankrupt city transit system.

The nature of the agencies involved had a significant impact on the types of programs they supported. What was lacking in both of these efforts was any involvement in the due process of our political system. Citizens had no opportunity to carry on a dialogue with their elected representatives at the beginning of the process, nor any time throughout the program. Many participants thought that decision makers were interested and that it made a difference for the citizens to contribute their valuable time and effort. As a result, perhaps it is because of strategies like those described in the paper that citizens are participating less.

Government efforts on the whole for the past 10 years of citizen participation have been lost in a maze of goal setting, projects, ad hoc advisory committees, technical advisory committees, and bureaucratic jargon. Academic efforts have evolved games, obscure panels, model strategies, community attitude surveys, and computer programs. The output from citizen efforts is often frustration or a wild form of guerilla warfare between the citizens and their government, and it has not changed political institutions and conventions that need profound change.

## AUTHOR'S CLOSURE

Gunby's discussion begins with several challenging criticisms of the approach and content of the paper. The terminology criticized (i.e., client, train, and recruit) was used for a specific purpose: to emphasize the role of citizens as the agencies involved view them rather than as the citizens or I view their role in the planning and decision-making process. Although the criticism of the lack of recommendations for improving the subject programs is certainly valid, the stated and intended purpose of the paper was

to show how the goals for citizen participation programs vary by agency, the type of planning situation, and the nature of the decision-making process. Admittedly, both programs were in need of changes to provide citizens with a greater voice in decisions that affect them.

The remainder of Gunby's discussion does not criticize; it supplements the account of the two planning processes and their citizen participation programs. These comments add depth and perspective to the paper. However, it is rather disappointing that the beginning discussion was not more fully developed into a critique of the author's analysis of the two citizen participation programs. Unfortunately, Gunby's knowledge of and experience in citizen participation seem to be underutilized in this discussion of the paper.