

Now, where do we go from here? Just how important is direct citizen input before a top decision maker? Does this testimony matter, or has it all been collected, analyzed, and synthesized beforehand, accompanied by recommendations? Is the public hearing just a tool for giving the citizen a taste of power? Does it really matter?

The situation should be examined from two points of view—that of the transportation planning process itself and that of the input of the citizen. Certainly the transportation planning process has been transformed when the hearing officer is the top decision maker. The implications of this action will have to be studied over time. And what about the citizen, particularly the consumer—the individual who has had restricted access to decision makers? All of the citizens interviewed who had participated in the public hearing process had very positive feelings about it and felt that their views were heard and would be considered. Whether this is a good way of han-

dling citizen input in the decision-making process is difficult to determine at this point. Time will provide answers to some of the issues raised, especially that of the institutionalization of the secretarial public hearing.

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Organization for Regional Community Participation: the Boston Approach

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Federal process requirements for community involvement in transportation planning have elicited many responses from state, regional, and local planning agencies. One of the most interesting responses has been in the Boston region, where an institutionalized regional participation approach has evolved over the past several years. This paper examines the current structure for citizen participation activities in Boston: (a) a Metropolitan Planning Organization formed as a joint body of six agencies; (b) a Joint Regional Transportation Committee, which serves as a citizens' advisory group to the MPO; and (c) the Central Transportation Planning Staff, a staff group under the policy direction of the MPO that is responsible for maintaining a coordinated, participatory process for system planning and project development in the Boston region. The paper highlights the special antecedents of these mechanisms, most notably the Boston Transportation Planning Review, which influenced participation procedures in the region. Finally, the paper discusses the strengths and weaknesses of this approach and identifies aspects that might be transferable to other locations.

Attempts to solicit citizen participation in transportation planning were often launched in response to facility-related controversies. Such efforts have usually involved easily defined geographic areas and clear positive and negative impacts. Even for individual projects, the effectiveness of various approaches to community participation is under debate; methods are unclear and poorly understood. Few well documented mechanisms exist for achieving successful and productive citizen involvement in regional transportation planning. Mechanisms are needed to use citizen expertise to respond to broad regional priorities and major transportation resource allocation decisions. Several reasons for organizing a regional process for community participation follow.

1. Legal and administrative reasons involve the requirements for citizen participation in developing

regional transportation plans, including the requirements specified by the federal urban transportation planning process, such as unified work programs, transportation system management plans, or transportation improvement programs for long-range, high-capital improvements.

2. Planning process reasons include the development of regional priorities and programs in order to bring about a greater understanding of trade-offs between regional and local concerns. The diminished importance of the complete system plan has meant an explicit recognition of the need for short-term planning. Citizen involvement allows citizens to make inputs to incremental investment decisions that, over the long run, may profoundly influence the shape and functional performances of the region.

3. Political reasons involve allowing citizens a frequent and meaningful voice in regional decisions on priorities, thereby reducing chances of future confrontations over individual project decisions. Such involvement could help avoid the holdups due to citizen opposition in the 1960s and provide an important bridge between regional planning and local project development.

Citizen involvement at the regional level ensures that individual projects are derived from a common framework for transportation. A structure for regional participation may, therefore, be an important prerequisite to successful community involvement activities on the project scale. Also, when the citizen involvement process is administered at the regional level, standard procedures for participation can be applied to each individual project.

EXPERIENCE IN BOSTON

The Boston community has strong intellectual and activist traditions. However, local involvement in transportation planning has become significant only in the last decade. Early regional planning efforts in the 1960s of the Boston Regional Planning Project (BRPP) and the Eastern Massachusetts Regional Planning Project (EMRPP) involved officials of cities and towns in a dialogue on growth and development. Much of the effort was directed to developing technical procedures for land use and travel forecasting; there was little citizen interaction. However, in the period from 1969 to 1972 a major questioning of the region's transportation plans and the assumptions on which they were based led to the following sequence of events:

1. In 1969, local public controversies over the Interstate program prompted the governor to establish an advisory task force to review state and regional transportation policy.
2. In 1970, the governor ordered a moratorium on highway construction in the Boston region until more data on alternatives were available.
3. From 1971 to 1972 the Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) conducted an 18-month restudy of controversial highway and transit projects in the region.
4. In November 1972, the governor decided to drop most major highways within Boston's Route 128 in favor of an expanded regional transit system.

These events were greatly influenced by the activities of an energetic cadre of citizen participants who were concerned with regional decisions and who represented every conceivable ideology. State officials were receptive to the involvement of these participants in the restudy. This led to a high level of regional expectations for community involvement in transportation policy and to the creation between 1973 and 1975 of several closely related institutional mechanisms for regional planning and participation:

1. A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was formed to be responsible for the federal transportation planning process. The MPO is composed of six state and regional signatory agencies acting jointly through a memorandum of understanding.
2. A Joint Regional Transportation Committee (JRTC) was created to serve as an advisory forum for citizen participation in the planning process. The JRTC has a diverse membership of approximately 50 people.
3. The Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPS) was created to be a multidisciplinary group supported by the signatory agencies to assist in administration of the planning process and related interagency planning activities.

Evolution and Significance of the Participatory Process

The history of heated political action in Boston that led to a deemphasis in highway construction has been well documented (1). Before 1969, an extremely vocal constituency for regional transportation planning combined with an executive leadership that was sympathetic to an open planning process. During the 1960s, sophisticated transportation planning studies predicted continued heavy use of automobiles and a need for completion of the planned Interstate highway system. In several areas

of Boston within the 16-km (10-mile) Route 128 circumferential highway, neighborhood groups, advocate planners, and environmental groups banded together to oppose those links that were not yet completed. In other regions, such opposition was confined to individual segments of the system, but in Boston a regional coalition developed to question the technical validity and social worth of the proposed transportation plan for the region. The proposed inner belt was the project that unified the highway opposition. The inner belt was a circumferential highway around Boston intended to link the proposed Interstate system at the heart of the region.

During the controversy about the inner belt, the anti-highway forces formed a united front for anti-highway efforts across the region and broadened their position to advocate major new public transportation improvements in the region. These moves raised the issues to a regional level. The shift toward a regional focus for the anti-highway protest led to creation of other regional groups that took the pro-highway position (formed most notably by labor groups, contractors, and some suburbanites). The development of diverse regional constituencies turned the public agenda to questions of resource allocation and balance of transportation. This, in turn, raised expectations for citizen involvement in transportation planning in the Boston region and influenced the structures that evolved to formally integrate it into the agency processes.

Executive Response (1969 to 1971)

The political turmoil regarding the future of the inner belt and the related Interstate system highlighted the lack of ability, at the state or regional level, to deal with intermodal questions of potential regional significance. In the period from 1969 to 1971, Governor Sargent created a blue ribbon task force. This group recommended a restudy of the controversial facilities and suggested the need for balance in the regional transportation system. The governor also called a moratorium on new highway construction within Route 128 until decisions could be made on the basis of the restudy.

During this period, consultation with diverse groups set an initial tone and level of expectation for community involvement in the restudy process. The restudy (BTPR) (2) was to follow these general principles in citizen involvement:

1. The process was to be participatory but decisive;
2. The study was to have a multivalued orientation;
3. Equity was to be a guiding principle;
4. Public contact was to be encouraged, both in formal steering groups and in ad hoc workshops; and
5. Ten percent of the study funds were set aside for community liaison and technical assistance activities (3).

By the middle of 1971, powerful forces were in motion that placed significant planning resources under the close control of the governor and created a mandate for an open, responsive process. At the same time, the state Executive Office of Transportation and Construction (EOTC) was created. This placed, for the first time, a cabinet officer in a position to oversee the existing state and regional agencies. These trends centralized multimodal decision making while widening the range of inputs to transportation decisions. In order to enable politically and technically knowledgeable executive decision making, it was necessary to have credible mechanisms for discussing, if not resolving, conflicts in transportation preferences and policies among a diverse group of official and ad hoc participants in the region.

Innovations During the BTPR (1971 to 1972)

The BTPR had an important influence on the development of current mechanisms for citizen participation in metropolitan Boston. The mandate for the technical work stressed consideration of alternatives that would be multimodal and broadly defined. The staff was not to make recommendations because decision making would fall ultimately to the governor. The governor's willingness to take direct responsibility for the decision made the decision-making process consciously political and encouraged the full participation of diverse groups.

At the regional level, a working committee was created that included representatives from a wide range of interest groups—suburbs, city, environmental groups, labor, contractors' groups, and chambers of commerce. The working committee was designed to advise on policy matters by using a consensus approach to decision making. Opposing points of view were aired, and the restudy management and staff gave appropriate technical responses. The working committee was a place for disagreements to be discussed in public and for participants to influence the technical work of the restudy. Reviewers of the BTPR have noted that "the working committee served as a microcosm of the full public of the study, offering nearly the full span of views that would eventually be addressed to the proposals" (4) and that "the working committee as a whole was committed to an open participatory process, but this was about the only commitment they held in common" (5). The activities of the working committee ensured the perpetuation of a knowledgeable group of regional participants. The transportation agencies grudgingly accepted the inevitability of continued citizen involvement at the regional level.

The mechanism of the BTPR for citizen participation was an independent community liaison and technical assistance staff, to which was allocated 10 percent of the study's \$3.5 million budget. This group worked in parallel with the technical staff and used a broad variety of techniques to solicit and maintain involvement. Their efforts went well beyond the usual agency practices of the time. The special mission of BTPR and the governor's interest in the process fostered a spirit of innovation and disrupted the normal flow of work at the transit and highway agencies.

The work of the BTPR was undertaken on a multimodal basis; transit and highway options were studied in each corridor. When the first decisions were made to drop the major highways in favor of expanded transit plans and the BTPR effort was disbanded, federal, state, and regional officials sought to retain the most successful aspects of the process, including closely linked project and system planning; a high level of coordination among modal agencies; and active, closely monitored citizen participation at the project level and at the regional level.

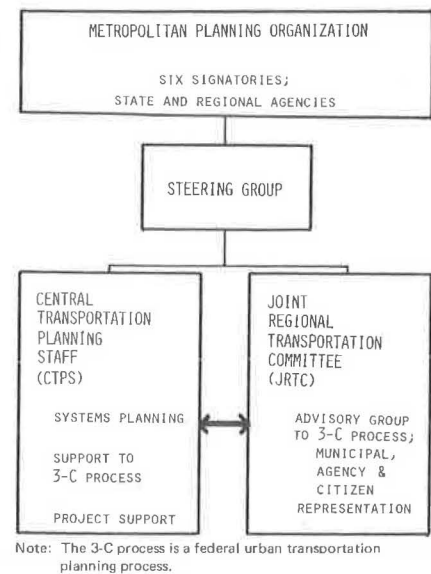
Institutionalization of a Participatory Mechanism (1973 to Present)

Boston's participatory process draws on many of the innovative features of the BTPR experience modified and refined to meet current needs. Three principal concepts create a strong, centralized responsibility for planning and participation in the region: a multiagency MPO, an advisory process for citizen involvement, and a central support staff for community involvement and technical work of regional scope. These concepts are summarized in Figure 1 and explained below.

The MPO

Both the principles and the structure for the current approach flow from the MPO. Boston's MPO is com-

Figure 1. Boston urban transportation planning process.



posed of six agencies—the secretariat of transportation, the state highway agency, the regional planning agency, the port authority, the transit authority, and the municipalities' advisory board to the transit authority. These agencies are signatories to an agreement that sets forth their objectives for the transportation planning process in the region. The MPO represents the institutionalization of the multimodal planning approach that was initiated during BTPR.

The CTPS

In their memorandum of understanding, the signatory agencies agree to support a CTPS. This is an inter-agency, interdisciplinary staff of 50 that provides continuing support for transportation planning in the Boston region. The CTPS receives approximately equal portions of highway and transit planning funds for its work; its current annual budget is \$1.2 million. The staff works under the policy control of the MPO and the administrative guidance of its agency steering group. This planning staff is charged with three chief functions: systems planning, support of the planning process, and assistance to agencies in project planning. The CTPS develops and maintains a regional data base and travel forecasts to provide all the agencies with consistent, comprehensive information for their planning efforts. It prepares the unified work program and other certification documents for the region. The staff gives liaison and technical assistance services to support citizen participation programs at the regional, corridor, and project levels. Further, the CTPS provides engineering, design, planning, and environmental analyses to agencies for specific transportation planning projects. CTPS aids the agencies in centralizing and coordinating planning for the region and in filling recognized gaps within or between the agencies' functions.

The JRJC

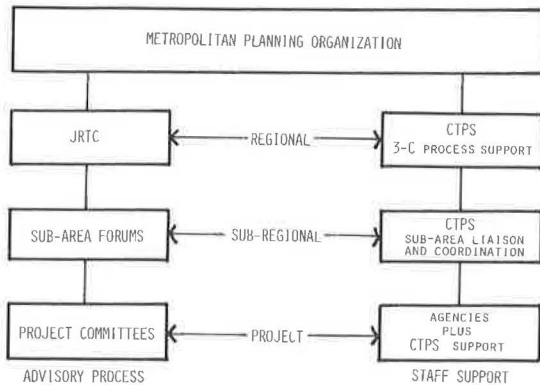
The MPO agencies agreed to provide for a regional advisory process by forming a JRJC. In many critical respects, the JRJC is the descendant of the working committee of the BTPR, both in concept and structure. The JRJC is the policy advisory group to the agencies on transportation planning for the Boston region. It is the MPO's formal means for ensuring that the objectives of the federal transportation planning process are carried

out at the regional level and that community participants have input into regional planning. The JRTC is currently composed of 54 members, all of whom are appointed by the MPO. They include the 14 agency representatives, of whom 6 are the signatory agencies; 20 representatives of municipalities; and 20 citizens from private organizations concerned with transportation planning. Staff support and the advisory process have been structured around regional, subregional, and project elements; there are strong relations between participation and planning at each of these levels.

CURRENT APPROACH TO REGIONAL PARTICIPATION

Both the advisory process and staff support in Boston's regional participation model are specified in the MPO's agreement. As is illustrated in Figure 2, the advisory process and staff support have been structured around regional, subregional, and project elements. The advisory process has different organizational structures for participation at each level, but these levels are closely linked.

Figure 2. Regional participation model.



Note: The 3-C process is a federal urban transportation planning process.

The JRTC was organized in late 1972. Its members represent a broad range of viewpoints. The JRTC's focus is regional, although it relies on information filtered up from corridor and project planning. The committee is an advisory body that works closely with the MPO agencies and whose goal is developing consensus among participants. Its functions are set forth in the MPO agreement as follows:

1. To advise the agencies on matters of policy affecting the conduct of the transportation planning process for the region;
2. To advise the agencies on regional transportation documents, such as the unified work program, that are required by state or federal laws and regulations; and
3. To provide maximum participation in the transportation planning process by creating a forum for bringing the MPO agencies together with other public agencies, municipal representatives, and citizens concerned with the transportation planning process.

This participation is intended to facilitate the consistency of transportation plans with the policies, priorities, and plans of other agencies, communities, private groups, and individuals in the region. The JRTC has monthly meetings, which are open to the general public. In addition, a series of subcommittees on operations policies, intermodal development, port

issues, and citizen participation meet more frequently. Ten of the JRTC citizen designees sit on a panel to select other citizens to review proposals for planning projects.

The Boston region has been divided into seven subareas: the Boston core and six broad radial corridors, which each include 15 to 20 municipalities. For each of these parts of the region, subarea forums have been established as the principal means for this level of participation. The forums address planning issues and community concerns in each subarea on a broader basis than purely local or project issues. The work of the forums provides input to JRTC in its consideration of regional issues and provides an overview to guide planning in each subarea.

The forums are not organized groups of designated members, although JRTC members have been appointed as chairpersons. Typically, 100 to 200 municipal officials, agency representatives, and citizen groups are notified of forum meetings, which are open to the public. Forums meet two to four times a year. Meetings are devoted almost exclusively to reviews and comments on aspects of regional planning certification documents that pertain to the subarea.

Project working committees are the principal means by which large numbers of citizens are actively involved in transportation planning in the region. The strong role of working committees in the overall participatory process is a direct inheritance from the BTPR, which has been maintained and supported by the agencies and the CTPS. Other activities and techniques are also used in projects to involve additional citizens in different ways.

Working committees are established by the agency responsible for a particular project, with advice and assistance from the CTPS staff. Committees serve for the duration of the project planning stage. They are usually composed of 25 or more participants from project area municipalities, a diversity of private citizen interest groups, and a number of public agencies.

Working committees are more formally structured than subarea forums and less formally structured than the JRTC. As are all other participatory groups in the regional planning process, working committees are advisory. The success of the project working committees relates to the immediacy of specific planning issues, the strong interest of citizens in active involvement in local projects, and the frequency of meetings. Project working committees identify pressing local issues and generate information that is filtered up to subarea forums and to the JRTC.

STAFF SUPPORT: THE CTPS

The CTPS is organized into five major divisions: systems analysis, design and environmental planning, policy and programming, community liaison, and area coordination. The systems analysis, policy and programming, and community liaison divisions play major roles at the regional level in supporting the planning process.

The systems analysis division is responsible for developing and maintaining the regional transportation data base and for conducting systems analyses and travel forecasts. Its work supports the ongoing regional planning efforts of the agencies, is used in the refinement of regional plans and certification documents, and is also used for individual facility planning.

The policy and programming division prepares and updates the regional planning certification documents. The division provides staff support to the MPO by assisting its agency steering group. The steering group reviews virtually all of the advance work that precedes

MPO decisions, and the CTPS policy and programming staff plays a key role in providing input to these deliberations. It also gives staff assistance to the JRTC by providing information to help JRTC develop its advisory positions.

The community liaison division gives staff support to the participatory process. Its staff of five, about 10 percent of the CTPS, plays three major roles at the regional level: (a) staff support to the JRTC and its subcommittees, (b) information and advice on questions of community involvement policy and process to the agencies and to the JRTC, and (c) encouragement of two-way communication between agency personnel and citizens.

The liaison division and the area coordinators provide staff support for subregional planning. Both divisions have ongoing responsibility to monitor sub-area transportation issues, projects, and needs and to relate these to regional plans and certification documents. They are also responsible for developing and maintaining contact with local officials, citizens, and agency personnel in each subarea. Liaison staff and area coordinators work as partners; liaison planners concentrate on the participatory process and community liaison and area coordinators concentrate on technical planning and agency liaison. The separate identity of the community liaison function is a direct inheritance from the BTPR experience. However, because liaison staff and area coordinators work as partners, integration of the related technical and participatory aspects of the planning process is encouraged.

All CTPS divisions take part in project-level activities at various stages of the project's development. At the environmental impact statement and project development stage, one or more agencies assume major responsibility for a project; consultants are typically hired to perform planning, environmental, and design studies. In these instances, the role of CTPS is one of secondary staff support to the lead agency. For studies at the corridor planning and preproject stage, CTPS plays a more direct role, serving as the planning team.

For project work, the area coordinator and liaison staff members keep contact with the community, provide information to agency and consultant staffs, attend workshops, and review work products. In some instances, other CTPS divisions provide specific planning services, such as systems analysis for a project.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE APPROACH

The multiagency approach combines the several key agencies that contribute to transportation policy in the Boston region. It has the major advantage of centralizing decision-making authority, while enabling the diverse inputs and concerns of each agency to influence the process. This type of approach to the MPO is one of the ways in which the cooperative facet of the federal transportation planning process is ensured organizationally in a way that responds to the bureaucratic concerns of individual participating agencies. Such a cooperative relation is not necessarily served by designating a single regional planning agency as the MPO, which may also have the effect of bypassing state statutory authorities vested in several transportation agencies. The multiagency approach entails the risk of centralizing a large measure of decision making latitude in the hands of a small steering group, although this group is, in theory, responsive to diverse agency policies and priorities. Because the agencies have such strong control over the process, the decisions regarding

participation programs may be slanted to resemble those of a passive advisory group, rather than of a diverse group whose inputs can contribute to a healthy regional dialogue. This type of organization for an MPO is clearly dependent on a relatively amicable interagency relationship; in Boston the role of the EOTC as *primus inter pares* provides a mediating influence and an extremely strong voice within the MPO. Without such clear direction, such a formula might be a prescription for internecine conflict.

The establishment of the advisory JRTC and the designation of the CTPS to monitor and facilitate the planning process provides a system for participation within which several levels of planning and involvement are closely linked. This system provides for significant mobility of people and ideas between the local and regional levels of concern. The creation of the JRTC explicitly recognizes the existence of legitimate differences of opinion, providing a place and a process for their resolution. The system's multilevel structure provides a means of entry for new participants to become involved at the project level and have the opportunity to participate in activities at either the subregional or the regional level. This also provides a frequent means for communities to represent legitimate concerns that go beyond their own borders and to make these known to others in their immediate subregion. The system requires that the sponsors retain enthusiasm for bringing new faces and concerns into the process. Without such new blood, the system and the participants within it can become stale.

The sponsorship of the CTPS by the composite agencies of the MPO has created a professional staff that is not bound to the outlook of any individual agency. The staff, therefore, has the potential to contribute new perspectives and solutions, which might not be likely to emanate from the agencies. Also, in Massachusetts, where most project development work is done by outside consultants, CTPS provides a flexible means to respond quickly to technical problems with a built-in capacity to deal with the affected community in ways consistent with the federal planning process. The organization provides a locus for contributed staff from the individual agencies and offers a potential training environment for the participating agency staff. Most importantly, CTPS serves as a bridging device between the agencies and the participants and between local and regional concerns. This bridging function is of paramount importance in developing a regional process that does not lose sight of real problems and people. The major opportunity for conflict in such a model is between the rather abstract and idealized needs and concerns of the regional process versus the potential project and implementation-related demands of the signatory agencies that comprise the MPO.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The general form that has evolved for the participatory process in Boston has been strongly influenced by the previous experience in the BTPR. The JRTC is similar, though not identical, to the BTPR working committee. The CTPS is similar in some respects to the BTPR staff; however, the new institutional structure represents a union of the strengths of the several key agencies in ways consistent with current realities, statutory responsibilities of the agencies, and federal process requirements. Although the particular mechanisms have been strongly influenced by the past experience, there is no reason why this model might not be used elsewhere if it is adapted to take account of local agencies'

abilities and authorities and has a regional participatory mechanism that is tuned to the locality.

These observations highlight a more general need for disseminating information and sharing experiences regarding the role of and mechanisms for regional participation in transportation planning among various regions. Such exchanges could result in wider application of innovative organizational and methodological techniques to structure the participation process to assist in formulating, endorsing, and implementing sensible regional transportation systems to reflect local priorities and needs.

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Selecting Effective Citizen Participation Techniques

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Selection of effective citizen participation techniques for use in transportation planning is described as a three-part process: (a) identify on the basis of function those techniques that are suitable to the stage in the planning process, (b) eliminate any techniques that require the use of resources beyond those available to the agency, and (c) select the most appropriate remaining technique on the basis of the sociopolitical situation in the community. Each part of the selection process is discussed and applied to 37 participation techniques, including advocacy planning, charrettes, hotlines, and surveys. The 37 techniques are classified as performing the functions of information dissemination, information collection, initiative planning, reactive planning, decision making, and participation process support and are related to appropriate steps in a 19-step analysis of the planning process. Several other functional classifications and analyses of the planning process are briefly discussed. The resources necessary for implementation of techniques are money, time, staff from the agency, expertise, and equipment. Estimates for each type of resource have been gathered from the literature for the 37 techniques. Sociopolitical factors are not easily quantified. Factors planners should consider in matching a potential technique to a given community are local interest level, attitude, cohesion, expectations of the community's role in planning, past experience with participation, and median educational level.

Much of the recent discussion on citizen participation has focused on individual techniques. Previous efforts to collect and synthesize this material have been in the area of transportation planning and were usually encyclopedic in nature. Typically these works suggested selecting techniques by means of elaborate interactive processes that use classification schemes of up to nine dimensions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). This paper summarizes and provides a simple framework for using that information. Transportation planning is used as a specific example, but the framework can be applied as well to other types of planning.

Citizen participation techniques are the elementary components of a citizen participation program. In some situations a certain technique (such as a citizens' ad-

visory committee) will be very effective; in other situations the same technique will be totally ineffective. Through systematic consideration, effective techniques can be selected for different stages of a citizen participation program. An orderly three-step process for selecting effective techniques would (a) identify by function techniques that are suitable to the stage in the planning process being considered, (b) eliminate any technique that requires the use of resources beyond those available to the agency, and (c) select the most appropriate remaining technique on the basis of the sociopolitical situation in the community.

The first step in selecting an effective citizen participation technique for a specific stage of the planning process is to determine the function of citizen participation at that stage. There are six functions that citizen participation techniques perform in planning:

1. To disseminate to the public information about the planning process;
2. To collect information, either factual or perceptual, as input to the plans that are being developed;
3. To initiate plans by citizens with assistance from the agency;
4. To collect public reaction to alternative plans developed by the agency;
5. To make decisions that reflect a consensus within the community on the correct action to be taken; and
6. To support other elements of the participation process to operate more effectively (4, p. 18).

Most stages of the planning process require more than one citizen participation function and thus may need more than one citizen participation technique. For example, when a decision is made on whether to build a facility, decision-making techniques are needed, but also needed