

It also seems that most of the persons involved in attempting to promote these particular schemes understand that they should not a priori assume that the reactions of the community and the ultimate rejection of their proposals were not appropriate responses, and that better "marketing" would have made the proposal acceptable. While we must be cautious in how we judge public response and not become obsequious to notions of the infallibility of these demonstrations of feelings, at the same time we had better be sensitive and politically perceptive about the information that is being communicated by such community responses.

We should realize, for example, that the objective of the use of pricing schemes to constrain vehicle use is counter intuitive to the past body of experiences of most people. They probably wondered how it would be possible to maintain (and even increase) activities in the community and, at the same time, reduce the number of vehicles. This is certainly the concern of business people, who associate traffic with store volumes, and ultimately, their own profits. The proposals also could be perceived to be discriminatory use of a public good directly used to improve the mobility of the more affluent who could afford to pay the "price", although I am not sure that such distributional equity problems were associated with these particular proposals.

It is interesting that we provide substantial resources to develop plans and devise abstract models of consumer behavior but neglect to, a priori, consider with any elegance the behavioral response of communities, especially in relationship to such sensitive and potentially controversial issues as transportation planning. We seem to be willing to learn "after the fact" about citizen response and that is very expensive on-the-job training.

Earl Robb, Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation

The experience of Berkeley and Madison has been an interesting situation. It reminds me of my first experience many years ago with public participation. We held a project public hearing in a small rural farming community concerning a secondary road improvement. The public hearing took place in a local high school auditorium with about 50 farmers and their families in attendance. Arrangements for the hearing included the display of detailed engineering drawings, the dissemination of technically oriented study reports, and placement of a microphone for recording purposes. The contingent of highway engineers paraded before the audience presenting superb dissertations on the merits of the proposed improvement. The presentations were followed by an invitation to the citizens to move forward, speak into the microphone, and comment on the proposal. An elderly farmer rose, walked to the front of the audience, passed the microphone, positioned himself in front of one of the sound speakers used with the public address amplification system, and proceeded to give his comments.

In one respect this could be perceived as a very humorous situation. In reality it drove home the point that we often assume too much in preparing for public participation. If the old farmer had difficulty distinguishing between the microphone and the speaker system, how much did he really understand of our superb engineering presentations?

Sound communication techniques are the basis of any public participation program. We must attempt to identify the values and expectations of the citizens. We must ensure that our plans and terminology are understood. We must, as a prerequisite for public participation, attempt to identify community goals and objectives and to relate those goals and objectives to our proposals.

There is a great danger in assuming that the local political structure speaks for the citizen in every situation. Many in the public sector view public administrators and elected officials with a degree of distrust. While the public demands service from government officials, it does not relinquish its right to be properly informed and to be included in the decision making process.

Public participation must be initiated during the earliest stages of the program planning. The existing organizational structures should be employed as a mechanism for accomplishing meaningful citizen involvement and great care should be taken to avoid a segmented concept in the introduction of a new project. Any proposal as complex as transportation pricing should be incorporated with regional or areawide planning. It is difficult to justify radical new concepts without first relating the benefits of such concepts to a total transportation package.

The study presented has a great deal of merit; however, it should now be obvious that implementation of such projects will be extremely difficult in the absence of public support.

Robert Hixson, Federal Aviation Administration

I feel that the key to your problems may be that of confusing planning with implementation. Citizen participation is not a public relations tool. It is not intended as a tool to sell a preconceived plan. It is instead an integral part of the planning process.

You have a product to sell, road pricing. It is a possible solution to the problems of congestion and air pollution. But it is only one from among perhaps many possible solutions. Your approach, with citizen participation, should have been problem oriented. You should have enlisted the participation of the citizens to solve the problems at hand, including your product -- road pricing -- as one of the alternatives for their consideration. Your solution was being imposed upon rather than being assumed by the citizens. The solution was preconceived rather than growing out of the citizen participation activities.

A good example of this was the Gruen Plan for downtown Fort Worth, Texas. It was a good plan, which significantly advanced the concepts of what a city center could be and which is still having positive effects upon