CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN THE PLANNING PROCESS: 
A CASE STUDY OF THE CITY OF VANCOUVER’S 
PROJECT ON AGING

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the nature, merits and limitations of the citizen participation model used in the process of developing a municipal plan for the impacts of population aging. The research is based on a literature review and participant observation of one case study.

It is evident from the literature that citizen participation is integral to the democratic decision making process, since it can strengthen principles central to the practice of democratic government, namely, representation, public interest and accountability. Power and its distribution are fundamental elements in distinguishing one level of participation from another. They are also, therefore, key factors to consider in the design of participation programs. Of the models investigated, partnership is identified as one that requires government and citizens to engage in shared decision making.

Citizen participation in planning practice over the last twenty-five years has varied widely in terms of the intent, design and techniques used. Among citizen participation theorists there is some consensus on the causes of all too frequent failures in practice. These include differing expectations and objectives among the government actors and citizens involved, failure to match appropriate techniques with objectives, and lack of evaluation. Based on the theory, the partnership model effectively addresses these problems and has considerable advantages over other models such as consultation. The research reveals that in partnership, the objectives of both citizen and government participants guide the process, and that resources, expertise and decision making power are shared during the planning process. Problems associated with the model include dangers of cooptation of citizens involved, and
the tendency for the citizen participants to become an elite group unrepresentative of the larger public.

These findings are explored and amplified through an evaluation of a case of partnership in practice which generates mixed results in terms of its merits and limitations. This model produced conditions for a substantial degree of shared decision making. Techniques used provided direct access to resources and the planning process for citizen and government participants. An open-ended project design and multiple opportunities provided for participation in varying degrees were also successful features used in achieving partnership. The research also indicates that citizens engaged in partnership with government were relatively few, and the project lacked political support necessary for changes in resource allocation. These results are attributable to, in part, a trade off between the quality and quantity of citizen participation as sharing of decision making power increases.

Conclusions of this study of a model of citizen participation suggest that in defining social issues and developing plans to address them, government and citizen participants need to redefine their roles and expectations of each other. In the past, common roles for citizens in the planning process have been as clients, advocates, complainants, advisors and suppli-
cants. As decision makers and problem solvers engaged in partnership planning with government, their participation may be more effective. The study of the Project on Aging generates some lessons for future practice of the partnership model. This case suggests that planning in partnership requires commitment to the partnership objective as a substantive and not a symbolic goal. This means government takes an active role in creating conditions for partners to act on their interests.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Citizen Participation in Planning: The Current Context

Citizen participation processes are conducted by local governments in recognition of their necessity and value as part of an effective decision making process around urban issues, and increasingly social planning issues. Since the 1960s, when citizen participation became institutionalized at the local government level and therefore of concern to urban planners, the intended outcomes of the processes have varied, which reflects changing public, professional and political attitudes. The evolution of citizen participation reveals that efforts have been made to involve diverse interest groups in society, such as industry, city residents and cultural minority groups, in a vast range of issues, from neighbourhood planning and transportation planning to natural resource management (Draper, 1977:40). Too often, efforts of those dedicated or bound to seek public input in government decisions and plans have been frustrated by an inability to achieve the objectives of meaningful and useful involvement.

Models of citizen participation most commonly used in practice are intended to allow government to consult with the public before making decisions. Much less common have been models for sharing decision making power among citizens and government in the planning process. Today, there are several factors prompting many city governments to rethink the traditional models and strategies for involving the public in planning. According to one practitioner, the public has been "consulted to death" (Christine Warren, Interview March 23, 1993) and there is a growing demand for a more satisfactory means of
involvement (Sewell and Coppock, 1977:2). Other factors including increasing public
dissatisfaction with government and less trust of the knowledge and motivation of "experts"
have been identified as fuelling public desire for more participatory approaches to public
decision making and thus an increasing unwillingness to allow decisions to be made without
meaningful public input (Cooley, 1992).

In the City of Vancouver, as in other Canadian cities, residents, politicians and City
staff have at times experienced frustration, distrust and skepticism in relation to citizen
participation in planning. Recent public involvement processes conducted by the City have
produced some lose-lose situations for City staff, developers, politicians and neighbourhood
residents.¹ The possibility that citizen participation programs will cause even greater public
discontent in the form of skepticism and distrust, rather than the intended outcomes
(Langton, 1978), may be a very real one unless the means by which citizens are involved in
local government decision making are better understood and more confidently practised. By
studying innovative examples of participation practice, hopefully skepticism and distrust can
be dissipated and ultimately, plans which more effectively address social needs can be made.

In addition to addressing public demand, other practical concerns require planners to
reassess their method for involving the public in planning initiatives. They include on-going
demographic shifts in the population (accounting for the increasing proportion of the
population who are over age 45) and fiscal restraint at all government levels. Together these

¹ A well publicized example was the dispute that took place between these parties over the "Arbutus Lands" area
in the Vancouver neighbourhood of Kitsilano. The confrontation that occurred between neighbourhood residents
and City staff in this case confirm research findings that suggest that in today's political climate strategies for citizen
participation processes that pit one interest against another frequently backfire (Potapchuk:1991).
trends mean that cities face growing demand for social services which increasingly they will be unable to meet alone.²

Both these trends are currently taking effect in the rapidly growing city of Vancouver and the surrounding Lower Mainland region. To address them, as well as problems associated with citizen participation practices, in 1991 the City of Vancouver's Social Planning Department launched the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging. It was designed around three complementary goals; firstly, to plan for the considerable impacts of population aging, secondly and further to this, to help prepare the City administration for the attitudinal, program and structural changes required and thirdly, to deal with public involvement in planning differently from past methods--through 'partnership'.

Although the Project on Aging has three stated objectives, the piloting of a new process of citizen participation different from models used by the City in the past, is clearly the objective emphasized by the project organizers and participants. This fact is evidenced by the project's mission statement:

"Ready or Not!" is a process of empowering neighbourhoods -- through consultation and interaction -- to identify, plan for, and act upon vital community priorities related to the aging of the population. (Workshop Analysis, October 1992:3).

Through the Project on Aging, which is currently in its final stages, the City seeks to involve the public in the process of planning for meeting the social needs of city residents as they age, and in so doing, foster greater public trust and more effective and implementable plans.

² Appendix A shows the demographic shifts occurring in Vancouver's population using the period from 1971 to 2016.
The project's objective to work in 'partnership' with the community gives rise to a number of important questions. What is 'partnership' and how is it expected to be more successful than past models for participation? What are the techniques used to implement this participation model? What are its limitations? How does it respond to the current context for citizen participation at the municipal government level? Answers to these questions are vital if citizen participation practices are to be improved.

1.2 Purpose

Analyzing and evaluating the key features of an effective citizen participation process are the main goals of this study. The "partnership" model is examined in detail, both as it is conceived of in theory and as it has been put into practice.

The assumption underlying the analysis is that representation is not the only measure, nor alone an adequate measure, of a successful citizen participation program. How citizens are involved in the planning process is an important factor for analysis in addition to who is involved. Both will depend on the intent behind the participation. Thus, to understand and evaluate citizen participation in practice, requires that assumptions about the purposes of citizen participation be investigated. This can be accomplished by examining democratic principles and citizen participation models. An investigation of principles of democratic theory and a survey different models of citizen participation will help clarify the distinction between levels of participation. By examining the citizen participation process used in the Project on Aging, the operation, merits and limitations of the "partnership" model will be clarified and evaluated. The case under study will be evaluated in terms of how well it
achieved the objectives and conditions for participation discussed. Conclusions will be drawn as to the broader implications of this model for future planning practice.

1.3 Research Methodology

A review of the literature on models and evaluation of citizen participation in planning is followed by a study of a practical case. The case study analyzes citizen participation process involved in the City of Vancouver's Project on Aging in order to examine and assess the way in which it achieved its goal of piloting a new, more effective means of working with city residents—through 'partnership'. Descriptive and qualitative analysis techniques are used to generate the lessons to be learned from the case. In conducting the study, a number of research methods were employed including: interviews with key informants, participant observation and document analysis.

1.4 Scope and Organization

Theories about citizen participation originate from a variety of disciplines and ideological perspectives (Clarkson, 1980). Pertinent references may be drawn from the fields of political studies, sociology and public administration, to name only a few. Since it is the intent of this research to gain insight into effective methods for public involvement, the focus is on literature that deals specifically with how citizens may be included in the planning process. The emphasis then is on what some researchers have called "participatory activities", or the process by which citizens can shape government action (Verba and Nie:1972:3).
In order to understand the importance of participatory methods to the field of planning, Chapter 2 begins with an overview of its purposes in terms of both philosophical and pragmatic considerations. Next, models and concepts related to citizen participation in planning are examined. In Chapter 3, some causes of failure of citizen participation in practice are identified, followed by a discussion of the partnership model. The public participation process used in the Project on Aging is described in Chapter 4 and research findings are presented in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6, conclusions as to the merits and limitations of the partnership model are presented, as well as the broader implications of the findings for future planning practice.

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3 The study is limited to the citizen participation process involved in the Project on Aging's I, II, III and interim phases spanning the period from June 1990 until May 1993. By the latter date, a preliminary draft of the project’s Strategic Plan was completed.
2. THEORIES OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Today there is a general acceptance of the practice of citizen participation in planning at the local government level. Still, the terms 'citizen participation', 'public involvement' and combinations of the two such as 'public participation' do not mean the same thing to all actors involved in the public decision making process (Higgins, 1977:184). Citizen participation, the term used in this thesis, can span a range of activities from voting in a federal election to voluntary involvement at a municipal level. Thus, the definition accepted here is that to participate in urban planning is to "participate in politics...[which] is an attempt to exercise influence on the structures, personalities, and processes of government in order to produce new decisions, reverse previous decisions, or alter the decision making processes themselves" (Higgins, 1977:185).

2.1 Citizen Participation and Democratic Principles

Although a rationale for citizen participation would appear to be self-evident in a democratic society, some theorists have expressed the concern that planning practitioners may overlook its importance in the broader context; in the practice of democratic government:

...the pursuit of citizen participation in urban and regional planning is too frequently undertaken in considerable ignorance of the political philosophy of democracy...little thought, if any, is apparently given to...the sensitive issues of representation and the public interest (Fagence, 1977:9).

---

4 These terms each have different nuances and their use is dependent on the actor, user and the situation. 'Public involvement' is a term often used by planning practitioners to refer to means designed by governments through which citizens can have input into a certain set of decisions. The term 'citizen participation' has obvious political connotations since it implies the process by which the citizenry relates to the government in a democratic state.
It remains important for planners to consider how citizen participation can be used as a means toward the end of more equitable and effective decision making. Since assumptions made by planners about how democratic principles can best be achieved will often determine the amount and nature of citizen participation sought in practice, investigation of three of these principles warrant investigation. The three concepts examined are public interest, accountability, and representation.

Beliefs about the aims of involving the public in political life are directly linked to ideas of what constitutes the 'public' interest. This concept, has been referred to as, at best, an "elusive ideal" (Rein, 1969:233) since in society there exist a range of interests among different groups and individuals. Because of the plurality of interests in society, advocates of greater citizen participation in political life argue that "what is required...is...the opening of all possible means by which to 'hear' the attitudes, opinions and aspirations of those for whom the planning is being done..." (Fagence, 1977:69). Clearly, from this perspective, voting in elections alone is not adequate to ensure that governments remain representative of or accountable to all public interests.

The concept of government accountability can be defined as "...essentially the concept of democracy...it embodies the idea that government should be responsible to the people" (Nachmias, 1978:249). When citizen participation is equated with voting, accountability of government will depend on the responsiveness of publicly elected officials (Plunkett and Betts, 1978:144). Accountable governments in this sense, are composed of politicians who make decisions to allocate resources based on the public interest with which they were entrusted by a majority. Another view of government accountability is that it is a function of the degree of
'openness' of government organizations. The belief is that citizen participation processes allowing free access to information and resources, together with responsive government institutions, are indicators of 'open' or accountable governments (Clague, 1971:37). Voting is not seen as sufficient participation to ensure that the accountability ideal is achieved. Instead, democracy is contingent on a more active and frequent role for the public in government.

Representation is a third principle important to the operation of a democratic society. The idea is that private interests should be given fair representation in the public realm so that decisions about public service provision are made fairly and resources distributed equitably. Whether fair representation of interests can best be accomplished through decision making by many or a select few; by an elite or 'the masses', is a classic debate in political philosophy (Fagence: 1977:34-35). At one end of the democratic spectrum, where citizen participation is narrowly conceived of as voting, representation becomes difficult to interpret other than literally, such as the extent to which occupations of publicly elected officials match those of their constituents (Plunkett and Betts, 1978:141). Further along the continuum toward more participatory forms of democratic government, the belief is that more active citizen participation in the democratic process will make it more likely that the plurality of interests in society are directly represented and therefore responded to through government action. Put another way, the value of citizen participation is that "...it produces public goods more closely attuned to citizens needs than it would if there were no participation" (Verba and Nie: 1972:11).

Three inter-related principles important to the democratic practice of government are representation, public interest and accountability. In theory, citizen participation in public decision making is meant to strengthen these principles. Discussion of the commonly used
models and typologies in citizen participation theory below will further clarify interpretations of citizen participation in the planning context.

2.2 Citizen Participation at the Local Government Level: Pragmatic Considerations

In addition to achieving the goal of better government, or government that is more representative of all interests and more accountable to the public, there are also practical reasons for citizens to participate at the local government level in planning processes. From an administrative or government perspective, a practical advantage of involving citizens in planning is the increased likelihood that a "...plan would be more acceptable, more popular, easier to vote for by the politicians and easier to implement" (Bousfield, 1976:9). From a citizen perspective, motivations for participation may stem from a desire to have their values incorporated into government decision making, getting their needs met more adequately or expressing their satisfaction or discontent with public bodies (Davis, 1973:62).

At one extreme, citizen participation can be seen as a means of merely legitimizing government action and at the other, it may be viewed as a problem solving technique. As a problem solving technique, citizen participation may be desired as a way of helping to carry out the work of government (Davis, 1973:64), or more specifically planning, decision making, and service delivery (Glass, 1979:181). From this perspective, informed citizens participating in the process of public decision making has the practical advantage of acceptance of those decisions. Some theorists believe more citizen participation can only foster better participation: "the major
function of participation... is therefore an educative one, educative in the very widest sense... The more individuals participate the better able they become to do so" (Pateman: 1970:27).

It has been observed that "pressure for an expanded role for the public [in planning] is rooted in both philosophical and pragmatic considerations" (Sewell and Coppock, 1977:1). Philosophically speaking, using citizen participation as a means towards more democratic government in the sense described below, requires that it is practised in a way that furthers equitable representation of public interests in public decision making. If we accept that in a democratic society the political process is the means through which society makes choices about the allocation of limited resources, then the questions of who makes the decisions and how they are made so that both public and private interests are fairly defined, served and reconciled are crucial to answer. Who has a role and how are they involved? These questions are ones that theories of citizen participation in the democratic process generally, and in planning particularly, seek to address.

2.3 Models of Citizen Participation

Over the last few decades several models and typologies of citizen participation in planning have been developed in an effort to better grasp the potential and pitfalls of involving the public in government. A "model" of citizen participation can be defined as "...a comprehensive statement describing the objectives, methods and requirements of a [citizen participation] program and the results that can be expected from it in a given situation" (Connor, 1991).
Several typologies of citizen participation models found in the literature demonstrate the variation in perceived limits and potentials for public involvement in planning.

A typology of eight levels of participation ranked according to the degree of power each technique or model delegates to citizens, Arnstein's (1969) "Ladder of Citizen Participation" continues to be at the forefront of citizen participation analysis, (see Figure 1). For her, the power (or "decision making clout") is a key factor in the design of citizen participation programs, since those without it cannot influence the outcome of a decision making process (Arnstein: 1969:216-217).

By describing different degrees or levels of participation, her classification makes clear that citizen involvement takes a variety of forms in practice, not all of which constitute actual participation. Hence, 'manipulation' and 'informing' are considered techniques of non-participation whereas those of 'partnership' and 'citizen control' are techniques that maximize the efficacy of citizens' participation (Arnstein, 1969:217). The assumption underlying Arnstein's ladder is clear; methods of citizen participation may be evaluated on the extent to which they redistribute power among groups in society. For her, these groups are the "power holders", or those that can readily get their needs met through the current structure of democratic government, while the "have nots" are citizens without influence over government decision making. The intended result of a shift of power from the power-holders to the powerless is 'social change', since according to this view, only a fundamental change in society's political structures can provide long term solutions to seemingly intractable social problems, such as urban poverty. It has been noted that portrayal of the power distribution between actors in the decision making process is presented as a zero-sum game; "ascent on
Figure 1: Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation

- Citizen control
- Delegated power
- Partnership
- Placation
- Consultation
- Informing
- Therapy
- Manipulation

Degrees of citizen power

Degrees of tokenism

Nonparticipation

Arnstein’s ladder ultimately means a loss of control for the public official” (Kasperson and Brietbart, 1974:6).

Hence, a change in the power structure of society is seen by some as the ultimate measure of success to be used to assess methods of citizen participation in planning. This idea is conveyed by the statement "citizen participation is concerned with social change and must be evaluated in terms of its accomplishments in this area...[and it] must be evaluated in terms of its ability to recapture the spirit of participatory democracy..." (Head, 1971:29). In spite of the wealth of literature written on public participation since Arnstein’s time, a valuable lesson from her writing remains relevant. Simply put, it is that the participation technique used is never value neutral; a choice of techniques is inherently political—in that it affects power balances and structures in society. Moreover, the design, intent and practice of a model, will determine the amount of power citizens and government will have to act on their interests.

Since Arnstein’s ladder, the body of knowledge about and experience with citizen participation has grown. In much of the current literature, the answers to the questions of ‘who should participate?’; ‘how much participation is possible and desirable?’ and on ‘what issues and at what stages in decision making is public participation desirable?’ (Sewell and Coppock, 1977:7-9) are believed to be situationally specific. In other words, from this perspective, each type and degree of participation on Arnstein’s ladder, from the level of non-participation to citizen control, is valid.

2.4 Contemporary Models of Citizen Participation

A perceived change in the context for citizen participation, (and what for some is the somewhat dated context and limited scope of Arnstein’s model) has given rise to an number of
new classifications of citizen participation models. A number of theorists (Kasperson and Breibart, 1974; Cooley, 1992; Potapchuk, 1991) share the belief that Arnstein's schema is not adequately flexible to acknowledge realities of the last twenty-five years of citizen participation in practice. As a response, one practitioner has constructed a new ladder of citizen participation (Connor, 1988; see Figure 2). The levels on Connor's ladder: education, information feedback, consultation, joint planning, mediation, litigation and resolution/prevention are seen not as mutually exclusive concepts, but as building blocks toward achieving the desired end of the resolution of "public controversy" (Connor, 1988:250). For example, consultation, while it is not adequate by itself, does allow those making the decision to "...accept or reject the views expressed by the public, but at least now they are clearly identified and can be addressed in more relevant ways than before consultation occurred" (Connor, 1988:253).

More recently, it has been suggested that both the ladders described above are inadequate for identifying the range of citizen participation models since "...neither ladder stretches to the new broad-based forms of participation that have emerged..." (Potapchuk, 1991:161). Potapchuk's typology spans five levels of shared decision making based on the level of authority granted or recognized by government (Potapchuk, 1991:165, see Figure 3). The levels range from processes of decision making whereby at one extreme, government alone makes a decision, and the other extreme, government delegates its decision making power to another body. While all levels may have their uses and be appropriate in different situations, according to Potapchuk,
Figure 2: Connor's New Ladder of Citizen Participation

Figure 3: Potapchuk’s Levels of Shared Decision Making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Decides</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Consults with Individuals and Decides</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Consults With A Representative Group and Decides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Works with A Representative Group And They Jointly Decide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Delegates Decision To Others</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

levels of citizen participation that allow decisions to be made jointly by government and citizens are more likely to attain the desired goal of "building consent" and resolution of conflict. Conversely, they are less likely exacerbate government-citizen power struggles which in his view have plagued recent practice of public participation (Potapchuk, 1991:158).

Potapchuk’s typology reflects a move away from models that imply an inherent struggle for power in the political arena, toward models that incorporate a means of power balance. One of his "new broad-based forms" of participation is through "collaborative" decision making processes which truly democratize decision making since they allow citizens, government and other actors "...who bring differing criteria to the table to develop joint criteria for evaluating options" (Potapchuk, 1991:159). By participating in the process in this way, it is believed that decisions can be affected by a realistic mix of values, political and technological considerations held by a variety of interests in society, such as citizens, public interests, business and single issue groups (Potapchuk, 1991:160-161).

2.5 Conclusion

The factor of who has power in the planning process is one that has been at the core of many theories of citizen participation in planning and is also at the root of dissatisfaction with participation practice. Criticism has been levelled at practitioners with respect to their unwillingness or inability to deal directly with the power issue:

There has been a tendency for citizen participation and community action to be considered neutral activities. In fact, they are political acts. In one sense, programs of citizen participation have been characterized by political naivety." (Draper, 1977:37).
In this chapter, views on the reasons for and means of including citizens in the process of democratic decision making have been explored. The underlying belief expressed by some contemporary citizen participation theorists and practitioners is that it is in the interests of those with decision making power to share it. The alternative is to face resistance to the outcomes of the decision making process and lack of support for plan implementation. In the following section, perspectives on the partnership model for citizen participation are examined in an effort to understand how it may provide a practical solution to the conflicts caused by an imbalance of power in the plan making process.
3. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING PRACTICE

Recently, as some causes of failure of citizen participation have become better understood, the partnership model for involving citizens in planning has received more attention in planning practice. It is necessary to examine the literature on partnership in order to assess its efficacy in practice.

3.1 Some Causes of Failure of Citizen Participation in Practice

What are some causes of failure in citizen participation practice? An overview of the literature suggests that three main causes can be identified:

1. Scholars studying participation practice almost unanimously agree that the main cause has to do with expectations and objectives. Opinions range from the idea that the expectations of actors in the citizen participation process were too high (Cullingsworth, 1984:11) to the idea that expectations were left undefined amongst the actors (Potapchuk, 1991:164). Clearly goals for participation that are not articulated either will not be achieved, or will not be achieved to the full satisfaction of the actors involved who hold them. Directly related to the latter point is the lesson for practitioners that the intent of the participation process must be mutually understood by the participants involved.

2. Once the intent or objectives of the program are made clear, a number of practitioners note the importance of matching the techniques with the objectives for the program (Glass, 1979:180; Connor, 1977:61). Since techniques and activities used in the planning process will determine the success of goal achievement, the job of the
practitioner and evaluator becomes matching objectives (such as information exchange, education, supplemental decision making, and representational input) with the most appropriate techniques (Glass, 1979:180). According to this view, failure to systematically employ the correct technique for achieving a stated objective is a major cause of failure.

3. Together with deficiencies in the way citizens are involved and how their input is used, lack of evaluation of participation programs is cited as another factor contributing to failure of participation in practice (Sadler, 1977:5-6).

Problems experienced with citizen participation in practice have prompted the search for new models that allow governments, together with citizens, to more effectively address these concerns involving expectations, objectives, techniques and evaluation. Partnership is one of these models.

3.2 The Partnership Model: Principal Assumptions

The partnership model is founded on certain assumptions about why the public need participate in government planning processes that differ from other models. Firstly, partnership is predicated on the assumption that both partners need equal access to information and other resources in order to make informed choices. This premise is conveyed by the statement that "...for citizens to understand policy issues they must be included in the planning process" (Clarkson, 1980:45). Another assumption of the partnership model for participation is that the sharing of power between governments and citizens as partners leads to a mutual responsibility
for the outcomes. The belief expressed here is that "...when citizens are given the right to participate in decision making, then they must assume responsibility for action taken to implement these plans" (Head, 1971:28). While for some the partnership model promises much, the question of its outcomes in practice arises.

3.3 Definitions, Purposes, and Techniques of Partnership

The term 'partnership' has been used in a great variety of contexts in relation to public and private sector initiatives with varying degrees of precision.6 What is the nature and purpose of the action undertaken by citizens and government in partnership?

There are at least three areas with which joint action partnerships have been practised: labour relations, environmental conservation and service management and production (Parenteau, 1988:65). Associated with the latter area, and of particular relevance to the case under study, is the practice of "co-production" of services by citizens and government (Gittell, 1980; Kotler, 1982; Parenteau, 1988; Susskind and Elliott, 1983). Co-production of services can take the form of "community service partnerships" through which neighbourhood organizations have been involved in the planning and delivery of community based public services (Kotler, 1982:45).

In terms of objectives, sharing of responsibility for planning and delivery of government services

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6 There is a substantial body of literature on the subject of the relations between public agencies and community organizations, such as formalized structures for neighbourhood representation common to the U.S. experience, (Hallman, 1973; Hain, 1980; and Haeberle, 1989). Although a detailed examination of neighbourhood governance is beyond the scope of this discussion, some of the research on this subject shows similar concerns to those raised in the discussion of the merits and limitations of the partnership model.
has obvious appeal for both government (such as reduced costs, Bregha, [1991]) and citizens (such as higher degrees of government responsiveness and sense of empowerment).

In relation to citizen participation in planning, 'partnership' appears in the top half of Arnstein's ladder, meaning that it involves a high degree of citizen power over the planning process, as opposed to the categories of 'tokenism' or 'non-participation' (Arnstein, 1969:217). Her idea is that when citizens enter into partnership with government, power is redistributed between them -- instead of being planned for, citizens plan with government. In contrast, consultation, is a model of participation used to invite public opinion and involves only token power sharing, although it can be used as a step toward citizen power if used in combination with partnership (Arnstein, 1969:219).

Many other practitioners have used the term 'partnership' to describe a model of participation that allows 'collaboration' between government and citizens (Cooley, 1992:5), 'shared decision making' (Potapchuk:1991:163), or similarly, 'joint-planning' (Connor, 1989:254). One theorist cites the need for "collaborative planning" and "decision-informing partnership" in the belief that only it can create a process that gives rise to "genuine interchange between citizens and planners" (Fagence, 1977:4). In practice, techniques or mechanisms for involving citizens in partnership with government for planning purposes have included community-based working groups, task forces (Potapchuk, 1991) planning advisory committees (Bousfield, 1977; Cullingsworth, 1984; Higgins, 1977) and citizen panels (Crosby, Kelly and Schaefer, 1986).

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7 She notes that in her experience, where power sharing of this nature was practised, it occurred because power was taken by citizens, not given by governments (Arnstein, 1969:222).
While these perspectives on partnership discussed above refer to partnership of citizens with government in planning and decision making in general, a similar concept is discussed by another researcher with an emphasis on action:

Participation may be called joint action when citizens and official government representatives jointly elaborate and implement public policy. This is entirely different from government action, whether subject to consultation or not, and from collective action by citizens, initiated by them, under their control, and aimed at their objectives. (Parenteau, 1988:63)

According to this view, citizen participation in planning with government provides an opportunity for them to bring their respective objectives and interests to the planning process. Moreover, joint planning through partnership is seen as particularly effective for the implementation or 'action' phase in the planning process. This is particularly important to theorists who believe that the prerequisite for substantive citizen involvement is for the participants be motivated to act (Fagence, 1977:7).

3.4 Advantages of the Partnership Model

Some of the advantages of the partnership model for citizen participation in the planning process have already been delineated. The amount of power citizens and government will have to represent and act on their interests depends on the model used for citizen participation in the planning process. Thus, on a theoretical level, if one believes that a genuine level of participation requires power redistribution (e.g., Arnstein, 1969), then the partnership model would appear to support this goal through collaborative decision making, joint planning and joint action such as co-production of social and other public services.
Another advantage to the partnership model in practice has to do with the ability for more than one set of objectives to be considered in the planning process. Because the partnership model is predicated on the understanding that citizens and government may have different objectives for the planning process (Burton, 1979:19; Folkes, 1989:6), it entails shared decision making throughout the planning process; from the agenda setting stage to plan implementation. Thus, this model effectively deals with the fact that there is an administrative perspective and a citizen perspective on the goals for citizen participation in planning programs, (Davis, 1973:64-65; Cole, 1974:7).

However, to further complicate matters, neither administrators nor citizens, as groups of actors in the planning process, can be characterized as homogeneous groups (Burton, 1979:19; Arnstein, 1969:217; Davis, 1973:60). In the words of one researcher "not only can there be more than one objective in undertaking participation; there can also be different objectives sought by different actors or groups involved" (Burton, 1979:19). In this sense, the term "citizens" is a category which may include a myriad of private individuals or groups; and "government" may include politicians, planners or other staff members depending on the level of government. Since neither of the participant groups involved in the planning process constitute a homogeneous group, consideration of as wide a spectrum of interests in the planning process as possible is even more essential.

On a more practical level, some advantages of this model have been suggested by a study of advisory committees and task forces (Bousfield, 1977:27). They include use by planning staff of resources and expertise of community members, substantive contribution of some members
of the public to the planning process and good communication, information flow and coordination between government and citizens.

### 3.5 Limitations of the Partnership Model

The practice of citizen-government partnership has given rise to discussion of some barriers to its effective implementation. These problems with 'partnership' in practice relate to firstly, the tension between citizen autonomy and cooptation and secondly, the tension between the need for informed decision making and adequate representation.

Forms of partnership, such as joint action, are engaged in by parties who have unequal, disproportionate resources (Parenteau, 1988:63). In order for partnership to work, it is justifiably argued, citizen groups must be able to remain true to their objectives, without compromising their autonomy. The latter effort has often been a struggle for community organizations (Cooper, 1980), since the resources to which government and citizens groups do not have equal access are money and information. The concern is whether it is possible for citizens engaged in partnership with government to remain independent. The question becomes to what extent does cooperation necessarily become cooptation? (Burton, 1979:19).

One researcher reports that studies of community organizations have found that community-government joint ventures tend to "...transform the community partner and sever it from its citizen base" (Cooper, 1980:438). In this sense, in some instances cooptation of community groups has been all too common.
Similarly, in a study of planning advisory committees and task forces, it was noted that

...in several instances, the committees became non-professional planning staff for all practical purposes. This did not result in an increase in the numbers of opportunities afforded for the participation by the general public. In fact, the committees were frequently less receptive than the professional planning staff to input from the general public (Bousfield, 1977:28).

The problem of cooptation has much to do with the complexity of modern urban issues which governments must make resource allocation decisions (Ventriss, 1987:281). The belief is that if information required to make decisions is increasing in amount and complexity, then there is a heightened possibility for citizens to be coopted by "experts", such as government analysts or bureaucrats. The pertinent question here with respect to citizen participation in public decision making becomes "...what is the role, what can be the role, of the uninformed citizen?" (Davis, 1973:69) and is one that will be explored in the case analysis.

The chronic discrepancy between government and citizens with respect to resources they are able to use in the planning process implies that a solution would involve making monetary resources available for citizen groups, and increasing mutual education and information sharing among participants. This idea is echoed by the following comment made in reference to co-production of services; "...[it] necessitates a social knowledge transfer...between the citizens and the administration whereby both parties gain important information about the serious problems

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8 This issue is explored from a slightly different angle by Desario and Langton (1987) in their discussion of the nature of modern technocratic institutions and contributions citizens may make given the complex context in which policy making takes place. Two other researchers who have carried out extensive analysis of citizen participation in bureaucratic institutions are Kweit and Kweit (1981).

9 One practitioner's answer to this question is that there is an inverse relationship between the proportion of the public that can be involved and the amount of information that be accessed, (see Connor's [1985] "Public Participation Matrix", discussed in Chapter 5, Figure 4).
affecting the community" (Ventriss, 1985:435).\textsuperscript{10} Similarly, to combat the propensity for community group cooptation and impotence (because of lack of informational and monetary resources) Cooper suggests a number of changes needed on the part of government. Firstly, he believes governments need to make a commitment to preserve and support the integrity of community groups and secondly, one of their responsibilities and roles should be education of the community (Cooper, 1980:440). These proposed conditions for effective partnership practice will be discussed further in the analysis of the City of Vancouver's Project on Aging.

In cases where partnership is implemented by involving of "elites" or a small group of citizens (Potapchuk, 1991:166) rather than public at large, problems related to representativeness are raised. A study of advisory committees and task forces reveals that "...because of their exposure to more information and different planning perspectives than the average resident, committee members can come to judge issues in a very different light than the 'uninformed' public" (Bousfield, 1977:28). This comment suggests that in order to successfully carry out the goals associated with the partnership model in practice, a number of techniques which serve to involve the public on different scales during the course of the planning process should be used.

3.6 Conclusion

In the case under study, the objective of the citizen participation process is partnership. In this chapter conceptions of the partnership model found in the literature have been examined and some of its advantages and limitations considered. Chapter 5 provides an analysis of the

\textsuperscript{10} Social learning theorists espouse the benefits of citizen participation with regards to mutual education and learning precipitated amongst government and citizen participants (see Draper et al. 1991. Dignity and Growth: Citizen Participation in Social Change.)
design of the citizen participation program used to achieve partnership, and the success with which it deals with the issues raised here. To undertake the analysis, a description of the citizen participation process involved in the Project on Aging is required.
4. THE CITY OF VANCOUVER'S PROJECT ON AGING

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging recently undertaken by the City of Vancouver’s Social Planning Department. A detailed account of its policy origins and the ways in which citizens were involved in the project’s three phases will be given in order to provide the necessary background for the analysis which follows. The discussion begins with a brief overview of the City of Vancouver’s experience with citizen participation, in order to place the project, as an exercise in citizen participation in planning, in context.

4.1 Citizen Participation and the City of Vancouver

4.1.1 Models of Citizen Participation

With the rise of citizen activism beginning in the late 1960s, the City of Vancouver like most local governments in Canada has endorsed policies to encourage citizen participation in planning. In 1973, the Municipal Council of the City of Vancouver first directed the planning department to develop effective means of including public involvement in planning processes (Report to Council, Standing Committee on Neighbourhood Issues and Services, April 6, 1989:2). Since then, citizens have been involved in planning mainly in relation to three areas: specific development projects, area studies, and "Local Area Planning", the City’s version of neighbourhood-based planning. According to City reports, for each of these areas of planning, a different model of citizen participation has been used. Thus, an "education model" has been used for public involvement in specific projects, for area studies citizens have been involved mainly through "consultation" mainly at public meetings or hearings (Manager’s Report, March
28, 1989:1). For LAP processes a "partnership model" for citizen participation has been used.

It is evident from planning department reports that the idea of a "partnership" is nothing new to the City of Vancouver. It was developed as an extension of the consultation model. Consultation is defined as a public involvement method by which to "share information, develop alternatives, identify impacts and create awareness" and it "relies on a series of public meetings, workshops or a task force" (Report of the Acting Director of Planning, March 28, 1989:1). The partnership model is described as having the same objectives as the consultation model, except that the planning process is jointly managed by the City and citizens. In addition to relying on the consultation input mechanisms, partnership has entailed formation of 'citizen planning committees' for LAP exercises.

Since 1973, adjustments to the models used for citizen participation have been made by the City, most recently in 1989. The call for improvements to the models at this time can be linked to the City's desire to avoid City-citizen conflict which has been inflamed by rapid growth occurring in the Vancouver region, (such as the Arbutus Lands case mentioned in the introduction) and in recognition of the fact that few of the processes conducted in past have inspired high levels of public satisfaction or trust. Thus in a October, 1, 1991 Policy Report to City Council it is suggested that the Project on Aging is needed to bring about "...increased potential for positive, supportable change through inter-departmental collaboration and partnership with the community." In addition, the project is described as resulting not only in a strategic plan on aging, but also as producing "...concrete community actions and will assist in re-defining the City's relationship with the community in the most positive sense". [emphasis added], (Policy Report to the City Council, October 1, 1991:8). Thus, while the idea of
"partnership" is not new to the City, it is evident that their experience to date with citizen participation has caused them to re-think their practice of this model. In the City's view, in terms of achieving social goals and 'partnership' with the community, their problem has to do with "...the difficulty with translating philosophy and intent into practice" (Social Planning Department, February 14, 1991:3). The Project on Aging is a program designed to pilot a new model of partnership between local government and citizens in the community.

### 4.1.2 The Project on Aging in Context

The Project on Aging represents both a departure and continuation of past planning practices for the City of Vancouver. It is concerned with social policy issues and neighbourhood planning issues, both of which were reportedly the focus of the Local Area Planning (LAP) program (City of Vancouver Planning Department, January 1978:6). Partnership is named as the intended model for citizen participation in both cases.

However, in other ways the Project on Aging can be seen as a departure from past planning practices for the City of Vancouver, which is not surprising given the changing context for planning in the city. Demographic aging is the subject of the planning effort, and it is a concept that has required considerable explanation to participants throughout the project. Whereas the LAP program was applied to individual neighbourhoods experiencing pressing problems and used a partnership model to involve that community, the Project on Aging is an attempt to have people participate using the same model but on a city-wide basis, and in relation to a policy issue. Some of the factors motivating the City to launch this particular project at this particular time have been suggested above. Exploration of the project’s policy origins and goals
will provide a better understanding of the project, and thus what type of planning exercise citizens were asked to participate in.

4.2 Project Background: Policy Origins and Project Goals

In June 1990, Vancouver City Council identified "Social Development" and "impacts of population aging" as two of its most urgent corporate priorities. It gave the Social Planning Department a mandate to develop social policy that would identify and address Vancouver’s social issues and goals. Accordingly, the Social Planning Department developed the "Pilot Project on Aging" as part of a "Social Action Strategy", and Phase I and II of the initiative were approved by Council in October of 1991. The objective of the City’s Social Action Strategy, approved by the Municipal Council on March 7, 1991 is "to employ City resources in the most efficient, effective and timely way possible to address social goals and issues" and the process to be used is described as "...one of cooperation and collaboration among departments in partnership with the community..." (Social Planning Department, Report, February 14, 1991:4-5).

The Project on Aging thus can be seen as originating in a social policy initiative of the city government. It was developed as a pilot in terms of both its content and method, and is designed around three complementary goals. The goals are firstly, to plan for the anticipated substantial impacts of population aging on municipal services, secondly and further to this, to help prepare the City’s administration for program and structural changes required to meet changing needs (or "improving internal collaboration") and thirdly, to deal with public involvement in planning differently from past methods--through ‘partnership’ (Policy Report,
According to the project organizers, partnership of the City and citizens is described as the process to be used throughout the project's three phases, and as one of its products ("Ready or Not!" Vancouver's Project on Aging; Project Summary).

These then are the policy origins of the Project and its three main goals. The description of the project's phases that follows will aid the analysis of it as a case of partnership in practice. The project will be examined in terms of its three phases. The major events in the process are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: PROJECT SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT PHASE</th>
<th>DATES</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>October 1991</td>
<td>Council receives report on the Pilot Project on Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October '91 - March '92</td>
<td>Preparation for the Neighbourhood Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>April 1992</td>
<td>Hold Neighbourhood Workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May '92 - June '92</td>
<td>Compile Information for Working Group</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 1992</td>
<td>Report to Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Sept. '92 - May '93</td>
<td>Working Group Sessions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May '93 - October '93</td>
<td>Report Compiled and Reviewed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>January 1994</td>
<td>Final Report to Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Adapted from a 1991 report to Council.
4.3 Project Description

4.3.1 Phase I - The Steering Committee and Project Planning

The Project on Aging was not actually approved by the Vancouver Municipal Council until October 1991. However, citizen participation in the project began in Phase I when it was in the policy formulation and planning stages. The beginnings of the first phase can be traced back to June 1990 when the Social Planning Department received instructions from the City Council to take action on "social development" as one of its corporate priorities. In October 1991, the City Council gave approval to the project's work-plan, timetable and budget and Phase I continued until March, 1992, when the planning for the Phase II Neighbourhood workshops was completed.

Members of the community were involved in Phase I of the Project at a number of different times mostly through attending single meetings, as participants on a committee, and on Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Teams. Thus, selected groups and individuals were invited to attend a number of early meetings used to conceptualize issues and design the project. These tasks were also the job of the project's Steering Committee, on which some community-based individuals were chosen to sit and thereby participate on an on-going basis in the project. For the purposes of analysis, details of these meetings and the formation of the Steering Group warrant further description.

In the fall of 1990, the City's Social Planners involved in the project held a series of meetings with members of community-based social service organizations. Their purpose was to discuss development of a viable project that could be used to implement the goals of their "Social Action Strategy". One of the goals involved anticipating the impacts of population
aging. Those invited to meet to discuss ideas for a project included staff at neighbourhood houses, women's and special needs groups, and other groups who were part of Social Planning's network of community-based contacts at the time. As a result of these meetings, ideas for how to involve citizens at a larger scale in the project were generated, and a commitment to on-going participation in the project was obtained from some of the participants. Also in the fall of 1990, an interdepartmental committee was established so that members of different City departments could contribute their knowledge as to how population aging would likely impact their department's functions with respect to service provision.

Following these initial meetings with community-based and City-based groups for planning the project, in January 1991 the project coordinators amalgamated these two groups of participants to form the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee was comprised of seven people from the community (some of whom were "recruited" from the City's Committees of Council and by other ad hoc methods) and thirteen City staff from the different city departments. Its purpose was to continue to work with the Social Planners to design the project, and it met regularly over the next year.

By February 1991, a description of the goals, phases and resources required for the "Pilot Project on Aging" had been written by the Social Planners and members of the Steering Committee using the ideas of the participants gathered up until that time. In anticipation of the project's approval by the Council in March, a meeting of City staff and community members was held in February 1991 with the purpose of securing support for the project and volunteers

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11 According to project coordinators, this step to bring the community-based group and the City's interdepartmental committees together was done more out of practical convenience than observance of a participation principle.
to take part in implementing it. The invitations for this meeting were sent to City staff in a letter which asked them to invite one community member to attend ("either a senior or someone interested in the issues of aging"), hence asking them to make use of their "network in the community".

From 90 invitations sent, 120 people attended the meeting the purpose of which was to "...give everyone a clear idea of the Pilot Project and to identify the possible roles people can play in its planning and implementation." (Letter to City Staff members, February 1, 1991). People were grouped by their neighbourhood of residence (there are 22 neighbourhoods in Vancouver as defined by the City’s administrative boundaries) and were asked to work together in small groups to generate ideas for how the project’s topic could be addressed in their neighbourhood and how it could proceed.

According to the project’s organizers, notwithstanding the enthusiasm and support for the project generated by City staff and city residents attending this meeting, the project was not approved by the Municipal Council when it was submitted in February, 1991. The official reason given was that Council desired terms of reference for the project before approving it. According to project organizers, unofficially, members of Council wanted the project to place less emphasis on seniors and greater acknowledgement of Council’s potential role as final decision makers. Hence, after establishing that those involved thus far were interested in pursuing the matter, the Steering Committee together with the planners reviewed, edited and revised several drafts of the Project plan over the next six months. Over this period, the project underwent some redefinition and refinement and finally received the Council’s approval in October, 1991 with the stipulation that any recommendations emerging from the project would
not involve any ‘new’ money.

4.3.2. Phase I - Neighbourhood Based Teams & Workshop Planning

The last part of Phase I, from November 1991 until March 1992, focused on planning for the April 1992 Neighbourhood Workshops.

Further to this end, citizens were invited to attend another community meeting in November, 1991 which had similar objectives to the earlier February, 1991 meeting; to help design the workshops, and for the City to gain support for and create awareness in the community about the project. At the meeting, "Ready or Not!" was announced as the winning submission in a public contest held to name the project. Media coverage at the time promoted the Project on Aging and relayed the City’s message inviting "community leaders, ethnic leaders and everyone interested" to attend the meeting (The Province Newspaper, Friday November 8, 1991). About 150 people attended the meeting, and 104 volunteered to help further with the project; many by becoming part of a "Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Team" in their area.

About 50 percent of the Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Team’s members were resident volunteers, the other half included Parks Department staff (working in local area community centres) and Health Department staff (working in the City’s local area health units). In neighbourhoods where teams had not been formed, the Social Planners, often with the help of community centre staff, mobilized people to help with the workshop in that area.

Social Planners met regularly with the team coordinators over the three month period before the Neighbourhood Workshops, supplying informational materials, coordinating efforts, advertising the event, and providing the agenda for the workshops which the teams had the
option to modify. The teams were responsible for all planning to do with the workshop in their area, including setting the time, place, arranging for food, childcare and finally recruiting people to act as facilitators and recorders at the workshops. During this period, the Steering Committee continued to meet every two weeks to oversee the project's planning.

Finally, just prior to the April 1992 Workshops, citizens who had volunteered to facilitate and record proceedings where invited to attend one of two training sessions. The three and a half hour session was provided by consultants hired by the City to teach facilitating skills and provide resource information on the workshop format. Altogether, over 250 residents and City staff were involved in planning, running and training for the workshops.

4.3.3 Phase II - Neighbourhood Workshops

Phase II of the Project on Aging began in April 1992 and extended through what the project organizers call an "interim phase", ending in August, 1992. The focus of this phase was the Neighbourhood Workshops, at which the public at large were invited to participate in the project.

Most of the twenty-four workshops took place simultaneously on April 11, 1992, in every Vancouver neighbourhood. Of the over 1,200 people who participated, 102 were City Staff, 4 were City Council members and the rest were members of the general public. In addition to neighbourhood-based workshops, four of the workshops were not based on neighbourhood residency but instead had a city-wide focus. They were organized by people for their own language or ethnic group, such as in the American Sign Language Community, Chinese Community and Sunset (Punjabi) Community. A Jewish Community workshop was held on
April 29, 1992 since the April 11 neighbourhood workshops fell on the Jewish sabbath.

The workshops are described as "...one of the prime vehicles for working towards achieving the project goals" (Workshop Analysis, City of Vancouver, October 1992:3). The workshop chairpeople were asked to introduce the meetings with an explanation of the project, emphasizing in particular that "'READY OR NOT!' is all about partnership--working together to make decisions that will shape our future" (Guidelines for Chairpeople, Social Planning Department, 1992:1).

At the workshops, members of the public worked in small groups of eight to twelve people with a trained facilitator for about three and a half hours. Participants at each of the twenty-four workshops had a common agenda and guidelines developed earlier by the Steering Committee. These were to first discuss a range of issues related to the impact of aging and as a group, decide on one or two priority issues for in-depth discussion. Secondly, in relation to the issues identified, they were asked to discuss ways in which their neighbourhood already met needs of people as they age from generation to generation and finally, what actions could be taken to address anticipated needs of neighbourhood residents. Participants were asked to concentrate on what actions neighbourhood residents could take immediately to meet identified needs, either by themselves, with other neighbourhoods or with the City government.

At the end of the meeting, all small groups were asked to report back their conclusions to the entire group. They were informed that the ideas generated at all the meetings were to be published together verbatim used as content for the Strategic Plan for Aging that was to be prepared for the City in the third phase of the project. Seventy-five percent of the workshops participants chose to fill out a registration card indicating that they were willing to participate
in the project’s subsequent phases either in their neighbourhood or on a city-wide basis.

After the Neighbourhood Workshops, citizen participation in the project continued in a number of ways. Nine of the groups continued to meet individually on their own initiative, to discuss implementing some of the actions they identified at the workshops. The Steering Committee met a few times in May and June, 1992, to help evaluate the workshops and finalize plans for Phase III. Three inter-neighbourhood meetings took place inviting people from all Vancouver neighbourhoods and at the second of these a mission statement for the community participation aspect of the project: "‘Ready or Not!’ is a process of empowering neighbourhoods --through consultation and interaction-- to identify, plan for and act upon vital community priorities related to the aging of the population" (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging", July 1, 1992:4).

Beginning in May 1992, all participants in the project thus far received a bi-monthly "Ready or Not!" newsletter produced by the Social Planning Department, informing them of the project’s on-going progress. Also during this period, a report was prepared by the Social Planners for City Council. It informed Council of the preliminary findings from the April 1992 Public Workshops (a final Workshop analysis was published and made available to participants in October, 1992), and recommended continuing with Phase III of the project, which included plans for a Working Group and implementation of a "Vancouver Community Building Fund". The recommendations were approved by Council on July 30, 1992.

4.3.4 Phase III - The Working Group & Neighbourhood Groups

Phase III is the Project on Aging’s final stage. Beginning in September 1992, it will end
in January 1994 when a concluding report on the pilot Project on Aging will be submitted to Council. During this phase, citizens participate in the project mainly through two techniques; the Working Group, for those interested in the project from a city-wide issue-based perspective; and through neighbourhood based groups, some of which have been continuously active since the workshop planning stage.

Neighbourhoods Groups and the "Vancouver Community Building Fund"

People who participated in the project at this stage through a group based in their neighbourhood did so in varying degrees. In some areas, neighbourhood-based "Ready or Not!" groups amalgamated with another citizen groups, such as residents’ associations or "Healthy Communities" groups. In other areas, the groups continued to operate independently, some using ideas generated at the April 1992 workshops to develop projects for immediate implementation in their neighbourhoods. Altogether about nine of these groups continued meeting after the April, 1992 workshops.

Many of the active neighbourhood-based groups responded to the project coordinator's invitation to submit proposals for funding from the Vancouver Community Building Fund. This fund ($67,500 in total), which had been approved by the Council in July, 1992, received contributions from the City of Vancouver and four other funders including government, non-profit and private sector groups. On October 14, 1992, the project coordinators sent letters to current or past project participants in each neighbourhood making them aware of the fund and inviting proposals. By May 11, 1993, fifteen neighbourhood and cultural-community based groups had received $2,600 dollars each for projects that fulfilled the fund's goal "...to support
the neighbourhoods and communities participating in 'Ready or Not!' in developing the ideas they identified to build, strengthen and create their own 'sense of community'" (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging", July 1, 1992; Appendix B:1). Added to this general goal were specific objectives and suggestions for neighbourhood groups to follow in developing their project proposals.

The Working Group and the Strategic Plan on Aging

The Working Group was formed in September, 1992 and will continue to operate on an on-going basis until the project ends in January, 1994. It is comprised of twelve members of the public (from 11 different neighbourhoods), and ten Vancouver City Staff (from 7 departments and the Vancouver School Board). From 300 people who were invited to submit letters of interest, twelve members of the public were chosen by the Steering Committee, using the terms of reference they developed. The ten Staff members were people from departments who had expressed an interest in the project in the past.

In terms of procedure, the Working Group made decisions on the basis of consensus of its members. It was chaired jointly by the project coordinator and a resident. Minutes from the meetings (on average, three per month) were recorded on a rotating basis by the committee members. The main task of the Working Group was "to produce a plan for strategic change with respect to the impact of aging on the city's population" (Policy Report: "Social Development, Aging", July 1, 1992; Appendix E:1). In addition, their other tasks were to support community building activities in neighbourhoods and help evaluate the Project on Aging.

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12 The Steering Committee ceased to meet after the Working Group began meeting in October, 1992.
During the fall of 1992, the Working Group met regularly to discuss the content, format and strategies for drafting the Strategic Plan. The ideas were shared with 80 members of the public (who had participated in some way in the project before) at another Inter-Neighbourhood Forum held on November 26, 1992. At this forum, participants were invited to suggest possible approaches that would make the "Strategic Plan" action oriented. They were also asked to share experiences relating to their "Community Building Projects". Twenty of the people attending volunteered to participate Working Group sub-committees later on.

The Strategic Plan had been characterized in planning reports as a document that would "assist, encourage and promote community-based action", as well as help prepare the City administration for the "changes resulting from a population undergoing a major demographic shift" (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging", October 1, 1991:3). City staff decided and participants agreed that the Strategic Plan should specifically identify and provide direction for actions to which the City and community could lend equal support. In the period from November, 1992 to April, 1993, the City staff--citizen "Working Group" developed several strategies for achieving these general goals.

Firstly, they agreed that the plan should focus on addressing the concerns identified in the neighbourhood workshops. Accordingly, they divided into nine issue-based sub-committees: Arts and Culture, Community Empowerment, Education, Environment/Neighbourhood Planning, Health, Housing, Recreation, Safety and Security, and Transportation, (these categories were introduced in the Workshop Analysis document). The sub-committees began meeting in January, 1993 and each invited an average of four to five people (usually residents) to work with them. All the sub-committees were given the same objectives, timetable and operating checklist decided
on by the Working Group and submitted their individual papers for review by the Working Group in April, 1993.

Another strategy used in the process of drafting the strategic plan involved the use of a variety of informational resources. Citizens and staff on each sub-committee made use of a many information sources to help them with the job of writing a short paper on their subject, (which collectively form a large portion of the Strategic Plan)\(^\text{13}\). The "resources" used included two hour meetings with "experts", who were identified and invited by staff and residents to advise them on possible actions neighbourhoods could take around the issues identified. Members of the sub-committees were invited to these "advisory" Working Group meetings which took place in January and February, 1993. Other informational resources were supplied by the reports the Social Planning Department requested from each City department asking them to identify ways in which population aging would cause changing demands on their resources. For instance, those on the Education sub-committee, received the Vancouver Public Libraries report of March 8, 1993 "Library Service to an Aging Population", which was the result of a focus group discussion by library users. Also made, compiled and distributed by the Social Planning Department around this time was the April 1993 "Inventory of Neighbourhood-Based Organizations" which lists many community-based or community oriented groups in Vancouver by neighbourhood.

In May 1993, the papers produced by the sub-committees were collectively reviewed by the Working Group. While all sub-committees were given suggested guidelines, the issue based

\(^{13}\) The other portion of the Strategic Plan will be composed of the reports from each of the City’s departments on the anticipated impacts of an aging population on the services they provide and their recommendations for responding to these changes within existing budget constraints (Policy Report: "Social Development, Aging", October 1, 1991:1).
papers produced by each of the nine groups varied considerably in form and content due to the different resources used and approaches taken to the task. The Working Group's review involved discussing and editing each of the nine papers. Once this task was completed, the Working Group began to meet less frequently. These meetings were for the purpose of planning the final sub-committee and community reviews of the Strategic Plan to take place in the summer and fall of 1993 respectively. It will be submitted to Council in January of 1994.

4.3.5 Epilogue

To date, the method for obtaining community feedback on the plan is still undetermined. Completion of the project has been delayed due to the November, 1993 civic elections and time constraints of the Social Planning staff coordinating the project. Most likely, after a review by Working Group sub-committee members, citizens who have participated in the project to date will receive the document in the mail and then be asked to attend a Strategic Plan review meeting to revise it and make suggestions with regard to its on-going implementation.

Also to further implementation of the project, Social Planning staff have announced the possibility of implementing some of the ideas through another project for piloting a neighbourhood based planning approach and thereby establishing a framework for on-going partnership between citizens and the City.

4.4 Conclusion

The model of citizen participation used by the City of Vancouver in the Project on Aging was intended to offer members of the public a "new and improved" way to be involved in a
municipal planning process. The City together with citizens were meant to address social policy issues related to social service provision. From this description, it is clear that citizens participated in the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging at different times in different ways throughout its three phases. How did the participation techniques used reflect principles of partnership? How did partnership as practised in this case overcome some of the deficiencies associated with participation? Was the citizen participation process used a success or failure in terms of its stated objectives and theoretical considerations? The case analysis in the following chapter will suggest answers to these questions.
5. CASE STUDY FINDINGS: ANALYSIS OF THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESS, PARTNERSHIP IN PRACTICE

5.1 Introduction

"To develop a partnership with the community" is one of the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging’s three main goals. What does the partnership model for citizen participation mean in practice? As it is utilized by the City of Vancouver through the Project on Aging, is partnership a symbolic gesture or a substantive effort? These questions will be addressed in this section, following a brief overview of some considerations for analysis.

5.1.1 Evaluation of Citizen Participation Programs

Rosener’s (1983) list of factors that make the assessment of citizen participation programs problematic is both comprehensive and succinct:

1. the participation concept is complex and value laden;
2. there are no widely held criteria for judging success and failure;
3. there are no agreed-upon evaluation methods; and
4. there are few reliable measurement tools. (Rosener, 1983:45).

These barriers to precise "measurement" of participation effectiveness pose a problem for its practitioners and advocates, especially in times when citizen participation is on the political defensive. Thus, proponents of the view that "...public officials must cease to accept uncritically each new instance of citizen participation and every new effort to extend its operation" (Cupps, 1977:478) have much in the way of ammunition when it comes to assessing the "proof" of the effectiveness of participation programs. There is no proof. What does exist are lessons that have emerged from a growing body of literature examining and evaluating citizen participation on a case by case basis (Burton, 1979). Hence, while the partnership model would seem to offer a means by which decision making power is shared, only by examining
applications of the model in practice can this be verified.

A common method used to assess citizen participation programs has been through the use of quantitative measurements focusing on the number of people involved in the planning process. The rationale for this approach is that in terms of participation ‘more is better’, since greater participation means more of the population has had the chance of having their interests represented and therefore taken into account during the decision making process. As one researcher points out however, this may not be a suitable way of assessing citizen participation processes:

one may attempt to evaluate public participation primarily in terms of ‘amount’ of participation or participants, but this can lead to overlooking a fundamental principle of participation, which is that the breadth and quality of the public’s contributions are more important to decision making than quantity" (Cuthbertson, 1983:105).

Qualitative examination of the design and techniques used to implement the partnership model in practice is the analytical approach used here. Analysis of the Project on Aging will provide answers to the following questions: Analysis of the Project on Aging will provide answers to the following questions:

1. How does the design of the citizen participation process reflect the principles of partnership discussed in Chapter 3?
2. Are the merits of the model borne out in practice?
3. How are the problems associated with it manifested and dealt with?

5.1.2 Framework for Analysis of the Partnership Model in Practice

The answers to the preceding questions will be provided in a two part evaluation of the Project on Aging. In the first part, evidence of a successful City-citizen partnership in the Project on Aging will be sought. This involves a discussion of techniques used to accomplish the ‘partnership’ objective and the nature of the decision making that occurred during each phase of the planning process. (Although the project is still in its final stages, the major instances of
citizen participation in the project have already taken place and may be examined in their entirety.) This approach reflects the principle that a citizen participation program’s success will depend on the how well the techniques deployed match the stated objectives (Glass, 1979:180). Also, access to resources, as a condition for and evidence of partnership is considered. This is prompted by the view that for meaningful partnerships to occur, "mobilization" of partners who possess "disproportionate means" is required (Parenteau, 1988:63).

In the second part of the analysis, the merits and limitations of the partnership model will be assessed. Also examined is the way in which the model as practised addresses the issues of multiple objectives, autonomy and power raised in the literature and discussed earlier. Methods used to gather data for analysis included: document analysis, interviews with key informants and observation of the project as a participant in the Working Group during Phase III.

5.2 The "Partnership" Objective

In a October 1, 1991 report to the Vancouver City Council, Project on Aging planning staff defined partnership in the following way: "partnership with the community means equal participation in the development of recommendations to [political] decision-makers. The recommendations will be based on a consensus model" (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging", 10 01, 1991:5). In the same report staff submitted that "all participants will receive the same information. The process will be conducted openly and honestly, with no hidden agendas". Another stated assumption on the part of the project organizers is that "municipal government and the public working together as partners will increase the community’s collective capacity to make decisions and create positive change" (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging" October 1, 1991).
The City of Vancouver's stated intentions reflect interpretations of partnership as involving 'collaborative' or 'joint' planning, and 'shared decision making' found in the theory. The selection of the partnership model for citizen participation in the project in itself demonstrates the intent to share decision making power by considering and acting on both the administrative and citizen objectives for participation. Examination of the citizen participation techniques used to achieve the partnership objective will provide answers to the most critical question for evaluation: what decisions were citizens involved in and how?

5.3 Techniques for Partnership: Shared Decision Making in the Planning Process

A successful partnership entails the use of techniques in the planning process that allow both 'partners', in this case the City and citizens, to have decision making powers to ensure that their needs and interests are addressed. Citizen participation techniques that involved a mix of City staff working together with citizens through all phases of the planning process were effectively used to achieve the partnership objective. Table 2 shows how the participants involved in each stage of the planning process were most often comprised of a City staff--resident mix.

Involving residents and City staff in joint planning is a significant means toward achieving partnership for two reasons. Firstly, it ensured that the diverse range of interests and perspectives among the "citizen" partners was represented. Members of the public involved in the project, who were sometimes self-selected (e.g., participants in the Neighbourhood Workshops), and at other times formally selected (e.g., participants in the Working Group), came from the 22 neighbourhoods in Vancouver. Similarly, a considerable effort was made to
involve City staff from each of the 14 departments in the project, thus also representing the heterogeneous nature of the "City" partner. Secondly, the staff-resident mix is significant in terms of creating a non-hierarchical structure for decision making. All individuals involved in joint planning were considered equal, in terms of their right to express dissenting opinions, suggest directions for future action, access information and bring their own ideas and resources to the project.

Equally important to the fact that both city and citizen partners were present in these groups, is the role they played at each stage in the planning process: in project definition and planning, issue identification, plan writing and implementation.
## Table 2: Partnership Techniques
### Vehicles for Staff-Resident Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Planning Phase</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary meetings with representatives from Community-Based Groups and City Departments, (several)</td>
<td>Phase I Project Conceptualization</td>
<td>informal meetings, total numbers unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steering Committee (1)</td>
<td>Phase I Project Planning</td>
<td>16-17 people, about 50% staff and community-based agency people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Groups (24)</td>
<td>Phase I Neighbourhood Workshop, planning &amp; organization</td>
<td>250 residents total plus staff based in neighbourhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Workshops (24)</td>
<td>Phase II Public consultation</td>
<td>over 1,200 total 4 council members 102 staff over 1,000 residents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-neighbourhood Forum (3)</td>
<td>Interim Phase Information Sharing: Working Group--Project Group Sub-Committee recruitment</td>
<td>Over 75 residents plus Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Group (1)</td>
<td>Phase III Plan Drafting</td>
<td>22 people 12 residents 10 staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Groups (15) (recipients of Vancouver Community Building Fund)</td>
<td>Phases II-III Project Implementation</td>
<td>residents only</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.1 Beginnings of Partnership: Project Definition & Planning

The first technique used to bring the partners committed to social development together was the resident-City staff Steering Committee. The sixteen member Steering Committee was particularly important during the early stages of the project when the concept of social development took shape as the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging. Decision making undertaken by the committee related to project definition and planning, specifically focusing on what social development goals could be most effectively met, with the assumption that citizen participation in implementing these goals would be essential to the project's success. Once the Project on Aging had been conceptualized, the Steering Committee began planning of the project stages and techniques to be used for citizen participation throughout the project.

In addition to the eight or so citizen members of the Steering Committee, other members of the public were involved at this stage in planning process through two community meetings held in February and November 1991. Residents attending either of these meetings were involved in project design and at the same time, project organizers hoped public awareness of the project would create support for its implementation. Indeed, at the second of these meetings, of the 150 who attended, 104 volunteered to become part of the Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Team in their area. The eventual involvement of 250 residents and City staff in planning and organizing as part of Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Teams and running the Neighbourhood Workshops as facilitators and recorders is evidence of considerable sharing of decision making power amongst the partners involved.

Shared power through partnership requires that people have the opportunity to participate not only in drafting a plan, or even identifying the issues, but also in design of the project. This
is a considerable achievement considering that according to the findings of other researchers, "...using the participation program itself to define the plan, or outline the participation programs own objectives..." is seldom carried out in practice (Bousfield, 1976:11).

5.3.2 Issue Identification

Citizen participation in the next stage of the planning process took place using a simultaneous workshop technique. As described in the preceding chapter, twenty-four Neighbourhood Workshops held in April, 1992 at which over 1,000 neighbourhood residents identified priority issues to be addressed by citizens and the City to prepare for the impacts of the aging population on neighbourhoods and City social service provision. Participants identified changes or improvements they believed would be required in social services and other positive amenities that neighbourhoods currently offer to people as they age, as well as identification of actions residents in their neighbourhood should take and government should take (Workshop Analysis, 1992:4). Using verbatim transcripts of the workshop proceedings from each of the 113 Workshop discussion groups, staff analysis identified incidences of common issues raised by different neighbourhoods.¹⁴

The workshop technique was effectively used to consult with the larger community (who had as yet not been involved in the project) in order to establish common ground on which to proceed. While the consultation was the objective for citizen participation at this stage in the process, the workshops still contributed to the practice of partnership in several ways. Firstly,

¹⁴ As reported in Chapter 4, the following areas of concern to neighbourhoods, in light of aging impacts, were identified; arts and culture, community empowerment, education, environment/neighbourhood planning, health, housing, recreation, safety and transportation.
City staff together with residents designed them. Secondly, resident teams had a substantial degree of control over workshop planning, implementation and reporting. Next, the format of small group discussions at the workshops enabled residents to contribute their knowledge of their neighbourhood’s assets and deficiencies, and to generate specific recommendations for action to address them. For these reasons, the April 1992 Neighbourhood Workshops were used as a vehicle for joint decision making since the public was involved in deciding on what to plan for and thus setting the agenda (direction) for subsequent planning and more importantly, subsequent action. Few of the identified changes and improvements required in neighbourhoods, such as the need for more affordable housing, and extension of neighbourhood based social services to meet the future needs of an aging population were highly original or unexpected. What was unusual was consultation with residents on what specific actions neighbourhood residents could recommend or undertake themselves to address these needs and what actions government should take to respond to the requirements they identified. Thinking in terms of action was encouraged.

Evidence of the principles of partnership in practice is provided by the fact that both the City and citizens used the results of the workshop consultations to their benefit and for their purposes. For the City, the results were used to justify continuation of the project to political decision makers in Council. The planners concluded that based on the Neighbourhood Workshop results "there is significant community interest in continuing the "Ready or Not!" Project [on Aging] and the partnership model. There is also the pervasive sense that strong communities will support people as they mature" (City of Vancouver, 07/1992). Throughout the project, citizen participation was interpreted as public approval for the project, since it was
based on the common concern for the quality of life in the city's neighbourhoods. Their considerable numbers at the Neighbourhood Workshops was viewed as a pool from which to draw supporters and participants in the future. In addition, the City's categorization of the concerns of neighbourhood residents found in the Workshop Analysis created a structure by which to address them in the next stage.

Citizens also benefited from the results of the Workshops. Groups of highly motivated residents in neighbourhoods voluntarily continued to meet to discuss the concerns raised and ideas for action spawned during the workshops. Liaising with the City's Social Planning Department, it quickly became clear that these groups required financial resources to act on their ideas, as well as interaction among the groups to strengthen community organizing in the City. As a result, many of these groups later received funding for neighbourhood based projects which they implemented independently of the City (see discussion of resources below).

In addition to citizen and City partners benefiting individually from the process and products of the Neighbourhood Workshops, the knowledge and ideas generated were used by the partners jointly in the next phase of the process which involved plan writing and project implementation.

5.3.3 Partnership - Plan Writing and Implementation

Both the process used to draft the "Strategic Plan on the Impact of Aging" and the final product, demonstrate application of partnership principles in practice, since decisions about how the plan would be written, who would write it and what it would say were decided jointly by City staff working together with residents on the Working Group and its sub-committees.
Citizen participation in the plan writing process is discussed first, followed by the consideration of the significance of the strategic plan document to the objective of partnership.

**The Process: Plan Writing and the Working Group**

The Working Group began meeting in the third phase of the Project on Aging to oversee the plan writing and its implementation. The Working Group’s membership and function was intended to embody more of a conscious ‘partnership’ design than the Steering Group, whose members and role had been selected on an ad hoc basis. Its members included residents from different neighbourhoods and City Staff from different departments including Housing and Properties, Community Planning, Health services, Social Planning, the School Board, Police-Community Services and Parks Board. In addition to this attempt to include representation of different interests and perspectives, the use of other selection criteria also demonstrated a more systematic approach to the committee’s formation.  

In terms of the operation of the Working Group, decisions were made by consensus and all members shared in the responsibilities of attending weekly meetings, recording minutes and bringing their knowledge and expertise to bear on the process. The structure of the committee was non-hierarchical, with City staff and residents equally responsible for the decisions made and actions committed to, while planning staff played the leading role in coordinating the project. Preliminary decision making by the Working Group involved reaching agreement on group procedures and functions. Citizen and City Staff participants also agreed that the plan

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15 Applications for the Working Group by citizens were solicited from former project participants and considered by the Steering Committee on the basis of a set of criteria which included "commitment to a consensus model of decision making" and "representation from all major geographic sectors of the city and for a mix of ages and backgrounds" (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging" Appendix E, July 1, 1991, Appendix E:2).
should emphasize actions rather than make recommendations which required approval from political decision makers. Thus, the content of the plan was 'action oriented', wherever possible giving examples of community based actions that could or were taking place that directly responded to the impacts of population aging (Policy Report, "Social Development, Aging", October 1, 1991:5).

Although the Working Group produced the framework and guidelines for use by the issue-based sub-committees responsible for writing individual sub-sections of the plan, a great deal of autonomy was allowed in the process of plan drafting (see Appendix C for Working Group Sub-Committee Guidelines). Residents and City Staff working together on the sub-committees had considerable autonomy in terms of the content, views and recommendations included in their report. Each of the issue-based papers produced by the sub-committees was subject to review by other participants; first by the Working Group, then by all other sub-committee members and in the fall of 1993 it will be reviewed by the larger public consisting of those who have participated to date in the project.

The Working Group is one technique used in the Project on Aging designed to put partnership into practice. Many of the activities of the Working Group required a considerable commitment on the part of all members to educate themselves on the issues in order to make informed decisions. An equally important function of the Working Group was the opportunity it provided for participants to exchange knowledge and experience. Interestingly, during the course of its operation, some adjustment of expectations was required on the part of all members. The balance of power involved in the partnership model required Citizens and City Staff to re-think their roles in planning for the impact of aging on City neighbourhoods and
services. The functions of leadership, project responsibility and direction were not always clear, and because of this, skepticism, doubt and confusion were, at times, expressed by Working Group participants. Because the partnership model for citizen participation was a new approach to planning and decision making, it necessitated adaption by all participants to a new method of planning in addition to learning about substantive issues.

The Product: The Strategic Plan Document

The part of the plan written by neighbourhood residents and City staff through the Working Group and its sub-committees addresses community concerns regarding maintaining and improving the quality of life in Vancouver neighbourhoods in the face of the trend of population aging. This part however comprises only half of the document that will be submitted to the City Council in January 1994. The second major part of the plan is comprised of reports written by each of the City's departments reporting the likely impact of aging on services they provide. The plan's introductory section, as well as its summary, will be written by the Social Planning Department staff and will recommend the continuance of the partnership model through subsequent joint social planning projects to be undertaken by City staff and citizens in two Vancouver neighbourhoods.

The format of the Strategic Plan then, clearly reflects the objectives of the different partners involved in the Project on Aging's planning process. It addressed the impacts of the aging population on both City services and on the quality of life in neighbourhoods. Importantly however, all participants agreed that the plan embodies only one of the products of the Project on Aging, and arguably, it is only a means toward an end of obtaining political approval for the
continuation of the joint planning and implementation process. Thus, throughout the project, the participants emphasized not only joint planning but also joint action as a way of using the partnership to accomplish meaningful ends. In the following section, the discussion of the use of resources in the Project on Aging reveals how joint 'action' or implementation was a crucial element in creating partnership between the City and citizens.

5.4 Techniques for Partnership: The Role of Resources

One of the conditions for achieving a meaningful partnership recognized by theorists is the autonomy of each partner (Cooper, 1980). In other words, the ability of partners to take action and make decisions independently, as well as cooperatively with another partner should they so choose, is essential. If the groups involved in joint planning and action are not autonomous, there can be no sharing of power. Achieving this type of autonomy in government-citizen partnerships however presents an enormous challenge since citizens have "...unequal, totally disproportionate means" (Parenteau, 1988:63). Thus, any attempt to create a meaningful partnership to achieve the objectives of joint planning and action must involve an active effort on the part of the government to make informational and financial resources accessible. In short, citizen partners must be given the resources to act on their own objectives, and this must be done without 'cooptation', or compromising their independence (Parenteau, 1988:64). Evidence of a successful City--citizen partnership in the Project on Aging requires that these issues were addressed.

5.4.1 Access to Financial Resources: The Vancouver Building Fund

The Vancouver Community Building Fund was created by the project organizers to help
community-based groups of residents implement any project of their design that also furthered the project’s goals and reflected its principles. More specifically, it was started to provide seed money for community based proposals projects aimed at "...developing the ideas they identified to build, strengthen and create or enhance their own ’sense of community’" (City of Vancouver Policy Statement, 07/1992). This type of modest funding (about $2,800) allowed neighbourhood residents or other community groups to cover expenses for projects that would in some way contribute to improved social service provision or community development.16

The creation of the Vancouver Community Building Fund is an indication of the determination of the project organizers to create conditions for independent community action, in spite of the fact that when the project was approved by Council in October 1991, the stipulation was that recommendations emerging from it must not require any ‘new’ money to be allocated to the project. In the end, with the support of the City Manager for the fund, Council agreed that the City would contribute to the fund 20,000 of the total 67,500 dollars.

The Vancouver Community Building Fund represents a significant effort on the part of the City to redress the imbalance in power between themselves and the community. City staff specifically recognized the need for a way of "acknowledging and supporting peoples’ interest in acting to strengthen their own communities" (City of Vancouver, 07/1992) and therefore that partnership or shared power requires that informational and financial resources be made accessible to those involved. Citizens were encouraged to participate in the implementation of the project’s goals and principles autonomously, meaning with independent means. By the same

16 To date the fund has been used to provide money to 15 projects in 17 neighbourhoods and project organizers are looking into the possibility of creating a matching fund for on-going neighbourhood development projects in the future (see Appendix A for funding guidelines and Table 2 for a list of funded projects).
token, access to information was effectively provided to the community participants as partners, in many instances throughout the project.

5.4.2 Access to Information Resources

Information resources were used effectively in the Project on Aging to create conditions for informed decision making and planning by citizen and City partners.

As described above, the perspective of citizens as well as City staff was incorporated in the conceptualization design and implementation of the project. Thus, one of the key sources of expert knowledge used throughout the project was the participants themselves. Because of techniques used to involve a mix of residents and staff, there was constant opportunity for mutual learning and exchange of expertise with regard to responding to the impacts of population on neighbourhoods and social service provision. The importance of including both citizen judgement and expert skills and knowledge has been noted in the literature (McAllister, 1980:235).

Citizens participated not only as informants and decision makers but also as planners and coordinators, and in the case of the Neighbourhood Workshops, were provided with training in order to play their role as facilitators and recorders effectively. In this sense, the development of human resources was recognized by the project organizers as an equally important and necessary condition for the development of community based services. This idea is echoed by the theory of "co-production of services" examined earlier. The basic tenet of this theory is that the public as consumers of public services must have input into its provision to achieve maximum satisfaction, and in this way can usefully take on the role of co-producers with government (Gittell, 1980:255). Such joint activity necessitates "social knowledge transfer"
(Ventriss, 1985:435) and thus the exchange of informational resources and sharing of expertise amongst partners.

Information provided by "experts" was another resource that was used to support partnership. When outside expertise was required, it was made available to all participants. For example, people with experience and knowledge of community based actions that could be taken to address issues raised in the neighbourhood Workshops, such as housing, safety and education, were invited to speak to the Working Group. Members of the Working Group were encouraged to identify individuals who could be called upon to share their expertise, some of whom were academics, City staff members and community activists. In addition, Project on Aging planning staff co-sponsored two events at which individuals from the American cities of Portland and Seattle spoke about models for on-going neighbourhood participation used in their cities.

Finally, provision of written information played an important role in creating one of the conditions for partnership, an informed public. City staff and citizen members on the Working Group were provided with policy documents, departmental reports as well as "expert" advise with which to make decisions and plan. Information packages consisting of copies of published articles on a wide range of topics were distributed to participants in each phase of the planning process. These documents included the demographic studies and a literature review on the topic of population aging and copies of journal and newspaper articles on its projected impacts on the provision of social services. Finally, all members of the public who had expressed interest or participated in the project were sent a quarterly "Ready or Not!", Project on Aging newsletter. In the newsletter, Social Planning staff reported on the project's progress to date, up coming events and on the implementation status of the neighbourhood based Vancouver Community
Building Fund projects.

5.5 Merits and Limitations of the Practice of Partnership in The Project on Aging

5.5.1 Citizen Participation Techniques

In the Project on Aging, members of the public were involved in the project through a variety of techniques: preliminary meetings with community-based groups, the Steering Committee, Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Groups, the Neighbourhood Workshops, an inter-neighbourhood forum, the Working Group and its sub-committees, Project Groups, and in review and revision of the Strategic Plan. By involving the public in a variety of ways, the project organizers recognized, as some theorists have, that no one technique will fit every objective (Glass, 1979:188) and for this reason a multiple technique approach is preferred (Sadler, 1977:29). In terms of partnership however, the most significant instances of joint planning and decision making took place through the committees composed of City staff and residents, namely, the Steering Committee and the Working Group. For this reason, they warrant closer examination.

The Working Group and Steering Committee involved relatively few citizens in joint planning and decision making. The findings of research on Advisory Committees and Task Forces, which these two techniques closely resemble, refer to a central paradox with regard to this type of participatory technique. That is, while the role of such committees is highly effective in involving some of the public in creative and informed ways in planning, the role of the public at large is generally much less extensive (Bousfield, 1976:27). One researcher, in his "Public Participation Matrix", represents this paradox in terms of an inverse relationship...
between the number of people involved in a technique and the amount of information to which they gain access (see Figure 4, Connor, 1985:II-24). Suggested is a trade off between the quantity and quality of participation.

Both these research findings corroborate the analysis of the Project on Aging. Members of the public were involved in the greatest numbers in the Neighbourhood Workshops, at which the objective was to consult with them rather than engage them in a partnership role. Since they were not involved in sharing decision making power, it was necessary to provide relatively little information about substantive issues to the participants at this stage. Those citizens participating on the Steering Committee and Working Group were exposed to much more information and needed to understand and respond to many more perspectives in order to make decisions than the public participating at large. The problem with this as noted in the research is the tendency for committee members to "...judge issues in a very different light than the 'uninformed' public" and therefore create the possibility that their views as expressed for example in the Strategic Plan, do not reflect those of the wider community (Bousfield, 1976:28). This research finding raises two thorny issues for partnership practice: representation and cooptation.

Findings of a study of "citizen committees" as traditionally practised in the United States, claim that this method of involving the public has some serious shortcomings (Milbrath, 1977:89). These include the proposition that in general, they are very unrepresentative, can be easily manipulated by public officials to suit their own purposes and also that the uninterested public, (often the vast majority) do not have input. The Project on Aging's Working Group and Steering Committee required high degrees of commitment, time and 'buy-in' by their resident and staff participants.
Figure 4: Connor's Public Participation Matrix

While an effort was made to attain some sort of balanced resident and staff "representation" on the committees (on the Working Group in particular) in terms of the type an location of their community based affiliation, the participants on these committees had no accountability to the larger public, nor was reporting back to their group or neighbourhood of origin raised as an issue.

The danger of using a highly interested, motivated and relatively small group of individuals as the main vehicle for citizen participation would seem to be the development of elitism which "contradicts the basic ideals" of citizen participation (Sadler, 1977:11). Involvement of relatively few members of the public was more conducive to garnering and sustaining support for the Project on Aging throughout its duration, as well as for involving the public in significant partnership decision making. At the same time, ensuring a high degree of inclusiveness and representation by involving the public in large numbers throughout the process, was not evident in the Project on Aging.17

5.5.2 Multiple Objectives and Autonomy

There is much evidence to suggest that a genuine effort was made on the part of the local government to create the conditions for partnership to occur. Because the design of the project was open-ended, in the sense that City staff provided guidelines for the project but no detailed definition of issues, the process was able to respond to the requirements for partnership indicated by the community. In other words, citizen participation in the project had substantial impacts

17 It is likely that one of the causes of this situation was the project's budget constraints. Project organizers were very open with Working Group participants about the fact that while this project had Council's backing, this was on the condition that it require no extra staff or budget beyond those resources allocated by the Social Planning Department.
both in shaping the project's evolution and outcome; process and product.

The process used to produce the "Strategic Plan for the Impacts of Population Aging" is an example of the City's attempt to find the point of delicate balance between satisfying corporate objectives and allowing citizen input to shape outcomes and subsequent phases of the project. The open ended project design, which created both uncertainty and lack of clear direction at times, also allowed the residents and City staff eventually to agree to write a Strategic Plan that addressed, in addition to corporate priorities, "the relationship between aging, community building and the role of neighbourhoods" (‘Ready or Not!’ News, March 1993:6).

Another example of the City’s efforts to create conditions necessary for partnership include the creation of the Vancouver Community Building Fund. By giving seed money to ‘grass roots’ initiatives, this fund acted as a catalyst in the creation of community partners who would in effect, have the power and means to implement shared project goals. This was a critical step since in the efforts of community organizations to avoid cooptation and impotence, money is recognized as a critical factor (Cooper, 1980:411). In addition, the inter-neighbourhood forum, the newsletter, sponsorship of talks on neighbourhood governance, and publication of a listing of community-based groups are all examples of resources made available by the City to community groups in response to requirements identified by the community to increase their abilities to engage in ‘partnership’ with the City in significant ways.

5.6 Other Considerations

The extent to which the Project on Aging was successful in its goal to create a
partnership with the community has been evaluated in terms of the techniques used to create conditions for power sharing, joint planning and co-production of local social service related projects. Also important to the project's outcome however were its inter-personal aspects and political context.

It is important to understand that the project could not have achieved partnership to the extent it did without the commitment and considerable resources of the planning staff involved. Key participants in the project were the social planners involved who called upon an extensive network of people both in the community, within the bureaucracy and in the media who were supportive of the project's philosophy and goals. The partnership could not have been managed without the energies of the planning staff who, paid for their time and expertise, devoted to coordinating the activities of non-paid participants and providing a framework for planning and inter-personal networking.

Citizen support and staff determination to implement the project however, cannot offset the limited attention the project was given by Council. Originally, the project design called for some members of Council to sit with residents and City staff on planning committees and participate in project events. However, while some members of Council did attend the April 1992 Workshops, none took part in the aspects of the project involving joint decision making. The reasons for its low priority could well have been the CityPlan process occurring at the same time as the Project on Aging. The City of Vancouver's efforts to involve the public in the process for drafting a comprehensive plan for the city or "CityPlan" have involved over a million dollars in local government funding, and have received considerable public and media attention. In effect, the CityPlan process overshadowed the Project on Aging, which concerned
relatively long term social policy goals which are not likely to generate a sense of urgency in the minds of political decision makers.

How did the planners involved deal with the difficulties involved in creating meaningful partnership in the context of a relatively low level of political commitment? Social planners openly admitted to Working Group participants that this project had a low priority for Council but that it would nonetheless achieve its objectives if community and City participants were committed to implementing its goals. How realistic was this view? On the one hand, community groups received funding to carry out projects that addressed the impacts of population aging in their area. On the other hand however, no new social services were created, nor as yet have public resources been reallocated as a result of this project. Thus while participants shared in decision making, plan making and project implementation through the partnership created with the City through this project, in no way did citizens increase their political decision making power.\textsuperscript{18}

Finally, the limitations of the partnership model as practised by the City of Vancouver, cannot be fully appreciated without an understanding of the context in which practice of the partnership model was attempted. In the city of Vancouver, there is no formal structure for resident input into local government decision making, nor area specific representation on City Council. No system of elected or appointed neighbourhood councils exists, and even Local Area Planning exercises have been curtailed somewhat in recent years. For the Project on Aging’s organizers, the challenge of engaging in partnership with the community, in a city where no

\textsuperscript{18} To the credit of the project organizers however, the political context of partnership was not ignored. Project organizers actively supported community-based efforts to raise the issue of neighbourhood governance, and ways in which to bring about on-going participation in local government decision making
formal structure for community organizations exists, was a significant one.

5.7 Conclusions

A summary of the features and techniques used to implement the partnership model, and its merits and limitations are presented in Table 3.

The findings of the case study suggest that in the Project on Aging to date, citizens participated with government in making meaningful decisions throughout the planning process; ones that affected the design, issues and implementation and outcomes of the project. The Steering Committee, Neighbourhood Workshop Planning Teams and Working Group were some of the techniques used by the City of Vancouver to incorporate citizen participation in the Project on Aging. Each of these techniques involved a considerable degree of shared decision making in, and control over, the planning process.

Decision making power was shared as was access to resources. The availability of information, expertise and monetary resources provided a means of effectively addressing the power imbalance between citizen and government. Specifically, the Vancouver Community Building Fund and information made available to the citizen participants by Social Planning Staff also demonstrated principles of partnership in practice. In these ways, the practice of partnership in the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging, while not without its limitations and deficiencies, proves to have been substantive in nature rather than merely symbolic.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partnership Technique/Feature</th>
<th>Merits</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Staff-resident mix           | - Government and citizens’ objectives and expectations brought to bear on process.  
- Resources and expertise pooled.  
- Vehicle for shared decision making using non-hierarchical structure.  
- Direct communication of public concerns to City staff. | - Limited numbers involved  
- Large commitment of time and energy required.  
- Cooptation possible.  
- No formal system in place for ongoing communication of participants with larger "partner" group. |
| Open-ended project design     | - participants had direct role in shaping subsequent phases and project outcomes.                                                                                                                      | - lack of direction, loss of momentum, uncertainty among project participants                                                                                                                              |
| Involvement throughout the planning process | - Citizens and City staff participants were involved in decision making throughout the planning process: project definition and planning, issue identification, plan writing and implementation. | - lack of political interest in the project makes it uncertain as to what this project will accomplish in the long run.  
- stakes in this planning process are low.                                                                                                                                 |
| resources                    | - Access to financial resources provided to community groups.  
- Informational resources available to all participants.  
- Information and expertise contributed by all participants.                                                                                     | - City Council approved project with stipulation that it would require no extra staff or budget; citizens therefore had no power to influence decisions involving re-allocation of resources. |
| multiple opportunities for participation | - The variety of techniques used to involve the public in phases of the project allowed for varying amounts of time and interest among citizens.                                                              | - The greatest number of citizens were involved in the consultation phase and not in partnership with City staff.                                                                                                                                 |
6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study has been to assess the nature, merits, and limitations of the citizen participation model used in the process of developing a municipal plan for the impacts of population aging. The rationale for undertaking the research is that in the current planning context, there is increasing pressure for more satisfactory and effective methods for including citizens in the public planning process and government decision making in general. In Vancouver, this pressure stems both from public dissatisfaction with its role in past planning processes and government concerns regarding social service provision for a population with changing demographic characteristics. Thus, the incentive to share decision making power is growing among governments and citizens, and in the City of Vancouver's case, has resulted in the piloting of a new model of citizen participation in the planning process. Creating a working City-citizen 'partnership' is a central goal in the City of Vancouver's "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging.

6.1 Citizen Participation Theory

The analysis and evaluation of a practical case of citizen participation in practice was preceded by a literature review. Examination of theories of citizen participation sheds light on the importance of citizen participation in a democracy, since it contributes to governments remaining accountable and representative of the plurality of public interests. Investigation of the models of citizen participation in planning developed over the past twenty-five years make clear that citizen participation practice has varied widely in terms of the intent, design and techniques used. Evident from the planning literature is that power and its distribution are fundamental in
distinguishing one level of participation from another. They are key factors to consider in the design of participation programs. Of the models investigated, partnership is identified as one that requires that government and citizens engage in shared decision making.

Among citizen participation theorists, there is some consensus on the causes of failure in citizen participation practice. These include differing expectations and objectives among the government actors and citizens involved, failure to match appropriate techniques with objectives, and lack of evaluation. Based on the theory, the partnership model, by giving citizens decision making power in the planning process, effectively addresses these problems.

Advocates of 'partnership', 'collaborative planning' and 'joint action' as it is also known, believe that the model has considerable advantages over other models such as consultation. In partnership, the objectives of both citizen and government participants steer the process, resources, expertise and decision making power are shared in the planning process. Problems associated with the model include dangers of cooptation of citizens involved, and the tendency for the citizen participants to become an elite group unrepresentative of the larger public. Evaluation of a case of this model in practice generated mixed results in terms of its merits and limitations.

6.2 The City of Vancouver’s Project on Aging

As a response to the Municipal Council’s identification of "social development" as one of its corporate priorities, the City of Vancouver’s Social Planning Department undertook formulation of a "social action strategy". As part of this strategy, the "Ready or Not!" Project on Aging was launched in 1991 and was intended to involve citizens, through partnership, in
planning for future social needs.

Though not yet completely finalized, it is well evident that the "Ready or Not!" - Project on Aging has included as a cornerstone, an innovative approach to citizen participation in city planning. Through use of the partnership model based on collaborative involvement of City residents and staff, there is evidence that the Project on Aging created a process which has resulted in some sharing of decision making power, resources and responsibility for project implementation. Since community organization in the City varies considerably, and the City of Vancouver has no system for area specific representation on Council, the Project on Aging, with partnership as its goal, has the considerable task not only of sharing power by involving citizens in joint decision making, but also of supporting independent community organizing to make a meaningful partnership possible. In this context, partnership was an ambitious goal and was achieved with some success and a number of limitations.

To enter into a partnership, a common ground between corporate priorities and citizen priorities has to be found. One of the significant features of the Project on Aging is a specific goal serving common interests that underlie the City-citizen partnership. While it is safe to assume that both ‘partners’ have an interest in maintaining the ‘quality of life’ in Vancouver, as one practitioner points out "quality of life issues can encompass almost anything" (Kathler, 1991:5). The selection of the impact of an aging population on social service provision in neighbourhoods provided the common ground on which the interests of citizens and the City met. Hence, it was the common desire, on the part of citizens and the City, to strengthen citizen activism in neighbourhoods and plan for future demands on community-based social services that provided the basis for the partnership.
This case provides an example of citizen participation through partnership with local government, in a planning exercise related to a policy issue on a city-wide basis. Relatively low levels of controversy, public visibility, resource commitment, and political interest were involved in the project. What this study cannot show, is the performance of the partnership model under more adverse conditions, where conflicting values and objectives are involved, and in general, the stakes are higher in terms of public investment. Further research could be usefully employed to investigate whether partnership is suitable as a pro-active strategy only, or whether it can be used where the conditions for planning necessitate resolution of considerable conflict.

6.3 Citizen Participation and the Partnership Model

The findings of this study show that power and its distribution, are key variables in understanding the intent and design of participation methods. The meaning of ‘partnership’ as a model for citizen participation has changed and evolved since it was first proposed in the 1960s; Arnstein’s (1969) particular vision of ‘citizen power’ is not entirely applicable to the present context for planning. However, partnership, while not a precise term, does dictate the use of techniques which allow sharing of decision making power and resources between citizens and governments. At the same time, problems associated with the model relate to the representativeness and autonomy (or elitism and cooptation), of citizens participating in the planning process.

The study of the Project on Aging generates some lessons for future practice of the partnership model. This case suggests that planning in partnership requires commitment to the partnership objective as a substantive and not a symbolic goal. This means government takes
an active role in creating conditions for partners to act on their interests using the following techniques:

1. Opportunities for staff and residents to engage in purposeful joint planning activities in a non-hierarchical structure allowing equal contribution and shared responsibility for the outcomes.

2. Involvement of citizens throughout the planning process: from project formulation stages to implementation.

3. Multiple opportunities and techniques for allowing public involvement in the process; not all of these techniques will involve the degree of involvement required by partnership; public consultation may be used as a vehicle in achieving the partnership goal.

4. Flexibility: an open ended project design allows the participants in the process to have a legitimate impact on shaping the project as it evolves.

5. Access to information and financial resources. These factors directly affect individual partners’ ability to act on their interests and must therefore be provided by government.

This study of the merits and limitations of the partnership model in theory and demonstrated in practice suggests that it is a model able to respond to the need for more useful and more meaningful public participation in planning. However, the findings also raise questions as to how widely applicable this model is. Can it work for planning at a regional level? Is it successful where high levels of public controversy and stakeholder conflict exist? To what extent can the model be adapted to meet the challenges of these and other contexts? It is likely that with future applications, the partnership model will continue to evolve so that it
meets more needs in a variety of planning environments.

6.4 New Directions in Citizen Participation

In most communities, municipal governments are facing down-loading and down-sizing of senior government support for social services and recognize their inability to meet future social needs alone. Citizens interested in enhancing the quality of life in their neighbourhoods and being involved in a process that allows them to do so, will require government support for community based social services. Thus, both citizens and local governments require processes to plan for social needs that will make allow the latter to better respond to the impacts of population aging.

In the case studied, the process of defining social issues and developing a plan to address them challenged government and citizen participants to redefine their roles and expectations of each other. In the past, common roles for citizens in the planning process have been as clients, advocates, complainants, advisors and supplicants. As decision makers and problem solvers, their participation may be more effective. Governments have the ability to create the conditions for shared decision making and need to make a commitment to preserve and support the integrity of community groups to do so. Thus, in structuring citizen participation in the planning process, government organizations

...may be understood as not only producing results (i.e., services, goods, plans) but also as strengthening or weakening (i.e., reproducing) social and political relations among citizens, thereby affecting their knowledge or ignorance, active participation or passive deference, trust, suspicion, and awareness or neglect (Forester, 1983:3).

The lessons to be learned from this case reflect an increasingly popular view that
collaborative efforts by the public sector working together with citizens, the private and non-profit sectors are necessary to ensure that future social needs are met, thereby ensuring that the quality of life in communities is enhanced. Partnership is one model that appears to make this possible, but in order to be representative of the many interests in society, governments will need to collaborate with more people on more issues.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Vancouver’s Demographic Shifts for the years 1971 - 2016

Appendix B: Funding Guidelines for the Vancouver Community Building Fund

Appendix C: Working Group Sub-Committee Guidelines
Appendix B

VANCOUVER COMMUNITY BUILDING FUND

A. FUNDING GUIDELINES

1. Funds must be administered by a registered non-profit society. A letter of agreement accepting responsibility from the sponsoring society must be attached to the proposal (if the proposal is not submitted by that society).

2. The project must complement, rather than duplicate, existing work in the community.

3. It is expected that projects will be concluded by the end of 1993.

4. Only one proposal will be accepted from each neighbourhood (or community), but the proposals may include more than one project.

5. Projects should not depend on additional funding — in other words, should be achievable within the budget requested. However, additional fund-raising to expand or augment the projects is encouraged.

6. It is not the intent of the Fund to supplement existing organizational budgets. However, it would be acceptable if the community wishes to add on to an existing project — and this meets the Fund criteria.

7. The full amount of the request — not to exceed $3000 — can be paid upon approval of the proposal. An accounting of expenditures must be provided at the conclusion of the project.

8. It is not anticipated that the Fund will continue beyond 1993. Communities wishing to continue their projects beyond this initial phase should seek financing from alternative sources.

9. Funded groups are asked to a) make a commitment to providing verbal progress reports for inclusion in the "READY OR NOT!" newsletter; and b) sending a representative to 2—3 inter-neighbourhood meetings during 1993.

B. INFORMATION REQUIRED IN PROPOSALS (Maximum 2—3 pages)

1. Project Overview
   a) What are you going to do? Briefly describe the project(s), including why you think it will contribute to strengthening the community.
   b) What are the expected outcomes of the project(s)?
   c) Who supports the project(s)? List names of community groups, contact people and telephone numbers.
2. How are you going to carry out the project?
   a) How will you involve the community?
   b) Will City staff be involved? If so, how?
   c) Who will manage the project?
      - who is the prime contact?
      - what committee(s) are or will be put in place?
   d) What will the funds be used for? Please identify general categories and expenditure and include amounts.
   e) What is the time frame for the project?
   f) How will you evaluate the project?

C. HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY

1. Submit proposals to:

   Social Planning Department
   "READY OR NOT!"
   P.O. Box 96, City Square
   555 West 12th Avenue
   Vancouver, BC
   V5Z 3X7

2. There will be two submission deadlines:

   October 23, 1992
   January 20, 1993
   April 23, 1993

   Decisions will be made within two weeks of each deadline. Proposals can be submitted for either deadline, but not both.

3. If you have questions or would like assistance, call Social Planning:
   Chris Warren — 871-6033
   Mario Lee — 871-6034

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WORKING GROUP
SUBCOMMITTEE GUIDELINES

Definition of Aging:

"This project recognizes the changing age make-up of the city, whereby the median age will continue to rise. All residents will inevitably be affected by the ensuing challenges, demands and opportunities."

Objectives:

- To engage residents and staff in discussions which will result in the identification of both neighbourhood and City actions to address the issues of aging. The issues of aging — along with other issues — are best addressed through strong, involved and informed communities.
- To understand what impact aging has on the community at large.

Checklist:

(For each sub-committee to strive for, encourage and support)

a. multicultural involvement
b. youth involvement
c. inter-generational linkages
d. neighbourhood empowerment
e. staff / resident partnerships (shared responsibility)
f. solutions leading to action
g. the relationship between actions and objectives
h. a focus on strengths and assets
i. plain language
j. allowing all participants to be heard
k. inclusiveness in both planning & implementation of community roundtables
l. ensuring the issue fits the mandate of "READY OR NOT!?"
m. opportunities for recognition of achievements
n. inclusiveness of the special needs of all residents — physical, economic and social