PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COMPREHENSIVE
MUNICIPAL PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING

by

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The purpose of this study was to determine the nature and the adequacy of public participation methods used in the process of developing municipal parks and recreation plans. The work is based largely on library research and participant-observation of one case study.

It is evident from the literature that the comprehensive or master plan approach is typical of good, current parks and recreation planning practice. As well, there is virtually unanimous agreement on the importance of public participation in the plan making process.

The stated purposes of public participation in plan preparation forms the basis of a set of goals and targets which have been used to assess the adequacy of the participation methods currently used in parks and recreation planning. These methods were identified through a review of plan documents authoritatively regarded as examples of good practice. The three major methodological types identified are surveys, select committees, and staff contacts.

Results of assessing these methods against the stated criteria indicate that no method is sufficient alone to ensure adequate public participation in the planning process. The survey method should be used in combination with a select committee or staff contact, because the inherent weaknesses of the first are strong points of the others.
This conclusion is explored and amplified by examining a case study in which all three methods were employed. Statistical data indicates that while all three methods were used, there remained significant differences in basic parks and recreation priorities among the general public, the plan makers and the political decision makers. This result is attributed to problems in the implementation of the methodologies and in the utilization of data and findings that resulted from their use.

Recommendations based on this research suggest improvement in the conduct of public participation and in the integration of participation with other elements of the planning process:

- methodologies should be used to complement each other,
- each method should be implemented fully and carefully, so that the quality of the results approaches the potential ideally available within each method,
- inherent strengths and weaknesses of public participation should be considered in the planning process and in the utilization and feedback of participation results throughout the process.
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INTRODUCTION AND STUDY METHODS

Introduction

This study deals with two areas of concern to municipal planners; the parks and recreation planning process and the role of public participation in that process. Each of these has been the subject of much thought and discussion and together, they represent an important issue for municipal planners. As Wright, Braithwaite and Forster state

The real success of urban recreational open space planning depends largely on the extent to which the citizens participate in the major decisions affecting the eventual course of action, or strategy, proposed by the study committee. (1976, 61)

Parks and recreation planning and public participation are a concern to municipal planners for a variety of reasons. Over the years our society has experienced an increase not only in the time individuals have available for the pursuit of leisure activities, but in the diversity of leisure activities as well. (HUD, 1972; Jubenville, 1976; Lutzin, 1973; Newmeyer and Newmeyer, 1958) People are demanding facilities and programs to occupy their leisure time, with municipal responsibility for the provision of these facilities and programs increasing. Planners on a municipal level are faced with planning a local parks and recreation system that will meet the needs of residents, while recognizing the limited availability of resources to meet these needs. (Greueling, 1973;
Concurrently, there has been a movement to increase public participation and input in all areas of government. Planners are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of involving the people they are planning for, in the planning process. Ellis and Homenuck note

Also important, if not crucial, to the success of the planning effort in the climate of the 1970's, is the issue of who participates in the process. (1976, 17)

The concern of planners has been how and when to involve the public in the planning process and numerous theories and models of public participation in the comprehensive planning process have been developed to try and answer this concern. Recently, some effort has been made to identify appropriate methods of obtaining public participation and input in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. (Bannon, 1976; Burton, Ellis and Homenuck, 1977; Gold, 1973; Jubenville, 1976; Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster, 1976)

Although, the importance of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process has been identified, it appears that public participation is not seriously considered in the current process. Wright, Braithwaite and Forster feel that,

One of the key problems with present methods of planning for urban recreational open space is the failure to consider the diverse values and needs of ethnic, economic, age and other groups within the urban population. (1976, 19)
This is partially due to the planning approach generally used in the field of municipal parks and recreation planning. This approach, based primarily on the application of standards, does not emphasize public participation in the planning process. It is the intent of this study to generally examine public participation in the current municipal parks and recreation planning process.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The overall purpose of this study is to assess the adequacy of current methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The specific objectives are:

1. to briefly outline the historical development of municipal parks and recreation planning to put the study in perspective and to briefly describe the current process of municipal parks and recreation planning;

2. to verify the importance of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process;

3. to determine current methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process;

4. to identify the goals of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process and the intent of those goals; and

5. to assess current public participation methods using the identified goals and a case study.
Scope and Significance of the Study

Specifically, this study is concerned with public participation in the plan preparation and development phase of the current municipal parks and recreation planning process. It is not concerned with public participation in the adoption and implementation phases of the same process.

The theoretical significance of the study lies in broadening the foundations of municipal parks and recreation planning. Until recently, public participation in parks and recreation planning was a minor concern. The planning was done, with little public participation. As attitudes have changed and the concept of public participation has gained recognition, the methods of obtaining public participation have become a concern of municipal parks and recreation planners. This study attempts to increase knowledge in the area of municipal parks and recreation planning, by determining if the current methods of obtaining public participation in the planning process are adequate. The practical value of the study is that it determines the usefulness of current public participation methods in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

Study Methods

The primary research method of this study was a literature review, supplemented with a case study. This
research involved the review of several types of literature. Generally, the investigation followed a step by step approach, related to the five objectives stated earlier. The four types of literature reviewed for the study were historical, theoretical, practical, and plans.

A range of literature that discussed the historical development of municipal parks and recreation planning was briefly reviewed. The information gathered has been used as the basis for the sketch of the historical development of parks and recreation planning and serves as an introduction to the description of the current municipal parks and recreation planning process.

The theoretical and practical literature reviewed falls into two broad categories; public participation, and planning and parks and recreation. The literature on public participation in municipal planning was reviewed for the following types of information:

1. the general role of public participation;
2. the goals of public participation; and
3. the intent of these goals.

The theoretical planning and parks and recreation literature fell into three sub-categories; literature that dealt with parks and recreation administration and management; and a much smaller body of literature that dealt with parks and recreation planning. The practical planning and parks and recreation literature consisted primarily of "how-to-guides" for the parks and recreation master planning
process. The planning and parks and recreation literature was reviewed for two kinds of information:

1. the importance of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process; and
2. the methods available for obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

The final type of literature reviewed was municipal plans. Parks and recreation sections of community plans were reviewed as well as separate parks and recreation plans. These plans were reviewed to determine the methods that were used to obtain public participation in their preparation.

In addition, one other source of information was used extensively. The results of the Canadian Urban Open Space Study and two of its component projects were an important source of information for this study.

The other research method employed in the study was a case study. The purpose of the case study was to relate information obtained in the literature review to actual planning practice. The case study is intended as a means of verifying the conclusions reached from the literature review.

Organization

Chapter one of the study has presented a general introduction to the subject of the study and a description of the
study methods used.

Chapter two presents a brief sketch of the historical development of municipal parks and recreation planning and a short description of the current municipal parks and recreation planning process.

The third chapter of the study discusses the importance of public participation in the current municipal parks and recreation planning process.

Chapter four specifies the methods used to obtain public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. A brief description of each method is also included in this chapter.

Chapter five is concerned with assessing the adequacy of the public participation methods identified in Chapter four. This chapter also includes identification of the goals of public participation and the intent of these goals.

Chapter six is concerned with the case study; a practical assessment of the conclusions reached earlier in the study. The case study is an additional test of the adequacy of current methods of public participation in municipal parks and recreation planning process.

The final chapter of the study presents a summary of the findings and conclusions of the study based on those findings.
Introduction

This chapter presents a brief sketch of the historical roots of municipal parks and recreation planning. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overall framework for the study. It is important to understand the origins of municipal parks and recreation planning since current planning processes are a reflection of historical development and trends. This chapter also briefly describes the current and typical approach to municipal parks and recreation planning.

Historical Perspective

Municipal parks and recreation planning has its roots in the City Beautiful planning movement of the late 1890's. It was during this time that planners and decision-makers recognized the importance of parks and open space in the urban environment. It was felt that the provision of the parks and open space in cities would not only "beautify" the city landscape, but could help alleviate social ills.
Greueling comments that "the parameters on which planning for parks and recreation almost universally are based today grew out of the needs of urban society several decades ago". (1973, 1)

It was during the era of the City Beautiful movement that the first municipal master plans were promoted. Bottomley comments that Harlan Bartholomew, a prominent planner of the age stated that

"Those things which properly constitute the city plan are six in number:
1. street system
2. transit system
3. transportation (rail and water)
4. public recreation
5. zoning
6. civic art

These are the physical elements which, when properly planned and correlated, make possible the creation of an attractive and orderly working organism out of the heterogeneous mass we now call the City."

Each element was then discussed in turn and 'ideal' arrangements outlined.

"The several types of public recreation facilities which cities should provide in varying degrees according to their size and density of population are: a. community centers
b. childrens playgrounds
c. neighborhood parks
d. recreation fields
e. large parks
f. boulevards and outlying parks"

These facilities were to be organized on a quasi-neighborhood basis with a hierarchical arrangement of facilities provided making use of the public school system as much as possible. Community centers
were to be integrated with high schools, recreation fields with the intermediate school system and childrens playgrounds with the elementary school system. (1977, 244)

In addition Bottomley contends that "Bartholomew obviously had great faith in the applicability of these ideas". (1977, 244) These are the ideas that Bartholomew incorporated into his municipal master plans. Bartholomew emphasized physical planning and his ideas about parks and recreation reflect this. Municipal parks and recreation planning has not changed much since Bartholomew's time. Burton, Ellis and Homenuck note that,

A second problem with urban open space planning in Canada has to do with the very notion of planning itself. Historically, Canadian cities and towns have been concerned with the provision of urban open space, rather than with its planning. (1977, 1)

This trend is a reflection of the historical emphasis on physical planning in municipal parks and recreation planning. In addition Burton, Ellis and Homenuck comment that,

A significant consequence of the emphasis upon provision rather than planning has been the development of a "standards approach" to urban open space, which in turn, has lead to a preoccupation with means rather than ends, uses rather than functions and products rather than processes. (1977, 2)

It is Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster's feeling that,

Planning for urban recreational open space is clearly a developing art which can be improved substantially with existing knowledge and can be made even more comprehensive in the future given further research in specific areas. (1976, 19)
The following section provides a brief description of the current and typical municipal parks and recreation planning process.

The Current and Typical Municipal Parks and Recreation Planning Process

In their study, *Planning for Urban Recreational Open Space: Towards Community-Specific Standards*, Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster have included "an analysis of the 'state of the art' of planning for urban recreational open space..." (1976, v) In this study,

Canadian and American sources were reviewed to assess the current planning 'state of the art'. From this material, a current typical approach was abstracted together with various assumptions and considerations on which planning is normally based. (1976, 5)

This section briefly summarizes Wright, Braithwaite and Forster's findings, since their study represents a synthesis of the state of the art as presented in other literature (Bannon, 1976; Burton, Ellis, and Homenuck, 1977; Gold, 1973; and Jubenville, 1976)

Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster indicate that "there are two principle methods by which urban recreational open space in a municipality is currently allocated and protected". (1976, 13) These two methods are "ad hoc acquisition" and "the traditional parks/recreation master plan". Wright,
Braithwaite and Forster have defined ad hoc acquisition as an "approach where a community obtains public control of recreational open space lands on an incremental basis from a variety of isolated actions or programs". (1976, 13) It is not within the scope of this document to discuss ad hoc acquisition, rather this study is concerned with the traditional parks and recreation master plan. Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster note that "the trend is definitely in this direction (master plans) and developments in this area reflect the state of the art". (1976, 14) It should be recognized that Burton, Ellis, and Homenuck found "very few of the communities had open space planning documents that contained sufficient information upon which to base an effective action program. Only 20 communities submitted reasonably complete plans..." (1977, 12), of the 135 responses received to their Canadian Urban Open Space questionnaire. But, since this approach is popular with both theoreticians and practicing planners, the master planning approach is the one addressed in this study.

Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster indicate that the municipal parks and recreation planning process normally involves developing and recording, in the form of a master plan, an integrated set of policies, programs, and plans, including the identification of potential recreational open space areas and appropriate implementation programs on a priority basis, together with site development and management plans for both existing areas and those to be acquired.
Normally this would be done as an adjunct to the official plan for the municipality. (1976, 16)

Generally, the initial step of the master planning process identifies the present community population, from which population projections are made. Recognized quantitative guidelines (e.g. Guidelines for Public Recreation Facility Standards prepared and distributed by the Sports and Recreation Branch of the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, 1973) and standards are related to the present and future population and a "demand" for these facilities is calculated.

The next major step involves an inventory of existing parks (and occasionally other public open space) and recreation facilities. This inventory or "supply" is then compared to the calculated demand to determine the existing and future need.

In addition, recreation participation or activity patterns are studied. These patterns can indicate what land and facilities are being used and the extent of that usage. Some municipalities never get beyond the first inventory phase to the study of participation patterns. Burton, Ellis, and Homenuck note that "more than 80% (of the communities responding to their questionnaire) had prepared an open space map, while only 60% had developed an inventory of open space". (1977, 12)
Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster state that the next step of the process involves an independent survey of the municipality to "identify the lands which are lightly developed and which are potentially and feasibly useful in one of the standard ways". (1976, 17) Essentially, this step is an identification of land that can be used to fulfill the present and future need, identified by the previous application of standards. It should be noted that by using standards to determine parks and recreation needs, it is "often discovered there is a present as well as future deficit" (1976, 17).

The final step of the process involves a comparison of the identified "potential open space lands" and the calculated future and existing need. Alternative methods of fulfilling the need are determined, along with the costs of those alternatives, and a specific alternative can then be selected by decision-makers. "Following the recommended plan, detailed site plans may then be prepared for each area.... although, Wright, Braithwaite, and Forster feel that developing site plans is not a reflection of the current status of the art, but does occur in isolated examples." (1976, 17)

In addition to this technical planning process, municipal parks and recreation planning can be described by the concepts used in the process. These concepts have changed little since Bartholomew's time and include the use of standards,
an open space classification system and joint park-school development and maintenance. A new concept has emerged since Bartholomew's time and that is the concept of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

In Bartholomew's era, city planning was physically oriented, with strict guidelines. There was no need for public input. Therefore it is not surprising that Bartholomew's concept of parks and recreation planning revolved around standards and a park classification system. But figure 2, which diagramatically depicts the planning process for municipal parks and recreation, indicates public participation at a number of steps in the process.

The next chapter elaborates on the importance of public participation in this municipal parks and recreation planning process.
CHAPTER 3

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MUNICIPAL PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

This chapter addresses the importance of public participation in the current municipal parks and recreation planning process; the parks and recreation master planning process. The purpose is to fully illustrate the importance placed on public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The information presented in this chapter comes from theoretical literature and from practical guides on the preparation of municipal parks and recreation plans.

Theoretical References

There is much academic and scholarly writing that focuses on municipal parks and recreation management and administration. There is relatively little that relates specifically to municipal parks and recreation planning. Yet, without exception, all of the works reviewed note the importance of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. In addition the literature generally indicates that the role of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process is an advisory,
but essential communication link between planners, decision-makers, and citizens throughout the planning process.

For example, Reynolds and Hormanchea, in their book *Public Recreation Administration*, state six recreation planning principles intended to "provide major guidelines for physical planning", as well as to represent "a general truth or fact". (1976, 313) Guideline 5 states "Involve the public in order to better determine needs and maintain public support". (1976, 314) These two reasons; assessing public opinion, and generating support for the process and plan, are the most frequently mentioned reasons for involving the public in the parks and recreation planning process.

Public participation and input is also addressed in the report *Guidelines for Urban Open Space Planning*. (burton, Ellis, and Homenuck, 1977) This report represents the results of the comprehensive Canadian Urban Open Space Study, which was jointly sponsored by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association and the Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. In the section entitled "Planning Implications of the Urban Open Space Study", public participation is addressed.

Turning to specific implications, one may note a special concern with the issue of public participation in planning for urban open space, parks and recreation. This is especially important for two reasons. One is that the meeting of people's needs through the highly-important and personal-oriented roles of open space can best be done by involving people in their planning. The second is that the
participation of the public in all forms of planning may well be advanced by good experiences of it in one or more specialized areas of planning and parks and recreation matters lend themselves well to it, as the several case studies have attested. This link has laso been recognized in a recent report, Canadian Planning Issues, prepared by the Canadian Institute of Planners. (1977, 43)

The authors of Guidelines for Urban Open Space Planning (Burton, Ellis and Homenuck, 1977) emphasize that public participation and input is not only an important component of the parks and recreation planning process, but that it is specifically appropriate in the specialized field of municipal parks and recreation planning. The ultimate objective of this study was to develop a set of guidelines for urban open space planning for use by municipalities throughout Canada. The purpose stated in the final report was to "present a comprehensive set of themes relevant to urban open space planning and to offer guidelines applicable to each theme". (1977, 42) Several of the guidelines presented in the study deal with public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process, one of which is presented here.

The most effective relationship among the primary actors is one that may be described as a public participatory decision-making process. A public participatory decision-making process is one which gives a considerable degree of decision-making power and responsibility to those most affected by policies and proposals - the public. This process sees residents as an integral part of the ongoing planning, along with elected officials and experts, in the identification and resolution of problems and issues.
Public participation in planning fulfills several functions which bring numerous benefits to the overall planning activity. Chief among these are the following: It provides additional information which may not have been considered or identified by planners; It can achieve the most responsive policy and programs through public participants making the tradeoffs that are necessary; It can be a source of new ideas, imaginative alternatives; and it results in a more knowledgeable community resource which will be supportive in implementing policies and programs.

(1977, 47)

The authors of *Guidelines for Urban Open Space Planning* (Burton, Ellis and Homenuck, 1977) specify in detail, the basic concept of and rationale for public participation found in *Public Recreation Administration*. (Reynolds and Hormancéa, 1976) Yet, the two works have been prepared from different perspectives. *Guidelines for Urban Space Planning* (Burton, Ellis and Homenuck, 1977) focuses on municipal parks planning, while *Public Recreation Administration* (Reynolds and Hormancéa, 1976) deals with parks and recreation administration and management.

A third reference from the theoretical literature group, *Urban Recreational Open Space: Towards Community Specific Standards*, (Wright, Braithwaite and Forster, 1976) confirms the importance of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

Public participation is concerned with basic assumptions and values as well as alternative directions. It concerns the 'process' which involves citizens in decision-making about the many factors affecting their future environment... Basic to citizen input is an appreciation of the citizens' role in the process, and their responsibility and function in arriving at decisions affecting their community. (1976, 61)
It is clear that those involved in the theoretical sphere of municipal parks and recreation planning view public participation as an essential component of the planning process.

Practical References

The second group of works that deal with the importance of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process are practical or how-to guides. These guides, prepared by senior governments (provincial in most cases) as aids to local planning units under their jurisdiction, provide simplified explanations of the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

The Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Department has published a booklet entitled "Yes, You Can! - Master Plan, The Community Recreation Master Plan Guidelines for Writing a Community Recreation Master Plan Document". (1979) In the introduction to the booklet is found a statement on public participation.

Today's society indicates that there is a need and a requirement that planning should be done with the people who are to be affected by the decisions. Not only does this provide for a greater understanding of the particular needs of the people, but it also allows a greater number of people to share in the decision-making. (1979, 5)

The Province of British Columbia has published a similar booklet, "An Approach to Recreational Master Planning". (1978) Again the importance of public participation and input is
An effective plan must incorporate community input in decision-making. Public involvement not only provides direction for recreation development but it also insures community commitment to the development and implementation of the master plan. (1978, 20)

The practical works take the same position on public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process as the theoretical literature. All of the works reviewed stressed the importance of public participation in the planning process.

The next chapter focuses on the identification of the current methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.
CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION METHODS CURRENTLY USED IN MUNICIPAL PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING

Introduction

The intent of this chapter is to identify the current methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. Over forty municipal comprehensive plans (parks and recreation sections) and parks and recreation plans were reviewed in an effort to identify the method of public participation currently being used in their preparation. In addition, Case Studies of Urban Open Space Planning (Ellis and Homenuck, 1976), phase two of the Canadian Urban Open Space Study, was a primary source of information. The purpose of that phase of the study was to examine "in detail the planning practices with respect to urban open space of a sample of the municipalities that responded to the Phase I study". (1976, 2)

Burton, Ellis and Homenuck in Guidelines for Urban Open Space Planning state that these six case studies, were selected from among about 20 cities and towns which the first project had identified as having relatively comprehensive approaches to the planning of open space, and were chosen also to reflect a range of community population size. (1977, 5).

In addition, "it was believed that, collectively, these six communities encompassed a 'model' approach, or approaches, to
urban open space planning". (1977, 5)

Identifying the Methods: Review of the literature and Plans

The theoretical literature previously reviewed indicates that a wide variety of methods can be employed to obtain public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. These methods include: votes and referenda, hearings, large public meetings, advisory groups, surveys, small group meetings, telecommunication techniques, workshops, participant observation, and simulation techniques. (Burton, Ellis, Homenuck 1977) Yet, only one method is mentioned in municipal plans, surveys. Of the plans reviewed, only 14% had statements of the research methods employed, but 26% mentioned that surveys were used in the preparation of the plan. The following excerpts are typical of the statements found in the municipal plans that mention surveys.

The City of Winnipeg, Parks and Recreation Department, Winnipeg Study states that,

This data was supplemented by additional field work and from questionnaires addressed to both those people who provide for and operate the parks and recreation programs and those who use them. In all every attempt was made to obtain sound measures of the opinions and needs of the people who work in and use the various parks systems. (1969, 12)
The Surrey/White Rock, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, prepared by Professional Environmental Recreational Consultants Ltd. notes that,

In order to determine individual and family opinions on recreation programming needs, methods of financing, delivery of services, and ratings of satisfaction with current services, individual survey techniques are useful... It is our opinion that the completeness of the questionnaire and high quality of methodology make it unnecessary to solicit any additional information from individuals using survey techniques. (1978, iii)

And lastly, The City of Calgary, Policy Statement and Planning Recommendations, developed by the Staff of the Parks/Recreation Department with assistance from the Planning Department states that,

In an effort to develop a report that accurately reflects community needs, considerable effort was made to determine public preferences and expressed needs. The information was gathered in the following ways:
  Individual Citizens
  - Random sample in-depth interviews
  - City-wide questionnaire survey
  Groups of Citizens
  - Selected recreation-orientated group interviews
  - City-wide recreation-orientated group questionnaire survey. (1976, 7)

The only method of obtaining public participation that was explicitly mentioned in the municipal plans that were reviewed was surveys.

Identifying the Methods: Review of the Case Studies

Chapter Two of Case Studies of Urban Open Space Planning presents a "Comparative Review of Participation and Goal
Setting" of the six case studies mentioned earlier. The authors, Ellis and Homenuck, note "considerable differences in the style and degree of participation over the case cities". (1976, 21) For each of the cities, the authors have characterized the methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. Three broadly interpreted methods can be identified in the case studies: surveys, staff contact, and select committees.

In Edmonton,

the processes of public participation follow what might be called the formal style of consultation and presentation. That is, at appropriate stages in the process, the public were invited to make submissions to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. These were usually in written form, and tended to come from relatively well-organized and articulate groups.

There was also usually an opportunity for input to be received verbally, at hearings and public meetings. The plan was essentially, then, prepared by experts and then presented in draft form and becomes the subject of formal public meetings to react to it. Additional input to the experts was provided by a large scale survey of activities and opportunities in Edmonton, conducted by the Provincial Department of Yough. (1976, 21)

The two identified methods of obtaining public participation in the Edmonton case study were a survey and a select committee.

In Lethbridge,

At the policy level, there is a formally-structured Community Services Advisory Committee, but it operates in a very flexible manner, setting up ad hoc committees with special tasks as the need arises... At the more local level, no special form of citizen participation is adopted, but staff in this smaller community keep in touch with the local level and
hold meetings, usually in local schools or meeting places, when necessary to discuss a given local development. (1976, 24)

In Lethbridge the two identified methods of obtaining public participation were a select committee and staff contact.

In Kitchener, the process recently completed provided for an innovative and broadly-based process of public participation at the policy goal-setting level. The process called for a two stage effort as input to the plan. The first stage involved interviews with special interest groups, in this case, local developers, city politicians, community recreation association members, and sports association members. Then citizen's at large were sampled from the telephone directory, and formed into panels of 20 persons for group interviews. (1976, 25)

The method used to obtain public participation in the Kitchener case study can be broadly identified as a survey.

In Etobicoke, there is no specific process involved for citizen participation other than normal (and statutory requirements) for it, such as through hearings and meetings during the approval or amendment process. The Staff is always present to develop latent efforts, to assist technically and logistically, but the effective planning is entirely in citizen's hands. (1976, 27)

It appears that in Etobicoke, the method of obtaining participation is primarily through staff contact.

In St. Bruno de Montarville, there is a widely-based Advisory Committee which worked closely with senior staff in evolving a unique criterion matrix to apply to the above problem setting. Subjective criteria were provided by citizens in the form of relative weight which they felt should be applied to the various objective data in planning. (1976, 28).
In this case study, the explicit method of obtaining public participation was a select committee. Although, some survey method is implicit in the description of the citizen's weighing of the developed criterion.

In Chicoutimi,

There is an earlier plan in place, formulated with little more than a traditional after-the-fact participation process, but efforts are under way to replace it with a new plan. The process involves several working committees, similar to the case of Lethbridge, but in Chicoutimi there has not been a structural provision for citizens on these and they consist of small groups of staff plus student researchers. (1976, 28)

The only identified method of obtaining public participation in Chicoutimi is staff contact. The select committee is not really used as a method, since there was no provision for citizens on the "working committees" in Chicoutimi.

Of all the cases investigated in this phase of the Canadian Urban Open Space Study, the authors feel that Kitchener has the most advanced methods of obtaining public participation in their municipal parks and recreation planning process. Ellis and Homenuck note in Kitchener that,

The process incorporated specific provision for extracting citizen's perceptions and values, in contrast to the implicit manner in which these usually must be estimated by planners. (1976, 25)

Yet, Kitchener's method of obtaining public participation can be broadly described as a survey method.
It appears that there are three general methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. These have been identified as surveys, select committees, and staff contact. It has also been discovered that when a public participation method is mentioned in a municipal plan, it is the survey method that is mentioned. Perhaps this is because, of the three methods, the survey method is the most quantifiable.

Characteristics of the Methods

This section of the study presents a brief description of each of the three identified methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The basic characteristics and uses of each of these methods should be understood before they are assessed.

Surveys

Surveys are used in the municipal parks and recreation planning process to collect three types of data or information; demographic, participatory, and attitudinal. The desire for these three kinds of information is a reflection of the parks and recreation master planning process.

The demographic information collected through the use of surveys for the municipal parks and recreation planning process is the same as that collected for many other
planning purposes. On the other hand, the kinds of participatory and attitudinal data collected are specific to the municipal parks and recreation planning process; although occasionally other informational questions may be addressed. The purpose of collecting this participatory and attitudinal information is to establish who uses the municipal parks and recreation system and who doesn't, and citizens' attitudes about the system. In addition, surveys attempt to determine need or demand by the public, for aspects of the municipal parks and recreation system.

One of the attributes of surveys is that they offer a starting point for the collection, consolidation and analysis of information about the municipal parks and recreational system. An additional characteristic of surveys is that large amounts of the information collected are quantifiable and suitable for statistical analysis.

Surveys are instruments that measure public participation at one point in time. They rarely allow for a rapid turnover of information, and are not conducive to communication between groups or individuals. Burton, Ellis and Homenuck have characterized surveys as,

The most widely used public participation technique getting at the public values, attitudes and opinions is the survey. The technique is not used to generate new ideas but is useful in providing consumer opinions, attitudes, and behaviour patterns (user information) and further direction
in ambiguous situations.

Surveys, though, can be time consuming and costly and, like the census, the public is a passive participant. But, as a public information gathering tool, surveys are an extremely versatile instrument in that they are applicable at any scale. Surveys are further valuable in that they can be carried out in such a way as to ensure that all segments of the population are represented in the information gathering. (1977, 94)

Select Committees

Select committees known by a variety of names (e.g., Advisory Committee, Steering Committee, Working Group, etc.) are generally designed to represent interests and values that occur in a community. As such they usually provide a broad range of attitudes in one group of individuals. Select committees are most often used in the municipal parks and recreation planning process as advisory bodies to guide the direction of the technical work throughout the planning process.

The advantages of the select committee approach are the continuity of the committee throughout the planning process, the potential diversity available in one "working" group, and greater intensity of interaction with the process. One of the disadvantages of this method of public participation is that it tends to limit public participation to those on the committee, which can be a problem if the committee members are not representative of broader community attitudes.
Burton, Ellis, and Homenuck describe select committees as,

One of the most widely used techniques that serve in a capacity as a sounding board. That is, in reaction or response to the plans/policies forwarded to the public by the elected official or the technical expert. As such, the level of participation realized through the use of Advisory Groups is limited.

Advisory groups are most useful at the neighbourhood or similar small scale where a sense of community may exist and where the public representatives on the advisory group may share and/or be sensitive to community needs, issues and goals. Advisory groups are effective tools for breaking into a "closed" planning process. Indeed, where the planning process can be described as totally closed, the establishment of an advisory group is a large step.

To its disadvantage, the Advisory Group approach can be a generator of inaccurate community information if its membership is not representative of the public. Also, the advisory group lacks decision making powers, and so its existence may be seen as a front for politicians and planners to convey the impression that resident input is being utilized. (1977, 94)

Staff Contact

Staff contact as a method of obtaining public participation can include: large public meetings, small group meetings, telecommunication techniques, workshops, and participant observation methods. These methods are not exclusive to the staff contact method of obtaining public participation, but they are frequently used means by which staff can obtain public participation.

In addition, staff contact as a method of obtaining public participation is a method that may be used without any conscious effort by a municipality. In this case, all that is necessary is the recognition of public participation
by municipal staff. The information obtained through staff contact can be valuable in gauging short-term public response to immediate issues and long-term attitudes and trends about the parks and recreation system, the recognition it is given by municipal staff, the longevity of the staff, the degree of trust the public has in the staff, and the limited nature of the issues addressed.

Each of the three methods used to obtain public participation in the municipal parks and recreation process has advantages and disadvantages. Understanding the nature of these methods permits a comparative assessment of them.
CHAPTER 5

ASSESSING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION METHODS FOR MUNICIPAL PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING

Introduction

In all the literature reviewed in previous chapters, public participation is identified as an integral component of the municipal parks and recreation planning process. Yet, this literature is not specific as to the methods of public participation that should be employed in that process. Rather, the emphasis is on the general concept of public participation and its importance in the planning process.

The preceding chapter focused on methods used to obtain public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process, and concluded that the survey is the most frequently applied method. Surveys were the only stated method of obtaining public participation mentioned in the municipal plans that were reviewed. Although two other methods of obtaining public participation in the planning process were identified through case studies, the use of select committees, and municipal staff contact with the public.
This chapter focuses on a comparative assessment of the adequacy of these three methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

Defining Adequacy

In order to assess the adequacy of the methods used to obtain public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process, the concept of adequacy must be defined. This study defines adequacy in terms of five general goals that relate to the two identified purposes of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. First, public participation as a means of obtaining public involvement, that is, as a means of "broadening the political power base". (Wright, Braithwaite, Forster, 1976) and secondly public participation as a means of obtaining support for the planning process and the plan. This study assumes that public participation methods can achieve both these purposes.

Each of the five goals are defined by statements that clarify the intent of the goal. These intent statements are the basis for assessing the three identified methods of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. In general, to fulfill the goals a municipality must actively pursue public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.
The assessment of the three methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process is judgemental; a subjective "measurement" of whether each method can be designed to achieve the intent of each goal.

Defining the Goals

The five goals that have been established to assess the adequacy of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process are:

1. **Involvement** of affected persons and concerned citizens in the planning process;

2. **Openness** of the process and freedom of access into the process by interested persons;

3. Distribution of adequate and timely **information** to encourage appropriate public input and knowledgeable decision-making;

4. **Solicitation** of views, opinions and concerns at a variety of points in the planning process; and

5. **Continuity** of public participation throughout the planning process.
These goals reflect the idea that public participation is more than just an opportunity for participation. Commitment and effort are required on the part of a municipality, throughout the planning process, to ensure adequate public participation. The remaining portion of this section discusses in more detail the general goals and their intent statements.

1. Involvement of affected persons and concerned citizens in the planning process.

In the municipal parks and recreation planning process there are two broad groups of affected and concerned persons; existing and potential future users of the municipal parks and recreation system, and individuals and groups that have any interest in the municipal parks and recreation system (regardless of whether these citizens reside in the planning area). Two intents of this goal generally refer to the type of public contact obtainable with a public participation method.

   A. To obtain public participation from a representative sample of affected persons and concerned citizens during the planning process; and

   B. To obtain public participation that provides information on the entire range of issues being considered in the planning process.
2. **Openness** of the process and freedom of access into the process by interested persons.

Generally openness and freedom of access indicate the ease with which the public can become involved in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. Openness refers to the public perception about the ease of becoming involved in the process. While freedom access is indicative of the technical response to public involvement in the process. The two intents of this goal are:

A. To make available to the public information about the direction and development of the planning process, so that the public perceives opportunities for involvement in the process; and

B. To recognize, consider and incorporate public participation into the planning process, throughout the process, regardless of whether the participation is in a framework of a formal participation program.

Goals 3 and 4 are highly related and deal with two aspects of the same issue.
3. Distribution of adequate and timely information to encourage appropriate input and knowledgeable decision-making.

Adequate information refers to the amount, quality, and relevance of information made available to the public; information which promotes useful, appropriate and knowledgeable participation by the public in the planning process. For the same reason, information must be distributed throughout the planning process in a timely manner. The intents of this goal are:

A. To distribute information so the public will have a good understanding of the purpose, direction and expected results of the planning process and of the role of public participation in the process; and

B. To implement a program that establishes points at which the public is informed about the status of the planning process, and its products.

4. Solicitation of views, opinions and concerns at a variety of points in the planning process.

The attitudes of the public should be actively sought throughout the planning process. But more importantly, the information received from the public must be used
in the process. This idea is reflected in the intent statements for this goal.

A. To actively pursue public participation at crucial decision-making points in the planning process.

B. To recognize, consider and incorporate solicited participation in the planning process.

5. **Continuity** of public participation throughout the planning process.

Since planning is not a static activity, the public participation associated with the planning process should not be static. Obtaining the views, opinions and concerns of the public throughout the planning process provides data for the process, but continuity of participation encourages the accountability of the plan-makers and decision-makers to the public. The intent of this goal is:

A. To obtain participation from the public throughout the municipal parks and recreation planning process. That is, citizens involved in the initial stages of the process should have the opportunity to be associated with the process throughout its duration. In addition, a cyclical participation program which promotes communication and feedback between citizens and
the planners and decision-makers is essential.

Assessing the Methods

Assessment of the adequacy of the identified methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process will be done in two parts. First, the methods will be comparatively assessed, based on their ability to fulfill the identified goals and intent statements. This assessment will be based on the 'ideal' of each public participation method. That is, on the full, careful, and proper design and implementation of the method. Second, the overall ability of each method to meet the goals will be discussed briefly.

1. Involvement of affected persons and concerned citizens in the planning process.

This goal and intent statements are best met by the survey method of obtaining public participation, in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The character of the survey method is ideal for fulfilling the intents of this goal. The rationale for this conclusion is that surveys are a methodology designed to achieve representative public participation over a wide range of issues. The next best method would be the select committee method. This method of obtaining public participation has the ability of being designed to meet this goal, but not
as well as the survey method. This conclusion is based on the fact that the select committee is less quantitative in information collection. That is in order to meet this goal a select committee may well employ the methodology of a survey. Staff contact with the public fulfills this goal the least, of all methods. It is difficult to obtain representative participation, over a range of issues with this method.

2. **Openness** of the process and freedom of access into the process by interested persons.

   This goal deals with the perceptions of the public about the opportunities to become involved in the municipal parks and recreation process and the perceptions of these preparing the plan with respect to those opportunities, i.e. the utilization of public participation in the planning process. Both a select committee and staff contact may be used to fulfill this goal. The survey method does not have the same ability to fulfill this goal, as it does not take into account public participation outside the framework of the method. That is, the public may perceive that they can approach municipal staff or a select committee at any time during the process, but that a survey limits their ability to participate in the process.
3. Distribution of adequate and timely information to encourage appropriate input and knowledgeable decision-making.

The survey method of obtaining public participation is most useful for fulfilling this goal. The method can be designed to inform the public about the planning process, while at the same time encouraging participation that is appropriate at each stage of the process. Select committees and staff contact are not as useful in fulfilling this goal primarily because they are 'secondary' methods of obtaining public participation. That is both these methods rely on specific means to obtain public participation; for example through the use of surveys.

4. Solicitation of views, opinions, and concerns at a variety of points in the planning process.

Again, the survey method of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process is the most appropriate method to meet this goal. The rationale for this assessment is similar to that for goal 3, i.e. that select committees and staff contact may well rely on the survey method to fulfill this goal.
5. **Continuity** of public participation throughout the planning process.

Select committees and staff contact will fulfill the goal of continuity better than the survey method of obtaining public participation. Of these two the one that is most appropriate depends on local circumstances. The survey method of obtaining public participation is static, while select committees and staff contact, by their very nature, have continuity built in.

The following figure (1) summarizes the comparative assessment of the three identified methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The table comparatively marks each method on a scale of 1 (high) to 3 (low), based on the general ability of the method of achieve each goal.
From the preceding assessment it appears that surveys are the best overall method for obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. This method fulfills three of the five goals, (involvement, information, and solicitation) more than the other three methods. But, the method is inadequate in fulfilling two of the five goals; openness and continuity. These inadequacies can be minimized by a properly designed survey method. In fact, the usefulness of this method is very dependent on the overall design and
application of the method. The reliability of the participation depends on these two critical elements.

Select committees and staff contact rank the same on all the goals except the first; involvement. Select committees rank above staff contact on this goal. Overall both methods rank lower than the survey method. It is interesting to note though, that the strength of these methods lies in areas where the survey method is weak. As in the survey method, the design and application of select committees and staff contact is important; but the critical element in these methods is credibility. Credibility is essential if either of these two methods are to fulfill the goals in which they are the strongest, openness and continuity.

Conclusions

It is apparent from the assessment that none of the methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process are independently adequate. The important point to be made is that the methods are complementary. It appears, from the previous assessment, that the survey method used in conjunction with either a select committee or staff contact, will provide adequate public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. This conclusion
is based on the assumption that the methods are designed and utilized as close to the 'ideal' as possible; and that the public perceives the methods as credible.
CHAPTER 6
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE MUNICIPAL PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING PROCESS: CASE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents a case study of the municipal parks and recreation planning process used in the Corporation of the District of West Vancouver, British Columbia, 1977-1978. The purpose of the case study is to apply the general conclusions reached in the previous chapter to a specific situation. That is, to determine if a combination of a survey(s), and a select committee and/or staff contact with the public is a means of obtaining adequate public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

West Vancouver was chosen as the case study for three reasons:

1. information about the municipal parks and recreation planning process was available to the author through employment with the municipality during the process;
2. the municipality recently completed a parks and recreation plan, using the master planning approach; and
3. the municipality used all three methods of obtaining public participation in their parks and recreation planning process.
West Vancouver started updating their parks and recreation master plan in May 1977. The project was initiated jointly by municipal staff and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission; an appointed advisory body to the municipal Council. The plan was completed in October 1977.

Public Participation in the West Vancouver Municipal Parks and Recreation Planning Process

All three methods previously identified of obtaining public participation, in the municipal parks and recreation planning process, were used to some degree in West Vancouver. The extent that each of the three; surveys, a select committee, and staff contact with the public was used, is described in this section.

Two surveys were used in the parks and recreation planning process in West Vancouver. Both were administered very early in the planning process. One was a questionnaire distributed to all known groups providing leisure service programs and facilities in West Vancouver. The intent of the questionnaire was to determine participation in these groups and to identify future facility needs. The other survey was a parks and facilities survey. It was an attempt to assess the participation at parks, facilities and in leisure programs provided by West Vancouver. This questionnaire was administered sporadically at a local shopping center
and the municipal recreation center for a week. Little conscious effort was spent in assuring the accuracy and usefulness of the surveys used in the West Vancouver planning process. The surveys were not a high priority in the West Vancouver municipal parks and recreation planning process, since the staff felt that they would provide little benefit for the cost.

A select committee, in this instance called the Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee, was established as an advisory body to the planning staff after the inventory phase of the planning process was completed. The Steering Committee was established for political reasons, rather than as a method of obtaining public participation in the planning process. The Steering Committee brought together various individuals who represented decision-making groups in the community, and was intended as a vehicle to improve the communications between these decision-making groups.

The Steering Committee was responsible to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission, who approved the establishment of the Committee on the advice of municipal staff. There was no direct contact between the groups represented on the Steering Committee during the planning process, except through staff and the individuals who were members of the groups. The Steering Committee met sporadically during the planning process. As a group
they encouraged the planning staff to use their expertise to prepare the parks and recreation plan. As they were established as an advisory group, the Steering Committee functioned primarily as reactors to the staff.

Staff contact with the public was an important means of obtaining public participation in the parks and recreation planning process in West Vancouver. This was not a formalized method established for the parks and recreation planning process, but occurred informally as a matter of departmental policy. There were two reasons this method of obtaining public participation was available during the planning process. First, the continuity of the staff over a long period of time (five years plus) permitted an assessment of the trends in public attitudes towards the municipal parks and recreation system. Secondly, the staff was perceived by the public as open to ideas, suggestions, and opinions, about the parks and recreation system; so that many citizens did not hesitate to let the staff know how they felt about parks and recreation issues. Generally, the staff had very good credibility with the citizens of West Vancouver.

Assessment of the Adequacy of Public Participation in the West Vancouver Parks and Recreation Planning Process.

Statistical Assessment

In order to test an aspect of the adequacy of public
participation in the West Vancouver parks and recreation process, additional data was collected and analyzed. The research for this section of the study utilized a portion of a 'community survey' developed by West Vancouver to be a statistically valid instrument. This questionnaire was separate from the surveys used during the parks and recreation planning process. The questionnaire was administered to eight groups of people; one group of citizens and seven groups of decision-makers. The individuals in each group selected what they felt were the three most important parks and recreation goals, from a list of seven parks and recreation goals. The result was a group ranking of the seven parks and recreation goals.

The use of this data is based on the assumption that within our political system decision-makers are supposed to represent their constituency. To do this the decision-makers need to know what the public opinion is; one of the purposes of public participation, this concept is discussed by Lang and Page.

As the main tool for better decisions respecting urban and regional development, planning tradition offers the master plan. Central to this kind of plan and the basis for delivering its goals is a concept of total public interest for a given area, one which over-rides the particular special interests. Such planning begins with the establishment of general goals which are assumed to reflect community consensus. (1973, 6)
This concept is further developed by Altchuler,

The comprehensive planner must assume that his community's various collective goals can somehow be measured at least roughly as to importance and worked into a single hierarchy of community objectives. (1973, 14)

Based on this concept, it is assumed that if the methods of obtaining public participation in West Vancouver were adequate, there would be a positive correlation between the citizen's goal ranking and the decision-makers goal rankings.

The decision-making groups were chosen on the basis of their position in the administrative/political structure of West Vancouver. All of the groups chosen had a direct influence on parks and recreation planning in the municipality. It should be noted that the decision-making groups were non-exclusive.

In addition to Group 1, the citizen's group (609 individuals), the decision-making groups represented in the study are:

Group 2: West Vancouver Policy Staff (5 individuals)
Group 3: West Vancouver Parks Staff (5 individuals)
Group 4: West Vancouver Recreation Staff (10 individuals)
Group 5: West Vancouver Municipal Council (7 individuals)
Group 6: West Vancouver Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee 1977 (8 individuals)
Group 7: West Vancouver Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee 1978 (8 individuals)
Group 8: West Vancouver Parks and Recreation Master Plan Steering Committee (5 individuals)

The results of the tabulated questionnaires are found in Figure 4. The numbers in the table indicate the number of times a response was given for each goal. The figures in the parenthesis, indicate the rank assigned to each goal, based on the total number of individual responses received for each goal.

From the table few observable correlations can be seen between the citizens and the decision-makers ranking of the goals. This visual analysis indicates that in four out of the seven goals at least one decision-making group ranked a goal the same as the citizens, but it is not the same group for all the goals. Overall, there are many more goals that are not ranked the same between the citizens and the decision-makers.

In order to determine if there was any statistical correlation between the groups, a Kendall rank order correlation coefficient test was conducted.
### FIGURE 2

**CASE STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE TABULATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUPS</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citizens</td>
<td>253(3)</td>
<td>233(5)</td>
<td>121(7)</td>
<td>272(2)</td>
<td>350(1)</td>
<td>167(6)</td>
<td>242(4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Staff</td>
<td>1(6)</td>
<td>3(2.5)</td>
<td>2(4)</td>
<td>3(2.5)</td>
<td>4(1)</td>
<td>1(6)</td>
<td>1(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks Staff</td>
<td>2(4)</td>
<td>2(4)</td>
<td>2(4)</td>
<td>5(1)</td>
<td>4(2)</td>
<td>0(6.5)</td>
<td>0(6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation Staff</td>
<td>3(4.5)</td>
<td>4(3)</td>
<td>8(1.5)</td>
<td>2(6.5)</td>
<td>8(1.5)</td>
<td>3(4.5)</td>
<td>2(6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Council</td>
<td>3(3.5)</td>
<td>3(3.5)</td>
<td>3(3.5)</td>
<td>3(3.5)</td>
<td>4(1)</td>
<td>2(6)</td>
<td>0(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation Commission (1978)</td>
<td>2(6.5)</td>
<td>4(3)</td>
<td>2(6.5)</td>
<td>4(3)</td>
<td>5(1)</td>
<td>4(3)</td>
<td>3(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parks and Recreation Commission (1977)</td>
<td>4(4)</td>
<td>3(5)</td>
<td>5(2)</td>
<td>5(2)</td>
<td>5(2)</td>
<td>0(7)</td>
<td>2(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Plan Steering Committee</td>
<td>3(3.5)</td>
<td>4(1.5)</td>
<td>1(5)</td>
<td>4(1.5)</td>
<td>3(3.5)</td>
<td>0(6.5)</td>
<td>0(6.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The analysis shows no statistical correlation between the citizens and any decision-making groups. The analysis does show some weak correlations between decision-making groups, but this is not unexpected as some individuals are members of more than one decision-making group. Therefore, based on the earlier assumption that adequate methods of obtaining public participation would be indicated by positive correlations between citizens and decision-making groups; the public participation in the West Vancouver Parks and recreation planning process is not adequate.

There are three possible reasons why there is no positive correlation between the citizens and the decision-makers on the goal rankings. First, is that the groups simply made a different judgement or reached a different marking based on different perceptions or values. Second, is the possibility
that the decision-makers were not aware of public opinion. Thirdly, the decision-makers may be aware of public opinion, but feel that the public does not "understand" the issues. Both of the latter reasons may reflect an inadequacy in the methods used to obtain public participation. In the first instance it is because public involvement is not being obtained; and in the second it is because there is a lack of communication between the citizens and the decision-makers, which can result in a lack of support for the parks and recreation master plan.

Goal Assessment

It is the intent of this section of the study to assess West Vancouver's methods of obtaining public participation in their parks and recreation planning process, using the goals discussed in the previous chapter. West Vancouver employed the three identified methods of obtaining public participation in their parks and recreation planning process, yet, the statistical assessment indicates that public participation may not have been adequate. Therefore, the six goals discussed in chapter six will be used to reassess the case study.

The first goal of public participation, that was identified in the previous chapter, was the involvement of affected persons and concerned citizens in the planning process. This goal was represented by two intent statements.
None of the three methods used to obtain public participation in West Vancouver met the intents of this goal. The survey method which is most likely to meet this goal was not a high priority in the West Vancouver parks and recreation planning process. Although surveys were used, in the parks and recreation planning process they were poorly designed instruments and not able to fulfill the goal.

The second goal was openness of the process and freedom of access into the process by interested persons. This goal has two intents, only one of these was met by the staff contact method of obtaining public participation in West Vancouver. None of the methods used in West Vancouver made available information about the planning process, although public participation was incorporated into the process through staff contact with residents.

In West Vancouver, none of the three methods of obtaining public participation were used to distribute adequate and timely information to encourage appropriate input and knowledgeable decision-making (Goal 3). Each of the three methods was used to gather information or feedback on technical aspects of the process, not to notify the public about the status of the project.

The solicitation of views, opinions and concerns at a variety of points throughout the planning process (Goal 4) was not adequately fulfilled by the methods used to obtain
public participation in West Vancouver. The survey method used comes closest to meeting this goal, but in the West Vancouver case, the survey was only used once in the initial stages of the planning process; public participation was not actively sought at crucial points throughout the process. Although, the Steering Committee was used in the capacity of soliciting opinions, it was not structured to be representative of the community.

There was very little continuity of public participation throughout the planning process in West Vancouver (Goal 5). This goal is met somewhat by the Steering Committee, but the earlier inadequacy noted in the Committee's structure, limits its ability to fulfill this goal. Even though there was continuity of the staff during the process, there was not continuity of public participation using the staff contact method. This relates to the lack of "solicitation" of public participation in the process.

Overall, the methods used to obtain public participation in the West Vancouver parks and recreation planning process, do not fulfill the stated public participation goals and the intents of those goals.

Conclusions

This chapter has provided a description of the public participation methods used and the extent of their use in
the West Vancouver parks and recreation planning process. West Vancouver employed all three of the identified methods of obtaining public participation in their parks and recreation planning process; surveys, a select committee, and staff contact. Yet the three methods, used in combination, did not provide adequate public participation in the West Vancouver parks and recreation planning process.

The inadequacy of these methods may be attributed to two factors. First, none of the methods used was designed 'properly'; that is designed specifically to obtain public involvement and support for the planning process and the plan. Each of these methods can be designed, within a specific situation, to optimize their ability to fulfill these purposes. In West Vancouver staff contact was a day to day activity and the focus was not on obtaining public participation for the parks and recreation planning process. The select committee was used as a means of co-opting influential decision-makers in order to encourage 'political communication', and the surveys were not designed as statistically accurate measurement tools.

Secondly, in the West Vancouver case the methods used to obtain public participation were not used in a manner to complement and supplement each other. Little consideration was given to developing a public participation 'program' that used each of the methods to their fullest potential, in order to achieve an adequate public participation program in the parks and recreation planning process.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to assess the adequacy of the current methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The first three chapters of the study present background information that provides a framework for the rest of the study. The remainder of the study directly addresses the purpose.

The first chapter of the study introduces the concept of public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The chapter asserts that public participation is an important aspect of the municipal parks and recreation planning process; and contains a description of the study methods used; library research and a case study.

The second chapter, which briefly describes the historical development of municipal parks and recreation planning, concludes that there has been little change in this area of planning since its introduction in the late 1800's. The current municipal parks and recreation planning process is a direct reflection of this historical
development. The chapter also concludes that the current municipal parks and recreation planning process is the "traditional master plan" approach. The third chapter of the study documents the importance of public participation in this current and typical municipal parks and recreation planning process.

In chapter four, surveys, select committees and staff contact are identified as the three current methods of obtaining public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. Chapter five comparatively assesses the adequacy of these identified methods of obtaining public participation. This chapter concludes that the survey method comes the closest to fulfilling the stated goals of public participation, which form the basis of the assessment. The assessment also indicates that the weaknesses of the survey method, in openness and continuity are the strengths of the other two methods, select committees and staff contact. The general conclusion of this chapter is that in order to have adequate public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process, surveys should be used and complemented with either a select committee or staff contact.

Chapter six of the study is a case study of public participation in the West Vancouver parks and recreation planning process. West Vancouver used all three methods
of obtaining public participation in their parks and recreation planning process. Therefore, it was anticipated that they would have adequate public participation in their parks and recreation planning process. A statistical analysis and an assessment using the previously stated goals indicates that the public participation in the West Vancouver parks and recreation planning process was not adequate. These results were attributed to two factors. First, the individual methods were not designed and applied as they should have been; and second, the methods were not used in a manner to complement each other.

Conclusions

On the surface it appears that the conclusions from the literature review and assessment are inconsistent with those from the case study. The literature review concludes that a combination of the survey method and either a select committee or staff contact will result in adequate public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. But this assessment is based on the "ideal" design and implementation of each of these methods.

The West Vancouver case, which employed all three methods of obtaining public participation, is a practical example of the use of these methods in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. Over-all, West Vancouver
is a good example of the state-of-the-art in municipal parks and recreation planning. Yet, the statistical analysis and assessment indicates that West Vancouver did not have adequate public participation in their parks and recreation planning process. This observed inadequacy has been attributed to two factors; the poor design and use of the individual methods and the lack of a program that used the methods in a complementary manner.

In West Vancouver the staff method of obtaining public participation was individually adequate. Even though this method was not designed specifically for use in the parks and recreation planning process, it functioned well in that process. But this method alone was not adequate to overcome the gaps of the other methods. Based on the results of the literature review and assessment, West Vancouver could have had adequate public participation, in their parks and recreation planning process, if they had paid more attention to the survey method. Since none of the methods is adequate on its own and West Vancouver had excellent staff contact, the weakness in their public participation methodology must have been in their survey method. This conclusion is based on the manner in which the survey method was used in West Vancouver and the earlier conclusion that surveys are a requirement of adequate public participation.

If West Vancouver is a good example of the state-of-the-art in municipal parks and recreation planning, what are
the implications of this study for other municipalities? The first is that, in general, current public participation is not adequate in the municipal parks and recreation planning process. The second implication is that, based on the findings of the literature review and assessment, public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process can be adequate. Theoretically, in order to obtain adequate public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process, three things must be recognized as the basis of the public participation in the municipal parks and recreation planning process.

1. The public participation methods must be designed and implemented as they were intended, as close to the "ideal" as possible, given local constraints; and

2. A program of public participation, which uses the methods to complement each other must be developed. This means the use of the survey method in conjunction with either the select committee or staff contact method;

3. The strengths and weaknesses of each method should be considered in the planning process and in the utilization and feedback of participation results throughout the process.
PLANS REVIEWED


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