PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE PREPARATION OF OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

by

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ABSTRACT

Public participation in the planning process is a well established concept and an important one to municipal planners as they deal with the question of how to most effectively involve citizens in planning. The purpose of this study is to assess the effectiveness of techniques and processes used to involve the public in a specific planning process: the preparation of official community plans in British Columbia.

Two principal methods are used to achieve this purpose: a literature review and a comparative analysis of the experiences of four municipalities located in the greater Vancouver region which have recently completed of official community plans. Data for this analysis came from municipal documents, interviews with planners and field observation.

Six process-oriented objectives based on democratic principles are established as criteria of effective public participation. The six criteria are:

(1) Accessibility - All citizens have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate;

(2) Timing - The public is provided with information and opportunities to participate at crucial decision making points in the planning process.

(3) Impartiality - No individual or group is permitted to dominate the participation process at the expense of others;

(4) Comprehensibility - Important information is provided and is presented in such a way that it is understood by those whom it affects;

(5) Alternatives - The public is presented with a range of alternatives;

(6) Efficacy - Participants' views are considered in products of the planning process.

The suitability of each participation technique and combination
of techniques used in the four municipalities is assessed by these six objectives.

Nine summary observations derived from the analysis are presented as suggestions to help planners effectively involve the public in future official community plan processes. It is found that effort to involve citizens in the preparation of an official community plan must go beyond the techniques required or suggested by legislation. A public hearing and an advisory planning commission are not sufficient to provide effective participation. It is not possible to state an ideal public participation program with a set of specific techniques that would be useful in all communities preparing an official community plan. However, by designing and implementing a participation program that strives to satisfy the process-oriented objectives, planners can obtain meaningful response from the public. Achieving these objectives depends foremost on administrative commitment.
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CHAPTER ONE
PURPOSE AND METHODOLOGY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Public participation in community planning has been the subject of much discussion for the past two decades and represents an important topic for municipal planners. This study deals with a specific community planning process: the preparation of municipality-wide official community plans in British Columbia. The role of public participation in this process is investigated in the context of British Columbia municipalities.

As background leading up to the purpose and objectives of this study, the problems facing planners in involving the public in an official community plan process will be discussed. Such a discussion is important to put the study into context and to understand its importance.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As defined in the Municipal Amendment Act, 1985, an official community plan is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan (subsec. 945(1)). Although adoption of community plans remains optional according to legislation, once adopted by a municipality, the policies established must be adhered to in subsequent legislation passed by that municipality unless changed by an
amendment to the plan.

The Municipal Act allows municipalities to prepare official community plans for areas of a community or the whole community. Area specific official community plans provide the opportunity to address neighbourhood land use issues. In some cases, neighbourhood land use issues need resolution through clear land use policies before development in the area can proceed. In general, official community plans for areas within a municipality are quite specific in nature, addressing a range of local issues. An official community plan for the whole municipality, conversely, is much wider in scope providing community-wide goals and development objectives. As a policy document, it sets out a land use management strategy for the municipality's growth and orderly supply of services.

Official community plans deal with complex issues facing municipal governments; complex issues that affect people who live and work in the community. Frequently the issues dealt with in these plans also have implications that go beyond the municipality's boundaries affecting the broader region. The plans are used by municipal councils to guide them in making decisions about development, zoning and providing the services required to accommodate growth. The ultimate success of the plan and ease with which it can be implemented depends on the extent to which these public issues are effectively dealt with. A central premise of this thesis is that one means of effectively dealing with public issues is through the public participation process.

Eliciting meaningful public participation in the
preparation of municipality-wide official community plans can be
difficult for the planner for two reasons. First, official
community plans for the whole community are broad and general in
nature, setting out long term goals. In developing plan
policies, a long term planning horizon is used, generally
fifteen to twenty years. Second, municipality-wide official
community plans are much broader in scope than the more specific
neighbourhood or local area plans. Thus, community-wide issues
are addressed rather than isolated concerns. The problem facing
the planner is that community interest is generally at its
highest when an issue is immediate and directly affects the
particular citizen. As Anthony Catanese explains:

One of the most complex problems for planners and
politicians is that of participation in the planning
and political processes. It is clear that people tend
to become involved in planning only when there is some
specific and tangible interest for them and their
groups (1984, 121).

Therefore, whereas the issues dealt with in a municipality-wide
official community plan are important for the community's
future, they may not be perceived by the individual citizen as
being immediately important. As a result, in developing an
official community plan for the whole community, the planner is
often in a situation where he must actively seek out the
public's views more so than for area specific plans.

Under existing legislation, local planning authorities
undertaking the development of an official community plan must
involve the public through a hearing under section 711(2) of the
Municipal Act. This required public hearing does not represent a
comprehensive opportunity to obtain meaningful participation
from the public. For many situations, receiving public input at
the final stage, just prior to third reading, is too late in a long process to constitute meaningful participation. Where issues are complex and opinion is diverse, there is a need to identify alternatives and decide on choices early in the process.

The problem facing the planner is how to obtain meaningful participation, beyond the public hearing technique, when preparing an official community plan, given the plan's broad scope.

1.2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this thesis is to assess the effectiveness of techniques and processes used by municipal planning departments to obtain participation from the public in the preparation of official community plans.

The specific objectives are:

1. To verify the importance of public participation in the community planning process.
2. To identify objectives for citizen involvement in community planning.
3. To determine current processes and techniques used to obtain participation from the public in the preparation of official community plans;
4. To determine the most appropriate method to evaluate public participation in community planning;
5. To assess the adequacy of public participation efforts of four municipalities in the Vancouver region;
6. To provide suggestions for public participation programs to
be used in future official community plan processes.

1.3 SCOPE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is concerned specifically with public participation as it relates to the preparation and development of municipality-wide official community plans. It is not directly concerned with public participation in the implementation phase of the process.

The scope and significance of the study emerge from the strengths and weaknesses of the literature. The literature is extensive regarding the desirability and appropriateness of public involvement in planning (Bjur and Siegel 1977; Buck 1984; Catanese 1984; Pateman 1970). Generally, contemporary writers view participation as an integral part of municipal land use planning although they agree that participation is not without constraints. There is less agreement in the literature however, as to what constitutes effective participation or how to evaluate participation in municipal land use planning. Also not common in the literature are guidelines for specific techniques that would be appropriate for use in an official community plan process.

The study attempts to increase knowledge in the area of community planning by investigating public participation techniques and processes and assessing their effectiveness and adequacy. In so doing, the study has theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically it broadens the foundations for community planning. Practically, the effectiveness of public participation techniques and processes in a specific community
planning context is determined and suggestions outlined for use by planners in the future. While the research findings have particular value for municipalities in metropolitan areas, it is hoped the findings will be useful for many different planning agencies responsible for community planning.

1.4 STUDY METHODS

The study involves a comparative analysis of four British Columbia municipalities that have developed or are in the process of developing a municipality-wide official community plan. The municipalities, Richmond, Delta, Surrey, and New Westminster have two common characteristics: (1) they are all situated in greater Vancouver, and (2) they are all experiencing the impacts of urban growth. Data for the comparative analysis came from pertinent municipal documents, field observation when possible and interviews with planners from each municipality. As well, two key citizen leaders were also interviewed.

The other primary method used for the research was a literature review. The growth of citizen demand for an influence in decision making in the last two decades has led to a proliferation of literature on public participation. Some of the literature is specific to community planning while much of it is generic in nature and can be applied to a number of decision making processes. The literature reviewed was selected for its applicability to public participation in land use planning by municipalities.
1.5 ORGANIZATION

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

Chapter two defines the role of public participation in community planning. Factors contributing to effective and desirable public participation are considered and process-oriented objectives for citizen involvement in community planning are determined. Reviewing the literature and determining objectives for public participation efforts gives the necessary background and standards for judging the effectiveness of participation efforts.

Chapter three begins with an overview of legislation pertinent to the official community plan process in British Columbia. Describing the legislative requirements that municipalities are expected to meet and the amount of flexibility permitted when preparing official community plans leads to an understanding of the different processes that four municipalities followed in the preparation of their official community plans. Outlining the experiences of four municipalities is necessary in order to determine the range of techniques and processes currently being used in the preparation of official community plans. Case studies are useful to supplement the literature which is not specific as to what approaches are appropriate to involve the public in an official community plan process.
In Chapter four, the various participation techniques used by the four municipalities are described identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each technique. The suitability of each technique to achieve the objectives for citizen involvement in community planning is examined.

In Chapter five, the concept of evaluation is discussed. An approach using the evaluator's composite judgement is considered the most appropriate approach for this study since this approach is based on available explicit indicators of success that are available as well as the evaluator's own judgement. The effectiveness of the overall public participation effort of each municipality in the preparation of their official community plan is assessed using the evaluation approach judged on the ability to meet the process-oriented objectives for citizen involvement. Determining the ability of each municipal effort to satisfy the participation objectives is necessary since no single technique is sufficient on its own. The combination of techniques and their utilization at different points in the process is important in determining effectiveness.

Chapter six synthesizes the results of the study presenting suggestions for public participation programs in the preparation of official community plans in the future.

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Public Participation and Citizen Participation

The terms public participation and citizen participation will be used interchangeably and do not indicate any difference in nuance. A discussion defining public participation is held in
chapter two.

**Official Community Plan**

The abbreviation for official community plan (O.C.P.) will be used frequently throughout the text. Unless otherwise indicated as area-specific, the term official community plan, will be in reference to an official community plan for a whole municipality.
CHAPTER TWO
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY PLANNING

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature on the role of public participation in community planning. A short history of public participation in planning begins the chapter followed by the role of participation in a parliamentary democracy. Important advantages and disadvantages of participation in planning are discussed in order to put the study into greater context. Public participation is defined and the concept of effective participation is discussed. Finally, six process-oriented objectives for public participation are established which any public participation program in a municipal land use planning process should strive to achieve.

2.1 RECENT HISTORY

The idea of public participation in the planning process has been a long-standing and integral part of the history of planning (Catanese 1984, 124). For the first half of the twentieth century, there was the basic assumption that planners had to assess the goals and values of the public in order to define interest in problems. This search for public goals usually meant consulting with the political, economic and social leadership. Participation was seen as a representational endeavor in which planners discussed problems with designated leaders (Catanese 1984, 124).

In the second half of the twentieth century, the nature of
public participation changed as citizens became more involved. The growth of citizen demand for an influence in decision making in more recent years can be related to the changing nature of our society as well as to the quickening rate of change itself. The activism of the 1960's created interest in public participation which led to changes in the manner in which planners viewed participation in planning. Generally, the activism of the 1960's came about as a result of people's disillusionment with the effects and processes of planning, heightened awareness of environmental and ecological values, and alarm and confusion at the scale and complexities of contemporary life along with the vast array of institutions which have been created to cope with them (Cullingworth 1984, 1). Citizens demanded to become more involved in decision making processes which were becoming more and more removed from them.

Creighton explains that the system had become too complex so that the line of accountability was becoming too drawn out and tenuous to provide issue-by-issue accountability (1983, 46-48). In the 1960's public participation took the form of protest. That activism has now been institutionalized and become part of the planning process. As Barry Cullingworth observes:

Physical protests against the bulldozer have given way to public hearings, commissions of inquiry, social surveys, community meetings, environmental impact assessments, advisory councils, and a multiplicity of mechanisms for appealing or objecting decisions. Public participation is now part of the planning process (1984, 1).

Public participation in municipal land use planning is now an almost universally accepted principle of Canadian democracy. While municipal planners still discuss issues and problems with
community leaders, other citizens are also involved in the planning process. While physical protests still persist, other techniques are used in the involvement of citizens in decision making.

2.2 PARTICIPATION IN A PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

In a parliamentary democracy in which individuals have the right to vote to elect people to represent them and make decisions, the question arises why public participation on a broader scale is necessary. The ideal of public participation is rooted deep in democratic theory. Classical democratic theory espouses the inherent legitimacy of public participation in political and other social processes (Pateman 1970, Chapt. 2). It is based on the supposition that man's dignity, and indeed his growth and development as a functioning and responsive individual in a free society, is dependent upon an opportunity to participate actively in decisions that significantly affect him (Bachrach 1967, 98). As Bjur and Seigel explain:

We are heirs of a theory of participatory democracy described by Rousseau, who believed that freedom required that the citizen should be able to exercise a fair amount of control over those who execute the laws, and over elected representatives. In the absence of such citizen control, he argued, the very institutions created to serve the public end up enslaving us all (1977, 135).

Bachrach and Schattschneider are examples of two modern theorists who believe that the definition of classical democracy is too simplistic for modern terms and requires redefining (Schattschneider 1960, 129; Bachrach 1967, 99). Schattschneider emphasizes the role of leadership and organization in a democracy while Bachrach looks towards a spontaneous generation.
of something from the grass roots. Public participation is central to Schattschneider's working definition of democracy:

"Democracy is a competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision making process (1960, 141).

Although public participation in decision making covers a variety of decision making processes in society within which individuals and groups find themselves, participation in politics and government is discussed most frequently of all (Sorensen 1981, 3). The growth of government and its impact on people's everyday lives has led to three major problems which have created more than ever the need for public participation in decision making:

1. The growing misalignment of Canada's three formal legislative levels, among themselves and increasingly to the populace as a whole (Clague 1971, 35);

2. An information problem which depicts a situation where citizens, legislators and bureaucrats are unable to maintain a communications flow that informs, educates and instructs all parties involved (Clague 1971, 35);

3. Bureaucratic and administrative power has grown in both its reach and scope of its discretion (Rosenbaum 1979, 1; Thomas 1982, 54).

Rosenbaum sees the expansion of opportunities for direct citizen involvement as a necessary antidote, an adaptation of democratic practice to modern conditions (1979, 1). Likewise, Clague believes the scope of the legislative process is simply not broad enough to accommodate the political responsibilities and involvement requirements of citizens in today's world (1971, 36). The federal government Task Force on Government Information, 1969, summed up the situation in this way:
Since governments are inevitably increasing their effect on the day-to-day lives of citizens, it follows that the citizens should be able to increase their say in what governments do...participatory democracy suggests the citizen's continuous and broadly based involvement in the problems of government (quoted by Clague 1971, 55).

The problem of representation and the lack of ability for the system to adequately deal with an ever growing and complex society points to the extreme difficulty of defining the 'public interest' to the satisfaction of all groups in a given society. There are many ways that the public interest has been defined. Stanbury believes that it is possible to divide these various definitions into four groups, each representing a more limited number of themes or central concepts (Stanbury 1979, 213-216).

The public interest is seen:

1. As resulting from the aggregation, weighing and balancing of a number of special interests;

2. In terms of the common or universal interests which all (at least almost all) members of society/nation/political unit share;

3. From an idealist perspective, such definitions judge alternative actions or policies in relation to some absolute standard of values - in some cases independently of the preferences of individual citizens;

4. In terms of the process by which decisions are made rather than the specification of some ideal outcome.

Communities are composed of many publics, with a maze of interests and attitudes about their living environments. Consequently no policy will please everyone, and some will benefit at a cost to others. Any provision for public participation which ignores this potential diversity could result in more bias than no provision at all (Johnson 1984, 5).
2.3 PROS AND CONS OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

While it is generally agreed in the literature that public participation is needed to complement government decision making, the presence of public participation is not always considered desirable by all parties. The most common disadvantages and difficulties in implementing citizen participation are cited, followed by a discussion of some of the advantages and opportunities of participation in the planning process.

2.3.1 DISADVANTAGES & DIFFICULTIES

(1) There is nothing to guarantee that participants in public participation techniques and programs are representative of the general public. The uninterested but affected public (which is a substantial majority in most cases) does not participate (Milbrath 1981, 482).

(2) Most citizen participation methods can be manipulated easily by public officials to suit their own purposes (Milbrath 1981, 48). Administrative agencies often use participation as an instrument to achieve their own ends placing heavy reliance on "safe" methods, such as public hearings that keep participation under careful control (Checkoway and VanTil 1978, 32).

(3) Traditional methods used have consistently attracted the well-educated, articulate and excluded the poor, ill-educated and apathetic (Fogg 1981, 257; Johnson 1984, 8).

(4) Expectations of what public participation can do are often too broad and too high to be realized. Participation is seen as a panacea for the ills of society (Kweit and Kweit 1981, 7). Expectations are aroused and then not met.

(5) The assumption is often made that the public is a large
homogeneous unit, rather than a possibly large set of publics with defining characteristics (Boaden et al. 1980, 52). Certain publics will have more to say on an issue than others but it is important for everyone to have the opportunity to participate.

(6) Citizen participation requires time, effort and money often drawing out the planning period. Conflict is generated, and new time allocations and resource commitments are needed when participation is included in the process.

(7) Often public participation does not result in clear decisions as conflicts arise among the many public interests. Many of these conflicts and dilemmas are not easily solved. The planner or decision maker may have no criterion by which to judge among competing claims and may seek an escape by refusing to listen to all or by giving in to the loudest of the claimants (Buck and Stone 1981; 551).

(8) There is no one way to handle citizen involvement. What works in one place will not always work in some other place; context and environment are important. It is not the technique that is important so much as the people who employ the techniques and their attitude (Priscoli 1978, 105).

2.3.2 ADVANTAGES & OPPORTUNITIES

(1) Participatory mechanisms can keep public authorities honest and thoughtful and are useful in pressuring and persuading these authorities to perform their duties more sensitively (Fogg 1981, 265).

(2) Public participation can be used to show competing views of the public will.

(3) Public participation provides a process that permits the
development of implementable policies. If individuals have had a say in a fair and open process of policy development then they are more willing to accept the outcome of that process, even if it is not their preferred outcome (Buck 1984, 469). When plans and policies are implemented there is less likelihood of opposition because the reasoning behind the action is better understood.

(4) Participation improves self-realization because of increased awareness of one's surroundings, interests and the functioning of the whole political system (Burke, 1968).

(5) Participation provides the opportunity to develop leaders which are necessary to bridge the gap between the public, and the planners and decision makers.

(6) People are educated through exposure to new and different ideas and opinions and to a variety of people.

In summary, public participation in planning makes the process more complex and perhaps more costly and time consuming. Participation strategies can be easily manipulated by the sponsoring administrative agency, their worth often depending on the commitment of the agency staff. Representation of the general public is not guaranteed and for those that do participate, expectations are often unrealistic. Conversely, public participation has significant benefits. Mutual education and understanding can occur, plans and policies that are implementable can result and authorities are pressured into performing their duties more sensitively.
2.4 DEFINING PARTICIPATION

Given that ballot-box participation is not sufficient to ensure adequate representation of the people, and that there is a need in a representative democracy for an ongoing based involvement of the public in decision making, the questions of how much participation and what constitutes adequate or effective public participation arise. A number of writings on the implementation of public participation have focussed on the possible forms of public participation in theory and practice. This has led to various typologies and classifications of citizen or public participation, each developing a hierarchy of the degrees of participation. These writings are useful to review before settling on a definition of public participation.

A "ladder of citizen participation" produced by Sherry Arnstein in 1969 and "citizen participation strategies" outlined by Edmund Burke in 1968 represent the first attempts to define what constitutes public participation. Arnstein views citizen participation as "the means by which the have-nots can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society...citizen participation is a categorized term for citizen power" (1969, 216). Likewise, Burke's fifth of five strategies describes participation as community power.

Arnstein's 'ladder of participation', covers the range from non-participation (manipulation and therapy) to degrees of tokenism (informing, consultation, placation) to degrees of
citizen power (partnership, delegated power, citizen control). This simplified eight-rung ladder illustrates that there are many gradations of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969:217). In her belief that full citizen participation requires that powers be redistributed and that that power needs to affect the outcome of the process leads Arnstein to deeply criticize the lower five 'rungs' of the ladder; i.e., manipulation up to placation.

Lawrence Susskind concentrates on attitudes towards public participation. He identifies three common views of participation:

1. Participation as a time-wasting but inescapable requirement;
2. Participation as an opportunity for the presenters to pick-up some information about unanticipated or unintended side-effects;
3. Participation as an opportunity to build support for a favoured proposal (Susskind 1977, 33).

Susskind writes about land-use decision making and as an alternative to the traditional citizen involvement efforts he promotes consensus building as a more appropriate model (1977, 38). The consensus building model is more in line with Arnstein's partnership level of participation as far as the degree of effectiveness the individual citizen has in influencing decision making. In Arnstein's 'partnership rung', power is in fact redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. According to Arnstein, partnership works most effectively when there is an organized power-base in the community to which the citizen leaders are accountable (1969, 221).
At the 'delegated power' level, negotiations between citizens and public officials can result in citizens achieving dominant decision making authority over a particular plan or program. Another model of delegated power is separate and parallel groups of citizens and powerholders, with provision for citizen veto if differences of opinion cannot be resolved through negotiation. Likewise, under 'citizen control', have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision making seats, or full managerial power (Arnstein 1969, 217). The feasibility of the implementation of these levels of participation raises two important questions:

1. Can elected government officials delegate decision making (political) power to voluntary groups?

2. How does this delegation relate to their official duty to represent their constituents, since by the law the elected officials are the duly elected decision makers in a democratic society? (Head 1971, 20)

A significant difference exists between Susskind's consensus model and Arnstein's degrees of citizen power. Susskind recognizes that elected or appointed officials still must make the final decisions. But what Susskind's method does is make it increasingly difficult for officials to choose an alternative besides the one developed through the consensus process (Susskind 1977, 40).

Defining participation and determining at what point it becomes "full" or "meaningful" or "effective" is arbitrary and therefore a frustrating task. Arthur Stinson's premise is that this frustration is exacerbated by the many different assumptions about what is involved (1982, 15). Basic differences exist about how people perceive participation and Stinson cites
three different perceptions to illustrate this problem.

Under the first position, participation is approached from a paternalistic point of view and is valued on an advisory or consultative level. The advisors, may be screened or carefully selected from among those perceived to have something "worthwhile to contribute".

In the second position, participation is approached as a method of distributing power. The ideal is a partnership concept of participation in which citizen groups have an authentic role, shared with government, for determining aspects of the environment which affect them.

The third position, is based on the need for social transformation to a style of participation characterized by citizen control. Relating to Arnstein's ladder, Stinson adds:

The person achieves liberation through inter-dependency, a concept which makes irrelevant any other step on the "ladder of participation" than authentic self-control (Stinson 1982, 15).

In settling on a definition for public participation, the definition of the Bureau of Municipal Research in Toronto includes the two elements which the various typologies and classifications systems have in common:

Citizen participation is ... a component of the democratic system which permits non-elected members of the community to exercise some control over decision making which goes beyond elections (Shalinsky 1979, 24).

It is evident that some authors see participation as only being adequate or effective if power is transferred to interested public groups. As understood in this thesis, the transfer of power is not necessary for citizen participation to occur. Elected representatives retain their traditional
authority and use public participation as a means of gaining and maintaining a more informed understanding of public values.

2.5 OBJECTIVES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Three conclusions are taken from the literature review up to this point. First, there is now general agreement among contemporary writers on the subject of citizen involvement in planning that public participation is desirable as part of any democratic system of governance. Second, writers also agree that two minimal conditions are necessary within any definition of public participation: the involvement of non-elected members of the community and that this involvement goes beyond the formal electoral processes. Third, there is no overall agreement as to what constitutes effective or adequate participation. There are no "golden rules" of effective citizen participation programs yet identified (Berry et al. 1981, 466).

Although there is no consensus in the literature on the issue of effectiveness or adequacy, there has been a number of studies carried out which suggest how to improve participation efforts. Based on what is available in the literature and the democratic goal that every citizen has the right to participate in decisions that affect his interests, a number of process-oriented objectives can be posited which any public participation in municipal land use planning should strive to achieve. These objectives serve as a basis on which to judge the adequacy of public participation in a planning process. The six objectives are: accessibility, timing, impartiality, comprehensibility, alternatives and efficacy.
(1) **Accessibility** - ALL CITIZENS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY AND ARE ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE.

A variety of means to enable interested and concerned citizens to become involved are provided at times and locations convenient to them.

(2) **Timing** - THE PUBLIC IS PROVIDED WITH INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES AT CRUCIAL DECISION-MAKING POINTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS.

Failure to acquire information early in the planning process can severely handicap interests in identifying their concerns and preparing their positions. Moreover, if information is not disseminated until late in the planning process, after substantial investments have been made in technical and other studies by parties to a proposal, the plan can gain momentum which effectively prevents rational consideration of its merits. Many contemporary writers have concluded that participation must be integrated into a number of stages in the planning process (Creighton 1983, 127; Boaden et al. 1980, 45; Berry et al. 1984, 17; Alterman et al. 1984). Therefore a single effort approach to involve the public either early or late in the planning process is insufficient.

(3) **Impartiality** - NO INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP IS PERMITTED TO DOMINATE THE PARTICIPATION PROCESS AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS.

The battles and debates that go on over land use are a struggle among competing fundamental values about how land should be used
and the lifestyles associated with that use. The demands for public participation in the planning process are demands that agencies be accountable to a broader range of alternative values (Creighton 1983, 43). In order for planners to understand the range of values held in the community and in turn, for the public to understand the information held by the planners, exchanges are necessary whereby all parties become educated as to others' positions and about the information they possess. Mutual education is fundamental in public participation. People and groups which can be expected to reflect different values and philosophies therefore, must be permitted and encouraged to participate.

(4) Comprehensibility - IMPORTANT INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AND IS PRESENTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT IS UNDERSTOOD BY THOSE WHOM IT AFFECTS.

Effort could be wasted in establishing a program in which the public would have difficulty participating because they lack understanding of the issues and decisions. Therefore, technical jargon must be avoided and instead lay terminology employed where ever feasible. Technical information is generated in such a way that the risks, costs, and uncertainties are simply and clearly expressed to allow the public to understand the implications of the alternatives presented. Included in this objective is the full disclosure of all relevant data and analysis. The information distributed must be sufficient 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. The information must be accurate and compiled in a useful form.

(5) **Alternatives** - THE PUBLIC IS PRESENTED WITH A RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES.

The public is presented with the planners' own analysis of the problems or issues and a range of alternative solutions with perceived consequences. In turn citizens have the opportunity to offer their own opinion of the alternatives and suggest different ones. In order for exchange to occur the flow of ideas and information is cyclical between planners, elected officials and the public, including opportunities for debate and dialogue.

(6) **Efficacy** - PARTICIPATORS' VIEWS ARE CONSIDERED IN PRODUCTS OF THE PLANNING PROCESS.

In order for there to be mutual education, it is necessary that the public be given an explanation about the decisions made, including why certain suggestions and views were incorporated while others were rejected, or a compromise was struck. The objective of participation efforts influencing decision outcomes is considered very important by many contemporary writers (Pollack 1984, 72; Kweit and Kweit 1981, 33; Kasperson and Brietbart qtd. in Checkoway and Van Til 1978, 35). Therefore, the opinions, views and concerns of the public that are solicited during the planning process must be recognized, considered and, if appropriate, have an effect on staff and decision makers' opinions and be incorporated in the outcome and products of the planning process.
It is important to recognize that in order for any of the above objectives to be met, commitment is required on the part of a municipality or agency implementing the public participation. If effort is not made by those responsible for administrating a public participation program and by politicians, then meeting the objectives will be difficult. Many writers point to the political environment and administrative commitment as important conditions for effective public participation efforts (Catanese 1984, 129; Berry et al. 1984, 7; Johnson 1984; 8).

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has summarized the literature on public participation in community planning. It is evident that while public participation is not without its constraints and limitations, it is deemed as an accepted and integral part of municipal land use planning. Contemporary writers agree that as minimum conditions, public participation must involve non-elected members of the public and that that involvement must go beyond the formal electoral processes. There is no agreement however, as to when participation becomes effective or adequate. Based on democratic principles and supported by findings in the literature, the chapter has concluded with six process-oriented objectives for public participation. How well a public participation program achieves these objectives will determine the degree of effectiveness of the effort. The steps taken by each municipality in their O.C.P. process to meet these six objectives will be assessed in chapter five. Before going into evaluation of the four municipal processes, the official
community plan process as experienced in four British Columbia municipalities and the techniques they used will be discussed in the next two chapters.
CHAPTER THREE
THE PROCESS OF PREPARING AN OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is: (1) to provide a brief description of the four municipalities used as examples in this study, (2) to describe the O.C.P. as currently defined in British Columbia, (3) to describe the processes that four municipalities went through in preparing their O.C.P. and (4) to describe the role public participation played in those processes.

As mentioned in chapter one, the four municipalities chosen for the comparison are all situated in the greater Vancouver region and have recently completed, or are close to completing, an official community plan. Figure 1 illustrates the geographic location of the four municipalities.

Surrey is the largest of the four municipalities with its 150,000 residents and 32,225 hectares. Figure 2 illustrates Surrey's planning areas. Richmond has the second largest population of the four municipalities with 105,000 people residing almost exclusively on the west side of the municipality. Richmond's total area is 13,311 hectares. Figure 3 illustrates Richmond's planning areas. Delta's population of 78,000 lives in the three distinct and separate communities of Ladner, South Delta and North Delta. Delta's total area is 18,679 hectares. Delta's planning areas are illustrated in Figure 4. New Westminster is the smallest of the four municipalities in both area size and population.
FIGURE 1

THE LOCATION OF RICHMOND, SURREY, DELTA AND NEW WESTMINSTER IN THE GREATER VANCOUVER REGION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
FIGURE 2
SURREY LOCAL PLANNING AREAS

Source: (Surrey 1983a, 79)
FIGURE 3
RICHMOND LOCAL PLANNING AREAS

Source: (Richmond 1996b, 14)
FIGURE 5

NEW WESTMINSTER PLANNING AREAS

1. DOWNTOWN
2. QUEEN'S PARK
3. UPTOWN
4. BROW OF THE HILL
5. VICTORY HEIGHTS
6. SAPPERTON
7. BRUNETTE CREEK
8. QUEENSBOROUGH
9. QUEENSBOROUGH
10. NORTH ARM SOUTH
11. CONNAUGHT HEIGHTS
12. WEST END
13. KELVIN
14. GLENBROOKE NORTH
15. GLENBROOKE SOUTH
Forty thousand people live on 1565 hectares (G.V.R.D. 1982). New Westminster's planning areas are illustrated on Figure 5.

3.1 LEGISLATION AND OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANS

In British Columbia all official community plans are prepared and adopted within the statutory provisions of the Municipal Act of the provincial legislature. This legislation prescribes the general content of O.C.P.'s and also sets out a formal process for adopting a plan.

In the autumn of 1985, the provincial legislature passed Bill 62, The Municipal Amendment Act, which affected the preparation of O.C.P.'s in a number of ways. Before considering the more pertinent changes, a summary of the legislation as it existed before the most recent amendments will be outlined. This is necessary because both Surrey's O.C.P. and New Westminster's O.C.P. were prepared before the 1985 amendments were introduced.

3.1.1 MUNICIPAL ACT 1979

Prior to the 1985 amendments, a community plan was defined in the Municipal Act as "an expression of policy for any use of land, including surfaces of water, or the pattern of the subdivision of land, and either or both may apply to any or all areas of the municipality" (1979, Sec. 709). To become an official community plan, a community plan had to be given bylaw designation by council (1979, Subsec. 711(1)) and consideration had to be given to:

(a) the probable social, environmental and economic consequences of proposed policies;
(b) the stated objectives, policies and programs of the government; 
(c) the suitability of land for various uses; 
(d) land area requirements for uses related to projections of population and economic growth; and 
(e) the prevention of pollution of air, water and land (1984, sec. 711(2)and 810(3)).

A fair amount of flexibility was permitted in the pre-1985 Act. First, community plans could be expressed in the form of maps, plans, reports or any combination of these (1979, sec. 710). Second, the preparation of community plans was optional (1984, subsec. 711(1)). However, once adopted as an official community plan, then the plan became paramount. Subsection 712(1) of the Municipal Act 1984 states:

The council or trustees of an improvement district shall not enact a provision or undertake a work contrary to or at variance with, an official community plan".

At the same time, subsection 713(1) ensured that council was not obligated to do everything outlined in the plan:

An official community plan does not commit the council or any other administrative body to undertake any projects suggested or outlined in it.

If a council did not want to have an O.C.P., two other options were available: (1) to adopt a community plan by resolution or (2) not to have a community plan at all. Both of these options meant there was a lesser degree of certainty as to how future change would be managed.

Provisions for public input into the O.C.P. process included two devices. The first of these provisions was a public hearing which was mandatory. Under the Municipal Act, 1979, the council could not designate a community plan as an official community plan or amend an O.C.P. unless it held a public hearing (subsec. 711(2)).
The second provision was the establishment of an advisory planning commission which was optional for municipal councils. If established, the purpose of the commission was to advise council on such matters coming within the scope of community planning as referred to the commission by the council (Municipal Act 1979, sec. 715).

3.1.2 THE MUNICIPAL AMENDMENT ACT, 1985

Under the 1985 amendments introduced in Bill 62, adoption of official community plans remains optional and still retains a fair amount of flexibility. In the Municipal Amendment Act 1985, an O.C.P. is defined as:

a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan (subsec. 945(1)).

Under subsection 945(2), a community plan must now be in writing and may include plans, maps, tables or other graphic material but must include statements and map designations for the area covered by the plan respecting

(a) the approximate location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years,
(b) the approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses,
(c) the approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction,
(d) restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous condition or that is environmentally sensitive to development,
(e) the approximate location and phasing of major highways and trunk sewer and water services,
(f) the approximate location and type of present and
proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites, and (g) other matters that may, in respect of any plan, be required by the minister.

New provisions in the Municipal Amendment Act 1985 respecting O.C.P.'s include:

• O.C.P.'s must designate areas where temporary commercial/industrial uses would be permitted before such permits may be issued (subsec. 945(3));

• O.C.P.'s are restricted to statements of broad objectives on matters outside local jurisdiction unless the Minister has required otherwise (subsec. 945(5)); and

• O.C.P.'s must designate where development permits will be required before such permits can be issued. A community plan may designate such areas for the

(a) protection of the natural environment,
(b) protection of development from hazardous conditions,
(c) protection of Provincial or municipal heritage sites, under the Heritage Conservation Act, or
(d) redevelopment of urban commercial areas. (subsec. 945(4)).

If a municipality wishes to issue development permits, therefore, an O.C.P. which designates the areas in question, must be adopted first.

Public hearings remain mandatory before an O.C.P. bylaw can be adopted. A new stipulation requires a council refer the plan (or amendment) to adjoining municipalities and to the regional district of which it is a member for comment at least 30 days before a public hearing (subsec. 947(b)). The legislation now specifies that a hearing be held after first reading and before third reading and requires a certified record of each hearing be prepared and made available to the public (Municipal Amendment
Act 1985, subsec. 947(b)). Furthermore, the guidelines set out for public hearings under sections 956 through 959 ensures that all persons who believe that their interest in property is affected by the proposed bylaw are afforded a reasonable opportunity to be heard (as opposed to the pre-amendment 1985 Act "afforded an opportunity") or to present written submissions respecting matters contained in the bylaw. "Interest in property" is interpreted widely to include any interest people have in how a bylaw would affect them.

When adopting an O.C.P., in addition to referring a proposed plan to adjoining municipalities and its regional district and holding a public hearing, a council must, after first and before third reading, examine its capital expenditure bylaw and any waste management plan or economic strategy plan applicable to the area in terms of their effect on the plan. The council may then adopt the plan by giving it fourth and final reading (Municipal Amendment Act 1985, subsec. 947).

Establishment of an advisory planning commission remains optional under the new amended Act. Membership has been restricted to residents of the municipality or the electoral area of the regional district and excludes officers, employees, and elected officials of the municipality (Municipal Amendment Act 1985, sec. 955).

To ensure public access to the information considered and decisions made by an advisory planning commission, a new provision requires that where ever a commission is established, the minutes of all its meetings must be kept and made available upon request to the public (Municipal Amendment Act 1985,
The legislation also requires that any person who believes his interest in property is affected by the matter before the commission and wishes to address the commission, must be heard (subsec. 955(7)). According to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs "this increases the level of local public input to advice received by the board or council" (Province of British Columbia, 1985, 3).

3.1.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF AN O.C.P.

Official community plans cannot directly affect the rights of landowners. Section 712 of the Municipal Act 1979 states that while the council shall not enact a provision or undertake a work contrary to, or at variance with, an O.C.P., this does not empower the council to impair, abrogate or otherwise affect the rights and privileges to which an owner of land is otherwise lawfully entitled. Subsection 945(2) of the Municipal Amendment Act 1985, states that the description of the location, type, density, phasing and amount of the various features and map designations for the area covered by the plan shall be approximate and therefore not detailed. The O.C.P. is meant to be conceptual in this respect.

Therefore, whereas O.C.P.'s are important in the management of development, they are ineffective unless there is a means to implement their policies and a willingness to do so. Implementation of an O.C.P. involves financial commitment to carry out specific actions and the preparation and enforcement of zoning and subdivision regulations which reflect the aspirations of the plan. In particular, zoning and subdivision bylaws represent powerful tools which can be used to implement
In contrast to an O.C.P., a council by using its zoning bylaw powers exercises direct control over property rights in land in a zoned area. Subsection 963(1) of the Municipal Amendment Act 1985 legislates that a local government may, by bylaw,

(a) divide the whole or part of the municipality or regional district, as the case may be, into zones, name each zone and show by map or describe by legal description the boundaries of the zones,
(b) limit the vertical extent of a zone and provide other zones above or below it, and
(c) regulate within the zones
   (i) the use of land, buildings or structures,
   (ii) the density of the use of land, buildings and structures,
   (iii) the siting, size and dimensions of buildings and structures, and
   (iv) the area, shape and dimensions of all parcels of land that may be created by subdivision under the Land Title Act or the Condominium Act.

Furthermore subsection 963(3) states that the power to regulate under subsection (1) includes the power to prohibit any use or uses in any zone or zones.

The nature of O.C.P.'s and zoning bylaws have not changed under the new amendments introduced in 1985. Therefore in differentiating between an O.C.P. bylaw and a zoning bylaw, an O.C.P. does not bind private citizens, while a zoning bylaw does. An O.C.P. bylaw by itself does not have the legislative power to ensure its implementation. Therefore, for an O.C.P. to be effective, it should be implemented in conjunction with a zoning bylaw and other devices. Such a bylaw has the legislative authority to require landowners to comply with the provisions for the zoning districts in which they are located.

However, zoning bylaws do not always reflect the intent of
an O.C.P.. In these cases subdivision control can be useful in implementing the plan. Subdivision regulations supplement zoning bylaws by designating conditions that may have to be met before land can be subdivided for the uses permitted under the zoning bylaw. These conditions generally involve the provision of public services (Bish 1984, 200). Because subdivision involves transactions in real property it is governed by the Land Titles Act as well as the Municipal Act. Municipalities and regional districts may designate an official "approving officer" (Bish 1984, 199). It is stated in subsection 729(3) of the Municipal Act 1979, that:

Every approving officer shall give regard to any official community plan when dealing with application for the approval of a plan of subdivision.

Therefore, where zoning bylaws and O.C.P. land use designations and policies conflict, the subdivisions approving officer can exercise his discretion as to what is most appropriate. This power is limited however, since controlling subdivision lot size and servicing is only one aspect of the overall concept of an O.C.P.. Two other principle methods used to implement an O.C.P. are the taxation system which can be used selectively to affect development and, spending power through the municipal capital budget which is prepared to select priorities from among competing demands.

3.1.4 SUMMARY

In summary, an official community plan is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government respecting the form and character of existing and
proposed land use and servicing requirements in the area covered by the plan. In British Columbia, all O.C.P.'s are prepared and adopted within the statutory provisions of the Municipal Act of the provincial legislature. O.C.P.'s provide a degree of certainty about the location and nature of community change to residents and landowners and serve as a guide for municipal councils when they make decisions about development, zoning, and providing the required services to accommodate growth.

Once adopting a plan with land use designations, a council can rezone for uses permitted within each of the plan designation areas. If council feels it wants to allow a rezoning that is not permitted under a land use designation, the O.C.P. must be amended first and then rezoning procedures can proceed. Furthermore, the plan can only encourage senior levels of government to take action; it cannot force or require senior governments to act. As far as public involvement is concerned, the legislation requires a public hearing be held before third reading of the O.C.P. bylaw and it is left up to the council's discretion whether or not to appoint an advisory planning commission.

3.2 THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN RICHMOND
3.2.1 THE OVERALL PROCESS

In January 1984, Richmond municipal council directed their planning department to prepare an O.C.P. for Richmond. Council approved the planning department's proposal to prepare the O.C.P. in six steps; research, analysis, discussion, policy development, adoption, and implementation (Richmond 1986, 2).
The major thrust of the research and analysis stages were the preparation of 24 background reports detailing community issues. The major issues included: agriculture, environment, transportation, social services, Vancouver International Airport, heritage, and growth. These reports were completed by the planning department with the assistance of all municipal departments as well as outside agencies and consultants. A final report entitled *Issues and Choices* was prepared to summarize the major issues and to propose alternatives.

The public discussion stage was held in May, June and July of 1985 and consisted of a series of five open houses which operated during the afternoon and early evening. Each open house was followed by an evening public information meeting. Special meetings were held with environmental groups, senior levels of government, community service groups, farmers and heritage groups. Graphic displays were set up at two of Richmond's malls, the Richmond public library, and two community events. Richmond residents were invited to send in their comments on questionnaire/information sheets made available at the displays, open houses, public information meetings and at the planning department. A summary feedback report of the public participation program was prepared and published in the fall of 1985. In addition, an information brochure, based on the summary report of major issues and proposed options, was sent to every household and business in Richmond in May, media coverage was actively encouraged and letters and briefs were solicited. As well, throughout the preparation on the plan, an advisory planning commission was established to advise council and staff
on the development of the O.C.P.

At the policy development stage planners formulated policy derived from five major sources. The five sources included the regional planning framework, research on the major issues by the planning department, local area plans that were in place prior to the development of the O.C.P., past and present council policies and public input. With these five sources, planners developed a strategy for the plan and presented it as the first draft of Richmond's O.C.P.. The planning department organized a second public participation program in the spring of 1986 to discuss the draft plan. The 1986 participation program was similar to the 1985 program and also included the distribution of a broadsheet of the draft plan.

The research for this thesis was completed as the adoption phase of the process was beginning. Planners revised the first draft plan following the 1986 public participation program. The second draft was the subject of a mandatory public hearing in the autumn and winter of 1986. If major revisions are considered necessary by council, then a third draft of the plan will be needed and another public hearing scheduled before the O.C.P. is passed as a bylaw by council.

The final result of the O.C.P. process will be a document of roughly 50 pages which outlines a land use strategy. The strategy is comprised of six major policy areas: agriculture, jobs, housing, transportation, environment and services. Six goals of the O.C.P. are established which are meant to be regarded as a package of broad targets the municipality wants to achieve by meeting the objectives and implementing the policies
which are outlined in the remainder of the plan. An O.C.P. land use map, a map indicating development permit areas and a road hierarchy map accompany the written document. A separate document summarizes the background reports providing a community profile to complement the plan. A diagram of the Richmond O.C.P. process can be found in Figure 6.

Many different players were involved in the development of Richmond's O.C.P.. Figure 7 depicts Richmond's O.C.P. organization, and how the different players and committees relate.

The planning department is responsible for functional coordination of research and policy development proposals. The research and policy development information comes from a variety of sources: outside governmental agencies and ministries, municipal staff and consultants, local area planning committees and Richmond citizens, and the private sector.

Background reports, draft plans and other documentation for the O.C.P. are reviewed by the staff steering and coordinating committee and the advisory planning commission. The staff steering and coordinating committee is made up of representatives from municipal departments, the RCMP and school district. This committee is important for inter-departmental liaison and is an important medium for transferring information and reaching consensus on areas of mutual concern. Due to the broad and encompassing scope of the O.C.P. and its importance to many municipal departments, this committee is useful in helping the planning department coordinate the plan's development.
FIGURE 6
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
AND THE
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN RICHMOND

COUNCIL APPROVES
PLAN'S PREPARATION
-January 1984

BACKGROUND REPORTS
-24 reports

REGIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

PAST AND PRESENT COUNCIL POLICIES

LOCAL AREA PLANS

SUMMARY BACKGROUND REPORT
-issues and choices
-brochure delivery outlining alternatives and how to get involved

DISCUSSION PHASE
-9 part public participation program
-spring and summer 1985

POLICY DEVELOPMENT & DRAFT PLAN
-winter 1986

DISCUSSION PHASE
-8 part public participation program
-spring 1986

2nd DRAFT PLAN
-1st and 2nd reading

PUBLIC HEARING

ADOPTION & IMPLEMENTATION
-scheduled for Dec. 1986
-revise local area plans
-revise zoning bylaws
FIGURE 7
RICHMOND ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

RICHMOND COUNCIL
-final decisions

COUNCIL PLANNING COMMITTEE
-recommends

OTHER COUNCIL COMMITTEES
-review and comment
when appropriate

STAFF STEERING AND COORDINATING
COMMITTEE
-review, comment and advise

ADVISORY PLANNING
COMMISSION
-review, comment
and advise

PLANNING DEPARTMENT
-research, coordinate
consolidate and produce

OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES AND
MINISTRIES
-input, comment

LOCAL AREA PLANNING
COMMITTEES
-input, comment

MUNICIPAL STAFF
AND CONSULTANTS
-policy analysis
and development

RICHMOND CITIZENS &
PRIVATE SECTOR
-input, comment
The advisory planning commission on the other hand, consists of members representing the interests of Richmond citizens. The commission's purpose is to examine research information and policy and make suggestions to municipal staff and council. Both of these committees therefore, review, comment and advise both the planning department and council. However, neither has veto power on anything being passed through them to council. They are welcome to comment, but the planning department is not obligated to incorporate their suggestions. If either committee is not satisfied that revisions do not meet with their approval or if they disagree with a planning department recommendation, they can advise council of this.

The Planning Committee of Council consists of four members of council who are regularly advised on the progress of the plan. The committee receives written material, and reviews and considers all aspects of the O.C.P.. This committee may ask for revisions to material before it will endorse it and pass it onto council.

### 3.2.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE RICHMOND O.C.P. PROCESS

Participation by the public was represented in many ways and at several points in the O.C.P. process. The advisory planning commission represents a continuous form of public participation that was restructured in April 1984 near the start of the O.C.P. process and is scheduled to continue until at least adoption of the final plan in December 1986. The commission is structured such that half the members represent areas of Richmond, while the other half represent specific
fields of interest such as the environment and social services.

Input from local area planning committees was an indirect involvement technique. The primary purpose of these committees was to advise on the O.C.P.'s being prepared for the local areas. They were not directly consulted on the Richmond O.C.P. although the decisions made on those local plans had an inherent affect on land use designations for the Richmond O.C.P.. Also, not all areas of Richmond had a local area plan in place prior to the development of the Richmond O.C.P.. In fact, planners prepared several local area plans concurrently with the Richmond O.C.P.. For this reason many of the background reports and much initial research was useful in the design of local area O.C.P.'s although directed for the purpose of the preparation of the Richmond O.C.P.. Revision to existing local area O.C.P.'s will occur when the Richmond O.C.P. is adopted and the ongoing program of preparing O.C.P.'s for those local areas without them, is scheduled to continue.

At two points in the process, participation was actively encouraged by the municipality with deliberate public participation programs designed and implemented. A third opportunity for public input in the form of public hearings took place near the end of the process.

Each of the two designed public participation programs which took place in the spring and summer of 1985 and again in the spring and summer of 1986 included:

- media coverage including radio, newspaper and television advertising and news coverage;
- open houses and public meetings
- graphic displays at malls, library, special functions and meetings;
- meetings with community groups and government agencies
- questionnaire/comment sheets (Spring 1985 only)
- solicitation of letters and briefs
- feedback report

In addition, before the 1985 program, the municipality prepared 24 background reports and made them available during and after the 1985 program. In order to summarize the key points in the background reports, at the beginning of the 1985 program, the municipality sent a summary brochure of the issues and choices to every address in Richmond. Also in 1986, the municipality sent a summary broadsheet of the draft plan to every address in the community.

The goals and objectives of the 1985 public participation program were clearly stated by the planners. The goal was:

to develop a consensus building public participation program which draws from a broad spectrum of individuals, groups and organizations and provides for a variety of opportunities for public involvement early in the planning process. (Richmond 1985b, 2)

The objectives as stated were:

1. To increase the flow of information between the municipality and residents;

2. To work with the public to clarify emerging issues and choices as they relate to the community planning process; and

3. To seek input from various 'publics' in determining issues, choices and priorities (Richmond 1985b, 2-3).

The goals and objectives for the 1986 public program were very similar to those of the 1985 program (Richmond 1986b, 3). Consensus building was defined in an earlier Richmond staff document as meaning:

a process by which issues are identified, common ground is established, and those areas of potential
agreement are ascertained (Richmond 1984, 1).

3.2.3 SUMMARY

In summary, the O.C.P. process in Richmond was a clearly planned strategy which involved the public at three important points in the process: (1) issue and alternatives identification and clarification, (2) comment on first draft plan and (3) comment on second draft plan. As well, the municipality involved the advisory planning commission from the beginning of the process. Planners established goals and objectives specifically for public involvement, then used a variety of techniques to meet the goals and objectives.

3.3 THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN SURREY

3.3.1 THE OVERALL PROCESS

Surrey's O.C.P. was formulated over a number of years beginning in the late 1970's and ending with plan adoption in March 1985. The reason for the length of the process is related to the rather ad hoc nature of the process and the use of local area plans to develop the O.C.P.. The process is depicted in figure 8.
FIGURE 8

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
AND THE
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN SURREY

LOCAL AREA PLANS
-prepared by local committees
and ratepayers groups
-most completed by late 1970's

PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

BACKGROUND MATERIAL
-population projection

DRAFT PLAN
-1st and 2nd reading

ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
-appointed May 1982
-comment and edit on 2nd draft

2nd DRAFT PLAN
-published May 1983
-summary boardsheet delivered to residents

ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
-disbanded May 1983

PUBLIC HEARINGS
-in 10 locations
-June-August 1983

REVISIONS TO PLAN

PUBLIC HEARINGS
-throughout 1984
-revisions to land use designations

ADOPTION
-spring 1985

IMPLEMENTATION
-yearly public hearings
-zoning changes
In 1966, Surrey adopted its original O.C.P. followed by 18 other community and industrial plans completed by 1982 (Surrey 1983b, 2). The community plans of the late 1970's and early 1980's were prepared by a variety of authors including local area planning committees appointed by council; self-appointed local planning committees who submitted policy statements to council for its consideration; and ratepayers' associations who produced local area plans and policies on their own initiative, sometimes superseding the work of council-appointed local area planning committees, and sometimes engaging the assistance of developers and private consultants. As well, several local area plans were produced on the initiative of council by the municipal planning department and subsequently subjected to a review by local area committees (Surrey 1983a, 369). These plans were submitted to council which either received them, or approved them in principle subject to modifications as needed to make them compatible with each other and with the overall O.C.P. (Surrey 1983a, 369).

The process of preparing local area plans did not represent an effort to reach consensus or a compromise of the residents in Surrey's sub areas. The local area plans' relationship to each other along with their relationship to the larger O.C.P. is summed up in the appendix of the 1983 draft of the O.C.P.:

Some plans and the local policy statements cover overlapping areas which is due to the sometimes competitive nature of local area groups who "claimed" their territory. In such overlap areas judicious application of the policies will usually avoid conflict. Legal conflict does not exist since this Appendix has no legal status. For this reason, it was easier to leave the overlaps than to discuss with the various local groups their "claims" (1983a, 369).
Concurrent with the development of local area plans, planners prepared background studies and population projections. The background studies remained internal documents for the planning department's use until they were included in the plan. The background material was largely superficial. There was very little data gathered on the current state of the municipality and analysis of the trends for the future (Caselton interview).

Together these two sets of devices, the local area plans and the background reports, represented the research and analysis for the O.C.P. Development policies were integrated and in May of 1983, the municipality published a 427 page draft of the O.C.P.. Copies of the complete draft were made available at all Surrey libraries and the municipal hall. In May 1983, the planning department produced a four page broadsheet summarizing the O.C.P. draft plan highlighting the physical plan and policies and sent it to every household in the municipality.

A public hearing, adjourned to ten different locations was held in June, July and August of 1983. Revisions to the draft were completed throughout 1984 accompanied by additional public hearings dominated mostly by individual land owners requesting changes to the designation of their properties. Altogether, consideration of the requested changes took approximately eighteen months. Final adoption of the O.C.P. occurred in March 1985. With the exception of a land use designation map displayed at municipal hall, no further drafts of the O.C.P. were published and made available to the public based on the revisions resulting from the hearings. The only O.C.P. draft available for public referral remains the May 1983 draft. The
final result is a very large O.C.P. document of which two chapters are adopted by bylaw and two chapters by council resolution. Plan designations, land use bylaws and development permit areas are all included in the O.C.P. bylaw. The residential land-use designations are quite specific breaking the land into three zones: multiple residential, urban residential and suburban residential. The first two chapters which included a description of the community and a policy plan were adopted by resolution.

An interdepartmental committee, called the technical planning committee consisting of the municipal manager and the department heads, was responsible for guiding the development of the plan. Due to conflicts within the committee, the committee was not as useful as it could have been. Basically, there was little interaction between departments about the plan despite the impact of the plan on such things as servicing capability which is an issue of basic importance to the engineering department (Dickinson interview).

3.3.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE SURREY O.C.P.

Public participation was present in Surrey's O.C.P. process in five ways. First, local planning committees, both council appointed and self appointed and ratepayers associations, were active in the production of local area plans. These committees can be considered an indirect link to public participation in the development of the O.C.P. since aspects of the local area plans were used in the development of the O.C.P.. The local area planning committees, and the general public, however, did not have the opportunity to comment on the aspects of the local area
plans that were incorporated in the Surrey O.C.P.. As well, some of the local area plans were prepared by special interest groups which did not represent the residents in the area. The membership of many committees that produced local area plans was restricted to landowners only. The aspects of the different local area plans that were incorporated into the O.C.P. were decided by the planners and politicians.

Second, in 1980, the municipality conducted a public opinion survey. The questions solicited opinions on a wide variety of issues relevant to Surrey as well as what preferences residents had for communicating their opinions. The questions were designed to require only short answers. The municipality intended to deliver the survey to every home in Surrey. However, the delivery system did not work as intended leaving some addresses without delivery (Caselton interview). Only three percent were returned which planners considered a very low response. Surveys of this sort usually command a 15-20 percent return rate (Mak interview). Therefore, the results could not be considered an accurate reflection of public opinion. At least one Surrey planner considered the results unuseable, even as a general indicator of public opinion (Caselton interview). The survey results were used as one means to determine policy questions. Staff were instructed not to formulate policy based on the survey responses alone but rather to consider the responses with other factors such as the local area plans and the background reports (Dickinson interview).

Third, a twelve member advisory planning commission was established in May 1982. Members included representatives from
ten areas in Surrey, three of which had been on their respective local area planning committee. One member represented the school board and one member was an alderman. The commission's terms of reference were outlined by the council and were included in the minutes of the commission's May 20, 1986 meeting. Among other things, the terms included:

The Commission shall meet regularly at least once in each month with respect to the overall area of Surrey and to the long range development in the municipality, and on all planning matters referred to it by the Council or the Planning Department; provided however, that the Commission shall not deal with individual development applications unless such development applications are deemed by Council to affect the overall or long range development of the Municipality (Surrey 1986).

At the same meeting it was stated that one of the purposes of the advisory planning commission was to comment to council about the feelings of residents in the areas that each member was representing. According to the advisory planning commission chairman, each member tried to put aside local concern for the benefit of the overall plan (Schon interview).

The commission critiqued the draft O.C.P. going through every chapter and each of the local area plans. The advisory planning commission found the local area plans to be totally unworkable as they were too diverse and many were out of date not reflecting the needs of the time (Schon interview). One important aspect of the plan the commission was not asked to comment on were the nine different areas designated "special study areas" which are defined in the plan as "areas of undetermined use; they possess equally good potential for, or constraints against, two or more uses" (Surrey 1983b). The
commission members would like to have had a say in the development of these special area and seen them declared in the O.C.P. (Schon interview).

The advisory planning commission was not open to general members of the public. This is clear in the June 15, 1983 minutes of the commission when a movement "that members of the public be permitted to attend the June 15, 1983 special meeting regarding the Genstar proposal" was defeated. Specific associations and Genstar were invited to submit written briefs instead.

The Surrey advisory planning commission was not reappointed for 1984 and the commission did not meet after the beginning of public hearings in the summer of 1983. At no point did the advisory planning commission have the opportunity to comment after the hearings even though changes resulted to the plan.

The May 1983 draft plan and the four page summary broadsheet represent a fourth public participation technique. Due to its size, the draft plan was expensive to purchase but interested citizens had access to it at Surrey public libraries and at municipal hall. The broadsheet delivered to every home in Surrey described the proposed plan in two sections: the land use plan and the policy plan.

The fifth form of public participation was a set of public hearings which were advertised in the newspaper and in the summary broadsheet. The initial public hearings were held in ten different locations throughout the municipality. A year of public hearings followed the initial hearings. In reviewing hearing minutes it is evident the planners and council made
changes to the O.C.P. land use designations. The vast majority of changes were landowners wanting their property changed from a suburban designation to an urban designation. Consideration of these changes by the planners including consultation with the engineering department with regard to servicing considerations resulted in an eighteen month delay of adoption of the plan.

3.3.3 SUMMARY

In Surrey, the public was involved at two points in the process (1) alternative identification and (2) comment on first draft plan. The local area planning committees and the advisory planning commission were used for up to twelve months durations. There was no mechanism in place for continuous involvement during the process. The public participation process in Surrey was very much ad hoc. At no point in the process were public participation objectives and goals laid out and no strategy for public participation existed. At no point was the general public's opinion sought except for the survey done of Surrey residents in 1980 and at the public hearings.

3.4 THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN DELTA

3.4.1 THE OVERALL PROCESS

Between 1961 and 1982, Delta made several attempts to prepare an O.C.P.. None of the attempts were completed because important issues were skirted by the planners and the plans were either too mediocre or too complicated (Collier interview). In the past, planners had failed to take ideas and present them in a simple manner. According to the municipal administrator, past attempts had lacked the creative flair needed when dealing with
community groups (Collier interview).

Delta's latest attempt in completing an O.C.P. began in early 1984 when the municipality hired a consultant to perform the task. It was felt the planning department did not have the time to devote to such a major project and an experienced consultant would be more successful at completing the plan. In the plan's preparation the consultant used many outside sources for technical assistance and information gathering. For example population projections were done by a professor and his students at the University of British Columbia and graphics for the plan were completed at Columbia College (Rogers interview). The Delta O.C.P. was adopted in January 1986.

Due to the past attempts at developing an O.C.P., the planners felt the important issues had been identified and therefore they did not seek public input in their identification (Cowie 1985) but rather sought public participation into further defining the issues and developing policies to deal with them. Throughout 1984, the municipality held a public meeting every month. Each meeting focussed on a major issue such as, commercial and industrial land, the extension of residential land into the agricultural land reserve by major developers in two locations, the agricultural/residential interface conflict, parks and recreation, community and social services, transportation, heritage, and ecology. The purpose of these meetings was to hear the public's concerns on these issues. Fourteen position papers were presented to council on the major issues discussed at these meetings.

In April 1985, a draft plan was prepared and delivered to
every address in Delta. In May and June 1985, four televised public meetings were held in the communities of Ladner, South Delta and North Delta and at municipal hall. Letters and briefs were received by the planning department and the advisory planning commission reported to council on its views of the draft plan.

Planners made amendments and additions to the plan after receiving the comments from the public and a second draft was prepared by September 1985. This draft was circulated to adjoining municipalities and regional districts and passed through first and second reading by Delta council. In October, 1985, the municipality held a public hearing which resulted in minor amendments. The planner prepared a final draft incorporating the amendments and this plan was given third reading in January 1986. Figure 9 depicts the Delta O.C.P. process.
FIGURE 9
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
AND THE
OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN DELTA

PLANNING CONSULTANT HIRED
-winter 1984
-key community leaders identified

COMMUNITY AND SPECIAL INTEREST
GROUP MEETINGS AND SEMINARS
-discussions and workshops on major issues
-alternatives creation and clarification

BACKGROUND REPORTS

ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION
-continuous term

DRAFT PLAN and BROADSHEET DELIVERY

PUBLIC MEETINGS
-3 locations

PUBLIC HEARING

MINOR AMENDMENTS

FINAL DRAFT

ADOPTION
-Jan. 1986

IMPLEMENTATION
-local area plans
Prior to the preparation of Delta's O.C.P., only two area-specific O.C.P.'s had been developed for the municipality: the Delta civic center O.C.P. and South Delta Commercial Area O.C.P., both adopted in 1968. These bylaws were repealed with the adoption of Delta's new O.C.P.. Area O.C.P.'s had not been prepared for Delta's three distinct communities of Ladner, South Delta and North Delta at the time the Delta O.C.P. was being developed. One policy included in the O.C.P. is to prepare area plans with public input for these three communities as well as in the industrial and agricultural areas. The area plans play an important role in the implementation of the Delta O.C.P.. In the Future Land Use Plan of the O.C.P., several lands that are adjacent to developed land in Ladner and South Delta have been designated 'urban' without a particular land use agreed by council. The number of housing units and form of related development is to be decided on at the time of zoning application. However, phased development is not to proceed until an area plan has been prepared for the general area (Delta 1986, 34).

During the preparation of the O.C.P., four broad objectives were recognized as the basis for more specific planning policies. The objectives were to:

- Conserve, enhance and improve the physical environment of the municipality;
- Conserve and increase the diversity of community activities and services throughout the municipality;
- Improve access to and ease of movement within the municipality;
- Encourage economic growth and protect the existing tax base by managing and guiding the development of
the municipality as a whole (Delta 1986, 30).

The major part of the Delta plan comprises explanations and background for sixteen different areas of concern. Sixteen specific planning policies are presented which relate directly to analysis of each issue. Land use plan designation explanations accompany the future land use map completing the 34 page document.

No special mechanisms were established within the municipal hall to deal with the O.C.P. specifically. All communication and coordination was carried out by existing channels. According to the municipal administrator, the membership of council was ideal for the development of the plan. Since the late 1970's, Delta voters have endorsed a conservative/liberal split in the six alderman/1 mayor council. The split during the plan's development was three to three with the mayor claiming no allegiance but generally being more conservative. This balance resulted in much debate on the issues in the plan at the council level (Collier interview).

3.4.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE DELTA O.C.P.

Several public participation techniques were used by Delta with public meetings accounting for the most significant effort to involve the public. First of all, the municipality held public meetings on each of the major issues covered in the plan. Depending on the issue being discussed, these meetings attracted various size crowds of up to 200 persons (Cowie interview). These meetings were advertised in newspapers and community groups were also informed. All of these issues-oriented meetings were held in South Delta and Ladner. The organizers found it
difficult to attract any interest from North Delta residents because the community leaders had just spent a great deal of time over the impact of a major bridge being built in their community (Rogers interview). Some of the meetings took the form of a workshop where participants were asked to draw up their own solutions and plans and prioritize what was important (Rogers interview). For example, in the meeting concerning the residential/agricultural interface issue, participants were given paper and felt pens and asked to draw solutions to the problem of conflict and list and prioritize what was important to them.

For some meetings, panels were set up to represent varying views on an issue. For example, pro-agriculture and anti-agriculture representatives sat on a panel to discuss and answer questions regarding urban development on the Agricultural Land Reserve. In addition, different interest groups were encouraged to discuss their respective views with each other. For example, the two major developers, Daon Development Corporation and Genstar were asked by the planner to hold open houses on their plans for residential expansion in Ladner and South Delta (Rogers interview).

After the delivery of the draft plan to every address in Delta, the municipality held four more meetings at different locations throughout the community. The fourteen position papers that had been presented to council were available at these public meetings. Finally, the municipality held a public hearing before third reading. The local community station televised many of the public information meetings as well as the public
hearing.

According to the chairman of the advisory planning commission, the heavy reliance on the various forms of public meetings is related to the lack of resources available to the planner responsible for the plan. In particular, there was a lack of manpower available to go beyond the use of the public meeting method (Rogers interview). A variety of techniques such as workshops and panel discussions were used to broaden the usefulness of the public meetings that were held.

There has been an advisory planning commission in Delta since 1955. Its primary responsibility has been advising on zoning and subdivision matters. The twelve commission members represent the three different communities of Delta. Six are from North Delta, three are from Ladner and three are from South Delta. The commission dealt with specific themes in the O.C.P., made comments of the draft to council and helped organize the public meetings on the draft plan. As a group they were not particularly active in the O.C.P.'s development. However, the chairman was very active and worked very closely with the planning consultant throughout the process. Along with two other community leaders, the chairman of the planning commission and the planner got together for several informal meetings to discuss the issues, prioritize and "bounce ideas off one another" (Rogers interview). The municipality also received a number of letters and briefs during the course of the plan's preparation. Documentation includes responses from individual citizens, special interest groups, other municipalities and government agencies.
All the draft plans were made available to the public. The first draft was delivered in its entirety to every address in the municipality. Its design, a twenty page colour broadsheet, was intended to attract interest in the plan.

At no point in the process were objectives laid out for public participation as part of the public record although every draft and the final plan mentioned the importance of public participation in the overall process. In addition, public input is included in the policy outlining the preparation of local area O.C.P.'s to follow the Delta O.C.P..

3.4.3 SUMMARY

In summary, the O.C.P. process in Delta involved citizens from early in the process. A limited number of techniques were used to involve the public, however, variety and ingenuity were used to broaden their usefulness. Community leaders played an important role in working with the planning consultant in identifying issues and proposing alternatives and assisting in the public involvement component of the program. The Municipality of Delta involved the public at three stages in the process: (1) issue clarification and alternative identification, (2) comment on first draft plan and (3) comment on second draft plan. The advisory planning commission was also involved throughout the process.
3.5 THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN PROCESS IN NEW WESTMINSTER

3.5.1 THE OVERALL PROCESS

In May of 1980, New Westminster City council resolved

THAT Council intends to prepare and adopt an Official Community Plan and such a plan is intended to give general direction to growth and change within the City and would take the form of a Policy Plan (New Westminster 1981a).

The concept of only producing a "policy plan" makes New Westminster distinct from the other municipalities being considered in this study. The purpose of the O.C.P. as stated, is to guide the city and provide parameters for future growth (New Westminster 1982a).

The New Westminster O.C.P. is a document in written form only. There are no land use plan designations as there are with the O.C.P.'s of Delta, Surrey and Richmond. In this respect, this type of plan would not be permitted under the 1985 amendments to the Municipal Act in which a policy plan must be accompanied by a map outlining land use designations for the area. The New Westminster O.C.P. is strictly a policy document which outlines the fundamental goals, objectives and policies of the city.

The fundamental goals of the city as stated in the O.C.P. are to:

(1) improve and enhance the physical environment, the economic base, and the livability of the City; and at the same time
(2) maintain and preserve the overall character and identity of the City (1982a, 4).

The goals represent the general statements for the desired future conditions of the city. The policies are designed to
contribute to the achievement of these general goals and respond directly to the more specific objectives of the plan. The policies represent a set of criteria upon which to assess and judge those developments that exist or any policies for change that arise in the future. The objectives and policies relate to residential areas, commercial areas, working areas, community facilities, transportation, environment and public utilities and services.

To begin the process of producing their O.C.P. after receiving direction from council, the planning department prepared five background reports. Based on the information gathered in these reports as well as past council policies, and other planning documents, two discussion papers were prepared. Together these two documents represented a draft of the O.C.P.. The first paper entitled "Goals and Objectives: Towards a Community Plan for the City of New Westminster" addressed itself to the long term directions in terms of the quality of life and the environment that the city would aim to achieve through various actions in the future. The second report, "Policies: Towards a Community Plan for the City of New Westminster", related directly to the goals and objectives outlined in the first discussion paper.

A summary of the discussion papers was produced in a broadsheet and sent to every household in the city, the public library, community centers and several community organizations in June 1981 (New Westminster 1982b, 1). The document outlined goals, objectives and policies and solicited the public to comment. Citizens were told that their concerns and ideas were
important at this point in the process and were asked to submit their views on the goals, objectives and policies to the planning department.

The public response phase lasted six months and included solicitation of telephone and written comments and two community group meetings. The planning department received twenty-eight comments and briefs in this six month period (New Westminster 1982). The planner responsible prepared a paper entitled "A Report on Comments" suggesting amendments to the draft plan based on these twenty-eight comments and briefs.

The planning department submitted a forty page amended plan to council in August 1982. Council adopted the amended plan by bylaw in September 1982 after holding a public hearing. No changes resulted from the public hearing process. Since the adoption of the New Westminster O.C.P., council has adopted two local area plans and the planning department is preparing two more. The intent is to eventually have fifteen local area plans which would together cover all of the city. The area plans would be more detailed with land use designations and maps. O.C.P. policies would be applied to the local area plans.

There was no special steering committee to oversee the plan's development as the research for the plan was strictly done by the planning department. The planning department circulated copies of the plan to other municipal departments and the planner responsible for the plan worked closely with council and the advisory planning commission. New Westminster is a relatively small community. The planner responsible for the plan's preparation had been the planning director for almost
twenty years and had a good working relationship with council. New Westminster's O.C.P. process is depicted in figure 10.

3.5.2 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE NEW WESTMINSTER O.C.P.

The techniques used in the planning process included background reports, a summary of the draft plan, a report on the comments received, telephone and written submissions, meetings with community groups, a public hearing and an advisory planning commission. The background reports were made available to the public as were the drafts of the O.C.P..

There has been an advisory planning commission established in New Westminster for a number of years to advise council on planning matters referred to it. The advisory planning commission's role in the O.C.P. was to review and comment on background reports, the discussion papers and the amended plan. According to the planner responsible for the plan, the advisory planning commission was not very interested in the plan and did not offer very much input into its development (Chaster interview). Minutes of the commission's meetings are not available to the public.

Planners held two meetings with community groups at the request of ratepayers' associations. The planning department did not take minutes or notes of the meetings with the community groups and the feedback obtained at these meetings was not included in the "Report on Comments" outlining the response received from the public on the O.C.P. draft.
FIGURE 10
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PROCESS IN NEW WESTMINSTER

COUNCIL APPROVES PREPARATION OF POLICY PLAN
- spring 1980

↓

BACKGROUND REPORTS

↓

DISCUSSION PAPERS
- goals and objectives
- policies

↓

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION PAPER

↓

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PHASE
- six months
- telephone and written comments
- community group meetings

↓

FEEDBACK REPORT
- summary of comments and minor revisions to plan

↓

DRAFT PLAN

↓

PUBLIC HEARING
- no comments or changes

↓

ADOPTION & IMPLEMENTATION
- Sept. 1982
- 15 local area plans
  2 completed by 1986
The 28 comments received by the planning department through telephone calls and written submissions were recorded and presented in a report to council. According to the report, the 28 responses represented only a small fraction of the potential public response. However, planners felt that these responses gave a good representative cross-section of public opinion (New Westminster 1982). Planners also felt that the comments generally indicated very little disagreement with the contents of the plan and/or the policy recommendations (New Westminster 1982).

At no point in the process were goals and objectives established for public participation. However, planners and politicians acknowledged in several documents such as the plan itself and the summary delivered to the residents, that public participation is important to the O.C.P. process. The public response program was considered most valuable for two reasons:

(1) The public was given the opportunity to provide input to the Community Plan process; and
(2) The subjects of prime concern were identified by the people as the environment with its many facets, transportation, and residential areas (New Westminster 1982, 2).

In addition to the techniques used, it is important in New Westminster's case to examine the planners' relationship to the community. As mentioned, the planner principally responsible for the plan had worked as Director of Planning for almost twenty years and had a close working relationship with council. The planner knew the community groups and community leaders very well and associated with them formally and informally. In fact, the original reason why the planner suggested to council that an
O.C.P. be done was a result of people in the community stating for many years they would like to have a general plan (Chaster interview). Because New Westminster is a small and developed community with significant historical roots, the planner felt he had a good idea of the citizens' various values and views (Chaster interview). Through this extended informal and formal contact with the public over the years, identifying the issues was made easier. However, new issues not identified in the draft plan did emerge through the input that was received. Furthermore, according to one New Westminster planner, more issues would have been identified had there been more participation in the process (Ing interview).

3.5.3 SUMMARY

New Westminster differs from the other municipalities in that their O.C.P. was strictly a policy document. The intangible nature of the plan coupled with the planner's perception that he was very aware of the issues and public sentiment and values played a role in the extent to which the public was encouraged to become involved in the process. However, in the limited response received from the public, the planner had new issues brought to his attention. Therefore, the planner's perception that he knew all the issues and community values was inaccurate. The City of New Westminster involved the public at two points in the process: (1) comment on first draft plan and (2) comment on final draft. The advisory planning commission was also involved from the early stages through to plan adoption.
3.6 CONCLUSIONS

Legislation requires that an O.C.P. include statements and map designations that cover a broad range of land use matters. Therefore, municipalities address a number of issues relating to land use and servicing requirements in their plan that are important to the future of the community. Due to the range of issues to be dealt with and the complexity of the task, a minimum of at least two years is required to complete an O.C.P.

All four municipalities differed from one another in their O.C.P. processes and in the manner in which the public became involved. Richmond developed a strategy which involved the public at three points in the O.C.P. process as well as engaging the services of an advisory planning commission throughout the preparation of the plan. Richmond's local area planning program complemented the O.C.P. process but did not serve as the basis of the O.C.P.. Rather, goals and objectives were determined specifically for the Richmond O.C.P. as well as for public involvement in the O.C.P.. Planners used a variety of techniques to meet these goals and objectives.

Surrey on the other hand, depended on local area plans to form the basis of their O.C.P.. Opportunities for the general public to participate in the development of the plan were limited to a survey and public hearing at two points in the process.

Delta, like Richmond, involved the public at three points in the O.C.P. process and also used their advisory planning commission throughout the process. Delta used fewer techniques than Richmond to involve the public.
New Westminster differs from the other municipalities in that their O.C.P was strictly a policy document. With changes to the Municipal Act in 1985, an O.C.P. like New Westminster's would not be permitted without accompanying maps. The New Westminster process involved the public at two points in the process and planners also used an advisory planning commission.

All four municipalities went beyond the mandatory public hearing and optional advisory planning commission outlined in the legislation to involve the public in the preparation of their O.C.P.'s. Thirteen additional techniques were used. The following chapter will describe the techniques used by the four municipalities.
4.0 INTRODUCTION

Collectively, the four municipalities used fifteen techniques in their quest for public involvement in the preparation of their O.C.P.'s. The purpose of this chapter is to describe these techniques and to discuss the merits and constraints of each, based on the available literature and observation. The ability of each technique to achieve the six process-oriented objectives for public participation established in chapter two will be assessed to determine which techniques are suitable for meeting the individual objectives. The six objectives are accessibility, timing, impartiality, comprehensibility, alternatives and efficacy.

The fifteen techniques can be divided into three broad categories: information-giving, information-receiving and interaction:

**Information-giving** - Information-giving techniques are used by agencies to communicate information to the public. This information could include the nature of the study, the issues which have been identified by the agency, the possible alternatives or the proposed plan selected by the agency. Essentially, the agency possesses the information and seeks to communicate it in some manner to the public.

**Information-receiving** - Information-receiving techniques are used by agencies to acquire information held by the public. The public possesses the information, which could include public
perceptions of needs, problems, values, impacts and reactions to alternatives, that the agency needs to know.

Interaction - While interaction clearly involves both information-giving and information-receiving, it also serves the additional purpose of allowing people to test their ideas on the agency or other publics and possibly come to modify their viewpoint as a result of interaction (Creighton 1983, 245).

Techniques that were primarily geared toward information-giving used by the four municipalities include: brochure and broadsheet distribution, graphic display exhibits, background reports, media coverage, feedback reports, and draft plans. Techniques primarily geared toward information-receiving include questionnaire and comment sheets, surveys, letters and briefs and, telephone comments. Techniques involving interaction include public meetings, public hearings, open houses, community and special interest group meetings and seminars, advisory planning commissions, and local area planning committees and plans.

4.1 INFORMATION-GIVING TECHNIQUES

4.1.1 BROCHURE AND BROADSHEET DISTRIBUTION

Brochures and broadsheets are used to inform the public of opportunities for participation, issues involved, alternatives to consider and to provide a description of the progress of the plan. In the case of an official community plan, a broadsheet may include a summary or a copy of the draft plan.

In order to be useful, the product must be in language familiar to the public free of jargon and technical lingo. The
use of graphics and the avoidance of an overly bureaucratic layout is considered an asset (Creighton 1983, 285). In addition, clear instructions provided as to how the public can interact with the planner should be included (Creighton 1983, 285).

Through the use of postal walks, theoretically every household and business in a municipality can be reached which provides a direct means for a substantial amount of information to be passed on to the public. The amount of information is large compared to other forms of communication and offers the advantage of constant referral since it is something that can be kept by the recipient. If this device is used early in the process, it is recommended that alternatives be presented and direct questions be included (Boaden et al. 1980, 52).

Despite widespread delivery this type of document often gets lost in the volume of other mail or newspapers delivered to individual homes and businesses, often being mistaken for an advertisement flyer. Thus, many recipients discard them without note. Even very attractive publications, which can become both time consuming to prepare and costly to produce, do not receive attention by many recipients.

All four municipalities used this technique in their O.C.P. process. New Westminster and Delta sent out draft plans in broadsheet format. Richmond and Surrey, on the other hand, used a broadsheet to deliver a summary of the draft plan. One of the reasons Surrey used a summary was related to the length of the plan which would have been impractical to reproduce for widespread delivery. In addition, Richmond also used this technique
very early in the O.C.P. process to discuss alternatives concerning the major issue of growth. Direct questions on individuals' opinions on the issue were included in the brochure. All four broadsheets and the one brochure included information on how residents could become further involved. With the exception of New Westminster, all were produced in colour and used ample graphics.

The broadsheet technique can contribute to achieving five of the six objectives for public participation. The accessibility objective can be partially met because of the broad distribution of broadsheets to every address in a municipality which is very convenient to people. The timing objective is partially met because a broadsheet delivery of the draft plan occurs at a crucial decision making point in the process. In Richmond's case, a brochure delivery of alternatives for the key issue of urban growth also occurred at an important decision making point early in the process: the issue and alternatives identification stage. Thus the alternatives objectives can also be partially achieved with the broadsheet technique. Because a broadsheet has wide distribution it does not cater to one group, thereby contributing to the achievement of the impartiality objective. This technique can contribute to the comprehensible objective by including important information in easily understood language.

4.1.2 GRAPHIC DISPLAY EXHIBITS

Graphic display exhibits are used to make the broad public aware that a plan is being prepared and to encourage
participation by describing the process and how citizens can become involved. It is primarily meant as an eye-catcher to direct attention and inspire curiosity for further investigation. Displays are set up in high-use public areas such as libraries, shopping malls and at community events. The displays range from fixed boards which provide general information to the public, to booths which are manned by planners who are able to answer questions from the public, or solicit public comment. Even when fixed displays are used, it is possible to have response forms available so that the public can respond to the display (Creighton 1983, 282).

This technique is especially useful in providing general information to the public about community concerns and the planning process, even if people are not interested in participating further. For many members of the public the simple presence of some kind of exhibition is sufficient to draw attention to the fact that the municipality is preparing a community plan and is willing to go out and tell people about it. Displays also have a value to play in promoting retention of information (Boaden et al. 1980, 48). According to Boaden et al., research has shown that dynamic presentations promote a longer-lasting retention, if not of detail, at least that a message has been sent (1980, 48). For more detailed retention of even the most simple information in the exhibition, take-away material would seem to be an indispensable instrument (Boaden et al. 1980, 48). If a person does become interested as a result of the display, the display can direct them to other more involving participation activities.
Two problems with graphic display exhibits is the major commitment of staff time needed if they are manned and the cost involved in their production. If they are not manned and one of the goals of the display is to promote further action on the part of the public, then a message encouraging further participation must be clear. In their research on structure planning in Great Britain, Boaden et al. found that encouraging further participation was not well done in most cases:

An important goal of many exhibitions which we have seen has been to promote further action on the part of visitors - to fill in comment forms, for example, or to attend a public meeting. The goal is usually frustrated, however, by making it an ancillary component of the total message. Typically, action is urged on the last panel of the exhibition, at which point attention is exhausted or the panel is missed as the exit is sought (Boaden et al. 1980, 48).

The design of the display both structurally and in content is therefore an important factor in its effectiveness.

Richmond was the only municipality out of the four examples to use this technique. At three points in the Richmond O.C.P. process, displays were used. Planners manned the display in shopping malls, at community events, open houses, public meetings and the public hearing. The displays were left unmanned in the library and other locations. Materials that could be taken away were also available. Information on ways the public could become further involved was posted at the beginning of each of the displays.

The graphic display technique can contribute to achieving five of the six objectives for participation. If the display is set up in a variety of locations, then this technique can contribute to the accessibility, timing and impartiality
objectives. The design of the exhibit can also pass information to the public that is easily understood thus contributing to the comprehensibility objective. The alternatives objective can be partially met if the display offers alternatives and presents an opportunity for the public to respond to the alternatives and offer their own suggestions. This can be accomplished by manning the display so individuals can discuss issues with a planner or by offering other means for the public to respond such as using one of the information-receiving or interaction techniques.

4.1.3 FEEDBACK REPORT

A feedback report documents the input obtained from the public. Often the extent of material that is received by public comment can cause a number of problems in its processing (Boaden et al. 1980, 64). The process involved in attempting to reduce public comment to a manageable format often introduces contentious manipulations of it. Some comments may be excluded on the grounds of irrelevance. But as Boaden et al. point out, relevance is relative to one's viewpoint and despite how irrelevant the comments may be judged to be, they may still deserve an answer if participation is not to be interpreted as a facade (1980, 64).

In an effort to avoid missing out important information, Creighton outlines a method of content analysis designed to capture the actual language of the public in their comments which give the decision maker a "feel" for the intensity of language used, or the closeness of argumentation (1983, 361). In other forms of analysis, comments are typically categorized
being grouped under a range of subject headings. These latter methods, while having the advantage of handling a large amount of information, tend to undermine more complex responses to planning proposals as a whole. Also, when comments are distilled, there are additional dangers of omitting or misrepresenting parts of an argument (Boaden et al. 1980, 64). Whatever reporting system is used, it is important that the feedback be recorded and made available to the public so that there is an understanding of what the range of views are and in turn what effect they have had on subsequent decisions.

Some would argue that the final plan and draft plans are enough feedback in themselves but Boaden et al. believe they are not the ideal instrument. They found in their work that one of the major lessons learned, if the wider educational goals of participation are to be met, is that the public should receive some feedback about reaction to their comments and suggestions. They point out that tracing the effects of participation in the final plan is difficult and may not be a good way to report the effect of input back to the public (Boaden et al. 1980, 42).

The two municipalities to use feedback reports were Richmond and New Westminster. Richmond completed one at the end of each of the two major public participation phases in the process. Minutes from all meetings, comments made at open houses, feedback from comments and letters and so on were compiled in their entirety in reports made available to the public. In New Westminster, the planning department compiled a report covering all comments made through letters and telephone comments. In both cases the planner took care to include the
exact language and phrasing used by the public when ever possible, while categorizing comments for ease of reading. In the New Westminster report, each comment was followed by an explanation of why a comment was or was not appropriate to the O.C.P. and noted any changes to the plan that resulted from it.

The feedback technique is related most closely to the efficacy objective by showing the public the results of their participation. By referring to a feedback report, efficacy can then better be judged and reasons for the outcome of the final product assessed. The timing and comprehensibility objectives are also partially achieved by this technique in providing important information at crucial decision making points in the process.

4.1.4 DRAFT PLAN

Producing a draft plan to be made available for public scrutiny can be an excellent device to foster public interest and reaction. As opposed to asking for citizens' views on issues and alternatives, the draft plan provides a concrete proposal of the direction to be taken to which the public can react. This technique can provide valuable feedback for the planner as to the public's views. It is especially effective when it is made clear the plan is a preliminary draft produced for discussion purposes in anticipation of changes to be made after public reaction has been collected.

Often a major constraint exists due to the sheer volume of the plan, making it expensive to reproduce. In such cases, effort must be made to make the plan assessable to the public in
libraries, schools and other networks. The plan should also be clearly written in a form that non-professionals can understand.

As mentioned, two municipalities sent out a complete draft plan and in the case of Surrey and Richmond, a summary of the draft plan. In Surrey and New Westminster subsequent draft plans were not made available to the public. Delta and Richmond, conversely published subsequent drafts and sent them to community groups and made them readily available at the planning department and libraries.

If there is widespread availability of a draft plan, its use as a participation technique can contribute to achieving all the objectives for participation with the exception of the alternatives objective. The alternatives objective would have to have been met in the development of the draft plan.

4.1.5 BACKGROUND REPORTS

Background reports give technical details and detailed outlines of issues. They are particularly important so that the public has access to information on which an informed judgement can then be made. Background reports are particularly important for those citizens who want more information than is available through summaries. Access to detailed information allows those interested the opportunity to investigate the material and data on which the planning agency is basing its priorities and developing the alternatives.

As with draft plans, the sheer volume of such reports can make them expensive to reproduce. Therefore, effort has to be made to make reports available to the public. This can be
accomplished by placing them in public libraries and making them available at the planning department.

All four municipalities made background material available to the public. Certain municipalities offered more information than others and made them more accessible earlier in the process. In Delta, background reports were made available at the four public meetings held after the draft plan was produced. In New Westminster, background reports were available early in the process but not advertised, even in the draft plan broadsheet sent to every home. In Surrey, all the background material was included in two chapters of the draft plan which was available for sale and placed in Surrey libraries. In Richmond, background reports were made available at the planning department as they were produced and were advertised in the preliminary brochure and the subsequent draft plan broadsheet. As well, the reports were displayed at the Richmond public library.

Background reports are important in contributing to the fulfillment of the timing and comprehensibility objectives. Background reports can contain important and relevant information early in the O.C.P. process which is needed to make informed decisions later on.

4.1.6 MEDIA COVERAGE

The use of media is important in transmitting information to the public about issues and becoming involved in the planning process. As a participation technique it is primarily valuable for its information-giving capacity due to its broad audience. For the same reason, it can be used to solicit response. Another
function of the media is its use of advertising to inform people where and how they can become involved in the planning process. Newspapers, radio and television are prime instruments used for these purposes. Television has the constraint of being expensive if the planning agency has to pay for coverage. Many community channels are excellent for covering local events including free public service announcements. Radio is less expensive with many stations also providing opportunities for free public service announcements.

At the same time, it is not always easy to attract media attention on many planning issues whether it be newspapers, radio or television. In the case of television coverage, very often the only station interested is the local community channel. While community stations do not keep records of their viewership, it is estimated an average of one to two percent of all viewers watch community channel programming (Wood interview). While this figure is quite small, community television program managers believe coverage of municipal council meetings and related community coverage are some of the most popular programs aired (Wood interview; Davidson interview; Dubbin interview). The primary advantage of community television is its ability to go into great depth by covering an entire meeting or event rather than providing a summary as is done in print media. However, print media is predominant in covering local issues. In a survey conducted in 1981 for the Royal Commission on Newspapers, newspapers were found to be the preferred medium over radio and television for obtaining local community news (Canada 1986, 107). The local newspapers in Delta
and Richmond have circulations of approximately fifteen percent of their populations. Readership exceeds fifteen percent, however, as newspapers are commonly shared among two or more individuals.

In summary, media can be useful especially in disseminating information. In order to ensure a broad audience, it is wise to use a mixture of different types of media to carry the message.

Due to legislative requirements, it is necessary for a municipality to advertise a public hearing at least thirty days in advance in a newspaper circulating at least weekly in the municipality (Municipal Amendment Act 1985, sec. 947). Therefore, all four municipalities used newspapers to announce the public hearing date. Delta and Richmond also used the local newspapers and radio to advertise their public meetings and in Richmond's case, the open houses.

Television was used quite extensively in Delta with all the public meetings and the hearing televised by the community station. In Richmond the community station covered the public hearing as well as short segments of some of the public meetings. Both Richmond and New Westminster planners were interviewed about their O.C.P. by their respective local community stations. Beyond council meeting coverage, television and radio were not utilized during Surrey's O.C.P. process.

The broad use of media can contribute to all of the objectives for participation. In particular, the use of media can be important in passing on relevant and useful information in easily understood language at important points in the process thus contributing to the achievement of the timing,
accessibility and comprehensibility objectives. If a mixture of media types is used, then no one group will dominate this aspect of participation and the impartiality objective will also be partially achieved. Media can also be used to explain alternatives and reasons for decisions, thus contributing to the alternatives and efficacy objectives.

4.2 INFORMATION-RECEIVING TECHNIQUES

4.2.1 SURVEYS

Surveys are an effort to determine public attitudes, values and perceptions on various issues. The basic reason for using a survey is to provide a carefully conducted poll of a representative sample of the population on some issue or set of issues (ACIR 1979, 276). Therefore, the design must ensure that the survey does not contain bias and that the "sample" of people interviewed is in fact representative (Creighton 1983, 285). Thus, a successfully drawn and achieved sample has the characteristic of including members of many minorities, the inarticulate and non-joiners and of ensuring their response (Boaden et al. 1980, 61). When a survey is well designed the results can best be used to help to balance a distorted interpretation of the public's view that may result when there is participation from only a tiny fraction of the public (Milbrath 1981, 482):

A survey has the unique capability of incorporating the views of the uninterested but affected public who would have no other form of representation (Milbrath 1981, 482).

Conversely, surveys are not without their constraints. First, a scientifically designed survey is difficult and costly
to construct, usually involving the need for outside consultants. Secondly, without careful design, the collection and analysis of data will likely be unreliable and meaningless. Third, the information flow is virtually uni-directional from public to planner. Few survey procedures include an information priming element. Therefore, the questions asked tend to be simplistic (Boaden et al. 1980, 63). Furthermore, however carefully designed, it is argued that this type of participation renders the citizen into a passive 'ayer' or 'nayer' to questions defined by others (Audain 1972, 80).

These constraints are not common to all surveys. Indeed, some surveys include comprehensive information and ask questions requiring thought provoking answers. Regardless, even if citizen surveys are well designed and implemented, they are not adequate as an exclusive substitute for the dynamic interaction and development of ideas that can occur in face-to-face discussion (Milbrath 1981, 487). As part of a wider participation program, surveys can be an important element.

To overcome the most common limitations of surveys, Lester Milbrath suggests that a well designed and lengthy interview of a random sample of people from a given region or constituency can obtain the beliefs and attitudes of people on a spectrum of related concerns (Langton 1979, 103). This type of survey technique is more extensive than the typical opinion poll which asks people whether they favor or oppose a specific issue by responding to single questions. According to Milbrath, by using this more extensive approach,

a specific policy belief under investigation...can be seen in perspective as it is embedded in an overall
A set of related beliefs and attitudes. When beliefs are seen "in context", they are more representative than if they are elicited as a specific response to a single question (Langton 1979, 103).

Surrey was the only municipality to use a public opinion survey. The survey was designed to get short responses on a wide variety of issues and was mailed to every household in the municipality. Due to the very low response rate, it could not be considered statistically valid or a reliable indication of public preference.

Well designed surveys can be used to achieve the impartiality objective. Surveys can also contribute to the accessibility, timing, comprehensibility and alternatives objectives. How well it meets any of these objectives will depend on the implementation and design of the survey.

4.2.2 QUESTIONNAIRE AND COMMENT SHEETS

The actual format of questionnaire and comment sheets varies greatly and as Boaden et al. comment: "the technique is as simple as the survey is sophisticated" (1980, 63-64). The comment form is useful when alternative issues and proposals are being explained. Usually specific information will have been previously distributed or information accompanies the form. In the evaluation of alternatives, citizens are asked for their preferences, often by both having them give a simple quantitative indication as well as in supporting statements in the respondent's own words. The latter offers the respondent the opportunity to expand on the alternatives and suggest different directions and concerns. It also ensures that the basis of public preferences is not invalidly assumed by the planner or
forcibly cast in his own terms (Boaden et al. 1980, 63-64).

This technique offers the respondent an opportunity to express himself on his own terms while being guided by a comparison of alternatives. The responses therefore, tend to be more clearly focussed and less vague. As a result, these written comments will usually include the most detailed and carefully reasoned responses to proposals which an authority will receive through any channel (Boaden et al. 1980, 64-69). Additionally, comment forms have the advantage of encouraging some kind of active response to publicity material which might otherwise be taken in rather passively (Boaden et al. 1980, 64). This promotes learning on the part of the citizen and can be an important part of an educative interactive dialogue between the planners and the public.

Conversely, with the questionnaire/comment sheet technique, there is usually no way of knowing who responds or in preventing someone or a group from filling out several sheets resulting in a biased outcome. Also the handling of the written response portion of the comment sheet by the researchers can be difficult and lead to a number of distortions. These limitations are not unique to the questionnaire and comment sheet technique. Public meetings may be dominated by one group and surveys may be manipulated. Therefore, the response from the questionnaire and comment sheet technique, as with other techniques should not be used exclusively and be given undue weight and attention.

Only Richmond used this technique. The planners did so early in the process to give citizens a capsule review of each issue in easily understood language. Citizens then had the
opportunity to make choices from a number of alternatives and give additional comments. Well over half of the 1536 comment sheets that were returned included additional comments made by citizens expressing their opinion on the issue. This technique was considered very worthwhile as an educational tool for the citizens about the issues and as an indication of public preference for the planners.

The primary use of questionnaire and comment sheets meets the alternatives objective by representing a range of alternatives and encouraging response and the public's own ideas. Important and relevant information is provided thus contributing to the achievement of the comprehensibility objective. There is no way to ensure the impartiality objective is met with this technique. The accessibility objective is not totally met by this technique although comment sheets can contribute to the achieving of this objective.

4.2.3 LETTERS, BRIEFS AND TELEPHONE COMMENTS

The solicitation of letters, briefs and telephone comments offers members of the public an opportunity to express their views in either written or oral form. The attraction of letters and briefs, both to the planning authority and the members of the public is that they are a matter of record and are often more detailed, clearly expressed and carefully argued (Boaden et al. 1980, 64). Given proper attention, telephone comments can also be methodically recorded and used in analysis as well.

This technique, however, has a major limitation in that in many situations where the public is invited to submit oral or
written comments, only a tiny fraction of the public participates. Those citizens who do comment usually have a very special interest in the proposal and may not be representative of the views of the general public (Milbrath 1981, 479-80).

Conversely in situations where there is substantial response, a number of problems can exist in processing the information. Unlike comment sheets, which direct respondents on how they feel on certain issues, this type of communication is much more open resulting in more diverse comments as far as topic area and issues are concerned. Furthermore, while provisions can be made to communicate the general results back to the contributing public, often this does not occur. Therefore, in the majority of cases individuals are not able to witness other positions and accordingly modify their own position (Farrell, 36).

In Delta, Richmond and New Westminster, letters, briefs and telephone comments were solicited although there was not a large response. In New Westminster, letters and telephone comments were the focal point of the participation effort and only twenty-eight responses were recorded. In Richmond, only four letters were received during the first phase of that public participation program and thirty letters in the second phase. Delta received approximately 25 responses. This finding would tend to support Milbrath's contention that only a tiny fraction of the public participates in this technique. In reviewing the letters, response included specific concerns and requests as well as comments of a more general nature (Delta 1985c; Richmond 1985c; Richmond 1986b).

This technique can contribute to the accessibility, timing,
and alternatives objectives but is insufficient to meet any of them without other techniques.

4.3 INTERACTION TECHNIQUES

4.3.1 PUBLIC MEETING

The public meeting or town meeting as it is sometimes referred to, is a session where authorities have the opportunity to disseminate information and explain issues, alternatives and proposals. In turn, citizens are given the opportunity to express their concerns and opinions. Such meetings are relatively inexpensive and provide a forum for anyone to comment (Burton 1977, 12). A presentation is usually held followed by a discussion period. This technique is applicable in situations where large amounts of information are to be dispersed. It is a useful technique to educate the public and to share information including obtaining feedback from citizens. Two factors are important in order that the time is spent well. The first of these is a skilled chairman. The second is the provision of preliminary information material, including notification to the relevant publics well in advance of the meeting date (Farrell, 41).

Public meetings have several drawbacks. First, the atmosphere is not always conducive to effective communication. Many people are reluctant to speak in front of a large group of people and therefore a great number of people who attend a public meeting do not voice their opinions. As well, the meeting format does not allow for an indepth exchange of information. Secondly, the atmosphere can be emotional and hostile when an
issue is controversial. Individual speakers may attempt to be rhetorical and emotionally sway the audience which may in turn polarize pre-existing groups (Farrell, 41).

In many cases, public meetings and public hearings are used interchangeably in the literature being considered one in the same. Catanese traces the roots of the public hearing back to the town meeting (1984, 124), while Creighton considers public hearings as just one type of public meeting (1983, 244). When the two are differentiated, hearings are considered to have features which are more formal and less flexible, very often having to adhere to legislation governing their timing and format. The public meeting, on the other hand, represents a more flexible method used to involve the public.

Whatever the format, Creighton points out that throughout the 1970's, public meetings of one sort or another, were a staple of public involvement in the United States. This claim is substantiated by Thomas Burton in his study of Canadian public participation experiences in which he found nearly two-thirds of the 96 cases reviewed made use of public meetings (Burton 1977, 19). Burton concluded the most persistent technique employed in public participation in Canada has been the public meeting (1977, 19). Many of the constraints and merits of public meetings are similar to those of public hearings. These are elaborated on in the public hearing section which follows.

Public meetings were held in Richmond and Delta. Both municipalities advertised their meetings in brochure and broadsheet deliveries and also through the media. Delta organizers were not satisfied with the results of the public
meetings held to discuss the draft plan. A few interest groups dominated the proceedings reiterating the same views at each meeting (Rogers interview). The meetings were not very useful in exchanging information or in leading to substantial changes in the plan (Collier interview).

In Richmond's case, the proceedings did not tend to be dominated by specific interest groups, although some of the meetings became quite emotional concerning the issue of whether urban expansion should be allowed onto agricultural land. Otherwise, the meetings were useful for planners to transfer information to the public and to answer questions on specific concerns. In turn, planners were able to listen to the participants' views, ideas and reactions. Interestingly, as each meeting progressed, they tended to take on their own themes such as the environment, or servicing potential and logistics or the future of agricultural land. Planners were frustrated on a couple of occasions because rather than receiving input from the public on a wide variety of issues relevant to the O.C.P., the meetings turned into a question and answer period with the planners giving out information but getting very little back. Conversely, certain meetings were more worthwhile in terms of receiving comments from the public on a variety of O.C.P. issues. Based on these examples, it is clear planners were not able to overcome all the constraints which are common to public meetings, however some meetings resulted in productive interaction.

Public meetings can contribute to the achievement of the accessibility and timing objectives by providing opportunities
for citizens at times and locations convenient to them at important decision making points in the process. The comprehensibility objective can be met and public meetings provide an excellent opportunity to present a range of alternatives to the public and have people respond with their own ideas. It is not always easy to control participation in public meetings and therefore, they can become dominated by individuals or groups.

4.3.2 PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing is a special, focussed mechanism for public participation in policy making which meets statutory requirements with respect to procedure (Burton 1977, 11). A public hearing provides a forum where the public can make formal statements to the authorities about the issue at hand (Farrell, 40). Public hearings are widely used in Canada partially because they are required by law for a variety of situations at the federal, provincial and local levels of government. At the local level, mandated public hearings exist before certain plans and zoning by-laws are passed as legislation.

Public hearings have been criticized heavily for their lack of effectiveness in the public participation process (Catanese 1984, 124; Checkoway 1981, 574; Cole 1984, 415; Milbrath 1981, 479; Martin 1973, 94; Estrin 1977, 83). Primarily the main criticism is that public hearings are held late in the planning process after major decisions and choices have already been established. As a result, hearings are seen as a "safe" method of involving the public because there is little opportunity for
citizens, or chance that citizen's views, will change the proposals and have a real impact on the decisions being made. As a result, as a mechanism for changing government behavior, the public hearing is seen as being largely inconsequential (Cole 1984, 415). Instead of influencing decisions, they are used for a number of other ends. Barry Checkoway identifies four alternative purposes for public hearings: (1) to satisfy minimum legal requirements; (2) to build support for agency plans; (3) to diffuse antagonism and (4) to legitimate a decision that has already been made (1981, 570-1).

Spence and Yukubousky cite the scheduling of hearings late in the planning process as a prime means for an agency to be successful in gaining legitimacy for a decision that has already been made. They note that by leaving the hearing until late in time, in most cases, the agency staff will have already produced a plan in several volumes. Not only does this make it difficult and expensive to change the proposed course of action, but the public may be shut out of the early, determinative stages of planning or left without enough time to make an adequate response (Checkoway 1981, 571-2). Milbrath considers this a common occurrence:

... it is more common for a hearing to be held after a policy has been agreed to by the parties most involved in the decision. When a hearing does occur, input from the public can have only a marginal effect on the tentative agreement that has already been worked out (1981, 479).

Further dissatisfaction with this technique includes the hearing's inflexibility and lack of representation. According to Rosenbaum, this dissatisfaction arises from the use of public hearings as the primary vehicle for public participation:
Clearly because of limitations on the number who can meaningful participate and the legal formality of the proceedings, public hearings cannot carry the main load of estimating aggregate community preference (N. Rosenbaum 1976, 59).

Hearings are often considered inflexible due to their formal nature. Procedural rules are followed and hearings are held in official government buildings such as a city hall. While this is considered good on one hand for the order and fairness it can promote, it is also intimidating and inconvenient on the other. While procedural rules are designed to minimize unequal status and limit those with special rhetorical skills, they also may inhibit speakers unfamiliar with them. The imposing presence of microphones, the necessity of walking to the front of the room to speak, the enforcement of time limits and the presence of an audience may infringe upon the ability of even experienced citizens to speak freely (Checkoway 1981, 568).

Not all scholars agree with these rather negative views of the use of the public hearing as a participation technique (Kure 1977; Rosener 1982). For example, Rosener found that citizens participating in public hearing were successful in influencing the final decision making (1982, 343). In addition, there are a number of suggestions in the literature for ways public hearings can be improved so that they are more effective. These suggestions include:

(1) holding multiple decentralized hearings to allow greater interchange between citizens and public officials (N. Rosenbaum 1976, 59) and for better accessibility and convenience;

(2) improve prehearing publicity (Checkoway 1981, 573) but not relying solely on legal announcements in newspapers;
(3) ensure that speakers identify themselves and their groups or affiliation (Lotz 1978, 11);

(4) have adequate written material available to summarize what the hearing is about and what the facts are (Lotz 1978, 11);

In summary, while public hearings are not considered particularly effective as a participation technique, efforts can be made to overcome their constraints. In particular:

... the finding is not that hearings are without uses for citizens wishing to influence agency decisions, but that hearings alone are not enough to assure such influence (Checkoway 1981, 570).

In Rosenbaum's view public hearings are useful as a 'summing up' or formal conclusion. He considers the hearing to be a symbolic opportunity for individuals and organizations to go on record with final criticisms and suggestions (N. Rosenbaum 1976, 59); what R.E. Mann refers to as "a safety valve for pent-up feelings" (Macor 1980, 159).

Surrey relied on this technique almost exclusively for public input into the plan and in so doing practiced many of the suggestions in improving their effectiveness. That is, the hearing was adjourned to ten different location and dates, prehearing publicity was extended and speakers identified themselves, and the broadsheet summarized the plan. Surrey, however, failed to supplement their public hearing with very many other techniques, despite the fact the hearing was held late in the process. In so doing, the Surrey process reflects the major criticism applied to public hearings.

Richmond also adjourned their public hearing to be held on five separate evenings over a two week period. In order to accommodate all those who wished to speak. A large school
auditorium was utilized in order to accommodate the large crowds anticipated. The public hearing was well publicized in the local newspapers in three languages. A graphic display exhibit and information packets were available to people attending the hearing as well.

In New Westminster and Delta, the public hearings were more of a formality, required by legislation. In Delta, nine people spoke on behalf of a special interest group and sixteen other individuals made comments, similar to those received at the public meetings. This closely follows Rosenbaum's view of public hearings as a "summing up". In New Westminster, the public hearing was publicized to the extent legislation required and no one addressed the O.C.P. at the hearing which was held for a number of issues simultaneously.

Public hearings are controlled by procedures which ensure accessibility to everyone and that everyone be heard. Therefore, the impartiality objective can be achieved using this method. However, not all people are comfortable in a formal public hearing format, so the accessibility objective cannot be fully met by a public hearing. Public hearings also take place late in the process thus contributing to the achievement of the timing objective but not being appropriate for alternatives identification. Since public hearings take place with elected officials, and the events are officially recorded, the public is made aware if their views are considered in the outcome and may be given reasons why or why not certain decisions were made. Thus the efficacy objective may be satisfied using this technique.
4.3.3 OPEN HOUSES

An open house is a drop-in technique used to enable one-on-one interaction between citizens and the planner. This method offers the opportunity for interested citizens and planners to learn a great deal, in an informal personal manner. Rather than having citizens coming to a government office to discuss concerns, open houses can be set-up where people work, shop or recreate. This encourages citizens to take interest and participate in surroundings familiar and convenient to them.

While such interaction can be very useful for both the planner and citizen in gaining knowledge and understanding about the issues, it is not always very efficient in terms of time spent. It is very easy for the planner to become involved with one person at the expense of time that could be spent with other members of the public.

The major drawback of this technique is the fact it is extremely time consuming. In order to reach a number of citizens, the hours of operation must be long and flexible and the location convenient to the citizens.

Richmond was the only municipality to use the open house technique doing so before each town meeting and in conjunction with the display boards in malls and at community events. The open houses had the most participation just prior to the public meetings' scheduled starting times. Just over two hundred people attended five open houses during the 1985 public program (Richmond 1985b, 17). The Richmond planners found the one-on-one exchange particularly effective and informative although time
consuming (Picard 1986).

Open houses can contribute to meeting five of the six objectives for public participation including accessibility, timing, impartiality, comprehensibility and alternatives.

4.3.4 COMMUNITY AND INTEREST GROUP MEETINGS AND SEMINARS

The purpose of special meetings for community and interest groups is to target the 'publics' with specific concerns. Very often the very detailed and narrow nature of these groups' concerns makes participation in other forms of the public process difficult. Making provisions for special meetings has several advantages. One, special meetings and consultation with groups and organizations can provide a coherent and structured response to proposals from large numbers of people representing a particular set of interests, with relatively little outlay of time and resources on the part of the planning authority (Boaden et al. 1980, 68). Two, it is easier to target advertising for these meetings including letters to individuals and groups known to the planner as having a specific interest in the issue being discussed. Three, these meetings are usually smaller than the traditional public meeting and therefore allow for a more indepth interaction between the planner and the participants. For this reason, a seminar format can be used or other small group exercises.

However, if attendance becomes too large then this technique suffers the same setbacks as larger public meetings. Furthermore, because of the very specific nature of the audience, this technique cannot be relied on to reflect broad
community concerns. The feedback obtained may be a good indication of the general public's thoughts but other methods should be used to substantiate the information collected.

Delta, Richmond and New Westminster used special interest meetings in their processes. Richmond planners found this technique to be particularly helpful with certain groups mostly because of the educational component. These groups are now aware of what the O.C.P. is and are able to refer to it in subsequent meetings with planners (Picard interview). In certain meetings, planners employed specialized techniques to facilitate the process. For example, with social and service agencies, the Richmond planners split the meeting into small groups and had the groups prioritize concerns and then report back to the larger group with their findings.

In Delta, this type of workshop format was used extensively. On certain occasions people were asked to do rough drawings of solutions to certain problems. These were then shared with other people at the meeting and then taken by the planners to be considered. Panels of experts with diverging views were also established to debate and answer questions. Delta organizers found this technique to be very adaptable and successful (Rogers interview).

New Westminster, conversely used a more informal question and answer meeting format since it was the community groups who asked the planners to come and give them more information about the O.C.P..

This technique can best meet the alternatives objective. As an isolated technique, special interest group meetings do not
meet the impartiality and accessibility objectives. This technique needs to be supplemented with other techniques to ensure the views of special interest groups are balanced with those of the general public.

4.3.5 ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

Advisory planning commissions are frequently utilized by municipalities for four primary purposes:

1. to function as a sounding board of public concerns and help to bridge the gap between the public and agency (Milbrath 1981, 479; Farrell, 40);

2. to serve as a guidance group monitoring the progress of the planning process and the public involvement program (Creighton 1983, 297);

3. to serve as a channel of communication to and from other individuals and interest groups (Creighton 1983, 297).

4. to provide a mechanism for sustained public involvement in the planning process (Cullingworth 1984, 13).

In the preparation of O.C.P.'s, advisory planning commissions are valuable in reviewing background reports, making recommendations on their adequacy, assisting in developing and evaluating alternatives, reviewing written material prior to release to the general public and assisting in educating the public about the plan and the planning process. Membership to advisory planning bodies is meant to reflect a broad cross section of the community. Therefore representatives are usually chosen from different neighbourhoods and special interest groups. Through such a selection process, theoretically a wide range of opinions and attitudes exists among the group's members which usually number between ten and twenty people. This size is
large enough to prevent domination by special interests, and small enough to be effective (N. Rosenbaum 1976, 51).

In the establishment of any citizen committee, it is important that the limits of authority be clearly defined and understood as there is frequently confusion as to the difference between a group that is advisory and a decision making body (Creighton 1983, 300). Once authority has been established it is important to specify the role of the commission or committee in order to avoid the development of expectations which cannot, or will not, be fulfilled, since such unfulfilled expectations can lead to frustration among both planners and the members involved (Kweit and Kweit 1981, 107). At the time of establishment, it is also important to outline how long the committee's life will be in relation to the purpose it will serve.

A primary advantage of having an advisory planning commission is continuity. Membership on a commission usually extends for at least one year. Therefore, members have the opportunity to become well acquainted with the issues and are more able to make informed judgements. The continuity also allows for members to get to know one another which can help in forming a working group with greater intensity of interaction with the process (Freed 1980, 30).

Although advisory planning commissions can serve many useful functions and be an asset to the planning process, two major pitfalls have been cited. Traditionally, these groups have been criticized as being unrepresentative and as being vulnerable to manipulation by administration staff (N. Rosenbaum 1976, 51; Milbrath 1981, 479; Susskind 1978, 33). According to
...a careful public official typically gives a great deal of consideration to the composition of a citizen's committee to ensure that it interferes as little as possible with her or his intentions on policy decisions (1981, 479).

Susskind refers to many of these groups as 'blue ribbon committees' - made up of carefully selected individuals (supposedly representative of key interests) to "advise" elected officials (1978, 33). A second pitfall is that these commissions, which can last for many years, come to be viewed by planners as a surrogate public (Creighton 1983, 297). Even when an honest attempt is made to have the membership reflect the many different interests in the community, it is not possible for every 'public' to be represented. Therefore, this form of citizen participation must be complemented by other techniques.

All the example municipalities used an advisory planning commission, some more than others. In Delta and New Westminster, advisory planning commissions were already established when the O.C.P. process commenced. Both commissions considered the O.C.P. drafts and supporting documents along with their other functions of commenting on day-to-day zoning and subdivision approvals. Neither were reported as being particularly helpful or overly interested in the O.C.P. (Chaster interview; Rogers interview). The exception was the chairman of Delta's commission who took a very active and instrumental role.

Conversely, in Surrey, an advisory planning commission was established for only fourteen months of the total O.C.P. process. The commission assisted primarily with the O.C.P. draft's preparation. Over half of the commission's time
was spent rewriting the draft plan into language that could be understood by the general public (Schon interview). The commission felt it had some impact but would have liked more if council would have permitted it (Schon interview).

In Richmond, a restructured advisory planning commission was established to deal specifically with the O.C.P. and lasted throughout the plan's preparation. The commission was only considered to be partially effective in its first eighteen months because of internal philosophical conflicts between members that were difficult to reconcile. Some members also had difficulty consistently dealing with the substantive issues concentrating instead on minor points such as grammar. The staff would have preferred to deal with the minor points themselves and use the time of the commission to discuss more important philosophical and policy issues. Four members were replaced prior to the draft plan's completion. According to one planner, the commission acted more efficiently because the new members were of the same philosophy as the majority of council (Picard interview). Throughout the O.C.P. process, the commission was very successful in implementing changes to background reports and the plan.

From these examples, it is clear that advisory planning commissions are quite political in nature and vary as to the quality of input provided for an O.C.P.. The membership, while being from various groups and interests can still be manipulated. Furthermore, members must be sufficiently interested in the O.C.P. that they are willing to devote time and effort to the process. These factors combined, confirm that
while this technique can be useful, it is generally difficult to overcome the constraints and therefore must be supplemented with other techniques.

Advisory planning commissions can help achieve the alternatives objective but as with special interest group meetings, this technique must be used with other techniques to meet the accessibility and impartiality objectives. Advisory planning commissions can be very useful in complementing other techniques to meet the timing objective by providing continuous involvement.

4.3.6 LOCAL AREA PLANNING COMMITTEES AND PLANS

Similar to a municipality-wide advisory planning commission, planners involve citizens in local area planning. Local area committees are established under the same guidelines as for the municipality-wide advisory commission. These local committees assist the local area or neighbourhood planner in developing a community plan for their area. The plans are then considered and used in developing the municipality-wide O.C.P..

In addition to the advantages and constraints outlined for the community-wide advisory planning commission, this technique suffers one more problem. Local area planning committees concentrate on their own areas. They often do not consider the broader community-wide issues except when it directly affects their area. An accumulation of individual local plans can easily become contradictory and together lack a coherent community-wide context. The sole use of local area plans and local area planning committees is in some ways the antithesis of what a
community-wide O.C.P. represents. This constraint can be overcome by including participation techniques directed toward the community-wide issues to balance the very area-specific concerns of local area plans and local area planning committees.

Surrey and Richmond both used local area planning committees and plans in their respective O.C.P. processes. In Richmond, the local area technique was not considered a major component of the O.C.P. process, but rather something to be taken into consideration since some local area planning committees had been established in recent years and some were active while the broader O.C.P. was being prepared. The input from the local area public programs, committees and completed plans were therefore considered with the rest of the public response when it related to issues relevant to the O.C.P.

Surrey conversely, relied heavily on many different local area plans developed by a variety of sources to develop their O.C.P.. The local plans were often contradictory and the general public was not consulted on broader issues and the bringing together of these plans. Surrey planners agree that the local area committees that were set-up by the municipality were representative and worked quite well (Caselton interview; Dickinson interview; Atienza interview). However, in terms of having any say in how their plans related to other plans put forward by ratepayers or other groups and how the plans would be affected when amalgamated into an overall plan, the committees were not consulted despite the fact that many of the plans were significantly altered by the head planner responsible for the O.C.P..
The alternatives objective can be partially achieved with the use of this technique. As with the previous two techniques, this technique must be combined with other techniques to satisfy the accessibility and impartiality objectives.

4.4 SUMMARY

In summarizing the techniques used by the four municipalities, different techniques are more appropriate for meeting individual process-oriented objectives for participation. In chapter three it was found that the four municipalities being studied involved the public in at least two or more points in the O.C.P. process: (1) issue and alternative identification, (2) comment on first draft plan and (3) comment on second draft plan. As well, three out of four municipalities used an advisory planning commission throughout the O.C.P. process and Surrey used a commission for the twelve month period leading up to the first draft plan. It is evident from the description of the fifteen techniques used by the four municipalities that no one technique is appropriate to achieve the objectives for participation at any one stage in the process. Table 1 illustrates the information-giving, information-receiving and interaction techniques used at the various stages of the O.C.P. process.
TABLE I: Techniques Used at Various Stages in the O.C.P. Process by Four Greater Vancouver Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMATION GIVING</th>
<th>INFORMATION RECEIVING</th>
<th>INTERACTION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EARLY</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-media</td>
<td>-surveys</td>
<td>-public meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-brochure</td>
<td>-letters</td>
<td>-open house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-background reports</td>
<td>-comment sheets</td>
<td>-interest group meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-feedback report</td>
<td></td>
<td>-local area committees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-graphic displays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST DRAFT PLAN</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>-media</td>
<td>-letters</td>
<td>-public meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-broadsheet</td>
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<td>-open house</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-draft plan</td>
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<td>-interest group meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>-graphic displays</td>
<td></td>
<td>-public hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-feedback report</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SECOND DRAFT PLAN</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-draft plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>-public hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-feedback report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>-media</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CONTINUOUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>-advisory planning commission</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The steps each municipality took to achieve each process-oriented objective will be assessed in the next chapter. Knowing how well each municipality was able to satisfy the objectives will lead to a better understanding of how to effectively involve the public in the O.C.P. process.
CHAPTER FIVE
EVALUATION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the overall effort of each municipality to involve the public in the preparation of its O.C.P.. The steps taken by each municipality in its O.C.P. process to achieve the six process-oriented objectives are determined. A discussion on evaluating public participation will be held first in order to understand the appropriateness of the evaluation procedure.

5.1 EVALUATING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are a number of approaches that can be taken to evaluate public participation and in many cases it is most effective if a combination of methods are used. Whatever the methods used, it is generally acknowledged that there is a need to assess the effectiveness of public participation in a systematic manner (Rosener 1981, 583). It is also widely acknowledged that evaluation is an extremely difficult process.

There are three problems inherent in evaluating public participation. First, as discussed in chapter two, there is no agreement among researchers as to what is effective, as opposed to ineffective participation. Second, there are no agreed-upon evaluation methods. Third, there are few reliable measurement tools (Rosener 1981, 583).

Rosenbaum (1979, 83-4) outlines three approaches available to the evaluation analyst. The first level is the least complex and most common focussing on the techniques used. For example,
statistics and records of the number of people who attended public meetings and public hearings are used as evidence of accessibility. Similarly, some evaluations examine the record of a public hearing to determine whether all points of view were given ample opportunity for expression. Representativeness of program participants is also used to determine participation effectiveness (Berry et al. 1984, 10). At best, such indicators can only be used to determine a lower bound on accessibility. Rosenbaum points out that the difficulty with exclusive reliance upon these indices of effectiveness is that what appears to be objectively effective may not be translated into a similar subjective assessment of effectiveness on the part of the actors in the process (Rosenbaum 1979, 84). This level of analysis also carries the assumption that the closer participants come to reflecting the demographic characteristics of the affected population, and the number who participate, the more likely it is the actual policy outcomes will reflect the preferences of that population (Berry et al. 1984, 10).

The second level of analysis relates to the subjective perceptions of the bureaucrats themselves. Among methods that have been used are direct examination of the records of decision makers' deliberations, and interviews with key staff members and decision makers to ascertain their views on the accessibility, fairness, and responsiveness of the decision making process. The problem with this latter approach is that bureaucrats cannot be expected to be entirely candid about their own motivation and decision making styles. According to Rosenbaum, interviews with administrators can, at best, yield data which can assist the
interpretation of effectiveness, but evaluation should not be based solely upon this level of analysis (Rosenbaum 1979, 84). This sentiment is echoed by the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in the United States which states:

... decision makers and their staffs can be interviewed for their views on the impact of citizen involvement, recognizing that because of official self-interest those views should be used only to assist in the interpretation of effectiveness, rather than serve as the only basis for that interpretation (ACIR 1979, 306).

The third level of analysis relates to the attitudes and views of citizens toward outcomes of the participation program. To Rosenbaum, this level represents the most important test of the effectiveness of a citizen involvement program; i.e., whether the members of the affected public itself feel that their views were considered equitably, and that final decisions reflected the balance of public preferences. "Whatever the findings of the other levels of analysis the bottom line is whether the people think their rights were respected and their interests recognized" (Rosenbaum 1974, 84). This approach to evaluation is the most elaborate and expensive, relying by and large, upon original, large-scale survey research (Rosenbaum 1974, 84). A variation of Rosenbaum's third level of analysis is to analyse the responsiveness of agencies to the policy demands of participants. Berry et al. refer to the willingness of administrators to change policies as the "bottomline" - the most crucial indicator of program effectiveness (1984, 10).

It becomes evident in the literature that there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation of as many events and actions as are available to determine the adequacy of any public
participation program. An analysis of just one aspect is insufficient. Boaden et al. point out that some of the more obvious criteria of success are not easy to interpret or will only become apparent after several years experience in participation. Therefore, it is necessary to be broad in an evaluation and not adopt too rigorous a research model. For example, they cite the problems of only using outcome as a gauge of success:

An examination of any changes in the final plan which may result from public participation is not sufficient. If the planning was sensitive to public opinion in the first place, then a very successful public participation campaign might lead to few amendments (Boaden et al. 1980, 13).

One of the most common evaluation methods cited in the literature is to evaluate public participation techniques and programs based on how well goals and objectives are met (Rosener 1981). A problem that arises with the use of this method relates to which objectives a program should be evaluated upon (Wolfe 1979, 45; Alterman, Harris and Hill 1984, 178). Program objectives, and the extent and nature of public involvement are determined by the agency responsible for the decision making process. However, other sets of participants - the general public or elected officials, may also have identified objectives for the participation program:

Evaluation of a program by an agency or independent authority solely on the basis of agency objectives will inevitably be biased toward a favourable judgement. Evaluation should identify and assess how well the objectives of each set of participants are fulfilled (Wolfe 1979, 45).

Judy Rosener goes as far as to say that when goals and objectives are not clearly articulated and participatory parties
have different expectations of what participation is to achieve, it is not possible to measure the effectiveness of any participation activity, because there is lack of agreement as to what the participation is intended to do (1978, 112). Kweit and Kweit contend that with a clearer specification of the goals posited for participation should come a clearer understanding of what can be realistically expected from participation which will lead to less complicated processes for evaluating public participation (1981, 41).

The use of goals and objectives in evaluation is possible when goals and objectives have been defined from the outset and are explicit. David Godshalk points out however, that typically, public participation is subsidiary to a functional planning program such as land use and thus rarely has formally specified goals of its own (1981, 598-9). Therefore, where goals and objectives vary widely among sets of participants and are not made explicit, it becomes impossible to determine whether or not they have been achieved.

However, as outlined in chapter two, certain objectives can be established which are important for a public participation effort to achieve. In developing objectives for a participation program, the major pitfall of using goals and objectives as Rosener describes is avoided; that is, which goals and objectives to use. The objectives set out in this study are all-encompassing objectives for public participation. They are not objectives for any specific group or community. That is, the public participation objectives are determined as part of theoretical research and democratic principles and not
determined by the community or politicians. Adequacy or effectiveness is defined by these objectives.

In order to be broad and comprehensive in evaluating if the objectives for participation were met by each municipality, an approach identified by Berry et al. will be used which focuses on the evaluator's composite judgement which reflects his or her overall conclusion as to the success of participation in the process (1984, 10). This method incorporates other explicit standards of success, as well as the evaluator's internal biases, his or her subjective assessment of what was realistically possible in the program, and whatever "hidden agenda" criteria were or are operative (1984, 10).

5.2 ANALYSIS

The literature is insufficient in describing what processes or specific techniques are appropriate for public participation in the preparation of an O.C.P.. Having identified the basic objectives for adequate public participation, the process each municipality went through to involve the public can be assessed. Assessing the steps each municipality took to achieve the objectives for participation will give an indication of the adequacy of the public participation efforts and the range of techniques used in the four different O.C.P. processes.
5.2.1 RICHMOND

5.2.1.1 Accessibility

In Richmond, there was a diverse effort to encourage all citizens interested to participate and a number of techniques provided so that they could participate. Citizens were encouraged to participate through two municipality-wide mail deliveries. The first was a brochure explaining the issues and proposing alternatives and the second, a broadsheet summarizing the draft plan. In these home deliveries, further opportunities to participate were advertised such as open houses, public meetings and solicitation of letters and briefs.

Five open houses followed by public meetings were organized at two points during the plan's preparation. Meetings took place in different parts of the municipality on a week night evening. Planners organized the first set of meetings around discussing the issues and alternatives. Approximately 250 people attended five meetings. In the second set of meetings, attended by almost three hundred people, discussion centered on the first draft plan. Media coverage was actively solicited by the planners about the O.C.P. issues and the participation programs. While coverage was not extensive, advertising on radio, television and newspapers was thorough. For example, the municipality advertised the open houses and public meetings in both major Richmond newspapers and by public service announcement on the local radio and television stations prior to and during their scheduled times.

In order to encourage participation on specific issues during the 1985 public program, the Richmond planners wrote 137
personal letters to groups, citizens, and government officials to ask them to special interest or local community group meetings. In total, 99 people attended six different meetings. In the 1986 program, the municipality sent letters with a copy of the first draft plan and community profile to 26 different community organizations and government agencies soliciting comments. Comment sheets were also provided during the 1985 program to encourage citizens to comment on specific concerns and issues. Citizens returned over 1500 sheets commenting on preferred alternatives and concerns on fourteen different issue areas.

Finally, a public hearing was held prior to adoption of the O.C.P.. The number of choices of techniques and their availability to the public indicates that the Richmond process was very accessible to the public and that Richmond satisfied the accessibility objective.

5.2.1.2 Timing

The public was encouraged to participate at three points in the process: (1) issues clarification stage, (2) comment on first draft, and (3) comment on second draft. In addition, local area planning committees were active for limited periods of time and the advisory planning commission was involved throughout the entire process. The encouragement of participation in the very earliest stages to clarify the issues and choices, combined with the array of techniques employed suggest that interested citizens had a good opportunity to participate throughout the process from the early stages through to plan adoption. This participation was not confined to the advisory planning
commission but involved a commitment to receive views from a wide cross-section of the general public. It can be concluded that Richmond met the timing objective.

5.2.1.3 Impartiality

No one individual group appeared to dominate the public participation. The number of avenues available to the public to participate seemed to be enough so that virtually all points of view could be communicated. The variety of techniques also allowed for both written and oral communication both on a one-to-one basis (open houses, telephone comments, comment sheets, face-to-face contacts) and in group situations (community group meetings, public meetings).

The Richmond advisory planning commission consisted of a wide variety of people representing neighbourhoods in the municipality as well as special interests. However, some of the commission membership, as is the case with many citizen committees, was altered during the process to reflect the philosophical direction of council. Nevertheless, a wide variety of views were exchanged at the monthly meetings. For example, two of the twelve members voted not to support the recommendation made in the draft O.C.P. that a large section of land in West Richmond be removed from the Agricultural Land Reserve. On another major issue, land use under the flight path of the Vancouver International Airport, approximately one-third of the Commission disagreed with many of the proposed land use designations proposed in the draft plan (Richmond 1986b, 31-32).

Different values and philosophies emerged during the process. Clearly, the different techniques were designed to
solicit thought on different issues and to encourage people to make value judgements. The comment sheets and public meetings are two examples of techniques which focussed on what the citizens felt about the different issues encouraging people to express their opinions. It can be concluded that with the exception of the change in membership of the advisory planning commission, the impartiality objective was achieved.

5.2.1.4 Comprehensibility

The language used in information passed onto the public was clear and understandable. Some of the background reports were of a technical nature, but even in these situations, there was an effort made to write in layman's terms. The background reports written by consultants and various municipal departments were available to the public after being reviewed by the advisory planning commission and received by council. These reports, combined with the brochure and broadsheet draft plan mailout and the information display boards, provided accurate and useful information transfer throughout the O.C.P. process. The comprehensibility objective was met in Richmond.

5.2.1.5 Alternatives

Citizens had many opportunities to meet with planners to discuss and debate issues and alternatives. Techniques used for face-to-face discussions about alternatives included open houses, public meetings, staffed display exhibits in shopping malls and at community events, meetings with community groups and local area planning meetings.

Interaction was facilitated early in the process by the planners who formulated alternatives for the different issues to
which the public could react. Reaction included support or opposition to the alternatives, modification to the alternatives and the development of new alternatives. On the issue of growth, the planners were particularly criticized by some people during the 1985 public program for the four alternatives presented. The planners were accused of making the first and fourth alternatives so extreme that they were unreasonable, thus leaving only two alternatives. However, the planners stressed in their interaction with the public that the alternatives suggested for the various issues were meant to solicit discussion from which modified or new alternatives would emerge. In fact, much discussion did occur and modification to the alternatives for policies on growth emerged.

A second major complaint from citizens was the lack of information available regarding how much each of the alternatives would cost if implemented. That is, if the "no growth" option was chosen, would that result in increased taxes and if so how much? Some citizens felt they were being asked to make a choice without knowing all the ramifications. Planners explained to the public that the information on the growth policy alternatives would be forthcoming. Completion of such cost estimates and forecasts was delayed due to the complexity of the task. Consultants had been hired to perform the task and much coordination with municipal departments was required to complete the work. Rather than hold up the entire process, planners felt they should continue with their plan to initiate a public participation program at the crucial alternatives identification and clarification stage. Where and how much urban
growth should occur was just one of many issues to be discussed. Overall, the alternatives objective was met in Richmond.

5.2.1.6 Efficacy

The effect of public participation on the products of the planning process is difficult to assess in Richmond's case because the O.C.P. process had not been completed at the time of this research. According to the Richmond planners themselves, public participation did have an effect on their opinions and on the plan (Jackson interview 1986; Picard interview 1986). For example, planners received the message from the 1985 public program that the municipality should play a more active and stronger role to preserve heritage sites and the natural environment. This message was reflected in the first draft plan (Jackson interview).

On certain issues, such as whether urban growth should be allowed to expand into the Agricultural Land Reserve, a range of opinions were expressed by people who participated in the public programs. The planning department responded by retracting some proposals to designate certain Agricultural Land Reserve parcels "non-agricultural". Conversely, in another hotly debated issue concerning a large parcel of agricultural land in west Richmond called Terra Nova (see Map 3), the planning department recommended it be designated for residential purposes despite the fact the majority of those who participated in the public program were against non-agricultural use of the area. Whether council will support the planning departments recommendations remains to be seen after council makes a decision following the public hearing.
The planning department did change some policies based on public reaction to the first draft plan. For example, the first draft plan proposed changing a residential area directly south of the airport to an industrial and commercial designation due to high noise impact from Vancouver International Airport. Landowners, as well as other citizens and the advisory planning commission, expressed their concern that this area be retained for residential purposes. In the second draft plan, this area was designated residential.

Feedback available to the public on their views and concerns as conveyed to the planners was extensive in Richmond. All records of the public's response including minutes from public and community group meetings, letters and briefs, results of the questionnaire/comment sheets and comments at open houses were compiled in their entirety in reports made available to the public. In addition, the drafts of the plan were made readily available.

It is not possible to finally determine if the efficacy objective was achieved in Richmond until the O.C.P. is adopted. However, judging from the contents of the first and second draft plans, the planners incorporated many concerns expressed by the public.

5.2.1.7 Summary

In summary, Richmond was successful in including adequate public participation in its O.C.P. process. Virtually all of the public participation objectives were fulfilled, although there was room for improvement with regard to more information on the effects of different growth policy alternatives and under the
objective of impartiality as it related to the advisory planning commission. The main feature of the process was a planned and concerted effort to involve the public from the early stages through to plan adoption. The variety of techniques provided opportunity for a diverse number of people interested to become involved, recognizing that there is a broad spectrum of interests and opinions within the community. In addition, the planners felt their own stated objectives of the public participation component of the process were achieved (Jackson interview).

5.2.2 SURREY

5.2.2.1 Accessibility

The only methods available for the general public to participate in the O.C.P. process were public hearings and a public opinion survey. Due to the low response and an inadequate delivery system which did not work as intended, the survey cannot be considered an adequate indication of the public's views. At the public hearings all interested and concerned citizens had the opportunity and were encouraged to participate. The municipality adjourned the hearings to ten different locations in the community to make them more convenient to the citizens advertising the times and locations in a broadsheet summary of the draft plan and in newspapers.

Local area planning committees and an advisory planning commission were used in the process. Both techniques as implemented, had limitations. The commission was active for a limited period and Surrey council dismissed the members before
completion of the public hearings. The local area plans that were part of policy development did not, in most cases, represent an attempt on behalf of planners to reach a consensus or compromise acceptable to the area's citizens. Local plans were devised by different groups which "claimed their territory". This process, while being effective in unfolding different views of ratepayers associations and other interest groups, does not substitute for techniques which offer the opportunity for discussion on community-wide concerns and the context in which the local area plan is operating within. That is not to say that all the local plans were parochial in nature ignoring the wider context. Had council and the planners committed themselves to solving conflicts in the local areas in the context of broader community-wide issues and offered means for all interested citizens to become involved, then using these plans to assist in developing an overall strategy and plan for the municipality, would have been more productive.

As it was carried out, the O.C.P. process was deficient in providing opportunities and encouraging interested citizens to take part in the preparation of the O.C.P.. With the exception of the public hearings which were designed in such a way that many deficiencies that tend to characterize public hearings were overcome, the accessibility objective was not met in Surrey.

5.2.2.2 Timing

The general public was only consulted once early in the O.C.P. process by way of a public opinion survey which had a very low response rate and did not reach all residents. Otherwise, information was not made available to the public at
the crucial early stage of identifying issues. Local area planning committees took part in local area issue identification, however, involvement in these committees was restricted, the focus of the committees' concerns were local-area related, and committee members were not consulted on what aspects of the local area plans would be incorporated into the O.C.P.. Delivery of a broadsheet summarizing the draft plan was a positive step taken by the planning department to convey information at a crucial stage in the latter part of the process. As well, the public hearings took place at the crucial time of commenting on the draft plan. The lack of opportunity for the general public to participate early in the process indicates the timing objective was not satisfied as much as would be desired in Surrey.

5.2.2.3 Impartiality

Everyone had an equal opportunity to participate in the public hearings. However, many of the local area planning committees were restricted to land owners thus being biased against rental tenants. Other local area plans were developed by special interest groups with no opportunity for the general public to comment. The opportunity for consideration of questions of value judgements was very limited and rarely encouraged. Besides the local area planning committees, the advisory planning commission and public hearings, there was no opportunity for face-to-face discussion and debate with planners. Of these three techniques, only the public hearings were open to the general public and they were only available after the draft plan was produced. At the public hearings, only
changes to boundaries to isolated land use designations were addressed. Policy and philosophical issues were not discussed. Overall, the impartiality objective was not as achieved as much as would be desired.

5.2.2.4 Comprehensibility

The public participation aspect of the O.C.P. was not explained to the public until the municipality delivered the broadsheet summary of the draft plan to every home in the municipality. Only at the time of the broadsheet mailout was the general public made aware of the issues the plan was addressing. Therefore, while the summary was written in layman's terms and the planning process explained in both the plan and in the broadsheet, there was not full disclosure of all relevant data and analysis. Background material was not available to the public early in the process and access to the general public was denied to advisory planning commission meetings.

Information that was given to the public was done so late in the process. The large draft plan and accompanying broadsheet was the first material given to the public. Although the draft plan was placed in public libraries, smaller documents that would be more readable and readily accessible would have facilitated information availability. The plan very much had the presence of being an official document which was not easy to change. The draft plan was a very expensive document to produce because of its size and many coloured maps. The fact that this same draft remains today as the only one available to the public, both at Surrey Municipal Hall and at the public libraries, suggests it was not intended to be changed
dramatically. The first page, which reads "Surrey Official Community Plan By-Law #7600 Final Draft, May, 1983" in bold print gives the impression it was not meant for major discussion but rather minor amendments. Such a large and complex document is also intimidating and not easily accessible to the average citizen.

The summary broadsheet does represent an attempt to reduce information into an understandable and convenient level by describing the plan and the process and to encourage participation by attending public hearings. However, besides the public hearings, interaction with the planners was not available for citizens to discuss the plan proposal. The comprehensibility objective was not met in Surrey.

5.2.2.5 Alternatives

Except for the public opinion survey, at no point in the process were alternatives presented to the public. Rather, the draft plan was published and comment was solicited. Local planning committees dealt with alternatives identification, however these committees had no say in deciding what would be incorporated into the Surrey O.C.P.. The range of alternatives was kept as interdepartmental information. Basically, a plan that was geared toward a concept of five town-centers was proposed in the draft plan with no alternatives offered on that concept or any other issues. The alternatives objective was not met in Surrey.

5.2.2.6 Efficacy

Records show that many suggestions offered by the advisory planning commission and at the public hearings were incorporated
in the final plan. In the case of the public hearings, the changes were related to land use designation boundaries of specific properties. Formulation of the plan was also influenced through the use of local area plans. However, the public was not consulted as to how compromises may be developed in local areas before the plans were amalgamated into the O.C.P. Thus, the public was excluded from an important stage in the O.C.P. process. In the case of the advisory planning commission, the majority of changes it suggested were concerned with the policy statements. All the changes were minor.

Feedback was given to the advisory planning commission on its suggestions in the form of a summary report from the planning department. Some suggestions were acted upon while with others, the planning department explained why they were inappropriate. The general public, however, had no record available to them of their input and had no way of gauging their efficacy beyond what was proposed in the public hearings and then accepted as amendments to the draft plan. An amended plan was never made available for public viewing. The original plan remains the only document available in public libraries. Due to the adhoc nature of the Surrey process, citizens were not made aware of how they could influence the process or what their place was in that process except as outlined in the summary broadsheet advertising the public hearing locations. Furthermore, the public was not given any explanation of how or why it was decided which aspects of local area plans were incorporated into the O.C.P. while others were excluded.

Overall, no major shifts in direction in the final outcome
of the plan resulted from public comments. Minor changes did occur and for these the efficacy objective was met in Surrey. However, opportunities for major changes and influence never arose and therefore the efficacy objective was not well tested in the O.C.P. process.

5.2.2.7 Summary

In summary, none of the public participation objectives were totally met in the Surrey process. The major deficiencies in the process relate to the lack of participation in the development of the draft plan. Alternatives were not put forth for discussion and there was a lack of information given to the public prior to the publishing of the draft plan. The draft plan itself was a large and intimidating document, not as accessible to the general public as in other municipalities.

It would seem that the council was quite comfortable with the use of public hearings as a technique and they used it well, but were reluctant to go beyond this means and encourage other public participation. The advisory planning commission was established for only a short period during the process and not included early in the process. Finally, there was no effort to reconcile differences at the local area planning level so citizens could be involved in final decisions. On the whole, the process lacked effort and commitment on behalf of the municipality to encourage the involvement of citizens throughout the process and especially in the early stages.
5.2.3 DELTA

5.2.3.1 Accessibility

The limited range of techniques used in Delta does not represent an extraordinary effort to ensure as many people participated as may have been possible even though any person who was interested was not prevented from participating. Public meetings and letters were the only two techniques available to the general public to become actively involved in the process. Delta used the public meeting technique very well however. For example, to facilitate discussion at some public meetings, planners set up panels and workshops. Attendance at some of the meetings on specific issues reached approximately two hundred people. The four public meetings organized to discuss the first draft plan were held in four different locations in the municipality on week night evenings thus being convenient to most residents.

A variety of techniques to suit the needs of different individuals and to encourage their participation would have made the process more accessible than it was. Therefore, Delta did not meet the accessibility objective as much as would be desired.

5.2.3.2 Timing

Citizens had the opportunity to participate at several important decision making points in the process. Meetings were held to discuss issues and develop alternatives and policies early in the process. Position papers on major issues were available to the public after these initial meetings took place. The municipality delivered a draft plan to every address in
Delta and four televised public meetings were held to discuss it. The municipality also solicited letters and briefs from individuals, community groups and government agencies and departments. The planner responsible prepared a second draft plan which was available to the public. Finally the municipality held a public hearing prior to adopting the plan. Therefore, by providing the general public access to the process at three important points: (1) issues and alternatives discussion stage, (2) comment on first draft plan, and (3) comment on second draft as well as continued consultation with the advisory planning commission, Delta met the timing objective.

5.2.3.3 Impartiality

All interested persons had the opportunity and were encouraged to debate and discuss issues with the planners. In particular, the use of panels and seminars within the public meeting technique early in the process to clarify issues and develop alternatives facilitated the sharing of different philosophical views and opinions. However, all the issue-related meetings were held in South Delta or Ladner thus being inconvenient to North Delta residents. Also, during the meetings to discuss the first draft plan, citizens favouring the preservation of agricultural land dominated the proceedings. The use of other techniques such as special interest group meetings would have been useful to hear a full and wide range of views and opinions. The impartiality objective was not met as much as would be desired in Delta.

5.2.3.4 Comprehensibility

Materials that were distributed to the public were suited
to the citizen and were very accessible. All draft plans were freely given to those requesting them and a complete copy of the first draft was delivered to every address in the municipality in a broadsheet format. Also in the broadsheet, the public meetings were advertised and public comment on the draft plan solicited. Background reports were prepared after the meetings on individual issues had taken place but were not available until the meetings to discuss the first draft plan. If the background reports had been available to the public earlier in the process, it would have facilitated information transfer to those citizens wanting more detailed information. Overall, the municipality passed on important and relevant information to the public that met the comprehensibility objective.

5.2.3.5 Alternatives

Alternatives identification was done early in the process as each area of interest in the community was discussed at separate meetings. However, single opportunities to discuss each issue cannot be considered sufficient input into alternatives identification especially since all of these meetings were held in South Delta and Ladner neglecting populous North Delta. Although the use of public meetings and smaller seminars facilitated interaction with the planners, other techniques would have been useful to both distribute information as to the alternatives and to receive input into their appropriateness. The advisory planning commission was marginally involved in discussing the appropriateness of the alternatives, however additional opportunities for other interested citizens was lacking. The alternatives objective was not met in Delta as much
as would be desired.

5.2.3.6 Efficacy

In the development of the first draft plan, the views expressed by the public did have an impact. The initial meetings were especially useful in affecting staff opinion at this early stage. The meetings on the proposed draft plan, however, were not all that useful in leading to substantial changes in the plan (Collier interview). Several changes were made but all of them were quite minor. As for the politicians, the public input confirmed their views on the different opinions that existed in the community. It is interesting to note and perhaps indicative of the political process that the adopted O.C.P. which allows for two major encroachments into the agricultural land reserve, was passed by a four-three margin by Delta council. This has caused disillusionment by some people and especially the Delta Fraser Group who stand for the preservation of agricultural land. During the preparation of the O.C.P., an election was held and all the candidates who were eventually elected said they supported the preservation of the Agricultural Land Reserve (Collier interview). Regardless, less than three months after being elected, four of the seven council members voted for a plan which included two encroachments into the Reserve. Evidently, at election time, candidates perceived that more votes could be obtained from supporting the preservation of the Agricultural Land Reserve. Conversely, once in power, taking all things into consideration, voted otherwise.

Feedback was given to the public in the form of draft plans. All drafts were made readily available. However, no
special report outlining all the input or indicating why some input might be inappropriate was completed.

It would appear that the efficacy objective was met early in the process. However, it is not so clear that the final plan represented the views expressed by the public during the process on the major issue of urban development in the Agricultural Land Reserve. The final result was a political decision which favoured some use of agricultural lands for urban purposes.

5.2.3.7 Summary

In summary, the Delta O.C.P. process included considerable public involvement which was not as adequate as would be desired. Five of the objectives were not fully met. The planner responsible for the plan's preparation showed ingenuity in providing a number of different ways to use the public meeting technique for interested citizens and groups to become involved in the process which resulted in a productive exchange of ideas. However, the process would have been more accessible had there not been such an overreliance on public meeting techniques to involve the citizens and had more effort been made to involve North Delta residents, especially in the early policy development stage of the process. With the use of a broader range of techniques, alternatives identification could have been enhanced which would have made for even more effective participation.

5.2.4 NEW WESTMINSTER

5.2.4.1 Accessibility

Besides a public hearing, at which no one chose to speak
about the O.C.P., there was only one other point in the New Westminster O.C.P. process when the general public had the opportunity to participate: commenting on first draft plan. At this point, the only encouragement and technique offered to the general public to be involved in the O.C.P. process was to send in written and telephone comments.

Two other techniques were employed: an advisory planning commission and special interest community group meetings. These community group meetings were not advertised in the summary broadsheet that was delivered to every home in the city. The meetings were not geared to the general public but rather to specific community and interest groups that took the initiative to call a meeting to learn more about the O.C.P..

The advisory planning commission was minimally involved throughout the process but did represent some continuity in citizen input into the plan's preparation. Historically, the commission has dealt with day-to-day issues and found the O.C.P. to be too general and abstract (Chaster interview). The accessibility objective was not met in New Westminster.

5.2.4.2 Timing

The lack of techniques available to the public to participate as described above, also prevented access at important points in the process. In particular, there was a lack of opportunity to identify issues and review alternatives early in the process. The timing objective was not met in New Westminster.

5.2.4.3 Impartiality

Generally, no individual or group dominated the
participation and anyone comfortable in writing a letter or talking on the phone had an equal opportunity to participate. The techniques employed were deficient in encouraging other participation including the identification of concerned groups with diverse views and the seeking of their opinions. Opportunity was definitely focussed on questions of values and different philosophies and not merely technical details. This can be related to New Westminster's commitment to a plan of policy based on goals and objectives. The impartiality objective was not satisfied as much as would be desired.

5.2.4.4 Comprehensibility

Information produced by the planning department for the public was well written and easy to understand. Relevant data and analysis was made available to the public including five background reports for those who sought further and more detailed information. Issue identification was not done in conjunction with the public early in the process, rather information was distributed once goals, objectives and policies were formulated. This is related to the planner feeling he had a good grasp of the issues from previous exposure to the public and familiarity with the community. The comprehensibility objective was not achieved as much as would be desired.

5.2.4.5 Alternatives

Basically, all the information was made available to the public at one point in the process with the exception of the advisory planning commission which was given information throughout the period of the plan's preparation. In so doing, alternatives were not identified by the municipality from which
the public could consider and offer feedback and suggestions for modification or major changes. Instead, one set of goals, objectives and policies which together comprised the draft plan were developed by the planners and then presented for public scrutiny.

Interaction was minimal in the techniques used. Besides the advisory planning commission and special interest group meetings, planners relied on feedback obtained through letters and telephone calls. Therefore, the general public had no formal opportunity to ask questions and have face-to-face dialogue with the planners. This restricted the opportunity for interested citizens to present their reasons for or against the plan and prevented people from knowing other views and opinions and sharing ideas. It should be noted that according to one New Westminster planner, historically there has been a close relationship between the planning department and the public and citizens know that their concerns will be listened to by coming into city hall and talking to the planning staff (Scheving interview). This open policy was carried out throughout the O.C.P. process. However, due to the absence of encouragement and opportunities, the alternatives objective was not achieved in New Westminster.

5.2.4.6 Efficacy

It is clear public participation had an effect on staff opinions and the final plan. Both the planners and politicians took the feedback that was obtained seriously and were willing to include suggestions in the final result. Basing decisions on only 28 comments received through the mail and over the phone
is, however, questionable. The fact that this small amount of response was taken seriously by the planners could be related to the nature of the feedback which offered little disagreement to the proposed plan:

Only 28 comments and briefs were received. This represents a small fraction of the potential public response. However, it is felt that these responses give a good representative cross section of public opinion. They generally indicate very little disagreement with the contents of the Plan and/or the policy recommendations (New Westminster 1982b, 1).

A report on the feedback was produced by the planning department based on the 28 letters and telephone comments received. Discussions that were held with special interest groups were not included in the report except in the opening letter of transmittal which stated:

In summarizing all the input -- the briefs, telephone calls and discussions -- many of the prime concerns appear to overlap and cover the whole spectrum of what we have defined as the "livability" factor. It appears that many citizens are concerned about the quality of life issues and want to prevent further deterioration of their environmental surroundings. Consequently, it is concluded that a minor change should be made in the major thrust of the Plan and the program in accordance with this current public sentiment (New Westminster 1982b, 2).

The change described above regarding the 'major' thrust of the plan was made in the final draft plan along with four other changes to policies that were suggested in the comments. The report also explained why certain suggestions would not be incorporated in the plan. Overall, although the efficacy objective was not well tested, it was met in New Westminster.

5.2.4.7 Summary

In summary, the New Westminster public participation effort
was not as adequate as would be desired. Accessibility, while being equally available to all, was only encouraged with limited means. The small number of techniques used to involve the public resulted in a very small amount of response. The citizen input that was received was taken in good faith by the planners and decision makers resulting in changes to the plan. In order to improve the process, more information about the issues and more varied opportunities for involvement at more places throughout the process would be necessary. In addition, alternatives would be presented from which the public could choose and develop new alternatives.

At the same time it should be recognized that the New Westminster O.C.P. was a policy document. Without the adoption of supporting maps, planners did not feel that there would be very much public interest in the plan right from the start. Also, the head planner had an extensive knowledge of the community and its citizens from previous experience. Therefore, whereas there was not extensive public participation in the O.C.P. process itself, the planner had accumulated much knowledge through years of contacts with citizens. Nevertheless, the feedback that was received from the public included issues that were not considered in the original draft. It is likely that if there had been a greater attempt to solicit participation even more issues would have been identified.
CHAPTER SIX
CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study has been to assess the effectiveness of techniques and processes used by municipal planning departments to obtain participation from the public in the preparation of official community plans. Six objectives were established for the study which flowed from the purpose.

The first objective was to verify the importance of public participation in the community planning process. It was found that there is general agreement among contemporary writers that public participation is desirable and important as part of any democratic system of governance.

The second objective sought to identify objectives for public participation programs in community planning. This was found to be a more difficult task since there is no agreement among contemporary writers as to what constitutes effective or adequate participation. However, based on democratic principles and supported by findings in the literature, six process-oriented objectives were established which any citizen involvement program in community planning should strive to achieve. These objectives are:

(1) Accessibility - All citizens have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate.

(2) Timing - The public is provided with information and opportunities to participate at crucial decision making points in the planning process.

(3) Impartiality - No individual or group is permitted to dominate the participation process at the expense of others.
(4) **Comprehensibility** - Important information is provided and is presented in such a way that it is understood by those whom it affects.

(5) **Alternatives** - The public is presented with a range of alternatives.

(6) **Efficacy** - Participants' views are considered in products of the planning process.

The third objective for the study as stated in chapter one was to determine current processes and techniques used to obtain participation from the public in the preparation of O.C.P.'s. An investigation into four municipalities in the greater Vancouver region found that the O.C.P. process and the participation techniques used varied among the four communities. In total, fifteen different techniques were utilized at three different stages in the O.C.P. process: (1) issue and alternative identification and clarification stage, (2) comment on first draft plan stage and (3) comment on second draft plan stage. As well, it was common for there to be some provision for continuous participation throughout the entire process although this provision was primarily restricted to advisory planning commissions.

Of all the different techniques that are available, three techniques were used by all four municipalities considered in this study. First of all, an advisory planning commission was either established or an existing one was consulted. Second, public hearings were held before the different plans became bylaws. Third, the first complete draft plan or a summary of the plan in a broadsheet format was sent to every address in each of
the municipalities. Of these three devices, the public hearing is required by legislation and the advisory planning commission is suggested in the legislation.

None of these three techniques meet all of the process-oriented objectives for public participation. Advisory planning commissions are most useful for identifying issues and discussing alternatives thus helping to achieve the alternatives objective. Also an advisory planning commission can be in place for the duration of an O.C.P. process thus assisting the municipality in meeting the timing objective. However, because advisory planning commissions are restricted in membership to a small number of citizens (usually ten to fifteen people), it cannot substitute for techniques open to the general public. Therefore, no process-oriented objective can be fully achieved using this technique.

Public hearings do not meet all of the objectives for participation. As pointed out in chapter four, public hearings alone cannot fulfill the accessibility or timing objectives. Public hearings are also held too late in the process to meet the alternatives objective.

A summary of the draft plan in a broadsheet format helps to satisfy many of the objectives including accessibility, impartiality, and comprehensibility. It can also be instrumental in meeting the timing objective as far as providing information to the public at a crucial decision making point in the process.

What is particularly lacking in this combination of techniques is opportunity for the general public to participate early in the process at the issue and alternatives
identification stage and opportunity for face-to-face or group interaction with planners and other citizens at all stages of the process. Official community plans deal with complex issues that are important to the community. Therefore, the use of these three techniques must be supplemented with other techniques in order for there to be opportunities for the public to become familiar with the issues, the alternatives and the consequences of different choices.

It is important that techniques are used which allow for a range of views to be expressed through a number of different means. Therefore, the techniques chosen should allow for face-to-face contact between the public and planners as well as opportunities for other oral and written communication. Involvement must begin early in the process. Findings from the experiences of municipalities studied suggest the development of background reports followed by easily read summaries of the major issues and possible alternatives made widely available to the public can begin the process of involving the public. With this relevant information, the public can then enter into discussions with the planners to clarify the issues and alternatives and propose new ones. Any number of techniques can be utilized at this stage including display exhibits, comment sheets, public meetings, surveys, open houses and community group meetings.

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the most appropriate method to evaluate public participation in community planning. It was discovered that evaluating public participation is a difficult process. One of the most common methods cited in
the literature is to base evaluation on stated aims and objectives. However, different groups and players in the planning process have different expectations of what participation is to achieve. As a result, their goals and objectives also vary. Therefore, it was decided that objectives for participation which were not specific to any one group, but rather based on democratic principles, would be used. These objectives are the six process-oriented objectives described in detail in chapter two and summarized near the beginning of this chapter. A method relying on the evaluator's subjective assessment and whatever explicit indicators of success that are available, was identified as an appropriate means to determine how well each of the process-oriented objectives had been met. 

The fifth objective of the study was to assess the public participation efforts of four greater Vancouver municipalities. It was found that the four municipalities had varying degrees of success in achieving the process-oriented objectives for participation. The following summarizes the lessons learned from each municipality.

In terms of overall effectiveness of the participation effort, Richmond was the most successful municipality in achieving the objectives for participation. Richmond planners did so through the use of a planned strategy designed to reach identified publics. Planners established goals and objectives specifically for the public participation component of the process. The variety of techniques used and the timing of those techniques combined so that three of the process-oriented objectives were fully achieved. Two other objectives were very
close to being satisfied. It was not possible to determine if
the efficacy objective was fully satisfied or not although many
concerns expressed by the public had been incorporated into the
draft plans. Of significance in Richmond, was the openness of
the process to the public at various stages of the preparation
of the O.C.P.. In particular, at the issue clarification stage,
the municipality actively encouraged participation and debate on
issues and alternative solutions to problems. The techniques
used were varied and applied at several points in the process.
Certain techniques that were utilized, appropriately
accommodated identifiable special interest groups while other
techniques were more appropriate for the broader public.

Surrey's process, conversely, did not fully meet any of the
objectives. This can be related to a number of factors. First of
all, there was no planned strategy on how the public could be
involved in the process. Publics were not identified and a broad
range of techniques were not applied to ensure full
participation. Secondly, the general public was excluded from
participating early in the process so they took no part in issue
clarification or choosing alternatives beyond answering survey
questions. The general public had no opportunity to be part of
the preparation of the draft plan that resulted from culminating
local area plans.

These first two factors are important because without
participation early in the process and opportunities for the
public to learn what the plan is about, the probability is
increased that the plan will be misunderstood. As one Surrey
planner said who had been involved in the plan from the
beginning stages: "people are not committed to the feeling of the plan" (Caselton interview). This lack of commitment and understanding led to a number of people demanding changes at the public hearing and after the plan was adopted. In all cases, these changes were proposed by property owners who wanted their land changed from one designation to another, usually from suburban residential to urban residential (i.e. from large to small lot size). Much of this could have been avoided through a more complete public participation program. As Creighton comments from a planning agency's point of view:

One of the major functions of public involvement is to create sufficient visibility to the decision making process so that decisions which result from it are perceived as fair and legitimate. While some of the people most directly impacted by a decision may not be impressed by the equity of a decision, their ability to undermine the credibility of the decision rests on their ability to convince the larger public that the decision was unfairly made. Effective public involvement can establish your credibility with the larger public, so that the claims of special interests fall on deaf ears (1983, 443).

The third factor related to lack of effectiveness in Surrey's process was the reliance on local area plans as a basis for the overall O.C.P.. Other techniques which would allow for dialogue on the municipality-wide issues were not included except for an public opinion survey which had a low response and an advisory planning commission which was short-lived and quite restricted on the feedback it could give to council.

It is not possible to conclude from this study that the use of local area plans is not a wise process to pursue in developing a municipality-wide O.C.P.. However, it can be concluded that local area plans themselves must be prepared with community involvement with one compatible plan finally being
adopted for the area which has been through a process of public consultation so everyone has had an opportunity to have a say in the final outcome and understands it. Where consensus cannot be reached, the plan needs to consider balancing opposing points of views and values to reach a compromise. Whereas, it is acknowledged that consensus is difficult if not impossible to reach in many cases, compromises have to be made in consultation with the public. Furthermore, the local plans must reflect response from the members of the public who have had the opportunity to consider the broader municipality-wide concerns. This did not occur in Surrey. Had it, then the O.C.P. would probably have been better understood by the public and less time would be spent in making continual amendments to the land use designations of the plan.

The use of local area plans as a basis for their O.C.P. in Surrey was an anomaly among the four municipalities. Richmond used local area plans, however, the plans did not form the basis for the O.C.P., but rather complemented the overall O.C.P. process. Based on interviews with five planners and a community leader (from Delta), all agree that the preferable route to take in a community planning process is from a general to specific nature. Reasons for this include:

- The area planning process should not "wag the dog" of the O.C.P. because there is too much vested interest in a local area plan (Jackson interview).

- Local area planning focuses on specifics and therefore needs a broad framework to relate to and understand how the area fits in (Picard interview; Scheving interview).

- It is administratively easier and more efficient to have an O.C.P. in place first (Caselton interview).
• All issues would not be addressed by simply amalgamating local area plans (Rogers interview).

• There is no perfect system, however, the general to specific route is a more rational approach which creates a framework. Very often communities that do local area plans first usually never get around to doing an overall O.C.P. (Collier interview).

Very often a municipality has no choice as community planning is a dynamic process. Richmond, for example, was in a position where they already had some local area plans in place and were in the process of completing more at the time they started the O.C.P.. Therefore, local area plans and committees had an influence on the O.C.P.. Surrey had numerous local area plans and attempted to complete plans for each area and amalgamate them into one overall plan. Regardless of the route that is taken by a municipality, what is important is that the process of preparing an O.C.P. is done openly and democratically. By planning a public participation strategy which meets the objectives for participation, both approaches can work.

The final factor related to the lack of effectiveness in Surrey was a lack of commitment at the leadership level to genuinely involve the public. Without the leaders, who are responsible for allocating financial and human resources believing in the need for participation as part of the planning process, the participation that does occur can easily become token and largely ineffective. This factor relates back to the local area plans as a basis for the O.C.P.. The Surrey example does not prove that local area plans do not work as a basis for an O.C.P., but rather that there has to be commitment to participation, which ever way the process is structured.
Delta's O.C.P. process had considerable public involvement which was not as effective as would be desired in meeting five of the process-oriented objectives. However, officials were pleased with the final plan and attributed what they considered a successful process to leadership. According to one Delta official, the planner hired to prepare the plan was experienced and able to communicate creatively with the different publics (Collier interview; Rogers interview).

The Delta process suggests that with creativity a limited number of techniques can be arranged in such a way as to increase their usefulness. Even given limited resources, participation can be quite effective overall. The Delta example also portrays the value of identifying key community leaders who can assist the planner in the participation aspect. The advisory planning commission chairman was instrumental in the O.C.P. process.

In New Westminster, the public participation effort was not as effective as would be desired. A number of observations can be made. First, the New Westminster example suggests that in order to get people to participate in a policy plan which does not include a map indicating the ramifications of the policies in actual physical form, planners must encourage participation and design and implement a public participation program to meet the process-oriented objectives.

There is some debate as to whether policy plans should be accompanied by land use designation maps. Some planners believe an O.C.P. needs land-use designations to tie policies to their physical ramifications noting that the focus of an O.C.P. is
land use. This results in a plan with more certainty although still retaining some flexibility. Conversely, other planners argue that maps decrease the flexibility of the O.C.P. turning it into a fixed plan. Maps, they believe, should be reserved for local area plans. Ultimately, in order for the O.C.P. to be implemented, the O.C.P. policies at some point must be applied to actual physical land use. One planner pointed out that if local area plans had already been developed with land-use designations then an O.C.P. developed afterwards would only need to be a policy plan (Jackson interview). The New Westminster example did not offer enough choices to the public to participate to know if it is more difficult to solicit participation with a more intangible and broad plan dealing in policy statements without applying them. This question is not of great importance for the future in the context of official community plans. Legislation now requires that a land use designation map and other maps be included in all O.C.P.'s. Nevertheless, it is an interesting question and one that warrants further research.

The second observation with regard to the New Westminster example is related to the planners' perceptions of the community. In smaller communities, where planners are well known and have a history of informal and formal contact with the public, they may have gathered over the years a feel for the community's values and range of interests. As a result, a public participation program for a specific plan such as an O.C.P. may not have to be as extensive as in larger communities. However, the planners should never assume they know everything and can
predict what the public is thinking or how they will react. It is still necessary to seek input and clarification and offer alternatives. Previously unidentified issues emerged from the relatively small response received from the public in New Westminster. The planners admitted even more issues would have been identified if there had been more effort to go to the public (Chaster interview; Ing interview).

Third, despite the feeling by planners that the planning department is open and citizens are comfortable coming in to talk about concerns, it is no substitute for actually going out to where people recreate, work, shop or reside.

The sixth objective of the study was to provide suggestions for future public participation programs to be used in the O.C.P. process. Nine summary observations can be derived from the analysis which can be used to help guide planners designing and implementing public participation in the preparation of an official community plan.

(1) Planners should at all times keep in mind the process-oriented objectives for citizen involvement when designing and implementing a public participation program.

(2) Commitment on behalf of the planners, administration and council, especially at the leadership level where financial and human resources are allocated, is necessary for participation to have a chance at being effective. Without commitment, the variety, choice or number of techniques is of little consequence.

(3) Planners should not take for granted they know what the public is thinking or wants. Regardless of size of community,
experience of staff or context of plan, it is necessary to involve the citizens keeping in mind participation is an educational process.

(4) Effort to include citizen participation in the O.C.P. process must go beyond that required by legislation. A public hearing and an advisory commission is not sufficient to ensure adequate participation in an O.C.P. process.

(5) It is beneficial to have a planned strategy for public participation whereby goals and objectives are established, publics are identified and tactics are devised to reach them.

(6) Lack of participation early in the process can lead to lack of understanding of, and commitment to, the plan. Therefore, planners should endeavor to involve citizens in the early issues and alternatives identification phase of the process.

(7) If local area plans are to be culminated into an overall plan, then there has to be consideration given to the broader municipality-wide context. The local area plans themselves must be prepared using a coordinated effort to involve the public in agreeing on one plan for the area. That effort should also take into consideration and achieve the process-oriented objectives outlined in this study.

(8) There are limitations and constraints to the implementation of any technique. Awareness of these limitations will assist the planner in preparing a program that compensates for these limitations.

(9) The need for a variety of techniques to be used in an O.C.P. process is related to the fact certain techniques are geared toward one segment of the population and/or are best
suited to a certain stage in the process. Therefore, when involving the public, planners should ensure that information-giving, information-receiving and interactive techniques are included at important points in the process in order that the process-oriented objectives for participation can be achieved. Findings from the four case studies indicate there are three important decision making points in the O.C.P. process: (1) issue and alternative identification and clarification, (2) comment on first draft plan and (3) comment on second draft plan. As well, some mechanism for continuity throughout the entire O.C.P. process is common. The specific techniques used at each stage will depend on the historical background leading up to the plan's development, the issues, the community itself, the planners' expertise and familiarity with certain techniques and the resources available.

In conclusion, this study has attempted to deal with public participation as it relates to the preparation of official community plans. Continued participation in the implementation stage of an O.C.P. has not been addressed and is an area which requires additional study. It has been determined in this study that by keeping the process-oriented objectives in mind, planners can develop a public participation program for an O.C.P. through which meaningful response can be obtained from the public. However, the ability to carry out a program which satisfies these objectives depends foremost on administrative commitment. It is not possible to state an ideal public participation program which would meet all conditions suitable for all communities preparing an official community plan. The
actual choice of techniques will vary and are not limited to ones identified in this study. The challenge for the planner is to ensure that a combination of techniques is used which meets the process-oriented objectives for public participation.
LITERATURE REFERENCES


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PERSONAL REFERENCES


