To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Dale J. Austin, Jr., entitled "The Nominal Group Process as a Citizen Participation Strategy in Substate Planning Agencies." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Planning.

Judith G. Stoloff

Judith G. Stoloff, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Robert D. Miller

George W. Bowers

Accepted for the Council:

L. Evans Roth

Vice Chancellor
Graduate Studies and Research

CRAIGS CREST

Thesis
77
A888
cop. 2

THE NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS AS A CITIZEN PARTICIPATION STRATEGY IN SUBSTATE PLANNING AGENCIES

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science in Planning

Degree

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Dale J. Austin, Jr.

August 1977

1328424

DEDICATION

TO MY SHEPHERD

PSALM 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in
the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley
of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head
with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life: and I will dwell in the
house of the Lord for ever.

Proverbs 3:5 and 6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding.
Acknowledge Him in all your ways and
He will make your paths straight.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to take this opportunity to thank Judy Stoloff, his major professor, for her consideration, concern and kindness throughout the "long, hard fight." He would also like to thank Walter Shouse for his constant encouragement through the years to "Please, get out of school!" He would also like to thank Ann, Marty and Paulette for putting the logistics of this thesis together.

Also to be thanked are the many Christian brothers and sisters and especially Linda for their constant help, encouragement, and prayer.

The author also praises and gives thanks to the Lord God Almighty, whose divine wisdom, guidance, strength and love makes all things possible - even an impossible thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis concerns the general scope of substate planning and various types of citizen participation processes which are available for use by these agencies at this level of planning. The problem explored in this thesis is that there is no generally accepted citizen participation process for use at this level of planning which can not only fulfill the desires of the general public but also provide openness among the participants and can also provide results which are considered valid by all participants involved.

This thesis hopes to determine whether a particular type of citizen participation technique, the Nominal Group Process, can be effectively used as a citizen participation forum at the substate level of planning as an instrument to meet the general needs of the various types of planning performed there and whether this process can fulfill the desires of the various publics involved in citizen participation.

The author concludes that (1) the Nominal Group Process can be applied to substate planning problems, concepts and projects in areas of goal definition, priority setting and decision-making; (2) when compared with other participation processes, it is as effective or more effective at soliciting citizen attitudes, feelings and in-put, and (3) the ideas, priorities and decisions generated while using the Nominal Group Process will have an equal or better chance of being implemented as those generated during other citizen participation process and (4) because the Nominal

Group Process is not a panacea, it should be included in a comprehensive citizen participation program by substate agencies.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
	Statement of the Problem	1
	Purpose of the Study	5
	Research Questions	6
	Methodology	7
	Outline of the Nominal Group Process	8
	Limits to the Study	9
	Citizen Participation	10
	Substate and/or Multi-jurisdictional Planning	10
	Organization of the Thesis	11
II.	THE FUNCTION OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SUBSTATE PLANNING	13
	Characteristics of Substate Planning Agencies	13
	General Planning Issues Concerning Regions Which Contain Substate Planning Agencies	22
	The Role of Citizen Participation for Substate Agencies	29
	The Obstacles to Obtaining Effective Citizen Participation at the Substate Level of Planning	37
III.	COMPARISON OF VARIOUS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESSES . .	45
	Characteristics of Various Processes for Use by Substate Planning Agencies	48
	Open Public Hearing	48
	Small Workshops	50
	Simulation or "Gaming	53
	Charrette Planning	54
	The Advisory Committee	55
	Survey Interview	56
	The Delphi Technique	57
	Mass Media Responses	58
	Explanation of Variable Comparisons for Citizen Participation Processes	59
IV.	AN EXPLANATION OF THE NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS	68
	A Description From the Works of André Delbecq and Andrew Van de Ven	68
	Past and Anticipated Uses of the Nominal Group Process	80
	Strengths and Weaknesses of the Nominal Group Process	88

CHAPTER PAGE

V. A CASE STUDY 96
A History of the Process and the Author's Involvement 96
Question Used to Solicit Participant Responses 98
Selection of the Participants 99
Conduct of Participation Sessions 100
Analysis of Responses 102
Inclusion of the Responses in the Recreation Guidelines for the Great Smokies Region 105

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION 110
Summary 110
Conclusions 115
Recommendations for Future Research 117

BIBLIOGRAPHY 118

APPENDICES 124
A: PRIORITY LISTS 125
B: CITIZENS EVALUATION OF NOMINAL GROUP WORKSHOPS 131

VITA 133

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1.	Regional Priority List	128
2.	Tennessee Priority List	129
3.	North Carolina Priority List	130
4.	Evaluation of Sessions	132
5.	Worth of Input	132

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between citizen participation and the scope of substate planning has been and still is a major issue which must be confronted. This issue is the concern of this thesis. In particular, the Nominal Group Process is explored as a means by which substate agencies can solicit citizen participation. Definitively, substate planning districts are a group of neighboring local communities whose residents are joined as a unit economically, socially, and geographically but which generally lack governmental unity.[1]

Statement of the Problem

The citizen participation process used at the substate level of planning usually involves the same strategy. Godschalk states that traditionally, projects or processes "are planned by technical experts, reviewed by elected officials, and then submitted to public hearing."[2] During the process, special interest groups and the general public usually learn about the scope and strategy of the planning process through informal contacts, such as the news media or advisory committees.

> Affected interests have sought to enter the planning process in its early stages: to take part in identifying problems

---

[1]National Association of Regional Councils, *Current Policies and Proposed Changes*, June 8, 1976, p. 5.

[2]David R. Godschalk, "Public Participation in Areawide Waste Treatment Management," Prepared for Triangle J Council of Governments, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina (September, 1974), p. 7.

> and goals; to assist in defining and evaluating alternative solutions and to have a voice in decisions on alternatives and means of implementation. They have asked that technical and economic information be made available and that clearly-structured channels of communication be set up at the start of the planning process. They have made known their need for technical assistance, in order to act as competent participants.[3]

Requests for more information and an increasing demand to be involved in the participation process demonstrate that "traditional government reviews and public hearings are not adequate to deal with the full range of public participation needs."[4]

According to Vetter, "Few programs include the public in the planning process early enough or with enough understanding for . . . public involvement to have much serious impact."[5] Such has been the case in a number of regional planning processes and projects in the United States; i.e. citizen involvement conducted after a plan has been completed and, in some cases, after the initial stages of implementation have been started.

> A revolutionary new approach to goals setting is needed. . . . We need, quite literally, to go to the people with a question that is almost never asked of them: What kind of world do you want ten, twenty, or thirty years from now? We need to initiate, in short, a continuing plebiscite on the future.[6]

---

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Caroline C. W. Vetter, "Regional Citizen Participation: Myth or Reality? The New Orleans Transportation Experience." Presented at the 57th Annual Conference, American Institute of Planners (1975), p. 2.

[6]Bruce W. McClendon and John A. Lewis, "Maximizing Citizen Participation in the Development of Goals for a Comprehensive Plan: The Corpus Christi, Texas, Experience," Submitted at the 57th Annual Conference, American Institute of Planners (1975), p. 2.

According to David Godschalk, "public involvement should commence with the earliest possible steps of the [regional] planning process and continue throughout."[7] However, the problem to be resolved concerns the type of citizen participation strategy which would produce the timely and valid information needed for the planning and decision-making processes of a regional project and at the same time would provide a good forum for face-to-face confrontation among planners, elected officials, citizens, and the various interest groups. With this in mind, Vetter says,

> Citizen boards of review and public hearing style meetings of professionals and citizens are now regarded as efforts to avoid rather than encourage citizen input. Public understanding of this traditional citizen participation arrangement has led to demands for more decision making power rather than merely rubber stamp functions."[8]

Harlan Cleveland states that there are risks to seeking this type of power by openness and participation in substate district planning.

> An open meeting is likely to be large. The larger it is, the higher the ratio of emotion to reason, nonsense to common sense. An open meeting favors simple formulation over complicated ones, . . . the loud-mouth over the reflective private person. An open meeting is more likely to generate confrontation than compromise liable to result in inaction rather than action.[9]

The scope of citizen participation at the substate level of planning is characterized by its broader scope, as distinguished from that of the local level. Within this broader scope, the following situations are found:

---

[7]Godschalk, p. 12.

[8]Vetter, p. 2.

[9]Harlan Cleveland, "How Do You Get Everyone in on the Act and Still Get Some Action?" *Educational Record*, Vol. 55, No. 3 (Summer 1974), p. 179.

1. More jurisdictions, both governmental and otherwise, must be considered for input. Each jurisdiction must maintain its autonomy and be able to defend its position when threatened by overall substate planning or by citizen involvement. Among these jurisdictions are counties, both incorporated and unincorporated municipalities, utility districts, cooperatives, and various agencies.

2. More appointed and elected officials are involved and each must be considered. They include judges, court members, mayors, city council members, agency directors and governing boards.

3. A substate district is a larger geographical area and its more numerous citizens have a broader range of interests. These interests. These interests include organizationa, agency, and/or their own personal interests.

4. A wider range of professional interests is involved at the substate level of planning including planners, engineers, directors of social programs, and technicians.

5. Because of the larger geographical area, participants must assume the cost of travelling longer distances in order to participate at this level of planning. This is a special burden on the poor and/or illiterate people found within the boundaries of substate districts.

The various publics involved in citizen participation at the substate level of planning seek certain types of satisfaction from their involvement:

1. They want to represent their own interests,

2. They desire to be heard,

3. They want to know that their ideas are recorded and will be considered by the planning agency conducting the process,

4. They want face-to-face contact with planners, technicians, and other participants, and

5. They would prefer that the meetings be held close to their home, and, as much as possible, fit into their own time and budget limitations.

Although these concerns may present themselves at various levels of planning, this thesis explores them as they are exposed at the substate level of planning and addresses the issue of selecting a process which can generally meet these concerns.

Purpose of the Study

The issue of citizen participation in substate physical and social planning is a quagmire.[10] Part of this quagmire is due to the number of changes taking place at this level of planning:

1. The number of substate and multi-jurisdictional planning agencies is increasing.

2. The planning scope of existing agencies is changing and increasing.

3. Planning problems (such as water resources, transportation, and energy) are becoming more regional in scale.

---

[10]Andrew H. Van de Ven and Andre L. Delbecq, "A Planning Process For Development of Complex Regional Programs," Delivered at the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (August, 1972), p. 3.

4. As the number of substate agencies across the nation increases, the number of people involved in and influenced by this level of planning is increasing.

5. The public is demanding more freedom of expression in all types of planning at this level.

6. The general public is seeking a greater influence in decision-making and goal formulation throughout these planning processes.

For the purposes of this thesis, it is assumed that a two-way communication process is needed for soliciting information and responses from citizens at this level of planning. This thesis hopes to determine whether the Nominal Group Process can be effectively used as a citizen participation forum at the substate level of planning as an instrument to meet the general needs of the various types of planning performed there and whether this process can fulfill the desires of the various publics involved in citizen participation.

Research Questions

The basic elements of this thesis are substate and/or multi-jurisdictional planning and citizen participation. The scope of the study is defined in terms of research questions which this thesis answers. These questions are as follows:

1. What are the main characteristics of substate and/or multi-jurisdictional agencies?

2. What role should citizen participation have in substate planning processes and projects?

3. What are the problems with citizen participation which are encountered at the substate level of planning?

4. What are the primary citizen participation processes in present use and how does the Nominal Group Process compare with them?

5. What are the characteristics of the Nominal Group Process?

6. How was the Nominal Group Process used in the development of recreational guidelines for the Great Smokies Recreation Region?

7. How can the Nominal Group Process be used in substate planning processes and projects?

Methodology

Three methods were used to obtain material for their thesis: A review of the literature, in-depth interviews with other professionals, and the author's own professional experience. After an extensive search of literature, material concerning substate planning and/or citizen participation processes was selected as text sources of information. Interviewees were selected on the basis of their knowledge of substate planning agencies and of the problems encountered with citizen participation at their level of planning for interview material. The research questions were used as a guide. No other type of questionnaire was used. The author's own experiences, as used for this thesis, included his personal use of the citizen participation processes in Chapter III and his direct involvement in the Nominal Group Process as described in Chapter V.

Outline of the Nominal Group Process

The Nominal Group Process is a two-way communication forum in which there is a give-and-take of information by all parties involved. Nominal Groups are those in which individuals work in the presence of one another but do not interact. Although this normally is a one-step operation, for the purposes of this thesis the Nominal Group Process includes the four steps: assemble into a large group meeting; divide the large group into smaller groups to conduct the nominal group function; small group round-robin interaction and voting procedure; and reassemble into a second large group to reach group concensus. This procedure is explained more fully in Chapter IV.

The basic characteristics of the Nominal Group Process are as follows:

1. The Process is orderly and controlled, and is conducted by specially trained individuals.

2. All participatns and all responses from participants are considered equally important.

3. All responses are written for the whole group to see so that such responses can be of more use to the planners in goal-formulation and decision making.

4. The Process is one of learning and education for all who participate.

5. The Process provides face-to-face confrontation among all participants who generally come from diversified backgrounds.

6. Time, a meeting place, appropriate equipment, money, and people are required to control the Process.

7. Participants must meet in a central location.

Limits to the Study

This study was subject to the following limitations:

1. Certain planning agencies at the substate level of planning, because of their governing body and stipulations from funding sources, must implement some of their programs at the local level. Examples of these agencies are councils-of-government and development districts. While this thesis concerns these agencies, only those planning processes which are substate or regional in scope were included.

2. At the substate and/or multi-jurisdictional level of planning efforts have been made to find accounts of the use of the Nominal Group Process and other processes for citizen participation. However there is the possibility of a lack of quantifiable information concerning these processes for use at the substate level of planning. Nevertheless, exploratory comparisons are made in text and matrix form in Chapter III.

3. Various types of planning, including transportation, health, and law enforcement, are performed by substate agencies. However, these types of planning cannot generally be compared. This thesis does not attempt to determine the role of citizen participation in each type of planning. Only the general scope of substate planning is considered here.

4. Most of the information obtained for this thesis comes from publications in which the scope of substate planning and the agencies involved are more rural than urban in character. The reader should keep this in mind when this thesis presents its concepts and ideas.

Citizen Participation

Whittick describes citizen participation as: ". . . the means by which members of the community are able to take part in the shaping of policies and plans that will affect the environment in which they live."[11]

Spiegel states the following in his defintion of citizen participation:

> . . . the acts of those who are not formally part of the legislative or public administration hierarchy but who nonetheless intend to influence the efficiency of the program and the behavior of those public officials responsible for the ultimate policy and operational decision.[12]

There are many other definitions of citizen participation but, generally, all state that it is the action of community or area citizens wanting and seeking direct involvement in the development of plans and programs which affect the future of the community or area in which they live.

Substate and/or Multi-jurisdictional Planning

According to the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, this level of planning is generally characterized by:

> . . . an inter-governmental coordinating mechanism for making policy decisions and agreeing on the methods for implementing those decisions. It is governed and works for local government elected officials and deals with problems having a multi-jurisdictional or [substate] impact. It is not a

---

[11]Arnold Whittick, *Encyclopedia of Urban Planning.* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, N.Y., 1974), p. 345.

[12]Hans B. C. Spiegel, "Citizen Participation in Federal Programs: A Review," in *Perspectives on the American Community* (New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1973), p. 367.

> general purpose local government, with a directly elected governing body, engaged in the direct delivery of services and with the power to tax.[13]

Organization of the Thesis

The remaining chapters of this thesis are organized as follows:

Chapter II contains a description of the characteristics of substate planning agencies and the general planning problems which these agencies encounter. The roles which citizens perform in substate planning and the obstacles which these agencies encounter in obtaining citizen participation are described.

Chapter III discusses various citizen participation processes including the Nominal Group Process. A conceptual framework compares these processes in terms of their usefulness for promoting citizen participation in substate planning. This is displayed in the form of a matrix.

Chapter IV explains the Nominal Group Process according to the works of André Delbecq and Andrew Van de Ven who developed this instrument. Uses of the Nominal Group Process and its strengths and weaknesses as a citizen participation forum in substate planning are also explored.

Chapter V examines the Nominal Group Process as it was used in a citizen participation forum to help develop *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region.*

---

[13]Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Hearings on Substate Regionalism*, Vol. VI (October, 1973), p. 2.

Chapter VI is composed of the summary and conclusions in which the Nominal Group Process as a forum for citizen participation at the substate level of planning is evaluated.

CHAPTER II

THE FUNCTION OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SUBSTATE PLANNING

Characteristics of Substate Planning Agencies

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) states that substate districting is a geographic concept which can be utilized for two purposes:

1. It provides a consistent set of boundaries for the administration of state and federal programs at the regional level;

2. It is the basis for organizing regional councils to deal with multi-jurisdictional problems.

The district, thus, becomes the framework for planning and coordination among federal, state, and local governments.[1] NARC states that local governments are those that are closest and most accountable to people: that local governments should take the initiative in meeting these challenges and should not pass these responsibilities on to the national or state government; and that local governments must work together on an area wide basis to meet these challenges.[2] One of the functions of substate agencies is to organize local governments so that they can work together toward common goals and objectives.

---

[1] National Association of Regional Councils, *Current Policies and Proposed Changes*, June 8, 1976, p. 13.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

One author feels that the two chief goals for substate planning are the development of a balanced region and the achievement of orderly growth.[3] The U.S. Department of Commerce states that the role of substate planning agencies is to

> . . . contribute to the coordination of planning by being designed to bring about total economic and social development through the combined assistance of all appropriate agencies of federal, state and local governments; and through the private economy.[4]

Doeksen states that in order to obtain total economic and social development, the three primary functions of substate agencies are comprehensive planning, performing clearinghouse responsibilities, and providing technical assistance.[5] Substate agencies generally do not have the legislative authority to levy taxes nor to provide services; however, they can make recommendations in both of these areas of local governmental responsibility.

Substate agencies seek the "implementation of a fully comprehensive regional plan involving the total environment of the region and improving the quality of life within that area."[6] To do this, substate agencies perform many functions which include:

---

[3]Charles C. Schimpeler, *A Decision--Theoretic Approach to Weighing Community Development Criteria and Evaluation Alternative Plans*, Dissertation (Purdue University, 1967), p. 4.

[4]John R. Joyner, "Introduction," *Substate Districting*. (U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Annual Conference of the Council of State Planning Agencies, Lexington, Ky., August 6-9, 1974), p. 4.

[5]Jerald A. Doeksen, et al. *The Role of Multicounty Development Districts in Rural Areas.* Agricultural Economic Report No. 307. (Economic Research Service, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., August, 1975), p. 2.

[6]*Handbook for Regional Councils in West Virginia*, (Planning and Development Department, Office of Federal-State Relations, Charleston, West Virginia, May, 1972), p. 1-3.

1. A partnership approach to problem solving involving federal, state and local units of government;

2. A more effective use of limited resources to meet the ever-increasing demands made upon the public sector;

3. The coordination of planning efforts made at different levels of government;

4. The enhancement of government's responsiveness to the people by insuring that efforts which are statewide in scope are consistent with local needs and priorities;

5. The strengthening of local units of government by insuring that their participation is involved in the planning process;

6. A program for progressive, orderly economic growth not only within the regions but across the entire state;

7. A more effective use of federal resources in particular, eliminating the competition of local units of government for the federal dollar and making more federal dollars available;

8. An organization which will aid in the implementation of programs and projects developed at the state level; and

9. More direct technical assistance to local units of government.[7]

The characteristics of the following types of substate agencies will be discussed: Development District, Council of Governments (COG),

---

[7]Ibid.

Regional Planning Commission (RPC), and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council.

Development District. A development district is a group of counties having common geographic, social and economic ties which face interrelated development problems.[8] It is a public agency established by legislation. Locally elected officials or their designated representatives comprise the governing board. Characteristics of the development districts include the following:

1. Participation or representation by local units of government in the district activity is voluntary. Thus, although a government may be within the district boundaries, it is not included on the District Commission or in the activities of the district until it voluntarily joins.

2. Each local unit of government may decide to participate at any time during the existence of the district agency even though that particular unit of government had previously declined to join the District agency.

3. No local unit of government may decide to participate at any time during the existence of the district agency even though that particular unit of government had previously declined to join the district agency.

---

[8]"Tennessee's Development District Program," (Agricultural Extension Service, Institute of Agriculture, University of Tennessee), p. 1.

4. The district is established by action of local government and private interests within the district. By working together, they obtain certification, but not direction, from the state government under state law.[9]

A development district can utilize information, service, technical assistance, and funding of both state and federal programs more effectively by gaining broader understanding, support, and participation from such programs and by performing local responsibilities more effectively.[10] A district agency can bring representatives of private interest into direct participation with representatives of all three levels of government. As the participants realistically confront their mutual problems, both private interests and individual citizens can consolidate to support action for a solution for which they may have formerly had no understanding or support.[11]

Characteristic tasks performed by a development district agency may include the establishment of areawide development priorities; providing research-based information for investment decision to both public and private interests; gathering and disseminating intelligence on grant and loan programs to all interested parties; and informing the public about economic development strategies.[12]

---

[9]Appalachian Regional Commission, *Establishment of Local-State-Federal Program Management Development System*, memorandum, (March 7, 1969), p. 1.

[10]Ibid., p. 2.

[11]Ibid., p. 3.

[12]Appalachian Regional Commission, p. 6.

Council of Governments (COG). The Advisory Commission and Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) states that:

> Those agencies termed councils, associations, or conferences of local Governments or local elected officials are commonly known as councils of governments. They are generally defined as multi-functional voluntary regional associations of elected officials.[13]

A COG consists of the governments within a standard metropolitan statistical area as compared to a Development District which is a staff designated, multi-jurisdictional area containing a series of counties economically linked together. As the concept of regionalism has grown, many COG's and Development Districts have assumed the same characteristics.

From a study done in 1972 of Tennessee councils of government, or regional councils, the five basic characteristics of these bodies were found:

1. COG's are made up of more than one unit of local government, with a governing body composed primarily (if not entirely) of elected officials from member local units.[14] COG's are not a "supergovernment," and the ease with which they are formed makes then readily acceptable to potential members.

2. The stated purpose of COG's is increased cooperation and coordination among member units. The council not only provides a

---

[13]ACIR, *Hearings on Substate Regionalism*, p. 2.

[14]Keith J. Ward, *Metropolitan Cooperation and Coordination: Tennessee Councils of Government.* (The Bureau of Public Administration, University of Tennessee, 1972), p. 13.

forum for discussion of mutual problems but also creates "a voice which speaks with the strength of numbers."[15]

3. COG's have assumed the role of coordination of planning for the region. One of the fruits of the coordination of effort in the regional council is the development of an area-wide planning apparatus. The ability of regional councils to execute plans is at this point still in question, but the joining of the decision maker and the planner in the same agency is in accordance with the needs of effective planning.[16]

4. COG's are voluntary associations, allowing participation or nonparticipation in any programs which are developed.[17] Regional councils are basically voluntary advisory and have no governmental, regulatory, or taxing power. Whatever they accomplish they have to do through their member local governments.[18]

5. COG programs may include transportation, human resources, and land use planning. They also include the provision of technical assistance to local governments and of functional programs which member units agree upon.[19]

In these program areas, regional councils determine the regional needs, goals, priorities, and actions required to undertake coordinated local actions.[20] COG's must also make certain that local jurisdictions

---

[15]Ibid., p. 15. [16]Ibid. [17]Ibid., p. 16.

[18]Piedmont Triad Council of Governments and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Proceedings: Regionalism 70's Conference" (November 18, 1971), p. 7.

[19]Ward, p. 17. [20]Piedmont Triad Council, p. 8.

are able to meet federal program requirements in order to receive program and project grants.

Regional Planning Commission (RPC). An RPC includes "one or more entire counties and/or parts of several counties; it is not necessary that the boundaries so created conform to existing political units."[21] The three basic types of RPC's are county planning commissions, city-county planning commissions, and multi-jurisdictional planning commissions. An RPC is a public planning body, authorized by the state legislature, which emphasizes regional land use planning and coordinates local land use plans.[22] Financial support comes primarily from the state planning office. The commission may also receive gifts from public or private interests and can vote to assess its members for proportionate shares of its expenses. A commission has three areas of activity authorized by the legislature: the mandate to draft a regional plan, the duty to promote intergovernmental cooperation, and the power to review and approve or disapprove subdivision plats within the jurisdiction of the planning region.[23]

Twin Cities Metropolitan Council. The ACIR describes the Twin Cities Metropolitan Council (Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota) as "representing an unusual attempt at institutionalized multi-jurisdictional

---

[21]Steve Kyles, "Review of Tennessee Regional Planning Enabling Legislation," Prepared by Tennessee Chapter, American Institute of Planners (February, 1976), p. 1.

[22]Advisory Commission, p. 50.

[23]Tennessee Chapter, p. 2.

planning cooperation."[24] Some of the characteristics of both the Metro Council and the Regional Policy Process Model are:

1. Unlike other substate agencies, Metro Council members are not local elected officials but appointees of the governor from equal population sub regional districts; the Council receives its operating funds from its own tax levy rather than contributions from local governments; and the Council exercises policy authority over separate operating agencies within its boundaries.[25]

2. The idea of thinking in terms of regional concepts and processes is not only prevalent among the planning staff but also among strong interest groups and Metro Council members. With the emergence of "regional politicians at the Metro Council, regional ideas became not only ideas of planners but issues for politicians capable of exercising power. This is a crucial element of the Process Model."[26]

3. A strong argument is made that the most important elements of the Process Model are the social/physical/economic conditions of the Twin Cities area. All citizens and various types of citizen groups are committed to maintain and protect the high degress of "quality-of-life" factors found in the area. For these reasons, individuals, groups, politicians, planners, and metro officials work together to implement the whole process because "no one aspect of the process is 'most

---

[24]Advisory Commission, p. 50.

[25]Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area, *Regional Politics in the Twin Cities*, September, 1976, p. 38.

[26]Ibid.

important,' but it is a combination of several key elements that together are 'most important.'"[27]

4. Three types of structures--planning, decision making, and taking action or implementation--are all elements of the process model. To insure the higher level of regional social/physical/economic conditions which now exist, the Metro Council is heavily involved in the planning process from beginning to end.[28]

General Planning Issues Concerning Regions Which Contain Substate Planning Agencies

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) has conducted surveys among various states which have substate districts. One of the reasons for the surveys was to determine major problems and issues manifest at the substate level of organizations and planning. As of the beginning date of the surveys, the most consistent general problem areas and sources of difficulty for substate agencies have been federal program participation, implementation of comprehensive and functional plans and relationships with other areawide bodies. Subatate agencies must contend with coordination and cooperation problems and issues within their immediate boundaries.[29] The ACIR states that the two things essential to solving governmental problems of today are to revitalize and strengthen local governments and to

---

[27]Ibid., p. 39

[28]Ibid., p. 40.

[29]Advisory Commission, p. 102.

firmly root national intergovernmental processes in order to encourage local governments to cooperate in solving multi-jurisdictional problems.[30] A major regional problem, according to Bodine,[31] is that the job of persuading several hundred governmental entities to cooperate in a comprehensive planning program designed to guide regional development is complicated by the fact that each government is jealous of its own autonomy. Another view is that regional issues endemic to a substate area can be solved effectively only by coordinated planning which encompasses the entire area. The bulk of these problems is a direct result of uncontrolled regional growth in terms of population, urban development, and associated growth.[32]

The ACIR has outlined seven major intergovernmental issues that influence the future course of substate districts. These issues will affect, either directly or indirectly, the majority of citizens residing within the district. Therefore, alternative decisions considered by the agency to be a possible solution of these issues should be taken to the public in an effort to solicit citizen input into the decision making process.

---

[30]Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Hearings on Substate Regionalism*, Vol. VI, Washington, D.C., October, 1973, p. 2.

[31]John W. Bodine, "The Indispensable One-Hundredth of One Percent," *Taming Megalopolis*, by H. Wentworth Eldredge, Doubleday and Co., New York, 1967, p. 960.

[32]South Carolina Appalachina Regional Planning and Development Commission, *Sketch Plans: South Carolina Appalachian Region*, October, 1970, p. 3.

The first of these issues is the conflict between allowing the substate agency to coordinate local efforts vis-a-vis maintaining a local governmental fragmentation of efforts.[33]

To facilitate district planning, two approaches have been taken by the federal government. Organizationally, comprehensive regional planning bodies (such as development districts and councils of government) have been established. Procedurally, a Federal aid application review and comment process has been set up under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-95.

The A-95 system is designed to help alleviate the complex problem of coordinating the various projects within substate agency boundaries. It strengthens substate regional councils and eliminates the single-purpose districts that have proliferated over past years primarily as a result of federal assistance to categorical programs requiring interlocal cooperation.[34] Nevertheless, most local governments argue that the coordination role of regional councils should continue to be advisory and non-binding.

> These bodies should not perform areawide services or operate regional programs, nor should they have decision making powers with the force of law or veto authority over Federally funded local Capital projects.[35]

---

[33]Advisory Commission, *Regional Decision Making*, p. 324.

[34]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *State Planning, Intergovernmental Policy Coordination, Executive Summary* (Washington, D.C., August, 1976), p. 11.

[35]Advisory Commission, *Regional Decision Making*, p. 324.

The second issue involves the assignment of substate functions and activities. Critics of substate agencies feel such functions should remain with the traditional special districts and public authorities. They contend that regional efforts which have been encouraged or mandated by the federal or state government through substate agencies have either had a complicating effect or no real impact on the local and areawide delivery service systems.[36] Proponents contend that there is a higher performance level of functions resulting from the emergence of these agencies. "Many new districts have been assigned functions that previously were not performed in their area."[37] The regionalists also content that the coordination aspects of the A-95 project review process assists in making decisions of areawide resource allocation and the performance of certain functions.

Most local governments, especially the smaller ones, prefer that the primary function of substate district agencies be directed towards rendering technical assistance for local planning projects and giving assistance in obtaining federal and state grants.[38] In fact, ACIR studies show "the amount of praise for a substate agency seems to be directly proportional to the amount of money it had brought in."[39] Although this function is necessary it substantially reduces the amount of time available to the agency staff for development of comprehensive district plans.

---

[36] Ibid., p. 326.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid., p. 248.

[39] Ibid., p. 249.

The third area of contention deals with the issue of district-wide planning, coordination, and implementation. The backbone of sub-state comprehensive planning coordination is "consistent" planning. However this role is "usually left to others; regional planning usually is given only the role of showing others how programs and projects could be made consistent."[40] The issue of assigning functional program responsibilities (such as law enforcement, economic development, and resource conservation and development, for example) is one for which a satisfactory legal and political solution must be found.[41]

The fourth issue, as viewed by ACIR, lies in the process of setting boundaries and related organizational designations for sub-state districts. "The delineation of appropriate substate district boundaries is a complex problem."[42] Four main questions have arisen in the consideration of the boundary delineation process issue:

1. Should a given program cover the entire state or just certain types of areas?
2. Is a single set of boundaries suitable for any given areawide program?
3. Can rural and urban interests be satisfactorily combined in a single district?
4. Are interstate areas adequately encompassed?[43]

---

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., p. 329.

[42] Ibid., p. 330.

[43] Ibid.

The fifth issue in the development of substate districting agencies concerns the degree of authority regional organizations should possess.[44] Opponents of the districting concept maintain that substate district agencies should remain pretty much as they are and should work within the framework of established local governments.[45] Proponents maintain that the accomplisments of the few authoritative regional decision making units that have been established to date demonstrate the need for more such bodies.[46] Some local government officials still view regional councils as the first step toward "supergovernment" and a threat to local control.[47]

> People want local control over the critical issues that affect their lives, and many people view regionalism as a threat to that control. . . . Local governments must understand that if they don't work together to solve regional problems, local control will be lost to special authorities or state government.[48]

Few states have fully effective regional planning systems because they fear the creation of a "third level of government and a reluctance to transfer responsibility and authority to the regional level."[49] The establishment of direct federal program relationships with substate agencies has created a lack of enthusiastic participation on the part of local officials. However, the National Association of Regional Councils states that "regional councils *are* local government."[50]

---

[44]Ibid., p. 330. [45]Ibid. [46]Ibid.

[47]National Association of Regional Councils, *Regional Council Communications* (Washington, D.C., January, 1973), p. 9.

[48]Ibid., p. 3. [49]*State Planning*, p. 10.

[50]Advisory Association of Regional Councils, *Regional Council Communication*, p. 9.

The sixth issue is that of appropriate representation and voting strategies for members and constituents of the substate district agency. The governing boards or committees of the substate agencies are composed of a majority of local elected officials. Citizen participation is normally required of these agencies, thereby providing a mechanism for the citizen voice in regional affairs. Questions arise, however, over the proper allocation of voting power among member local jurisdictions.[51]

The seventh issue involves the financing of regional councils and substate districts. The federal government has supplied the bulk of financing for state planning and development districts; yet many states claim that these agencies will be the keystone of eventual state administrative decentralization efforts.[52] These are also arguments to either increase financial assistance or reduce financial help from local governments, the second largest source of regional council funding.

As one author states:

> Too many rural governments operate on too small a scale to be practical [for example, services rendered]. The financial and legal resources available to these governments are severly limited . . . many major problems which are multi-jurisdictional in scope require an economic-geographical approach that is larger in scale than a single county.[53]

---

[51]Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, *Regional Decision Making*, p. 335.

[52]Ibid., p. 336.

[53]James J. Glass, *Regional Planning and Politics*, The Bureau of Public Administration, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tenn., 1973, p. 6.

In brief, the general substate planning issues previously described are as follows:

1. The conflict of whether to allow the substate agency to coordinate local efforts vis-a-vis permitting local governmental fragmation of efforts.

2. The conflict of whether to allow substate agencies to assume the functions and activities of special districts and public authorities or to let them remain fragmented with these districts and authorities.

3. The issue of how much authority the substate agency should have in district wide planning, coordination, and implementation.

4. The problems with district boundary delineations and related organizational boundary designations.

5. The argument over how much real authority the substate organization should actually possess.

6. The issue of appropriate representation and voting strategies for members and constituents of the substate district agency.

7. The problem of financing and finding funds for regional councils and substate districts.

While this list is very general in content, it does relate to the major issues facing all substate agencies. In this regard, it is relatively comprehensive.

The Role of Citizen Participation for Substate Agencies

An essential ingredient for the successful functioning of a substate agency is citizen participation. Substate planning requires

the help of the public in order to perform the following functions: (1) meeting federal requirements; (2) providing a check and balance on locally elected officials; (3) promoting the democratic process by allowing freedom of speech; (4) manifesting the needs and desires of the people to agency officials; (5) allowing the substate agency to present a more comprehensive program; (6) providing a psychological benefit for the participants; and (7) permitting a greater possibility for implementing the planning product.

The successful operation of the agency depends, among other things, on areawide industries, business interests, civic groups, and the general citizenery within the district. District or regional growth and development is dependent upon areawide public factions. Therefore, general public support is necessary for a regional council program to be effective, and the efforts of many citizens in the community is required to promote an attractive and desirable community.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development states that the functions of public participation in planning processes are to: determine the needs these processes should meet and development of policies and programs responsive and relevant to these needs, to involve citizens in the development and execution of policies and programs in order to further their own growth and development and to obtain a firmer commitment from the citizens to the projects.[54]

---

[54]U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Urban Renewal Handbook*, (Washington, D.C.), 1975, p. 1.

Aleshire states that the functions of citizen participation are: providing another form of "checks and balances" for technical decision making; providing a forum for the setting of priorities; and providing more opportunities for issue development. Additionally, citizen participation supports the movement toward issue politics, bringing a higher level of rationality to the electoral process.[55]

Other concepts identified from the literature were synthesized into the following five general roles which citizen participation activities perform for substate planning agencies:

1. Citizen participation advances the freedom of speech principle of the democratic process. The concept of participation implies that people should have access to the choices and proposals open to a planning authority and should be able to put forward ideas and comments at every stage in the planning process from the initial identification of social objectives to the detailed implementation.[56] Burke states that ". . . citizens should share in decisions affecting their destinies. Anything less is a betrayal of our democratic tradition."[57] Cornett states:

> Our system of government is rooted in the premise that decisions made in the name of the people must be related, in an appropriately-sanctioned manner, to constituency opinion. Since the political process is the process by

---

[55]Robert A. Aleshire, "Planning and Citizen Participation: Cost, Benefits and Approaches," *Urban Affairs Quarterly*, (June, 1970), p. 371.

[56]Whittick, p. 850.

[57]Edmund M. Burke, "Citizen Participation Strategies," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, Vol. XXXIV (September, 1968), p. 287.

> which constituency opinion is determined and given force, a planning function which fails to subordinate itself to this political process is squarely in conflict with a basic element of our form of government. Such a planning function has no legitimacy.[58]

Godschalk states:

> Participation is a form of partisan influence, whose purpose in democratic decision making is to counterbalance the social control activities of elites by providing opportunities for citizens and interest groups to influence their decisions. It is a check on the power of those holding public office.[59]

Dorris declares, "if planning is to remain [or become] . . . a meaningful function of government, it must fit into the democratic framework of government and adhere to the meaning of democracy and democratic."[60]

2. Citizen participation processes provide a forum which allows citizens to express their needs and concerns to the units of government and the substate agency. This interactive function involves the citizen, planners, politicians, and others who are jointly working on a process, problem, or project. Whittick declares:

> The demand for participation stems from a growing concern that the decisions which determine the quality of life in a community should reflect the wishes of those who live there rather than represent purely technical solutions imposed from outside.[61]

---

[58]Bob Cornett, "State Experiences in Districting Kentucky," *Substate Districting*, p. 48.

[59]Godschalk, p. 3.

[60]J. David Dorris, "Public Relations and Involvement in the Planning Process" (unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Tennessee, 1967), p. 17.

[61]Whittick, p. 345.

NARC believes that citizens who live in a region have knowledge and insight into the problems and needs of their community. . . . [also that] not all citizens are "represented" by elected officials--citizens with minority opinions should have the opportunity to be heard. . . .[62]

A regional council [or substate district] is formed when communities within the district decide that certain things need to be accomplished in order to improve the quality of life. The regional council's success in helping these communities to improve the quality of life depends, to a large extent, upon community support and without this support, the district agency or local units of government can do little.[63] The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers declares:

> The role of public involvement in planning is to assist the planners in refining the limits of social and political feasibility throughout the entire planning process. This end is accomplished by constant communication with individuals and organizations who, in the end, are the determining influence. The key to realistic appraisal of social and political feasibility is to maintain constant communication with a broad spectrum of those who will finally determine these limits.[64]

Godschalk proposes that citizen participation could be viewed as an:

> . . . exchange processes in which citizens or other interested parties give their time, energy, information, cooperation, and support to finding solutions to public problems in return for

---

[62]National Association of Regional Councils, *Regional Council Communication*, p. 23.

[63]*Handbook for Regional Councils in West Virginia*, p. V-9.

[64]U.S. Army of Engineers, *Public Participation in Water Resources Planning*, IRW Report 70-77, (December, 1970), p. 11.

> access to officials, government responsiveness, information, community status, or recognition and potential influence over the allocation of resources.[65]

It is further stated:

> One of the major purposes of involving the public in planning is to produce plans which are generally consistant within the values of the various publics. In order to do this, the planner must develop alternative solutions embodying quite different values so that the public can get a feel for the implications of different values. The planner plays a major role in identifying the implications of the alternative, but the publics because of their familiarity with their individual problems may also play a role in forecasting consequences.[66]

3. Citizen participation in substate districting gives a certain amount of psychological and therapeutic benefit to the individuals involved in the process. Godschalk states:

> In its broadest context, citizen participation could be thought of as a collective learning process; a continuous cycle of planning, implementation, evaluation and on and on as [all parties concerned with the planning process] learn their way into the future.[67]

Crenson notes that participation can have positive effects upon citizens involved in the process. He cites participation as a means to overcome isolation, alienation, and a sense of powerlessness; states that this involvement generally helps one to become a "good citizen."[68] In addition, Heberlein says:

---

[65]Godschalk, p. 4.

[66]Synergy, *Citizen Participation: Public Involvement Skills Workbook*, p. 21.

[67]Godschalk, p. 4.

[68]Matthew Crenson, "Organizational Factors in Citizen Participation," *Journal of Politics*, XXXVI (May, 1974), p. 357.

> Public involvement can serve as an assurance function. Here the prime goal of the agency [and government] is to make sure that a group knows that its views have been heard and that it has not been ignored in the planning process. The agency may have a very good idea of the values and preferences of a particular group, but needs to use techniques which assure the particular public that it has been heard.[69]

4. Citizen participation facilitates a more comprehensive and complete decision making process to obtain a more valid product. Successful public involvement, initiated by a substate agency, is not a one-shot affair. The public must be involved on a continuing basis to achieve desireable decision making in the agency planning processes. A genuine effort must be made by the substate agency to make citizen participation an integral part of the planning process. Only when planning information is made available to all individuals and citizen feedback is genuinely sought, can positive participation be achieved. The function of citizen participation is not necessarily to tell politicians "there is the answer," but instead it is to provide politicians (and planners) with more data for making decisions.[70] Another author states:

> The advantages of involving the public in the development of alternative solutions are three-fold. (1) the planner can identify the range of socially and politically feasible alternatives before becoming committed to a particular outcome; (2) the public may be a source of viable alternatives if they are allowed the opportunity to present these alternatives at an appropriate stages in the planning process; (3) in the

---

[69]Thomas A. Heberlein, *Principles of Public Involvement for National Park Service Planners and Managers*, Prepared for the National Park Service, Park Planning Task Force (June, 1975), p. 10.

[70]Charles R. Ross, "Public Participation and Decision Making," *Urban Planning in Transition*, (New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970), p. 172.

> process of developing alternatives the public also develops a committment to change and are less resistant to new proposals.[71]

5. Citizen participation in substate planning agencies should meet the need for citizen support of and input into the planning process in order to further facilitate product implementation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers believes that the primary objective of citizen participation is to develop trust in the planning process. Burke states that [individuals and groups] will probably support a decision and, equally important will probably assist in carrying it out if "they have had a part in discovering the need for change and if they share in the decision making process."[72] NARC contends that plans developed through a process of community involvement have a better chance of being implemented since they have community support.[73] By initiating an active citizen participation program, the substate agency will encounter fewer "stumbling blocks" and therefore will have its programs implemented at a faster pace.[74] The expenditure of time and money by a substate agency for citizen participation should be viewed as an investment which will yield substantial returns.

> Better decisions which reflect the cognizance and understanding of public attitudes are less likely to be reversed

---

[71] Synergy, p. 20.

[72] Burke, p. 289.

[73] National Association of Regional Councils, *Regional Council Communications*, p. 23.

[74] "Handbook for Regional Councils in West Virginia," p. V-10.

> through public pressure. Most likely such decisions will be supported making implementation quicker and easier.[75]

Citizen participation can be seen as a:

> management strategy useful to a public agency in coopting dissenters or in mediating conflicts, in building support for a proposal, or in changing the behavior and attitudes of participants toward the project.[76]

The Obstacles to Obtaining Effective Citizen Participation at the Substate Level of Planning

The obstacles which substate planning agencies encounter in obtaining citizen participation come from many different publics within the district and are manifest for many different reasons. One of the greatest obstacles is that the average citizen does not know or understand the general concept of comprehensive planning, much less regional or district planning.

> The average citizen relates public services to their local, state or federal government . . . he probably does not even know the regional council exists, much less what the council, supported by his tax money, is doing for him.[77]

Area citizens are sometimes confused about the scope and scale of regionalism and about the function of the regional council. In order to overcome this obstacle:

> . . . citizens must know what the regional council is, what it is doing, and what the impact of the regional plans will be on their lives. They must also be aware of opportunities for involvement in the planning process.[78]

---

[75]Heberlein, p. 2.

[76]Godschalk, p. 5.

[77]National Association, *Regional Council Communications*, p. 3.

[78]Ibid., p. 23.

The lack of trust and confidence in substate planning on the part of areawide citizens is a barrier to obtaining citizen participation. Such mistrust can occur even after participation is obtained because sometimes little is done with the results of citizen participation. Another author states:

> Once the citizens have been involved the course is set. Failure to be responsive to the problems and dealings in the alternative with the impact on citizen identified problems will cause more anger than if there had been involvement in the first place.[79]

Citizens frequently become disenchanted when their recommendations are only given token consideration and are only incorporated into a plan which is not implemented. Another point of distress occurs when citizen participation is solicited only to meet federal requirements. Thus, some citizen participation at the substate level has now receded into a ritualistic phase of the planning process instead of being a meaningful process. "Grass-root input has been reduced to a mere window dressing effect."[80] Many citizens, in fact, believe that their involvement will not effect a change; and much of this feeling may be a result of their own attitudes toward all forms of government and all types of public planning agencies.

The lack of trust and confidence can also create a breakdown in communication between an agency and the public. Lack of effective

---

[79]Stephen A. Webster, "Citizen Involvement in Land Use Planning for Rural Development," Paper presented at Planning Frontiers in Rural America, Boone, North Carolina. (March, 1975), p. 13.

[80]Robin Z. Nurick, "The Impact of Citizen Participation on Planning; History, Criticism and Implications," University of Tennessee School of Social Work, Planning 4100. (November 26, 1974), p. 10.

communication between citizens and planners can complicate progressive substate planning, even if it's only because local citizens do not like "foreigners" telling them how to live or what they should do with their property. The problem of facilitating communication between these two groups to obtain effective citizen participation is one that must be resolved so as to avoid placing citizens and planners in competition with each other.

> The competitive process is most likely to occur where there is a misjudgment or misperception on the part of one or more parties in the process. Competition is also created if one side perceives the other is inflexible in its position.[81]

Lack of communication also distorts the perspectives of one group toward the other.

> Often the planner sees himself, because of his professional training, to be uniquely qualified to identify community needs. Studies indicate that many planners view the public as lacking in planning, lacking in objectivity, and extremely parochial. The public often views the planner as a narrow specialist with no appreciation for social values. Public participation provides the planner with the opportunity to test his perceptions of the public prior to beginning the search for possible solutions.[82]

Along with the general lack of public trust and confidence, other negative attitudes of citizens toward government, planning agencies, and their anticipated actions can obstruct the process of obtaining citizen participation. Attitudes toward regionalism may be one of skepticism and mistrust simply because the average citizen does not want another level of bureaucracy forced upon him. Substate

---

[81] Synergy, p. 20 and 22.

[82] Ibid., p. 21.

agencies must calm these fears with honest and effective communication. Experience shows that failure to explain to the people the rationale of a given proposal may produce opposition based more on emotion than on the merits of the case. Emotional opposition can be far more virulent.[83] Negative attitudes by the public toward government and/or substate planning may be manifest because of one or more of the following problems:

1. Those groups complain the worst are served while those who are quiet, diffuse, or unable to make a case may be ignored.

2. The views of organized groups seem to be given more weight than opinions of unorganized citizens.

3. The citizen often must initiate the inquiring.

4. When the agency initiates public involvement, the meetings and process are too formal. This restricts input and the effectiveness of a citizen is largely based on prior participation.

5. Public participation takes place after positions have been solidified.

6. The procedures are aimed at letting the public preview and (at best) react to material largely prepared by the bureaucracy.

7. There is little feedback concerning the impact of suggestions on the agency.

8. Because participation is erratic . . . there is always the feeling that options are being quietly dropped into the deep bogs of

---

[83]R. C. Seaver, "The Dilemma of Citizen Participation," *Citizen Participation in Urban Development*, Vol. II. (Washington, D.C., 1968), p. 12.

the bureaucracy while the citizen is still waiting to make comment.[84] Citizens become frustrated when their comments are solicited "later in the planning process when decisions and commitments have been finished up, rather than early when plans may be easily changed in response to public concerns."[85]

A random sample of participants is almost impossible to achieve in a citizen meeting. "Regardless of whom you would like to involve, the citizens who actually participate will be those who choose to do so."[86] Also, participation potential is not randomly distributed throughout the region. Qualities that encourage one to participate--opportunity, interpersonal skills, resources, motivation--are not distributed on a random basis.[87] Similarly, there is no such person as a "representative" citizen. All people are different with different attitudes and opinions.[88]

The uneducated and the poor generally do not participate as freely as the educated and higher status public. It is generally believed that persons with lower income and education levels have neither the time nor interest for participating in substate planning problems; on the other hand, those with higher income and educational

---

[84]Heberlein, p. 3. [85]Ibid., p. 4.

[86]National Association, *Regional Council Communications*, p. 23.

[87]Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1972), p. 337.

[88]National Association, *Regional Council Communication*, p. 24.

levels (normally with more time and money) are able to participate. "Participation is largely the prerogative of persons with high social status with the result that governmental performance and responsiveness is geared largely to the needs of these higher status individuals."[89] As has already been mentioned, it takes time and money for responsible citizen participation both on the part of the agency and on the part of the individual participant. The lack of these elements is a barrier to conducting a good citizen participation program by the agency and to the participation of many individuals from the regional citizenery. Citizen participation in the planning process sometimes delays a plan with a deadline to meet, which is another time and money cost to the program.

Some regional councils have the attitude that two-way communication between themselves and the public is unnecessary. They believe that it is acceptable and perhaps desirable to inform citizens about regional council activities, but that this should be a one-way flow of information, that regional councils are responsible only to their member local governments, and that citizens should provide their input at the local level.[90] Some agencies also feel that citizen's do not want to be heard anyway--unless they are directly affected by the project or plan. "Two-way communication only brings out the disenters, not the majority,"[91] As one author states:

---

[89]Verba, p. 340.

[90]National Association, *Regional Council Communications*, p. 4.

[91]Ibid.

> . . . those people who are directly affected by any particular change are most opinionated and involved in the decision. Those with a marginal, general, or no interest in the issue choose not to be involved in most concerns.[92]

Another writer declares:

> If the citizen truly understands that any governmental action will in one way or another affect his private life and thus reacts to the governmental proposal, then the participation problem is automatically resolved, and we will be living in a truly "by the people, of the people, and for the people" society. In other words, the citizens *are* and *should be* involved. The citizens' desire and willingness to serve are the key to success. The question is whether we can really get them involved in activities that will affect us all.[93]

The characteristics of substate planning agencies and the general planning issues which these agencies must consider are related here as general overview material for this thesis. The issues are the areas to which citizen participation should be applied. The results obtained from citizen participation must either be used to help the agency develop solutions for the issues in the decision making process or the citizens must be told why their suggestions cannot be used.

The scope of substate planning is relatively new when compared with other scales of planning, such as state and local planning. In many cases, substate planning is not readily accepted by the citizens and frequently is thought of as "just another level of bureaucracy." The quantitites of scale and the relative lack of immediacy are two underlying obstacles to the majority of efforts undertaken to obtain

---

[92]"Regional Planning Agenda," p. 1.

[93]"Handbook for Regional Councils," p. V-10.

quality citizen participation for substate agencies. Local government elected and appointed officials get their jobs by considering local issues. For these reasons, issues which are regional in scope frequently get "put on the back burner."

Substate agencies need to establish a citizen participation program to help alleviate the fears and doubts expressed by local citizens. Such a program can also bring substate issues to the attention of not only local officials but state and federal officials as well. Chapter III is a comparison of some of the citizen participation processes which could be used by a substate agency in such a program.

CHAPTER III

COMPARISON OF VARIOUS CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESSES

Since citizen participation is becoming a major concern in substate planning processes, various ways to involve the public in these processes are being developed. This chapter considers the characteristics of some of these citizen participation processes and then, using a conceptual framework in the form of a matrix, relates each one to the other by using variable comparisons.

In many processes, the active participation of all parties in the planning process is sought: citizens, politicians, consultants and planners.

> The inclusion of comprehensive factors in the planning process requires the involvement of resource experts from many heterogeneous disciplines or functions and no single discipline commands sufficient technological expertise to unilaterally develop solutions to complex problems. For this reason a process which allows both shared experience and public involvement to be directed toward planning problems would be extremely useful to the planner.[1]

Although the emphasis here is on a "process," no one process or technique to obtain citizen participation can be applied for every planning process conducted at the substate level. "The particular citizen involvement methods planned may well vary according to the

---

[1]A. H. Voelker, "Facility Sitting: An Application of the Nominal Group Process," Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Regional and Urban Studies Section, (April, 1976), p. 2.

nature of the plan and the point in the planning process."[2] According to Anderson, "the issue addressed will determine the appropriateness of the citizen participation process used."[3] The limitations and/or parameters within which a specific planning product must be produced by a specific type of substate agency make it difficult to make generalized recommendations for the use of citizen participation processes. The type of product that the planning agency seeks from citizen participation is another factor to be considered for determining which process to use. The results obtained from the process employed to entice citizen participation should exert a significant influence on the quality of the final planning product.[4]

Because the citizens within the substate area have different interests and are involved in different groups and organizations, their responses and reactions could vary as they participate in various types of citizen participation processes. Therefore "a variety of citizen participation processes should be utilized."[5] This variety could manifest itself either as a range of participation processes available to a substate agency or as a variety of processes used throughout a particular planning process. For example, "some people

---

[2]National Association of Regional Councils, *Regional Council Communication*, (Washington, D.C., January, 1973), p. 32.

[3]John Anderson, Executive Director, East Tennessee Development District, Personal interview, January 13, 1977.

[4]Charles O. Holloman and Hal W. Hendrick, "Adequacy of Group Decisions as a Function of the Decision-Making Processes," *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 15, (June, 1972), p. 176.

[5]National Association of Regional Councils, p. 32.

may not have the time or interest to work actively on an advisory committee, yet they may be interested in attending a workshop or community meeting."[6] In this regard, Carson states that citizen participation at the substate level should be more than a "one shot deal." The agency can use advisory committees to the point of a draft, then can employ public meetings or the media to solicit responses.[7]

When a substate agency is considering a citizen participation program, all the following issues must be regarded:

1. Who are the citizens the agency is trying to reach who will be affected by the planning program or project?
2. Is the purpose of the citizen participation program to educate the citizen, to solicit citizen response, or to meet federal requirements?
3. How much decision making authority will citizens really have?
4. What are the legal requirements for citizen participation in substate planning in, for example, public hearings?[8]
5. What is the frequency of the various citizen participation processes throughout the planning process?

According to Gober, the frequency of the use of citizen participation depends on how much action is taking place in the project area or with the planning process itself.[9] Another author states that a planner

---

[6]Ibid.

[7]Suzy Carson, Communications Officer, East Tennessee Development District, personal interview, April 21, 1977.

[8]National Association of Regional Councils, p. 33.

[9]James Gober, Chief, Regional Planning Staff, Tennessee Valley Authority, personal interview, April 22, 1977.

who designs a citizen participation program should be guided by two principles: (1) the objectives of involving the public in the study should be clearly spelled out, and (2) the techniques used should be designed to meet these objectives.[10]

Characteristics of Various Processes for Use by Substate Planning Agencies

Two criteria were used to choose citizen participation processes for comparison in this chapter: (1) a substate agency which is basically rural in nature can use these processes to solicit information from the public for use in planning processes and projects, and (2) the processes employ all forms of two-way communication, i.e. all parties involved in the processes are both giving and receiving information to be used in decision making and producing planning products. This study separates processes into the categories of meetings and surveys. This is done to facilitate organization and to promote reader understanding of the nature of the processes. The first seven processes considered are types of meetings.

Open Public Hearing

An open public hearing is an announced meeting which is open to anyone who wants to come. Agency personnel describe proposed courses of action or decisions that have to be made. The citizens then voice their opinions, indicating approval or disapproval of the ideas

---

[10]Synergy, p. 22.

or plans presented. Frequently, they also ask questions to obtain more information about specific issues or ideas concerning the planning process. After the meeting is over, the citizens may submit written letters or reports, expressing approval or disapproval of the ideas presented or stating recommendations for other courses of action.[11] Normally, an open public hearing is held in a large room with enough chairs to accommodate the participants and the appropriate audio visual equipment needed for the agency's presentation.

An open public hearing is also used when agency decisions require certification concerning decisions that have already been made or several possible courses of action that have already been identified. The hearing is a means by which the agency informs the citizens and makes them aware of the planning process, and is normally used to fulfill federal requirements for citizen participation for federally funded planning projects and/or programs. Open public hearings "generally do a poor job of fulfilling the functions of public participation."[12] The discussion is usually polarized between the avid proponents or opponents of the plan allowing only a small percentage of audience input which is usually given by the "vocal few, who may not represent the feelings of the majority of the group."[13] Because of the format of public hearings:

> . . . the natural polarization between interest groups can be and often is reinforced through the process. There is seldom a feeling of mutual concern for achieving the best solution in the highly charged atmosphere of the hearing process.[14]

---

[11] Synergy, p. 64

[12] Heberlein, p. 11.

[13] Synergy, p. 64.

[14] Voelker, p. 1.

Citizen input is difficult to evaluate because it is usually very general.

Small Workshops

Small workshops are small working groups usually composed of not more than 10 to 12 people. Citizen participation at a workshop can be either by invitation or open to the general public. The group is given information, data, and graphic materials by a trained leader and is asked to develop planning procedures or plans or revise present procedures or plans. The participants interact verbally by indicating approval or disapproval of ideas and proposals which have been developed by the planning agency. The agency can use a workshop when some alternatives and/or procedures have been developed and additional ones are desired from the public.[15] A workshop can also be used to involve people from different user groups to discuss mutual concerns in order to seek solutions acceptable to all of the groups. "The value of this technique is in coming up with proposals for consideration that are the product of various publics and groups working together."[16] If the workshop is properly structured, information transfer is excellent and there is a high quality of interaction among all participants. Since participants are directly involved in the planning process, they will better understand the procedures used for decision

---

[15]Synergy, p. 66.

[16]Sally Fairfax, *Public Involvement: Our Evaluation of the Southern Region Forest Service*, (1975), p. 19.

making.[17] The data given to the participants must be in a format which is understandable by the citizens and laypeople. Two specific types of workshops are discussed further. These are "brainstorming" and the Nominal Group Process.

Brainstorming. The usual "brainstorming" group consists of 10 to 12 persons. A trained leader distributes planning materials and data to the group. Through the use of this information, the brainstorming group develops a series of ideas by group discussion. These ideas are then utilized by the agency in its planning procedures. The concept of brainstorming frees individuals from "inhibition, self-criticism and criticism by others in order that in response to a specific problem they may produce as many different ideas as possible."[18] While members share many ideas with each other in verbal form, there is no set order or fashion to follow. The assumption is that the larger the number of ideas produced, the greater the probability of achieving usuable recommendations for decision making. Brainstorming is normally conducted in one session. Sometimes a second session is needed at another phase in the planning process, depending on the nature of the planning process and the desires and abilities of the agency. Brainstorming is characterized by four basic rules.

1. Criticism is ruled out. Adverse judgment of ideas must be withheld until later.

---

[17] Synergy, p. 66.

[18] D. W. Taylor, et al., "Does Group Participation When Using Brainstorming Facilitate or Inhibit Creative Thinking?", *Administrative Science Quarterly* (Vol. 3, 1958), p. 24.

> 2. "Free wheeling" is welcomed. The wilder the idea, the better; it is easier to tame down than to think up.
> 3. Quantity is wanted. The greater the number of ideas the more the likelihood of winners.
> 4. Combination and improvement of ideas is sought. In addition to contributing ideas of their own, participants should suggest how ideas of others can be turned into better ideas; or how two or more ideas can be joined into still another idea.[19]

There is no criticism of ideas in brainstorming. Since ideas in quantity are sought and there is no prioritizing of these ideas, this may result in presenting a confusing plethora of concepts to the planning agency. In the long run, this may inhibit the decision making process. Although participants are encouraged to contribute ideas, but lack of meeting control may actually inhibit creative thinking.[20]

Nominal Group Process. The Nominal Group Process is a small workshop group which is formed to analyze a particular planning problem or situation. Briefly described, the individuals in the group nominally respond to a question or statement as given to them by the group leader. The responses are then given by the members of the group in round-robin fashion. The group leader lists these responses and they are discussed by the entire group. After the discussion, the responses are ranked by the group to obtain a group priority concensus list. This process is explained in detail in Chapter IV. As with other workshop sessions, the Nominal Group Process can be conducted in a small room with accommodations for the participants and appropriate materials which the agency needs to conduct the session. Because the

---

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid., p. 43.

process is highly structured and is controlled by a trained leader, a group consensus and a priority list is almost always produced. Normally, participants feel that these meetings are worthwhile because their ideas are given fair consideration.[21] A written priority list is produced to facilitate the use of ideas by the planning agency. Participants in nominal groups are given a question or statement to which they are to respond. The quality of these responses in relation to what the agency is looking for is directly related to the way the question or statement is expressed. Appropriate responses to a poorly phrased question could be useless to the agency.

Simulation or "Gaming"

A "game" is a structured process which can either be conducted as a simulation or be used to address issues and problems of an actual plan or project. The process requires a room in which to display a graphic or board model and which will allow participant interaction. A small model of the proposed project or planning scheme is presented to the participants, who then play "roles" under conditions that allow comparison in a normal (controlled) environment.

> These models focus on quantifiable human activity such as transportation, land use and employment, although extrapolation into less quantifiable social aspects is possible. Gaming processes are often highly complex, take considerable time commitments, and provide results which are often too aggregated to be of much use in substate problem solving situations.[22]

---

[21] National Association of Regional Councils, p. 29.

[22] Runyan, p. 11.

The planning agency measures the reactions of one group of participants to the various roles played by another group in order to draw conclusions about general areawide reactions based on the specific reactions of the participants.[23] There is, at times, a certain amount of realism portrayed in gaming processes. However, they generally require large room spaces, trained observers, and experiment designers, and are often quite difficult to design and conduct.[24]

Charrette Planning

A charrette is a "marathon planning session which is open to the public but built around an invited backbone of experts. . . ."[25] The work sessions are very intense with set deadlines. The citizens and elected officials are involved throughout the process as full partners.[26] A charrette may last from several days to several weeks depending on the nature of the agency task to be performed. Much advance planning is needed to conduct a charrette including selection of participants and deciding on a time in which the participants can actively and fully take part. Several months are usually needed for this phase of the process. A charrette is designed to generate ideas, identify and analyze solutions and develop proposals in order to allow the planning agency to complete production and implementation. Charrette participants do not themselves implement the final product but they do "develop a strategy for implementing the plan; hence,

---

[23]Synergy, p. 73. [24]Ibid. [25]Fairfax, p. 19.

[26]National Association of Regional Councils, p. 30.

providing for continuity and follow through."[27] The key elements of charrette planning are: (1) pressure to produce a product in a limited time; (2) considerable opportunities to participate throughout the process; (3) a product produced that has involved public officials, and (4) because of the first three elements, the product has a better chance of being implemented.[28] A charrette must be a highly coordinated planning effort. Planners, technicians, professionals, and other citizens must sometimes dedicate large blocks of time and sometimes their own money to participate in a charrette. Organizing a charrette can be difficult because of these requirements.

The Advisory Committee

The advisory committee generally consists of professionals, technicians, and interest group representatives from which the agency wishes to obtain information. A substate agency may use a citizen forum as a form of advisory committee. Although these forums can be large in number of participants, involvement of all members is not guaranteed. To increase the potential for effective committee operation, the agency staff representative who has responsibility for the forum should be trained in group dynamics and must devote considerable time to organize and administer the committee.[29] These types of committees bring a variety of perspectives to bear on the problem. The agency staff and the participants on the committee must be committed to the job of making the committee work effectively. These committees should consider issues for the decision making

---

[27] Ibid. [28] Ibid. [29] Ibid., p. 25.

process and make recommendations to the agency. Participants on these committees frequently become frustrated because they do not fully understand what they are to do and because their working and authority parameters have not been specifically designated by the planning agency.[30]

> When properly used, advisory committees are an effective way of solving problems, generating solutions and involving citizens in planning. When misused, however, they are nothing but a waste of time.[31]

A serious problem of these committees is their potential "lack of representativeness"[32] because the "method limits the size of the working groups"[33] to those specifically invited by the agency to help in the decision making process.

The last three types of processes discussed in this study are survey techniques.

Survey Interivew

The survey interview process involves interviewing a "representative" cross-section of the public to determine attitudes, opinions and other factual information regarding the planning issues(s).[34] Respondents are obtained by selecting a statistically valid sample of the public. The purpose of a survey is to gather information to assist the agency in its decision making processes, to evaluate alternatives, and to measure the effectiveness of particular

---

[30]Ibid., p. 24 [31]Ibid. [32]Heberlein, p. 12.

[33]Synergy, p. 68. [34]Ibid., p. 70.

programs.[35] Surveys can provide a planning agency with information which is easily analyzed and sharply focused. However, "the development of questionnaires and surveys requires considerable professional expertise and time."[36] If valid information is to be gained, the survey must contain the right questions and participants must understand the issue(s) so that they can give knowledgeable and appropriate answers. By its nature, a sample survey restricts the number of people who can participate. The designers of the survey must have had experience and/or training in planning questionnaires or else the survey may not obtain the results needed. Survey results "must have some effect on regional council decisions and the citizens who participate must be given feedback"[37] in order for the process to be considered effective.

The Delphi Technique

The Delphi technique was originally developed "to tap the opinions of 'experts' about complex, technical problems."[38] The process is directed to the "literate" citizens of the region, and is usually a series of four or more questionnaires distributed to selected individuals. The participants do not meet as a group. Instead, communication through questionnaire responses is expected to obtain a usable product. Each questionnaire is based on the

---

[35]National Association of Regional Councils, p. 25.

[36]Fairfax, p. 17

[37]National Association of Regional Councils, p. 25.

[38]Runyan, p. 8.

responses from the preceding one, a procedure which serves to continue the communication process. Participation in the process is not open to the general public, so it is less representative of the general public than in a sample survey. "The process can be used for a variety of purposes, including goal setting, problem identification, setting of priorities and identification of solutions to problems."[39] A Delphi process can be described as tending to be:

> . . . a time-consuming activity requiring commitment over at least several weeks (assuming the questionnaires are mailed) and possibly several months. Moreover, the manner which the summaries and questionnaires are prepared influences both focus and extent of the consensus, making this a technique open to intentional or inadvertant manipulation by its operators.[40]

A Delphi process is used to address complex issues or topics among individuals who may have widely differing opinions. Its design specifically avoids interaction problems which may occur when all of these people meet in a face-to-face setting. Complex information is more readily obtained through the Delphi technique than is available through alternative techniques, such as surveys.[41]

Mass Media Responses

The use of the media (radio, television, newspaper, agency newsletters) can be an effective way for an agency to give and receive information from the public. Information concerning a project or planning process is widely distributed to the public through the media and in this same way, responses are solicited. The public can respond by telephone, letters, or face-to-face contact with the

---

[39]National Association of Regional Councils, p. 26.

[40]Runyan, p. 9.

[41]Ibid.

planners. Substate agencies should solicit responses from the citizens who receive agency newsletters. This is usually done by a response form including or attaching it to the newsletter or to an agency document. The general public is more apt to comment and respond to the report or study when response sheets are enclosed.[42] The newspaper is probably the best means available to solicit participation by the average citizens because "all he has to do is sit down and write a letter to request a study or write a comment."[43] Although the media may distribute information to the relevant publics involved directly and indirectly in the planning process, Heberlein feels that these efforts should not be considered as sufficient for relating the total planning picture to the public and that media distribution of information is important and should not be neglected.[44] Sometimes a particular media is not representative of the public, and information distributed by it may be biased.[45]

Explanation of Variable Comparisons for Citizen Participation Processes

In this section, a number of variables are compared as they relate to the use of citizen participation techniques by substate planning agencies. According to the author's research, most of these variables are more salient than others and should be considered when an agency chooses which technique(s) it will employ in an areawide citizen participation program. As previously stated, in many cases

---

[42]Fairfax, p. 17

[43]Carson.

[44]Heberlein, p. 13.

[45]Synergy, p. 71.

the degree to which these variables become manifest depends upon the specific planning issue or program for which the substate agency is conducting citizen participation. An explanation of these variables and a relative scale for quantifiable comparison for each are given below, and include the variables of cost, time, personnel requirements, participant interaction, and flow of ideas. Each variable has been assigned its own designation scheme which is described as each is explained. The scale for variable comparisons with citizen participation processes is presented in matrix form on page 65.

Group size for a typical exercise. Group size pertains to the number of citizens who can submit information to a planning agency while being involved in a particular citizen participation process. Some processes can solicit a wide range of participants. An open public hearing may solicit from a small group of three or four persons to a large number of participants. Normally the structured workshop sessions (such as brainstorming and the Nominal Group Process) can accommodate from 10 to 12 individuals. The group size of other techniques may vary considerably. In the matrix, quantifiable group size comparisons are designated as either small (25 or less), medium (26-100) or large (100+). The typical size for a survey interview is a valid percent of the population being considered.

Financial requirements. The budget of a substate agency does not always allow for an extensive, elaborate citizen participation process. Grimm states that the "major problem with having the type of citizen participation a substate agency would like to have is

money."[46] Budget constraints and program limitations, according to Gober, "frequently determine what type of citizen participation process the agency uses."[47] In the matrix, the cost per unit of the process, excluding staff salaries, is categorized into low ($50 or less), medium ($51-200), and high requirements ($200+).

Logistics requirements. Generally speaking, logistics concerns the procurement and maintenance of material and facilities in order to conduct a citizen participation process. This would include room size and support equipment necessary to conduct the process. In the matrix, these are designated in terms of low, medium and high requirements.

Trained personnel requirements. Trained personnel refers to a person(s) who is hired specifically to conduct a citizen participation process or to an agency staff representative especially trained for this purpose. In any case, "the leader must (1) understand the process; (2) possess self-confidence to lead a group through the process steps; and (3) be legitimate so as to be accepted as he or she directs group behavior."[48] In the matrix, the designation of "yes" or "no" is given to indicate whether or not the leader must go through

---

[46]Pam Grimm, Research Director, East Tennessee Development District, private interview, May 21, 1977.

[47]Gober.

[48]André Delberg and Andrew Van de Vein, *Group Techniques for Program Planning*, (Scott Foresman, Glenview, Ill., March, 1975), p. 80.

specialized training in order to conduct the specific citizen participation process.

Time requirements. This requirement relates to the amount of time it takes to complete a single part of the particular citizen participation process. A part (or unit) is determined by the way the process is structured for agency use. According to Van de Ven, "research indicates that the success of problem-solving groups in arriving at creative decisions is related to the proportion of time spent working on the problem."[49] In the matrix, time requirements are designated in terms of low (8 hours or less), medium (2-7 days), or high (7 days or more) for each unit of the participation process.

Participant interaction. Participant interaction refers to the amount of direct mutual influence that both citizens and planners (the participants) have on one another.

> The quality of decisions made by groups is positively related to the amount and quality of interactions among the group members. Decision making procedures which require and/or permit increased interaction produce better decisions than do procedures involving less interaction.[50]

In the matrix, this variable is designated as low, medium, or high levels of participant interaction.

Participant satisfaction. Citizen satisfaction measures the levels at which citizens perceive they have been a part of the process

---

[49]Van de Ven, p. 207.

[50]Holloman, p. 182.

and have had an influence in the decision-making process of the planning product. The psychological nature of this variable makes it difficult to put in quantifiable terms. In the matrix, processes are designated, nevertheless, in terms of low, medium, or high levels of satisfaction.

Ability to reach a consensus. Synergy describes consensus seeking as "cooperative problem-solving in which the conflicting parties have the joint interest of reaching a mutually satisfactory solution."[51] Openness is the extent to which the agency allows the participants access to the entire planning and decision making process through the citizen participation procedures. High degrees of openness and interaction among participants are conducive to reaching a consensus. In the matrix, quantitative measures are in terms of a low, medium, or high ability of a citizen participation process to enable the participants to obtain a consensus.

Facilitating the flow of ideas. The rapid flow, expansion, and/or consolidation of ideas during a participation process is generally considered to be a positive aspect of a planning process. The helpful flow of ideas among participants usually has a positive effect on some of the variables already described. In the matrix, the terms of low, medium, or high are used to quantify the ability of the process to facilitate the flow of ideas among the participants.

---

[51] Synergy, p. 21.

Multiple problem consideration. The multiple problem variable concerns the extent the participation process enables participants to consider various dimensions, aspects, or parts of the planning process or project. For example, there may be many elements which will affect a proposed project such as transportation, employment opportunities, housing needs, and social considerations. In the matrix, a process is designated as low, medium, or high, based on its ability to consider multiple problem dimensions or increments during the citizen participation session.

Likelihood of achieving usable results. The likelihood of achieving usable results is directly related to the ability of the participants to obtain a product or results which will be of use to the agency in the decision making process. Stated another way, the opinions and information gathered from participants involved in the process are likely to be incorporated in the agency decision making process. The parameters which a process imposes on participants because of its structure will definitely affect the achievement of those usable results. In the matrix, a process is evaluated on the basis of its high, medium, or low ability to allow participants to achieve these results.

Explanation of A Matrix as a Conceptual Framework Experimental Matrix

The matrix which follows (Table I) is a conceptual framework based on various types of information. Some of this information is subjective which is supported by the author's own personal experiences

TABLE I

A MATRIX: CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROCESSES AND VARIABLE COMPARISONS

Participation Process	Variables for Comparison: Group Size for a Typical Exercise	Financial Requirements	Logistics Requirements	Trained Personnel Requirements	Time Requirements	Participant Interaction	Participation Satisfaction	Ability to Reach a Consensus	Flow of Ideas	Multiple Problem Consideration	Likelihood of Achieving Usable Results
Open Public Hearing	Normally Large	Low	Low	No	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Normally Low
Workshop	Small	Medium	Medium	No	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Nominal Group Technique	Small	Low	Medium	Yes	Low	High	High	High	High	Medium	High
Brain-storming	Small	Low	Medium	No	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Simulations and Gaming	Small	High	High	Yes	Low	Normally High	Medium	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Charrette	Normally Small	High	High	Yes	Normally Medium	High	High	High	High	High	High
Advisory Committees	Small	Medium	Medium	No	Low	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	High	Medium
Survey Interview	Valid percent of Pop.	Normally Medium	Medium	Yes	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Medium
Delphi Technique	Medium	Medium	Low	Yes	High	Low	Medium	High	Medium	High	High
Mass Media Response	Large	Medium	Low	Yes	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low	High	Low

with the processes. The suggested relationships designated in the matrix have not been unequivocally substantiated.

They are presented here as a basis for comparison among the other processes and the Nominal Group Process and should be subjected to further research and development. The matrix is exploratory; each process and its relationship to the variables is evaluated according to the literature and the author's own personal experiences. The author has been directly subjected to all of these processes as they are used in citizen and group participation sessions. Although the general scope of literature researched for the citizen participation processes does not make comprehensive comparisons to this extent, nevertheless they are displayed here to give the reader a better understanding and perspective of the content of this study.

This chapter is written to give a conceptual base upon which various citizen participation processes available to substate planning agencies can be compared and to help the reader distinguish differences existing among the various processes. Hopefully, the Matrix itself can be used as a beginning basis for utilizing citizen participation in decision making. The Nominal Group Process is included in one c many possible processes which a substate agency should consider for incorporation into a total citizen participation program. This particular process is discussed in detail in Chapter IV.

As described in Chapter V, the Nominal Group Process was selected as a citizen participation forum to help develop the *Coordinated Guidelines* . . . to meet a goal, i.e. to avoid isolated planning. The

philosophy was that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is one of the major economic resources of the area and the "impact of park development ought to be in the direction that residents desire."[52] The Nominal Group Process was chosen because it allowed citizens and locally elected officials to enunciate their concerns for future development. Generally, the process did allow high degrees of participant interaction, participant satisfaction, consensus reached, idea flow among participants, and the achieving of usable results. Financial and time requirements to conduct the process were quite low. For these reasons, the use of the Nominal Group Process in this instance was timely and productive. Other techniques, such as workshops, survey interviews, or mass media response could have been used according to the matrix on page 65, the likelihood of achieving usable results would have been less, the flow of ideas among participants would have been slower, and except for workshops, the time requirements would have been higher. The organizer and administrator of these citizen participation sessions found that the Nominal Group Process worked very well.[53]

---

[52]Stephen A. Webster and John W. Anderson. "Citizen Involvement in Land Use Planning for Rural Development." paper presented at Planning Frontiers in Rural America, Boone, North Carolina, March, 1975, p. 4.

[53]Ibid., p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXPLANATION OF THE NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

A Description From the Works of André Delbecq and Andrew Van de Ven

The Nominal Group Process was developed in 1968 by Dr. André Delbecq, a professor in the Graduate School of Business at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Andrew Van de Ven, a graduate assistant working with Dr. Delbecq. The authors developed the process as an alternative means of solving difficult problems and decision making situations faced by program planners.

The Nominal Group Process has been given wide recognition as a useful tool in a variety of situations. It was derived from social-/psychological studies of decision conferences, management science studies of aggregating group judgements, and social work studies of problems surrounding citizen participation in program planning. The process has been used extensively by planning agencies in the fields of health, social services and education, and also by industry and government.[1]

As described in Chapter I, one session of the process consists basically of four procedural steps: (1) large group meeting; (2) nominal small group process function; (3) round-robin group interaction and voting; and (4) second large group meeting. The process described

---

[1]Voelker, p. 3.

in this chapter is according to the works of Delbecq and Van de Ven, but with some variations so that it can be utilized by substate planning agencies.

Prior to a Nominal Group Process meeting, the planning agency selects a sample of individuals from which responses will be sought. This sample of participants can be obtained by selecting a random sample of the public or publics that should be involved in the planning process or by extending an open invitation to anyone who might want to participate. For purposes of this thesis, the participants in the citizen participation process will be referred to as the "client" group. The explanation of the Nominal Group Process is taken from an article by Van den Ven and Delbecq as published in the *American Journal of Public Health.*[2] In addition, this study has added certain statements to this explanation which are specifically designed to make the Process more useful to substate planning agencies.

The Nominal Group Process meeting is usually opened by the planner, or moderator, who expresses the sincere interest of his organization in seeking information about the problems which the clients are experiencing in the area being investigated. He then indicates that the role of the client group, based on its perceptions, experiences, and expertise, is to relate information for the purpose of defining the character of these problems. He explicitly requests

---

[2]Andrew H. Van de Ven and André L. Delbecq, "The Nominal Group As A Research Instrument For Exploratory Health Studies," *American Journal of Public Health*, (March, 1972), p. 338.

the cooperation and commitment of each participant to the task at hand. He carefully emphasizes that the theme of the meeting is to be "problem-centered," not "solution-centered."

Further,

> the planner indicates that most problems have both subjective and objective components. The subjective components center around feelings and emotions of individuals in the problem situation. The objective components deal with organizational or environmental realities surrounding the problem.[3]

The planner then tells the client group that both subjective and objective responses to the question will be sought during the meeting.

Because of the structure of the Nominal Group Process, each participant has an equal opportunity to contribute to the group task. This is accomplished at the beginning by "nominal" or "silent" generation of ideas.[4] The planner or moderator divides the client group into several smaller groups of from 5 to 12 individuals, as determined by such factors as the size of the overall client group, space available for smaller group meetings, and the number of trained facilitators on hand. The facilitators for the smaller groups pass out writing materials to each person, states the exploratory question or statement each participant is to respond to as a means of defining critical elements of the problem, and invites discussion about the question or statement to make certain that all participants understood what is being sought.

The agency must decide which is more appropriate in order to solicit the type of information it needs. A question may be asked

---

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

such as "What are the major obstacles to implementation of this project?" Or a statement such as "List the major obstacles to implementation of thi project." As previously mentioned, the participants are asked to respond in terms of a list of "personal feelings" toward the problem and then with a list of "organizational difficulties." These two lists can be as long as each individual wishes but should be kept spearate from the other. The participants are then asked to spend a short time, usually 15 to 20 minutes, listing aspects of the problem on the writing material which they had received earlier. They are asked to do this without speaking to anyone else at their table and to proceed in silence.[5] The facilitator enforces silence by requesting those participants who have stopped writing not to distract others still working.[6]

At the end of the allotted amount of time for writing in silence, the moderator indicates that each small group area, (usually in an "around a table" setting) be provided with marking pens, a large pad of paper, and tape. A staff member, acting as the recorder for each small group, then asks the clients, one at a time, to read aloud one "organizational difficulties" item from his card. He writes that item on his pad exactly as the client member reads it from his card.[7] Terse statements are requested and no group discussion is

---

[5]André L. Delbecq, "A Group Process Model for Problem Identification and Program Planning," *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1971, p. 470.

[6]Van de Ven, "The Nominal Group," p. 339.

[7]Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 470.

allowed.[8] The recorder sequentially receives one item from each client, assigning a number to each item. He asks members at the table who have the same item on their cards to raise their hands so he can record it by putting check marks next to the item. No debate is allowed about equivalency of items. All related "problems" are written on the pads as expressed by each participant.[9] Even if there is response overlap, no rewording is done.

The mechanical format of this step allows equal participation of all group members and ensures that all ideas are ultimately considered. An interesting phenomenon occurs in this round. Group members "hitchhike"[10] on the ideas suggested by others; that is, additional ideas spontaneously develop from previously mentioned ideas. The recorder encourages participants to hitchhike as his turn occurs in the round-robin,[11] and these new ideas are also added to the recorder's list. By this time in the session, the large pad begins to assume a central role in the group; it becomes the focal point of the group's common effort, acting as a strong visual focus and providing a written record and guide.[12]

The recorder continues to list items until all "organizational difficulties" have been aired. He then removes the sheet from the pad,

---

[8]Voelker, p. 4.

[9]Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 471.

[10]Voelker, p. 4.

[11]Van de Ven, "The Nominal Group," p. 339.

[12]Voelker, p. 4.

tapes it to the wall, and repeats the entire process for the "personal feelings" items.[13]

After all ideas from the nominal forms of all participants have been listed and displayed, the recorder initiates a 30 minute discussion among members of the group concerning the ideas which have been expressed. The purpose of the discussion is to clarify, elaborate, defend, or dispute these recorded items or to add new ideas which may emerge through the discussion.[14] However the collapsing or condensing of items into general problem categories should be avoided in order to maintain a greater specificity of problem dimensions.[15] Although the pace of the discussion should be slow, unproductive arguments which can sidetrack or unduly delay the process should be discouraged by the recorder.[16] The discussion should progress one idea at a time, not with the list in its entirety.[17]

Following the discussion period, the group is asked to rank the priority or critical problems from the total list. Usually this list of critical elements contains either 5 or 10 items. The recorder requests each member to independently choose and record (by name and number) on cards or paper those items (either 5 or 10) from the list which he considers most important.[18] Each member is asked to

---

[13]Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 471.

[14]Van de Ven, "The Nominal Group," p. 339.

[15]Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 471.

[16]Voelker, p. 5.

[17]Van de Ven, "The Nominal Group," p. 339.

[18]Ibid.

privately vote (by number) on the items he considers most crucial on the "organizational" problem list,[19] assigning a value of 5 or 10 to the most important item down to a value of one to the least important. The recorder then collects the individual votes and records them on the appropriate lists.

After the ideas have been ranked in order of priority, the participants can reclarify, elaborate, defend, or dispute this preliminary vote on priorities. If the priority vote discussion results in a redefinition of some problem[20] (and it usually does), the recorder asks the individual participants to review and change, as he wishes, his individual preliminary priority items. Each individual privately reranks his critical priority items and the recorder then asks each participant to privately rate his reranked items by assessing a value from 100 (highest priority) to zero (lowest priority) so as to reflect relative differences in importance between items. This final rating of priorities is collected by the recorder.[21]

The next step in the Nominal Group Process is to reassemble all participants and to report the votes of each small group to the entire gathering. If desired, members of the whole group can individually rank the items from all of these small group priority lists. In this way, the 5 or 10 most crucial problem areas can be given a priority

---

[19] Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 471.

[20] Van de Ven, "The Nominal Group," p. 339.

[21] Ibid.

ranking by the whole group. Discussion is allowed for as long as the participants desire--usually about 20 minutes.

The moderator then briefly explains that the Nominal Group Process will be conducted with other groups of people involved in the planning process. He asks the group if it would like to select representatives to participate in the next nominal group meeting of the planning process. If so, members vote for their representatives. The client group is thanked and the meeting ends.[22]

As detailed in this study, the client group meeting is a deliberate, structured process designed to accomplish the following general objectives: (1) to define the problem or problems by determining their dimensions using nominal group techniques; (2) to focus attention on those items which have the highest priority in the client's or consumer's perspective; (3) to avoid defining a problem in terms of how a few leaders or a single client group would act on it but, instead, to react to problem definitions from multiple reference groups and representative clients; (4) to force professional members in the groups to react to the opinions and expressions of the clients rather than to their own theoretical or professional biases; (5) to create enough tension to assure that the professional organizations will react to the comments and suggestions of the clients; (6) to provide a forum which allows clients and professionals to confront each other in a manner which avoids mutually frustrating semantic hangups,

---

[22]Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 472.

and (7) to involve clients early in the planning process so that they may more closely relate to later program proposals, thus increasing the possibility of program implementation.[23]

The second nominal group meeting begins with the identification of external scientific and organizational experts whose discipline and functional skills relate to the priority items which evolved in the client group meeting and which are to be considered for application to a particular planning project of a substate agency. The organizational experts involved in the project could include planners, engineers, planning consultants, and specialists and technicians from various related fields. Combined with internal functional experts from the principal organization(s) responsible for the implementation of the planning program, this group of knowledge resource people is invited to engage in a problem-solving meeting which follows processes somewhat similar to the format of the first nominal group meeting.[24] An outline of procedure for this second meeting in substate planning processes follows.

As in the first "clients" session, this meeting is sponsored and conducted by the planning agency responsible for the process or project. The moderator welcomes the large group and emphasizes that the focus of the meeting is on the list of priority problems developed by the client group during the previous meeting. He provides a visual display of these priority problems for the present group to see. A brief description of how these priorities were developed is given

---

[23]Ibid., p. 478.

[24]Ibid.

without any attempt at analyzing them. The moderator stresses that the specialists involved in this meeting are to develop ideas about the specific planning project or process under consideration and that they are not to act as "representatives" of specific programs in which they have a personal interest or of organizations by which they may be employed.[25]

The large group of specialists is then divided into smaller nominal groups, in a similar manner as was done in the client group meeting. These smaller groups ideally should contain a cross section of age, and of scientific and organizational affiliation and functional expertise. The specialists are instructed in the nominal group format and are asked to provide information in two categories: "Solution components and existing resources which can be adopted or used" and solution components and new resources which can and should be developed."[26] A specific period of time is set for the specialists to list those priority items obtained from the first meeting under the two headings which each believes should be part of the solution program. Again, silence is maintained during this part of the meeting.

When all participants have completed their listing, a recorder provides a large pad of paper for each nominal group and each specialist shares individually-noted solution components and resource items in the round-robin format as described for the client group meeting. A separate sheet should be used for each priority problem. After all items have been shared, a discussion ensues in which a

---

[25]Ibid., p. 481. [26]Ibid.

group consensus of solution components and resources is obtained.

The small groups then reassemble and report, in turn, to the whole session. A master list of all solution components and resources is made. After a discussion period, the participants are asked to nominally vote on and rate by priority those solution components and resources they believe to be absolutely essential for a program which could effectively solve the priority problems generated during the first meeting.[27]

This second meeting is a deliberate, structured Nominal Group Process which seeks to accomplish the following objectives: (1) to reconceptualize the priority problems, initiated in the client group meeting, in terms of essential solution components and resources through use of sceintific and organizational specialists; (2) to avoid defending existing organizational or agency programs and to focus on new combinations of solution components and resources necessary for this particular planning process; (3) to obtain a wide range of information about the planning process by making the composition of the nominal groups as interdisciplinary and as diverse as possible; (4) to call attention to existing but untapped solution components and resources as well as the need for new components and resources; (5) to provide a legitimate "scientific endorsement" of essential program components and resources by the participant specialists and, hopefully, by the organizations and agencies they represent in order to develop an adequate solution to priority problems.[28]

---

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid., p. 484.

These two types of meetings, as explained in terms of using the Nominal Group Process, and the people involved in these meetings are indeed important in the majority of planning processes at the substate level. Another group of people who may need to nominally furnish information about the planning process are those representing financial or administrative agencies or organizations. The involvement of these experts in the planning process should be at a time when supporters of the program and process objectives are still flexible. This nominal group session should be held at a time when there is sufficient content in both problem and solution analysis to stimulate discussion for resource control and administration. At the same time, the planners who have the responsibility for research and development of the planning process and for the writing of the plan document have not yet fully developed or decided all the specifics of the process. As a result, these planners should be in a position "to respond flexibly to the type of realistic adjustments which administrators and resource controllers are likely to suggest."[29]

It is not unusual for relevant planning processes to be vetoed by resource controllers or administrators because of rather minor implementation issues. In other words, they may feel that, while the planning process or project is needed or desired, minor matters of plan implementation may not be satisfactory. Therefore, the objective of this meeting "is a review of the types of reservations or qualifications that resource controllers and key administrators may

---

[29]Ibid., p. 486.

have and the adjustments required in order for the program proposal to be fully endorsed and supported."[30] Because the priority problems, solution components and resources, and plan implementation factors are juxtaposed with one another in these meetings, the essential concerns and solutions of each of these reference groups from all of the nominal group meetings can be included within the content of the final planning process proposal.[31]

After the planners have had time to interpret and use the information obtained from these meetings, a third meeting or a series of meetings could be scheduled. These meetings would follow the first series to determine if the planner(s)' awareness and subsequent use of the outputs of the first series has been adequate. The Nominal Group Process could be used in these meetings but may not be necessary, depending on what needs are to be considered and the kind of responses required for input into that particular phase of the planning process.

Past and Anticipated Uses of the Nominal Group Process

Several agencies and organizations which have a regional or multi-jurisdictional scope of planning have used the Nominal Group Process for various purposes. This section of the study focuses on four examples of the application of the Nominal Group Process by organizations in the East Tennessee area.

---

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., p. 486.

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in Tennessee has used the Process to address the issue of facility siting. This agency felt that:

> . . . the inclusion of comprehensive factors in the planning process requires the involvement of resource experts from many heterogeneous disciplines or functions. No single discipline commands sufficient technological expertise to unilaterally develop solutions to complex problems.[32]

For this reason, a process which allows technicians and the general public to confront each other and to direct constructive, useful ideas toward planning problems would be extremely useful. ORNL wanted to identify the total range of new and often subtle factors which could affect acquisition of power plant sites. It was thought that these factors sould be incorporated into a systematic site screening and evaluation process. ORNL also wanted to offer information to utilities and state agencies which would give a more rational basis for site selection, and also needed information which was comprehensive enough to help avoid unforseen obstacles which could preclude use of a selected site. The structured approach of the Nominal Process was selected as a forum to identify and rank the importance of sitting factors."[33]

The participant requirement during the Nominal Group Process at ORNL was to respond to the following statement: "List the ten most important factors requiring consideration when selecting a site for a nuclear power plant of two unit configuration, 1100 MWe per unit, cooling tower option."[34] At the beginning of the session, the nominal groups were asked to identify all sitting factors without regard to elements which

---

[32]Voelker, p. 2. [33]Ibid., p. 7. [34]Ibid., p. 12.

were or could be exclusionary. After this task was performed, a second requirement was given: From the initial list, the individuals in the group were asked to list exclusionary factors, (such as National Park Land) and continuous factors (such as construction costs). These factors would disqualify some tracts of land from being considered as power plant sites.

In the view of the participants and organizers of these nominal group meetings, the application of the Nominal Group Process to determine power plant sites was successful. The factor lists obtained were especially good when tested against comprehensiveness, reasonableness, agreement with the siting literature, and internal consistency. "This is particularly notable considering the fact that the structure of a well-organized Nominal Group Process does not allow the group leader to force the group toward these goals."[35]

The Oak Ridge Lab use of the Nominal Group Process concludes:

> . . . there is no inherent reason why the Nominal Group Process cannot be extended to siting any major facility, not just nuclear power plants. There is also the possibility that a broader spectrum of participants could be involved in the Process, for instance, the non-expert public. The potential for effective use of the Process has not begun to be tapped and is only limited by the imagination of possible users."[36]

The National Park Service first initiated the use of the Nominal Group Process in October, 1974, to help develop *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region*, a process described in detail in Chapter V. Since that time, the National Park Service has used the Nominal Group Process as a tool to explore issues

---

[35] Ibid., p. 25

[36] Ibid., p. 34

and develop guidelines for a number of their land areas. According to Jim Ryan, Public Information Specialist with the National Park Service, "people would not go to a citizen participation meeting unless they wanted to give information. The question is, how is the best way to get this information?"[37] The National Park Service makes frequent use of the Nominal Group Process because it brings individuals with different interests together to hear what each other has to say. Each is allowed to say what he wants to say and everyone else listens.

> It gives the citizens an opportunity to listen directly to each other's viewpoint and it makes them feel like they are a part of the planning process. This aspect promotes trust between the citizens and the agency.[38]

The National Park Service has used the Process as a citizen participation forum to obtain resource use priorities concerning the ultization of its territories. When information is sought concerning priorities for a large tract of park land such as the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, generally, it will be broad in scope and must be obtained in the very early planning stages. The information gathered is used in the context of existing federal laws and acts, and in conjunction with Park policy when considered for recommendations in a general management plan. The Nominal Group Process has been used in this manner for the planning of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Blue Ridge Parkway, Gulf Island National Seashore, and Cumberland Island National Seashore.

---

[37]Jim Ryan, Public Information Specialist, National Park Service, personal interview, February 11, 1977.

[38]Ibid.

The Park Service has tentative plans to use the Process as a means to obtain alternatives relating to specific issues concerning the utilization of its lands and areas. "The Nominal Group Process can be used to obtain information about alternatives for specific parts of a planning process."[39] This concept could be instituted after a draft of alternatives has been provided for the general public. The public could then consider these alternatives in nominal groups and thereby, from the public standpoint, determine the best alternative for the specific consideration. Mr. Ryan feels that the Nominal Group Process can be used by the National Park Service as a citizen participation forum to solicit two types of information: first, to rate the salient issues and problems concerning a Park Service territory and second, to set priorities of the preliminarily recommended alternatives so that the Park Service planners would be better able to contend with these issues and/or problems.[40]

The Tennessee Valley Authority has used the Nominal Group Process to develop land use guidelines for their Tims Ford Reservoir.[41] This product was achieved by involving the Tennessee Elk River Development Association (the local citizens' body responsible for the reservoir lands). The Association requested that TVA update the reservoir master plan and asked to be involved in developing this update. It also wanted flexible guidelines and not a "colored land use map." Several TVA

---

[39]Ibid. [40]Ibid.

[41]Robert Olson, Economist, Special Studies Section, Recreation Resources Branch, Tennessee Valley Authority, personal interview, February 8, 1977.

employees had previously participated in a Nominal Group Process meeting and suggested that the Association use the procedure to produce development guidelines for the Tims Ford Reservoir. The Association was receptive to this idea. "To have a workable product, the planning agency must incorporate the ideas of the local people so that it becomes their plan."[42] However, the validity of the product does depend on the knowledge of the participants. In this case, however, the participants had intimate knowledge of the task to be performed. The product was not as professional as it could have been, but "if it has a good chance of being implemented, then that is better than having a very professional plan with no chance of implementation."[43] The Association thus had a real part in developing workable guidelines for the Tims Ford Reservoir. Its members were satisfied with the product whereas, if the TVA planners had handed them a ready made map of reservoir land use optimization, the plan probably would never have materialized.[44] The people at TVA with whom the author spoke and who, for various purposes, had moderated or participated in the Nominal Group Process sessions, found that the product obtained from these sessions was as good or better than had been anticipated.

According to staff representatives, the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission has successfully used the Nominal Group

---

[42] Ibid.

[43] Elizabeth Howard, Ecologist, Land Analysis and Planning, Division of Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife Development, Tennessee Valley Authority, personal interview, February 8, 1977.

[44] Ibid.

Process as a citizen participation forum to obtain information in several areas of their planning responsibility. However, on at least one occasion the process did not function to the satisfaction of all parties involved. This particular occasion was one of a series of Continuing Community Conferences and was attended by approximately 125 citizens from Knoxville and Knox County. The Nominal Group Process was chosen for this conference because the Planning Commission wanted a more structured meeting in order to get the product desired, and hoped to accomplish this by controlling the number of people who would attend the conference.[45]

The issue addressed was "Harmonizing Urban Development with the Natural Environment."[46] The workshops, in which a modified Nominal Group Process was used, were designed to produce specific products "which should form the environmental agenda for the Metropolitan Planning Commission and other public agencies with environmental responsibilities."[47] The nominal groups developed a list of issues ranked by the participants according to the relative importance of each issue. The future application and implementation of these issues was not considered. As of this writing, these phases, which are contingent on many variables, are to be considered at a later date.[48]

---

[45]Kay Fendley, Planner, Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission, personal interview, February 24, 1977.

[46]The Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission, "Continuing Community Conference: Harmonizing Urban Development with the Natural Environment," January, 1977.

[47]"Conference on Harmonizing Urban Development with the Natural Environment," an agenda, Wednesday, October 27, 1976.

[48]Kay Fendley, personal interview.

Experts from various fields of environmental concerns were asked to give presentations and moderate the different nominal groups. However, insufficient time was allowed to properly train these experts on controlling and moderating a nominal group, and this was one of the main reasons why the nominal groups were not as successful as they could have been. Another problem was the size of the nominal groups. Each group there was composed of 25 or more people. It is extremely difficult to achieve the high level of controlled and spontaneous participant interaction, which is characteristic of the Nominal Group Process with a group of this size. There were "too many people, not enough money and not enough time" to conduct the Process.[49] Time was lacking to give adequate feedback of the issues list to the participants. Giving ample feedback is a most important characteristic of the Nominal Group Process.[50]

Although some individuals in the nominal groups appreciated the opportunity to participate, the general feeling was that the Nominal Group Process was not the best method for this particular situation. Stoloff suggests that it might have been better to have the "town hall, public hearing type of meeting" to fulfill the purposes of citizen participation for this conference.[51] He also suggested that although a workable product was obtained, the Metropolitan Planning Commission

---

[49]Ibid.

[50]David Stoloff, Housing and Planning Consultant, personal interview, February 11, 1977.

[51]Ibid.

does not anticipate using the Nominal Group Process again for similar purposes. The coordinators of the Conference believe that the Nominal Group Process is a good citizen participation forum but that it was not the best procedure for the purposes of the Conference because of time, financial, and trained personnel requirements.

According to the Planning Commission consultants for this Conference, the Nominal Group Process cannot be used effectively in situations in which the moderators of the nominal groups have preconceived ideas about what the product should be. Further, if ranking priority issues is the goal of the meeting, the moderators must approach this task as objectively as possible, avoiding the possibility of biased interests affecting the product. If specialists are requested to be moderators of nominal groups, they must dedicate a certain amoung of their time for training and must be committed to achieving an unbiased, nominal group product.[52]

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Nominal Group Process

The organizations, groups, agencies and/or individuals that seek to use the Nominal Group Process must understand the strengths and weaknesses which are characteristic of its application. Most individuals interviewed by the author stated that the Nominal Group Process had produced positive results for them in all instances to which it had been applied. As was the case with TVA personnel, the Process yielded results equal to or greater than the results anticipated. "However,

---

[52]Becky Kemmerer, Housing and Planning Consultant, personal interview, February 11, 1977.

to say that the Nominal Group Process is better or worse than other techniques depends on the objectives you are trying to achieve."[53] The strengths and weaknesses of the Process depends on these objectives as well as upon the degree of modification of the Process needs to obtain the results desired for the particular planning procedure.

The characteristic strengths and weaknesses of the Nominal Group Process are many. Perhaps its greatest strength lies in the high degree of interaction which is allowed all participants. Jim Ryan states that the Process "gives the participants an opportunity to listen directly to each other's viewpoint. It makes them feel like they are a part of the process and the exchange of ideas promotes trust between the participants and the represented agencies."[54] Delbecq asserts that when the participants meet in nominal groups face-to-face around a table, they become acquainted with each other and communicate directly with each other and with the group moderator.[55] Bob Olson states that a great strength of the Nominal Group Process is that the people who attend the meeting are "obligated" to participate," that the round-robin group interaction "forces" people to share thoughts and ideas, and that, because the participants become acquainted with each other and talk with one another, a group sense of "oneness" is obtained.[56]

---

[53]John Needy, Supervisor, Special Studies Section, Recreation Resources Branch, Tennessee Valley Authority, personal interview, January 25, 1977.

[54]Jim Ryan, personal interview.

[55]Andrew H. Van de Ven and André L. Delbecq, "The Comparative Effectiveness of Applied Group Decision-Making Processes," Unpublished paper, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

[56]Bob Olson, personal interview.

Needy alleges that this type of interaction establishes everyone on an equal basis even though they may be from different backgrounds.[57] Because of its interactive nature, the Nominal Group Process allows group members to "educate" one another; this constant flow of new information breaks down defensive barriers and creates a sense of group well-being whereas before there may have been hostility among certain members of the group.[58] This high degree of interaction is attained by limiting the number of participants in the nominal groups to a range of from 5 to 12 persons. This group size also promotes greater exploration of problem dimensions.[59]

Another important strength of the process lies in the nominal generation of information which mitigates status and conformity pressure on the part of group members toward other group members. The structure of the process does not allow group dominance by one or two persons.[60] Also, because of the independent voting mechanism in the Nominal Group Process, the more influential members or the ones who verbalize the most during the discussion may not command the group influence that they normally would.[61]

A third strength is displayed in the high degree of individual participant satisfaction. A person's ideas and problem statements are written on paper for all to see, and the participants develop a good

---

[57]John Needy, personal interview.

[58]Voelker, p. 27.

[59]Delbecq, *Group Techniques*, p. 69.

[60]Voelker, p. 28.

[61]Delbecq, *Group Techniques*, p. 79.

deal of individual pride and self-satisfaction in observing their ideas transcribed in front of the group.[62]

The products developed during a Nominal Group Process lend creditability for subsequent decision making procedures for planning processes and there is another strength. In certain types of planning, products are sought through objective discussion and interaction means; the Nominal Group Process reduces the possibility of arbitrariness in decision making. Thus the agency can claim a systematic procedure involving all persons necessary for the decision making process.[63] In certain planning processes in which a hypothesis has been proposed, the nature of the Process allows for the testing of the validity of this hypothesis. The interaction of participants from various fields of expertise in an interdisciplinary forum also allows for this testing.[64]

The Nominal Group Process provides quantitative data in terms of voted-on priorities and qualitative data in terms of rich descriptive discussion of the problem dimensions. This Process strength combines qualitative and quantitative data to create a situation in which decision makers and/or planning agency officials cannot easily ignore client priorities.[65] The product obtained in a nominal group meeting is usually in the form of a priority list. Because this is a "guide from

---

[62]Anderson.

[63]Voelker, p. 26.

[64]Ibid., p. 28.

[65]Delbecq, "A Group Process Model," p. 477.

the citizens," the planning agency stands a better chance to implement its planning process by giving credence, as it conforms with policies and procedures, to this citizen priority list.[66]

Another strength in the Nominal Group Process results from the satisfaction of participants who feel a high level of individual accomplishment.[67] Because of this sense of accomplishment in achieving a product, they have a greater degree of pride about their role in the Process and about the "task being brought to closure," or termination.[68]

The mechanics of the Nominal Group Process are flexible and can be modified and adapted to fit the needs of a particular planning process. Through this strength, the type of product desired can be obtained for use in the specific planning procedure. However, the basic elements of the Process (i.e. nominal group listing, round-robin interaction and a large group rating or ranking procedure) should not be omitted.

The nature of the nominal groups as problem-oriented rather than solution-oriented is another strength of the Process. It is necessary to maintain this attitude throughout the various sessions because "it appears to be a human tendency to seek solutions even before the problem is understood."[69] If the process is to maintain

---

[66]Van de Ven, "The Comparative Effectiveness of Applied Group Decision-Making Processes," p. 28.

[67]Delbecq, *Group Techniques for Program Planning*, p. x.

[68]Van de Ven, "Nominal Versus Interacting," p. 207.

[69]Ibid.

this "problem-mindedness," it must be highly structured and controlled by a person who has been trained to moderate it. The training of a person or persons to moderate a nominal group may require more time and money but the product will be more useful in the planning procedure.

Finally, there is the strength of instant feedback to the participants concerning the rating or ranking of priority problems or issues. A tabulation is taken while the large group session is still being conducted and the results of this tabulation are made known to all participants. This characteristic of the Nominal Group Process adds to the sense of meeting closure and participant satisfaction.

There are some weaknesses and limitations which are generally intrinsic with employing the Nominal Group Process as a forum for citizen participation. For one, the operation of the entire process takes a reasonable amount of time, usually from two to three hours.[70] This amount of time is usually necessary to achieve the product results desired.

The process "calls for certain physical facilities and leadership requirements which are not always readily available,"[71] and this can be considered a weakness. Juxtaposed with these requirements is the possible cost of renting facilities, the time and money required to train leaders and the cost to participants for traveling to and from the meeting site.[72]

---

[70] Olson, personal interview.

[71] Delbecq, *Group Techniques for Program Planning*, p. 81.

[72] Olson.

The Nominal Group Process "can deal with only one question at a time, so that it is a single-purpose technique."[73] Consequently, a nominal group is generally not able to address problems at different scales of planning, and that, too, can be a weakness of the process. The response question or statement which is given to the nominal group members dictates the product sought and the level of planning for which it is sought. The scale of the participant responses cannot be controlled because the moderator is not allowed to demand consistency of scale.[74] Therefore, the question or statement for which responses are sought must be worded so that the participant product desired is in fact the one obtained.

Another weakness which could jeapordize the product of planning processes is method of selecting participants.[75] Generally, the participants are either randomly selected or are invited by open invitation. The type of strategy used to obtain participants depends on the type of citizen participation product needed for the planning process. If a random selection of participants is desired, a problem may develop in obtaining a good attendance.[76] Some selected people may not be able to attend the meeting while others may not wish to do so. An open invitation, on the other hand, involves the problem of planning for an undetermined number of people. How many moderators must be trained, how big a facility is needed, and the accompanying logistics needed to accommodate the participants in order to achieve the desired

---

[73]Delbecq, *Group Techniques for Program Planning*, p. 81.

[74]Voelker, p. 29. [75]Anderson. [76]Ryan.

product must also be determined.[77] Open meetings, because of their nature, will also attract people who have biases for or against the planning effort.[78]

A fifth weakness is that even though nominal groups may generate a large quantity of ideas and stimulate a high level of group satisfaction, the mechanics of the process cannot guarantee that the results will be accepted as any more valid than the results from any other process.[79] "Problem-oriented decisions [obtained during the Process] have to be judged by both acceptability and quality. Organizational acceptance is based on many variables on which quality is but one."[80] The Nominal Group Process must be analyzed and used on the basis of producing a needed product in a certain planning process and not as a panacea for obtaining needed citizen participation products in all substate planning processes.

This description of the Nominal Group Process gives the reader operational guidelines for use of the Process. A substate agency should consider this process for inclusion in a comprehensive citizen participation program. This process has been used by a number of organizations to solicit various types of information. Chapter V describes the Nominal Group Process as it was employed in a citizen participation forum to help develop *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region.*

---

[77] Ibid. [78] Ibid.

[79] Van de Ven, "The Comparative Effectiveness," p. 7.

[80] Ibid.

CHAPTER V

A CASE STUDY

A History of the Process and the Author's Involvement

A unique plan evolved from the Process which set the guidelines for the Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region. The National Park Service periodically prepares "master plans" to guide management and development of the lands and areas in its system. The decision to update the master plan for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park was made in the spring of 1973 because it had become apparent by that time that the park and its surrounding region were inseparable. For this reason, the Park Service decided that the development of a park plan which did not also contain considerations for the influence area of the park would be considerably less than comprehensive.[1]

Meetings sponsored by the Park Service were held at various sites surrounding the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The influence area of the park was somewhat arbitrarily designated as 13 counties: five in Tennessee and eight in North Carolina. The North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources and the East Tennessee Development District accepted responsibility for coordinating efforts

---

[1]Great Smokies Regional Planning Team, *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region*, Department of Housing and Urban Development and Appalachian Regional Commission, June, 1975, p. 1.

in their respective states. The author assumed the role of coordinator for the staff of the East Tennessee Development District in September, 1974.

All agencies involved in the process agreed to set guidelines for the area on a regional base rather than prepare a definitive plan for all 13 counties. The guidelines would be confined to assessing for "recreational development potential of the region by the year 1990."[2] Implementation efforts, which are still underway, would be coordinated among all local, state, substate, regional, federal, and private agencies participating in the development of guidelines.

Various roles and requirements became clearer as the project progressed. Some changes were made in the activities of the planning participants. One of these was an important and beneficial organizational change which took place in October, 1974, when Western Carolina University and the University of Tennessee joined the research effort. One of the eight major steps in the development of the guidelines was the "identification of priorities of citizens and elected officials."[3] The identification of county and area problems and the assignment of priorities for their solution by citizens and elected officials of the region during the development of the guidelines is believed to be innovative in planning.[4] The Nominal Group Process was chosen as the forum obtaining information from the citizens. Various faculty members at the two universities were responsible for the operation of this process.

---

[2]Ibid., p. 3. [3]Ibid., p. 4. [4]Ibid., p. 5.

The author was an observer at one location during its phase of the Nominal Group Process which were held in November and December, 1974, in which responses were written on paper by the participants, and participated in the open discussion sessions among citizens and elected officials which were held in May and June, 1975. For purposes of obtaining the guidelines, responses from both sets of meetings were used to help develop priorities, goals, and possible implementation strategies for the immediate area for the region as a whole.

Question Used to Solicit Participant Responses

The question chosen for soliciting responses from the citizens and elected officials was developed at a meeting held in Denver, Colorado, in September, 1974. This meeting was attended by professor Steve Webster, University of Tennessee School of Social Work, and Drs. Frank Faulk and Donald Brodie, Professors at the University of Denver Department of Sociology. Professor Webster had been contracted to arrange the citizen participation meetings in the five Tennessee counties, and was also to train the personnel who would conduct the Nominal Group Process meetings. Professors Faulk and Brodie were consultants for the Denver Service Center which develops master plans and designs studies for National Park Service territories.

These men wanted the question to be as simple and easy to understand as possible. They also wanted to elicit a wide range of responses. The question they developed was: "What do you feel will be the major problems which need to be solved in the next 15 years to make

your county the kind of place in which you want to continue to live?"[5] This question, according to these professors, was open-ended enough so as not to possibly bias or affect any of the responses and was not so narrow in scope that certain responses would not be given. According to Webster, the question worked out "pretty well"[6] in that it gave all participants an equal opportunity to respond to what each one thought the characteristics of their county should be to make it a better place to live. On the other hand, the question did not allow participants to respond directly to the issue of how coordinated guidelines for recreation resource use in the Great Smokies Region should be developed.

Selection of the Participants

The method used to select the participants was, according to Steve Webster, "the worst part of the whole thing"[7] (the "whole thing" being the citizen participation process). Initially, the participants were to be picked at random from area telephone directories. However, one member of the planning team suggested that this method would result in an unfair sex bias because "most" phone numbers were listed in a man's name. Therefore, the method finally decided upon was to generate totally random numbers on a computer. According to Webster, the "terrible part" was that of the total number of computer-generated phone numbers called, 25 percent did not exist, 25 percent were not

---

[5]Nurick, p. 13.

[6]Steve Webster, former professor, University of Tennessee School of Social Work, personal interview, January 7, 1977.

[7]Ibid.

answered, 25 percent resulted in disinterested answers, and only 25 percent obtained respondents who said they would come. Of the last 25 percent, only one-third (about 8 percent of the total calls made) actually came to the meetings. This lack of response was especially frustrating to the persons who did the telephoning. In addition, the whole process, and especially the citizen participation phase had been so tightly scheduled that there was very little time for notifying the participants of the meeting dates and the actual meetings themselves.

Although randominess was sought in the participant selection process, bias was not eliminated. The fact that only a small percentage of the people called actually came to the meetings indicates a possible vested interest in the impact that the guidelines might have on their lives. Webster stated that generally the people who attended the meetings were those who had a certain amount of power in the community,[8] and/or had confidence in the government's ability to improve the general quality of community life.

The method of computer-generated telephone numbers for selecting participants was the most difficult part of the citizen participation processes according to Webster. The endeavor would have been more successful in terms of number of people who participated if a different method had been used.[9]

Conduct of Participation Sessions

The Nominal Group Process was somewhat modified for this planning procedure so as to meet specific needs for development of the guidelines.

---

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

In addition, time contraints did not allow use of the full process and the procedure described in Chapter IV was not stringently followed. The participation sessions were conducted as follows:

1. The participants were assembled and a brief introduction was given by the coordinator; the purpose of the meeting was explained and the question for which responses were sought was given to the participants; it was explained that responses were to be written in order of personal priorities and in silence.

2. The participants were divided into smaller groups of about six persons who were given a period of time (usually 15 to 20 minutes) to write their answers to the question described earlier in this chapter.

3. Members of each smaller group presented their responses to that group in a round-robin procedure; responses were recorded by the group leader on flip-charts so that each person's response to a certain priority was given equal weight.

4. After a short break, the whole group reassembled to discuss the items on all flip-charts; priorities were not condensed but were given as the participants had expressed them.

5. Each participant was requested to list nominally on 3 x 5 cards those items on the flip-charts which are considered most important by a rating of one to five; the votes were collected, tabulated on the flip-charts, and the results shared with the group.

6. All priorities were discussed; each participant was asked to re-rank the priorities and then to rate his new listing using a value of 100 to the priority he felt most important down to zero

for the least important; from these new ratings, a group consensus was obtained and this information shared with the whole group.

Analysis of Responses

The responses and priority ratings of the participants were sent to the Denver Service Center of the National Park Service for analysis by the planners and other professionals. (The Denver center was selected because this agency had provided the original impetus behind the planning process and the National Park Service was financing the total planning procedure.) According to Webster, the answers given by the participants were "pretty good."[10] For purposes of simplification, results from the process were grouped into societal categories.

A wide range of responses from the citizens and officials resulted from these meetings and many were surprising to the planners. Some participants expressed a need for land use controls, particularly the need for flood plain and wet land use controls. The control of inadequate and unneeded subdivisions of land was considered important. Considerable response, both pro and con, was expressed on the impact which large numbers of tourists have on local areas and the region as a whole.

Many responses concerned building new transportation arteries or upgrading existing roads. In this same context, mass transit was discussed as a possibility for certain areas of the region. A number of responses expressed a desire to disperse the tourist industry into areas of the region which presently lack this industry.

---

[10] Ibid.

The impact which the Park has on the region also aroused comment. Concern was expressed that the relationship between Park management and local governments was not as intimate as it should be and it was suggested that communication lines should become more open to facilitate trust and understanding. A priority list of responses from the Tennessee meetings, North Carolina meetings, and a regional list from all 13-counties is given in Appendix A.

Even though the purpose of the whole planning process was to develop recreational guidelines for the 13-county area, recreation had an aggregate rank of only 10 out of a possible 15 on the regional priority list. The planners "went into the citizen participation meetings with blinders on to make a recreation plan and they came out with blinders on to make a recreation plan."[11] According to Anderson, "the evaluation [of the citizen's responses by the planners] was rather superficial."[12] Webster stated, "the problem lies with the planners and not the citizens."[13]

The responses used to develop the guidelines were obtained from two sets of meetings; the first set was held in November and December of 1974. Two meetings were held in each county in this first round, one for citizens and one for elected officials. These meetings were held before guidelines were developed.

---

[11] Ibid.

[12] Anderson, personal interview.

[13] Webster, personal interview.

The second set took place in May and June of 1975. The citizens and elected officials who had attended the previous set were invited and an open invitation was extended to the general public. One meeting was held in each of the five Tennessee counties during this round.

The second set of meetings occurred after a preliminary draft of the guidelines had been completed so that a basic outline could be presented. Comments and suggestions from citizens and elected officials were recorded on flip-charts during these sessions. As stated earlier in this chapter, the Nominal Group Process was modified to meet the specific needs of this planning process.

Participants at both rounds of meetings were given questionnaires in which they were asked to elucidate their attitudes toward the meetings. Composite answers from these questionnaires (shown in Appendix B) indicate that the participants viewed the meetings as "worthwhile and challenging, moderately fun, and minimally disorganized and confusing."[14] In terms of satisfaction rankings, this places the meetings in the satisfactory to highly satisfactory category and indicates that the participants considered the meetings were successful. The participants were asked to evaluate the "worth of input" of individuals at the meetings. Generally, each person evaluated his own participation as having more worth than that of the individuals conducting the meetings and also of more worth than that of the other participants. This indicates that the participants felt individually satisfied with the experience and believed they had contributed valid, relevant information.

---

[14]"Regional Agenda Planning," p. 11.

Inclusion of the Responses in the Recreation Guidelines for the Great Smokies Region

The responses of citizens and elected officials generated at the first round of meetings were distributed to two planning workshop sessions.

The purpose of these workshops was to develop and draft the guidelines document for the Great Smokies Region. The first workshop in April lasted for a week. It was an intense planning session, almost to the point of being a charrette. Members of the planning team were divided into smaller workshop groups and brainstorming was used to list ideas and make recommendations. Members of the team rotated among the brainstorming sessions to obtain maximum use of each individual's expertise. The development of the guidelines was not completed at this first workshop session. A second workshop of three days, held in May, was not as intense as the first. It was here that the task of drafting the guidelines document was completed.

It took the coordination and cooperation of members of the planning team, (consisting of approximately 75 people from 25 organizations) to develop the guidelines.[15] The participants represented federal, state, regional, and local units of governments, citizens organizations, and private business.

The planning team determined that there were five alternative strategies for the development of regional recreational guidelines. These alternatives were:

---

[15]Susan F. Taylor, *A Documentation of the Great Smoky Mountains Park Cooperative Planning Effort*, prepared for the Denver Service Center, National Park Service, April, 1975, p. 3.

1. Pursue current policies and practices;
2. Maximize recreational development;
3. Minimize environmental deterioration;
4. Maximize economic growth, and
5. Balance economic growth and environmental quality.[16]

Relying on the expertise of the planning team, a ranking system was developed to determine which of the alternatives would be the basis for development of the guidelines. Alternative number five received the highest ranking and so the planning team determined that a strategy of "balanced economic growth and environmental quality" would have the greatest positive impact on the Great Smoky Mountains Region. Despite this selection, the analytical process actually used by the planning team was heavily weighted toward the development of recreational activities and facilities.[17] This strategy was determined after the meetings in which the priorities of citizens and elected officials were obtained from the first round of nominal groyp sessions. These participants did not have an opportunity to react to the development of recreational strategies for the region, the guidelines report "does not do a good job of saying to what extent the priorities were taken into account at the workshops."[18] However, the report states that "the guidelines for development of the region's recreation potential . . .

---

[16]Great Smokies Regional Planning Team, p. 93.

[17]Ibid., p. 99.

[18]Needy, personal interview.

were reached by addressing the identified priority issues as closely as possible."[19]

The aggregate regional priority list from the citizens and elected officials placed recreation in perspective in the people's lives. This perspective led the planning team to realize that the development of the guidelines must be more than "saying that all regional problems revolve around recreation or that solving the recreation problems will solve all other problems."[20] Although the objective of the workshops was to develop regional recreational guidelines, this recreational perspective was used to determine how recreational development could be the impetus for solving other problems which had a higher priority, such as better roads or more job opportunities.

"Participants [in the citizens and elected official meetings] were not directed to consider the future in the context of recreation."[21] Accordingly, Needy stated that "if a question had been posed that dealt specifically with recreation needs, then we, i.e. the planning team, could have produced something which could have been more useful."[22] Such responses could have been applied directly to the development of the guidelines. "It may, in retrospect, have been good to ask two

---

[19]Great Smokies Regional Planning Team, p. 82.

[20]Needy, personal interview.

[21]Great Smokies Regional Planning Team, p. 81.

[22]Needy, personal interview.

different questions to the participants in the nominal groups. First, the general question which was asked and then the specific question which would have applied to recreation."[23]

The guidelines, which were completed in August, 1977, have been considered, discussed, and evaluated by a number of groups. The "selling" process by the planners is expected to take quite some time.

The guideline recommendations have already had a direct impact on two other planning processes. In Swain County, North Carolina, some of the specific county recreational opportunities expressed in the guidelines are being used to direct future recreational development. In the second instance, the National Park Service is using guideline recommendations for the development of various sections in the planning process to update the general management plan and environmental assessment of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The use of the Nominal Group Process to develop the *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resources Use in the Great Smokies Region* was quite different from the traditional ways citizen participation is solicited by substate agencies in this area. Process participant responses were generally very favorable. For this planning process, an alternative method for soliciting participants should have been used--possibly that of an open invitation to the general public. Also, a different question could have been presented to the participants. The question which was asked did not allow participants to respond to the intent of the document, i.e. recreation resource use for the Great Smokies Region.

---

[23]Ibid.

Although problems did arise, as a whole, the use of the Nominal Group Process in this instance was beneficial.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This thesis is written in an attempt to give the reader general information about substate planning and citizen participation. It focuses primarily on the study of a particular citizen participation technique, the Nominal Group Process.

Summary

Chapter I, which dwells on introductory material, notes that no single generally accepted citizen participation process exists for use at the substate level of planning for meeting participant demands and/or provides openness and results considered valid by all participants involved. The purpose of this thesis is to determine if the Nominal Group Process can be used to fulfill these requirements.

Chapter II contains a description of the characteristics of substate planning agencies and the general planning problems which these agencies encounter. The roles which citizen participation performs and the obstacles these agencies encounter in obtaining this participation are also described. From the data, it was concluded that the establishment of a citizen participation program to overcome public fears and doubts is a real need of substate agencies. Such a program can also bring substate issues to the attention of state and federal officials as well as to the area citizenry.

Chapter III discusses various citizen participation processes, including the Nominal Group Process. A conceptual framework compares

these processes in terms of their usefulness in promoting citizen participation in substate planning. The Nominal Group Process is presented as one of many possible techniques to be considered by a substate agency for incorporation into a total citizen participation program.

Chapter IV explains the Nominal Group Process as developed by Dr. André Delbercq and Andrew Van de Ven. Uses of the Nominal Group Process and its strength and weaknesses as a citizen participation forum in substate planning are also explored.

Chapter V examines the Nominal Group Process as it was utilized in a citizen participation forum called for the purpose of helping to develop *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region.*

There are probably many salient, valid questions concerning the relationships of citizen participation processes and the scope of substate planning than there are satisfactory responses to these questions. This thesis is an attempt to illuminate some of the reasons that these questions are difficult to respond to in an effective manner. Carson states that it is "technically, morally, and practically wise for a substate agency to seek citizen participation for their programs and projects."[1] Wise, yes; but when a substate agency develops a citizen participation program, it must be committed to involving all who desire to participate and it must either use the information that is received

---

[1]Carson, personal interview.

or relay reasons why it can not be used. "Before the first citizen participation meeting, the agency planners must decide what they expect to get from citizen participation, how they propose to get it and what will be done with it."[2]

These factors have a great deal to do with the general attitudes planners and citizens have for each other. These attitudes, because of the basic nature of the citizenery, are frequently manifest in the local politics of the area or in state politics. Policies which the planning agency makes bestow benefits or costs, depending on the people's values. "The act of selecting between opposing values to determine a policy that affects a number of people is essentially a political act. This is why there is a demand by the public to participate in these decisions."[3] The substate planning agency should recognize and meet this demand because one of the keys to effective citizen participation and product, and for plan implementation is the early involvement in the planning and decision making process of state representatives, locally elected officials, interest groups, and concerned citizens.[4]

A substate planning agency must seek to employ participation processes which will result in a usable, viable product and which will

---

[2]U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waterways Study: An Evaluation*, Institute for Water Resources, (June, 1972), p. 12.

[3]Synergy, p. 26.

[4]U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Public Participation*, p. 32.

allow participants the freedom to present this product. Hornback states, however, that "impromptu citizen involvement programs and traditional public hearings" do not enable consensus information and problem resolution. Effective public involvement requires conscious efforts by members of the public, public officials (and the planning agency staff). . . ."[5] A substate agency requires a comprehensive citizen participation program which can be conducted, for the most part, by the agency staff. This program should contain a number of participation processes so that the agency can be flexible in its efforts to obtain the information desired. One of these processes could be the Nominal Group Technique.

The Nominal Group Process has been used in a wide variety of planning processes and situations. Health care administration is one of the first areas where the Process was applied. In one early instance, Guam was the site for Process meetings which included participants from a variety of socioeconomic levels and cultures. The women involved as participants were initially embarrassed because of their inability to speak English. However, the skilled group leader was able to rest their fears, and by the end of the process, the women took great satisfaction in the work they had accomplished.[6] An evaluation of the Nominal Group Process in these situations concluded that the

---

[5]Kenneth E. Hornback, "Overcoming Obstacles to Agency and Public Involvement: A Program and Its Methods," Division of Planning, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado, (1976), p. 1.

[6]Delbecq, *Group Techniques*, p. xi.

Process had afforded (1) a greater flow of ideas when compared with traditional meetings; (2) fuller participation of all those involved in contrast to other settings; (3) an increased sense of the task obtaining closure; and (4) an evident sense of satisfaction on the part of the participants about the first three accomplishments.[7]

Gustafson, et al. has evaluated four process methods of eliciting subjective likelihood ratio estimates. These processes and an example of each were: estimate (survey interviews), talk-estimate (brain-storming), estimate-talk-estimate (Nominal Group Technique) and estimate-feedback-estimate (Delphi).[8] Information collected for the study showed that "group discussion contributes something over and above the statistical pooling of individual contributions."[9] This particular study concluded that the estimate-talk-estimate group process was superior to the other three processes in approaching correct estimates in the judgemental task. This conclusion is consistent with other comparable research on the subject and supports the nominal group of Delbecq and Van de Ven.[10] According to Voelker, "the Nominal Group Process has been shown to be superior in the high quality of group ideas as measured by creativity, originality and practicality."[11] However, various authorities agree that the Nominal Group Process is not a

---

[7]Ibid., p. x.

[8]David H. Gustafson, et al., "A Comparative Study of Differences in Subjective Likelihood Estimated Made by Individuals, Interacting Groups, Delphi Groups and Nominal Groups," *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, Vol. 9, (1973), p. 281.

[9]Ibid. [10]Ibid. [11]Voelker, p. e.

panacea to overcome all problems of small group process; it must be used with discrimination as a part of the substate agency citizen participation program.[12]

Conclusions

As was introduced in Chapter IV, the Nominal Group Process can be used as a participation forum by substate agencies. The first session is a citizen participation process designed to solicit information from the public. Participants are obtained by issuing an open invitation to the general public or by contacting a random sample of area residents.

The responses elicited from this session are employed in another session of the Process attended by a different group of people. This group consists of organizational experts involved in the planning projects, includes planners, engineers, planning consultants, specialists, and technicians from various fields.

Recommendations and responses from these two meetings can be used by participants in still another Nominal Group Process session. This session includes participants who represent financial and/or administrative agencies or organizations. The procedure outlined above is a suggested framework for the use of the Nominal Group Process. Its flexibility enhances its value as a decision making tool in many different situations.

---

[12]Delbecq, p. xii.

As an outcome of this study, the author concludes that:

1. The Nominal Group Process can be applied to substate planning problems, concepts and projects in areas of goal definition, priority setting, and decision-making;

2. When compared with other participation processes, the process is as effective or more effective at soliciting citizen attitudes, feelings, and input;

3. The ideas, priorities and decision generated from the Nominal Group Process will have an equal or better chance of being implemented as compared to those generated during other citizen participation process;

4. Even though it is not a panacea, the Nominal Group Process should be considered by a substate agency for inclusion in a total citizen participation program.

Some principles which should guide a substate agency in designing a citizen participation program are:

1. The process communicates relationship. The structure of the program tells more about what is felt about the public than what is said.
2. Visibility maintains confidence. Keep everything completely out in the open.
3. It is the agency's job to learn the public's language, not theirs to learn how the agency communicates.
4. Emotional data is also valid data. Feelings should be accepted as equally legitimate with factual information.
5. Public participation is substantially shaped by what the public understands to be possible. The agency should use its expertise to create options rather than close them.
6. Professional training provides expertise in analyzing the implications of value decisions. However, professionals are just "people" when they have to choose among alternative values.

7. The agency should clearly identify the scope and limits of its authority to make decisions based on the information obtained from the citizen during the participation process.[13]

Another author states:

> Citizen participation activities are never automatic and easy. They require time, money, understanding and good will. They require an openness and respect for the ideas of others and most importantly a willingness to listen. . . . Although neat and precise answers do not always result, plans, recommendations and decisions that have been developed through an effective process of citizen participation will be of a higher quality and more likely to be implemented.[14]

Recommendations for Future Research

As a result of this research, the author believes that there are at least two areas which can be explored in depth. An in-depth research and analysis of the process in Chapter III should be performed and a more definitive matrix should be produced. One element of the methodology for additional research could be to distribute questionnaires to various experts for them to rank and/or rate the processes for use in substate planning.

A second area of exploration could be that of determining the citizen participation process which could best be utilized for each type of planning performed by a substate agency. A recommended guide describing the nature and procedure of these processes would be extremely useful for planners who must solicit responses through group processes for their programs.

---

[13]Synergy, p. 49.

[14]National Association of Regional Councils, *Regional Council Communications*, p. 33.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. *Hearings on Substate Regionalism.* Vol. VI, March, 1974.

Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations. *Regional Decision Making: New Strategies for Substate Districts.* Vol. I, Washington, D. C., October, 1973.

Bodine, John W. "The Indispensable One-hundredth of One Percent." *Taming Megalopolis.* Ed. By H. Wentworth Eldredge, New York, Doubleday and Co., 1967.

Delbecq, Andre and André Van de Ven. *Group Techniques for Program Planning.* Glenviey, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Co., March, 1975.

Glass, James J. *Regional Planning and Politics.* The Bureau of Public Administration, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 1973.

Ross, Charles R. "Public Participation and Decision-Making" *Urban Planning in Transition,* New York: Grossman Publishers, 1970.

Schimpeler, Charles C. *A Decision Theoretic Approach to Weighing Community Development Criteria and Evaluation of Alternative Plans.* Dissertation Purdue University, 1967.

Seaver, R. C. "The Dilemma of Citizen Participation." *Citizen Participation in Urban Development.* Vol. II, Washington, D. C., 1968.

Spiegel, Hans B. C. "Citizen Participation in Federal Programs: A Review." *Perspectives on the American Community.* New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1973.

Spiegel, Hans B. C. *Citizen Participation in Urban Development: Vol. I - Concepts and Issues.* Washington, D. C.: National Institute for Applied Behavioral Science, 1968.

Verba, Sidney and Norman H. Hie. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality.* New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

Ward, Keith J. *Metropolitan Cooperation and Coordination:* Tennessee *Councils of Government.* The Bureau of Public Administration. The University of Tennessee, 1972.

Whittick, Arnold. *Encyclopedia of Urban Planning.* New York: McGraw-Hill Company, 1974.

B. PERIODICALS

Altshire, Robert A. "Planning and Citizen Participation: Costs, Benefit and Approaches." *Urban Affairs Quarterly,* June, 1970.

Arnstein, Sherry R. "A Ladder of Citizen Participation." *Journal of The American Institute of Planners,* July, 1969.

Burke, Edmund M. "Citizen Participation Strategies." *Journal of the American Institute of Planners,* Vol. XXXIV, September, 1968.

Cleveland, Harlan. "How Do You Get Everyone in on the Act and Still Get Some Action?" *Educational Record,* Vol. 55, No. 3, Summer, 1974.

Crenson, Matthew. "Organizational Factors in Citizen Participation." *Journal of Politics,* Vol. XXXVI, May, 1974.

Delbecq, André L. "A Group Process Model for Problem Identification and Program Planning." *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science,* Vol. 7, No. 4, 1971.

Gustafson, David W., et al. "A Comparative Study of Differences in Subjective Likelihood Estimated by Individuals, Interacting Groups, Delphi Groups and Nominal Groups." *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance,* Vol. 9, 1973.

Holloman, Charles O. and Hal W. Hendrick. "Adequacy of Group Decisions as a Function of the Decision-Making Process." *Academy of Management Journal,* Vol. 15, June, 1972.

Taylor, D. W., et al. "Does Group Participation When Using Brainstorming Facilitate or Inhibit Creative Thinking?" *Administrative Science Quarterly,* Vol. 3, 1958.

Van De Ven, Andrew and André L. Delbecq. "Nominal Versus Interacting Group Processes for Committee Decision-Making Effectiveness." *Journal of the Academy of Management,* Vol. 14, No. 2, June, 1971.

Van De Ven, Andrew and André L. Delbecq. "The Nominal Group as a Research Instrument for Exploratory Health Studies." *American Journal of Public Health*, March, 1972.

C. PUBLISHED ARTICLES AND REPORTS

Doeksen, Gerald A., et al. "*The Role of Multicounty Development Districts in Rural Areas.*" U. S. Department of Agriculture, Report No. 307, August, 1975.

Fairfax, Sally. *Public Involvement: Our Evaluation of the Southern Region Forest Service.* 1975.

Great Smokies Regional Planning Team. *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource use in the Great Smokies Region.* U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Appalachian Regional Commission, June, 1975.

Handbook for Regional Councils in West Virginia. Planning and Development Department, Office of Federal-State Relations, Charleston, West Virginia, May, 1972.

Heberlein, Thomas A. *Principles of Public Involvement for National Park Service Planners and Managers,* Prepared for the National Park Service, Park Planning Task Force, June, 1975.

Malone, David W. and Roland R. Kessler. *Analysis of Approaches to Later Functional Priority Setting for Capital Expenditures.* Battelle, Columbus, Ohio, June 6, 1975.

Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area. *Regional Politics in the Twin Cities.* September, 1976.

National Association of Regional Councils. *Current Policies and Proposed Changes.* June 8, 1976.

National Association of Regional Councils. *Regional Council Communications.* Washington, D. C., January, 1973.

South Carolina Appalachian Regional Planning and Development Commission. *Sketch Plan: South Carolina Appalachian Region.* October, 1970.

Synergy. *Citizen Participation: Public Involvement Skills Work Book.*

Taylor, Susan F. *A Documentation of the Great Smoky Moutains Park Cooperative Planning Effort.* Prepared for the Denver Service Center, National Park Service, April, 1975.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. *Public Participation in Water Resources Planning.* IRW Report 70-7, December, 1970.

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. *Public Workshops on the Puget Sound and Adjacent Waterways Study: An Evaluation.* Institute for Water Resources, June, 1972.

U. S. Department of Commerce. *Substate Districting.* Annual Conference of the Council of State Planning Agencies, Lexington, Kentucky, August 6-9, 1974.

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *State Planning Intergovernmental Policy Coordination, Executive Summary.* Washington, D. C., August, 1976.

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Urban Renewal Handbook.* Washington, D. C., 1975.

D. UNPUBLISHED ARTICLES

Appalachian Regional Commission. "Establishment of Local-State-Federal Program Management Development System." Memorandom, March 7, 1969.

"Assessment of Alternative Workshops." U. S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, January 28, 1977.

"Conference on Harmonizing Urban Development with the Natural Environment." An Agenda, Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission, October 27, 1976.

Dorris, J. David. "Public Relations and Involvement in the Planning Process." Unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Tennessee, 1967.

Godschalk, David R. "Public Participation in Areawide Waste Treatment Management." Prepared for Triangle J. Council of Governments, Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, September, 1974.

Hornback, Kenneth E. "Overcoming Obstacles to Agency and Public Involvement: A Program and Its Methods." Division of Planning, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, Denver, Colorado, 1976.

Kyles, Steve. "Review of Tennessee Regional Planning Enabling Legislation." Prepared by Tennessee Chapter, American Institute of Planners, February, 1976.

Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission. "Continuing Community Conference: Harmonizing Urban Development With the Natural Environment." January, 1977.

McClendon, Bruce W. and John A. Lewis. "Maximizing Citizen Participation in the Development of Goals for a Comprehensive Plan: The Corpus Christi, Texas Experience." Submitted at the 57th Annual Conference, American Institute of Planners, 1975.

Hurick, Robin Z. "The Impact of Citizen Participation on Planning: History, Criticism and Implications." The University of Tennessee, School of Social Work, Planning 4100, November 26, 1974.

Piedmont Triad Council of Governments and U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. "Proceedings: Regionalism 70's Conference."

"Regional Planning Agenda." The University of Tennessee School of Social Work, April 1, 1975.

Runyan, Dean. "Community Managed Approaches to Social Impact Assessment." Presented to the American Institute of Planners, 57th Annual Conference, October, 1975.

"Tennessee's Development District Program." Agricultural Extension Service, Institute of Agriculture, The University of Tennessee.

Van de Ven, André H. and Andre L. Delbecq. "A Planning Process for Development of Complex Regional Programs." Submitted at the 67th Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, August, 1972.

Van Deven, Andrew and Andre L. Delbecq. "The Comparative Effectiveness of Applied Group Decision-Making Processes." Unpublished Paper, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

Vetter, Caroline C. W. "Regional Citizen Participation: Myth or Reality? The New Orleans Transportation Experience." Presented at the 57th Annual Conference, American Institute of Planners, 1975.

Voekler, A. H. "Facility Sitting: An Application of the Nominal Group Process." Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Regional and Urban Studies Section, April, 1976.

Webster, Stephen A. "Citizen Involvement in Land Use Planning for Rural Development." Paper Presented at Planning Frontiers in Rural America, Boone, North Carolina, March, 1975.

E. INTERVIEWS

Anderson, John. Executive Director, East Tennessee Development District. Personal Interview, January 13, 1976.

Carson, Suzy. Communications Officer, East Tennessee Development District. Personal Interview, April 21, 1977.

Fendley, Kay. Planner, Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission. Personal Interview, February 24, 1977.

Gober, James. Chief, Regional Planning Staff, Tennessee Valley Authority. Personal Interview, April 22, 1977.

Grimm, Pam. Research Director, East Tennessee Development District. Personal Interview, May 21, 1977.

Howard, Elizabeth. Ecologist, Land Analysis and Planning, Division of Forestry, Fisheries and Wildlife Development, Tennessee Valley Authority. Personal Interview, February 8, 1977.

Kemmerer, Rebecca. Housing and Planning Consultant. Personal Interview, February 11, 1977.

Needy, John L. Supervisor, Special Studies Section, Recreation Resources Branch, Tennessee Valley Authority. Personal Interview, January 25, 1977.

Olson, Robert. Economist, Special Studies Section, Recreation Resources Branch, Tennessee Valley Authority. Personal Interview, February 8, 1977.

Ryan, James. Public Information Specialist, Southeast Regional Office National Park Service. Personal Interview, February 11, 1977.

Stoloff, David. Housing and Planning Consultant. Personal Interview, February 11, 1977.

Webster, Steve. Former Professor, The University of Tennessee School of Social Work. Personal Interview, January 17, 1977.

F. LETTERS

Dr. André L. Delbecq, Professor, School of Business, University of Wisconsin Madison, Wisconsin. Personal correspondence between Dale Austin and Dr. Delbecq, January 25, 1977.

Kenneth Hornback, Staff Sociologist, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U. S. Department. Personal correspondence between Dale Austin and Mr. Hornback, February 1, 1977.

Charles F. Riebe, Civil Engineer, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, U. S. Department of Interior. Personal correspondence between Dale Austin and Mr. Riebe, March 25, 1977.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PRIORITY LISTS

Item
1. Better Roads and Travel.
2. More Doctors and Medical Facilities.
3. More Industry and Jobs.
4. Better Education and Facilities.
5. Begin Zoning.
6. Abate Pollution of Streams and Lakes.
7. Adequate Water and Sewage Systems.
8. Better Waste and Trash Disposal.
9. More Planning (Regional).
10. More Recreation and Facilities.
11. Better Government.
12. Improved Relationship Between Park Service and Counties.
13. Better Law Enforcement.
14. Better Health and Welfare Services.
15. Solve Park Lands and Monetary Problems.

Figure 1. Regional Priority List*

Adapted from *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region*, June 1975.

*Combined list - elected officials and citizens.

Item
1. Begin Zoning.
2. Better Schools and Education.
3. More Doctors and Health Care.
4. Better Roads.
5. Better Waste and Trash Disposal.
6. More Industry and Employment.
7. Abate Pollution and Protect Environment.
8. Need for Comprehensive Planning.
9. Better Government.
10. Need for Mass Transportation.
11. Better Health and Welfare.
12. Better Law Enforcement.
13. Adequate Utilities and Water.

Figure 2. Tennessee Priority List.*

*Combined list - elected officials and citizens.

Adapted from *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region*, June 1975.

Item
1. Better Roads and Travel.
2. More Industry and Jobs.
3. Adequate Water and Sewage Systems.
4. More Doctors, Medical Facilities, and Health Services.
5. Abate Pollution of Streams, Lakes, Etc.
6. More Recreation and Facilities.
7. More Planning.
8. Better Education and Facilities.
9. Improved Relationships Between Park Service and Counties.
10. Better Law Enforcement.
11. Improve Relations Between National Park Service and County Officials.
12. Solve Park Lands and Monetary Problems.
13. Better Housing.
14. Better Wildlife Protection.

Figure 3. North Carolina Priority List.*

*Combined list - elected officials and citizens.

Adapted from *Coordinated Guidelines for Recreation Resource Use in the Great Smokies Region*, June 1975.

APPENDIX B

CITIZENS EVALUATION OF NOMINAL GROUP WORKSHOPS

Describe Sessions as:	Mean Score (Scale 1-10)
Worthwhile	7.2
Challenging	6.9
Fun	5.8
Confusing	3.9
Disorganized	3.7

Total Responses: 138

Figure 4. Evaluation of Sessions.

Worth of Input:	Mean Score (Scale 1-5)
By Others	2.9
By Organizers	3.3
By Self	3.4

Figure 5. Worth of Input.

"Regional Planning Agenda," p. 11.

VITA

Dale J. Austin Jr., was born in Kingsport, Tennessee on July 18, 1945. He attended elementary schools in that city and was graduated from Kingsport High School (Dobyns-Bennett) in June, 1963. The following September he entered East Tennessee State University and in August, 1967, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology. At this same commencement, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army.

He spent three years on active duty which included 22 months in Germany and 10 months in Vietnam. After his tour of duty, he entered the Graduate School of Planning, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville in June, 1971. He was employed for four years and five months with the East Tennessee Development District as a regional planner. He was graduated with a Master of Science in Planning in August, 1977.