Citizen participation in planning has been a traditional concern of city planners. More recently, participation has been recognized as an important tool in the process and functioning of effective planning. The technique is seen as a method to involve the citizen in the planning process itself, to develop a feeling of community responsibility for a plan. Theoretically, the public gains understanding of planning and its objectives, and the planner gains public acceptance and determines citizen wants, needs and desires. In terms of the political process, citizen participation is a means for the public to review and approve the actions of public officials.

Participation on an individual basis, New England town meeting style, is largely a myth except in the smallest villages. As Floyd Hunter points out:

... Urban life is organized along the lines of organized interest groupings whether the particular interest be higher wages, higher profits, lower tax rates or lower disease rates. Basic organizations have sprung up around a multiplicity of interests in urban communities and the possibility of the so-called "face-to-face relationship" of city dwellers is an illusion. ...

Consequently, citizen participation must be group participation. Although the citizen can be reached through various public relations techniques of the planning agency, the formal citizens' organization is a means for the citizen to reach the planning agency. The citizens' group can also devote its time more exclusively to informing the general public.

This report is an attempt to show the many functions and activities of these groups. At the same time, some seldom discussed disadvantages of these organizations will be explored. This is not intended to be a "how to do it" manual, but a discussion of the potentialities of citizens' organizations.

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1This and subsequent footnotes are listed at end of report.

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The Growth of Organized Interest

Although many "citizens' councils on city planning," or "civic associations," have fallen by the wayside, more of them are succeeding and growing in influence. Their maturity and influence is shown by the increasing number with full-time, well-paid staffs, and larger budgets and endowments. In some instances, these organizations provide most of the local leadership in planning; a few clearly dominate planning, development and, especially, redevelopment activities.

In addition, there is increasing interest among other organizations, such as chambers of commerce, retail merchants associations and various local and national civic organizations. For example, The U. S. Chamber of Commerce has published numerous reports and booklets on city planning and development. The local chambers often have a committee on planning and development. The League of Women Voters, which has traditionally emphasized problems of citizenship and government, is now becoming more interested in community planning.

The growth in the number of citizens'organizations devoted exclusively to planning or housing is shown by the existence of the National Council of Housing and Planning Associations, an organization that serves as a clearing house of information for local councils or committees. The American Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods (ACTION) has also taken an interest in citizens' organizations since its inception. Many of its numerous booklets and research papers are oriented toward these bodies.

The growth of groups interested in urban renewal has been stimulated by the federal government requirement for citizen participation as part of the "workable program" provisions. The attitude of the federal government was succinctly stated by the President in his special housing message in 1961. He stated the need for

... an effective and comprehensive planning process in each metropolitan area embracing all major activities, both public and private, which shape the community. Such a process must be democratic—for only when the citizens of a community have participated in selecting the goals which will shape their environment can they be expected to support the action necessary to accomplish these goals.

Organizational Impetus. In general, citizens' councils on planning are formed because of local government inaction, or some problem which has become so intolerable that only an organized community effort can assist in its solution. These groups often organize in order to solve a particular problem related to planning, then shift their interests to the broader area of planning in general. Some organizations form with the express purpose of creating interest in the establishment of a public planning agency. Some may disband when they feel their goal is accomplished; others may transform themselves into watchdog or public information agencies. The following specific examples are illustrative.

Philadelphia's Citizens' Council on City Planning evolved from a small group of people who had set out to establish a city planning commission "in a city which had been carefully preserved in inertia for some sixty years by the same political party." After the successful establishment of the city planning commission, the group decided to form a private organization to serve as a
watchdog and to look after the new agency. Since that time the council has developed into one of the most efficient and effective citizens' planning organizations in the nation.

The Regional Association of Cleveland resulted from a failure. A charter revision initiating metropolitan planning in Cuyahoga County had been rejected by the voters. The regional group was then formed on the assumption that public understanding of the need for metropolitan planning had to be established before any other actions could be taken.

The Buffalo and Erie County Planning Association was born when the location of a new city hall was a burning issue. A group of real estate men had been lobbying for a location that reportedly would have brought great profits to certain speculators. An association of leading citizens was formed as a counter-group. After a successful campaign on this issue, the group broadened both its membership and objectives.

During World War II the University of Pittsburgh was doing research in urban problems. As a result of its work the university saw the need for strong citizen support of postwar efforts to rehabilitate the City of Pittsburgh. The idea was warmly received by community leaders, and resulted in the formation of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. Since that time the Conference has become one of the most effective local private groups of its kind in the nation.

The Baltimore Citizens' Planning and Housing Association evolved from a small group of people who banded together during the late 1930's to fight for public housing. After a number of years of action in that field, the group expanded its interests to include the overall planning and development of Baltimore.

Organization and Membership. The membership of city-wide citizens' groups is usually dominated by community leaders and influencers. Representatives of banking, manufacturing, commerce, real estate and labor are typically included, although one group specifically includes "housewives." An organization may be primarily made up of representatives of existing civic and social agencies, individuals not identified by organizational connection, or a combination of the two. Another distinction can be made between "blueribbon" groups with only community leaders as members, and those groups which anyone can join.

The typical organization has an executive committee made up of the top leadership represented in the group. This committee usually makes most of the important policy decisions. If the citizens' group is well financed (as is increasingly the case) it will have a well-paid executive director and professional staff. In addition, the organization as a whole is often divided into committees which deal with specific areas such as zoning, housing, transportation, capital improvements, or central business district problems.

FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The activities that citizens' groups have performed, both independently and in cooperation with official planning agencies, are many and varied. These acti-
vities will be discussed as they relate to the four commonly accepted phases of the planning process: formulation of goals, studies, plan preparation, and plan implementation. Other activities will be discussed under appropriate headings. Emphasis is placed upon variety, rather than quantity, and thus no attempt will be made to mention all the organizations which have performed a particular activity.

**Formulation of Community Goals**

Of all the functions that citizens' organizations can perform, the discussion of goals seems to be an especially important one. The argument most often repeated for citizen participation in the planning process is that the public's desires, wants, needs and aspirations must be known and taken into account before planning can be successful. However, there are very few examples of citizens' councils actually cooperating with the public planning agency in order to determine "what our city should be in 1980." As is shown in this report, these groups tend to emphasize study, education, and action programs.

Although there may be some legitimate questions as to what extent formal action can be taken in the formulation of goals, certainly the very existence of these groups indicates an interest in sound planning and development. In contrast, community apathy may be indicated where no citizens' organization exists, or where an existing organization is losing membership. On the other hand, deteriorating citizen activity may indicate that the public feels the official planning agency is doing a very good job in meeting the city's needs.

Even if such groups do not engage in formal activities concerning goals and policies, the planning director should be aware of those specific aspects of community development seen to be particularly important by these groups. For example, a keen interest in recreational facilities and a lesser amount of interest in sewage treatment is a partial indication of relative public values. Obviously the planner must be aware of the relationship between the membership composition of an organization and those aspects of community development emphasized by it.

Probably no citizens' organization will ever call a special meeting to discuss and prepare a neat package on "the goals of our city," although such a meeting might have some interesting results. The planner will probably be forced to use every bit of intuition and imagination he can muster to glean bits and pieces of information from the activities, opinions and public positions of citizens' organizations, and thus construct in his own mind a picture of the values and objectives of the community as expressed through these organizations.

**Making Studies**

Citizens' organizations have been very active in the study of community problems. In many cases, these studies have been geared to mesh with the study phase of community planning. However, independent studies have proved to be of great value at a later date to an official planning agency. The following examples of what some groups have done attempt to be an inclusive list. However, it is fairly certain that many activities in this area are relatively unknown and consequently cannot be reported.
Traditionally, citizens' organizations have tended to study those areas of community life which tend to have more "social" significance. For example, the Citizens' Plan Association of Worcester, Massachusetts, surveyed housing conditions in ten substandard neighborhoods. The survey was complete with maps and photographs. The same group also conducted a redevelopment study, as well as a study of recreational facilities in public parks and neighborhoods. Similarly, the Passaic-Bergen Community Planning Association conducted a survey to determine the number of families eligible for low-rent public housing, and the Development Committee for Greater Columbus, Ohio, made a study of relocation housing problems.

Transportation studies are another favorite of these organizations. Specifically, the Citizens' Council on City Planning of Philadelphia undertook a study of the policies, programs and projects required to achieve a coordinated and comprehensive transportation plan. The study and accompanying recommendations will serve as an advisory tool to the city council. The Citizens' Council is also influential enough in this area of planning to have a representative on the Penn-Jersey transportation study board. Other typical studies include: a study of future bridge crossings over San Francisco Bay by the Civic League of Improvement Clubs and Associations; the Seattle-King County Municipal League's study of future right-of-way provisions for rapid mass transit on planned major arterials and freeways; and the Central Atlanta Improvement Association's central business district parking and traffic survey.

Other citizens' agencies and the various types of studies undertaken are summarized below.

Brandywine Valley Association (Wilmington, Del.)--Solicited and obtained the aid of the Soil Conservation Service for assistance in surveys to coordinate land use practices.

Chicago Regional Planning Association--Conducted research on and made forecasts of population growth in all parts of the region.

Central Atlanta Improvement Association--Made vacancy surveys of the central business district every six months.

Regional Association of Cleveland--Undertook the first comprehensive land use study and helped to organize a geodetic and topographic survey.

Greater Philadelphia Movement--Conducted investigations of regional affairs with particular emphasis on industrial and economic development, and port facilities.

Citizens' Housing and Planning Association of Baltimore--Administrative study of all agencies connected with urban renewal resulted in the creation of a single responsible agency.

Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Civic Planning and Traffic Division--Cooperated in a survey on "Attitudes and Practices of Residents of Greater Providence Concerning Downtown Providence."

Greater Trenton Council--Various planning studies with particular emphasis on economic factors.
Citizens' organizations such as the Regional Plan Association of New York, or the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, are, in effect, private planning agencies, and as such engage in a very wide range of studies. For example, at one time or another the Allegheny Conference has investigated housing, population trends, agricultural land, recreational facilities, refuse disposal, highway programs, comparative weather, flood control, parking, mass transit, economic development, chronic disease facilities, rail-river-truck terminals, and a host of other subjects.

It must be emphasized that in most cases the citizen did not prepare these studies. They were prepared by professional staffs or by consultants for the organization. However, in the smaller cities, citizen members who are professional people, such as social workers, businessmen, lawyers, and educators, frequently do much of the work involved in a community study. In the latter instance, it is not so much the quality of a study (although many of them are very good) that is important, but rather the fact that a citizen has gotten a first-hand look at some of his city's problems. Many types of planning studies have now reached the point where only well-trained planners or related professionals can cope with their intricacies; however, such studies as attitude surveys, home interviews, or similar surveys are still within the grasp of an alert layman under proper supervision.

Plan Preparation

For the purposes of this report, citizen participation in plan preparation is defined as the actual making of plans, or consultation and review of proposed plans prepared by the public agencies. This definition is in contrast to the attitude typified by a remark made after the formal publication of a plan: "Here's the plan. What do you think of it?"

There are very few examples of planning commissions working particularly closely with citizens' groups while in the process of preparing comprehensive plans. This is not unusual, however, since it is in this phase of the planning process that the work becomes most technical and consequently requires professional work almost exclusively. The problems and difficulties encountered in the active participation of citizens' groups in comprehensive planning are described by a planner in the following account of experiences in Philadelphia.

In 1954, the Citizens' Council on City Planning established a Committee on Comprehensive Planning. Public participation in the comprehensive planning process was limited, with a few exceptions, to a continuing exchange with this committee. Meetings with them progressed through four phases: review and discussion of the general nature of a comprehensive plan; review and criticism of the Commission's proposed work program, of the components of the pilot plan, and of the components of the comprehensive plan. This was a time-consuming and gruelling process. But it was a necessary one.

The problem of public participation in comprehensive planning is a difficult one. I am convinced that any further formalization of public participation would have simply wasted time to no useful end. It is important that a city planner, both as a professional and as a public official, be clear as to his role. At the level of comprehensive planning, his role is to bring to bear his best professional judgment on the development of the city as a whole.
With a few exceptions the general public cannot contribute effectively at this level. The plan is launched by the professional into the public arena through the formal process of government and through a series of discussions which the commission, or an agency such as the Citizens' Council, may arrange upon completion of the plan. Undoubtedly the public and its legislative body will react to the plan. Undoubtedly this reaction will cause modifications and adjustments. This is proper ...

As one goes down the scale to the district to the neighborhood, the contribution of the citizen relative to that of the professional increases. There is no question in my mind that in neighborhood planning the citizen should take part in the process. But even here it is important that the planner be clear as to his role vis-a-vis the public.

In the final analysis the public can always fire the planner. 3

All hope is not lost, as the quotation suggests, since there are numerous examples of citizens' groups actually influencing various kinds of plans in the formative stages. For example, the route of a major expressway in Philadelphia was changed after a long period of pressure by the Citizens' Council on City Planning. Plans concerning certain aspects of a city's development have also been prepared by citizens. The La Jolla Town Council of California prepared a major street plan and presented it to the city council for adoption. The Development Committee for Greater Columbus, Ohio, prepared a plan for the use of express bus service on major expressways.

A number of citizens' groups have picked up the bill for plan preparation. Specifically, the Greater Fort Worth Planning Committee hired a consultant to prepare a central business district plan, and the Wheeling (W. Va.) Area Conference on Community Development financed the preparation of master plan studies.

A few citizens' organizations, although they tend to be an almost different breed of planning animal, prepare plans as their major activity. The better known ones include the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association, the St. Louis Metropolitan Plan Association, and a number of district planning bodies in the larger cities.

These organizations are similar to official planning bodies in every respect except that they lack official connection to some unit of government. They make studies and prepare plans later to be adopted by government agencies. For example, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association has prepared master plans for a number of municipalities in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. In effect, it is a non-profit planning consulting firm operating on a metropolitan basis. Similarly, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development hired various consultants to prepare studies and plans for the redevelopment of the now nationally famous "Golden Triangle" in the heart of Pittsburgh.

At the present time, city-wide citizens' groups that actually prepare plans are vastly outnumbered by those groups that tend to emphasize other activities related to planning. However, with increasing activity in urban renewal, more neighborhood groups are participating in actual plan preparation. Although it is not the purpose of this report to go into detail on any groups which do not represent all parts of the city, it must be noted that many planners feel that it is only on the neighborhood level that effective citizen participation in
plan preparation can take place. There are numerous examples of how local groups, in conjunction with community organizers, citizens, small businessmen and other individuals, have cooperated with planning commissions in developing plans for a small area of a city. These situations are characterized by relationships in which the professional planner still does the technical work, but constantly submits his work to the citizen for comments, criticism and general evaluation. The citizen increases his participation through increased interaction with the professional on a geographical scale that is meaningful to himself as a resident of a particular neighborhood. The growing evidence suggests that the planner has little excuse or justification for ignoring the citizen on the neighborhood level.

The lack of initial participation and the growing sophistication of citizens' organizations are shown by a recent example in New York City. An official plan for the redevelopment of the Cooper Square area was prepared by the city, calling for the construction of 2,900 units of middle-income housing to replace an area which contained a combination of apartments, businesses, furnished rooms and beds for homeless men. Residents of the area felt threatened by the plan, since most of them would be forced to move out of the neighborhood. A Community Development Committee and Businessmen's Association was formed to represent the interests of the neighborhood. The Committee felt the plan

... was prepared with an almost total disregard for those being displaced. The survey of site tenants and businessmen, ... was unbelievably inaccurate. Hundreds of residents were not included in the totals, over a hundred businesses were not listed in the inventory. The site occupants were being treated as so many statistics required to process a plan.4

The committee was so disturbed that it decided to hire a planning consultant. The result was An Alternate Plan for Cooper Square, a document proposing a different pattern of redevelopment which would make it unnecessary to relocate the majority of the residents of the neighborhood. The basic principle of the document was that the "renewal of the Cooper Square area should benefit those affected by the program, not cause them to suffer from it." Thus, when these local residents felt that public plans prepared without their advice were unacceptable, they took it upon themselves to get professional assistance in order to not merely make protests, but propose alternatives as well.

Although a remarkable accomplishment in itself, the plan is all the more meaningful since the private organization sought, and received, the assistance of public agencies that had ignored the group in the preparation of the public plan. The report points out that public participation is not an easy task, since over two hundred meetings were held during a two year period. At these meetings", ... needs had to be discussed, ideas had to be presented, conflicting interests had to be considered. Then it had to synthesize its findings and develop a plan which would gain official acceptance as well as meet with community approval."5

Plan Implementation

In general, citizens' organizations are most active in those functions classified as implementation techniques. Part of the reason is that these are the
most "visible" aspects of planning. For example, streets are laid, buildings are completed, zoning ordinances are passed, slum clearance begins, public housing is built, the civic center is started, or the new municipal stadium or parking garage is completed. These activities are less abstract to the average citizen than basic "research" or plan reports. Support of a comprehensive plan is probably fairly easily accomplished because it is a document complete with text, maps and pictures. It often refers to specific areas of the city with which the citizen is familiar.

One of the most active groups in the area of implementation is the Philadelphia Citizens' Council on City Planning. The new proposed zoning ordinance for the city was reviewed by the Council with over one hundred community groups throughout the city to acquaint them with the need for and advantages of a new zoning ordinance. The group has the only civic organization that presented testimony at all of the city council's hearings on the ordinance. This included both supporting comments and suggestions for improvement. In addition, the Citizens' Council received a special grant from a foundation to prepare and distribute over 20,000 copies of a special report on the new ordinance. As part of the new ordinance, the Council cooperated with a local industrial development corporation in promoting performance standards for industry.

The Council also has a "zoning alerting service." This service includes the publishing of a special newsletter to subscribers giving a weekly notice of all zoning cases from introduction to final disposition. As part of the service, the Council staff attends the weekly meetings of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. In addition to advising neighborhood groups on specific zoning problems, the Council prepares special studies on zoning. For example, one study was a comparative analysis of zoning variances requested of and granted by the Board of Adjustment.

The Philadelphia Citizens' Council also has a unique procedure for reviewing the capital improvement program of the city. For the past six years this has been done through a public improvements committee. Members discuss major proposals with representatives of the various city departments and determine the need for specific programs and projects during the six year period. Following these discussions, the committee members visit the project sites and prepare an objective report on the merits of each project. Neighborhood leaders are contacted for their views. The various projects are then discussed to determine priorities for the city as a whole. One of four priority ratings is given to each project. In addition to being interested in specific projects, the Council also gives considerable attention to questions of fiscal policy as related to the capital budget and the finances of the city. After various committee reports, the Council as a body makes its recommendations to the city council during its budget hearings. In recognition of the value of this citizen review, the city council has recently helped to defray the cost of the preparation of these recommendations.

In addition to the committee meetings and reports, the Council sponsored a series of "town meetings" in various sections of the city to discuss the capital program. The city's planning director, as well as other public officials, attended these meetings to explain how the program would affect that part of the city. During sectional meetings, citizens would often begin to look at the capital program only in terms of their own area interests, and raise questions on the relative amounts of improvements that their part of the city was
going to receive, in comparison with other parts of the city. According to one observer, this procedure will be dropped in favor of a series of city-wide meetings to emphasize the fact that a capital improvement program benefits the city as a whole.

When the time came for achieving public understanding and acceptance of the comprehensive plan of Philadelphia, the Citizens' Council was ready. It distributed over 5,000 copies of a special summary report of the plan. A shorter statement of the goals of the plan was also published for wider distribution in the community.

Activities of other citizens' organizations indicate constructive work in implementing community plans. The zoning alerting service mentioned in connection with Philadelphia is also used in Baltimore by the Citizens' Planning and Housing Association, and by the La Jolla (Cal.) Town Council, a citizens' organization. Citizen interest in zoning is so common that to summarize the activities of particular organizations is impossible. In general, groups at one time or another have generated pressure to enact an ordinance, conducted land use studies in anticipation of zoning, helped to prepare ordinances, explained the meaning of zoning to laymen, or lobbied for the revision of an outdated ordinance.

In the last instance, the creation of an ad hoc group, the Committee for Modern Zoning, in New York City, is an example of how community interest, even on a temporary basis, can be exerted to influence local officials in the passage of a new zoning ordinance. The battery of witnesses the Committee presented to the planning commission at its public hearings was so extensive that a book summarizing their opinions was published by the public service foundation of a publishing firm. The group represented the most prominent civic and business leaders in the New York area, as well as organizations representing professional planners, citizens' planning councils, business and real estate interests, architects, builders, parent-teacher groups, churches, political clubs, and a host of other community organizations.

In addition to supporting the passage of zoning ordinances, citizens' organizations have often supported legislation related to planning and plan implementation on the local and state levels.

For example, the Seattle-King County Municipal League supported a metropolitan council act in the state legislature which included provisions for metropolitan planning. Again on a metropolitan level, the Evansville, Indiana, Citizens' Planning Association supported legislation permitting inter-local governmental contracts for regional planning. In Chicago, the Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council strongly supported a measure requiring mandatory referral of certain public works to the planning commission. Other instances of citizen action include: the Greater Fort Worth Planning Committee's sponsorship of a state bill enabling cities to issue revenue bonds for the construction of municipal parking garages; the Community Welfare Council of Dayton and Montgomery County's support of a bill to allow counties to exercise the power of eminent domain so as to participate in urban renewal; and, in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Citizens' Planning Committee worked toward the creation of a local architectural review board.

Some very productive work in citizen participation in urban renewal has been
done. Undoubtedly this activity has come about, in part, to satisfy the federal requirement for citizen participation as part of the workable program of a locality. Some real "grass roots" participation in renewal has come on the neighborhood level, and has provided planners and social scientists with numerous examples of social interaction in community planning. However, action on a city-wide level has also been very important.

On a broad level, citizens have helped to initiate local renewal activity by pushing for the formation of a renewal agency. They have also been helpful in combating the pressure groups that oppose urban renewal. Preventing further deterioration of the housing supply through proper code enforcement has been another favorite cause of these groups.

Probably one of the most important functions assumed has been the distribution of information designed to awaken a city to its problems concerning slums, and the need for public action. A good example of this activity is the lively and comprehensive pamphlet, Housing and Planning Program for New Yorkers, distributed by the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York. The report explains the problems in a clear, concise manner, free from jargon and sob-sister emotionalism. It outlines action that should be taken not only on the local level, but on state and federal levels as well. Quite importantly, the pamphlet puts the redevelopment and housing problem into a planning perspective, and not in isolation from other city activities.

One of the most comprehensive reports on the activities of citizens' groups in urban renewal is told in a book entitled Citizen Participation in Urban Renewal, published jointly by the Housing and Home Finance Agency and the Tennessee State Planning Commission in 1957. The report describes a demonstration project in Dyersburg, Tennessee. The purpose of the project was to seek ways to guide smaller communities in the techniques of organized citizen participation in urban renewal.

Although the Dyersburg program was administered by both governmental and non-governmental personnel, it provides excellent examples of the cooperation of organized citizens' groups. In particular, the groups were most helpful in making financial contributions for the preparation of special motion pictures on renewal and related problems in Dyersburg, participating in the dissemination of information, and conducting a neighborhood facilities survey, a public opinion survey, a study of proposed housing codes, and a housing survey.

Another demonstration project in the Boston area describes similar activities in a larger city. However the report tends to emphasize the activities of neighborhood, rather than city-wide, groups.

Probably one of the most active and influential citizens' organizations in renewal or redevelopment has been the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, in Pittsburgh. Its role in the redevelopment of the "Golden Triangle" is well known throughout the nation, and need not be repeated here.

**Public Relations and Civic Education**

The citizens' planning organization resembles other civic groups most closely in its activities in public information and education. Almost every citizens'
group issues an annual report and a monthly newsletter. Although the newsletter goes to the members of the group, many are sent or distributed to the community at large. Publishing activities also include the preparation of special reports and studies on various topics related to the technical work of the agency's staff. Pamphlets on the comprehensive plan, the planning process in local government, zoning, urban renewal, capital programming and other phases of the official planning agency's work are prepared by the more active groups.

There are as many different techniques for informing the general public as there are citizens' groups. The following are selected samples of what various groups have done in this area.

1. The reprinting and distribution of important speeches and papers on planning.
2. Holding special conferences on planning problems.
3. Workshops for citizens on zoning, subdivision regulations and urban renewal.
4. Administering a speakers bureau to provide programs for other civic groups.
5. Releasing statements to local newspapers on the organization's stands on planning matters.
6. Promoting and sponsoring special "days" or "weeks".
7. Showing motion picture films on planning and development.
8. Preparation and maintenance of planning exhibits.
9. Sponsoring and conducting tours of planning offices or important public works.
10. Preparation or sponsorship of special radio and television programs on planning.
11. The publication of textbooks on planning for local schools.
12. Maintaining a library on planning.

In general these kinds of activities are helpful in sustaining interest in planning for the community. Naturally, many of these examples are one-shot operations. However, the alert agencies are increasingly achieving continuity of public interest by varying their projects and activities. With the work of the citizens' organization constantly before the eye of the public, an image of trust and respect is built. In almost all cases the most successful and influential groups are those with comprehensive programs.

Watchdog and Critic

The fundamental reason for the formation and continuance of most civic organizations has been the desire for "good government." To implement this goal, these organizations have tried to keep close watch on "suspicious, dishonest or incompetent" public officials. Within the field of city planning, citizens' organizations have usually started because of the lack of official planning agencies, to rejuvenate interest in a floundering city planning program, or to support an existing program. These groups have seldom, if ever, organized to "watch" the official planning agency. Instead, as this report suggests, there are varying degrees of cooperation to such an extent as to make the unofficial group an adjunct of the public planning program.

A citizens' group may be "watchdogging" when it has a zoning alerting service
to inform residents of impending actions of the planning or zoning board. Another example of this function is in the process of carrying out a capital improvement program. Many citizens' organizations are very quick to remind city councils of the inclusion of a particular improvement which "through an oversight" was left out when the time came for appropriations. Or similarly, they remind the city council when a project was added at the last minute under pressure.

Citizens' organizations tend to watch other agencies and governmental operations more often and closely than they watch the planning agency to see how actions measure up to sound planning. For example, many citizens' councils have examined and protested the nature of the site or location of a public improvement over which the planning agency has no power of review. This is particularly desirable since many civic and private organizations may give blind and unqualified support to projects without close examination of site or location standards.

One of the most interesting criticisms of a planning agency's work by a citizens' group is contained in a recent report prepared by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce\textsuperscript{9}, analyzing the recently completed Philadelphia comprehensive plan. The report places heavy emphasis on the economic and financial aspects of the plan. This is a natural emphasis for a businessmen's group. However, the analysis makes criticisms that show a degree of responsibility and planning awareness not usually displayed by business organizations. For example, one comment cites the lack of cooperation in planning for school construction and related facilities. To remedy this the report urges more cooperation between the school board and the planning commission. Another display of awareness of the planning process and its tools is shown when the report points out what is felt to be a lack of attention to the new zoning ordinance and its place in the comprehensive plan.

The Chamber's report also suggests that increased interest and participation could be achieved by publishing and circulating more copies of the plan and supplementary reports to civic agencies, libraries, planning commissions in other cities, and interested individuals. Similarly, the Chamber feels that it and other organizations should have regular opportunities to review changes in the comprehensive plan and the programs required to implement it. The Chamber feels that in this manner both plan revision and execution could be accomplished in a more sound and effective way each year.

**A CLOSE LOOK AT SOME CITIES**

One of the most widely held, almost sacred, ideas in the field of planning is that citizens' organizations interested in planning are absolutely necessary if planning is to succeed--that organized citizen participation can make the objectives of planning better understood and more acceptable. Experience has shown this to be valid. However, experience has also shown that these organizations are a mixed blessing, sometimes hampering or harming the work of official agencies legally responsible for carrying out planning activities, or on occasion assuming a quasi-governmental function without public scrutiny.

Reports describing the work of citizens' groups and news items were studied carefully to determine the presence of some of the issues discussed here. Since
many of our conclusions are of a "delicate" nature, it has been necessary to disguise the locality and circumstances of examples used. The lack of documentation should be viewed in this light.

The following four examples of citizens' groups carrying on extensive planning functions are drawn from various parts of the nation. Although they have done some useful and important work, these groups provide good examples of some of the dangers involved when private organizations make public plans. In all of the cities mentioned, plans, or projects resulting from the plans, are in various stages. Consequently, judgments could be altered with the passage of time. However, the examples were not chosen simply on the basis of public or private development that has or will take place, but rather because of the way in which the planning process has been carried out.

City "A"—Too Much Power

In city "A" the principal citizens' organization filled a public planning vacuum that had existed for many years. The organization is made up of powerful industrial, banking and commercial interests. Within the organization itself, a very few key men are generally considered to be the most influential in the formulation of group policy. The group has a professional staff.

The citizens' group has conducted some very extensive studies both independently and in cooperation with official agencies, on the physical and planning problems of city "A". The studies were done by competent professionals and are considered to be of high quality. In the conduct of some of its studies, however, it has overlapped the work of public agencies. In one instance a public agency had completed significant portions of a study only to be told later that their efforts were no longer necessary. The study would instead be done by the private group's staff. The already low morale of the public planning agency went down another notch.

Because of interlocking directorships with other citizens' agencies and with governmental "special" authorities, a small group of men wield great power in local development and redevelopment policy. Almost all of the major public improvements for many years have been initiated by the group. There is no instance when one of the group's recommendations has been rejected by government officials. In particular, the group has provided the leadership and impetus for renewal of one of the most spectacular slum areas. A number of projects in the area have been completed and are generally considered by some observers as "impressive".

Unfortunately, there are some serious shortcomings in the completed projects. Those shortcomings that are "internal" to a specific project, such as a shortage of offstreet parking coupled with intensive land use, could occur with any public agency doing the same work. However, there is little excuse for public agencies allowing this to happen. Those problems which are "external" to a project area point up the difficulties in having private groups carry out normal public planning functions. Because of the piecemeal, project-by-project approach, typical of too many citizens' groups, very little attention has been given to highway ingress and egress. With the increased traffic loads generated by the projects, officials have become quite worried about the probability that the adjacent interchange of an expressway system will become a highway
engineer's and driver's nightmare. Because of the lack of coordination of development, which might have taken place with more public agency participation, the citizens' group is now pushing for "its solution" to the problem of access: a relief highway in another part of the city. How this proposal, if carried out without an over-all plan, would affect the original area and its surroundings, or the city as a whole, or the region, remains to be seen.

City "B"—Secret Preparation

Another example of a citizens' group taking matters into its own hands is evident in city "B". A group of businessmen was becoming increasingly concerned about the future of the downtown area of the city. Without the knowledge of the public, they hired a planning consultant to prepare a plan for the central business district. The purpose of the behind-the-scenes action was to surprise and awaken an apathetic city. The plan was unveiled first to a small group of top civic leaders, then to a larger group of community representatives. City "B" officials were "briefed" on the plan before the public meeting. Curiously enough, the planning director was the last official to be contacted.

The plan was presented with due ceremony and was accompanied by a generous amount of publicity and acclaim. The plan itself has been described by some observers as bold and imaginative. Others called it grandiose and unrealistic. Which view is the correct one is probably debatable. The basic weakness of this approach is the difficulty of determining community goals while preparing plans in private and without the slightest degree of knowledge and participation by the general public. Very little attempt was made to fit the plan into the development of the city as a whole. Admittedly, this would have been difficult, since no comprehensive plan existed. In addition, the plan made no attempt to show how the recommendations would or could be implemented. This detail was given to the planning commission to ponder.

The results of this procedure soon began to show. A major piece of legislation upon which one of the elements of the plan rested failed to be enacted. The first public improvement related to the plan had to be changed considerably from that recommended because of the city's unwillingness to pay the cost. Subsequently, other key public improvements to be financed by bond issues were submitted to the public. They were soundly defeated.

By its own admission, this particular citizens' group has learned many lessons from its experience. It has recognized the dangers of planning without providing means of implementation. Paradoxically, this "citizens'" group found that its failures resulted from a lack of wide citizen participation. They have now placed the plan temporarily on the shelf while they endeavor to build public understanding and urge the strengthening of the city planning department.

City "C"—Cart Before the Horse

City "C" presents a problem of a different sort. It was chosen as an example not because of the citizens' work, which appears to be badly needed, but because of some of the attitudes of its leaders. As in the two other cities, a citizens' organization was formed to fill a vacuum in the public planning program. The planning commission had no professional staff to carry out the many
technical studies needed to maintain a successful planning program. In addition, the local government structure and organization was considered outmoded and inefficient.

In its work, the citizens' organization received the help of competent planning consultants, and it has conducted some high level studies on its own. Interest within the group is high, although it has been in existence only a short time.

Both public officials and private leaders are included in the organization. However, leadership is clearly lodged in the private members. The private leadership feels that the citizens' group is more representative and responsive than the local government. Therefore, it can handle far more facets of planning and development than the city government. In this regard, however, the group has concentrated almost exclusively on activities usually labeled as economic development. To a great extent this emphasis reflects the occupational background and interests of the dominant proportion of the membership. Similarly, the group is pushing very hard for a metropolitan highway program while at the same time putting off a comprehensive city or metropolitan plan. Information presently being gathered can be used for highway planning, in the opinion of the group, and can later be used for comprehensive planning. From the planner's viewpoint this appears to place the cart before the horse.

The leadership also argues that decision making moves much faster in a private organization than in a governmental agency because the people in the citizens' organization are accustomed to "thinking big" and "making their own final decisions." Public agencies, on the other hand, must be "bothered" with submitting their suggestions to other official agencies for review, and holding public hearings. In addition, the public agency or official must be sensitive to political pressures and public opinion. Supposedly the private group can ignore or bypass these "unnecessary" requirements of democratic government.

City "D" — Make No Expensive Plans

The activities of a citizens' organization in City "D" pose a problem not encountered in the first three examples. Although some of the same criticisms leveled in other examples can be applied with equal force, critics are concerned with the quality of planning studies undertaken by the citizens' group.

A citizens' group made up almost exclusively of businessmen wanted to experiment with a special program designed to guide community development. It was particularly concerned with the length of time and cost the typical public planning agency requires in doing its work. The group wanted to show that community development policy and planning could be done far more quickly.

A steering committee, composed of a handful of "outstanding representatives of the business community," was formed. Who chose these people, and why only members of the business community were considered as potential members of the steering committee, is not known. Administrative work was done by the staff of the organization that sponsored the project. A number of city-wide meetings with representatives of civic organizations and other community leaders were held to explain the purposes of the program and to gain their support.

When the support of various organizations and individuals had been assured, the
steering committee initiated the program in full force by identifying a hundred or so "problem areas." The problem area technique was chosen to focus interest and to achieve a more comprehensive approach than that of public planning agencies. Critics point out that the total list omitted many important elements of a good community study. Although topics were arranged under broad categories, there was a poor relationship between various levels of community problems. Thus traffic lights at particular corners were given as much weight as a total transportation system. Many of the topic headings appeared to be "loaded", reflecting the final recommendations that were later made.

After the problem areas had been defined, the committee solicited the assistance of key resource people in the community who had special knowledge or competence in the problem area. For example, an engineer from an electric company would serve on the utilities committee, or a bus company executive on the transportation committee. Of the nearly three hundred resource persons chosen, the overwhelming proportion were from the business community. Representatives of other civic organizations and public officials made up only a small minority. The composition of individual committees was rather curious for a program which intended to bring together both private citizens and public officials. The majority of committees consisted exclusively of businessmen, a small proportion had only public officials, and an even smaller proportion had mixed membership.

Each committee would study its problem area, then make recommendations as to possible solutions. No member had to put in more than two or three days of his time to complete his part in the study. After reporting back to the steering committee, another city-wide meeting was held, at which a priorities committee was appointed. This committee was also made up exclusively of businessmen. Its function was to analyze the reports and choose those which, in their opinion, deserved the highest priority rating. They then chose either one or a combination of suggested courses of action as the recommended procedure for solving the particular problem. Their collective action then received wide publicity and was presented at a city-wide meeting of the representatives of citizens' organization. With a few modifications, the report of the committee was adopted.

Recommendations ranged from suggestions on better promotion for convention activities, to the selection of project areas for urban renewal and the various public works that should be undertaken. Recommendations concerning high priority projects were translated into specific work programs to be carried out by civic agencies. When supervision was necessary, the priorities committee would function in this capacity.

The lasting results of this method of solving community problems are as yet unknown, since no follow-up study of the program's effectiveness has ever been done (or published, if it has been done).

An obvious problem is the lack of any real depth of citizen participation. The activities of direction, coordination, decision making, policy formulation, study and the choice of problems to be considered and acted upon, rested exclusively with members of the business community. Any other participation amounted to a rubber stamp action.

The quality of the work product has been roundly criticized by some authorities. The entire program took a very short period to complete at a cost of less than $1,000. With a city population approaching a quarter-million, the critics argue
that such a crash program could not possibly yield the depth of analysis that such an ambitious undertaking deserves. To properly answer the questions posed requires much more study than could possibly have been done. They contend that the original time and cost limitations make a product of superficial character almost inevitable.

A disappointing feature of "crash program" activities is that a great deal of civic energy has been expended without having much to show for the work. Without a strengthening of the public planning agencies existing in these cities, lasting results might well be difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. It would seem that if these citizens' organizations had worked as hard for the establishment of effective public planning agencies as they have in the work they have done, the entire community could have been benefited. In particular, the community study method used in city "D", coupled with a strong planning agency program, has a tremendous potential for achieving citizen interest and understanding. The enthusiasm shown by the participants in the study has probably resulted in far more understanding of that city's problems than all the money that could have been spent on public relations by any public agency. This example also shows that busy people do care about their city, are willing to do something, and can do more than many planners generally assume.

PLANNING DIRECTORS' EVALUATIONS

Unfortunately there are few objective evaluations of the work of citizens' organizations. There are even fewer sources within the literature of planning that point out the limitations and disadvantages of these groups. Because of the lack of meaningful criticism, no attempt will be made to reach solid "conclusions"; rather, the goal here will be to provoke some thought on this matter.

For the purpose of evaluating the citizens' planning group, the planning director is in a unique position in his community. Whether under the independent commission or departmental form of organization, the agency he directs or, should be, the primary focal point of information on the progress toward city planning objectives. In particular, he probably knows better than any other individual how a citizens' group helps his program.

ASPO solicited the opinions of selected planning directors, asking them to evaluate their local citizens' planning organizations in terms of their effectiveness, usefulness, disadvantages and general characteristics. The following is a summary of the more important comments that were made. Specific cities are not mentioned and specific citizens' groups are referred to as the "Citizens' Council," due to the "delicate" nature of the conclusions.

How Citizens' Groups Help the Planning Agency

In general, the planning directors praised very highly the work of the citizens' agencies in helping the planning commission. Some typical extracts of comments are as follows:

The Citizens' Council is so much a part of the planning picture in
that we are inclined to take if for granted and have some difficulty viewing it objectively. It is an integral part of the whole operation.

The Citizens' Council has helped the City Planning Commission by backing the bond issues which have enabled some of the plans to be executed. This gives a measure of faith in the plans themselves. It has also helped my program by being a source of consultation on the wisdom of specific ideas before they become proposals.

The Citizens' Council has supported the planning commission in matters of budget, at public hearings on a full-range of issues, and by giving us a pat on the back in propaganda material. We have excellent working relations because of mutual confidence and respect between our staff and the staff of the citizens' group.

The Citizens' Council has supported through public resolutions and appearances our subdivision regulation ordinance, the creation of a redevelopment department, creation of a combined city-county building authority, and the passage of a minimum housing code. This organization has provided several opportunities to discuss various projects the planning commission was proposing.

The Citizens' Council has organized support for specific planning proposals, has vigorously supported an enlarged planning program for the city, and has called attention to the need for high-grade appointments to the planning commission. The group has been instrumental in developing a body of citizenry knowledgeable to some extent on planning matters . . . Planning as such has a good reputation here at the present time. Certainly, the Citizens' Council has been a significant factor in developing this favorable climate.

Criticism and Conflict Between Agencies

Planning directors were asked to comment on instances in which citizens' groups have either hampered or have been critical of the official agency's program. In general, there were few instances of conflict between agencies. The citizens' group seldom criticized the planning agency, at least not in public. However, the planning directors made a few comments concerning the operation of the citizens' agency that cast some light on at least a range of "minor" complaints. The directors speak for themselves in the following extracts:

It is often felt that the Citizens' Council claims credit which really should belong to others. . . . The group secures some support from various business interests in the community and it has been felt that fear of alienating support has sometimes led the Citizens' Council to be unduly timid in certain quarters . . . There is also the feeling that despite its fairly large membership the affairs of the Citizens' Council are largely in the hands of a relatively small inbred group and that the organization does not do as much for the general membership as it should. Certainly a very large proportion of its members pay their annual dues simply because it is the thing to do and do not participate in its activities.
There is some feeling that the Citizens' Council occasionally tends to operate like a bull in a china shop and that in such situations it tends to do more harm than good.

While the group occasionally becomes involved in zoning fights, it does not exert its full influence against unwise zone changes being considered by the city council. Apparently this results from a fear that too much participation in legislative matters might endanger the present tax deductibility of contributions which are made to it.

One planning director considered the general effectiveness and some undesirable results of a major means of communication for many of these citizens' groups: the monthly or weekly newsletter. He comments as follows:

In some instances, through the publishing of a newsletter, information has been circulated to civic groups and, as a result, caused some confusion on certain issues. For example, attempts are made in rezoning cases to interpret the rezoning and the related parts of the ordinance in a few sentences. Important subtle distinctions are thus glossed over at the expense of complete understanding of the issues involved. . . . Friction can result when the publisher of the newsletter appears to be taking credit for the accomplishment of certain projects for which the city was responsible. I believe this friction is caused more by the publication of the newsletter as such rather than the intent or interest of the persons writing the newsletter.

A number of directors said that the citizens' group hampered the planning commission to the extent that they did not support strongly enough, or even opposed, the development of either projects or policies that the planning commission considered to be quite important. The directors' comments:

We have at times felt that stronger support was needed for such projects as port development . . .

The Citizens' Council has never hampered our program. If we have been hampered by them it has been mainly because of their inadequacy, i.e., the fact that they have not been able to meet the big development issues head on or, frankly, to keep up with our program.

. . . they did not agree that we should be spending our efforts on a crucial urban renewal project which was to be occupied by upper income groups. Instead they felt we should be rehousing the lower income families occupying the site.

I resented very much the opposition of the Citizens' Council to our design and technical standards for new residential areas that were carefully worked out by our staff. I felt that they were following an unrealistic and retrogressive line on this particular issue.

I feel that the Citizens' Council is somewhat off base in preparing and issuing separate reports to the city council on particular phases of our program without attempting to fully understand the reasons for
our recommendations. In one case they really set up a parallel operation rather than one which evaluates and criticizes the results of the commission's work.

Citizen groups certainly often hamper progress. It seems to me that the outstanding examples at the present time lie in the field of urban renewal. Here in _____ a number of groups have latched on to the early sins of the program and, ignoring all the city's recent steps at improvement, are trying to discredit urban renewal ... Examples of unwarranted criticisms are certainly to be found in one particular neighborhood of the city. Recently they have engaged in vituperation which is almost unbelievable in view of the calibre of the people and the issues involved.

One planning director seems to feel that a certain amount of conflict and friction is absolutely necessary if the citizens' group is to be effective. His following comments about the relationship between the planning commission and the citizens' organizations are both honest and perceptive:

Of course there is conflict and tension between the planning commission and the citizens' agency. If this were not so neither agency would be doing its job. Just as no machine could run without friction, so there cannot be any effective interaction between the two without tension, friction and heat ... I have frequently been irritated by positions they have taken, but ... these are all minor. Basically I think that their operation is of utmost value, especially when it does irritate me.

If the letters received from various planning directors are indicative of the activities of citizens' planning groups, then it can be concluded that citizens' groups devoted to planning tend to emphasize comprehensive planning rather than individual projects far more than once was the case. However, this should not be interpreted to mean that other civic organizations with more general interests are still not engaging in a project-by-project approach. The next few extracts probably indicate the range of support for comprehensive planning. The first example is humorous and at the same time shows the relatively unsophisticated activities that too many civic organizations still think are supremely important. The last example shows the exact opposite and is undoubtedly far more beneficial to a city.

Recently a vacant land committee was formed by the Citizens' Council. The committee solicited labor from the township relief office and embarked upon a program of cleaning up vacant lots. About the first week of operation found the vacant lot committee encroaching upon a private citizen's land and cutting down several trees and bushes. Unfortunately, the private citizen involved happened to be a member of city council and of a political faith other than the administration in office. I see no reason for further comment since this tempered somewhat their case of "projectitis."

It is true that the Citizens' Council will push fairly popular projects at the expense of controversial projects. It refuses to sponsor anything obviously controversial.
While the Citizens' Council has supported the successful development of a range of important projects, these projects themselves have in general been of a major dimension and of importance to the city as a whole.

In the past the citizens' group has been frankly pro-public housing and pro-urban renewal for minority groups. In recent years it has tended to become much more broadminded and recognizes that city building has many facets of equal importance. . . . Now this group is very responsible, and is very much oriented toward the need for comprehensive planning and does not attempt to push projects of its own.

In our city the Citizens' Council has followed a line quite the opposite of "projectitis" and has effectively agitated for a comprehensive plan and effectively participated in its formation.

Influence in Planning and Development Policy

Achieving an accurate assessment or exact measurement of the influence and effectiveness of the citizens' group in the formation of planning policies is probably impossible. When a particular policy or project has been defeated after support from a citizens' organization, one could come to the conclusion that on this particular issue it was ineffective. On the other hand, when a policy that is supported gains acceptance, the opposite may not necessarily be true. The influence of any one particular group is almost impossible to single out from the efforts, pressures and energies that were exerted for or against a particular cause by other equally interested groups. Consequently any judgment is largely subjective. However, because of the position of the planning director in local government and community life, his opinions on this matter are certainly important. The difficulty in determining the influence of the local citizens' group is evident in the comments that were made. For example:

. . . Over the years the impact of a number of citizens' groups has left its mark on the city so that both the citizens and the official leadership now believe in planning and accept its role as a major role in insuring a sound future for the community.

The Citizens' Council has an indirect influence on local planning and development policy. This influence is expressed through city council and city planning commission members. We have endeavored to create plans which will be accomplished, and it is therefore important to receive the reactions of those persons who will be instrumental in the accomplishment of the plans.

The Citizens' Council is an integral part of the whole operation.

It is hard to judge the extent to which the Citizens' Council has been effective in local planning and development policy. There is certainly a tendency on the part of the members of city council to regard the Citizens' Council as being impractical do-gooders, but, nevertheless, the group does have a large membership and the city council treats it with outward respect. Many of the successes claimed
by the Citizens' Council have involved matters where it has been one of a group of agencies or interests pressing towards a common goal. In such instances it is not easy to judge the extent to which the goal might have been reached without the assistance of the Citizens' Council. In any event, however, it is certainly fair to say that the group has had a substantial influence.

I would say these groups have relatively little influence in the total picture. In specific, in a small area they can be influential, otherwise no. To a certain extent they can't shake their "do-gooder" label.

Although spotty, I would say that citizens' groups, on occasion, wield tremendous, sometimes excessive, influence.

An honest planner's concern with his own and his agency's fallibility is evident in the following extract. This refreshing remark is probably too rare.

With regard to how much influence this group has on local planning, I must say that we must always take them into consideration and at least attempt to sell them early if we feel that they might be opposed to a step we are about to undertake. A fair estimate would be that they occasionally gave us reason for doing the right thing, but would not be strong enough to prevent us from doing the wrong thing.

Another planning director, in referring to a citizens' group undergoing revitalization, said: "We would welcome the 'watchdog' aspects of their activities."

The Planning Process and the Citizens' Group

As was shown by the examination of the work of certain citizens' organizations in four selected cities, questions of the proper relationship between official planning agencies and citizens' groups, the quality of planning efforts and the public interest were raised. Bearing in mind the nature of these activities and the resulting issues in question, opinions of planning directors seem to be quite pertinent.

Directors were asked in which phase of the planning process they thought citizens' groups were most useful, or in which such groups should concentrate their activity. Every answer emphasized that these organizations should concentrate on those phases related to goal formation and implementation. Not one director suggested that they were useful in the preparation of studies or plans. Some stated that the citizens' group should leave these activities to the official planning agency with a professional staff. The following views are a representative sample of opinion on this point.

We feel that the citizens' groups can be more useful in the implementation of the planning process. This is especially true in cases where public understanding and education become necessary. Consequently, we feel that they should concentrate their activity in this direction.
Our agency follows a specific planning process, which includes the following phases: research, idea formation, idea testing, proposals, and implementation. It is during the idea testing phase that I seek the reaction of citizens' groups. I believe that the city planner must first state the goals, do the research, and draft some ideas in comprehensible form, before he can secure a reaction from citizens' groups. This is especially true of business leaders and executives. They will not waste their time on generalities, and must see a need for a decision on something before they will contribute their opinions. The second most useful phase for the contributions of citizens' groups is in the implementation stage. By that time proposals should have been altered in accord with reactions of these citizens during the idea testing phase.

Based on experience in our city, I believe that citizens' groups can be more effective if they participate in the definition of goals and in marshaling support for the implementation of worthy projects, leaving to the appropriate city agencies the preparation of plans and studies of a technical nature.

It is our intention to utilize the Citizens' Council as a city-wide sounding board for comprehensive planning ideas. . . . we will use them in a continuing manner to help us define developmental goals of the city, as a sounding board for studies and plan preparation, as well as a vehicle for citizen attention.

Generally speaking, the Citizens' Council has not endeavored to intervene in the development of specific planning proposals. It has tended to concentrate on developing support for the implementation of these proposals. In addition, it has, over the years, devoted considerable attention to various planning and related programs which it felt were not being administered properly and has exerted a general needling influence in the direction of securing more emphasis on planning, better housing, etc. It also has been interested in good appointments to the various commissions operating in its fields of interest. Generally speaking, it has seemed to me that these are the fields in which citizens' groups can most profitably concentrate their activities.

Although these statements are in general agreement, there are some important differences in the views. For example, different directors placed varying emphasis on the relative importance of participation in goal formation in contrast with plan implementation. An equally important point is the difference in the one view concerning the relationships between goal formation, study, and citizen participation, as stated in the second quotation. In particular, the issue of who should state the initial goals may be a good topic for debate.

Some Random Comments

Some of the directors made general comments that deserve to be mentioned. For example, one planner felt that the citizens' council in his city had given full support to many programs. However, he felt the need of a separate group that had a special interest in the problems of housing. Another stated his disap-
pointment with the decrease in interest of a particular group that had seen "its part" of a large-scale project completed, but did not give as strong support to the other related portions of the as yet uncompleted development. One director felt that citizens' organizations could contribute a great deal to the urban renewal program by taking a very active part in rehabilitation and conservation areas where there is more private than public action.

Another planning director explored the difficulties in getting civic leaders to participate in planning programs. He concluded that:

... The major problem is one of insufficient time on the part of community leaders to understand and to work for a planning program, or for the accomplishment of the plans. They are busy people, and civic affairs are just another demand on their time.

Still another planner gave his opinions on the strengths and limitations of citizens' groups, and in addition makes an interesting proposal concerning the education and training of professional people to work in citizen participation activities. His remarks are as follows:

I think that a citizens' planning group can only be as strong as its staff and its citizen leadership. It is unlikely that any planning group with financial limitations could keep track of the more than 75 active projects in which we are involved. I think they must concentrate on the big picture and not concern themselves with project details. They should address themselves to major questions of development policy and their main goal should be to ask searching questions of the bureaucrats. It would be very useful if some one university in the country would train executive directors of citizens' planning associations.

CONCLUSIONS

This report has attempted to achieve three goals: to show the activities and functions of citizens' planning organizations; to take a look at the questionable practices of some of these groups; and, to have various planning directors evaluate the organizations in their own cities. From these separate but related goals, a number of useful generalizations can be made concerning the relationship between the official planning agency and the citizens' agency.

Planning has become an established function of local government. As such, the average citizen has the right to demand that his city government plan for the future. Because many decisions concerning the development of the city influence his private interests and welfare, the citizen also should look with great suspicion upon any attempt to delegate, either intentionally or by default, the responsibility for planning to any private group, no matter how altruistic its objectives may be.

There is almost unanimous agreement that citizens' planning groups can make a valuable contribution to the local planning program. In order to achieve the widest possible degree of citizen participation it may be desirable to have
two citizens' planning groups. One would be a "blue ribbon" or "brass roots" organization that would include in its membership the most influential community and business leaders of the city. Understanding and support of these groups is absolutely essential to the achievement of success in such areas as economic development, central business district improvement, and certain urban renewal projects. The basic functions of such a group would be study, advice, and action in private development. They should not be delegated the responsibility of preparing plans that more properly should be prepared by public agencies.

The second citizens' group should also have in its membership community leaders, for their presence is necessary to insure success. In contrast to the first kind of organization, this group should have as its fundamental purpose the participation of the greatest number of people representing as many segments of the community as possible. This group should also advise the official planning agency, but in addition should distribute information to the community as a whole. This group should play the role of the watchdog as well as being a support group of the planning agency. It may sometimes be necessary for the citizens' group to undertake an independent study to arouse public action. However, the citizens' agency should complement, not duplicate, the work and efforts of the public planning agency. There is too much chance of confusing the general public if separate recommendations are issued on the same undertaking. The citizens' group is falling down on its job if it does not first attempt to understand the recommendations of the official agency, and then issue its criticisms and any alternate suggestions.

Even if a planning director is fortunate enough to have active citizens' groups making his task easier, he should be aware of their limitations. There should be a clear understanding of the role that each plays in the development of the community. One cannot effectively achieve community goals without the aid and assistance of the other.

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5. Ibid., p.2.


10. For example see David A. Wallace, "Renaissancemanship", Journal of the American Institute of Planners, XXVI, No. 3 (August, 1960), 173.

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