COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN TRANSPORT PLANNING:
- "A MODEL FOR CONSULTATION"

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Abstract:

The urban planning process in Australia has undergone significant changes in the past decade. Noteable amongst the changes has been the increased sensitivity of the planning profession to the variety of views voiced by the various sectors of the community. Also, sections of the community have gained knowledge and information, and developed sophistication in participating in planning programmes and in understanding the consequences.

The complexity of planning is illustrated by the variety of professions who are now involved in the process and must work together. These professions have different interests, values and languages, however there is no overall consensus about each of their importance to the process. One assumption is that they should work together, and to do this they must explore each other's views of what the planning processes are about. This view is challenged and opposed by established planners.

This paper discusses some of the concepts of Community Development as understood and practised by Social Work. It suggests a model for consultation in the planning processes which is based upon the authors experiences in this field.

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INTRODUCTION

Social workers claim some experience and understanding of processes
necessary to work with the community. The authors assume that people
living in the community are usually left out of the essential decision-
making which affects their lives. They start with the assumption that
it is necessary to devise ways of involving such people in decision-
making. People are capable of making an important contribution to
the planning processes. An awareness of their characteristics, needs,
and experiences, can be used to set up opportunities whereby communities
can increase their useful contributions. Community development is a
method of complementing the normal planning processes to deliberately
foster increased sharing in a given community.

Planners who approach transport or other proposals primarily with
engineering, physical, and economic criteria may start with the
assumption that the public has to be informed about decisions made on
its behalf. It is accepted that the planners have the technical
knowledge to make planning decisions, the judgement to balance competing
demands, and the self-confidence to regulate the access of people through
their provision of physical amenities. However, because of the absence
of information about the community, planners usually determine the nature
and scope of any public involvement from their profession's perspective.
They normally do not distinguish their personally held values from those
which might be held by the affected community. Also, any attempt to
generalise about the community ignores the complexity and diversity of
its different sectors. If the needs of specific groups are ignored,
their members will often appear to be apathetic or dissatisfied. This
can occur if the consultative process is inadequately conceived. So the
process must include that of helping groups articulate their different
needs, and is often described as the community development process.

Without a careful consideration of the process, planners, who know what
they want from the public, can fall into the trap of laying down the

terms by which consultation will take place. Information directed to the public is usually in the planners' language rather than the public's and is produced at the rate which suits the planner rather than the public.

Under these circumstances, there is no certainty that the needs or expectations of either the planner or the public will be met by offers or attempts at public involvement. Rather than blaming the objectives of public involvement as faulty and unrealistic, the authors argue that the structure and processes used to facilitate the involvement are often inadequate and ill-considered. Effective consultation requires skill to plan and implement. These skills can be translated into tasks and responsibilities which planners can implement, along with the assistance of other professions already involved in community development. Community development ensures that the differing information and involvement needs of different segments of the community are recognised and met. Community development is the method or process used to improve the links and networks between people and organisations, to mobilise resources, to gain access to services, and to aid decision-making.

The next two sections examine the skills and tasks involved in initiating and implementing community development, and make references to the application of transport. The paper examines two styles of working with the community through two case studies. It looks at whether different outcomes emerge as a result of different objectives, as well as of different processes of community development. The paper then proposes a series of steps which offer planners a framework for ensuring that the objectives of community development are facilitated by the processes used to achieve it.

Definitions of Community Development

The context of community development is wider than planning. Social workers use it in its broadest sense. They use it as a method to raise public awareness of problems, issues, citizen rights, and to increase

acceptance of the differences between groups. It requires a range of
interpersonal and group relating skills to build a sense of belonging,
to improve networks between people and groups, to mobilize resources,
and to gain access to services and decision - making.

The activities are described as taking place at 3 levels, the "grass
roots" or neighbourhood level, the local agency and inter-agency level,
and the regional level. [1]   In the U.S.A., 3 objectives are defined
for community work, locality development, social planning and social
action.   Locality development aims to strengthen neighbourhood networks
and stimulate self-help and community programmes; social planning aims
to integrate or reconcile programmes for the good of the consumer-clients;
and social action aims to change institutions and their administrative
procedures by acquiring and exercising power in specific areas of
decision-making. [2]

In Australia, the rhetoric of community development is only about a
decade old, and few attempts have been made to analyse the role of the
community development officer. [3]

Brager and Specht point out the contradiction between the values of
participation, expertise, and leadership, in contemporary community
organising. [4]

The community organiser is called on to be an organiser, administrator
and expert.   As organiser, he is concerned with the development of his
constituency, and the means by which the community interests are protected
and advanced.   As expert, he focuses on the tasks of organisation
building, studying problems, developing strategies, and devising programs;
and as administrator, he undertakes the tasks of executive leadership.

In order to clarify the skills and tasks to be used in community development,
we have listed them as relying on basic interpersonal and group relating
skills, administrative skills, research skills, and political skills.

80

These skills, the knowledge of organisations, and of the community as a social system, can be used in problem-solving and planning efforts.

1. Individual Relating Skills

   The ability to effectively and appropriately communicate with individuals at all levels of the community.
   This includes an understanding of non-verbal, and other communication patterns.

2. Group Relating Skills

   The ability to effectively use the group process to facilitate Committee functions.

3. Community as a Social System

   The ability to understand communication patterns and dynamics of a community.

   The ability to translate this understanding into strategies.

4. Administrative Skills

   The ability to understand organisational management.

5. Planning Skills

   The ability to understand and utilize the political and planning systems.

6. Research Skills

   The ability to undertake and report on research.

81

Having listed these skills, it is still necessary to consider how to
implement the objectives of all those involved in the planning process.
Planners who aim to gain consensus will be more committed to information
sharing than planners whose prime objective is to implement their own
plan for the community. However, it is recognised that planners only
have limited opportunities to share the decision-making with a wider
section of the public, since they themselves are employed to plan
and implement programmes which someone else (e.g. government) has
already decided upon.

The two cases which follow contrast differing structures for community
consultation. One commenced with a strong intention by planners to
provide an open planning process. The other had elements of consultation
in the planning process which was essentially of a closed nature.

Two Case Studies

1)   F.19 Freeway (Melbourne)

In 1972, construction began on the F.19 freeway. This represented
a closed planning process, and was implemented as the result of a
decision made in 1969 after final hearings of public objections
to the freeway. The background was a typical one - a state plan
to construct a freeway network across the city had been made at a
time when many believed that better roads for more cars was the
solution to all our transport problems.

Although a structure existed for lodging public objections to
the plan at that time, resident's objections on the basis of
environmental impact were ruled out of order. There followed a
gradual change of view over a period of years by public transport
lobbyists and some resident groups who eventually joined forces
to oppose the construction of the F.19 freeway.

82

Resident opposition was not organised until construction began in 1972. At that stage an organisation U.M.F.A.G. (United Melbourne Freeway Action Group) consisting of residents and workers across Melbourne threatened by freeways was set up to co-ordinate the opposition in the inner and outer suburbs affected. In 1973 some recognition of changed public opinion was evident. The axed F.19 connection to the airport meant that all freeway traffic would pour off onto an existing 4 lane street. New plans showed a 10 lane arterial road.

Through the next 2 years more vigorous opposition to the F.19 built up and 3 public meetings were organised to oppose a freeway feeder road taking traffic through inner suburbs. As a result of these meetings, the government was called on to set up a study into the social and environmental impact of the Western end of the freeway, and accepted the request. It was expected by the public that recommendations would also be made regarding pollution levels and compensation for lowered property values. A shop front office was set up by the consultants but due to poor utilization the planners concluded the community was apathetic. This, in fact, was not true. Poor positioning and inadequate advertising led to the under-utilization.

While the study was underway, two councils allocated money to set up an organisation, Citizens Against Freeways (C.A.F.), and employed two lobbyists to spearhead a protest campaign. Although primarily opposed to the F.19, the councils and the C.A.F. were concerned with wider issues, including the need for more effective overall planning of Melbourne's transport needs. C.A.F. was aware that part of its role was to keep outer suburban residents informed of the planning activities and their consequences.

The lobbyists collected opinions from the various political and cultural groups in the region, and attracted people with related interests into the campaign. The media were used wherever and whenever appropriate for presenting their views.

83

In order to focus community activity and hold their interest for a
substained period a variety of activities were planned, including
the erection of grafitti boards at strategic spots, the commissioning
of a huge mural outside a town hall, and family fun day activities
arranged to coincide with protests. This stage of the community
development campaign was aimed at informing the public of the issues.
It was aimed, too, at building a strong sense of solidarity and
commitment to the anti-freeway stance. From various public meetings,
goals for the campaign were stated. The lobbyists also recognised that
people participate in different ways. Symbolic activities such as
bricking up the freeway entrance, planting trees along the threatened
nature strip and the installation of community gas barbeques captured
the enthusiasm of the residents. A cavalcade to the Premier's house
after the feeder road was announced open, further bonded the community.
The community attempted to gain access to the decision-makers, but
ultimately were unsuccessful. [5]

Local councils gave the C.A.F. legitimacy to continue the campaign.
From early September to Xmas, 1977, there were daily meetings.

The F.19 exercise shows that lack of any community consultation can
lead to misunderstanding and resentment by many affected citizens.

Many of the problems created by the F.19 process could have been obviated
by some attempt at constructive community involvement in the governments
planning processes.

2)   North East Area Public Transport Review (Adelaide)

In 1976 the South Australian Government on the recommendation
of the Director-General of Transport directed that a Department
of Transport study making maximum use of an open planning
process with a high level of public involvement, be undertaken
to examine the whole question of public transport in the
north-eastern suburbs of Metropolitan Adelaide (N.E.A.P.T.R.). [6]
Some emphasis was to be placed on the Modbury Transportation
corridor identified in earlier studies.

The study entailed a substantial element of public involvement
as part of the open planning process. At the commencement of
the study, the media was used to inform residents of the study,
being undertaken. The aims, objectives, and methods to be used
to achieve the objectives were explained. In addition, residents
who were considered likely to be affected by the study in any
way, were personally informed about the study. They were kept
informed about all actions taken throughout the course of the study.

Departmental and consultant staff met a broad variety of local and
regional groups and individuals from social, recreational,
professional, health, welfare, educational, and employment fields.
These meetings enabled the study team to gather data about current
transport needs and desires, uses and modes, constraints and
liabilities. This information was integrated with land-use,
environmental, economic, transport, and engineering aspects, to
provide the government with a data-base upon which future planning
decisions would be made.

The public involvement element of the study maintained information
dissemintation at all stages of the study, by using the media,
producing study newsletters, and technical study working papers. [7]

85

Simultaneously, public grievances and opinions about current public transport services were gathered, and appropriate government departments and/or instrumentalities were informed. In some instances, small and yet not insignificant changes to services were able to be made due to the identification of problems by the public to the study team. They were then able to take appropriate steps within governmental spheres.

In addition, the study sponsored seminars and workshops about transport and related issues. These sessions were used to exchange information, help the D.O.T. to gauge the nature of the problem, the degree of concern, and the likely urgency for resolution of any problems.

As a direct result of the above actions, the study was able to modify its information exchange strategies, check the validity of its data-base, and implement or enhance innovative pilot schemes such as para-transit, public transport information, and public involvement in transport planning.

Literature now exists dealing with the validity of greater public involvement and accountability in one planning process. N.E.A.P.T.R. did take up the challenges in a very ambitious manner. The cost - financial, time and energy - were higher than previous planning projects; but the overall outcomes of a better informed community, a better qualified and informed planning profession, and a better informed government, were of significant benefit in the final overall assessment of the project. One clear lesson of importance to this paper, was the need for skilled and knowledgeable professionals who would be able to work with the community, other professionals, and decision-makers.

The ability of this study to use such professionals, albeit in a constrained way, enabled the planning processes to remain open. It enhanced the planning professionals' ability to work with the community, be open to public scrutiny, and ensured that a higher degree of public accountability in government decision-making took place.

86

The Community Development Process Model

The following figure attempts to outline the process steps and suggests
the tasks necessary to achieve community development.

FIG. 1   Tasks and process in community development

	Task	Processes
1. a)	Determination of overall planning processes.	Aims, purposes, and objectives of planning process are determined.*
b)	Determination of public involvement.	Determining aims, purposes, and objectives of public involvement; elements of planning and specifying methods used to implement objectives. C.D. is integrated with other elements of planning process; key decision to be made is whether or not planning is to be closed or open.
2. a)	Investigation of current situation.	Data about the locality is collected. Demographic, socio-economic, political, and cultural profile of the region, locality, community is developed. Existing land-use, transport, environment, and other facilities are identified. Constraints and opportunities for planning are identified.
b)	Investigation of who are key actors*	Information about location and functions of key individuals, groups, organisations is collected. Information about viable local communication channels is gathered

87

(newspapers, journals, pamphlets,
radio, T.V., and their targets/audience
is collected). Identification of
"allies and enemies", lobby and special
interest groups is made.

3. a) Informing the
     community

Whole community is informed.
Media (press, radio and T.V.) is used
for information exchange. Key individuals
are given additional information about
study. These different sources can
also be used to collect information from
the community.

   b) Working with the
     community

Key individuals, groups, and organisations
are given opportunity to determine
possible planning processes; whether
they should speak on behalf of the
community; whether they are prepared
to work with planning professions.
The professionals must at this stage
contract* with all above actors about
roles and responsibilities.

   c) Arbitration in
     the community

Planners must decide whether they will
play any role in receiving adverse and
contradictory/disparate views, and how
they will respect these in ongoing
planning. Again, a clear contract
is required between all parties involved.
Adequate time must be allowed for full
exposure.

88

d) Working for the community

Public/community grievances about current planning or facilities must be heard. Planners will contract to either accept grievances and attempt to resolve problems on communities' behalf, help to communicate to locate relevant responsible bodies, or to do nothing except hear the grievances.

e) Monitoring the process

Planners must constantly review their data, contracts, means, and modes of communication. Working in the community to determine what if any changes to planning are appropriate.

4. a) Collecting the data

Planners must integrate all data from all elements of study process. Disparate points of view must be acknowledged.

b) Presenting the data

Planners must integrate all data from all elements of study process. Disparate points of view must be acknowledged.

c) Informing decision-makers

Planners must integrate all data from all elements of study process. Disparate points of view must be acknowledged.

d) Informing community about decisions

Whole community is informed through:
- Media, key individuals, groups, organisations, and other appropriate communication channels.

89

Adequate time must be allowed for
information to reach whole community
(minimum of 2 months with allowance
for feedback from community).

    *   *   *

NOTES

*2b) Key community contacts that are likely to be found:
Churches, play-groups, recreation and leisure groups, social
groups, elderly citizens groups, day-care groups, places of
business, education, employment, health and welfare care-giving,
medical and dental services, milk-bars, hotels, restaurants,
Government departments and agencies, shops, councils, schools,
special interest and historical groups, local papers and reporters,
transport facilities.

*1a) For the purpose of this discussion aims, purposes, and objectives,
are defined thus: aims are the intentions, purposes are the
reasons why, and objectives are the goals or end points of the
planning processes.

*3b) Contract - a working agreement negotiable between all relevant
parties. It is strongly suggested that once a contract is
established, it be maintained, unless renegotiated.

The Community Development Process Model

1. The first phase of community development in this model is one
   of identifying the needs and resources of an area: an "area profile".

   Such an "area profile" will draw on at least four major sources of
   information.

90

(i)   An analysis of the census information relating to such
        factors as population structure, household size,
        land-use and transport.

(ii)   Collecting and collating opinions on community strengths,
        needs, problems, and resources, from key individuals and
        the media - newspapers, T.V. and pamphlets.

(iii)   Information about the location, hours available, services
        offered by local resources, e.g. churches, doctors.

(iv)   An analysis of enquiries reaching various service departments,
        and data on people receiving services, which will show the
        location, age grouping, and problems, which are handled
        in different agencies. It will be necessary to discover
        how well services operate for what purpose, and if change
        is required.

Phase I could be seen as a pre-organising phase, and is sometimes
referred to as the "socialising" process. The reality is that
only those with enough self-esteem, money, time, and energy will
be interested in change efforts. Planners will have to decide
whether time should be spent informing the public through shop
fronts, public meetings, and media campaigns.

The activity of identifying, recruiting, and developing a
constituency will allow the planner to gather information and
elicit interest. It will also establish mutual boundaries.
It is easier to mobilise support around an issue or problem that
around vague generalised goals. Concrete problems are likely
to generate the strongest sense of identity and commitment.

91

The basis for decision-making will be a consideration of the contribution which the planner can offer, and that to which the community will accept and commit itself. The degree to which the planner can establish effective rapport will influence participants to either drop out or commit themselves.

The setting of goals is a developmental process, and community groups will usually modify their objectives in the light of ongoing experience. The planner can assist in this process by clarifying group goals, and helping the group set priorities. In the F.19 case study this was effectively done within the community organisation.

Phase II involves an assessment of the current level and effectiveness of service provision, e.g. transport, in order to set priorities. The process is to link people and resources, and to tap the potential for self-help activities and local initiatives. It should be possible to find out how proposals for change will be received, and to promote them in a language familiar to the public (e.g. the media can be used to improve information exchange). Key individuals, organisations, and journalists, can be cultivated to assist in the process.

The planning phase can be described as requiring three steps:

(i)   To know which issues have been discussed at all;

(ii)   which issues are the subject of continuing controversy; and

(iii)   which opinions are presently widely shared.

This process will lead to a clarification of goals so that complex tasks can be co-ordinated.

Phase III - Implementation of a proposal. A community of interests must then be organised with its membership established and maintained. Outside support must then be sought, and leadership developed. The next step is for community groups to decide whether to set up a formal

92

structure, establish roles, and elect an executive who can carry out most of the tasks, and make decisions about the planning process on behalf of their larger constituency. Leaders deal with conflict in the situation by collecting additional information that may provide consensus. Planners, must contract to undertake those tasks that will enable all parties to understand the processes involved. Maintaining the delicate balance between the values of participation, leadership, and expertise, is the art of the effective planner.

Leaders of groups would normally receive differing views, and encourage respect for these in the ongoing planning. However, if a common goal is desired, it may sometimes be expedient to ignore diverse interests in the short term, and emphasise commonalities. Otherwise internal struggles may dissipate the energy of the group. To avoid a leadership struggle, it will be essential for the leader to have the legitimacy of the group to carry out such an approach.

The community group, with the planner, can see if incompatabilities in the plan are real or imagined, and devise ways to reach a compromise. Opponents to criticisms can be used to correct the policy, and client satisfaction can be advertised widely.

Occassionally a planner might choose to be involved in advocacy activities which could increase his visibility in the community. This role has many problems because ultimately a planner must be able to maintain his credibility with both his employing body and the community.

WHY COMMUNITY?

In her book "Public Participation in Planning" [8], Leonie Sandercock states: "that most of the literature dealing with participation is as naive as the rash of politicians rhetoric on the subject. Most writers have assumed not only that participation is a good thing, but that the

93

more it hands over 'power to the people', the better it is ..... I find
the academic pre-occupation with this approach both ill-informed and
unrealistic ..... We cannot simply assume that more (participation)
is better ....."

What reasons does this leave us for supporting participation at all?....

"It can keep public authorities honest and human and thoughtful and
concerned about their functions and considerate of the people they're
serving. Open planning can re-assure people, by keeping them informed
and consulting them. And it can usually elicit informed responses
on questions on very local detail - on things that may not even seem
important to planners but are usually very important in the lives of
those suggesting them. But above all, if it can sometimes pressure
or persuade public authorities to perform their duties more sensitively,
it is worth a certain amount of expense and delay."

In this paper the authors have used the term community development to
incorporate various components which traditionally fit under headings,
such as participation, involvement, consultation. (See appendix 1 -
glossary.) Sandercock's statement above could equally well have used
the term community development rather than participation and still be
valid.

The model of Community Development that has been presented in
descriptive form is appropriate to the current social, political, and
economic climate in which most planning is occurring in Australia.
Central to the whole model is the proposition that is stated so clearly
by Sandercock and others. It requires a spirit of goodwill and
commitment from all parties involved - professionals, decision-makers,
and the public - but inevitably the initiative is more likely to be
required to come from professional planners than other parties.

94

That this is so should not be surprising. Transport planners have continually been in the forefront in introducing innovative and beneficial programmes for the community. Examples ranging from para-transit, car-pooling, public transport information services through to high speed transport modes (freeways, rail, bus) have been of significant benefit to people in meeting their mobility and accessibility demands.

In presenting their model the authors can think of no better way of concluding this paper than by using the sentiments expressed in the report "People and planning - the Skeffington Report": [9]

> "We understand community development to be the act of sharing
> in the formulation of policies and proposals. Clearly, the giving
> of information by the ..... planning authority and of an opportunity
> to comment on that information is a major part in the process,
> ....but it is not the whole story. Community development involves
> doing as well as talking and there will be full community development
> only where the public are able to take an active part throughout
> the planning process. There are limitations to this concept.
> One is that responsibility for preparing a plan is, and must remain,
> that of the ..... planning authority. Another is the completion of
> plans - the setting into statutory forms of proposals and decisions -
> is a task demanding the highest standards of professional knowledge
> and skills, and must be undertaken by the professional staff of
> the ..... planning authority."

Community   -   aggregate comprising a majority of individuals, groups

and organisations living and working in a geographically

bounded region.

Public   -   As above

Development   -   the process by which communities gain or enhance

knowledge and skills that can improve their lifestyles.

Participation   -   the process by which information gained or enhanced by

communities can be appropriately used to help them to

make decisions about actions affecting their lifestyles.

Consultation   -   the process whereby communities are informed about ideas

and are given opportunity to give their own responses or ideas.

Involvement   -   the process whereby communities can interact with external

or internal bodies as part of their everday life.

Publicity   -   information made available to communities; such information

could be fact, argument and explanation.   Publicity alone

is not participation.

Contract — the process whereby planners make clear to the community
the boundaries which determine the nature and extent
of interaction between planners and the community.
It can be written or remain a verbal understanding.

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"A MODEL FOR CONSULTATION"

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75.

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