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# Community Involvement Manual

August 1990

FAA-EE-90-03

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U.S. Department of Transportation
**Federal Aviation Administration**

Office of Environment and Energy
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Technical Report Documentation Page

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|---|---|---|
| 1. Report No. FAA-EE-90-03 | 2. Government Accession No. | 3. Recipient's Catalog No. |
| 4. Title and Subtitle Community Involvement Manual | | 5. Report Date August 1990 |
| | | 6. Performing Organization Code AEE-300 |
| 7. Author(s) William J. Willkie, F. Roy Madgwick, Robert A. Sweatt, Caroline A. Grievson, Eileen M. Carlton | | 8. Performing Organization Report No. |
| 9. Performing Organization Name and Address HNTB 99 Canal Center Plaza Alexandria, VA 22314 | | 10. Work Unit No. (TRAIS) |
| | | 11. Contract or Grant No. DTFA01-89-C-00016 |
| 12. Sponsoring Agency Name and Address Federal Aviation Administration Office of Environment and Energy 800 Independence Avenue, S.W. Washington, DC 20591 | | 13. Type of Report and Period Covered |
| | | 14. Sponsoring Agency Code |
| 15. Supplementary Notes | | |

16. Abstract


This manual is written for planning professionals and others dealing with airport development and the concerns of airport communities. Community involvement is a broad and evolving area of study. The manual is designed to provide practical guidelines for involving the community in a variety of aviation planning situations.

Since planning and community involvement situations will vary with different airports, communities, issues, and points in the planning process, this manual outlines a process for identifying community involvement needs, evaluating techniques to meet these needs and designing a workable program.


| 17. Key Words | 18. Distribution Statement |
|---|---|
| Community Involvement<br>Airport Planning<br>Aviation Noise | Document is available to the U.S. public through the National Technical Information Service, Springfield, VA 22161 |

| 19. Security Classif. (of this report) | 20. Security Classif. (of this page) | 21. No. of Pages | 22. Price |
|---|---|---|---|
| UNCLASSIFIED | UNCLASSIFIED | 92 | |

Form DOT F 1700.7 (8-72) Reproduction of completed page authorized

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Aviation noise remains one of the most serious constraints to expansion and improvement of the air transportation system. If the national system is to keep pace with the growing demand for air travel, a number of technical and policy issues must be resolved at the national and community levels. In recent years, communities near airports have become increasingly concerned about noise and more willing to get involved in this and other airport planning issues.

Community involvement can be a very useful tool in developing acceptable approaches to the capacity and environmental issues facing airports. Experience shows that involving the community in the planning process can produce better plans. Further, plans developed with appropriate community involvement are more likely to be acceptable and, thus, more likely to be successful.

### Purpose of the Community Involvement Manual

The Community Involvement Manual is written for planning professionals and others dealing with airport development and the concerns of airport communities.

Community involvement is a broad and evolving area of study. This document is not a textbook addressing all aspects of this topic. The manual is designed to provide practical guidelines for involving the community in a variety of aviation planning situations. Consultation with public affairs professionals through the FAA's Headquarters, Regional, and Technical and Aeronautical Center Public Affairs staff is encouraged. These professionals can help to identify the need for community involvement and to develop a successful program.

Since planning and community involvement situations will vary with different airports, communities, issues, and points in the planning process, this manual outlines a process for identifying community involvement needs, evaluating techniques to meet these needs and designing a workable program.

### How to Use this Manual

The manual is designed to accommodate readers with differing needs in terms of specific information and level of detail. It presents a logical sequence of topics in a format which allows "skimming" for items of particular interest. Individual chapters can be used as independent references for specific topics. More detailed information on community involvement techniques is appended.

**Chapter 2** outlines the legal requirements for community involvement and describes the potential benefits of an effective community involvement program.

**Chapter 3** reviews principles of community involvement and "helpful hints" which generally apply to community involvement efforts.

**Chapter 4** discusses a critical aspect of community involvement; namely the audience. This chapter notes that a community is normally composed of many interest groups. Each of these groups has its own concerns, level of interest and degree of sophistication. These factors play a major role in selecting community involvement techniques.

**Chapter 5** describes the desired results of community involvement efforts. Knowing what you want to achieve in a given situation is a frequently overlooked prerequisite for developing an effective community involvement program.

**Chapter 6** briefly describes the key features of individual community involvement techniques. In each case, the advantages and disadvantages of the technique are clearly highlighted. More detailed descriptions of the techniques, including "how to" instructions are appended.

**Chapter 7** outlines a process for developing a community involvement program and integrating community involvement activities into the decision-making process. This chapter also provides a summary evaluation of potential techniques.

# CHAPTER 2

## THE NEED FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Dealing with aviation noise issues has always been difficult. Planning issues in this area include national transportation policy, regional economic development, air traffic control, local land use, individual property rights, and personal annoyance. Making sense of these technical and policy issues frequently requires a great deal of education. Dealing with these issues effectively requires a consensus on a course of action.

In recent years, communities have become increasingly sophisticated and willing to become involved in aviation noise and other airport planning issues. Many of the comments submitted in response to a Federal Register Notice on airport noise compatibility planning and proposed changes to FAR Part 150 in November 1988 related to community involvement. The most frequently cited needs for community involvement related to education of the various interest groups and their involvement in the decision- making process.

This chapter outlines specific requirements for community involvement in aviation planning and, more importantly, describes the potential benefits of an effective community involvement program (CIP).

**Legal and Administrative Requirements for Community Involvement**

The FAA actively encourages community involvement in its sponsored programs. A legal mandate for community involvement is found in Public Law 94-54 Title of Law which states, "No airport development project may be approved by the Secretary unless he is satisfied that fair consideration has been given to the interest of the communities in or near which the project is located." Section 16(c)(3).

Community involvement is recommended whenever public acceptance and understanding of an action or decision is necessary. Community involement is specifically required in the following cases:

- Actions or projects involving the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA);
- Noise compatibility studies conducted under FAR Part 150;

- Planning studies including airport system plans and airport master plans; and

- Facilities establishment, particularly if proposed navigational aids or other improvements could be interpreted as permitting or encouraging increased traffic or operations by larger or more noisy airplanes.

The EIS/EA process requires that, "affected local units of government, and pertinent federal and state agencies should be consulted early in the process...," (FAA Order 1050.1D Section 22). In addition, the process requires that, "Citizen involvement, where appropriate, shall be initiated at the earliest practical time and continued throughout the development of the proposed project in order to obtain meaningful input...," (FAA Order 1050.1D Section 29, FAA Order 5050.4A, para 18).

Affected interests shall be provided an opportunity to review and comment on draft and final environmental statements. In the case of projects involving airport location, new runway location or major extension of a runway, FAA Order 5050.4A specifies that public hearings must be conducted. For other actions, public hearings are to be considered based on the guidelines of paragraph 49 of the order.

**FAR Part 150** requires consultation with specified interests including States, public agencies, planning agencies, local jurisdictions, FAA regional officials and other Federal officials, and regular aeronautical users of the airport. It does not specify the nature of this consultation other than to require a public hearing during the course of the study.

**Building Community Support**

Beyond the legal and administrative requirements for community involvement, there are also good, practical reasons for developing an effective community involvement process. Any aviation planning effort, whether it relates to physical improvements at an existing airport, location of a new airport, or development of a noise compatibility program, requires general agreement by the interested parties on some course of action.

While the airport may benefit the community as a whole, some aspects of its operation (e.g., noise) may adversely affect some community members. The enigma is that the general good may not be as strongly perceived as the adverse noise impacts on those who live adjacent to the airport. In practice, this local constituency often opposes implementation of airport projects which benefit the larger community. Successful implementation requires support of a majority of the affected interests. The community involvement process is a means of achieving consensus, and involves procedures to:

- identify concerns;

- explain technical factors;

- establish legitimacy of the process; and

- provide understanding of project implications, costs and benefits.

The objective of the process is to develop technically correct and generally acceptable solutions to noise compatibility issues. Consensus development is a primary purpose of the activity, regardless of the legal and administrative requirements.

# CHAPTER 3

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter addresses the basic principles of community involvement and presents considerations for developing an effective community involvement program.

### Program Design that Yields Desired Results

The goals of a well-designed community involvement program are to increase public knowledge and understanding of complex issues, consult with interested and affected publics during planning and decision-making, and develop consensus.

A well-designed program requires planning and analysis. While poor technical planning may result in expensive redesign and construction, a poorly-designed community involvement program can prevent projects from ever being implemented, undermine valuable technical work, and impair community relations for years to come.

Developing educational programs or creating a dialogue with the public does not necessarily mean that effective community involvement has been established. The public expects to influence planning products and decisions. A community involvement program should introduce community concerns into the planning process. The program should also make it clear that consideration of these concerns will be balanced by consideration of other factors.

Public participation programs must be tailored to suit the situation, the community and the job. An effective program requires competent personnel, an adequate budget, and realistic timeframes. If the program is large, or has the potential to be controversial, professional advice should be sought to help develop and implement a community involvement program. The selection of an appropriate consultant can be as important as the program itself. Not only does the design of the program reflect the value placed on the community's concerns, but it also publicly demonstrates a commitment to working with the community.

### High Visibility Program

A visible, easily understood and publicly convenient community involvement program improves the credibility of the technical planning process. Initially, most people are simply curious about the effect of a project on their community. However, curiosity quickly changes to suspicion and frustration if the public is not able to get information on a situation. If the public is not allowed to review or see the study's progress, suspicions relating to the airport administration's intentions and the study's conclusions usually develop.

Maintaining high visibility for the community involvement program is important for several reasons:

- Community apprehension not only affects the outcome of the proposed project, but it contributes to possible response to future actions as well, and

- If the airport administration does not provide reliable information, the public will seek its own sources of information which may be inaccurate or misleading.

**Avoid the "Hard Sell"**

The "hard sell" often produces disappointing results. If the community response is not a positive one, the proponents of the project are likely to become defensive. A defensive attitude is a barrier to communication because it shows the public the airport is only willing to listen to views that support the project. If the community involvement process is used as a forum for pushing the airport point of view without consideration of community interests, it creates two problems.

- The public avoids participation in future community involvement opportunities because it believes the airport administration is going to do whatever it wants regardless of public concerns, and

- The airport staff becomes defensive because it is in a position of defending the proposed program, the airport, and the airport's integrity in what can quickly become an adverse situation.

By learning and considering community concerns during the planning process, rather than selling its results, the airport administration gains the credibility needed to implement an effective community involvement program.

**Allow that Technicians can be Wrong**

People often respond more favorably to staff or technicians who know the limits of their own expertise and the project scope. If the limits of professional expertise are recognized by the staff, the public will react more favorably to explanations about the practicality and the consequences of a proposed action. If the technicians use professional expertise to override and discard concerns which are legitimate in the eyes of the public, they often lose credibility.

Technicians don't know everything and can't think of everything. It is essential that they listen to public opinions and values. This information allows technicians to address community concerns and increases their ability to develop feasible and acceptable solutions.

**Use Professional Expertise to Create Options, Not Close Them**

The community involvement program should encourage public interest and involvement in developing viable options rather than dictate what can or cannot be done. It is important to describe and lay out basic project considerations, such as the technical and economic feasibility of an option, the project's environmental constraints and the various limitations, permit requirements and regulations imposed upon the airport. In conjunction with this educational process, the staff must also be able to assist the public in recognizing the limits of the options and the constraints under which all parties are operating. The public must recognize all of the limitations imposed on the technicians; such as the laws of physics governing the flight of aircraft. The public must understand that the professionals are using their expertise to develop solutions which are responsive to the community's needs, but they must operate within set limits.

### Speak the Public's Language

Throughout the community involvement program, the project staff should carefully consider the level of understanding needed by its affected communities. In most cases, the airport is required to interact with different groups with varying sophistication and different degrees of interest. It is important to tailor your program to the community's level of interest and technical understanding.

When planning a community involvement program, remember to translate the proposed study into layman's terms. Avoid the use of acronyms and highly technical terms when addressing the general public. Overly technical jargon can intimidate or confuse the public, creating mistrust or loss of interest. It is equally important not to "talk down" to your audience or speak "at" people. Spend time understanding your community's backgrounds, concerns and interests.

### Listen to and Respect Public Concerns about the Project

The public provides valuable insights into a project by expressing its perceptions and feelings. Listening to the public is the key to developing an effective community involvement program. Careful listening avoids costly oversights during a project and focuses the study on significant issues. Listening also identifies misconceptions concerning the project and enables the staff to educate the public in areas where concerns may be based on lack of understanding of the project and its implications.

To expect only technical data or rational reactions about the project from the public is unrealistic. An error in assessing factual data can seriously affect the outcome of a project, but an error in judgment about peoples' values (i.e., their likes, dislikes, hopes, fears, prejudices, etc.) is no less important. It is the staff's responsibility to incorporate these values into the project so that the public can see a legitimate attempt has been made to address their concerns.

### Clarify Responsibilities and Authority

In many public settings, the group leaders who organize and conduct the community involvement program are perceived as credible and respected sources of information and ideas. However, the people often have unrealistic expectations concerning the authority of airport staff or consultants. For example, consultants cannot make decisions for a public body. The public and the press often try to obtain commitments or decisions from project staff who may not be authorized to make these decisions.

A project staff must clarify its responsibilities and authority at the outset of the program. A useful technique often used in the Part 150 planning process is to describe the process, the actors, the role of each and the decision-making responsibilities of each. This technique is applicable to most projects which involve public participation.

The public's responsibility to assist the airport and its consultant in the process is an integral part of the technique.

### Try New Approaches or Methods

Designing your community involvement program is a creative process. It requires assessing the techniques that best fit your community's needs. It also requires combining techniques to meet all of the program requirements with minimal cost.

Try new approaches through the use of new technology and software packages that present cost-effective methods for producing effective and valuable information. Community involvement can be an exciting challenge rather than a threatening obligation.

# CHAPTER 4

## WHO IS THE PUBLIC?

Man lives, works, and plays in groups. Each group values things, relationships and conditions on some relative scale. Individuals may be part of many groups which may be defined by education, economic condition, location, social status or other conditions. A community is generally made up of many groups, and there may be many communities within the area of influence of a major airport. Each group within each community is a public, and different publics may have different community involvement needs.

This chapter reviews the concept of multiple publics, including the "vocal minority/silent majority" issue, and discusses techniques for identifying potentially interested "publics" during the course of a community involvement process.

**The Concept of Publics**

The public interest, which is an aggregation of diverse individual interests, is essentially an academic concept. A more useful concept is to consider that each interest group constitutes a "public". There are many publics to address rather than a single monolithic public. One useful way of grouping publics in relation to airport issues follows.

**The Indifferent.** Many people are indifferent to an airport. Such people are not aware of its benefit , disbenefit, or even of its existence. Indifference may result from cultural, economic, social, geographic or other distinction. The indifferent may be a relatively large public.

**Adversaries.** There are individuals who for various reasons perceive the airport as primarily a disbenefit. The desired results of the program will depend upon the interrelationship of these factors. The following outline illustrates the community involvement results which may be desired during the course of a planning process. Adversaries may include airport neighbors concerned about visual and audible pollution; providers of competing modes of transport; those who perceive aviation only as a benefit for businessmen and jet setters; those who perceive airports as harmful to ecology; energy conservationists who perceive only the high energy cost of hurling tons of aluminum through the air; and those who only see land removed from tax roles, job opportunity dislocations, and community disruption.

**Users.** Many people use an airport. Passengers, aircraft operators and cargo shippers all benefit from the airport in some way, although their views on specific airport issues may differ. Passengers may perceive the airport as useful, while remaining concerned about aircraft noise. Aircraft operators and freight shippers may have concerns about other aspects of airport operations, but are generally advocates.

**Beneficiaries.** There are beneficiaries of the airport who are not users, such as employees at the airport local suppliers of goods and services, motels, taxicabs, etc. Development induced by the airport and its infrastructure produces another set of beneficiaries. Considering the multiplier effect of the economic activity of all the beneficiaries, additional beneficiaries may be identified. Society as a whole also benefits from air transportation by decreasing time lost in transit by both people and goods.

**Providers.** There is another societal group best classified as providers of the airport and its services. Airport proprietors, generally local public bodies, are included in this group. The airlines provide the mechanism for air transport. Manufacturers who provide the aircraft to airlines are indirect providers. Airport concessionaires provide auxiliary services at the airport.

**Regulators.** Finally, there are groups who regulate or affect the airport and its operations; managers and specialists in the FAA, the Department of Justice, the Department of Defense, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, other Federal agencies and many State and local agencies. All tend to focus on their individual responsibilities and protect their current operations.

An airport project could be viewed in relation to these publics: the indifferent, the adversaries, the users, the beneficiaries, the providers and the regulators. Understanding that there are many interrelated publics is important in developing an effective community involvement program.

**"The Vocal Minority/Silent Majority"**

A common belief is that too many decisions are made by "the vocal minority," since it often seems that most political decisions are made by a minority of actively involved and interested citizens. As you have just read, public facilities such as airports affect many publics. Frequently, the benefits of such facilities are spread over the entire community, while negative effects are concentrated in the immediate vicinity of the facility itself. Although those adversely affected may represent a minority of the community, they may feel more significantly affected than other interests. Consequently, minority interests may express vocal opposition in the public debate. It is frequently argued that the "silent majority" of people benefited by the airport is not being heard.

The concept of "the silent majority" is used as a justification for opposing the demands of the active minority. Thus a politician, an agency, or an interest group may claim, "If we could just hear from the 'silent majority' .....then it would be clear that our policies have the support of the general public." In fact, the concept of "the silent majority" rests on the assumption that because people are silent, they are in agreement. In reality, the silent majority may contain many diverse opinions.

The "silent majority" is not a fixed class of people. All of us make choices about when to participate. We may chose to be part of the vocal minority on one issue and be a member of the silent majority on several others. In other words, the memberships of the vocal minority and the silent majority are constantly changing. When we say we have a "controversial" issue, all we are saying is that the number of people interested enough to participate in the debate is relatively large.

There has been considerable research on the reasons **why people choose not to participate.** The three reasons most often cited are:

**People feel adequately represented by the active minority.** Leaders of visible interest groups often serve as "surrogates" for a much larger group of people who feel represented by the activities of that interest group. Many of us belong to some group in which we do little more than send our annual dues, so that group will represent our interests.

**People are unaware that they have a stake in a particular decision.** We may choose to involve ourselves in those issues we see as having a major impact on our personal lives. We also make choices between those issues we see as having major impacts versus those having relatively minor impacts. We may be so busy earning a living that an aviation project seems abstract and unrelated to our lives.

**People don't believe they can affect the decision.** If people don't believe their participating will make a difference, they won't participate. One of the major responsibilities in a community involvement program is to make clear how people can influence a decision, and show clear connections between the public's participation and the outcome.

In summary, it is probably inevitable that community involvement programs address a relatively small number of highly motivated and affected citizens and groups which tend to be adversaries. Because community involvement programs often deal primarily with the minority, there are certain obligations that every community involvement program has to the broader majority.

**Inform as broad a segment of the public as possible of the stake they may have in the issue under study** (e.g., informing air travellers of the possible impacts of curfew hours).

**Inform the public how they can participate in the study, and how their participation will influence the outcome** (e.g., news articles about upcoming activities).

**Systematically target publics in the community involvement program to insure that the active minority reasonably represents the broader majority** (i.e., that all points of view are involved in your program).

**Targeting The Right Public**

Public opinion and interests vary from issue to issue. The number of people seeing themselves as sufficiently affected by a particular decision varies from decision to decision. An initial step in designing an effective community involvement program is to systematically identify the publics most likely to be affected at each stage of the planning or decision-making process. This task is difficult because the degree to which people feel affected by a particular decision is purely subjective. One individual may feel severely impacted by an airport's activity while his neighbor does not. There are a number of other specific resources you may want to tap in targeting the public.

**Self-identification.** Stories about the study in the newspaper, radio, or TV, the distribution of brochures and newsletters, and well-publicized public meetings are all means of encouraging self-identification. Anyone who participates by attending the meeting or writing a letter or phoning for information has clearly indicated an interest in being an active member of the public in the study. Brochures and reports should also contain some sort of response form so that people can indicate an interest in participating.

**Third-party identification.** One of the best ways to obtain information about other interests or individuals who should be included in the study is to ask representatives of known interests for their suggestions. You might conduct interviews with neighborhood group representatives, inquiring who else they believe should be consulted. Response forms attached to reports, brochures, or newsletters should request suggestions of other groups or individuals who might be interested in the study.

**Staff identification.** Airport staff members are usually aware of individuals or groups who have concerns about airport issues. Staff awareness may be due to participation in past studies, complaints received on noise or other environmental issues, or personal contacts in the local communities. Airport staff can be one of the richest sources of information about individuals and groups who may be interested in given issue.

**Lists of groups or individuals.** There are numerous lists available which could assist in targeting the publics. These lists include:

- yellow pages,
- chamber of commerce membership lists,
- associations/organizations/neighborhood groups,
- city and county directories,
- direct mailing lists (usually purchased), and
- lists maintained by sociology/political science departments.

**Historical records.** There may be information in your own files. This may include:

- noise complaints,
- lists of previous participants in earlier studies,
- correspondence files, and
- library files on past projects.

**Newspaper library.** A review of newspaper clippings may reveal names of individuals or groups who have previously participated in aviation-related studies, or who have expressed opinions about the area of your concern.

**Consultation with other agencies.** A number of agencies may have information about people or groups interested in aviation issues. These might include: the FAA, airport proprietors, airlines, city and county planning and zoning authorities, state aviation office, etc. In addition, many other agencies such as the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Department of Transportation often undertake community involvement or citizen participation efforts and, as a result, may know influential community leaders who might also be included in your studies.

**User survey.** One possible community involvement technique is to conduct a user survey. If this survey is conducted near the beginning of a community involvement program, it can identify individuals or groups who would like to participate in the study.

**Identifying Publics at Each Stage of Plan**

The same publics are not necessarily involved in each stage of planning. Some stages of planning require public review from the broadest range possible. Other stages require a degree of understanding of technical data which may limit participation to a technical group. Still other phases may involve questions of policy which require individuals who have defined leadership roles in environmental, business, civic groups, etc. Some people are seen as leaders because they are advocates for a particular position, while others are seen as leaders precisely because they are viewed as "objective" or "reasonable."

The broader public should not be excluded from the decision of technical issues; however, the techniques used during highly technical stages of the planning process are likely to be aimed at smaller groups. For example, when continuity is needed, an advisory group may be a particularly useful technique. When there is a need for broad public evaluation of alternatives, then public meetings, newsletters, workshops, etc., may be more useful techniques.

In thinking through which publics need to be involved at specific stages of the planning process, it may be useful to identify the different levels of "publics," such as:

- staff of other Federal, State, and local governmental agencies;
- elected officials at various levels of government;
- highly visible leaders of organized groups or identifiable interests, (e.g., air transport associations, airline pilots' associations, neighborhood groups, etc.);

- members of technical and professional groups;

- members of organized groups or identifiable interests (e.g., residents in proximity of the airport, airport users, etc.); and

- the "general" public not otherwise identified with any organized groups.

When a project or study is initially contemplated, no other agencies may be involved. At the start of a formal planning process, outside agencies and technical/professional groups are usually consulted. When the scope of the project or study is established, elected officials may become interested. As planning alternatives are developed, organized groups will be interested. During the evaluation of alternatives, the general public will be involved. Publics tend to be added rather than subtracted during the planning process.

At some stages of the planning process, many levels of the public may need to be involved. At other stages, only a few of these levels will be targeted. To avoid the dangers of producing an "elitist" community involvement program, any planning stage that has primarily involved leadership groups should be followed by a more general review by a broader public. Even though working with a leadership group is easier because of its smaller size and technical background, it is desirable to work with a much broader public for both visibility and political acceptability.

By "targeting" the various publics at each stage of the decision-making process, the sponsor can select appropriate community involvement techniques to reach these particular publics.

# CHAPTER 5

## DESIRED RESULTS OF A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

This chapter describes four basic goals of community involvement, discusses the points at which involvement should occur during a planning process, and describes some of the desired results of a Community Involvement Program.

**Purpose of Community Involvement**

A planning process provides a road map or a pathway to proceed from problem definition to problem solution. Dissemination of information, public response and conflict resolution are parts of this process. These community involvement activities will be influenced by the degree of controversy, polarization of interests, and history associated with the issue under consideration. An effective community involvement program must accomplish a variety of goals in situations that will vary from problem to problem and from time to time in the planning process. A better understanding of the desired results of community involvement can be obtained by restating the purpose of citizen involvement.

The basic purpose of citizen involvement is to see that government decisions reflect the preferences of the people. The basic intention of citizen participation is to ensure responsiveness and accountability of government to the citizens. Community involvement also produces better plans, and increases the likelihood of implementing the plan.

In addition to legal and administrative requirements, there are four general goals for community involvement.

**Inform/educate the public.** When people understand why things are the way they are or how things work, they are more likely to accept or support planning recommendations. In the absence of information, people become suspicious. An adverse relationship tends to develop. Once this relationship develops, it is difficult to solve problems when they occur.

**Gather information from the public.** Community involvement provides an opportunity to gather information about local needs and concerns; local social, economic and environmental conditions; and the relative importance the public places upon various program objectives.

**Conflict resolution.** Community involvement sometimes results in a general agreement which provides a base of support for proposed actions or policies. Because of the divided responsibility for aviation noise compatibility, many things can be resolved by mutual agreement that are difficult to accomplish by the decision of one of the agencies.

**Establish the credibility of the decision-making process.** Since there cannot be complete agreement on all solutions, decisions must derive their legitimacy not just from legal authority but from the common belief that they were arrived at in a fair and equitable manner. Decision-making must be open and visible, so the public can make its own judgment about whether the decision-making process was fair. The public must believe that equal access has been provided to all individuals and groups.

Fundamental to the success of citizen involvement is openness. An open process is the key to successful citizen involvement. The purpose, procedures and schedule for conducting the planning process should be described as clearly and completely as possible. This information should include the following: decisions to be made, factors which will be considered, choices which are and are not open for consideration, and timing. Openness means that planning is done publicly to the maximum reasonable extent, and that decisions are made public. Any individual or group should have an opportunity to contribute to the process. Written information generated during the planning process should be made available to interested participants. This openness does not guarantee there will be trust or agreement between planners and the public, but it does help to ensure that what conflict does arise will be over the real issues to be resolved rather than the question of whether an honest intent to resolve them is being made.

### When Should Community Involvement Occur?

An airport project begins with the recognition that a problem exists, and a solution is needed. Although problem recognition frequently results from technical analysis, the public should be involved in determining the need for a solution. Therefore, technical analysis needs to be translated into information that can be understood by the general public.

There are a number of ways to solve any problem. Involving the public in the postulation of alternatives and the screening of alternatives to be analyzed will promote an understanding of the problem and a general realization that all reasonable alternatives will be considered.

Community involvement cannot substitute for technical studies. For the public to understand the results of the technical study, it needs to understand the purposes and the limitations of the proposed technical study. Therefore, the public should be involved in the conception and creation of technical studies and informed of the results. If the process of accepting the technical study results in a decision, the public should be involved in that decision process.

For example, a Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 150 Noise Compatibility Plan is a highly technical study dealing with noise problems. The public should be involved in determining the need and/or timing for such a study. The public should be informed about the study's technical and legal limitations. When noise abatement procedures are developed for study, the public should be consulted. The process of screening alternatives for further study should also involve the public. The public should be allowed to review and comment on forecasts and other technical assumptions of the noise analysis. Finally, the decision of accepting the noise abatement program and the noise map for submission to the FAA should involve the public. Involving the public at these points in the process will increase the possibility of reaching technically correct and generally acceptable decisions.

Public input will take place even at those points where the basic purpose is to inform the public. How well the public understands the information being presented is in itself a very useful input. The requirement for public input is best understood if it is defined at every point where understanding is required, and at every point where the study produces results that bear on subsequent conditions.

### Desired Results of a Community Involvement Program

A community involvement program must achieve different goals at different points in the planning process in a variety of situations.

The desired results of the program will depend upon the interrelationship of these factors. The following outline illustrates the community involvement results which may be desired during the course of a planning process.

| Situation | Desired Results |
|---|---|
| • Determining need for a solution. | • Education of community regarding purpose and need for project/program.<br>• Identification of concerned public.<br>• Identification of concerns and issues.<br>• Establishment of agency credibility.<br>• Establishment of process credibility. |
| • Development of alternatives. | • Education of community regarding technical issues.<br>• Understanding of specific community concerns.<br>• Understanding of local conditions. |
| • Evaluation of alternatives. | • Inform community regarding assumptions and criteria.<br>• Understanding of community values.<br>• Maintain credibility of planning process. |
| • Decision-making. | • Informing community of decisions and rationale.<br>• Understanding of community acceptability.<br>• Understanding of implementation factors.<br>• Resolution of community conflicts.<br>• Maintain credibility of planning process. |

# CHAPTER 6

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

This chapter summarizes frequently used community involvement techniques. A short description is provided for each technique, followed by a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the technique. Additional advice on how to effectively implement some of the more complex techniques can be found in the Appendices. The techniques discussed in this chapter are:

- Meetings
- Charrettes
- Public Hearings
- Advisory Committees
- Interviews
- Field Offices
- Hotlines
- Displays, Exhibits
- Newspaper Inserts
- Publications
- Surveys
- Participatory Television
- Cumulative Brochures
- Responsiveness Summaries
- Conduct Contests or Events
- Mediation
- Delphi
- Simulation Games
- Technical Assistance to Citizens
- Training Programs for Citizens
- Community Coordination

### Meetings

Meetings provide a framework for constructively interacting with the public, an opportunity for developing agency credibility, and a mechanism for obtaining, evaluating, and incorporating public input on an ongoing basis. There are many types of meetings. The following categories of meetings may be conducted to achieve specific program objectives. Additional advice on how to design effective meetings is given in Appendix A.

**Working Meetings.** A working meeting attempts to resolve a pre-determined problem in the absence of top administrators. The various interests should be represented by staff-level personnel who are not in a position to make concessions or demands. When the group encounters controversial views or goals, the meeting should turn to focus on those areas where the participants have some interests in common. This focus is accomplished primarily by building the area of agreement into larger areas of overlapping views.

This type of meeting is most useful in exploring alternatives and reviewing technical issues.

Advantages: Working meetings invite and facilitate free give-and-take discussions without committing participants to policies.

Disadvantages: Trying to find a compromise when participants express strongly opposed views can be time consuming and detract from the meeting's goal to resolve a specific, defined problem.

**Open Meetings.** An open meeting is fairly similar to a working meeting, except that an audience is present. Top administrators are more inclined to attend since their agency or group may have to "go on record" in front of the public and the media.

Advantages: Citizen concerns frequently have more to do with the ability, possibility and opportunity to participate than with actively participating. Open meetings provide opportunities for public participation. Even if a crowd is large, a skilled meeting leader can create a sense of interaction between the participants.

Disadvantages: If the audience is large and has very strong feelings, an open meeting can degenerate into a public argument in which participants respond to the crowd instead of each other. Very often, participants in an open meeting are reluctant to explore options because the presence of an audience may prevent them from changing positions upon further consideration.

**Public Mass Meeting.** Unlike the other meetings described which are designed to find solutions to defined problems, the purpose of a public mass meeting is to demonstrate support, opposition, or concern about a particular issue. The meeting's success or failure is typically measured by the turnout, which is an indicator of how much people care, or how much political energy might be brought to the issue.

Advantages: Public mass meetings serve to generate public comment. If a lot of people show concern at these meetings it is likely that stronger efforts will be made to incorporate their views.

Disadvantages: Public mass meetings are especially likely to generate controversy. Positions taken in public cannot be negotiated or reconciled easily. Speakers often take extreme positions for the sake of the audience. Finally, some participants will not feel comfortable speaking to a large audience.

**Large Group/Small Group Meeting.** If there is a particularly large crowd, one technique is to make a presentation to the entire crowd and then break into smaller discussion groups that report back to the larger group at the end of the meeting.

Advantages: The small group discussion provides everyone an opportunity to participate intensively, and report back to the large group. This helps provide a feeling of representation within the total body.

Disadvantages: This type of meeting requires more staff members on hand who are competent in their abilities to organize groups.

**Panel Meeting.** A panel meeting is designed to air certain issues, to hear different viewpoints, to shed light on a subject, and to facilitate the decision-making process at a later date. Such a meeting involves a panel of representatives of different opinions who discuss the issues in question, followed by either questions from the audience, or by small group discussions.

Advantages: When issues surrounding a decision are not well understood by potentially affected interested parties, a panel meeting can help clarify a subject. A panel format allows responsible individuals to air their views, and documentation of the meeting provides a record of how the issues were resolved.

Disadvantages: If the issues being discussed are extremely complex and evoke considerable public response, the issue may become more confused.

**Workshops.** Workshops are built on the premise that any reasonably representative group of people can identify virtually all the problems associated with a project. This type of meeting can make the individual compromises that are necessary for developing a single list of priorities or preferences. Workshops differ from the large group/small group format in that they usually have a specific task or goal to be accomplished.

Advantages: Workshops help bring to the surface major concerns and allow for people to express their preferences. This format is especially useful in developing potential solutions to problems.

Disadvantages: The views expressed in a workshop do not represent a real decision by the community, unless the participants happen to be the governmental body having legitimate decision-making responsibility for the issues at hand.

**Open House.** An open house meeting is an informal event held at a well-known location and scheduled at a time such as the evenings or the weekends convenient to most working people. These meetings are usually held over an extended period to avoid crowding at any one time. Often the purpose of such a meeting is to present the public with various alternatives that can lead to a solution. Experts are available to explain issues, answer questions and respond to public concerns. The public is asked to submit written comments and suggestions and identify their preferred alternative with reasons cited for their choice. The decision-makers then may choose an alternative after taking into consideration comments from the public.

Advantages: An open house allows the public to learn about the issues in question in a non-intimidating, informal manner with technical experts on hand. The experts will be able to incorporate the public's input and reactions into their final decisions.

Disadvantages: There may not be a very wide public representation at an open house since only those especially interested in learning more about the issues are likely to attend. Unless properly organized and managed, there is a tendency for this format to turn into a loosely organized public mass meeting.

**Charrettes**

A 'charrette' is traditionally an architectural term which originated when the 'Ecole des Beaux Arts' would send a cart (charrette) around Paris to collect its students' work when the submission deadline was reached. Some students would jump on the cart to work on their drawings up until the last minute (en charrette).

A charrette brings together all the critical agencies or individuals in an attempt to achieve mutual agreement on an overall plan in a relatively short time. A charrette is designed for a very concentrated bloc of time such as an entire weekend or a series of nightly meetings for a week, or a series of once-a-week or weekend meetings. It is a particularly useful technique in a crisis situation, or as a means of resolving an impasse reached between various groups. Additional advice on how to effectively implement a Charrette can be found in Appendix B.

Advantages: Charrettes are useful as a means of achieving consensus and, since all critical interests are involved, can result in a commitment by all significant groups to support any plan coming out of the meeting. The intense nature of the charrette can lead to a deeper understanding of the positions and motivations of other individuals and groups. By working together in this manner, previously conflicting interests may develop a feeling of teamwork and cooperation which may extend long beyond this particular study.

Disadvantages: Charrettes are effective only when all interested parties are willing to enthusiastically participate and are willing to accept a negotiated decision. Charrettes are very time-consuming, and it is difficult to get key decision-makers to make the commitment to participate for the length of time required. Charrettes require substantial staff preparation and can be quite expensive.

**Public Hearings**

Public hearings are formal in nature and consist of three major parts: a presentation summary of the main parts of the project or problem; an outline of the range of solutions including the recommended solution (provided there is one); and the publics' reactions to the proposed course of actions. Helpful hints on how to successfully conduct public hearings are provided in Appendix B.

Advantages: Public hearings fulfill the minimum legal requirement for citizen participation. Public hearings prevent an agency from making decisions in secrecy without giving the public opportunity for comment. In addition, an official, permanent record is established at the public hearing.

Disadvantages: Public hearings are poor techniques to obtain citizen input since they can be the perfect setting for confrontation and conflicts rather than rational discussion. Some people may be too intimidated by the crowd and the technical experts to air their views, other participants may take an uncompromising, militant position. This kind of input tends to polarize interests and makes compromise on issues harder to attain.

**Advisory Committees**

This technique incorporates a number of different types of committees. The advisory committee is an extremely popular community participation technique in airport noise compatibility studies. One reason for this popularity is that an advisory committee can serve many different functions. Consequently, the sponsor must determine precisely what it wants to accomplish and how the advisory committee can be tailored for the function it will serve. Additional information on how to work with advisory committees can be found in Appendix C. Different types of advisory committees which may be considered include:

**Committee to give popularity-type advice .** When elected officials have to decide on controversial issues, they may wish to use a committee which reflects the feelings of their constituency. Such a committee serves to indicate how popular or unpopular a particular idea is.

Advantages: This committee provides quick advice to the decision-makers on the popularity/unpopularity of an issue. Dealing with the views of a relatively small committee representing a broad range of the public is easier than coordinating and understanding the views expressed in a referendum.

Disadvantages: Although this type of Advisory Committee attempts to achieve quick referenda, it falls far short of the one-person one-vote principle of a referendum. Deciding who should be on the committee is in itself a difficult decision.

**Committee to give content-type advice.** This kind of committee is primarily a source of information to aid in understanding the issues to be addressed in the study. The committee can advise the study team on a wide range of topics. Such advice may include technical information as well as information relating to community concerns and issues. Committee members can also carry information from the study team to their individual constituencies. This kind of group may become large if there are many different interests. It is not always necessary to meet with this committee as long as the necessary information is provided.

Advantages: This type of Committee is made up of lay people whose ideas, concerns, issues, etc., can benefit the problem-solving effort.

Disadvantages: Since the group may be large and may include diverse interests, meetings could become lengthy and possibly awkward.

**Committee to build a consensus among polarized interests.** When individuals disagree strongly on issues and are unwilling to compromise, an Advisory Committee that is designed to depolarize interests and develop consensus on key issues can play an important role. This kind of committee requires representation by opposing interests, procedures which minimize "grand-standing," and a commitment to focus on potential areas of agreement.

Advantages: When it works well, this type of Advisory Committee can contribute toward a general improvement in the public decision-making environment by offsetting polarization of interests which can adversely affect the entire governmental decision-making climate.

Disadvantages: Such a Committee involves the risk of agitating the community if not managed effectively.

**Coordinating Committee (frequently called a committee of "go-fers").** A Coordinating Committee is composed of representatives whose role is to relay information between the technical team and their interest groups. An essential feature of this committee is that members do not have the authority to commit their organizations to any course of action. Committee members do provide personal or professional advice.

Advantages: Such a committee is low-key because members do not commit their interest groups to any position and do not generally attract media attention.

Disadvantages: This type of committee requires considerable time and a substantial commitment of time and effort.

**Blue Ribbon Panel Committee.** This type of committee is made up of open-minded, impartial individuals who are widely known to be so. This kind of committee is usually established to help solve particularly sensitive and controversial issues.

Advantages: A Blue Ribbon Panel Committee can help the agency get to the bottom of a complex issue. A thought-provoking report is generally issued at the end of such a committee's work.

Disadvantages: Experience shows that frequently the report is not widely published or read. As a result, recommendations may not be implemented.

**Watch-Dog Committee.** The role of the watch-dog committee is to check the work of the agencies' experts to ensure that they are not biased, closed-minded, prejudiced, or negligent.

Advantages: A Watch-Dog Committee can help restore public faith in decision-makers or the decision-making process.

Disadvantages: Because most public agencies work on complex problems, it is hard for lay people to really check the work of the agency's experts without training. Therein lies a problem since, with training in the field of professionals they are supposed to "check" on, they may lose their "lay" citizen status.

**Committees to build a constituency for the agency's cause.** Public officials may want to involve a constituency to solve unpopular but, nevertheless, important public sector problems. For such an advisory committee to be an effective constituency-builder, it needs to include interests which most people are surprised to see supporting the agency's cause. This is important, since even a small minority may be able to block the implementation of the agency's program.

Advantages: A body of supporters increases an agencies' chances for successfully solving the problem at hand.

Disadvantages: It may be disadvantageous for a public agency that has tough problem-solving responsibilities to be recruiting and organizing solely its supporters. However, it may be difficult for supporters and opponents of a program to work effectively together.

Interviews

One technique for quickly assessing public sentiment is to conduct a series of interviews with key individuals representing the range of public most likely to be interested or affected by the study. Information likely to be discussed in an interview would include the amount of interest in the study, the goals and values of the interest group the individual represents, the manner in which the interest group would like to participate in the study, and the political climate and relationship between the various interest groups. Interviews can be either non-structured or structured, whereby the interviewer prepares a list of questions or topics to be discussed in each interview so that responses can be easily compared and summarized.

Federal agencies are required to get approval from the Office of Management and Budget for all surveys and questionnaires. Structured interviews may fail under these approval requirements. Federal agencies may find it preferable to stay with unstructured interviews. Agency orders should be carefully reviewed.

Advantages: Interviews can provide a quick picture of the political situation in which a study will be conducted. Interviews can provide important information about how various individuals wish to participate. Personal relationships can be built with key individuals, and more direct communication links established with the public. Once communication has been established through an interview, individuals and groups are more likely to participate.

Disadvantages: Poor interviewing can create a negative impression by the individual. Interviews may not be entirely representative of public sentiment.

**Field Offices**

Field offices are local offices of the sponsoring agency established in the community where the project or issue has the potential for significant impact. Typically, a field office is placed in a highly visible part of the community, such as a downtown storefront or shopping center, so that the largest number of people will know of its existence. The field office staff are able to answer questions and solicit opinions from the local community.

A field office is designed to encourage "drop-ins" and other informal interactions with the community using exhibits, charts, maps, brochures and other materials on display. The offices can also be the meeting place for workshops, task force meetings, open houses or other events. This reinforces the field offices as the focal point for participation in the study. This technique requires careful preparation and coordination through the media in order to get maximum exposure.

Advantages: Field offices provide a means of informal interaction with the local community at the convenience of the residents. Field offices communicate the value the agency places upon community feelings and show that it is willing to talk with local neighbors about airport-related problems. Staff occupying field offices often obtain a better understanding of community needs and desires.

Disadvantages: Field offices can be costly to staff and operate. Field office staff often experience divided loyalties between their commitments to the sponsoring agency and the concerns of the local public.

**Hotlines**

A hotline is an "easy to remember" telephone number which is publicized through brochures, reports, news stories, paid advertising, etc., as a single telephone number that citizens can call to ask questions or make comments. Hotlines have been used as a method of handling noise complaints and as coordination points for individuals requiring information about the progress of a study. Comments received over a hotline can be incorporated as a part of the record of a public meeting or hearing.

The hotline should be staffed by individuals who will take responsibility for finding answers to questions from the public, or for relaying comments or complaints from the public to appropriate staff persons. Hotlines can be used as a method of handling noise complaints, and as coordination pints for individuals requiring information about the progress of a study. Comments received over a hotline can be incorporated as a part of the record of a public meeting or hearing.

The communication skills of the staff operating the hotline are very important, as defensive or insensitive responses to the public comment may produce negative effects. The use of an answering machine instead of a staff person also reduces the value of a hotline. Callers may be willing to accept a recording outside of normal working hours, but not during the workday.

Advantages: The hotline provides a convenient means for citizens to participate in the study. The hotline assists citizens in locating the staff most likely to be able to answer their questions or receive their comments. The hotline may be a useful means of providing information about meetings or other community involvement activities. A hotline is an indicator of the sponsoring agency's interest in public comments or questions.

Disadvantages: Defensive or insensitive comments may produce negative reactions. The hotline must be staffed by people willing and able to deal with public comments effectively. The hotline can require a great deal of staff time.

**Displays/Exhibits**

One technique which has been used to inform or obtain comment from the public is to set up displays or exhibits in public places such as the agency lobby, shopping centers, or other locations in high visibility areas. These exhibits range from fixed displays that provide general information to the public, to booths manned by community involvement specialists who are able to answer questions from the public, or solicit public comment. Even when unattended displays are used, response forms should be available so that the public can respond to the display.

Displays and exhibits may be particularly useful in reaching publics that had not been previously identified as interested in aviation issues. They also provide general information to the public about aviation problems, even if people choose not to participate. In order to be an effective technique, it is necessary that the displays/exhibits are attractively designed to catch the public's eye.

Advantages: Provides information to the general public about aviation issues. Helps identify individuals and groups with an interest in aviation issues.

Disadvantages: If exhibits are staffed, they involve a major commitment of staff time. Must be coordinated with other public involvement techniques so that interest developed through the exhibit can be directed into other community involvement activities.

**Newspaper Inserts**

One technique that has been used to provide information to the general public and, at the same time, solicit comments back, is to distribute a newspaper insert including a response form via the local newspaper. The newspaper insert can describe the study and the various means by which the public can be involved, and the response form allows people to express opinions or indicate their willingness to be involved in other community involvement techniques. Additional advice on how to work effectively with media can be found in Appendix D.

Advantages: Newspaper inserts reach a much greater percentage of the population than most other public information techniques. Newspaper inserts provide an opportunity for a large number of citizens to participate. Newspaper insert response forms provide a means for identifying other individuals and groups interested in participating in the community involvement activities.

Disadvantages: Newspaper inserts are relatively expensive to produce and distribute in large numbers. Because respondents are self-selecting, a statistical bias is introduced into the response and they cannot be represented as statistically valid as a survey.

**Publications**

Reports, brochures, and information bulletins provide a means to inform the public of the opportunities for participation; of the progress of the study to date; and of any decisions that have been made.

Reports contain technical information and are typically published several times during a community involvement program, namely:

- after problem definition, including initial data collection;
- upon identification of a set of broad general alternatives;
- upon identification of specific detailed alternatives and their environmental impacts.

Brochures are usually brief and contain a description of the study, the issues involved in the study, and a summary of the opportunities for the public to participate in the study.

Information bulletins or newsletters are periodic reports to the public published as a means of maintaining a continuing interest in the study as well as documenting the progress of the study in a highly visible and simplified form. Helpful hints on how to effectively implement publications are given in Appendix B.

Advantages: Publications are a direct means of providing a substantial amount of information to a large number of people in a relatively economic manner. Publications are able to communicate a greater amount of information than almost any other form of communication. Publications serve as a permanent record of what has transpired in the community involvement program.

Disadvantages: Preparation of attractive publications requires definite skills that are not available in all organizations and, therefore, may have to be purchased outside the organization. Because of cost factors, publications may reach only a limited audience.

Surveys

Surveys are an effort to determine public attitudes, values, and perceptions on various issues. A rigorous methodology is employed to ensure that the findings of the survey represent the sentiment of the community being sampled and are not biased. Surveys can be conducted by phone, by mail, by individual interviews, or in small group interviews.

Federal regulations require OMB approval of all surveys or formal questionnaires conducted by Federal agencies or with Federal funds. These approvals are difficult and time-consuming to obtain, often ruling this technique out for Federal agencies. Advice on how to successfully conduct surveys is provided in Appendix B.

Advantages: Well-designed sampling procedures can create a survey which is truly representative of the population from which it was drawn. Surveys can provide an expression of feeling from the public as a whole, not just those members of the public who are most directly affected. A survey can reach the "silent majority" whose views would otherwise be missed through hearings, discussion, etc. The inclusion of all elements of a population is what gives the survey the potential for being truly representative and projectable to the total population.

Disadvantages: Unless surveys are carefully designed, they do not produce reliable and meaningful data. The cost of developing statistically reliable surveys is high. Surveys cannot substitute for political negotiation between significant interests. If the issue is not of broad public interest, then a substantial number of survey respondents will be uninformed about the issues covered by the survey. The knowledge that people are poorly-informed is itself important information. Requirements for OMB approval complicate the use of this technique for most Federal agencies.

### Participatory Television

Participatory television holds considerable potential as a tool for both informing the public and soliciting participation. Some experts see cable television as holding the answer to participation since, eventually, cable television may be utilized in such a way that it allows for two-way communication. In the meantime, there are several major uses of television programs. These include:

- Preparing a half-hour or a one-hour television program which describes alternative courses of action in a major study. Participants are asked to express their preference by mail or by a ballot that has been distributed in advance of the television program.
- Obtaining a block of time and conducting a call-in show on issues.
- Obtaining a regular block of free time from the local channel, and use this as a channel of communication about upcoming events and as a forum for continuing the discussion.

Additional information on working with the media is provided in Appendix D.

Advantages: Participatory television reaches the largest audience of any community involvement technique. This technique is most convenient for the participants, because they do not have to leave their home. If people do not participate by filling out a ballot or phoning in, there is a definite educational function to participatory television.

Disadvantages: It is difficult to obtain large blocks of time for a participatory television program on commercial television. The audience viewing the program may not be representative, and any votes or tallies taken as a result of the program may be unrepresentative. Unless some public participation occurs in designing the program, the public may not feel that the agency accurately or objectively described the issues. This kind of participation gives equal value to somebody who lives immediately next to the project or area of impact as somebody who lives 50 miles away and is only peripherally impacted.

### Cumulative Brochure

The cumulative brochure is a document which keeps a visible record of a series of repetitive public meetings, public brochures, workshops, and citizen committee meetings. At the beginning of the process, a brochure is prepared presenting various study alternatives along with the pros and cons for each of the alternatives. In a series of public meetings and workshops, individuals, agencies, and organizations are invited to submit their own alternatives, which are then included in the brochure along with their description of pros, cons, and a no-action alternative.

The brochure is then republished with space provided in the brochure for individuals to react to the various alternatives by writing their own pros and cons. These comments then become a part of the new brochure. With each round of meetings or other forums for public comment, the brochure grows by the addition of the public comment and technical response.

Advantages: The process is very visible and allows the public to see how a decision was reached. The process encourages open communication between the various members of public as well as between the public and the sponsoring agency. No special status is granted to any one individual or group over another.

Disadvantages: The final brochure can be a large, cumbersome document and the many editions of the brochure can be expensive to produce. The effectiveness of the brochure depends on the ability of the sponsoring agency to address the issues in non-bureaucratic language. The format of the brochure may force public reaction into a pro or con response when there may be other positions. Since the sponsoring agency prepares the brochure, groups which are suspicious of that agency may question whether the brochure is biased.

**Responsiveness Summary**

A responsiveness summary is similar to the cumulative brochure in that it keeps a record of input from potentially affected interests. However, the procedure of conducting a responsiveness summary is less complex. Different agencies go about it in different ways. The basic concept, however, is to keep a running account of all reactions to planning efforts, be it in the form of a phone call, an informal comment made at a meeting to a staff member, an angry letter, a newspaper editorial, etc. A record of the comment and a proposed response is made and circulated to the study team. Following study team agreement on a response, the comment and response are circulated to interested parties. Appendix B provides additional guidelines on how to use a responsiveness summary.

Advantages: A responsiveness summary is very visible and provides proof to the public that the agency is listening to their concerns, frustrations, etc. Investment of time and money is minimal, since comments and responses must be compiled in most planning processes in any event.

Disadvantages: Requires consistent use during the entire planning process.

**Conduct Contests or Events**

One way to obtain publicity for your community involvement program is to stage a contest or event as a means of stimulating interest and gaining newspaper or television coverage. Examples of the use of this technique might include:

- An essay contest in the public schools regarding aviation;
- A photo contest for the best photo of antique planes;
- Tours of agency facilities.

The aim is to stage a newsworthy event, related to the theme of the community involvement study.

Advantages: May generate substantial interest and publicity. Will help to identify individuals interested in the kinds of issues addressed by the study.
Disadvantages: Typically does not produce comment directly applicable to the study. Expectations may be established for continuing participation which, if not fulfilled, may lead to resentment or cynicism.

**Mediation**

Mediation is the application of the principles of labor/management negotiation to environmental or political issues. In mediation, a group is established which represents all the major interests that will be affected by a decision. Members of the mediation panel are all "official" representatives of the interest, and are appointed with the understanding that the organizations they represent will have the opportunity to approve or disapprove any agreements that result from the mediation. The basic ground rule which is established is that all agreements will be unanimous.

A key element in mediation is the appointment of a third party mediator--someone skilled in mediation, who is not seen as an interested party to the negotiations. The mediator not only structures the deliberations, but often serves as a conduit for negotiations between the various parties.

Mediation is only possible when the various interests in a conflict believe they can accomplish more by negotiation than by continuing to fight. Ground rules on how to effectively carry out the mediation process are listed in Appendix B.

Advantages: Mediation can result in an agreement which is supported by all parties to the conflict. Mediation may lead to quick resolution of issues that might otherwise be dragged out through litigation or other political processes.

Disadvantages: Mediation is an entirely voluntary process and, therefore, will work only when all parties are willing to negotiate. Mediation requires a highly skilled third party mediator.

**Delphi**

The Delphi process is a method for obtaining consensus on forecasts by a group of experts. It might be useful, for example, as a means to estimate future airport use by a group of experts with differing philosophies and viewpoints. It can also be used as a technique for estimating possible environmental effects of various actions.

The basic procedure is as follows: A questionnaire is submitted individually to each participant requesting them to indicate their forecasts concerning the topic. The responses to the questionnaire are consolidated and resubmitted to the participants with a request that they make an estimate of the probable occurrence of each event. The participants' responses are again collected, and a statistical summary is prepared. The statistical summary is distributed to all participants, and the participants are asked to give a new estimate now that they have seen the response of the total group. Participants whose answers differ substantially from the rest of the group are asked to state the reasons behind their answers. The new responses are then summarized statistically and redistributed to the participants who are asked to prepare a final estimate. A final statistical summary is then prepared based on participants' comments. Additional information on how to implement the Delphi process is given in Appendix B.

Advantages: The Delphi process is an effective tool for achieving a consensus on forecasts among groups of experts. Delphi minimizes the disadvantages of group dynamics such as overdominance by a single personality or positions taken to obtain status or acceptance from the group. The Delphi process can serve to generate considerable public interest and can be combined with community techniques for a greater overall effect.

Disadvantages: Delphi may have a tendency to homogenize points of view. The process of mailing questionnaires and redistributing summaries can be a time-consuming and cumbersome process. The public may be no more willing to accept the findings of an expert panel than it would of a single technical expert. The experts still may not be right.

**Simulation Games**

There are a number of simulation games which have been designed to allow people to simulate the effects of making particular policy choices and decisions and, in the process, learn more about the impacts of decisions and the interrelated nature of various features of an environmental or economic system. Simulation gaming provides an opportunity for people to try out their positions and see what the consequences would be and how other groups react to them. Simulation games vary greatly in their complexity and the length of time required to play them. The closer the game resembles "reality," the more lengthy and complex it usually becomes. Special care is required in selecting a simulation game appropriate for your particular study.

Most agencies should not attempt to design their own games unless no suitable games are available and they have considerable resources to devote to such a project. Typically, a game that has been developed to simulate a particular set of roles is purchased by an agency. These games usually come in the form of a kit that contains all of the necessary materials and instructions for playing the game.

Advantages: Simulation games can provide the public with information about the consequences of various policy positions or decisions. Simulation games can provide the public with an understanding of the dynamics of an economic or environmental system. Participation in a simulation game is usually fun, and participants develop a rapport and communication which can be maintained throughout the entire study.

Disadvantages: There are a number of simulation games on the market that are confusing, overtechnical or misleading. You will have to exercise great care in selecting a simulation game appropriate for your particular study. While simulation games can be educational, they typically don't provide opportunities for direct public comment on your study. Since few games have a perfect fit with reality, citizens may apply the game rules inappropriately to the actual situation. People may become so engrossed in the game that they forget about the actual issues at hand.

**Technical Assistance to Citizens**

The public is often intimidated by professional staff and, consequently, may feel intimidated by agencies that are able to present its points of view in well-argued technical studies. Several agencies have afforded technical assistance to citizens by providing staff or consultants to help various individuals in developing their own alternatives, or helping them analyze issues or evaluate the impacts of various alternatives. Whether or not this assistance can be provided by internal staff, or must be via "independent" consultants, depends on the relationship that exists between the planning agency and the community.

The purpose in providing technical assistance is to ensure that citizens who have different values and orientations than the agency's are able to develop their ideas using the same kind of technical expertise as those possessed by the agency itself. In high controversial situations, the "facts" generated by independent technical assistance may be accepted more readily than "facts" generated by the agency's professional staff.

__Advantages:__ Technical assistance can reduce the likelihood that citizens will feel intimidated by the technical detail of professional staff. Ideas from the public can be developed to the same level of technical detail as ideas generated by the agency. Information generated by "independent" sources may be more acceptable to the public than those generated by the agency's staff in controversial situations.

__Disadvantages:__ If the agency is not open to all alternatives, then agency staff may be placed in the position of divided loyalties. It is difficult to provide technical assistance to all groups, instead of simply the most active. The public can still fear that technical assistance will be used to mislead them or manipulate them to accept the agency's viewpoint.

**Training Programs for Citizens**

Training programs are usually conducted to improve citizen understanding of how studies are conducted, to inform them of technical information necessary to understand the study, and to provide citizens a more equal footing with professionals so that citizens can work with professionals without being intimidated by their expertise. Those training programs for citizens which have been used in community involvement have typically been in the following three areas:

- Training about the planning and decision-making process.
- Training on substantive content such as planning, environmental impact assessment, etc.
- Skills of working together as a team or skills of meeting leadership.

__Advantages:__ Training may increase the effectiveness or impact the public has upon the study. Fully informed citizens may feel less intimated by professionals and will be more likely to express differing viewpoints. Properly trained citizens can make a valuable contribution in the conduct of the community involvement program.

__Disadvantages:__ Some citizens may resent the suggestion that they need training or may question the "objectivity" of a training program conducted by a planning agency. Training is usually limited to a small group and, therefore, there are problems regarding who is included. Conducting an effective training program requires special training skills and, therefore, may require the additional cost of an outside consultant. The training must be integral to the planning or decision-making process or citizens will view the training as wasted time and effort.

**Community Coordination**

Instead of creating new mechanisms, such as newsletters, committees, etc., existing mechanisms can be extremely effective tools in a community planning program. Additional information on how to incorporate existing mechanisms into your program is provided in Appendix B. Such mechanisms may include the following.

**Clubs: Civic Groups: Other Organizations.** Most existing community organizations are constantly looking for issues that interest its members. Staff from these organizations are usually active in their communities, attending meetings, arranging events, and recruiting new members.

Advantages: By consciously making use of the existing community organizations, agencies can reap the benefits that such organizations offer to a citizen participation effort without having to do any of the "groundwork."

Disadvantages: Considerable staff time is required to attend and participate in the existing organization.

**Newsletters: Other Publications: Media, etc.** Existing newsletters, publications, media, etc., provide a means to inform all affected individuals, groups, corporations, institutes, agencies, etc.

Advantages: By using the existing mechanisms, the saving of time is significant. Producing a newsletter, for example, requires the development of a mailing list, the editing of articles and their layout, the actual mailing, etc.; all of which are costly and time consuming. These steps can be avoided by including an article in an existing newsletter. In addition, a wide cross section of the public can be targeted.

Disadvantages: Agencies have to comply with the rules and regulations set forth for existing newslet ters, publications, media, etc. Mechanisms may not exist to reach all affected interests.

# CHAPTER 7

## DESIGNING YOUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM

This chapter helps you to combine the techniques described in Chapter 6 into a constructive community involvement program. There are many possible ways to design a program and many available techniques. Start by answering some basic questions: What are your community involvement goals? When should you involve the community? How should you involve the community? This chapter outlines a "thought process" for answering these questions and using the answers to develop a community involvement program suited to your needs.

### What Are Your Community Involvement Goals?

Goals provide a clear purpose for any activity, and are especially important for activities involving the public. Chapter 5 describes typical community involvement goals. Briefly, these goals are:

- **Inform/educate the public.**
- **Gather information from the public.**
- **Resolve conflicts.**
- **Establish credibility of the decision-making process.**

Evaluate your situation to determine which goals apply. Consider which goals are most important. Since community involvement techniques differ greatly in their ability to attain specific goals, these considerations will play a major role in your evaluation of techniques.

### When Should You Involve the Community?

To be effective, community involvement efforts must be integrated into your decision-making process. Reacting to issues or concerns after decisions have been made is difficult and frequently involves the loss of time, effort, and credibility. Consequently, community involvement activities should be coordinated with other elements of the process so that information goes to and comes from the community in time to contribute to the decisions.

Outline the steps in your decision-making process and identify the information to be communicated to and received from the community at each step. These steps may or may not be clearly defined;

however, nearly all public decision-making processes contain some basic elements. These basic elements, described below, may assist you in structuring your program.

**Data collection/issue identification.** Community involvement efforts at this stage relate to development of goals and objectives, understanding community concerns, analysis of existing conditions, and projections of future conditions if no action is taken. The following information exchanges typically occur.

From the community:

- interested parties
- community concerns/planning issues
- local conditions
- community goals

To the community:

- purpose of study/project
- baseline conditions
- planning assumptions
- projected, no action conditions
- community involvement mechanisms

**Formulation of alternatives.** Alternatives may come from many sources. In most cases, the sponsoring agency identifies alternative solutions to problems as part of the decision-making process. Other agencies, organized groups, community leaders, and individuals frequently contribute ideas for alternatives. Ideas contributed by the community need to be translated into alternatives which can be systematically evaluated. The following information exchanges may occur at this stage.

From the community:

- alternatives to be considered

To the community:

- possible alternatives
- technical limitations/constraints
- evaluation criteria

**Evaluation of alternatives.** This stage of the process normally generates the most community interest and, therefore, deserves particular attention. It may be necessary to provide multiple opportunities for community involvement prior to the selection of a preferred alternative. The following information exchanges may occur at this stage.

From the community:

- relative importance of impacts
- acceptability of alternatives

To the community:

- impacts of alternatives
- technical feasibility of alternatives

**Decision-making.** Depending upon the study's complexity and degree of controversy, this stage of the process may involve negotiations with affected interests outside of the sponsoring agency. The community should be informed promptly once a decision is made, including the reasons for the decision, and why the alternatives were rejected. The following information exchanges typically occur at this stage.

From the community:

- acceptability of the proposed solution
- factors affecting implementation of the proposed solution

To the community:

- proposed solution and reasons for decision

- reasons other alternatives were rejected

**How Should You Involve the Community?**

At this point, you know what your community involvement objectives are and the information exchanges you will need to help make decisions. To decide which technique best suits your needs, consider the strengths and weaknesses of each and your resources in terms of staff and funding. You may also have legal or administrative requirements (described in Chapter 2) which dictate the use of specific techniques or preclude the use of others in your program.

To provide a framework for the evaluation of community involvement techniques, specific objectives have been identified for compliance with legal and administrative requirements and for each of the community involvement goals previously described.

**Comply with legal requirements.** FAR Part 150 requires consultation with affected on-airport and off-airport interests in the conduct of noise compatibility studies. Environmental studies required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) also specify public participation requirements. Generally, legal requirements for public participation address the following issues:

- **Potentially affected interests.** All potentially affected interests must have an opportunity to participate in the process.

- **Notification.** Adequate time must be provided for interested parties to participate.

- **Explanation of proposed action.** The proposed or recommended action should be explained to potentially affected interests to permit informed participation.

- **Comment.** Interested parties must be allowed to submit comments; comments should receive a reply.

- **Public Record.** A written record of public comments is usually required.

**Inform/educate the public.** Noise issues frequently involve relatively complex technical concepts. In addition, potential corrective measures affect many interests. Familiarizing the participants in noise compatibility efforts with these concepts and concerns increases the likelihood of meaningful participation. Public information/education objectives are listed below.

- **Realistic expectations.** Educated participants may have many more realistic expectations regarding the outcome of noise compatibility efforts.

- **Technical information.** Effective public participation requires some understanding of aircraft and airport operations, as well as acoustical terminology and concepts. Information regarding procedural matters is also necessary.

- **Other viewpoints.** Each segment of the community has individual concerns. A general understanding of the various viewpoints promotes rational discussion.

**Gather information from the public.** A great deal of community information is needed to develop noise compatibility plans. Some of this information, such as land use and the location of noise sensitive uses, may be technical.

Other information, such as local concerns, issues, and values are policy oriented. Techniques should be considered in terms of their effectiveness in each area.

- **Technical information.** The accuracy of analysis depends upon technical data. In addition to local government staff input, community involvement can be a valuable quality control mechanism.

- **Concerns/issues.** An understanding of the various community concerns and issues is necessary to define the specific problems to be addressed. Community involvement is needed to provide this information.

**Conflict resolution.** Noise compatibility issues frequently generate disagreements which must be resolved among the various elements of the community to permit public action. The ability of relatively small segments of any community to veto generally acceptable action leads to the need for consensus building techniques.

- **Compromise.** The identification of partial solutions that are acceptable to the various interests may be possible.

- **Negotiation.** Conflicting interests must be able to discuss alternatives without taking a public position from which they cannot retreat. A means of ensuring that specific interest groups agree with negotiated positions is also necessary.

- **Consensus development.** For large and complex issues, it is frequently possible to identify some aspects on which nearly all participants agree; so called "win-win" situations. Building on small agreements may lead to agreements on larger issues.

**Establish and maintain credibility.** The credibility of the agency and the decision-making process is very important. Frequently, people will accept an undesirable decision if they believe that the decision resulted from a fair and open process. Similarly, the community is more likely to accept the need for a particular action if the proposing agency is believed to be working toward a legitimate goal or public purpose.

- **Credibility of the organization.** Belief that an agency or organization is pursuing its legitimate purposes may enable interest groups to accept compromises.

- **Credibility of the process.** Decisions resulting from a process which is understood, open, and rational are more likely to be acceptable.

The following table (Table 1) of community involvement techniques and objectives rates each technique according to its potential for attaining specific objectives. Techniques may receive a high, moderate or low rating for each objective. These ratings are based on the following rationale:

**High.** If properly applied, this technique will usually attain the specified objective. Such techniques should be seriously considered to attain the specified goal. If only one technique is employed to achieve this objective, it should have a high rating.

**Moderate.** If properly applied, this technique will contribute to attainment of the specified objective. Such techniques may be especially appropriate if they can serve a number of objectives simultaneously, or if they have low associated costs.

**Low.** Even if properly applied, this technique does not contribute significantly toward attaining the specified goal. In some cases, it may actually be counter-productive.

**Managing your Community Involvement Program**

Once you have identified community involvement techniques which meet your needs, you should coordinate the timing and sequence of these activities for maximum efficiency. For example, if you have decided to conduct a series of neighborhood workshops, you should consider a range of other techniques to make your workshops more effective. Additional activities may be designed to increase attendance, educate the participants, im-

Table 1

# Evaluation of Community Involvement Techniques by Objectives

Goals and Objectives: Legal Administrative (All Interests Involved, Adequate Notification, Explain Proposal, Comment Response, Public Record); Inform Educate Public (Realistic Expectations, Technical Info, Other Viewpoints); Information From Public (Technical Info, Concerns Issues); Conflict Resolution (Compromise, Negotiation, Consensus); Credibility (Organization, Process)

| Techniques | Resources: Cost Elements | Estimated Person-Days |
|---|---|---|
| Meetings: | | |
| Working | Postage, briefing materials (handouts, slides, boards) | 2-5 |
| Open | Postage, briefing materials (handouts, slides, boards) | 2-5 |
| Public (mass) | Advertising, (newspaper, radio), audio visual equipment (microphones, projectors), space rental (if required) | 5-10 |
| Large/Small Group | Advertising, audio-visual equipment, briefing materials, space rental (if required). | 5-10 |
| Panel | Advertising, audio-visual equipment, space rental (if required). | 10-15 |
| Workshop | Advertising, audio-visual equipment, briefing materials, working materials (paper, markers), space rental (if required) | 10-15 |
| Open House | Advertising, audio-visual equipment, briefing materials, space rental (if required) | 10-15 |
| Charrette | Advertising, audio-visual equipment, briefing materials, working materials, space rental (if required). | 10-15 |
| Public Hearing | Advertising, audio-visual equipment, space rental (if required) | 5-10 |
| Advisory Committees: | | |
| Popularity | Postage, meeting requirements (working or open), correspondence, report production | Ongoing |
| Content | Postage, meeting requirements, correspondence, report production | Ongoing |
| Consensus | Postage, meeting requirements, correspondence, report production. | Ongoing |
| Coordinating | Postage, meeting requirements, correspondence, report production. | Ongoing |
| Blue Ribbon | Postage, meeting requirements, correspondence, report production. | Ongoing |
| Watch-Dog | Postage, meeting requirements, correspondence, report production. | Ongoing |
| Constituency | Postage, meeting requirements, correspondence, report production. | Ongoing |
| Responsiveness Summary | Postage, comment/response forms. | Minimal |
| Interviews | Travel (if required), interview forms. | 1/2-1 |
| Field Office | Office rental, telephone service. | Extra Staff |
| Hotline | Additional telephone line | 1-4 Hr day |
| Displays/Exhibits | Graphic materials (boards, posters). | 5-10 |
| Newspaper Insert | Advertising (possibly). | 2-5 |
| Reports/Brochures/Etc. | Camera ready materials, printing | 15-20 |
| Survey | Professional services. | 10-15 |
| Participatory T.V. | (Assume publicity supported television) | 5-10 |
| Cumulative Brochure | Report production (multiple editions). | Ongoing |
| Contest Event | Publicity (fliers, brochures) | 10-15 |
| Mediation | Postage, meeting requirements. | Ongoing |
| Delphi | Report compilation | 15-20 |
| Simulation Games | Available games, professional services | 2-5 |
| Technical Assistance | Meeting requirements, professional services | Ongoing |
| Training Program | Meeting requirements, professional services. | Ongoing |
| Community Coordination | Briefing materials, travel (if required). | 1/2-1 |
| Effectiveness: High / Moderate / Low | Resources per Single Event or Activity | May vary widely, for comparison only. |

prove the exchange of information, or document results. These techniques could include news releases, presentations to civic groups, paid advertising, publicity arranged by interest groups themselves, consultation with an advisory committee, response forms, audio-visual presentations, and follow-up news releases.

The sequence of events in your community involvement program will depend upon the schedule of your decision-making process. Identify key community involvement points in this process to establish the schedule for specific community involvement activities. Select appropriate techniques for each of these major points, and schedule supporting activities as appropriate.

Once you have started a community involvement program, evaluate its results as you go along. If the techniques don't work in your situation, try to find out why they don't, and what other techniques might work better.

## APPENDIX A

## DESIGNING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

This appendix suggests ways to design effective meetings. The following topics are discussed.

**Reasons for Conducting Meetings**

Meetings serve a variety of purposes. Meetings allow participants to investigate technical issues, explore alternative solutions to problems, and work toward consensus. Public meetings provide an opportunity to inform the public in detail of the issues in question. Meetings also provide a mechanism for citizens to hear other people's ideas and discuss them, and a means for resolution of differences of opinion. Finally, meetings increase the visibility of the decision-making process.

On the other hand, meetings can be fruitless if they are not carefully integrated into the decision-making process. For example, meetings can be unproductive if held so early in the planning process that there isn't anything to discuss. Meetings can be a waste of time if the participants could be as well informed by a report or brochure. Meetings are also counterproductive if they are held after decisions are made, rather than at a time when public comments will have an influence upon the decision. For meetings to be effective, it is important to give considerable attention to their design, so they serve the purpose for which they are intended.

**Types of Meetings**

There are many types of meetings; far more than most meeting designers realize. The major types of meetings are as follows.

Working Meeting. This type of meeting is most useful for exploring alternatives and reviewing technical issues. A working meeting should be informal in nature and have no more than 12 staff-level people. The group should meet with the expressed intent of resolving specific issues. A prerequisite to a successful meeting, therefore, is that all participants are aware of the agenda items to be discussed. A circular seating arrangement should be set up to help individuals see and interact with each other. Ample work surfaces should be provided to write, draw sketches, graphs, and diagrams.

Instead of an assigned chairman, the meeting can be run by one of the participants. Should the conversation stray too far afield, it is important for one of the participants to steer the group back on track.

Open Meetings. The meeting, including its purpose, agenda, time, and place, is advertised and announced to those members of the public who may wish to attend. It is run by a chairman, or by a moderator if the issues to be discussed are particularly controversial. The role of the moderator is to help conduct the meeting in an even-handed way.

The meetings are conducted in the open, where anyone, including the press, can see and hear what transpires. Public participation may or may not be permitted. If public participation is permitted, the chairman may allow the public to participate throughout the meeting or only at a particular point in the agenda.

Public Mass Meeting. Advertising is a key component of a successful public mass meeting. Advertising may be carried out in a variety of ways (e.g., distributing flyers, calling interested parties via telephone chains, and media coverage).

The meeting place must be able to accommodate a potentially large crowd. The audience should be seated in chairs facing the meeting leaders at the front of the room. This encourages the public to direct their questions to the meeting leaders rather than with each other.

Large Group/Small Group Meeting. If the crowd is large and real discussion is desired, one technique is to divide the crowd into smaller discussion groups, which then report back to the larger group at the end of the meeting. A typical format for this type of meeting follows.

- An explanation of the meeting format and procedures.
- A half-hour presentation describing the technical background of the study and the issue to be posed before the smaller groups.
- One or two hours of small group discussions.
- Reports from each discussion group on their views and findings.

This type of meeting requires staff members on hand who are comfortable in their abilities to organize groups. Depending upon the size of the anticipated audience, the entire meeting may be conducted in one large room. On one side of the room, chairs may be set up for the "large" group presentation. On the other, circular tables can be arranged to accommodate the small group discussions. If there is insufficient room to accommodate this many tables and chairs, it may be useful to hold the meeting in a school where the large meeting can be in an assembly hall, with small group discussions in classrooms. A more detailed discussion of possible seating arrangements can be found on page A-7.

Panel Meeting. The agency must choose a panel of technical experts familiar with the issues under consideration and ensure the panel represents a range of viewpoints. The audience consists of the general public. If there is particularly complex, technical information to be conveyed, a "Meet the Press" format may be desirable. It is the responsibility of the agency's Public Affairs Officer (if they have one) to invite members of the press familiar with the program to participate. A news release may be issued stating the meeting's topic, its location, and the time it will take place. A follow-up phone call to those press members who are familiar with, and cover, the agency's program is advisable. Panel members should be informed of the meeting's topic and format prior to the meeting.

Representatives discuss an issue from their point of view, followed by either question from the audience or small group discussions. A meeting coordinator directs questions and answers. If reporters are present, they will be given the opportunity to question the panel. Since reporters are often skilled interviewers, this opportunity often serves to identify the critical issues and communicate the technical information in a way which is relevant to the public.

**Workshops**. Workshops are informal in nature and usually held for smaller audiences between 25 and 35 people. Initially, the group is seated together facing the workshop coordinator, who is responsible for providing the people with an unbiased background of the project-related issues. The group is then divided into smaller groups of four to seven people seated at round tables which have been set up in the same room. The individuals write one major issue on a blank card which they believe needs attention along with the reasons for their choices.

After each individual has filled out as many cards as appropriate, the group at each table starts to compile a combined list of issues. This can be done in the following manner.

- Taking turns going around the table, each person calls off one of the issues they have noted and their reasons for considering it an important issue.
- One of the group members writes down the issues as they are called out with a felt-tip marker, in large letters on butcher-paper.
- Members keep taking turns around the table listing issues until everyone is out of issues.

After all groups around the individual tables have completed their listing of issues, all of these large sheets of butcher-paper are hung up on the walls so everyone in the room can read them from their seats.

Next, ballots are handed out. Each individual votes on what he/she thinks the several most important issues are. After the ballots are counted, the issues with the highest number of votes are listed in the order of the number of votes each received.

At this point, there is discussion - guided by a moderator or coordinator - in which people are asked to lobby for or against issues. After a round of lobbying, the vote is repeated and the resulting new priority listing is posted. If the last round of voting produced considerable change in the priority listing, the group may want to hold another round of discussion and lobbying - followed by another ballot, etc. There are many ways to vary this basic technique to suit the needs of any particular group and/or issues.

Open House. An open house meeting is an informal event held in a familiar or well-known public building and scheduled at a time, such as the evenings or the weekends, convenient to most working people. Multiple display stations are set up and staffed by experts who are available to answer questions and respond to public concerns. There may be an introductory presentation which can be useful to provide the public with some background to the project. However, a presentation may encourage the public to congregate instead of benefitting individually from one to one exchanges with the experts on hand.

Displays must be readily understood by the layman. Hand-outs of the displays should be prepared for people to take home for further examination. The public should be asked to give written comments and suggestions and further identify the preferred alternatives with reasons given for the first choice.

Don't mislead the public into thinking the most popular alternative will be chosen. The open house is not a popularity poll. It is an opportunity to have questions answered and communicate ideas to the experts. The decision-makers have the responsibility for choosing an alternative after taking the public's input and reactions into consideration. Anything that may contribute to making the open house an informal event that furthers two-way communication, such as refreshments, should be incorporated in its design.

**Selecting a Meeting Format**

To choose between these types of meetings and develop a detailed format, first define exactly what you want to accomplish in the meeting. The guiding principle of meeting design is that the format should reflect the purpose of the meeting. There are five basic functions which meetings can serve, although a single meeting may serve more than one of these functions. The five basic functions follow.

- **Information Giving:** The agency possesses the information and must communicate it in some manner to the public (e.g., announcing the context of a proposed noise rule).

- **Information Receiving:** The public possesses the information, which could include public perceptions of needs, problems, values, impacts, or reactions to alternatives. In this case, the agency must acquire the information held by the public.

- **Interaction:** Interaction involves both information giving and information receiving. It also serves the additional purpose of allowing people to test their ideas on the sponsoring agency or other publics. As a result of this interaction, people may modify their viewpoints.

- **Consensus Forming/Negotiation:** Over and beyond interaction, some meetings are directed towards developing agreement on a single plan or course of action.

- **Summarizing:** At the end of a long process, there is a need to publicly acknowledge the agreements or decisions that have been reached. Reiterate the positions of the different groups towards these agreements in a summary form.

Each of these functions in turn establishes limitations on the kind of meeting format that is possible if the function is to be served. A few of these limitations and implications are shown below.

- **Information Giving.** The information must flow from the agency to all the various publics. In this case, it is appropriate to have a meeting format which primarily allows for presentations from the agency with questions from the audience. Consequently, the classic meeting, with one person at the front of the room making a presentation to an audience in rows, may be a suitable format for this function.

- **Information Receiving.** When the function is reversed and information is obtained from the public, having one person stand at the front of the room addressing an entire audience is extremely inefficient. Many more comments could be received from the public if the audience were broken into small groups and comments were recorded on flip charts, 3 x 5 cards, or other media.

- **Interaction and Consensus Forming/Negotiation.** Interaction, as well as consensus forming/negotiation require extensive two-way communication and usually must be accomplished in some form of small group. In addition, the requirement for consensus formation usually means some procedure is used to assist the group in working towards a single agreed-upon plan. A relatively structured format, such as a large group/small group meeting or a workshop, is more suitable for this function.

- **Summarizing.** Since the function of summarizing is to provide visibility of the entire process which has taken place, it may again be suitable to use large public meetings as the means to serve the summarizing function. In this way, individuals and groups can be seen taking positions and describing their involvement in the planning process which has preceded this meeting.

Several other factors should be taken into consideration in selecting a meeting format. These include:

- **Anticipated Audience Size.** If the audience is anticipated to number in the hundreds, this factor will influence the choice of meeting format. Even a large crowd can be broken into small discussion groups if that is the kind of meeting required and the meeting facility is chosen carefully.

- **Intensity of Interest in the Issue.** If people are highly interested in the topic, they are more willing to participate in workshops or other intense formats rather than a more passive form of interface.

- **Degree of Controversy.** If an issue is extremely controversial, the public may resist being broken down into small groups, believing that it is an attempt on the part of the agency to manipulate by "dividing and conquering." Also, meetings should not be arranged so that all "issue opponents" or all "pro-aviation" people are segregated into homogenous groups for discussion. Such a division would only reinforce the antagonism between the groups and further polarize positions.

**Time and Place of Meetings**

Meetings should be held at a time and place convenient to the public. Convenience for the staff is a secondary consideration. Often this consideration dictates that meetings be held in the evening, although some circumstances will allow for afternoon meetings. If a meeting is aimed primarily at representatives of other governmental agencies or interests, then daytime meetings are preferable.

One of the first considerations in selecting a meeting place should be whether or not the facilities are adequate for the meeting format you wish to use. (See the section on Seating Arrangement following.) You may also want the meeting to be held away from the agency headquarters, on "neutral" ground. Other issues you should consider in selecting a meeting place should include:

- central location,

- public transportation access,

- suitable parking, and

- safety of the area.

**Pre-Meeting Publicity**

If a meeting is aimed at a relatively small group, then pre-meeting publicity will be quite limited. However, if the purpose of a meeting is to reach the broad general public, pre-meeting publicity is very important. The pre-meeting publicity techniques you may wish to employ include the following.

- Issue a press release/spot announcement.
- Place an announcement in the Federal Register.
- Develop a press kit or technical summary for the press.
- Visit members of the press to arrange for feature stories.
- Purchase display advertising or radio and TV announcements.
- Have community organizations and interest groups advertise the meeting to their own membership.
- Have a community organization sponsor the meeting.

Your Public Information or Public Affairs Officer may be able to provide you with other ideas.

**Meeting Logistics**

There are numerous logistical issues which must be taken care of if the meeting is to be a success. To assist you in identifying these issues, a Public Meeting Checklist is attached at the end of this appendix (following p. A-10). This checklist is taken from a guide on effective public meetings which is distributed by the Environmental Protection Agency.*

**Seating Arrangements**

The seating arrangements for a meeting are a direct reflection of the type of meeting you wish to hold. For example, in Figure A-1 (A) the sources of all information are the individuals at the front of the room. This seating arrangement may be useful and appropriate in a situation where the majority of the public talk to the meeting leaders at the front of the room, rather than to each other. As a result, this seating arrangement may be useful and appropriate in a situation where the major function of the meeting is information giving. If you would like to encourage interaction between participants, one alternative would be Figure A-1 (B), which allows people in the audience to see each other more easily. In addition, microphones are placed throughout the room so that people do not have to come to the front of the room to participate.

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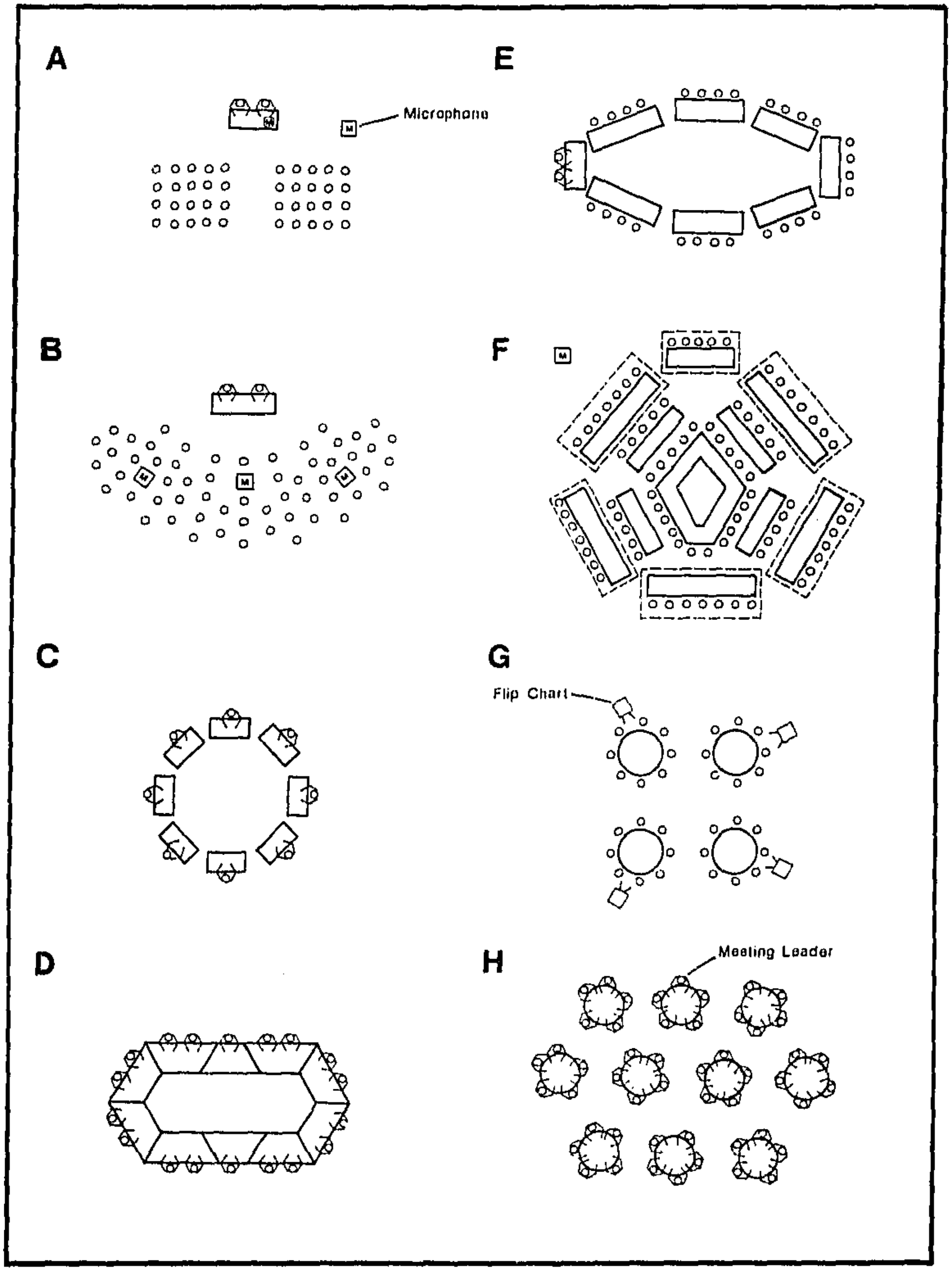
*Guide 1 Effective Public Meetings by James F. Ragan, Jr., available from U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Public Affairs, A-107 Washington, D.C.

## Suggested Seating Arrangements  Figure A-1



The ideal arrangements for interaction or consensus forming/negotiation are the nearly circular formations shown in Figure A-1 (C, D, E, F). The major differences between these formations are the number of participants and the kinds of tables available. If there are a large number of individuals and you still wish to retain the conditions for interaction, then an arrangement such as that shown in Figure A-1 (G) is appropriate for the large group/small group meeting. The audience first meets in a general assembly shown on the left side of the diagram, then adjourns to the circular tables for the small group discussions. If there is insufficient room to accommodate this many tables and chairs, it may be useful to hold the meeting in a school where the large meeting can be in an assembly hall, with small group discussion in classrooms. An alternative format which can be used when there will be small discussion groups is shown in Figure A-1 (H). This format accommodates both small discussion groups, as well as a general session, with people simply remaining in their seats at the circular tables during the general session. Naturally, there are numerous variations to all the configurations shown in Figure A-1. These examples simply serve to illustrate that seating arrangements are a significant part of the meeting format.

**Meeting Leadership**

The leadership style chosen by the meeting leader is a major factor in the overall effectiveness of the meeting. If a meeting is run in a highly authoritative manner, the public may believe it is not allowed to participate and have a negative response towards the meeting. If the style of meeting leadership is such that participants feel consulted and believe the meeting is being run on behalf of everybody, they are likely to feel more positive about their role at the meeting and support any procedural suggestions of the leader. The critical element in effective meeting leadership appears to be the audience's belief that the meeting is "theirs" rather than the agency's.

There are definite skills to conducting meetings in a congenial, but efficient, manner. Traditionally, agency leaders have always conducted public meetings. However, if the agency leader is not also a skilled meeting leader, it may be better to have the agency leader open the meeting, make a short presentation, and hand the meeting on to an experienced meeting leader.

**Recording Public Comments**

The sponsoring agency needs to keep a record of comments made in the public meeting as proof to the public that its comments are being heard. In a public hearing, a court reporter keeps a verbatim transcript, which becomes a formal record of the meeting. However, this is a very formal procedure and most members of the public will never read the public record.

One of the most effective techniques for both keeping a summary of the meeting and indicating to the public that it is being heard is to keep a summary of the meeting on a flip chart. The public is able to watch the summary as it is being taken and is informed that if the summary is inaccurate changes may be requested. Agencies that have used this method have discovered that the summary is usually far more helpful than reading a verbatim transcript. It also provides a quick record of the meeting which can be distributed to others as a document of the meeting. If a more complete record is needed, a tape recording of the meeting can also be made.

One limitation of the flip chart method occurs in a very large meetings where the flip chart often cannot be seen by each participant. An overhead projector with a continuous roll of acetate might be used as an alternative. The disadvantage to this approach is that the summary appears on the screen for only a short period of time and is not visible to the public afterward. A verbatim transcript is still required for a formal public hearing.

**Providing Feedback to the Public**

One fundamental rule of meetings is to provide feedback to the public on what has been heard. It is recommended that this be done by typing up the flip chart summary of the meeting and distributing it to everyone in attendance, as well as other interested individuals and groups, with request for additional comments or reactions. Other items that should be addressed in this feedback should include:

- what will be done with the public comment,
- any decisions that have resulted from the meeting, and
- future opportunities for participation in the community involvement program.

## PUBLIC MEETING CHECKLIST

1. Meeting Purpose: ______________________________

2. Meeting Type: ______ Formal ______ Informal

3. Meeting Format: ______________________________

4. Meeting Budget: ______ Prepared ______ Approved

5. Advisory Committee Approval? ______

6. Identifying Potential Participants

   Interests identified and categorized? ______
   Organizations and individuals identified? ______

7. Meeting Time: ____________ Date ____________ Hours ____________

8. Meeting Place(s): ______________________________

   ______________________________

   Central location? ___
   Public transportation access? ___
   Suitable parking? ___
   Safe area? ___
   Adequate facilities? ___

   Rental fee? __ No __ Yes $ ___

   Does the rental fee include

   - Lecterns? ___
   - Speaker sound system? ___
   - Blackboards or easels? ___
   - Projectors? ___
   - Tape recorders? ___
   - Chairs? ___
   - Tables? ___
   - Meeting room set-up? ___
   - Meeting room clean-up? ___

9. Meeting Space

Total number of people expected: ____

General session
- Seating arrangement type: ____
- Adequate space? ____

Discussion session
- Number of small groups: ____
- Seating arrangement type: ____
- Number of people in each group: ____
- Adequate space?

10. Meeting Sponsorship

- Agency? ____
- Other organization? ____
  - Who? ____
  - Accepted? ____

11. Leader Selection

- Who? ____
- Accepted? ____

12. Speaker Selection

- Identified? ____
- Speakers invited? ____
- Speakers have accepted? ____

13. Moderator Selection

- How many needed? ____
- Identified? ____
- Moderators invited? ____
- Moderators have accepted? ____

14. Agenda Development

- Questions developed? ____
- Schedule developed? ____

15. Background Information Development

Information to be provided: ______________________________
______________________________________________

Graphics identified? ___
Graphics ordered? ___
Graphics received? ___
Written information completed? ___
Distribution Methods: ______________________________
______________________________________________
Number of copies: ___
copies reproduced? ___
copies distributed? ___
Graphics to be used in oral presentations? ___ Yes ___ No
Graphics identified? ___
Graphics ordered? ___
Display equipment ordered? ___
Graphics received? ___
Graphics to be used in discussion groups? ___ Yes ___ No
Graphics identified? ___
How many copies? ___
Graphics ordered? ___
Graphics received? ___

16. Publicity

Methods selected: ______________________________
______________________________________________
Preparation ordered? ___
Material prepared? ___
Number of copies needed:
Material placed and/or distributed? ___
Personal follow up completed? ___

17. Meeting Arrangements

For the general session
Lecterns, chairs, tables obtained? ___
Speaker system obtained? ___
Projectors/screens obtained? ___
Space for wall displays? ___
Registration table/space? ___
Personnel for registration? ___

Refreshments (and personnel)? ___
Name tags obtained? ___
Room arrangements made? ___
Audio/visual equipment set up? ___
Audio/visual equipment tested? ___
Ventilation/heating adequate? ___

For discussion sessions

Number of easels/blackboards:
Easels/blackboards obtained? ___
Easels/blackboards delivered? ___
Newsprint for easels obtained? ___
Supplies (pencils/chalk/erasers/ felt tip pens/masking tape/ thumb tacks) obtained? ___
Room arrangements made? ___
Ventilation/heating adequate? ___

Luncheon arrangements for conference? ___ Yes ___ No

Meeting Clean-up

Facilities restored & cleaned? ___
Equipment returned? ___

18. Recording the Proceedings

Methods to be used: ______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Personnel/equipment obtained? ___

19. Orienting Discussion Moderators

Orientation meeting scheduled? ___
Orientation meeting held? ___
Moderators have prepared materials? ___
Final moderator meeting? ___

20. Reporting to the Decision-making Body

The body(s):______________________________________________

______________________________________________

______________________________________________

Reporting format: ______________________________

Report made? ___

21. Reporting to the Public

Formats used: ______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Report prepared? ___
Number of copies required:
Copies reproduced? ___
Reporting completed? ___

22. Meeting Evaluation

______________________________

______________________________

______________________________

Evaluation completed? ___
Recommendations made? ___
Recommendations accepted? ___

# APPENDIX B

## WORKING WITH OTHER TECHNIQUES

This appendix provides helpful hints on how to use some of the community involvement techniques described in Chapter 6. These techniques include:

**Charrettes**

A charrette is designed for a very concentrated block of time, such as an entire weekend, a series of nightly meetings for a week, or a series of once-a-week or weekend meetings. Charrettes require substantial staff preparation and can be quite expensive.

Most charrettes involve a few people - maybe as many as 30 people. However, some organizations and agencies have held charrettes involving as many as 2,000 people. The more people involved, the more carefully one has to plan the charrette. Basic preparations include:

- **Having a "Catalyst-type Problem"** that everyone can focus on, at least at the outset. The charrette leader, or organizer, needs to focus everyone's attention on this problem as a starter for the creative activity.

- **Arranging meeting space.** If more than a few people will be involved, there will need to be two kinds of spaces: one space big enough for all people to meet at the beginning of the charrette, occasionally during the charrette, and also at the end, and the work areas where the participants can work in groups of up to eight or ten. The work spaces should have ample free wall areas where large sections of butcher-paper, etc. can be taped up to be used to write and draw sketches, graphs, diagrams.

- **Ensuring that materials are available**, including all kinds of paper--particularly butcher-paper and/or tracing paper, magic markers, etc.

- **Providing pertinent background information** such as relevant maps.

- **Providing food, coffee, etc.**, since a charrette cannot "stop for lunch."

- **Providing some bunks** where individuals can lie down if they absolutely must sleep a couple of hours. Ideally, the charrette itself is non-stop; it continues 24 hours a day at a hard-working pitch of creative productivity. Experienced charretters tend not to use any bunks. They understand when a team member simply has to lie down on the floor or on a table for an hour.

- **Ensuring that professional designers are present.** Such designers may include architects, engineers, urban designers, etc., with experience in the creative problem-solving process. They should be interspersed among the lay participants so they can get the creative process going again when it threatens to get side-tracked.

**Public Hearings**

When planning a public hearing, the following principles should be considered.

- Interact directly and informally with each of the potentially affected interests prior to the hearing.

- Accommodate the needs and concerns of each of the interests to the extent possible and make these efforts known.

- Conduct the public hearing only when everything possible has already been done to achieve the support of each interest.

With this approach, the public hearing ideally holds no surprises for anyone. It is simply the formal ratification of the agreement (or disagreement) that you and the affected interests have worked out informally. All of the interests should know what will be presented. Whether you have reached complete agreement with a given interest or not, both of you will know that each of you has made all of the concessions possible, and whatever disagreement remains cannot be resolved by further negotiation. If you have arrived at this point with each interest, you will know precisely what form the presentation will take. In fact, you may want to provide technical assistance to help the interested party present the remaining points of disagreement effectively.

Some agencies have developed techniques to improve the exchange of information at public hearings. One such technique is to hold simultaneous hearings; one formal process at which statements are read into the record, and a simultaneous open-house format in which members of the public can discuss issues with technical staff. Other combinations of formal and informal presentations can be developed.

**Publications**

Reports, brochures, and information bulletins are an important part of most community involvement efforts. Reports should be written to provide needed technical information, which is understandable to the general public. It is sometimes useful to have reports reviewed by an advisory committee that can point out confusing, biased, or unnecessary material in the report.

Brochures are used to reach new publics or inform known publics of the initiation of the study. The usefulness of a brochure is almost entirely dependent on its visual attractiveness and the skill with which it is written.

Information bulletins or newsletters are periodic reports which are particularly useful during portions of the study that are relatively technical in nature. During these periods, the general public is less likely to be involved but should be kept informed of what is occurring through these media. As with a brochure, the value of an information bulletin or newsletter rests on its ability to stir interest and encourage interaction. A drab, boring, bureaucratic sounding newsletter is usually not worth the effort. Some suggestions for all publications are shown below.

- Strive for simplicity.
- Use the public's language.
- Make the message relevant to the reader.
- Use graphics and interesting layouts.
- Don't make commitments that cannot be fulfilled.
- Provide clear instructions on how the public can interact with you.
- Get help from the public in preparing and reviewing the materials.

**Surveys**

Surveys must be designed and conducted by somebody who is experienced in survey design to ensure they are not biased and that the "sample" of people interviewed is representative. Normally this means that someone outside the planning organizations must be retained to design and conduct the survey. The steps to follow in conducting a survey are listed below.

- Determine specifically what your agency or organization wants to find out.

- Determine how the information will be used once it is obtained, so you know the results are related to your planning or decision-making process.

- Check to see if other organizations have already collected the information that will answer your questions.

- Contact a reputable survey research firm unless you have an experienced survey person in your own organization.

**Responsiveness Summary**

This process ensures all of the study team is kept aware of planning issues and other public concerns. All public input to the agency's planning efforts is roughly noted in a tabular form. Included is the date, the source, the input item, the section of the agency's plan that is relevant to this input item, and a proposed response to the public input. The response form is then circulated within the study team to ensure team members are aware of the comment or concern, and that the proposed response is correct. The response form is also a mechanism for coordinating study team actions in terms of investigating the comment, evaluating its impact on the study, and conducting any necessary planning analysis.

The roughly compiled response account, as amended through the process described above, is then typed and incorporated in the plan as a "Response Summary". The document is then circulated outside the study team. The form on the following page illustrates an example of a responsiveness summary table. (Table B-1).

Table B-1

**MODEL RESPONSIVENESS SUMMARY TABLE**

| DATE | SOURCE | INPUT | RELEVANCE | SUGGESTED RESPONSE |
|---|---|---|---|---|

**Mediation**

Mediation techniques have long been used to resolve labor/management disputes. The application of these techniques to airport noise compatibility planning issues is still relatively new. This process is formal and requires considerable skill in administration as well as substantial commitment of the participating interests. To start the process, a group representing all the major interests, which will be affected by a decision, is established. Members of this mediation panel are all "official" representatives of the interests and are appointed with the understanding that the organizations they represent will have the opportunity to approve or disapprove any agreements resulting from the mediation. The basic ground rule is that all decisions of the panel will be unanimous.

A key element in mediation is the appointment of a third party mediator -- someone skilled in mediation -- who is not seen as an interested party to the negotiations. The mediator not only structures the deliberations, but often serves as a conduit for negotiations between the various parties. Mediation is only possible when the various interests in a conflict believe they can accomplish more by negotiation than by confrontation.

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport has successfully employed the mediation process as a means to resolve airport noise issues. Ground rules for the mediation process were adopted by the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Noise Abatement Committee on April 10, 1989. The final version of the ground rules is dated May 8, 1989. These ground rules, which provide useful guidelines for other airports considering the mediation process, are attached.

EXAMPLE

**GROUND RULES:**

**SEATTLE-TACOMA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NOISE MEDIATION**

The purpose of these ground rules is to make explicit the common expectations with which the participants enter the mediation process. They describe the purpose of the process, the manner in which the several interests are structured for effective participation, the responsibilities of the participants to one another and to their constituents, the spirit in which they will seek consensus, and the responsibility of the mediators to facilitate the process. Their intent is to provide a framework for fruitful discussion and exchange that guides rather than constrains the interaction.

Participating in the mediation process as a member of a negotiating team signals an understanding and acceptance of the ground rules. The ground rules may be amended by consensus of the Mediation Committee.

## I. Definitions

**Caucus:** A cluster of interests and organizations that negotiate as a team. A caucus may be composed of a single organization.

**Sub-caucus:** Refers to individual geographic areas that make up the community caucus.

**Negotiating Team:** Those individuals who are designated to represent the interests at the mediation sessions. Not all members of a negotiating team will be seated at the table. Members of negotiating teams are expected to be in attendance at all mediation sessions and subscribe to these ground rules.

**Mediation Committee:** A committee representing all interests and composed of negotiators seated at the table.

**Mediation Committee Members:** Those negotiators designated by their respective caucus to be seated at the table during mediation sessions.

**Designated Alternate:** A negotiator who is formally designated to be seated at the table during a mediation session in the absence of a Mediation Committee member.

**Contact Person:** One or more Mediation Committee Members designated by a caucus to work with the mediators in facilitating and coordinating communications relative to mediation session between and during such sessions.

**Subcommittee:** A committee established and appointed by the Mediation Committee. Members of a subcommittee must be negotiators.

**Working Group:** A group established and appointed by the Mediation Committee or a subcommittee. Its members may include persons who are not negotiators.

**Mediators:** Impartial individuals selected by the Mediation Committee to guide the mediation process, including the facilitation of the Mediation Committee, subcommittee, and working group meetings; working with caucuses, sub-caucuses, and representatives between meetings; representing the process to external interests; and such other functions as may be agreed to by the mediators and the Mediation Committee.

**Community Coordinator:** An individual selected by the community caucus with the concurrence of the Mediation Committee to assist the community caucus in administrative and organizational matters supportive of its participation in the mediation process. The community coordinator will not represent the community caucus in the mediation process or be a member of the negotiating team.

**Consensus:** The explicit concurrence of the six caucuses participating in the mediation process, as conveyed by Mediation Committee members. Each caucus is responsible for determining its own process for deciding whether or not to participate in a consensus. In the community caucus, consensus will be defined as consensus among the four sub-caucuses of the impacted communities. County representatives, if they choose to have a seat at the table, must participate in consensus on any issues which directly affect them.

## II. Purpose

1. The purpose of the mediation process is to reach a consensus on programs which will mitigate and/or reduce noise, and which will be implemented for Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. Any noise impact caused by operation of aircraft into and out of Seattle-Tacoma International Airport may be part of the negotiations.

2. It is intended that the consensus will include a commitment by each caucus to carry forward and fully support the consensus programs through necessary administrative and other processes of implementation.

## III. Structure

3. The following caucuses shall participate in the mediation process.

   - Impacted communities
   - Air industry
   - Airport users
   - Air Line Pilots Association, International (ALPA)
   - Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)
   - Port of Seattle

4. The impacted communities shall be organized into a community caucus composed of four sub-caucuses:

   - communities within or immediately adjacent to the Part 150 designated area,
   - communities south and southwest of the airport,
   - communities north and northwest of the airport, and
   - communities east of Lake Washington and including Mercer Island.

5. Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties shall each be invited to participate in the community caucus.

6. The air industry shall be represented by a caucus composed of representatives of airline operators, air freight operators, and the Air Transport Association (ATA).

7. The caucus of airport users shall represent those interests concerned with access to air transportation services, including the general business community, hospitality industry, and tourist and convention interests.

8. Each caucus or organization shall appoint a negotiating team that shall represent the interests and concerns of its caucus or organization in the negotiations. In the interest of ensuring a manageable number of direct participants in the discussion, not more than the following number of Mediation Committee members representing each caucus shall be seated "at the table".

   - Community Caucus 8

   (One additional seat per county, for a total of not more than three (3) additional "seats", may be occupied by representatives of Kitsap, Pierce, and Snohomish

Counties. A decision regarding such participation must be made before the March 20, 1989, meeting of the Mediation Committee.)

| | |
|---|---|
| • Air industry caucus | 5 |
| • Airport users | 1 |
| • Air Line Pilots Association, International | 1 |
| • Federal Aviation Administration | 2 |
| • Port of Seattle | 2 |

9. Should other interests or communities be impacted as a result of the deliberations of the Mediation Committee, those interests or communities shall be represented in the discussions through a process agreed to by the Mediation Committee.

10. No limitation on the number of persons on a negotiating team is specified in these ground rules. Caucuses are encouraged to limit the total size of their teams as much as possible.

11. The membership of each negotiating team shall be established by the caucus, and a list of members will be exchanged between caucuses. It is intended that negotiating team members will remain constant and that negotiators will attend all sessions. The Mediation Committee will be informed through the mediators whenever changes in a negotiating team are necessary.

12. Negotiating teams may be accompanied at the mediation sessions by such other persons as they deem necessary to provide technical and other support.

13. Only Mediation Committee Members shall be seated at the table and participate directly in the discussions except as provided below.

14. Each caucus and each sub-caucus of the community caucus shall designate not more than two alternates to participate on the Mediation Committee in the absence of a Mediation Committee member. Such designated alternates must be members of the negotiating team.

15. Each caucus shall designate one or more contact persons to assist the mediators in facilitating communications during and between meetings. Contact persons should be Mediation Committee members.

16. In the interest of continuity and efficient discussions, it is expected that all negotiators be in attendance at all sessions.

17. Other members of a negotiating team may address the Mediation Committee and/or participate in discussions with the concurrence of the Mediation Committee.

18. Other persons may address the Mediation Committee and/or participate in discussions with the concurrence of the committee. The mediators and Mediation Committee should be informed in advance of such participation.

19. Subcommittees may be formed to address particular issues or perform specific tasks.

    - Subcommittees will be formed by consensus of the Mediation Committee.
    - Composition of subcommittees will be by consensus of the Mediation Committee.
    - Subcommittee members must be members of negotiating teams.
    - The Mediation Committee shall establish the scope of work of subcommittees.
    - The mediators shall provide a facilitator for all subcommittee meetings.
    - Subcommittee meetings shall be open.

20. Working groups may be established to undertake a specific task.

    - Working groups will be formed by consensus of the Mediation Committee or a subcommittee.
    - Composition of working groups will be by consensus of the Mediation Committee or subcommittee.
    - Working group meetings shall be open.
    - The Mediation Committee or subcommittee shall establish the scope of work of working groups.
    - The mediators shall provide a facilitator for all working group meetings.

## IV. Procedures

21. The Mediation Committee will operate by consensus.

22. Meetings will be task-oriented with specific agendas. Agendas will describe the matter for discussion, the purpose of the discussion, and provide such other information necessary to support informed discussion.

23. A draft agenda for the next mediation session will be developed at the conclusion of each mediation session. A copy of the draft agenda will be mailed to negotiating team members at least seven days prior to the mediation session.

24. Mediation sessions will not be recorded verbatim by electronic or other means.

25. Meetings of the Mediation Committee will not be "closed."

## V. Public Outreach and Involvement

26. The mediators shall be the designated spokespersons of the mediation process and its progress.

27. A summary statement suitable for discussion with the media and general public will be agreed upon at the conclusion of each Mediation Committee meeting as the formal statement of progress for the mediation process.

28. Each caucus, sub-caucus, and organization will develop procedures for keeping members informed of the progress of the mediation process and for ratification and implementation of any consensus agreement.

29. The Mediation Committee with the assistance of the mediator(s) shall develop procedures for informing interested elected and administrative officials. This is not intended to limit the access of participants in the mediating process to such persons, within the spirit of other provisions in these ground rules.

30. The Mediation Committee, with the assistance of the mediators and in consultation with community coordinator, shall develop a public involvement program, including public forums and other such means of communication as may be agreed upon. Its purpose will be to consult with the public about matters under discussion and receive their suggestions.

This public involvement program is not intended to replace the responsibility and activities of the community caucus in informing and receiving guidance from their constituents.

## VI. Technical, Substantive and Other Information

31. As an initial step in the mediation process, the participants will develop a common information base, identifying areas where available information needs to be shared and/or verified, additional interpretation is necessary, or additional information is needed.

32. Requests for information will be coordinated through the Mediation Committee and/or the mediator.

33. The Port of Seattle shall provide technical support funds to enable the Mediation Committee to jointly select those with the expertise necessary to accomplish this task. A subcommittee will be formed to establish procedures and criteria for the selection and invitation of such expertise.

34. It is appropriate that any caucus or organization may wish to verify the information or data supplied by a consultant, expert, or agency staff. The costs of such verification may be paid from technical support funds with the concurrence of the subcommittee.

35. Information provided, statements, positions, and offers made during the mediation process should be understood as being made only for purposes of the mediation and not as findings for any other purposes including litigation and administrative procedures.

36. Consultants selected and engaged by the Mediation Committee accept their assignment with the understanding that they will not be used by organizations and individuals participating as members of the negotiating teams in any subsequent proceedings relative to the issues of noise abatement, which are under discussion, except by consensus of the Mediation Committee.

37. Organizations and individuals participating as members of a negotiating team recognize the special nature of the mediators' role, and agree not to seek or compel the testimony of the mediators or their staff or the production of their personal notes or work product, except as may be agreed by the Mediation Committee and the mediators.

## VII. Scheduling and Time Lines

38. The Mediation Committee shall establish a schedule of meetings. It is important to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to permit caucuses to fully consider any items which are placed on the Mediation Committee agenda.

39. The Mediation Committee shall establish an interim date at which time it shall evaluate progress and by consensus agree whether or not to continue.

40. The target for developing substantive options and conclusions is June 30, 1989. At that time, the Mediation Committee shall make a substantive progress assessment and determine whether or not it is necessary and productive to continue the mediation process. If the process is continued, a date for concluding the process shall be established.

## VIII. Products

41. The final report of the mediation process shall be adopted by consensus of the interests represented and presented for review and adoption by implementing entities.

42. The goal of the mediation process is to publish and implement a consensus agreement on noise abatement programs for Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

43. The consensus agreement shall address matters relating to implementation, including both process and timing.

44. In the absence of consensus agreement on all issues, the negotiators may reach a consensus that explicitly excludes specific items. In such instances, the Mediation Committee shall agree upon a statement describing the areas of disagreement and/or any lack of information and data that prevents agreement.

    Insofar as is possible, means of reconciling differences or obtaining the necessary information should be identified.

45. No provision in these ground rules should be interpreted to prohibit the Mediation Committee from reaching a consensus on any interim or immediate actions to address the issues before them.

## IX. Principles of Collaborative Negotiations

It is important that all participants be familiar with and subscribe to certain basic elements that are important in developing consensus on difficult and complex issues. The following matters describe the conduct of the negotiation/mediation process.

46. The purpose of negotiations is to agree.

47. Negotiators agree to act in "good faith" in all aspects of the process.

48. Negotiators accept the concerns and goals of others as legitimate.

49. It is important that a caucus raises with the Mediation Committee any matter which it perceives to be in violation of these ground rules or of "good faith" negotiations.

50. It shall be the responsibility of the negotiating teams to assure that their members understand and abide by the ground rules. Only those who are able and willing to accept these ground rules shall be members of a negotiating team.

51. The focus will be on interests and concerns rather than positions and demands.

52. Negotiators commit to fully explore issues, searching for solutions in a problem-solving atmosphere.

53. The parties agree to make a "good faith" attempt to share information on matters related to mediation.

54. In order to facilitate the broadest possible consideration of options and solutions, all suggestions and offers will be regarded as tentative until full agreement is achieved.

55. Negotiators will make a good faith effort to accurately characterize the process and substance of the mediation to their constituents, the public, and the media, and will act in good faith when characterizing the concerns and positions of their constituents to other negotiators.

56. Negotiators will not agree to any provision or action for which they are unwilling to seek the concurrence of those they represent.

## Delphi

To use the Delphi process, the following steps should be taken. First, establish a list of individuals with expertise in the topic that you need to forecast. This handful of experts will constitute your Delphi experts. The selected panel of experts will never meet. Rather, a questionnaire is submitted individually to each participant requesting them to indicate their forecasts concerning the topic. The responses to the questionnaire are consolidated and resubmitted to the participants with a request that they make an estimate of the probable occurrence of each event. The participants' responses are again collected, and a statistical summary is prepared.

The statistical summary is distributed to all participants, and the participants are asked to give a new estimate now that they have seen the response of the total group. Participants whose answers differ substantially from the rest of the group are asked to state the reasons behind their answers. The new responses are then summarized statistically and redistributed to the participants who are asked to prepare a final estimate. A final statistical summary is then prepared based on participants' comments.

Delphi can be combined with other community involvement techniques. One agency, for example, carried out the Delphi process by distributing the original questionnaire to several thousand people. Even though only a few responded to the first questionnaire, the results were summarized and redistributed back to the original mailing list. With each redistribution of results, more and more individuals joined in the process. In place of the final summary, a large public meeting was held at which the results of the process were discussed. In this case, the Delphi process served to generate considerable public interest, and the agency believed the final public meeting was much better attended than it would have been without the Delphi process.

**Community Coordination**

Existing mechanisms can be extremely effective tools in a community planning program. These may include the following.

Clubs; Civic Groups; Other organizations. The most obvious existing community organizations whose members might be interested in your project include the following.

- Local churches;
- Local service organizations, including Kiwanis, Lions Club, Rotary Club;
- Fraternal organizations, including Elks, Moose, Masons, etc.;
- The local Chamber of Commerce;
- Merchants' organizations
- The local chapter of the League of Women Voters; and
- Local parent-teachers organizations.

Some of the less obvious ones that might exist include:

- neighborhood associations,
- professional organizations and trade groups,
- the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects,
- the local chapter of the American Institute of Planners, and
- the local educational association.

Existing organizations can do the most for your program if you work out an understanding with each of them from the outset. You should make your intentions clear (i.e., that you want to establish a working relationship in which their organization serves as a two-way communications channel between the community and the project). You should establish your role in the process. Consider the following kinds of activities.

- Provide brief writeups about current project-related issues for inclusion in their newsletter, or bulletin, on a regular basis.
- Have project staff members participate in the organization's program by making presentations about the project.
- Make project staff available to participate on panels, in workshops, in small meetings, etc.

- Sponsor a tour of the project or project offices for organization members and non-members.

<u>Newsletters, Other Publications, Media, Etc.</u> Existing newsletters, publications, media, etc., provide a means to inform all affected individuals, groups, corporations, institutes, agencies, etc. The first step, one which needs to be kept in mind throughout the project, is to think of all the potentially affected individuals, groups, corporations, institutions, agencies, etc., which need to be kept up-to-date. The second step is to identify the groups and publications, which some of those interests either belong or subscribe to. These two lists need to be developed and updated periodically. Contacts then need to be initiated with the relevant groups and/or publishers. In some cases, a one-time article may suffice. In others, progress reports are necessary from time to time.

## APPENDIX C

## WORKING WITH ADVISORY COMMITTEES

This appendix is divided into the following sections.

**Description of Advisory Committees**

The advisory committee is an extremely popular community participation technique in airport noise compatibility studies. One reason for this popularity is that advisory committees can serve many different functions. Consequently, the sponsor must determine what is to be accomplished and how the advisory committee can be tailored for the function it will serve. Different types of advisory committees, which may be considered, are as follows.

Committee to Give Popularity-Type Advice. This type of committee should be kept small and reflect, as far as possible, the feelings of the public to tell the agency how popular or unpopular a particular idea. To achieve this objective, it is necessary to:

- have a broad range of public views represented on such a committee,
- conduct meetings, which are visible to the public, so as to increase the credibility of the decision-making process, and
- recognize that the committee does not make decisions.

Committee to Give Content-Type Advice. This type of committee is made up of people whose ideas, concerns, issues, etc., can benefit the problem-solving effort. Such a committee is created to give substantive advice which may include technical information as well as information relating to concerns and issues. To create an advisory committee that gives content-type advice, it is necessary to:

- get individuals with varying interests on the committee,
- allow all interests to be represented, since all of their ideas are important, and
- prevent committee members from intimidating each other or inhibiting the flow of ideas to you.

There's no real need for the committee to meet. As long as it generates a lot of ideas and gets them to the agency/organization in an unchanged form, the committee is fulfilling its role. In fact, requiring a committee to meet inhibits some of its content-type advice-generating potential.

Committee to Build a Consensus Among Polarized Interests. To make a constructive contribution to the agency/organizations' problem-solving efforts, the makeup of such a committee has to include polarized interests and the committees' operating procedures have to be such that:

- polarized interests learn to appreciate there are different legitimate points of view;

- polarized interests are not tempted to make emotional statements for public consumption or "grandstand," thus, further polarizing their positions;

- representatives of the various polarized interests come to know -- if not "like", at least "respect" -- each other;

- the committee finds, focuses on, and builds on areas of agreement -- no matter how small -- rather than focusing on the areas of disagreement; and

- there is the opportunity to establish a long-term, on-going working relationship, which, in turn, provides opportunities for making trade-offs and compromises.

This kind of committee needs to be effectively managed to achieve consensus and avoid "grandstanding." Meetings of committee members should be informal. Since public participation and media attention could detract from the interactive process required for consensus development, the meeting format should encourage small group discussions. A workshop or large group/small group meeting format would be best suited for discussions of substantive issues.

Coordinating Committee (Frequently Called A Committee Of "Go-fers"). Such a committee is low-key, and members do not commit their interest groups to any position and do not generally attract media attention. A coordinating committee has three primary responsibilities.

- Relay information from the agency's technical team to each of the potentially affected interests. Committee members keep their interest informed about what the experts are doing, how they're doing it, and why they're doing what they're doing. This kind of advisory committee, in other words, is a major "output" channel for the agency.

- Relay information from each of the potentially affected interests to the technical team. The committee is also a major "input" channel, communicating information about values, views, concerns, priorities, suggestions, ideas, questions, etc., from the various interests.

- Make their own personal input to the agency.

Members of a coordinating committee are primarily message carriers who are able, and willing, to run errands. They "go for this," and they "go for that"... they are "Go-fers".[1] It is important that members not be able to commit their organization to any position. Membership is not a matter of prestige, since they have no power. Rather, it is a matter of being able and willing to contribute to helping the public agency in question find and implement the best feasible solution to the problem at hand.

The minimum effort the agency can put into this kind of advisory committee to make it function properly is the equivalent of one full-time staff person. Consequently, this technique is rather expensive. If you try to create and operate such a committee with an insufficient resource commitment, the committee is likely to deteriorate into a traditional advisory committee.

Blue Ribbon Panel Committee. A Blue Ribbon Panel is typically made up of influential, respected members of the community. Since these individuals have many demands on their time and energy, the issues to be resolved must be of considerable importance. The criteria for appointment on such a committee are:

- an extensive, unimpeachable record of public service,
- the respect of a broad spectrum of the various interests who make up the public,
- a demonstrated ability to use and supervise a staff of experts to do the necessary investigative homework, and
- a grasp of the absolute need for (as well as the sensitivity and difficulty of) getting to the bottom of the issue being investigated.

This kind of advisory committee is generally created with considerable publicity, and it is given a specific mandate. The mandate is necessary for this advisory committee to focus all of its efforts on the specific issue it is supposed to help clarify. The public fanfare is necessary for the public to realize:

- the committee has been created;
- its membership is impartial and open-minded;
- it will be investigating the issue in question; and

[1]Institute for Participating Management and Planning. Citizen Participation Handbook, 6th Edition, 1989. IPMP, Monterey, CA, 93940.

- it will make its own independent findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Watch-Dog Committee. This committee checks the technical work of the agency to ensure it is accurate and unbiased. Since most public agencies work on rather complex kinds of problems, it's hard for people who are not involved in related fields to really "check" the work of the agency's experts.

- Train the watch-dog advisory committee members. Although this still does not make it impossible for the professionals to overwhelm their citizen watch-dogs, it gives the advisory committee a better chance to do its job.

- Ensure the creation of such a committee is visible to the public to enhance the agency's credibility.

Committees to Build a Constituency for the Agency's Cause. In many cases, project implementation has far less to do with the amount of support than with the amount of opposition. Even a small minority may be able to prevent the implementation of a plan or program. To build a constituency and avoid minority vetoes, the committee's mandate, membership, and standard operating procedures have to be designed with this specific purpose clearly in mind. For example, an advisory committee that only has members who are already known to be supporters of the agency's cause or, who because of their own self-interests, could readily be expected to support the agency's cause, does not really contribute toward building a constituency.

For such an advisory committee to be an effective constituency-builder, the agency needs to:

- include interests which do not automatically support the agency's cause, and

- ensure the committee meetings are informal and visible so as to lessen the likelihood of public opposition to the program.

**Selecting an Advisory Committee**

Depending on the nature of the issues and other circumstances, there are several alternative methods for selecting advisory committee members. Some of these methods follow.

1. **Members selected by the agency to balance different interests.** Assuming that the sponsoring agency has done a careful job of analyzing the interests in the community, this may be one of the simplest and most efficient means of establishing an advisory committee. If, however, there is substantial controversy

surrounding the study, this method runs the risk of being unacceptable to members of the public who believe the sponsoring agency may be attempting to manipulate the community involvement process through the composition of the advisory committee.

2. **Agency identified interest groups select their own representatives.** This method gives the various interest groups more control over their own representation and, therefore, is more credible. The major difficulty arises if there is an interest that needs to be represented but is not formalized into some organization that can readily select a representative. For example, if a neighborhood is not already organized into a neighborhood association, it may be very difficult to get that neighborhood to select a representative.

3. **Establishment core group of major interests, which adds members as other interests are identified.** Sometimes it is easier not to over-structure the membership of an advisory committee but simply establish a core group of the obvious interest groups with the understanding that it will invite representatives onto the committee as other groups and interests are identified. This method assumes the original members of the advisory group understand the need to ensure that the advisory group continues to be broadly representative.

4. **Selection by an established political body.** To ensure credibility, it is sometimes appropriate to request that a city council, county commission, or other body of elected officials select the representatives for the advisory committee. Assuming the elected body is viewed as representative, then the members selected by this body will have considerable legitimacy. The potential risk is that by involving elected officials, the advisory committee can become very political. However, advisory committee members may also be positive, ensuring their continuing interest in the study.

5. **Membership by election.** In a few instances, there are definable districts or entities which have been established, that will allow for popular election of members of advisory committees.

**Meeting Logistics**

The timing and subject matter for advisory committee meetings should be carefully planned. Time volunteered by participants of an advisory committee is extremely valuable, precisely because it is volunteered. Generally, there needs to be considerable staff work to ensure the agenda is carefully planned, the necessary documents are out to the advisory committee members in advance of the meetings, the meeting format is suitable for discussion of that particular topic, and that necessary consultants or other technical experts are available at the meetings.

It is desirable to establish a comfortable, informal atmosphere in the committee meetings. An over-emphasis on parliamentary procedure can lead to many hours spent on formalities rather than substantive issues. In addition, one of the purposes of the advisory committee is to reduce the barriers between citizens and staff of the sponsoring agency. Formal meeting procedures tend to exaggerate differences rather than reduce them.

The location and time of the meeting should be established based on the convenience of the advisory committee members more than the convenience of agency staff. The length of the meeting should be specified and agreed upon; usually no longer than two and one-half to three hours. If the group is not too large, the best seating arrangement is to have the committee seated around a table so all members of the committee can see each other when they speak. If the committee is so large that this is not possible, then the committee may be broken down into smaller groups if discussion of substantive issues is desired.

One of the basic questions facing every committee is whether or not to schedule regular meetings, even at the risk that they will not be needed, or to schedule meetings only when needed, with potential logistical problems in finding a time suitable to everybody. Regular meetings seem to be easier for people to remember and schedule. However, some flexibility needs to be built in so they can be cancelled if not really needed.

Some advisory committees have found they can reduce the number of meetings by using written progress reports coupled with response forms requesting specific information needed for the progress of the study. Summaries of the comments received on the response form are then prepared and redistributed, along with an indication of any action taken based on the comment.

**Staff Involvement**

As the comments above indicate, working with an advisory committee in an effective manner requires considerable staff work in preparation and followup to the comments received during the meetings. Advisory committees should not be established unless the sponsoring agency is willing to provide sufficient staff assistance to ensure its effectiveness.

In extremely controversial situations, problems can occur when citizens are suspicious that staff members may manipulate the process to protect the sponsoring agency's position. In some cases, agencies have provided money so that an advisory committee can retain its own staff. If carefully planned, this can be effective, although there is some experience to suggest that this approach may institutionalize the differences between the agency staff and the public.

One issue that must be addressed is whether or not the meeting leader at advisory committee meetings will be a staff person or a citizen selected by the advisory committee. If a citizen is skilled at meeting leadership and has an appreciation for the requirements of problem-solving between the groups, a citizen leader is often better because he/she will lend credibility to the advisory committee process. However, a staff member skilled in meeting leadership may be more effective if there is no skilled leader from within the group. One of the deciding factors in selecting a meeting leader is the confidence and trust level which exists between the staff and citizen members of the committee.

**Establishing Ground Rules**

A number of ground rules need to be established in an advisory committee, depending on the degree of formality or the significance of the advisory committee in the overall community involvement program. The following issues require consideration.

- **Attendance.** Will a certain number of absences be grounds for dropping a member? Do alternates have all the same rights on the committee as full members?

- **Participation of Observers.** Are non-members permitted to speak at meetings or participate in other ways?

- **Subcommittees or Task Forces.** How do the subcommittees or task forces keep the full advisory committee informed? Does the advisory committee have the right to substantially change work performed by a subcommittee?

- **Reporting.** Who reports the conclusions of the advisory board to the decision-making body?

- **Constituencies.** What are the mechanisms by which advisory committee members will keep in touch with their constituencies?

- **Parliamentary Procedures.** To what extent are formal parliamentary procedures followed?

- **Expenses.** Are members' travel expenses reimbursed? What constitutes reasonable expenses?

**Voting**

A difficult issue within an advisory committee is the question of voting. One of the problems with voting is that it's not clear exactly what a vote means. There is no assurance that an advisory committee can represent the exact proportion of viewpoints held by the broad general public. As a result, a closely split vote on an advisory board cannot be presumed to represent public sentiment, except to suggest that public sentiment is substantially divided. Yet the vote of an advisory committee can often carry political weight beyond its real merit as a democratic process. In many cases, no vote is necessary. The fact that individual members express approval or disapproval of a concept or alternative is often all that is necessary for the committee to serve its advisory function.

There are several alternative voting methods that might be tried if there is a reason the committee should vote at all. These include:

- requiring a three-fifths or two-thirds majority for any vote to carry. In effect, this means there is a substantial majority necessary for anything to pass; and

- using different vote margins for different types of issues. Procedural issues might be settled by simple majority vote, but votes on the substance of plans might require a larger majority or even be determined by consensus.

Experience suggests that when decisions can be made by general group agreement, this is preferable. Accomplishing this requires a skilled meeting leader who is able to summarize the sense of the meeting and obtain general consensus for this summary.

**Relationship of Advisory Committees to other Community Involvement Activities**

Advisory committees are particularly useful during those phases of the planning or decision-making process when there are technical studies underway, and there are no broad philosophical options to present to the public. During these phases, the advisory committee can review the technical work and provide the continuity and visibility necessary to maintain the overall credibility of the community involvement process. Advisory committees can also be particularly helpful in reviewing logistics for public meetings, including possible hand-outs and meeting formats. As a general rule, however, phases of community involvement programs which have relied primarily on advisory committee meetings for public participation should be followed by phases of broad general review of the products generated by that advisory committee. By combining advisory committee activity with other broader public activities, it is possible to obtain the advantages of continuity from the advisory committee coupled with the political credibility of broad public comment.

# APPENDIX D

## WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

This appendix is divided into the following sections.

**Introduction**

Newspapers, radio, and television are all important vehicles by which to communicate with the broad general public. A well-designed public information program incorporating the media is an essential element in any community involvement program. Individuals and groups need to be informed of possible actions or policies and their consequences before they can effectively participate in a decision-making process.

Many larger airports or government agencies already have public information or public affairs officers who are able to provide guidance in designing a public information program. These individuals can be extremely helpful because of their skills in working with the media and, also, because they most likely already have contacts or relationships with members of the media within the community. In addition, most agencies have established procedures for approval of press releases and other communications to the media, and a public information officer can provide advice on these procedures. Whenever possible, communication efforts with the media should be coordinated through an agency public affairs office.

There are some basic differences between working with newspapers and working with the electronic media. The following guidelines are divided into two sections accordingly: **Working with Newspapers and Working with TV and Radio.**

**Working with Newspapers**

<u>Competition for Coverage</u>. In working with newspapers, you are automatically in competition with all other newsworthy community events for coverage in the local newspaper. The more urban the area in which you are working, the more difficult you will find it to get full and complete coverage from the major metropolitan dailies.

<u>Establishing Yourself with the Press</u>. The first step in working with the press is to identify those newspapers you believe are good vehicles to communicate stories about your community involvement program. If the competition for coverage is particularly intense, you may wish to identify weekly or suburban newspapers that are widely read in the communities immediately adjoining the airport. If, however, you want coverage from a major metropolitan newspaper, it is helpful to identify those sections of the newspaper in which coverage of your story is most likely. If your approach is targeted towards editors or reporters in these particular sections, you are much more likely to get the coverage that you wish. In the smaller newspaper, you may be dealing directly with the editor or city editor of the newspaper; however, there may still be reporters who have particular interest in stories about aviation or planning issues.

Having identified the newspapers which are the most likely to report on your community involvement program, you should make a personal visit to the editor or reporters from whom you seek coverage. The primary purpose of this visit is to get to know this individual and provide them with background information on the issues that are likely to emerge during the community involvement program. It is helpful to have news releases, summaries of technical background for the study, or brochures to leave with the reporter or editor. It often provides added weight to your visit if a citizen member of an advisory committee accompanies you.

Types of Coverage from the Press. In your public information planning and in your visits with the press, there are a number of different types of coverage which may be arranged. These include:

- News stories describing meetings or events, or reporting speeches made by agency leaders.
- Announcements of meetings or other community involvement activities.
- Feature stories about the issues being addressed in the study.
- Editorial support for the community involvement effort.
- Coverage of press conferences when there are major announcements or events that cannot be covered adequately in press releases.
- If a newspaper is particularly interested in your issue, it may be willing to not only print feature stories but also provide coverage of reader responses to that story.

Attitudes Towards the Press. Although it is appropriate to provide news to the press, you cannot dictate how it is used. Members of the press have great professional pride and can become defensive or insulted if you attempt to do their job. If you disagree with a reporter's coverage, this should be discussed privately and rationally with the reporter or simply ignored. Efforts to go over the reporter's head to the editor will usually backfire. If you have serious problems with the newspaper, it might be more effective for members of the advisory committee, if there is one, to write letters to the editor for publication.

One of your initial tasks must be to establish and maintain your own credibility with the press. Credibility is built on honesty and accuracy. Don't dodge controversy. If you attempt to downplay controversy too much, you risk losing your credibility. Avoid "no comment" responses, and return phone calls to the press promptly. If reporters are not able to reach you before their deadlines, they will likely indicate that you were "not available," which looks to the public as if you are avoiding the press. If you are taken by surprise by a reporter's question or a public statement by an individual or group, it is better to say that you have just heard about the statement and will have a response as soon as you have had an opportunity to study it.

Press Release. Press releases will be your primary vehicle for informing the press and notifying them of newsworthy stories. Normally press releases should be sent to the press two to three days before you expect the story to run. If the story is particularly newsworthy, it may be picked up the next day. Otherwise, the story may be held for a day or two.

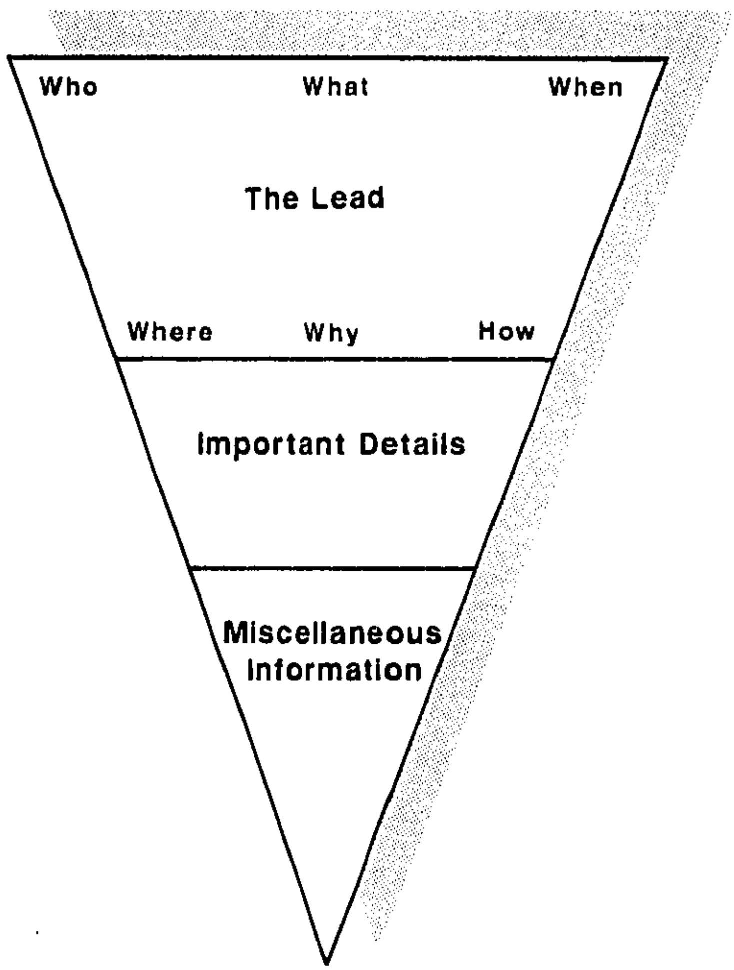
When dealing with weekly newspapers, it is particularly important to observe their closing deadlines, which are often set several days before the newspaper actually reaches the street. From your earlier visits to the newspapers, you will have identified reporters that have an interest in aviation stories. It is entirely appropriate to send press releases directly to them. If there are several reporters that may want to cover the same story from different angles, it is a good idea to send copies of the press release to all of them and indicate that you have done so.

Writing a Press Release. A press release should be written so that the most important information is in the first paragraph, the next most important information in the second paragraph, etc. The press refer to this as the "inverted pyramid" (See Figure D-1). **The first part of the story--the lead, should cover "who, what, when, where, why, how." The second part of the story should cover other important details, and the third part should cover other miscellaneous information.** The first paragraph of the story should attract the reader's interest. By providing the essential details in the first paragraph or two, the reader gets the important information without completing the entire story. Also, when editors are squeezing stories into limited space, they will cut the story from the bottom up. Sometimes, only the first few paragraphs will survive. If important information has been included in the final paragraphs, the readers may miss the essentials of the story.

Other principles that should be observed in writing press releases include:

- keeping sentences short.
- using simple language.
- using the Active Voice (e.g., "Metro Airport announces it will conduct a series of workshops" instead of "A series of workshops will be conducted to consider problems at Metro Airport.").

**Inverted Pyramid for News Release** **Figure D-1**



- adding conversation (quotes) to your story (e.g., John Q. Smith, Airport Director, stated: "These meetings will give us a chance to hear the public's ideas about future development around the airport.").

- avoid wordiness (e.g., "Comments from the public about the alternatives are invited" instead of "Opportunities for thorough discussion, analysis, and evaluation of alternatives will be provided.").

- writing as you speak.

- relating the story to the reader's experience.

- overuse of adjectives (e.g., dynamic, outstanding).

- using a consistent style.

- striving for accuracy.

Press Conferences. Press conferences are a useful way to get the press interested and involved in your stories. However, press conferences should not be held if the material covered can be handled equally well in a press release. Be aware that you are in competition with other newsworthy events. Since press conferences require additional travel time, the reporter has less time to cover other stories. Therefore, press conferences should be utilized only when the additional time is justified by the importance of the story.

The typical format is to have a spokesperson present a short statement and then allow time for questions from the press. Both the spokesperson's statement and general background on the study or decision-making process should be printed and distributed to the press at the time of the press conference. This will assist the reporter and, also, protect you by ensuring you are accurately quoted.

**Working with Radio and TV**

Public Service Announcements. All radio and TV stations are required by law to provide public service news coverage and features to the community. However, a radio or TV station does not have any obligation to provide public service time to your particular program, as there may be a number of other worthy programs competing for the time. Coverage is allocated to the extent that a story is newsworthy.

Establishing Yourself with Radio and TV Stations. Most of the principles of working with newspapers apply equally to radio and television stations. The first step is to identify those radio and TV stations which you believe will best provide information to the public interested in your community involvement program. For example, a five-minute program on a station with a very large audience elicits far greater public interest and response than a half-hour program on a station with relatively low coverage. Public broadcasting stations and cable television stations, for example, are far more likely to provide you with prolonged coverage, but the number of people watching these stations may be substantially less.

The second step is to contact the news director of the radio or television stations from which you wish to receive coverage. Printed materials should be left with the news director. A citizen representative will add legitimacy to your story.

Types of Radio and TV Coverage. There are several types of radio and TV coverage which you should discuss with the news director. These include:

- Coverage of meetings or other community involvement events on regular news programs.
- Thirty to sixty-second spot coverage announcing public meetings or inviting participation in the community involvement.
- Pre-taped guest editorials describing your community involvement program and inviting participation.
- Appearance of an agency official or leading community figure on an interview show.
- Appearance of an agency official or other program participant on a call-in show.
- A taped documentary describing the issues which will be covered in the study.
- Participatory radio or television such as that described in Chapter 6.

Writing for Radio and TV. In preparing press releases or announcements for radio, most of the same rules apply as for newspaper stories. The critical difference is that with radio and TV, the time you receive will usually be much briefer. You must remember that major world events may receive no more than 30 to 60 seconds of coverage on radio or television news, so your public involvement program would be very fortunate to receive anything more.

Brevity is extremely important. You can assume that a story longer than 8 to 15 lines will not appear. Also, remember that the news announcer will "speak" your story. Therefore, sentences must be brief and simple so that they sound conversational. As in the case of newspaper articles, radio and television stories should always be written in the Present Active Tense, using tight, simple language.

# APPENDIX E

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