

A DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF CITIZEN
INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING FOR THE SMALL COMMUNITY
A CASE STUDY OF ST. JOHNS, MICHIGAN

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ABSTRACT

A DESCRIPTIVE REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING FOR THE SMALL COMMUNITY

by Max R. Putters

With the availability of Federal Planning grants for smaller communities, more attention has focused on planning, and the subject of active citizen involvement in local planning programs. This thesis explores the various facets of a broad scale citizen participation effort in St. Johns, Michigan, and evaluates the effectiveness of that endeavor. A limiting factor in the evaluation stems from the fact that the program was relatively short lived, and therefore little occurred in the way of plan implementation during the research phase of this paper. Nevertheless, the information developed from the St. Johns program should be a helpful resource for communities contemplating programs of citizen participation.

The St. Johns citizen program was guided by the Institute for Community Development and Services of Michigan State University. Hence, a critical informational resource was the records maintained by that

agency, which includes correspondence, technical reports, news clippings, progress reports, and various memoranda. Of these, the program evaluations made through progress reports by Institute personnel were most useful. Their timely observations of successes and failures offered a unique insight into the entire operation as it progressed. Additional insight was obtained from an interview with the present city manager who worked with the program as city assessor. The program evaluation also drew data from other communities which experimented or employed citizen resources in planning. Several brief accounts of these programs are included as are the results of a letter interview with a number of professional planners. Their selected comments on the subject of citizen participation are incorporated into the thesis.

The main emphasis of the St. Johns program was the use of citizens in preparing the comprehensive plan. Citizens with a variety of backgrounds were assigned to inventory existing land use, transfer field information onto data cards, conduct home interviews, and do some report writing. Leadership for this citizen activity was provided by city officials, although Institute personnel assisted indirectly.

The organizational structure for the St. Johns program provided for the participation of 125 citizens. This structure competently encompassed the key subject areas of the planning program. It also stands as an effective educational device, creating a ready forum for discussing planning concepts, and development problems. The major limitation rests on the fact that so large an organizational structure is difficult to properly maintain when technical staff time is scarce,

as it was in St. Johns.

The most significant conclusions of this thesis are listed below:

1. The focus of citizen involvement in planning for the small community should be around the planning commission and the local governing body. Other citizens may be included on an active basis through existing community groups, special purpose study committees, mass communication media, and technical report presentations at various public meetings. Other committee groups in small communities should be used for the specific purpose intended and then disbanded. Standing committees are quick to lose interest and become difficult to reconvene without complete reorganization.
2. If citizens are to do actual planning work, such as data gathering, they should know exactly what work will be involved before being committed to the task. In addition, adequate direction, forms and instructional aids should be provided. School age citizens may prove to be the most satisfactory source of assistance in obtaining and processing many types of community information.
3. Extensive citizen involvement programs will consume a great amount of staff time. This time will be required from both professional planners and city officials.
4. The most effective citizen involvement programs are motivated by a community crisis factor. This could be a serious economic situation or the prospect of developing a significant community project (urban renewal, new swimming pool, new expressway, etc.)

5. The major role of citizen involvement in community planning is that of advising the technical planner. Hence the planner has a forum for identifying community needs as well as for testing planning proposals.
6. When subject matter specialists are responsible for preparing individual technical reports, direction is needed to assure that each study contributes to the total planning effort in the most meaningful way.

Although the St. Johns citizens involvement program was a limited experiment, it offers a number of guides for communities which may desire to engage in a similar effort. Hence, this thesis endeavored to evaluate the program from a practical operational point of view.

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INTRODUCTION

A basic tenet of planning theory is that citizens should participate in the processes of plan formulation and plan implementation. The most specific guides for accomplishing citizen involvement are found in Planning Enabling Legislation and in the directives of Federally assisted Urban Renewal Programs. These guides envision citizen participation in an advisory capacity and prescribe representation from various occupational groups or affected geographic areas. This develops a broader citizen base upon which program proposals may be tested.

Through the vehicle of a case study of St. Johns, Michigan this paper will endeavor to describe and evaluate a broader application of the concept of citizen participation. In this case, the Institute for Community Development and Services, Michigan State University experimented with the concept that local citizens could perform meaningful work on planning studies. In this instance the citizen's work related to gathering community facts and compiling the information obtained, including some limited report writing. By having citizens enlisted in the work of the plan, the sponsor of the program assumed that there would be greater interest in community affairs generally, and would result in a more effective planning program. Not to be overlooked in the St. Johns effort was an underlying objective to create or develop the local leadership, necessary to carry out planning objectives.

As a frame of reference for evaluating the St. Johns citizen participation experiment, selected opinions from professional planners, and examples of other citizen planning programs are included. These data provide a rather broad view of how citizens may be organized and used in programs and plans for community development.

CITIZEN ROLES IN PLANNING THE SMALL COMMUNITY

Any person with established residence in a community may be referred to as a citizen. However, for the purposes of this paper, citizens will be referred to in terms of three broad groups: Elected officials, municipal officials, and citizens. By definition, elected officials are persons officially seated on the local governing body. Municipal officials are technical or semi-technical persons employed within the operating departments of the municipality, perhaps better described as department heads. For simplicity reasons, the term citizen refers to all other residents of the community.

Citizens may also be considered as being in either the organized or unorganized sector of society. Although somewhat colloquial, the unorganized citizen group is also referred to as the "man in the street" citizen. Citizens from the organized sector of society produce much of the leadership found among community residents. They are the active members of such groups as Lions, Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, Labor Unions, Fraternal Orders, Women's Clubs, PTA's, and professional associations such as a local Real Estate Board.

Below is a discussion of the major citizen groups as they, at least theoretically, would perform in a comprehensive planning program.

Elected Officials

Perhaps one of the most important single roles in the process of community development and/or planning, is that of the elected official. For the purpose of this discussion, elected officials are considered in terms of their total function as the legislative body and not as individuals. In the approximate order of importance the roles of

elected officials are:

- (1) To authorize sufficient monies to support a planning program or a related community-wide study. The planning work as it evolves becomes instrumental to the elected officials central function of policy-making.
- (2) Upon completion of the study, (or parts thereof), adopt the necessary ordinances or ordinance amendments that will assist in carrying out approved plans. This involves bringing community policy officially into line with necessary community action.
- (3) Refer special project proposals to the planning commission for recommendation. Special projects in this instance may arise from municipal officials, organized citizen groups embarking on various community projects, or from professional advisors.
- (4) Evaluate alternative action programs, and promote those which will provide the best long and short term returns to the community.
- (5) Seek advice from various persons and groups in order to carry out the above functions. In larger cities special committees or task forces may be appointed to review various project proposals. In smaller communities, elected officials must rely upon the knowledge of municipal officials, legal advisors, and other trained specialists.

Nearly all community development projects proceed under the general authorization of community policy, which is subject to sanction by elected officials or public referendum. Few major projects material-

ize which are totally beyond the authority of local elected officials. Those that do are normally sponsored by state or national governments. For example, the location of a new military installation or the general routing of an interstate highway are developments largely beyond local control.

For the most part the role of the elected official can be described as "representative" and one which must view the planning process in the eyes of an entire electorate. In this capacity, the short term benefits must continually be weighed against the long term gains. Here is where an economically depressed community may be forced into choosing immediate solutions to problems. Theoretically the long term benefits of the community should be given priority if there are significant differences in alternative proposals. Failure to obtain favorable policy decisions from elected officials results in a gradual weakening of long term planning efforts. Hence an aware citizenery may be able to stimulate favorable long term policy decisions by actively voicing its views to the governing body.

Municipal Officials

Municipal Officials are usually equipped with professional skills or technical training. Their functions are specialized and mainly concern the solution of day to day problems. Under some forms of government, a city manager is responsible for directing the individual functions of all departmental people. The small community probably would not have more than four or five official departments (including the school superintendent who is not subject to city control). Frequently these department heads will be responsible for more than one municipal function so as to utilize their time more efficiently.

Since municipal officials are normally preoccupied with daily programs of municipal operation, they rarely have sufficient time to analyze the long term needs of the community. For example, a recreation director is concerned with such matters as hiring staff, maintaining and requisitioning equipment, organizing and scheduling athletic programs, preparing a budget and generally supervising the activities of his department. Normally he would not have the time or expertise to project the city's population, survey all natural resources, classify various facilities, do mapping, evaluate his facilities in terms of accepted standards, correlate future recreation needs with such other community facilities as schools, and traffic routes, and finally his appraisal of future needs may be biased by continual budget (or policy) pressures to economize. For the most part, municipal officials are not in an easy position to take the long term comprehensive view.¹ Even resident planners, working full time for the community may find themselves amidst a variety of administrative functions which reduce their effectiveness to approach long range planning. In the larger communities, planning departments frequently have a staff section that devotes much of its energy solely to the task of long range planning.

¹ It would duplicate efforts for each municipal department to prepare its own population projection, and the results may differ significantly from one another. All departments should operate from a single study of future population. The 1948 edition of Local Planning Administration supports this concept in the section "Relationships with City Officials," with the following: "The Planning Commission can also aid greatly in developing programs and plans that involve more than one department and in collecting basic data that are useful to several departments, thus avoiding duplication of effort."

Perhaps the single most serious shortcoming of long range departmental planning, is the inherent lack of coordination with other departments, or other agencies within the community. A good example is the frequent conflict between municipal government and the school district with jurisdiction over the same area. This conflict is particularly noticeable among smaller communities and makes the task of good coordination extremely difficult.

The role of municipal officials in terms of planning effectuation is to carry out particular elements of the comprehensive plan through successive stages of development. This is accomplished most directly through recommendations in the annual capital budget, which should reflect proposals in the plan and capital improvement program. In order for these officials to effectively relate their specialized area of work to the general development policies of the community - as expressed in the plan - they must be involved in the comprehensive planning program from the beginning. Failure to achieve rapport with municipal officials on a continuing basis may preclude the implementation of important long term objectives. The scope of the day to day work of municipal officials must be broadened to include the underlying policies of the plan.

Citizens

With minor exception, it is the citizen who makes up the membership of local planning commissions and other civic groups. While it is true that nearly all planning commissions have representation from the organized sector of the community, this does not imply that the "man in the street" is excluded.

Citizens have as their major function the task of reviewing and understanding various planning proposals on community development projects. If they serve on a planning commission their duties are enumerated in state enabling statutes, wherein their function includes making recommendations to elected officials as well as some mandatory review powers. The planning commission is in itself a basic structure for establishing citizen participation in the municipality. According to statute, the members must be representative of a variety of professional and occupational fields. Other forms of citizen planning organizations (such as advisory committees) are essentially refinements of the planning commission concept of citizen review, citizen understanding, and citizen response to proposals for development or redevelopment.

Citizens from the unorganized sector of local society are usually difficult to reach, since they do not belong to the major civic groups of the community. Newspaper accounts, radio and television broadcasts, and special informational bulletins are the most accepted means of bringing their attention to planning efforts. In those instances where a proposed project directly affects or interests citizens, they may respond with letters to the editor, sign petitions, attend hearings and/or alert public officials of their desires. If the matter is of no direct concern, the citizens normally would not volunteer their opinions. Perhaps the most direct means of reaching citizens are through measures which involve personal interviews, mailed questionnaires or special citizen committees.

Persons who have a prominent community orientation or interest often stand out as community leaders. Executives in local industry, large land owners, doctors, church or club officers, and renowned family names

typify citizens who have a deep influence upon the affairs of small towns. These citizens may come from either the organized or unorganized sector of society and, being respected, are called upon for advice. Their local prestige is a significant factor in selling ideas for various community improvements; hence, it is advisable to seat such persons on a planning body or otherwise engage their counsel in an advisory capacity.

Citizen leaders working closely with, or in support of, the planning commission can have a strong effect on morale. Respect for a leader's prestige can be a stimulus for members of a planning body to participate more fully in affairs affecting community growth. This motivating effect of leaders can also work in reverse; particularly if his views are counter to that of the general planning program. Building confidence in planning work may well be a leader's most significant contribution to the plan, therefore, it is critical for the planner to expose prominent citizens to the planning work in progress.

EVALUATION CRITERIA FROM SELECTED CASE STUDIES

In developing a framework or guide for evaluating the St. John's citizens participation program, it is necessary to first identify the basic components of citizen participation and then explore some actual working programs. For the purposes of this paper, the author envisions three basic elements of citizen participation, as linked to the process of community planning. The first relates to educating citizens as to the scope and meaning of community planning. This element is exemplified in small towns where University staff, planning consultants, or regional planning agencies endeavor to impart direct knowledge of how communities grow and what can be done to encourage better forms of development. Usually this kind of information is intended to reach a maximum number of local citizens. The second element involves the preparation of a comprehensive or master plan. This element is specific in that it embodies the general work and scope of community planning exemplified by the operations of a planning commission. The third element is the use of citizens to effectuate a definite community project, such as a new highway, library, park, band shell, or similar facility, which ultimately results in effectuating the comprehensive plan. This is perhaps the most widely recognized form of citizen involvement. Hence, the three elements of citizen participation may be listed as follows:

1. General Planning Education
2. Comprehensive Planning Programs
3. Individual Project Developments

Although the basic components may be separated for discussion purposes, each is interrelated with the other. Moreover they may exist separately, partially, or in combination, in any community, at any given time. His-

torically, element three has been most prominent. Citizens working on specific projects began to realize that there was a larger sphere of planning activity that had to be recognized before the project plans could be considered competent. The mayor's "blue ribbon" committee is typical of this approach. Finally, as comprehensive planning became more widely understood, the need for educating citizens on planning became apparent. Comprehensive planning as practiced today actually involves all three elements in a simultaneous process, geared to effectuate the best long term development patterns for the community. Individual projects are best carried out when planned in concert with other community needs, and when properly announced to the citizenery (educational aspect).

The following cases of citizen oriented planning programs were selected partly on the basis of the author's experience in the community, and partly on the availability of reasonably good examples. The intent is to present as many different approaches to the subject as is practical. It should be noted that the cases discussed below are not limited to small communities, but they do relate to the basic elements of citizen participation as discussed in the foregoing paragraphs.

Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission

The Detroit Regional Planning Commission was among the first planning commissions to complete basic elements of a metropolitan area plan. Logically the next step was to establish a program for promoting and implementing the plan, a formidable task in a metropolitan region which contains over a hundred and fifty separate municipalities. Since there is no single development authority to effectuate elements of the plan on a region-wide basis, it was deemed necessary to implement at the

local level. The approach in this case was to organize local communities with common development relationships into sub-regional units, wherein the growth problems of the total region could be analyzed in greater detail and in reference to smaller segments of the metropolitan region. Not only did this create a framework within which the process of general planning education could be carried out, but it also provided a systematic means for local informational feedback.

The sub-regional units established in the Detroit Metropolitan Area were called Development Areas and were organized under Development Area Councils. Local trade areas, school service areas, and land use barriers (expressways, railroads, industrial corridors etc.) were the principal criteria used to define a Development Area, although the final boundaries were adjusted to coincide with local governmental units. Work in the Development Areas involved detailing the General Regional Plan for a given Development Area and holding regular meetings with the Development Area Councils, which functioned in the capacity of an area planning commission. Through these meetings, the plan could be explained in full and the local units of government were better able to understand how they related to the metropolitan area.

By design, nearly every Development Area Council had an incorporated city or village as its focal point. Hence local news media and other communication channels could be effective in dispensing information on the activities of the Development Area Council. As a concept for citizen participation from a regional level, the Development Area Councils appear highly logical, and where tested proved to be reasonably successful. Two factors however, are necessary to make the Development Area concept a success: one involves adequate financing to staff and

program the active councils, and the second involves the preparation of comprehensive local plans to maintain local interest. This would mean the introduction of element three of the citizen's participation process; that of working with specific projects.

In actual practice the Regional Planning Commission consistently lacked the necessary staff and financing to sustain numerous active councils. Hence, only a few communities in the Detroit Region ever obtained a sound understanding of planning at either the regional or the local level through the development area technique. In time, local planning assistance funds from the Federal Government enabled individual communities to embark on their own planning program, thereby decreasing their need to rely on regional planning staff for technical assistance in preparing plans. The formation of county planning commissions further removed the regional commission from local planning functions. It must be recognized, however, that the general acceptance of professional consultants and county planning agencies was due in part to the early educational efforts of the regional planning commission. Moreover, the technical reports prepared by the Regional Planning Commission proved to be valuable reference material in the local planning programs which followed.

Washtenaw County, Michigan

The Washtenaw County Planning Commission, with offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan, established a county-wide program of education to stimulate interest in, and an understanding of, land use planning. The technique for undertaking this effort was not unlike the Development Area Councils used by the Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission. The geographic area of Washtenaw County was divided into smaller units and

designated Community Areas. Each Community Area was composed of one urban focal point with its surrounding influence area. One of these sub-county units experienced planning successes related to the subject area of this paper and is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Milan Area Regional Planning Commission is in one organized Community Area of Washtenaw County. In this area the elected officials and citizens from one village and four townships (centered half in Monroe County and half in Washtenaw County) joined in a cooperative planning effort under the direction of the Washtenaw County Planning Commission to achieve an impressive record of accomplishment. In sketch form, the Milan Area program evolved as follows:

The general need for planning at the local level was stressed on many occasions by the county planning staff. A new interstate highway was planned, and eventually constructed, through the village and two townships. This, along with the loss of several industrial employers and declining retail sales, created a "crisis factor" which stimulated the local governmental units to work jointly toward their future.

With the technical and financial backing of Washtenaw County, and a shared financial contribution from the five local units of government, the Milan Area Regional Planning Commission was formed. In addition to available county staff, a part time technical assistant (a graduate student from the University of Michigan) was hired to research this community area and prepare a "sketch plan" to guide future development.

In the course of preparing the sketch plan, a good deal of local interest was stimulated over existing problems, declining industrial base, and a parallel reduction in retail sales. The area planning

commission, as the first local group to consider local problems on a broad scale, was able to arouse local businessmen to take an active role in the program. An economic subcommittee of the planning commission led to the formation of a local Industrial Development Corporation. As the plan neared completion, a number of critical answers were obtained in regard to business district improvements, prime industrial areas, transportation advantages, potential housing areas, and a number of related subjects. At this phase of the program a large town meeting was held in the high school auditorium for the purpose of explaining progress on the planning commission's work to area residents. In addition to several prepared talks, Milan's mayor publicly announced that a small new industry would soon begin operating in Milan. This proved to be the beginning of a successful drive for new economic activity. To actively assist, the Washtenaw County Planning Commission published an industrial promotional brochure for the Milan area. This report focused local interest on matters of industrial development and was successful even if no tangible industrial developments can be directly credited to the publication.

At the end of some three years of intensive work in the Milan Area, the industrial picture brightened significantly with a 40% increase in the industrial labor force. One of the first ground breakings, for a new plastics research plant, was a well-promoted event complete with local dignitaries, invited guests, the high school band, and numerous area residents.

Obtaining the land for this new industrial operation proved to be a project requiring wide participation, since the land had to be annexed from an adjacent township so that municipal water and sewerage facilities

could be provided. The inter-community organization of the Milan Area Planning Commission was an important fact in the ultimate success of obtaining the new industry.

As a tribute to the success story of the Milan area, the Michigan Week Achievement Award in Washtenaw County was presented to the Milan Area Regional Planning Commission for its part in "developing a sound economic atmosphere and a climate favorable to business and industry in the Milan area."¹ Some important reasons for the Milan success story in planning and development were:

1. The presence of serious problems which threatened the economic welfare of the community, and a county planning commission which recognized these basic problems.
2. The establishment of an inter-community organization, the Milan Area Regional Planning Commission, to effectively engage in a comprehensive planning study.
3. An Interstate expressway then was a new community factor which aroused the interest of both local community leaders and the "man in the street" citizen.
4. The availability of numerous agencies concerned with community development problems who volunteered to spend time in the community. These included: the Detroit Metropolitan Area Regional Planning Commission, the University of Michigan, Michigan Industrial Ambassadors, the Michigan Consolidated Gas Co., the Detroit Edison Co., the U. S. Department of Commerce, and a number of County agencies. Each of these agencies came to Milan by invitation and addressed the Planning Commission on development matters that should be solved.

¹ From an article printed in the Ann Arbor News, April 24, 1964.

Perhaps the Milan situation is unusual in that a small village and four rural townships joined together to explore mutual problems. Previous to the formation of this local Regional Planning Commission, all of the traditional problems associated with political barriers were present. It was also a unique experience in that the new regional planning commission aroused more interest, accomplished more work and, in general, out-performed the established village planning commission in Milan.

City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Although not entirely applicable to small community planning, the City of Philadelphia has some rather interesting and widely publicized citizen participation elements. In Philadelphia, citizen participation began before the establishment of an official planning program under the auspices of a Citizens Council, which was instrumental in getting a planning commission organized. Today the Citizens Council is still active and promotes the work of the official planning commission in the following manner:

1. Organizes neighborhood improvement associations, and sponsors regular meetings at the neighborhood level. Proposed capital outlays and other improvements for the neighborhood area are discussed, with speakers from public agencies and city departments usually participating.
2. Larger geographic areas of Philadelphia are approached through a town meeting technique, bringing together numerous organization representatives. Here the mayor, Planning Director, or Department heads explain area-wide proposed developments or those concerning more than a single neighborhood. Time is

allotted for questions, answers, and comments from the floor.

3. City-wide citizen participation is promoted through advisory committees, in a manner similar to that used by most large planning commissions.
4. Recently initiated was a program centered around meetings called "Delegates Planning Meetings". City-wide in scope, the Delegates are representatives from major civic and business organizations in Philadelphia (two from each). Monthly meetings are held in city hall for the purpose of discussing a particular planning topic, such as: the library, recreation, transportation, zoning, and the like.

Though oriented to a large metropolitan city, the Philadelphia program has some potentials for small town application. For example, neighborhood meetings could be related to the elementary school service area. A PTA group is actually interested in proposed improvements within their "neighborhood". The next level of participation would be city-wide. Here the town meeting or Delegate meeting idea has valid application for airing planning proposals, obtaining citizen reaction and otherwise discussing community problems.

One of the more unusual approaches to bringing the citizen closer to the planning process in Philadelphia is the citizen's annual review of the six year Capital Improvements Program. Briefly, the Citizen Council has a Public Improvements sub-committee, which in turn has sub-committees that work on proposed projects with department heads. Members visit project areas, ask citizen opinions at the neighborhood level, compare notes, and recommend the projects deemed most vital to the City Council. Although simplified here, the whole procedure appears to hold a great

potential for arousing citizen interest as it reportedly does in Philadelphia.

As a rule, citizens are concerned about matters which involve public expenditures, and include bond issues, tax levies and tax rates. Issues of millage increases for school bonding is a continuing problem among Michigan school districts. Once the school bonding proposal is placed on the ballot (or proposed to be so placed) the citizen becomes very concerned, often is vocal, and demands evidence of need. Hence, it is not unusual to find local school boards appointing citizen committees to study the school district capital expenditures, thereby reversing the process of gaining public understanding of why and how projects become reality.

In Philadelphia, this idea has worked so well that the City Council gave financial assistance toward the committee's work. To illustrate effectiveness the City Council made 89 changes in their 1959 Capital Improvements Program before adoption. Seventy-five of these changes were recommended by the Citizens Committee.¹

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan

Another program of citizen involvement which bears mention was undertaken in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. This community had several exposures to planning thought, but the first significant city-wide study was not begun until 1958. Staff from the Institute of Community Development Services, Michigan State University, used the Sault as a test for

¹ Journal of the American Institute of Planners, "Planning and Development in Philadelphia, Citizen Participation," August 1960, Volume XXVI, Number 3, p. 198.

IBM data processing techniques in a land use study for planning purposes.

In this land use study, citizens were used to gather land use data on field sheets (maps). Specially prepared data sheets were then filled out for each parcel of land to record the field survey findings. These data were eventually transferred to IBM cards and tabulated by machine. Subsequently an existing land use report, a population study, and a preliminary land use plan were prepared. Overall the study took some two years to complete and resulted in a good deal of citizen contact with the planning process.

From the Sault study effort it is difficult to cite many specific items related to widespread citizen acceptance or understanding of municipal planning and development projects. However, the author has since become involved in a complete updating of the Sault Ste. Marie Plan under the auspices of a federal planning assistance grant. From work with the community it is significant that:

1. The local planning commission is a group of citizens with concern for the future of their community. Detailed minutes of proceedings are kept of each meeting which normally has a good deal of active discussion among the members. Both city department heads and elected officials are represented on the planning commission; hence, there is established liaison among citizens, technicians, and policy-makers. In addition, the minutes of several other municipal working committees are filed with the planning commission and distributed along with their own regular minutes.

2. Formal presentations of technical planning studies by consultants normally occupy only one item of a long working agenda. The chairman ensures a thorough discussion of each item. When no official action is taken on planning commission recommendations there is active follow-up to ascertain the reason. It is a strong point that day-to-day problem solving is a major aspect of the commission's work.
3. The City's elected officials have also displayed an awareness of development problems, and tend to agree more than disagree with planning commission recommendations. Moreover, in the face of a declining industrial economy, the city purchased some 1300 feet of river front land for park and recreation purposes. This was perhaps an unusual perceptiveness on the part of an economically depressed community to invest some \$100,000 in the tourist aspects of the local economy. Formerly the Sault was an industrially oriented community and tourism was secondary. However, the changing character of the local economy is dramatized by the fact that the Sault lost over 80% of its manufacturing labor force between 1950 and 1963. Thus, after several years of continued exposure to the planning process, it appears that the various community elements are functioning in a sophisticated manner. Perhaps more importantly, these elements are aware of local development potentials.

Santa Barbara County, California

Functioning somewhat like the Citizens Council in Philadelphia, Santa Barbara County has a Citizens Planning Association. Its stated purpose is to provide the strong backing needed by official planning commissions

throughout the County. Their program for action on a County-wide basis includes the following:

1. Researching long-range area planning.
2. Informing the general public through meetings and news media of problems and planning.
3. Working with public and private agencies on all problems of the economy, natural resources, and development.
4. Establishing liaison among various groups to facilitate the flow of information.
5. Promoting the creation or establishment of improvement groups at the local level.
6. Representing itself at major planning meetings.¹

From the list of endeavors, the Santa Barbara Citizens Planning Association covers a broad spectrum of activity. In fact, many would be construed as duplications or usurpation of functions normally undertaken by a planning commission. Emphasizing a key phrase in its purpose, strong backing, would imply that this group investigates the facts of a development issue and publicly states its position. Undoubtedly planning commission resources are used. As an added voice in development matters, both local and county planning agencies find the necessary support to be more aggressive in their work to influence public policy.

¹ "Citizen Action for Community Planning," Planning and Civic Comment, Vol. 26, No. 4, December, 1960, pages 28-30.

SCOPE AND NATURE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

In order to establish a broader base of information on which to evaluate the St. John's program, a number of planning officials from the United States and Canada were interviewed by letter. A deliberate effort was made to reach planning directors representing different types of planning agencies. Of the 50 names selected, ten replied, and these are listed in the appendix.

Each of the planners interviewed was asked to express his opinion on several key facets of citizen participation in the planning process. Their comments are listed individually and in composite form by appropriate subject area on the following pages. No attempt was made to correlate the selected comments with individuals, as some expressed the desire not to be quoted.

Definitions of Citizen Participation

Of itself, the term citizen participation is quite broad and may be interpreted to include a wide range of activities. In order to give a clearer understanding of citizen involvement in community planning, a few selected comments from the professional planners are listed below.¹

1. Generally, citizen participation is twofold, either in the form of advisory or working committees assisting the municipality, or other citizen groups which function independently from the governing body, such as service clubs and property owner's associations.

¹ Comments listed herein have been modified and combined and thus are not shown in quotations.

2. Citizen participation is no more than the normal involvement which is theoretically expected from an informed citizen in a democratic society. Converting this into what would approach even a form of mass action may be carrying the process a bit too far (some exception in Urban Renewal).
3. A good citizen participation program is one in which the institutions of the community are actively involved in a dialogue that results in community objectives.
4. Citizen participation may be defined as a taking part in the planning process by those who will be affected by the plans.
5. To some extent citizen participation has become a cliché that is now in vogue and can harm responsible local government if irresponsibly advocated.

Based on the foregoing, it may be concluded that citizen participation is primarily an advisory vehicle, designed to facilitate communication between the planning function and those who are to be affected by the plans. It is deemed significant that citizen participation was viewed as a normal activity, operating through the established structure of local society. An opinion not listed above expressed the idea that local government in the small community is also considered to be citizen participation.

None suggested the desirability of organizing a citizens group that would operate over and above the established community structure. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that such an organization would necessarily be undesirable.

Citizens Who Participate in Planning

Having developed some reasonable definitions of citizen participation,

it is pertinent to identify the range of citizens who should be brought into the process. The following statements typify the thinking of the professionals interviewed:

1. Citizens who participate in planning work should come from various strata of the local society. In most cases they are selected from among the upper levels of society.
2. The range of citizens who "should" participate extends from the average citizen, through a special meeting in small communities, to the well-organized goal-oriented group in larger areas.
3. There should be an opportunity for the unorganized sector of the public to have their opinions heard and considered. The "man in the street" who is not a part of the institutionalized structure of the community is too frequently overlooked.

The planners agree that virtually all sectors of local society should participate in the planning process. Moreover there is a general recognition that the "man in the street" citizen has fewer opportunities to advise on planning matters. Perhaps this condition is not unusual as those citizens who are part of the organized sector of society are accustomed to group work and therefore have developed more interest in community affairs. However, the professionals imply that there should be greater concern for the "man in the street" citizen, as he too can materially contribute to the process of goal formulation.

Purpose and Need for Citizen Participation

The purpose and need for citizen participation can be interpreted in part from the definitions section above. However, the general recognition that citizen participation is a distinct function of the planning process stems from the belief that the older forms of public involvement

were too limited.

This thinking is supported by Mr. Stuart Chapin who notes: "Partly because of the lack of understanding of the nature and purposes of city planning and the consequent public apathy to planning proposals, and partly because of a genuine interest in bringing planning decisions closer to the ultimate consumers of planning, city planners today are devoting increasing attention to civic relations."¹ He noted further that the older approaches emphasized "eye-catching reports and newspaper articles," which to a degree, is included in the broader concept of citizen participation today. Chapin goes on to state three of the major objectives in today's citizen or public relation programs. These are presented in summary form below:

1. Develop an understanding among citizens of the principal physical problems and needs of the community.
2. Cultivate the practice among civic leaders and civic organizations of sharing in the planning process (early and later stages).
3. Provide a medium for reporting on planning studies and recommendations to the community.²

It is interesting that the professionals interviewed for this thesis expressed similar views on the overall purposes of citizen participation programs. Some of their comments related to: educating public

¹ Stuart F. Chapin, "Perspectives of Land Use Planning," Urban Land Use Planning, Harber & Brothers, Publishers, New York, p. 386.

² Ibid., p. 368.

officials to the needs of the community, educating citizens of the facts which must be considered, and allowing citizens to examine on a factual basis, some of the problems that may concern them. An appropriate summary to the foregoing is one of the planner's statements that "the cooperation of municipal officials and citizens can evolve plans with economic and social realism."

Implied in the above paragraphs is that participating citizens can illuminate the wishes, needs, desires, and capabilities of the community, thereby resulting in more rational compromises between pure planning concepts and actual developments. Valid compromises, however, need not depend on citizen involvement. Indeed the development conditions of a community are subject to change, perhaps more rapidly than the citizen's ability or willingness to recognize new factors. Hence, the planning technician is usually the first to consider concept modifications in view of the community situations he encounters through basic research.

Use of Citizens

Theories on the use of citizens in the planning process range from the advisory role to that of having citizens do actual planning work. The following statements represent the opinions of selected professional planners on the subject of valid citizen functions.

1. Citizen participation can be useful in these two stages of the planning process: (1) collection of certain types of data and recognition of trends in the municipality, and (2) representing popular reaction to planning proposals.
2. It would be acceptable for citizens to work on studies for the purpose of education and pragmatic experience. However, if it

is done as a substitute for professional work, the results will usually be disappointing.

3. Smaller municipalities with poor finances may employ citizens to work on planning studies; however, it rarely produces satisfactory results.
4. One important area in which citizens can participate is that of establishing community goals and objectives. Another area is that of capital budgeting where the goals can be weighed against available revenues.
5. Everyone should not have a free hand in molding the clay of the community plan. However, PTA's, trade unions, newspapers, research councils and the like, should have their opinions and objectives considered in the planning process.
6. It is important that citizen groups know their responsibilities and relationships to the planning agency. When an agency invites community reactions and ideas, it must be prepared to consider these suggestions.

From the foregoing it may be concluded that use of citizens in the planning process lies in the area of goal formulation, which entails determining community needs. Even though it is the job of the planner to determine needs on a technical basis, the citizen substantiates these determinations through discussion, and his reactions are a test of their general applicability. This discussion-reaction phase is a key factor in building support for, and confidence in, the final planning recommendations (both for the citizen and the technician). It further supports previous statements that the chief role of citizens is advisory.

Some professionals felt that citizens could be asked to work on planning studies for educational purposes. In some instances it may result in beneficial work experience for retired citizens, particularly when a planning program does have meaningful work to be done by this approach. On the whole, however, it is the general consensus that the role of study preparation is for the technician rather than the average citizen.

In any work with citizen groups it is important to clearly spell out duties, and responsibilities. The citizen should not have the idea that he is free to dominate a plan with his impressions, but rather that his contributions can have an influence upon it. One professional noted that "asking a citizen for an opinion on a technical matter is a possible invitation to trouble."

Plan Implementation

An important benefit of programs for citizen involvement is to increase the possibility that major elements of the community plan would be implemented. This concern grew out of past community experiences when plans were virtually lost in the files of municipal officials. The professionals interviewed were asked to comment on the importance of citizen participation to plan implementation. Their selected replies are listed below:

1. Two major factors which cause plans to fall into obscurity are:
 - (1) lack of activity on the part of the elected officials, and thus on the part of the assisting groups and committees, and
 - (2) lack of financial resources or proper municipal budgeting.
2. Those plans that survive the political test of the community, and succeed in achieving political support, are those that are

carried out. It cannot be expected that every plan would meet this test.

3. The fact that there is active citizen participation in community planning is not the sole ingredient that leads to success. Such factors as financing, political ramifications and expediciencies, and the impact of a project on the community as a whole, or on neighboring communities is also significant.
4. Plans are not implemented for many reasons. Perhaps one of the more basic reasons is inherent in the nature of the plan, in that it may be thought of as being a document rather than a process.

While none of the above statements suggest that citizen participation will not assist in the process of plan effectuation, they clearly point out that there are a wide number of other forces which come into the picture. A particularly cogent point was the view that plans are thought of as documents rather than as processes. This may be interpreted to mean that the community may not be an exact replica of the plan twenty (20) years hence, but that the principles of sound development should be followed. It is likely that those specific proposals which pass the tests of political and financial expedience would be realized in the twenty year period.

Assuming that the foregoing is essentially true, the key to successful plan implementation can be shown to rest upon citizen involvement. By educating citizens about community needs, and long term development objectives, the forces of political acceptance and financial ability can be made to follow the guides of the plan rather than operating independently of the best long term needs of the whole community. Viewing

the first of these is the fact that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the various parts are interrelated and interdependent. The second is that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the parts are constantly changing and evolving. The third is that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The fourth is that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The fifth is that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion. The sixth is that the system is not a simple one, but a complex one, in which the parts are interrelated and interdependent. The seventh is that the system is not a static one, but a dynamic one, in which the parts are constantly changing and evolving. The eighth is that the system is not a closed one, but an open one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with the environment. The ninth is that the system is not a linear one, but a non-linear one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a non-linear fashion. The tenth is that the system is not a deterministic one, but a probabilistic one, in which the parts are constantly interacting with each other in a probabilistic fashion.

citizens in their total community context of officials and residents, the scope of citizen involvement becomes clearer.¹

Summary

From the statements contained in this chapter it is possible to present a general consensus of how professional planners view citizen participation. These opinions are of interest in that they give some indication as to how citizen participation functions, and also how some professionals see the citizen working more effectively in the planning process.

Foremost, it appears that planners have a definite responsibility to expose the citizen to their planning programs. Some planners noted that the citizen should be brought into the process in the early phases, at such time as planning concepts have been technically refined. Moreover, the citizen's role is not confined to a few areas of responsibility, but generally works into the entire scope of planning. The citizen's usefulness will vary with each community and the particular objectives to be achieved. For example, there was a near unanimous opinion that citizens should not actually "work" on a planning study, since this is the responsibility of the trained planner. However, such work may be justified under certain special conditions. This emphasizes the point that

¹ An example of this process in operation could be Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Having experienced catastrophic industrial losses between 1950 and 1963, this community rallied enough support from its citizenry to finance the construction of a women's dormitory for their small university. Significantly, funds were obtained from the surrounding counties as well as the city itself. In this instance, an element of crisis contributed to or provided the cause for local community action, but the action obtained rested on the understanding by area residents of the changing nature of the local economy.

a citizen's role is chiefly advisory in nature, a source for testing planning ideas (or plans) as well as formulating community goals.¹

An important point rests on the method used to establish liaison with the citizen. The dominant approach appears to be through existing citizen organizations: PTA, Lions, Rotary, Chambers of Commerce, and related groups. Sometimes special committees may be formed, as in Urban Renewal. Citizens who are not a part of the organized community structure are exposed through mass communication media which include radio, television, and newspapers. Individuals may then express their view through personal contacts with community officials. Not to be overlooked is the fact that citizens may occasionally be asked to participate financially on certain community-wide endeavors, either by voted millage or personal contributions. In these instances a good deal of promotional work is essential.

¹ The advisory role of citizens applies to planning commission members as well as special study committees.

THE ST. JOHNS' CASE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to present a factual review of the St. Johns Citizen Participation Program, as it proceeded under the direction of both the city and the Institute for Community Development and Services, Michigan State University. The following statement taken from the Initial Outline For St. Johns Citizens Planning Study Committee is an excellent illustration of the overall program objectives: "The St. Johns community planning program--- is a means of transforming St. Johns from the community "it is" into the kind of place "it wants to be."

Description of the City of St. Johns

The city of St. Johns is a small self-contained urban center situated some 20 miles north of and within the regional influence of Lansing, Michigan. St. Johns is also the county seat of Clinton County and is surrounded by some of the richest agricultural soil in the state. Functionally, St. Johns is a center for local government, serves a growing retail trade area, provides nearly 700 jobs in manufacturing enterprises and offers a variety of services for the surrounding agricultural area.

The physical development of St. Johns may in some respects be likened to a storybook village centered among picturesque farm lands. The older residential areas of the community are neat, well maintained, and attractively accented with large shade trees. The community center is dominated by a large masonry courthouse sited on the public square. The square is flanked by several churches, the high school, and the main street shopping area. With a touch of imagination it is possible to sense the atmosphere of bustling week-ends of years past when the

surrounding farm population came to town in horse drawn vehicles for provisions, socializing, and entertainment.

Amidst the serenity of a small town environment one can also find the signs of a modern city tooling up to meet twentieth century demands. Surrounding the older urbanized area are new housing developments, new schools, new streets, and even a small shopping center on the periphery. Moreover, the city is no longer dependent upon railroad transportation, as modern highways cross east to west, and north to south. Drive-in restaurants, motels, and new offices also reflect the changes which are taking place. Age also shows through in the twentieth century, as signs of structural obsolescence can be found along main street, in some housing areas and on some street surfaces.

More recently the city of St. Johns has taken on some of the characteristics of a bedroom community to Lansing. Although the city has a history of continued population growth, it is gradually accounting for less of the total county population. This is due to the weight of Lansing's metropolitan growth in the southern areas of Clinton County. In 1960, St. Johns' population was reported at 5,636 people, representing a 13.7% increase over the 1950 U.S. Census figure.

Public facilities in St. Johns are available to serve the needs of the city and its influence area. A large city park accommodates most city-wide recreational activities. Several major park improvements were provided by active civic organizations. Public assembly space is available in City Hall, the Courthouse, and school buildings. In addition the city provides a wide array of services including fire protection, water supply and sewage treatment.

Perhaps the most significant development concern of St. Johns is the need to provide necessary community services at a pace equal to its rate of growth. This could become a more serious problem if the "bedroom" function should become dominant over the years to come. Also the need to check physical obsolescence and modernize the central shopping district is apparent.

Initiating the St. Johns Program

During 1957, the city manager of St. Johns felt a need to have the city planning commission re-activated. He discussed this interest with a planning specialist from Michigan State University, who simultaneously was employed by the Institute For Community Development, a public service agency dedicated to the cause of advising communities on their development problems.¹ Following this initial meeting the city manager requested the Institute to assist in the work of re-instating a local planning commission. The Institute agreed to assist and, on April 28, 1958, after two meetings, the new planning commission was officially organized. Thereafter the city manager inquired as to the possible services that the Institute would provide in developing a master plan and capital improvement program. This request began a series of events which resulted in the citizens participation planning program in St. Johns.

In reply to the city manager, the director of the Institute expressed interest in an "educationally oriented program of community development", and arranged a meeting to work out a possible joint program.²

¹ The Institute for Community Development, hereafter referred to as the Institute, was established with funds provided by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Located at MSU's Kellogg Center, the Institute is physically near to St. John's, hence a convenient source of professional assistance for the city.

² Letter from the Institute director to the planning commission chair-

On September 10, 1958, the public meeting was held and resulted in a tentative planning program to be undertaken over a period of three years, to proceed according to the following schedule:

First Year would result in the completion of a Community Master Plan, using citizens in the process of plan preparation.

Second Year work would entail an analysis of the Master Plan, and formulation of a Capital Outlay Program.

Third Year work envisioned a program for up-dating both the Master Plan and the Capital Outlay Program.

At this same public meeting, the planning commission discussed the relative merits of hiring a professional planning consultant or of using Institute staff and the facilities of Michigan State University. By a unanimous vote, the planning commission moved to recommend to the City Council that St. Johns contract with the Institute for Community Development. On October 8, 1958, the St. Johns City Council concurred with the planning commission's decision to employ the Institute, and the program was officially underway. To ensure local sincerity and concern, the city contributed some \$2,000. to the proposed planning effort.

The customary practice for the Institute was to proceed with community projects on the strength of a resolution passed by the local governing body, and a return letter of confirmation. Hence, there was no detailed contract spelling out mutual duties, responsibilities, or work items. The agreement between the city and the Institute became effective on October 17, 1958 and contained the following:

1. St. Johns was committed only to the first year of contemplated work;
2. The Institute would provide a project coordinator to organize various committees for broad citizen participation;

3. The Institute agreed to furnish various subject matter specialists, including urban planners;
4. Written reports and maps would be prepared by the Institute;
5. Clerical and drafting services would also be part of the Institute's responsibility.

Following the agreement, the city planning commission held a meeting to discuss the goals and objectives of the program, which resulted in a decision to sponsor a large public meeting to inform the entire community of the impending study effort.

The Involvement of St. Johns Citizens

The St. Johns Planning Commission scheduled the large public meeting in an effort to dramatize the beginning of the community planning study. The purpose of the meeting was to attract as many citizens as possible to explain what could be accomplished through planning. Various community organizations received special invitations urging that they invite their members to attend. In addition, an appeal was made to the unorganized sector of society, requesting active participation.

A driving force behind the community planning program was the St. Johns Chamber of Commerce. This was due, in part, to land use and parking problems in the main business area, and fear of competition from the small shopping center in the southeast part of the city. Zoning, water supply, and sewage disposal difficulties in the downtown area also concerned these local merchants.

On the evening of November 11, 1958, the large initiating meeting was held with more than 100 persons attending. Representation included the city council, industrial managers, civic organizations, and various

other segments of the city's population. Advance notice of the meeting comprised extensive press coverage, letter campaigns, notices in places of employment, and appeals to various individuals. In view of the attendance figures, the publicity proved effective, enabling the program sponsors to explain the coming planning work directly to a large number of citizens. The agenda for the meeting was designed to generate as much interest as possible, and contained the following items:

1. The local news editor, who was a member of an earlier (the first) planning commission, began with a short talk on the history of the city's large park, the county hospital, school system, and related facilities. The role of public spirit and participation was emphasized, noting how local civic organizations worked toward the realization of some major park improvements, which included a large swimming pool.
2. The chairman of the newly formed planning commission discussed the merits of re-activating the planning commission, including a description of its functions.
3. The project coordinator from the Institute explained the purposes of his agency, how it was related to Michigan State University, and what it would do in the St. Johns study.
4. A prepared slide talk by the Institute's planning specialist explained some of the goals to be achieved through planning. Illustrations of accomplishments in other urban centers were used.

It was generally agreed by those responsible that the public meeting was a success. Planning commission members "evidenced real satisfaction" with the session and were eager to move ahead. Thus was

launched a full scale experiment to involve citizens more closely with all phases of the planning process. As a gesture of support and good will, the Chamber of Commerce publicly contributed \$500 to the city planning commission's effort.

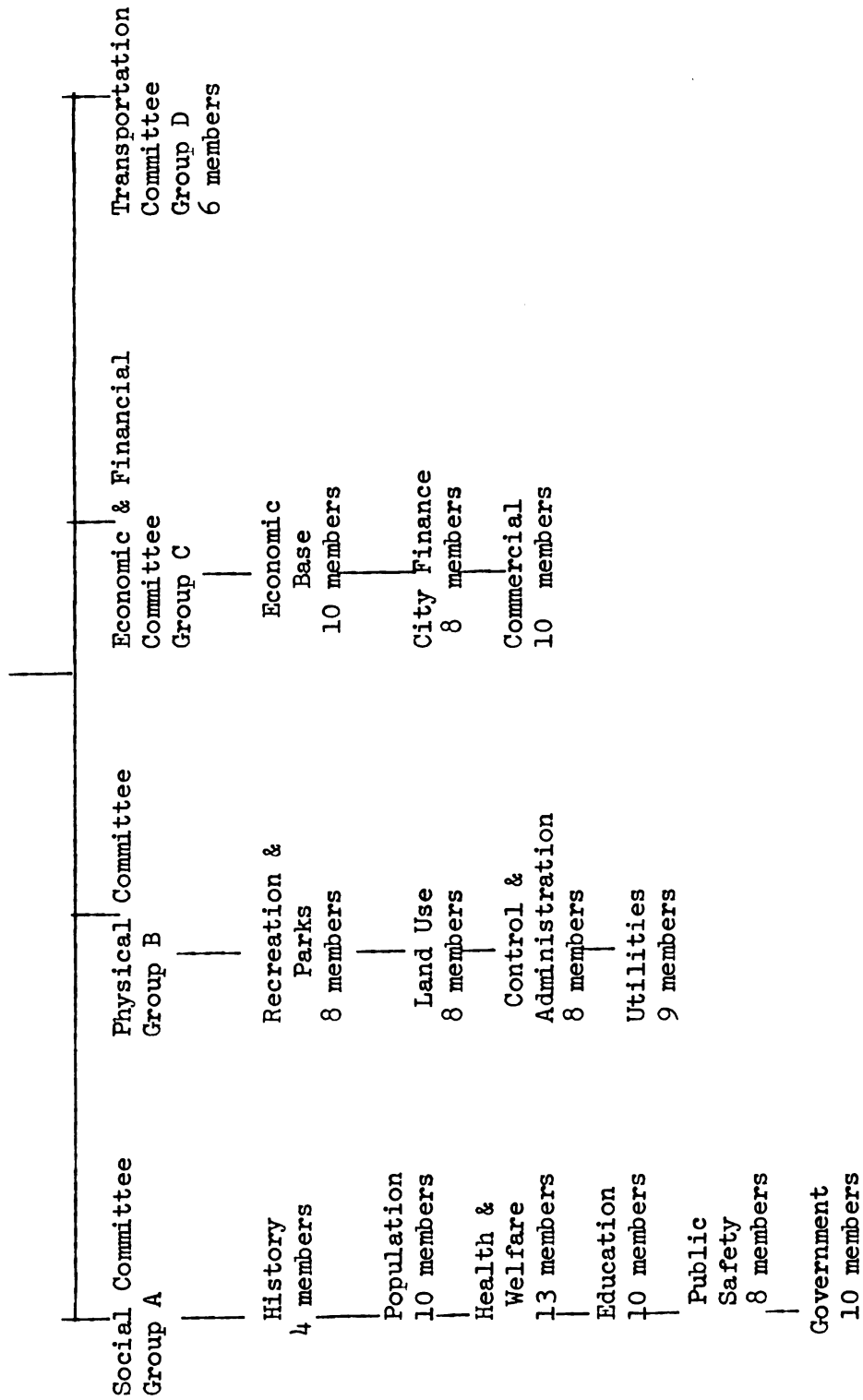
Organization for Citizen Participation

Following the public informational meeting the Institute for Community Development outlined a broad organizational structure that would involve numerous citizens. The names of over one hundred citizens interested in participating on study committees were obtained at the public meeting. The next step in building the citizen committee structure was to establish the planning commission as the steering committee. Under the steering committee arrangement there were four basic committees: (1) Social, (2) Physical, (3) Economic and Financial, and (4) Transportation. Under these committees were organized some 16 subcommittees. The task of filling committee positions was carefully controlled by the steering committee. Each person was evaluated as to his particular abilities and willingness to work on a particular study committee. Even the chairman for each committee was selected in advance by the planning commission. Once the tentative committee roster was prepared, a planning commission member was made responsible for contacting each selected citizen to obtain his formal acceptance. Generally, the response was excellent, as very few citizens declined to serve; however, this enthusiasm waned for some and they were eventually replaced.

In all, some 125 citizens agreed to work with the planning commission on the community-wide study. (See Chart II, Citizens Organizational structure). Their general responsibilities focused around the follow-

CITIZENS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

St. Johns Planning Commission
(Citizens Steering Committee)
9 members



Source: Institute for Community Development and Services, Project Records, Initial Outline for St. Johns Citizens Planning Study Committee, (undated).

ing three functions:

1. Gather data on existing conditions in St. Johns.
2. Decide what is desirable and needed in the community.
3. Determine how to achieve the needs and desires of the community.

To assist citizens in this work, specialists from the Institute were assigned to applicable subject committees as follows:

Economist, to the Economic and Financial Committee; Sociologist, to the Social committee; and Planning specialist, to the Physical Committee, and the Transportation Committee. In order that the efforts of the subject specialists be harmoniously guided toward the study's overall objectives, a project coordinator was assigned to the program. Part of the task of coordination involved scheduling meetings, maintaining correspondence with the community, keeping records on progress, submitting news release materials, and attending committee meetings as necessary. Some committees had more than one specialist to assist with their work, and MSU graduate students were employed to assist the specialists. Including the Director of the Institute, there were eleven specialists and four graduate students who worked on the study from its beginning in 1957 to December 1960. The specialists did not work simultaneously, but at various times during the course of the project.

The First Twelve Months

From the time that contacts between St. Johns and the Institute began through January 1959, no actual planning work had begun. Establishing the organizational system occupied a rather significant amount of time both previous to and during the first 12 months of work which officially began in October 1958. Hence, most of the first year's emphasis was on

matters of organization and promotion. With a rather complete committee system and professional staff assignments, the work program for the citizens planning study was underway.

Within three months of the official contract date all positions on the citizens committees were filled and some meetings were held to explain and prepare for the study work. The time consumed in preparing for the initial public meeting resulted in dividends early in the program schedule. At a subsequent general meeting of all the committees over one hundred participating citizens were in attendance. Their interest had been aroused and the citizens were eager to move on their respective study assignments. However, only 19 days later, some committee members complained that they did not have the necessary forms to use in gathering data and that the study objectives were not clear. Moreover, the committee members expressed dissatisfaction with their rate of progress as they wanted to get into actual studies. Below is a list of observations made by the citizens with regard to progress and program effectiveness:¹

1. A number of committees had been established pre-maturely.
2. The citizens were seeking greater leadership from the Institute, but agreed local leadership should be encouraged.
3. Some citizens felt their role would be limited to data gathering.
4. Members desired more meetings between Institute specialists and committee chairmen.

1

Memorandum dated February 26, 1959, written by the planning specialist to the project coordinator.

5. The Planning Commission agreed with the philosophy to educate the people of St. Johns to appreciate the need for planning.
6. The citizens noted some problems of inter-committee communications; more progress reports by specialists, notices of meetings and news release materials were requested.

In a report to the project coordinator the planning specialist pointed out that no one on the land use committee had read the previously distributed hand out materials. Moreover, local committee work on the base map had not begun. At this point the planning specialist suggested that all the physical group committees "work as one" until there was agreement on the basic data that was needed. "The futility of working as independent study groups" was emphasized.¹ The planning specialist noted the importance of the land use committee's work as a foundation to the work of the Transportation, Parks and Recreation, and Utilities committees.

Despite the problems which had come into focus by January 1959, several committees were making progress in their area of responsibility. A report by the project coordinator in March noted that the social group committees had organized much of their thinking as to what data to gather, how it would be obtained, and who should do it. A good deal of credit for this favorable status among the social committees must be given to the six Institute specialists for specifying a program of

¹ Memoranda dated February 24 and 26, 1959, written by the planning specialist in progress reports to the project coordinator.

study. However, the progress report indicated that active citizens were playing a leading role in the study of city history, and health and welfare. The population study group also relied on citizen support, to draft a sample questionnaire and to participate in home interviews, which ultimately included 90 percent of the city's dwelling units. According to city officials, there was some serious disagreement over the Institute's proposal to interview a 100 percent sample of the homes when the U.S. Census of Population was scheduled for the following year.

The subject of processing land use data provided a key around which citizens interest was generated. The planning specialist reviewed IBM data processing techniques with the committee; however, emphasis shifted toward the idea of using a manual system as there was local apprehension of automatic data techniques. Following a review of various data processing systems, the planning commission approved the use of an edge punch card requiring hand sorting. The cards are printed and manufactured by the Royal McBee Company and therefore are referred to herein as McBee Cards. This method of data manipulation is less sophisticated than IBM type systems, but is an improvement over a standard card file index. Because the McBee Card uses a basic hand sort technique, it is most applicable to the smaller community which would have fewer land parcels. An exact copy of the cards used in St. Johns is presented in the Appendix.

Because of the relevancy of the information on each parcel of land, the city assessor voluntarily took the responsibility for guiding the use of the cards as well as offering to keep them up to date in subsequent

years. As it evolved, the cards were maintained for about three (3) years after the program terminated and are now in storage.

The McBee card system was a turning point for the land use committee as the planning specialist noted in his progress report that the chairman "was able, to a large extent, to conduct the meeting on his own."¹ Hence, a beginning toward the concept that this was a citizens program and not an expert-following group. The specialists noted further that the chairman "distributed some notes of the past meeting which had been mimeographed----. This was the first spontaneous activity on the part of the committee."¹ At a subsequent meeting the land use committee resolved to have a session with the population committee to discuss the addition of certain questions on the home interview survey, as data to be placed on the McBee cards.

By the end of June 1959, the citizen study had moved fairly well as evidenced by the following statements from Institute progress reports:

1. History Committee---nearly completed their summary report.
2. Population Committee---gathered all basic data, chairman asked what the next steps were (house-to-house survey had been completed).
3. Economic Committees---began energetically, but degenerated seriously. Some data was collected and the next move was to bring in Institute specialists.
4. Physical Committees---waiting for McBee cards to facilitate recording land use information.

¹ Memorandum dated March 20, 1959, written by the planning specialist to the project coordinator.

5. The Institute completed the property line base map of St. Johns.

Through the summer of 1959 progress consisted largely of study meetings, data gathering, questionnaire preparation (economic committee), and a few committees were preparing final subject reports. However, the physical committees were still awaiting the McBee data cards, which did not arrive until the end of August, 1959.

Originally the land use field information was to be recorded directly onto the McBee cards; however, time consumed in receiving the cards resulted in a normal survey procedure with original data being recorded on field sheets. The city assessor never favored having the new cards taken into the field for fear of unnecessary damage. Also by this time, a good deal of the basic mapping (utilities, street data, etc.) had been completed by Institute drafting personnel.

The McBee Keysort card system was a relatively new means for processing land use data in a small community. As originally hoped, the card system generated interest among the physical committee members and work progressed rapidly. For example, the cards arrived in St. Johns on August 31, 1959. By October 19th about one-fourth of the data to go on the cards had been recorded and the edges punched to code the information. The city assessor displayed a keen interest in the card system and volunteered to punch the cards once the citizens entered the necessary data. As it evolved, MSU graduate assistants did most of the card punching.

Preliminaries for the land use field survey involved the citizens to a

high degree, even though no field work actually began until the second 12 months. Committee members were given clip boards and a portion of base map upon which to record land uses in the field. A prepared instruction sheet explained to the citizen exactly how to inventory the field data.¹ Later another group of citizens would transfer the field sheet information onto the McBee edge punch cards. While citizens recorded most of the land use data on the McBee cards, the city assessor would not agree to let citizens transfer information from the assessor's records; hence, M.S.U. personnel transferred this data.

At the end of the first 12 months work, most of the basic data had been gathered and reports were being prepared for the studies of History, Population, Health and Welfare, Public Safety, and Education. The Government Structure Committee submitted its report before the end of the first twelve months. The Finance Committee was preparing its written report, but other Economic group committees were still gathering data. Progress reports at this time generally showed the Social Group Committees with the highest degree of accomplishment. This can be attributed to the fact that more specialists were available in the social science fields; hence, there was more direction of the activities of these citizens. In addition, the work involved subject matter that was basic to the entire study, thereby necessitating an early start with early results.

The physical groups experienced some delays in acquiring necessary maps and the McBee data cards. Progress was slower, in part, because only

¹ Refer to Appendix A-2 "St. Johns Instructions for Land Use Field Survey."

one planning specialist was assigned to these committees. Moreover, the subject matter was broad in scope, necessitating that more public education be given as the subject matter was perhaps the least familiar to citizens. Despite such limitations and the delayed starting time, a considerable amount of work was ultimately accomplished by the end of the first year.

The Second Twelve Months

The second official year of the citizens participation planning program began in October 1959, at which time committee progress was quite varied. In addition, some committees had never convened as a separate functioning group.

Significant to the second year was the beginning of the land use survey in early November. Realizing the varying status of work accomplishments the steering Committee decided to push harder for results, and set November 24, 1959 as a target date for final committee reports. It was recognized that the established deadline could not be met by all committees; however, it was intended to speed up the work, apparently with results as indicated by the project coordinator's remarks in a January progress report:

1. "All Social Group Committee reports are complete and mimeographed except Health & Welfare and the final Population Committee report.
2. The Economic Group Committees are moving well with the exception of the Commercial Areas Committee. If we cannot obtain local action on the part of the Commercial Areas committee it may be necessary to prepare our own (Institute) report from other sources.

3. The Government Finances committee has completed its report which will be reviewed by the Steering Committee.
4. The Physical Group Committees, other than Land Use, have not made significant progress. Some of their members assisted in the land use survey, which has been completed.
5. Institute specialists met with the steering committee on December 17, to discuss the fire and police services report of the Public Safety Committee.
6. I hope we can quickly work through the tasks of the Utilities, Parks and Recreation, and Transportation committees, as most of their map work is completed."

In addition to the above progress items, the coordinator noted, "there seems to be some sense of urgency to push rapidly for a final report and the presentation of the community plan."¹ At this point there seemed to be general agreement by the coordinator and the planning specialist that progress was slow. In a later memorandum the coordinator noted, "I believe they are beginning to realize that we refuse to do the leg work for them, and have begun to do more of this themselves as evidenced by the land use survey, and McBee information transfer activity."² A moderate sense of urgency was perceptible in remarks by the coordinator, as one year of work had passed and there still was no tentative date whereby the Comprehensive Plan report would be completed. The basic data was being collected for a preliminary report on Existing

¹ Memorandum dated January 4, 1960 written by the project coordinator to the director of the Institute.

² Memorandum dated February 4, 1960.

Land Use, which was not published until June, and the final report was distributed in July.

Eight teams of citizens from the Physical Committee met alternately in the city hall to transfer mapped land use data onto McBee cards, with leadership provided by the city manager and the city assessor. The working time extended from February to April of 1960. Sample spot checks by Institute personnel indicated that the citizens achieved a high degree of accuracy in this work, except for a tendency to overlook or ignore home occupations. City officials of St. Johns noted that it took a great deal of direction to keep the land use committees working. In all, some twenty (20) evening sessions were conducted by the manager and assessor before the data was complete. Moreover, a number of citizens did not go into the field, but obtained their parcel data from the assessor's records, and others let the assessor complete their assigned work for them. This explains why the land use field data was generally inaccurate in showing home occupations.

The Committees on Utilities, Transportation, and Parks and Recreation began tangible progress in April of 1960 when detailed outlines were distributed to the citizens indicating the kinds of data to collect, possible sources of information, and key facets of the subject which should be investigated. These work guides proved effective as the citizens gathered the necessary information, and all final reports were published by September 1960. A fairly good preliminary report on transportation was written, typed, and submitted in entirety by the Transportation Committee. Only minor alterations by Institute specialists were required to transform this citizen report to a technical format.

Where the first year of work was concerned with matters of organization and goal formulation, the second year was preoccupied with report work and study committee sessions. The technical depth of a particular study, limited the amount of actual research and report work the citizens could do. Areas where the citizens were able to function most satisfactorily, but under general supervision, were:

1. Home interviews for the population census.
2. Record land uses on maps in the field.
3. Transfer mapped information onto data cards.
4. Interview persons in the community for specific information relative to an industry, or public institution, etc.

Noteworthy at the end of the second twelve (12) months was the fact that the Comprehensive Land Use Plan had not been published, an item originally scheduled for completion during the first year. An initial draft of the plan was ready for review in December, 1960 and the final publication appeared in June some six months later. This point marked the end of the citizens participation program in St. Johns, as guided by the Institute for Community Development and Services.

EVALUATION OF THE ST. JOHNS PROJECT

A major limiting factor in the research phase of the St. Johns project lies in the fact that the program was not originally designed for a critical evaluation. For example there was no parallel test community with which program effectiveness could be compared. This formal test arrangement would have enabled the Institute to analyze each phase of the program so as to evaluate the value of various inputs. However, no follow-up analysis was intended in the St. Johns project, as the program was more in the nature of a general community service and it would have cost the Institute considerably more to conduct a parallel test study.

The critical evaluation for the St. Johns program is structured around the study's major elements, which included:

1. Program Objectives
2. Project Initiation
3. Citizens Organization
4. Citizen's Work
5. Communication and Information
6. Records
7. Citizen Motivation

The analysis which follows is necessarily related to the evaluative guidelines already established for this thesis. Successful measures employed in similar studies, the opinions of professionals in planning, statements by St. Johns officials, and the appraisal of work progress by Institute personnel represent the major sources of evaluative criteria. In addition, the experiences of the author in the project will bear on the analysis results.

Program Objectives

A publication prepared for the citizens who were involved in the St. Johns program, listed the objectives to be achieved.¹ These were stated exactly as follows:

1. To establish a structure through which we will operate to find the problems and gain support for their solutions.
2. To determine the nature and extent of existing and future problems of the city.
3. To determine the administrative organization(s) both public and private necessary for the solution of these problems.
4. To determine the legislation required, if any, to set up the administrative framework in (3) above.
5. To provide the data for solution of the problems both present and future, determined in (2) above.

Objective 1 was approached with the adoption of the citizens committee structure suggested by the Institute. It was successful in that each committee position was filled (125 in all) and the basic organization was retained throughout the program. There is no way of determining whether the problem finding and support for solutions process was particularly more effective than in a more usual planning effort. However, in view of the number of citizens exposed to the program, and in view of the fact that some citizens did perform some work on the plan it may be assumed that this phase of the objective was generally successful.

¹ Institute for Community Development and Services, MSU, Initial Outline for St. Johns Citizens Planning Study Committee, (undated) p. 1.

Objective 2 is, in essence, the planning and research work completed for St. Johns. Considering the number of studies completed and their individual quality this objective was satisfied. The most obvious shortcoming of the technical report phase was the failure to meet predetermined publishing schedules. Explanations for this occurrence relate to the facts that staff time was limited, there were Institute personnel changes during the course of the study, some materials did not arrive on time (McBee cards) and there are always innumerable problems in scheduling committee meetings so that at least a quorum can be in attendance. Over-riding these technical problems was the experimental nature of the effort to encourage active citizens participation in the technical work.

More serious was the failure to effectively integrate the various technical studies with the objectives of the land use plan. For example, expert demographers undertook the population research and guided the study's progress; however, there was no attempt to project the future population of the city. Hence, the population projection had to be done by personnel less experienced in matters of population analysis. It also created a need for duplicating basic population research to complete the necessary work.

The technical study on the City's fiscal policies and economic base is another example of a highly competent work. Yet it did not fulfill some basic economic elements of a master plan. The city's trade area was not determined or mapped, the volume of retail sales was not related to commercial floor area needs and there were no tentative projections of future retailing or future floor area needs. This is where an early

population projection would have been highly useful to the specialist responsible for the economic base analysis.

An explanation for these incongruities in coordinating the evolvement of the master plan was the fact that other subject matter specialists, including the coordinator, were not trained community planners. Hence, it is likely that they did not fully recognize how their work could contribute to the final plan report. Although the technical reports were competent of themselves, city officials considered them to be too technical for practical applications at the local level.¹

Objectives 3 and 4 are closely related to plan implementation and each is highly difficult to gauge for any degree of success. Some of these recommendations could have been made informally at any time during the program. The most significant proposal related to these objectives came from the Public Safety Committee, which recommended the establishment of a municipal court to replace the justice of the peace system, which began on January 1, 1965. This, however, is an example of a study recommendation considered to be beyond the scope of a master plan.

Otherwise, the author is not aware of changes in legislative matters or administrative organization deemed necessary to carry out the plan.

Local legislation may be interpreted to include a zoning ordinance and a subdivision ordinance. However, neither of these items was prepared during the planning period ending in December 1960.²

¹ From an interview with the St. Johns City Manager, July 1965.

² At this writing, August 1965, the Institute is engaged in a program with St. Johns to prepare a revised zoning ordinance.

Objective 5 was achieved quite satisfactorily and involved efforts by the participating citizens as well as their advisory specialists from the Institute. The population survey (home interviews), land use field survey, and McBee data card work were the most significant data sources, and each of these had to be developed at the community level. Institute specialists refined, manipulated and added to the data so as to ascertain present needs and estimate future needs. The specialists did most of the research work involving statistical analysis.

From statements found in progress reports it may be concluded that the citizens did not have a clear understanding of program objectives or their duties. There is no indication that "most" citizens experienced this feeling; moreover, it would be impossible to expect all the participants to fully understand their roles. However, the comments signify that perhaps more care should be taken to explain responsibilities, roles, and duties when citizens are involved. An excerpt entitled "Community Organization in Action" contains the following statement. "It cannot be said too often that clarity of purpose is essential if committees are to produce. Purpose must be understood by the body which appoints the committee and by the members who are to work together. Furthermore, this clear statement of purpose is essentially the baseline the committee must use in evaluating its work."¹ A similar concern for clearly stating objectives was expressed by professional planners in the chapter on the scope and nature of citizen participation. Greater

¹ Excerpts selected by the Institute specialists from:
 (a) E.B. Harper and Arthur Dunham, Community Organization in Action, Association Press, 1959, pp. 248-253.
 (b) Audrey R., and Harleigh B. Trecker, Committee Common Sense, Whiteside and Morrow, 1954, pp. 145-153.

emphasis on teaching objectives may have been thwarted by the Institute's concern for having citizens do the work themselves. A degree of failure in communicating objectives rests on those aspects where the Institute wished to educate the citizens and to involve them more closely in the planning process. From interpretations of progress reports and early correspondence, it appeared as though the citizens expected the following from the Institute:

1. Professional guidance, as to direction.
2. Gather basic facts about St. Johns.
3. Assess the potentials of the community in terms of development and economic base.
4. Develop a blueprint to guide future community growth.

The author interprets this to mean that the city was originally seeking a total comprehensive plan prepared by the Institute. However, this idea was played down by the Institute. In a recent statement, the St. Johns city manager noted that "many participating citizens came to the conclusion that citizen groups should be used only for advisory purposes, and not as leg workers."¹ This statement parallels the general findings of previous chapters of this thesis.

Project Initiation

The general process by which the Institute and St. Johns came to terms over a planning program was typical of similar undertakings in other areas. In fact the Institute did an excellent guidance job in re-activating the city planning commission and encouraging them to develop

¹ From an interview with the St. Johns city manager, July 1965.

a comprehensive plan. There was good rapport between the city and the University, both initially and in later stages of the program.

From the viewpoint of good business it may be said that the official agreement between the city and the Institute was too casual, even though brief letter agreements were Institute policy at the time.

A slightly tighter contract might have reduced some problems by:

1. Spelling out the estimated time to be spent on each study or program phase. This could have given advance knowledge as to the likely amount of time that would be consumed; hence, the financial arrangement might have been altered.
2. Stating the type, number, and contents of each study to be prepared; a good way to alert the city as to what it will get from the program in the way of technical reports; as well as alert the Institute specialists as to the general contents of their respective studies.
3. Listing more precisely the duties and responsibilities of the Institute, city officials and citizens.
4. A resume of those study areas that would be experimental in nature or would involve experimental techniques.

It must be assumed that the Institute desired to do the St. Johns project as an object lesson in dealing with a community development program involving a land use plan. If this were not the case, the Institute should have encouraged St. Johns to consider planning proposals from other sources such as a private consultant.¹ Objectively, it was a

¹ In view of the work and administrative time contributed by city officials, it actually cost St. Johns considerably more to participate in the program than their financial outlay indicates.

shortcoming educationally not to encourage the city's planning commission or city council to at least listen to several other proposals. Even though the Institute was the unanimous choice of the city planning commission the experience of interviewing a number of consultants would have been a practical educational device. It also would have given the planning commission a clearer understanding as to how the Institute study would differ or be similar.

Citizens Organization

A notable characteristic of the St. Johns program was the extensive committee structure around which the technical studies evolved. In all, some 125 citizens were grouped into 16 committees. This gave the community a citizens organization which was perhaps heretofore unmatched by any comparably-sized community in the state.

It is significant that this structure was entirely in addition to the existing or conventional community organizations (PTA, Lions, Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, etc.). Yet representation from these various groups was achieved in the organization suggested by the Institute.

From a technical standpoint, the basic organizational structure was sound and well conceived.¹ Efforts were made to place citizens on subject matter committees that interested them most, and the types of committees encompassed the subjects normally considered in a comprehensive planning program. In the opinion of the author, the very size of the organizational structure proved to be a limiting factor in the effectiveness of some aspects of the program. For example, the citizens

¹ Refer to Chart: Committee Organization for St. Johns Citizens.

were informed that they would be able to: (1) gather data, (2) work on studies, and (3) recommend action. It proved physically impossible to have every person perform at least one of these tasks, due in large part to the time limitations of Institute specialists, as they were both teaching professors and professional advisors. In the event of time conflicts it must be assumed that the St. Johns work was sacrificed. This was perhaps the main reason for not being able to meet scheduled deadlines and could have been a valid reason for not executing a more formal contract agreement. In addition, city officials felt that the citizens never really desired to participate in work other than recommending action (advisory function).

The citizens themselves recognized that some committees were organized prematurely. For example, no official work by the land use and recreation committees had begun for nearly a year. Although the inactive committees could have listened to the work and progress of other groups, the machinery of subcommittee work did not lend itself to this kind of cross participation. It would have taken a considerable amount of administrative detail to effectuate. For instance, in the later stages of the program the entire Physical Committee was encouraged to work on the land use survey as one committee. Originally the survey was to be done only by the land use committee.

From the standpoint of an educational device, the rather large committee structure was logical. Many citizens who were normally not in the organizational structure of the community heard and worked with ideas regarding overall community development. However, the scarcity of staff time resulted in delays between subcommittee meetings, and those citi-

zens on standing committees soon lost interest in the entire program.

Two areas of citizen representation which might have been included were the School District and the area of retail influence. This would have broadened the size of the community area to approximate those established in the Detroit Metropolitan Area and in Washtenaw County. Such a study area would have given a regional perspective to the problems under consideration. However, the disadvantage to the Institute in terms of cost, added time, more negotiation for a suitable contract and increased demands on staff time are apparent. In addition, local financial assistance would have had to come from a number of local government units.

Citizens' Work

A stated objective of the St. Johns program was to have citizens participate directly in the development of technical planning studies. This aspect of citizens involvement was generally considered to be "undesirable" by the professional planners interviewed for this thesis. Nonetheless, the Institute, together with St. Johns officials, achieved various degrees of success in the following study areas.

1. Land Use Survey

With instructions, prepared field maps, and a clearly defined area of the community, some citizens of St. Johns carried out their land use field work. However, a good deal of education and supervision was necessary and the city assessor ultimately completed much of the work. Success in this aspect of work proved to be quite limited.

2. Home Interviews

The St. Johns effort showed that citizens can be used to conduct

personal home interviews in order to obtain necessary community information. Even though there was some disagreement on the need to conduct a 100% home survey one year prior to the official U.S. Census, practically all homes were contacted in the St. Johns study. The results of the citizen work proved highly accurate as the final estimate of the city's total population was within 30 persons of the federal census results.

Using citizens for home survey work is a workable technique to obtain current community information, particularly at times when federal census data is more or less out of date. Conceivably, good results can be obtained from either a selected population sample or a 100% sample as used in St. Johns. Moreover, the survey work could be done by high school students as well as by heads of households.

3. Recording Information

Upon completing the Land use survey citizens proved capable of transferring data from maps onto the McBee cards. In addition to parcel use data, street improvements, utility improvements, and existing zoning information were recorded on the cards. Although not given the opportunity, it is reasonable to assume that assessors information could also have been accurately recorded by citizens, however, for confidential reasons these data were obtained by the Institute personnel. Understandably, few assessors would allow citizens a random access to their files. Primary direction over the data recording process was given by city officials. Citizens including several high school students worked during the evening hours until the information was properly transferred. Of importance to this effort is the fact

that the community provided both the leadership and the workers. However, prepared forms and background direction provided by the Institute were factors contributing to the degree of success achieved. Quite possibly time was saved in transferring data by this method. If not, this particular use of citizen resources could probably be repeated with a time-cost saving due to the experience obtained.

A similar use of citizens in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan indicated that retired citizens are a good resource for this type of work. They are interested in performing a useful task and normally have sufficient time to contribute.

4. Community History

A reasonably good account of the city's historical development was completed from citizen resources. This involved relatively little direction by Institute specialists and proved to be one of the earliest studies completed. Where available, a local historical society may be able to offer the best historical accounts of the community.

5. Other Subjects

Even though Institute specialists delayed in providing the necessary guidelines, the committees on Transportation, Utilities, and Recreation were able to perform a fair amount of subject matter research. One of these reports was submitted in typed form, requiring only slight modifications to bring it into a technical report format.

6. McBee Card Punching

Personnel from the Institute performed about three-fourths of the work required to punch data onto the McBee cards. The edge punching was simply a mechanical means to identify information contained on the face of the card. Two high school boys were taught how to operate the equipment and they successfully completed part of this work. Conceivably, these students could have done the entire punching operation, although Institute direction and spot checks would have been necessary.

While it is true that citizens were successfully able to perform basic planning work it must be emphasized that a significant amount of direction is needed to train, coordinate, equip, and maintain accuracy in citizen efforts. Spot checks on the land use inventory revealed an error of about two percent. Work on card punching proved to be equally accurate. However, it must be assumed that the sophistication of work completed depends on the citizens inherent talent, interest, sincerity, and available technical leadership. Also, the technical depth of the work to be done establishes limitations on the extent of citizen adaptability. For example, a manual task, such as land use inventorying or data transferring is much simpler to do than complicated economic base analysis.

Communications

A major concern in every planning effort is effective communication between the planning commission and the community as a whole. There must be communication with the local government, municipal officials, merchants, industrialists, the schools, and the citizenry in general.

Much of the communication network in St. Johns was automatically established through the organizational structure of participating citizens, a channel of communication which did not exist previous to the Institute study program. Practically every segment of the community was represented therein.

Although informational meetings with citizen groups are among the more direct means of communication, other media also play important roles. Newspapers are effective in that the facts are available for study and future reference purposes. Radio and T.V. broadcasts are more dramatic but require careful timing or repeat performances in order to impress the largest audience. From the start the local newspaper in St. Johns pledged to assist the planning effort in whatever way it could. Newsclippings from the Institute files reveal a substantial amount of publicity over the program, including some editorial commentaries. Generally, however, the news coverage did not include many excerpts from the actual Master Planning studies, and there were noticeably fewer clippings relating to work accomplished in the second 12 months.¹

Much of the newspaper coverage in St. Johns was developed by newspaper resources, although there were some official news release materials prepared by Institute specialists, and it is reasonable to assume that news coverage dropped in later stages of the program as a result of scarce staff time. Committee members themselves complained of the

¹ Unless published after the author's involvement in the study, there was no press coverage on the future land use plan report. Good press coverage parallels the development of planning studies, by including preliminary findings as they develop.

need for additional news coverage. In an educationally oriented program, such as that conducted in St. Johns, more time should have been devoted to published news accounts.

The flow of information between committees proved to be a problem, perhaps to be expected with so large an organizational structure. Some ways of correcting this situation were suggested by the Institute planning specialist and included:¹

1. The committee chairmen within a given group should attend each others committee meetings.
2. The group chairmen should attend all planning commission meetings.
3. The project coordinator should make more frequent progress reports.
4. Various Institute specialists, working with committees, should make a progress report to the coordinator. Copies should go to the planning commission.

While it is difficult to ascertain the total effectiveness of the foregoing suggestions, it is a fact that an average of three committee chairmen attended each regular planning commission meeting for the 11 months which followed the specialists suggestions. With numerous committee meetings in progress and the time demands normally placed upon committee chairmen it probably was difficult to schedule meeting times to satisfy a quorum of the membership, let alone to accommodate the chairmen and members of other committees.

¹ Memorandum dated February 26, 1959, written by the planning specialist to the project coordinator.

Committee members also felt a need for additional meetings with Institute specialists, indicating a desire for more professional guidance on what to do next. Judging from the time lag in the total project, it is reasonable to assume that the citizens tired, progress was slow and technical studies were not being published as quickly as anticipated. This fact relates back to the social group successes in completing studies. Sufficient Institute staff was available to guide efforts, produce facts, and generally move the committees at a more rapid pace. Surprisingly, there were virtually no progress reports-----as news releases from specialists other than the project coordinator and the planning specialist.

Records

The effectiveness of any comprehensive planning program is dependent in part on the amount of knowledge which can be compiled in a useful manner. Unless there are accurate records of progress, official actions and technical information, much of the planning commission's work effort will be diluted. Each meeting should follow one another in a fairly rational sequence of informational build-up. Failure to keep detailed records will lead to duplicated work and could result in a communication breakdown between the planning technician and the community.

Record keeping procedures and results in the St. Johns program leave little to be desired. There is a complete record of all significant events, correspondence, news releases and progress reports. The information contained therein is detailed sufficiently for review purposes and is sufficiently candid to the point of noting program shortcomings as well as achievements.

The format of the St. Johns planning commission minutes is presented below, to serve as an illustration of proper record keeping procedure.

1. Identification: St. Johns Citizens Planning Commission.
2. Date: Record of the month, day, and year of the meeting
3. Time and roll: Time the chairman called the meeting to order and roll call of those in attendance
4. Introduction: Statement of the purpose of the meeting
5. Business:
 - (a) Reading of minutes from previous meeting
 - (b) Reports of events which involved members during the month
 - (c) Discussion and work relating to the meeting purpose
 - (d) Other business
6. Next meeting: Announcement of next meeting date
7. Conclusion: Motion for and time of adjournment
8. Closing: Signature of the Secretary.

The minutes of each planning commission meeting were published in sufficient quantity for distribution to all planning commissioners, the city council, and Institute files. Minutes of most sub-committee meetings were not kept on the same level as the planning commission's, although a few important ones were published.

The frequent progress reports of the project coordinator and planning specialist were quite sophisticated and reported most events in detail. Without these, many cogent aspects of the St. Johns project would have passed into obscurity and there would have been no accurate history of the experiences gained in the effort.

Motivation

Motivation is deemed by the author to be critical in any efforts to actively employ citizen resources. Those communities which generally boast of successful citizen participation efforts usually contain some specific motivating factors, which may also be referred to as a crisis factor. In some instances specific project developments may be effectively used as a motivating force.

St. Johns did not face a crisis situation at the time the Institute began the citizen involvement program. There were no impending factory closings, population was increasing at a moderate pace, no major highway construction program was directly affecting the city, no major shopping center was threatening the demise of downtown, and there were no wide-spread conditions of physical blight and obsolescence. Overall, it is fair to say that St. Johns was a well maintained community, serving a large rural trade area with typical municipal problems.

The Milan Area study, described in a previous chapter, concerned a community with regional characteristics similar to St. Johns. However, this community faced serious employment problems, retail sales were falling, and there was the accompanying drama of an Interstate Highway construction program, a "possible" factor in resolving a worsening economic climate. A situation of this type presents a much clearer forum upon which to formulate and carry out planning policies.

In the absence of serious development problems on a city-wide level and with relatively few daily planning decisions, much of the motivating force in St. Johns centered on the preparation of the land use plan. Perhaps this is one reason for the relatively high citizen interest generated over the McBee data card system and the land use in-

ventory work. In a recent interview, the city manager noted that the inventory maps were highly beneficial to the city and are still being used in the process of evaluating development needs. It would appear from this statement that the inventory maps bear a heavier role in policy decisions than do the future plan studies. Quite possibly this is a result of emphasis being placed on the mechanics of data gathering and plan preparation rather than upon the citizens function to learn and advise on policies relative to the development of the total community. In the author's opinion, much of the educational function of the Institute was diluted by the need to meet publishing dates and the time demands of Institute staff.

The Chamber of Commerce's financial contribution to the planning program signaled a specific interest in the area of shopping center development. Since their contribution made up one-fourth of the total local contribution, it follows that the Chamber was interested in a detailed analysis of the retail center, particularly downtown. Although there were market data in the financial study, some general discussions of shopping center theory, and a suggested modified pedestrian mall, there were no detailed design studies for downtown. In deference to the generous chamber contribution, it is well to note that no one part of the general plan was emphasized, and in view of the nature of the entire study, a general treatment of the downtown area was justified.

Shortly after the completion of the St. Johns study by the Institute, a professional planning consultant was engaged to do a detailed market analysis and development plan for the Central Business District. For this work the downtown merchants contributed some \$2,000.00 as local matching funds for a federal planning grant.

CONCLUSIONS

A comprehensive planning program in any community experiences some failure and some success. Few programs operate exactly alike and few achieve the same degree of success. Some reasons why programs differ from one another lie in the inherent nature of the community as defined by the following characteristics:

1. Regional location
2. Regional dominance or influence
3. Pace of physical development (or regression)
4. Diversity of economic functions
5. Condition of physical plant
6. Citizen attitudes (provincial or progressive)
7. Competence of elected officials
8. Aggregate size of community

Directly related to each of the foregoing is the presence of a crisis factor, which may simply be described as a significant change in conditions or trends affecting the municipality. As discussed in this paper, several of the above factors entered into the degree of success achieved in St. Johns.

The use of citizens in the planning process has numerous applications, and there are wide differences of opinion as to the degree to which citizens should become involved. Some professional community planners see little or no merit to any citizen planning body, and even advocate the abolishment of the Planning Commission. Under this proposal planning would become a departmental function much like engineering, public works, recreation, and so forth. At the other extreme are

those who feel that maximum citizen involvement is an absolute must, and only through an extensive campaign to enlist citizen action will a comprehensive plan have assurance of success.

Although the foregoing opposing viewpoints are interesting points for debate, it is not in the province of this paper to explore their logic. Rather the concern herein is the relative success or failure of the St. Johns citizen planning program. Similar efforts in other communities may or may not be desirable, with much depending on the nature and sponsor of the local planning operation.

Perhaps the first conclusion which can be drawn from the St. Johns citizens planning effort is that it takes a considerable amount of time to effectuate broad scale citizen involvement. Where originally it was felt a comprehensive plan could be prepared in one year, it did not materialize until two months after the second year of work. The final report of the plan appeared one year and eight months beyond the anticipated due date. Hence, it is probable that citizen involvement programs such as that in St. Johns, will be most successful under the guidance of planning agencies with sufficient staff.

Even though the need for staff proved greater than first anticipated and the project as a whole fell behind schedule, citizens were able to do some work on the plan. Data gathering, through home interviews, proved to be the most successful item in the active participation program. In addition, citizens did process some of the basic community information by recording facts on the McBee cards. From this it would appear that citizens could be used to obtain current community information, particularly at times when U.S. Census reports are more or less

outdated. Likewise, fairly large amounts of information on community characteristics can be systematized and manipulated with the aid of citizens, although it must be recognized that sufficient technical administrative time will be a necessity.

Care should be exercised to avoid over-organizing community citizens. Most urban areas, including small communities, have a number of existing committees, clubs, organizations, and special purpose groups. Hence, any new citizen structure must not duplicate existing committee functions. Some committees in St. Johns might have functioned more expeditiously had they been created to perform a specific task and then disbanded after fulfilling that purpose. Idle committees lose interest and energy, become dissatisfied, and perhaps detract from the overall project. Even though this approach lessens the committees exposure to a more general planning education, it proved quite difficult to educate one committee about the objectives and work of another in St. Johns. As it evolved only the chairman of a committee was able to actively participate in the activities of other committees.

A factor relating to citizen interest in St. Johns was the nature of community problems. The city was basically sound and progressing at a moderate pace. Hence, there were few tangible development activities with which planning commissioners could be concerned. A major share of the citizens interest had to be related to the planning study itself and was one reason why interest was generated over the McBee data cards. Much of the tone of the St. Johns plan was a preparation for future development, rather than dramatic proposals for resolving current problems. A crisis factor was noticeably lacking.

A benefit of the citizens participation organization in St. Johns was the broad exposure of citizens to planning purposes, concepts, and recommendations. Not only did the community have extensive at large representation among the 125 citizens on the various committees, but there was an opportunity for the information "feedback" process to operate. In later phases of the program direct contact with the 125 citizens lessened significantly.

Among the comments of the professional planners regarding citizen participation was the thought that the local governmental process may be damaged by arousing widespread citizen concern. In St. Johns there was no evidence to indicate a weakening of local government and there was no effort or movement to coerce elected officials into any decision they did not wish to effect. None of the study groups considered themselves to be pressure groups for action. Rather the committees were generally aware of their role to assist governmental decision-making by providing facts, outlining problems, and "suggesting" appropriate action or goals. Adequate care was taken at the beginning of the St. Johns effort to involve elected officials and municipal department heads.

As it evolved in St. Johns, citizens were able to do work on the master plan. However, this was achieved at considerable administrative expense to the city, and the citizens themselves were dissatisfied by the effort to use their time in a capacity other than advisory. They simply did not wish to do the leg work.

Perhaps it would have been more fruitful to have school age citizens actively work on the plan rather than heads of households. Regardless

of which citizens are to be used in doing any planning work, they should know from the beginning exactly what they are expected to do. Ample time must also be allowed for teaching the citizen how to do the task as well as prepare learning aids (administration).

The most effective use of citizens may well be around specific development proposals rather than working on the plan. For example, the citizens might have reacted more energetically on proposals to improve parking, begin urban renewal, build a neighborhood park, or similar items of interest. This is a traditional use of citizens but a valid one.

Although records of progress in the St. Johns program were excellent, there appeared to be a breakdown in communication with the community. At the start of the St. Johns effort, good news coverage was available. However, during the course of preparing the land use plan, there was very little publicity of future objectives. Mass communication media are still the most reliable means for notifying large numbers of citizens of planning progress.

Technical reports for the St. John's program were prepared by specialists on the specific subjects which comprised the master plan. For the most part these studies did not harmonize well with the format of an evolving planning program. Although competent of themselves, the special studies left gaps in the information needed for planning purposes; hence, some duplicated effort. Also the St. Johns city manager felt the reports were too technical for the citizen to understand. This is a critical limitation of a program aimed at broader citizen understanding and participation.

The ultimate objective of any use of citizens in the planning process is the evolution of a community with rational development patterns, one which reflects human amenities. Therefore, citizens must be educated as to what planning is, convinced to support planning, and encouraged to effectuate specific proposals. This process, which affects all residents of the community, strives to achieve a balance between public needs or desires, and political and economic feasibility.

The key citizens about which active planning projects should evolve are planning commissioners. Their role will chiefly be advisory to function as follows:

- a. Act as a sounding board for testing planning ideas relative to political feasibility, regional applicability, and public acceptance.
- b. As a source of information to provide insight on certain community facts as well as qualify facts obtained by the technician.
- c. Assist in the dissemination of planning facts in the community.

Other existing citizen groups in the community, as well as sub-committees of the planning commission as done in St. Johns, can be used in nearly the same way. However, the planning commission is the primary citizen group responsible for maintaining and continuing the function of citizens in the planning process.

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Letter interviews with ten professional planners, refer to
credits list in Appendix A-1, Winter 1965.

APPENDIX

CONTRIBUTING PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS

During the winter months of 1965, a number of professional urban planners were interviewed by letter for the purpose of obtaining their views on citizen participation. Those who responded are listed below in alphabetical order:

Albert, Linzy D.,	Director of State Planning, Tennessee State Planning Commission, Nashville, Tennessee
Bacon, Edmund N.,	Executive Director, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Blucher, Walter H.,	Planning Consultant, Detroit, Michigan
Bowman, Norman J.,	Planning Director, Royal Oak City Planning Commission, Royal Oak, Michigan
Carpenter, Robert D.,	Director, Washtenaw County Planning Commission, Ann Arbor, Michigan
Cullers, Samuel J.,	Director, Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, Toronto, Ontario
Dernoi, L. A.,	Professor and Town Planning Consultant, Montreal, Quebec
Driker, Jacob,	President, Development Planning Company, Pontiac, Michigan
Fasic, George W.,	Executive Director (Acting), Berks County Planning Commission, Reading, Pennsylvania
Small, Mary R.,	Special Assistant to the Director, National Capital Planning Commission, Washington, D.C.

LAND USE INSTRUCTIONS FOR CITIZENS

Below is a reproduction of the Land Use field survey instructions prepared and distributed by the Institute for Community Development for the Citizen committee in St. Johns.

1. Secure a base map section and a clip board from the committee chairman. The base map section contains:
 - a. Correct parcel boundaries
 - b. Street names
 - c. Two sets of numbers
 - (1) House number
(Small number along street)
 - (2) Parcel number
(Large number in center of property)
2. Go to area of St. Johns indicated by street names on your map. Locate yourself in front of respective properties, indicated in your map, by House number.
3. Using a BLUE pencil write exact use of property on the map, in the corresponding parcel. If a non-residential property, write the type of use AND name of firm. Also record all secondary uses, such as rooming houses, beauty shops, etc. Record residential properties as follows:

Code Number

1F	Single Family
2F	Two Family
3F	Three Family
etc.	All Greater
V	Vacant

Example: 1F-V is
a vacant single family.

4. Using a RED pencil, record your impression of the quality of each major building by using one of the numbers from the following scale:
 1. Best
 2. Good
 3. Average
 4. Poor
 5. Worst
5. Using a GREEN pencil, draw a line parallel to the front of those properties which have a sidewalk.
6. Please make any other observations which appear significant to you. Write any notes directly on the base map, or refer to the property in question on a separate sheet, by parcel number.
(See item 1-c-(2).)
7. Return the completed base map, including the clip board, to the land use chairman: (Address of chairman here)

McBEE DATA CARD

Following this page is an example of the McBee data card used in the St. Johns planning work. The illustrated front side of the card presented detailed information relative to parcel identity, street conditions, structural data, utility services and the social characteristics of site occupants when dwellings were involved. The back side of the card is similar in format and contained parcel information on zoning, land use and building conditions.

Data recorded on the face of the card is keyed to the card's edge where there is a corresponding number and perforation. The applicable information is coded by punching out the proper perforations at the card's edge (refer to accompanying illustration). To process the data a long steel needle is inserted into a given perforation and lifted from a random group. Those cards which adhere to the needle are lifted out of the group, those which fall have been punched and therefore contain the particular data sought. This may generally be referred to as a negative sorting process.

The illustrated McBee data card was developed and designed by Dr. Richard D. Duke, Michigan State University, through the facilities of the Institute for Community Development.

McBee Card (front view)

IDENTIFICATION DATA										POPULATION AND ECONOMIC DATA										STRUCTURE DATA										UTILITIES										FIELD NOTES									
<p>(1) PARCEL NUMBER</p> <p>(2) PARCEL STREET ADDRESS</p> <p>(3) PARCEL STREET ADDRESS</p> <p>(4) CODE NO.</p> <p>(5) DATE OF SURVEY</p> <p>(6) DATE OF CORRECTION</p>										<p>(7) BLOCK NUMBER</p> <p>(8) SIDE OF STREET</p> <p>(9) CORNER LOT</p> <p>(10) IF YES, NAME OF CROSS STREET</p> <p>(11) PEOPLE ON PROPERTY</p> <p>(12) AGE BY SEX</p> <p>(13) WHERE DO YOU BUY YOUR GROCERIES?</p> <p>(14) DO YOU INTEND TO MOVE?</p> <p>(15) YES, WITHIN ONE YEAR</p> <p>(16) YES, WITHIN FIVE YEARS</p> <p>(17) NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</p>										<p>(18) PLUMBING</p> <p>(19) YEAR BUILT</p> <p>(20) MATERIAL</p> <p>(21) HEATING</p> <p>(22) CENTRAL</p> <p>(23) SPACE</p> <p>(24) SIZE</p> <p>(25) LAND</p> <p>(26) BUILDING</p> <p>(27) TOTAL</p> <p>(28) ACRES</p> <p>(29) STORIES</p> <p>(30) AGE</p> <p>(31) PLUMB</p> <p>(32) HEAT</p>										<p>(33) WATER</p> <p>(34) SEWER</p> <p>(35) STORM</p> <p>(36) GAS</p> <p>(37) NONE</p> <p>(38) 8 IN.</p> <p>(39) 10 IN.</p> <p>(40) 12 IN.</p> <p>(41) 15 IN.</p> <p>(42) 18 IN.</p> <p>(43) 21 IN.</p>										<p>(44) SOCIAL</p> <p>(45) OWN</p> <p>(46) B</p> <p>(47) EMPLOYEE</p> <p>(48) NUMBER</p> <p>(49) STORIES</p> <p>(50) MAT</p> <p>(51) AGE</p> <p>(52) PLUMB</p> <p>(53) HEAT</p>									

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