

Appendix B

From the Wisconsin DOT, Guidelines for Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Communities Developing a Public Participation Process, November 1993

Participation Techniques	Informational		Advantages	Disadvantages
	Give	Get		
Ad Hoc Committees/Advisory Groups Task Forces	Good	Good	Cost effective; Good Transfer of information between members and staff; Often can reach informed consensus.	May not be representative; Sometimes perceived as biases and elitist; Roles sometime not clearly defined.
Advertising	Good	Poor	The agency communicates it messages it wants; Reaches a wide range of publics.	May be perceived by the public as an attempt to buy good will and spending large amounts of taxpayer dollars to do it.
Brainstorming	Fair	Good	Pushes for creative solutions; Often can generate variety of ideas	Difficult to involve more than a small number of people. Generated may solutions which may be difficult to evaluate.
Brochures/Publications/Newsletters	Good	Poor	A direct means of providing a large amount of information to many people; Can provide detail	Preparation and approval can be time consuming; Potentially expensive
Charrette (Prolonged meeting to reach agreement)	Good	Good	Effective in achieving consensus among conflicting interests. Participants gain understanding of both sides if an issue.	Outside consultant usually necessary; Crisis issue prerequisite to motivating participants.
Citizen Training Programs	Good	Poor	Provides technical/issues background so citizens can participate effectively and equally; Train others and work together	Resent the suggestion that they need it; limited to small groups.
Community Workshops	Good	Good	High Quality of interchange among participants; Contribute to increased interest and commitment to project.	Takes staff resources to organize and conduct.
Computer Based Participation	Fair	Good	Permits participation by geographically dispersed people; stores information (data); permits involvement while offering anonymity; May help people visualize a project/program	Excludes people without computers; preset format dictated by a computer may cause resentment; Potential technical problems.

Conferences	Good	Fair	Results in sharing information which may change opinions	Takes time and energy to plan; Costly.
Contests/Events	Fair	Poor	Can gain publicity for the entire public participation program; Can draw out special interests; Good for arousing interest.	May not be applicable; May arouse interest and create expectations for continuous participation which may not materialize.
Cumulative Brochure	Good	Fair	Visible; Encourages open communication; No special status granted to individual or group.	Final brochure is large or cumbersome; Costly to reproduce the many editions; Forces pro or con response.
Day to Day Contacts	Good	Good	Immediate feedback	Time constraints; Non-representative; don't get group interplay.
Delphi Process (from experts, consensus on forecasts through use of questionnaires)	Fair	Good	Effective for achieving consensus on forecasts among experts; Minimizes dominance by single personality; Minimizes negative group dynamics.	May homogenize viewpoints; Public may not accept experts anymore than agency staff; Can be time consuming and cumbersome.
Dialogues	Good	Good	Encourages open communication; Helps break stereotypes; defines points of common interest; reduces perception as adversarities.	Focuses on broad issues; Not good for public involvement program considering a proposed action.
Direct Mail	Good	Poor	Targets every household	Costly; Percent interested may be small; Perceived as junk mail.
Exhibits and Displays	Good	Fair	Provides information on issues important to agency; May reach and increase interest of people who do not usually participate	Requires major staff commitment; If not coordinated, may arouse interest without providing follow-up.
Field Offices	Good	Good	Visible, informal, local and convenient; Communicates agency value locally; Staff have deep understanding of community.	Project or issue must justify high cost; If more than one community involved, community w/o facility might feel slighted.
Focus Groups (A market research technique as an alternative to surveys)	Good	Good	Provides fast general public reaction to proposal or project; Comparatively inexpensive.	No strong statistical validity; Requires skilled facilitator or consultant.
Forum	Good	Good	Constructive, balanced, educational; Visible; Exposes each others views; Inexpensive.	May have poor turnout of not appropriate timing and advertising

Hotline	Poor	Good	Convenient; Accessible; Fast	Staff must be provided training on issues and not respond defensively/insensitively to callers; Needs follow through.
Key Interviews	Poor	Good	Provides quick understanding of issues, dynamics and intensity of issue; Permits in-depth exploration.	Time consuming; Not representative; Lack visibility
Mobile Office	Good	Good	Good for sparsely populated areas; Lets people know you are accessible; Good for complex organizations; Can process large volumes of people	Will not work if coordination or relationship with media is poor; Expensive to staff and maintain
Negotiation	Good	Good	Provides alternative to adversary; Educated; Identifies workable solutions; High implementation rate of solutions.	All parties must be represented; Often time consuming; One party may not act in good faith.
News Conferences	Good	Poor	Increases story coverage; Cost effective; Reaches broad audience	Can result in the loss of credibility if not newsworthy; Requires careful advanced planning; Negativism on sensitive issues can feed on itself.
News Releases	Good	Poor	Effective method of obtaining publicity; Can stimulate media interest to go in depth	Media determines which stories are newsworthy; Credibility must be cultured/maintained with media
Newspaper Inserts	Good	Poor	Reaches a greater percentage of the population than other similar techniques	Expensive; Response rate of mail-back form is low; Cannot be represented as statistically valid
Nominal Group Process (Designed to help groups generate creative ideas and information)	Fair	Fair	Generates ideas; Provides preliminary estimate of acceptability of an idea; Permits people of different views to work together with minimum friction, Relatively easy to use.	Cursory job of evaluating ideas; Can create expectations that agency is bound by these preliminary ideas; Some people may feel processed rather than consulted

Open Houses	Good	Fair	Accomplishes educational objective in informal manner, encouraging more active involvement of average citizen; Opportunity for direct interaction results in correcting misinformation, developing relationships, in-depth explanation of opinions.	Primarily used to give information; Considerable preparation and time in publicity and displays, evening and weekends.
Ombudsman	Fair	Good	Effective lightening rod; Provides agency with means to solve problems while they are still manageable	Ombudsman must be given agency commitment, support and independence for degenerates into PR agent for agency
Panels	Fair	Poor	Educates; Permits interactions between experts in front of an audience.	Potential for dullness or personnel attacks; Limited participation of panelists
Participatory Television (Call-in shows/televised public meetings/two-way cable television)	Good	Fair	Reaches large audiences; Convenient, Educational	Unrepresentative audience; Issue may not be portrayed objectively; Not many people skilled in presenting info on TV.
Position Papers	Good	Poor	Test public response; May generate new ideas or opinions	Takes time; Limited in applicability.
Public Hearings	Good	Poor	Low cost; Meets legal requirements.	Low end of public participation effectiveness; Reactive public instead of proactive involvement; Often very low attendance
Public Information/Group Meetings/Presentations	Good	Poor	Exposure of information to large numbers of people; Provides visibility to the political process	Small percent have opportunity to speak; May be manipulation of the meeting by interest groups; Tends to increase polarization of positions; Limits to broad brush picture.
Public Service Announcements	Good	Poor	Free publicity; Potential to reach large audience	Must be brief, May not be used by station/paper.
Questionnaires/Polls/Surveys	Poor	Good	Reaches the public at large; Can identify values and attitudes; Representative; Systematic approach	Costly; Design and sampling techniques are critical to level of confidence; Difficult to collect

Reports	Good	Poor	Can communicate detailed complex information; Relatively low cost; Provide visible record of public involvement process	May not be read or understood; If too slick, may appear patronizing.
Simulation Games	Poor	Poor	Educates public on an issue or project and the consequence of various decisions; Enjoyable; Develop personal relationships.	May be confusing, technical, simplistic or applies inappropriately to real world; Customized games expensive; Does not provide opportunity to comment.
Technical Assistance to Citizens	Fair	Fair	Citizens may be intimidated by technical expertise of staff; Improves trust.	Assistance often provided to the most vocal; Results are biases; Results in bad feelings by those left out.
Town meetings	Fair	Fair	Sensitize management to concerns of local community; Can identify problems early; Shows public official care and can be reached.	Of more symbolic value; Because there is no set agenda; not suitable for specific proposal actions or plans.
Written Submissions	Poor	Fair	Can be formally requested or informal response; Autonomous	Usually limited to most vocal persons; No deadline on informal response, so difficult to begin content analysis.