

Contemporary Neighborhood Planning: A Critique Of Two Operating Programs

Contemporary neighborhood planning has developed, in part, as a reaction to the failures of traditional comprehensive planning. Critics of comprehensive planning suggest that it has favored business interests, has accomplished few tangible results, has excluded citizens from meaningful participation, has ignored the needs of local areas, and has failed to achieve a more equal distribution of public goods (Chapin, 1967; Friedman, 1971; Perin, 1967).

In response to these criticisms, as well as to federal pressure for citizen participation, neighborhood based planning programs have been established in a number of cities throughout the country. These neighborhood level programs are meant to supplement comprehensive planning programs, and differ from them in a number of ways. First, these programs are typically problem oriented rather than comprehensive in nature. Second, they focus on geographic subareas rather than the city as a functional whole. Third, they allow considerable input from the citizenry. Last, they typically adopt a short term rather than a long term perspective. (Center for Governmental Studies, 1976; Rafter, 1980; Zuccotti, 1974.)

Although much of the impetus for contemporary neighborhood planning can be traced back to the federal poverty programs of the 1960s, such as the Model Cities and Community Action Programs, most new programs are distinctly different from the earlier ones. Unlike their earlier counterparts, which were confined to low income or poverty areas, contemporary programs are often city-wide. Most have also been initiated and developed at the local level. Thus, they have been tailored to the specific needs and conditions of individual municipal-

ities. Furthermore, many contemporary programs have developed formal channels of communication between citizens, planners, and elected officials, which, although sought, were often lacking in the earlier programs (Frieden and Kaplan, 1975; Gilbert and Specht, 1977).

Proponents of contemporary neighborhood planning suggest that it can accomplish a number of goals including 1) improving physical conditions and service delivery in local areas, 2) improving social equity, 3) developing local leadership, 4) educating the citizenry in the operation of local government, and 5) improving relations between citizens and government (Zuccotti, 1974; Hallman, 1977; Yates, 1973).

As yet, however, the degree to which neighborhood planning programs have achieved

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these goals has not been evaluated. In fact, very little attention has been focused on whether these programs are living up to their expectations. Are they fulfilling their intended goals? Which components are instrumental to program effectiveness? How are mayors, city councils, and other city departments reacting to these programs? How can programs be restructured to better meet their intended purpose? Answers to these and other questions are necessary if contemporary neighborhood planning is to survive and flourish.

A case study method was used to address these questions. The Cities of Raleigh and Wilmington, North Carolina were selected as

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study sites because of their well established neighborhood planning programs. Data collection involved interviews with the major actors in these programs: planning directors, neighborhood planners, and citizen representatives. There may, indeed, be considerable variation in program evaluation depending on the individual's role in the program. Separate interview schedules were developed for individuals representing each group, yet similarity between schedules was maintained to elicit comparable responses. Most questions on the schedules were open ended, however, on several questions respondents were asked to rate their responses on a five point scale. A total of six interviews were completed in Raleigh, including the Director, two Neighborhood Planners, and three citizen representatives. In Wilmington, the Director, the Neighborhood Planner, and five citizen representatives were interviewed, for a total of seven interviews.

Herein, each program will be discussed separately. We will begin with a brief description of the city involved, its government type, and its planning department. Following, the neighborhood planning program and its goals will be presented with specific emphasis on program structure, channels of communication, and the role of the neighborhood planners. Next, the accomplishments of the program will be reviewed and the influence of various program elements on program effectiveness will be discussed. Finally, factors inhibiting program accomplishments will be presented.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING IN RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Raleigh is a rapidly growing southern city with a current population of approximately 125,000 people. As the state capitol, a rela-

tively large proportion of its working population is employed in white collar occupations. Raleigh has adopted a council-manager form of government in which three councilpersons are elected at-large and five by district. The Planning Department has a full-time staff of thirty employees which includes fifteen professional planners. Their overall operating budget is approximately \$450,000 a year.

Raleigh's neighborhood planning program, or citizens' advisory council as it is called, was developed in 1972 by the Planning Department staff to qualify for federal community development funds. In 1973, the City Council agreed upon creation, and the first officers were elected in 1974. The program, which is supported by both the Planning Department and the Department of Human Resources, was designed to "educate residents about government plans, policies, and regulations so that a dialogue could occur between Raleigh's neighborhoods and the city government." (Third annual report of the citizens' advisory council--July 1976-June 1977.) Its overall operating budget is approximately \$60,000 a year.

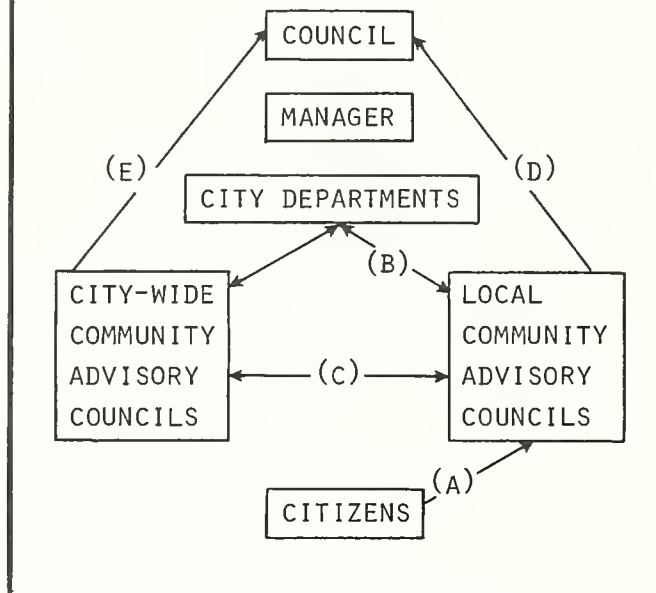
ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

Raleigh's program involves two organizational tiers: local neighborhood organizations and a city-wide advisory council. Eighteen neighborhood areas have been defined throughout Raleigh's planning jurisdiction. The neighborhoods were originally defined on the basis of census tract boundaries, major geographic boundaries, historic communities, and citizen perceptions. Presently, each neighborhood encompasses between 7,000 and 14,000 residents. Neighborhood organizations were organized in each area by publicizing local meetings and inviting members of existing neighborhood organizations such as garden clubs, church groups, and civic associations. The program calls for the election of chairpersons and vice-chairpersons on a yearly basis. These local advisory councils, then, are responsible for assessing local needs and evaluating proposed development. The local chairperson also serves on the city-wide advisory council (RCAC) designed to assess city-wide needs and evaluate city-wide development projects. Both the local groups and the RCAC establish committees on an ad hoc basis to address specific needs and problems.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

A major goal of Raleigh's neighborhood planning program is to establish communications between citizens, city departments, and city officials. Figure 1 depicts the channels of communication between citizens and city government established by the program.

FIGURE 1
FORMAL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION
(RALEIGH)



The citizens express their concerns and develop recommendations at local advisory group meetings (A). Local advisory groups also receive information from city departments concerning proposed projects and at this point may provide initial reactions to departmental proposals (B). Local concerns are also passed on to the city-wide council (C) or may be taken directly to the council (D). The RCAC also submits their recommendations to the council (E) which may instruct the City Manager to charge city departments with specific activities.

THE ROLE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNERS

The officially defined role of the planners in the Raleigh program is to facilitate the communication process and to provide technical assistance to local advisory groups. Two planners and one staff person from the Department of Human Resources have been responsible for providing needed information to local advisory groups and handling much of the administrative work (such as mailings and reproductions of task force minutes). Often the staff arranges for city officials to address local advisory groups, and publicizes the upcoming meetings. The staff is explicitly instructed to avoid assuming an advocacy role with community groups. In fact, the number of staff assigned to the program was intentionally limited to avoid deep involvement with local advisory groups.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

All persons interviewed were asked what they saw as the major accomplishments of the program. The Planning Director stressed the effectiveness of the program in providing a mechanism for "anyone to let their needs be known" and its effectiveness in establishing communications between citizens and local developers. The Neighborhood Planners, however, stressed the program's impact on educating citizens about local government, developing leadership in the community, and increasing citizen self confidence and sense of efficacy. The citizen representatives emphasized the "watchdog" role played by the program, its effectiveness as a means of advocating citizen concerns, and its influence in developing a cooperative relationship between the business community and local neighborhoods. Thus, in the view of the participants the program has accomplished many objectives, although each group focuses on different aspects.

There are also considerable discrepancies in how participants responded to questions concerning specific areas of accomplishment. When asked if the program has led to an improvement in physical conditions and local service delivery, the Planning Director responded that he did not believe the program has had a major influence. The Neighborhood Planners, however, felt that the program had improved transportation services, stopped road widenings and raised funds for parks and street landscaping. The citizen representatives felt that fire and transportation services have been improved as well as parks and street landscaping.

A consensus on program accomplishments centered around the program's influence on the relations between citizens and government; all three groups felt that the program has resulted in considerable improvements. It was suggested that citizens who participated had a greater understanding of the constraints on local government officials and were also comfortable expressing their concerns to local officials.

The last specific question on program accomplishments asked if the program had led to a more equal distribution of public goods. In general, all involved mentioned some improvements in the conditions of inner city areas, however, they felt that no major change in this distribution had occurred.

It is apparent from the above discussion that those involved with the program believe it has produced a number of accomplishments. These favorable responses may, however, be due to psychological commitment to the program which they have worked hard to support. For this reason we asked our respondents to be spe-

cific about the kinds of projects and activities which the local advisory groups have undertaken. One of the major activities mentioned included the review of plans: transportation improvements, land use and recreation plans, and proposals for zoning changes and special use permits. In addition, local groups have been active in undertaking needs assessments with respect to transit needs and special concerns of youth and elderly. Finally, self-help projects such as clean-up, landscaping, and Neighborhood Watch programs have been successfully developed.

FACTORS LEADING TO ACCOMPLISHMENTS

For our purposes, it is not enough to enumerate program accomplishments, but also, to understand which aspects of the program have led to these accomplishments and which have inhibited them. In response to an open ended question on effective program elements, members of all three groups interviewed mentioned the flexibility of the program as a major asset. They specifically referred to flexibility with respect to the issues that could be addressed and the structure of the program as evidenced by the lack of specific procedures for forming committees and for voting on issues. Local advisory groups differ on how committee members

"...NEIGHBORHOOD LEVEL PROGRAMS ARE MEANT TO SUPPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAMS,"

are elected or appointed, on whether committees make recommendations that go directly to the RCAC or whether they are voted on at a general meeting, but they are generally free to adopt their own rules and procedures. They may also address any issue, as they are not confined to land use or any other substantive area.

There were other program components that individuals thought particularly effective. The Director felt that neighborhood boundaries not conforming to district lines helped to keep the program apolitical. Neighborhood Planners, however, emphasized the program's openness and its city-wide nature. Everyone, they commented, can participate in the program.

When asked to assess the amount of influence the program has had on the City Council, all thought it had a moderate influence, rating it three on a five point scale. The Director commented that if the RCAC had more influence, the Council would be upset. One citizen representative suggested that the Council viewed the RCAC as a "necessary evil," while another said that the level of influence varied depending on the specific councilmember and where their allegiances lie. One Neighborhood Planner commented that she wished, on certain issues (e.g., the location of low income housing), that citizen influence was less.

Respondents were also asked to rate the level of support given to the program by the Mayor, the City Council, the City Manager, and city departments. The Mayor received the highest overall rating followed by the City Council, the City Manager, and city departments. There was, of course, variation in ratings of individual councilpersons and city agencies. The Police Department and Planning Department were consistently rated highly, while the Public Works Department received low ratings.

Finally, respondents gave similar answers to a question asking what attributes of the city contribute to the effectiveness of the program. The attributes mentioned focused on the homogeneity of socioeconomic characteristics in Raleigh, such as the white collar population, the affluent nature of the community, and the generally high education level. It is not uncommon for leaders of neighborhood advisory groups to hold graduate degrees. The relative absence of racial conflict in Raleigh was also thought to contribute to program effectiveness.

FACTORS INHIBITING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Although the accomplishments of the Raleigh neighborhood planning program have been many, a number of factors appear to have inhibited the program's effectiveness. There was consensus among those interviewed on a number of such factors. First, low participation rates appear to inhibit program effectiveness. The average number of people that attend local advisory group meetings is twenty-five, and given that the average number of people in task force areas is about 7,000, this represents a participation rate of .35 percent. This, according to respondents, hurts the credibility of neighborhood leaders and of the overall program. Participation rates do increase substantially, however, when "hot" issues are being considered. Second, although the flexible structure was mentioned as a program strength, it was also considered a weakness. Certain voting procedures adopted by local advisory groups, for example, were not condoned by the Council and became an issue of contention. Third, the lack of support given to the program by the City Manager and certain city departments has, according to respondents, inhibited its effectiveness. The City Manager, according to one respondent, "does not like to be influenced by outside people" and has criticized participants in the program for not going through proper channels. In addition, it was suggested that many department heads are not accustomed to being confronted, and thus shy away from meetings with citizens. Furthermore, contrary to program goals, city departments do not always inform the citizen groups of their plans. Finally, respondents agreed that the staff split between the Planning Department and Human Resources Department has caused problems.

TABLE 1

RATINGS OF PROGRAM SUPPORT (RALEIGH)

	<u>Score Given To:</u>			
	<u>Mayor</u>	<u>City Council</u>	<u>City Manager</u>	<u>City Departments</u>
Director	5.0	3.0	3.0	1.0
Neighborhood Planner	5.0	4.0	2.0	3.0
Neighborhood Planner	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
Citizen Representative	5.0	4.0	3.0	3.5
Citizen Representative	5.0	4.0	3.0	3.0
Citizen Representative	<u>5.0</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>4.0</u>	<u>3.0</u>
Total	28	22	17	16.5

Note: A rating of 5 indicates the greatest support; a rating of 1 indicates the least.

From the point of view of the Planning Director, there were other problems. The present staff was said to be inadequate. In particular, more secretarial help was needed to cut down on the paper work of the professional staff, thus freeing their time for more instrumental activities. The Director also mentioned that real estate brokers and builders were able to influence the zoning recommendations of the local advisory groups by promising concessions that were later disregarded.

The Neighborhood Planners had other unique concerns. One planner felt that the citizens were reluctant to participate in activities that would result in conflict and, furthermore, that citizens did not have a clear understanding of what they wanted. A second planner talked of conflicts between her efforts and the efforts of other community organizations in certain poorer neighborhoods. The City's program was criticized and competition for membership went on between the organizations.

A major factor inhibiting the program's achievements according to the community representative, is the limit on the length of time chairpersons of the city-wide RCAC remain in office. One year is not perceived as enough time for a chairperson to learn the job well. Just as the representative is becoming effective, it was suggested, it is time to step down. Also, one representative felt that neighborhood boundaries should follow council district lines. This, in her opinion, would increase the influence of the program. Another point of disagree-

ment concerned a procedure that allowed committee chairmen as well as local advisory group leaders to vote on city-wide advisory council recommendations. This was believed to water down the influence of local advisory group leaders. More emphasis, it was suggested, needed to be placed on the local organizations and their leaders.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING IN WILMINGTON, NORTH CAROLINA

The City of Wilmington is North Carolina's major port city and has a population of approximately 52,600 people. Its inhabitants are generally poorer than those of Raleigh (twenty percent of the population is below the poverty line). The nonwhite population comprises thirty-five percent of the total population. Wilmington has adopted a council-manager form of government in which seven council members are elected by district in nonpartisan elections. The mayor is elected directly and is a voting member of the council.

Wilmington's Planning Department has a full time staff of forty-five employees; approximately one-third are professional planners. The operating budget is approximately \$400,000 per year, while the capital budget is approximately two million dollars per year, including community development funding.

Wilmington's neighborhood planning program was initiated in 1974 to qualify for the Com-

munity Development Block Grant program, and to provide a general mechanism for city-wide citizen participation. Initial support for the program came from the City Manager, the City Council, and from local citizens. The goals of the program as originally expressed were to provide a mechanism through which citizens could influence Community Development budgeting, express their views, gain an understanding of city government, initiate programs, and "make a difference." The program's operating budget is approximately \$34,000 per year.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PROGRAM

As in Raleigh, Wilmington has a two-tier system composed of seventeen local assemblies and a city-wide Community Development Committee. The seventeen local assemblies were organized in areas defined on the basis of a sample survey of 700 residents. Representatives and alternates who serve for one year are elected at assembly meetings. The alternate's role is to "learn the ropes," and then automatically assume the position of representative upon expiration of the previous representative's term. Assemblies typically meet once a month to discuss neighborhood problems, react to city proposals and develop general short term proposals.

The city-wide Community Development Committee (CDC) is composed of the seventeen assembly representatives plus five prerepresentatives from a coalition of civic groups which includes the League of Women Voters, the Kiwanis Club, the Boys Club, and others. Both the local assemblies and the CDC have ad hoc subcommittees. These committees meet once a month to review neighborhood and city-wide problems and to develop solutions to specific problems. The CDC has the added responsibility of holding public hearings on the Community Development Block Grant budget.

CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION

Formal communication channels established by the participation strategy in Wilmington are virtually the same as those established by the Raleigh program (see Figure 1). Citizens take their concerns to local assembly meetings, and the assembly representatives may request information from city departments. Most often, these requests are handled through the citizen participation planner working with the program. Concerns and proposals are then forwarded to the Community Development Committee for review. They, in turn, present recommendations to the City Council which makes the final decision. The only major difference between this communication network and the one established in Raleigh is that city departments are not required to volunteer information about their activities to local assemblies in areas poten-

tially impacted. They just respond to requests for information.

THE ROLE OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNER

The official function of the neighborhood planner is somewhat ill-defined, according to the Planning Director. He commented that the planner should assist neighborhoods in getting themselves organized but should not be telling people their problems or trying to actually organize them. He admitted that making the distinction between helping to organize and actually organizing is often difficult. Tasks that he did feel were the legitimate role of the Neighborhood Planner included getting minutes typed and circulated, providing information on the activities of city agencies and other issues, and helping them solve local problems.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

In response to our open-ended question on program accomplishments, the Planning Director

"THE OFFICIALLY DEFINED ROLE OF THE PLANNERS IN THE RALEIGH PROGRAM IS TO FACILITATE THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS AND PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE..."

felt that the program has made the city more responsive to citizen needs and viewpoints. He suggested that city programs were now addressing some of the real needs of the citizenry. In addition, he commented that some city department heads were now questioning whether ideas or projects have been reviewed by the neighborhood assembly. He also felt that citizens were now much better informed on local issues and procedures.

The Neighborhood Planner, on the other hand, emphasized the program's influence on the implementation of projects proposed by citizens. A working relationship has developed between citizens and the Planning Department. Citizens present a basic idea to the planning staff, who then develop it into a specific program or project proposal.

The citizen representatives echoed several previously mentioned accomplishments such as improved relations between citizens and government and a more educated citizenry. Furthermore, they stressed its positive impact on community cohesion within neighborhoods and the city as a whole. The program, it was suggested, has done much to improve race relations in Wilmington. Finally, several citizen representatives felt that the program has given those not associated with an interest group a means of being heard; a means of communicating problems.

In response to specific questions about the program's impact on local services and local physical conditions, the consensus of opinion was that it has led to improvements. Only one citizen representative saw no improvements. The most frequently mentioned service improvements were police and sanitation services; police patrolling patterns had been altered and sanitation schedules changed.

Specific physical improvements were also cited in the areas of housing, recreation, and street paving. This is not surprising, however, given that the program involves the budgeting of CDBG monies; yet a number of projects were funded from the regular city budget.

The program's influence on the relations between citizens and government is much less clear. The Director felt that relations had improved some, however, there continues to be some negative feelings among citizens whose expectations concerning the program have not been met. The Director suggested that the program was oversold initially to get people involved. The Neighborhood Planner felt that there was little improvement in relations, while citizen representatives generally saw a minor improvement or felt that relations were highly variable and depended on recent events.

Beyond the subjective evaluations of program effectiveness, a number of projects and programs can be credited to the neighborhood planning program in Wilmington. The major activity of the program, as mentioned, has been developing the CDBG budget. In recent years all but a few of the budget items have been approved as requested. The majority of the budget has been allocated to street paving, drainage, housing rehabilitation, and parks. Other projects, however, are unrelated to the CDBG program. Money for the restoration of a cemetery, for example, was provided from the city budget. In addition, the program can be credited with starting crime watch, rat control, and clean-up efforts in a number of areas. Local assemblies have also been successful in opposing unwanted projects such as a municipal garage expansion project, which was to be funded by EDA for 2 million dollars.

FACTORS LEADING TO ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Our open-ended question designed to identify program components which have led to accomplishments elicited a number of responses. The Director felt that the fact that the program covered the entire city was important in that everyone had an opportunity to participate, not just low income neighborhoods. In addition, the Director suggested that the council had been very supportive of the program. The Neighborhood Planner stressed the importance of a procedure where copies of the minutes of the CDC

meetings were given to council members. This procedure helped in keeping council members well informed of the CDC's deliberations and recommendations. Second, the Neighborhood Planner felt that the program has established communication between the department heads and citizen representatives. This, he suggested, facilitated action.

When asked specifically whether the program had given too little or too much power to citizens, the consensus was that their level of influence was about right. The Director felt that the citizens have had a considerable influence on city officials and any more may cause a reactionary response. The Neighborhood Planner felt that the program allowed much more influ-

"...THE TWO-TIER APPROACH SEEMS TO BE AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF STRUCTURING A PROGRAM,"

ence than the citizens were taking advantage of, while citizens representatives felt they had enough influence, and several emphasized that the council, being elected representatives, should make the final decisions. It was the council's responsibility, they felt, to consider the overall needs of the city. There was one dissenting representative, however, who felt that the head of the CDC should sit with council as a non-voting member.

"...LOW PARTICIPATION RATES APPEAR TO INHIBIT PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS,"

The Mayor received the highest overall ratings for supportiveness, followed by the City Council and city departments (see Table 2). The City Manager received the lowest overall ratings. Of the various city departments in Wilmington, the Planning, Police, and Human Relations Departments were rated highest and the Parks and Public Works Departments rated the lowest.

Finally, the respondents offered a number of characteristics of Wilmington that helped contribute to the program's effectiveness. The Director felt that the city is a "community of neighborhoods." Areas of the City are clearly distinguishable in terms of their physical and social characteristics. In the opinion of the Neighborhood Planner, the in-migration of liberal people interested in politics and civic involvement have provided much support for the program. Furthermore, she felt that Wilmington's size was particularly suitable for such a program. Similarly, some citizen representatives felt that the City's size was an important contributing factor. Race relations was another factor mentioned by several citizen representatives. Both races, it was suggested, felt the need for a mechanism for constructively working out problems.

FACTORS INHIBITING ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Two factors which have inhibited the program's effectiveness were mentioned by individuals in all three groups interviewed. First, as in Raleigh, participation rates were seen as a major problem. According to the Neighborhood Planner, the typical turnout for monthly assembly meetings is approximately twenty. This represents a participation rate of .66% based on an average assembly population of 3,000 people. When major issues were being considered, however, participation rates were said to increase substantially. The Neighborhood Planner suggested that the low participation rate was partially due to the size of the assemblies. Smaller assemblies would, in her opinion, involve a higher percentage of citizens. One citizen representative felt that citizens were deferring responsibility to the local representative and expected him or her to watch out for the interests of local residents. A related problem is that there is uneven participation in different areas of the city. In particular, many of the higher income areas feel the program is not designed to help them. Two upper income assemblies had no organization at the time of our visit. This uneven representation was seen as detracting from the legitimacy of the program.

The second problem mentioned by all groups is citizen mistrust of government. Many citizens doubt the intentions of the program and believe that government officials will do what they want regardless of the wishes of the CDC.

Some of this mistrust stems from the program's inability to meet initial expectations. Apparently, an inaccurate impression of the program was conveyed in the initial organizing of assemblies. Citizens expected more influence over a wider variety of concerns.

The Director mentioned other problems. First, he felt that more highly qualified staff were needed. Most of the present staff consists of student interns, and although helpful, they can not do work comparable to professional staff. Second, he suggested that the lack of planning data available at the neighborhood level inhibited the program's effectiveness. Third, people in Wilmington were not, in his opinion, accustomed to making decisions by themselves. In the past, decision-making has been dominated by the business community. Last, the Director said that an unclear understanding of the roles of the three main groups involved - the administration, the council, and the citizens - produced unnecessary conflicts. The program was established on the basis of a two-paragraph council resolution which did not sufficiently detail the role of each group.

The Neighborhood Planner had other unique concerns. One major problem, in her view, was that she was not receiving important information from department heads. In certain instances, citizens had found out about department plans before the Neighborhood Planner. This, she felt, severely hurt her credibility with the community. The new City Manager had further hampered this flow of information by not allowing the Neigh-

TABLE 2
RATINGS OF PROGRAM SUPPORT (WILMINGTON)

	Score Given To:			
	Mayor	City Council	City Manager	City Departments
Director	4.5	3.5	3.0	3.5
Neighborhood Planner	5.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
Citizen Representative	3.5	3.0	3.0	1.0
Citizen Representative	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0
Citizen Representative	4.0	3.0	2.0	3.0
Citizen Representative	3.0	2.0	3.0	3.0
Citizen Representative	1.0	3.0	2.0	4.0
	24.5	20.5	17.5	19.5

Note: A rating of 5 indicates the greatest support; a rating of 1 indicates the least.

borhood Planner to talk directly to the department heads. She was asked to communicate through the Planning Director. This, however, was changed upon the protests of the Neighborhood Planner. The flow of information was further hampered by the physical isolation of the Neighborhood Planning staff. They are housed in the Community Development offices which are several blocks from the Planning Department and from most other city departments. Another problem mentioned concerned the tenure of the citizen representatives in the program. As in Raleigh, the maximum length of tenure for citizen representatives is one year, too short a time to get things accomplished. Some representatives were also seen as lacking the skills or motivation to be effective in that position.

The citizen representatives voiced a similar concern over their representative's tenure. They felt it was demoralizing to require an effective neighborhood leader to give up that role after a year's time. Citizen representatives also mentioned that communications with the council were one-way. The Council wanted information from the CDC with important information or explanations of their actions. Finally, one representative suggested that the citizens need to have access to legal advice, which is currently unavailable.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is apparent from the results cited above that the neighborhood based participation programs have lived up to certain expectations and not others. There is a general consensus among program participants that these programs have led to an improvement in local physical conditions and to a lesser extent to improved local service delivery. Relations between citizens and government have also benefited from the program, however, given the low participation rates, this improvement can not be extensive. The same can be said for the program's influence on citizen knowledge of the operation of local government. Those citizens who regularly participate undoubtedly have a better understanding. Relatively few, however, participate on a regular basis. The programs also appear to have an effect on the distribution of public goods. Most participants felt that the programs have benefited the "have nots" more than the "haves." These programs provided a participatory mechanism for those who traditionally have not had access to the political system. Possibly more important is that these programs have provided a spawning ground for community leaders. Many of the local representatives interviewed had no previous experience with community service of any nature. In addition, in both Wilmington and Raleigh there were numerous examples of council members who

were once heads of local neighborhood groups. Thus, although the impact of these programs was dampened by low rates of participation, they do appear to provide the potential for more dramatic achievements if participation rates can be increased.

A number of structural elements appear to have contributed to the accomplishments achieved by these programs. First, the two-tier approach seems to be an effective way of structuring a program. It helps to provide local neighborhood leaders with a city-wide view of problems and to avoid conflicting proposals being submitted to

"...MEMBERS OF ALL THREE GROUPS INTERVIEWED MENTIONED THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE PROGRAM AS A MAJOR ASSET."

the City Council. In addition, communication between the council and neighborhood organizations is facilitated by having one organization presenting proposals and recommendations rather than many. Providing local civic organizations representation on the city-wide council as done in Wilmington, also appears to add to the legitimacy and efficacy of a program. Second, the city-wide nature of these programs is important. The programs receive political support because of their all inclusive nature. Third, a two-way communication flow between council, city departments, and the citizens' groups seems vital. The council and city departments must not only ask for information, but also they must be willing to provide information. Furthermore, well-defined channels of communication seem essential to the smooth operation of these programs. Many of the problems faced by program participants stem from poorly defined communication channels. The following recommendations are offered to improve the effectiveness of neighborhood based planning programs.

1. Involve the three major parties-- citizens, council, and department heads-- in the initial formulation of the program.
2. Establish a well documented, detailed organizational structure. If flexibility is desired, specify which aspects of the program will be left flexible (e.g., establishing subcommittees). Important organizational elements include a) two-tier structure, b) subcommittee structure, and c) election and voting procedures.
3. Establish clear expectations concerning the roles, responsibilities, and levels of influence for each major party.
4. Establish formal lines of communication between a) department heads and citizen representatives, b) neighborhood

- planners and department heads, and
 e) citizen representatives and city council members.
5. Pay special attention to attaining the cooperation of city departments and the city manager. Short courses in human relations should help them in dealing with citizen contacts. Once the program has been established, willingness to work with the program should be a criterium for selecting new department heads or a new manager.
 6. Adequately staff the program. One planner should have no more than five local neighborhood groups. One full time secretary for every four planners is also recommended.

"ONE PLANNER SHOULD HAVE NO MORE THAN FIVE LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS."

7. Neighborhood planners should provide the following basic services to local community groups: help organize and publicize meetings, inform groups of new city projects and policies, provide guidance in expanding citizen attendance, help disseminate meeting minutes, help keep an up-to-date mailing list, research questions brought up by citizens of opportunities for improving their areas.
8. The offices of the neighborhood planner staff should not be physically isolated from the Planning Department and the planners should be allowed direct access to all city personnel.
9. Neighborhood planners should have training in community organizing and should pay special attention to encouraging citizen participation.
10. Neighborhood planners should make sure that planning data is available at the neighborhood level.
11. Training sessions should be run for new citizen representatives. These sessions should cover topics such as the structure of city government and of the neighborhood planning program, how to run group meetings and elicit group concerns, and community organizing.
12. Legal council should be readily available to citizens' groups.

13. The program should allow local representatives to serve longer than one year.
14. A monitoring and evaluation component should be built into the program. Yearly evaluations should be done to assess accomplishments, detect problems, and suggest alterations in the programs' operations and/or structures.

It is clear that these programs will not lead to fundamental changes in society and thus, will not satisfy the more radical social reformers. They have been shown, however, to result in real and immediate benefits to the quality of life in the two cities studied.

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