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Odie Joe Avery

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The “new” charrette: stakeholder perceptions of an alternate approach

By

Odie Joe Avery

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Landscape Architecture
in Landscape Architecture
in the Department of Landscape Architecture

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2013

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2013

The “new” charrette: stakeholder perceptions of an alternate approach

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Landscape architects, many of whom practice the design principles of the New Urbanism, have become increasingly involved with the participatory planning process. A key principle of New Urbanism, the participatory planning process is incorporated in an attempt to ensure that any new development - or alteration of an existing development - meets the needs of the community for which the design is created. This study examines data gathered from a web-based survey addressing the alternate, stakeholder-access charrette approach. It was distributed to participants of charrettes facilitated by the Mississippi Main Street Association and is an attempt to understand the perceptions of those actively involved in the process. The purpose of this study was to examine this alternate approach to charrette facilitation and identify trends associated within. The analysis of stakeholder perceptions may prove beneficial in identifying trends that threaten charrette efficiency while highlighting trends worthy of replication in future charrettes.

DEDICATION

First, I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family. Their love, support, encouragement, and belief in my abilities have kept me focused on the task at hand. The life lessons I learned as a child, thanks to my parents and grandparents, serve as the foundation for my work ethic and have provided the confidence needed for completing this task. Second, I owe a world of gratitude and appreciation to Leigh-Ann Sallis – a genuine friend, confidant and colleague whose love and support through this process has fueled my fire and pushed me to strive for excellence in all areas of my life. Thank you for being my rock and offering insight and guidance through the terms of this endeavor. Thirdly, I must thank my friends, Jay and Amy Yates, and the entire Veranda family. I am eternally grateful for each of you as I have worked to complete this degree. You all helped make this a reality for me by offering your support and understanding of my goals. I never imagined that while on this journey I would come to know so many wonderful people. My family and friends have lifted me up through the hard times and have been amazingly supportive during the many sleepless nights. The love and support that each of you has shown will never be forgotten.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Citizen involvement in the decision making process is not a new concept and served, in part, to form the republic we recognize today. Societies have evolved as a result of citizens' desire to work together to create a built environment. In the United States, the American Industrial Revolution of the early twentieth-century mechanized our society and created an ease of movement across the nation. The growth that followed re-defined the traditional definition of "community" (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000). Many areas of the country witnessed progress beyond expectation, and urban planners increasingly became less influential as development progressed (Jacobs 1961). Additionally, this accelerated urban development introduced new problems in American cities. Sprawl and gentrification became an issue in many metropolitan areas as the associated growth threatened quality of life and ripped at the historic social fabric of communities.

The research associated with this thesis will examine urban planning practices in the decades following the First and Second World Wars as the automobile profoundly altered the American citizen's way of life. More specifically, it will offer insight into how planning trends have influenced the movement known as New Urbanism and explore the merits of the participatory planning process associated with this approach. To

gather data for this study the researcher will explore the charrette process as facilitated by the Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA) as they have applied principles of the New Urbanism in communities throughout the State of Mississippi.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

Incorporation of design principles outlined by the New Urbanist movement has gained popularity in recent decades. As challenges associated with the process have come to light practitioners began to question exactly what form and how much citizen participation is necessary for the process to be effective and efficient (Irvin and Stansbury 2005; Konisky and Beierle 2001). Current debate is centered on two approaches of community involvement and citizen participation (Konisky and Beierle 2001). One allows for an open-forum charrette inclusive of all members of a community while the other takes a limited-access approach to the process. The latter, the stakeholder-access approach, seeks the contribution of key business leaders, political officials, and civic-minded individuals within the community who may serve as active participants throughout the charrette process (Lennertz 2009; Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000; Irvin and Stansbury 2005). In the former the number of people eager to participate has the potential of creating a process where time, increased costs, and social gridlock in the decision making process may occur (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Both methods present advantages and challenges. Sanoff acknowledges the phenomenon and suggests that, in many cases, the incorporation of the charrette in the design process often leads to unexpected costs and inefficient use of allotted time (2008).

The purpose of this study was to examine the stakeholder-access approach to charrette facilitation and discuss participant perceptions concerning the charrette process.

In an attempt to compare each approach a survey of stakeholders having participated in community charrettes facilitated in coordination with the MMSA will offer data for analyzing the charrette process. It is the hope of the researcher that the data will identify characteristics which may be worthy of replication and address how stakeholders, business leaders, and political officials communicate with the public-at-large to create an effective, efficient, and time-wise process. Also, it will discuss how existing relationships within communities influence the process and gauge the merits of the process as prescribed by the Charter for the New Urbanism.

Various situations exist as each community has a diverse social capacity and no two participatory planning events are exactly the same. Consideration must be given to understanding the stakeholder-access charrette so that it may be compared to the traditional method. The stakeholder-access approach has re-defined the charrette process and has resulted in planning events where input from the “public-at-large” has become limited to an opening (information gathering) and closing (feedback/response) session (Leccese, McCormick, and New Urbanism 2000). Previous studies of the traditional charrette process and other community building initiatives offer beneficial information regarding charrettes held in an open forum setting. However, little research exists analyzing the more limited stakeholder-access approach (Reed 2007). Also, dismissing the public from the decision making process should not be taken lightly if practitioners of the New Urbanism aim to create communities which strengthen people and their surroundings by incorporating them in the participatory planning process (CNU 1996).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to add potentially useful information to the somewhat limited body of knowledge within the discipline of landscape architecture concerning the alternate, stakeholder-access approach to the charrette process. An increased understanding of this alternate approach will provide the tools necessary for charrette facilitators, and others closely aligned with the process, to promote effective, efficient planning events in the future. In an attempt to gain a more complete understanding of the stakeholder-access approach this study engaged participants of the charrettes facilitated by the MMSA. This thesis has four main objectives. The first was to offer a background discussion on the topics of Participatory Planning, New Urbanism, the Charrette, and the events conducted by the MMSA and how each is related to modern urban planning and design. The second objective was to understand participant perceptions of the stakeholder-access charrette by collecting data using a web-based survey with questions based on the research of Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey. Their book, *Community Building, What Makes it Work?*, defines the characteristics for a successful community building process. Third, an analysis of the collected data highlights perceptions of active participants in the stakeholder-access charrette. The fourth objective is to address opportunities for future research which are needed for the creation of a balanced process.

1.4 Outline of the Study

The outline for this study included a web-based survey built on the research of Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey. While director of the Wilder Research Center Paul Mattessich, and research associate Barbara Monsey, focused on research related to

human service trends, programs, and policies (Mattessich et al. 1997). Their interest in community planning efforts and involvement, as described in the book “Community Building: What Makes it Work?” served as the foundation for questions directed at participants of the MMSA charrettes.

The web-based survey employed questions in both Likert-scale and open-ended format to explore perceptions of participants in the stakeholder-access charrettes. The survey questions were derived from those characteristics described by Mattessich and Monsey as being a necessity for creating a successful community building effort. These questions were used to gather data from participants of the stakeholder-access charrettes concerning their perceptions of the process. Surveys were electronically distributed to key participants, public officials, and prominent stakeholders in each of the thirty-four communities where charrettes have been conducted by the Mississippi Main Street Association.

Analysis of the survey data provides insight into the process and may assist future charrette facilitators as they strive to promote successful events in the future. As landscape architects become increasingly involved in the process this information may prove beneficial in developing a unique set of tools and techniques applicable to the charrette process and worthy of replication in future events.

1.5 Background

Providing background information on the topics of participatory planning, New Urbanism, the Charrette process, and the MMSA is important in laying the groundwork for this study.

1.5.1 Historical Context of Participatory Planning

Public Participation is defined by Rowe and Frewer as “the practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development” and is not a new concept (2004). Evidence of participatory planning processes date as far back as Plato’s Republic where freedom of speech, the right to peaceably assemble, the right to vote, and the right to equal representation witnessed their establishment (Sanoff 2000). Early Americans exercised their new-found rights and became increasingly involved in the practices of building community as populations expanded westward (Sanoff 2000). Eventually, excessive growth undermined traditional participatory practices as population became too large and it became “increasingly difficult for every citizen to participate in community decisions” (Sanoff 1978). The solution for this problem came in the form of the political system recognized in America today in which “representatives” are selected by public election to serve as the voice of the people (Sanoff 1978).

This trust in representative government did not suffice, however. The United States witnessed insurmountable growth following the industrial revolution and the first two World Wars. As a result, city and urban planners who were traditionally accustomed to pedestrian-oriented development had to consider a society increasingly reliant on the automobile. Simultaneously, public interest and awareness of the importance of their role in the planning process increased. The public recognized a “sense of social responsibility that constituted a new movement” (Sanoff 2000). Citizens become increasingly aware of the social division between those living in communities and those making the decisions

affecting their daily lives. Poverty and lack of representation became key factors influencing this division and the poor began “to define and implement their own planning goals” in the communities they called home (Sanoff 1978). Moreover, citizen participants became advocates within their communities. They became the voice of a movement, and with the help of federally backed grants and funding, fought modern urban redevelopment practices. The result was a participatory democracy based on the idea that “planning of environment is more effective if citizens are active and involved in the decision-making process instead of being treated as passive consumers” (Sanoff 2000).

This re-discovery of participatory democracy grew. The desire and willingness of the general public to be included in the decision making process created an approach to planning including both positive and negative effects.

Today, practitioners and critics are at odds defining the best approach. Some critics even question the relevance of citizen involvement in the decision making process. Both practitioners of New Urbanism such as Andres Duany and critics, like Cliff Ellis, agree that participatory planning practices can be relevant to community design (2000; 2002). Most, however, remain at odds in defining exactly which form of participatory planning is most appropriate.

1.5.2 An Overview of the New Urbanism

Andres Duany suggests that the basic concept of the New Urbanism lies on the idea of the neighborhood acting as the “building block of healthy cities and towns” (1992). Urban planners and architects who practice and promote these principles have a common goal: create safe, walkable neighborhoods designed for the pedestrian, rather than the automobile (CNU 1996). Other principles of the movement include

incorporating a variety of housing options, adequate public facilities, and multiple options for transportation. These are but a few of the characteristics that fuel the design process as practitioners of the movement strive to build a sense of community.

New Urbanism promotes a traditional approach to community design. Before the rise of the automobile, planners designed communities based on walkability and spatial proximity. New Urbanists take many of the principles associated with this Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) and apply them today to address the concerns resulting from sprawl and other less responsive planning practices.

As New Urbanism gained popularity during the 1980s and early 1990s the leaders of the movement recognized the need to create universal goals and objectives. In 1991 Andres Duany, Peter Calthorpe, Elizabeth Moule, and other leaders in the disciplines of architecture and planning gathered at the Ahwahnee Hotel at Yosemite National Park. Here they set out to address the problems and concerns associated with suburban sprawl by defining the key principles for creating responsible, sustainable design standards applicable to the New Urbanist movement (Urbanism 2012). The resulting document, known initially as the Ahwahnee Principles, evolved into the Charter for The New Urbanism and, in 1996, became the seminal text promoting their recommendations regarding community planning and design (Leccese, McCormick, and New Urbanism 2000). Through the late 1990s and early 2000s, as the tenets of the movement were applied, the Congress worked to promote and strengthen the principles set forth in the original Charter. Since then the application of New Urbanist principles has garnered much support, and criticism, and has been applied to development projects worldwide.

1.5.3 The Charrette

The “charrette”, derived from the French word for “cart”, has become the common method used to gather information and feedback from citizen participants involved in the participatory planning process. These carts, originally used by students at the Ecole de Beaux Arts in Paris, signified the intense work effort many would experience as a deadline drew near (Lennertz 2009). Much like this last minute scramble the modern charrette exhibits an “intense burst of activity” as designers and stakeholders participate in a multi-day planning event intended to address issues facing a community while offering solutions for transformative change (Lennertz 2009). Practitioners of the New Urbanism have applied the charrette to planning activities on various scales and suggest that success requires “that everyone affected by the outcome be included in the planning effort from the beginning” (Lennertz 2009). The inclusion of those so closely associated with a neighborhood or community as ideas are generated to solve problems is one of the key principles of the New Urbanist Movement.

Bill Lennertz of the National Charrette Institute and author of *The Charrette as an Agent for Change* defines the charrette as “a comprehensive, intensive development plan to bring transformative change to a neighborhood” (2009). Additionally, he offers nine basic principles of the charrette process:

1. Work collaboratively
2. Design cross-functionally
3. Use design to achieve a shared vision and create holistic solutions
4. Work in detail
5. Constrain work schedules

6. Communicate in short feedback loops
7. Work for at least four to seven consecutive days
8. Work on site
9. Produce a buildable plan (2009)

The actual charrette, however, is only part of the process. Before the charrette begins the project team must conduct research to educate themselves of the many conditions and variables existing in and around the community. At the onset of the project the team will hold a one-day meeting to discuss the actual charrette process, identify stakeholders, develop schedules, and define the goals and objectives of the charrette (Lennertz 2009). All of this is necessary and takes place behind-the-scenes as preparation for the actual event. Following these preliminary steps the project team gathers to conduct the charrette. In modern charrettes opening and closing sessions typically involve the public-at-large and serve as opportunities to gather feedback from the general populace. Stakeholders participate in more intense sessions and are often divided into smaller teams to tour the community and meet with key individuals (Lennertz 2009). Over the course of the next few days stakeholders and facilitators develop tangible plans for addressing the goals and objectives set forth at the beginning of the process and present them in a public forum on the last day of the charrette (Lennertz 2009). After receiving feedback from stakeholders and the general public the project team will often address any concerns, alter the plan as needed, and define an implementation plan as the final phase of the charrette (Lennertz 2009).

This general approach is common among practitioners yet criticism of the process exists. Proponents urge that the charrette process is adequate for solving complex and

controversial problems (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). Critics argue that the charrette process is only applicable in certain circumstances and “may not be adequate for solving the problems associated with multifaceted projects with divergent or conflicting views” (Sarkissian, Cook, and Walsh 1997). Proponents of the New Urbanism are confident in their commitment to incorporate elements of participatory planning in the design process and recognize how a properly coordinated charrette can successfully address the issues facing a community (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000).

The New Urbanist practitioner believes the inclusion of the charrette to be a key principle and necessary for a successful community development (CNU 1996). This belief has played a significant role in planning events worldwide and discussion of how to best approach future application is at the center of debate among planners, landscape architects, and critics of the New Urbanism (Ellis 2002). Practitioners have traditionally applied the open-forum charrette as the primary tool for gathering information from key stakeholders and community members associated with a development. Over time, and as challenges presented themselves, the need to refine the process has been revealed. The debate has shifted and proponents of the movement concerned with sustaining in an environment where costs and time over-runs have become commonplace seek to identify the best approach for creating the most efficient process (Ellis 2002). Practitioners of the New Urbanism recognize the benefits associated with the charrette but identifying the characteristics necessary for developing an effective, efficient process deemed successful from the participants’ perspective is a topic in need of further research (Talen and Ellis 2003; Day 2003).

1.5.4 The Mississippi Main Street Association

The charrette proceedings conducted in part with the Mississippi Main Street Association (MMSA) will serve to provide the data necessary for the completion of this thesis. The MMSA originated as a historic preservation program and subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (MMSA 2010). In 1989 the MMSA joined forces with the Mississippi Development Authority to form the Main Street Program, a non-profit organization intended “to direct the revitalization efforts of downtowns and surrounding neighborhoods throughout Mississippi’s cities and towns” (MMSA 2010). During its existence the MMSA has evolved from a “historic preservation program into one of the largest economic development programs in the United States” (MMSA 2010). Outreach across the state has led to the creation of “50 active Main Street Programs and more than 40 Network, Association Members and charrette communities” (MMSA 2010).

The MMSA offers a variety of benefits to member communities across the state and services include staff hiring assistance, festival and event development, and charrette services to name a few. Their mission is “to provide leadership, guidance and counsel to Mississippi Main Street communities through organization, promotion, design and economic development to make our cities and towns better places to work, live and play” (MMSA 2010).

The Mississippi Main Street Association follows a unique approach in addressing the revitalization of a member community’s commercial corridor or business district. The MMSA uses the Main Street Four-Point Approach as a comprehensive methodology aimed at addressing the issues and concerns facing a community. Organization,

Promotion, Design, and Economic Restructuring of the commercial core serve as the four-points of the revitalization strategy promoted by the National Trust Main Street Center. The MMSA emphasizes four main components aligned with the Main Street Four-Point Approach in the planning events held throughout the state. They include:

1. Market Assessment to understand the economic development factors affecting a community
2. Branding and Marketing to aid the community in communicating its unique promotional messages in a compelling, consistent and effective way
3. Design and Planning to enhance the physical appearance and function of the Community
4. Implementation Strategies to ensure the recommendations of the plan include a road map to turn them into reality (2010)

The National Main Street program suggests that the application of this methodology has been “widely successful in helping build sustainable communities in towns and cities nationwide” (MMSA 2010). The four-point approach has proven that historic preservation of the central business district or corridor encourages economic development within these once thriving areas. The MMSA continues:

“The Main Street Approach advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community” (2010).

This unique methodology for revitalizing a commercial district hinges on a community's willingness and ability to adhere to key principles deemed critical for bringing a commercial corridor back to life. First, a comprehensive plan taking a holistic approach while offering incremental progression is necessary. In order to build confidence within the community the public needs to see that "new things are happening in the commercial district" and feel the excitement associated with this process (MMSA 2010). Second, local leaders must promote and gain the support of their constituents as they work to create partnerships within the public and private sectors. Third, a community must capitalize on existing assets and promote improvement in the craftsmanship and quality of the projects taking place within the district. Emphasizing "quality in every aspect of the revitalization program" is paramount (MMSA 2010). The approach suggests: "from storefront designs to promotional campaigns to educational programs, each element of the process must evolve from the highest of standards" (MMSA 2010). Fourth, promoting change and implementing the ideas and designs resulting from the comprehensive plan will offer visible results which garner positive change among the residents in a community. It is noted by the MMSA that "small projects at the beginning of the program pave the way for larger ones as the revitalization effort matures, and that constant revitalization creates confidence in the Main Street program and ever-greater levels of participation" (2010).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Citizen participation in the decision making process is important to the democratic society in which we live. Participatory planning has taken many forms and is integral in addressing the issues and concerns that arise as progress is made. Our communities have evolved and are built on the collective effort of a group of people who share a common goal to create a sense of place. Often, planning and design of the urban realm depends on a society's willingness and ability to reach consensus as neighborhoods and cities advance. Offering insight and historical context of participatory planning and how the process has evolved is a goal of this literature review.

This review of the literature will offer a foundation for the study as it will explore the advantages and challenges associated with citizen participation; offer historical context of, and address the criticism associated with New Urbanism; explore the incorporation and evolution of the charrette; and discuss the stakeholder access charrettes facilitated by the Mississippi Main Street Association.

2.2 Participatory Planning and Design

An increased interest in public participation is attributed, by some, to a decline in the confidence that the public-at-large places in elected officials or individuals considered

experts in their respective fields (Rowe and Frewer 2004). In many ways the term “public participation” is loosely defined as participation in a “number of different ways or at a number of levels” (Arnstein 1969). Participation may be passive, it may be sought out, or it may be active through public representation (Rowe and Frewer 2004). Arnstein submits that citizen participation can be considered “citizen power” which, when redistributed, “enables the have-not citizens who may be excluded from the political and economic processes to be deliberately included in the future” (1969).

To better understand the principle of participatory planning and citizen participation, as prescribed by the Congress for the New Urbanism, the modern history of the concept must be examined. The review of the literature that follows examines the participatory planning process and, specifically, how New Urbanists work to incorporate citizen participants in the design and decision making process.

2.2.1 Modern Participatory Planning Practices

Modern practitioners define participatory planning, at a general level, as the practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organizations or institutions responsible for policy development (Rowe and Frewer 2004). The newfound awareness of the role of the citizen following the Industrial Revolution strengthened the historic notion of the participatory democracy and reached an apex during the urban renewal movement of the 1960s (Olsen 1982). Olsen suggests that this renewed interest in community planning held by citizens “was a rediscovery of traditional democratic philosophy” (1982). Sanoff describes the phenomenon of participatory democracy as:

Collective decision-making highly decentralized throughout all sectors of society, so that all individuals learn participatory skills and can effectively participate in various ways in the making of all decisions that affect them. Particularly crucial in this conception of participatory democracy is the insistence that full democratization of decision-making with all local and private organizations is a necessary prerequisite for political democracy at the national level (Olsen 1982).

For a greater understanding of what is, and what is not, participation one may look to Arnstein's "typology of eight levels of participation" or "eight rungs on a ladder of citizen participation" (1969). Here Arnstein describes the various levels at which participants are involved with the process. Obviously a simplification, and though limitations exist, Arnstein's suggested typology offers a general definition and illustrative model to help express the gradations of citizen participation.

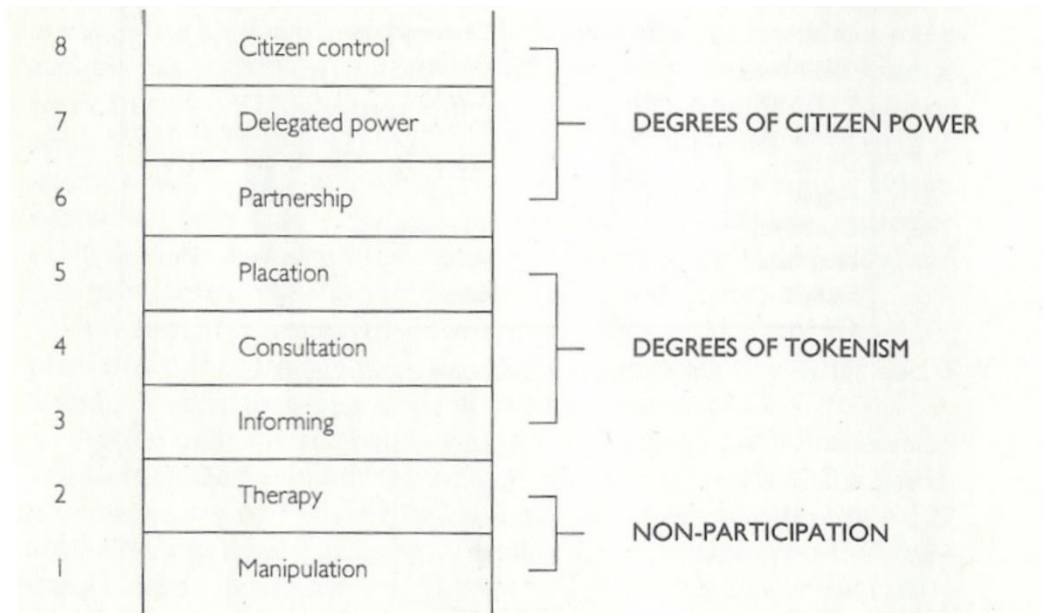


Figure 2.1 A Ladder of Participation (from Arnstein 1969).

The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) *Manipulation* and (2) *Therapy*. These two rungs describe levels of “non-participation” that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable power-holders to “educate” or “cure” the participants. Rungs 3 and 4 progress to levels of “tokenism” that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: (3) *Informing* and (4) *Consultation*. When they are proffered by power-holders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no “muscle”, hence no assurance of changing the status quo. Rung (5) *Placation*, is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the power-holders the continued right to decide.

Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a (6) *Partnership* that enables them to negotiate and engage in the trade-offs with traditional power-holders. At the topmost rungs (7) *Delegated Power* and (8) *Citizen Control*, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power (Arnstein 1969).

A driving force behind this concept of a participatory democracy and the typology for participation in participatory planning often takes the form of the power struggle

between the “haves” and the “have-nots” (Arnstein 1969). Arnstein attempts to simplify this sentiment, offering:

Citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future. It is the strategy by which the have-nots join in determining how information is shared, goals and policies are set, tax resources are allocated, programs are operated, and benefits like contracts and patronage are parceled out. In short, it is the means by which they can induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society (1969).

As practitioners of the New Urbanism incorporate principles of participatory planning into the design process problems have revealed themselves as solutions are sought. The debate and divide among the social classes in a community have the potential to hinder the process in many ways and will be discussed later in this literature review.

Regardless the approach practitioners of the movement attempting the application of New Urbanist Principles must consider the dynamics of the existing community as the planning process evolves. Increasingly, traditional methods for the incorporation of the public-at-large are being questioned (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). Modern practitioners of the New Urbanism recognize how existing community dynamics may create gridlock and inefficiency, and realize the need to identify a more efficient process (Irvin and Stansbury 2005).

2.2.2 The Debate of Participatory Planning and Design

The Congress for the New Urbanism acknowledges the desire of the general public to be involved in the decision-making process regarding issues that directly affect their lives. Understanding the social and spatial dynamics present prior to redevelopment is also part of the process as planners and designers of the New Urbanism approach a project. Success within a participatory planning process lies in having an informed group of citizen participants who offer insight into the dynamics and inner workings of a community – knowledge unknown to the charrette facilitators or design team (Irvin and Stansbury 2005).

Criticism concerning the process of participatory design has become increasingly common. Debate among proponents and critics has taken many avenues and the relevancy of the participatory design process is sometimes questioned. Talen suggests that opinions concerning the relevancy of participatory design among designers, planners, political officials and the public show that “some favor while others discourage participatory design practices” (2003). In theory, the concept of participatory design seems captivating as the inclusion of this process seemingly has an underlying goal of producing a solution aimed at creating the best outcome for the population as a whole (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). In practice, however, relevancy is questioned as political suasion and even designer elitism may result in an outcome that a time-wise planner could have derived in a matter of hours rather than a matter of days (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Arnstein suggests that designers, in an effort to substantiate their contributions and skill, usually do not feel the need to declare otherwise, even if they may doubt the relevance of the process (1969). Criticism of participatory planning and design takes

many forms and is often revealed in an attack on New Urbanism. Grant criticizes the practices of the New Urbanist and says:

At the same time the New Urbanist offers a level of citizen participation, however, its fear of local opposition to projects is palpable... In the charrette process, the rhetoric of local control encounters the reality of slick graphics, romantic watercolors, and celebrity designers. Difficult policy or environmental issues are set aside as participants focus on design questions (Grant 2006).

Crewe offers: “to date the discussion of participation has been a one-sided commentary, largely exhorting the participation process or deploring designer elitism” (2001). In an effort to understand this debate the review of the literature that follows will discuss the benefits and challenges of the participatory planning process.

2.2.3 The Benefits

Advantage in the planning process lies in having a knowledgeable group of participants involved (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Educating the public, specifically the citizens who may be directly affected, is important for communicating the goals and objectives set forth at the beginning of a participatory planning event. Irvin and Stansbury argue that education creates informed and involved citizens who become citizen-experts who “see and understand technically difficult situations and can identify holistic, community-wide solution (2005). Also, facilitators of the process can easily communicate with participants if they are aware of the issues at hand, enabling them to be more sensitive to any hot topics within the community.

The review of the literature that follows offers a variety of benefits associated community involvement in the planning process. Community building, political suasion,

the empowerment of citizens, and a more efficient process are often products of citizen involvement and influence the process in various ways.

2.2.3.1 Community Building

Varying levels of existing social cohesion and community strength are characteristics capable of having great influence on the participatory process. Existing societal characteristics have the potential to promote or weaken the participatory planning event. On one hand a pre-existing strength in community may create ease of communication during the process. On the other hand a lack of social cohesion has the potential of creating gridlock and wasting time while trying to reach consensus.

Conversely, from the New Urbanist view, it is the goal of participation to increase and strengthen the bonds within the community (Morris, Stewart, and Local Government Management 1996). Morris offers that when people recognize a strengthened sense of community they are more likely to respond positively to efforts to solve problems, and will be willing to contribute their time and resources to meet community needs (1996).

As community is strengthened citizens form a sense of attachment with their neighborhood and the people they encounter on a day-to-day basis. This attachment can help to inspire action as people are motivated to protect and improve places that are meaningful to them (Sanoff 2000). Attachment often leads to empowerment as more residents identify with a community and become increasingly involved in the decision-making process. Empowerment allows organizations and communities to have control over their affairs (Rappaport 1987). Studies of empowerment suggest that such a power is “achieved on the strength of interpersonal relationships among those working towards a common goal” (Perkins and Zimmerman 1995). Sanoff concludes with the observation

that experiences in the participation process show that the “main source of user satisfaction is not the degree to which a person’s needs have been met, but the feeling of having influenced the decision” (2000).

2.2.3.2 Political Suasion

From local entities to national initiatives governments attempt to relinquish various responsibilities to the general public throughout the decision-making process. Debate occurs as the motives of government entities are questioned as they approach and promote citizen involvement. Accusations of “routinized” citizen participation made during the 1960s in response to urban renewal initiatives suggests that government promotion of “public involvement comes from a need to obtain acceptance as a prerequisite to successful implementation” of government initiatives (Irvin and Stansbury 2005; Thomas 1995). In some instances, as Irving and Stansbury note, the incorporation of citizen participants merely serves as a marketing event aimed at “guiding citizens toward decisions the administrator would have made in the first place (2005). Here, political suasion becomes important. A network of residents who recognize a strong sense of community and have a history of working together to promote their neighborhood may uphold a heightened social influence relative to their political counterparts. The views and opinions of those capable of the greatest social influence have the potential to evolve into conflict and may become a debate of “the man” vs. “the system” (Thomas 1995). In these instances community residents offering the greatest social influence hold the power to sway the opinions of their neighbors. Regardless of the motive, political suasion of citizen participants - particularly garnering the support of socially influential community members – may help support ideas for or against a policy

to spread through the community and has the potential to promote or diffuse opposition in the process (Howell, Olsen, and Olsen 1987).

2.2.3.3 Empowerment, Breaking Gridlock and Litigation Risks

As previously mentioned, empowerment of the citizen participant often occurs as a result of the participatory planning process. The inclusion of local residents and stakeholders has the potential to increase social cohesion within a community and, as there is strength in numbers, may create an empowered group of citizen participants. The result is a community where residents exhibit a strong willingness to participate in community activities. Social connections are made and personal connections evolve into a sense of pride for one's neighborhood (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). The sense of empowerment resulting from extensive social cohesion may side with the general populace, or it may prove advantageous to political officials as they promote initiatives that will affect the community. This is an example of political persuasion working in the opposite direction. Community members holding social influence within the community "may have regular contact with key government decision makers" who have the potential to "persuasively convey their viewpoint in a non-confrontational atmosphere" prompting their political agenda (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Some advocate public participation as a means of creating "legitimate political players" out of "otherwise powerless citizens" who interact with and influence other groups within the community (Fox and Miller 1995).

As interests in the participatory planning process gains momentum and more citizens recognize the opportunity of involvement, problems arise. An increase in participation combined with the ideas, opinions, and emotions of citizen participants has

led to gridlock in the participatory planning process (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Gridlock often occurs as views and opinions among participants differ. Typically, gridlock will occur at the onset of the participatory planning process as “traditional political discourse can disintegrate into obstructionist maneuvers” (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Hindering gridlock and balancing input to promote a fair, efficient process becomes critical and may lead to obtainable solutions (Reich 1988).

Occasionally, gridlock cannot be broken. Citizen participants may feel that their involvement in the process is not viewed as relevant and may object to the decisions being made. In some instances citizen participants may choose litigation as a means of being heard. Litigation costs associated with planning or development for the public has been an issue of concern in projects that do not include a proper participatory planning process (O’Leary 1999). Incorporating a range of citizen participants into the planning process is presumed cost effective because it potentially reduces the probability of litigation associated with a deficient participatory planning process (Randolph et al. 1999).

2.2.4 The Challenges

As the incorporation of public participation as a principle of the New Urbanism has evolved and gained popularity the question has shifted from the merits of the practice to what type of citizen participation is best (Konisky and Beierle 2001). Modern designers and practitioners of New Urbanism, as well as many critics, agree that participatory planning is relevant to community design yet they still debate the appropriate method for facilitation (Ellis 2002). To better understand the role of citizen participation one must also explore the challenges and disadvantages associated with the

process. Irvin and Stansbury offer a number of topics discussing the challenges and disadvantages of citizen participation. Exploration of the challenges that often arise will offer greater comprehension of the positive and negative characteristics of the process.

2.2.4.1 Costs

Community planning utilizing citizen participants has the potential to become an expensive endeavor. In many cases the costs associated with facilitation are often omitted in the discussion of the value of public participation (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). The participatory planning process typically involves a minimum time commitment of one week for the charrette process itself, not considering the preparation and follow-up time needed by the facilitators. Time is a major consideration as some advocate that the outcomes of the participatory planning process result in the same suggestions that would have been made by planners working alone – often derived during a relatively short time period (Lawrence and Deagen 2001). Irvin and Stansbury introduce the fact that a single administrator of a project may come to the same planning and design conclusions in a short amount of time that may consume valuable time and resources for a citizen group over the course of several days (2005). However, this does not consider that more effective implementation may lead to better solutions (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Ultimately, the cost associated with any participatory process should be weighed against the possible benefits of the outcome. Identifying methods and techniques aimed at controlling costs while refining the process are currently the topic of much debate in the realm of New Urbanism (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000).

2.2.4.2 Public Opinion and Complacency

There are many variables that influence public opinion and accepted views of the issues facing a community. Media outlets including newspaper, television, and internet sites play a large role in how the majority of society gathers the information needed to make informed decisions. In larger communities where a relatively small group of people involved in the participation process represent a significantly larger population there are no guarantees that their influence will guide the population as a whole. Unless these participants are part of a constituency or have the sense of empowerment necessary to sway the decision-making process their influence may be overshadowed by public opinion (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Citizens may find the tasks associated with the participatory planning process burdensome and may become complacent. They allow public opinion to affect their ideas and views on issue affecting the community. Lawrence and Deagen note that “in communities where complacency is an issue, a top-down administration tends to evolve for the sake of efficiency”, and often the participatory process may be deemed unnecessary (2001).

2.2.4.3 Representation

In many situations the public-at-large consist of lower and middle class residents – specifically targeted in New Urbanist planning processes – who do not have the means to participate regularly (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Lack of adequate representation of the general population in the participation and planning process becomes a disadvantage in cases where the process is dominated by strongly partisan participants who “live comfortably enough to participate regularly” (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). A study of the citizen planning process by Smith and McDonough reveal that many citizens recognized

some level of inequality in representation (2001). Many of them describe the participatory process as “unfair; feeling that the meetings were orchestrated and that their input would not influence the outcome” (Smith and McDonough 2001). It has been observed through practice that citizen-participation panels, when balanced, are adequate in producing more effective decisions (Petts 2001). Administrators must be aware of how the participatory planning process unfolds and not allow a small, elite group to control the outcomes of the process.

2.2.4.4 Making the Wrong Decisions

In some cases the participatory process leads to outcomes that may not be the best solution for the problem and, occasionally, public officials or experienced practitioners may be aware of a more effective alternative. This is disadvantageous to the process if practitioners feel that implementation of a more sound alternative will defy the decisions of the citizen participants (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). As mentioned earlier the participation process can act as a tool for breaking any gridlock that may occur. Again, with respect to the New Urbanist movement, there must be a participatory process involving a diverse group of stakeholders while balancing input on the goals and objectives of the process.

2.3 Literature Review of the New Urbanism

The increased popularity of the New Urbanism as design theory has influenced community design worldwide. Interest among designers, public officials and the public at-large in creating walkable communities designed with the pedestrian in mind has been a driving force behind the movement (Hanlon 2010). Leaders in architecture and design,

as well as government entities such as United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the United State Green Building Council have recognized the benefit of traditional neighborhood development – a development pattern similar to that of the era prior to the rise of the automobile. They have, in turn, adopted many of the principles set forth by the Congress for the New Urbanism as development and redevelopment occurs.

Principles of the movement have become increasingly popular in application, yet debate remains as critics argue the credibility of the New Urbanists' agenda. Collectively, most agree that creating an effective and efficient participatory planning process is the foremost issue facing the movement today (Ellis 2002). Traditionally, the New Urbanist incorporated an all-inclusive forum for obtaining community feedback on a development or project. Andres Duany – considered the “Father of the New Urbanism” - and his colleagues have recognized the need to streamline the process as they strive to create a better process (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007).

Discussion of how to best approach future application is at the center of debate among planners, landscape architects, and critics of the movement (Hanlon 2010). Practitioners have traditionally applied the open-forum charrette as the primary tool for gathering information from key stakeholders and community members associated with a development. Over time, and as challenges presented themselves, the need for refinement of the process was revealed. The debate has shifted and proponents of the movement concerned with sustaining in an environment where costs and time over-runs have become commonplace seek to identify the best approach for creating the most efficient process (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007; Irvin and Stansbury 2005).

Practitioners of the New Urbanism recognize the benefits associated with the charrette but identifying the characteristics necessary for developing an effective, efficient process deemed successful from the participants' perspective is a topic in need of further research (Reed 2007). The process must be examined and the tools and techniques worthy of replication must be identified. Less successful aspects must be pinpointed and addressed in an effort to create a process that promotes balance among efficiency, effectiveness, and perceptions of success.

2.3.1 Historical Context of the New Urbanism

The basis for the New Urbanism lies on the idea of the neighborhood acting as the “building block of healthy cities and towns” (Duany et al. 1992). Andres Duany and fellow planners, architects and designers have, over the past three decades, developed the principles they deem necessary for constructing these blocks. Their primary goal is to create safe, walkable neighborhoods built with the pedestrian, rather than the car, in mind. A mix of housing options, expanded transit infrastructure, and sufficient public facilities are incorporated into New Urbanist design in an attempt to evoke a sense of community - a place where residents take pride in their homes and neighborhoods (CNU 1996). For a complete understanding of the New Urbanism one must consider the initial driving forces behind the movement. The following pages offer a review of the literature explaining the history, principles and applications of the New Urbanism.

2.3.2 Building the New Urbanism

New Urbanism, also commonly known as Transit Oriented Design (TOD) or Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), is based on a set of well-defined design

principles and practices. Popularity of the New Urbanism has grown and during the last two decades the application of the suggested principles by urban planners, architects, and landscape architects has become increasingly common (Urbanism 2012). Through the late 1980s and early 1990s the movement gained momentum and practitioners of the day recognized the need to define the phenomenon. Andres Duany, Peter Calthorpe, Elizabeth Moule, and others in the disciplines of architecture and planning who recognized the need for change focused on identifying the characteristics of a successful community. The group's desire to address the problems associated with suburban sprawl was the driving force behind this movement and throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s the Congress worked to promote and strengthen the principles set forth in their original Charter (Hanlon 2010; Talen and Ellis 2003). Since then, the application of New Urbanist principles has garnered much attention and has been applied, on varying levels, to development projects from New Jersey to Dubai.

2.3.3 Principles of the CNU

The basic principles of the Charter for the New Urbanism organize development into mixed-use neighborhoods that are diverse, compact, pedestrian oriented, and transit friendly (Bohl 2000). The overarching goal of the New Urbanist is to create transit and pedestrian oriented communities offering safe alternatives for residents to walk or bike to the places they most commonly travel (Day 2003). Additionally, New Urbanists strive to create diverse communities which offer a variety of housing options that target residents of various income levels and include single-family and multi-family housing (Day 2003; Steuterville 2001). The development of a defined space for social interaction and activity is also a key design principle in New Urbanist communities (CNU 1996). The following

paragraphs offer a description of each of the five main principles outlined in the Charter for the New Urbanism. These include: Mixed-use development, designing for diversity, incorporation and inclusion of a neighborhood center, elements of pedestrian oriented design, and the inclusion of citizen participants throughout the design process.

2.3.3.1 Mixed-Use Development

Mixed-use development is not a new idea. Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND), common before the rise of the automobile, was the prominent design practice when citizens relied on non-motorized methods of travel. Typically, the TND incorporated a neighborhood center of mixed-use facilities spatially arranged to accommodate the needs of local residents in relation to their residential setting. Proximity was important in a world devoid of motorized transportation. As America witnessed a tremendous increase in automobile usage decentralization of neighborhood centers led to sprawl and suburbanization. As a result the sense of place created in traditional neighborhood centers began to deteriorate (Jacobs 1961). In “The Death and Life of Great American Cities”, Jane Jacobs speaks of the importance of mixing land use as it promotes a sense of community and overall social interaction (1961). When place of residence is juxtaposed with places to work, shop, or recreate, social integration of different incomes, races or ages is encouraged since people will tend to walk more and drive less (Talen 2000). Incorporating mixed-use and a variety of business types within a five to ten minute walk radius to one’s residence promotes a certain ease of use (Talen 2000). Development practices that support this type of spatial organization are important to the New Urbanist agenda as the over-arching goal is to promote walkable communities.

2.3.3.2 Designing for Diversity

Designing communities that promote a population of diverse residents is also a defining principle of the New Urbanism. The Charter actively endorses the creation of community design aimed at reducing concentrations of poverty and encouraging neighborhood diversity (CNU 1996). In many areas this is accomplished by incorporating affordable housing throughout the region, rather than in a centralized location, and should occur in response to local job opportunities (CNU 1996). The CNU, supporters, and practitioners passionately advocate increasing the diversity of neighborhoods. Critics, however, suggest that although New Urbanists claim to incorporate diverse populations in their developments the actual practice offers few strategies directly supporting diversity (Day 2003). Furthermore, Day proposes that New Urbanism merely encourages a variety of housing types and a range of housing prices with the assumption that residential proximity will bring people of diverse ages, races, and incomes into daily interaction (2003).

2.3.3.3 Neighborhood Center

Spatial arrangement and organization of community with intentions of strengthening social fabric is also an objective of The Congress for the New Urbanism. The Charter identifies the Neighborhood, the District, and the Corridor as the recognizable areas within a community and often are the areas in which residents take pride (CNU 1996). The neighborhood center is often a location that strives to create a sense of place while offering opportunities for interaction on varying levels. Specifically, it “provides a venue for chance encounters which serve to strengthen community bonds” (Talen 2000). It also serves as a major node of activity and is the epicenter for shopping,

dining, services, and transit (Bohl 2000). In dense urban settings, the center is most likely to focus on a commercial corridor at the edge of a neighborhood, with residential areas fanning out in a roughly semicircular pattern away from the corridor (Calthorpe 1993). Development and design of the neighborhood center is reminiscent of pre- World War II neighborhoods where residents relied less on motorized forms of transportation. New Urbanists have adopted this traditional approach after recognizing the recurring built patterns of hamlets, villages and towns over thousands of years which have successfully evolved over time (Bohl 2000). These patterns have been “disrupted by twentieth century zoning and subdivision laws” which, in part, have placed a strain on society as we strive to meet the needs associated with the extensive infrastructure requirements common with suburban sprawl (Bohl 2000). As the incorporation of New Urbanist principles have become increasingly common designers have looked to cities in the US and abroad offering historical reference for new planning practices. Cities of relevance such as Annapolis, MD; Alexandria, VA; Savannah, GA; and Charleston, SC have been viewed as precedents (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000). Increasingly, developers are recognizing the benefits of incorporating the types of building forms, lot configurations, streets, and public spaces found in these historic cities as they design and build new neighborhoods and infill developments (Bohl 2000).

2.3.3.4 Pedestrian Oriented Design (POD)

New Urbanists also advocate design with the pedestrian in mind as one considers the Neighborhood, the District and the Corridor. Pedestrianism reflects the extent to which a neighborhood is designed for walking, the fostering of street-side activities, and how people find their way. Kim suggests “comprising elements of location and distance

as well as the smells, sounds, colors, textures or other visual qualities that characterize a given physical environment” help create a “sense of place” (2007). Elements common to pedestrian oriented design are often found in New Urbanist communities and include streetscapes, sidewalks, building arrangements, and setbacks all designed to create an interesting space while promoting a sense of security. Box suggests that the central theme in the New Urbanists vision is that ‘good’ cities are generally composed of “clusters of mixed-use neighborhoods that give residents quick access to their daily needs within a maximum five-minute walking distance” (2007). The CNU suggests, too, that the social connectedness associated with pedestrian oriented design serves to strengthen community bonds (CNU 1996). Physical elements such as building mass, building lines, streetscapes, vistas, porches, and the street grid contribute to the livability and vitality of neighborhoods and are often referred to as the “building blocks of communities” (Duany et al. 1992; Kashef 2009). New Urbanists support the notion that reinstating the traditional street and civic architecture will, in part, contribute to the restoration of those communities where the “sense of place” has been lost as a result of sprawl and other harmful planning practices (Kashef 2009).

2.3.3.5 Citizen Participation

Participatory Planning in the design process is also a defining principle of the New Urbanist movement and serves as the primary focus of this study. The Charter of the New Urbanism states:

We represent a broad-based citizenry, composed of public and private sector leaders, community activists, and multi-disciplinary professionals. We are committed to reestablishing the relationship between the art of building and the

making of community, through citizen based participatory planning and design (1996).

Here, the Charter suggests that the inclusion of public participation is integral in developing an effective, successful design. Specifically, the movement relies on the Charrette Process as the tool for obtaining input and feedback from a group of residents or public officials affiliated with a neighborhood or development.

2.3.4 Notable Projects

Since the movement began many neighborhoods and infill developments have been established based on the design principles recognized by the Charter for the New Urbanism. These communities reflect the design practices common prior to World War II and are reminiscent of a time when pedestrian oriented design was the catalyst for development. One may look to Andres Duany's design and development at Seaside, Florida as one of the first examples of New Urban Design (Mohny and Easterling 1991). Developments worldwide have adopted many of the principles of New Urbanism on various scales yet Seaside, after thirty years, still remains a point of reference for the movement. Conversely, there is also variety found in the perceptions of success as those neighborhoods labeled New Urbanist communities are compared to the tenets of the movement. Each community design, however, strives to create walkable communities where resident's reliance on motorized transportation is minimal. Specific sites worth consideration in the New Urbanist movement include the aforementioned Seaside, FL; Celebration, FL; Stapleton, CO; Holiday, CO and the Cotton District located in Starkville, MS. Each of these communities display elements of New Urbanist Design and are often viewed as precedents in the movement (Katz, Scully, and Bressi 1994).

The worldwide adoption and incorporation of New Urbanist principles is on the rise and the inclusion of these practices in both the public and private sectors has garnered recognition from proponents and critics alike. For an example one need only look to The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. In an effort to restructure their approach to public housing HUD has adopted and incorporated many of the principles of New Urbanist design in programs such as HOPE VI and the Choice Neighborhoods program (MMSA 2010).

2.3.5 Criticism of the New Urbanism

New Urbanism has been at the forefront of much debate and criticism as the movement has evolved and gained momentum. A review of the literature concerning the criticism of New Urbanism offers an insight into the many opinions on the topic. From the concept of sprawl to the inclusion of participatory planning in the process, skeptics and critics have offered endless observations on the perceived successes and failures of the movement.

Ellis proposes that the debate over the New Urbanism can be reduced to three main areas: empirical performance, ideological and cultural issues, and aesthetic quality (2002). In “The New Urbanism: Critiques and Rebuttals” Ellis states:

These categories are not hermetically sealed from one another; they are interrelated. Empirical claims about the superiority of New Urbanist design with respect to trip reduction, infrastructure costs, environmental protection and housing affordability continue to be vigorously discussed. The New Urbanism has also been swept up into ideological and cultural debates about the proper role of historical patterns in city planning, the importance of a public realm that

reinforces social interaction and civic virtue, the political implications of different urban forms, and the difference between false and authentic landscapes. These issues are contentious and are not resolvable by statistical studies. Aesthetic controversies also evade any simple empirical test (2002).

Sprawl, a by-product of suburban design practice in post-World War II development, has been a chief focus of the movement. The growth associated with modern planning practices has created a need for re-assessment (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000). Proponents and critics are vocal on both fronts. Ellis identifies one type of critic as the “free-market enthusiasts” and suggests they reject meaningful urban and regional planning (2002). These “free-marketeers” frequently defend sprawl with arguments characterized by an “endemic short-term economic logic, a historical analysis of urban problems, blindness to the distortions caused by concentrations of private power”, and “excess faith in the virtues of markets without a corresponding sense of their limits” (Feldman 1987; Kuttner 1997). Left unchecked, the problems associated with sprawl – automobile dependency and an infrastructure stretched beyond capacity – hinder the ability of creating safe, sustainable communities. Landscapes in these suburban areas are openly hostile to pedestrians; transit service is minimal (Ellis 2002). In general they are recognized as examples of poor urban design (Moudon 1987).

In another camp critics like Alex Krieger suggest that New Urbanism is, “in application, a form of new suburbia, that its primary appeal is through nostalgia, that it advances a rear-guard architectural aesthetic, and that there is nothing new, or even urban, about it” (1998). Krieger speculates that the success of New Urbanism will

eventually be measured by comparing its achievements against its claims (1998). In speaking to the founders of the New Urbanism he continues:

To date you have helped to produce: More subdivisions (albeit innovative ones) than towns; an increased reliance on private management of communities, not innovative forms of elected local governance; densities too low to support mixed use, much less to support public transportation; relatively homogenous demographic enclaves, not rainbow coalitions; a new, attractive, and desirable form of planned unit development, not yet substantial in fill, or even better, connections between new and existing development; marketing strategies better suited to real estate entrepreneurs than public officials; a new wave of form-follows-function determinism (oddly modern for such ardent critics of modernism), implying that community can be assured through design; a perpetuation of the myth of the creation and sustainment of urban environments amidst pastoral settings; carefully edited, rose-colored evocations of small town urbanism, from which a century ago many Americans fled not to the suburbs but to the city (Krieger 1998).

Other critics attack the political and social outcomes of the movement. Some argue that New Urbanism ignores the social and economic realities of the modern world and that now “people prefer privacy over community, spatial separation over contiguity and dispersed social networks over neighborhoods; elements offered by sprawl and not by New Urbanism” (Ellis 2002). Duany and Speck contend that New Urbanists are aware of global restructuring, social transformations, and the dynamics of the land

development process under late capitalism, but they are not in the position to single-handedly rearrange those structural variables (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000).

Many critics share a passion for debating the successes and failures of the movement yet fail to offer any viable alternatives to the criticism they offer. In the end, New Urbanism cannot satisfy all of the critics because “they demand contradictory changes” (Ellis 2002). Talen and Ellis also point out that those critiques often terminate in “lofty abstractions with no connection to the day-to-day realities of land development, finance and local politics” (2002). What can be said about the criticism of New Urbanism is that it has definitely initiated conversation between many parties both directly and indirectly associated with the movement. As more questions arise and more projects are completed opportunities to better understand what works and what does not will be presented and “New Urbanists have made it clear that they accept the challenge” (Ellis 2002).

2.4 The Charrette

Various participatory planning techniques and methods of involving the general public have been developed and have evolved as our societies have progressed. Complexity of the participatory planning process requires the facilitator to judge and gauge the practice most beneficial for a thoroughly successful outcome (Sanoff 2000). “Community surveys, review boards, advisory boards, task forces neighborhood and community meetings, public hearings, public information programs, and interactive cable television”, have all been used with varying degrees of success, depending on the effectiveness of the participation plan (Sanoff 2008). For the purpose of the New

Urbanist movement the Charrette has been adopted as the primary method of participatory planning (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000; Lennertz 2009).



Figure 2.2 The “Charrette”. (www.masterplanning.com)

The New Urbanist charrette is formally defined as “an intensive design-based planning workshop where all required information and specialists are present to enable relevant issues to be considered simultaneously and in an interactive way, with resultant decisions on detailed design and planning options” (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). For the New Urbanist the charrette has been the primary vehicle for incorporating citizen participation and is commonly used to facilitate citizen-based planning (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007).

Lennertz explains how the New Urbanist Charrette involves a specific three phase approach:

Pre-charrette phase of information gathering, education, publicity and promotion lasting two to six months;

The Charrette event, an interactive, multi-disciplinary design workshop held over several consecutive days with a component of public or key stakeholder involvement. Ideas and concepts are “tested” through the design of alternatives against what is possible in terms of the geography, context, agency interests and the public input. These are then synthesized into a preferred plan;

Post-charrette implementation phase, including further feasibility testing, public review and plan refinement (2009).

Accordingly, variations of the procedure rely on the nature and context of the local application of the charrette process but the design “focus, intensity, interactive multi-disciplinary nature and speed of the process are fundamental to the approach” (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007; Lennertz 2009). The New Urbanist Charrette is complex and warrants a concrete explanation to separate it from other methods of participatory planning. Lennertz continues by suggesting nine strategies that distinguish charrettes from other participatory planning and design practices:

1. Charrettes work collaboratively with all participants
2. Use design to achieve a shared vision
3. Create holistic solutions
4. Design in detail
5. Apply reasonable pressure through a series of deadlines

6. Communicate in short, regular feedback loops
7. Work for at least four to seven consecutive days to accommodate feedback loops
8. Work on site
9. Produce an actionable plan (2009)

The rapid succession of the events of the charrette process leads to the final design, and, with the inclusion of multiple disciplines, as well as the public, ideas are exchanged and points of view from all sides are considered. In the charrette process the forum is open, knowledge is shared and policies, attitudes, emotions and proposals of all who have a stake in the future of the place are introduced and exposed (McGlynn and Murrain 1994). McGlynn also comments on the legitimacy of the process stating that the outcomes will be severely questioned without the comprehensive involvement and commitment of all stakeholders (1994).

The charrette process has been applied in many contexts and is most commonly used in the “planning process for specific new community or redevelopment projects” (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). Because of the variety of contexts in which the charrette is applied there are often differences in how the process evolves and different circumstances may call for alterations to the standard process (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007).

2.4.1 A Critique of the Charrette Process

Not surprisingly, as with the general concept of New Urbanism, the charrette process is the subject of much criticism among scholars and practitioners. At the forefront of the critical debate is the lack of thorough understanding of the usefulness of

the charrette in solving conflict (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). Proponents urge that the charrette is adequate for solving complex and controversial problems (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). Critics argue that the charrette process is only applicable in certain circumstances and “may not be adequate for solving the problems associated with multifaceted projects with divergent or conflicting views” (Sarkissian, Cook, and Walsh 1997). Proponents of the New Urbanism are confident in their commitment to incorporate elements of participatory planning in the design process. Also, they understand how a properly coordinated charrette can successfully address the issues facing a community.

Critics also voice concern about the facilitation process and those who guide it. During the charrette process the administrator, or team of facilitators, guide the proceedings. Participants may identify these groups or individuals as experts in the field of New Urbanism and may place tremendous faith in their guidance. Many critics identify this as a fatal flaw and argue that a facilitator will guide the charrette proceedings in a way that he or she sees fit (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). Many critics ask: “What is the real aim of involving the public in the planning process?” if the facilitator, in their opinion, is the one making the decision (Krieger 1998). Bond offers several possible answers to the question:

One is that there is a genuine commitment to participatory involvement, but that New Urbanists are not fully cognizant of the potential effects of the type of process they have adopted. A second is that Urbanists seek only information or local knowledge to inject into the project outcomes, rather than the more transformative and often intangible outcomes advocated by many contemporary

planning theorists and practitioners with a strong focus on “bottom-up” approaches, the outcomes of which include social learning, capacity building, the generation of social capital, and the engagement of local people in decision making that affects them. A third is that in controlling how they approach public participation, New Urbanists ensure that they perpetuate their own tenets and yet fulfill the increasing demands for public inclusion in planning processes (2007).

New Urbanists refute the notion that they merely function to serve their own agenda and maintain that the charrette is integral to the design outcomes as it strives to include those who have the most at stake (Bond and Thompson-Fawcett 2007). Still, critics suggest that New Urbanist practices incorporate an exaggerated level of citizen participation. Grant refutes: the “fear of local opposition to projects is palpable and difficult policy or environmental issues are set aside” during the process as “participants focus on design questions” (2006).

2.5 Mississippi Main Street Association and the New Urban Charrette

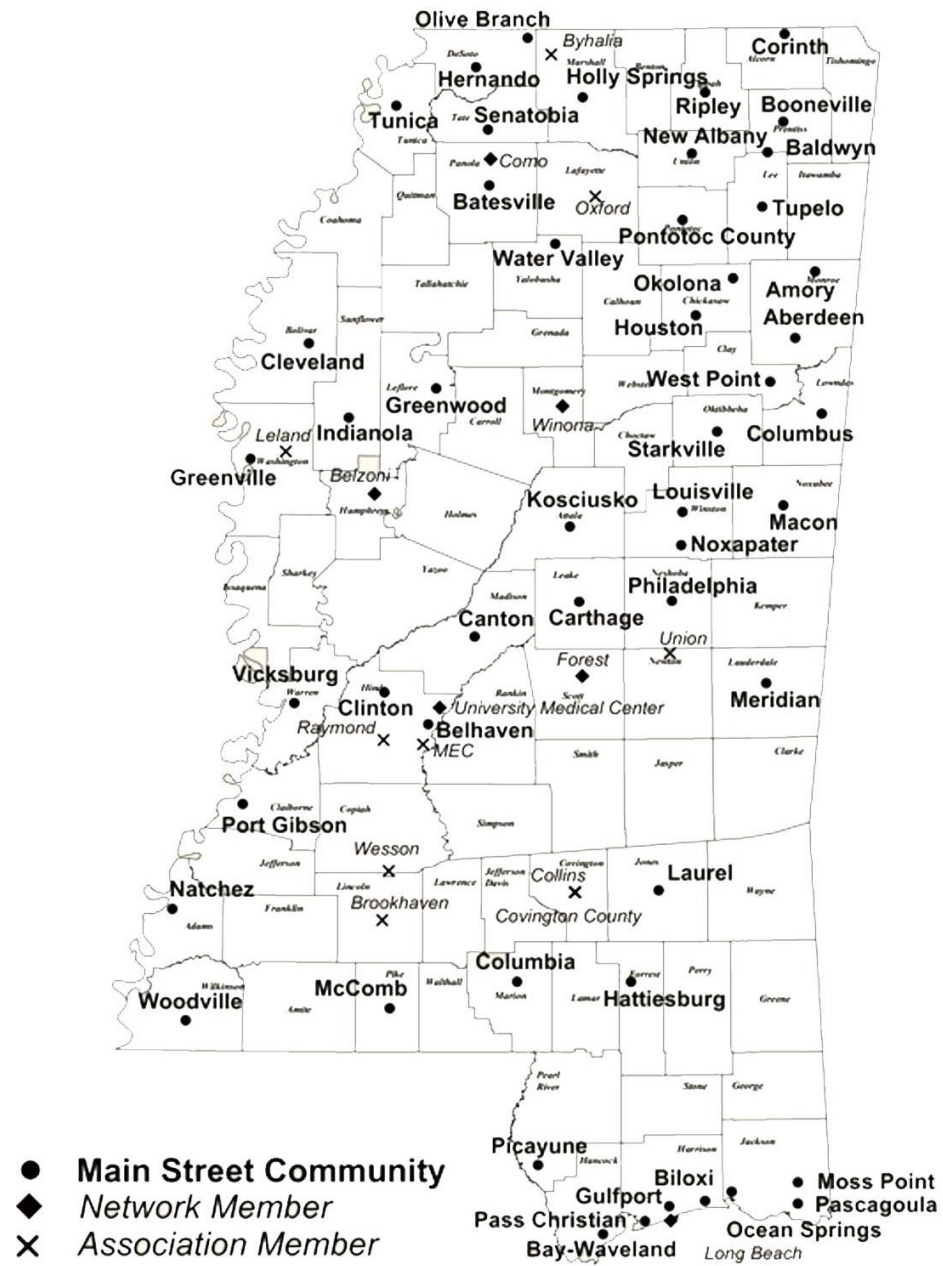
The Main Street Approach to Downtown Revitalization formed the foundation of the Mississippi Main Street Association. In 1977 the National Trust for Historic Preservation proceeded with a demonstration project for addressing the blight associated with commercial buildings in cities across the Midwest (Robertson 2004). The resulting establishment was a non-profit organization whose objective was “to direct the revitalization efforts of downtowns and surrounding neighborhoods throughout American cities and towns” (MMSA 2010). The organization evolved as their efforts proved successful, and in 1980, with the support of a variety of government entities, led to the creation of the National Main Street Center (Robertson 2004). Throughout the early

1980s the Main Street Approach expanded to include 31 state programs. Today, that number has grown to 43. This growth and application of the Main Street Approach has evolved into “one of the largest economic development programs in the United States” (MMSA 2010). Interestingly, many of the research findings of the initial demonstration project are common today (Robertson 2004). A key finding of the research suggests that “the necessity of a full-time manager and a strong private-public partnership, as well as the realization that a strong organization, effective promotions, a commitment to quality design, and economic diversification needed to accompany historic preservation” (Robertson 2004). The National Trust for Historic Preservation suggests that the Main Street Approach “advocates a return to community self-reliance, local empowerment, and the rebuilding of traditional commercial districts based on their unique assets: distinctive architecture, a pedestrian-friendly environment, personal service, local ownership, and a sense of community” (MMSA 2010).

In 1989 the Mississippi Main Street Association, originally a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, joined forces with the Mississippi Development Authority to form a statewide Main Street Program (MMSA 2010). Through the 1990s popularity and application of the approach increased. Between 1993 and 1998 the number of Main Street Communities in Mississippi grew from sixteen to forty. Today, outreach across the state has led to the creation of “51 active Main Street Programs and more than 40 Network, Association Members and charrette communities” (MMSA 2010). The MMSA offers a variety of benefits to member communities across the state. Services include staff hiring assistance, festival and event development, and charrette services to name a few. Their mission is “to provide leadership, guidance and counsel to

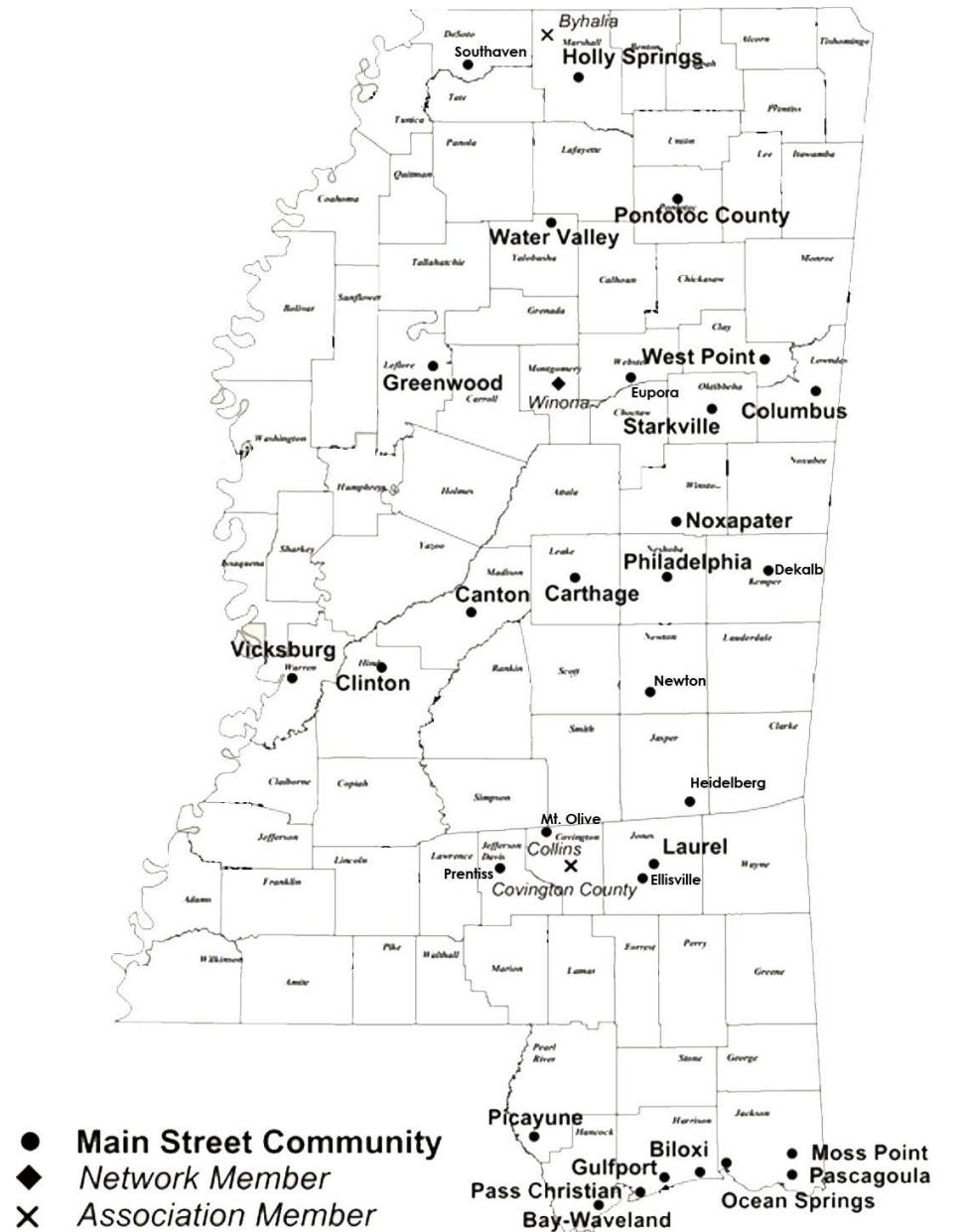
Mississippi Main Street communities through organization, promotion, design and economic development to make our cities and towns better places to work, live and play” (MMSA 2010).

Since 2000 the Mississippi Main Street Association has promoted the facilitation of more than 35 community design charrettes throughout the state (MMSA 2010).



November 2012

Figure 2.3 Member Communities of the Mississippi Main Street Association (www.msmainstreet.com).



November 2012

Figure 2.4 Mississippi Main Street Communities having completed a charrette.

2.6 Research Method

2.6.1 Surveys and Self-Administered Questionnaires

Surveys have been used throughout history as researchers gathered information from a population. Modern researchers commonly utilize the survey method for collecting data from respondents as the process has become increasingly efficient and readily available for populations to access. Today's society, progressively intuitive with internet and web-based applications, displays an eagerness to participate in social networking like never before. Researchers today are armed with knowledge of the traditional survey method formulated by Don Dillman in the 1970s and recognize the benefits associated with utilizing the survey to gather information, especially considering the ease of access to various populations via modern technology. E-mail, websites, Facebook, Linked-In, Twitter, web-based applications, and multiple other forms of social media allow for a greater connectedness among people the world over. Combining the format of the widely accepted Total Design Method for surveys design by Don Dillman – who claims has the ability to produce response rates of 70 percent - with the ease found in today's technology provides researchers a new tool for investigative questioning (Dillman 2007).

These technologically advanced methods of survey distribution have been proven time-savers as they are more readily accessible to the survey population; however, they may offer a reduced response rate when compared with the traditional method (Schuldt and Totten 1994). In many cases the response rate is dependent on the frequency with which the survey population interacts via e-mail or other web-based application (Kiernan

et al. 2005). Questions of the process do arise as one considers validating accuracy and reliability of the data received from the survey distributed via electronic mail.

The popularity of the survey is in part due to the usefulness and flexibility of the tool as it may be adapted for multiple purposes and for a population ranging in size (Schuldt and Totten 1994). Dillman, among others, has led extensive research endeavors in an attempt to further assess the benefits of various survey methods. Dillman's tailored design "involves using multiple motivational features in compatible and mutually supportive ways to encourage high quantity and quality of response to the surveyor's request" (2009). Dillman's work serves as the seminal text for research involving methodology and forms the framework of the study.

Milburn explains that all surveys share common characteristics and describes the survey format common to the majority of designed surveys (1999). She suggests the following format:

1. Definition of the Problem
2. Development of Methodology
3. Questionnaire Writing
4. Cover Letter: writing and packaging
5. Sample design
6. Pre-testing
7. Data collection
8. Data processing and analysis
9. Reporting results (Milburn 1999)

Babbie discusses the survey format by also recognizing the common characteristics of all surveys while offering that the most important step in survey preparation is the construction – including format and appearance - of the questionnaire (2004). The evolution of typical questionnaire construction begins by selecting the type of questionnaire, identifying what types of questions are to be utilized, identifying the survey population, and selecting the appropriate mode of survey distribution (Milburn 1999; Dillman 2007). Additionally, Dillman offers that the method of distribution chosen by the researcher is often the key consideration as survey construction evolves (2007).

Face-to face interviews, telephone surveys, mail surveys, and questionnaires are various survey formats common today. Mail surveys often take the form of self-administered questionnaires with the respondents answering questions on their own accord (Babbie 1992). In recent decades advancements in technology have promoted the ease of use and have resulted in the increase in web-based surveys and questionnaires. Challenges and advantages exist with this form of distribution just as with other methods. Speed of distribution and return, strength in reliability, lower costs, and the option of anonymity are some advantages characteristic of the self-administered questionnaire which often make it appealing as a viable survey method (Babbie 1992; Milburn 1999). Limitations of the self-administered questionnaire exist as they may become vulnerable to data entry and analysis error, low response rates or non-response rates (Dillman 2007; Couper 2000). However, when weighed against other survey methods, the self-administered questionnaire commonly becomes the preferred option.

Error also must be considered as a limitation to self-administered questionnaires. Typically, as Dillman suggests, error occurs in four ways: sampling error, non-coverage

error, non-response error, and measurement error (2007). Dillman defines sampling error as “the result of surveying only some, and not all, (randomly selected) elements of the survey population” (2007). Non-coverage error “arises because some members of the population are not covered by the sampling frame and therefore have no chance of being selected into the sample”, has diminished the usefulness of the mail survey method (Dillman 2002). Dillman describes non-response error and how it “stems from the fact that some members of the sample population do not respond to the survey questionnaire” (2002). Eliminating this error should be the focus for increasing the rate of return (Dillman 2002). Measurement error, the fourth type, “refers to the discrepancy between underlying, unobserved variables (whether opinions, behavior or attributes) and the observed survey responses” (Babbie 1992; Dillman 2002).

Also important to the survey design and construction is the development of the survey question type. Common among these are: open-ended, closed-ended, and Likert scale questions. Each question type offers advantages and disadvantages and may be constructed by the researcher to offer opportunities for varying forms of response. In an open-ended question respondents are required to provide their own response to the question in front of them. While beneficial for gathering more detailed information of the survey topic open-ended questions are often difficult to code and are less likely to be completed by members of the survey population (Babbie 1992). Closed-ended questioning, the most common type, provides a list of options from which the respondent may select the answer. Advantage lies in the researcher’s ability to easily code the answers gathered in a survey utilizing closed-ended questioning (Babbie 1992). The third type, Likert-scale questions, are also easily coded but may result in a false

representation of the sample population and are susceptible to non-response error as respondents may not agree with the answers provided and choose an answer non-reflective of their actual feelings or may refuse to answer at all (Babbie 1992).

2.6.2 The Tailored Design Method

Research conducted in the 1970s by Don Dillman and based on the theory of social exchange led to the development of the Tailored Design Method (TDM). Specifically focused on mail and telephone surveys, common during the period, the TDM was to be a “one size fits all approach aimed at creating an increase in response rates” (Dillman 2007). As the researcher prepares the survey for the population Dillman addresses the concerns involving the response rate and suggests a specific approach to distribution. Four appropriately timed “personalized mailings”, constructed following specific instructions from the implementation to how one should fold the survey, formed the TDM approach (Dillman 2007). This “open-minded” approach only considered one theory and methodology for the construction and development of all surveys but it “may allow the researcher to increase response rates and improve data quality” while “decreasing error and bias” (Dillman 2007; Schaefer and Dillman 1998).

Dillman describes five steps in his approach to distribution of the self-administered questionnaire intended to increase the response rate from the sample population. They include:

1. Pre-notice letter
2. The questionnaire
3. Thank you postcard
4. Replacement Questionnaire

5. Final contact (2007)

Additionally, it is suggested that “sending a cover letter, keeping the questionnaire short, providing an incentive such as a copy of the results, including a stamped self-addressed envelope, and sending two follow-up mailings which include a reminder letter and an additional copy of the questionnaire” will increase the rate of response and are important to Dillman’s TDM (Milburn 1999; Milburn and Brown 2003). Other researchers have tested the Tailored Design Method through use in studies of their own. Modifications of the approach have also occurred and are encouraged by Dillman who offers that the questionnaires be “refined for specific situations” (2007).

2.6.3 E-Mail and Web-Based Surveys

With the success of Dillman’s TDM and the advances in modern technology came the increase in application of the web-based survey. Internet and e-mail usage increased significantly during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and, progressively, more research concerning the merits of electronic surveys is shedding new light on the subject. Understanding how Dillman’s research during the 1970s and application of the Dillman Method since, when applied in digital format, warranted further investigation.

In 1998 Dillman and Schaefer began research which used the TDM for postal mail surveys in electronic mail surveys with the intent of developing a similar standard methodology for electronic surveys (Schaefer and Dillman 1998). Utilizing the original methodology the researchers surveyed a sample population of 904 faculty members at Washington State University. The group was divided into four separate groups each receiving the questionnaire via different modes in an attempt to compare the results of the traditional method with the electronic method (Schaefer and Dillman 1998). Here,

Dillman and Schaefer focused on the “response rates, response quality and response time” (1998). Each potential respondent received a pre-notice letter, the questionnaire, thank you or reminder, and a replacement questionnaire (Schaefer and Dillman 1998). The mixed-mode method was then applied and varied for each of the four groups. As applied, “group 1 received all paper contacts, group 2 received all e-mail contacts, group 3 received a paper pre-notice letter with all three additional mailings made by email, and group 4 all email contacts except for the third mailing which was the thank you/reminder contact” (Schaefer and Dillman 1998). Results revealed the response rate for the e-mail survey to be 54 percent while the response rate for the traditional method remained slightly higher at 57.5percent, yet showed that e-mail surveys contained “more complete returned questionnaires as 69.4 percent of those responding to the e-mail version completed at least 95 percent of the survey, while only 56.6 percent of those responding to the paper version completed 95 percent” (Schaefer and Dillman 1998). Also notable was that responses to open-ended questioning were noticeably more complete than those returned in the mail survey (Schaefer and Dillman 1998).

Response time, the third factor in the research, differed among the modes of distribution. With a traditional mail survey the researchers found the response time to be 14.39 days while the e-mail survey response time averaged 9.16 days (Schaefer and Dillman 1998). Final conclusions from the survey conducted by Dillman and Schaefer suggested that e-mail surveys distributed to a population may be used as a low cost means for data collection resulting in response rates greater than those found in traditional mail surveys (1998).

Following their research Schaefer and Dillman were able to develop a methodology for the distribution of web-based, or e-mail surveys as:

1. Utilize a multiple contact strategy much like that used for regular mail surveys.
2. Personalize all e-mail contacts so that none are part of a mass mailing that reveals either multiple recipient addresses or a listserv origin.
3. Keep the cover letter brief to enable respondents to get to the first question without having to scroll down the page.
4. Inform respondents of alternative ways to respond such as printing and sending back their responses.
5. Include a replacement questionnaire with the reminder message
6. Limit the column width of the questionnaire to about 70 characters in order to decrease the likelihood of wrap-around text.
7. Begin with an interesting but simple-to-answer question.
8. Ask respondents to place X's inside the brackets to indicate their answers
9. Consider limiting scale lengths and making other accommodations to the limitations of e-mail to facilitate mixed-mode comparisons when response comparisons with other modes will be made (1998).

Dillman adds that while these recommendations follow the original version they must still be tailored “to accommodate each individual research study” (2007).

The design and implementation of the e-mail survey, much like the traditional method, involves specific principles for fostering the greatest response rate. Dillman identifies the following as design principles worthy of replication in e-mail surveys:

1. A brief, one page notice letter in e-mail format
2. Multiple contacts with shortened timing between mailings (two or three days between pre-notice and initial questionnaire)
3. Progress bar to provide the respondents with a percentage of completion
4. Use the same visual principles as paper mail surveys (2007)

While results vary many of those having conducted research concerning the merits of the e-mail survey suggest that they “are as effective as a mail survey in the completion of quantitative questions that measure knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and intentions” (Kiernan et al. 2005).

Web-based surveys have also become a useful tool for gathering information from a particular population. Typically, web-based surveys follow many of the same design principles as mail and e-mail surveys and, considering the ease of use associated with the format, web-based surveys have become the primary method for Internet surveying (Dillman 2007; Solomon 2001). This format proves advantageous as it offers a reduction in data entry error, costs, response time, it allows the researcher instant access to the data, and can accommodate a large sample population (Solomon 2001). Disadvantages associated with the web-based survey arise in the form of low response rates or error due to lack of Internet access or Internet connection speed which may hinder the respondent’s ability to complete the survey (Solomon 2001; Crawford, Couper, and Lamias 2001).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Needs Assessment Survey

3.1.1 Survey Sample

Since 2005 the Mississippi Main Street Association has conducted a total of thirty-four Charrettes across the state of Mississippi (MMSA 2010). Designated Main Street Managers, Chamber of Commerce leaders, and political officials in each community rallied the local populace to participate in these events and have encouraged cooperation among the public and seasoned professionals with hopes of generating designs offering holistic solutions. Each of the MMSA communities having completed a charrette identified and invited key stakeholders to join their efforts and provide feedback from a local standpoint while addressing the goals and objectives set forth early in the charrette process. These selected stakeholders - those who participated beyond the opening and closing sessions - served as the sample population for this survey.

Stakeholder's contact information was gathered following correspondence with the Main Street Manager or Chamber of Commerce contact in each community resulting in a total of 623 contact e-mails. Obtaining a list of contact's emails from the Main Street Managers in the communities involved provided a sample population limited to those who were active participants throughout the charrette process. It did not include contact

information for the general populace who are rarely present for the entire stakeholder-access charrette.

3.1.2 Questionnaire Context

The questionnaire evolved from research conducted by Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey. Their 1997 book, “Community Building: What Makes It Work?” discusses their approach for developing criteria used to evaluate community building efforts. Following in-depth research and evaluation of 525 studies Mattessich and Monsey utilized findings from the forty-eight most applicable community building events to identify twenty-eight key factors that influence success in the community building process (1997). The research suggests that communities exhibiting a majority of these factors are more likely to experience a successful community building effort (Mattessich et al. 1997). Albeit a broad topic Mattessich and Monsey identified several areas of focus to narrow their research. First, the authors defined the term “community” as those “formed on the basis of where people live” (Mattessich et al. 1997). Second, emphasis was placed on community strengths (as well as community building initiatives that increase those strengths) aimed at improving living standards for residents (Mattessich et al. 1997). Next they examine social capacity and discussed the internal potential of the community to accomplish what it needs to (not focusing on task accomplishment itself, only the potential to do so) (Mattessich et al. 1997). Lastly, they addressed the definition of terms needed to make their analysis uniform across different studies.

After sharpening their focus and analyzing the forty-eight events Mattessich and Monsey identified twenty-eight factors that influence the success of community building efforts and divided them into three categories:

Characteristics of the Community – the social, psychological, and geographical attributes of a community and its residents that contribute to the success of a community building effort.

Characteristics of the Community Building Process – factors that make up the process by which people attempt to build community, such as representation, communication and technical assistance.

Characteristics of Community Building Organizers – the qualities of those people who organize and lead a community building effort, such as commitment, trust, understanding, and experience.

Utilizing a conglomeration of survey questions developed following the exploration of the twenty-eight factors described by Mattessich and Monsey as those necessary for successful community building efforts will provide a base of measure for assessing the perceptions of efficacy and effectiveness held by charrette participants.

3.1.3 Questionnaire Construction

Due to the seemingly common setbacks and lack of a standard methodology for the development of online questionnaires the Tailored Design Method suggested by Dillman served as the foundation for the construction of the questionnaire used to gather data for this thesis. The questionnaire design followed suggestions made by Dillman in his Tailored Design Method for Mail Surveys and was selected because of its popularity in traditional survey design. Schafer and Dillman suggest that the design principles of the TDM are applicable to, and sufficient for use in the development of e-mail and web-based surveys (1998).

Dillman's TDM "involves using multiple motivational features in compatible and mutually supportive ways to encourage high quantity and quality of response to the surveyor's request" (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009). Reducing survey error, developing a set of survey procedures, and encouraging positive social exchange are three fundamental considerations Dillman offers as one approaches survey design (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009).

The researcher in this study followed Dillman's suggestions for the design of the questionnaire, tailored them to the survey, and included the following elements:

1. Simple introductory e-mail containing the survey link
2. Instructions and general time frame for completing the survey
3. Familiar visual design theme based on "Facebook"
4. Easy to read font type and size
5. Progress bar to track completion percentage
6. Related questions grouped on individual pages
7. Open-ended questioning placed at the end of the survey (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009)

3.1.4 Implementation of the Survey

Increased Internet usage in recent decades has also created additional challenges not common in traditional mail surveys. Web based application, e-mail, and social media are all sources that inundate our daily lives and have produced a technological society cautious of providing personal information (Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009).

Understanding the challenges associated with the implementation of a successful questionnaire is necessary and Dillman offers suggestions in the TDM that are applicable

to online and web-based surveys. He suggests five elements for improving the response rates of the sample population:

1. Pre-notice letter
2. Questionnaire
3. Thank you postcard
4. Replacement questionnaire
5. Final contact (Dillman 2007)

For the purpose of this survey the researcher deviated from the TDM by eliminating the thank you postcard common in traditional mail surveys. The researcher took steps aimed at improving response rates and address potential concerns of the survey population. The steps included: a concise introductory email containing the link to the web-based survey, the survey was tailored to be easily completed in fifteen minutes or less, addressed recipients using the blind carbon copy email to ensure anonymity, and provided an incentive for respondents who completed the survey before the closing date.

The alteration of the TDM resulted in the following sequence of e-mail distribution to charrette participants:

1. Initial Contact E-Mail containing a link to the questionnaire
2. Follow-up / Reminder E-mail
3. Final Reminder / Thank you E-mail

Implementation and distribution of the questionnaire utilized the web-based software provided by SurveyGizmo which offers real-time data and response information. The utilization of web-based software proves beneficial as it allows the researcher to view the data as subjects submit their responses. Additionally, web-based

surveys offer a low cost option for distribution and often increase the speed and accuracy of data collection while helping eliminate or reduce the threat of human error (Fleming and Bowden 2009). Web-based software will often manage “the distribution of email cover letters, built-in statistical analysis and reporting capabilities, and automatic tracking of people who have responded” (Solomon 2001).

3.1.5 The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of a total of thirty-six questions. It included five open-ended questions, ten closed-ended questions, nineteen questions using the Likert-scale, and two questions in which respondents were asked to rank characteristics in order of importance.

3.1.6 Distribution Procedures

In the months prior to the distribution of the survey the researcher worked to identify and initiate contact with the Main Street Managers in the communities where charrettes had occurred. Additional correspondence with MMSA Director, Bob Wilson, identified contacts within the Chamber of Commerce in communities lacking a designated manager for the Main Street Program. Following the collection of contacts the researcher distributed an e-mail requesting any existing contact information for residents who were active participants in the stakeholder access approach. The resulting lists identified 623 potential respondents across the state as a survey population for the questionnaire.

To gather data for use in this survey the researcher implemented three separate electronic mailings utilizing Survey Gizmo as the means for gathering anonymous

feedback. The first mailing included a description of the study, discussed the purpose and importance to the discipline of Landscape Architecture, and offered a link to the web-based survey. On November 28, 2012 the researcher delivered the email to the 623 potential respondents whose contact information was gathered from Main Street Associations and Chamber of Commerce directors across the state. As mentioned previously, the distribution procedures were altered from those suggested by Dillman (2009). A series of three e-mails were sent to potential respondents and included: the initial contact e-mail containing a link to the questionnaire; a follow-up/reminder e-mail; and a final reminder/thank you e-mail.

In the days following the initial contact e-mail 253 addresses were returned as either inactive or non-existent. Additionally, five potential respondents replied via e-mail stating that the event in their community occurred so far in the past that they were not comfortable providing a response based upon their inability to recall specifics of the event. These contacts were eliminated from the mailing list prior to the distribution of the second mailing. The second email, and first reminder, was sent to an updated list of 370 potential respondents on December 12, 2012. Again, the details of the survey and its goals and objectives were explained and a link to the web-based survey was provided. The third and final e-mail was distributed on January 2, 2013. It also included an explanation along with a letter of thanks for those having already completed the survey. At the close of the survey on January 16, 2013 a total of 100 people had followed the link to the survey. Unfortunately, fifteen of those merely began the survey yet never answered the questions. These non-respondents were dismissed from the final survey count.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The research of Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey as detailed in the book “Community Building: What Makes It Work – A Review of Factors Influencing Successful Community Building” served as the foundation for the survey. In their research they identify twenty-eight key factors that influence success in the community building process and suggest that communities exhibiting a majority of these factors are more likely to experience a successful community building effort (Mattessich et al. 1997). For the purpose of this study Demographics, Characteristics of Community, the Process of Community Building, Facilitation, and Perceptions of the Process were identified as key variables. The results of the web-based survey are presented in the following pages. Survey questions addressed factors deemed most appropriate by the researcher for gathering perceptions of the stakeholder-access charrette process.

4.2 Response Rate

At the close of the survey 100 people accepted consent and followed the link to the survey. After omitting the non-respondents eighty-five responses were deemed suitable and produced a final response rate of 23 percent (85/374). This is significantly lower than the suggested 70 percent response rate offered by Dillman in his TDM and is a

factor that must be considered in this and future research (Dillman, Tortora, and Bowker 1998; Dillman, Smyth, and Christian 2009).

Figure 4.1 and Table 4.1 show the frequency of responses for the survey by week. During the first two weeks twenty-seven people followed the link to begin the survey. Over the course of the next three weeks, notably, during the holiday season, no one followed the link to begin the survey process. Following the distribution of the final reminder at the beginning of week six, thirty-two people began the survey. At the beginning of week seven, as the closing date drew near, forty-one did the same.

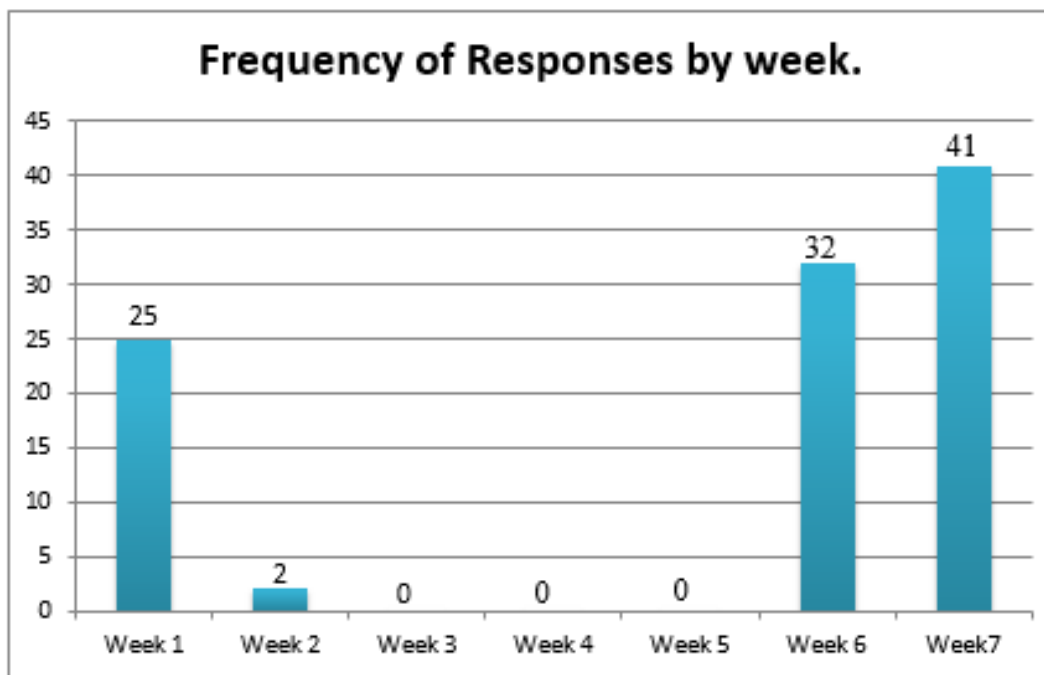


Figure 4.1 Frequency of Responses by week.

Table 4.1 Frequency of Responses by week.

WEEK	Total Responses
1	25
2	2
3	0
4	0
5	0
6	32
7	41

Additionally, the researcher examined the fall-off rate, the rate at which potential respondents were exiting the survey, following each page. The final survey consisted of eight pages and Figure 4.2 shows when potential respondents decided to leave the survey at the end of each page.

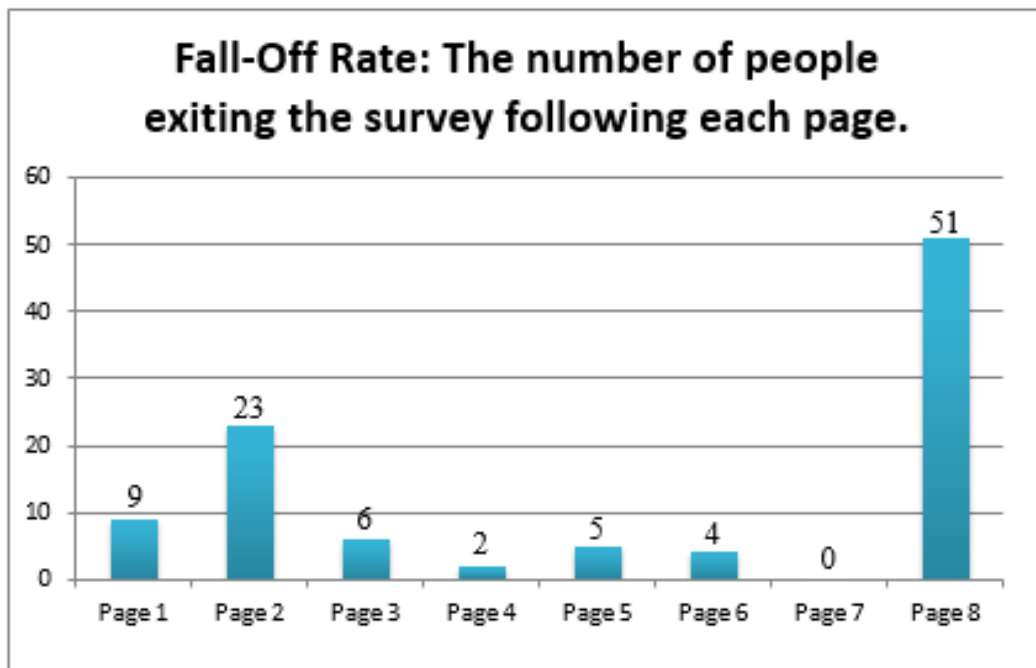


Figure 4.2 Fall-Off Rate: The number of people exiting the survey following each page.

4.3 Demographics

Of the usable responses eighty-four (99%) people answered the question concerning gender. Of the respondents forty-six (54.8%) identified themselves as male and thirty-eight (45.2%) as female, with the majority (87.1%) claiming Caucasian ethnicity (Figure 4.3). Ages of the respondents ranged from twenty-eight to eighty-three with a mean of fifty-one years (Figure 4.4). The majority of participants ranged in age from fifty to sixty-nine (52%).

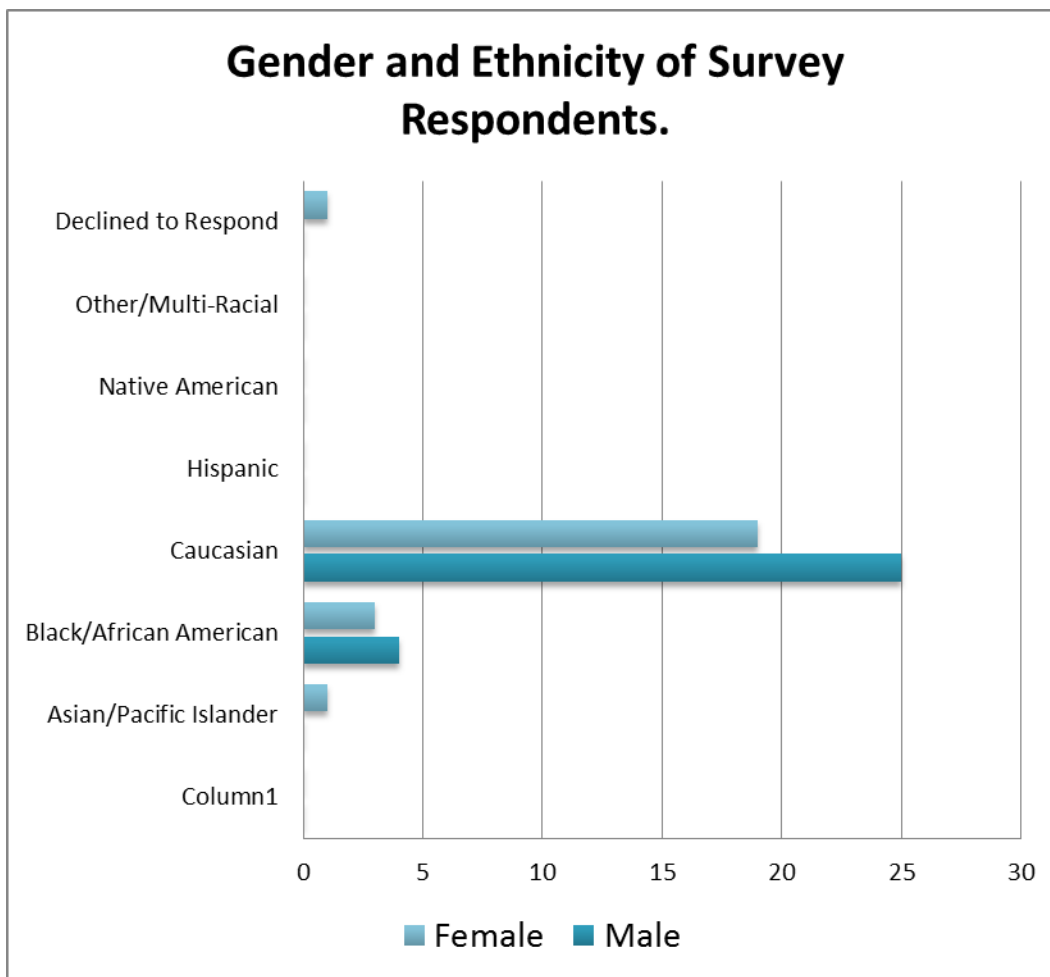


Figure 4.3 Gender and Ethnicity of Survey Respondents

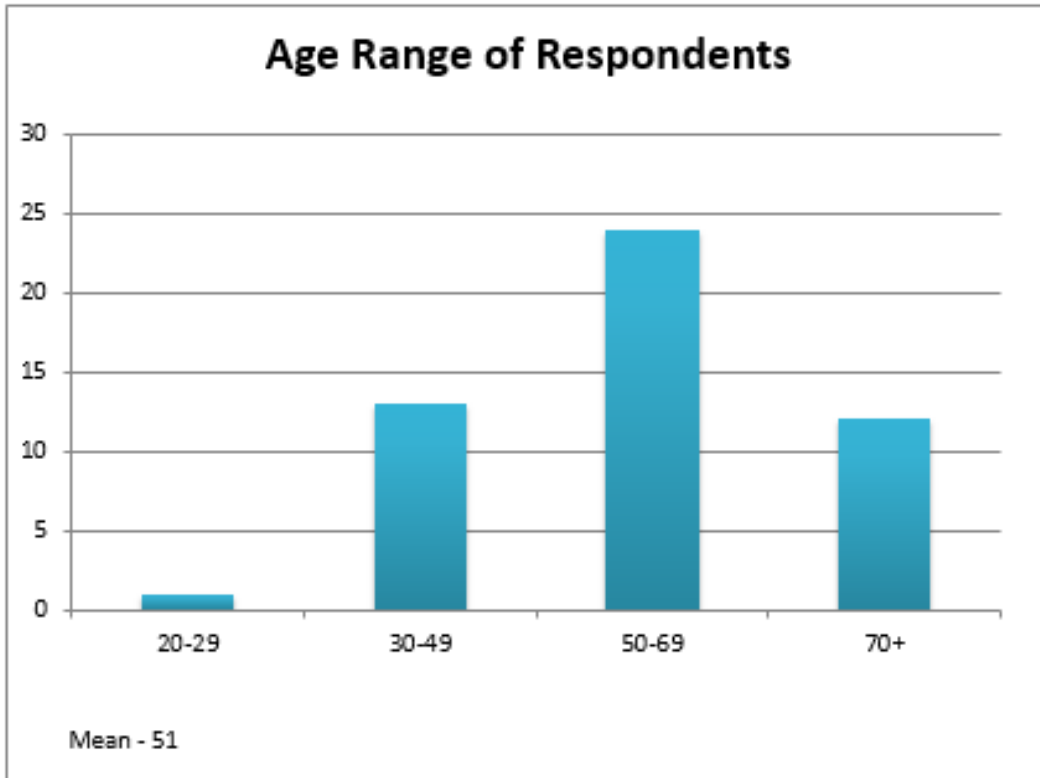


Figure 4.4 Age Range of Respondents

Questioning concerning the educational attainment of charrette respondents resulted in a 96 percent response rate with the majority (47.6%) holding a bachelor’s degree (Figure 4.5). Of the remaining, eighteen (22.0%) had obtained a Master’s Degree, nine (11.0%) identified themselves as having “some college” experience, seven (8.5%) had obtained a Doctorate Degree, three (3.7%) a high school diploma or GED, three (3.7%) an Associate’s Degree, and three (3.7%) a Law Degree.

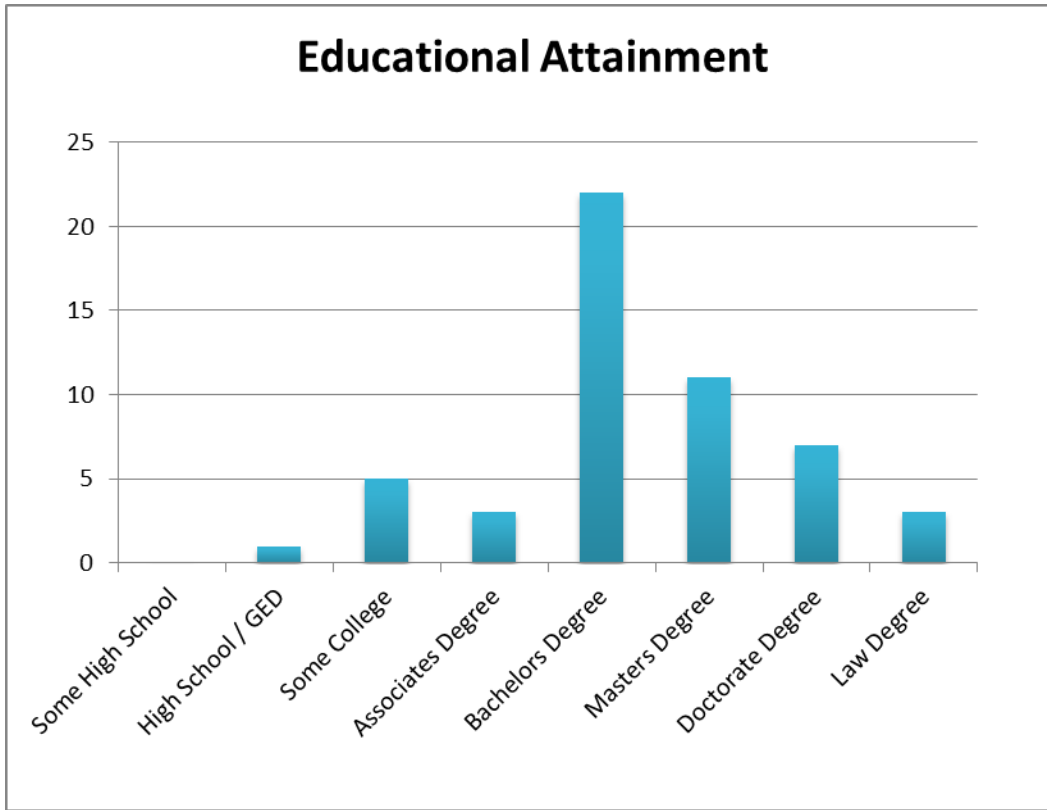


Figure 4.5 Educational Attainment of Survey Respondents

The overwhelming majority of the participants who responded to the survey (88.0%) identified themselves as full-time employees. In this case eighty-three (98%) of those who participated in the survey answered the question “In which profession do you work?” Figure 4.6 shows that thirteen of the respondents (15.7%) work in the profession of education and thirteen (15.7%) selected “other” as their professional status. Of the remaining fifty-seven respondents, ten (12.1%) selected accounting/finance/banking as their profession, eight (9.6%) selected management, six (7.2%) aligned themselves with the professions architecture and design, and five (6.0%) chose sales/marketing and real estate. Respondents associated with advertisement and the food/restaurant industry

consisted of four (4.8%) people, three respondents (3.6%) aligned themselves with the news/information industry, and two (2.4%) were event planners. Conversely, one (1.2%) respondent in each represented the fields of clerical, construction, customer service, human resources, operations, production, and research.

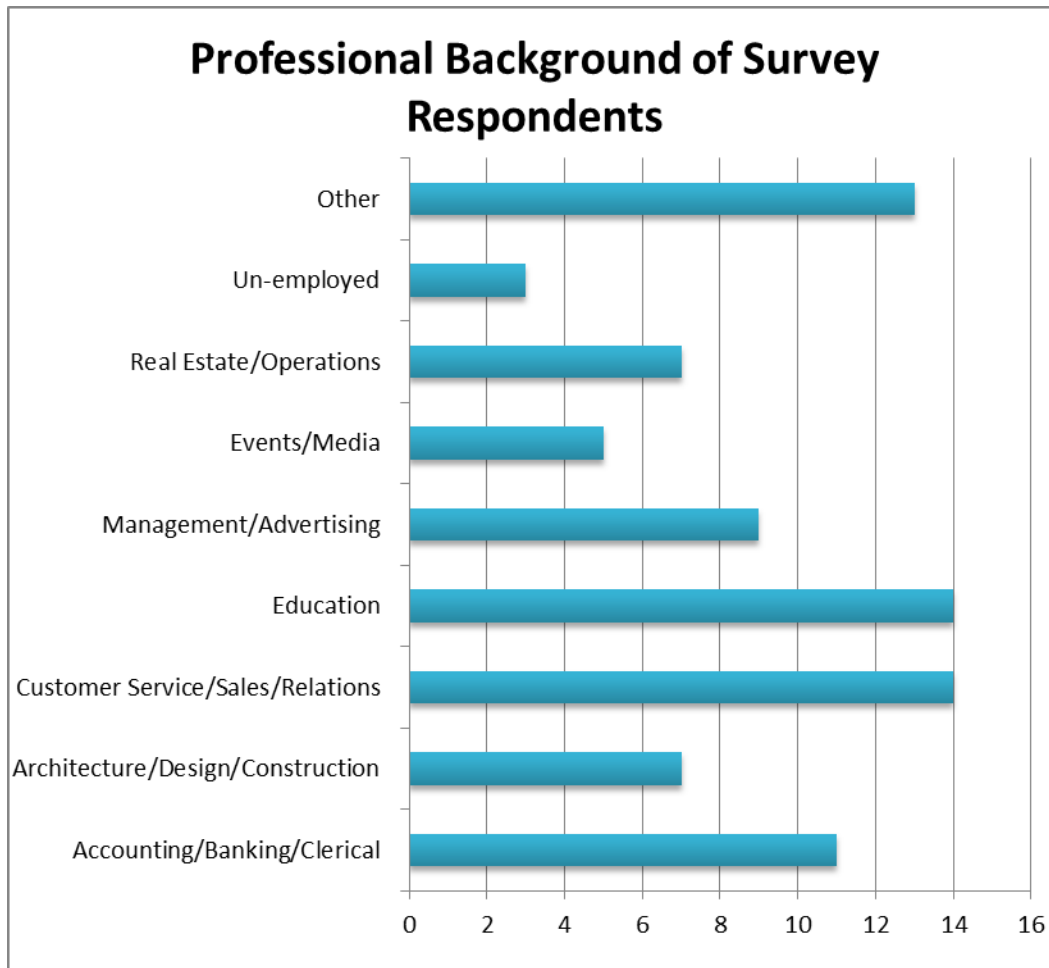


Figure 4.6 Professional Background of Survey Respondents

This series of demographic questions at the beginning of the survey revealed that the majority of respondents were Caucasian Males between the ages of thirty-eight and

sixty-two. Most had received a bachelor's degree from a four-year university and now work in the fields of Education or Sales/Customer Service.

The Mississippi Main Street association is active in fifty-one communities across the state and many were represented in the responses of those surveyed. When questioned, sixty-three (74%) of those surveyed identified the community in which they were active participants with the majority (38; 60.3%) participating in the Columbus, MS Charrette. Respondents from the Greenwood charrette responded with six (9.5%), Eupora and Starkville with four (6.4%) each, Canton with three (4.8%), and Biloxi with two (3.2%). Hancock County, Byhalia, Carthage, Gulfport, Pass Christian, and Philadelphia each had one (1.6%) respondent complete the survey (Figure 4.7).

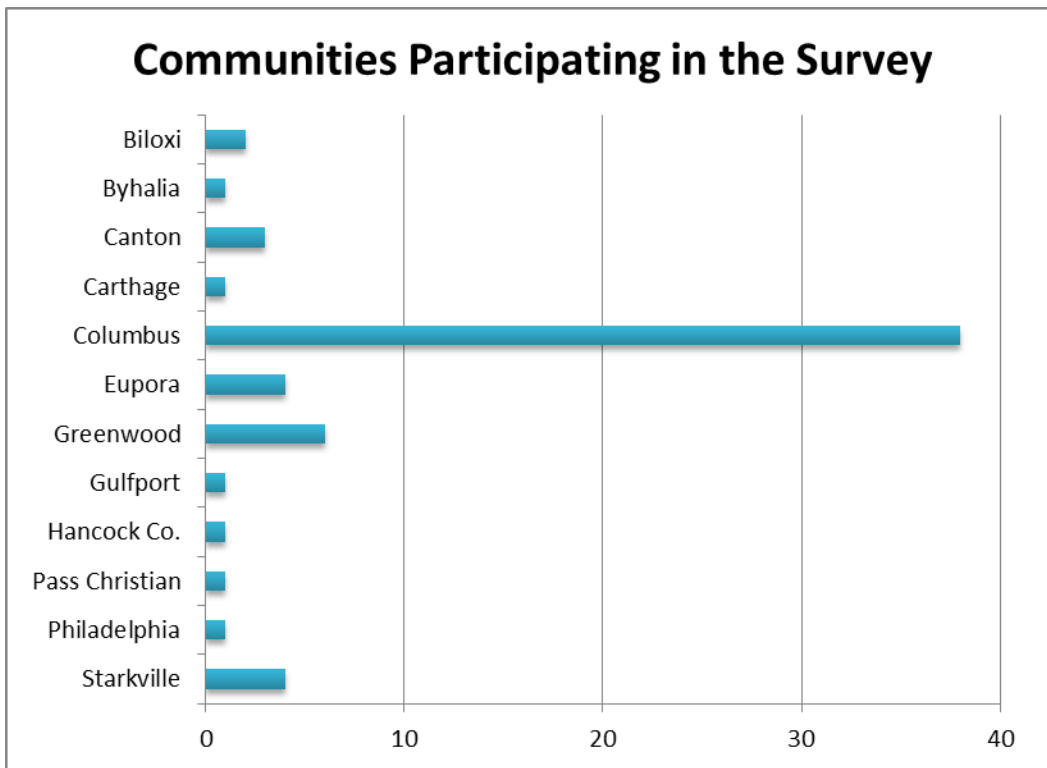


Figure 4.7 List of Communities and number of Respondents participating in the Survey

In this case the researcher can only speculate the reasons for the significant difference in the number of participants from Columbus, but assumptions can be made.

First, the Columbus charrette occurred more recently than a number of the other charrettes facilitated by the MMSA. Held in 2009 the Columbus charrette may have been recent enough, as a number of e-mail responses suggest, for respondents to easily recall their perceptions of the process. It is plausible that since the event occurred in the not-so-distant past the details of the process are still fresh on the minds of the participants. Additionally, ones willingness to offer feedback may be influenced by the time between the charrette and this study. Second, the researcher discovered that the Main Street Manager in this community maintained a detailed list of charrette participants along with their updated contact information. Because a complete list of participants existed (this was not the case in any of the other communities) potential respondents from the Columbus charrette totaled 380 and represented (61%) of the original survey population.

4.4 Characteristics of Community

Mattessich and Monsey describe Characteristics of the Community as the “social, psychological, and geographical attributes of a community and its residents that contribute to the success of the community building effort” (Mattessich et al. 1997). Their research provides an outline of the twenty-eight factors they deem necessary for successful community building efforts. For this study the researcher determined community awareness, pre-existing social cohesion, motivation from within the community, and flexibility and adaptability of citizens to be primary factors of consideration in the questionnaire.

4.4.1 Community Awareness

For the purpose of this study community awareness is assessed in three ways. First, the data explores how residents in each community were made aware of the upcoming charrette. Second, - to determine if advertising initiatives within the community prior to the event influenced attendance and diversity - the researcher examined participant perceptions of awareness, education and advertisement before the charrette. Third, an open-ended question was utilized to gather detailed responses concerning participant perceptions of the charrette process prior to the event.

Potential respondents were asked to describe how they heard about or were made aware of the upcoming charrette in their community. Sixty-four people (75%) responded with the majority (52%) having been directly informed by a Main Street Manager or Chamber of Commerce member within the community. Of the remaining respondents fourteen (21.9%) selected “other”, thirteen (20.3%) were informed after reading the local newspaper, and one (1.6%) learned about the charrette via local television. (Figure 4.8)

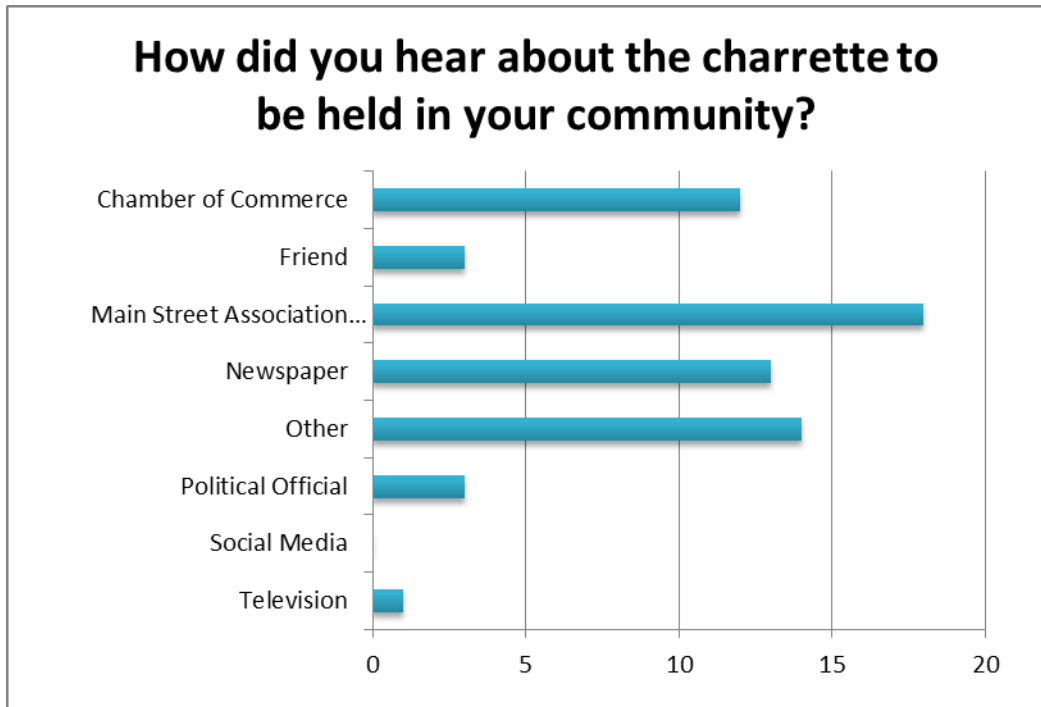


Figure 4.8 How did you learn of the charrette to be held in your community?

Here, the data reveals that more than half (52%) of the respondents said that they learned of the event via word-of-mouth, not the conventional, more readily available media forms of newspaper or television. Instead, Main Street Managers and Chamber leaders were identified as the primary sources concerning charrette advertising and promotion. Interestingly, too, none of the respondents selected social media as their primary source concerning charrette information. Considering the current popularity of social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter the researcher was curious that neither of these were selected.

Mattessich and Monsey also suggest that residents must know about and be aware of issues facing the community if a holistic solution is sought (Mattessich et al. 1997). Each community will experience various issues, and each may require a different

approach, but creating awareness aimed at generating buy-in from the community is important as facilitators lay the groundwork for the process. For this study the researcher hoped to gather information concerning the amount of advertising in the community prior to the event. Potential respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction concerning the amount of advertising dedicated to the charrette before it began. Here, fifty-nine participants (69%) responded and the majority (52.9%) revealed that they were satisfied with the amount of advertising that took place within their community prior to the opening session. Figure 4.9 offers further detail concerning the remaining responses.

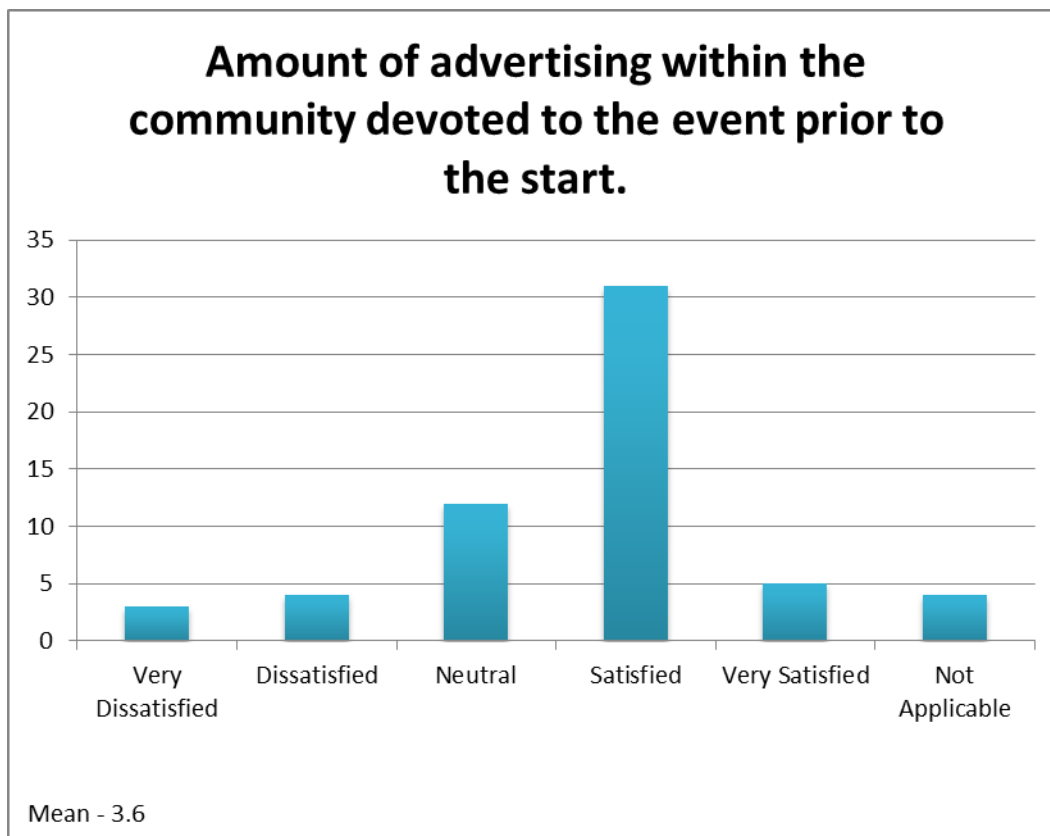


Figure 4.9 Respondent's satisfaction of advertising efforts prior to the event.

The data gathered from this question shows that participants were seemingly satisfied with how well the charrette was advertised in the community prior to it taking place. However, when asked what they might suggest for improving future participatory planning events 31 percent said increased awareness, education, and advertising before the event would be beneficial to the community.

To gather specific responses concerning perceptions of the charrette prior to the start the researcher included the open-ended question: “Prior to the event how was the charrette perceived among residents in your community?”. For this question thirty-six (42%) respondents offered feedback. Each response was then categorized and coded into one of six categories. The list that follows examines each category and offers examples of the responses:

1. Just another community study (4; 11% Figure 4.10)
 - a. “As just another study.”
 - b. “Another exercise.”
 - c. “Many felt it was just another community exercise that we would do then put on the shelf.”
2. Unfamiliar with the purpose (9; 25%)
 - a. “Confused as to what it was about and what was supposed to be accomplished.”
 - b. “Uncertain. Unknown Process.”
 - c. “I don’t think they understood what a charrette was – so they were waiting to see what it would be.”
3. Skeptical of the process and intentions (4; 11%)

- a. "With question."
 - b. "Cautiously optimistically."
 - c. "More important to get business here and not spend money on this."
4. The Community was not aware (6; 17%)
- a. "No knowledge of it."
 - b. "Not perceived, heard nothing about it."
 - c. "Most knew very little about them, as the participants were invited and represented the same ole list of people."
5. Positive and Optimistic (9; 25%)
- a. "Very good."
 - b. "Well-perceived."
 - c. "As a unique experience to get outside advice on planning."
6. Unknown (4; 11%)
- a. "None."
 - b. "Unknown."
 - c. "n/a."

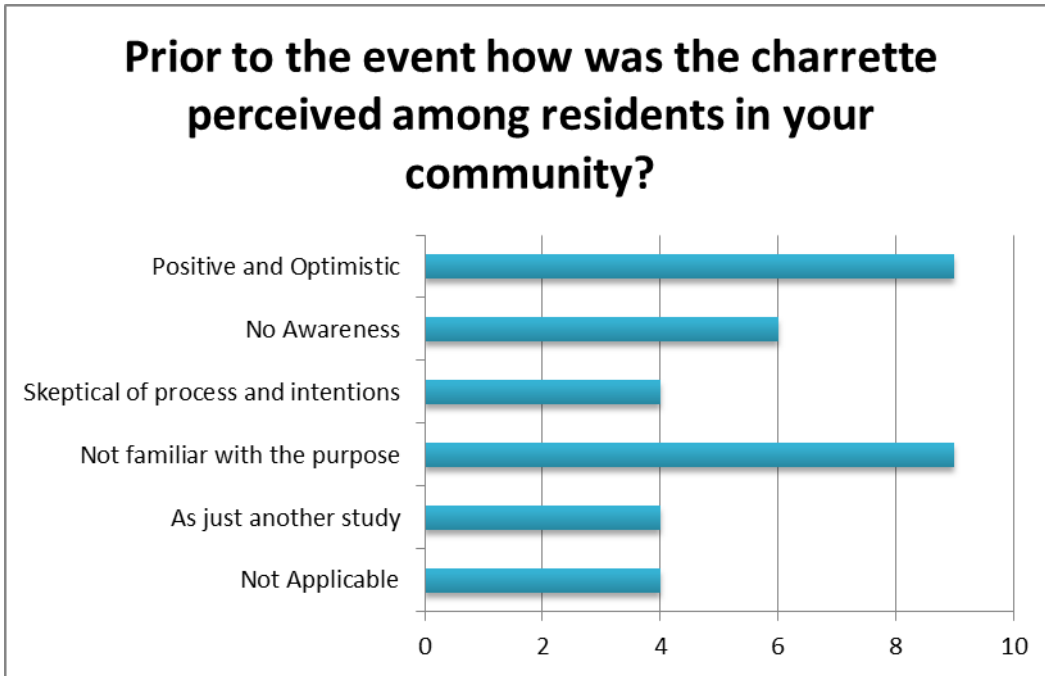


Figure 4.10 Responses to the question: “Prior to the event how was the charrette perceived among residents in your community?”

Data uncovers several trends when respondents discuss their perceptions of the charrette prior to the start. As noted above, half of the respondents stated that residents within the community seemed positive and optimistic before the charrette and were eager to be involved with the process. Equally as many offered responses that revealed a lack of awareness concerning the charrette, a lack of understanding concerning the purpose of the event, and perceived it as “just another study”. This data also suggests that few people in the community were seemingly informed or educated of the process beforehand. Since “advantage lies in having a knowledgeable group of participants involved” it seems that advertising the event and, at the very least, education initiative prior to the event would strengthen the process (Sanoff 2008). A gap in the literature exists and a study assessing the effects various forms of advertising may have on

community buy-in and the charrette process is warranted. Also, the data suggests that the proper amount of advertising and education needed before the charrette be identified.

This may be a topic worthy of consideration if organizers seek sufficient buy-in from the community and wish to create a group of participants who represent the diverse population.

4.4.2 Pre-existing Social Cohesion

Pre-existing social cohesion – the “strength of the interrelationships among community residents”- is a key factor of a successful community building process (Mattessich et al. 1997). Stability of a population is cited by Mattessich and Monsey as a key characteristic of communities having been involved in successful community building efforts (1997). Following an analysis of the demographic data two trends discussed by Mattessich and Monsey were revealed. They are also applicable in this study. First, they discuss social cohesion and how it may be influenced by the length of time a person has spent as a member of a community. Data gathered from the eighty-four (99%) total responses revealed that fifty-five participants (65.5%) had been members of their community for ten or more years, thus representing the majority. Additionally, nineteen participants (22.6%) have been members of their community for five to ten years, five (6.0%) for three to five years, and five (6%) for less than three years (Figure 4.11).

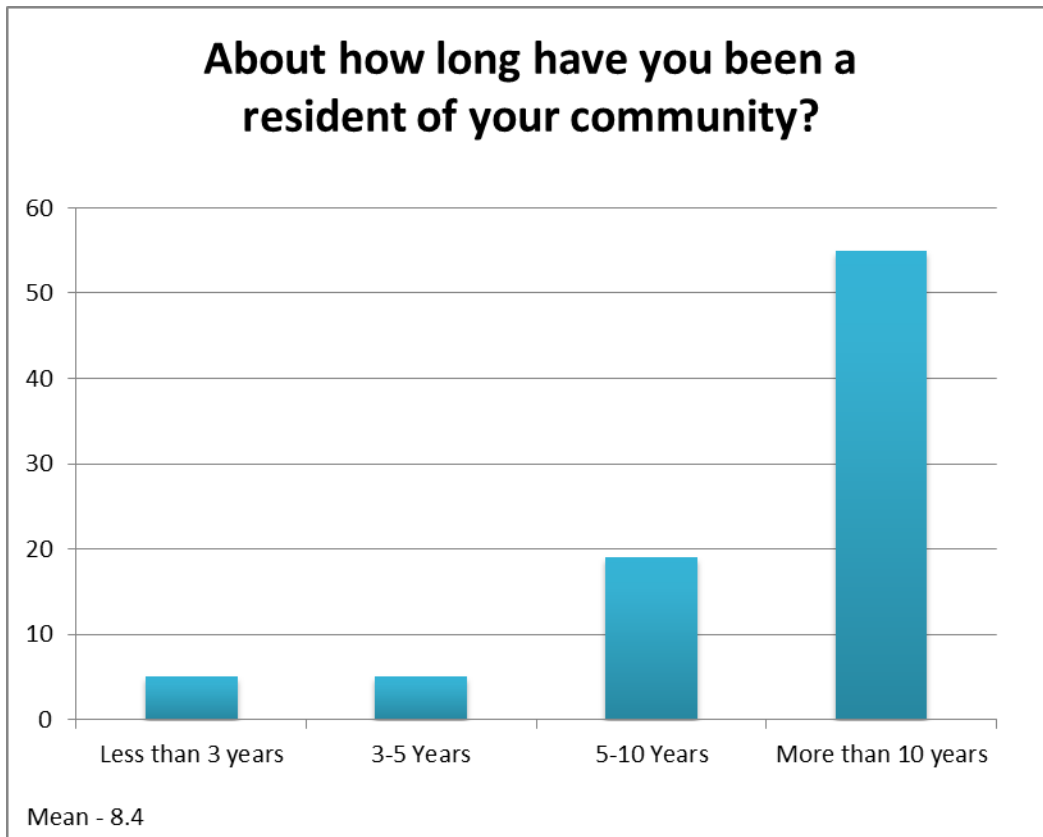


Figure 4.11 Responses to the question: “About how long have you been a resident of your community?”

A comparison of the survey data with the findings of Mattessich and Monsey suggest that this group could, potentially exhibit a greater sense of social cohesion since many of the respondents have lived in their community for five years or more. This assumed level of social cohesion could, potentially guide the process and influence the perceptions respondents have concerning the overall process.

Pre-existing social cohesion within a community may also be measured by discussing the frequency with which residents participate in civic, religious, or other social groups (Mattessich et al. 1997). To identify if and with what frequency

community residents are actively involved in their community they were asked to indicate how often, during the course of a week, they participate in religious, volunteer, professional or other organizations. Figure 4.12 presents the results from this question. Here, eighty-four (99%) people responded and twenty-three (27.4%) of those stated they participated at least twice a week, and twenty-one (25%) at least once a week. Of the remaining respondents sixteen (19.1%) were active at least three times each week, ten (11.9%) five or more times weekly, eight (9.5%) four times, and six (7.1%) did not participate in any form of weekly community activity group.



Figure 4.12 Responses when asked: “Please indicate how often each week you participate in religious, volunteer, professional, or other organization within your community.”

The data suggest, too, that community members and charrette respondents active in the stakeholder-access process have, and already maintain, a certain level of pre-existing social cohesion within the community. Through the charrette process the pre-existing social cohesiveness, or lack thereof, has the potential to influence both the process and the perceptions of success in the community building effort (Mattessich et al. 1997).

4.4.3 Motivation from within the Community

Successful community building is more likely to occur when motivation among community residents is self-imposed (Mattessich et al. 1997). Willingness among residents to participate in community building efforts is important as representation from a diverse group of citizens influences solutions for the issues facing the community as a whole (Mattessich et al. 1997). Mattessich and Monsey found that participation of a concerned citizen base, motivated to generate ideas for the improvement of the whole is important if successful community building efforts are to occur (1997).

Previous research suggest that communities with an active citizenry who are seemingly motivated may have had “prior positive experiences with community building efforts are more likely to succeed with new efforts” (Mattessich et al. 1997).

Additionally, community support prior to the event suggests a certain level of pre-existing motivation. To better understand perceptions prior to the charrette respondents were asked to rate the level of satisfaction they held concerning support from within the community before the commencement of the opening session. Examining this data will allow the researcher to make certain assumptions concerning how community support and motivation influences the process.

Figure 4.13 shows that of the fifty-eight (68%) responses, thirty-three people (56.9%) responded positively, fifteen (25.9%) had neutral feelings, and six (10.3%) were dissatisfied. Four (6.9%) responded not applicable. This result suggests that the majority of respondents felt that fellow participants and community members were motivated and eager to participate prior to the charrette. Mattessich and Monsey’s claim that successful community building efforts occur when residents are motivated is supported by this data. Informing and educating residents prior to the charrette may potentially generate increased buy-in, support, and motivation from within the community.

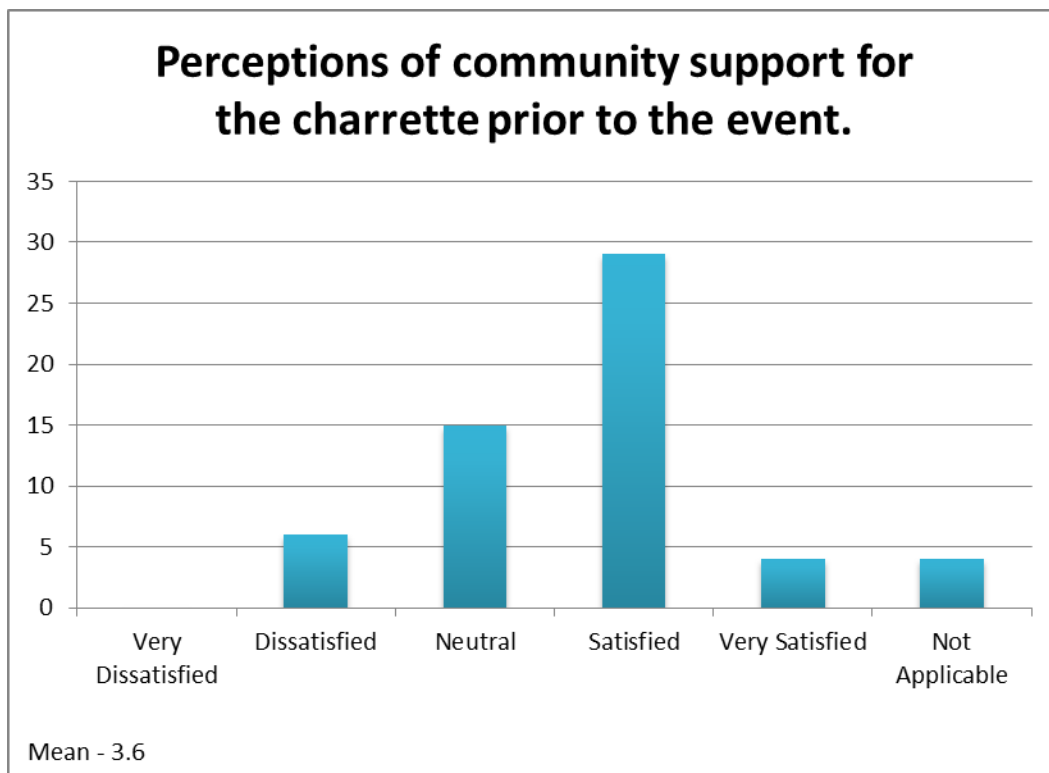


Figure 4.13 Respondent perceptions concerning community support for the charrette prior to the event.

Potential respondents were also asked their perceptions concerning the eagerness and willingness with which their fellow stakeholders were involved during the charrette. Of the sixty-one (72%) participants who responded forty-six (75.4%) agreed that the charrette participants were eager and willing to offer input during the meetings. Figure 4.14 displays the overall results including the remaining respondents.

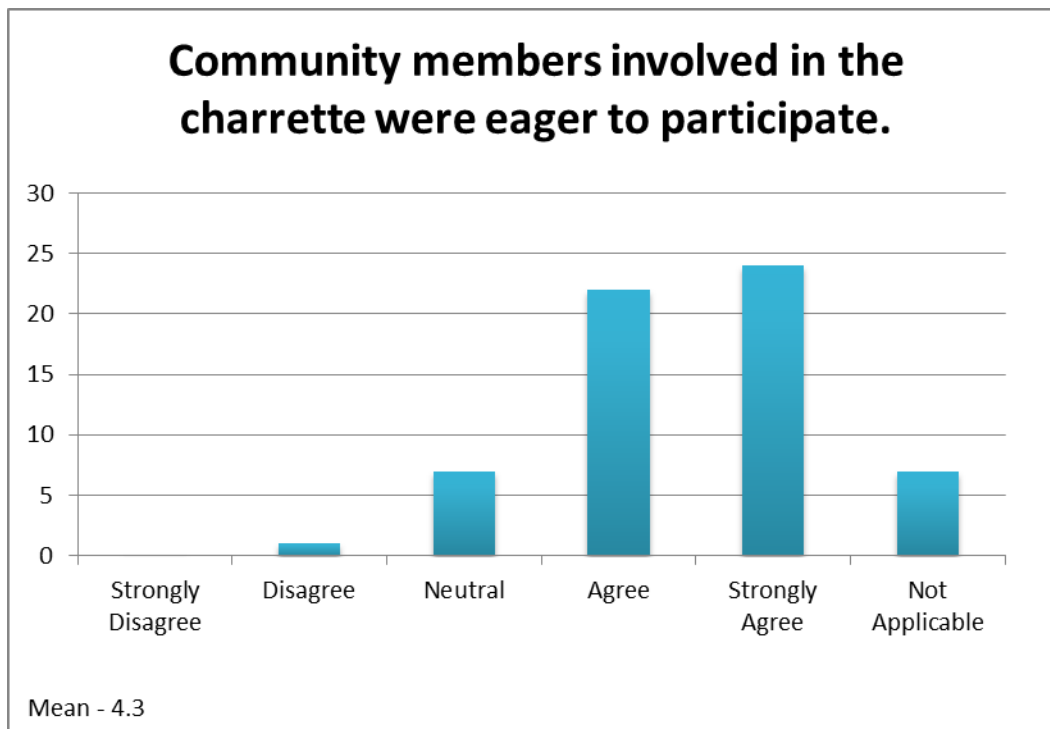


Figure 4.14 Responses to the comment: “Community members involved in the charrette were eager to participate.”

This data proposes that the majority of respondents were in agreement and that charrette participants were eager to be involved in the process. This also supports the findings of Mattessich and Monsey suggesting that success lies in self-imposed motivation from within the community (1997). That is, residents realize the opportunity

to address the issues of the whole, recognize the potential for social pay-off, and, seemingly possess the self-motivation and drive to make it happen.

4.4.4 Flexibility and Adaptability

Flexibility and adaptability in problem solving and task accomplishment among residents is identified by Mattessich and Monsey as a characteristic of community necessary for successful community building efforts to occur (Mattessich et al. 1997). In their research they determine that community members “who are open to change”, who have the “ability to switch tasks, goals or objectives if necessary”, and who are willing to accept alternative approaches serve to promote a successful process (Mattessich et al. 1997). Respondents were asked their perceptions concerning the flexibility and adaptability of charrette participants. Here, sixty people (71%) offered feedback and the results show that forty (66.6%) responded positively when asked if participants were flexible and adaptable as ideas were presented. Of the remaining respondents ten (16.7%) were neutral, two (3.3%) disagreed with the statement, one (1.7%) strongly disagreed, and seven (11.7%) responded with “not applicable” (Figure 4.15).

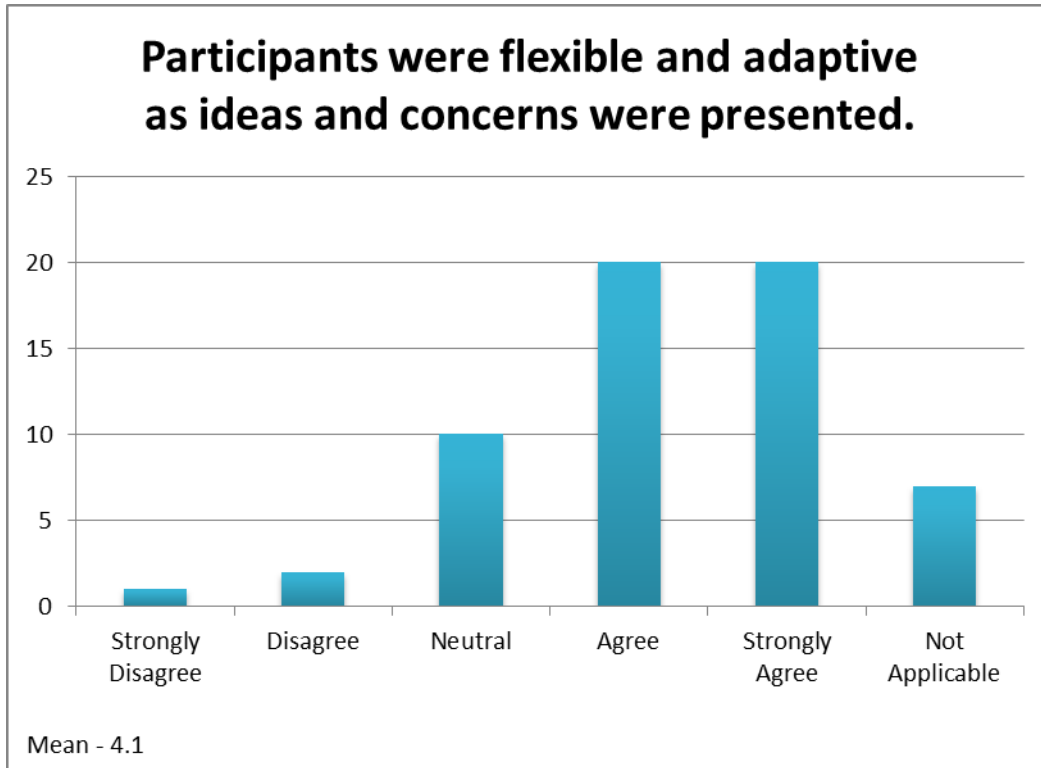


Figure 4.15 Responses to the comment; “Participants were flexible and adaptive as ideas and concerns were presented.”

Data derived from this question suggests that participants in the stakeholder-access charrettes were seemingly flexible and adaptive. For example, many of the respondents expressed how the ease of communication and adaptability of participants during the charrette seemingly helped strengthen the social cohesion, thus the process. Additionally, they identify buy-in from the community (followed closely by open-communication and flexibility of leadership) as the most important variable for creating an effective charrette.

The final question concerning characteristics of community asked respondents to rank the characteristics in order from most to least important. Respondents were asked to

consider the following characteristics and rank them: flexibility and adaptability; ability to discuss, reach consensus and cooperate; pre-existing social cohesion; existing identifiable leadership; motivation from within the community; and community awareness of the issues. Here, forty-nine participants (58%) ranked these characteristics in order of importance. Table 4.2 details the results.

Table 4.2 Respondent’s Ranking of Characteristics from least to most important in producing a successful process.

	Total Score	Overall Rank
Motivation from within the community.	216	1
Community awareness of the issues.	192	2
Ability to discuss, reach consensus, and cooperate.	186	3
Existing identifiable leadership.	156	4
Pre-existing social cohesion.	142	5
Flexibility and adaptability of those involved.	137	6
Total Respondents - 49		

4.5 The Process

Mattessich and Monsey define Characteristics of the Community Building Process as the “factors that make up the process by which people attempt to build community, such as representation, communications, and technical assistance” (Mattessich et al. 1997). Utilizing the web-based survey the researcher attempted to examine the characteristics of the stakeholder-access charrette process to gauge the perceptions of efficiency and effectiveness associated within. Ideally, as suggested by Mattessich and Monsey, as more of these “factors are present in a community building process, the greater the likelihood of success” (1997).

Potential respondents were asked questions concerning the process by which the charrette evolved. The series of questioning addresses the following characteristics of the community building process: widespread participation, a good system of communication, minimal competition in pursuit of goals, benefits to many residents, progression from simple to complex planning activities, and community control of the decision making process.

4.5.1 Widespread Participation

Widespread participation in the planning process strengthens the community building effort by offering increased diversity. Inclusion of a diverse population helps create a process in which the participants are capable of representing the community as a whole (Mattessich et al. 1997). In the past, charrette organizers utilized a less formal approach which, as previously noted, risked creating gridlock, time delays, and cost overruns. The stakeholder-access charrette seeks an alternate approach aimed at managing time and costs by controlling the number of active participants involved in the majority of the process. For this study the researcher developed a series of questions to gather information concerning perceptions of widespread participation.

Perhaps most notable, and relevant when discussing participation, is demographic data gathered from the survey. In this case the data suggests a significant lack of diversity among survey respondents participating in the MMSA charrettes. When questioned, 87.1% of survey respondents identified themselves as Caucasian. (Figure 4.16) This suggests that diversity in representation, a key principle of the New Urbanism, may not have been a reality in the MMSA charrettes. Seemingly, following an analysis of the data, charrette organizers and facilitators in MMSA charrettes are

lacking adequate levels of minority involvement considering that African-Americans account for 37.3 percent of the population within the state. (Figure 4.15)

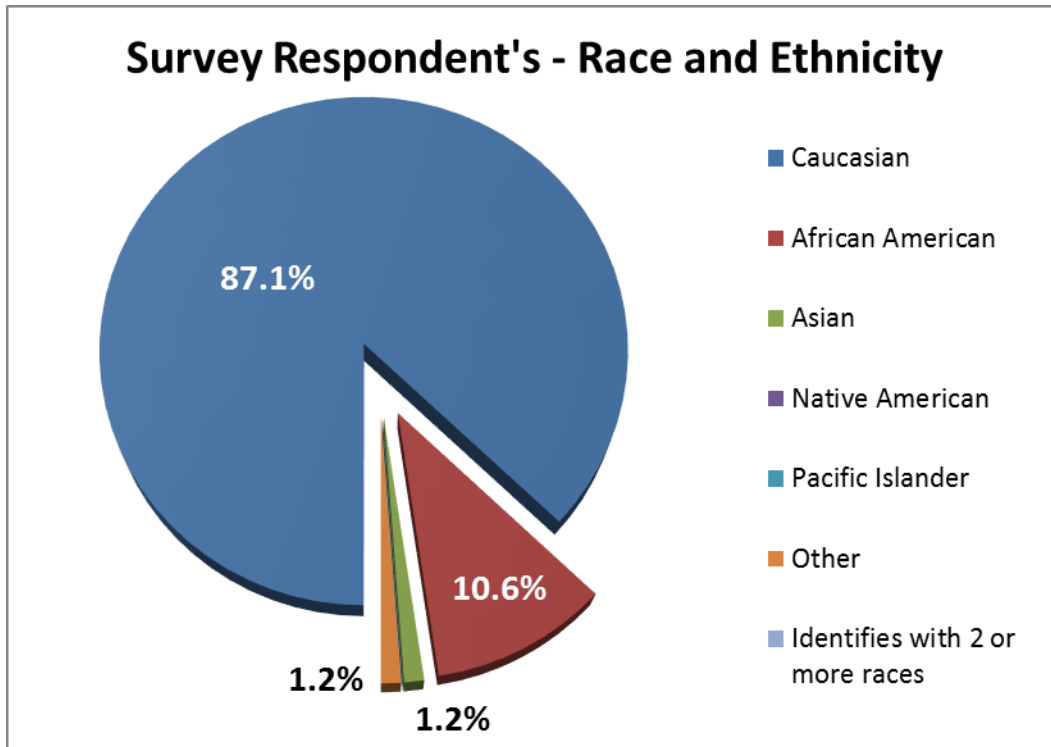


Figure 4.16 Survey Respondent's Race and Ethnicity

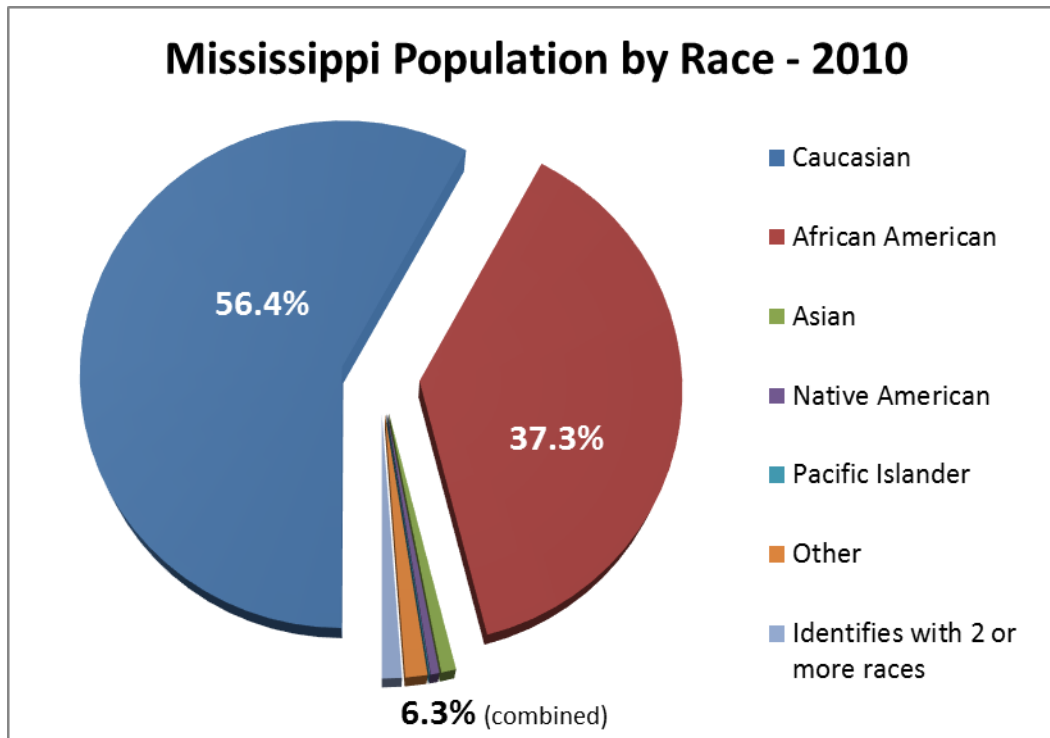


Figure 4.17 Mississippi Population by Race - 2010

In an attempt to gauge respondent’s perceptions of diversity the survey asked them to consider other participants in the charrette process. Respondents were asked if those in attendance represented a population of diverse individuals. This question received sixty-two (73%) total responses and a majority (59.7%) responded positively, expressing their satisfaction regarding the diversity of those involved in the charrette. Of the remaining respondents, eleven (17.7%) were neutral on the matter, eight (12.9%) disagreed, and six people (9.7%) responded not applicable. (Figure 4.18)

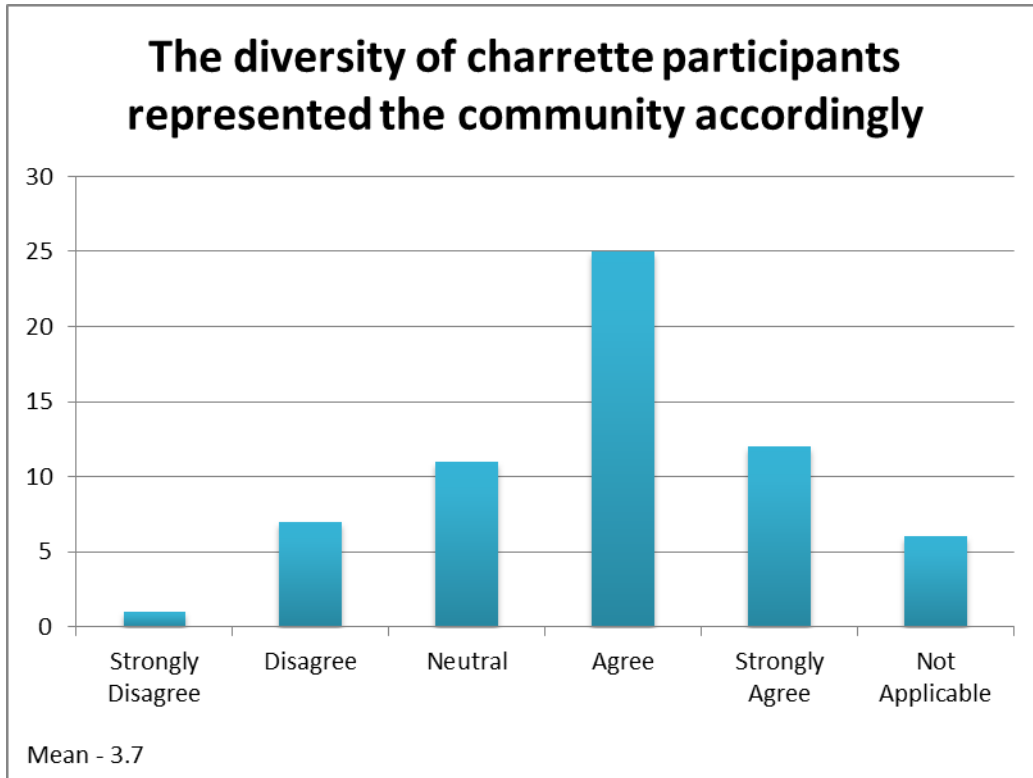


Figure 4.18 Responses to the statement: “The diversity of charrette participants represented the community accordingly.”

It is interesting to note that the data derived from this question represents an interesting trend in the MMSA charrettes. Although the majority of the survey respondents (87.1%) identified themselves as Caucasian there is still, seemingly, a perception among those involved in the process that diversity was sufficient.

Practitioners and facilitators recognize the benefits of, and challenges associated with, increasing diversity among charrette participants (Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck 2000; Lennertz 2009). Attempts to create an efficient and effective process in a short period of time, however, have proven difficult in traditional charrette proceedings (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). The stakeholder-access approach to facilitation is an attempt to

better manage when and to what extent citizens participate. The goal of the stakeholder-access charrette is to regulate participation while limiting obstacles that threaten time and costs (Lennertz 2009). Conversely, one must not forget that the stakeholder-access charrette evolved as a direct result of the chaos associated with uncontrolled widespread participation in traditional charrette proceedings. Based on this alone one may feel that there is merit in exploring this approach. Ultimately, however, more research is warranted exploring the application of the variables needed to create balance throughout the process.

In an attempt to better understand perceptions of efficiency concerning this topic the researcher asked participants if the inclusion of more people in the charrette would lead to a more effective process. In this instance sixty-two participants (73%) responded and Figure 4.19 shows that the majority (36; 58.1%) felt that including more community members would result in a more effective outcome.

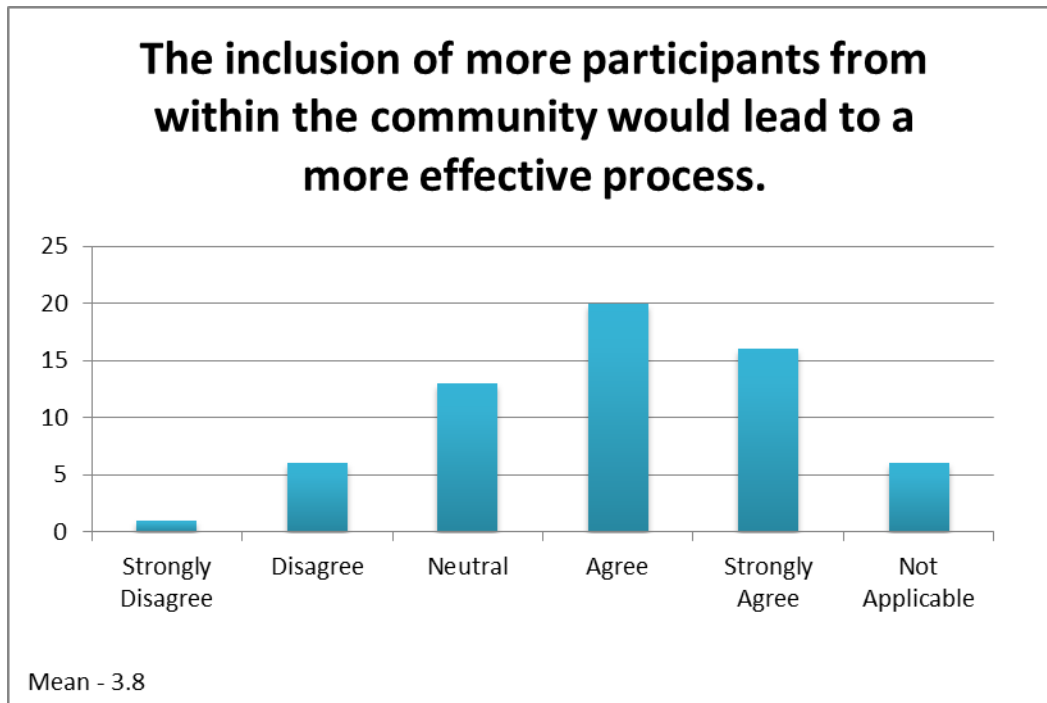


Figure 4.19 Responses to the comment: “The inclusion of more participants from within the community would lead to a more effective process.”

The data derived from questions concerning inclusiveness suggest that respondents did not believe there was adequate representation from within their community. Respondents seemingly recognize the benefits of having a diverse group of people involved and feel that encouraging participation by more residents would be beneficial to the charrette and the community.

The Charter for the New Urbanism identifies the inclusion of citizen participants and public involvement as key principles of the movement (CNU 1996). Although the stakeholder-access charrette is not open-forum style it does retain many aspects of the traditional approach. One similar characteristic is the inclusion of an opening and closing session encouraging citizens to participate. During the opening session charrette

facilitators seek insight regarding the issues and concerns of community members in an attempt to guide and direct the charrette process (Lennertz 2009). Equally, the opening and closing sessions offer members of the community greater opportunity to provide feedback and discuss the outcomes and suggestions made during the charrette. To better understand perceptions of participation during these sessions potential respondents were asked to rate their level of satisfaction concerning the number of community members in attendance. Here, fifty-eight (58%) of those who accessed the survey responded. Figure 4.20 shows twenty-seven people (46.5%) said that they were satisfied with the turnout during these sessions. Of the remaining respondents, eleven (19%) had neutral feelings on the matter and eleven people (19%) were dissatisfied with the number of community members in attendance.

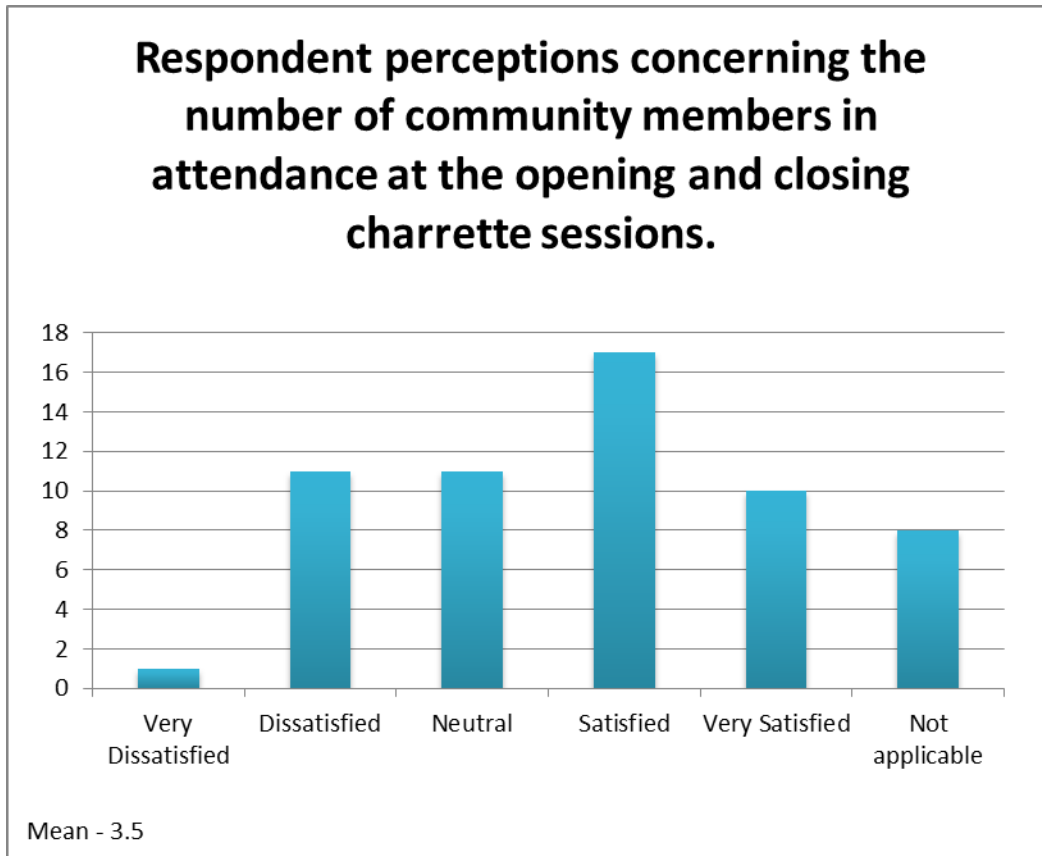


Figure 4.20 Respondent perceptions concerning the number of community members in attendance at the opening and closing charrette sessions.

A discussion of the variables affecting attendance rates would be based on pure speculation but is worthy of further investigation. However, after an analysis of the data one may submit that increased advertising efforts prior to the event may, potentially, promote an increase in the rate of attendance in future charrette proceedings.

Further data concerning the open and closing sessions reveals that respondents felt that more members of the community should be present. While nearly half of the respondents (46.5%) felt comfortable with the turnout in the opening and closing

sessions, supplementary data shows that a large majority (72.9%) agree that the entire charrette should be open to members of the community. (Figure 4.21)

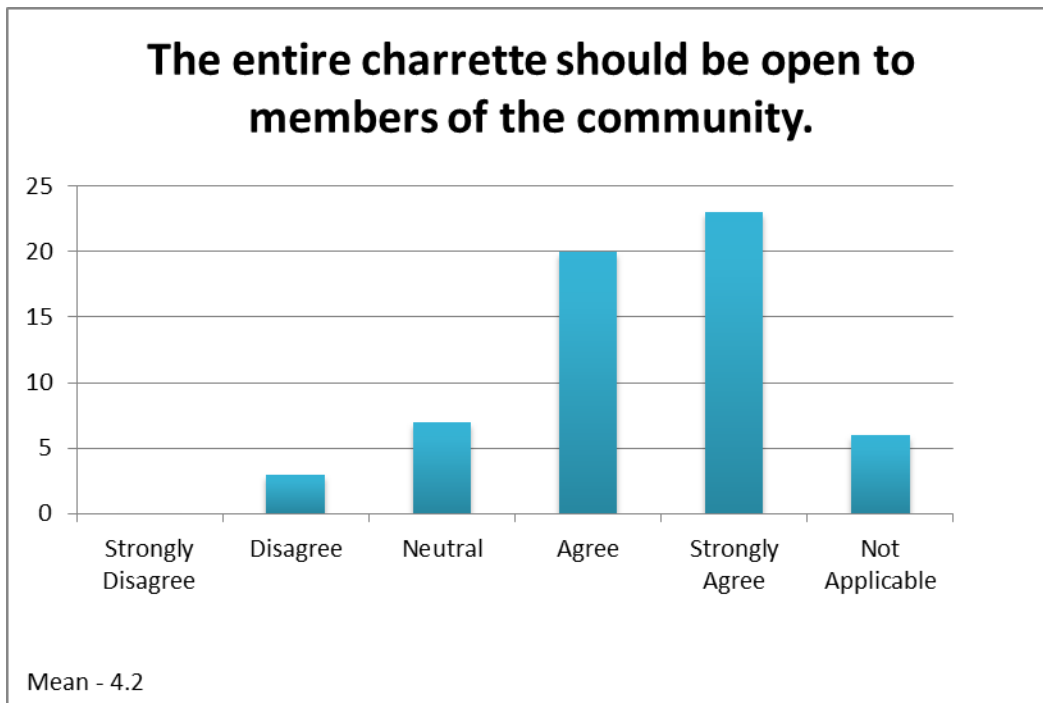


Figure 4.21 Respondent perceptions of the comment: “The entire charrette should be open to members of the community.”

The results of this study suggest that inclusiveness is important to charrette participants and methods for promoting and managing participation may be a topic worthy of further exploration. As Figure 4.21 above shows, forty-three people (72.9%) offered a positive response when asked if the charrette process should be open to all members of the community. Of the remaining respondents seven people (11.9%) were neutral on the matter, six (10.2%) responded not applicable, and three (5.1%) of those who responded disagreed completely.

4.5.2 Good System of Communication

Open communication during the charrette process was the topic for the next series of questions. Mattessich and Monsey discuss the merits of having a good system of communication and suggest that it “fosters community residents’ awareness, motivation, participation, innovation, and problem solving abilities” – which helps promote successful community building efforts (1997). For the purpose of this study the researcher addressed the topic of open communication by asking potential respondents to rate their satisfaction concerning the ease of communication they experienced during the charrette process. Of the eighty-five surveys fifty-eight participants (68%) offered feedback. The majority of respondents (42; 72.4%) agreed that there was a comfortable ease in communication among the charrette participants and those leading the facilitation. (Figure 4.22)

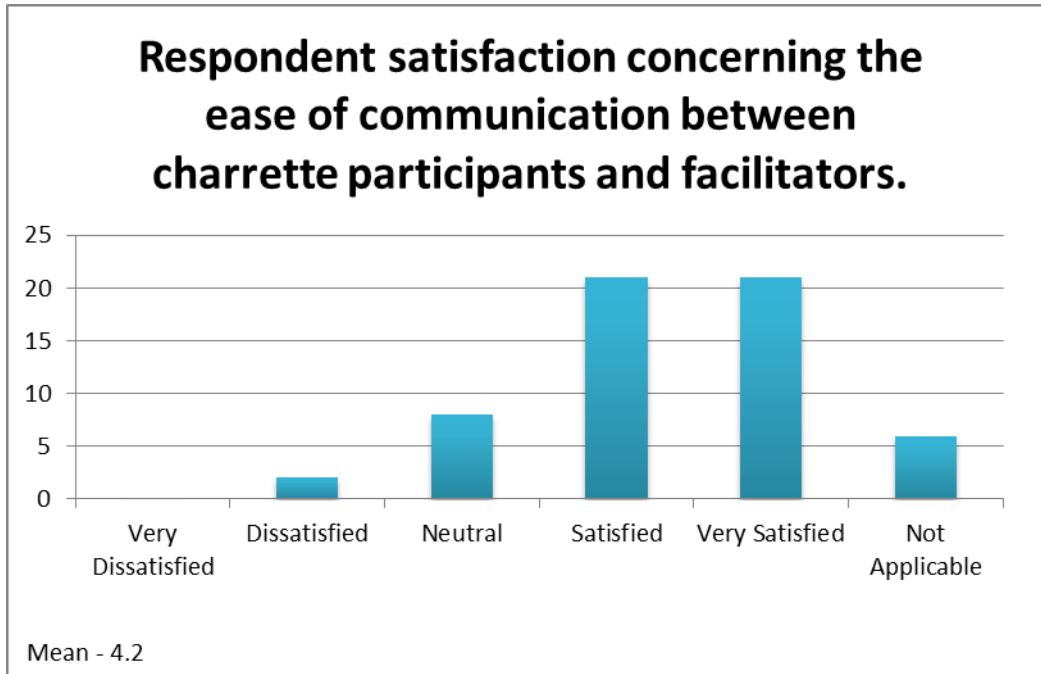


Figure 4.22 Respondent satisfaction concerning the ease of communication between charrette participants and facilitators.

Additionally, when discussing communication, Mattessich and Monsey suggest that goals and objectives of the charrette be made clear early in the process to ensure that participants are made aware of what the group wishes to accomplish (1997). To further examine perceptions concerning communication charrette participants were asked if the goals and objectives of the charrette held in their community were made clear early in the process. Here, sixty participants (71%) responded and forty-seven (78.4%) agreed with the statement. Of the remaining respondents five (8.3%) were neutral, two (3.4%) were in disagreement, and six (10%) responded not applicable. (Figure 4.23)

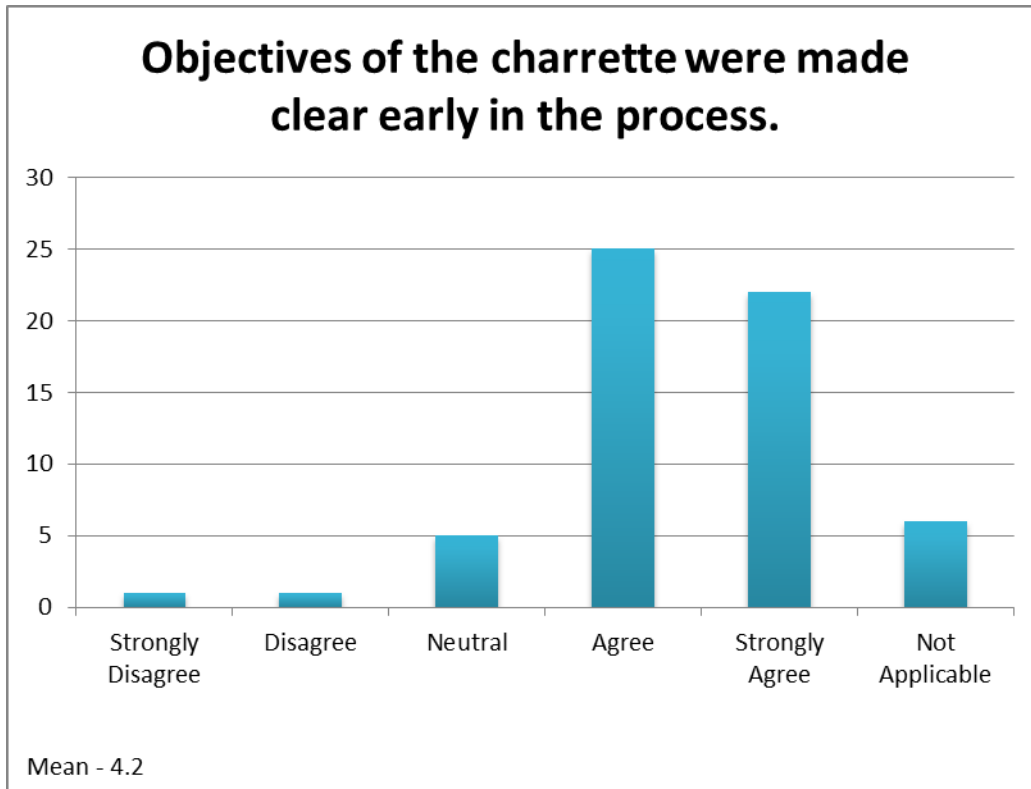


Figure 4.23 Respondent perceptions of the statement: “Objectives of the charrette were made clear early in the process.”

An analysis of this data concerning the ease of communication and a clear definition of goals suggests that MMSA charrettes offered participants a process promoting clarity and many felt it was a success. Also, the information gathered following the analysis of the data raises questions concerning the existing social cohesion within the community. Specifically, understanding how this phenomenon influences the ease with which residents communicate as ideas are shared is a topic requiring further exploration. As previously mentioned in the demographics section, survey data shows that most respondents have lived in their community for a significant amount of time and were seemingly active in various social and professional organizations. This suggests the

likelihood of a certain pre-existing social cohesion within the community prior to the event which may potentially influence communication among participants during the process. A greater understanding of how existing social cohesiveness influences communication among charrette participants is worthy of further discussion.

Seemingly, the data reveals that many of the respondents felt the ease with which participants communicated and the clear definition of the goals and objectives helped strengthen the process.

4.5.3 Minimal Competition in Pursuit of Goals

Gridlock and time management issues have the potential to hinder the process and often occur when there is active competition in pursuit of goals during the participatory planning process (Irvin and Stansbury 2005). In an attempt to identify if this occurrence was a trend in the MMSA Charrettes the researcher asked respondents if participants promoted their personal agenda during the process. Of the total survey population sixty-one participants (72%) responded and Figure 4.24 details the results. Here, twenty-five people (39.3%) agreed that some participants seemed to be promoting a personal agenda during the charrette process. Of the remaining respondents, thirteen (21.3%) disagreed, 17 (27.9%) were neutral, and seven (11.9%) felt that they could not respond to the question.

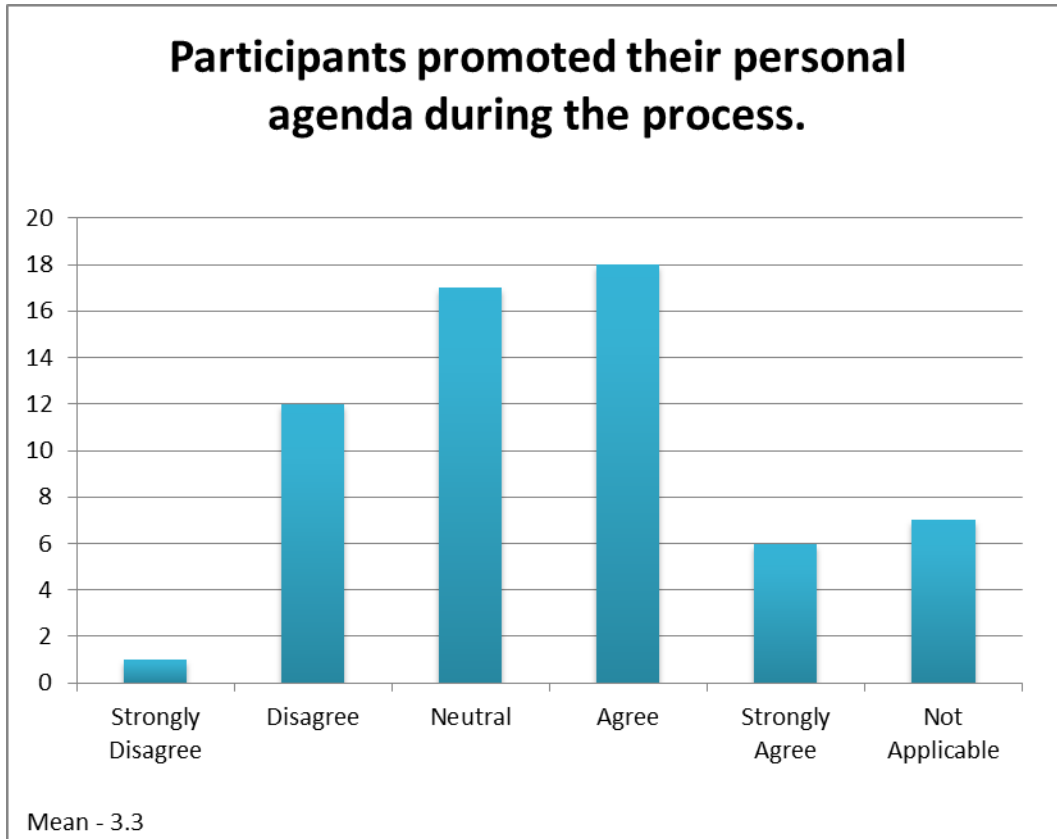


Figure 4.24 Respondent perceptions of the statement: “Participants promoted their personal agenda during the process.”

This data raises questions concerning focus and approach during a charrette. Mattessich and Monsey discuss alternate agendas and the potential they have for hindering the process having found that “successful efforts tend to occur in communities where existing community organizations do not perceive other organization or the leaders of a community building initiative as competitors” (1997). The data also suggests that this was a topic of concern among participants of the MMSA charrettes as many (39.3%) were seemingly displeased with the perceived intentions of some of the stakeholders.

4.5.4 Benefits to Many Residents

Following their research findings Mattessich and Monsey determine that “successful community building efforts occur more often when the community goals, tasks, and activities have clear benefits to many residents in the community, and when these benefits are visible” (1997). When asked if the charrette process focused on generating solutions for the concerns facing the community fifty-nine participants (69%) offered response. The majority (40; 67.8%) said that they agreed that focus during the charrette process was placed on generating holistic solutions beneficial to the community as a whole. Of the remaining responses six (10.2%) were neutral on the matter, five (8.5%) disagreed, one (1.7%) strongly disagreed, while seven (11.9%) responded not applicable. Figure 4.25 gives the results.

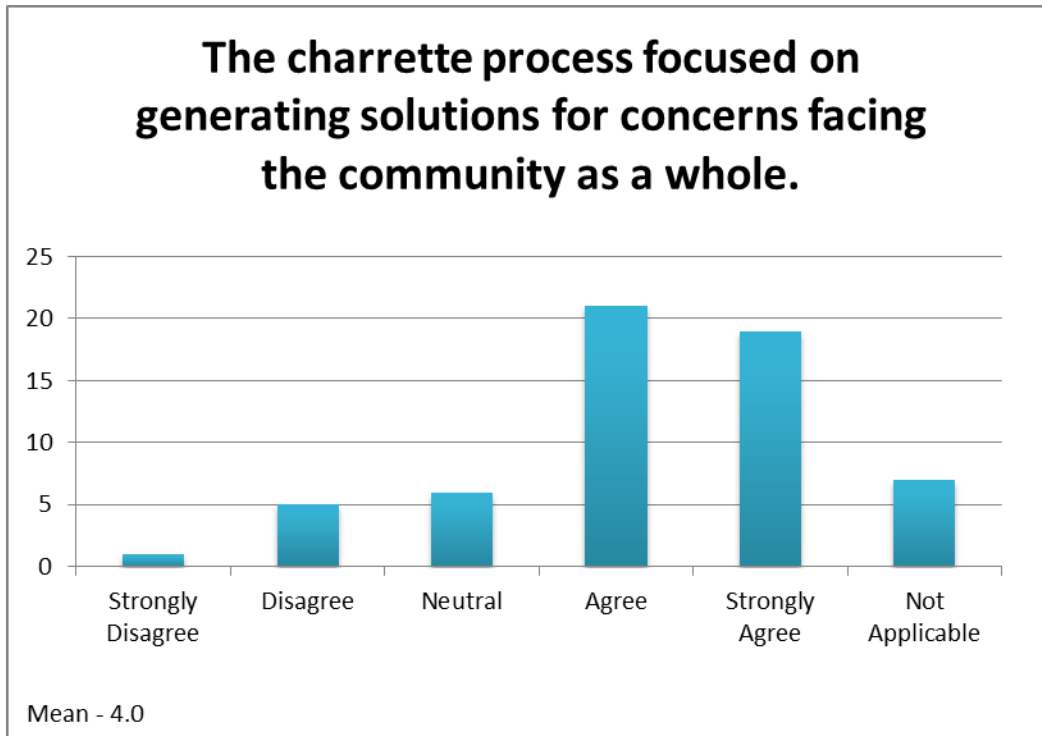


Figure 4.25 Respondent perceptions of the statement: “The charrette process focused on generating solutions for concerns facing the community as a whole.”

The data shows that charrette participants perceived interests from all in seeking holistic solutions for addressing the issues facing the community. From an analysis of the data one may conclude that stakeholders felt that they were making recommendations focused on the well-being of the community as a whole. It should be noted, however, that the data not examine perceptions held by the general population concerning these recommendations.

4.5.5 Progression from Simple to Complex Activities

Findings from the research of Paul Mattessich and Barbara Monsey describe how progression of the process may be influential in promoting a successful event. They

recommend a progression from simple to complex activities, stating that success is more likely when this takes place (Mattessich et al. 1997). To determine if this was a characteristic present in the MMSA charrettes the respondents were asked their perception of how the process evolved. Here, fifty-six participants offered feedback. Based on responses, thirty-seven (66.1%) either agreed or strongly agreed that the charrette evolved in this manner. Of the remaining respondents eight (14.3%) were neutral on the matter, five (8.9%) disagreed, and six (10.7%) responded “not applicable.” (Figure 4.26)

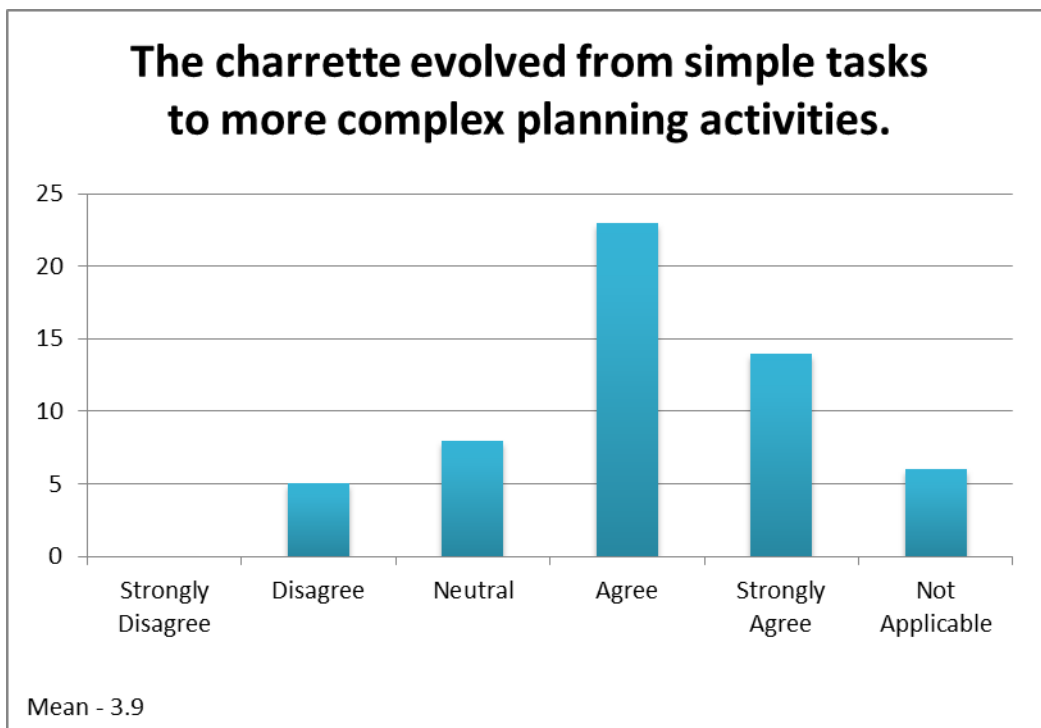


Figure 4.26 Respondent perceptions of the statement: “The charrette evolved from simple tasks to more complex activities.”

Although some respondents were concerned with the agenda of fellow participants the majority felt that the actual process – the charrette – followed a comfortable rhythm. Data gathered from the survey proposes that respondents felt the process moved from simple to more complex planning activities.

4.5.6 Community Control over the Decision Making Process

Mattessich and Monsey discuss the importance of the community retaining control of the decision making process and suggest that “successful community building efforts are more likely to occur when residents have control over decisions, particularly over how funds are used” (Mattessich et al. 1997). For this study the researcher needed to determine if participants in the MMSA charrettes were maintaining control of the decision making process. Respondents were asked to share their perceptions and fifty-five people responded. Here, twenty-four (43.7%) participants agreed that existing community leaders did, in fact, emerge as the decision makers in the charrette. Of the remaining respondents twelve (21.8%) disagreed, eleven (20.0%) were neutral, two (3.6%) strongly disagreed, and six (10.9%) failed to offer a response. (Figure 4.27)

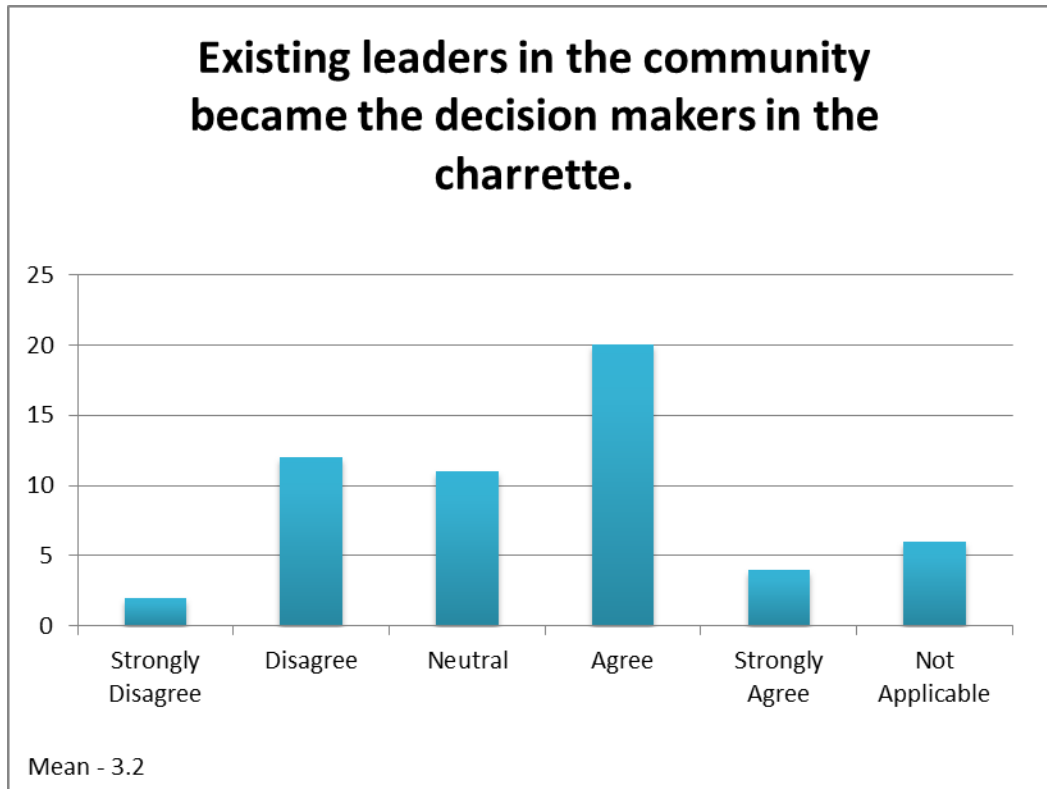


Figure 4.27 Respondent perceptions of the statement: “Existing leaders in the community became the decision makers in the charrette.”

Even considering perceptions concerning the ease of communication present during the process, and the eagerness with which stakeholders seemingly participate, it is interesting that the consensus of participants suggests that existing community leaders ultimately retained control of the decision making process. It seems as if those who have been in control in the community prior to the charrette become citizen leaders during the charrette. Left unchecked this has the potential to alter the process and the outcomes associated with it. Further exploration of this topic is necessary for a greater understanding of how this may be addressed in future charrettes.

To gain a greater insight of how stakeholders viewed the process the researcher included a series of questions focusing on perceptions of overall effectiveness, efficiency, and success of the charrette. Participants were presented three questions and were asked to rate their level of overall satisfaction concerning the effectiveness, efficiency, and perceived success of the charrette in their community. For each question fifty-eight (68.2%) total responses were gathered and Figure 4.28 shows the results.

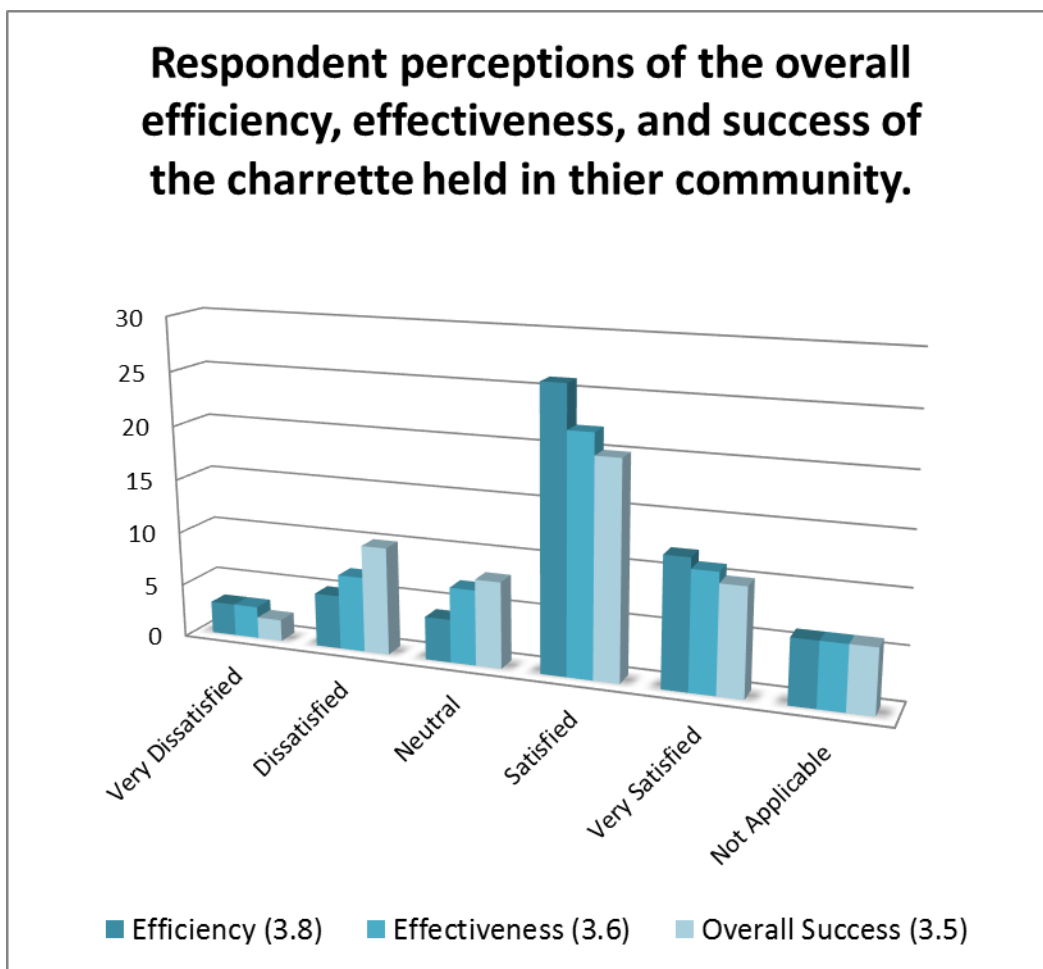


Figure 4.28 Respondent perceptions of the overall efficiency, effectiveness, and success of the charrette held in their community.

Here, the data suggests that, all things considered, the majority of the participants were generally satisfied with the charrette in their community. Results show that thirty people (51.7%) offered positive feedback concerning their satisfaction with the overall charrette process. Additionally, thirty-eight (67.8%) were seemingly satisfied with the efficiency of the process while thirty-three (58.9%) felt the same when considering the effectiveness of the event. Research data from this study also reveals that, when asked, 71.2 percent of respondents said that they would participate if a future charrette was held in their community. (Figure 4.29)

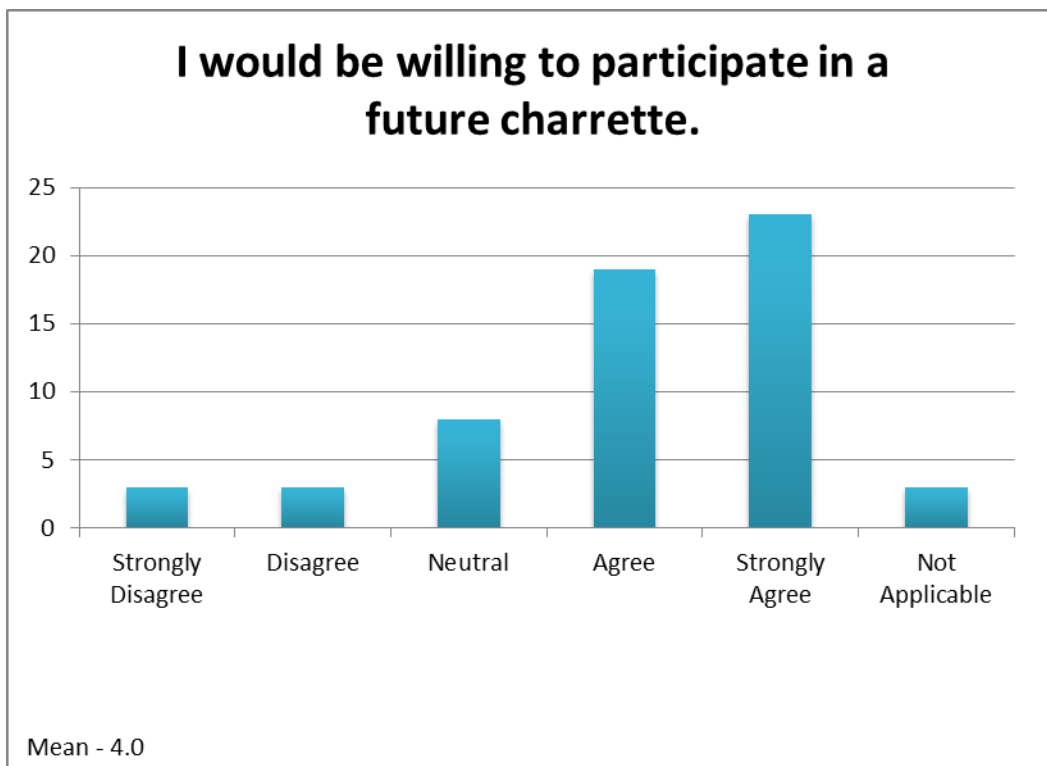


Figure 4.29 Responses when asked if they would be willing to participate in a future charrette.

4.6 Facilitation

When discussing the characteristics of community building organizers, charrette facilitators in this case, Mattessich and Monsey discuss how “every community building effort has individuals who design, implement, and manage the effort” and may live within or outside of the community (1997). For this study the researcher examined the characteristics described by Mattessich and Monsey as those which promote successful facilitation of the community building process. These include: understanding the community, sincerity in commitment, a relationship of trust, the level of organizing experience, and the ability of the organizers to be flexible and adaptable. To gauge the importance of these characteristics participants were asked to rank them in order from most to least important based on their experience with the charrette process. Table 4.3 details how participants ranked these characteristics.

Table 4.3 Ranking of Characteristics important to facilitation.

	Total Score	Overall Rank
Understanding the issues facing the community	189	1
Level of Experience	140	2
Sincerity of Commitment	140	3
A relationship of trust	129	4
Ability to be flexible and adaptable	122	5
Total Responses - 48		

In this case the data suggests that the most important factor to charrette participants concerning the facilitation of the process is that those leading the charge fully understand the issues facing the community. Previous research describes how this

characteristic becomes important in the evolution of the community building process. Mattessich and Monsey note how understanding a community's "culture, social structure, demographics, political structures, and issues" strengthens the capacity of the facilitation team to offer holistic solutions (1997). This data suggests that facilitator awareness of the dynamics within a community prior to the event is important to, and likely an expectation of, charrette participants.

Next, respondents ranked level of experience and sincerity of commitment as second and third most important characteristics they seek concerning characteristics of facilitation. A facilitator's commitment to the well-being of the community and experience in guiding the process are characteristics important to participants as the process evolves and trust, the fourth most important characteristic, is built (Mattessich et al. 1997; Reed 2007). Finally, flexibility and adaptability completes the ranked list of the characteristics of the facilitation deemed necessary for a successful event.

An analysis of this data allows the researcher to discuss characteristics of facilitation and understand which are more important to the charrette participants. Increased exploration and understanding what is expected of organizers and facilitators may be beneficial in future events and charrette proceedings.

4.7 Additional Feedback

Open-ended questions at the end of the survey addressed perceptions and asked for suggestions which may prove beneficial to future charrettes. These were included in hopes of obtaining more detailed, personalized feedback from charrette participants concerning their experience with the charrette process. To accomplish this, the researcher developed four questions aimed at identifying specific responses from those

who participated in the survey. The responses for each question were categorized and coded into one of six categories. (See appendices F-I for a complete list of responses)

The questions for this series included:

1. What factors do you feel most important in creating an effective, efficient charrette process?
2. What were your greatest takeaways from the charrette in your community?
3. What suggestions would you recommend for improving the charrette process for use in future charrettes?
4. What advantages/disadvantages would there be in conducting a charrette open to all residents from beginning to end?

The following paragraphs examine each question, describe the coded categories, and offer examples of the responses.

When asked to describe which factors you feel most important in creating an effective, efficient process thirty-three participants (39%) responded. The results were coded into the following categories and are shown in Figure 4.30.

1. Community Buy-in / Involvement (11; 33%)
 - a. “Buy-in from the community.”
 - b. “Getting the buy-in of appropriate people. Keeping politicians completely out if possible.”
 - c. “Getting every aspect of the community involved in the process. There were a lot of small business people that were not involved in the process.”
2. Open Communication / Adaptability (6; 18%)
 - a. “Openness and adaptability.”

- b. "Ability to listen and compromise."
 - c. "Being able to recognize the opportunities and taking things one reasonable step at a time."
3. Commitment and Flexibility of Leadership (6; 18%)
- a. "Open-mindedness and commitment on behalf of leadership."
 - b. "Willingness among the politicians to take a back seat. Less of me and more of us. Experienced facilitation is essential."
 - c. "Leadership and the ability to show the community how the charrette will improve the community economically."
4. None (5; 16%)
- a. "Pointless."
 - b. "Unknown."
 - c. "Nothing"
5. Unbiased Feedback (3; 9%)
- a. "Open and honest feedback that isn't self-motivating/beneficial."
 - b. "Outsiders insight into the community needs and an insightful/tactful presentation to address those needs."
 - c. "The focus groups providing open, honest feedback to the team and community leaders willing to allow them to do their job without wanting to weigh in too heavily on what should be done."
6. Education of the process (2; 6%)
- a. "Communicate the purpose of the charrette."
 - b. "Prior communication and understanding of the process involved."

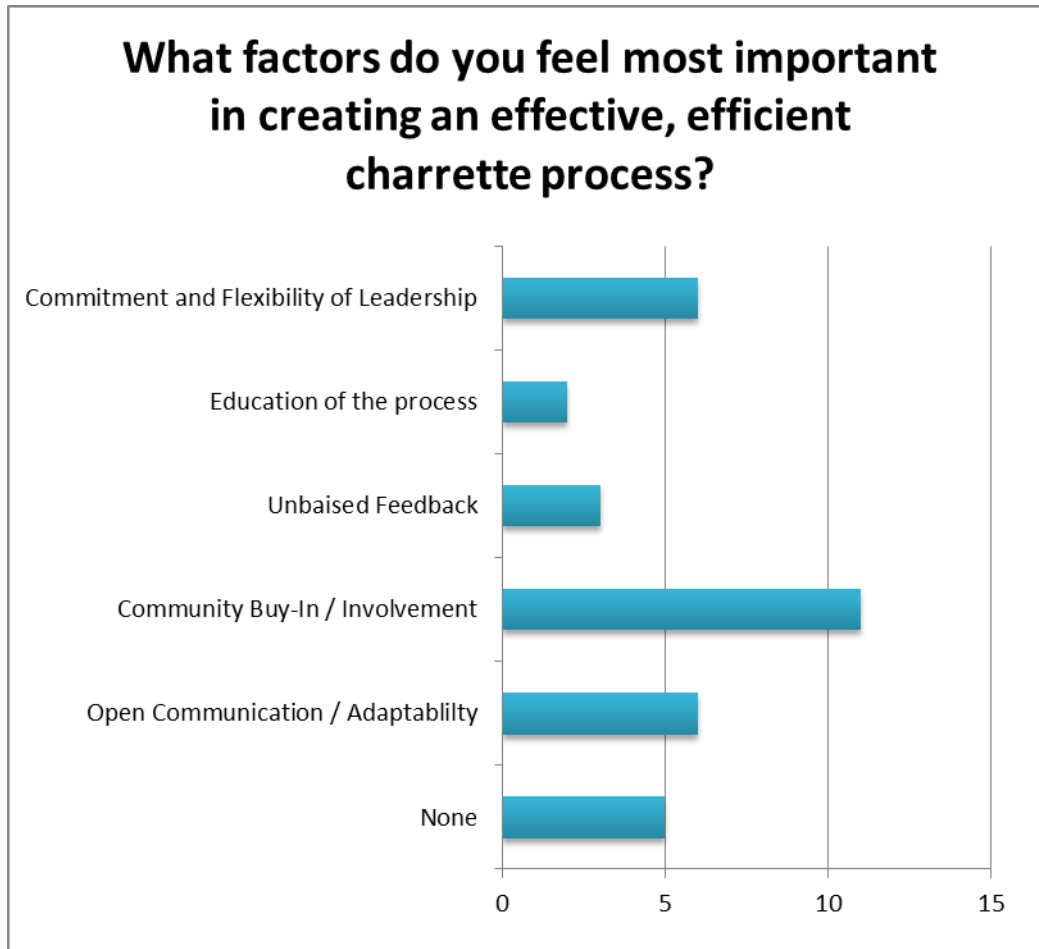


Figure 4.30 Coded responses concerning the question: “What factors do you feel most important in creating an effective, efficient charrette process?”

Here, buy-in, communication, and commitment from leadership emerged as common responses when participants were asked what was most important to the process. Being aware of these characteristics and how they influence the process is important in the development of future charrettes. The data suggests that facilitators and organizers familiarize themselves with successful methods of generating buy-in and maintaining clear lines of communication throughout the process. Data also highlights the importance of the commitment demonstrated by community leaders and charrette

facilitators and supports claims made in the research of Mattessich and Monsey that this is necessary for a successful community building effort to occur (1997).

In the next open-ended question charrette participants were asked to identify what they considered the greatest take-away following the charrette held in their community. Of the participants thirty-six people (42%) responded when asked to describe what they or the community gained most from participating in the charrette. The responses were coded into six categories and are detailed in the following list as shown in Figure 4.31.

1. A tangible plan / Collective vision (9; 25%)
 - a. “Designs, logo ideas and a plan.”
 - b. “The actual plan map which caused motivation of business owners to improve their property façade.”
 - c. “Concept for solutions.”
2. Identification of future opportunities (9; 25%)
 - a. “Identifiable and doable projects that could help move the goals forward.”
 - b. “Opportunities for improvement of the community.”
 - c. “Some specific short-term opportunities that would be undertaken and a sense of the long-term opportunities available to the community.”
3. Importance of community buy-in and willingness to implement plans (8; 22%)
 - a. “People who are willing to fight the agendas to bring on needed change.”

- b. “Community members felt they could do something about some of the issues revealed and discussed.”
 - c. “We need cooperation.”
- 4. Diversity of New Ideas (4; 11%)
 - a. “Diverse ideas for alternate solutions from a more objective audience.”
 - b. “New Ideas.”
 - c. “Ideas to make the quality of life better in the community.”
- 5. None / Unknown (4; 11%)
 - a. “Unknown.”
 - b. “Don’t know.”
 - c. “N/A.”
- 6. Importance of leaders’ commitment (2; 5%)
 - a. “Has to be follow through from elected officials.”
 - b. “Leadership, even before funding, is necessary to move a project like this forward. Leadership is challenged in this community.”

In this case the data reveals that the majority of respondents (18; 50%) felt that a tangible plan for the community and the identification of specific opportunities concerning future implementation were the greatest outcomes of the charrette. Conversely, the data supports the notion discussed in previous research that a collective vision and a clear plan for the implementation of future projects is a key characteristic of a successful community building process (Mattessich et al. 1997; Reed 2007). Of the remaining responses 22 percent revealed that their greatest take-away from the charrette was an understanding of how important buy-in from the community became as the

charrette evolved. Additional responses identify the development of new ideas (4; 11%) and the importance of commitment from leaders (2; 5%) as learned characteristics following the event.

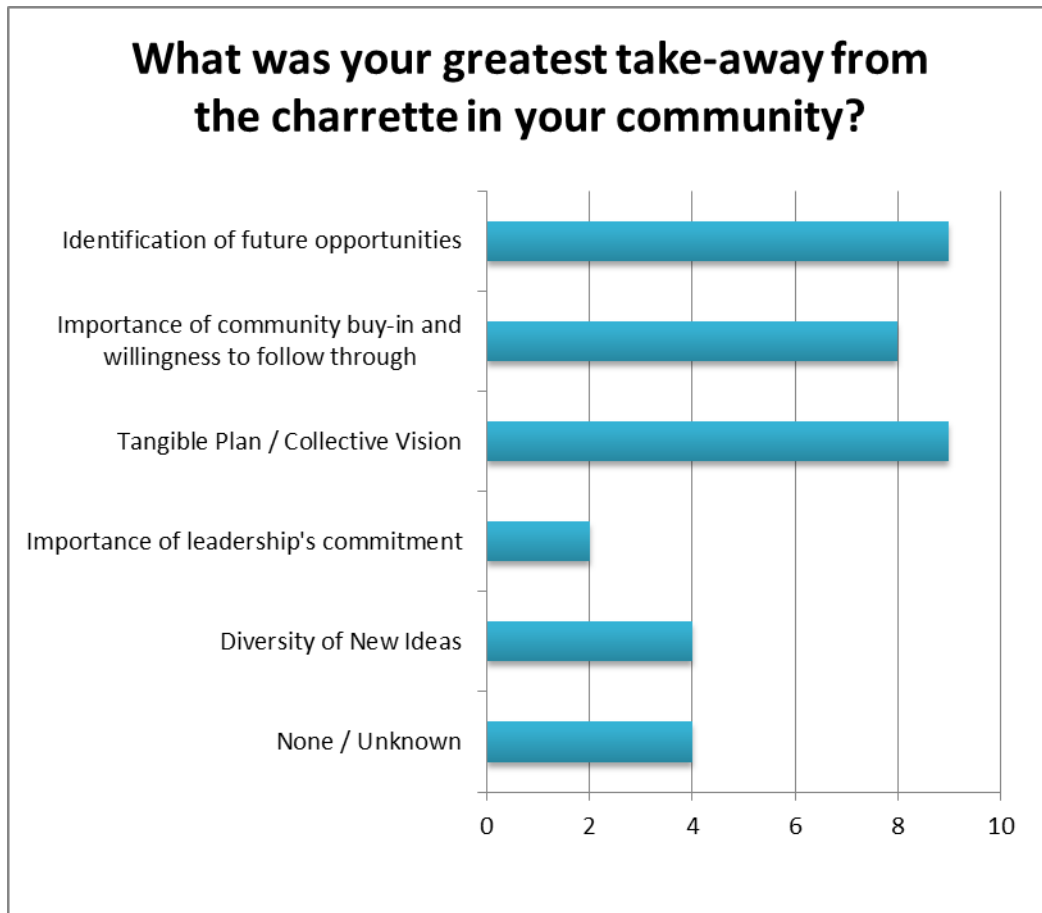


Figure 4.31 Coded responses concerning the question: “What was your greatest take-away from the charrette in your community?”

Next, the researcher utilized open-ended questioning to ask potential respondents to provide recommendations or suggestions for improving future charrettes. Here, thirty-

two people offered feedback resulting in a response rate of 38 percent. The responses were coded into six categories and are detailed in Figure 4.32.

1. Awareness / Education / Advertising Prior to the Event (10; 31%)
 - a. “Advertise more prior to.”
 - b. “ More education of the process.”
 - c. “More information needed to be out there in the state so others may be willing to participate.”
2. Don’t know / No recommendation (6; 19%)
3. Community Involvement / Diversity (5; 16%)
 - a. “More effective outreach and involvement from key demographic areas.”
 - b. “Get as many people involved as possible.”
 - c. “Wider participation.”
4. Increased organization and communication (5; 16%)
 - a. “It would be great if we could stream the “war room” so that all members of the community could be part of the design/work process.”
 - b. “The process was good.”
 - c. “Some of the graphic design seemed a bit generic. Spend more time communicating the plan.”
5. Commitment from leaders (3; 9%)
 - a. “Gain strong support from community leaders.”
 - b. “Need more commitment from those facilitating charrette for communities.

- c. “Get leaderships’ formal commitment to the process.”
- 6. Follow-up / Funding (3; 9%)
 - a. “I think a follow-up meeting with community leaders regarding execution of the suggestions.”
 - b. “Follow-up is needed for implementation of the things we decided on.”

In this case the data reveals that increasing awareness, education, and advertising prior to the event is the number one suggestion made by charrette participants following the event. Seemingly, respondents feel that the dissemination of information educating citizens on the process and making them aware of the goals and expectations of the charrette is important for future events. The results also suggest that open communication and diversity of participants are also concerns and must be considered and addressed in future proceedings.

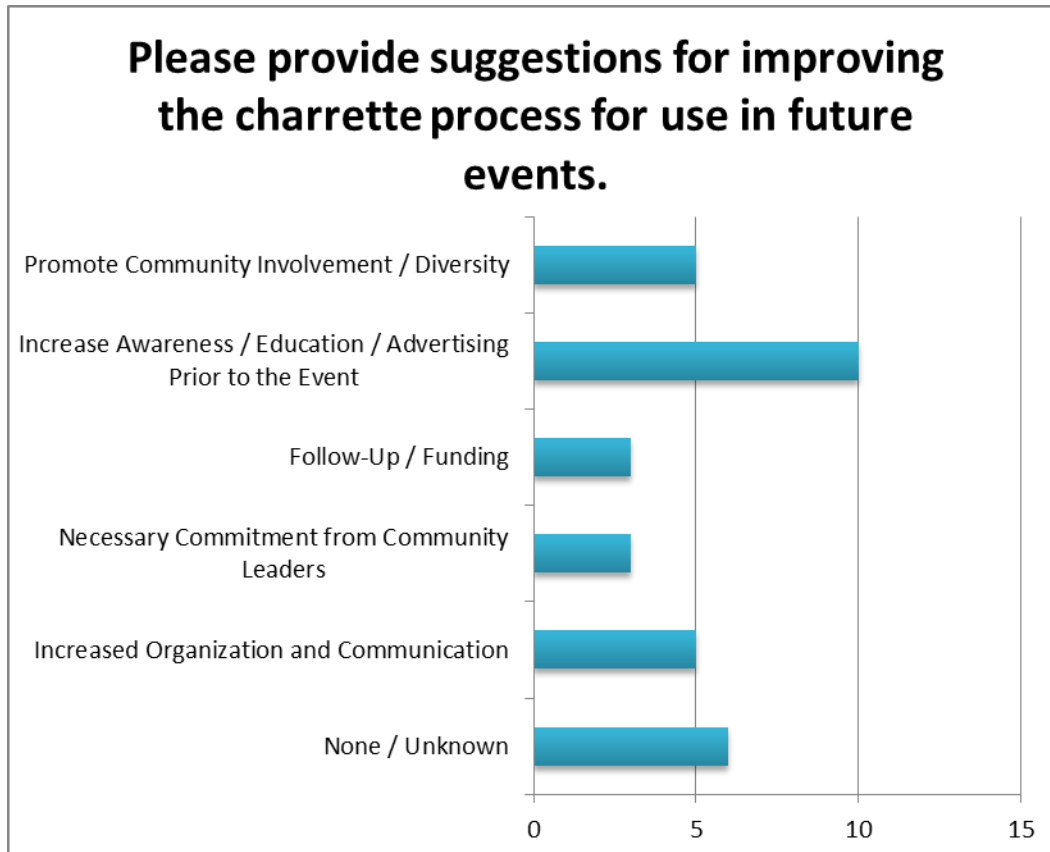


Figure 4.32 Coded responses concerning suggestions for improving the charrette process for use in future events.

When discussing widespread participation previous research discusses including a diversity of participants and promoting the event to include as many people as possible (Mattessich et al. 1997). The researcher also learned over the course of the study how an open-forum setting has the potential to do more harm than good as a charrette evolves. There are both advantages and disadvantages associated with increased inclusiveness of the charrette process. Identifying and understanding how they influence the process is necessary if the discipline wishes to create a balanced, efficient charrette.

In an attempt to gather more specific information concerning perceptions of inclusiveness charrette participants were asked to discuss their views concerning this approach. The researcher petitioned respondents to discuss what they see as possible advantages and disadvantages associated with a charrette which is open to the public-at-large from beginning to end. There are both advantages and disadvantages associated with increased inclusiveness of the charrette process. Identifying and understanding these and how they influence the charrette is necessary if the discipline wishes to create a balanced, efficient charrette. This time, forty people provided feedback resulting in a response rate of 47 percent. Responses to the open-ended question are grouped into six categories; three concerning advantages and three concerning disadvantages. The category “unknown” resulted in six (15%). The following list of categories describes individual responses and Figures 4.33 and 4.34 show the respective results:

Advantages

1. Adequate Representation (5; 13%)
 - a. “Gives a voice to all.”
 - b. “Opportunity for those who may have something good to bring to the tables and were not invited.”
 - c. “True democratic process.”
2. Community Buy-in / Social Cohesion (8; 18%)
 - a. “Buy-in from all.”
 - b. “Level of ownership would increase considerably promoting a stronger community.”
 - c. “More possible motivation to buy-in to the suggestions.”

3. Increased input from the majority (3; 8%)
 - a. “Broader input from all.”
 - b. “The advantage would be that you would get broader input into the process.”
 - c. “More community input the better.”

Disadvantages

4. Too many agendas jeopardizing effectiveness (13; 33%)
 - a. “Would just be too many agendas.”
 - b. “Too many opinions often leads to ineffective decisions, which impeded progress.”
 - c. “Would be input of too many personal agendas vs what is best for the community.”
5. Difficulty maintaining focus (4; 10%)
 - a. “More people makes it difficult to manage the process.”
 - b. “It becomes hard to drill down and focus on the issues”
 - c. “Too many people will make focus of specific topics difficult.”
6. Increased difficulty of communication. (1; 3%)
 - a. “Communicating the goals to a larger number of people may prove difficult and inefficient.”

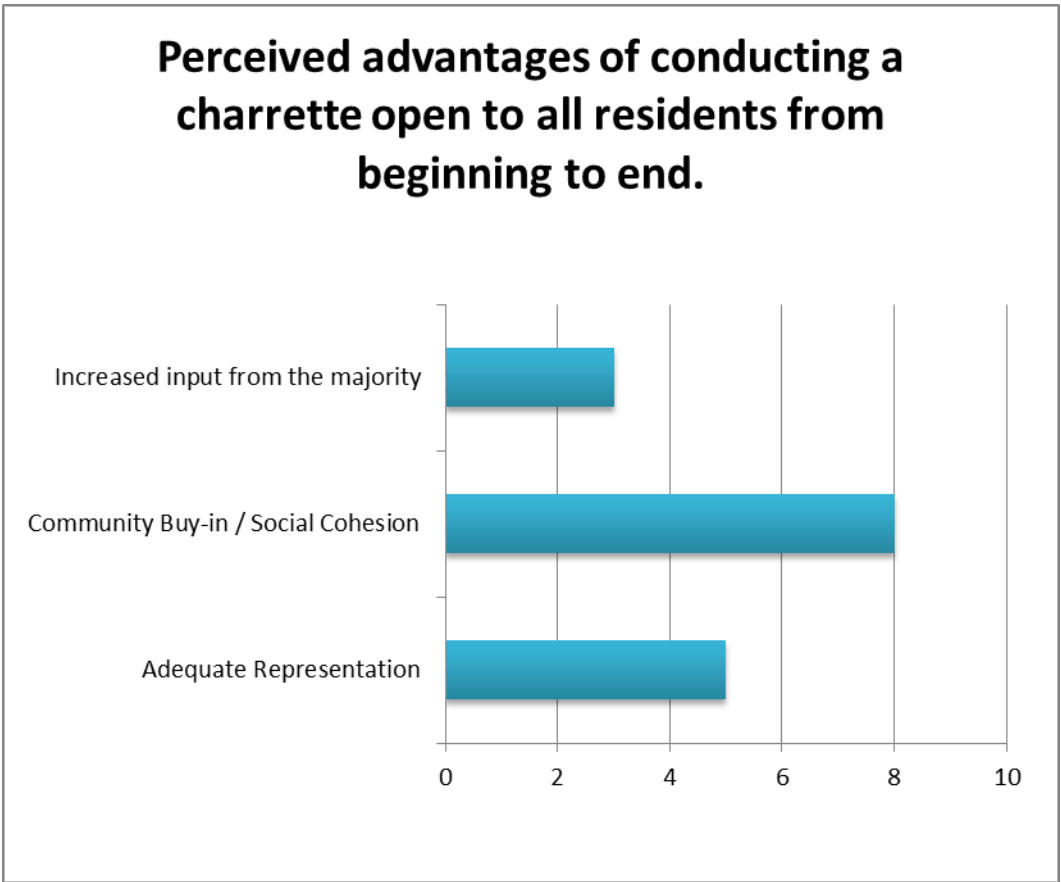


Figure 4.33 Perceived advantages of conducting a charrette open to all residents from beginning to end.

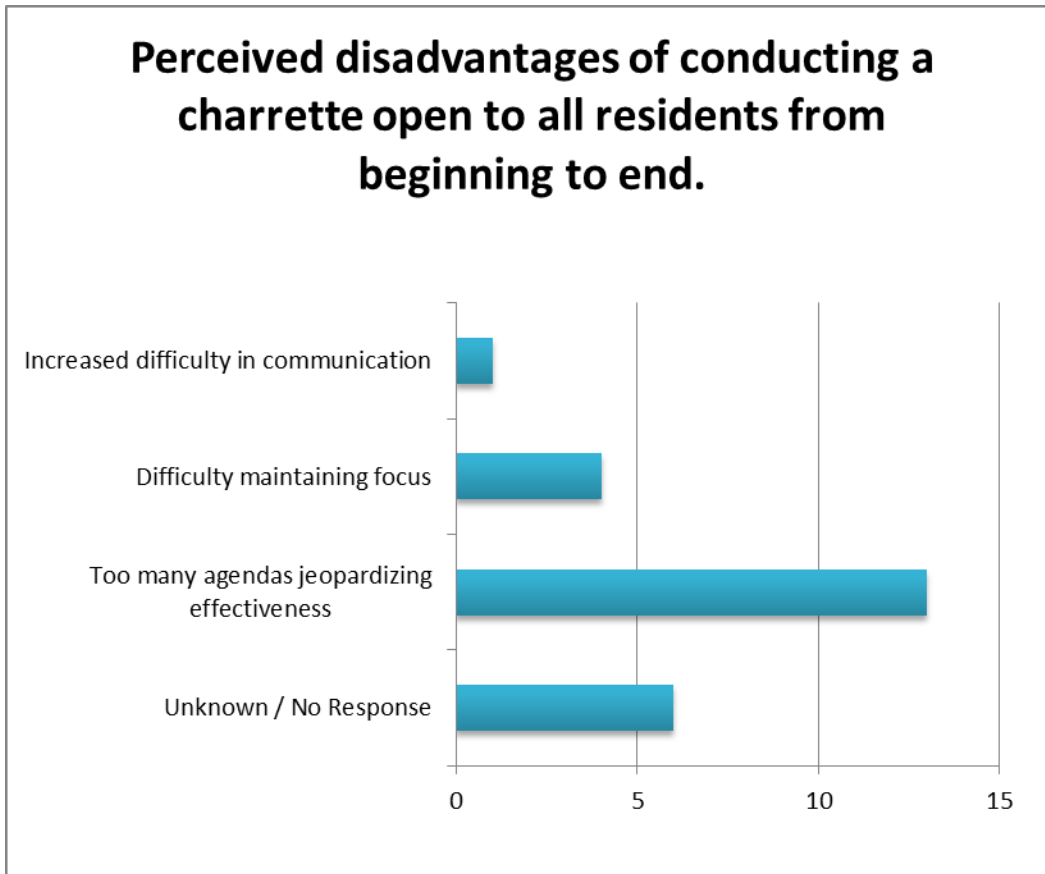


Figure 4.34 Perceived disadvantages of conducting a charrette open to all residents from beginning to end.

Results derived from these questions show that many of the participants (8; 18%) view an increase in buy-in and social cohesion within the community as the greatest advantage of conducting an open-forum charrette. While this form and approach to charrette facilitation has been the traditional method for involving the public-at-large difficulties in managing the time and costs associated have, at times, threatened the process. Conversely, when asked to describe the disadvantages of an open-forum charrette thirteen people (33%) said they were concerned that the inclusion of more people would create a process in which the participants carry far too many agendas.

These agendas consume valuable time and seemingly have the potential to reduce efficiency, effectiveness, and perceptions of success concerning the process. These participants recognize how having more people involved may result in a more holistic plan but acknowledge the threat of gridlock that may result from having too many agendas.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The results of the web-based survey helped the researcher examine how the stakeholder-access approach to charrette facilitation is perceived by those who are active in the participatory process. By gathering and compiling data addressing the characteristics and variables associated with successful community building efforts the researcher was able to gain an in-depth view of this alternate approach. This chapter will, identify how the data gathered from the web-based survey may be used within the discipline of landscape architecture, identify the assumptions and limitations, discuss recommendations made by the researcher, and offer suggestions for future research concerning the charrette process. An exploration of the participant perceptions of the charrette process will identify variables important in creating a process focused on both effectiveness and efficiency applicable to future charrettes.

5.2 Assumptions

Several assumptions were made throughout the course of the study. First, the researcher developed a survey tool focusing primarily on the charrettes facilitated by the MMSA. Residents who participated in the MMSA charrettes were easily accessible and the researcher assumed that feedback from these individuals would be representative of a

broader population. Second, it is assumed that the research method, based on Dillman's TDM, was most appropriate for this study. The researcher assumed that following Dillman's' TDM would produce adequate response rates sufficient for making assumptions regarding survey respondents. Third, it is the assumption of the researcher that participants who responded to the survey provided truthful answers and gave honest feedback concerning their experience with the charrette process.

5.3 Limitations of Study

Multiple limitations were revealed during the course of this study. First, and foremost, involves the survey implementation. The survey utilized to gather the data for this thesis was reliant on a sample of convenience, rather than a random sample, and the results may not be suggestive of participants in other charrette proceedings. Lists of contacts gathered from the Main Street Managers and Chamber of Commerce Directors served as the primary method of identifying the active participants in each community. It should be noted, too, that official records of those in attendance were not kept for most of the communities that have held a charrette. This made it difficult for the researcher to properly identify stakeholders active in many of the towns. As previously noted the majority of respondents (60.3%) participated in the Columbus, MS charrette and created a scope more limited than the researcher had hoped. Also, following the distribution of the survey tool 253 email addresses of potential respondents were returned as invalid or non-existent and resulted in response rates much lower than those suggested by Dillman's TDM.

Second, the survey population was limited to participants in charrettes designed and facilitated by the MMSA. While the MMSA follows the charrette facilitation

recommendations of the National Charrette Institute it cannot be assumed that their approach is the same as other entities operating on the recommendations of the NCI.

Third, many of the MMSA charrettes occurred four to eight years ago. Several emails were received from potential respondents addressing their concern regarding their ability to remember specifics of the event they attended. These respondents felt that the event occurred too far in the past for them to offer useful feedback for the purpose of the survey and they opted out. The survey data and reactionary emails suggest the possibility that length of time since the charrette may, potentially, influence the rate of response as well as the respondent's ability to provide accurate feedback.

Finally, it is to be noted that the research examines only Mississippi Communities, many of which are considered rural areas. The societal structure and social dynamics found in a rural Mississippi community differs greatly from that of an urban metropolitan area.

5.4 Recommendations

Seemingly, there were many positive outcomes following the MMSA charrettes and the stakeholder-access approach is successful in promoting an effective, efficient process. The data suggests that, overall, respondents were satisfied with the charrette process and that most perceived it as a success. They seem to recognize how a participatory planning event may prove beneficial for their community as they plan for future growth and identify opportunities focused on the whole. It, too, is the opinion of the researchers that from this perspective the charrettes conducted by the MMSA have been successful. Community leaders and charrette facilitators have successfully engaged

key members of the community and petitioned them to reach consensus in identifying a formidable plan for future growth.

More importantly, however, this study has highlighted notable short-comings and identified characteristics of the stakeholder-access charrette process which may require greater scrutiny as facilitators seek the best approach for charrette facilitation. Namely, there is a significant lack of diversity among charrette participants which potentially threatens the development of holistic solutions for the issues facing the community. Though the process itself may be deemed successful data shows that methods for promoting inclusion and diversity of charrette participants should receive greater consideration as facilitators seek the best approach for future participatory planning events. The recommendations of the researcher address this disconnect while discussing the topics of diversity, the difficulty of balancing inclusion and efficiency, and alternative methods for participation. Also, these recommendations discuss the importance of developing social capacity within the community before and during the event and maintaining it afterward.

The data gathered from surveys distributed to participants of the MMSA charrettes has allowed the researcher to make the following recommendations for future participatory planning events:

- Increase media advertising prior to the event in an effort to raise awareness of the upcoming charrette.
- Offer educational opportunities prior to the upcoming charrette for residents to become familiar with the process: its history, application, purpose, goals, and objectives.

- Develop plans for increasing the diversity of charrette participants in both the stakeholder-access portion and the general sessions, helping ensure community control during the decision making process.
- Utilize various social media outlets in an attempt to connect, educate, and gather feedback from community members.
- Develop surveys specific to the MMSA charrettes so that participant data may be gathered before, during, and immediately after a charrette has occurred.
- Track and maintain contact information for charrette participants in both the stakeholder-access and general sessions.

Data gathered from the survey revealed that participants involved in the MMSA charrettes felt that there was a significant lack of advertising within the community before the event took place. Many of the survey respondents (46.9%) said they learned about the process from a local Main Street Manager or Chamber of commerce member. Interestingly, traditional media (newspaper or television) only accounted for 21.9 percent and was not the primary method for informing the public prior to the opening session. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the researcher that organizers and facilitators develop methods for increasing the awareness of the event in the weeks leading up to the opening session. An exploration of how to best utilize local media outlets to promote advertising is necessary as community leaders and charrette facilitators seek buy-in from motivated, well-informed individuals.

When asked what suggestions they would make for future charrettes, 31 percent of the respondents felt that increased education, primarily before the process, would be

beneficial. Data from the survey reveals that prior to the charrette few people seemed to understand the charrette or the intentions of the process. Based on participant concerns, the researcher recommends that community leaders and charrette facilitators develop a system for offering educational opportunities discussing the history, application, purpose, goals, and objectives associated with this process.

Third, data shows 87.1 percent of survey respondents of the MMSA charrettes were Caucasian and did not represent a diverse population. Although demographic data gathered for this survey may not be suggestive of a larger population it is important to note the lack of diversity here. If charrette organizers are promoting the process based on the principles of the New Urbanism then this must be addressed. It is the recommendation of the researcher that organizers develop plans for including a diversity of charrette participants in both the stakeholder-access portion and the general sessions so that holistic solutions may be identified.

Next, as mentioned above, an analysis of participant responses revealed that word-of-mouth was the primary media source for informing potential participants of the upcoming charrette. This made the researcher question both the inclusiveness and missed opportunities for informing and inviting participants into the process. Today, the ease of communication associated with current technology and the popularity of social media outlets allow members of our society to connect like never before. Surely, charrette organizers and facilitators recognize the potential in utilizing this technology to promote the charrette process. After analyzing the data the researcher recommends that other options for charrette participation be considered and explored in an attempt to connect, educate, interact with, and gather feedback from community members.

As research into the participatory planning process evolved the researcher experienced difficulty in obtaining information concerning any similar study or survey of participants in charrettes of this type. Very little information exists concerning both the traditional, open-forum charrette, and the alternate stakeholder-access approach. It is the recommendation of the researcher that future charrettes held by the MMSA, or any other entity hoping to gather useful feedback concerning the process, include surveys as the process occurs. Gathering information during the process will allow charrette organizers to immediately identify trends among the participants or the process, some of which may be time sensitive. Considering the gap in information related to the charrette process, and if facilitators truly seek solutions for the well-being of the whole, research focused on the process must evolve as part of the process.

Finally, the researcher recommends that organizers and facilitators address the fact that very few of the communities having held a MMSA charrette maintained records of the event. Gathering contact information for charrette participants proved difficult because many of the communities did not compile a list of those involved nor did they maintain contact information for participants. If future research is to prove beneficial, those in charge must strive to maintain awareness of and information concerning who was in attendance. Tracking and maintaining contact information of participants in both the stakeholder-access and general sessions is important for the validity of future research.

Based on the data compiled following the survey the researcher presented these recommendations to the MMSA as suggestions for promoting advertisement and education before the process, increasing diversity during the process, and identifying

other methodologies for promoting an inclusive approach focused on creating an efficient, successful charrette.

5.5 Implications Concerning the Profession

The Landscape Architect has a unique opportunity to practice the principles of New Urbanism, build relationships with local residents, and participate in the community building process. Having a knowledgeably informed citizen base is beneficial to the participatory planning process (Arnstein 1975). The Landscape Architect, as steward of the environment motivated to create resilient communities, holds the responsibility of promoting diversity within and educating those involved with the process. Moreover, the landscape architect offers the experience necessary for the development of an informed design. He or she considers the variables present, and the variables that may be manipulated, to create a sense of place based, in part, on community feedback. Consider, for example, how participants responded when asked to describe what was gained as a result of the charrette. Many of them said “A tangible plan built on a collective vision”. Understanding the participatory planning process - specifically, how to engage participants so that a “collective vision” is the result - becomes important for the landscape architect as a tangible plan emerges. Additionally, understanding social capacity and having the ability to recognize and apply the variables necessary for conducting an efficient process influences how the landscape architect designs.

The landscape architect often develops a holistic approach based on research informed design. Landscape architects are trained to conduct an analysis of existing features and elements present within a community prior to any development or re-development. This should be no different when considering the social capital and social

capacity present in a community before, during, and after a participatory planning event. Just as research of circulation patterns may identify transportation solutions research concerning the participatory process, and how to keep it efficient, ultimately, influence the design. Understanding the variables that constitute the proper form of charrette approach for use is necessary for the designer who, at the very least, creates visual representations of the suggestions made during the process.

The role of the designer is molded as trust is built with the participants in the charrette (Duany et al. 1992). Mattessich and Monsey describe the importance of experienced facilitators and how communities witnessing strong leadership in facilitation tend to show an increase in successful community building efforts (1997). Knowledge within the discipline concerning the most efficient process gives landscape architects the tools for strengthening their leadership abilities. Additionally, the landscape architect has the opportunity to forge a bond with charrette participants while organizing and creating a visual representation of the ideals they have suggested. In turn, a plan evolves as trust is strengthened.

5.6 Opportunities for Further Research

This study has identified several opportunities for future research concerning the charrette process. The following is a discussion of opportunities focused on identifying best practices for application and replication in the charrette process.

First, and foremost, further research aimed at collecting feedback before, during, and immediately after the event is needed. The researcher found little information or previous research concerning the charrette process as it evolves. The data collected in this survey suggested that respondents may be less apt to participate if they were involved

in participatory events further in the past. It is the opinion of the researcher that the length of time between the charrette and the survey reduces participant's willingness and ability to participate in the study. Here, a study addressing the timeliness of the survey may prove beneficial. Conversely, gathering feedback from participants immediately following the charrette process will allow them to address concerns which may be more time sensitive. Data gathered from surveys completed prior to the event may identify variables influencing how participant perceptions change from the beginning of the process to the end. Research of pre and post-charrette perceptions may identify key characteristics necessary for strengthening the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. Understanding these variables and how they are perceived prior to and immediately following the actual event may offer advanced methods for creating a more inclusive process while simultaneously maintaining efficiency.

A second opportunity for further research would examine input from the public-at-large who participate in the general opening and closing sessions. Surveying these participants will provide future researchers a greater understanding of how the general public perceives the stakeholder-access charrette. Principles of the New Urbanism suggest that the plans recommended at the conclusion of the charrette concentrate on addressing issues facing the community as a whole. A study examining the perceptions of the public-at-large may prove beneficial in determining if, in fact, the outcomes suggested by the stakeholders and facilitators are accepted by the majority within the community. Understanding if, and to what extent, the general public feels that the stakeholder-access charrette promotes a successful process is worthy of exploration.

Third, opportunity and information lies in a comparison study of both the open-forum and stakeholder-access approach to charrette facilitation. Performed simultaneously, the researcher may apply similar survey methods to both forms of charrette facilitation. The results would allow researchers to make sound comparisons of the similarities of and differences between the two approaches.

Next, a study specific to the stakeholder-access approach for charrette facilitation should develop methodologies for generating interest and promoting inclusion and diversity in the participatory planning process. Data suggests that there is little advertising or education prior to the event and lack of interest or knowledge may lead to a reduction in the rate of participation. Identifying a plan for increasing participation and promoting diversity of charrette participants is an opportunity worthy of exploration.

Finally, research exploring alternative options and methods for participation would be an opportunity for future researchers as they strive to create the most successful, efficient charrette process. In recent years advancements in technology and the popularity of social media outlets have altered the way Americans communicate and share information. These advancements offer an ease in communication like never before and have potential in research involving the participatory planning process. Future research focused on developing these technologies to promote involvement and increase diversity is warranted. Management of information gathered utilizing multiple avenues of feedback will help ensure fair representation and offer real time data associated with the charrette process. It is the opinion of the researcher that further research in these areas is needed so practitioners may identify sound methodologies for charrette facilitation.

5.7 Summary

It is to be noted that the results of this study do offer insight of how survey respondents perceived the whole process. Overall, those who offered response felt that the lack of the diversity should be addressed in future application of this form of participatory planning process. It is the opinion of the researcher that diversity within, and education of, the process are the two main obstacles facing teams of charrette facilitators today. In current practice the MMSA, seemingly, is not creating a process promoting the incorporation of a diversity of participants. The fact that 87% of the survey respondents were Caucasian, that 58 percent of them felt that increased inclusion would create a better process, and 72 percent felt that the entire charrette should be open to the community is of great concern and supports the need for an examination of how to best approach the process. Identifying alternate methods and developing and utilizing social media outlets will arm future charrette facilitators with the tools they really need in future endeavors. Advertising, education, and communication are only a few of the issues that may be easily addressed by utilizing various media outlets aimed at generating buy-in and promoting a more diverse base of participants. If the goal is to produce solutions focused on a holistic approach then buy-in of the majority is important. The MMSA, certainly, should be interested in identifying various methods for gathering feedback if the intent of the organization is to strengthen communities and truly offer holistic solutions based on their four-point approach.

As mentioned previously the researcher identified the inability to efficiently gather contact information from charrette participants as a major limitation and a variable to be considered when discussing the response rate of 23 percent. It should be noted that

only one community, Columbus, maintained a seemingly complete, up to date, list of contacts who were involved in the charrette. It should be noted, too, that while many of the other communities offered a list of contacts they usually consisted only of local political figures or key business leaders. The main street manager in Columbus presented the information in an organized manner and was accommodating to the needs of the researcher. The system of organization utilized in Columbus should be examined and, possibly, replicated in communities either having held or hoping to conduct a charrette in the future. A well maintained list of participants will allow future researchers the ability to more accurately measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the process. Conversely, considering that these events are funded by federal and state grants, these lists should be maintained for public record.

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APPENDIX A

MISSISSIPPI MAIN STREET ASSOCIATION: NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The "New" New Urban Charrette: Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternate Approach

Mississippi Main Street Association and the "New" New Urban Charrette:
Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternate Approach

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the option to opt out of the entire survey or you may choose not to answer individual questions found within. There are no anticipated risks involved in this research. The survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete and has been approved by the Mississippi State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects. All participants must be at least 18 years of age. *If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. If you have questions or concerns please contact: Odie J. Avery Graduate Teaching Assistant Mississippi State University Oja1@msstate.edu OR Michael W. Seymour Assistant Professor Mississippi State University mseymour@lalc.msstate.edu

Thank you for taking our survey! We're gathering this information for statistical purposes only. The data will not be used to identify you personally in any way.

DEMOGRAPHICS

1) What is your gender?

Male

Female

2) Which answer best describes your race or ethnicity?

Asian/Pacific Islander

Black/African-American

Caucasian

Hispanic

Native American/Alaska Native

Other/Multi-Racial

Decline to Respond

3) In what year were you born?

1993

1992

1991

1990

1989

1988

1987

- 1986
- 1985
- 1984
- 1983
- 1982
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- 1935
- 1934
- 1933
- 1932
- 1931
- 1930
- 1929
- 1928
- 1927
- pre-1927

4) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school
- High school/GED
- Some college
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree

- Doctorate degree
- Law degree
- Medical degree
- Trade or other technical school degree

5) What is your employment status?

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Student
- Retired
- Unemployed

6) In which profession do you work?

- Accounting / Finance / Banking
- Administration / Clerical / Reception
- Advertisement / PR
- Architecture / Design
- Arts/Leisure / Entertainment
- Beauty / Fashion
- Buying / Purchasing
- Construction
- Consulting
- Customer Service

- Distribution
- Education
- Health Care (Physical & Mental)
- Human resources management
- Management (Senior / Corporate)
- News / Information
- Operations / Logistics
- Planning (Meeting, Events, etc.)
- Production
- Real Estate
- Research
- Restaurant / Food service
- Sales / Marketing
- Science / Technology / Programming
- Social service
- Student
- Other
- N/A - Unemployed / Retired / Homemaker

7) About how long have you been a resident of your community?

- Less than 3 years
- 3-5 Years
- 5-10 Years

10+ Years

8) Please indicate how often you participate each week in Religious, Volunteer, Professional or other Organizations within your community.

0

1

2

3

4

5 or more

The Process

Please think back to the charrette held in your community and consider your personal experience as you answer the following questions about the Charrette process.

9) In which community charrette did you participate?

Hancock County

Biloxi

Byhalia

Canton

Carthage

- Columbus
- Covington County
- DeKalb
- Ellisville
- Eupora
- Greenwood
- Gulfport
- Heidelberg
- Holly Springs
- Laurel
- Long Beach
- Marion
- Moss Point
- Newton
- Noxapater
- Ocean Springs
- Pascagoula
- Pass Christian
- Philadelphia
- Picayune
- Starkville
- Water Valley
- West Point

Winona

10) How did you hear about the charrette to be held in your community?

Newspaper

TV

Facebook

Twitter

Political Official

Main Street Association Member

Chamber of Commerce

Friend

Other

11) Community members involved in the charrette were eager to participate.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Not Applicable

12) Objectives of the charrette were made clear early in the process.

Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

13) Participants were flexible and adaptive as ideas and concerns were presented.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

14) The diversity of charrette participants represented the community accordingly.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

15) The inclusion of more participants from within the community would lead to a more effective process.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Not Applicable

16) Participants promoted their personal agenda during the process.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly agree

Not Applicable

17) Existing leaders in the community became the decision makers in the charrette.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Neutral

- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

18) The charrette evolved from simple tasks to more complex planning activities.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

19) The charrette process focused on generating solutions for concerns facing the community as a whole.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

20) The entire charrette should be open to members of the community.

- Strongly disagree

- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

21) I would participate in a future charrette.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree
- Not Applicable

Please rate your level of overall satisfaction of the following:

22) Community support for the charrette PRIOR to the event.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

Not Applicable

23) Amount of advertising within the community devoted to the event prior to the start.

Very Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

Not Applicable

24) Diversity of participants

Very Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

Satisfied

Very Satisfied

Not Applicable

25) Ease of communication between charrette participants and facilitators.

Very Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Neutral

- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Not Applicable

26) The number of community members in attendance at the opening and closing charrette sessions.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Not Applicable

27) Based on your experience please express your level of satisfaction concerning the EFFECTIVENESS of the charrette held in your community.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Not Applicable

28) Based on your experience please express your level of satisfaction concerning the EFFICIENCY of the charrette held in your community.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Not Applicable

29) Based on your experience please express your level of satisfaction concerning the OVERALL SUCCESS of the charrette held in your community.

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied
- Not Applicable

30) Based on your involvement in the charrette please rank the following statements about facilitation, in order of importance, needed for a successful process.

- _____ A relationship of trust
- _____ Understanding of the issues facing the community

_____ Sincerity of commitment

_____ Ability to be flexible and adaptable

_____ Level of experience

31) Please rank the following characteristics of community, in order of importance, that you feel necessary for a successful charrette.

_____ Flexibility and adaptability

_____ Ability to discuss, reach consensus, and cooperate

_____ Pre-existing social cohesion (strong ties to the community)

_____ Existing identifiable leadership

_____ Motivation from within the community

_____ Community awareness of the issues

32) Prior to the event, how was the charrette perceived among residents in your community?

33) What were your greatest take-aways from the charrette in your community?

34) What factors do you feel most important in creating an effective, efficient charrette process?

35) Please provide suggestions for improving the charrette process for use in future events.

36) What advantages / disadvantages would there be in conducting a charrette open to all residents from beginning to end?

Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.

APPENDIX B
FIRST EMAIL COVER LETTER

November 28, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

We are seeking your help in understanding the perceptions of those involved in the participatory planning **charrettes** conducted, in part, by the **Mississippi Main Street Association**. This study is being completed in an effort to recognize the characteristics of the charrette which influence the efficiency and overall perceptions of success of the process following the event.

Your completion of a short survey about the charrette process in your community would be greatly appreciated. Our goal is to provide a greater understanding of the factors within a community and within the charrette process that create a successful participatory planning event.

The survey link will remain open until January 16, 2012. As an added incentive, 1 (one) \$200.00 Visa Gift Card will be given to a randomly selected respondent following the completion and submittal of the survey on or before this date.

Your survey answers will be kept confidential and will not be associated with your name or e-mail account. Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have the option to opt out of the entire survey or you may choose not to answer individual questions found within. There are no anticipated risks involved in this research. The survey should take 10 to 15 minutes to complete and has been approved by the Mississippi State University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects.

All participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate. Should you decide to participate please click the following link to the online survey.

Survey Link:

Please Use the following Link to Access the Survey:

CHARRETTE SURVEY LINK

Or you can cut and paste this URL into your browser:

<http://edu.surveymoz.com/s3/1008266/Charrette-Process>

Sincerely,

Odie J. Avery
Graduate Assistant
Mississippi State University
Oja1@msstate.edu

Michael W. Seymour
Assistant Professor
Mississippi State University
mseymour@lalc.msstate.edu

APPENDIX C
SECOND EMAIL COVER LETTER

December 12, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam,

A few weeks ago I sent an e-mail with a link to an on-line survey asking you to provide information concerning your experience with the Charrette Process administered by the Mississippi Main Street Association and held in your community. My records indicate that you have not yet completed this survey; however, if you have already completed the survey, please disregard this message and please accept my sincere apology.

I am writing again to request that you consider taking the time to complete the survey in order to contribute to the success of this study. As an active participant in the Charrette Process, your response is extremely important to the success of this study. The value of your feedback is important in determining best practices applicable to future charrettes.

Your answers are completely confidential and your participation is completely voluntary.

The results of this research will be analyzed and published as part of a Masters thesis in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University.

I realize that your time is very valuable, and I ask that you dedicate approximately 15-20 minutes to complete this survey.

Thank you in advance for your time, and I appreciate your contributions to the success of this study.

For questions regarding your rights as a participant in human subject research, please contact the Mississippi State University Office of Regulatory Compliance at (662) 325-5220 or via email at irb@research.msstate.edu.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me or Michael Seymour. If not, please follow the link below to begin the survey.

CHARRETTE SURVEY LINK

Thank you for contributing to the success of this study.

Sincerely,

Odie J. Avery
Graduate Assistant
Mississippi State University
Ojal@msstate.edu

Michael W. Seymour
Assistant Professor
Mississippi State University
mseymour@lalc.msstate.edu

APPENDIX D

THIRD AND FINAL EMAIL COVER LETTER

January 2, 2013

Dear Sir or Madam,

A few weeks ago I sent an e-mail with a link to an on-line survey asking you to provide information concerning your experience with the Charrette Process administered by the Mississippi Main Street Association and held in your community. My records indicate that you have not yet completed this survey; however, if you have already completed the survey, please disregard this message and please accept my sincere apology.

I am writing again to request that you consider taking the time to complete the survey in order to contribute to the success of this study. As an active participant in the Charrette Process, your response is extremely important to the success of this study. The value of your feedback is important in determining best practices applicable to future charrettes.

I am also writing to express thanks and my utmost appreciation for those of you who have participated by already completing the survey. The information you have given will be beneficial in assessing the perceptions of the stakeholder-access charrette process.

Your answers are completely confidential and your participation is completely voluntary.

The results of this research will be analyzed and published as part of a Masters thesis in the Department of Landscape Architecture at Mississippi State University.

I realize that your time is very valuable, and I ask that you dedicate approximately 15-20 minutes to complete this survey.

I am also writing to express thanks and my utmost appreciation for those of you who have participated by already completing the survey. The information you have given will be beneficial in assessing the perceptions of the stakeholder-access charrette process. This will be the last e-mail contact you will receive before the survey official closes on January 16, 2013.

Thank you in advance for your time, and I appreciate your contributions to the success of this study.

For questions regarding your rights as a participant in human subject research, please contact the Mississippi State University Office of Regulatory Compliance at (662) 325-5220 or via email at irb@research.msstate.edu.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact me or Michael Seymour. If not, please follow the link below to begin the survey.

CHARRETTE SURVEY LINK

Thank you for contributing to the success of this study.

Sincerely,

Odie J. Avery
Graduate Assistant
Mississippi State University
Oja1@msstate.edu

Michael W. Seymour
Assistant Professor
Mississippi State University
mseymour@lalc.msstate.edu

APPENDIX E

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES: “PRIOR TO THE EVENT, HOW WAS THE
CHARRETTE PERCEIVED AMONG RESIDENTS IN
YOUR COMMUNITY?”

Summary Report - Feb 26, 2013 Q32

Survey: Mississippi Main Street Association and the "New" New Urban Charrette: Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternate Approach

Prior to the event, how was the charrette perceived among residents in your community?

Response:

Another exercise

As a unique experience to get outside advice on planning

As just another study.

Cautiously optimistically

Confused as to what it was about and what was supposed to be accomplished.

Didn't know what charrette was. Didn't know what it was supposed to do.

Few understood it.

Good

I think very few people understood what a charrette was.

Many did not grasp the purpose and concept of a "charrette"

More important to get business here and not spend money on this

Most did not know about it but those who did were excited.

Response:

N/A

Negatively.

No knowledge of it.

None

Not perceived, heard nothing about it.

People were excited for the attention -- but didn't really know what to expect.

Positive

Positive.

Positively - good chance for people to get their voice heard.

Really didn't know what it was all going to be about.

Uncertain, unknown process

Very good

Well perceived.

With high hope

I think it okay but it could have been much better

N/A

Response:

Unknown

With great hope and confident expectations

With question

It took time and personal visits to explain the process. We got better response this way to have the attendance and participation.

Most knew very little about them, as the participants were "invited" and represented the "same ole" list of people.

I don't think they understood what a Charrette was - so they were waiting to see what it would be.

Some skeptics. Some thought it was "just another political activity". Positive receptiveness from some stakeholders.

Many felt it was just another community study that we would do and then put on the shelf. Others felt it may breathe some new ideas into the community.

APPENDIX F

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES: “WHAT WERE THE GREATEST TAKE-AWAYS
FROM THE CHARRETTE IN YOUR COMMUNITY?”

What were your greatest take-aways from the charrette in your community?

Response

A lot of good work was done

A plan.

Community members felt they could do something about some of the issues revealed and discussed

Design, logo ideas and a plan.

Diverse ideas for alternate solutions from a more objective audience.

Good to see planning for the future to make quality of life better in the community.

Has to be follow through from elected officials

I was hopeful because of the objective observations.

Identifiable and doable projects that could help move the goals forward

N/A

Response

New ideas.

None

Once participants understood what was being done the support levels improved.

Opportunities for improvement of the community.

See what "could" happen to our town

Seemed like a good open minded discussion of possible solutions to revitalizing area.

Soccer complex, warehouse district

The actual plan map which caused motivation of business owners to improve their property facade.

Things don't have to remain the same.

Useless

We need cooperation.

Concept for solutions

How well things was laid out for improvement in our community.

Response

Needs

Too formal, too soon after Katrina.

Unknown

Better understanding of the connections in the community.

Higher level of understanding of how these exercises can help promote the community.

We are just now seeing some of the charrette suggestions taking place with the renovation of the Courthouse Square. The process was a recommendation of the charrette.

People have big dreams. Some unrealistic. People can't separate their own experiences and they bring in their agendas. People are willing to fight the agendas to bring on needed change.

Ideas from the charrette led to the creation of a very successful soccer park/multi-use park in the heart of our downtown.

The graphics provided were outstanding - we still use them. The ideas for community space and connections were invaluable - we have tried to proceed

Response

with these ideas.

Some specific, short-term opportunities that would be undertaken and a sense of the long-term opportunities available to the community.

This community is too divided to accomplish very much, and has leadership that tends to support that divisiveness.

Leadership, even before funding, is necessary to move a project like this forward. Leadership is challenged in this community.

That the community was not ready when it was done. Too many basic needs still had to be met. On a positive note, great ideas were generated through the process.

The receptiveness of the community for the final report and their willingness

Response

to implement many of the recommendations.

APPENDIX G

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES: “WHAT FACTORS DO YOU FEEL MOST
IMPORTANT IN CREATING AN EFFECTIVE, EFFICIENT
CHARRETTE PROCESS?”

Summary Report - Feb 26, 2013 Q32

Survey: Mississippi Main Street Association and the "New" New Urban Charrette: Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternate Approach

What factors do you feel most important in creating an effective, efficient charrette process?

Response

Ability to listen and compromise

Being able to recognize the opportunities and taking things one reasonable step at a time.

Buy in from the community

Citizens input.

Commitment to project.

Community involvement and carry through.

Focusing on things that can be done -- and how to do them -- not just a report of needs.

Getting the buy-in of appropriate people, keep politicians completely

Response

out if possible.

Getting the word out to citizens and getting diverse participation.

More opportunities for public participation.

N/A

None

Open-mindedness and commitment on behalf of leadership.

Pointless.

Breaking the demographic barrier that exists within the City's core.

Commitment of leadership to implement desires of community.

Open and honest feedback that isn't self-motivating/beneficial.

Openness and adaptability.

Unknown

Wide participation and effective leadership.

Response

Community involvement, understanding the difference between concept and reality (the latter most likely in a follow-up session).

Make sure the process and outcomes are fully explained. Not a grip session. Everything that is mentioned may not be accomplished or tackled.

Communicate the purpose. That will be difficult. I was the spokesman at the Waveland presentation and people still couldn't get passed the fear that was present at the time.

Prior communication and understanding of the process involved. Communicate this to the leaders and community to raise participation.

Community Involvement, no political agenda, willingness to listen and Adapt, willingness to express an opinion and not just let the

Response

professionals tell us.

The focus groups providing open honest feedback to the team and community leaders willing to allow the team to do their job without wanting to weigh in too heavily on what should be done.

Getting every aspect of the community involved in the process. There were a lot of small business people that were not involved in the process.

Good leadership to carry out the goals and objectives. Need strong backing from supervisors and mayor.

Outsider's insight into the community needs & an insightful/tactful presentation to address those needs.

Response

Willingness among the politicians to take a back seat. Less of me and more of us. Experienced facilitating is essential.

Leadership from the community and the ability to show the community how the charrette will improve the community economically.

Wait until the general public is ready. Grand plans were not what were on their minds at the time. Seemed almost "opportunistic" at the time to many.

APPENDIX H

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES: “PLEASE PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS FOR
IMPROVING THE CHARRETTE PROCESS IN FUTURE EVENTS.”

Summary Report - Feb 26, 2013 Q32

Survey: Mississippi Main Street Association and the "New" New Urban Charrette: Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternate Approach

Please provide suggestions for improving the charrette process for use in future events.

Response

Advertise more prior to

Can't think of anything that needs to be done to improve the process

Did not participate personally and was unaware of the event

Don't have them anymore

Gain strong support from community leaders and come up with quality ideas.

Get as many people involved as possible.

I think a follow up meeting with community leaders regarding execution of the suggestions.

Response

More education of the process.

More effective outreach and involvement from key demographic areas.

More information needed to be out there in the state so others may be willing to participate.

Need more commitment from those facilitating Charrette for communities.

None

Removal of personal agendas by participants.

See above.

Wider participation.

You need inclusion but it is hard to get ethnic and minority groups to participate.

As above.

I thank things went well on trying to get the word out an getting the community involved.

Response

N/A

None

See above.

Assigning a chair for the process. The chamber staff and Mayor/Alderman should be directly involved but a committee/chair would be helpful. Time management, promotions, communications and direct contact is helpful.

Get leadership's formal commitment to the process. Identify funding resources lined up prior to introducing the plan.

Examples of a charrette from beginning to completion as an added inspiration at local event to see what is possible. and motivational

More contact with local leaders / stakeholders before the charrette would perhaps provide more targeted solutions -- and encourage better consensus.

Response

Due to loss of funding from the county and city governments we lost our economic development leader. We must have a leader and cooperation between that leader and the county and city leaders who fund the needed improvements pointed out by the charrette.

It would be great if we could stream the "war room" so that all members of the community could be part of the design/work process.

My observation is that after two years and much discussion, nothing has been done to implement the things we decided on.

The process was good. Some of the proposed graphic design seemed a little generic. Perhaps more time needs to be spent on that aspect of the plan.

In in a disaster the size and scale of Katrina, waiting until the basic needs had been met might have been better. Or have it in place before the disaster occurs.

Response

N/A I have no idea what this is and I do not recall participating; unsure why I have been asked to complete this survey.

APPENDIX I

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES: “WHAT ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES
WOULD THERE BE IN CONDUCTING A CHARRETTE OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC FROM BEGINNING TO END?”

Summary Report - Feb 26, 2013 Q32

Survey: Mississippi Main Street Association and the "New" New Urban Charrette: Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternate Approach

What advantages / disadvantages would there be in conducting a charrette open to all residents from beginning to end?

Response

Advantage-gives a voice to all Disadvantage-reduces effectiveness.

Broader input but more difficult to manage the process.

Disadvantages: single issue participants ignorance of populace.

Advantages: Buy in from all

It is already open to all from beginning to end.

It might be hard to get work done with potentially continuous stop & start.

Level of ownership would increase considerably promoting a stronger community.

More community input the better.

Response

More disadvantages than advantages

N/A

No perceived agendas

None

None aware of

Nothing matters if you are not going to try to implement some of the things that are decided.

The advantages would be that you would get a broader input into the process.

Those who aren't truly educated on issues and development.

A demographic lack of understanding of what a charrette is and the intent.

Disadvantage is it becomes too hard to drill down and focus on true

Response

issues.

Too many agendas.

Unknown

Would improve consensus -- but might be harder to control in short timeframe.

A big disadvantage is that new people come to each meeting so you have to repeat and rehash discussions from previous meetings. This is frustrating to those who attended all sessions.

Advantages would be all inclusive opportunity for those who may have something good to bring to the tables and were not invited?

Disadvantages? None, as those who have the time should be able to share their thoughts also.

Response

The advantages can be seen in the community as it rebuilds. Look at the style of the homes and buildings that have been built since Katrina vs. those built after Camille. The amenities are much better than prior. Also, you do get a buy in and the opportunity for positive change. Finally, a sense of pride that did not exist prior.

This one was (as I recall). Advantages - everyone gets a voice.

Disadvantages - those less experienced do not know what can realistically be done - expect the moon and are disappointed when they don't get it.

I think it is good to have a smaller stakeholder meeting before all residents are invited. Seems it helps the facilitators become familiar with the community quicker.

Advantage: More possible motivation to buy in to the suggestions, thereby making positive changes by each resident. Disadvantage: Too many opinions often lead to ineffective decisions, which impede

Response

progress.

The charrette process has the community involved as much as necessary because the charrette team has to have uninterrupted time to get the tremendous amount of work done in a very short period of time.

It is an advantage for the process, but at first stakeholders need to be brought into the process first so that they can both contribute and also feel that the process enhances instead of distracts from their perspective.

Dialog and agendas were confusing at different points. A way to pull those together is needed to save time.

Advantages: - true democratic process - more suggestions Disadvantage:
- increased inefficiency.

Advantage, could create cohesion among the community and a feel of

Response

ownership. Disadvantage, would be input of to many personal agendas vs. the what is best for the community.

APPENDIX J
IRB APPROVAL LETTER

November 19, 2012

Odie Avery

Landscape Architecture

RE: IRB Study #12-387: Mississippi Main Street Association and the "New" New
Urban Charrette: Stakeholder Perceptions of an Alternative Approach

Dear Mr. Avery:

This email serves as official documentation that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 11/19/2012 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please note that the MSU IRB is in the process of seeking accreditation for our human subject's protection program. As a result of these efforts, you will likely notice many changes in the IRB's policies and procedures in the coming months. These changes will be posted online at <http://www.orc.msstate.edu/human/aahrpp.php>. The first of these

changes is the implementation of an approval stamp for consent forms. The approval stamp will assist in ensuring the IRB approved version of the consent form is used in the actual conduct of research. Your stamped consent form will be attached in a separate email.

Please refer to your IRB number (#12-387) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at cwilliams@research.msstate.edu or call [662-325-5220](tel:662-325-5220). In addition, we would greatly appreciate your feedback on the IRB approval process. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YZC7QQD>.

Sincerely,

Christine Williams, MPPA, CIP
IRB Compliance Administrator