

Local Government Citizen Academies: Is Knowledge Power?

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Abstract

Government decision-makers and especially urban planners increasingly face difficulties engaging citizens given trends of public apathy, cynicism towards government, language and cultural barriers, and the growing complexity of government bureaucracy. As municipal governments increasingly focus on the long-term engagement of citizens, particularly special interest, advocacy, and community organizations, a key dilemma is how to create an on-going process for training stakeholders to participate in consultation and conflict resolution efforts. Many individuals and interest groups are ill prepared for participation in public planning processes and do not understand how municipal government functions, the key dilemmas it faces, or the urban planning concepts and procedures that shape economic, social and physical life. Likewise, many planners are not trained to understand and integrate “local knowledge” –the specific expertise and on-the-ground information brought by local citizens--with technical information and bureaucratic processes. As a result, communication with the public is often constrained as citizens perceive government as a “black box” that is unapproachable. To address these challenges there is a growing trend among municipal governments to conduct citizen academies. These efforts to educate the public on the basic functions of municipal government, urban planning, and the land development process are distinct from other forms of citizen training because they occur on a regular basis, are geared towards a broader public, and are coordinated by municipal government staff. This thesis evaluates the effectiveness of three citizen academy programs in the United States in terms of their ability to improve citizen engagement capacity. This research measures such improvements through changes in citizens’ and planners’ perceptions about citizen-government relations, learning and knowledge exchange, and citizen action. The findings indicate that these academies do broaden citizen understanding of planning and government, foster improved personal relations between citizens and planners, improve citizen’s (perceived) ability to influence decision-makers, and invigorate public interest in government boards and commissions. However, academies rarely integrate local and professional knowledge into what they teach and they face an inherent conflict between “capacity building” and “allegiance building.” To improve citizen academies local governments might want to foster collaboration between planning and neighborhood services departments, to partner with a local community-based organization, and employ case-based learning approaches in the way they teach.

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Chapter One: Citizen Academies, Local Government and Civic Engagement

The process of planning and its role in local politics has grown and matured since the 1970s as cities have moved away from heavy-handed top down approaches towards more transparent forms of “deliberative” democracy. Following the intense rejection of Federal Urban Renewal Programs and federal and regional highway projects that left little room for citizen input, many city and county governments now recognize the central importance of citizen involvement as an indispensable precursor and supplement to representative democracy and informed decision making. Decision makers and especially urban planners must increasingly face the problem of determining how best to engage individuals given trends of public apathy, cynicism towards government, language and cultural barriers, and the growing complexity of government bureaucracy to name a few.

While engagement of individuals is important, the proverbial “rubber hits the road” in the context of interest group dynamics where majority and minority groups jockey for power through lobbying, advocacy, and the formation of coalitions.¹ Susskind and Cruikshank point out that government has tried to, “bolster the legitimacy and accountability of our political system,” but argue that the resulting processes are costly, inefficient, unjust, and have largely exacerbated the problems they were intended to solve (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1987: 38). In this way government often finds itself at an “impasse” knowing it must take action, but not knowing how to broker fair, efficient, just, and timely decisions among competing interest groups. This problem is especially pertinent for municipal governments who retain authority over land use regulation and must preside over many distributional disputes involving infrastructure and natural resources. To address this issue many practitioners have shifted away from consultation of individuals to consensus building approaches that focus on building better relations between stakeholder groups.

Still, as municipal governments increasingly focus on longer-term group engagement a key dilemma is how to choose legitimate representatives of stakeholder interests in the formal process of public consultation and negotiation. Who gets to have influence over public disputes

¹ Common local interest groups in the U.S. include home owners, business owners, land developers, environmentalists, labor unions, and historic preservationists.

and government decisions? Who is best suited to serve as a representative? According to David Laws “the qualities of a good representative are different in consensus building than in advocacy processes,” because representatives must reconcile “a conflict between imperatives of the internal negotiation (i.e. the discussion taking place at the negotiation table) and those of the external interaction with constituents.” (Laws, 1999, 244). Laws writes that such representatives must have effective communication skills to clearly articulate the interests of their constituents yet they must also be open to understanding the problem and the views of other stakeholders. (Laws, 1999, 280).

Unfortunately many individuals and interest groups are ill prepared and do not understand how municipal government functions, the key dilemmas it faces, or the urban planning concepts, procedures, and processes that shape economic, social and physical life. To complicate matters, relations and communication between citizens and local government are often distant and impersonal as government is perceived as a “black box” that is unapproachable. Community groups may lack communicative skills, knowledge about other stakeholders, or solid relationships and trust with other interest groups, which are all elements of what Robert Fisher terms “negotiation power” (Fisher, 1983:155). Such deficiencies preclude interest groups from tapping key sources of power and influence over local government staff and decision makers.²

On the flip side, professional urban planners have many opportunities to hone their “professional knowledge” through classes and seminars offered through professional associations, consulting firms and through their daily practice. However, these classes generally do not teach planners how to understand, relate and integrate “local community knowledge” into their work. Should citizens and planners relegate themselves to separate institutions to learn how to interact with each other (e.g. planners to professional conferences and citizens to non-governmental leadership programs) or can they learn concepts, build relationships, and improve communication in a joint program? New educative infrastructure is needed to bridge this gap and to enable lay citizens to more effectively engage in local planning and dispute resolution.

² See chapter two for further discussion on alternative forms of “negotiation power.”

A Remedy for Insufficient Civics Education?

Where do citizens learn about the nuts and bolts of local government, and more specifically, about the planning process? Bill Healy, City Planning Director for the City of Colorado Springs, asserts that city and county services are taken for granted and that high school civics curricula fail to teach citizens how their most local and (theoretically) accessible form of government really works. After high school there are less systematic ways for the public to learn how government functions.³ This is a crucial gap in education because local government is accessible and offers more frequent participation opportunities than state or federal government.⁴

Institutional and Public Memory

In organizations the concept of “institutional memory” is of great importance because it ensures some level of stability and continuity for long-term strategies and operations. Reoccurring themes in public service announcements illustrate that over time the public forgets and must be reminded and reeducated about issues. In the same way there is a need to continually educate the public about urban planning issues especially since community leaders and residents come and go. Inherent in urban planning is the need to be strategic about the future yet the public learns about planning in ad hoc spurts of attention on particular development proposals or comprehensive plans. Thus where implementation of plans begins, public education about planning often tapers off. Can on-going “nuts and bolts” planning education lead to more sophisticated public discourse on planning issues?

Who needs planning education?

There seems to be a notion within planning that engagement capacity should NOT be limited to elected and appointed officials and planning commissioners, yet most training is geared toward these groups, not the general public. What about training for everyone else who is interested but is not necessary willing or able to be a commissioner? In the prologue of his classic book, The Citizen’s Guide to Planning, author Herbert Smith remarks:

"Therefore I have broadened the purpose of this second edition. While initially I have wanted The Citizen's Guide to Planning to be useful to all interested citizens, I

³ Bill Healey. Interview by Adam Marcus, City of Colorado Springs City Hall, March 27, 2007.

⁴ There is a burgeoning movement to educate and develop curricula for K-12 youth about resource conservation and land use planning. The American Planning Association provides many tools for youth education for teachers and planners at: <http://www.planning.org/resourceszine/>

directed my first edition largely toward members of planning boards. With the changes that have now taken place in our cities and rural areas, with the shift in the direction of planning and, especially, of the federal programs that have been to a large measure the supporting financial base, all of us – not just the members of our elected or appointed bodies must be informed. We need civic leaders, neighborhood organizers, educators, and young people who are aware that the future, their future, is too important to leave to the work of others or to chance. This book is intended to provide some thought and encouragement to any concerned person who is resolved to be more a part of the future." (Smith, 1979)

Thus the selection of stakeholder representatives in planning relates closely to who has the skills and knowledge to participate and represent effectively. This thesis investigates a new model that may address this deficit of local non-commissioner specific citizen training programs and the difficulty of selecting and training legitimate stakeholder representatives.

The citizen academy model surfaced in the early 1990's in city management and urban planning circles and has continued as a quiet trend in local government. Sometimes called citizen academies, these models took on slightly different names across the country that include: Community Connection (City of Orlando, FL), Partnership academy for Community Teamwork (Redwood City, CA) and Neighborhood College (Arlington, VA). The model first gained widespread attention during the late 1990's and several articles about the model were published by the American Planning Association, International City/County Management Association, and the California League of Cities. Michael Chandler conducted a survey for the American Planning Association in 2000, but it did not include training programs hosted by planning agencies (Chandler, 2000).⁵ The states of Virginia, Colorado, Washington, and California all have a number of academies at the city or county level. During this time there were different types of academies but the most common forms were the police academies, citizen academies (government 101) and to a lesser extent citizen planning academies. Internet searches and a

⁵ The City of Redwood City California conducted a survey of Citizen Academies in 2002 which included Colorado Springs.

relatively sparse amount of academic and professional literature on these programs indicate that though they are a growing trend, they are still far from ubiquitous.

Origins of the Local Government Citizen Academy Model

The specific origin of these academies is unclear. However Michael Chandler former Professor and University Extension Specialist at Virginia Tech University suggests that citizen academies originated from citizen policing academies in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary in Great Britain in the 1970's. The "Police Night School" was set up in 1977 to familiarize citizens with the "operations and organizational structures of law enforcement agencies" and during these meetings it was discovered how little citizens understood about the way police agencies worked (Giant et al., 2000). Citizen police academies caught on in North American cities during the 1980's and approximately 45 percent of U.S. Cities have such programs (Becton et. Al, 2005: 20). These police academies are associated with more positive perceptions of the police, higher levels of trust and satisfaction, and are popular with local government because they:

1. Provide police officers with opportunities to involve citizens in law enforcement.
2. Give citizens a working knowledge of the police department's mission, operation, policies and personnel.
3. Foster positive interactions between community members and police compared to common negative interaction between citizens and police.
4. Develop a relationship of trust and cooperation between police and citizens.
5. Dispel suspicions and misconceptions.
6. "Humanize" officers in the eyes of citizens.
7. Provide a proactive approach to law enforcement.

(Becton et. Al, 2005: 20).

Broadening the Citizen Academy Model

Educators and local government officials adapted the government sponsored police academy model in the 1990's to help the public understand how all of municipal government departments and agencies work and more specifically, to help outline and explain the process by which citizens can plug into local government. These programs, offered by city or county governments, run for three to eight weeks and are often conducted by local community planners. The curriculum may consist of weekly reading assignments, meetings with city officials from

different departments, special guest lectures, and field trips to “model” development projects or different departmental facilities. Another variation on the citizen academy model is the planner academy that is usually developed by planners and focuses on fundamental urban planning concepts and processes (e.g. zoning, permitting, and design review) and the roles of various stakeholders. Some academies also introduce normative city design concepts such as pedestrian scaled streets, energy efficient “green” building, transit-oriented development, historic preservation and other smart growth principles.

Comparing Academies with Other Training Models

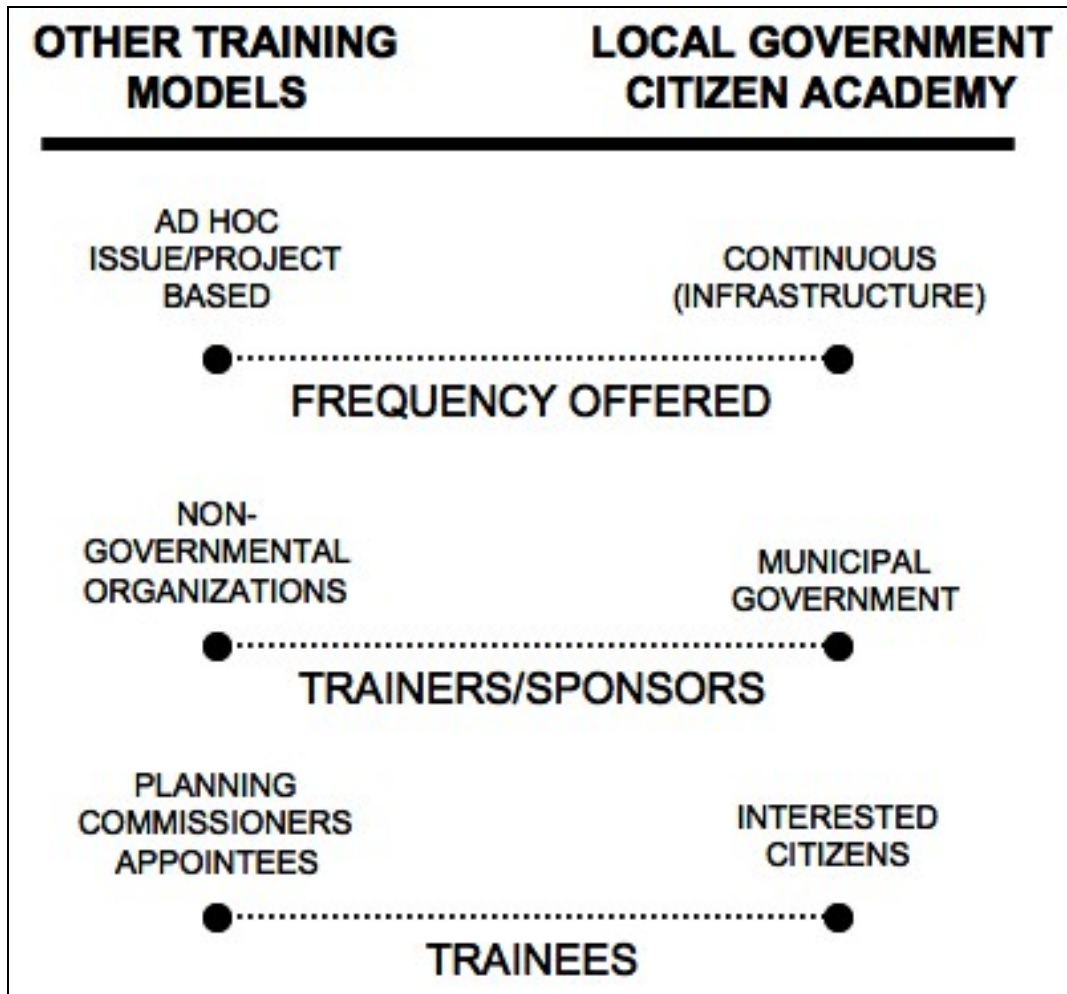
In 2000, Michael Chandler published a survey of citizen planner training programs for the American Planning Association. The survey did not focus on programs conducted by local government planning agencies but sought to provide a good overview of similar programs put on by American Planning Association (APA) Chapters, higher education extension programs, municipal County and State Leagues, and State or Regional Agencies and Associations (Chandler, 2000). According to Chandler, these programs range in their training format, target audience and subject matter. The formats used range from one-time workshops, seminars, and conferences to annual and semi-annual series that follow a curriculum or respond to “hot topics” of the day. Target audiences tend to be newly appointed planning commissioners. However Chandler found there are often trainings for “rookie and veteran commissioners” alike (Chandler, 2000).

Finally, with regard to subject matter Chandler found that these programs focus on technical training (subdivision practices, zoning law, etc.) in addition to soft skills such as meeting management, communication skills, and public engagement skills. Chandler’s analyses found that approximately half of the respondent programs offered training in soft skills but that the APA respondent programs emphasized technical training and training for “efficiency and effectiveness.” Chandler found that higher education citizen training programs reported a higher emphasis on “group dynamics and decision making and meeting management” as well as on visioning in planning than did APA or Municipal/State/Regional Leagues or Associations (Chandler 2000).

It is also important to note ‘unofficial’ ways that citizens learn about planning and government. For example, citizens who are active in neighborhood or homeowners’ associations may gain knowledge through interactions with other neighborhood or community leaders, or advocates. Training can range from informal conversations exposure to information or discussions on an email list serve, to programs organized by community based organizations, Community Development Corporations, non-profit organizations, or foundations. For example, the Washington D.C. Humanities Council’s “Soul of the City” program began in 2002 in an effort to “address the need for thoughtful, confident leadership at the community service level.” (Humanities Council of Washington, D.C., 2007). The program emphasizes soft skills such as reflection, relationship building, and decision-making skills, through the study of “literature, story, history, ethics, and public space.” (Humanities Council of Washington, D.C., 2007). The Interaction Institute for Social Change⁶ utilizes a curriculum of seven principles that build, “Skills for Emerging Grassroots Leaders.” The Interaction Institute utilizes this framework to host eight workshops and teaches one principle per week. The institute also maintains a network of graduates who help each other “apply their new skills” (The Interaction Institute, 2007). The following diagram illustrates some of the primary differences between citizen academies and other citizen training models:

⁶ www.interactioninstitute.org

Distinguishing Characteristics of the Citizen Academy Model



An Improved Training Model?

In 2001, the International City Management Association (ICMA) published a brief on citizen academies that highlighted five case studies from around the country. The report claimed that, “informed citizens are valuable resources for a community. They also make government’s job easier.” (International City/County Management Association, 2001). How do Academies make governance easier? It is important to distinguish as part of this research if “easier” means that citizens can function better within the government process, or if they are being co-opted to sympathize with government and let it do its job. The author hypothesizes that citizen academies do make government easier, by teaching citizens to understand how to work within the existing bureaucratic framework. The author also hypothesizes that citizens remain critical of government despite gaining newfound appreciation for civil servants. The author will return to this

fundamental question throughout this thesis.

The citizen police academy model has been around since the 1970's but it seems that "local government 101" and "planning" academies are more recent phenomena. Since the subject matter is fundamentally different, how does this borrowed model translate when applied to urban planning and more broadly to civic engagement in the local political realm? Does the model achieve the same aims or does it acquire new significance under the guise of urban planning or broader civic leadership development?

The following chart provides a snap shot of the three case studies included in this thesis.

Comparison Grid of Case Studies

	City of Colorado Springs, CO	City of Sacramento, CA	Orange County, FL
Type	Local Government 101	Planning	Planning
Date Created	2001	2002	2005
Duration Frequency	7 Weekly Meetings Offered Twice Annually	11 Weekly Meetings Offered Twice Annually	7 Monthly Meetings (2005, 2006) 7 Weekly Meetings (2007) Offered Twice Annually
Purpose Created	Improve citizen understanding of municipal government Develop understanding of citizen role in government Develop knowledgeable pool of individuals for future boards/commissions Develop leaders for elected office	Build support for Growth Management Tools Educate Public for Engagement Train Advocates for "Good" Development (Smart Growth) Improve citizen Understanding of the Land Development Process	Build support for Growth Management Tools Educate Public for Engagement Improve Citizen Understanding of the Land Development Process
Target Audience	People already civically engaged People showing leadership potential (elected or appointed) People With Potential Influence on Larger Groups	People most likely to continue to participate People With Potential Influence on Larger Groups Balanced representation (council districts, age, public/private sector employees)	People from Lower Income Neighborhoods

	City of Colorado Springs, CO	City of Sacramento, CA	Orange County, FL
Actual Participants	Neighborhood Representatives Neighborhood Leaders Home Owners Association Members	Neighborhood Representatives Neighborhood Leaders Chamber of Commerce Church members Homeowners Association Members	Neighborhood Representatives Land Developers Property Managers Middle Class People
Number of Graduates	224 Graduates ⁷	198 Graduates 2006: 23 2005: 27 2004: 28, 43 2003: 33, 20 2002: 24	35 Graduates 2007: 17 2006: 2 2005: 16
Criteria for Selection	Prior/Current involvement on boards, commissions Likelihood of Continued Participation Leadership Potential (elected or appointed) Likelihood of transmitting knowledge to other citizens	Likelihood of Continued Participation Likelihood of transmitting knowledge to other citizens Diverse representation from council districts, occupation, income, ethnicity	First Come, First Serve
Program Format	Reading Assignments City Staff Lectures/Discussions Field Trips/Revolving Class Location	Reading Assignments Guest Lectures/Discussions City Staff Lectures/Discussions Field Trips (2)	Reading Assignments Guest Lectures/Discussions City Staff Lectures/Discussions (2007) Interactive Mapping Sessions (2007)

⁷ A yearly breakdown is not available but in recent years the academy accepted 40 participants.

	City of Colorado Springs, CO	City of Sacramento, CA	Orange County, FL
Class Speakers	<p>City Staff Planning Director Comprehensive, Permits, Transportation, Housing City Manager City Councilmembers Assistant to the Mayor Fire and Police Chiefs Public Works Director Budget (Manager) Planning Commissioners Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Services Director City Clerk City Attorney</p>	<p>City Staff Planning Director Long Range Current Planning Redevelopment Transportation Mayor, Selected Council Members City Planning Commissioner</p> <p>Housing Developers Architects State Assembly Member (Former City Council Member County Department of Health Services, Staff Regional MPO Staff State Environmental Protection Agency, Staff</p>	<p>City Staff Planning Neighborhood Services Staff</p> <p>Housing Developers Urban Planning Consultants Professional Associations (e.g. APA)</p>
Program Content	<p>City Management Fire Department Public Works Police Department City Budget; Memorial Hospital; Airport City Planning and Community Development Planning Commission; Utilities Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Volunteering on City Boards and Commissions</p>	<p>Planning 101 The New General Plan Regional Planning for Smart Growth/Livability What does Smart Growth Look Like? Facilitating Smart Growth in Sacramento The Land Use/Transportation Connection Sustainability Health and Livability Local Politics and Implementation Obstacles to Smart Growth</p>	<p>Growth Management Planning 101 Land Development Process Zoning Transportation Planning Neighborhood Redevelopment Citizen Participation</p>

	City of Colorado Springs, CO	City of Sacramento, CA	Orange County, FL
Cost Per Course* And Sponsor	\$1,139 Private Sponsors \$40 Course Fee	\$5,000 City Planning Dept. No Course Fee	\$450.00 County Neighborhood Services Dept. \$15 Course Fee
Host	Neighborhood Services Dept. (2001-2002) Long Range Planning Dept. (2002-2007) Public Communications Dept. (2007-)	Long Range Planning Dept. (2002-2007)	Long Range Planning Dept. (2005) Neighborhood Services Dept. (2006-2007)
Goals Achieved	Encouraged Participation in Government: Three Graduates are Elected Council Members Improved citizen understanding of municipal government Facilitated participants to consider citizen's role in government Generated excitement about getting involved (generally) Developed small pool of individuals for future boards and commissions	Encouraged Participation in Government: One Graduate is a Elected Council Member Several Graduates are on: Project Area Committees Redevelopment Action Committees General Plan Update Advisory Committee Improved Citizen Understanding of the Land Development Process Facilitated participants to consider citizen's role in government Generated excitement about getting civically involved (generally) Gained supporters for Growth Management/ "Good" Development Developed small pool of individuals for future boards and commissions	Improved Citizen Understanding of Land Development Process Facilitated participants to consider citizen's role in government

*Costs figures do not include in-kind donations of food or staff time.

The central question of this thesis asks if government sponsored citizen academies are models for improving citizen engagement capacity to help individual and group representatives to engage with local government, or if they are simply a way for local government to counter NIMBYist⁸ opposition. Before answering this question it is important to first set parameters for what “improved” citizen engagement means in the context of this study. An improvement in citizen engagement capacity will be measured by changes in the factors identified in Table One:

Criteria for evaluating civic engagement and negotiation power

Citizen-Government Relations
Do citizen academies affect relations between citizens and planners?
Do academy graduates perceive any change in their ability to influence decision-making and agenda setting as a result of participating in the citizen academy?
Learning and Knowledge Exchange
What do citizens and government staff learn from each other by participating in or facilitating these academies?
Citizen Action
How do citizens convert this experience and new knowledge into action?

Citizen Government Relations

It is important to distinguish this model from other citizen training/leadership models because it offers opportunities for citizen training and improvements in communication and relationships with local government officials. Citizen training from non-governmental organizations is one step removed from the people who work within local government bureaucracy and the people with the power to make decisions.⁹ Local government sponsorship allows for more direct interaction between street level officials, department heads, and elected officials. This opportunity to make personal connections with government may provide added value.

⁸ NIMBY is an acronym that stands for “Not In My Backyard” a term commonly used to refer to citizen groups who fiercely oppose changes in their local area that have broader regional significance.

⁹ It appears that local government sponsored citizen academies go into less technical detail than trainings geared specifically for planning commissioners who are poised to fill a particular role.

Learning and Knowledge Exchange

One must also examine what planners learn from their involvement in the citizen planning academies. Some people argue that planners benefit from learning the tacit knowledge that exists in the community in which they plan and that the integration of professional and technical knowledge and training can be complimented by creating better forums for interaction and communication with the local community. Do planners gain new knowledge through this new model for interaction with the community?

Citizen Action

Is there value in providing *on-going* training to the larger population? Is it worthwhile to provide on-going proactive training that is NOT tied to a particular project or plan? Is there value in training programs that are NOT geared expressly for planning commissioners but rather to target a larger audience of regular citizens?

Methodology

To measure changes in the above factors, this research model evaluates three case studies: Colorado Springs, Colorado; Sacramento, California; and Orange County, Florida. The case studies were selected based on their structure, curriculum, operating history, location, target audience, and primary sponsor. In each case the researcher surveyed planning academy participants asking what they learned, how they applied it, and if they perceive any difference in their ability to impact local decision making. The survey also collected demographic data (occupation, age, gender, race, income, and location of residence) to determine who was attracted and selected to participate in these academies.

The researcher conducted over 15 open-ended and focus group interviews with academy citizens to provide an opportunity to gain a richer understanding of participants' perceptions and hear stories about their experiences. Twelve interviews were conducted with street and management level public agency planning staff.

Method of Recruitment

In each case, citizen participants were selected from the local government's list of past academy participants. All three governments were unwilling to turn over academy participant contact information but they agreed to forward invitation messages from the researcher. Planners were contacted based on their current or recent employment as a municipal planner and by their degree of involvement with the municipal planning process and with the academy in question.

Location of the Research

The selection of planning academies took into account several criteria. Academies in existence for at least one year and those currently operating on an on-going basis were selected instead of one-time events. One of the most interesting characteristics about planning academies is the idea of creating new "infrastructure" for on-going learning and civic engagement and without regular activity sustained improvements to the engagement process would be unlikely. A second criterion required there be at least a moderate level of public interest in the planning academy to understand why the academies are helpful. A third criterion focuses on the academies that teach lay citizens as opposed to programs designed solely for planning commission members. Finally, preference was given to academies conducted by city or county government staff as opposed to universities, non-profit organizations, or regional and state governments. Government sponsored academies foster direct interaction between planners and their constituents and afford more opportunities to study how academies affect relationships between municipal planners and the public.

Limitations of this Research

One of the primary limitations of this research is that it relies on people's perceptions at one point in time. To gain a true understanding for how active people have become following the academy would require a longitudinal analysis. Such an analysis could track how people's perceptions changed during, immediately after, and for a period of time following graduation from the academy. Additionally such a study would also show how people's participation patterns changed in the time following the academy, which could provide insight on short, medium, and long-term effects on participation as well as perceptions.

Another limitation is that the survey was administered over the internet assuming that most academy participants were sufficiently savvy with internet and email. The researcher did offer to send hard copies of the survey, however no respondents made such a request. However, the initial survey invitation was sent via email as that is the way the City or County governments maintained contact with past participants.

Finally, the research is difficult to generalize to the larger public because the participants in each of the academies were self selected and also selected by the city agencies. It is difficult to know how this selection process may have influenced the responses or even if the academies truly are useful for groups not represented in this sample (namely low income and non-Caucasian populations or immigrants (non-English native-speaking participants). While these academies claim to be open to all, they are naturally selective in who can actually devote so much time to the academy classes and they assume English language fluency as a prerequisite for training.¹⁰ This likely has more to do with the tenuous shoestring budgets that these programs run on, but nonetheless they systematically exclude non-English speakers, as they do not provide translation or targeted outreach services.

Overview of Chapters

This chapter offers an overview of citizen participation and the history and goals of citizen academies. It also provides an outline of the thesis questions and an explanation of research methodology and limits. Chapter Two “Citizen Academies, Local Government and Civic Engagement” includes a review of literature on the history and current dilemmas that “deliberative bureaucracies” face. The chapter will set the scene for these modern dilemmas and will explore theory about the role that education, and more specifically, citizen training programs have on improving communication and knowledge exchange between professionals and local community members. The chapter will briefly discuss the problem of understanding bureaucracy and will spotlight new trends in government-sponsored civic training and empowerment programs in an effort to find ways to improve communication and engagement within the bureaucratic structure that exists in most local governments across the nation.

¹⁰ There are exceptions as City of Orange County Police academy also runs a companion “Hispanic Citizen Police academy” which offers the same topics presented completely in Spanish. This Spanish version has been operating since 2003. (http://www.cityoforlando.net/police/citizen_info/cpa.htm)

Chapters Three, Four and Five will focus on individual case studies of functioning citizen academy programs. They will explore background, program development, program operation, citizen and government reactions, and lessons learned. Chapter Six “Case Study Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations” will analyze and compare the survey results across the three programs, and will incorporate comments from participant interviews to better understand if these programs are effective at improving citizen-government relations, learning and knowledge exchange opportunities, and ultimately empowering informed citizen action. The chapter will also set forth final conclusions regarding this research and will offer some recommendations for the creation and operation of future citizen academies. This final chapter will also suggest new research, ideas, and directions for creating and improving government sponsored citizen engagement training infrastructure. Lastly, the appendices of this thesis include sample syllabi from each of the case study courses as well as other supporting documentation.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Power and the Role of Civic Knowledge in Deliberative Democracy

This chapter provides an overview of relevant theory, policy, and practice of deliberative democracy and public engagement in the United States. The literature review will trace the progression of public engagement theory over the last forty years to frame current dilemmas among planning theorists and practitioners. This review will draw on urban planning, public administration, deliberative democracy, local governance, and urban sociology theory. Interspersed with these theories will be real life examples of important federal policies that led to broad changes in the way local actors view and facilitate formal public engagement processes. The author will argue that a series of events, social movements, and government policies produced a flurry of support for citizen engagement and increased public participation in urban policymaking. However, entrenched political power structures, unresponsive government, domination by vocal interest groups, questions of legitimacy of local knowledge, and limited citizen engagement capacity continue to vex many of these public participation initiatives. In addition this chapter also looks at the conflicting and often intertwined roles of power and knowledge in the urban policy making process.

Since the 1960's government decentralization and new federal mandates for public participation have given local governments an increasingly important role in orchestrating public engagement processes. In most cities, "street level bureaucrats" (which in many cases are urban planners) have more face time with the community at large than do high-level administrators and elected officials. In some cities the best and perhaps only opportunity to have a glimpse of the mayor is through the public access television network. Since planners have been a primary point of contact between the public and local government, it is important to carefully consider how their relationships with the public impact the quality of civic discourse and engagement. While this thesis touches on structural issues that impact the meaningfulness of engagement, its primary focus is on such planner-citizen relations and on the role of government-sponsored "citizen planning academies" in improving connections between "street level" planners, the public, and elected officials.

The Ungovernable City?

In Seeing Like a State, James Scott argues that the state has been the single most powerful agent of change in recent history because civil society is unable to resist its plans (Scott, 1988). Scott writes, “where utopian vision goes wrong is when it is held by ruling elites with no commitment to democracy or civil rights and who are therefore likely to use unbridled power for its achievement” (Scott, 1988: 89). In recent American planning history urban renewal programs, FHA mortgage insurance, and “red-lining” by lending institutions are painful examples of the overt discrimination advanced by government and private entities in favor of white middle and upper class Americans. The strong backlash against these destructive and discriminatory practices brought about new policies that increased federal spending on urban programs. President Johnson’s “war on poverty” and “model cities” programs in the 1960s were accompanied by new mandates for extensive public participation. Since this time the topic of public engagement has gained traction among academics, policy makers, and bureaucrats, but the challenges of moving from theory to reality still remain.

Despite the progress described above, Yates argues that the current structure of the state makes it ungovernable due to competing aims of different levels of government which result in chaotic fragmentation and disconnection between mayors, high level administrators, and “street level bureaucrats” (Yates, 1977: 33). In short, Yates argues that government cannot control itself and is therefore dysfunctional. As a result, Yates claims that citizens can do little to affect policymaking and that participation comes with high costs such as time from work and family, loss of political clout or fear of retaliation (Yates, 1977: 7).

In some ways this point is valid especially given that many city departments operate as separate “silos” with surprisingly minimal amounts of collaboration and coordination. For example the planning department may hold extensive public meetings and produce consensus around a plan only for the public works or Mayor’s office to adopt a different plan. However, there are cities where public participation has significant influence on government policy. It is important to note that this disconnect within the hierarchy of government contributes in part to the growing frustration experienced by the public. When community groups attend meetings only to find that their feedback is not heeded, it can be very demoralizing. It is not surprising that community

groups have reacted strongly against hegemonic public and private power regimes but also more indirectly against deficiencies in the structure of the state and perhaps, by extension, planners because they are often the most accessible members of government.

For local planners this structural deficiency coupled with increasing community expectations and action/organization makes for a contentious public process. According to Stephen Cupps, one related dilemma is the question of how city administrators should respond to the forceful demands of vocal interest groups without leading to, “poorly conceived, unrepresentative, and costly policy decisions.” (Cupps, 1977: 478). Cupps argues that government administrators must balance professional judgment with “adequate opportunities for citizen participation” or else “citizen groups will inevitably limit their [administrator’s] ability to assess and pursue independently their broader public interest responsibilities,” (Cupps, 1977: 483). These are valid concerns from the standpoint of improving government effectiveness and reasonable limits must be set if government is to serve its function as mediator and redistributor of resources.

However, Cupps fails to acknowledge the inherent biases of government towards private interests and towards historically privileged socio-economic community groups. While a balance must be achieved, one must be careful when arguing to limit participation for fear of upsetting the status quo when current policies do not equitably represent the public interest. Paul Davidoff’s classic article on “Advocacy Planning” was a direct response to government’s inability to represent the “deep seated convictions” of marginalized communities.” (Davidoff, 1965: 332). This presents a difficult challenge for planners who must strive towards meaningful public participation and governability while balancing inequities of the past with the complex needs of the present and future.

What is “meaningful” public participation?

It is impossible to arrive at a single agreed upon definition of “meaningful public participation” but it is important to consider some fundamental differences between the citizen and planner viewpoints on this issue. In Guerillas in the Bureaucracy, Needleman and Needleman categorize planners perceptions of this role by their view of “the relationship of planning to implementation” (Needleman et. Al., 1974: 103). In this way they argue that some planners view

input as “public relations” whereby “the citizen’s role is a political one, to lobby for the plan once it is drawn up by the professional planner assigned to their area. In the political realm of implementation, democracy—that is, citizen participation —is appropriate; in the professional realm of planning, it is not” (Needelman et. All, 1974: 103). Another view is that citizen input is “a balancing act” where “the boundary between the creation of a plan and its implementation is blurred” such that planners must make difficult ad hoc decisions about the appropriate degree of public input to solicit for projects with local versus city-wide scope (Needelman et al., 1974: 109). It is at this point that NIMBY issues come into play as a planner is caught in a dilemma of supporting the ideas of public involvement, but not knowing when to draw the line for the benefit of the larger public good. A third and final category views implementation as critical and is where the “professional task of planning...derives its only claim to validity from the political dimension,” (Needleman, et al., 1974: 100). One planner interviewed in the book remarked:

“All plans around here are meaningless without money, and there isn’t any money. If you don’t have money power, you’ve got to get people power. The purpose of the community planner is to organize the community, so that when the plan is complete the people can exert enough power to get the plan implemented. Planning without power is meaningless.”

(Needleman et al., 1974: 111).

While governability and managing the volume of participation are constructive criteria, it is crucial to also consider criteria that relate to citizen’s needs. Where Cupps is concerned with the needs of the state and those who benefit from the status quo, Sherry Arnstein characterizes different levels of “participation” and “non-participation” for citizens who are poor or otherwise marginalized. Arnstein argues that “citizen participation is a categorical term for citizen power,” and that it allows have-nots to “induce significant social reform which enables them to share in the benefits of the affluent society.” (Arnstein, 1969: 224)¹¹. There are limits however as Arnstein classifies the varying degrees of meaningful participation in a ladder model which

¹¹ Improved channels of participation alone will not erase the need for pluralistic advocacy, but can they help manage it in a mutually acceptable way?

includes manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power, and citizen control.

Arnstein discusses federal mandates for participation such as the Model Cities participation process and what such programs must do to reconcile past inequalities towards the poor. She asserts that successful participation in such a program depends on how clear the program's "ground rules" are and on the extent to which, "citizens understand that achieving a genuine place in the pluralistic scene subjects them to its legitimate forms of give-and-take." (Arnstein, 1969: 224). This is an important point because some of the strong-arm grassroots political tactics that Cupps responds to are in fact responses to the lack of genuine places for marginalized publics to enter into meaningful public discourse.¹²

While Arnstein's theories focus on improving consultation of marginalized communities, more recent literature argues that representative democracy suffers from fundamental flaws that complicate public deliberation and dispute resolution. Susskind and Cruikshank identify five major flaws as the tyranny of the majority, a lack of long term political commitment, shortcomings of the voting process, the increasingly technical nature of distributional problems, and a winner takes all mindset (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1989: 38). Ian Shapiro denounces "aggregative" theories and argues it is impossible to discover a general "will of the people" because some interests are "invariably at odds," (Shapiro, 2003: 10). Similarly Susskind and Cruikshank contend that politicizing public disputes leads to excessive litigation, deterioration of government credibility, and ultimately to adversarial confrontations and stalemates. They argue instead for ad hoc voluntary consensus building approaches to supplement conventional democratic processes (Susskind and Cruikshank, 1989: 8).

Shapiro also argues that theories of "deliberative democracy" focus too narrowly on the "deliberative deficit" rather than addressing fundamental power inequalities. Thus a key issue is how to prepare economically disadvantaged interest groups to engage more effectively in deliberation and dispute resolution efforts. Roger Fisher broadens the definition of "negotiation

¹² While the question of representation is not the central focus of this thesis, it is an important element of the 'meaningfulness' of civic participation and will be addressed briefly in chapter six.

power” by suggesting additional categories. Fisher argues that the more knowledge one has about the people, interests, and relevant facts in a particular negotiation that your “entering posture” and the ability to “invent creative solutions” will be stronger (Fisher, 1983: 155). Fisher also writes, “The better a working relationship I establish in advance with those whom I will be negotiating, the more powerful I am. A good working relationship does not necessarily imply approval of each other’s conduct, through mutual respect and even mutual affection – when it exists may help” (Fisher, 1983: 155).

Clear communication channels between stakeholders are also a major source of negotiation power. Fisher contends that if people know each other longer they will likely have a better understanding of each other’s point of view and will minimize misunderstandings (Fisher, 1983: 155). Susskind and Ozawa argue that face to face negotiation helps contending groups understand each other’s interests and that, “with an improved understanding of the interests and concerns of various groups, tactical alliances can be formed and future propositions can be framed in ways less threatening to parties with potentially conflicting interests – thereby improving the likelihood of such proposals gaining acceptance” (Susskind and Ozawa, 1984: 14). This issue is especially pertinent as citizen academies provide a new forum for constructive face-to-face interaction.

Communication between stakeholders and urban planners are also crucial since planners often mediate on local planning issues. Susskind and Ozawa discuss the role of the planner as mediator and argue, “implementation failures are a consequence of the planning profession’s hesitancy to stress the important role that planners can play during implementation, especially in building and maintaining a durable consensus and in resolving disagreements,” (Susskind and Ozawa, 1984: 9). John Forester contends that planners “shape...citizen’s access to information, their understanding and interpretation of such information, and their ability to participate effectively in political processes affecting their lives,” (Forester, 1980: 275). Forester suggests several strategies to improve the way planners communicate with the community, among which are the following:

- “Cultivate community networks of liaisons and contacts, rather than depending on the power of documents, both to provide and disseminate information”

- “Educate citizen and community organizations about the planning process and the “rules of the game”
- “Supply technical and political information to citizens to enable informed, effective political participation.” ” (Forester, 1980: 282).

However, despite such efforts by planners many citizens remain politically and civically apathetic. In his book Bowling Alone, Robert Putnam points to declining participation in civic activities and argues that social capital in America has diminished as a result of work, suburban lifestyles, family structure, and other factors. Perhaps even more telling is the fact that only 59% of eligible voters cast ballots in America’s 2004 presidential election (McDonald, 2004). While this number was higher than in previous years, it is still a low absolute percentage. It is important to remember that improving channels for engagement can induce those who are not already inclined towards engagement to get involved. However, even with improved engagement opportunities there continue to be barriers for many people and some government agencies set criteria to filter participants for various reasons. This issue will be discussed further in chapter six.

Problems with Fusing Professional and Local Knowledge

One important element of meaningful of public participation is the value that is afforded to local knowledge by professional planners and politicians. Planners and lay citizens possess very different types of knowledge and often times find it difficult to share and integrate each other’s knowledge into plans and policies for implementation. Frank Fisher writes about a growing skepticism of a scientific “technocracy” that “conflates morality with instrumental rationality.” (Fisher, 2000:14). According to Fisher, emerging technologies are increasingly used to divorce value from fact in order to justify elite political agendas. In the realm of urban planning this can be especially pertinent with regard to the increasing use of GIS mapping and scenario planning software. While such tools are powerful aids they have limitations and it is crucial that planners not forget the value of “tacit” knowledge which does not, “lend itself easily to the reductionist model-making,”(Coburn, 2005: 74). In other words, both technical and tacit forms of knowledge are valid and planners must figure out how to utilize them both to ensure that policy making is more informed and to guard against the dangers of knowingly or mistakenly relying on positivism to justify inappropriate policy.

Jason Coburn argues that government officials must fuse local knowledge with expert science to achieve better solutions to environmental health problems. Coburn writes, “The porous boundaries between local and professional knowledge suggests that planners and policy makers interested in democratic practice ought to pay attention to local knowledge as they manage processes that legitimate some information as relevant for decision making. This, however, calls for new practices and professional-local relationships.” (Coburn, 2005: 76). Coburn argues it is important to legitimate “tacit” knowledge alongside bodies of preexisting technically derived knowledge. Such local knowledge is based primarily in personal experiences and is therefore dynamic and constantly being updated.¹³ The next section of this chapter discusses a relatively new approach in public engagement that may help with what Coburn suggests: to change professional-local relationships.

Public engagement infrastructure

The author wishes to acknowledge there are larger structural factors that have a heavy influence on the meaningfulness of engagement. However, it is important to recognize that improving citizen capacity to interact with government can make modest progress towards the end goal of better participation. John Kalisky writes about the need for, “promoting the development of the infrastructure of process.” (Saunders, 2006: 34) and predicts that the role of planners, architects, and urban designers will increasingly change to that of “expert assistants” (Saunders, 2006: 34). This notion that a basic “infrastructure of process” exists implies several assumptions:

- 1.) Participation should occur regularly.
- 2.) Access should be provided widely throughout the community.
- 3.) Participation is a public good and provides benefits to a broad group of people.
- 4.) Government is responsible for building, providing, and maintaining the participation process.
- 5.) Participation is indispensable but its high cost must be balanced with quality and representativeness of the process.

¹³ Such knowledge might include personal “monitoring” of air and water pollution by industries or it could be sensitivity to cultural norms for new or established residents.

Kalisky 's notion of infrastructure pertains to the Neighborhood Council system enacted in Los Angeles, California. City of Los Angeles Planning Director Gail Goldberg mentioned, "There is no real structure for [Los Angeles] community councils to come together and act collectively," and wanted to develop a program to teach basic planning concepts and provide a venue where council representatives could interact and learn about citywide issues.¹⁴ Steven Haeberle writes about neighborhood councils in Birmingham, Alabama and discusses how they "constitute a refinement of the linkages between citizens and bureaucrats" (Haeberle, 1989: 108). The neighborhood council is a significant departure from other forms of representative governance and it remains to be seen how successful they have been or will continue to be. This thesis explores other forms of public process infrastructure and how these can successfully meet different public participation and deliberation needs. In particular this thesis looks at how "citizen planning academies" attempt to "refine" the connections between street level bureaucrats and citizens through education and the integration of professional and local knowledge.

Citizen Planning Academies

Urban planners have access to a wealth of on-going vocational training resources through various professional associations, conferences, and seminars but citizens do not have as much access to formal capacity building resources. The task of educating citizens is often undertaken by non-governmental and civil society organizations as part of social movements or advocacy initiatives. In such cases citizen participants learn as they go by reading information materials, talking with fellow advocates, or attending meetings. While these forms of education are valuable channels for achieving social change, they do not always provide a comprehensive outlook on the actors involved in urban planning, nor do they teach citizens how to deal effectively with local government bureaucracy (which is not going away any time soon). Another issue presented by informal planning education is that it doesn't teach lay people the jargon and acronyms that planning professionals often use. Jason Coburn notes how the important task of building better dialogue between citizens and government officials often falls on the citizens themselves:

¹⁴ "Are Neighborhood Groups Representative or Self-Serving," panel discussion at American Planning Association Conference, April 6, 2007.

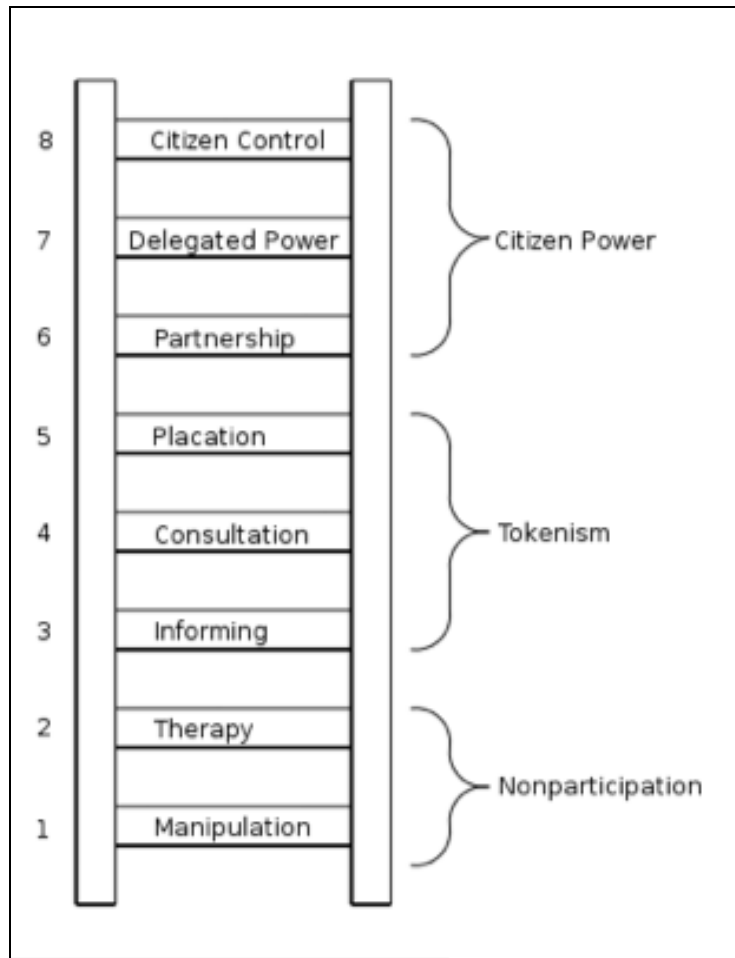
“Since community members often will carry the double burden of ‘translating’ their knowledge into language professionals can understand, they must be “multilingual” in both their own and the dominant discourse. This double burden presents a challenge for the successful sharing of community knowledge in professional decision-making forums.”
(Coburn, 2005: 65).

Citizen academies are sponsored and coordinated by local government staff and they last for approximately six weeks. Depending on the curriculum they may focus on land development process or more generally as a “civics 101” introduction to how local government works. In a brief prepared by the International City/County Management Association,

Meaningful Public Engagement, Negotiation Power, and Citizen Planning Academies:

The next three chapters will examine how citizen academies affect citizen-government relationships, knowledge exchange, and citizen involvement and action. Throughout this analysis it will be important to think critically about each case in terms of Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation to understand if the citizen academy is simply “tokenism” or if it offers something more than what Arnstein’s model defines.

Figure 1 Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation



Chapter Three: City of Colorado Springs, Colorado - Citizen Academy

Unlike the other two case studies this program does not focus explicitly on planning. Nonetheless this academy was selected to provide a comparison between a generalized citizen academy model which provides a broader look at the various departments and elements of the municipal government than does a more specialized citizen *planning* academy model. It is important to make this comparison because models like this one have been around longer and is also more common than planning focused local government training programs. Also, planning issues are highly integrated into the larger democratic framework of government and thus a study of engagement and its relation to planning need not limit itself to one type of this model. Much can be learned about the power of the local government academy model through such a comparison. It should also be noted that within the framework of general citizen academy programs, planning tends to take on a prominent role because planning issues garner on-going attention within the public realm.¹⁵

Background

Since the 1950's the area developed a large concentration of military and air force bases including the U.S. Air Force academy, the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and several space command centers. To support these installations many defense industries have also sprung up. In the 1960s and 1970's the region attracted a large number of high quality technology industries that located in Colorado Springs for the low costs of land and running a business. Tourism is also a large industry as the area receives many visitors who come to engage in outdoor activities in the vicinity of Pikes' Peak (City of Colorado Springs, 2007).

Demographics and Growth

The City of Colorado Springs is the second most populace city in Colorado and has a population of 376,985 of which approximately 80.3% are white, 13.7% Latino, and 6.3% African American (American Community Survey, 2005). Like many other cities on the Front Range, Colorado Springs has experienced rapid urban growth. Since the 1990's Colorado Springs experienced an economic boom and quickly added many new residents, jobs, homes, commercial and industrial development leading to rapidly increasing demands for new services and capital improvements

¹⁵ The Colorado Springs Citizen academy a lots one session per department except for the planning department that gets one and a half classes.

(Colorado Springs General Plan, 2001). Between 1990 and 2000 the population grew from 281,140 to 360,890 an increase of 28.4% in ten years (U.S. Census, 1990, 2000).

Fiscal Constraints

Despite increasing needs for financing capital improvements to accommodate new growth, Colorado Springs voters placed fiscal restraints on municipal government. In 1991, voters amended the city’s charter with the adoption of the Tax Payers Bill of Rights (TABOR), which placed restrictions on raising taxes and limited how the city could spend surpluses in the general fund. In the following year Colorado voters amended the state constitution by passing a state level TABOR. This amendment effectively limits revenue growth for state and local government by requiring voter approval for new taxes and requiring that revenue surpluses above the year’s “allowed collections” be returned to tax payers (National Conference of State Legislature, 2007). Thus Colorado Springs must comply with two different types of TABOR restrictions.

According to the 2001 General Plan the passage of TABOR put “a fiscal restraint on the city’s ability to respond to the new demand generated by growth.” Also, the sun setting of the tax for capital improvements provoked the government to “find new ways to pay for both the backlog on unfunded improvement and the improvement need to serve new growth.” According to one resident, “Many other Colorado communities have opted out of [state] TABOR, but in Colorado Springs people are afraid to put it on the ballot. Nobody wants to be the tax candidate.”¹⁶ The combination of two TABOR policies has strained local government’s ability to fund non-essential programs or to react to price fluctuations due to inflation.

Colorado Springs City Manager Lorne Kramer remarked, “Given the many policies and values in all the city’s plans, how do you prioritize limited funding especially when you are required by law to maintain a balanced budget? It leaves little room to defer liabilities.”¹⁷ Thus taxes are an especially hot topic for the City of Colorado Springs because it places the onus of justifying higher taxes on the government. The government must constantly cut costs and programs to abide by these laws. For this reason it is understandable why many of the responses to the city’s

¹⁶ Jason DeGroot. Interviewed by Adam Marcus, March 27, 2007.

¹⁷ Lorne Kramer, Interview by Adam Marcus. March 26, 2007.

internal evaluation make reference to how much the city accomplishes given the fiscal constraints under which it must work. In a final evaluation for the 2001 class one academy participant wrote, “The City is efficiently and effectively run, but more tax dollars are urgently needed” and in 2002 a participant wrote, “I’m so proud to be a Colorado Springs citizen. I see how much our City is able to accomplish with so little funding. City employees are great.” (City of Colorado Springs, Final Program Evaluation, 2002).

Such responses indicate the importance placed on the tax issue both by participants but also by the program that the city presents. While it is not explicitly stated in the purpose for the citizen academy, it would make sense if one key motive for supporting the academy would be to garner sympathy for government with regard to reforming TABOR tax laws. Of course taxes are but one issue that government hopes to gain supporters on, but it is important to emphasize how big an issue TABOR is in Colorado Springs and ultimately to justifying the existence of the academy. TABOR is one lightning rod issue but growth management is another that both of the other cases are facing. Do these academies exist in part so government can build support and train advocates to address these lightning rod issues from the voter’s box?

Political Context

Colorado Springs employs a Council-Manager form of government and the city council is composed of nine members including the mayor. Half of the council and the mayor are elected at large while the other half are selected by districts. Colorado Springs is known for being a stronghold for conservative and libertarian voters.

Local Context for Civic Engagement

In addition to the citizen academy, the planning department conducts community outreach through the Neighborhood Workshop that is offered once per year and through the Community Action Team Program (CAT). The CAT is an open-ended forum organized once a year in different parts of the city and consists of a panel of officials from different departments. This is an opportunity to answer questions from community residents. The CAT is on going and is very staff intensive. One complaint voiced by city staff is that the same residents and activists attend the CAT.

Program Development

Like many cities, people were cynical about government and accused officials of making bad decisions with little public input and of favoring developers. City Manager Lorne Kramer noted, “In some ways we are trying to overcome citizen's general cynicism of government which is influenced heavily by people's disillusionment with the federal government. People tend to put local government in the same box as federal government.”¹⁸ City officials realized that community members did not have accurate information about city services, programs, and generally about how government decisions were made. According to city officials, misconceptions about the city were perpetuated among neighbors by word of mouth, but by the town's daily newspaper, the Colorado Springs Gazette, which has been criticized for maintaining a blurry line between news and its libertarian editorials. The combination of these two factors painted what city officials felt to be an unfair representation of a government that was mostly concerned with developers and less concerned about the needs of the larger public.

The prevailing cynicism towards local government discouraged people from getting to know how government actually worked, who to call about a given issue, or when to enter the various processes. In 2001, Ron Cousar Director of the City's Neighborhood Services Department attended a conference and learned about the citizen academy model in Redwood City, California¹⁹. Mr. Cousar saw the value of strengthening the partnership between government and the public and convinced other city officials that something had to be done to improve communication lines between the city and the public. Thus, to dispel misconceptions and build more direct lines of communication with the community, the city responded by launching the citizen academy.²⁰ In 2001, Ron Cousar, Director of Neighborhood Services for the City, presented the idea to the acting city manger. The City manager was receptive to the idea and asked each of the City's departments to set aside a small amount of funding from their budgets to cover the costs of food and printing handout materials for their respective academy sessions. The

¹⁸ Lorne Kramer, Interview by Adam Marcus. March 26, 2007.

¹⁹ Redwood City's Partnership academy for Community Teamwork is an initiative of the City Manager's Office and has graduated over two hundred participants. A description can be found at: <http://www.ci.redwood-city.ca.us/manager/initiatives/pact.html>

²⁰ City officials may argue this is well intentioned, however others may see it simply as a fancy form of public relations. Is the academy model an advance in deliberative democracy? What are the motives for doing this?

first class was convened in 2001. It was well received and when asked if they would recommend it one participant remarked, “It [citizen academy] gave a succinct overview of the city. It would be an excellent program for many doubters who are so vocal.” (Final Evaluation, 2001)

Program Operation

The stated purpose of the program is to improve citizens’ understanding of municipal government, of their role in government; and to develop a pool of knowledgeable potential elected or appointed leaders (City of Colorado Springs, 2002). The program is offered once a year in the fall and lasts for six weeks. Each week the class meets for two hours and is hosted at city offices depending on which city department is presenting that evening. The changing location is intended to keep people interested and promote “hands on” learning; however applicant evaluations also complain that facilities are less desirable than others and recommend keeping to a single location.

Initially a community planner in the Department of Neighborhoods coordinated the academy, however in 2003 the Department of Neighborhoods was dissolved and staff were shuffled to different departments. The academy was inherited by the planning department primarily for staffing reasons, but also because the planning department has frequent contact with the public. At the time of this writing the academy coordinator had resigned from the city and the status of the academy and which department would run it were in limbo. Planning officials indicated the academy would likely move to another department that deals more directly with public relations. This is important because it illustrates how much the academy program relies on the enthusiasm and interest of a key staff member. Thus, coordination of the academy is a labor of love both for the City staff person and the volunteers because without them taking the initiative the program would likely not continue. This also illustrates how tenuous these programs when the key staff person finally decides to move on. Past coordinators estimate spending approximately ten hours a week (a quarter time) on the academy. Former planner and academy coordinator Monique Katerina remarked, “Personally being the only staff person trying to do it was hard, it is a big commitment for one person.”²¹

²¹ Monique Katerina, Telephone Interview by Adam Marcus. February 10, 2007.

Since 2004, the Council of Neighborhoods and Organizations (CONO)²² assumed a greater role in organizing the academy in light of the city’s decision to, “reduce the amount of city staff time spent on financial tracking and administration of the program,” (City of Colorado Springs, January 2004). CONO has two primary citizen academy coordinators who trade off to distribute the time burden. In addition past citizen academy graduates volunteer to take care of logistics and coordination work. According to City Manager Lorne Kramer, “The citizen academy would not have survived without volunteerism on the part of city staff but more importantly of Jan Doran and the people at CONO. Jan has been an outstanding partner for many years, she has asked many tough questions of the city, but perhaps most importantly she has gotten people interested in and attracted to the process.”²³ This is an important point because in this case having a person like Jan Doran seems to add a layer of neutrality and credibility to the program. On the one hand Jan’s constituents are from the neighborhoods, however she and her colleagues at CONO understand the city’s comprehensive plan, zoning code, design review process they maintain amiable relationships with city staff, elected officials, and developers. In an interview Jan remarked, “We [CONO] don’t have a dog in the fight, the city will always be observed as being biased toward developers because developers have the bigger axe. How could the city be transparent?” CONO maintains a good reputation among neighborhoods and developers and is often asked to serve as mediators in development disputes.

The six classes provide an overview of the functions of the City Council and Manager, fire, police, public works, city planning, neighborhoods services, parks and recreation and cultural services departments. In addition participants learn about the city budget process, zoning and the community improvements program.²⁴ It is important to note that each department has only one class per year to present with the exception of the planning department that fills one and a half class sessions. Nonetheless, class evaluations still call for more time to be dedicated to planning issues indicating a possible latent demand for a stand-alone planner’s academy.

²² The Council of Neighborhoods and Organizations (CONO) has mission to, “serve as a facilitator working with government agencies, neighbors, and organizations to provide planning and information that protects and preserves the integrity our neighborhoods and the community as a whole.” According to city officials this organization serves as a primary liaison between the city and various neighborhood groups. (http://www.cscono.org/Board_Members_1.htm).

²³ Lorne Kramer, Interview by Adam Marcus. March 26, 2007.

²⁴ A complete copy of the course syllabus can be found in Appendix A.

Planning processes integrate so much technical and political baggage it makes sense why more than three hours are needed to provide a sufficient introduction to the topic, but how much knowledge is too much and how much is too little? However, when asked what makes a good citizen planners/planning commissioner Bill Healey replied, “A good commission member is fair, cordial, and level headed. A good commission member is not an expert, we have experts at the city, they just need a good head on their shoulders so they can think through tough issues...A little knowledge is dangerous, we don’t want them to be experts, the city has its own experts.” Mr. Healy raises an interesting dilemma about how to handle the complexity of planning and public education; in some cities²⁵ this complexity warrants the creation of an entire academy focused on planning issues while in cities like Colorado Springs it is deemed sufficient a lot and extra half session to the general citizen academy model. Each class begins with a brief tour, a buffet dinner, and includes 3-5 guest speaker presentations. Generally the guest speakers are department directors, managers, and chiefs.

Marketing and Criteria for Selection

The selection process is managed by the citizen academy Steering Committee that is composed of one representative from the city, three from the Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO), and five volunteers who are past academy graduates. This committee evaluates the strength of applications primarily by applicant’s leadership potential as expressed through their statement of interest. The committee selects 40 participants and recruits primarily from current city boards, commissions, and civic organizations such as the Urban League, NAACP, Chambers of Commerce and neighborhood councils.²⁶ The city markets the academy through newspapers advertisements, radio spots, the city website, neighborhood organization and church newsletters, and through word of mouth recommendations from past academy graduates. The city targets a diverse set of community-based organizations to diversify the applicants to the citizen academy; however it does not set geographic quotas by council district or by income level. In 2002, the

²⁵ Sacramento and Orange County both have general citizen or city management academies that cover the basics of local government in addition to their planning academies.

²⁶ This is an important distinction as some citizen academies do not filter who can attend the academy rather it is open on a first come first serve basis. The city likely wants to make sure that scarce resources are well spend on citizens who will remain active, but what is the value of reaching people who are not already active or a member of “the choir?”

second year of operation, the committee mailed more than three hundred recruitment letters, received 60 responses, and accepted 40 participants.

Financial Considerations

In 2001 the total cost of running the citizen academy was \$1,139 with nearly seventy percent of the cost going into printing (letterhead, envelopes, and other documents) and food catering. Participants are required to pay a \$40 course fee to pay for print outs, binders, and to ensure a high level of commitment and attendance. The primary costs are food however perhaps more importantly it is crucial to recognize the amount of in-kind staff time that is also needed to run the program.

The city funded the academy until 2002 when it faced budget cuts and decided to end funding for the academy. Senior Analyst Monique Katerina and CONO president Jan Doran took the lead and found a way to create a public-private partnership with funding from three organizations: El Pomar, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, and Pikes Peak Leadership. These groups became the initial sponsors and were later joined by the Colorado Springs Black Chamber of Commerce. This private sponsorship funded the academy from 2003-2006 and was administered through a gift trust account.²⁷ In addition CONO obtained donations from local restaurants and catering businesses to cover food costs. In [year] the academy began charging participants \$40 to participate. Current CONO president Francine Hansen cautioned that private funding would not last indefinitely.

Network Building and Citizen Action

The city has an email list of all past academy graduates; however it does not actively organize events or reunions. Some members of CONO who are academy graduates volunteer to coordinate the academy each year; however there does not seem to be any other network framework connecting past graduate and prompting them to take action on hot issues or to attend important meetings and hearings.

Current Status

²⁷ Monique Katerina, Telephone Interview by Adam Marcus. February 10, 2007.

A total of 244 people have graduated from the program since 2001. As mentioned above the academy was thrown into limbo when the coordinator of four years resigned from the city. CONO is still very supportive of the program and will help ensure that it is reinstated once a new person is assigned by the city. Unlike the other two cases, CONO represents a unique and resourceful partner that seems to be instrumental in keeping this program afloat despite funding issues and staff turnover at the city.

Government Reactions

In general the reactions of government officials were positive however there seemed to be different reasons for why the academy was deemed to be a successful program. From the standpoint of the academy coordinator it is a gratifying experience however it involves a considerable amount of work and places intense demands on one staff person's time. Former academy coordinator Monique Katerina noted, that the citizen academy, "was a lot of work but it was so very rewarding." Monique, who coordinated the academy for several years, also felt the academy was successful at changing negative perceptions about government and its staff members. Monique commented that participants "were pleasantly surprised that the city operations staff were so caring, compassionate, and professional and they started to think of it as a partnerships. It was no longer us and them. People were able to ask questions, and the trust level started to increase. We were asking them to be partners."

In addition to trust building city officials see the academy an effective way to disseminate information and to debunk myths. Bill Healy commented, "The citizens academy helps get the word out, the true facts on how the city budget works, what services are provided. Graduates help get the word out to the citizenry." Thus the academy is seen not only as a way to "humanize" the black box that is government but also as a way to inform others by word of mouth. In this way academy graduates are seen as proxies for government officials who can share what they learned in their respective neighborhoods and peer groups.

There were mixed reviews about how much city officials learned from participating in the academy. The planner most closely involved with organizing the academy reported that, "Other city staff that participated as speakers gained an enormous amount of knowledge...I found that many times after a class or during breaks, participants were having conversations with city staff

and were exchanging phone numbers not just because the citizen wanted information, but because the staff person did. For me the networking aspect was fabulous, I ended up meeting so many people and when things come up and I can call them as a contact person. The citizen's academy is not a one way street we [city staff] also gained knowledge and understanding of where participants were coming from.” However when asked the same question the City Manager and Planning Director seemed to take a different view. They saw the academy primarily as a means for government to educate its citizens rather than vice versa.

It is important to note that interviews with higher-level city staff such as the Planning Director and the City Manager emphasized appreciation for how the program gained political capital for the city and its departments. City Manager Lorne Kramer commented, “Yes, it is more effort to do outreach but in the long term it is more helpful to have informed citizens because ultimately they tend to be more supportive of city policies.” In addition Planning Director Bill Healey commented that, “academy graduates understand the city more, they understand how funds are used, the need for new taxes. They are more enlightened voters and better citizens.” Both of these comments speak to the need for City bureaucrats to gain political capital especially for issues like TABOR that constrain government.

Finally, Planning Director Bill Healey noted that many people do not understand or appreciate the range of services that local governments provide, the way it is funded, and the limited amounts of discretionary funds that are available to work with. He remarked, “People don't understand all the services they get for each of their tax dollars, they take these for granted. This may be a reflection on the failure of our educational system that fails to educate people about local governance. Also, education in school is disproportionate to the amount of impact that people can have at the local level. People know more about the most distant form of government than they do about their local government which they have the best chance of influencing.”

Citizen Reactions

In general the citizen reaction to the academy was positive and upbeat. Participants found the material stimulating and some even described it as being fun. Participants appreciated the complexity and dilemmas inherent in working for local government, and came away with a

better sense for the constraints that government has to work under. In a 2001 class evaluation one participant wrote, “You do more than I thought.” Perhaps most importantly the academy created opportunities for personal interaction and discussion between citizens and public agency staff, something that many of them had not yet experienced in a proactive way. Many participants reported having more confidence once they had made personal contacts with government officials, class speakers, and other academy participants. Academy graduate Joni Rocco remarked, “I wish I was still in Colorado Springs. It would have been easier to transition into volunteering right away because I got to know community leaders through the academy. Here in Parker, Colorado it will be a tougher time. It is much easier to get involved in city government once you have interacted and met people face to face. It is easier to make that next step.” In an interview another participant who wished to remain anonymous said, “I feel less bashful, a little more forceful and determined with options. You don’t get heard unless you are persistent. Maybe its time to look at a new way to run things because the population is changing and there are views that aren’t being represented fully out there. So, I won’t give up.”

Lessons Learned

Overall the academy has been well received both by government and participants. The city reports that more people apply than are accepted which indicates on-going interest. Three of the current city council members went through the academy however it is unknown if their political aspirations preceded their participation in the academy. Another indicator of success is the fact that the County essentially copied the program. Monique Katerina remarked, “The County saw what we were doing and they did exactly the same thing...I think it will continue to catch on across the country and I’ve gotten calls from other cities wanting to know more about our program.”

Perhaps the most salient theme in this case is the difficulty of coordinating the academy and the importance of a non-governmental community based partner. CONO and its leadership have been instrumental in coordinating, fundraising, and ultimately sustaining interest in the citizen academy program. It is also important to have a non-governmental champion such as Jan Doran who is respected by citizens, government and elected officials, and developers alike. Having a well-respected leader adds credibility and social capital to the academy and may help to attract people who would normally be turned off if it were solely a government initiative. Also, without

CONO's logistical support it would be difficult for a lone city employee to pull off the academy and to do it well. One remaining issue is long term funding. CONO was successful in arranging a public private-partnership to secure funding in the medium term, however this funding will not last indefinitely.

Chapter Four: City of Sacramento, California - Planning Academy

Background

In 1854 Sacramento became home to the permanent state capital of California and since this time the state government has been largest employer in the region. Like many California cities, Sacramento experienced rapid economic and population growth in the past thirty years due to its copious amounts of flat and relatively inexpensive land compared to the San Francisco Bay Area. This development was largely done with “Euclidian zoning” or separated uses and took the form of low-density single-family homes, strip malls, and suburban office parks connected by wide avenues and arterial roads. In the late 1970’s and early 1980s this model reached a scale at which problems with traffic, parking, air pollution, and pedestrian safety became serious public concerns. Other growth related concerns include the loss of prime agricultural land, a shortage of affordable housing, and degraded sense of place. Local policymakers have embraced “smart growth” concepts to manage the effects of the region’s booming real estate development market and in the city’s 2007 General Plan Update smart growth principles are presented prominently as the basis for the city’s future policy.

The Sacramento Metropolitan region is the fourth largest in the State with 2,004,476 inhabitants and at its core is the City of Sacramento with a population of 445,287 (U.S. Census). Between 1980-2000 Sacramento’s population increased by 47% percent also become more ethnically and racially diverse. In 2005 the city’s population was 45.7% white, 25.1% Latino, 18.4% Asian²⁸, 16.3 % African American, 1.3% American Indian, 0.9% Pacific Islander, and 13.3% were some other race (U.S. Census, 2005 American Community Survey). In 2002 in an article by Time Magazine the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University named Sacramento as the nation’s “most integrated city,” (Stodghill and Bower, 2002). According to the study affordable home ownership opportunities allowed for African Americans to move from the San Francisco Bay Area and purchase homes in the area. The article points out that despite statistical diversity and integration, the city still has its share of racial tension.

Local Context for Civic Engagement

According to City Council member Steve Cohn, Sacramento has long been a government town with a rich culture for civic engagement and democracy and that, “There is more public interest

here in [urban] growth than in most places. Sacramento is developing an urban culture.” Cohn recounted the major trends in local governance over the last few decades and explained that in the 1960’s there was a reconnection with local government in California, however in the 1970s the fight for property taxes and the passage of proposition 13 caused deep distrust of local government. In the 1980s this distrust began to level off and by the 1990’s more people became engaged with government in a positive way.²⁹

In 2006 the City of Sacramento initiated a public process to update the 1988 General Plan. Since this time there have been many community involvement opportunities including large community meetings, town hall forums, public hearings and a General Plan Advisory Committee. Among the seven primary objectives for the update the first seeks to “incorporate the current City Council’s vision and smart growth policy direction for Sacramento’s long-term future into the scope of the General Plan.”³⁰ It is important to note the prominence of this objective because this general plan is a departure from the urban growth policies that are typical in other fast growing cities in California. What is the role of the academy in creating support and perhaps even allegiance to the current council or to the “smart growth” principles that they champion? This connection between continuing education about innovative policies, network building of supporters of new land use planning paradigms, and civic engagement (deliberation and democratic processes) is not always so clear and there are many complicating factors to consider given the local context for civic engagement at the time of this research project.

Political Context

Voters adopted the City’s charter in 1920 created a city council-manager form of government where the council makes decisions and the city manager is charged with implementing them. However, in 2002 the city created a Compensation Commission and amended the charter making the mayor’s position a full time job³¹. While technically the form of government is not a strong mayor system, some would argue that this transition to full time has increased the mayor’s power considerably. The incumbent mayor has served three consecutive terms and is and is considered to be a “populist” mayor.

²⁹ Steve Cohn, Interview by Adam Marcus. January 27,2007

³⁰ (<http://www.sacgp.org/overview.html>, January 7, 2007).

³¹ (http://www.cityofsacramento.org/about_the_city.htm, 3/12/07)

As of February 2005, 42.92% of registered voters in Sacramento County were democrats, 35.17% are republican, 2.27% are American Independent, and .95% as members of the green party (California Secretary of State, Report of Registration as of February 10, 2005.) Thus it is within this context that the City of Sacramento is attempting to update its general plan despite the on-going fiscal pressures for sales tax revenue, the profit seeking of land developers, and the single and multi interest community groups. The city is attempting to implement policies that go against the grain, that redefine the form of development, and for this reason it is understandable why elected officials would need as much “cover” from understanding supporters as they can get.

Program Development

In response to concerns about rapid and poorly planned urban growth in the Natomas area, the city initiated a process to develop a Comprehensive Community Plan for North Natomas, the city’s fastest growing area. This area consists of low-lying agricultural land located to the North West of the downtown core. This process took eight years of extensive community meetings and input and won several awards, however in practice it has proven difficult to implement. In 2002 the council voted to allow an automobile oriented strip mall where the community plan had called for a mixed use Transit Oriented development. This decision provoked an immediate uproar from the community causing so much opposition that the council back-peddled to reconsider its decision.

This backlash further exacerbated the situation given that sales tax revenue was sorely needed due to the passing of proposition 13 in the late 1978³² From the standpoint of city staff, Senior Planner Jim McDonald commented, “The city council also needed advocates for smart growth to

³² California’s Proposition 13 reduced the amount of property taxes that local government could levy by almost 2/3 and restricted local governments from raising those rates (Fulton, 1999: 21). As a result local governments found themselves in a bind because State and Federal funding sources dried up and the burden of providing capital for infrastructure development was left to local governments.

support and not just oppose more dense, mixed use development that would benefit the city. There needed to be informed decisions on private development proposals.”³³

Following this conflict, community activist Brooks Truit realized that despite the city’s stated commitment to smart growth principles, in reality elected officials still needed citizen support and social capital to challenge “business as usual” development practices and procedures. In 2002, community activist Brooks Truit approached Mayor Heather Fargo with the idea of starting a planner academy modeled after the successful city management academy that was established a few years prior. Truit realized that the city needed new community leaders who were well informed about good planning and who could “provide political cover” for city officials as they tried to enact new “Smart growth” planning paradigms in the face of intense growth pressures. This initiative was consistent with the goal of the City’s Smart Growth Principles to “encourage citizen and stakeholder participation in development decisions” as well as its goal of “reconnecting with its neighborhoods and enhancing education opportunities for the entire community,” (City of Sacramento, 2001).

The Mayor liked the idea and in 2002 the city council directed senior planners Jim McDonald and Steve Peterson to develop a curriculum for a class to help advance the city’s Smart Growth Implementation Strategy. The first class took place in 2002.

Program Operation

The stated purpose of the academy is to, “encourage citizens and other stakeholders to participate in the planning process and the City’s smart growth initiative by providing them with information that will make them more effective community advocates.” (City of Sacramento, 2006). More specifically the program focuses on the general plan process, legal and implementation framework for planning, historic preservation, transit-oriented development and other topics.³⁴ The course consists of ten class sessions and two field trips over the course of eleven weeks and is offered two times a year (City of Sacramento, 2006).

³³ Jim McDonald. Interviewed by Adam Marcus December 27, 2007.

There seems to be a thin line between education and indoctrination. Where does one draw the line between “informed” decisions and “advocacy” based decision-making?

³⁴ A complete class syllabus can be found in Appendix C.

Participants are assigned reading in preparation for each class. Each class is facilitated by a planner from the City and includes a buffet dinner, two guest speaker presentations, a question and answer session, and a period for closing announcements and a speaker evaluation. Most of the guest speakers are municipal planners from the city, county, or state while other speakers come from the local transit authority, housing development companies, non-profit advocacy organizations, and community groups.

Since its inception the program has been housed in the city's long range planning division both for staffing reasons and for the need to engage citizens with the planning department.³⁵ The city has a department of neighborhoods however the planning department has greater staffing resources to coordinate the academy. Former academy coordinator Julie Sontag commented, "A cross pollination between the planning and neighborhoods department would be worthwhile because the department of neighborhoods knows the community well."³⁶ Initially the program was coordinated by a single associate level planner however given the large time commitment it was decided in 2005 that two planners would share the responsibility. Sixty-five people applied for the 2006 academy and twenty-three students graduated. The participants of the 2006 graduating class were affiliated with a range of organizations including housing associations, soccer leagues, school district booster associations, the city's metro chamber of commerce, city planning commission, and various other organizations and advisory committees.

Marketing and criteria for selection

According to Jim McDonald³⁷, City residents and business owners get first priority for the academy. Asking about ethnicity, education level, and income, though with the idea of diversifying applicants serves more to scare minority, less educated, or low-income residents away. Instead planners rely more heavily on the essay with an eye to what the applicant wants to do with the knowledge they gain. They do strive to get a balanced group but it is not always easy because asking scares people away from applying. It is difficult to get a diverse sample of people

³⁵ At the time of this writing the Citizen Planning was housed under the City's General Plan Update project even though it predated the project by several years. The webpage emphasizes the academies role in teaching citizens about the general plan update process. The other two case studies were not engaged in general plan updates at the time of this study.

³⁶ Julie Sontag. Interview by Adam Marcus March 29, 2007.

³⁷ Jim McDonald. Interviewed by Adam Marcus December 27, 2007.

because it is a lot to ask because it is a large time commitment but planners still try to select participants who are different areas of different educational backgrounds, incomes, race, etc. They also choose people that are likely to stay involved and use what they have learned.³⁸

Financial considerations

The costs approximately \$5,000 per course and is funded by the Planning Departments operating budget. Participants do not have to pay a fee to participate however they are expected to attend all meetings. While initially the academy was staffed by only staff member, the responsibility is now shared between two city planners. This allows for some flexibility over the eleven weeks of the course so that the course can continue and so a planner does not have to invest as much time. Senior Planner Jim McDonald remarked that, “the demands a lot of staff time and depends on the passion and dedication of planners to make it work.”³⁹

Network Building and Citizen Action

Mel Billingsly commented that the does not go far enough to nurture new leaders and that one it is over there is no follow through on the part of the city. Billingsly asserts that what is needed is a network, “that people can be a part of that they can continue to attend, get nudged to participate, get asked to be active in things. What is missing is the follow up.” Fortunately community activist Brooks Truit leads a group called Sustain Sacramento that maintains an email list of nearly all the city’s past graduates who wish to stay in the loop and stay active. Brooks presents at every planning and encourages participants to stay active. He uses his email list serve to maintain the network and to rally people to attend important meetings related to smart growth, historic preservation, and quality of life issues. When asked about this network, Mel Billingsly replied, “The exposed me to a number of people like Brooks Truit and Julie Sontag. Once I tapped into them all kinds of doors for opened up for me.”

An important thing to consider is the degree of independence that these graduates have from the city and the extent to which they initiate or self organize independently of the cities goading or

³⁸ What are the trade offs of picking the “low hanging fruit” or people who are already active versus cultivating new leaders?

³⁹ Jim McDonald. Interviewed by Adam Marcus December 27, 2007.

the city's most recent policy moves. This is difficult to measure, but the fact that other organizations in the city are interested in sparking dialogue with the larger community on their own initiative suggests that consciousness about planning and smart growth issues is gaining traction within the community.

Government Reactions

In general government officials consider the Sacramento planning a successful element of the City's larger outreach efforts and feel it is an effective way to build support for the City's "smart growth" strategies. Senior Planner Jim McDonald remarked that, "residents now expect that it [the] will be offered by the city each year," and the City in turn seems to display proud ownership over the program as department heads and the mayor make a point to attend at least one class session.⁴⁰ In a City council meeting the mayor remarked, "We're really very proud of all of our planning academy graduates and the program itself. And we know that we may have armed the enemy here by giving you more information about how you can contact us but we do obviously believe very much in having the public be aware of how decisions are made and we really do want to have people be involved in helping us make decisions."⁴¹ While there is political support for smart growth and programs that promote it, this support is by no means unanimous across the council. Despite the policy language and progress on certain issues, much of the projects that are approved and built are considered to be conventional and modestly cognizant of smart growth goals.

Planners recognize that education must be an on-going and long-term process. Senior planner Jim McDonald noted that "community memory" is short lived and that on-going education especially for SACOG's Regional Blue Print project will be important for implementation of smart growth plans. This is an important point as it relates to the larger question of the role that on-going education plays in shifting planning and local governance and democratic paradigms? The fact that the "public" is ever-changing, while government has documents, and long time employees and other institutional frameworks to perpetuate "institutional memory" begs the question: How does social consciousness around planning issues get created and sustained over time?

⁴⁰ Jim McDonald. Interviewed by Adam Marcus December 27, 2007.

⁴¹ Mayor Heather Fargo, Sacramento City Council Meeting, December 12, 2007.

City officials in Sacramento are explicit about their hope that the will not only create support, but that graduates will become advocates for the city. Ray Costantino remarked, “The benefit of the program is that people see the conflicts that are inherent in good city planning and the need for negotiation. People have a better sense of the complexity behind the scenes and become better advocates for the city as a whole.”⁴²

Planners also recognize the importance of creating a space for citizens to network with local government, speakers, and fellow classmates. This provides a unique opportunity to build relationships by convening a small group regularly over the course of six weeks. Assistant Planner Raymond Costantino remarked that the academy is, “not just about how to build knowledge, it is an opportunity to encourage a networking and for people to give their opinions in a new way.” This recognition is supported by the fact that there is an informal planning alumni network called Sacramento Sustainer, and organization that is lead by community activist Brooks Truit.⁴³

Finally, the city recognizes that it is not a panacea for citizen engagement but is part of a larger framework for supporting a more informed public. Councilmember Cohn said, “I think the public is more engaged now, more ordinary people are engaged and it is not just the usual suspects but there are variables other than have contributed to this increase such as the SACOG blueprint project.”⁴⁴

Citizen Reaction

Overall the citizen perception of the academy was very positive. The success is illustrated by the fact that 65 people applied for 25 slots in 2006 (City of Sacramento, 2006). Participants emphasized the importance of the personal connections they had made and reported being less intimidated about contacting local government. Graduates tend to range from highly motivated activists to people who were encouraged to attend by a friend or colleague. Mel Billingsly

⁴² Raymond Costantino. Telephone Interview by Adam Marcus. November 11, 2006.

⁴⁴ Steve Cohn, Interview by Adam Marcus. January 27, 2007

reported, “In my class some people were just ‘filling the square’ because it looked good on their resumes for a promotion. These people weren’t really engaged or interested in the class. Some were induced by their council members to attend.”⁴⁵ Thus it seems to accept and attract people for different reasons. This presents an additional challenge for selection as it is hard to gauge how involved and committed applicants are to remaining active after graduating.

Participants also noted that different parts of the city had varying capacity building needs in terms of understanding planning. In Sacramento, the midtown area has always been the most active and well-informed area of town, but according to Mel Billingsly, “The preponderance of activism is in downtown and midtown. I live in Tahoe Park where it is difficult to get people engaged. There’s very little knowledge about smart planning.”⁴⁶ This challenge of addressing the geographic imbalance of activism and education is a common problem in many cities, and it appears that the academy has potential to address these issues.

An important issue to keep in mind when thinking about the effectiveness of a planning is to what extent it creates a sense of allegiance between graduates and city officials on a set of principles. Part of the allegiance issue stems from who is attracted and selected to participate in the program. In Sacramento the City is explicit about trying to groom advocates for smart growth and this is reflected in the way people responded to interview questions. Graduate Glenda Marsh remarked, “There are people who are very cynical of government, who just say push it over and start a whole new system. I don’t think attracts those people. It attracts practical people who recognize that government isn’t perfect and we have to work with it and make changes where we can. ... Now that I understand how things work I can do a better job of influencing. These are definitely not revolutionaries in the class.”⁴⁷ However; a newly graduated participant addressed the council and said, “As the city council of Sacramento you have a really tough job. It probably is true that our enthusiasm for the planning academy may be the first and the last time we unanimously will agree on anything, my sincere hope however is that we can contribute as graduates as well informed and thoughtful participants in our communities.”⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Mel Billingsly, Telephone Interview by Adam Marcus. March 23, 2007

⁴⁶ Mel Billingsly, Telephone Interview by Adam Marcus. March 23, 2007

⁴⁷ Glenda Marsh, Telephone Interview by Adam Marcus. April 6, 2007

⁴⁸ Katherine Levin. Sacramento City Council Meeting, December 12, 2007.

Lessons learned

One important lesson learned was the dilemma that government faces in terms of training citizens to be actively critical of government policies and plans. One city official that asked to remain anonymous acknowledged that training citizens could be “a double edged sword. On the one hand it has potential to support good [smart growth] development but on the other it increases the chances that they will challenge hypocritical decisions made by elected officials. In the North Natomas area the city did not follow the plan that the community had spent years agreeing to and this caused an uproar. Brooks Truit responded to this dilemma by saying, “Bug the hell out of the professionals. The planners are probably ambivalent, they appreciate the fact that the Citizen Planning graduates are not totally green, but they may have to respond to more sophisticated questions.”

Another key lesson was that the academy requires a large amount of staff time and is very difficult for one person to coordinate. For this reason the academy is now coordinated by two planners to cut down on the number of night meetings that each is required to attend. Nevertheless the amount of time require to coordinate the academy is formidable even when the task is divided by two.

This case study also illustrates the importance not only of creating new networks and personal contacts but also in continuing those contacts through a social network. In this case the Sacramento Sustainers activist group is effective in keeping people aware of important city meetings. Though it may seem minor, an email list serve seems to be an effective way to keep people in the loop as it allows them to become as active as they wish while still remaining informed about ways and times to speak up, attend a meeting, or join a committee.

Chapter Five: Orange County, Florida - Citizen Planners Academy

Background

Orange County Florida is home to the City of Orlando, the sixth largest city in the State of Florida. In 1971 Walt Disney World opened and became the centerpiece of the area's booming tourist economy. With the rapid growth of the tourism industry came explosive population growth and sprawling low-density urbanization primarily outside the central city. Between 1990 and 2000 Orange County had a 32.3% growth rate and was ranked as one of the fastest growing counties in Florida (Orange County Comprehensive Planning, 2006). The unemployment rate in the area is low (3.1 %) ⁴⁹ but the majority of jobs are in the hospitality and entertainment sectors which are generally low-paying jobs. Low wages are exacerbated by the regions high housing prices, as the region was one of the most expensive real estate markets in the country.

Orange County is home to 1,002,849 people of whom 64.2% are white, 19.8% are African American, and 23.5% are Latino and between 1970-2000 the County's population increased by 160% (U.S. Census, 2005). Most residents work within the County, however jobs are dispersed and long commutes have become an issue. This disconnection between residential neighborhoods and employment centers lead the County to adopt plans and growth policies that integrate land uses. The Horizon West Plan calls for the "orderly transition from rural land uses in formally agricultural area to urban villages that will provide housing opportunities for new residents in developments of compact, integrated master-planned villages."

Despite such plans, the region still struggles with implementation in the face of intense growth pressures. In the last decade growth has led to increasing traffic congestion, loss of open space, environmental degradation, and sky-rocking housing prices. According to Lavon Williams, Division Manager for Orange County Neighborhood Services, the County is actively engaged in projects and dialogue about land preservation, management of the region's roadways, providing alternative modes of public transportation such as commuter rail, and balancing new growth with redevelopment. ⁵⁰

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Labor, 2007

⁵⁰ Lavon Williams. Telephone interview by Adam Marcus, March 6, 2007.

As a result of booming population growth and rapid urbanization in the unincorporated areas of Orange County, the County government decided it could no longer remain subject to governance of the State of Florida and adopted a charter in 1988. Unlike rural Counties, the Orange County population demanded new urban services and infrastructure to accommodate its urban needs. This new designation allows the county to govern itself and “gives the county the ability to respond to a changing environment and meet local needs.”⁵¹ There are six elected county commissioners and a mayor who is elected by the community at large.

In addition to the planners academy, since 2004, the City of Orlando Office of Neighborhood and Community Affairs and the Orange County Neighborhood Services Department have jointly organized the Community Connection Workshops. The program offers monthly two-hour workshops to “engage, inform, and educate citizens,” on topics such as improving neighborhood association effectiveness, leadership development, and neighborhood networking.⁵² Of particular interest was the workshop entitled “Power, Negotiation and Influence with Government” which covered the basics on how government is organized, the services and resources available, and the skills needed to “influence and negotiate with government and elected officials.”⁵³ These skills seem to be taught apart from the nuts and bolts of the planning process. Despite the overlap it seems that these two programs do not have any formal connection.

Context for Citizen Engagement

There are several citizen-training programs in Orange County and in the City of Orlando and many of these were instituted under the leadership of County Chairman Linden Chaften during the mid 1990’s to increase citizen participation. In 1980, the City of Orlando set a precedent by opening the first citizen police academy in the U.S. The success of this academy is often credited as an inspiration for the spread of the now ubiquitous citizen police academy model. In addition to a planners academy, Orange County also hosts Citizen Fire, Police, and even a Corrections Department academy that teaches people about “the Orange County Jail and how it operates.” County Chairman Chaften’s push for citizen outreach coincided with the realization that Orange County was no longer a conventional rural county and that it had more urban needs. Orange

⁵¹ (<http://www.orangecountyfl.net/cms/GOVERN/govataglace/default.htm>)

⁵² Orange County Government, www.orangecountyfl.net, accessed 1 May 2007.

⁵³ Orange County Government, www.orangecountyfl.net, accessed 1 May 2007.

County Neighborhood Services Manager Lavonne Williams noted, “At the time our county chairman had an initiative called Citizens First. As part of the initiative, especially as a planning department, we really tried to educate and reach out to our community as we were in the throes of a lot of growth issues. We were having discussions about urban service boundaries, talking about innovative ways of planning, smart growth, all of those things were just burgeoning. We were looking for ways to better educate our community.”⁵⁴ Thus with explicit political support for citizen education and burgeoning discussions surrounding growth management it was an opportune time to educate the public.

Program Development

Lavon Williams, already familiar with the basic citizen academy model, discovered an example of a citizen *planners* academy on the web one day. Lavon perceived a need to build capacity in low income neighborhoods on land development issues and said, “From a neighborhoods perspective, as an advocate for neighborhood organizations, we [Neighborhood Services staff] were often in a position to help them problem solve and consensus build. But we watched poor neighborhoods trying to get in front of the planning commission or in front of the county commissioners trying to express either their support or their dissent to a growth issue or a particular development...People used terms inappropriately, asked to impose conditions at the wrong time, and did not understand how to use the power of the community board process.”⁵⁵ Lavon and several planning staff members worked with a team from Rollins College and develop a curriculum for the academy that could begin to respond to these broader engagement capacity issues. It should be noted than the primary stated purpose for this academy was NOT to groom planning commissioners, rather to create a group of informed citizens that understood the process and could provide better feedback to County staff.⁵⁶

The academy began under the umbrella of the planning department, but the vision was unique in that it viewed County government staff as advocates for low-income neighborhoods. When the Neighborhood Services Department expanded into its own division, the academy was transferred

⁵⁴ Williams, Lavon. Telephone interview by Author, 6 March 2007

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

along with the staff that would run it. Lavon Williams made the decision to move the academy to the County's Neighborhood Services Department primarily for staffing reasons, however being that she was the primary champion for the academy it also made sense for it move with her and the staff who helped develop it. While Chariman Chaften provided the political support for initiating broader citizen education programs, it was Lavon Williams and her staff who championed and shaped the County's version of the planning academy model. County Program Coordinator Wes Johnson remarked, "Neighborhood services had expertise doing outreach and meetings, facilitations, action plans and defining assets and deficiencies. It seemed natural for neighborhood services to do it because they were the outreach experts."⁵⁷

Going along with this, the academy curriculum fairly is normative in how it teaches growth management and smart growth, however in interviews it is apparent the County staff are not actively looking for the same type of elite group of residents. Orange County Senior Planner Arthur Hall commented, "there was a need for education so residents could voice concerns early on, and to understand the technical tools government uses to inhibit sprawl through land use, transportation planning, redevelopment, zoning, etc."⁵⁸

Program Operation

In 2005 the first academy was organized under the auspices of the County's Planning Division and 16 participants completed the course. Initially the first two classes were stretched out over the course of six months and they were poorly attended. Effective in 2007, the course consists of seven classes over seven weeks that are each divided into lecture and dialogue sections. The academy is offered in the fall and spring and is held at the County offices and the County conducts outreach by mailing brochures to over five hundred community organizations and associations in addition to placing public service announcements in various newspapers. The county decided to change the schedule for the third session in 2007 so that the six sessions took place on a weekly basis. Seventeen students completed the 2007 program.

⁵⁷ Johnson, Wes. Telephone Interview by author. 5 February 2007.

⁵⁸ Hall, Arthur. Telephone interview by author 10 February 2006.

The academy is coordinated by one senior level planner and is added to this person's other duties. Senior Planner Arthur Hall was given free reign by his supervisor to develop and coordinate the program. At the onset representatives from the University of Florida and Rollins College helped develop the curriculum. Arthur reported that he'd like to develop the program further and hopes it will receive recognition from the Florida APA for "providing a new way to engage and educate residents, another avenue of engaging them in local government affairs."

The concept of a champion is important in this case but it is not an elected official or community activist rather it is the planning/neighborhood services staff. When asked whom to contact, a Neighborhood services staff member candidly replied that only one commissioner would know of and be able to reflect on the program. This politically "hands off" attitude may be a function of the newness of the program, but the fact that the academy was started at the department level and not from the mayor, county commission, or a citizen group suggests that academy 'champions' can come from a variety of sectors. Orange County's planner academy seems to fly 'below the radar' of the elected county commissioners.

The Neighborhood Services Division invited planning staff as well as planning consultants, developers, and professional organizations such as APA to participate as speakers. Lavonne remarked, "We try to pick people [speakers] who are just as committed about educating the public as we are." This diverse array of speakers was selected to provide academy participants with a diverse set of perspectives, but it was also because it was a challenge to convince County staff to attend after hours meetings. Lavon Williams explained that it was hard to convince County staff to stay for such a long day, whereas private sector and speakers from associations were willing to attend.

The curriculum was developed initially under the planning division and despite the fact that it now resides within Neighborhood Services, it will remain focused on planning and the land development process. The stated objectives of the program are to, "Educate public citizens on land development processes, planning principles and methods to implement growth management," and to, "Develop a working knowledge of how to engage with the land development process," (Orange County Florida, 2007). The academy dedicates one class to

provide an overview on growth management, planning 101, land development process, zoning, transportation planning, neighborhood redevelopment, and citizen participation opportunities. The final class on citizen participation opportunities discusses the steps of the participation and decision-making process for community meetings, the Local Planning Agency, and Board of County Commissioners hearings.

On planner remarked, that, “the purpose is to teach land development processes and all the decision making points of the stakeholders. From vacant land to built structure to redevelopment. How do we decide what are the impacts of redevelopment and when it is appropriate? We teach about how we make the decision to intervene and what goes into that.”⁵⁹

Criteria for Selection

The planners’ academy is open to all residents of Orange County and is limited only by the first come first serve rule. Planners indicate that the academy is popular with developers who wish to know more about the land development process and one participant noted, “There was a land acquisition guy who was in the class and he was looking at what kind of redevelopment or urban “renewal” will happen around his properties.”⁶⁰ The popularity of the academy waned early on due to the six-month schedule. Also, they found that many people signed up but in the end were dropped because they forgot or were unwilling to pay the course fee.

Financial Considerations

The fifteen-dollar fee helps ensure people will commit to attending all sessions and also covers the cost of textbooks. The total cost to run academy is \$450 plus \$15 per to cover the cost of printed materials and food. Currently the County covers the majority of the cost but they have not yet discussed long term funding strategies. Arthur Hall commented that in the future he would like to arrange assistance from private firms.⁶¹

Network Building

⁵⁹ Williams, Lavon. Telephone interview by Author, 6 March 2007

⁶⁰ Ezell, Ida. Telephone interview by Author, 15 March 2007.

⁶¹ Hall, Arthur. Telephone interview by author 10 February 2006

The County maintains an email list of past academy participants but it is unclear if there have been any formal attempts by government staff or citizen activists to organize or otherwise form a network of alumni. Interviews indicate that real estate developer and property managers are well represented in the academy and are interested in learning more about the County's land development process. One participant remarked, "More than half the class members were activists who had concerns about development and urban growth...the other ones, I am not sure why they were there. Maybe their companies asked them to attend, maybe they work in housing [development]. It would have been nice to introduce themselves and tell their background. I don't have a clue of what everyone did in our class. Unless we sat at the same table, I didn't know who anyone was."⁶² It is unclear however if this group of participants maintains ties after graduating from the academy.

Government Reactions

Overall it was difficult to get a sense for the public sector's reaction because the academy program is so new and experienced mediocre attendance in its first two sessions. In comparison to the other two case studies in this thesis Orange County planners did not have many lessons learned to share as they felt they were still figuring things out. One important difference is that neighborhood services division views itself as an advocate *within* government. Lavon Williams remarked, "That's the challenge of being an advocate, we work very hard to make sure we are not offending our coworkers and other staff members but that we equip the citizens with what they need to be equipped with. There have been some times when we decide to separate a little bit, we encourage them to do what they need to do."⁶³ While this academy does touch lightly on norms for growth management, it seems to take a slightly different tact by building citizens capacity so they can provide better feedback to the County on proposed greenfield and redevelopment projects. Though subtle, this differs from the other two case studies where the explicit aim was not to improve feedback, but rather to groom new advocates for government or normative smart growth planning. Planner Arthur Hall emphasized, "This was more than just education it was also about building a partnership between government and the community."

⁶² Ezell, Ida. Telephone interview by Author, 15 March 2007.

⁶³ Williams, Lavon. Telephone interview by Author, 6 March 2007.

The view from one elected official articulated the worth of the academy primarily in terms of making it easier for government to do what it does. County Commissioner Theresa Jacobs remarked, “I believe the better educated one is, the better they are able to make educated decisions. Government agencies are sometimes confusing to those not involved in the day-to-day activities. A citizen who has participated in the planner academy has an advantage of a better understanding of how things work, how projects are approved and why certain decisions are made.”⁶⁴ This viewpoint does not acknowledge the planner’s goal of “building partnership.”

Planner Wes Johnson felt the academy helps educate people about the process and related the following story: “One participant wanted to know why the Wal Mart went in without hearings or meetings. She didn’t understand it was allowed by right in the zoning regulation. If there is no land use change, there is no hearing.”⁶⁵ Johnson went on to say that the academy helped participants understand when to get involved in the process so that, as shown in the Wal Mart example, they could weigh in before it was too late.

Citizen Reactions

In this case it was especially difficult to conduct interviews with past participants in part because there were less people to choose from, but also because of a general lack of interest. County government was not willing to supply names and contact information to the researcher but agreed to send two email solicitations to the list of past graduates. Only one person responded for an interview. Another factor contributing to the small pool of graduates was that many people dropped out part way through the first two sessions because they were over the course of six months.

Nonetheless, survey participants indicated positive reactions to the program. One anonymous respondent remarked, “[I feel] better informed and with greater knowledge of terminology to better express myself. The academy has helped with my involvement in my HOA and in understanding governmental processes.” Respondents also spoke highly of County staff and one remarked, “I have a whole lot more understanding now. There is so much [for planners] to know.

⁶⁴ Jacobs, Theresa. Email Interview. 23 April 2007.

⁶⁵ Johnson, Wes. Telephone Interview by author. 5 February 2007.

I have a greater understanding for all that planners do and I am really impressed with Orange County's representatives and how well educated they are. I'm really proud of them."⁶⁶

Some respondents were pleased with making new personal contacts while others felt there were not enough opportunities to meet people who sat at different tables. One participant reported, "I found some nice people to contact. The class presenters especially for when I get involved in the committees. It is hard to find out what the commissioners are saying, we never thought to have them or senior staff come to our meetings so this is good."⁶⁷

When asked how they were applying what the learning in the academy some participants indicated they hadn't had time yet to employ their new knowledge, but planned to do it. In the survey one respondent remarked, "I'm working on it!" and another answered, "I am just completing the course...get me later, although I will be communicating the community's need for a more comprehensive Urban, village, mixed use/overlay redevelopment plan."⁶⁸ Some participants indicated they planned to get involved either in county boards and commissions or in local community groups. One anonymous survey respondent wrote, "I am now the head chairman for the expansion for our Church property."

Lessons Learned

The planners' academy in Orange County has only been operating for one and a half years and thus may not be as fully developed as the other two case studies included in this thesis. Finally the researcher encountered difficulties establishing contact with County staff and academy graduates. Orange County staff was initially very helpful however due to staffing issues it became difficult to obtain additional information. It was also much more difficult to solicit volunteers for follow up telephone interviews. These difficulties may be due, in large part, to the relative "newness" of the academy, but it may also provide insight about the county government's relationship with academy graduates and explain the reluctance of participants to discuss their experience at length with the researcher. For Colorado Springs and Sacramento the

⁶⁶ Ezell, Ida. Telephone interview by Author, 15 March 2007.

⁶⁷ Ezell, Ida. Telephone interview by Author, 15 March 2007.

⁶⁸ Anonymous Survey Respondent. Orange County, Florida.

researcher was able to arrange telephone and in-person interviews via email contact with much greater ease than for those in Orange County.

Despite these setbacks this case presents some valuable lessons. One lesson is the importance of having a “middle management” champion for the academy. In this case the idea and initiative to start the academy came from Lavon Williams and her staff. While the concept could come from a lower level planner, it seems that buy in from managers or planning directors is key. Thus the fact that citizen academies are often considered “extra” programs is supported by observation that in most cases a champion at some level is a key reason for the programs existence and continuation.

This case also illustrates a logistical lesson about the appropriate time frame for an academy. Stringing classes over a six-month period may be easier in terms of staff time, but it seems to have negative effects on citizen interest and commitment to attending the entire academy. While there researcher has no data to confirm it, it would seem also that a more condensed program would create a more dynamic environment for building bonds with other academy students, County staff, and guest speakers. Compared to the other cases, the survey responses for Orange County seemed to be flatter and less enthusiastic about the program but more generally about civic engagement. This may be due to many factors; however there is no doubt that participants favor a weekly time frame.

Chapter Six: Analysis, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The previous three chapters shed light on the origins, structure, and operations of three citizen academies, but the question remains; is the citizen academy model effective for improving citizen engagement and negotiation power at the local level? The introduction the thesis questions was framed in terms of the questions included below in Table 2:

Criteria for evaluating the effects of citizen academies

Citizen-Government Relations
Do citizen academies affect relations between citizens and planners?
Do academy graduates perceive any change in their ability to influence decision-making and agenda setting as a result of participating in the citizen academy?
Learning and Knowledge Exchange
What do citizens and government staff learn from each other by participating in or facilitating these academies?
Citizen Action
How do citizens convert this experience and new knowledge into action?

This chapter presents additional information and interesting findings that answer the above questions and also raise new ones. The chapter begins with an overview of the findings and salient themes that arise from this research. Within these themes it then discusses the survey responses as they relate to participant interviews and the political context in each study area. Finally, the chapter proposes practical recommendations for improving the citizen academy model. All responses to the survey's open-ended questions are included in Appendix F.

Overview of Findings

Both government officials and citizens appreciate the idea of an on-going citizen academy but for very different reasons and with varying degrees of enthusiasm. In terms of citizen-government relations, high-ranking government officials tended to view the academy as a way to build political capital and disseminate information on government's behalf while street level planners who were directly involved believed in the loftier goals of creating "social capital" and building capacity for citizen involvement. Academy participants felt more confident about contacting government officials they had met and thus felt they could better influence

government as a result. Participants were surprised and enamored with the personal attention they received and the connections they made with city staff, speakers, and to a lesser extent with their fellow classmates. Citizens indicated increased interest in getting involved and in joining government committees or boards following their participation in the academy. On the other hand, government officials did not seem to learn much from the academy beyond making a few contacts and finding better ways to coordinate logistics for the academy itself. Both citizens and government officials felt that learning was primarily one-way and government officials' attitudes were largely concerned with teaching, not learning from citizens.⁶⁹ While there are variations on the citizen academy model, fundamentally these academies do not overtly integrate local and professional knowledge. The three case studies do illustrate that the academy model lays groundwork for improved engagement by establishing lines of communication and working relationships between citizens and bureaucrats. This experience appears to invigorate interest and involvement in serving on boards, commissions, and in municipal processes.⁷⁰

Discussion of Survey Results

Overall the quality of the survey responses varied across case studies. The Sacramento and Colorado Springs respondents provided longer more robust responses to open-ended questions than those of Orange County. Throughout this analysis it is important to keep in mind the key differences between these case studies. Table 1 illustrates how Orange County is significantly newer than the other two programs. Orange County has had less time to build a reputation, to work out the kinks, and to develop an active network of past participants. The researcher selected Orange County despite its age because it was one of the few local government sponsored citizen-*planning* academies that the researcher could find.

Table 1: Comparison of Case Study Tenures

Academy Location	Year Established/Years Running	Total Graduates
City of Colorado Springs, CO	2001 (6 Years)	224
City of Sacramento, CA	2002 (5 Years)	198
County of Orange, FL	2005 (1.5 years)	35

⁶⁹ Some planners did report learning during conversations after class sessions but learning about non-professional local knowledge was never an explicit part of the curriculum for any of the three cases.

⁷⁰ The final section of this chapter will suggest ways to change the academy model to allow for more learning on the government side and to create more opportunities to integrate local and professional knowledge.

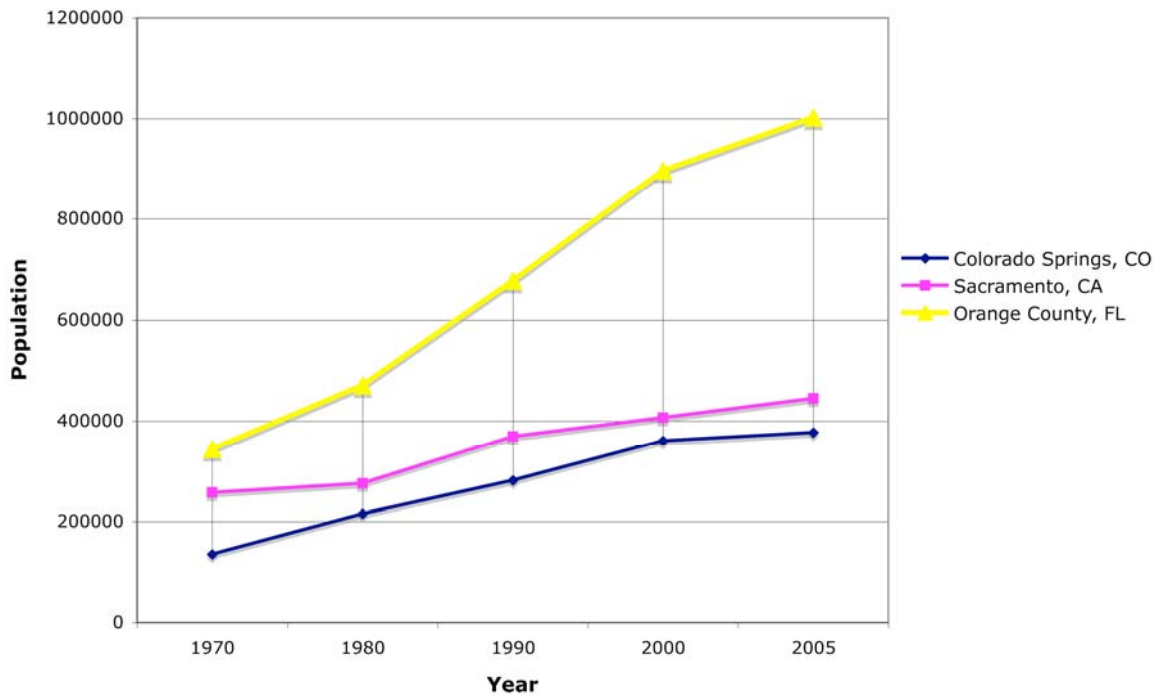
Comparing Demographic Contexts

It is important to first compare the basic demographic context of each case study area to best interpret the survey responses. In terms of population, Orange County is home to more than two times the population of Colorado Springs and Sacramento. Table 2 and the following chart illustrate Orange County’s explosive urban growth; Colorado Springs and Sacramento shared similar, much slower rates of growth.

Table 2: Total Population (U.S Census, American Community Survey, 2005)

Colorado Springs	Sacramento	Orange County
376,985	445,287	1,002,849

Populaton Growth Comparison, 1970-2005



(Source: U.S. Census)

The survey asked respondents how long they had lived in the area to get a sense for how rooted participants were in their local communities. The average number of years lived in each place

was 24, 14.1, and 9.7 years respectively for Colorado Springs, Sacramento, and Orange County and the overall average was 15.9 years. Respondents from Colorado Springs and Sacramento tended to attract long time residents which may be due in part to Orange County's exponential growth rate in the past 25 years.

Selection and Self Selection: Who Takes Part in the Academy?

Who participates in the academy has to do with how the government markets the program, who applies, and the government's selection criteria. Overall, the most common and effective way participants found out about the academy was from fellow friends, neighbors, employers, colleagues or other personal contacts. Government did mass mailings and advertised in the local newspaper but according to the survey these tactics seemed less effective than personal encouragement. Orange County was the only program that did not have predefined criteria for filtering applicants; Colorado Springs and Sacramento had more discerning selection processes.⁷¹

For example City Staff at Colorado Springs proposed using the following scoring criteria:

- Civic Involvement – Those involved in “three or more separate civic or professional organizations” scored highest.
- Reason for Participating – Those using the academy experience as a “first step to achieve the goal of being in an elected/appointed position” scored highest.
- Benefit to Community – Those who had “many opportunities to pass along the knowledge gained to other citizens in the community” scored highest.⁷²

It is important to consider how such selection criteria and outreach strategies influence who ends up participating in the academy. Since word of mouth tends to be the most effective way to get people involved, it is conceivable that over time certain social, professional, and peer groups would perpetuate participation toward certain subsets of the public. When asked how to change the academy one survey respondent from Colorado Springs suggested, “more diversity in participants as there seemed to be a large number of realtors or those involved in land development. Maybe educators/principals of Junior and Senior High students.”

⁷¹ In Sacramento two survey respondents noted they did not get accepted the first time they applied.

⁷² City of Colorado Springs, 2005

Glenda Marsh from Sacramento remarked, “the [planners] academy does not attract and perhaps is not receptive to revolutionaries who want to topple government. It attracts a pool of applicants who wish to work within the existing framework.” A planner from another city who wished to remain anonymous noted distinct differences between academy participants and people who attended weekly advisory meetings. The planner remarked, “Activists at the advisory meeting just complain and don’t see the bigger picture, the academy attracts more open minded participants who are focused on the bigger picture. My impression of activists went down after attending those [advisory] meetings.” This planner hypothesized that academy participants did not attend advisory meetings because they were dominated by the “same old” vocal activists with narrow interests. It is important to recognize that the academy model is sheltered from intense conflicts because it does not result in direct policy decisions as other engagement processes do.

Ethnicity and Representation in Academy Programs

In Sacramento, officials were quite concerned about the overrepresentation of white males yet they have not found a good way to ensure that the academy attracts a more diverse set of applicants. Senior Planner Jim McDonald remarked, “Asking about ethnicity, education level, and income serves more to scare less educated, low income residents away. Instead we rely more heavily on the essay while trying not to look at writing ability but at what the applicant wants to do. We strive to get a balanced group but it is not always easy to do.”⁷³ While this raises an important dilemma, it is unclear why Sacramento or the other case studies did not ask participants at the END of the program about their ethnicity. It seems that if diversity and representation were truly a priority, such information would be gathered in order to improve marketing and outreach to underrepresented publics.

In Orange County Marytza Sanz, President of Latino Leadership Orlando commented that she, and the larger Latino community in Orlando, were largely unaware of the Orange County Citizen Planner Academy. Ms. Sanz remarked, “Once I sat on a [government] board that distributed neighborhood grants, and I noticed that most of the people who knew about the program were from homeowners associations. What about other people? We have to develop a system to reach out to new groups and newcomers. We cannot assume that everyone reads email, you have to

⁷³ Jim McDonald. Interviewed by Adam Marcus. December 27, 2006.

understand who is out there and how to reach them. Use radio, media, churches, all the places where people go to congregate every day.”⁷⁴ A survey respondent from Colorado Springs noted the need for leadership development in minority communities and wrote, “now our City is so diverse (and growing to become more diverse) that new voices, not the same old, white, middle-to-upper middle class, conservative, Republican voices that have been on the Council - need to 'step-up' and run and be elected to Office.”

Table 3 compares the ethnic representation of the survey sample with each area’s U.S. Census percentages. It is important to note that none of the case study governments tracked the ethnicity or race of the program’s participants. Without such information it was impossible to determine how representative each sample is of the total population of graduates from each program. Nonetheless, if the small survey sample can be used as any indication, all three case studies are overrepresented by whites and underrepresented by African American, Latino and Asians. A longitudinal research study would do well to study why various social circles are overrepresented in the academy.

In addition, charging a fee to participate in the academy further constrains lower income groups from participating. While printed materials do cost money, a \$40 fee seems quite small compared to the City’s budget, but could be an impediment to a potential participant. One survey respondent from Colorado Springs remarked, “When I attended the Citizens' Academy in 2002, there wasn't a cost - but, now, with the City's budget always being 'in question,' there is a at least a \$40 charge to participate. What about people who can't afford \$40? Saying you have to PAY to learn more about your City is sending a VERY WRONG message to the citizens of this City...unless you have money to participate you are NOT worth learning about the City of Colorado Springs. It's not right and I think it is unfair.”

Demographic Profiles for Survey Respondents

In Colorado Springs survey respondents were fairly evenly distributed between the ages of 26- and 65, but the 45-55 group had the most of any other age group. The gender of participants was balanced towards females and most participants earned more than the median income for their

⁷⁴ Marytza Sanz. Interviewed by Adam Marcus. May 9, 2007.

region.⁷⁵ Finally the ethnicity/race of participants was almost exclusively Caucasian (non-Latino, non-Hispanic).

In Sacramento the respondents were also fairly evenly distributed between the ages of 26-65, but the 45-55 group had an even larger proportion of the distribution than it did in the Colorado Springs cohort. There were more females and slightly more than half the participants earned more than the median income for the area. Only about one quarter of the survey participants qualified as low-income (80% MFI for their area) and most participants were Caucasian with a few Latino, African American and Asian respondents.

Unlike the other two groups, the respondents from Orange County were much younger and about half came from the 25-35 group. The gender of participants was mostly male and most respondents earned more than the median income for the area. Finally most of the participants were Caucasian yet a few respondents were Latino.

Overall Colorado Springs and Sacramento tended to be more middle aged and more balanced in terms of gender. Orange County was younger and almost predominantly males. All three groups tended to be middle class income status and all had more than 70% of its respondents identifying themselves as white/Caucasian.

⁷⁵ Based on U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development FY 2006 Income Limits.

Table 3: Comparison of Ethnic Representation of Case Study Participants

	Colorado Springs			Sacramento			Orange County		
Ethnicity	U.S. Census*	CS Sample	Difference	U.S. Census*	SAC Sample	Difference	U.S. Census*	OC Sample	Difference
White	80.3%	92.90%	12.60%	45.7%	72.7%	27.0%	64.2%	81.8%	17.6%
African American	6.3%	0%	-6.30%	16.3%	9.1%	-7.2%	19.8%	0.0%	-19.8%
Latino	13.7%	7.10%	-6.60%	25.1%	18.2%	-6.9%	23.5%	18.2%	-5.3%
Asian	2.6%	0%	-2.60%	18.4%	9.1%	-9.3%	4.4%	0.0%	-4.4%
<i>*Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2005</i>									

Effects on Citizen-Government Relations

- A. Relations with Government Staff:* An important question in this thesis is how, if at all, the citizen academy experience changed people’s perceptions of their relationship with government and with government officials. The charts below illustrate that perceptions improved significantly in Sacramento, more modestly in Colorado Springs, and largely stayed the same in Orange County. One survey participant wrote, “After the opening of a new business campus there were huge traffic blockages every afternoon. I was in a good spot to see them as my window overlooks the main road where the back up was taking place. After the course I knew who to call, and was able to help him change the timing of the lights to clear up the snags.” Another respondent from Sacramento wrote, “Knowing who the players are and what influences that are present, I am able to tailor my comments to the right people and make my comments heard.” While many of the responses were positive, a few respondents had their doubts confirmed. One person from Colorado Springs wrote, “The city is still too enamored with becoming the largest city in Colorado. Any opinion that is voiced to more carefully consider growth predicated on the economics of the city is squelched. I more firmly believe now more than ever that the city is run by the developers.”

Figure 5 Colorado Springs




17. Following your participation in the Academy, have your personal relationships with city officials:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Improved significantly		21.4%	3
Improved slightly		42.9%	6
Stayed the same		35.7%	5
Got slightly worse		0%	0
Got much worse		0%	0
Total Respondents			14
(skipped this question)			1

Figure 6 Sacramento







17. Following your participation in the Academy, have your personal relationships with city officials:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Improved significantly		66.7%	8
Improved slightly		25%	3
Stayed the same		8.3%	1
Got slightly worse		0%	0
Got much worse		0%	0
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 7 Orange County

17. Following your participation in the Academy, have your personal relationships with county officials:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Improved significantly		20%	2
Improved slightly		10%	1
Stayed the same		70%	7
Got slightly worse		0%	0
Got much worse		0%	0
Total Respondents			10
(skipped this question)			2






B. Government Responsiveness: Another key element defining this relationship is people’s perception of how responsive government is to their needs. In Colorado Springs there was a moderate increase in individuals who thought that government was “responsive” or “very responsive” following participation in the academy and in Sacramento this number was substantially higher. Respondents from Orange County perceived a modest increase despite the large number of the participants who answered “not applicable.” This question indicates a positive yet ambivalent perception of improved responsiveness from the planning department. Future research could follow up such a question by asking for specific examples and by asking

for perceptions of government officials. Such a methodology would provide more clarity as to people’s perceptions and reality. When asked if there was any change to government’s responsiveness, participants answered as follows in Figures 8-10:

Figure 8 Colorado Springs

10. BEFORE your participation in the Academy rate your view of the city planning department’s responsiveness to your suggestions: (Circle one):			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Very unresponsive		6.7%	1
Moderately unresponsive		20%	3
Neutral		33.3%	5
Responsive		6.7%	1
Very Responsive		0%	0
Not applicable		33.3%	5
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0
11. AFTER your participation in the Academy rate your view of the city planning department’s responsiveness to your suggestions: (Circle one)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Very unresponsive		0%	0
Moderately unresponsive		13.3%	2
Neutral		26.7%	4
Responsive		20%	3
Very Responsive		6.7%	1
Not applicable		33.3%	5
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 9 Sacramento

10. BEFORE your participation in the Academy rate your view of the city planning department's responsiveness to your suggestions: (Circle one):			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Very unresponsive		16.7%	2
Moderately unresponsive		8.3%	1
Neutral		33.3%	4
Responsive		0%	0
Very Responsive		8.3%	1
Not applicable		33.3%	4
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0




11. AFTER your participation in the Academy rate your view of the city planning department's responsiveness to your suggestions: (Circle one)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Very unresponsive		0%	0
Moderately unresponsive		0%	0
Neutral		33.3%	4
Responsive		33.3%	4
Very Responsive		33.3%	4
Not applicable		0%	0
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 10 Orange County

10. BEFORE your participation in the Academy rate your view of the county planning department’s responsiveness to your suggestions: (Circle one):			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Very unresponsive		8.3%	1
Moderately unresponsive		8.3%	1
Neutral		25%	3
Responsive		16.7%	2
Very Responsive		0%	0
Not applicable		41.7%	5
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

11. AFTER your participation in the Academy rate your view of the county planning department’s responsiveness to your suggestions: (Circle one)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Very unresponsive		8.3%	1
Moderately unresponsive		0%	0
Neutral		8.3%	1
Responsive		8.3%	1
Very Responsive		25%	3
Not applicable		50%	6
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Effects on Ability to influence Local Government

A. Influence on Decision Making: One of the most important indicators in this survey was how effective citizens feel about their own ability to influence local decision-making. In Colorado Springs more than half of respondents perceived their ability to influence government as improved following the academy and in Sacramento an even higher percentage of respondents reported improved influence. The responses in Orange County were ambivalent as 50% “did not know” if their ability to influence had changed yet 47% said it had improved.

It is interesting to note how the two older more established academy programs reported more dramatic positive changes in perception than did respondents in Orange County. One respondent from Sacramento wrote, “I understand better the functions of the City and the decision making process, allowing me to work with the correct people and understand the channels necessary to go through to get something accomplished,” and another wrote that following the academy, “City officials are more familiar/comfortable with me.” The survey results are illustrated in Figures 11-13.

Figure 21 Colorado Springs




12. Has your ability to influence local decision-making changed since you participated in the Academy? (Circle One)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes, it has improved		66.7%	10
No, it is the same		20%	3
Yes, it has gotten worse		0%	0
I Don't know		13.3%	2
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 13 Sacramento






12. Has your ability to influence local decision-making changed since you participated in the Academy? (Circle One)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes, it has improved		83.3%	10
No, it is the same		16.7%	2
Yes, it has gotten worse		0%	0
I Don't know		0%	0
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 14 Orange County

12. Has your ability to influence local decision-making changed since you participated in the Academy? (Circle One)			
		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes, it has improved		41.7%	5
No, it is the same		8.3%	1
Yes, it has gotten worse		0%	0
I Don't know		50%	6
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Effects On Learning and Knowledge Exchange

The planners’ academy undoubtedly facilitated learning for citizen participants as evinced through their open-ended survey and interview responses. Many people learned about government processes and planning issues. When asked what they learned from the academy one survey respondent from Orange County wrote, “[I learned] that there actually is a plan and resources available to help you see where you can fit into and or affect the plan.” Another

respondent from Colorado Springs wrote, “[I learned] the finer points of how Colorado Springs City Government actually runs and where the true control of city administration lies.”

However on the planner’s side, learning was mostly limited to general impressions about the success of the academy, the importance of interacting with the citizenry, or logistical lessons for running a better program. Some planners were taken aback by the question as if they had not considered the academy as a tool for knowledge exchange. One former academy coordinator who wished to remain anonymous remarked, “My fear is they [planners] don’t learn from it [the academy], I suspect it is a one-way feeding of information and planners have no idea of what people really think.” Lavon Williams, Division Manager for Orange County’s Neighborhood Services remarked, “We have learned how informed our citizenry really is. Most of the people who come to the academy have had an experience in the profession for a developer or real estate agent or a management company for homeowners.”⁷⁶

While such discoveries are helpful this raises doubts about what groups of citizens are participating in the academy and whom planners are becoming more aware of. Thus the academy helped reframe citizen’s perceptions of the government perspective and demystified the processes and jargon of planning, but it did not change planner’s perspectives or introduce new forms of local knowledge. Improvements in communication may have resulted but the functioning and procedures of the bureaucracy were largely unchanged by the academy in all these case studies.

Effects on Citizen Action

To understand the effects of the academy on citizen’s behavior it is important to understand changes in people’s propensity to “get involved.” Sacramento respondents were the most inclined to get involved and saw the largest increase in the number of government sponsored meetings and hearings attended. Sacramento had a higher percentage of respondents who were very involved meaning they had attended eleven or more meetings or hearings per year. This indicates a greater degree of interest and engagement than in the other two case studies. Colorado Springs and Sacramento had similar results in that more respondents had already attended meetings prior to taking part in the academy, and following the academy they simply attended

⁷⁶ Lavon Williams. Interviewed by Adam Marcus, March 6, 2007.

more often. This suggests that Colorado Springs and Sacramento respondents were generally more engaged before the academy than Orange County participants. This makes sense given that Colorado Springs and Sacramento selection criteria favored people with previous involvement. In a memo to the Sacramento City Council, the planning department writes, “Staff selected twenty-five applicants with the goal of accepting those most likely to continue to participate in the planning process and share their knowledge and experience through community participation.” (Selph et. al, 2006).



Fewer Orange County respondents felt more inclined to get involved after the academy than in other case studies and many did not choose to attend meetings after they went through the academy. Thus the academy had a modest effect at increasing people’s likelihood of taking action, but it was not as dramatic a change as in the Sacramento or Colorado Springs. Thus in Orange County the academy had a significant impact in getting people to attend a modest number of meetings, and less of an impact on getting those who already attended meetings to do so more frequently. This difference illustrates that academies have different types of positive effects for people with varying levels of prior involvement with local government.






There were marked increases in all cases but the ambivalence in the newest program (Orange County) suggests it was not as successful at changing people’s motivation to get involved. It is important to also note that in personal interviews participants in Sacramento and Colorado Springs were very eager to share their thoughts and promptly offered their contact information upon request. This show of enthusiasm is further evidence that the Sacramento academy played a role in vitalizing new interest (or enriching preexisting interest) in getting involved with government. In Orange County this level of enthusiasm was not noted. Respondents were uninterested in talking about their experience despite two email invitations from the researcher.

There are two primary reasons why Orange County’s academy may have been less successful at influencing motivation to get involved. One is that the program is three years younger than the other two cases and the participant pool was smaller. With a smaller pool there may have been less probability that highly motivated and enthusiastic proponents would self select and volunteer to take part in participant interviews. In addition to temporal factors, the Orange County program

experienced structural difficulties in its first two years as it offered the program over the course of six months and experienced dwindling interest and dropouts. The 2007 Orange County Planning academy was condensed to seven weeks and was more effective at retaining participants. [I need to find out exactly how many graduates there are for this case] Given these temporal and logistical challenges it is not surprising that the academy provoked less dramatic changes in meeting attendance. Figures 14-16 Illustrate the responses to this set of survey questions:

Figure 14 Colorado Springs

4. AFTER graduating from the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I feel more inclined to get involved in local issues		73.3%	11
I feel the same as I did before about getting involved in local issues		26.7%	4
I feel less inclined to get involved in local issues		0%	0
Not applicable		0%	0
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0

5. BEFORE participating in the Academy I attended government-sponsored meetings or hearings approximately:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1-2 times a year		46.7%	7
3-6 times per		6.7%	1
7-10 times per year		6.7%	1
11+ times per year or more		13.3%	2
Never		26.7%	4
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0




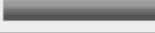








6. AFTER participating in the academy I have attended government-sponsored meetings or hearings approximately:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1-2 times a year		26.7%	4
3-6 times per		13.3%	2
7-10 times per year		13.3%	2
11 times per year or more		33.3%	5
Never		13.3%	2
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 15 Sacramento

4. AFTER graduating from the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I feel more inclined to get involved in local issues		83.3%	10
I feel the same as I did before about getting involved in local issues		16.7%	2
I feel less inclined to get involved in local issues		0%	0
Not applicable		0%	0
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

5. BEFORE participating in the Academy I attended government-sponsored meetings or hearings approximately:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1-2 times a year		41.7%	5
3-6 times per		8.3%	1
7-10 times per year		8.3%	1
11+ times per year or more		25%	3
Never		16.7%	2
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0
















6. AFTER participating in the academy I have attended government-sponsored meetings or hearings approximately:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1-2 times a year		16.7%	2
3-6 times per		16.7%	2
7-10 times per year		16.7%	2
11 times per year or more		50%	6
Never		0%	0
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 16 Orange County

4. AFTER graduating from the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I feel more inclined to get involved in local issues		66.7%	8
I feel the same as I did before about getting involved in local issues		25%	3
I feel less inclined to get involved in local issues		0%	0
Not applicable		8.3%	1
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

5. BEFORE participating in the Academy I attended government-sponsored meetings or hearings approximately:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1-2 times a year		8.3%	1
3-6 times per		0%	0
7-10 times per year		8.3%	1
11+ times per year or more		8.3%	1
Never		75%	9
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

6. AFTER participating in the academy I have attended government-sponsored meetings or hearings approximately:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
1-2 times a year		27.3%	3
3-6 times per		0%	0
7-10 times per year		18.2%	2
11 times per year or more		9.1%	1
Never		45.5%	5
Total Respondents			11
(skipped this question)			1

Membership on Government Boards:

While attending meetings is important, it does not show as much commitment as joining a government board or committee. The survey posed a final set of questions to further understand if academy graduates felt more inclined to join government boards (which was an explicit goal for the Colorado Springs and Sacramento).

Figure 17 Colorado Springs







7. BEFORE participating in the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I never considered joining a city board or advisory committee		78.6%	11
I considered serving on a city board or advisory committee, but never did		7.1%	1
I served on a city board or advisory committee		14.3%	2
Total Respondents			14
(skipped this question)			1
8. AFTER participating in the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I am still not interested in joining a city board or advisory committee		6.7%	1
Now, I am more interested in joining a city board or advisory committee		60%	9
I am still a member of the same board or advisory committee		0%	0
I recently joined a new/different city board or advisory committee		33.3%	5
Total Respondents			15
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 18 Sacramento













7. BEFORE participating in the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I never considered joining a city board or advisory committee		25%	3
I considered serving on a city board or advisory committee, but never did		25%	3
I served on a city board or advisory committee		50%	6
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0
8. AFTER participating in the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I am still not interested in joining a city board or advisory committee		0%	0
Now, I am more interested in joining a city board or advisory committee		50%	6
I am still a member of the same board or advisory committee		16.7%	2
I recently joined a new/different city board or advisory committee		33.3%	4
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Figure 19 Orange County

7. BEFORE participating in the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I never considered joining a county board or advisory committee		58.3%	7
I considered serving on a county board or advisory committee, but never did		25%	3
I served on a county board or advisory committee		16.7%	2
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0
8. AFTER participating in the Academy:			
		Response Percent	Response Total
I am still not interested in joining a county board or advisory committee		8.3%	1
Now, I am more interested in joining a county board or advisory committee		83.3%	10
I am still a member of the same board or advisory committee		8.3%	1
I recently joined a new/different county board or advisory committee		0%	0
Total Respondents			12
(skipped this question)			0

Overall, respondents from all three cases reported higher levels of interest in joining boards or committees following their participation in the academy. The drop in interest was less pronounced for Sacramento indicating again that Sacramento participants were already more civically engaged prior to joining the citizen academy. This is consistent with the finding in Figures 14-16 that Sacramento respondents were already more involved with government-sponsored meetings than the other two groups. In contrast Orange County’s selection process was wide open.

This may be due to the fact that Orange County’s program was oriented towards less towards recruiting citizen advocates, and more towards building capacity specifically for poor communities to engage more effectively in the land development process. Division Manager

Lavon Williams remarked, “We thought that the academy would be beneficial to gradually educating our community but also beneficial as we try to visualize what Orange County should become, to have a group of citizens that have a basic understanding but more than perhaps the average person on the street of some of the issues and processes, and laws that limit or increase their opportunity. It sort of gives us an informed bank of citizens that we can turn to for feedback.” Again, the Orange County academy is framed as a way to improve feedback that implies that government was more receptive to knowledge exchange rather than dissemination. The Orange County neighborhood services division sees itself as an advocate for citizens and Lavon remarked, “That’s the challenge of being an advocate, we [at the neighborhood services division] work very hard to make sure we are not offending our and other staff members and coworkers [in the planning division] but that we equip the citizens with what they need to be equipped with.”⁷⁷ Thus the role of the Orange County host government, Neighborhood Services, considered itself to be an advocate for citizens within government rather than training citizens to become advocates for government. In this way they conceived of the academy to educate citizens so citizens could be more effective, and no explicit reference was made to creating political capital to support government.

Also, the Orange County Planning academy seems to ‘fly under the radar’ given the disconnected response from elected officials. As mentioned in Chapter five, elected officials in Orange County were largely oblivious or uninterested in the existence of the Orange County planning academy illustrating a stark difference from the other two highly politicized academies. Ironically it was this academy that had the most unadulterated mission of promoting grassroots engagement capacity that reported the least impressive progress. This is an enormously important because these three academies operate at different levels, with different publics, under varying degrees of political oversight. This analysis of academies is essentially comparing apples to oranges because these academies are trying to accomplish different ends with a similar model.

Other Applications

When asked specifically how they applied what they learned in the academy, respondents reported attending meetings or joining boards, committees, community groups, city planning

⁷⁷ Lavon Williams. Interviewed by Adam Marcus. March 6, 2007

commission, Home Ownership Associations and taking leadership positions in organizations or church groups. Others reported testifying at a city planning commission meeting or having casual conversations with neighbors where they encouraged people to apply for the academy.

Salient Themes

Capacity vs. Allegiance Building

These academies helped people acquire a broader view of government, but there was an unmistakable element of allegiance that was overt or just below the surface. This presents a difficult question of how to distinguish between “allegiance building” versus “capacity building”. It also introduces a paradox such that political will is imperative to fund and staff the academy, but once there is political capital at stake the selection process becomes more constrained as officials look to maximize gains in political capital.⁷⁸ Are the goals of having a successful program and reaching new groups of underrepresented people mutually exclusive?

Former Colorado Springs Citizen Academy coordinator Monique Katerina remarked, “They [academy graduates] can go forward not just for committees but for elections. Maybe a year ago they wouldn’t have voted for a tax increase. All of a sudden they learn how the city can be an investment for themselves and they change their minds because they know where it will go. Those people have been some of our greatest advocates, not always fighting the system. They are more likely to jump in and stick up for the city.”⁷⁹ In Sacramento the sentiments were similar as one academy coordinator remarked, “One of the benefits of the program is that people see the conflicts that are inherent in good city planning and the need for negotiation. People have a better sense of the complexity behind the scenes and become better advocates for the city as a whole”⁸⁰

The academy teaching style contributes to this conflict. The Sacramento case employs an unabashedly normative approach while Orange County’s approach is only moderately normative.

⁷⁸ This refers to the preference by Sacramento and Colorado Springs at selecting Citizens who have already shown interest and leadership capacity in some other context. While these Academies do admit people who are just starting out, they prefer to pick the ‘low hanging fruit,’ or those who already are active. Thus one can think of various gradations of what it means to be a ‘lay citizen’ and to be a leader.

⁷⁹ Monique Katerina, Interview by Adam Marcus, February 27, 2007.

⁸⁰ Raymond Costantino, Interview by Adam Marcus, November 14, 2006.

The Colorado Springs academy provides a “nuts and bolts” overview of government, or planning and growth management. This thesis will not engage in the debate over normative planning, however it should be noted that Smart Growth and New Urbanism movements have gained notoriety and contention among U.S. local governments in recent decades, and currently are gaining political cache. I would argue that many of these normative planning movements are more engaging and appealing than the “nuts and bolts planning” however they ultimately rest on these bolts as a foundation. Thus normative physical planning curriculum are a means for getting people interested in tangible outcomes, however they are no substitute for basic “civics 101” lessons about municipal processes.

Monique Katerina also commented that, “If people know that you are willing to let them in, to educate them, and to become a part of what you do, the trust and confidence level goes up. No longer is it 'us and them' because we are a community. For me that was why I loved it [the academy] so much. Even though I am a staff person, I felt very much part of the cause that we were all trying to accomplish together.”⁸¹ What exactly does “trust” mean with regard to the academy? Is this trust building a way to improve communication with the citizenry, a strategy for conflict negotiation, or a method for relaxing criticism so government can do its work?

Yet sometimes even citizen support is not enough. One academy participant who will be referred to as “Frank” commented, “In Sacramento the left hand doesn’t know what the right hand is doing. We’ve got a mayor who wants Sacramento to become the most livable city in the state, but when the specific plans get made they do not have the walkable grid pattern with mixed uses we’d hoped for. Part of the problem is that the current and long-range planning divisions are separated. Also there is not enough follow through with the other elected officials.”⁸² Thus in such a situation where the elected leaders do not agree, it makes sense why political capital from the citizenry would be sought after. However, does this political capital really make a difference? If academy graduates are complaining that disappointing plans still get approved despite their best advocacy efforts, what does this say about the power of what they learned? If half the planning department and city council agrees with you but the other half does not, what than? One

⁸¹ Monique Katerina, *ibid.*

⁸² Frank’s name was changed to preserve anonymity.

survey respondent from Colorado Springs remarked, “The City Council (by virtue of their 'part-time' and low-paying status puts far too much trust/power into the hands of our City Manager who has too much power, [and] the ability to 'cut-off' citizen's communications when a citizen tries to hold the City Manager accountable...that's 'over the line' and Lorne Kramer needs to be reigned-in or fired.”

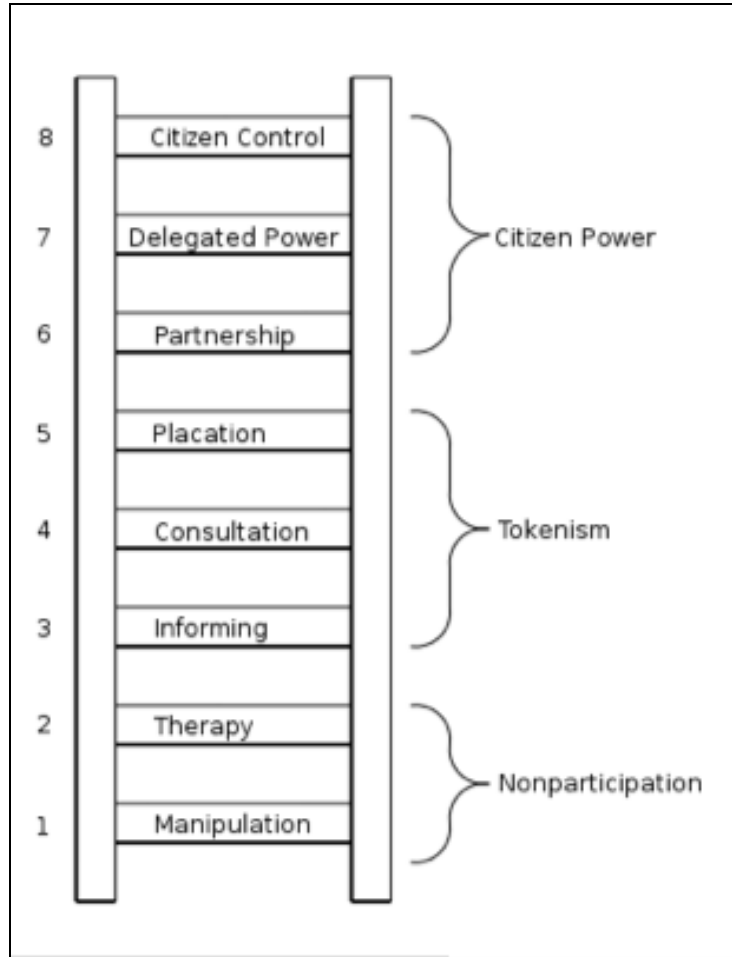
This thesis did not study negotiations for specific real estate projects, however it is important to remember the imbalance of political capital that exists between stakeholders. While the academy attempts to dispel myths that government is beholden to developers, it is rather obvious in each example that a power differential runs deeper than the lofty goals and rhetoric of each academy. This is not to say that academies are not effective, on the contrary they are as we have seen above, however they are only effective to a point and are not the panacea that neighborhoods and some planners have been looking for.

It is important to return once more to Sherry Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation (See Figure 4). According to this Ladder, ‘Placation’ is, “the level that citizens begin to have some degree of influence though tokenism is still apparent” and pointing to the Model Cities advisory and planning committees remarked, “they allow citizens to advise or plan ad infinitum but retain for powerholders the right to judge the legitimacy or feasibility of the advice,” (Arnstein, 1969: 7). In some ways the planning academy model fits on this rung of the ladder because it does not devolve any decision-making powers from government to citizen. Arnstein writes that under these circumstances, “there is no follow-through, no “muscle,” hence no assurance of changing the status quo.” (Arnstein, 1969: 2). However the academy may be a precursor to the ‘partnership’ rung which according to Arnstein is when “power is redistributed through negotiation between citizens and powerholders. They agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through such structures as joint policy boards, planning committees and mechanisms for resolving impasses” (Arnstein, 1969: 9).

This gets at the heart of the debate over comprehensive versus advocacy planning debate and evidence in this thesis shows that the planning academy model has something to offer both camps. For comprehensive planning the academy offers a way to improve public relations and to

get citizens to understand the procedures and processes employed by government. However, planning academy also provides opportunities for social networking in ways that adversarial public meetings and hearings cannot. Academies provide a unique space in a relatively condensed time and most importantly they do this on a concurrent basis.

One problem with Arnstein's model is that it focuses wholly on short-term power struggles and does not consider the role of "patient" capacity building that accrues over time with thoughtful dialogue and public education. Perhaps it is human nature to obscure long-term strategies in favor of immediate needs, but this is in essence one of the fundamental challenges in urban planning; how to think long term when the world has to act in the short term. In addition to negotiating public disputes through hearings, mediation, litigation and other means, planners citizens and elected officials should ALSO consider how long-term, on-going public education can build social and political capital over time.

Figure 4: Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation

Political Support and Sustaining the academy

Another key finding is that these programs are often born out of the need for gaining political capital to support local policy around a lightning rod issue such as growth management, maturing suburban/urban areas (Orange County and Sacramento) and of course fiscal policy and tax debates (Colorado Springs). This is not to say the academy exists solely to address these issues and to build awareness around government's position on them, but they appear to be a major impetus for establishing and maintaining such programs over time. There seems to be a need on both sides for such programs to occur regularly but the main challenge is how to pay for and sustain such a program over the long term. There is another paradox in that these are only effective when there is political support, yet without political support they would not be funded and would not survey.

Overall there seems to be demand by citizens and government for these programs to occur on a regular basis, but the main challenge is how to pay for them over time due to changing political support and the reality that private organizations will likely not donate in perpetuity. For this reason there is a need for internal and external “champions” to advocate for the programs behalf and to take proactive steps to coordinate and fund it.

The Importance of Champions

Despite government interest in citizen training, it remains a low priority. On-going funding and staff time are the most difficult barriers to starting and sustaining an academy over time. This research revealed that academies greatly benefit from having a champion within the local government as well as a community partner such as the Colorado Springs Council of Neighbors and Organizations. For the government coordinator, the academy is extra work and is often a “labor of love” requiring an enthusiastic and willing individual or team who is proactive. Given the precariousness and non-essential nature of these programs, having an external champion also helps distribute logistical tasks but more important an organization can carry the academy through when government interest wanes or when the government “champion” moves to another job.

In Orange County the internal champion was the manager of the Division who started the academy under planning and decided to bring it with her when she transferred to the new Neighborhood services department. While staffing needs mainly drove this decision, it was implied that it also moved because it was her project and she wanted to oversee it. Thus the planning academy remained very much a vision and idea of one champion and her staff within the government. In Sacramento community local activist Brooks Truit and the Sacramento Sustainers provide such community support and maintain a network for planning academy graduates to keep abreast of current issues and opportunities for action.

Closing Thoughts

The academies in this study arose in part from the need for government to build support on contentious issues such as growth management or tax reform. This is not to say these programs were born from single issues, but they seem especially useful in times of rapid change. Graduates learned a great deal about government’s functions and processes and gained an appreciation for

the broader viewpoint that government must take. In some ways the academies broadened people's perception of the public good by introducing the tough conditions, dilemmas, and constraints under which civil servants must work. Not all respondents bought into this wholeheartedly, but many came away with a broader appreciation for government and the challenge of governing for many "publics." However, the citizen academy model appears to face a fundamental conflict between the value of "capacity building" and "allegiance building." One could argue that academies can provide both, but it is important to question how allegiance building affects capacity building and deliberative democracy. This research does not claim that citizen academies disarm NIMBY tendencies per se, but it suggests that they do broaden people's perspectives about government, policy, and planning.

This issue is closely related to problems with stakeholder representation in public disputes. Theoretically, the lessons learned in citizen academies are intended to groom leaders and representatives to be more effective in formal government-sponsored deliberation and negotiation processes. As mentioned in chapter one, it is very difficult to identify and train legitimate representatives who can balance the mandates of their constituency with those at the negotiating table. The academy model is a proactive attempt to address this challenge, however selection criteria, limited staff and funding, as well as political factors have ensured that the academy is not reaching minority, immigrant, and other marginalized communities as much as it could. Thus academies help train stakeholder representatives, but the equity extent to which this knowledge translates into "negotiation power" and influence over government policies, remains to be seen.

The findings of this thesis indicate that learning in the citizen academy model is one-sided. If mutual learning is the goal, government sponsored training programs are a double edged sword; they offer unique opportunities to connect citizens and government, but they do so on government's terms placing the onus to learn almost entirely on the citizen. To supplement the academy model for citizen training, new practice oriented research is needed to understand how citizens can help train planners to communicate in a way that enables lay individuals and interest groups to learn, participate, [and negotiate conflict], (Forester, 1980: 283). This gets at a fundamental question: What value is there for citizens and planners to do at least some of their

learning together through an integrated process? Must they always be relegated to separate institutions for their respective tutelage (e.g. planners to professional conferences and citizens to grass roots leadership programs)?

Practitioners at the MIT Center for Reflective Practice (CRCP) facilitate exercises, some of which identify and understand and learn from “critical moments” in past projects and processes.⁸³ If such a model were applied to the citizen planning academy it could provide opportunities for increased two-way learning among citizens and planners.⁸⁴ Getting planners to attend occasional reflective workshops could be difficult, but if it were a minor component of the American Planning Association’s AICP accreditation process it might convince more planners to take part in such exercises.

Recommendations for Improving the Citizen Academy Model

The citizen academy model does equip citizens with “power” by allowing them to build communication skills, confidence, and better relationships with city staff, decision-makers, and other stakeholder groups. The final section of this thesis is intended to help municipal planning practitioners create or improve existing citizen *planner* academy programs.

- 1. Assess Political Buy-In:** In all three case studies government was the initiator of the academy. For such a program to work there must be support from elected officials, the city/county manager, and key departments heads such as the Planning Director. This buy in is necessary not only from establishing monetary support and staff time, it under girds the purpose and effectiveness of the program. What good is training citizens if the city council, mayor, and city manager explicitly ignore input from academy graduates when they get involved in government processes. A government must possess some degree of commitment to improving the public process or the program will be unlikely to flourish

⁸³The MIT Center for Reflective Practice (CRCP) gathers individuals from diverse circles of influence and helps them become highly creative, collaborative teams focused on forging innovative solutions to complex social justice problems [<http://crp.mit.edu/>].

⁸⁴ John Forester applies Habermas’ Critical Communication Theory to planning to identify “structural obstacles to democratic planning process and the practical opportunities planners have to counteract and overcome these obstacles.” (Forester, 1980).

2. **Collaborate with Current Planning and Neighborhood Services:** In the same way , long-range planning, current planning, and neighborhood services departments (where they all exist) would do well to share the responsibility of running an academy. Staffing levels will likely drive which departments can be involved, but a joining of forces provides several advantages. Long-range planning departments have technical expertise that is specific to topics like land development and urban design and they are ultimately the bureaucrats who produce the plans. It is the current who have discretion to interpret long range plans and who deal with conflict on a daily basis. Neighborhood services staff members specialize in issue management and may have a better feel and rapport with the community, but they don't necessarily have a direct hand in creating or implementing public policy. Thus the decision should not simply consider logistics; it should maximize the benefits so the citizen can build contacts with a team of government actors with varied expertise.
3. **Find a Community Partner:** Ideally if funding and staff are not limiting factors, a municipal government and a respected community-based organization should jointly manage the academy. Municipal governments are central actors in public disputes and training programs at Universities or non-governmental agencies lose out on the personal interaction and relationship building that occurs between bureaucrats and lay citizens. Volunteers from community organizations such as CONO in Colorado Springs have the capacity and trust (from government and from the neighborhood) to take on a portion of the logistical burden. By doing this they also take ownership and generate credibility, interest, and stability for the program. Other potential supporters including neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, local professional associations (American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, and the American Institute of Architects), the chamber of commerce, community development corporations and the regional metropolitan planning organization.
4. **Teach Fundamentals in the Context of Pressing Issues:** A planner academy should respond to pressing issues of the day (i.e. growth management, tax issues) without losing sight of the more fundamental “nuts and bolts” basics of planning, deliberation, and

decision-making. Pressing issues are likely to be more compelling than general training and garner political justification (funding allocation of staff resources) for building long term deliberation “infrastructure.” The curriculum should cover the following basic content balancing theory and practical application through a mix of readings, lectures, discussions, interactive activities, and field trips (when the budget allows).

- a. Who’s who in city government (Long Range and Current Planning, Planning Commission, Public Works, the City Manager, Mayor and City Council).
 - b. Planning 101: An overview of the field and its key dilemmas.
 - c. The role of citizen participation.
 - d. How to participate on municipal boards and commissions.
 - e. The zoning and the land development process.
 - f. Current social, economic, and environmental trends and dilemmas (Local and Regional).
5. **Organize Interactive Activities:** Planner academies need not be boring and laden with lectures and theory. Orange County conducted an interactive mapping exercise, and Sacramento organized two field trips. One method not employed by the examples in this thesis is case-based role-playing. This approach is employed in the Urban Land Institute’s Urban Plan Program for youth and allows for “hands-on experience in developing realistic land use solutions to vexing urban growth challenges.”⁸⁵ None of the academies studied in this thesis employed case based role playing activities, but it is worth considering as a tool to help citizens and planners understand each other’s frames of reference.
6. **Aim for Representativeness:** Some practitioners struggle to attract a representative array of academy participants from various neighborhoods, cultures, and employment sectors. Other academies may be less concerned with representation and more interested in training those who will most likely apply and share what they have learned. It was surprising that none of the academies studied in this thesis tracked ethnic or income

⁸⁵ ULI’s UrbanPlan is “a realistic, engaging, and academically challenging classroom-based, web-supported program in which high school students learn the roles, issues, trade-offs, and economics involved in urban development.” For more information: [http://www.urbanplan.org/UP_Home/UP_Home_fst.html]

information about its participants. Local governments would do well to incorporate such questions in final evaluations to better understand who they are attracting to the academy. Unfortunately, scarce resources make it unlikely that low priority programs like the academy would be offered in multiple languages. In this way there are structural barriers to making the academy fully representative. Language issues could be addressed partially through on-line citizen academy modules and video lectures, but these methods still fall victim to the digital divide and the experience. Perhaps more importantly learning from digital media often occurs in isolation whereas the academy provides face-to-face interaction and learning. This is not to say that electronic media should not be used, but it is no substitute for person-to-person learning.

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Appendix A: Colorado Springs Citizens' academy Schedule

2006 COLORADO SPRINGS CITIZENS' ACADEMY SCHEDULE

(Please note that all directions are from the downtown area. If you are coming from another area of town, please go to www.mapquest.com to find directions from your starting point)

Session 1 – Wednesday, September 6, 2006

Topics: City Management; City Clerk; City Attorney; City Council

Location: City Hall—Council Chambers, 107 N. Nevada Ave., 3rd Floor (northeast corner of Nevada & Kiowa)

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| 5:15 – 5:45 p.m. | Tour of City Hall |
| 5:45 – 6:00 p.m. | Light Dinner Buffet |
| 6:00 – 6:10 p.m. | Lorne Kramer, City Manager – <i>Opening Remarks and Welcome</i> |
| 6:10 – 6:25 p.m. | Student Introductions |
| 6:25 – 7:00 p.m. | Lorne Kramer, City Manager – <i>Overview of City Government/City</i> |

Manager Form of

Government; Overview of the City Charter

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| 7:00 – 7:20 p.m. | Q&A |
| 7:20 – 7:30 p.m. | Break |
| 7:30 – 7:45 p.m. | Kathryn Young, City Clerk – <i>Functions of the City Clerk's Office</i> |
| 7:45 – 8:00 p.m. | Pat Kelly, City Attorney – <i>Functions of the City Attorney's Office</i> |
| 8:00 – 8:45 p.m. | City Councilmembers – <i>Overview of City Council's roles and</i> |

responsibilities

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 8:45 – 9:00 p.m. | Q&A, Evaluation, and Wrap-Up |
|------------------|------------------------------|

Session 2 – Wednesday, September 13, 2006

Topic: Fire Department

Location: Fire Operations Complex, 375 Printers Parkway (east on Pikes Peak to Union Blvd.; turn right on Union; turn left on Airport Rd.; bare left at the fork in the road and turn left onto Printers Parkway; turn right into the parking lot)

5:45 – 6:00 p.m. Arrival and Light Dinner Buffet
6:00 – 8:45 p.m.* Battalion Chief Randy Royal - *Fire Department*
8:45 – 9:00 p.m. Evaluation and Wrap-Up

***Additional presentations, breakout sessions, Q&A and a 15-minute break will be incorporated into the presentation time. Please note that the breakout sessions will be held outside so wear warm and comfortable clothing.**

Session 3 – Wednesday, September 20, 2006

Topic: Public Works

Location: Traffic Operations Center, 234 W. Colorado Ave. (From Nevada Ave and Colorado Ave. head west on Colorado Ave. to top of bridge; turn right at the top of the bridge and circle around under bridge)

5:45 – 6:00 p.m. Arrival and Light Dinner Buffet
6:00 – 6:10 p.m. Ron Mitchell, Director - *Public Works*
6:10 – 8:25 p.m.* *Small Group Breakouts*

-Traffic Engineering – Traffic Control System
-Street Division – Roadway & Drainage Operations
-Transit Services – Mountain Metropolitan Transit
-City Engineering – Stormwater Enterprise (SWENT)
-Pikes Peak Highway – Contents of Zebulon Pike’s Pack
-Parking System

8:25 – 9:00 p.m. Q&A, Evaluation and Wrap-Up

***15-minute break to be incorporated into the presentation time. Please note that some of the breakout sessions will be held outside, so wear warm and comfortable clothing.**

Session 4 – Wednesday, September 27, 2006

Topic: Police Department

Location: Gold Hill Substation, 955 W. Moreno Ave. (west on Cimarron St. to 8th St., turn left on 8th St.; turn right on Moreno; substation is on the left side of the street)

5:15 – 5:45 p.m.	Tour of Gold Hill Substation
5:45 – 6:00 p.m.	Light Dinner Buffet
6:00 – 8:15 p.m.*	Dave Felice, Interim Police Chief - <i>Police Department</i>
8:15 – 8:30 p.m.	Evaluation and Wrap-Up

***Additional presentations, Q&A and a 15-minute break to be incorporated into the presentation time**

Session 5 – Wednesday, October 4, 2006

Topics: City Budget; Memorial Hospital; Colorado Springs Airport

Location: Hillside Community Center, 925 S. Institute (From Wahsatch and Fountain Blvd. head east on Fountain Blvd. to Institute; turn right on Institute; turn left into Community Center parking lot)

5:15 – 5:45 p.m.	Tour of Hillside Community Center
5:45 – 6:00 p.m.	Light Dinner Buffet
6:00 – 6:50 p.m.	Steve Reed, Budget Manager – <i>City Budget</i>
6:50 – 7:10 p.m.	Q&A
7:10 – 7:20 p.m.	Break
7:20 – 7:40 p.m.	Richard Eitel, CEO, <i>Memorial Hospital</i>
7:40 – 8:00 p.m.	Mark Earle, Aviation Director, <i>Colorado Springs Airport</i>
8:00 – 8:30 p.m.	Q&A, Evaluation, and Wrap-Up

Session 6 – Wednesday, October 11, 2006

Topic: City Planning and Community Development

Location: Regional Development Center (RDC), 2880 International Circle, 2nd floor, City Planning Commission Hearing Room (east on Pikes Peak to Union Blvd.; turn right on Union; turn left on Parkside Dr.; turn right on International Circle; turn right into RDC parking lot)

- 5:15 - 5:45 p.m. Tour of Regional Development Center
- 5:45 - 6:00 p.m. Arrival and Light Dinner Buffet
- 6:00 - 6:20 p.m. William Healy, Director, City Planning & Community

Development

Department – ***Welcome, Opening Remarks and Example of a Planning Project***

- 6:20 - 6:40 p.m. Ira Joseph, Manager, Comprehensive Planning – ***Comprehensive***

Planning

- 6:40 - 7:00 p.m. Paul Tice, Manager, Land Use Review Division – ***The***

Development Review Process

- 7:00 - 7:20 p.m. Brett Veltman, Manager, Development Review Enterprise –

Building Permit Review Process

- 7:20 - 7:40 p.m. Bill Hulse, Manager, Data Systems/GIS Division – ***Use of GIS in***

Planning

- 7:40 - 7:50 p.m. Break

- 7:50 - 8:10 p.m. Craig Blewitt, Manager, Transportation Planning Division –

Citywide Transportation Issues

- 8:10 - 8:30 p.m. Valorie Jordan, Manager, Housing and Community Development

Division – ***CDBG/HOME funds***

- 8:30 - 8:45 p.m. Q&A

- 8:45 - 9:00 p.m. Evaluation and Wrap-up

Session 7 – Wednesday, October 18, 2006

Topics: Planning Commission; Colorado Springs Utilities; Discussion Panel

Location: Leon Young Service Center, 1521 Hancock Expressway (east on Fountain Blvd. to Hancock Expressway; turn right on Hancock and proceed until you see the Leon Young Service Center on the left side of the street; turn left into parking lot)

- 5:45 – 6:00 p.m. Arrival and Light Dinner Buffet

- 6:00 – 6:30 p.m. Planning Commissioners and Planning Staff, ***City Planning***

Commission Process

- 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. Jerry Forte, CEO, Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) – *CSU's relationship to the City, policy governance, how CSU operates and major projects*
- 7:30 – 8:30 p.m. Planning and Community Development/CSU policy discussion panel – *How decisions are made, growth issues, etc.*
- 8:30 – 8:45 p.m. Q&A, Evaluation and Wrap-Up

Session 8 – Wednesday, October 25, 2006

Topics: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services; Boards and Commissions; Volunteering; Graduation

Location: Colorado Springs Senior Center, 1514 N. Hancock Ave. (east on Platte Ave. to Hancock Blvd.; turn left on Hancock; go straight, past Uintah St., and it will be on the left side in the Golf Acres Shopping Center just before Hancock dead ends)

- 5:15 – 5:45 p.m. Tour of Senior Center
- 5:45 – 6:00 p.m. Light Dinner Buffet
- 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.* Paul Butcher, Director - *Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services*
- 8:00 – 8:10 p.m. Break
- 8:10 – 8:25 p.m. Marti Devine, Assistant to the Mayor – *Citizens' Roles on Advisory Boards and Commissions*
- 8:25 – 8:40 p.m. Kim King, Senior Analyst, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services – *Volunteering for the City*
- 8:40 – 9:00 p.m. Graduation/Award of Certificates, Evaluations and Wrap-Up
- *Q&A to be incorporated into the presentation time**

Appendix B: Colorado Springs Citizen academy Marketing Mailer

CITIZENS' ACADEMY
an insight into your Colorado Springs City Government

Application

Permission for Photography: I hereby give my permission for the City of Colorado Springs and/or Citizens' Academy Sponsors to use any still photograph or video footage in which I may appear for publicity purpose(s). I do this voluntarily and with the understanding there is no remuneration.

Signature _____ Date _____

Release of Liability: In consideration of participant being allowed to participate in the registered program, the undersigned hereby releases the City of Colorado Springs and/or Citizens' Academy Sponsors, its employees and agents, from any action, claim or demand for personal injury or property loss arising from or due to any negligent act or omission of the City of Colorado Springs and/or Citizens' Academy Sponsors, its agents or employees. This release shall have no effect with regard to damages caused by the City of Colorado Springs' and/or Citizens' Academy Sponsors' gross negligence. In the event the City of Colorado Springs and/or Citizens' Academy Sponsors or a volunteer provides transportation, this waiver and release shall extend to and release the volunteer driver or City of Colorado Springs and/or Citizens' Academy Sponsors employee driver from any and all liability aforesaid. Permission is given for any emergency medical treatment, operation or anesthesia that might become necessary. I agree to be responsible for the expense of medical treatment or service.

Signature _____ Date _____

Voluntary Survey: By filling out this section, you will help to ensure our goal to have diverse representation in the program. Please check the relevant data that applies to you.

Male Female Caucasian African American
 Hispanic Asian Native American Other (please specify) _____

Age: 18-20 21-29 30-39
 40-55 56-65 66+

Deadline for applications is Thursday, August 3, 2006

Please mail your completed application to:
 City of Colorado Springs Planning and Community Development Department
 Attention: Manique Caterina
 30 South Nevada Avenue, Suite 301
 Colorado Springs, CO 80903
 719-385-5245
 or
 e-mail to mcaterina@springsgov.com

Applications may also be faxed to (719) 385-5167
Apply online at www.springsgov.com

Thank you for your interest in the Citizens' Academy

CITIZENS' ACADEMY
an insight into your Colorado Springs City Government

**City Council/
City Manager
form of
government**

Budget

Police

Fire

Streets

**City Clerk
Planning
and
Zoning**


Public Works

**Advisory
Boards
and
Commissions**

**Springs
Utilities**

**Parks,
Recreation
and Cultural
Services**

Volunteering





Citizens' Academy is a great opportunity to learn how Colorado Springs functions as a community and is a terrific starting point for those who want to volunteer their services to our City's various boards and commissions. Who knows? It may even provide you with the desire to serve as an elected official!

-Scott Hente, City Councilman

Citizens' Academy is an outstanding community learning experience. Each class is designed to demonstrate the role and responsibility of departments within the City government and the services they provide to the community. I gained a better understanding and appreciation of how much planning and work goes into maintaining the quality of life we have in Colorado Springs.

-Cleather Marchman, Citizens' Academy graduate

Sponsored by:
Council of Neighbors and Organizations (CONO)
Coordinated by the City of Colorado Springs-
Planning and Community Development Department

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Appendix C: Sacramento Planning Academy Syllabus

FALL 2006 CITY OF SACRAMENTO
PLANNING ACADEMY
SEPTEMBER 25 THROUGH DECEMBER 4

COURSE SYLLABUS

Class 1: Welcome, Planning academy Objectives, Planning 101 (Part 1)

DATE: Monday, September 25, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: Planning 101

5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)

6:00 pm: Meeting Facilitator – Helen Selph (916-808-7852) and Raymond Costantino (916 808-8826),

- Introductions
- Overview of City Planning academy objectives and policies
- Ground Rules

6:30 pm: Speaker – Jim McDonald, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning, Planning Department

Welcome & Overview

- Overview of Planning in California
- Land Use, New General Plan, Community Plans, New Growth Areas, Transit Oriented Development, Public Participation Process, Zoning Codes, CEQA
- Differences between Planning and Development Services
- How City departments are organized

7:00 pm: Q&A

7:15 pm: Speaker – Greg Bitter, Senior Planner, Development Services Department

- How projects are approved
- Project Management
- How Development Services and Planning are coordinated
- Who to call with questions

7:45pm: Q & A

8:00-8:30pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation

Suggested Reading: A Guide to California Planning by William Fulton (Book)

Class 2: Planning 101 Continued (Part 2)

DATE: Monday, October 2, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: Planning 101 Continued

5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)

5:45 pm: Meeting Facilitator – Helen Selph (916)-808-7852, hselph@cityofsacramento.org

- Planning 101 (Setting Context)
- Ground Rules
- Announcements

6:00 pm: Speaker – Joy Patterson, Senior Planner, Development Services Department

- Zoning

6:30 pm: Q&A

6: 45pm: Speaker Luis Sanchez, Director of Design Review, Development Services Department

- Design Review

- 7:15pm: Q & A**
- 7:30pm: Speaker Tom Buford, Senior Planner, Development Services Department**
- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- 8:00pm: Q & A**
- 8:15-8:30pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation**
- Readings: Citizen's Guide to Planning**
CEQA: The California Environmental Quality Act

Class 3: The New General Plan

- DATE: Monday, October 9, 5:30-8:30pm**
- LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,**
- THEME: Overview of General Plans & the City's New General Plan update.**

- 5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)**
- 5:45pm: Meeting Facilitator – Raymond Costantino (916) 808-8826,**
rcostantino@cityofsacramento.org
- Overview & Context
 - Ground Rules
 - Announcements
- 6:00 pm: Speaker – Tom Pace, Interim Principal Planner, Long Range Planning, Planning Department**
- The role of the General Plan: how it regulates development
 - Required General Plan elements
 - Additional General Plan elements unique to Sacramento: economic development, historic preservation, and community design
 - Making the General Plan work
 - New General Plan update process
 - A blueprint for the City of Sacramento
- 6:45pm: Q&A**

7:00pm: Speaker – Remi Mendoza: Assistant Planner, Long Range Planning, Planning Department

- Community Outreach
- What makes a great neighborhood?
- What will make Sacramento the most livable city in America?
- Opportunity Areas
- Overview of Scenarios
- Overview of General Plan Town Hall Forum Exercises and Results (Phase I & Phase I)
- Next Steps in Community Outreach

7:45pm: Q&A

8:00-8:30pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation

Readings: Sacramento General Plan Update Q&A
Sacramento General Plan Update Snapshot
Sacramento General Plan Update Vision and Guiding Principles

Saturday General Plan Tour

Date: Oct 14, 8:30 am-12:00 noon (Meeting at 8:30am and leaving promptly at 9:00pm)

Meeting Location: New City Hall, 915 I Street (We will be meeting at the passenger loading area on the backside of the New City Hall facing H Street between 9th and 10th Streets)

Tour Leader: Jim McDonald, Senior Planner, Long Range Planning, Planning Department

Tour Coordinator: Raymond Costantino (916 808-8826), rcostantino@cityofsacramento.org

Class 4: Regional Planning for Smart Growth and Livability

DATE: Monday, October 16, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,
THEME: Overview of SACOG Blueprint, Affordable Housing and Job/Housing
Balance.

- 5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)
- 5:45pm: Meeting Facilitator – Raymond Costantino (916 808-8826),
- Introductions
 - Overview & Context
 - Impression and thoughts of Saturday’s General Plan Tour
 - Announcements
- 6:00 pm: Speaker – Kacey Lizon, Blueprint Implementation Coordinator, Sacramento
Areas Council of Governments (SACOG)
- Sacramento Region: Blueprint Transportation and Land Use Study
- 6:45pm: Q&A
- 7:00pm: Speakers – Desmond Parrington, Associate Planner, Long Range Planning,
Planning Department and Cindy Cavanaugh, Sacramento Housing and
Redevelopment Authority (SHRA)
- Affordable Housing and Jobs/Housing Balance
- 7:45pm: Q&A
- 8:00-8:30pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation

Readings: **Special Report: SACOG Preferred Blueprint Alternative**
Myths & Facts about Affordable and High Density Housing

Class 5: What Does Smart Growth Look Like?

DATE: Monday, October 23, 5:30-8:30pm
LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: What is Smart Growth? What does it look like? How can it help Sacramento become a more livable city?

5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)

5:45pm Meeting Facilitator: Helen Selph (916-808-7852), Hselph@cityofsacramento.org

- Overview & Context
- Announcements

6:00pm: Speaker – Ashely Feeney, John Laing Homes

- Examples of Smart Growth Housing Developments

6:45pm: Q& A

7:00pm: Speaker – Bob Holmes & Eric Schlenker, Regis Homes

- Examples of Smart Growth Housing Developments

7:45pm: Q&A

8:00-8:30pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation

Readings: *The Ahwahnee Principles*

City of Sacramento Smart Growth Implementation Strategy

Better Ways to Grow- Seven Principles of Growth

Shining Places: Sacramento and National Examples of Smart Growth

Class 6: Facilitating Smart Growth in Sacramento

DATE: Monday, October 30, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: Overview Smart Growth Efforts in Sacramento

- 5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)
- 5:45pm: Meeting Facilitator – Raymond Costantino (916) 808-8826,
rcostantino@cityofsacramento.org
- Overview & Context
 - Announcements
- 6:00 pm: Speaker – Paul Zykofsky, Local Government Commission
- Smart Growth, livability, and the public realm
- 6:45pm: Q&A
- 7:00pm: Speaker – Todd Leon, R Street Development Manager, Capital Area
Development Authority (CADA)
- R Street Corridor
- 7:45pm: Q&A
- 8:00-8:30pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation
- Readings: *R-Street Corridor Revitalization Plan*
Real Towns- Making Your Neighborhood Work

Saturday Central City and R Street Corridor Walking Tour

- Date:** Nov. 4th, 8:30 am-12:00 noon (Meeting at 8:30am and leaving promptly at 9:00pm)
- Meeting Location:** Meeting at Crepeville at 18th and L Streets and ending at Safeway at 19th
and S Streets
- Tour Leader: Lindsey Alagozian and Michael York, Development Services Department**
Tom Kigar, Development Director, CADA
- Tour Coordinator:** Raymond Costantino (916 808-8826), rcostantino@cityofsacramento.org
-

Class 7: Getting around in Sacramento: The Land Use and Transportation Connection

DATE: Monday, November 6, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: Developer and City perspectives on the transportation-land use connection: Is it possible to accommodate future growth without gridlock?

5:30pm: Dinner (buffet style)

5:45pm: Meeting Facilitator – Raymond Costantino (916 808-8826),
rcostantino@cityofsacramento.org

- Overview & Context
- Impression and thoughts of the Urban Design Tour from Saturday

6:00pm: Speaker – Sparky Harris

- Level of Service Standards
- Alternate Modes
- Pedestrian Master Plan
- Bikeway Master Plan

6:45pm: Q&A

7:00pm: Speaker – Greta Vohlers and Traci Canfield, Regional Transit Staff

- Transportation Planning

7:45pm: Q & A

8:00 pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation

Readings: Calming the Community – Traffic Calming in Downtown Sacramento
Which Comes First, the Neighborhood or the Walking?
Fighting Pollution, Not Each Other

Class 8: Sustainability

DATE: Monday, November 13, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: Overview of Green Buildings and the City's Sustainability Agenda and existing efforts

5:30pm Dinner (buffet style)

5:45pm: Meeting Facilitator – Raymond Costantino (916 808-8826),
rcostantino@cityofsacramento.org

- Overview and Context (Special Intro by Bob Chase, City of Sacramento)
- Announcements

6:00 pm: Speaker – David Mogavero, Architect

- Green Buildings

6:45pm: Q&A

7:00pm: Speakers – Gary Stonehouse and Jim McDonald, Long Range Planning, Planning Department

- Sustainability Agenda

7:45pm: Q&A

8:00pm: Closing Announcements & Speaker Evaluation

Readings: Our Changing Climate- Assessing the Risks to California

Exercise: Check out your ecological footprint at www.myfootprint.org

Class 9: Health & Livability

DATE: Monday, November 20, 5:30 – 8:30

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: How Can We Have a More Sustainable, Livable City?

5:30pm: Dinner (buffet style)

5:45pm: Meeting Facilitator – Helen Selph (916-808-7852), Hselph@cityofsacramento.org

- Overview and Context
- Announcements: Remember No Class on Monday, November 27th
- Selection of speakers for City Council
- Group Photo

6:00pm: Speaker: Teri Duarte, Department of Health and Human Service, Sacramento County

- “Land Use Planning: What’s Health Got to Do With It?”

6:45pm: Q & A

7:00pm: Speaker – JP Tindell, Park, Planning, & Development Manager, Park & Recreation Department

- Parks, Public Health & Livability

7:45pm: Q & A

8:00pm: Closing Announcements, group photo & speaker evaluation

Readings: Measuring the Health Effects of Sprawl

Class 10: What does the future hold for Sacramento?

DATE: Monday, December 4, 5:30-8:30pm

LOCATION: New City Hall, 915 I Street, 5th Floor, Conf. Rm. 5110,

THEME: Panel discussion on Obstacles to Smart Growth and the Importance of Citizen Involvement

5:30pm: Dinner (buffet style)

5:40 Meeting Facilitators – Helen Selph (916-808-7852),

- Overview & Context
- Introductions

5:45pm: Opening Remarks: Mayor Heather Fargo

6:00pm: Panel Discussion: Perspectives on Political setting, obstacles to Smart Growth and the Importance of Citizen Involvement in community planning.

Moderator: Tim Quintero, Neighborhood Services

Panelists

- Assembly member Dave Jones
- Barry Wasserman, Planning Commissioner, Sac Co. Urban Design Manager
- David Kwong, Current Planning Manager
- Brooks Truit, Community Activist
- Bill Heartman, Regis Homes

7:00 Q&A for Panel

8:05pm: Tim Quintero -- Closing Remarks on continued involvement

8:10-8:30 Closing announcements/Class evaluation

Readings: *For Urban Developers, A Hard Row to Hoe*

Sacramento's Older, Successful Neighborhoods: Can We Recreate Them?

Graduation Night: Council Presentation

Date: Tuesday, December 12

Location: 915 I Street, 1st Floor,

Reception: 5:45 – 6:45, Conf. Room 1217

Presentation: 7:00pm, Council Chambers

Appendix D: Orange County Planners Academy – Syllabus

2007 Citizen Planner Academy **Course Syllabus**

Facilitator:

Mr. Arthur L. Hall
Senior Planner
Community and Environmental Services
Orange County Neighborhood Services

Contact information:

Phone: 407-836-5547
Email: Arthur.Hall@ocfl.net

Course Objective:

The Citizens Planner academy is designed to educate public citizens on Growth Management, planning and the land development process. This is a seven-week course that will cover the planning principles and methods that are used to implement Growth Management policies. The principles and methods that will be covered are Planning, Zoning, Transportation, Neighborhood Re-Development and Citizen Participation, which are explained in more detail below.

Throughout the seven weeks, we will have profession planners from the public, private sector to participate in our interactive working sessions. The interactive working session has been incorporated to give participants an opportunity to implement the principles that have been taught.

By the end of the seven-week course, participants will have a working knowledge on how to become engaged within the Land Development process. For completing the course, participants will receive a certificate and will be recognized at the annual Community Conference held in July.

Course Description and Guidelines:

The course consists of seven (7) classes. Each class will be approximately 2hrs. Each class will be divided into two sessions; the first session will consist of a lecture/dialog session.

The academy consists of two (2) sessions (a fall and a spring session) that will run over the course of 7 weeks (1 class per week). Classes will be held at the Internal Operations Center (450 E. South Street, down town Orlando) on Thursday's from 6:30pm to 8:30pm. The cost is \$15.00, which includes a textbook along with materials and supplies. The Citizens Planner academy is open to all Citizens of Orange County, however, spaces are limited, and therefore admission is on a first come first serve basis. Spring Session Classes begins in January 2007.

Course Requirements:

Attendance

Attendance is a mandatory requirement for the academy. Certificates will be given to those participants who have a perfect attendance. Participants who have more than one absence may continue to finish the course, but will not receive a certificate of completion.

Participation

As mentioned in the course objective, participants will have opportunities to participate in dialog discussions and other opportunities to get involved in a more hands on experience.

Required Text and Readings

The required text for the course will be "*The Citizens Guide to Planning.*" By Herbert H. Smith. There will be assigned readings prior to every class to prepare the participants for discussion. The readings are designed to give the participants a theoretical view of the topic. The weekly readings will correlate with the presentation to give the participants a broad perspective on the planning topic.

Course Outline

Week 1 - Growth Management Planning

January, 25 2007



Overview

This class is an introduction to growth management, land use and land use practices. We will briefly review the history of Growth Management and identify its intended goals and objectives. We will then review the Orange County Comprehensive Policy Plan in reference to how it is used to regulate development how it controls growth in Orange County.

Objective

This session will provide participants with a comprehensive overview of growth management, the comprehensive policy plan and land use regulations. By the end of the class, the participants will understand growth management principles and practices, land use regulations and the comprehensive policy plan.

Readings: Chapter 5, pp 83 – 107, Chapter 8, 141 – 145, Chapter 13, pp 207 – 209.
“The Citizens Guide to Planning”

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)

What is Growth Management?

Goals Of Growth Management

- Accommodate Development Needs
- Urban Containment
- Exurban and rural growth management
- Provide adequate public facilities and services (Concurrency)
- Provide adequate Housing

Chapter 163 Florida Statutes

Comprehensive Policy Plan (CPP)

10-Minute Break - Interactive Session

2nd Session – Presentation

Week 2 – Intro to Planning (Planning 101)

February 1, 2007



Overview

Planning 101 is an introduction on the fundamentals of planning. We will introduce some of the basic planning terminology and principles used in the planning profession. We also look at some of the key historical events and how these events shape urban and sub-urban development. We will look at the different methods of planning and their contribution toward the built environment.

Objective

By the end of the class, participants will have an understanding of common terms and definitions used in Planning. Participants will have a comprehensive outlook on some of the key historical issues of planning and the built environment. Lastly participants will understand the different types of planning methods and their role in implementing Growth Management policies.

Readings: Chapter 9, pp. 148-157. “*The Citizens Guide to Planning*”

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)

What is Planning?

- Definitions & Terms

Brief History of Planning

- 1909 Regional Plan for Chicago
- 1925 First Comp Plan with long range goals (Cincinnati)

- Housing Act of 1937
- 1969 National Environmental Policy (NEPA)

Types of Planning

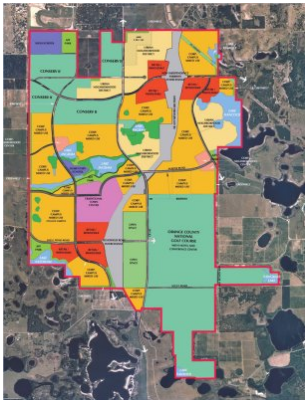
- Future Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation
- Conservation

10-Minute Break - Interactive Session

2nd Session – Presentation

Week 3 - Land Development Process

February 8, 2007



Overview

The Land Development class provides an overview of land development regulations and the process required to go from vacant land to development. Other topics include the Subdivision Review process, Planned Development process and the cost of building in Orange County including impact fees.

Objective

This class will provide participants with an overview of the land development process and the steps required to build in Orange County. Participants will have an understanding of the subdivision review process; planned development process and the cost of building and how impact fees are used. Participants will have an understanding of how the development process relates to school capacities.

Readings: Chapter 7 p. 130-137. “*The Citizens Guide to Planning*”

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)

From vacant land to development

- Comprehensive Plan Amendment Process
- Subdivision Regulation Process
- Preliminary

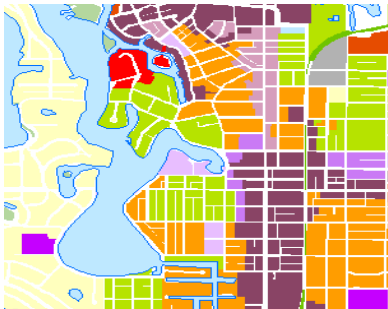
- Re-Zoning Process
- Planned Development Process

Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

- Transportation Analysis
- School Concurrency (Capacity Enhancement Agreement)
- Environmental Analysis

10-Minute Break - Interactive Session

2nd Session – Presentation



Week 4 – Zoning
15, 2007

February

Overview

The zoning class will offer participants a more in-depth view on zoning and it’s correlation to Land Use. We will review zoning ordinances and regulations and their relation with future land uses.

We will then examine the re-zoning process. This will include an in-depth view of school agreements, Planned Development (PD), Development Review Committee, etc. Participants will also be presented with various zoning definitions and terms to help clarify some of the more specific functions of zoning.

Objective

By the end of the class, participants will have a comprehensive understanding of zoning, zoning ordinances, regulations; it’s relation to land use and its function within the land development process.

Readings: Chapter 6 p. 109-122. “*The Citizens Guide to Planning*”

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)

- What is zoning?
- Zoning Ordinance
- Subdivision Regulations
- Zoning District Regulations
- Zoning Techniques
- Re-Zoning Process

10-Minute Break - Interactive Session

2nd Session – Presentations

Week 5 – Transportation

February 22, 2007



Overview

In this class we will look at the role of the transportation planner. We will present some of the basic terminologies of transportation planning. We will then look at look at the transportation planning process. This will include Level of Service (LOS), Trip Generation, Trip Distribution, Mode Choice, etc.

We will also look at the various federal, state and local government agencies and the functions of the Metropolitan Planning, Organization.

Objective

By the end of the class, participants will have a comprehensive understanding of the transportation planning process. Participants will also have an understanding of the steps that are taken when reviewing a project and what transportation planner's look to determining if that project qualifies for development.

Reading(s): *TBD*

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)

- Transportation Legislation
- Transportation Agencies
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Level of Service
- Types of Roadways
- Transportation planning process

10-Minute Break - Interactive Session

2nd Session – Interactive Session

Week 6 - Neighborhood Redevelopment

March 1, 2007



Overview

Participants will be introduced to two (2) common methods by which neighborhood redevelopment occurs. The first method is Citizen Action method, where the citizens take action in becoming involved toward improving their neighborhoods. Local citizens become involved in organizing a neighborhood organization or becoming apart of an established organization for neighborhood development. The second method is the professional planning method. Private developers or local governments forming and establishing a concept plan for a neighborhood. This is usually done in phases and consists of a process involving community meetings and hearings.

Objective

By the end of the class, participants will understand the history and impotents of neighborhood planning. Participants will also understand the benefits of becoming apart of or establishing neighborhood organizations and how to approach neighborhood redevelopment as an organized body.

Readings: Chapter 11 p. 169-181, "*The Citizens Guide to Planning*"

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)

Neighborhood Redevelopment Methods

- Development Agreements
- Community Development Districts (CDD)
- Infill and Revitalization
- Community Redevelopment Areas (CRA)
- Urban Infill and Redevelopment Areas

10-Minute Break - Interactive Session

2nd Session – Presentation

Week 7 - Citizen Participation

March 8, 2007



Overview

In the Citizen Participation class we will discuss the roll of the citizen within the land development process. We will discuss the steps within the citizen participation process, which are the community meetings, the Local Planning Agency (LPA) Hearing and finally the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Hearing. We will review all of the boards, their function within the land development process.

Objective

By the end of the class the participants will have the tools needed to effectively participate at community meeting and public hearings. Participants will also have an understanding of the Orange County Government structure, the County Commissioners and the various boards and their functions within the land development process. Participants will learn how to be an effective participant within the land development process.

Readings: Chapter 13 p. 185-199, "*The Citizens Guide to Planning*"

1st Session – (Discussion Topics)


- What is Citizen Participation
- Methods for encouraging citizen participation
- Creating an Effective Citizen Participation Strategy
- Public Information
- Citizen Interaction
- Public Meetings
- Public Hearings

Boards

- Local Planning Agency (LPA)
- Board of Zoning Adjustments (BZA)
- Planning & Zoning (P&Z)
- Board of County Commissioners (BCC)



2nd Session – Interactive Session

Appendix E: Orange County Planners Academy – Marketing Flyer





Our Mission

To provide quality training of the planning and growth management process in Orange County by promoting citizen understanding of local government structure, processes and funding.

For more information or an application, please call
407-836-5606
 or visit our website:
www.OrangeCountyFL.net/dept/CEsrvc/neighbor/
 P.O. Box 1393
 Orlando, FL 32802





Course Objective:

The Citizens Planner Academy is designed to educate the public on Growth Management and the Land Development Process. This is a seven-week course that will cover the principles and methods of Growth Management. The course material will cover Zoning, Transportation, Neighborhood Re-Development and citizen participation, which are explained in more detail below.

Throughout the seven weeks, we will have professional planners from the public and private sector who will facilitate our interactive work sessions to help participants implement the principles that have been taught.

By the end of the seven-week course, participants will have a working knowledge on how to become engaged within the Land Development process. Upon completion of the course, participants will receive a certificate and will be recognized by the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division.



Program Schedule

Week 5
Transportation Planning

In this class we will review some of the basic terminologies of transportation planning. We will examine how new roads infrastructures are built. We will look at how road expansion occurs and how other modes are incorporated to accommodate new development process. We will also look at the steps taken by the transportation planner to determine if a development should be approved.

Week 1
Growth Management

This class is an introduction to Growth Management. We will discuss growth control through regulatory and non-regulatory development incentives. We will review policies on how development should occur and how rate and timing of development is used to control density. We will also review the comprehensive policy plan in reference to state requirements. Amendments to the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) and how it relates to development in Orange County.

Week 2
Intro to Planning (Planning 101)

Planning 101 is an introduction to the fundamentals of land use planning. We will introduce some of the basic terminology and principles used. We also look at the key historical aspects of planning and how it was used as a tool to shape urban and suburban development.

Week 6
Neighborhood Redevelopment

In this class participants will analyze the rise and decline of neighborhoods. We will look at the growth and development of neighborhoods and the resources needed to create self-sustaining neighborhoods. We will also analyze the variables that cause neighborhoods to decline. We will look at how neighborhood redevelopment relates to Growth Management and how planning principles are used to eliminate blight.

Week 3
Land Development Process

The Land Development class provides an overview of land development processes and regulations required to develop vacant land. We will review the steps for development involving large-scale projects. We will also look at the key players involved in the land development process and their ability to influencing the decision making process.

Week 4
Zoning

The zoning class will offer participants a in-depth view on zoning and its correlation to land use. Participants will be presented with various zoning definitions and terms. We will then review the zoning process and regulations and how it impacts land development.

Week 7
Citizen Participation

In this class we will discuss the roll of the citizen within the land development process. We will discuss the opportunities citizens will have to effectively influence the decision making process of a land development project. Participants will learn how to communicate effectively at public hearings. We will review all of the boards that contribute to the Land Development process and their functions.

Appendix F: Responses to Open-Ended Survey Questions

Question 3: How did you find out about the academy?

Colorado Springs:

- Online newspaper
- From CONO - Council of Neighbors and Organizations
- Flyer inside the City Planning Dept.
- Attended Sheriff's Citizen's academy and was told about it.
- Local newspaper
- Email
- Newspaper
- Newspaper
- Community member
- I follow City Government very closely and read about it in the press and on the City's website.
- Word of mouth
- News Paper
- At a meeting to determine who would serve the balance of a retiring City Council Member's seat.
- Business Contact
- Word of mouth

Sacramento:

- Work
- At a neighborhood assoc meeting
- City web site
- Word of mouth and then on-line
- Committee I was on.
- Website
- Through a colleague, a Plan academy graduate
- City website
- Neighbor
- Power Inn BTA
- Community group I belong to.
- From a friend who had participated in the academy previously

Orange County:

- Home Owners Association (HOA) Management Company
- Orlando Sentinel newspaper
- 2007
- From a friend
- Orange County Government

- Online
- Excellent
- Habitat for Humanity of Greater Apopka
- Sue Carpenter CMP CEO/President

Question 9: What were the most important lessons learned in the academy?

Colorado Springs:

- How open our government is, and how easy it is to get involved
- The breath of the services provided by the city and the city's form of government
- That the infrastructure of the city is more organized than it appears to be.
- The sincere interest in and appreciation of, citizen participation.
- How the different departments in the city worked and interacted with each other. We went to the location of the departments and that was better than just a lecture. I also learned that the city boards really needed people to volunteer to be on them.
- How the city functions - all the different departments, their roles. Where places were located, what people do there.
- I did not know how much the city depends on volunteers - not just advisory boards but also firefighters etc.
- How complex the City puzzle is and how it all works together with amazing efficiency.
- I think the small details of what each department is doing for the city was interesting. Such as the transportation department who is putting up cameras at all intersections so you don't have to wait for a light if no one else is there. Or the overriding system they have for the traffic lights so that firetrucks and rescue vehicles have the right away. I learned about how the head of trees in the city truly loves trees, and the hours and efforts of the police and fire department to keep the citizens safe. There also seemed to be a disconnect between the 'departments' and the 'citizens.'
- I learned that the City is a very complex operation and that the City Management (including the City Manager) has an incredibly difficult job to perform. I learned also that good, honest, competent employees are a very valuable asset to this fine City.
- The dedication, hard work, and creativity of the Colorado Springs employees. They do so much with so little, I was very impressed. In fact, I was so moved, I have volunteered for the academy for the past 4 or so years.
- The city employs some amazing people that have learned to provide services to the city's citizens better than the average city provides and uses fewer funds to do so. They have learned very innovative ways to try to make the city work.
- The finer points of how Colorado Springs City Government actually runs and where the true control of city administration lies.
- City Planning dept organization and functions.

Sacramento:

- Community outreach and early involvement
- dynamics between landowners, developers, builders and Design Review, DOC, Planning Commission, City Council and City Staff. 2. role city activists play in maintaining a

balance between landowners, developers, planning, council, city staff and 'neighborhoods'. 3. the planning process, the city staff involved 4. Brooks Truitt - Sacramento Sustainers email list 5. environmental and economic sustainability issues 6. facts to debunk myths around perceptions of traffic, and other issues that inflame neighborhoods 7. how to navigate city planning websites, departments, organization charts, etc. 8. who the players are in the local Sacramento area landowner, developer, builder community 9. who the architects are - which are focused on single-family, which are skilled and focus on infill, which focus on transit center development, etc.

- Why some projects take longer than others and what the competing factors may be that affect project timelines and/or success (e.g. building codes, zoning, financing, market forces, City leadership/political will or lack thereof, etc.).
- Learning about the planning process was fascinating. Perhaps more important was meeting all the people - both those that work for the city and/or were presenters as well as the people in my class. I learned that individual citizens can and do make a difference.
- That community involvement is extremely important.
- limitations of city officials
- The most interesting thing I learned was about the City's MATRIX for customer service. It's a great model.
- The City has a much better plan to foster smart growth development than I previously realized but lacks the political will and policy/legal mechanisms to make it happen. I am more aware now than before attending the academy of opportunities for citizen involvement.
- if you want your voice heard get involved
- How to plan for smart urban growth in a fast growing city.
- The importance of attending public hearings/meetings to support 'good' projects (not always to fight 'bad' projects)

Orange County:

- The different aspects of Community Planning such as: - LandUse - Zoning - Community Planning - Growth Management - Transportation
- Did not finish course. Work assignment took me out of town/out of the country.
- Enjoyed the interaction, hands-on learning opportunities.
- How much planning is really involved in planning roads, residential and commercial properties
- Never, take any solution/or project development per granted. An individual must have some idea/or understanding the city & county different codes in their represent location.
- Just how much thought is put into planning the county's future use of property. Planning should be as good as possible, and I now know how this is being done.
- That the commissioners and staff want input to the plans and to involve citizens to join the effort and work as a team.
- The process and the departments that are involved in development related activities.
- That there actually is a plan and resources available to help you see where you can fit into and or effect the plan.
- Land Use vs. Zoning Redevelopment areas

Question 13. Briefly give an illustration to explain your answer to the previous question:

Colorado Springs:

- After the opening of a new business campus there were huge traffic blockages every afternoon. I was in a good spot to see them as my window overlooks the main road where the back up was taking place. After the course I knew who to call, and was able to help him change the timing of the lights to clear up the snags.
- I have a better understanding of the city and who to call on an issue.
- The city is still too enamored with becoming the largest city in Colorado. Any opinion that is voiced to more carefully consider growth predicated on the economics of the city is squelched. I more firmly believe now more than ever that the city is run by the developers.
- I know the city and county governments are open and willing to listen to citizen input. I have given input to the County Commissioners meeting and I am participating as a citizen at large member of the Justice Advisory Council of the Pikes Peak Region.
- By serving on two transportation boards I am able to assist in major decisions affecting transportation. I am also able to monitor how the money from a special sales tax is spent by the RTA.
- Though I understand how the city departments function, I don't feel that I was that influential before and still feel that after the academy I don't influence local decision-making.
- If I needed to I would now have a better idea of where to go and who is approachable.
- This is my fault since I haven't become more involved since graduating from the academy. But I do think I would have better resources available now because I would know where to begin looking or asking to find answers.
- I have not tried to get involved with any city activities, so I have no response
- Over time, I have been able to communicate with various City leaders about the (social) problem of substance abuse in this City. Colorado Springs is (now) the largest City in the State of Colorado (Metro-area wise....not total-area wise) - yet this City does not have ONE (2) 'in-patient, medically-supervised substance abuse treatment facility.' I have worked hard over the course of (now almost) seven (7) years to convince this City's leaders that a treatment facility for this City's and this County's citizens who suffer from substance abuse issues/matters/problems is a NECESSITY for a City this size. Finally, (at least) one City Council member hears me and is 'open' to look at this situation in a serious and proactive manner. But, it has taken YEARS (too many I believe) for these 'leaders' to open their minds to helping citizens' social needs - as much as they work to fix roads, build new homes, build new bridges, build and repair our infrastructure.
- I have learned more about how the city works so that I may better address issues that are of concern.
- I now know where to direct information and apply influence to in order to accomplish goals.

- I have given input to the I-25 construction process. While not 'exactly' a solely a city project my suggestions have been acted upon. I would have never shown up to a meeting before the academy. I am involved in the local city elections and find myself more and more interested in the process, the candidates and folks are interested in my input.

Sacramento:

- I understand better the functions of the City and the decision making process, allowing me to work with the correct people and understand the channels necessary to go through to get something accomplished.
- I am on a first name basis with the Mayor, several councilmembers (including my own), different commission/committee members (e.g., Planning, Design review, DOC, etc), Brooks Truitt & many of his Sacramento Sustainers, Ray Kerridge and many of his key city department managers, several landowners, developers and builders, my county supervisor, and many, many neighborhood activists in the Sacramento area.
- It still feels like there is a large disconnect between 'City Staff' and the general public. The fact that a generic term like 'Staff' is used to refer to the many individuals who work on a project is rather symptomatic and symbolic - it's as if some nebulous entity pilots and directs these projects through the process. The actual individuals involved seem largely anonymous, and for an average citizen interested in finding out more or getting involved or making positive change, the path to follow is not at all clear. Whom does one contact? Whom does one try to influence and how? What sort of access does one have to a Council Member or to the Mayor or do members of the Planning Department who have the authority to suggest and implement changes? All of this remains shadowy, even after the Planning academy.
- We are currently embattled with a large corporation that wants to once again infringe on the residential neighborhood. Going through the planning academy gave me insights into how the system works and how we can better prepare for the battle. Another example is the 'McMansion' ordinance that many in the neighborhood believe is needed. I have a much better understanding about what will need to happen to ensure this ordinance gets done.
- Knowing who the player are and what influences that are present, I am able to tailor my comments to the right people and make my comments heard.
- City officials are more familiar/comfortable with me
- I have become more involved with the County's General Plan update and have testified 3-4 times on it, asking for more smart growth and no more sprawling development.
- background in commercial construction. already knowledgeable about planning process. attended to establish networking opportunities.
- I advocated for a grocery store with fresh produce that supported sustainable agricultural practices and paid decent wages at a neighborhood association meeting. Someone who agreed with me took the message on to a neighborhood association general meeting with the city manager. The City manager replied that he would have his staff include a grocery store in their redevelopment plans for a local parcel under review. We're hoping that this will result in us getting our neighborhood grocery store.
- It has improved because I am more informed and I understand the 'city planning' language a little better, so I understand better city planning presentations and other new community developments.

Orange County:

- By attending at the OC academy, I've been able to provide comments with a better understanding of what goes around a piece of land and the potential impacts this land could have in the future.
- Better Informed and with greater knowledge of terminology to better express myself
- the academy has helped with my involvement in my HOA and understanding governmental processes.
- Any local decision-making is basic on fund
- Now I understand how the community needs to become more involved.
- I has gotten me more involved and I feel better educated and more competent to get involved

Question 14: What would change, add, or remove from the academy?

Colorado Springs:

- nothing -- it was really comprehensive
- Add additional time for the police department to tour communications facility
- I really felt that it was very well organized. We were given extensive insight into the major departments of city government. By being right in the departments we were able to actually watch them work. We also got to know some of our city leaders personally.
- Perhaps more diversity in participants as there seemed to be a large number of realtors or those involved in land development. Maybe educators/principals of Junior and Senior High students.
- Perhaps add a week or two so we weren't rushed through some of the information - utilities, planning etc.
- I would have liked to see more of a connection between the city and the county. Knowing who is responsible for what in the same categories that we learned about.
- I would like to see more actual 'hands-on' involvement with the Citizens' academy. In other words, have the ability to 'spend a day' with the City Manager (and/or his staff members) to see how they 'manage' the City and how they determine City priorities. How does the City Manager go about laying-out the Informal and Formal City Council Agendas? How often do the City Council members meet (behind closed doors) - with the City Manager to discuss the needs of the City??? Also, academy members should have a CHOICE of where (what City Department) they want to learn more about. Some people want to know more about City Planning. Some people want to know more about the Police Department and how that operates. Some people want to know more about the Fire Department and how that operates. Let the academy members choose 1 or 2 (maybe 3) individual Departments to 'spend a day' shadowing a leader of that Department to see how the City works 'in action' (not just through some jazzy presentation with a slide show/power point presentation.)
- I would try to do a better job of getting the word out about the academy. We have ~400k people living in and around Colorado Springs. Of that, we normally only receive about 40-50 applicants per year.
- If possible, I would make it longer so there was more time to learn everything that there is to know about how the city works.

- I think that the current curriculum was well balanced and just long enough so as not to over burden the volunteers attending or running the program. the information was inclusive enough to give a good working knowledge of each department and if someone wished to enquire further they had a person in each department they could contact to do so.
- I'd add a segment on City Utilities and Memorial Hospital. I'd add to all the programs with more depth and detail.

Sacramento:

- it should be held more frequently, there should be more industry speakers, and field trips/hands on items more than strict lecture.
- it has been too long - I might try to attend a few of this next groups sessions to see what they expose the participants to - and can offer suggestions to Helen Selph.
- More City tours to focus on specific areas and neighborhoods and consideration of what makes those areas unique, what makes planning in those areas a challenge, what the City's vision is for those areas.
- I know there are two sides to this, but I would like to have had more time - maybe another couple of weeks. There is so much good material to cover and sometimes it seemed a bit rushed.
- More time for questions from group to experts
- The new role for public health in land use planning. How to review development plans and specific plans and comment on them in terms of smart growth, especially walkability and bikeability.
- more on redevelopment and barriers in depressed areas where the real challenges are.
- It was all good, the variety of speakers and topics covered a lot of ground but it was manageable.
- Keep the good food and the friendly atmosphere.

Orange County:

- Do not have any negative complaints about the academy. I believe our instructor has been more than honest to tell us that he is not a genius on all the material and he may need to refer us to someone else. In addition, Planning professionals have attended all sessions to cover any possible question. From what I've been able to learn, most of the time, there is no right answer and it is a bureaucracy and political process.
- A tour of Orange County Offices related to planning services (location of) and a more comprehensive listing of grant / funding opportunities related to community improvements along with yearly time-tables.
- I didn't find the practice sections helpful
- Nothing
- I thought everything was great. Art was great and the guest speakers were great.

Question 16: Describe how/where you applied what you learned in the academy:

Colorado Springs

- I am now a member of or Fund Allocation Committee for the local Pikes Peak/United Way fund
- Issues with the our developer in the new development in which we live (it is in year 3 of a 10-15 year build-out).
- The main lesson was to find out about the openness and willingness of the city and county agencies to citizen input and I have become an active member of five boards, councils and committees.
- I am serving on two transportation boards. I also am able to answer people's questions about city government and to help them understand why certain decisions are made.
- Am now on an advisory board and knowing the city council and county commissioners a bit helps when speaking with them. Also I have a better understanding when I read in the newspaper what is going on in the in the city.
- Just casual conversation here and there. I have not been an active agent of change in my community since completing the academy.
- I was Citizens' academy classmates with two (2) current City Council members (Scott Hente, City Council District 1 and Jerry Heimlicher, City Council District 3.) I learned that we are all the 'same' and that each voice of this City counts. My (former) academy classmates are no better than or smarter than me - nor do they have more important thoughts/ideas/beliefs. The Citizens' academy (back in 2002) proved to me that EVERY person who has a genuine interest in the betterment of this fine (not yet great) City - has a 'voice' that is important. And, my 'voice' (meaning my thoughts, opinions, beliefs) are just as important (if not more than) - the Elected City leaders who sit on the City Council or are appointed to be in City Management.
- Volunteer for the Citizen's academy 2- Volunteer for the Pike's Peak United Way 3- Discussions with family and friends about the way the city operates (enterprises and such) 4- Have successfully encouraged other family members to attend the academy
- I have joined the Pikes Peak United Way Fund Allocation Committee. I also plan on running for City Council in 2009.
- I sit on several official and ad hoc boards and commissions in the City and County. The information I have gathered has allowed me to operate more efficiently and with a greater knowledge in those positions.
- Most of the impact of the academy has been my ability to talk about my city government with the people I come into contact with - I do community relations for a bank. I see and talk to 100s of folks a week! I've also learned how receptive our city fathers and city council is to input - pro and con.

Sacramento:

- I have gotten much more involved with my community groups.
- Currently a member of two committees: 1. City of Sacramento's General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) 2. Sacramento Housing & Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) 65th Street Redevelopment Advisory Committee Actively involved in neighborhood planning issues throughout the city. Frequent attendee of Midtown Neighborhood Advisory Group (NAG) neighborhood services area 1 meetings (monthly)

- I sit on the City Planning Commission, so I frequently use the knowledge and/or contacts I acquired during the academy to ask questions about propose projects or contact City Staff for information or queries.
- I use it in my job which deals with public policy issues as they pertain to transportation and land use. Not only the information, but the contacts have been invaluable. I also use the information as a neighborhood activist with the same applications listed above.
- In SACOG Blueprint meeting and keeping tabs on the General Plan Update.
- New city commission
- The most important thing I got from the academy was getting to know the City's Planning staff. It's enabled me to be more involved in the General Plan update and other projects.
- have testified before planning commission twice to stop undesirable businesses from operating or expanding. was successful both times.
- neighborhood association, conversations with friends, letters to the editor of Sac Bee, 3rd congressional district town hall meeting
- Use it everyday.

Orange County:

- In the HOA BOD meetings and at my job.
- Just completing course...get me later, although I will be communicating community's need for a more comprehensive Urban, village, mixed use /overlay redevelopment plan
- Working on it!!
- County Internet
- I am now the head chairman for the expansion for our Church property.

Question 23: Is there anything else you wish to mention about the academy?

Colorado Springs:

- It was a very good course. It has been going on for years, but almost no one I talked to knew it existed. Many people here are quite disenfranchised with our local govt. (developers beholden to the evangelicals), so I wish more people knew this opportunity was available to learn how easy it is to make your voice heard; moderate the discourse a bit.
- It was incredibly well organized and each participant was given an incredible amount of respect in terms of their participation and their opinions.
- Our county government has recently started a County College which is similar. I am helping our District Attorney office set up a Citizen College to teach the public about what we do. I would not be involved if I had not attended the Citizens academy.
- Nicely organized and put together. A most enjoyable experience. I appreciated the openness the City officials presented and willingness to answer most questions honestly and with candor.
- It was a wonderful experience. I would like to participate in citizens college with the county as well. But since I was going to miss one meeting and I told them that, they kicked me out. The academy was much more flexible and realistic with people's schedules.

- When I attended the Citizens' academy in 2002, there wasn't a cost - but, now, with the City's budget always being 'in question,' there is a (at least) \$40 charge to participate. What about people who can't afford \$40? Saying you have to PAY to learn more about your City is sending a VERY WRONG message to the citizens of this City....unless you have \$money\$ to participate - you are NOT worth learning-about the City of Colorado Springs. It's not right and I think it is unfair. The City of Colorado Springs needs a 'voice' for the PEOPLE and the needs of the people on the City Council....and the (current) closest thing we have to that now is City Councilman At-Large, Bernie Herpin. Past 'voices' (for the people) who sat on the City Council were Dr. Ted Eastburn (now a practicing Cardiologist in Colorado Springs) and Richard Skorman (now an aide to U.S. Senator Ken Salazar, D-CO.) But, those 'voices' have gone by the wayside (for the most part.) The City Council consists of nine (9) people who think/feel/believe the same way. There aren't many differences - and now our City is SO DIVERSE (and growing to become more diverse) that NEW VOICES....not the same old, white, middle-to-upper middle class, conservative, Republican voices that HAVE been on the Council - need to 'step-up' and run (and be elected to Office.) And, the City Council (by virtue of their 'part-time' and low-paying status puts FAR TOO MUCH trust/power into the hands of our City Manager (who is the former Chief of Police.) Lorne Kramer is the TRUE and REAL 'leader' of this City (and has been since he became the Chief of Police in 1991...from the LAPD.) Too much power, not enough accountability - and ability to 'cut-off' citizen's communications when a citizen tries to hold the City Manager accountable....that's 'over the line' and Lorne Kramer needs to be reigned-in or fired. He is TOO POWERFUL...and ALL POWERFUL...with accountability to NO ONE.
- One of the best 'courses' I have ever participated in. I would highly recommend the academy to anyone who even has the slightest interest in how the city operates.
- I thought it was a wonderful opportunity and if there was a way, every citizen in the city should attend - they would be very surprised at what they learn!
- I wish the resources were available to all citizens - I came away so very proud of my city, it's government and most importantly our city servants.

Sacramento:

- Keep it. 2. Reach out into the neighborhoods to recruit participants - graduates work more effectively and in a more balanced way with city staff and council. 3. Brooks Truitt's Sacramento Sustainers is a key to the continued success of Planning academy participants post-graduation.
- I think it's a wonderful opportunity to learn more about City Planning, and it really says a lot about the City of Sacramento's leadership that funding is set aside in the budget for a program that aims to empower its own citizens to be more active in the planning process, especially knowing that some of that activity may involve posing questions or challenges to projects that the City supports.
- I wish more people could attend! It was a great experience and very enlightening.
- Should be more regionally oriented. Involve neighboring towns and/or county officials
- I was unfortunately in a shorter version (only six weeks long). I envy those who are now getting the full 10 weeks. It really broadened my understanding of land use and transportation. I may take some more land use planning courses through UC Davis.
- free dinner

- It was great, hope it keeps going to educate more people.
- no
- I found the academy to be both intellectually stimulating and motivational. Connecting to other people who care about the community with a variety of different perspectives, from many different neighborhoods, was very inspirational.

Orange County:

- It's been fun!
- Sounds like a great educational opportunity.
- Thank You
- I've enjoyed the learning experience and look forward to using this knowledge in the future.
- More community such get involve an attend this course
- Arthur Hall is an excellent facilitator.
- Is was great, very educational