

Urban and Regional Policy
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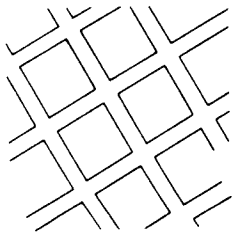
**Planning with
Neighborhoods**

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Structural changes in the larger society would seem necessary adequately to address this problem. Finally, the emphasis in each approach on one dimension of the neighborhood rather than on a coordinated approach including social, political, and physical dimensions may have limited program effects. A comprehensive approach to neighborhood development may meet with greater success.

how to coordinate a plan
how to implement a plan



3 The Theoretical Underpinnings of Neighborhood Planning

Three fields have contributed to the theory supporting the practice of neighborhood planning. First, the literature on planning is replete with critiques of traditional comprehensive planning and arguments for a more decentralized, participatory planning process. Comprehensive planning, it has been argued, has inherent limitations that restrict its ability to address the full range of urban problems facing American cities and this, in turn, has led to a general attitude among the public that planning is ineffectual. More specifically, these critics fault comprehensive planning for ignoring or misrepresenting the needs of local neighborhoods, excluding citizens from meaningful participation, achieving few tangible results, and overemphasizing physical development at the expense of service delivery and social and political development (Altschuler, 1965; Branch, 1972; Chapin, 1965; Friedmann, 1971). A decentralized, neighborhood-based approach to planning involving neighborhood groups has been put forth as a means of overcoming these limitations.

Second, social theory has emphasized several important social functions served by the local community or neighborhood which should be strengthened by neighborhood planning programs. The social functions of neighborhoods include the development of significant primary social relationships; the socialization of children and the development of informal social control; the provision of personal support networks; and the facilitation of social integration into the larger society (Fischer, 1982; Greer, 1956; Janowitz, 1975; Keller, 1968; Suttles, 1968; Warren, 1963; Warren and Warren, 1977). Neighborhood planning may be one means of supporting and strengthening these important social functions.

Finally, political theory has addressed the advantages of de-

centralized decision-making processes, including neighborhood planning programs. Three major claims made for decentralized government may apply to neighborhood planning programs. These are increased citizen trust in government, improved municipal service delivery, and increased social equity (Hallman, 1977; Schmandt, 1973; Yates, 1973; Zimmerman, 1972).

Drawing on these three bodies of theory, this chapter will present eight propositions on the benefits of neighborhood planning, which will provide the foundation for the evaluation of neighborhood planning programs presented in subsequent chapters. In the conclusion the legitimacy of these propositions will be assessed in light of the data presented.

Proposition 1: Compared to traditional planning approaches, neighborhood planning programs are more responsive to local characteristics, desires, and problems.

Traditionally, planners have relied on the comprehensive planning model to guide their activities. Among other attributes, this model emphasizes the development of a general plan covering the entire municipality. As such, it is necessarily general in nature and it emphasizes the larger projects of potential concern to the entire community. These often include major transportation, public facility, and recreation projects. Under this model, planners are charged with developing proposals for guiding physical development that serve the general public interest. The assumptions are that an overall public interest can be defined, that planners understand the overall public interest, at least with respect to the subject matter of their plans, and that they possess the knowledge to gauge the approximate net effect of proposed actions on the public interest (Altshuler, 1965).

Many have argued, however, that there is no one public interest, but rather a number of public interests (Davidoff, 1965; Meyerson and Banfield, 1955). The diversity of social groups within urban areas produces a range of distinct interests, which must be considered separately. Rather than ignore the diversity in favor of a unified view of the public interest, the planning process should recognize it and provide a mechanism for its expression. Critics have also charged that the unified view of the public interest is either politically naive or consciously

regressive because it ignores the distributive consequences of planning decisions; in many instances, it has been used to promote the interests of the economically advantaged over the disadvantaged (Davidoff, 1965).

The issue of how the public interest is defined is also important here. In the comprehensive planning model the planner is responsible for defining the public interest through rational analysis (Klosterman, 1980). Yet many question their ability to do this given the limited knowledge planners have of the values of the various social groups and their tendency to view the world from the perspective of their own social class (Gans, 1967). Although traditional citizen participation programs are designed to provide a clearer sense of public concerns, these have failed to involve a substantial proportion of the populace.

The work of urban sociologists has documented the existence of urban subgroups and shown that this diversity takes on a distinctly geographic pattern. In particular, the work of human ecologists has focused on identifying and describing various social subareas within larger urban areas. Their work has documented the existence of urban social subareas that vary in ethnicity, economic rank, family structure, and occupational status (Duncan and Duncan, 1955; Greer, 1972; Shevsky and Bell, 1955). More detailed analyses of these geographically based social groups indicate considerable variation in their life-styles, needs, and perceived problems (Fried and Gleicher, 1961; Gans, 1962; Michelson, 1976; Suttles, 1968). Rainwater (1966), for example, reports differences among the poor, working class, and middle class in their concerns about housing. Moreover, Michelson (1976) has shown that certain physical design elements are more or less conducive to various life-style groups. Traditional comprehensive planning, which adopts a city-wide perspective, is not well suited to accommodating these differences.

Among its advocates, neighborhood planning is seen as a means of accounting for the diversity in urban populations by providing a mechanism for local residents to come together and develop their own conceptions of their interests, rather than rely on the planner to define those interests. Each local community has the opportunity to express its unique values and life-styles in the forming of recommendations for the future development of the area. In the neighborhood planning model, local communities are also encouraged to develop self-

help projects to augment the services and capital improvements provided by the public sector. Finally, neighborhood planning programs provide a formal mechanism for communicating these unique values and desires to planners and, in many instances, directly to the local governing body.

The argument here is not that neighborhood planning should replace traditional comprehensive planning but that it is a necessary supplement to it. City-wide concerns need to be addressed, but the relative weights assigned to neighborhood and city-wide concerns have been overwhelmingly in favor of the latter. Neighborhood planning programs are an attempt to restore this balance by providing a mechanism for neighborhoods to participate in planning and development decisions.

Proposition 2: Compared to conventional approaches to planning, neighborhood planning programs result in an increase in the number of citizens participating in planning.

Traditional comprehensive planning has been criticized for its failure to involve a substantial proportion of citizens in the process of plan development. Although most comprehensive planning efforts involve some opportunity for citizen input, both planners and citizens are often disappointed by the amount of real input that results. There are several reasons for this.

First, citizen involvement in comprehensive planning typically comes at a very late stage in the planning process. Citizens are often asked to react to a plan in which a considerable investment of staff time and energy has been made. Thus, rather than respond to citizen concerns, planners often end up defending the plan. Moreover, since citizens have not been involved in the development of the plan, they are in a poor position truly to understand the constraints within which the planners worked or the trade-offs and choices they had to make. As a result, citizens often spend most of their time developing an understanding of the logic and intent of the plan and are in a poor position to provide insightful comments. Planners often leave with a feeling that citizens have little to offer, and citizens leave with a feeling that their participation was not genuinely desired.

Second, most citizens do not have a city-wide, long-term perspective. They have little idea of the current or future needs and problems of the city as a whole. Rather, they know and are concerned about the immediate problems in the areas

they experience on a daily basis—primarily their neighborhoods. Thus, citizens find it difficult to relate to comprehensive plans that cover the whole city and tend to be future oriented. They come to planning meetings hoping to talk about solutions to specific problems and end up discussing very general goals and policies. In commenting on planning in St. Paul, for example, Altschuler writes: "St. Paul's planners hoped that vigorous discussion would follow publication of their Land Use Plan. No one showed any interest in discussing it, however. The reason seemed to be that the plan's stated goals were too general. No one knew how the application of these goals would affect him in practice" (1965, p. 80). Given the general nature and future orientation of comprehensive planning and the more specific and present-oriented concerns of citizens, low rates of participation seem inevitable.

The consequences of public planning without substantial citizen involvement have been addressed by several theorists and researchers. Sennett (1970), for one, argues that conflict is essential to human personality development. Traditional public planning, he suggests, has insulated individuals from the conflict involved in planning issues and thus acts to inhibit the full development of the personality in the individuals affected. Roszak (1973) suggests that a reliance on expert knowledge leads to the disintegration of the urban community because it robs citizens of an important reason to come together and work to solve problems in the cooperative spirit that forms community solidarity. Moreover, traditional public planning which relies on experts cannot incorporate the values and spirit of the community. Comprehensive planning, Roszak believes, results in manipulation and exploitation of the individual by forcing reliance on the expert and robbing the individual of the capacity for moral choice. Gans (1962), Friedmann (1973), and others suggest that the lack of citizen participation results in plans that are expressions of middle- or upper-class values rather than of the full range of social values. Thus, the plans often do not meet the needs of the working class and the poor. Finally, because the business community does have city-wide interests and is usually organized, it often participates to a much greater extent. According to Altschuler:

Downtown businesses . . . are accustomed to watching the civic scene and searching for issues likely to affect their interests. They enter the discussion of any

proposal at a very early stage and understand its potential impact on their interests relatively early. Other members of the public, however, tend to become aware that something is afoot and then to conceptualize their interests more slowly. After the perceptions begin to dawn, most take quite some time to organize. (1965, p. 82.)

Thus, comprehensive planning has tended to favor commercial interests over residential interests.

Neighborhood planning programs are expected to be more conducive to citizen participation for several reasons. First, they put greater emphasis on local issues and problems more familiar and personally relevant to local residents. This is not to say that neighborhood residents or groups cannot address city-wide issues through these programs; neighborhood planning, though, offers opportunities to address the more local issues often overlooked by comprehensive planning.

Second, neighborhood planning programs are designed to involve citizens at an earlier stage in the planning process. Neighborhood planning programs are designed to keep neighborhood groups informed of new initiatives and proposals and to elicit their comments and suggestions before plans are formalized. This should provide greater incentive for involvement and a more satisfying experience for those who become involved.

Third, neighborhood planning programs encourage continuous rather than sporadic involvement. This means that persons participate on a regular basis, become more knowledgeable about the issues, and learn how to work through the political process to accomplish their goals. This is approaching what Friedmann (1973) refers to as "transactional planning," defined as "planning in which processes of mutual learning are closely integrated with an organized capacity and willingness to act" (p. 247). Thus, continuous involvement should act to reinforce participation.

Fourth, neighborhood planning programs allow citizens to establish their own agendas, rather than simply react to the agendas established by professional planners. Thus it involves community groups in what has been termed "the second face of power" (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962 and 1970). Controlling the agenda is an important source of power that has traditionally been denied neighborhood groups in their dealings

with public officials on planning issues. Within the context of neighborhood planning, citizens have opportunities to develop and recommend their own projects and raise their own concerns rather than simply respond to those identified by planners. This control over agenda setting should also reinforce participation.

Finally, participation in neighborhood planning programs takes place within familiar local neighborhoods, close to home and with familiar people. Residents are less likely to be discouraged from participation by unfamiliar and possibly intimidating people and places. Thus, higher rates of participation are expected in neighborhood planning programs.

Proposition 3: Neighborhood planning programs are more project rather than policy oriented and result in more local physical improvements and an increase in the political constituency for planning.

Traditional comprehensive planning has also been criticized for overemphasizing policy development at the expense of project development. Typically, comprehensive planning involves the development of a broad set of goals, objectives, and policies to guide the development and redevelopment of urban areas. The objectives of comprehensive planning stress the development of long-range, general plans. As defined by Black, a comprehensive plan is "an official public document adopted by a local government as a policy guide to decisions about the physical development of the community. It indicates in a general way how the leaders of government want the community to develop in the next 20 to 30 years" (1968, p. 350).

The development of these plans is a time-consuming process, and once developed, they are often updated every five years. The problem is that the comprehensive planning process itself does not result in more specific project plans needed to address the immediate problems facing the community, nor does it result in any immediate observable improvements. Moreover, once developed and adopted, these plans are often ignored by decision makers, bringing into question their overall relevance.

The long-range and general nature of the comprehensive planning process seems at least partially responsible for public apathy toward planning and a lack of a political constituency supporting planning efforts. Citizens often find it difficult to

rally around general long-range plans. Developed by professional planners, such plans may not represent the perceived concerns of citizens. Thus, citizens are generally unconcerned with their implementation and politicians are free to ignore them without arousing citizen protest. For planning to be effective it must develop a stronger political constituency among the public.

Neighborhood planning programs have the potential to avoid these problems by focusing on short-term project planning. They provide citizen groups the opportunity to identify needed improvements in their neighborhoods and provide technical and sometimes financial support for those improvements. In this sense, neighborhood planning is more action oriented and should result in more immediate and observable changes in the local community.

A more project-oriented planning process should also lead to the development of a stronger political constituency for planning. Citizens should have greater incentive for advocating and supporting local planning efforts. This should be particularly true in programs that involve citizen groups in the development of neighborhood plans. Citizens should feel a greater commitment to a plan that they developed and that represents their perceived interests.

Proposition 4: Neighborhood planning will result in a wider range of problems being addressed by the planning process and an improvement in public services.

A final criticism of traditional comprehensive planning is its emphasis on physical development. Rarely are social, political, or economic problems considered. This is particularly troublesome given the interdependence of these problems. High crime, for example, can precipitate the physical decline of an area as people move to safer locations and vandalism and other property crimes lead to physical decay. Similarly, lack of political organization or power in an area can lead to a relative lack of public services and improvements. Rarely are these relationships addressed in the comprehensive planning process.

This narrow focus on physical elements of the community contributes to the frustrations experienced by citizens involved in the comprehensive planning process. Their concerns are often much broader than physical planning, yet they are

asked to focus solely on physical problems. For planning to solve urban problems, the relationship between physical, social, political, and economic problems must be addressed in both general plans and more specific action plans.

One area often excluded from consideration, but important to citizens, is public service delivery. Over the last several decades, the provision of these services has typically been consolidated in larger administrative units to achieve economies of scale and to assure greater control over the character of services and the activities of service providers. Advocates of decentralized government structures, however, see this trend as misguided. Based on studies that demonstrate the continuation of pluralism in American society, they argue that centralized service provision cannot hope to account for the variation in needs and desires of the various social subgroups. Centralized services, they argue, are rigid, insensitive, and ultimately dehumanizing (Schmandt, 1973). Public services have also been "professionalized," and citizens have much less opportunity to influence their nature.

Underlying these criticisms is the belief that economic efficiency, narrowly defined, is not a sufficient criterion for evaluating service delivery. As Altschuler points out, "It is possible for a remarkably 'efficient' government to produce disastrous results. Its objectives may be irrelevant, perverse or self defeating. Or it may be so overwhelming in its consequence that it destroys the capacity of its clients to help themselves" (1970, p. 207). Efficiency defined in terms of dollars per citizen or some similar criterion is not as important as assuring that the services provided meet the needs and desires of the populace. Any extra expense incurred in decentralizing services, it is argued, is well worth the improved quality of those services.

Neighborhood planning programs should broaden the purview of city planning and provide a mechanism for citizens to influence the nature of the services provided to their local area. These programs are often designed to encourage the consideration of social and public service delivery problems as well as physical problems. They provide a mechanism by which local communities can evaluate local services and communicate their concerns to city officials. Moreover, neighborhood planning programs can encourage the development of self-help projects designed to supplement the services provided by the

city. Neighborhood clean-up, beautification, community crime prevention, and recreation programs are all examples of ways local residents can supplement city services.

Proposition 5: Neighborhood planning programs will result in more social interaction and a stronger sense of community in local areas.

Early sociologists, including Durlheim, Tonnies, and Simmel, bemoaned the loss of community in urban areas. These theorists felt that the persistent, personal, and satisfying relationships found in villages had given way to transient, instrumental, and nonsatisfying relationships in urban areas. Generally, they saw urban dwellers as lacking a sufficient number of primary relationships and as suffering from a sense of isolation and detachment from the society at large. The proponents of this perspective, however, present very little convincing empirical evidence to support their position. Typically, they cited the higher rates of crime and pathology in urban areas as evidence; yet these could have been caused by many factors.

More recent social theorists see the local neighborhood as a facilitator of feelings of community and belonging. Some, in fact, see the urban neighborhood "as the antidote to the alleged impersonality, specialization of interaction, and loss of comprehensible scale of the modern metropolis" (Wellman, 1977, p. 218). This is particularly true of those with limited mobility, including children, housewives, the elderly, and the poor. These groups, which make up a substantial proportion of the total population, are relatively placebound and are likely to develop their primary social relationships locally or not at all.

Janowitz (1952) coined the phrase "community of limited liability" to describe modern involvement with the local community. Individuals, he suggests, vary greatly in their involvement in their local neighborhood. In modern local communities people choose to become involved. Because of increased mobility there is no compelling necessity for their social involvement, as there was in earlier times. Moreover, their involvement is tenuous. If their needs or aspirations are not being met by involvement in the local community, they will withdraw from this involvement. Although this perspective is applicable to a large portion of the society, the substantial

number of people who are relatively immobile do not have other choices.

The continued importance of the local neighborhood has been supported by a number of survey studies which show that a significant proportion of friendships occur in the local area and that attachment to the local area is often strong (Athanasios and Yoshioka, 1973; Caplow and Forman, 1950; Fischer, 1982). One study comparing the number of primary social relationships in urban and rural areas found that they are more extensive in urban areas (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974). Moreover, based on a large sample survey, Fischer (1982) found that, on the average, respondents named 4.8 local associates when asked about recent social encounters. This represented 41 percent of all associates. Comparing the locus and number of social contacts between urban and nonurban residents, he concludes that urbanism does "not reduce the absolute number of neighbors people deal with, but it does reduce the proportional role of neighbors. Put another way, urbanism adds social ties outside the neighborhood" (p. 101). A number of ethnographic studies have demonstrated that extensive social interaction still occurs in local urban and suburban areas and that this interaction plays a significant role in controlling individual behavior (Gans, 1962; 1967; Kornblum, 1975; Suttles, 1968; Whyte, 1955).

The importance of local social contacts has been underscored by research on the influence of social support systems on mental and physical health. Recent evidence indicates that personal support networks protect individuals from the ill effects of stressful life situations (Hamburg and Killilea, 1979; House, 1980). Fischer (1982) has identified three important types of social support: counseling, which includes discussing personal matters and seeking advice; companionship, which includes spending leisure time together; and practical support, which involves several kinds of material assistance, including assistance in and around the house, looking after the house while away and lending money. Furthermore, based on a large sample survey, Fischer reports that compared to relatives, coworkers, and friends, neighbors were the most often called upon for certain types of material support and were the second most frequently relied upon for spending social holidays and discussing hobbies.

Local interaction and a sense of community are also the

basis for the development of informal social control. Warren and Warren comment, "It is on the local level that individuals encounter the culture and social systems of the larger society and are introduced into these systems and acquire appropriate attitudes and behavior patterns" (1977, p. 174). Beyond the family, the neighborhood is typically the first social system children are exposed to. Their behavior is influenced by their interaction with adult neighbors and other children. Moreover, adult behavior is constrained by the possibility of gossip, ridicule, and threats of social ostracism (Eames and Goode, 1977; Gans, 1962; Warren, 1962). According to Roland Warren: "These informal pressures, along with custom and local norms, operate directly on the decision-making of individuals as family or neighborhood members, along with the more formal controls operating through the law" (1962, p. 218).

Neighborhood planning programs are expected to increase local interaction and sense of community in neighborhoods and thus bolster the social support and social control functions of the urban neighborhood in two ways.

First, the designation of areas as distinct neighborhoods with distinct responsibilities is expected to strengthen the sense of common identity and common plight. As Altschuler comments: "There is a great deal of precedent for believing that a group's sense of unity can be cultivated by treating it as a group—i.e., by assigning it tasks which require collective decision-making and intense interaction among members, by distributing benefits through group channels and in accord with group policies, by refusing to negotiate except with official group spokesmen, and so on" (1962, p. 92).

The collective activities required of neighborhood planning programs provide a reason for people to come together, interact, and identify common perspectives and experiences. Furthermore, they provide a mechanism for the expression of these perspectives and experiences. Hallman, for example, concludes: "Looking at all phases of neighborhood decentralization, I find one of its greatest benefits is enhancing the sense of community. Where people have an organizational vehicle close at hand, they have a better opportunity to work together, and common action is a great booster of community spirit" (1977, p. 125). Treating an area as if it were a group by giving it certain responsibilities can lead to a sense of unity

and common purpose. This, in turn, can lead to a cohesive social group.

Second, neighborhood planning programs should strengthen the social functions of the neighborhood by increasing local interaction. These programs provide the opportunity for residents to meet at neighborhood meetings and other social functions sponsored by the neighborhood planning program and develop personal relationships that transcend the performance of duties associated with neighborhood planning. Friendships and acquaintances with local residents are the likely result. The local groups started or supported by neighborhood planning programs can provide the basis for establishing and enforcing local social norms for property upkeep and the like. The sponsorship of community clean-up days, for example, may establish a norm for property maintenance, and those taking part might apply social pressure on others to maintain the cleanliness of the community. There is a considerable body of research indicating that those who participate in local voluntary organizations are more involved in informal social interaction in the local neighborhood. Studies by Ahlbrandt and Cunningham (1979), Bell and Boat (1957), Kasarda and Janowitz (1974), and Hunter (1974) all confirm this association. Although the causal ordering of these variables is uncertain, they are likely to have a mutually reinforcing effect. Those with more local associations are more likely to know of and join local groups. Those who join local groups are likely to develop informal associations with other members and affective attachment to the community as a whole. Neighborhood planning programs that establish local neighborhood groups or councils should lead to an increase in local social interaction and in sense of community.

Proposition 6: Neighborhood planning will result in a greater integration of participants into the larger society and increase the vertical ties between the community and larger social organizations.

Social theorists have emphasized the role of the neighborhood in providing an intermediate structure between the state or larger society and the individual. Durkheim, for example, wrote:

Where the state is the only environment in which we can live communal lives, they inevitably lose contact, become detached, and thus society disintegrates. A nation can be maintained only if, between the state and the individual, there is intercalated a whole series of secondary groups near enough to the individuals to attract them strongly in their spheres of action and drag them in this way into the general torrent of social life. (1964, p. 28)

Many contemporary social theorists feel that neighborhood organizations provide this necessary link between the individual and the state (Nesbit, 1966; Rubin, 1969; Warren, 1963). These organizations draw individuals into local public involvement and lead to more extensive participation in state and national affairs. They provide a local frame of reference and a base from which to relate to the larger society. This is particularly true of newcomers to urban life. Neighborhood networks and more formal neighborhood organizations are important instruments in the assimilation of migrants into a new way of life (Warren and Warren, 1977).

The vertical linkages between individuals and organizations in the local community and extra-community systems are also essential for maximizing the resources and power acquired by a community. Warren (1963) suggests that the strength of these linkages has an important influence on local conditions. Warren and Warren (1977) and Schoenberg and Rosenbaum (1980) go on to suggest that strong vertical linkages are essential for a healthy, viable community. Based on an analysis of five neighborhoods in St. Louis, Schoenberg and Rosenbaum conclude, "The viable neighborhood has linkages to public and private resource-givers through branch institutions in the neighborhood or through leaders who make linkages to outside institutions" (1980, p. 34). They see these linkages as essential for acquiring both the funding and political influence necessary to maintain or improve local conditions.

Neighborhood planning programs should provide a mechanism for integrating participants into the larger society by involving them in activities that require interaction with representatives of municipal government and other organizations outside the neighborhood. This patterned interaction should lead to the development of new vertical linkages, both increas-

ing the integration of individuals into the larger society and improving the ability of the community to acquire resources from outside the community. Neighborhood planning programs that are responsible for creating 'new neighborhood groups should provide a new intermediate structure between the individual and the larger society and a mechanism through which local citizens can better understand and influence larger social institutions. Neighborhood planning programs should also provide new communication channels between citizens and municipal government. These should act to give citizens a better understanding of the activities of public officials and give public officials a better understanding of the concerns of citizens.

Proposition 7: Neighborhood planning programs will result in an increase in citizen access to and trust in local government.

During the last century, many writers argue, it has become increasingly difficult for citizens and neighborhood groups to influence the policies and programs of local government. Two actions are responsible for this trend: the consolidation of smaller jurisdictions into larger ones and the demise of the ward system of government.

Annexation of smaller jurisdictions by larger ones has severely weakened the influence that individuals and local groups have on government and strengthened the influence of business and financial interests. Kotler, for example, writes: "Through annexation, the strongest political unit in the region deprived other villages, towns and cities of their autonomous government and controlled their territory through political party organization, which was the instrument for domination for 'free' downtown. The strength of the party emanated from the power of that original city, which never lost its liberty" (1969, p. 6). Kotler views these annexations as imperial domination. Once autonomous neighborhoods are controlled for the sake of the economic and political interests of the central business district, tax expenditure and other important municipal decisions disproportionately favor the central business district. Regardless of whether one subscribes to Kotler's perspective, it is clear that during the last century annexations have increased the size and population of municipal jurisdictions and decreased the influence that any individual or local group can have.

The demise of the ward system, the second action that contributed to the decline of responsive municipal government, was a by-product of the municipal reform movement. In discussing this movement, the National Commission on Neighborhoods wrote, "While these reformers reduced parochialism, patronage and corruption, they also created structures that often made government more remote and less accountable" (1979, p. 277). In particular, at-large elections and professional nonpartisan management have been blamed for this lack of responsiveness and accountability. At-large elections decrease the influence of minority groups, while professional management tends to be rigid and ignore the needs and desires of citizens in favor of professional standards and operating procedures. Zimmerman comments: "The growth of a ponderous bureaucracy has slowed down the administrative decision making process and traditional municipal institutions have been unable to cope with the varying problems found in different neighborhoods. As a result, many citizens have become alienated from their local government" (1972, p. 11).

Some think that the reformers were simply unaware of these negative consequences, while others believe that at least some in the movement were trying to keep minorities out of government. Whatever the motivations, however, the result was to deprive local residential interests of a mechanism to define and redress local issues and problems. The demise of the ward system favored business and majority-group interests. Furthermore, it removed the mechanism for local participation and, according to some, led to a sense of political helplessness and apathy among residents (Hallman, 1977; Zimmerman, 1972). The average person was left powerless to influence the policy-making process in any significant way.

Neighborhood planning programs should increase access and trust in local government by allowing more citizen participation in municipal decisions affecting local neighborhoods. Providing greater opportunities for involvement should strengthen the representative structure and trust in municipal government. The communication channels established by many neighborhood planning programs should also help to inform citizens at an early date of projects affecting their neighborhoods. Thus citizens should be less likely to find out about a decision after it was too late to become involved in the political

process. Improved communication should also help citizens understand the necessity and logic behind municipal decisions, thus increasing trust in municipal governance.

Proposition 8: Neighborhood planning programs should result in a more equitable distribution of public goods.

Many have criticized municipal governments for failing to distribute public resources equally among all areas of the city. The more well-to-do areas have traditionally had greater political power than poorer areas, and this power differential has resulted in an imbalance in the expenditure of public funds that favors the more well-to-do areas. As Hallman states, "Municipal housekeeping departments have a double standard of service, with quality correlated to neighborhood income" (as quoted in Lineberry, 1977, p. 16). Harvey (1973) presents a convincing argument that the mechanisms of income redistribution in a complex city system typically increase inequalities.

As Lineberry (1977) points out, however, there are many definitional and operational problems with the concept of equity. Do equal inputs as measured by dollar expenditure, for example, constitute an equitable distribution? Or are equal outputs as measured by a standard level of service for all residents, for example, necessary? Equal outputs usually necessitate unequal inputs. In crime prevention, for example, equal inputs would mean the same level of patrols regardless of the crime rates, and equal outputs would mean deploying patrols in a manner that would equalize crime rates across the city. The use of subjective and objective measures of equity is also at issue. Should we be more concerned with objective measures based on dollars spent or distance to facilities or with the perceptions of individuals? Both measures would seem to provide useful information.

Lineberry's analysis of public service equity in San Antonio indicates inequities in the distribution of parks and libraries, but finds that they were not related to socioeconomic status, race, or political power. Instead, ecological variables such as the age and density of the neighborhood were the most highly associated with service levels. He concludes that in larger cities "pockets of discrimination can be found but probably not patterns of discrimination" (p. 196).

Yet a number of documented instances of inequity related to race are to be found in court cases and other independent evaluations. In *Hudnott v. City of Prattville*, it was shown that while the white-to-black population distribution was one to five, the ratio of white-to-black park acreage was fifteen to one. Similarly, in *Hawkins v. Shaw* testimony showed that 97 percent of the housing units without sanitary sewers were occupied by blacks and 98 percent of the housing units not fronting on paved streets were black occupied. Finally, a study of library services in Chicago concluded that "over the years the Chicago public library has been putting an undue share of its resources into outlying sections of the city and not enough in disadvantaged areas" (as quoted in Lineberry, 1977). Thus it is clear that inequities exist in the provision of public services and that in some instances they are related to race and income.

Neighborhood planning programs should help diminish these inequities, whether they be related to race, income, or ecological characteristics, by providing opportunities for those who have traditionally been underrepresented to analyze the level of services provided and engage in the necessary political action to rectify the situation. These programs aid in the establishment or maintenance of neighborhood organizations, assist those organizations in assessing local problems, and provide opportunities for those organizations to become involved in local political activity designed to remedy their problems. This should lead to a more equal distribution of public goods.

Conclusion

Drawing on social, political, and planning theory, this chapter has presented eight propositions on the benefits of neighborhood planning programs. These programs are expected to be more responsive to local problems, increase citizen participation, improve local physical conditions and public services, increase local interaction and sense of community, foster social integration, increase trust in local government, and bring about a more equitable distribution of public goods.

It is interesting to note that many of these propositions are similar to the stated goals of neighborhood planning programs. A content analysis of the official descriptions of the fifty-one programs we surveyed indicates that almost half of the pro-

grams have increased citizen participation as an explicit goal. Similarly, improving local physical conditions, solving local problems, and improving communication were also frequently mentioned goals. In evaluating the propositions developed in this chapter, then, we are also evaluating these programs in terms of many of their own goals.

The question we must now ask is, To what extent can these propositions be supported based on the actual experience with neighborhood planning programs? The data presented in the next four chapters will provide a basis upon which to answer this question. After presenting a description of the programs and of their major accomplishments and problems, we will reassess the validity of these propositions.

Table 5.1. Program Accomplishments as Identified by Survey Respondents

Accomplishment	Frequency	Percent ¹
Project initiation and improved physical conditions	28	54.9
Increased community awareness and competence	20	39.2
Increased citizen influence on city officials	13	25.5
Increased citizen participation in planning	12	23.5
Improved communication between neighborhoods and city officials	12	23.5
Improved local services	4	8.2

1. Percentages add up to greater than 100 since multiple answers were allowed.

Project Initiation and Improved Local Physical Conditions

The most frequent response to the open-ended survey question on program accomplishments was neighborhood improvement projects and improved local physical conditions. Almost 55 percent of the respondents freely offered this as an accomplishment. A more specific question on physical improvements attributable to the program sheds light on the nature of these improvements. Respondents were presented a list of physical elements and asked to identify which have been improved by the neighborhood planning program. The results are presented in Table 5.2.

The most frequently cited physical improvement was in housing conditions, followed by streets, curbs and sidewalks, recreation facilities, neighborhood cleanliness, street lighting, and traffic controls. Over two-thirds of the respondents identified five or more physical elements that had been improved, indicating that neighborhood groups within the program were involved in a wide range of activities.

3 Program Accomplishments

This chapter presents evidence on the accomplishments of neighborhood planning programs which, along with findings reported in other chapters, will be used to evaluate the validity of the propositions presented in chapter 3. Information on program accomplishments was obtained from the survey of program directors, case study interviews, and program documentation.

The survey included an open-ended question which asked, "What are the major accomplishments of your program?" and a series of closed-ended questions asking about specific accomplishments, including the program's influence on physical conditions, local services, citizen-government relations, project implementation, and citizen ability to influence city officials. The case study interviews with program directors, neighborhood planners, and citizen representatives included the same open- and closed-ended questions, with the addition of a specific question on the program's influence on the distribution of public resources.

Many accomplishments were mentioned by both survey and case study respondents, and, generally, the most frequently mentioned accomplishments were the same for both groups. The discussion of accomplishments follows the ordering in Table 5.1, which presents the rank order of accomplishments as mentioned by survey respondents in response to the open-ended question. These are followed by a discussion of other accomplishments as identified by closed-ended survey questions and case study interviews.

Table 5.2. Improved Physical Elements Identified by Survey Respondents

Improved Physical Elements	Frequency	Percent ¹
Housing	46	90.2
Streets, curbs, sidewalks	45	88.2
Recreation facilities	45	88.2
Neighborhood cleanliness	41	80.4
Street lights	31	60.8
Traffic signals	27	52.9
Other	8	15.7
None	1	2.0

1. Percentages add up to greater than 100 since multiple answers were allowed.

Case study respondents and program documentation provide more specific examples of improvements. Housing rehabilitation was a frequently mentioned accomplishment among neighborhood planners and citizen representatives in every case study city except Wilmington. One citizen representative in St. Paul commented: "We have been able to accomplish real improvements in the community. We have turned the community around in terms of deteriorating housing." A more specific example comes from Raleigh. There several inner-city task forces initiated a neighborhood maintenance program in which local youth were hired to paint and do minor repairs on the homes of elderly, handicapped, and poor residents of the area. Donations from local businesses and a stipend from Community Development Block Grant funds were used to support the program. In Cincinnati local development corporations have spun off from district councils and have become directly involved in major housing renovations. Entire blocks of abandoned housing have been refurbished through these efforts. The city has also established a sweat equity housing grant program to encourage groups to become involved in housing rehabilitation. In Atlanta a neighborhood planning unit applied for and received an Urban Development Action Grant to undertake a housing rehabilitation and neighborhood clean-up

program. In addition to becoming directly involved in housing rehabilitation programs, two cities—St. Paul and Cincinnati—have involved their community councils in the siting of new subsidized housing developments.

Transportation improvements were also frequently mentioned by those interviewed in the case studies and were cited in program documentation. These typically resulted from groups lobbying the city government to make the necessary repairs, improvements, or changes. In Cincinnati, for example, program staff aided a number of district councils in analyzing their traffic problems and facilitated meetings with the Highway Maintenance Division. According to program documentation most of the street improvements recommended by these councils were implemented. In Wilmington dirt streets in low-income areas were a problem. The district councils in these areas made street paving a priority issue and were able to secure CDBG funds for this purpose. Almost all the streets have now been paved. Public transportation scheduling was an issue in Raleigh, and several community councils successfully lobbied for scheduling changes to better serve non-work-related trips by local residents.

A large number of improvements in recreation facilities were also attributed to the program. Some of these improvements were a result of lobbying efforts and some were self-help projects. In St. Paul a neighborhood council was successful in lobbying the council to build a park on an island that was originally intended for sale to private developers. The neighborhood representative felt that the neighborhood plan, which identified a lack of recreation facilities in the area, was instrumental in this victory. In Cincinnati a number of neighborhood councils have received grants from the city (through the Mott Foundation) to renovate old schools as community recreation centers. Once renovated, the communities will fund and manage their own recreation and social programs in these facilities. The city has not committed itself to operating funds. The Community Chest has, however, offered to provide a portion of the operating costs for these centers. In Atlanta one neighborhood council fought for the improvement of a neighborhood park. Though a combination of self-help and city-implemented improvements, what was once perceived as a dangerous, underutilized park was transformed into a major

neighborhood activity center. Greenways have been the focus of attention in Raleigh, as a number of the councils have been involved in maintaining and improving their condition.

Most of the neighborhood groups involved in these programs also sponsor neighborhood beautification and cleanup programs. In Houston the city has established a "rent-a-truck" program, which enables neighborhood groups to rent, for a small fee, a city-owned dump truck to carry away debris. Many of the neighborhood groups have taken regular advantage of this by scheduling periodic clean-ups of vacant lots and other properties. The neighborhood planning staff assists in organizing these events. In Wilmington the clean-up and restoration of a historic black cemetery was accomplished by a neighborhood council, which used city-owned equipment and volunteer labor. Similar beautification activities were sponsored by neighborhood groups in the other case study cities.

These are but a handful of the physical improvements credited to the neighborhood planning programs in the study. They do, however, exemplify the types of projects taken on by neighborhood groups in these programs.

Increased Community Awareness and Competence

The next most frequently cited accomplishment was increased community awareness and competence. This was mentioned by approximately 40 percent of the respondents, who said that citizens were better informed of both public and private projects affecting their neighborhoods and better able to take constructive action to maintain or improve neighborhood conditions.

The case studies provide a deeper understanding of this accomplishment. Citizens, planners and directors alike, felt that the programs provided citizens with important information on existing and proposed city plans, current physical and social conditions, and city operating procedures. In Raleigh, for example, one annual report stated: "In terms of educating members about the effects of governmental plans, all task forces have been acquainted with the proposed Land Use and Public Services elements of the Comprehensive Plan, the proposed Thoroughfare Plan, zoning amendments and Board of Adjustment requests, procedures for petitioning the City and crime trends and prevention techniques." In Atlanta, Raleigh, and

St. Paul, participating neighborhood groups are notified of all zoning change requests in their areas. These are often discussed at monthly meetings, where positions for or against the requests are adopted and sent on to the city council. Several citizen representatives reported that developers came to these meetings and, in many instances, altered their projects to win the support of the neighborhood group. All three of these cities also routinely notify neighborhood groups of plans and proposals that might affect their areas. In Houston the emphasis is on providing information on such topics as incorporation procedures, restrictive covenants, and grant writing. Citizen representatives found this information to be extremely useful. In Cincinnati and Wilmington information on the municipal or CDBG budgeting process is provided to local groups, and the neighborhood planners routinely inform groups of impending actions with potential effects on their areas. One citizen representative in Wilmington commented: "When people get educated about city government, they learn how to get things done."

Programs were also credited with helping citizens learn how to analyze issues, develop effective strategies for neighborhood improvement, and increase organizational capacity. Citizens representatives in Atlanta, Cincinnati, St. Paul, and Raleigh all felt that the neighborhood planners had been helpful in pointing out the potential costs and benefits of proposed projects and in suggesting ways to address specific concerns. In Raleigh, for example, one community council had intended to support a zoning change request based on the developer's site plans. The neighborhood planner, however, informed the citizens that, once rezoned, the developer could develop the property at maximum density and not be held to the site plans. This changed the citizens' view of the proposal.

In Atlanta, Houston, and Cincinnati neighborhood planners worked with local neighborhood groups in developing action plans and grant proposals for addressing local problems. The citizen representatives felt that this taught them how to develop plans and proposals to "get something done in the neighborhood." A specific example from Cincinnati involved the renovation of a vacant recreation building. The staff stressed the need to develop a balance sheet of expected income and expenses to ensure maintenance of the building, helped structure a work plan detailing the steps necessary for successful

completion of the project, and identified who would be responsible for specific aspects of the project. The project was recommended for funding in the 1980 capital improvement budget for seventy thousand dollars.

Programs in Cincinnati have placed great emphasis on organizational capacity building. The Community Assistance Teams have prepared an organizational analysis of each community council and used this to help community groups to function more effectively. In the Pendleton area, for example, the staff helped the existing Thirteenth Street Tenant Organization and a newly formed group unite into one more broadly based council. In the Mohawk area staff met with the area council and disgruntled residents to resolve concerns about the council's representativeness of the total neighborhood. The staff helped develop bylaws and a constitution, monitored the selection of officers, and organized leadership training workshops.

Overall, these programs increase the vertical integration of communities into the larger governing structure. They provide local community groups with the knowledge and contacts to work effectively through the central administration.

Increased Citizen Influence on City Officials

Over 25 percent of the survey respondents mentioned increased citizen influence on city officials as an accomplishment of their neighborhood planning programs. Given that these respondents were to an open-ended question and that the respondents were program directors, this percentage seems particularly high. More revealing, perhaps, is the response to a more specific question: "How do you rate the effectiveness of the program in influencing the decisions of city officials?" As shown in Table 5.3, over 60 percent of the respondents felt their neighborhood programs were fairly to very effective in influencing city officials, and only 14 percent rated their programs as either fairly or very ineffective.

Case study data provide further evidence that these programs offer a means for citizen influence and help to clarify the nature of that influence. Increased citizen influence was mentioned as an accomplishment by respondents in all case study cities. The following general comments are typical of the responses:

Table 5.3. Ratings of Citizen Influence on City Officials

Rating of Influence	Accomplishments	
	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	10	19.6
Fairly effective	21	41.2
Moderately effective	13	25.5
Fairly ineffective	6	11.8
Very ineffective	1	2.0

I think the program has been very effective. I am not saying that they [the council] have always done what we asked, but there has been a new responsiveness on the part of elected officials. When they have made decisions contrary to our decisions they have tended to be more of a compromise. (Citizen representative, St. Paul.)

[Through the program] the citizens have tremendous influence. The city is built on neighborhoods. The mayor is alert to the power of the citizen. (Neighborhood planner, Atlanta.)

The citizens have a feeling, a sense of influencing the city government. This has led to increased satisfaction and increased self-confidence. (Neighborhood planner, Raleigh.)

Citizens are running the government. I feel that the city council has given us a taste of the candy and you can't take that away. (Citizen representative, St. Paul.)

Budgeting and city expenditures, zoning, and plan preparation were the most frequently mentioned areas in which influence was exerted through the program. Respondents in St. Paul, Cincinnati, and Wilmington emphasized the importance of citizen influence on budgeting and city expenditures. In St. Paul, for example, one citizen commented: "On the east side they [the city] wanted to take an old hospital site and put some townhouses there. The city was really pushing saying, 'Hey, we need the tax base,' but the community said, 'No, we don't want that; we want a park' and they got what they wanted." In this example the community, through lobbying and presentations at council meetings, was able to convince council mem-

bers to forgo extra tax revenues from residential development and provide funds to develop a park. Records kept on the number and outcome of budget requests by district councils in St. Paul indicate that over 80 percent of the neighborhood projects were, in fact, funded. Some St. Paul planners were actually expressing concern that too much money was being spent on neighborhood projects and not enough on city-wide projects such as improvements to the sewer system.

In Cincinnati citizen representatives and neighborhood planners alike offered the neighborhood support program as evidence of citizens' ability to influence budgeting. In the words of a neighborhood planner: "They [the neighborhoods] have had influence. For example, they have lobbied for [and received] the neighborhood improvement program and the neighborhood support program. Neighborhood action has also resulted in much money being channeled into housing programs." The neighborhood support program provides neighborhood councils with funds to hire part-time workers or undertake self-help projects. The community work plans developed by neighborhood councils also add neighborhood projects to the city budget. According to one neighborhood planner, between 30 and 60 percent of the projects requested are actually funded. In Wilmington influence on budgeting was also offered as a major program accomplishment. A community representative commented: "I held meetings to get more information when asked to help plan the [community development] budget. Then, some of my ideas were incorporated into the plan and I am just one person." This participation, however, unlike that in St. Paul and Cincinnati, is confined to the CDBG budget. In the remaining three cities—Atlanta, Houston, and Raleigh—there was little mention or evidence that citizens were substantially influencing budgeting or the expenditure of city funds. The programs in these cities also lacked any direct mechanism for neighborhood group involvement in budgeting. The programs in Houston and Raleigh had no link at all. In Atlanta the program had a tenuous link through the neighborhood plans, but there was little opportunity for neighborhood groups to monitor the progress of their proposed projects.

The second area of influence concerns zoning decisions and public facility siting. Examples of citizens influencing the outcomes of zoning decisions were widespread in Raleigh, At-

lanta, and St. Paul. In Raleigh citizen representatives held local hearings on zoning change requests and fought what were considered to be undesirable proposals. In one program year, the annual report indicates that local task forces had taken stands on nine zoning amendment cases before the planning commission and the city council, and appeared eight times before the board of adjustment to voice their opinions on pending appeals. According to one citizen representative, developers have begun to work with the local task forces before submitting proposals to the council.

Similarly, in Atlanta neighborhood groups appear to have had considerable influence in rezoning decisions. One citizen representative expresses it this way: "Credibility in the zoning process is our biggest plus. Our credibility came from responsible recommendations and building a rapport with developers and the council." Other representatives in Atlanta expressed similar sentiments. In St. Paul one of the routine tasks of a neighborhood organizer who works for an individual district council is to screen zoning variance requests and bring those in the local area to the attention of the district council. The district council then takes a stand on the proposed variance and sends a representative to the hearings. In Wilmington local assemblies have had a major influence on the placement of public facilities. In one instance the public works department proposed the expansion of a garage for city vehicles with Economic Development Administration funds. The local assembly, however, fought the proposal, which they considered disruptive, and was able to stop the project. According to several citizen representatives, this created a new attitude toward the local assemblies. Zoning changes did not seem to be an area of concern in Cincinnati, and in Houston the focus was on maintaining deed restrictions, since zoning is not practiced.

The third area of influence was in affecting city plans. Citizen representatives in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Raleigh, and St. Paul felt that they had had a substantial influence in altering the nature of the cities' comprehensive plans, as well as other expressions of official policy. In St. Paul, for example, neighborhood plans developed by district councils become part of the official comprehensive plan for the city. Neighborhood groups have also been involved in the development of a housing development plan for the city which identifies sites for new

subsidized housing developments. In Raleigh local councils have been extensively involved in revising the city's comprehensive plan and both its transportation and human services plans. One neighborhood planner commented that the local councils "have pretty good influence with the council. They have input on the comprehensive plan and have gotten a lot more people involved." In Cincinnati community plans were cited as a particularly powerful tool to influence the council. One citizen representative comments: "Good comprehensive community plans helped the city accept the community groups as partners in the planning process." There was little evidence of an influence on city plans, however, in Wilmington and Houston.

Increased Citizen Participation in Planning

A fourth accomplishment mentioned by 25 percent of the survey respondents was increased citizen participation in planning and governance. These respondents credited the programs with involving more people in planning and governance than other conventional citizen participation programs.

Responses from those interviewed in the case studies support this finding. Increased citizen participation was mentioned by respondents as an accomplishment in all cities except Houston. A citizen representative from St. Paul comments: "More citizens are interested in government than before. It's not a large group, but it's significant. The program draws people into the government process." Similarly, an Atlanta citizen suggests that the program "draws more people into the planning process by getting them interested in pressing local problems."

Unfortunately, figures on attendance are not routinely kept; so the actual numbers of participants in each of the programs are generally not available. In Cincinnati, however, figures were kept for the 1979 program year. They show that the average attendance per meeting was 38 and that a total of 1,607 volunteers actively participated in doing community projects.

The citizen representatives interviewed provide another source of information on this topic. They reported that the average attendance ranged from between 15 and 40 people. Although this number is not large—typically representing far

less than 1 percent of the population in the area—when multiplied by 20 to 40 individual neighborhood groups in each city, it represents 300 to 1,600 residents participating on a monthly basis. This number is undoubtedly large compared to other methods of citizen participation.

Furthermore, most citizen representatives reported that when "hot" issues were being discussed, participation increased dramatically. Many residents, it seems, are willing to let the community council representatives handle the more routine issues, but become directly involved in the major issues. The ongoing nature of the participation must also be considered in evaluating the benefits of these programs. Presumably, participation by those who are familiar with the issues and the context is more effective than that by those who participate infrequently.

Improved Communication

A fifth accomplishment mentioned by approximately 25 percent of the survey respondents is improved communication between neighborhood groups and between neighborhood groups and city officials. This differs from increased community awareness in that respondents were referring to the two-way communication of views and the face-to-face meetings between citizens and government officials facilitated by these programs. Citizens highlighted the importance of letting council members and department heads know what they wanted and why, while council members and department heads pointed to the opportunity to educate citizens on the constraints under which the local government operates and on operating procedures. In St. Paul, for example, a citizen representative commented that "[through the program] city officials have become less formidable to the community. Now the community is not afraid to talk with these people. Also, city officials come out to the community to hold hearings." A citizen representative in Cincinnati commented that the program has "carried neighborhood concerns to city departments and have gotten them [department heads] out in the neighborhoods." In Atlanta and Raleigh citizens and planners commented that the city-wide groups composed of neighborhood representatives were responsible for improving communication. These groups pro-

vided a convenient mechanism for council members and department heads to discuss issues with neighborhood leaders. Planners in Raleigh, Atlanta, and St. Paul also credited their programs with increasing their knowledge of community problems and perspectives. This knowledge, they suggested, assisted them in other planning activities in which they were involved, such as developing comprehensive plans and housing plans. They also reported that they shared these citizen concerns with others on the planning staff, thereby increasing the degree to which local plans were responsive to citizen concerns.

Local meetings and newsletters sponsored by participating neighborhood groups were also credited with improving communication within and between neighborhoods. The monthly meetings held by most neighborhood groups were said to provide opportunities for the exchange of information and ideas and generally to facilitate communication between local residents. Citizen representatives in some case study cities also credited their newsletters with improving communication. In St. Paul citizen representatives felt that their newsletter kept local residents informed of local events and concerns. In the words of one representative: "Increased communication is the result of our paper. We are publicizing the things that are happening and providing an information center." Several respondents in Cincinnati also credited their newsletters with improving local communication and with increasing participation in the groups' activities. In Houston communication within the neighborhoods was facilitated by local newsletters, while communication between neighborhoods was facilitated by a newsletter published by the planning department. Citizen leaders stressed the importance of learning what other neighborhood groups in the city were doing and of being exposed to examples of successful programs and approaches to local problems.

Improved Local Services

Only 8 percent of the survey respondents mentioned improved local services in response to the open-ended question on accomplishments. Answers to a direct question asking about specific services affected by the program, however, reveal a much greater impact on public services. As shown in Table 5.4, approximately 52 percent of the respondents indicated

Table 5.4. Improved Local Services Mentioned by Survey Respondents

Improved Local Services	Frequency	Percent ¹
Human services	25	52.1
Public transportation	18	37.5
Police	15	31.3
Sanitation	14	29.2
Rodent control	11	22.9
Fire	7	14.6
None	13	27.1
Other	14	29.2

1. Percentages add up to greater than 100 since multiple answers were allowed.

that the delivery of human services had been improved, followed by public transportation, police, sanitation, rodent control, and fire protection. However, 27 percent of the respondents reported that none of the local services mentioned had been improved. Apparently, many programs do not involve service delivery evaluation as one of their goals or activities.

The case study data provide specific examples of improvements. When asked if they felt the program had led to the improvement of local services, an overwhelming majority of the case study respondents felt that it had. The Cincinnati program was particularly active in the area of human services. A youth employment program, for example, was developed in the Madisonville area in connection with a large amusement park. A neighborhood planner helped the community council in negotiations, fund-raising, and arranging transportation for this program. A child-care program was established in the Winston Hills area after a needs assessment sponsored by the community council identified this as an unmet need. Program staff assisted the committee in developing the needs assessment, designing the program, and writing the grant application. Programs to provide meals, housing, counseling, and recreational services for over fifteen hundred elderly residents were also established in eight council areas. These projects were funded through a combination of Community Chest, Council on Aging, and CDBG funds.

The program in Raleigh has also had an impact on human service delivery. Each of the local task forces was involved in a needs assessment project, and the results were used to direct the efforts of existing programs and to help develop new ones. In St. Paul one district council started a drug education and counseling program for local youth and their parents, and another established a day-care cooperative to serve the needs of working mothers. In Houston groups started a tutoring program for elementary school children and sponsored a youth recreation program. In St. Paul a neighborhood which lacked nearby emergency medical facilities lobbied for and received a paramedic unit in its district. Another district council identified a multiservice center as its top priority and lobbied for and received funding from the city budget.

Case study respondents also mentioned improvements in police services. In all case study cities, neighborhood groups were involved in crime prevention programs. In most instances this involvement took the form of neighborhood watch programs, but other approaches were also used. In Atlanta, for example, one neighborhood planning unit started a witness assistance program and received a federal grant to continue the program. In the interviews community representatives often made mention of inviting police officials to meetings where residents could express their concerns about local crime and become more familiar with local patrol officers. In Cincinnati a district council initiated a twelve-member neighborhood dispute board to address local conflicts and minor criminal acts, such as vandalism. The board hears disputes and passes judgments. Another council has established a youth federation to provide counseling services and to advocate for youth needs. In St. Paul one district council created a crime task force to address the problem of delinquency by instituting counseling programs and other activities. Overall, community crime prevention programs were a major activity of community groups involved in neighborhood planning programs.

Improvements in recreation services were also mentioned by respondents in Raleigh and Cincinnati. In Raleigh community councils were involved in establishing local recreation programs for adults and youth. In Cincinnati a number of councils have raised funding through street fairs and block parties for recreation programs in recently rehabilitated local recreation centers.

Table 5.5. Ratings of Program Influence on
Citizen-Government Relations

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Greatly improved relations	13	25.5
Moderately improved relations	33	64.7
No influence on relations	4	7.8
Moderately impaired relations	1	2.0
Greatly impaired relations	0	0.0

Respondents in Raleigh and Atlanta also mentioned improvements in public transportation services. In these cities, pressure from community councils resulted in improvements in bus scheduling and signalization. In Raleigh community council activity also aided in establishing a shared-ride taxi service for the elderly and handicapped.

Nearly all the groups sponsor some sort of neighborhood clean-up or beautification program. In some instances these are organized yearly, while in others they are much more frequent. Sanitation vehicles are usually supplied by the city to support these activities. Citizen respondents felt that these activities not only improved local physical conditions but also helped to promote familiarity between neighbors and increase the sense of community.

Improved Citizen-Government Relations

Although survey respondents did not freely offer improved citizen-government relations as a program accomplishment in response to the open-ended question, when directly asked if citizen-government relations had improved as a result of the neighborhood planning program, over 80 percent of the survey respondents judged the relationship between citizens and government to have moderately or greatly improved. These results are presented in Table 5.5.

Many case study respondents mentioned improved citizen-government relations in response to an open-ended question on program accomplishments. This response was particularly common in Cincinnati, St. Paul, and Raleigh. Respondents em-

phasized the programs' positive influence on the citizens' perceptions of the cooperation and responsiveness shown by city officials. A citizen representative from St. Paul commented: "I believe there is a little more trust in government. Less conflict. Less of an advisory role or position. Citizens understand and are more supportive of city government." In Wilmington the planning director identified a new attitude among city officials. "City government has been more responsive to citizen needs and viewpoints. For example, the director of public works now asks if an idea has been checked out with the neighborhoods. That never happened five years ago." In Cincinnati citizen representatives and the program director agreed that the program had facilitated a cooperative attitude and involved citizens in more directive rather than reactive action. This, they suggested, was well received by the city council.

The responses of case study respondents to a direct question on the programs' influence on citizen-government relations, however, were more mixed. In fact, the majority of respondents in Atlanta felt that the program had worsened relations between the citizens and government. Some suggested that the heightened expectations created by the program were being frustrated by government officials who, after asking for citizen input on decisions, were not giving it serious weight. Others felt that the government was incapable of helping them with some of the more serious problems like housing deterioration. In Cincinnati, St. Paul, and Wilmington the responses were decidedly mixed. Some citizen representatives in Cincinnati, for example, felt the program "caused more people to complain." In St. Paul the typical response was a qualified yes. One citizen representative commented that the relationship between citizens and government is "considerably better than what it was. Yet, there is still a feeling of suspicion." Moreover, a neighborhood planner answered, "Yes and no; the program has allowed people to understand [the government process], but every now and then the program reinforces the negative feelings between the citizens and government." Similarly, in Wilmington a citizen representative commented that, "to a certain extent, citizens are still afraid or do not want to be bothered because they think the council will not listen." A neighborhood planner felt that "the relations between citizens and government are the same or have improved a little. Citizens still doubt government or anyone who works for govern-

ment." In Houston and Raleigh, however, a clear majority felt that citizen-government relations had improved as a result of the program.

Decreased Resistance to Project Initiation

Although survey respondents did not mention this as an accomplishment in response to the open-ended question, some did when they were specifically asked about it in a closed-ended question. As shown in Table 5.6, 17.6 percent of the respondents indicated their program had greatly decreased resistance, and a large 70.6 percent indicated that their program had led to a moderate decrease in citizen resistance to the implementation of planning projects. Only 11.7 percent of the respondents indicated that the program had either no effect or moderately increased resistance. This decreased resistance appears to be the result of early participation in the planning process, which allows citizens to "weed out" projects that are considered objectionable.

When neighborhood planners and program directors in the case study cities were asked about decreased community resistance, they overwhelmingly responded that their programs were successful in this regard. A planner in St. Paul, for example, said the program had "broken down the 'them versus us' attitude" and replaced it with a give-and-take attitude about development projects. In Houston a planner commented that "educating the communities about city-wide concerns aids in the implementation of city-wide projects." Finally, a planner in Wilmington commented that there was less resistance because "many of the projects are the result of a need expressed in the community." Only two planners in all the case study cities felt that resistance to city-initiated projects had not substantially decreased.

Leadership Training and the Development of Local Organizations

The open-ended question on accomplishments in the case study interviews elicited a number of responses indicating that these programs have been effective in developing local neighborhood

Table 5.6. Ratings of Program Influence on Resistance to Project Implementation

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Greatly decreased resistance	9	17.6
Moderately decreased resistance	36	70.6
Had no effect	4	7.8
Moderately increased resistance	2	3.9
Greatly increased resistance	0	0.0

leadership and in helping both to form new neighborhood organizations and to strengthen existing ones. Leadership training in particular was cited frequently by citizen representatives, neighborhood planners, and program directors in Atlanta, Cincinnati, Raleigh, and St. Paul. In Atlanta one citizen representative said the program had led to the "development of community activists which has allowed things to get done," while another said, "People have gotten leadership training and development." In Cincinnati the program was thought to be particularly good for helping new groups get organized and training new leaders. The Community Assistance Teams have routinely provided leadership training to new district council leaders. In St. Paul one citizen representative commented that the program had led to "the identification of good leadership within the community," and the program director commented that "the program brought out a whole new leadership in neighborhoods." In Raleigh the program was seen as a "great new stepping-stone" for residents to become involved in politics. It was a "place to develop political leadership."

This notion of neighborhood planning programs serving as a training ground for future political leaders was supported by examples of individuals starting as neighborhood group leaders and going on to hold political office. In Raleigh the former mayor had begun as a community council president. In Wilmington one of the council members started as a district council chairperson. Similarly, in Atlanta at least two recent council members had begun as heads of neighborhood planning units and one went on to become the director of budget and planning for the city. This is convincing evidence that these programs do, in fact, help to develop new political leadership.

Case study respondents in Cincinnati, Houston, St. Paul,

and Wilmington also emphasized the programs' role in creating new organizations and in strengthening existing ones. In Cincinnati the prospect of receiving a grant of Mott Foundation money was used as an incentive to encourage the formation of district councils in areas where they did not exist. The Community Assistance Teams also conducted confidential organizational assessments for district councils and provided assistance in improving organizational efficiency. In Houston respondents credited the program with direct responsibility for the organization of eight civic clubs and increasing organizational capacity by assisting them in obtaining tax-exempt status, securing grants from local corporations, and handling such technical matters as restrictive covenants. In St. Paul citizen representatives emphasized the importance of the community organizers funded through the program. They took responsibility for the managerial duties involved in running the organization, enabling the citizen representatives to focus on policy issues. This increased the organizational capacity of the district councils. The programs in Wilmington, Atlanta, and Raleigh were also credited with creating a number of neighborhood organizations throughout the city.

More Equitable Distribution of Public Resources

Although it was not possible to assess quantitatively the effect the programs had on the distribution of public resources, several questions provide some evidence on this issue. A survey question asked, "What types of neighborhoods participated the most in the neighborhood planning program?" Assuming that participation is necessary for program benefits, this question provides an indication of who is receiving the benefits. As shown in Table 5.7, slightly more than 47 percent of the respondents indicated that middle-income neighborhoods were most likely to participate in these programs; 31 percent indicated that low-income neighborhoods participated the most; and only 6 percent indicated that high-income neighborhoods participated the most. This suggests that middle-income neighborhoods are most likely to benefit from these programs.

Respondents in the case studies were also directly asked if the programs had led to a more equitable distribution of public resources. Overall the results are mixed. In Atlanta respondents were about equally split in their answers. One neighbor-

Table 5.7. Ratings of Neighborhood Type Most Active in the Program

Neighborhood Type	Frequency	Percent ¹
Low income	16	31.4
Middle income	24	47.1
High income	3	5.9
Equal activity level	7	13.7
Other	1	2.0

1. Percentages add up to greater than 100 since multiple answers were allowed.

hood planner commented, "The pendulum has swung far the other way [toward poorer neighborhoods]. For example, all the new public pools have been built in the low-income areas." But others felt the more vocal middle-class areas were benefiting the most and that any move toward a more equitable distribution of public resources was the result of the CDBG program and its targeting requirements, rather than of the local neighborhood planning program. In Raleigh respondents generally felt that the program had resulted in more parks and recreation services in poorer areas, but had not greatly affected the distribution of other public resources. In St. Paul the responses were also mixed. Respondents felt that neighborhoods were the beneficiaries of more public improvements but they were unclear as to whether the program resulted in a more equitable distribution among neighborhoods. In Houston the majority of respondents felt the program had done little to influence the distribution of public resources. Respondents felt that any improvements in distribution were the result of the CDBG program or that "the squeaky wheel got the oil," which left out the relatively quiet poorer neighborhoods. Only in Cincinnati and Wilmington did most respondents feel that the programs were responsible for a more equitable distribution of public resources. In Wilmington, however, most of the examples provided to substantiate this claim were projects funded with CDBG money. Overall, the evidence supporting a more equitable distribution of public resources as a program accomplishment, is weak. 8)

Conclusion

The data from both the survey and the case study interviews indicate that these programs can be credited with a number of important accomplishments. The initiation of neighborhood improvement projects and improved physical conditions was the most frequently cited accomplishment by survey respondents, and this was substantiated by the numerous examples in the case studies. In particular, these programs resulted in a considerable number of improvements in housing, transportation facilities, recreation facilities, and neighborhood cleanliness.

The respondents also credited neighborhood planning programs with increasing community awareness and competence. Local residents were said to be better educated on existing and proposed plans, on physical conditions in their areas, and on how to get things done through the city administration. According to the data, these programs also resulted in increased citizen influence on city officials, particularly in the area of budgeting, zoning, and plan preparation. Again these claims were substantiated by a number of specific examples of citizen pressure leading to changes in policy, funding decisions, and other matters under the control of the city administration.

The data also indicated that neighborhood planning programs led to increased citizen participation in planning. The programs were said to draw people into the planning process by getting them involved in pressing local problems. The rough estimates of the numbers of people participating in these programs are considerably greater than the numbers achieved with other traditional participation methods. Participation in neighborhood planning programs has the added advantage of being continuous.

Another frequently cited accomplishment was improved communications between residents and city officials. Citizens were better able to inform council members and department heads of what they wanted, and council members and department heads were better able to inform citizens of the constraints and operating procedures of local government. Planners were better informed of community problems and neighborhoods were better informed of common problems in other areas.

According to the responses, some programs also resulted in improved local services. Although slightly more than

one-quarter of the survey respondents indicated no improvement in local service delivery, others attributed improvements in human services, public transportation, police, and sanitation to the neighborhood planning program. A comparison of these findings with the findings on improved physical conditions indicates that neighborhood planning programs have had more success in influencing changes in physical conditions than they have in influencing improvements in public services.

There was some indication that neighborhood planning programs led to improved citizen-government relations. In some instances, citizens were said to feel that public officials were more responsive to their needs. Other responses, however, indicated that these programs raised expectations which were then not fulfilled.

Decreased resistance to project implementation was consistently cited as a program accomplishment. Neighborhood planning programs were said to help break down the "them-versus-us" attitude and to facilitate negotiation. Residents were also said to be better informed of community-wide needs.

Respondents also credited neighborhood planning programs with providing leadership training and developing new local organizations. Serving as the chairperson of a neighborhood organization provides training in leadership skills, which are often supplemented by more formal training offered by the neighborhood planning program. A number of these chairpersons have gone on to hold elected or appointed offices in the city. In this sense, these programs offer an alternate means of assuming political office. Neighborhood planning programs have also established many new neighborhood organizations in areas where they did not exist.

Finally, there is some evidence that these programs lead to a more equitable distribution of public resources. There are many examples of poorer neighborhoods receiving major improvements, but this may be due to the targeting requirements of the CDBG program, which funds many of the activities carried out within local neighborhood planning programs, rather than the neighborhood planning program itself. In fact, the data indicate that middle-income neighborhoods seem to be most actively involved in these programs.

In conclusion, it is clear that neighborhood planning programs have led to a number of important improvements in the

quality of life in local neighborhoods. These improvements include direct physical improvements as well as improvements in communication, trust, competence, and influence. The following chapter addresses the relationship between the characteristics of neighborhood planning programs and selected program accomplishments.