A SUMMARY OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION METHODS FOR THE WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT IN OCONTO, WISCONSIN

By:

Kevin Silveira
Former Project Assistant

Ron Shaffer
Community Development Economist

and

Chris Behr
Research Assistant

Department of Agricultural Economics
University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension

Center for Community Economic Development
Staff Paper 93.1

Initially prepared December 13, 1990 by Kevin Silveira. Modified March 20, 1993 by Chris Behr and Ron Shaffer. Prepared as partial fulfillment of National Coastal Resources Project No. BC07.90S-5618-49. The comments by Sue Sadowske were very helpful.

The City of Oconto and the National Coastal Resources Institute in a joint effort sought to evaluate and integrate information on the economic and environmental impacts of waterfront development. A significant dimension of that effort was to go beyond the technical dimension of those decisions, and address the equally important local perceptions and concerns regarding the waterfront. This review of various techniques for gathering citizen input and encouraging involvement was originally prepared as background to the project team to help their decisions regarding what and how they could involve Oconto residents in the decisions regarding the waterfront. Since the issue of citizen involvement has application to more than the Oconto waterfront, the document is being shared with a more general audience. Use the document as a starting, not ending, point for building a citizen involvement strategy. Several very good and more comprehensive references are cited in the Reference section. It was a working paper prepared to help our thinking, we offer it as a possible help to you.

The choice of tools for citizen involvement needs to be placed in the context of why it is being done and how it will be used. While citizen involvement carries some apple pie and flag connotations, it is seldom an end in itself. Arnstein [p. 216] characterizes the idea of citizen participation as similar to eating spinach, no one is against it--theoretically. She then goes on to state that citizen involvement involves "...the redistribution of power that enables ...[those who are] excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included" [p. 216]. Heberlein [1976a] offers a moderately contrasting definition that we seek public/citizen involvement in governmental decisions to make them better. Better is defined as incorporating more alternatives and not ignoring constituencies that may obfuscate the implementation of a decision by legal and political means. Both of these definitions have some applicability to the Oconto situation. There is a strong desire by political and economic interests to engage the citizens of Oconto more fully in a series of anticipated decisions regarding the waterfront.

Arnstein [1969] distills eight levels of citizen participation ranging from nonparticipation to true citizen power. While based largely on experiences with the Model Cities Program (HUD) of the mid-60s, many aspects transfer directly to other government/citizens efforts. While Arnstein is very careful about recognizing the limitations of her typology and its failure to explain how one increases involvement it does offer some important insights that are easy to overlook. Moving from the bottom (nonparticipation) of her 'ladder' to the top (full participation) here is a brief description of each rung:[1]

> **Manipulation**: places people on advisory boards to rubberstamp decisions; to educate them to the agency perspective; distorting the participation into a public relations ploy.
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> **Therapy**: engages citizens in numerous activities, under the guise of citizen involvement in planning/decision making, but where experts subject the citizens to 'clinical group therapy' to cure them, rather than fix the original problem.
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> **Informing**: provides information that is one way to the citizens, or too late to really affect decisions and fails to achieve real input; news media, pamphlets, response to inquiries, and information giving (not exchange) meetings are frequent forms of one-way communication.
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> **Consultation**: involves citizens in a significant manner, but is a sham if there are no assurances that their input will be fully

[1] Note the examples offered as forms of the specific activity can be appropriate involvement techniques, but if they are not accompanied with other actions they can represent less than complete involvement.

incorporated in the decisions, or the full range of options are considered; frequent forms are attitude surveys, neighborhood meetings, and public hearings.

Placation: represents tokenism if those previously excluded from power remain a numerical minority on the board and/or are not accountable to any constituency in the community; another form is giving only powers of advice or planning, but not to turn them into actual decisions.

Partnership: represents real citizen participation when citizens and governments agree to share planning and decision-making responsibilities through joint structures, and neither partner can unilaterally change the agreement; implicit in this is that citizens have access to resources (time, staff, information) comparable to the government partner.

Delegated Power: occurs when through negotiations between government and citizens, citizens gain the dominant decision making position on programs affecting them to insure accountability to the client's needs.

Citizen Control: falls short of the rhetoric of absolute control, but the intent is that citizens actually have managerial and policy control and can set the conditions under which government can alter the institution or program.

Dunn [1974] raises several pre-involvement questions that are often overlooked or not explicitly asked. He modifies an often used quote "We need to decide exactly where we are going before we can discuss strategies for getting there." The question he poses is: What are we after or hope to obtain from citizen involvement? This requires frank answers, because the answers will be inputs to the decisions about proceeding and how you will proceed. Yoder's [1979] seven steps in preparing a citizen participation strategy are shared in Table 1.

Moyer and Tiffany [1980] suggest four criteria for selecting an 'appropriate' citizen involvement technique. The first criteria is "How well does the technique fit into the decision making process?" Does it provide the information needed for the types of decisions that need to be made.[2] The second criteria is "How well does the technique serve the citizen involvement functions of information giving and getting, interaction and maintenance of the system?"[3] The third criterion "How representative of the general public

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[2] Summers [1987; p. 17-18] suggests the following possible contributions of public involvement to the decision-making process: defining the problem; gathering information; developing alternative solutions; evaluating alternatives; choosing a course of action; and implementing action.

[3] Moyer and Tiffany [1980] list several specific questions related to this criteria including: Does the technique allow information giving? Can you obtain information from the audience? How much time is available? Do you need to reach a specific audience or general public? Does the technique permit social interaction? Is the interaction face to face? What quality of working together can be expected? Does the technique meet legal requirements? Does the technique meet people's expectations? Does it assure people that they have been heard? Summers [1987; p. 17-18] adds getting citizens and officials working together, and assuring that public views are being heard even when the public is divided.

will the results be?", will it reach target publics. [4] The fourth criterion is "What are the costs in terms of time and money?" This includes cost not only to the agency, but to the individuals participating.

Just as the techniques for public involvement vary with the needs of the current issue, the 'public' is also likely to vary. Creighton [1980] suggests that geography, economics, personal interests etc. are important determinants of who the 'public' is regarding a specific issue. He goes on to enumerate such items as perceptions of whether people feel they will be significantly impacted by the decision, level of controversy associated with the decision, and urgency in making the decision as altering the composition of the public to be involved [Creighton, 1980; p. 41].

The rest of this paper proceeds along two paths. First, it summarizes selected citizen involvement techniques and the references offer more detailed sources of information. Second, it offers some commentary on these techniques relative how they might contribute to your specific purpose.

Heberlein [1976a] offers a series of public involvement techniques that are generally easily implemented, widely known, and informal. These are reported in Table 2 and only require limited commentary since most of them are self-explanatory.

While Moyer and Tiffany [1980] identify fifty-one separate citizen involvement techniques, our attention is limited to a few. These are, in order of discussion, Public Hearings, Surveys, Nominal Groups, Force Field Analysis, Focus Groups, Delphi, Futures Research, and SWOT Analysis.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

Public hearings are probably the most frequently used tool to acquire citizen input for a public decision. While they have been used extensively, there is a general skepticism by academics about the validity of their results because the demographic and interest profile of the participants often appears to differ from the general population. It is generally contended that more educated, higher income, and more extreme positions will be represented than found in the general public.

Gundry and Heberlein [1984] found that even though those characteristics might still occur that when public hearing results were compared to extensive and expensive surveys the response to several policy options was <u>not</u> different, nor would they seriously mislead the decision maker of the prevailing opinion. It should be noted that in this experiment they worked at making sure publics were identified and notified of the hearing, that location and timing was made as accessible as possible for the various publics, and they permitted people to cast ballots at the hearing rather than just tabulating the positions of the speakers. See Table 2 for a detailed discussion.

The jury workshop approach [Heberlein 1976b] attempts to mix professional expertise and advice with the values and intentions of citizens. It allows for complex questions to be made understandable to the general public without domination by professionals. It also avoids the domination by a vocal minority group, often found at public meetings. It addresses situations where

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[4] Summers [1987; p. 17-18] offers will the results accurately reflect the public studied? Who is the relevant public? How will this public change as the process moves through time.

public reactions are based on inaccurate or incomplete information because they were not completely aware of the complexity of the problem.

Names are drawn at random from a voter registration list, and those people are invited to attend a meeting and offered a small compensation for their work. Out of 50 names randomly drawn, perhaps 12 or 15 people register for the meeting. Like the American trial, the meeting often starts with testimony from expert witnesses, who are invited to present contrasting perspectives of a community problem or need. After witnesses have testified, the jury asks additional questions in order to become better informed. At some point, jury members convene and begin their own deliberation. They may draw on other small-group approaches such as the nominal group technique to eventually reach a conclusion about identifying or dealing with the issue. The jury workshop may last several days or just a few hours, depending on what needs to be accomplished.

The strength of the jury workshop is that it leads to responsible and representative decision making based on up-to-date information. Pros and cons are presented to a relatively impartial group that can make a thoughtful decision. It is assumed the jury is truly representative of citizens at large rather than an especially vocal minority group that tends to control public meetings. If citizens are poorly informed about a particular subject, a survey would be of little use. Hence the jury workshop is especially useful when professional groups or technicians are asked to provide information.

There are limitations to the jury workshop. If the public is well informed about a particular issue, surveys may be more appropriate. If it appears that more people should be involved in decision making, a public meeting might be preferred. Citizens who are particularly upset about a certain issue may resent a jury deciding their fate and may disrupt the decision making by sponsoring their own public meetings. In any case, the jury workshop is useful and should be viewed in light of its obvious limitations.

SURVEYS:

The second most frequent mechanism for getting public input is some form of survey [Johnson & Meiller, 1987]. Table 3 itemizes several pros and cons of various survey methods. In general, the use of a community wide survey is not a highly rated technique for generating citizen participation and involvement. Although surveys are excellent at getting information from the public, they are quite poor in giving information to the public. Because of this inherent lack of interactiveness, surveys should be incorporated with other processes designed to maximize citizen participation.

The need for community involvement in building the survey instrument is essential. A unique balance needs to be struck between the researchers and the community. The conflict is the risk of not being able to develop a statistically reliable survey due to the unskilled and perhaps hastily prepared contribution of a citizen's group. However, the evidence <u>does</u> bear out that a statistically valid survey and citizen involvement can occur.

Survey validity can be maintained and community participation can play a major role partly because help on such technical aspects, as final questionnaire construction and drawing of the sample are easily obtained from others. [5] Citizen groups can be trained for many of the steps of the survey method, such as initial questionnaire construction, distribution, data entry and processing and public presentation of results. The elements of time and finances play a critical role in the development, distribution and analysis of a survey. Appendix 1 presents an extensive summary of mail-in surveys relative to the Oconto waterfront experience. Appendix 2-4 contains copies of the Oconto surveys.

A particularly unique form of community surveys is the Community Consensus Survey developed by University of Wisconsin Professors Larry Meiller and Glen Broom [1979]. According to their strategy, three groups are selected for opinion sampling: citizens, elected officials, and community leaders. They represent the major decision-making groups and, ironically, are generally found to have weak communication links with each other.

In their research, Meiller and Broom [1979] discovered four levels of agreement and understanding that could exist in any community. They are:

Monolithic Consensus - people agree and know that they agree
False Consensus - they all agree but in reality they all disagree
Pluralistic Ignorance - they disagree but in reality they all agree
Descensus - people disagree and know they disagree

The information used to determine the levels of agreement and understanding is gathered through the survey instrument asking people to identify concerns regarding waterfront development. After the respondent lists concerns for each component, he or she is asked to rate the component on an importance scale.

Finally, each respondent is asked to predict how most of the members of his/her own group and how most of the members of the other groups will respond. By comparing these results, levels of understanding (agreement) can be determined.[6] If the results show common understanding and similar ratings then monolithic consensus exists which is obviously the best state. Descensus is the next best state since discussing the issues may bring groups together in agreement eventually.

This information should then be summarized and fed back to the community through the local newspaper, radio programs or public meetings. Most likely, this will introduce tension into the community. Yet, this tension, properly harnessed, can change levels of consensus. This would also help to identify and set priorities for community development problems and would motivate the community to continue to study their concerns.

However, an obvious precursor to this consensus assessment is knowledge of the groups that would have varying views on waterfront development. Logical

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[5] Some possible sources in the area could be local Extension office, faculty at a nearby college or university, or local high school sociology or government class.

[6] The project used a simplified version of this by asking survey respondents to give their importance rank for the waterfront, and then to give their friends and neighbors ranks. We then used the created categories (i.e., developmentalist/environmentalist categories etc.) from the survey responses to build comparisons.

sources for this information include University of Wisconsin-Extension Community Resource Development Agent, other trusted informants, newspaper content analysis, or an advisory committee could provide the same input.

If uncertainty exists as to where people stand, a possible forerunner to the community-wide survey is the "key informant interview." This is an informal interview approach to gain some understanding on how different people view the issue. Possible choices for interview would naturally be those people generally recognized as leaders in the community, both officially, and unofficially and those individuals that would be deemed "experts" on various issues of waterfront development as well as the local citizen. This can be done by either focus groups or key individual interviews. [7]

There are some cautions, however, with the use of this approach. The strength of the method is based on the relationship developed between the interviewees and the interviewer. The interviewees need to have the capacity to express themselves in a clear enough fashion for their opinions to be accurately categorized. Although many interviews might be held, they are nonetheless individual expressions which should not be generalized for the entire community.

NOMINAL GROUPS:

Nominal groups are a widely used problem identification and prioritizing method [Delbecq, Van de Ven & Gustafson, 1975; Miller & Hustedde, 1987; p. 112-116]. It works best in small groups of 8-12 people. Groups larger than this should be subdivided. The method's vehicle is a form of quiet brainstorming that builds on the peer pressure of seeing others writing furiously on note cards. The method requires strong facilitative skills to minimize the amount of 'lobbying' that might occur to justify particular positions or keep the discussion on problems rather than solutions. It permits quieter citizens to have an equal voice with those who are more vocal and provides a forum for exchange of information among the participants within the small group. The disadvantage of nominal groups is the more limited interaction between respondents than occurs in focus group interviews.

The formulation of the question is extremely critical because it conditions what and how people build responses. The question must solicit a series of reactions about 'problems' <u>not</u> perceived solutions. People are asked to quietly jot down problem issues, then those are shared one at a time without comment until everyone has exhausted their list. Then clarification of items and checking for similar or duplicate entries occurs. Typically the person who puts an item up has veto power over their item being combined with another. Then people, in the small group, are asked to pick from three to seven top priority items (they can use equal or different weights for the items). Once the votes are cast and tallied, the group can discuss and clarify the tally and may even revote if they feel it is necessary (See Table 4).

The only warnings or limitations for the use of this technique is that it is not suited for the typical information-exchange meeting. If it is used, then a well-trained overall facilitator and small group facilitators are required. It also requires great planning to get as many representative citizens as possible to attend. And though a cross-section of the community might be there, the assumption cannot be made that the ideas obtained from the meeting will be readily accepted by the rest of the community.

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[7] We used key individuals approach. See the outline of the interview questions in Appendix 5.

FORCE FIELD:

One of the frustrations with many citizen involvement techniques is the sensation that they stop at the agenda building stage and do not get the group to the action planning stage. Force Field Analysis is one tool that addresses that issue directly [Lewin, 1973]. While Nominal Groups build consensus on what are the problems, Force Field works on the idea of identifying the forces likely to oppose/support solving the problem. You always start with the opposing forces to get the negatives out first and to move to addressing the more positive dimension of who, what, and how you are going to deal with the opposing forces. See Table 5 outlining some critical steps in Force Field Analysis.

FOCUS GROUPS:

Another form of community involvement is focus groups [Krueger, 1986, 1988]. The focus group is currently one of the more popular tools in market research. Though surveys and face-to-face interviews are valuable in their own right, the focus group is able to gather information in a way that the other methods cannot. The focus group works best uncovering information on perceptions, feelings, opinions etc. (qualitative data) not quantitative data. The group interaction and greater insight into why certain opinions are held are some of the unique insights drawn from focus groups.

The focus group interviewer needs to create a non-threatening environment to allow the voicing of perceptions and different points of view and to allow members to influence each other by responding to the comments made. This is a critical area and one where the focus group excels over the survey or one-to-one interview. In surveys and individual interviews the assumption is that people know exactly how they feel about an issue and that they developed this opinion in relative isolation. This is not always the case and focus group interviews demonstrate that other peoples comments influence the belief structure as well as causing the belief structure to change. How the shift occurs and the nature of the influencing factors are the valuable gems extracted from focus groups.

One of the first steps in a focus group effort is determining what type of information is needed. The technique enables respondents to give you information in an open flexible manner that can, but really is not, appear unstructured. The facilitator must create a series of ideas or questions or points that elicit the information needed. Since the group meeting should be two hours or less, it is important to narrow down the potential list of questions to a few key questions. After completion of the interview the team needs to distill major themes discussed and integrate them within the context of the insights you are seeking. This can be done from notes or transcripts, although the latter implies some delay in doing it. The transcripts, however, permit quotes that make the point in the words of the focus group members.

The nature of focus groups allows them to be used not just at the beginning stages of the project but also during all phases of the project. Focus groups can quickly, easily and inexpensively obtain a bearing for the project coordinators on how the project is going, or how and whether the project met its goals and objectives.[8]

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[8] We used focus groups at the end of the Oconto waterfront project with both the project team and advisory committee to recall the unfolding of the project and build a sense of effects as perceived by members of the community who had been intimately involved.

There are clearly many advantages to the use of focus groups. There are some cautious and limitations to be aware of as well. Groups can be difficult to assemble since the time requirement will necessitate the juggling of many individual schedules. Focus group coordinators require special skills to produce the right environment to extract the desired information. And the data that is obtained is more difficult to quantify and, accordingly, more difficult to analyze. (See Table 6.)

DELPHI TECHNIQUE:

Miller and Hustedde [Johnson et al., 1987; p. 110-112] describe the Delphi Technique as one mechanism to solicit consensus among several people who often hold strongly divergent opinions and may find personal settings (confrontations) distracting in coming to agreement. The method is a lengthy one (often requiring over 45 days to complete) and relies on the personal motivation of individuals to participate in isolation from the stimulation of a peer group. It enables you to deal with extremely complex issues, but requires the participants to have well developed written communication skills.

The Delphi Process begins by asking what type of needs must be assessed and how will it be used. The number of respondents involved varies with the magnitude of expected differences. It can be as small as 10-15 or as large as several hundred. They should be involved in all parts of the process.

A minimum of three rounds of questionnaires is required, though more are not unusual. The first questionnaire solicits participants written responses to what are the problem issues. In Oconto that might have been a series of questions about problems facing the Oconto waterfront. A second questionnaire is built from the written responses to the first. In this second wave respondents are asked to rank their concerns, support or disagreement with various group responses and clarify their stance. This questionnaire identifies areas of agreement/disagreement on priorities, and builds comments supporting peoples positions. These are summarized and fed back to the respondents in the third questionnaire for further clarification. Respondents are asked to review their prior responses, make additional comments, and vote on the importance of the various items listed. If sharply divided disagreement continues to exist, another round of surveys may be needed, but in most cases closure occurs after the third wave. The final report summarizes the last questionnaire, the goals, processes, conclusions and actions reached because of the study.

While there are numerous advantages to the Delphi technique, the disadvantages dominate in using it to solicit citizen feedback in a community setting. It requires well honed writing skills and works best when personality styles distract the face-to-face discussions. The time to develop questionnaires, distribute, summarize feedback can be prohibitive. It generally does not elicit responses from a substantial number of community citizens.

FUTURES RESEARCH:

Futures research is another technique whereby both citizen participation and needs assessment can be achieved [Morrison et al., 1985; Miller & Hustedde, 1987]. As implied in its name, futures research [9] deals with the future the individual perceives for his/her community. (See Table 7.) One might become confused with this notion since it seems very much like the traditional technique of long-range planning. This would be a natural consequence since futuring depends heavily on the four phases of long-range planning: monitoring, forecasting, goal-setting and implementing. Or to put it in a more applicable way, long-range planners would ask these four questions: What's the situation with the Oconto waterfront at present? If left alone, what's going to happen to it? What do we as a community want to see happen to the waterfront? What do we have to do to get the waterfront to be what we want it to be?

Where traditional long-range planning falls short is that information about the changing internal environment is taken into account, while information about external environment usually is not. As a consequence, long-range planning sets itself on a course of constant surprises and potential failure. Information from the external environment adds important components to long-range planning. Futuring does not try to predict external changes but tries to identify new and perhaps crucial areas that should be evaluated with those areas already identified and watched in the monitoring phase. Also, it identifies possible developments which require adjustments to the internal forecasts made during the forecasting phase. When these components are added to long-range planning, the merging is referred to as the strategic planning process.

A starting place for creating an external perspective would be to survey some key community leaders to determine what their views are about the purpose of their waterfront and what kind of people do they want the waterfront to serve. What are the outside world issues that may affect their responses to the first point. Find out what types of resources these leaders use to stay abreast of the external world. Have them then rank the issues in the order of how likely they will impact waterfront development.

The ranking of the issues provides the basis for the planning assumptions of the external environment that feeds the forecasting phase in the internal environment. This is where the information about the external environment merges with the long-range plan. Broadening their resource information base will allow the community leaders to develop a monitoring capability that will provide an early warning system of future issues that will impact the waterfront development project.

Futuring is an ongoing process. Emerging external and internal issues need to be reported and evaluated. Eventually, the leaders will become comfortable enough with the process that regularly scheduled group meetings will become more appropriate from the standpoint of efficiency and the more timely flow of external and internal information.

One of the cautions with the use of futures research is a perception issue. Some of the common misconceptions to futures research are that it predicts the future, that it is a science or that it will supplant established technical or economic forecasting. It is simply a tool to augment the capability of the community leaders to deal intelligently with change, especially change that is farther off in the future.

Futuring is a tool based more on creating possible futures by the participants, rather than a single alternative. It presumes that the

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[9] Also called "futuring assessments" and "futuring."

community has intentions about the waterfront, knows what those intentions are and can develop strategies to meet them. It also presumes that the community can identify alternative problem definitions, consider alternative solutions, and can identify other people who share the common concern.

SWOT/SNOWCARD:

Bryson [1990; p. 117-138] notes that one of the more important aspects of strategic planning is building an awareness of what are the **S**trengths in the community to address future needs, the **W**eaknesses in the community to address those needs, the **O**pportunities that changing external conditions may create for the community, and finally the **T**hreats of changing external conditions on the community.

He then goes on to suggest Snowcarding is a mechanism to quickly get citizens involved in creating their inputs to those four forces. The technique allows very quick building of ideas and its flexibility in grouping ideas makes it a good way to brainstorm without losing spontaneity, but still creating some order.

Table 8 gives a more complete discussion of the approach.

SUMMARY:

Most, if not all, of the above approaches to greater community participation are focused on the client-centered or self-help strategy of intervention. Inherent to this type of strategy are overall cautions that the practitioner needs to recognize. It is rare to find a community that is completely, or at least mostly, homogeneous. There are likely many divergent views regarding the community development issues. Care has to be taken to choosing the appropriate method. Some methods can produce additional and needless conflict. Some may be inefficient in insights gained, input to decisions, and use of people's time.

Nonetheless, as an overall strategy, stimulating greater participation has many benefits. The more people involved, the more complete the information base. Officials also learn quickly the advantage and leverage gained when a community supports decisions decided collectively. The citizen involvement process is the first stepping stone to developing indigenous leadership. And the more a community is involved in the decision-making the more it develops a personal commitment to the project.

Table 9 tabulates the techniques most likely to support this effort.

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TABLE 1

STEPS IN DEVELOPING A CITIZEN PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

STEP 1 - DEFINE THE PURPOSE OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION.

Questions:

- Why do we need public participation?
- What is the objective of the involvement effort; what do we want to happen?

Reasons sometimes given for seeking public input are:

- Legitimize or seek support for a program, a budget, or a proposal
- Provide or obtain information
- Tap local resources
- Clarify pubic values and preferences
- Identify problems
- Identify attitudes and opinions
- Resolve conflicts
- Meet the requirements of a sponsor
- Make decisions or set priorities
- Evaluate and choose among alternatives
- Co-opt opposing forces or turn opposition into a more useful form

Clearly defining the purpose of the citizen participation effort will do a great deal to facilitate the process and the development of an appropriate strategy. Clarifying the objective in advance will assure that the participation effort goes smoothly and accomplishes the desired purpose.

STEP 2 - DECIDE HOW THE RESULTS OF THE PARTICIPATION EFFORT WILL BE USED.

The success of the entire participation strategy depends on how well the information can be processed and used to accomplish the desired objective.

Questions:

- Who will prepare the information generated?
- How will the information be presented?--(report, news media, etc.)
- Is the format appropriate for the sponsoring group's needs and for providing feedback to the participants?

STEP 3 - IDENTIFY THOSE WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED.

Questions:

- Who has an interest in what happens?
- Who will be affected by the proposed action or decision?
- Who is willing to participate?
- Whose support is critical to the project's success?

Table 1 (continued)

Clearly identifying who the affected and interested publics are will do a great deal to facilitate the participation process. Inadvertently omitting an important public can lead to opposition and sabotage by those not included. Groups or publics should include all those involved or affected by the proposed decision. A clear definition of the publics will help determine the timing of involvement as well as the appropriate techniques for assuring participation.

STEP 4 - DETERMINE WHEN INVOLVEMENT SHOULD TAKE PLACE.

The identification of the purpose, the relevant publics, and how the input will be used will help determine an appropriate timetable for participation.

Questions:

- To accomplish the stated purpose, at what stage in the process should the public be involved?
- Does the proposed timetable allow adequate time for the citizen participation process to work effectively?
- Does involvement take place early enough in the process to assure participants that their input will be used, not just become a rubber stamp or token effort?

STEP 5 - DETERMINE HOW PARTICIPATION WILL BE OBTAINED.

Questions:

- How can the sponsoring group's sincerity in requesting participation be best communicated to the public?
- How will you communicate to the pubic the purpose of their involvement and how their input will be used?
- How will feedback be provided to the participants?

STEP 6 - DEVELOP AN EVALUATION - Evaluation should help answer these questions:

- Was the original purpose or objective achieved?
- Were the relevant people involved?
- What contribution did those involved make to the final decision or solution?
- Was the timetable adequate to provide the desired participation?
- Was adequate feedback provided to those who participated?
- How appropriate were the methods or techniques used?
- What evidence for public support or non-support exists for the outcome of the participation process?

STEP 7 - IMPLEMENT THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PLAN AS DEVELOPED THROUGH STEPS 1-6.

This is the action phase of the citizen participation strategy, and its success or failure depends on how well each step was done and to what extent the decisions made at each step can be implemented.

SOURCE: Drawn from Yoder, 1979.

TABLE 2

FORMS AND FUNCTIONS OF PUBLIC CONTACT

Form of Public Involvement	Function of Public Involvement					Representa-tiveness
	Informational		Interactive	Assurance	Ritualistic*	
	To Give	To Get				
Open public meetings	Good	Poor	Poor	Fair	Yes	Poor
Workshops (small)	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Potentially good
Presentations to groups	Good	Fair	Fair	Fair	Yes	No clear assurance
Ad Hoc committees	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Potentially good
Advisory groups	Good	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Yes	Potentially good
Key contacts	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	No	No clear assurance
Analysis of incoming mail	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	Yes	Poor
Direct mail from agency to public	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Good	No	Potentially good
Questionnaires and surveys	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Fair	Yes	Potentially good
Behavioral observation	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Poor	No	Potentially good
Reports from key staff	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	No	No clear assurance
News releases and mass media	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor	Yes	Poor
Analysis of mass media	Poor	Fair	Poor	Poor	Yes	Poor
Day-to-day public contacts	Good	Good	Excellent	Fair	No	Poor

*Interactive refers to the governmental unit and the public working together on a problem. Information flows both ways quickly and interactively. Assurance refers to the governmental unit making sure the public knows it is being heard and not ignored in decision making. Ritualism refers to legalistic and social norms regarding public input. Social norms are the openness expected regarding any decision regardless of level of controversy or size of the project. It occurs almost automatically because the local political culture says that it is the minimal expected, even if no one appears for or against the project.

SOURCE: Thomas A. Heberlein, Principles of Public Involvement, UW-Madison, Dept. of Rural Sociology, Staff Paper Series in Rural and Community Development, April, 1976.

TABLE 3

PROS AND CONS OF SELECTED SURVEY APPROACHES

Mail questionnaire
Pros:

Relatively easy to draw representative sample of the community including all points of view.

Cost: depends on sample size. Least cost per respondent ($4-$7 average cost per respondent not including questionnaire design labor). (Includes printing, mailing supplies, stamps, and data entry).

Good method for getting data on a large quantity of related variables.

Cons:

Difficulty including non residents in sample of Oconto Residents, but not impossible.

Time of administration is longer.

Quantitative data on distribution of sampled population on topics and themes identified by the researchers prior to distribution

Qualitative data in mail questionnaires is limited, although open ended questions can provide some.

Telephone survey
Pros:

Random sample - representative of population

Administration is quicker than mail survey

Cons:

Difficulty including non residents - but not impossible

More expensive per respondent than mail

Some people do not have telephones, or they have unlisted numbers.

Face to Face Interviews
Pros:

High quality detailed information on views held by respondent.

Interviews are easy to set up and conduct.

Area probability sampling is least likely to introduce bias.

Cons:

Most expensive per respondent ($75-$100 average)

Most time per respondent

Data analysis time is longer than Mail and Telephone surveys on a per respondent basis and slightly longer than focus groups.

TABLE 4

NOMINAL GROUP PROCESS

Step

1. Form groups of six to eight participants. Encourage people to join with others from different organizations. Have them introduce themselves to everyone at their table, if necessary.

2. Each group needs to select a table recorder.

3. Introduce the leader who will provide the background information and/or explain the tasks to be accomplished.

4. (Three to five minutes in length.) Participants work alone to generate ideas. They will do this by writing as many responses as possible to a statement derived from the session title:
   "Community economic preparedness would work best if..."
   "What this community really needs is..."

5. (Eight to ten minutes.) Round-robin listing of ideas. Within each group, proceed around the table with each person in turn providing one idea from his/her list. No discussion other than clarification is permitted. The recorder will list these ideas by numbers on the newsprint pad sheet, taking care not to summarize, categorize or restate the individual statements. After ideas are listed, encourage each group to discuss ideas on the newsprint pads, comparing, clarifying and defending their statements.

6. (Three to five minutes.) The group needs to choose three to five top priority ideas. Can use unequal or equal voting weights.

7. (Eight to ten minutes.) Have each table leader report to the entire group what their priorities are.

8. (Three to five minutes.) Have the entire group select its top five priorities. Use consensus if possible. Consensus in large groups may be difficult, so voting may be necessary as done in small groups.

SOURCE: Adapted from Bob Bright, "Nominal Group Process," Community Dynamics Institute, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

TABLE 5

FORCE FIELD ANALYSIS

1. (5-10 minutes) Develop a goal statement for priority issue. Restate issue chosen as a goal statement. Use words such as "to plan, to develop, to survey, to organize," must have consensus on goal.

2. (5-10 minutes) Place goal statement at top of page. (To create more jobs in ...).

3. (30 minutes) List hindering and helping forces on tear sheets.

Helping	Hindering

4. (20-30 minutes) Analysis of which forces can diminish or enhance ability to move toward goal.

5. (20-30 minutes) Develop action plans using the following format to facilitate an action plan for each goal:
   What going to address:
   Who is doing it:
   When will you start:
   Where will you first meet:
   How will you do it:

6. Elect person who will serve as temporary chair of the issue team and as liaison to the executive committee.

SOURCE: Bob Bright's adoption of Kurt Lewin, Field Theory in Social Science, Darwin Cartwright (ed.) (New York: Haper Torchbooks, 1986).

TABLE 6

FOCUS GROUPS

Pros

Qualitative data. Excellent means of learning about issues, relationships, and the content of opinions.

Identifying issues, problems, solutions.

Enable respondents to identify issues and define themselves freely.

More preparation time in organizing focus groups.

Less preparation time spent designing question sequence than for either mail questionnaire or telephone survey.

Reporting data is time consuming.

Report tends to be more interesting reading, given the qualitative nature of the data. While the representativeness is not there, the accuracy of the specific views of respondents sampled is much higher.

Cons

Respondents need not be representative of the population.

Sample bias against less vocal respondents.

No way to determine how many, or what proportion of the public feels the same as the persons included in the focus groups.

More preparation time in organizing focus groups.

Reporting data is time consuming.

TABLE 7

FUTURE IMAGING EXERCISE FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

People have to be able to envision positive futures in order to achieve them. Conceptually it is useful to think of present reality as tethered to the future vision rather than the reverse. This imaging exercise is designed to generate and expand concrete possibilities and options in order to motivate people to take action to create the future they choose.

The procedure involves the following steps:

1. Assemble individuals that can contribute to a process of imaging for the community.

2. Demonstrate that participants can and do image. Ask knowledgeable individuals to recall concrete mental pictures of some notable community achievements. Have them bring forth images of how the project was accomplished, presenting salient ingredients of success.

3. Small groups then generate concrete images of the community's best possible future, 5 years from now. Practical questions of feasibility, probability, believability, etc., are now allowed at this point. Concreteness is key. That means visualizing places, people, actions, behaviors and physical settings. Group members ask "What is happening?" Group works emphasizes active listening, and an atmosphere that is supportive, probing and positive.

4. Small group images are shared with the whole group. The group identifies central themes and compelling images that capture the imagination.

5. Based on the central themes and compelling images, the group does a force-field analysis of this collective image, identifying positive and negative factors related to achieving this positive community future.

6. One factor is selected from the total community image that is most compelling or generates a lot of energy. Using this as one goal for the year ________, work backward to the present, identifying the specific actions for achieving this goal. It is important that the who, and how for achieving this goal are clearly defined. Also as important, develop creative strategies for accomplishing this goal. In other words put the fun in it!

7. Continue the process with the remaining goals to devise a strategic plan for achieving the best possible community future.

Prepared by: Sue Sadowske, Director, Tourism Research & Resources Center, University of Wisconsin-Extension.

Adapted from: <u>Working With Our Public</u> (In-service Education for Cooperative Extension): Module 7, Techniques for Futures Perspective - David Deshler.

TABLE 8

THE SNOW CARD TECHNIQUE FOR SWOT ANALYSIS

The strategic planning process for communities begins with scanning the external and internal environments to gain a clear picture of the community in its current environment, and future possibilities that will have greatest impact on the community.

Following the scans, communities need to assess their threats and opportunities (external) and strengths and weaknesses (internal). The "snow card" technique is a simple yet effective process for developing lists of community strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities (SWOT).
The title, Snow Card refers to the index cards used in the process.

This method combines brainstorming -- which produces a long list of possible answers to a specific question - with a synthesizing step, in which the answers are grouped into categories according to common themes.

For the SWOT analysis the technique is used four times to focus on the following questions:

1. What major external development opportunities does the community face?
2. What major external development threats does the community face?
3. What are the major internal strengths of the community?
4. What are the major internal weaknesses of the community?

The guidelines for using the snow card techniques are:

1. Form groups of five to nine persons.
2. Have the group sit around a table in a room with a nearby wall where the snow cards may be taped and clearly read from where the members sit.
3. Focus on a single question.
4. Have the individuals in the group silently brainstorm as many ideas as possible in response to the question, and record them on their personal worksheets.
5. Have individuals pick out the five "best" items from their personal worksheets and write them onto five separate index cards.
6. Collect the cards (shuffle them if anonymity is important) and tape them one at a time to the wall, clustering cards with similar themes together. Or tape all cards at once and rearrange them as a group into thematic clusters.
7. Labels are selected for each group, written on a colored index card and place at the top of the cluster.
8. Subcategories are added as needed. Categorizing and rearranging goes on until the group is satisfied that the groupings make sense.
9. Results are discussed.
10. Results of the session are typed up and distributed to participants.

A follow-up analysis of the SWOT list should be done to determine whether the appropriate categories have been identified, if some categories need to be fleshed out, or if some categories or important points have been missed. The follow-up analysis should be discussed at a subsequent meeting and becomes the basis for the SWOT section of the community's strategic plan. Actions that might be taken as a result of the analysis need to be discussed.

The snow card technique is also useful for the next part of strategic planning, which is developing strategy.

Prepared by: Sue Sadowske, Director, Tourism Research & Resources Center, University of Wisconsin.

Adapted from: Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations - John Bryson.

TABLE 9

SUMMARY OF STRENGTHS AND CAUTIONS OF SELECTED INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES

TECHNIQUE	CITIZEN PARTICIPATION POTENTIAL	STRENGTHS	CAUTIONS/WEAK-NESSES
GENERAL SURVEY	Poor	gathers a great deal of representative information, highly generalizable results	wording and timing critical, skilled surveyors needed for certain aspects
CONSENSUS MODEL	Poor	excellent measure of levels of agreement and understanding	results will introduce tension/conflict in the community
KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW	Good	informal conversation allows individual to speak freely; helps to identify various interest groups	interviewer should be a familiar and trusted person in the community, interviewees must have the capacity to clearly express themselves, not generalizable results
FOCUS GROUPS	Excellent	allows citizens of similar interests to express their opinions, interaction allows formulation and creation of ideas and strategies	skilled leader required, must meet several times to identify trends and patterns, maximum of 7-10 people per group, scheduling may be difficult
NOMINAL GROUPS	Excellent	allows expression of all ideas, non-debate format, prioritized needs and concerns	must have large representative group, results may or may not be generalizable, not to be used for an information-exchange type of meeting
FUTURES WORKSHOP	Good	makes community think about and plan for their future, makes community aware of externalities that their decisions might create and that might occur regardless of their decisions	may be perceived as a "predicting the future" event, presumes community has specific intentions and strategies about the waterfront

Appendix 1

MAIL SURVEYS

This section describes the method employed in developing a survey. Dillman's [1978] book provides suggestions on survey construction and implementation and is highly recommended for any survey work. The book can be found in most local college libraries or through inter-library loan. Highlights of this method are offered here to give the reader an idea of the details to consider. While specific decisions and actions depends on each individual project, this discussion offers general principles and our experience employing them.

Mechanics of Survey Construction

One of the first issues to consider is what kind of survey is most appropriate for your results. Dillman's book discusses the advantages and disadvantages between mail, telephone, and face-to-face surveys. His basic reply to the question of, Which one is best?, is that "It depends". He lists 24 criteria that should be considered when making the choice between instruments. This criteria varies among sample selection, questionnaire length and administrative requirements. Table A.1 summarizes Dillman's rating for each method per criteria.

To illustrate this rating system locate criteria 10 (Type of question: allowable complexity) on the following page. This criteria identifies the level of complexity that each type of survey should include. Personal interviews, given a 'High' rating, allow questions to be complex and telephone interview questions must be relatively simple. The theory behind this is that complex questions are more easily understood if someone is there to answer questions, or the questions can be read. Questions heard over the phone may be harder to answer if complicated.

These criteria form a strategy for information collection depending on the resources and needs of the research. For example, mailed surveys cost the least, but they entail the least amount of control over response. Personal interviews are preferable if the sample size is small and there are many complex questions. This project used the mailed survey because the population size was relatively large and because costs were a consideration. Each project will have its own set of circumstances with which to evaluate these questions. With time, money and a relatively small sample size, personal interviews may be the most appropriate means of gathering information. With a larger sample a telephone survey may be better.

TABLE A.1

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING SURVEYS

Performance Characteristics	Method		
	Personal Interviews	Mail Surveys	Telephone Interviews
Obtaining a Representative Sample			
1. Sampling total population with a complete list	High	High	High
2. Sampling total population without a complete list	High	Medium	Medium
3. Control over respondents within sampling units	High	Medium	High
4. Ability to locate selected respondents	Medium	High	High
5. Control over who responds in a household	Medium	Low	Low
6. Response rates: heterogeneous samples	High	Medium	High
7. Response rates: homogeneous samples	High	High	High
8. Ability to avoid unknown bias from refusals	High	Low	High
Questionnaire Construction and Question Design			
9. Allowable Length of questionnaire	High	Medium	Medium
10. Type of question: allowable complexity	High	Medium	Low
11. Type of question: success with open-ended questions	High	Low	High
12. Type of question: success with screen questions	High	Medium	High
13. Type of question: success with controlling sequence	High	Low	High
14. Type of question: success with tedious questions	High	Low	Medium
15. Success in avoiding item in non-response	High	Medium	High
16. Insensitivity to questionnaire construction procedures	High	Low	Medium
Obtaining Accurate Answers			
17. Ability to avoid social desirability bias	Low	High	Medium
18. Ability to avoid interviewer distortion and subversion	Low	High	Medium
19. Ability to avoid contamination by others	Medium	Medium	High
20. Ability to obtain consultation when needed	Medium	Medium	Low
Administrative Requirements			
21. Ability to meet personnel requirements	Low	High	High
22. Potential speed of implementation	Low	Low	High
23. Overall potential for low per interview costs	Low	High	Medium
24. Insensitivity of costs to geographical dispersion	Low	High	Medium

Drawn from Dillman [1978].

Question Development

A few suggestions are necessary before the details of the process are presented. First, never underestimate the time and detail involved in completing a survey. The earlier you begin the process the more time you have available to improve it. Second, remember that the ends justify the means in survey work. If a respondent returns a completed survey, you have achieved your goal. Third, remember that a substantial number of people view surveys as an imposition and remain unclear as to why they are doing it. The survey package must be designed to elicit a strong response. Ideally, when the respondent receives the survey, he or she opens, answers, and returns it. From that understanding, you can consider the questions to ask and how to organize them so that people will want to finish all the questions.

The first step in developing a questionnaire is to determine precisely the information desired. The best survey embodies a direct and consistent message without extraneous questions and tangent interests. A questionnaire must be clear, concise and focussed. One way to avoid unneeded questions is to divide the survey into specific sections. Sections within a survey provide a discipline to the survey writer to stay within its guidelines and overall focus.

All three surveys used in the project were developed with a clear focus in mind. The first survey established a baseline set of information on the residents' attitudes of the waterfront and several options for its future. Since no other survey had been conducted in Oconto, considerable information was needed to begin to understand how residents felt. Issues included development options, environmental-preservation options and selected demographic information. There were four sections to this survey. (See Appendix 2).

The second resident survey was somewhat more focussed. The primary goal in this survey was finding out if the residents' attitudes had changed from the first survey. In addition, questions asked about their attitudes toward information from the newsletter and of recent changes at Breakwater Park. This survey included questions to help in the evaluation stage. This survey included five sections. (See Appendix 3).

The third survey was directed at visitors of Oconto, who would provide important information that residents and planners may have overlooked or underestimated. This survey determined who were the visitors, their travel patterns, and their activities in and opinions of Oconto's amenities. Of particular interest was the money that visitors spent and the areas they would like to see the waterfront improved. (See Appendix 4).

For each of these surveys, the project team developed a list of objectives. Questions were developed from these objectives and the respective sections in each survey. This procedure was important because it eliminated time working on irrelevant questions.

Collect Information for Questions

After establishing the survey's focus, specific questions can be written. The first step in this process was collecting information about the questions. Two methods were used in this project: research and personal interviews. The most important of these were personal interviews because they identified specific interests in the community. Research supplemented knowledge of the issues interviewees mentioned and other factors that could be important. This process consisted of finding materials on waterfront revitalization and natural forces for the Oconto region.

Personal interviews were conducted with a selected group in the community. The Oconto County Extension Community Development agent, a member of the project staff, provided a list of people familiar with the waterfront and had an interest in it. Nine people were chosen from the list to represent categories we developed: waterfront property owners, business owners, environmentalists, people who hunt and fish, and political representatives. These groups were important because they revealed the important issues felt by the community.

The interviews provided critical information for the survey and in general for the project team. See Appendix 5 for a copy of the themes raised in an informal discussion. This uncovered such specific issues as, safety laws along the river, marina construction at Breakwater Park, and wetland preservation. They mentioned pressing issues facing community members and whether the city government had addressed their values and feelings in the past.

A primary tool for selecting the advisory committee was the information collected from the personal interviews. Through the interviews, two dominant groups emerged: newcomers to Oconto who were pro-development, and long-time residents satisfied with the status quo. Another strong feeling found within the community was a desire to improve the city's services, i.e. education, public works, etc. This group did not seem to fall into just either of the previously mentioned groups. By providing useful information on possible directions for the future of the Oconto waterfront, the team could consciously seek those interests in forming a well-balanced committee was possible.

Question Writing and Organizing

Exact questions could be developed once the focus of the survey is determined. This section marks the beginning of our extensive use of Dillman. His book discusses construction of questions (phrasing, ordering, and style), presentation of questions in the survey (layout and visual appeal), and implementation (pretesting, organizing survey package, mailing and reminders). The book considers many details including some with explicit instructions, others where flexibility and personal style are needed.

Writing survey questions balances two contrasting styles. The first, and too often used, focuses on the act of generating data, and leaving the analysis until later. While having appeal in situations where uncertainty exists about the community interests, there is high probability that questions may not obtain the information that is desired. The second style concentrates on only questions that are needed. This requires forcing answers to "How can we use that response?" or "What would it tell us?" This forces the analysis to begin with the writing of questions. The resulting survey should be much more precise, have fewer questions, and elicit more informative responses.

Dillman divides the writing of questions into three parts, each requiring separate decisions. They are (1) the kind of information sought, (2) the question structure, and (3) the actual choice of words. In general, four types of information exist. They are:

1) What people say they want: their **attitudes**: describing how they feel about something and reflect the respondents' views about the desirability of something. Word choices include: favor, oppose, prefer, should, good, bad, right, wrong.
   See Survey, Section 1, Question 3, Appendix 2

2) What people think is true: their **beliefs**: assesses if a person thinks something is true or false, and elicits perceptions of past, present and future, does not imply goodness or badness. Word choices include: correct, incorrect, accurate, inaccurate.
   See Survey, Section 2, Question 3, Appendix 3

3) What people do: their **behavior**: describe past, present and future actions. Word choices include: do(ing), plan(ing) and other forms of action questions.
   See Survey, Section 2, Question 2, Appendix 2

4) What people are: their **attributes**: describe personal characteristics, often called demographics. Information sought often includes: age, education, occupation, income, sex, marital status, family composition, home ownership, race, gender, etc.
   See Survey, Section 4, Questions 1-5, Appendix 2

For the purposes of this project, residents' attitudes about a range of issues concerning the waterfront were the focus. Other types of questions were included to supplement this information.

In most cases, questions should fall into one of the above classifications so that the information sought corresponds to the research needs already identified and agreed upon. Questions ultimately must reflect the interests and needs of the study and just not necessarily attempt to fill information for all four categories.

A suggestion in this process is to write all possible questions and retain only the most important ones. To do this, consider each one to see if it produces the desired information. It is often that you may list two questions that are only slightly different. One of these questions is sufficient because the data is likely to be the same. Moreover, the survey is shorter for the respondent and the person keying in the data.

Questions are divided into two types by the answers that they produce. First, open-ended questions are those that ask a respondent to create their own answer. The questions offer no choices for the respondent to select. Dillman suggests that this type of question is useful in obtaining diverse responses such as suggestions, personal memories, or strong opinions. These questions can also test the respondents' recall of a precise piece of information without prompting them with possible answer choices. The disadvantage of these questions is that they are time-consuming both for the respondent and the analyst who constructs variables from the information. The advantage of open-ended questions is that it enables free thought in a mostly ordered survey structure. These questions enable some answers to resemble personal interview-type data.

The second type of question is the close-ended class. These questions are the most common in survey work because of their ease in response and compilation. This class of questions includes those with ordered, unordered, and partially closed answers. All these types of answers serve different purposes. Ordered answers apply when the researcher requires a specific reply to a continuous set of responses, such as {strongly agree - strongly disagree}. Unordered responses let respondents order options themselves. This is done by providing a list of possible choices and having the respondent fill in the preferred option in the appropriate blank. Partially closed answers can also be used in close-ended questions. Questions of this type offer answer choices to select but also let the respondent fill in an answer that is not listed.

The next step in the process considers the exact wording and phrasing of the questions and answers. Dillman notes this process can be as frustrating as any in developing a survey. With any number of ways to ask the same question, the researcher must somehow choose the most appropriate one. To ease this tension, Dillman suggests several questions to ask of the survey to be certain that all motives are considered. The following is a list of these questions, why they are important, and in some cases, suggestions on how to avoid poor questions.

Will the words be uniformly understood? - Make the wording for all questions as simple as possible. A general rule of thumb is to replace words with six or seven letters. Commonly used words such as prescription drugs are an exception.

Do the questions contain abbreviations or unconventional phrases? - Avoid using abbreviations, foreign phrases, or slang. Exceptions to this are for repeated phrases in the survey.

Are the questions too vague? - Vagueness is a matter of degree and often the specific needs of the researcher define its relevance. Avoid using or precisely define words that do not have well-defined meanings. Words such as older and government are ambiguous without specific ages or levels of government to further identify the use of these words.

Is the question too precise? - Overly precise questions may not reflect the reality of a respondent's life or their ability to recall an exact amount.

Is the question biased? - Avoiding bias is an extremely important task because of respondents' sensitivity. Bias can exist in all types of questions and may not be avoided easily. The goal in these cases is to provide answers that balance the possible views of the respondents.

Is the question objectionable? - Questions can be objectionable if they ask about personal subjects, convey implications about the respondents, or ask about incriminating subjects. In these cases Dillman recommends that people respond to broad categories instead of specific choices. For example, income ranges are better than having a respondent write down the exact income amount.

Is the question too demanding? - These questions ask a respondent to compute unnecessarily or think of accurate responses.

Is the question a double question? - These questions are ambiguous because they contain parts of two questions. Always divide these questions into two or reword it to eliminate one that is unnecessary.

Does the questions have a double negative? - Avoid using these sorts of questions. Often rewording the questions and answers to offer unordered choices instead of ordered ones solves the problem.

Are the answer choices mutually exclusive? - When two responses could apply to the same question, split the questions.

Have you assumed too much knowledge? - Many questions require the respondent to have some knowledge of the issue. Too make sure that they are not embarrassed by their lack of knowledge always include a "Do Not Know" response where appropriate.

Has too much been assumed about respondent behavior? - Make sure that a question about behavior applies to the respondents. If still unsure, you should change the nature of the question to a hypothetical one.

Is the question technically accurate? - If providing information in the question, make sure that the information is correct and irrefutable.

Is an appropriate time referent provided? - Avoid using vague references to time. Either use a specific date such as March or 1992, or ask about 'the average' of something over a time period.

Can the responses be compared to existing information? - With demographic data, it is of interest to compare survey results with U.S. Census or other independent data sources.

Are the questions too cryptic? - Make sure that all questions can be read independently.

In conclusion, Dillman suggests that researchers ask three questions about each survey question: (1) Will it obtain the desired *kind* of information? (2) Is the question *structured* in an appropriate way? (3) Is the precise *wording* satisfactory? A negative answer to any of these questions suggests that questions should be rewritten.

Having assembled essential questions, the next step is to place them in an appropriate order. Dillman identifies four principles that should be considered in constructing a mail survey. First, questions are ordered along a descending order of social usefulness. Those questions that the respondent are most likely to find useful come first and those least useful come last. Second, group similar questions together and within context areas. Segmenting questions allows the respondent to realize when there is a shift in focus. Third, observe cognitive connections the respondent may make with questions. By placing them in an order that produces a logical flow in will further the respondents' interest and increase the likelihood of finishing the survey. Fourth, place more-objectionable questions after less objectionable questions. You must not confront a respondent abruptly rather, ease into the more-objectionable questions to increase the question's response.

The most important factor in question ordering is which question should be first. Dillman states that, "No single question is more crucial than the first one. It is more likely than any other to determine whether a questionnaire is destined for the mailbox or the garbage." The first question introduces the survey and makes a strong impression. To make a good impression, this question should be easy to answer, applicable to everyone, and interesting to everyone. A simple but interesting question that anyone would know the answer to is a likely candidate.

A survey's presentation blends both functional and stylistic characteristics. Dillman makes several suggestions to facilitate this process. First, upper and lower case letters should be used for questions and use only upper case letters for answers. This clearly distinguishes the questions from the answers. Second, a vertical flow should be established for the questions. To do this, all answers should be left justified with each answer number along the same vertical line. Third, provide directions on how to answer each question or where to proceed for the next one if necessary. Fourth, questions and answers should fit on one page. Fifth, create sections to break up the survey and introduce each section with a concise description. This facilitates the continuity of the survey and ensures that the respondent does not become confused by the survey.

These suggestions apply to most types of questions, but not all. Dillman makes special suggestions for questions that ask for a response to items in a series such as development options. These questions ask the respondent to answer a series of questions in the same manner. Refer to Question 5, Section 2, Survey 1, Appendix 2 for an example. These questions are often organized in a chart form. These types of questions involve the most consideration because they appear more difficult when first encountered. The format of this question breaks up the vertical flow of the survey and immediately confronts the respondent. To construct one of these questions, each line should contain the item in question followed by the answer choices. If necessary, define answer choices before the questions and in a banner above the answer choices should give directions for answering the question.

The cover pages, front and back, are another factor to consider in survey presentation. Above all, the cover pages should be attractive. They should make people want to open it and look inside. One technique in designing an attractive cover page is to create a logo for the cover that symbolizes the project's purpose. The back cover should ask for any comments they may have to improve future efforts. While most people will not write anything here, those that do may provide valuable insight into how the respondents perceive the survey.

Once a draft of the survey is complete, test it with either one or all of several groups. Dillman identifies three groups that are important: trained professionals, potential 'users' of the data, and a group drawn from the same population as the sample. These groups represent varying views on the quality, content and readability of the survey. Specific issues to consider in pretest sessions include:

Is the meaning well-understood?
Are the words clear?
Is the interpretation consistent?
Do the close-ended questions have an adequate set of possible responses?
Does the questionnaire create a positive impression?
Are the questions answered correctly?
Is any bias detected?

In this project, the survey was tested with three groups: the project team, a technical expert in survey design, and the Oconto Advisory Committee. The Oconto Advisory Committee was the most important because they were both potential users of the information and drawn from the same sample as the respondents. Their input was useful in both the first and second resident surveys. For the first survey, they indicated that the sample should be broadened to include residents of the neighboring town and reworded several questions. For the second survey, they helped us improve several questions that were confusing; and sharpened their focus.

Questionnaire Implementation

Survey implementation incorporates factors whose only purpose is to generate a response. The survey package sent to the sample of respondents includes a cover letter, a return envelope, and the outer envelope. All are important. The overall goal in this process is to develop a consistent look, feel and message to the respondent. The goal consists of the respondent opening, answering and returning the survey.

The project altered the procedure suggested by Dillman, by sending a first class letter, with a distinctive holographic stamp, to the sample to alert them to the pending survey. This letter was signed by a UW-Extension Community Development Agent to create some credibility. The criteria for the signature is recognized credibility, so other people are potential signers. The survey itself, followed a few days later. The project used bulk mailing to reduce costs. The greater than 55 percent response rate suggests this caused some reduction in response rate.

To achieve the first goal, opening the survey package, design an outer envelope that transmits a serious and personally relevant message. As Dillman states "the role of the envelope is to attract only enough attention to guarantee that it will be opened and to convey an impression consistent with the message contained inside." The envelope address should be individually typed or at least use personalized labels. 1st Class stamps should be used for postage; never use metered mail or bulk rate. The envelope should be of an unusual size, such as 6"x9" to attract attention.

The cover letter accompanying the survey facilitates the second goal, answering the survey. Since this is the primary device to entice the respondent to follow through with the survey, construct the letter carefully. The letter must form a balance between a short "snappy" letter, high on motivation and one that is long on information and low on appeal. The letter must also be informative because respondents may use it as a reference if they ever have doubts while answering the survey. The letters we use are reprinted and located in the appendix along with their survey.

Dillman states that each paragraph has an important component in the cover letter. Consult the cover letter in **Appendix 2.** The first paragraph explains the study's usefulness and why it is being done. Also this paragraph should convey a message about why the survey is part of an important study - maybe even important to the respondent. The second paragraph should convince the respondent that he or she is important to the success of the study. This paragraph should be personal and written as if the respondent was individually contacted for his or her response. The third paragraph ensures the respondents that her or his responses will be confidential. This message is made in earnest because of a sensitivity of some people. The fourth and final paragraph re-emphasizes the basic justification of the study and its social usefulness. Also, thank respondents in advance for their help and give a phone number to call collect if they have any questions.

General notes on the letter formalize its appearance. Personalize letters in the same manner as the envelope, using a full name and address. It is unnecessary and sometimes a mistake to begin the letter with 'Dear Mr. or Mrs.' because the name may not be clear. Always use good quality stationary and add a real signature (blue ink) at the bottom of the letter.

The third goal is for the survey to be returned. Include a self-addressed stamped return envelope in the survey package to ease the return. This envelope can be bulk mail and should continue to represent the consistent message displayed throughout the survey instrument.

Following the initial survey package with reminder messages is just as important as sending out the first survey. 'Follow-up' packages are sometimes just reminders for respondents who had intended to return their survey. Other times these follow-ups are an appropriate push towards answering and returning the survey. Dillman identifies a schedule for three follow-up packages, each with a different purpose.

The first follow-up is a postcard sent to all recipients of the survey, one week after they receive the survey. This is a simple note to alert their attention to the survey and make sure they have received one. The card 'jogs the memory' of the respondent if he or she has not yet responded but intends to. Dillman notes that most unreturned surveys are probably due to forgetfulness rather than a conscious refusal. The card should also express thanks for all those persons who have returned theirs. List a phone number on the card to offer them the opportunity to call for a replacement. The project's first survey received over 110 (1/4 of the total) additional surveys after sending this reminder.

The second follow-up includes a cover letter, another survey and return envelope. Send this follow-up to all people who have not responded. The letter has a tone of insistence, but not one so strong that it annoys people. The strength of the message comes in the first paragraph by stating their failure to return the survey. The rest of the letter explains why the study is important and why their response is necessary. It may be helpful to peruse the returned surveys for clues as to why some have not returned theirs. Often respondents attach notes explaining why they returned their survey unanswered. Send this package three weeks after the initial mailing.

The third follow-up takes a much more serious tone. Dillman recommends including a cover letter and replacement survey and sending it registered mail. This letter once more formally requests the response from this individual but is more intense in its effort. Dillman notes that by sending this package registered mail the response rate increased from an average of 59% to 72.4%. Used in the final reminder, registered mail produced a higher relative return than normal mailings. The costs of such a process are not trivial and the benefits of this final step should be weighed against expectations. We did not conduct a third follow-up because we were satisfied with our response rate and time pressures were to move forward on the project.

Sample Selection

How the sample is selected and drawn depends on the sources of information available. Most surveys are presumed to be random, so no prior clearance or qualifying of potential respondents is needed. If some particular group of people is desired, then it will be necessary to draw your sample from a list built from that population, e.g., subscribers to local newspaper, or trade journal.

For most communities there are several potential sources of getting addresses. These include tax roles, utility customer lists, telephone directory, and city directory. Each represents a potential source, but most contain subtle biases. For example, the telephone directory excludes those without phones or unlisted phone numbers. This project used the city directory for the residents of Oconto and tax roles for the Towns of Oconto and Little River. The city directory provided names of residents (owners, renters) at each address in the city. The tax roles gave us the names of property owners, which reduced the randomness of the rural sample, but no appreciable difference in responses was detected.

For the second survey, we used the names and addresses of people who had responded to the first mail survey. While, this creates some potential bias in the sample, a major purpose of the second survey was to measure shifts in opinions and involvement over time. Thus, it was the most appropriate list to use.

A crucial step that is very mechanical, but nonetheless important, is address correction. When surveys are returned with address changes that <u>must</u> be corrected in the address records, so future contacts go directly to that household. Another consideration is since the cover letters are personalized and if the person at that address had moved or deceased those changes needed to be made, so future mailings did not create frustration for the recipient.

The number of people/households to survey depends on degree of accuracy you wish to achieve (more respondents leads to more precise statistics), type of analysis (if you subdivide the data numerous ways it may lead to several zero observation categories) and budget. A final consideration is degree of confidence on the part of people using the data. Carefully constructed surveys by polling organizations of 2000 or less respondents are used and accepted for many national surveys, but local surveys with the same sampling rate (less than one percent) would probably be greeted with great skepticism.

APPENDIX 2

First Oconto Resident Survey

APPENDIX 3

Second Oconto Resident Survey

APPENDIX 4

Oconto Visitor Survey

APPENDIX 5

Oconto Key Informant Interview

COVER LETTER -- SECOND OCONTO RESIDENT SURVEY

January 5, 1993

Jane Oconto
Oconto Drive
Oconto, WI

Oconto's history has been influenced by activities around its waterfront from the river at Suzie's rapids to the marsh along the bay. You and your friends and neighbors may use the waterfront for a variety of purposes including fishing, hiking and sightseeing. To help shape the future of your waterfront, we need your opinions.

Your household is one of a small number of randomly selected households being asked to respond to some question regarding your use and attitudes about the waterfront. This is the second survey we have sent to your community; you may have received the first. This survey is similar to the first, but is focused on your opinions of recent changes along the Oconto waterfront and future options. We are also interested in specific feedback on the Decisions, Decisions, Decisions newsletter you have been receiving. So that the results truly represent the thinking of the people of Oconto, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

You may be assured that your comments and answers will be kept confidential. Your name will not be associated with the questionnaire.

We will share the results of the study with city officials, the harbor commission, and local community organizations. The results will also be shared with you. In addition, our study will also help other coastal communities develop their own waterfront strategies.

I've enclosed a prepaid, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. Please fill out and return the questionnaire as soon as you can.

I would like to thank you in advance for helping us.

Sincerely,

Ron Shaffer
Community Development Economist

FOLLOW-UP LETTER -- SECOND OCONTO RESIDENT SURVEY

January 20, 1993

Jane Oconto
Oconto Drive
Oconto, WI

About two weeks ago you were sent a questionnaire seeking your views on the future of the Oconto waterfront. Most specifically, where if at all, the city should devote its resources and energy. As of today only a third have responded. If you have not returned your completed questionnaire yet please do so today.

Oconto has always prided itself on its waterfront and many of its residents regularly use it for a variety of purposes. To help plan for the future of **your** waterfront this survey attempts to register the opinions of Oconto residents. Information from this study will be useful to local businesses and the Oconto city government as they plan for the future. The significance of your responses to this study should not be underestimated.

Your household is one of a small number of randomly selected households being asked to respond to questions regarding your use and attitudes about the waterfront. Since only about 1 in 4 Oconto households are being asked to respond to the survey, each questionnaire must be completed and returned for results to represent the thinking of people in Oconto. This survey is similar to one sent last year, but is not the same. We urge you to complete this one as well. It will take only about 15 minutes to complete.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed. For your convenience I've enclosed a prepaid, self-addressed envelope for your convenience. Please fill out and return the questionnaire as soon as you can.

I would like to thank you in advance for helping us.

Sincerely,

Ron Shaffer
Community Development Economist

FOLLOW-UP POSTCARD -- SECOND OCONTO RESIDENT SURVEY

March 29, 1993

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinion about the future of Oconto's waterfront was mailed to you. Your name was drawn in a random sample of households in the Oconto community.

If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because only a small, but representative, sample of Oconto residents received the survey, it is extremely important that we receive yours. Your response is important for our results to accurately represent the opinions of Oconto residents.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me right now, collect (608) 265-2134, and I will send another to you immediately. Thanks again for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ron Shaffer
Project Director

APPENDIX 4

Visitors Survey

APPENDIX 5

Key Informant Survey

Introduction

The purpose of this interview is to identify potential uses of the Oconto waterfront as well as any concerns about the lower Oconto river, its adjacent shorelines and marshes. These interviews are being conducted as a first step in a 2-year project devoted to promoting community involvement in economic development and natural resources management. Do you have any questions before we begin?

I am going to be asking you a lot of questions about the Oconto waterfront. By waterfront, we mean: the Oconto river from Suzie's Rapids to Green Bay; the shore of Green Bay one mile either side of the mouth. In addition to the river and bay we are interested in the shoreline and adjacent lands whether housing and businesses or undeveloped lands and wetlands.

Tell me about your connection with the Oconto waterfront?
Tell me about any personal involvement you have had.
How do you use the waterfront?
Probes: Activities/Recreation
Political involvement; committees
Employment
Business?
Property?
Is your use year-round or seasonal?

Issues/Problems

What do you see as current uses of the waterfront?
Probe: The river? Its shoreline?
The Lake? Its shoreline?
The Marsh? Its shoreline?
The Jetty? Its shoreline?
How is the Oconto waterfront important (directly and indirectly) to the community?
What changes in the waterfront have you noticed in the last 5 years?
Which businesses are particularly dependent on the waterfront?
How do you think it will change in the next 5 years?
Do you prefer the changes you envision or do you prefer that it remain as it is?
Given the changes you expect, how might these things affect Oconto's community.

Probes: Economy? Quality of Life?
What is your greatest concern?
We have covered a lot of ground about the oconto waterfront.
Tell me in general what you think needs to be done?
Who should do it?

Public Involvement

Now I'd like to ask you some questions about how the public has been involved in decisions effecting this area.
Probes: River, Bay, Shoreline, local economy.
What are the groups that you can think of that have an interest in the waterfront?
How should the public be involved in decisions affecting the river or bay?
Decisions affecting public lands?
Decisions affecting private lands?

Probe: Zoning changes that affect riparian landowners.
At what stage of project planning should the public be involved?
Tell me about any experience you have had as a citizen being involved in public decisions effecting Oconto.

What level of government?
How did they involve you?
What did you like/dislike?

What kind of influence do you feel your involvement had?
Anything else about how public officials responded to your participation?
Are you as aware of any time when the public had involvement in decisions effecting Oconto? If yes, tell me about this experience.

Probe: What, when,where, how
What are some effective ways to involve the public?
What is your perception of the receptivity of various public agencies to public input?

The Oconto waterfront: Issues and choices

What are some possible uses of the waterfront in the future?
Probe: Development options
Recreation
Preservation of natural resources
Stay the way it is
What are some of the issues affecting these options?
(Begin with [first option mentioned])
What are some of the environmental concerns about the river, the lake or the marsh, the shoreline?
Have you heard about proposals to dredge the river?

How did you learn about this proposal?
Advantages? Disadvantages?
How would dredging affect Oconto?

Who would benefit?
Who would lose?

Have you heard about proposals to build a marina?

How would this development affect Oconto?

Who would benefit?
Who would lose?

How would this marina affect the economy of Oconto?

Probes: Jobs
Property values
Businesses
Other impacts?

How would it affect the Marsh?
How would it affect local residents who use the river, and bay?
What kinds of positions for and against do you see various citizens or citizen groups are taking.

Have you heard of the EPA's proposal to preserve the bayshore wetlands through stricter regulation of filling wetland areas?

What do you remember about the proposal(s)?
What are your thoughts?
Advantages/disadvantages?

What do you see as the (economic implications/ uses) of the waterfront?
The waterfront is influenced by a variety of physical changes: How do you think the following will affect the Oconto waterfront?

Changes in water quality?
Changes in fish populations?
Changes in duck populations?
High water levels?
Low water levels?
Exotic fish? (which ones?)