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Mandating Citizen Participation in Plan Making

Six Strategic Planning Choices

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In addition to requiring that local governments plan for and manage urban development, state growth management laws require that citizens be given an opportunity to participate in the local planning process. In this article, we examine the strengths and weaknesses of citizen involvement mandates and the degree to which mandates and related local planning practices have resulted in broader citizen participation in plan making. We show that mandates do indeed affect local government attention to citizen involvement and that the choices planners make in crafting citizen involvement programs do affect the resulting level of public participation. Based on these results, we make suggestions for improving the efficacy of state growth management legislation and local planning practice directed toward enhancing citizen involvement in local planning.

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C itizen participation is widely viewed as a key component in the planning process, and, for the most part, planners accept the notion that participation is important to producing enduring plans. However, there are dissenting views, and a recent review characterized participation as a "contested concept" (Day, 1997). Some argue that planners tend to ignore public input and do a poor job of incorporating citizen concerns into plans (Berry et al., 1993; King et al., 1998; & Lowry et al., 1997). To counter this disinterest, several states include in their state growth management laws public participation requirements that direct localities to consider the interests of citizens when adopting plans.

While research indicates that state planning mandates result in stronger local plans (see Berke & French, 1994; Berke et al., 1996; Burby et al., 1997), little is known about their impacts on citizen involvement. In this article, we examine the strengths and weaknesses of citizen involvement mandates and the degree to which these mandates and associated local planning practices have resulted in broader citizen participation during the planning process. We show that participation mandates do affect local government attention to citizen involvement, and we offer guidance for crafting state citizen involvement requirements that will result in broad public participation in planning.

Citizen participation in plan making has a long history. At the federal level, it was first mandated in the 1954 Urban Renewal Program and expanded during the Model Cities program and the War on Poverty in the 1960s. Congress added participation requirements throughout the 1970s in the Coastal Zone Management Act and the Energy Reorganization Act (Lowry et al., 1997). At the state level, model state planning enabling legislation prepared by the U.S. Department of Commerce in the 1920s required local governments to offer citizens an opportunity to comment on plans.

Beginning with Hawaii's state growth management law in 1962, state growth management legislation has also required citizen involvement.

Mandates for public participation are designed to increase local government commitment to the principles of democratic governance. As discussed by Arnstein (1969), Burke (1979), Day (1997), Fainstein and Fainstein (1985), Godschalk and Mills (1966), and others, these principles include the rights of individuals to be informed, to be consulted, and to have the opportunity to express their views on governmental decisions. They also stress the need for better representation of the interests of disadvantaged and powerless groups in governmental decision making.

Recently, planning scholars have argued that citizen participation can generate trust, credibility, and commitment regarding the implementation of policies and can build social capital (Burby, 2003; Innes, 1996; Innes et al., 1994). Including key parties "early, often and ongoing" can create a sense of ownership over a plan's content and can reduce potential conflict over the long term, because those involved feel responsible for its policies (Creighton, 1992; Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000). Furthermore, organizations and individual participants bring valuable knowledge and innovative ideas about their community that can increase the quality of adopted plans (Forester, 1999; Moore, 1995). While participation can add time and cost at the initial planning stage, this up-front investment can pay off when it comes to agreement on policy and implementation. According to Godschalk et al. (1994), the result can be more equitable and enduring solutions, which help to ensure that the interests of stakeholders are protected over the long term.

In this article, we take stock of state growth management legislation as a tool for bringing about greater citizen involvement in the production of comprehensive plans. We examine the degree to which these laws provide guidance to local planners in making decisions about when and how to involve citizens in plan making. We identify six critical choices that planners must make in designing participation programs:

1. *Administration*—whether to prepare a participation plan and how to staff citizen involvement efforts;
2. *Objectives*—whether to educate citizens, seek their preferences, or grant them influence;
3. *Stage*—when to start encouraging citizen involvement in the planning process;
4. *Targeting*—which types of stakeholder groups to include in participation efforts;
5. *Techniques*—what types of participation approaches to employ; and

6. *Information*—what types of information and dissemination processes to incorporate in participation activities.

We find that in spite of the growing emphasis on citizen participation in the planning literature, participation requirements embodied in most state growth management laws are vague, outdated, and general. They provide little direction or guidance to planners seeking to craft effective citizen participation programs.

Our conclusions are drawn from a national study of the effects of state participation mandates. The following section describes the sample selection and data collection procedures used for this study. Our findings are then reported in two sections. First, we discuss the results of a survey of citizen involvement requirements embodied in state growth management legislation. Second, the citizen involvement practices of local governments and their impacts on the breadth of participation in local planning programs are examined in detail. Based on these results, we make suggestions for improving the efficacy of growth management legislation and local planning practice aimed at involving citizens in plan making.

Data and Methods

Our data come from systematic, comparative research on citizen participation in the preparation of comprehensive plans. First, data on 10 state growth management programs and their requirements are used to form a general picture of how citizen participation choices are incorporated into planning mandates. The selected states (Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington) all have widely recognized state growth management programs that either require or strongly encourage the adoption of local comprehensive plans (Weitz, 1999). Then, case studies of two states with sharply contrasting participation requirements (Florida and Washington) provide a more detailed analysis of the effects of participation requirements on local planning practices.[1]

We obtained the content of growth management legislation and legal codes using Lexis-Nexus software. Legal text for each of the 10 states was searched for excerpts containing requirements for public participation. We then compared state requirements against the six planning choices noted above. Requirements were evaluated in terms of the attention they give to each choice and in terms of the specific actions they require of local governments. Since the planning choices are constructs, in some cases it was necessary to interpret the intent of

the requirements and associate this intent with a particular choice.

Florida and Washington were selected for case studies of citizen involvement in local planning processes because of their different emphases. Florida has a weak citizen involvement mandate, while Washington's mandate is much stronger. This contrast enabled us to determine whether mandates, as currently crafted, can make a significant difference in local practice. We studied a random sample of 30 local governments in each state to determine the attention local governments give to citizen involvement and the impact of their choices on the number of groups that actually took part in the planning process.[2] We conducted personal interviews with planning directors and citizen participation staff to measure characteristics of the participation processes. Information was obtained on the level, timing, and extent of citizen participation; the type, quality, and availability of technical information provided to citizens; and the specific techniques employed throughout the process. The local survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (e.g., the percentage of jurisdictions making the planning choice) and Pearson Product Moment Correlations between techniques studied and the number (breadth) of groups subsequently participating in the planning process.

Results of Full Sample

Evaluation of State Mandates

Recent studies suggest that greater clarity and specificity of state mandates can improve the quality of local plans and planning processes (Burby et al., 1997). In general, the public participation mandates of the 10 states we evaluated lack specific language and are narrowly focused. The strongest participation requirements are found in Oregon, Maryland, Vermont, and Washington, which address four of the six choices related to participation. In contrast, Florida, Hawaii, Maine, and New Jersey include two or less in their mandates (see Table 1).

Evaluating state mandates involved not only noting the presence of language related to the six planning choices, but also the degree to which each mandate requires best practices within each choice. Administrative matters, such as adopting a citizen participation program or staffing for citizen involvement, receive the least attention of the six planning choices. Only 2 of 10 states, Washington and Oregon, require that local governments establish a formal public participation program when they prepare a comprehensive plan. Washington's mandate is by far the most specific, stating that each county and city "shall establish and broadly disseminate to the public a public participation program identifying procedures providing for early and continuous public participation in the development and amendment of comprehensive land use plans and development regulations implementing such plans" (WRC, sec. 36.70A.140).

Six of the 10 state mandates require that local planners pursue various objectives in involving citizens. Objectives range from simply complying with state requirements to actively engaging citizens in decision making. The most frequent objectives are to learn citizen preferences (three mandates) and to educate citizens about policy issues (three mandates). For example, Georgia's mandate states that public hearings must be held "to inform the public about the purpose of the plan and the process to be followed in the preparation of the plan, as well as to elicit community input" (GA Comp. Rules and Regulations, sec. 110-3-2-06). Two mandates (Oregon's and Hawaii's) go much further and direct planners to foster citizen influence in decision making. To "assure widespread citizen involvement in all phases of the planning process," Oregon's legislative directive (ORS, sec. 197.160) requires that local governments designate a citizen advisory committee or committees broadly representative of geographic areas and interests to provide input during plan development. Hawaii's mandate also emphasizes more citizen influence in decision making by providing "meaningful participation by the people in decision-making and for effective access to authority as well as an equitable sharing of benefits" (HRS, sec. 226-3).

Six state mandates designate the planning process stage at which citizens should become involved. Timing of participation can range from the very beginning of the process, when planners are deciding on the scope of the plan and the issues to be emphasized, to the end of the process, when public hearings are held on a draft plan. Planners generally believe that public participation during the early stages of the process is the most effective way to incorporate community knowledge, interests, and expertise into the final plan. Of the six mandates that provide timing directions to planners, three require citizen involvement to start at the initial (preplanning) stages of the planning process, and three require participation at the end (postplanning), before the plan is formally adopted. For example, the Vermont mandate states, "at the outset of the planning process and throughout the process, planning commissions shall solicit the participation of local citizens and organizations by holding informal working sessions that suit the needs of local people" (24 VSA, sec. 4384). In contrast, Maryland requires a planning commission to hold a public hearing at the end of the planning process, "before recommending the adoption of the plan or any part or amendment" (Md Ann. Code art. 66B, sec. 3.07).

TABLE 1. Local government citizen involvement planning choices mandated by states.

State	Choices					
	Administration	Objectives	Stage	Targeting	Techniques	Information
Case study states						
Florida	None	Educate citizens, learn citizen preferences	None	None	Public hearing, information, newspaper advertisement	None
Washington	Participation program	None	Preplanning	Public agencies, businesses, landowners, school districts, tribes	Public meetings, open discussion, posting property, newspaper inserts, public notices	None
Other states						
Georgia	None	Educate citizens, tap knowledge	Postplanning	None	Public hearings, announcements	None
Hawaii	None	Foster influence	None	None	None	None
Maine	None	Learn preferences	None	None	Public hearings, open discussions, dissemination of proposals	None
Maryland	None	None	Postplanning	Public agencies	Public hearings, newspaper notices	Copies of plan
New Jersey	None	None	None	None	Public hearings	None
Oregon	Participation program	Foster influence	Preplanning	None	Advisory committees	None
Rhode Island	None	Learn preferences	Postplanning	None	Public hearings	None
Vermont	None	None	Preplanning	Government agencies, businesses, conservation groups, low-income households, advocacy groups	Public hearings, notices, informal working sessions	Copies of plan

Note: Legislation: Florida Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act; Washington Growth Management Act; Georgia Planning Act; Hawaii State Planning Act; Maine Comprehensive Planning and Growth Management Act; Maryland Economic Growth, Resource Protection, and Planning Act; New Jersey State Planning Act; Oregon Land Conservation and Development Act; Rhode Island Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Act; Vermont Growth Management Act. Administrative rules: various.

Targeting is an important technique for increasing public involvement in preparing comprehensive plans (see Burby, 2001). Washington and Vermont require that groups be targeted for participation and provide direction on which groups should be included. Washington provides a detailed list of specific stakeholders to include. Most states, however, leave this decision to local discretion. This allows each local government to match its participation program to the specific makeup of the community.

Techniques for securing citizen input are mentioned by each mandate but, in most cases, state growth management laws do not go much beyond a requirement to hold a public hearing before adopting the plan. Other techniques, such as visioning sessions and facilitated workshops, are mentioned infrequently. Washington, Maine, and Vermont require workshops or open discussions in addition to formal public hearings.

Finally, state participation requirements do not give much attention to the issue of providing citizens with information. Disseminating information to participants helps inform them about key issues and engage them in the planning process. Each state mandate requires that public notice be given before public hearings. However, few states make the effort to ensure that citizens have adequate information about the plan itself. Maryland and Vermont mention the importance of providing information to local participants, but even in these states the mandate only ensures that interested citizens are provided copies of the plan. Techniques for providing information to citizens are also limited in scope. Mandates rely primarily on newspaper inserts or public notices and little attention is given to more recent, technology-driven techniques, such as television and the Internet.

Enforcement Measures

The types and strength of enforcement measures incorporated into state growth management laws can influence the level of attention paid to citizen participation at the local level. Even though a mandate may be highly prescriptive, with detailed language regarding the degree and scope of citizen participation required throughout the planning process, its implementation may be compromised by the inability of a state to enforce its own requirement. Enforcement of planning mandates can be described in terms of two categories: coercion (or "sticks") and persuasion (or "carrots"). Coercion usually involves monitoring compliance and imposing sanctions upon localities that do not meet program requirements. Of the states evaluated in this study, Florida, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Vermont have the strongest coercive features. These states set forth review

and approval requirements, make local compliance with state policies mandatory, and impose sanctions for non-compliance, such as legal actions, fines, or loss of state funding. Georgia, Hawaii, and Maryland have weaker coercive enforcement measures, where there is little oversight by state agencies and no sanctions are imposed for lack of compliance. Maine's mandate to prepare a comprehensive plan is now voluntary, making it the weakest of the sample. Persuasive enforcement features, which involve incentives such as financial benefits, also vary among the states examined. Florida, Oregon, Rhode Island, and Washington all provide financial and technical assistance for the preparation of plans by local governments. In contrast, Georgia, Hawaii, and New Jersey do not provide financial support or incentives for local planning. The remaining states in the sample reflect more moderate degrees of enforcement in their mandates. In instances of both coercive and persuasive enforcement tools, the intent is that the costs of not complying with state requirements outweigh the costs of preparing a compliant local comprehensive plan.

Results of Case Studies: Florida and Washington

Examining the two case study states provides an opportunity to evaluate the impacts of two types of mandates on the attention given by local planners to citizen participation. Washington's mandate is far more substantive, touching upon four of the six planning choices. Its bottom-up approach to local planning involves participation by a diverse group of stakeholders. Local planning agencies are required to begin public participation "early" and to ensure that it is "continuous" during the planning process. A wide range of participatory techniques is also designated to ensure that citizens are involved in the development of the comprehensive plan. Washington law states that local governments "shall provide for broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives, opportunity for written comments, public meetings after effective notice, provision for open discussion, communication programs, information services, and consideration of and response to public comments" (WA RC, sec. 36.70A.140).

By contrast, Florida's top-down growth management law is less comprehensive and specific, touching upon just two of the six planning choices we evaluated. The Florida law states that "local planning agencies and local governmental units are directed to adopt procedures designed to provide effective public participation in the comprehensive planning process" (FL Stat., sec 163.3181), but little information is provided about what

these procedures should be. Florida's primary vehicles for citizen participation are the public hearing and publication of notices for public hearings. Specific details of participation programs are left to the discretion of local governments.

Evaluating Planners' Choices

Comparison of actual practices at the local level in Florida and Washington indicates that the stronger Washington citizen participation requirements resulted in greater attention to participation by Washington localities than by those in Florida. Statistics reported include the percentage of jurisdictions in each state and in the total sample making each of the six choices, and tests of the statistical significance of the differences reported.

Choice 1: Program Administration. The first choice planners must make with regard to citizen involvement pertains to the level of resources committed to a participation program. Jurisdictions may officially adopt a participation plan that is disseminated to the public. This plan establishes guidelines for citizen participation and ensures that stakeholders have an opportunity to express their interests during the planning process. Appointing a staff member to manage the participation program or using an outside consultant are other methods that can help to ensure that citizen participation has a positive impact on the decision-making process, as well as the final plan.

Over half of the jurisdictions we studied in Florida and Washington prepared a plan for citizen involvement and assigned a staff member to oversee the participation program (see Table 2). The majority of jurisdictions also had staff with special training in citizen involvement techniques. Because Florida's mandate is stronger when it comes to adopting a legally binding plan, jurisdictions in this state were significantly more likely to adopt, disseminate, and include a written citizen involvement plan in their overall comprehensive plan.

Choice 2: Objectives to Guide Citizen Involvement. Emphasizing the right objectives is an essential component of a citizen participation program. The majority of jurisdictions in the sample geared their program objectives toward complying with state requirements for public participation. Washington was significantly more likely than Florida to emphasize learning about citizen preferences and values, such as through a visioning process. One third of the jurisdictions sampled promoted fostering citizen influence in decision making; less than one quarter focused on mobilizing an active constituency of citizens who would support proposed plans and policies (see Table 3).

Several authors view the choice of objectives in terms of a "ladder" of participation. They assume that the greater empowerment of citizens associated with a collaborative approach is normatively superior to the one-way communication that characterizes lesser degrees of involvement aimed at informing and educating citizens (Arnstein, 1969; Conner, 1984; Glass, 1979). Many argue that increasing collaboration will help citizens better understand information, generate new ideas for dealing with problems, lead to greater consensus on courses of action, and produce greater long-term support for policy recommendations proposed in plans (Barber, 1981; Godschalk et al., 1994; Healy, 1996; Innes, 1996). Despite the literature's emphasis on increasing citizen influence, when we arranged the objectives of the jurisdictions that we studied as a seven-rung ladder of participation (0–6), the average score was 3.8. This suggests that despite the increasing rhetoric on citizen involvement in decision making, planners, for the most part, want to maintain control of the planning process and do not strongly emphasize genuine citizen involvement in drafting specific policies.

Choice 3: Stage of the Planning Process when Citizens First Become Involved. Deciding when citizens first become involved is another key choice planners make that can affect public participation. In general, scholars believe that to ensure meaningful stakeholder involvement, it must occur "early, often, and [be] ongoing" (Wondolleck & Yaffee, 2000, p. 103). Early participation injects community knowledge and expertise into the planning process when it is most needed, before policies are set in stone. Furthermore, early stakeholder involvement allows plans to reflect public views and preferences. However, it should be noted that at the early stages, the issues raised are usually stated in general or abstract terms and may not be specific enough to catalyze responses from potentially affected parties. Participation that begins at a later stage, although capable of eliciting clear and focused responses from participants, may come too late to make a lasting impact on the final plan (Alterman et al., 1984). Participation that does not begin until public hearings at the end of the planning process may generate an adversarial, reactionary atmosphere that reduces support for implementing the plan.

Sixty-two percent of the jurisdictions sampled chose to involve citizens in the preplanning stage (see Table 4). Of these jurisdictions, the majority involved the public through early visioning techniques with face-to-face meetings. Florida localities were significantly more likely than those in Washington to include citizens at the end of the planning process in the form of a public hearing. This result indicates Florida's strong preference for pub-

TABLE 2. Choice 1: Administrative matters.

Administrative matters	Percent of jurisdictions making choice		
	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Preparation of a written plan for citizen involvement			
Written plan	53	63	43
If written plan:			
Plan adopted by governing body	51	100*	20
Plan disseminated to public	37	58*	23
Plan included in comprehensive plan document	44	72*	27
Staffing of citizen involvement effort			
Staff has had special training in citizen involvement techniques	59	66	53
Staff member assigned	57	67	47
If assigned staff:			
Percent of staff member's time devoted to task (mean)	*15*	*13*	*16*
Consultants assisted with citizen involvement effort	47	33	60*

*$p < .05$

TABLE 3. Choice 2: Objectives to guide citizen involvement.

Objectives	Percent of jurisdictions choosing objective		
	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of objectives emphasized			
Low (0 or 1)	33	37	30
Medium (2)	27	33	20
High (3 or more)	40	30	50
Objectives emphasized			
Complying with state requirements	68	77	60
Learning about citizen preferences and values, such as through a visioning process	53	40	69*
Tapping citizen knowledge and experience	40	30	50
Educating citizens about policy issues	37	27	47
Fostering citizen influence in decision making	30	27	33
Mobilizing an active constituency of citizens who would support proposed plans and policies	12	13	10
Ladder of participation (empowerment)			
Mean step on 7-rung (0–6) ladder of empowerment	*3.8*	*3.3*	*4.2*

*$p < .05$

lic hearings as a citizen involvement technique. In contrast, the majority of Washington jurisdictions (70%) involved their citizens during the preplanning stages of the process, primarily through visioning techniques.

Choice 4: How Many and Which Types of Groups to Target. Deciding how many and which types of groups to target for participation is an important part of the planning process, since it contributes to the success of a citizen involvement effort. Planners need to recognize the specific contribution each stakeholder group can make in the development of a plan and aggressively target these groups for participation. Targeting inevitably leads to a higher degree of citizen participation and added planning capacity (in the form of resources and knowledge), which can strengthen the quality of the final plan.

On average, jurisdictions targeted just over four types of groups for participation. Most were business groups, elected local government officials, development groups, and local government departments (see Table 5). Next came neighborhood groups, media, environmental groups, special district representatives, affordable housing groups, and property owners. Planners infrequently targeted less mainstream stakeholders, such as groups representing disadvantaged people, various types of professionals, or older persons. Florida localities were significantly more likely than those in Washington to target a low number of groups for their planning processes. In contrast, Washington localities targeted significantly more groups representing the media; special districts, such as school districts; and agricultural or forest industry trade groups. This difference in the number of types of groups targeted may be related to the type of participation mandate in each state. As noted above, Washington has a more detailed mandate offering a range of participatory techniques to involve a diverse group of stakeholders. This bottom-up approach to decision making tends to be more inclusive than a top-down model, such as Florida's.

Choice 5: Techniques for Obtaining Citizen Input. A number of techniques have been developed to foster citizen involvement in local planning, ranging from formal public hearings to community forums (Creighton, 1992; Sanoff, 2000). The specific techniques used can affect the degree of success in attaining broad public involvement and "constitute another important factor contributing to the possibility that the participation process will affect planning decisions" (Alterman et al., 1984, p. 181). The most widely used technique in our case study was the formal public hearing; 82% of the local governments in Florida and Washington reported that it played a central role in their citizen involvement

efforts (see Table 6). Other frequently used techniques include open meetings, facilitated workshops, and citizen advisory committees. Out of the 10 techniques surveyed, the average number used was 3.7. Washington localities were significantly more likely to employ more citizen participation techniques than those in Florida. The specific techniques used by each state during the planning process indicate the differences in the approach used for citizen participation. For example, Washington localities were more likely to use open meetings where citizens speak with staff, while Florida localities relied more heavily on formal public hearings to elicit citizen input.

It is important to note that planners use a variety of citizen participation techniques to accomplish any given objective. Some techniques are used more frequently to accomplish multiple objectives, such as subcommittees or workgroups, educational workshops, and talks to community groups. These techniques are broader in their focus and serve a number of purposes. Some participatory techniques serve only certain objectives, such as visioning and household surveys to learn citizen preferences. These techniques are more specific in their intent and are more tailored to achieving a specific objective.

Choice 6: Providing Citizens with Information. For participants to make or influence decisions competently, they must have access to adequate information. Information is power, and the way it is collected, stored, and disseminated is a vital part of incorporating citizens into the decision-making process. To this end, information should be widely accessible and highly integrated into all stages of the process of developing a plan. Providing adequate information can be a problem when dealing with complex ecological and political problems. Many local governments have little information about technical issues, and lay people as well as professional constituencies often ignore such information when it is available. Despite these difficulties, empowering citizens with information is an essential element of citizen involvement in planning. Planners are faced with two key choices when it comes to providing information: the types of information to provide and the types of meetings and other techniques to use.

Planners in Florida and Washington provided citizens, on average, four of the seven types of information we investigated (see Table 7). More than three quarters (78%) provided maps of environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas. Summaries of plan elements and vision statements were also commonly distributed to the public. While Florida localities were significantly more likely to provide citizens with maps of environmentally sensitive or hazardous areas (possibly due to strong interest in

TABLE 4. Choice 3: The stage of the planning process when citizens first become involved.

	Percent of jurisdictions choosing stage		
Stage when citizens first involved	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Preplanning	**62**	**53**	**70**
Scoping/development of work program	12	7	17
Early visioning process with face-to-face meetings	42	43	40
Public attitude or preference mail or phone survey	8	3	13
Planning			
Development and evaluation of alternative planning proposals	25	23	27
Postplanning			
Formal public hearing on the proposed plan	13	23*	3

*$p < .05$

TABLE 5. Choice 4: How many and which types of groups targeted for involvement.

	Percent of jurisdictions targeting groups		
Types of groups targeted	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of types of groups targeted			
Low (0)	18	22*	3
Medium (1–5)	42	27	50
High (6 or more)	40	40	47
Mean	*4.9*	*4.4*	*5.4*
Types of groups targeted			
Businesses or business groups (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce)	63	60	63
Elected local government officials	57	57	57
Development groups (e.g., homebuilders association or downtown business association)	50	47	53
Local government departments	50	50	50
Neighborhood groups (e.g., homeowners or neighborhood associations)	48	47	50
Media (e.g., newspapers, television, radio)	47	30	63*
Environmental groups (e.g., land trust or Sierra Club chapter)	35	30	40
Special district representatives (e.g., school districts)	35	23	47*
Affordable housing groups (e.g., Habitat for Humanity)	27	23	30
Property owners groups (e.g., groups representing owners in areas where development is to be discouraged)	25	33	17
Port, fishing, or marine industry trade groups	22	17	27
Agriculture or forest industry trade groups	13	3	23*
Older people's groups (e.g., the American Association of Retired Persons)	10	3	17
Professional groups (e.g., associations of engineers or architects)	7	13*	0
Disadvantaged groups exposed to hazards	5	3	7

*$p < .05$

TABLE 6. Choice 5: Techniques for obtaining citizen input.

Techniques	Percent of jurisdictions where technique played a central role in obtaining citizen input		
	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of types			
Low (1–2)	30	37	23
Medium (3–5)	55	56	53
High (6–10)	15	7	23
Mean	3.7	3.3	4.2*
Types of meetings			
Formal public hearings	82	93*	70
Open meetings where people talk to planning staff	67	47	87*
Facilitated workshops/meetings	52	50	53
Visioning, charettes, or workshops for goal setting, strategies, or designs	33	23	43
Community forums	28	27	30
Other techniques			
Citizen advisory committee	50	47	53
Subcommittee or workgroups	30	23	37
Interviews with key stakeholders	12	10	13
Household surveys	12	0	23*
Telephone hotline	7	7	7

*$p < .05$

potential hurricane damage), Washington localities were more likely to provide summaries of citizen input, reflecting the state's emphasis on public participation throughout the planning process.

The ways in which planners provided information to the public also differed in the two case study states. Washington localities utilized significantly more types of meetings and techniques than those in Florida, particularly educational workshops (see Table 8). Of the particular types of techniques we investigated, the use of educational workshops is often associated with broader participation by stakeholders. Educating citizens about pertinent issues helps raise interest in plan making and more effectively engages the public in the planning process.

Controlling for Capacity and Contextual Factors

In addition to direct comparisons of planning practice in Florida and Washington, we examined the relative impacts of their citizen involvement requirements, while controlling for other factors that can affect the attention local governments pay to citizen involvement. To do this,

we developed three summary measures of participation programs using principal components analysis of the indicators discussed in the preceding sections.[3]

Table 9 shows the results of regression modeling for which the dependent variables are the three dimensions of citizen participation revealed by the principal components analysis: level of effort, staff management, and use of consultants. The explanatory factors are the state participation mandate (Washington = 1; Florida = 0), indicators of the capacity of the planning agency to undertake citizen involvement activities, and indicators of the local context, such as population, growth rate, and socioeconomic status. Because the coefficients are standardized coefficients, they can be used as a gauge of the relative importance of different factors, while keeping in mind issues of statistical significance and differences in variability of each of the explanatory variables.

Regression results for the first dimension show that the Washington requirements have a positive, but not statistically significant, effect on citizen involvement effort. Effort is most strongly associated with staff expertise in facilitating public involvement and greater com-

TABLE 7. Choice 6a: Types of information to provide to citizens.

Information	Percent of jurisdictions providing type of information to citizens		
	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of types			
Low (1–3)	40	33	47
Medium (4–5)	40	50	30
High (6–7)	20	17	23
Mean	*4.0*	*4.2*	*3.8*
Types			
Maps of environmentally sensitive/hazardous areas	78	90*	67
Growth projections/build-out forecasts	77	87	67
Summaries of plan elements or issue areas	72	70	73
Vision statements	53	57	50
Summaries of citizen input obtained through meetings, surveys, and other means	52	37	67*
Alternative planning design concepts or strategies	38	33	43
Miscellaneous other types of information	27	43*	10

*$p < .05$

TABLE 8. Choice 6b: Techniques for providing information to citizens.

Techniques	Percent of jurisdictions where technique played a central role in providing information		
	Total (N=60)	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of types			
Low (0)	28	43*	13
Medium (1–2)	50	40	60*
High (3–6)	22	17	27
Mean	*1.5*	*1.1*	*2.0**
Types of meetings			
Educational workshops	38	20	57*
Other techniques			
Talks to neighborhood and community groups	33	27	40
Newsletters	32	20	43*
Brochures	17	17	17
Newspaper inserts	10	7	13
Public access cable television	8	7	10
Bill stuffers	7	3	10
Web site	5	10	0
Videos	3	0	7

*$p < .05$

TABLE 9. Factors associated with citizen participation effort and administration.

	Standardized regression coefficients (p-value, 1-tail test)		
		Administration	
Explanatory factors	Level of effort	Staff management	Use of consultants
State mandate			
Washington State	.16 (.09)	−.34 (.01)	.12 (.20)
Planning capacity			
Staff expertise in facilitating public involvement (director's estimate)	.37 (.001)	−.03 (.40)	−.04 (.38)
Staff training in public involvement	.09 (.20)	.21 (.07)	−.04 (.38)
Number of staff whose primary responsibility was preparation of plan	.27 (.03)	−.11 (.25)	.03 (.43)
Size of entire planning staff per capita	.11 (.18)	−.05 (.36)	−.25 (.05)
Contextual factors			
Population, 1990	.19 (.11)	.07 (.34)	−.36 (.02)
Population growth, 1990–1998	.01 (.46)	.17 (.13)	.08 (.29)
Population density, 1990	−.11 (.21)	−.14 (.17)	.02 (.44)
Median home value, 1990	.23 (.03)	−.20 (.07)	.08 (.29)
Summary statistics			
Adjusted R^2	.32	.10	.03
F-value for equation	4.05	1.74	1.15
Significance (p)	.001	.106	.329
Number of cases	60	60	60

Note: Dependent variables are scores for dimensions of the principal component analysis of citizen involvement practices. Higher scores indicate increased citizen involvement effort, staff management, and use of consultants. See Table A-2 for principal components analysis.

mitment to the planning process, as indicated by the number of staff whose primary responsibilities were preparation of the plan. Local governments serving wealthier constituencies (as indicated by median home value) also devoted more effort to citizen involvement. Larger communities, as measured by population, also tended to expend more effort on engaging the public.

The equations for staff management and use of consultants are poorly specified, making it difficult to draw accurate conclusions from the results. Florida localities employed a more structured approach to citizen involvement, possibly reflecting the state's highly formal and prescriptive growth management program. Furthermore, staff with training in citizen involvement techniques is associated with the staff management aspect of participation programs. The third participation program variable, use of consultants, is most strongly associated with localities that have smaller populations and smaller planning staffs, as would be expected. While this

analysis provides an initial indication of the influence of other explanatory variables on citizen participation, additional research examining selected case communities in more detail may yield further insights.

Conclusions from the Case Study

The multiple regression analysis indicates that while Washington's mandate clearly stresses citizen participation more than Florida's, the stronger requirement has only a moderate and statistically insignificant effect on the effort that localities make to incorporate citizens in the planning process. We believe that the relative strength of the overall planning mandates and the enforcement mechanisms used in each state are partly responsible for why there are not larger differences in participation practices between Florida and Washington. While Washington pays more attention to citizen participation, Florida has a stronger, more coercive mandate for local jurisdictions to prepare a comprehensive plan.

Florida gives the Department of Community Affairs ultimate authority for determining the consistency of local plans with both regional and state requirements. The state can withhold 1/365 of state revenue-sharing funds for each day a local plan is late for review or not in compliance. The legislature has added additional sanctions to encourage local governments to prepare plan evaluation and appraisal reports every 7 years. Once the deadline for the report passes, a local government cannot amend its plan until the state has approved the report. Florida supports its coercive enforcement measures with incentive-based tools. The state provides local jurisdictions with funds for preparing plans, as well as technical assistance for drafting effective policies.

Washington's mandate, by comparison, does not have anywhere near the same capability of ensuring that local governments prepare a plan that sufficiently meets state requirements. The Department of Trade and Economic and Community Development, which is responsible for the implementation of the state's Growth Management Act, serves primarily a technical assistance role and provides funding and incentives for planning at the local level. The department has no authority to review plans for consistency or impose sanctions for failure to comply with state requirements. An unenforceable mandate, even with an emphasis on citizen participation, may have resulted in less attention to public involvement at the local level than what would have been expected. While further investigation is necessary, we believe that an explicit, enforceable mandate with both coercive and incentive-based components is the most effective approach to ensuring compliance at the local level. A highly enforceable mandate does not necessarily mean local jurisdictions will be persuaded to meet only the minimum requirements. If structured properly to include detailed provisions, strong incentives, and a forceful regulatory stick for failure to comply, a mandate can indeed encourage communities to take creative and progressive action.

Impacts of Planners' Choices

The survey of local planning processes and related public involvement programs also provided important information about how the choices planners make can affect the level of citizen involvement actually attained in plan making. The correlation analyses shown in Table 10 indicate the association between citizen involvement program characteristics and the number of groups that participated in planning processes in Florida and Washington. The results of this analysis suggest which planning choices should be emphasized to encourage citizen participation. (Appendix Table A-1 summarizes data on the percentage of specific types of stakeholders who became involved in plan making in these places.) While the breadth of participation by stakeholders is not the only possible gauge of program effectiveness, it is related to other indicators of participation success and therefore serves as a good proxy for evaluating the ability of planners to engage the public.

Results of the analysis indicate that certain choices planners make with regard to administrative matters do affect the level of participation during the planning process. As the percentage of staff time devoted to citizen involvement increased, so did the number of groups subsequently participating in the development of the comprehensive plan. The presence of consultants assisting with citizen involvement efforts also had a positive impact on the number of groups involved in making the plan. These results suggest that by increasing the level of attention to citizen involvement from an administrative perspective, both through the number of personnel devoted to citizen involvement and the amount of time spent on the issue, participation programs will be more successful in engaging the public.

Generally, the more objectives planners emphasized, the greater the level of participation they obtained from a range of possible stakeholder groups. When the objectives emphasized are arranged as a ladder of participation, increasing levels of empowerment are correlated with a significantly greater number of groups participating in the planning process. That is, when citizens see an opportunity to genuinely impact local decision making, they are more likely to participate in the planning process.

While the timing of participation throughout the planning process alone did not seem to determine the success of a local citizen involvement effort, the types of meetings and techniques used to obtain information from citizens did in fact make a significant impact on the amount of participation. In general, the more types of meetings and techniques employed by jurisdictions, the more stakeholder groups participated in the planning process. As expected, the use of techniques that tend to engage the public and allow for a two-way exchange of information generated the highest level of citizen participation. For example, the use of visioning workshops and community forums is strongly correlated with the number of groups participating during the planning process. Opportunities for citizens to share their views in an informal setting seemed to encourage participation. While a formal public hearing was the most popular participation technique among the local governments in our sample, jurisdictions that made this a central feature of their public involvement efforts obtained less participation than those that focused on other participation techniques.

TABLE 10. Correlations between citizen involvement methods used and degree of stakeholder involvement in planning process.

Citizen involvement method	Pearson Product Moment Correlation
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS	
Preparation of a written plan for citizen involvement	
Written plan prepared	.09
If written plan:	
Plan adopted by governing body	−.05
Plan disseminated to public	.04
Plan included in comprehensive plan document	−.01
Staffing of citizen involvement effort	
Staff member assigned responsibility	.19
If assigned staff:	
Percent of staff member's time devoted to task	.31*
Consultants assisted with citizen involvement effort	.22*
OBJECTIVES	
Number of objectives emphasized	.54*
Step on 7-rung (0–6) ladder of empowerment	.40*
Objectives emphasized	
Learning about citizen preferences and values, such as through a visioning process	.46*
Educating citizens about policy issues	.45*
Mobilizing an active constituency of citizens who would support proposed plan	.36*
Fostering citizen influence in decision making	.24*
Complying with state requirements	.24*
Tapping citizen knowledge and experience	.23*
STAGE CITIZENS FIRST INVOLVED	
Preplanning	.20
Planning	−.12
Postplanning	−.14
TECHNIQUES FOR OBTAINING CITIZEN INPUT	
Number of types of meetings and other techniques	.50*
Types of meetings	
Visioning, charettes, or workshops for goal setting, strategies, or designs	.47*
Community forums	.36*
Facilitated workshops/meetings	.21
Open meetings where people talk to planning staff	.20
Formal public hearings	−.09
Other techniques	
Citizen advisory committee	.33*
Subcommittee or workgroups	.26*
Interviews with key stakeholders	.18
Household surveys	.02
Telephone hotline	−.12

TABLE 10. Continued.

Citizen involvement method	Pearson Product Moment Correlation
TYPES OF INFORMATION TO PROVIDE TO CITIZENS	
Number of types of information	.32*
Types of information	
Alternative planning design concepts or strategies	.53*
Summaries of citizen input obtained through meetings, surveys, and other means	.49*
Growth projections/build-out forecasts	.25
Maps of environmentally sensitive/hazardous areas	.24
Vision statements	.23
Summaries of plan elements or issue areas	.16
Miscellaneous other types of information	.13
TECHNIQUES FOR PROVIDING INFORMATION TO CITIZENS	
Number of types of meetings and other techniques to give citizens information	.38*
Types of meetings	
Educational workshops	.33*
Other techniques	
Talks to neighborhood and community groups	.21
Brochures	.21
Newspaper inserts	.35*
Public access cable television	.15
Videos	.15
Newsletters	.11
Web site	.08
Bill stuffers	−.10

Note: Correlations can vary from ± 0 to 1.

*$p < .05$

Choices regarding the types of information to provide citizens are also important in obtaining citizen participation during the planning process. On average, the more types of information provided, the greater the number of groups that subsequently participated in the planning process. This suggests that information empowers citizens to become involved in and make an impact on the plan-making process. Planners were able to encourage citizen participation most by providing information that was created by participants themselves. For example, groups were significantly more likely to participate in the planning process if they received summaries of citizen input obtained though meetings and other means, as well as alternative planning design concepts or strategies. Interestingly, these types of information were provided least often by the jurisdictions surveyed.

The ways in which planners provided information to the public also played a role in encouraging participation. Generally, the more techniques employed by a jurisdiction, the greater the number of groups that subsequently participated in the planning process. The use of educational workshops, which foster more interaction with citizens compared to other techniques, resulted in a significantly higher number of groups participating in the planning process.

Conclusions: Implications for Growth Management Mandates and Planning Practice

This article has analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of citizen involvement mandates in state growth

management laws and local planning practices focused on citizen participation in comprehensive plan making. We find that mandates do indeed affect local government attention to citizen involvement and that the choices planners make in crafting citizen involvement programs do affect the resulting level of public participation.

Our findings have clear and important implications for designers of growth management mandates and for local planning practitioners. Mandate designers who believe that authentic citizen involvement is important in plan making within our democratic system must update and reframe the participation language in their state growth management laws and regulations. Most current language still reflects the obsolete "notice and hearing" approach from the early 20th century, rather than the current state of the art based on hard-won lessons from more recent times.

A contemporary mandate that is serious about participation in plan making should do the following:

- Require that local governments prepare written plans for participation programs and designate specific staff resources sufficient to carry out these programs within the context of jurisdictional size and demographic makeup. The written plans will guide the administration of involvement activities and allow for budgeting of necessary staff resources for effective implementation. They will let planners know when to expect involvement and which staff members are available to facilitate it. They will also inform citizens and stakeholder groups about anticipated planning and participation schedules and events, allowing them to prepare themselves in advance, rather than simply reacting to a newspaper notice. Finally, they will alert elected officials to impending citizen input and to potential political impacts from planning issues.
- Require that participation programs clearly state their objectives and have them approved by the local government. Publishing statements of participation objectives will allow for community debate over the role of citizens in the planning process. Some communities may be satisfied with specified opportunities for input, while others may demand more active roles in influencing the content of plans. While the mandate may leave the nature of the objectives open to local choice, it should ensure that the localities are aware of the potential range of objectives from which to choose.
- Require that participation be included in the planning process from its earliest stages through every important decision point. At a minimum,

there should be systematic participation at the preplanning or visioning stage, at the selection of goals and objectives, at the choice of alternatives, and at the review and approval of the final planning package. Unless citizens are involved in the complete plan-making process, their participation will lack understanding of the scope of issues and range of opportunities selected for emphasis in the final plan. And without citizens' early and continuing participation, planners will lack the common knowledge and reality checks provided by stakeholders.

- Require that participation programs target relevant stakeholders, including representatives of environmental groups, business associations, and neighborhoods, in addition to public-sector organizations. By issuing specific invitations to stakeholders, the participation program will ensure both breadth and depth of citizen knowledge and input. The plan will benefit from a two-stage dissemination and discussion process, as stakeholder representatives relay planning issues and alternatives to their respective groups and organizations and report back at participation events.
- Require that participation programs use a range of involvement techniques and media to ensure that there is adequate information output, stakeholder preference input, and dialogue between planners and stakeholders. This is not to suggest that public hearings be abandoned, but that they be supplemented with workshops, committees, Web sites, focus groups, charettes, surveys, and other participatory techniques. One way to think about appropriate techniques is to have techniques for one-way planner output of information, for one-way public input of preferences, and for two-way dialogue.
- Require that participation programs provide stakeholders with a full range of planning data, information, and proposals during the planning process. The more complete the stakeholders' information, the more informed the stakeholder participation. With the traditional media supplemented by current electronic and digital information channels, there is no longer any excuse for citizens not to know what is happening in the planning process.

Local planning practitioners also can draw useful lessons from our study findings. It is possible to overcome problems of citizen apathy and disinterest in the planning process by crafting lively and engaging partic-

ipation programs. Such programs can build support for plans as well as for planning by opening up the process and sharing information, insights, and influence with affected stakeholders. They can also help to ensure that plans are approved by elected officials and are implemented not only by public agencies, but also by private organizations and citizens who have been a real part of the plan-making process.

We conclude that if the planning profession is serious about involving citizens in plan making, then we should hasten to rewrite the obsolete citizen participation requirements in state growth management laws and to strengthen local participation programs. These actions, which are within the power of the planning profession, can make a major difference in ensuring authentic participation, as well as increasing public understanding of, and support for, comprehensive planning.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

1. The intent of this study was to examine the relationship between the choices planners make when designing a participation program and the subsequent number of citizen groups that become involved in the planning process. We therefore focus on planning techniques and participants, rather than on how participation affects the quality of the adopted plan or the outcome of the planning process. The impacts of citizen participation on planning outcomes are, however, addressed by Burby (2003) using data from the same study. That article demonstrates that stronger participation programs result in higher quality plans, which are more likely to be implemented.

2. The sample of places studied was initially selected for use in an investigation of the impacts of planning mandates on the quality of the hazards elements of comprehensive plans (see Burby et al., 1997) and used again here to enable us to make use of longitudinal data. The sample of lo-

calities was selected to ensure some degree of comparability among places in different states. For this reason, sample frames were constructed in each state of cities and counties that met the following criteria: population of 2,500 or more in 1990 (to ensure a minimum capacity for plan making) and potential for significant exposure to natural hazards (location in a coastal jurisdiction in Florida and west of the Cascade Mountains in Washington, where flood hazards are ubiquitous). Large cities, such as Miami and Seattle, were also excluded because it is believed that these jurisdictions have very different contextual factors that may skew the sample. Once the sample frame was constructed, 30 local governments were selected at random in each state by numbering the list of places and drawing numbers at random from a random number table. The samples were limited to 30 localities in each state due to budget constraints associated with the cost of conducting personal interviews with planners in a number of localities. In each state, the sample was comprised primarily of both urban and rural cities (only a few counties—three in Florida and six in Washington—were selected at random). Because Florida is more urbanized, particularly in coastal areas, jurisdictions selected in this state tended to be larger and more urban in setting than those in Washington. The mean and median populations of the sampled jurisdictions were 91,000 and 19,000 in the Florida sample and 47,000 and 9,000 in the Washington sample. Because of the variation in population across the sample, population size is included as a control variable in the multivariate analysis.

3. The construction of these measures involved two steps. First, we developed summary measures for each category of choices planners face in crafting citizen involvement programs (breadth of objectives, stage when citizens were first involved, number of types of groups targeted for participation, number of techniques employed to provide information to and obtain it from citizens, number of types of information provided to citizens, and administrative matters such as preparing a plan for participation, appointing a manager of the process, using consultants, and allocating time for the planning process). The analytic task was then to deduce from citizen involvement practices the dimensions that represent differences in the attention local governments give to citizen involvement.

Two issues are involved in this determination. First, there is a statistical determination of the appropriate dimensionality for representing local government practices. This entails the number of dimensions that are required to adequately represent the data. Second, there is a determination of whether in fact a given choice of dimensions is plausible. Our statistical analyses and assessments of plausibility led us to select a three-dimensional representation that explains 65% of the variation in the data, based on principal components analysis with varimax rotation and a minimum Eigen value of 1.0.

The results of this analysis are presented in the Appendix in Table A-2, which shows the correlation between citizen involvement practices and each of the three di-

mensions. The first dimension loads highly on the number of techniques used to give and get information from citizens, the number of objectives emphasized, number of groups targeted for participation, and the number of types of information given to citizens. We labeled this dimension *citizen involvement effort*. This dimension varies from a very strong effort to involve citizens using a variety of approaches to a weaker effort involving few approaches to involve citizens. The second dimension loads highly on the preparation of a plan for citizen involvement and appointment of someone to manage the process. We labeled this a *staff management* dimension, since it involves primarily administrative measures. This dimension varies from local governments that have a highly structured approach to citizen involvement with a plan and manager to those that employ a more ad hoc approach. The third dimension loads highly on the use of consultants to assist the staff with the citizen involvement effort and the length of time the whole planning process took to complete. We labeled this dimension *use of consultants*, since it involves primarily the degree to which consultants were employed to manage and undertake the citizen involvement program. It varies from local governments that made heavy use of consultants and spent a longer time preparing the plan to those that made less use of consultants and completed the planning effort in a shorter period of time.

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APPENDIX

TABLE A-1. Citizen involvement in planning processes.

Groups involved	Percent of jurisdictions in which groups were involved	
	Florida (N=30)	Washington (N=30)
Number of types of groups involved		
Low (4 or fewer)	40	30
Medium (5–8)	30	37
High (9–15)	30	33
Mean	*5.7*	*6.6*
Types of groups involved		
Businesses or business groups (e.g., the Chamber of Commerce)	70	80
Elected local government officials	80	63
Development groups (e.g., the homebuilders association or downtown business association)	63	73
Local government departments	70	56
Neighborhood groups	60	57
Media (e.g., newspapers, television, and radio)	50	63
Environmental groups (e.g., a land trust or Sierra Club chapter)	37	50
Special district representatives (e.g., school districts)	23	56*
Affordable housing groups (e.g., Habitat for Humanity)	23	40
Property owners groups (e.g., groups representing owners in areas where development is to be discouraged)	23	7
Port, fishing, or marine industries or trade groups	13	30
Agriculture or forest industry trade groups	3	30*
Professional groups (e.g., associations of engineers and architects)	23	7
Older people's groups (e.g., the American Association of Retired Persons)	10	20
Disadvantaged groups exposed to hazards	3	7

*$p < .05$

TABLE A-2. Citizen involvement program dimensions.

Citizen involvement program indicators	Loadings for citizen involvement program dimensions		
	Citizen involvement	Staff management of citizen involvement	Use of consultants
Number of techniques used to provide information to and obtain information from citizens	.86	−.02	.23
Number of objectives emphasized	.82	.03	.17
Number of types of groups targeted for involvement	.81	−.12	−.03
Number of types of information provided to citizens	.73	.01	−.11
Stage of process when citizens first involved	.55	−.34	.23
Manager of citizen involvement effort	.61	.37	−.05
Citizen involvement plan prepared	.06	.90	−.09
Consultants employed in citizen involvement	.02	.19	.84
Length of time to complete planning process	−.34	.33	.73
Summary statistics			
Eigenvalue	3.33	1.51	1.15
Variance explained	37%	16%	12%
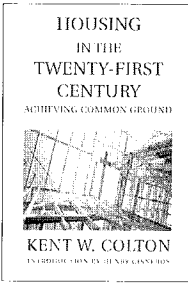
Note: Cell entries are the correlations of citizen involvement program indicators with the dimensions derived from principal component analysis for the sample of local governments in Florida and Washington. Bold items are those used to label each dimension. The results are after varimax rotation of axes.