MEANINGFUL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: A CASE STUDY OF MANHATTAN'S DOWNTOWN REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

by

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M.Sc., Northwestern University, 2012

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become a vehicle to deliver products and services internationally. It is a favored strategy widely adopted for implementing complex urban developments in the United States. However, the complex nature of such partnerships raises serious concerns about meaningful community engagement. Meaningful community engagement is a result of the presence and quality of transparency and public participation elements that are strongly correlated.

The following research describes how the community was involved and contributed to an urban development PPP project in Manhattan, Kansas. The research goal is to understand the mechanism of the community engagement in a PPP project and to evaluate the quality of the process at the local level from a planning perspective. With an in-depth case study and an understanding of meaningful community engagement processes, this research will contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of PPPs and meaningful community engagement at the local level and evaluate local PPP policies and practices.

The first objective is to evaluate the participation opportunities with a developed Community Engagement Attribute Evaluation System (CEAES) based on the recognized metrics of quality practices. Attributes are drawn from the identified characteristics of quality transparency and quality public participation of meaningful practices. The second goal is to interview the key stakeholders of the project from the public sector, the private sector, and the community and add depth to the findings that complements the overall evaluation.

Through both technical evaluation and open-ended personal interview, this study attempts to describe the design and the process of public participation practices. Analysis will show whether or not the community was meaningfully engaged and if the technical aspects of a quality community engagement practice were present. Finally, this study aims to inform future similar planning practices. The result serves two local purposes of planning governance and policy. For the former, it will help those with no record of PPP to better design and implement the engagement process; and for the ones with PPPs' experience, it will contribute to the quality of the future partnerships. For the latter, it will guide the local governments and policy makers to better address PPPs' ongoing issue of community engagement.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

Development of the states is the role of most governments. In this regard, Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have become a favored strategy widely adopted for implementing complex urban developments in the United States (Sagalyn, 2007). Joint provision of public services has a long history but it was not until around the 1980s that it has been recognized as PPPs being practiced today (Hodge et al., 2010; Wettenhall, 2005). Partnership is about involving society and private actors in dealing with problems rather than doing them alone or privatizing it to the market (Bovaird, 2010). Both theoretical and empirical research supports the idea that collaboration and participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process is critical for a successful development and project implementation. The interaction between the governance actors and civil society makes the community more likely to adopt meaningful policies critical to the success of planning programs. These interactions should be conducted through actively engaging community interests in a meaningful way and openly sharing information with stakeholders in an approach that satisfies multiple interest positions. Citizens are no longer voters and governments are no longer trustees, instead they are 'collaborative partners' aiming to reduce conflict and build a stronger consensus through which development objectives can be met (Hawkins & Wang, 2012).

Why has meaningful community engagement become a concern in public-private partnerships? The attractiveness of PPPs is due to its promise to leverage the advantages of each sector toward achieving a better outcome (Martin & Halachmi, 2012, p. 192). The growing trend of this strategy allows researchers of many disciplines to conduct numerous studies on best PPP practices within fields such as: management, finance, and public administration. However, the nature and rapid implementation of this type of project delivery sometimes cause the public and private partners to neglect the interests and concerns of the community, especially on the costs of the PPPs to taxpayers (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Sagalyn, 2007). In the 1970s, a concern was that executives of the PPP projects were much more influential compared to the ultimate payers who would be affected by the project (Sagalyn, 2007). The focus of the private sector is necessarily on profit, risk mitigation, and timeliness; whereas, the public sector interest is to ensure due process, effective representation, and good governance practices while providing value for money. In some cases, arising tensions between the parties—regarding "The pace,

transparency, openness, and inclusiveness of the process generates pressures to compromise the public interest to accommodate private interests"—are unavoidable (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011, p. 84). Problematic tradeoffs of transparency and community participation for quick execution have been identified in US case studies as well (Hodge, 2004; Sagalyn, 2007).

Despite the popularity of PPPs in American urban development, this topic has not been included specifically in the research agenda of many planning academics in the US. In addition, hitherto studies of PPPs have generally not addressed the issues of access to information, particulars of deal negotiation, and the potential of meaningful public consultation within the planning process (Sagalyn, 2007, p. 13). Thus, they have not been comprehensively examined from a planning perspective. Lack of evaluation of execution challenges creates a troublesome gap between theory and practice. This is specifically the case at the local level since a city may only undertake a major urban development PPP once or twice in a generation. The quality of planning processes used to achieve the gains ultimately impacts the system users—members of the community (Sagalyn, 2007; Siemiatycki 2007 & 2009).

The important point is that there is no singular solution for best community engagement practices in public-private partnerships—both theory and practice has shown that in every studied case (context) different factors are at play, thus researchers can not do more than identify general principles of good practices. Researchers have touched on the importance of community engagement and its necessity toward having successful PPPs. Sagalyn (2007) argues that clear and timely information on financial aspects of PPPs is a requirement for successful implementation. She also underlines the importance of processes in which the public is permitted to have a voice in decision-making. In his earlier single case study, Siemiatycki (2007) stresses the importance of key information disclosure and implementing a decision process that allows public input. Later, in a multiple case study (2009), he concludes that a short-term concern of PPPs is the limited transparency and minimized meaningful community engagement in project planning. Siemiatycki considers transparency and public engagement as the criteria on which implications of the PPPs must be evaluated. However, there has been no study based on evaluating the quality of the current practices. Evaluating the merits of PPP planning has been identified critical to deliver an efficient project. Planning practice would benefit from case-based research that analyzes the process to see how the context and local politics form the actions chosen (Hodge et al., 2010; Ng et al., 2012; Siemiatycki, 2007 & 2009).

This research has started with the fact that meaningful community engagement contributes to the success of PPP projects and adds to their timeliness, efficiency, legitimacy and accountability. Meaningful community engagement is defined as the sum of two concepts: first, transparency, adequate quality information provided from the public and private sectors, and second, citizen participation, at the level of the general public in the consulting and informational sessions (Andersson, 2008). Therefore, the level of transparency along with the level of citizen participation will be examined in the most recent downtown redevelopment project in Manhattan, Kansas.

According to the current need for more local public-private partnership case studies (Sagalyn, 2007), the study intends to evaluate the downtown redevelopment project particularly in the stages of the pre-contractual phase of North End Final Development Agreement and a rezoning issue. This paper aims to contribute to the needed effort to address this gap. Such a contribution, in turn, would expand our understanding of PPPs in general and bridge the gap between theory and practice in the field of community engagement and public-private partnerships.

This study has three overarching goals. First, to develop a comprehensive set of criteria on which to evaluate meaningful community engagement; second, to understand whether or not the community was meaningfully engaged, in two stages of a downtown redevelopment PPP project, before entering into the Final Development Agreement (FDA) and the rezoning issue. And third, to use that understanding to inform better practices and policies for similar local urban redevelopment PPP projects.

Research questions include:

1. Was the community meaningfully engaged in downtown redevelopment?

   a. Was an acceptable level of transparency and public participation in place before entering into the Final Development Agreement (FDA) of the North End?

   b. Was an acceptable level of transparency and public participation in place for resolving the rezoning issue?

2. What were the local factors influential in conducting a meaningful community engagement in Downtown Redevelopment?

3. How was the interest of the public protected and the fairness of the process assured?

The result of this study will reveal significant details on meaningful community engagement practice within this project and benefit policy makers, private sectors, and researchers. To policy makers it assists to better address the PPPs' ongoing issues of transparency and public participation in the regulatory framework for the ultimate goal of better communication in this type of project delivery. To the private sector, it gives practical ideas in addressing community engagement. To researchers it is an initial step on how to measure transparency and public engagement in PPPs.

Finally, this study gives clues as to the quality and transparency of the overall community engagement practice in downtown redevelopment. Evidence based information on the non-financial aspects of the PPPs will also enable planners, academics and citizens to move beyond individual case studies and systematically identify the strengths and weaknesses of the practice. Understanding and evaluating the practices of a local case study can help toward having more quality PPP practices. This research will help to create or improve the existing regulations toward having a more effective framework. My dissertation will also be a good guide to evaluate similar scale PPPs and better reflecting the interest, needs, and concerns of the communities in future projects.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Public Private Partnerships

From the global perspective, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are complex long-term contractual cooperation arrangements between public and private sectors to jointly deliver public services while sharing risks, costs, and resources. PPPs are founded on transferring risk from the public sector to the private sector, who best manages the risk, while offering a profit incentive in return. The PPP strategy offers flexibility and efficiency in the use of resources, not always evident in the public sector, and private financing to the local governments that reduces the financial burden on the public and assists them in budget deficiencies (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002; Hodge, 2010; Kwak et al., 2009; Reuschke, 2001; Sagalyn, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2009). Collaboration between the sectors and sharing risks has been widely accepted as common denominators of the PPPs (Hodge et al., 2010; Linder, 1999; Wall, 2013; Weihe, 2005; Wettenhall, 2005; The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, 2013; The National Council for Public-Private Partnerships in the United States, 2013).

There are many debates regarding the definition of public-private partnerships within the literature. Linder (1999) and Wettenhall (2005) underline the importance of 'partnership' in these corporations. Wall (2013) adds that the private sectors do the role that hitherto was carried out by the government. Thus, the provision of services to the community is done by involvement of a private sector on behalf of the public (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002; Ng et al., 2012). Hodge & Greve (2007) argue that PPPs have been considered from two different standpoints as governance tool, jointly provision of products and services in a long-term commitment between the public and the private sectors, and as a language game, a new label for 'contracting out' and 'privatization'.

The concept of PPPs has not yet been defined clearly (Hodg et al., 2010; Linder, 1999; Sagalyn, 2007; Weihe, 2005; Wettenhall, 2005). Three areas of confusion are: meanings (different definitions), arguments and rationality (contradictory arguments on the achievements), and best practices (most workable form of cooperation). In their study, Hodge et al., (2010) remark that the term PPP is a brand creating a general image rather than providing a precise definition.

In public-private partnerships, different stakeholders have different objectives. The government wants to lead while staying in power and to ensure that the private sector meets its contractual obligations properly while using public funds efficiently and effectively (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002; Hodge et al., 2010; Wall, 2013). The prime goal of a private sector is gaining profit and what users seek is a new facility or service at its minimum cost. Aligning the stakeholders' incentives makes these arrangements problematic (Hodge, 2010). However, the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships in the United States (2013) claims that PPPs' contract provides a high level of public control, monitoring and oversight that result in a win-win-win situation for the government, the private sector, and the general public.

From the planning perspective, the following comprehensive definition for PPPs embodies the focus of the present study on the community's interest:

> "Pubic-private partnership means cooperation among individuals and organizations in the public and private sectors for mutual benefit. Such cooperation has two dimensions: the policy dimension, in which the goals of the community are articulated, and the operational dimension, in which those goals are pursued. The purpose of public-private partnership is to link these dimensions in such a way that the participants contribute to the benefit of the broader community while promoting their own individual or organizational interests." (CED, 1982, p. 8-9)

CED (1982) looks at PPPs as an opportunity to fully use the existing potentials within every community. Under its definition, mutual goals and benefits of partnerships have to contribute to the benefit of the broader community. Reuschke (2001) argues that under an ideal form of partnership, partners are equal participants, however the ambitious concept of equality not often happens in practice. Thus, he calls CED's perspective too altruistic because partnerships have not often shared common or broader community goals and in many American cities these goals have remained unserved.

PPPs' Practice and Evolution

International

Cooperation and interface of public and private sectors has a record of over two millennia (Hodge & Greve, 2007). Nevertheless, the term public-private partnership is first used in 1970s and it was in 1980s that it appeared in the literature (Bovaird, 2010). The term is argued to be a

characteristic of the post-WWII era where as a result of limitations in public funds, governments were no longer able to provide the public services on their own. Both the Canadian and American councils look at PPPs as a financial tool maximizing efficiency for federal agencies, state, and local governments. PPPs best address 'challenging economic times' when the governments have funds limitation and there is a need to cut expenditures or increase taxes (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002; National Council for Public-Private Partnerships in the United States, 2013; Sagalyn, 2007). In recent years, PPPs are focused mainly on delivering large public-use infrastructure such as: transportation, telecommunication, energy, schools, hospitals, public housing; and in USA: prisons, water and waste treatment facilities (Grimsey & Lewis, 2002; Kwak et al., 2009; Siemiatycki, 2007).

The exact form of PPPs' arrangements depends on the policies and ideologies of the public partners signing these contracts. The contracts specify deliverables, achievements, payments schedule, and direction on the agent and the principle's rights of oversight (Hodge et al., 2010; Greve & Hodge, 2012). Therefore, "There is no general model for public-private partnerships but rather a range of possible models" (Reuschke, 2001, p. 7). In the approach and methodologies applied for the execution of PPPs, context is the essential defining characteristic (The National Council for Public-Private Partnerships in the United States, 2013; Weihe, 2005).

There are different types of public-private partnerships depending on the level of public sector and private sector's involvement. PPPs range from low level, purely public involvement: Operation-Maintenance (OM) and Design-Build-Operate (DBO), to high purely private involvement: Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) and Build-Own-Operate (BOO), with a balanced type of involvement of both: Design-Build-Finance-Operate (DBFO) (Kwak et al., 2009) (see Figure 1).

In public-private partnership projects, the role of governments shifts from the provider of the public service to the purchaser. The public is not the sole entity providing the public service rather by transferring risk and responsibility to the private sector the public is the purchaser of service with a higher level of efficiency (Siemiatycki, 2007).

Figure 1.

Range of public and private involvement in PPPs
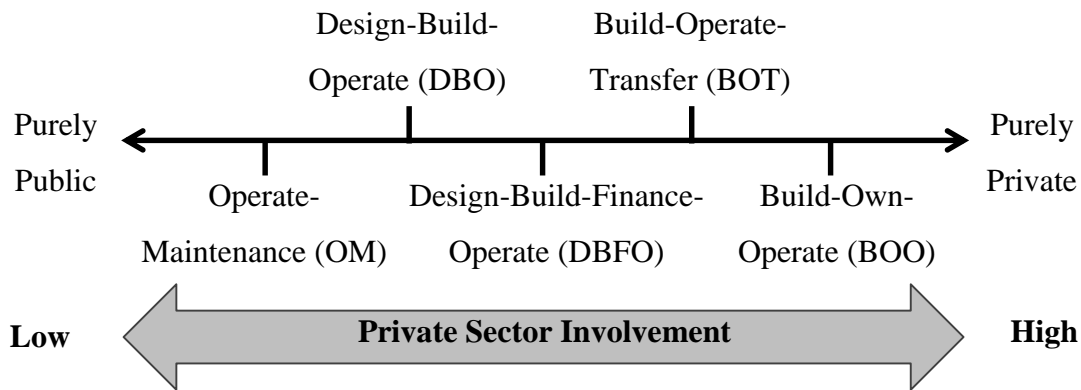
United States

A key part of the story of PPPs in the modern era began in the US in 1930s. In 1938, following the inception of housing assistance programs by the US federal government, the public sector and the private market became partners to produce housing in so-called targeted urban areas. A decade later, with the Housing and Urban Renewal Act 1949, a series of housing and development programs such as Urban Renewal were initiated. Redevelopment is rooted in this federal program. Merging private influence and public resources in urban redevelopment partnerships became a popular model in rebuilding American cities. Rebuilding the inner cities under those programs needed a high reliance on private developers (Bovaird, 2010; Reuschke, 2001).

In the 1960s and 1970s, more PPPs were launched in the US for the purpose of urban regeneration. Through programs such as Model Cities and the Urban Development Act Grant (UDAG), most of the American large cities redeveloped the major parts of their downtown (Bovaird, 2010). Starting in 1970s, with severe cutbacks in federal money, inflation, and growing anti-tax sentiment, the government transferred the responsibilities for urban redevelopment to the local governments and turned to public-private strategy. Public-private venture in the United States was explicitly started and developed in Reagan's administration; so did the rise of PPPs in urban development. By 1978, PPPs became a tool in the Carter administration in National Urban

Policy. Under this administration, federal and state government depended on the private sector at the local level for major responsibilities (CED, 1982).

Some features of the US cities have also made a favorable environment for PPPs to grow. Geographically dispersed US capital, made the local capital play a key role in the 'local growth coalitions'. Moreover, there was a higher level of interest and knowledge in local economic development in these cities and more social networks tried to link business people. Later the public-private approach was applied to other areas such as developing brownfields, building new infrastructure, and revitalizing neighborhood commercial centers. While the scope of public-private partnerships became broader at the end of 1970s and early 1980s, their cooperation became tighter (Hodge et al., 2010; Reuschke, 2001; Sagalyn, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2009).

Informal relationship between the public (local public officials: city departments or city hall) and private sectors (private development committees: private organizations) were common in the US around the 1950s and 1960s. Since 1970s, partners seek more formalized partnerships in the form of written development agreements (contracts). Thus, urban development in the US has become more institutionalized. While defining the responsibility of each and reduce uncertainty and risk for both sectors, formal agreements provide security for the participants (Reuschke, 2001).

The 1980s is called the resurgence of PPPs in urban development. New Public Management (NPM) suggested a different set of rationales based on increasing quality and reducing cost for PPPs. Based on the NPM concept, there should be an emphasis on market mechanisms and governments should involve private sectors to implement the projects because private sectors can provide value-for-money (VfM). The public sector, instead, has to concentrate on setting public policies and controlling implementation. Comparing the 1950s and 1960s' approach of PPPs with that of the 1970s and 1980s indicates strong qualitative changes. With federal and state shrinking funds, the private sector had to make the best use of resources (Bovaird, 2010; Reuschke, 2001). In late 20th century, governance is envisioned as a shared process between the state, the market and civil society while networking with each other (Wettenhall, 2005).

Since 1990s, the assumption of NPM based on the efficiency of PPP solution has been criticized. It has been argued that first PPPs brought debt for the future generations rather than bringing any new capital investment into the public services and second, assessments regarding

the provision of VfM were in favor of private finance (Hodge et al., 2010). Hodge et al., (2010) argue that in the beginning of PPPs, the projects risks were transferred to the private sector. However, later, governments were forced to intervene for their commitment to provide public services, since the political risks of not delivering a project can not be transferred. Sagalyn (2007, p.10) argues that early in 1990s, a set of best practices emerged from many case studies. Later, in mid-1990s, the emergence of the public governance model in partnerships emphasized the incorporation of citizens and users in decisions to have a more reliable project delivery (Bovaird, 2010).

Meaningful Community Engagement in Public-Private Partnerships

Development of the nation states, in terms of physical, social, and legal infrastructure, for further economic development purposes, is the role of most governments. Partnership is about involving society and private actors in dealing with problems rather than doing them alone or privatizing it to the market. However, the complex nature of such partnerships raises serious concerns about transparency and public involvement. (Bovaird, 2010; Hodge et al., 2010; Sagalyn, 2007).

In the traditional model of PPPs, a public service is contracted out to a private sector and the general public has a limited voice. Even in the more current PPP practices where the public and private sectors have a formal contractual relationship, the connection with the general public is still an issue. Thus, the public interest is often sacrificed in public officials' trade off with rapid project implementation (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Ng et al., 2012; Sagalyn, 2007). However, ignoring the public interest is one of the reasons for PPPs failure.

The purpose of the public-private partnerships is to contribute to the benefit of the broader community (CED, 1982). Therefore, in order to have a successful PPP with genuine partnership (Wettenhall, 2005) where all parties including the general public collaborate and benefit, as the National Council for Public-Private Partnerships in the United States (2013) recommends there should be an open communication with the affected portion of the public. Open communication helps the establishment of these partnerships through minimizing potential resistance.

Public-decision making is an important process. It has been widely accepted that there are benefits in creating a process to ensure the quality of the decision-making. However, there has

not seemed to be enough concern about including the perspective of the general public, especially in the decision-making of the early planning phases (Ng et al., 2012). For the purpose of gaining input on project objectives, there is a need for an ongoing meaningful consultation with stakeholders, including the general public, throughout the PPPs' process. Data disclosure and public engagement are the two important parts of this process to obtain public legitimacy. However, in some types of PPPs like DBFOs (Design-Build-Finance-Operate) private entities claim some level of confidentiality in order to maintain their intellectual property, especially during the competitive tendering process (Siemiatycki, 2007). A predictable decision making process, open access to key documents and data, fair opportunities for stakeholders to provide input to the plan, and a transparent and accountable system of integrating stakeholders contributions into the final decisions are characteristics of a meaningful consultation (Siemiatycki, 2009).

Andersson (2008) argues that transparency and public participation are strongly linked— so does this study. Transparency needs public involvement and meaningful public involvement cannot take place without transparency in procedures. Together, they are two of the major building blocks for awareness and thus enhancing conscious decision-making. But what are the concepts of these terms and how do they contribute to a better practice in public-private partnerships?

Successful governance of the PPPs is tied to a range of factors including: policies, governance, finance, scheduling, risk sharing, management, and social issues. In terms of social elements, the public interest must be tested based on factors such as effectiveness, transparency, equity, public access, consumer rights, security, privacy, and rights of representation of effected individuals and communities (Duffield, 2010). Within the social issues of PPPs, the focus of this study is to evaluate meaningful community engagement including factors of transparency and public participation in a local PPP project (see Figure 2).

Figure 2.

Variables Affecting the Success of PPPs

PPPs' Success

$\propto$

Public Policy + Governance + Politics + Finance + Risk Sharing + Management

+ Scheduling + Social Issues:
- Effectiveness
- Accountability
- Public Rights
- Privacy
- Meaningful Community Engagement

Public Participation
+
Transparency
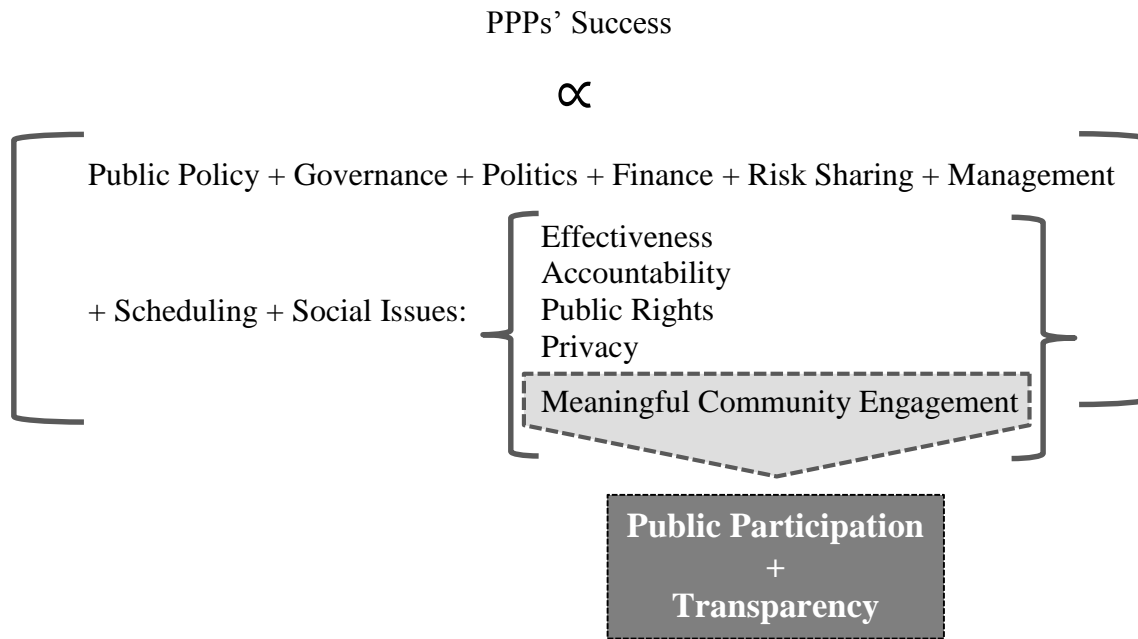
Transparency and Public Participation

Meaningful community engagement has become a concern for the success of public-private partnerships within the subject of social issues (Hodge, 2004; Hodge et al., 2010; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Ng et al., 2012; Sagalyn, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2007 & 2009). In the literature, meaningful community engagement is defined as where linked concepts of transparency and public participation are present, while transparency itself is a prerequisite for an effective public participation (Andersson, 2008; Brody et al., 2003; Creighton, 2005; Halachmi & Holzer, 2010; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Mihm, 2011; Ng et al., 2012; Pietro, 2013) (see Figure 3). In practice, each concept has a set of required dimensions to be effective and contributive to a truly meaningful community engagement. Reviewing literature on transparency and public participation, this section aims to address the following questions regarding concepts of transparency and public participation:

1. Why transparency/ public participation is important?
2. How is transparency/ public participation is being practiced?
3. What are the dimensions of quality transparency/ public participation practices?
4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of transparency/ public participation practices?

5. What are the obstacles and difficulties in transparency/ public participation practices?

Figure 3.

Schematic Summary of Findings from Literature
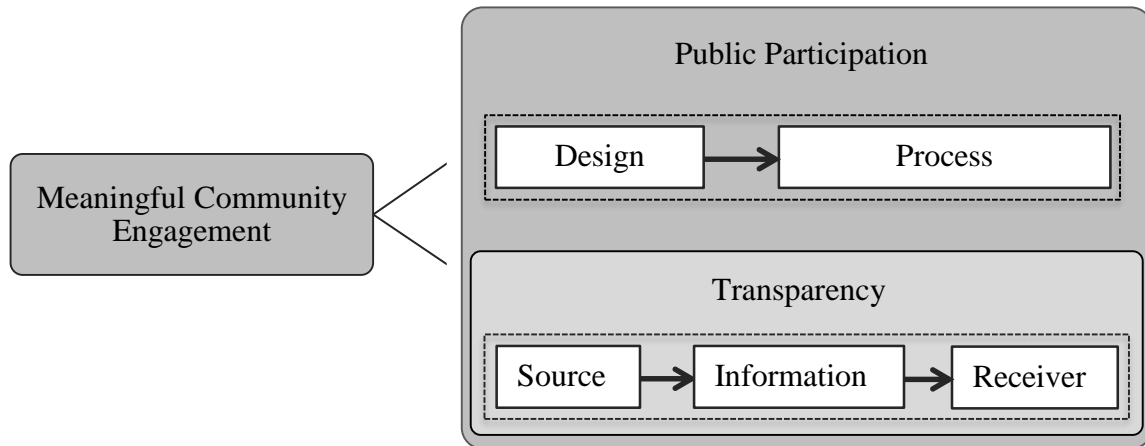
Reviewing literature, this section has also developed a common core of dimensions for methodological practices/principles of transparency and public engagement that can be used in most cases. However, for an effective practice different situations will require different designs using a combination of tools.

Transparency

Importance of Transparency

Transparency refers to "… the public release of information on policies and projects" (Nelson, 2003, p. 249; Schram, 2012). During the 1990s, unclear and mishandled monetary and fiscal governance was the main reason for the financial crises. Central banks and policymakers cooked data for the lack of independency and reliable mediators. After that, in a quest for better monitoring, policy makers looked forward to having more transparency through visibility in the operations, and therefore, adopted policies to increase the release of information about their operations. However, the fraud and financial crises of early 2000s, which Michener & Bersch associate with the 'creative accounting scandals' of big companies (Enron in 2001, WorldCom in 2002, and Tyco in 2002) affirmed that transparency through disclosed information might provide visibility but didn't necessarily provide quality information (Michener & Bersch, 2013, p. 236; Nelson, 2003).

Transparency is an element of good governance because it improves performance and reduces corruption (Baume, 2012; Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch, 2012;Meijer, 2009 & 2013; Nelson, 2003; Peters & Pierre, 2012; Pietro, 2013; Schram, 2012). Pietro (2013) discusses that transparency has become the newest value of democracy and a favored strategy to improve government and governance. Access to information is the initial symbol of democracy (Fine Licht, 2012; Hollyer et al., 2011; Michener & Bersch, 2013). As a principle of governance, Schram (2012) marks transparency a means to an end—democracy. On his first day in office, President Obama issued a memorandum in which he noted transparency as a major policy issue and the main theme of his administration (The White House, 2009). He believes that transparency promotes accountability and provides information for citizens about what their government is doing. However, there is a qualitative gap in the literature on the construction of government transparency in long-term multi-actor interactions. Moreover, previous empirical research has neglected transparency at the local government levels in the US (Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch, 2012). The concept is now as Greve &Hodge (2011) argue a key part of the current US public management and governance reforms. Meijer (2013) associates transparency to the earlier Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation. To Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer (2014), the increased attention on the topic of transparency results from the New Public Management (NPM) movement about making government more accountable and its emphasis on transparency reforms.

Following the movement toward watching governments, as an integral part of todays' public management reform, transparency ensures visible and understandable acts of public officials, businesses, and in general whoever serves the public needs, and that they report on their activities. Thereby, FOI and the belief that the public has the right to know information held by government is a focal component of the modern public administration (Greve & Hodge, 2012).

Transparency is a crucial component and prerequisite for the other important issue of public engagement (Andersson, 2008; Brody et al., 2003; Creighton, 2005; Halachmi & Holzer, 2010; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Mihm, 2011; Ng et al., 2012; Pietro, 2013). The goal of transparency is to create awareness for the decision-makers, inform the public about key issues, and ultimately provide the opportunity for the citizens to use the data and be influential; however, it is not guaranteed (Andersson, 2008; Mihm, 2011; Baume & Papadopoulos, 2012; Pietro, 2013). Deficient information will constrain the effectiveness of the participation. Hence, a

meaningful public involvement cannot take place without transparency in place. This is specifically the case at the local level where there is a quest for direct involvement of the citizens in decision-making and implementation (Andersson, 2008; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Mihm, 2011; Ng et al., 2012).

Importance of Transparency in PPPs

In the traditional mechanisms of project delivery, the provision of public services relies more on the public sector. Due to the inclusion of the project in the public budgets, the public has access to important documents. In PPPs, inclusion of the private sector in the provision of public services and compliance to private law domain makes transparency laws such as Freedom of Information (FOI) laws non-effective and creates some differences. Access to documents and information of PPP projects is important for the general public. Krawchenko & Stoney (2011) reports in their study that a major focus of "citizen-based lawsuit" involves obtaining access to the detailed documents of costs and comparative options because taxpayers are the ones ultimately paying for these projects.

Poor transparency is not a direct goal of PPPs but a consequence of the inclusion of private partners and contracts in the provision of public services. PPP contracts limit the amount of information that can be shared publicly. Having ready access to documents depends on risk sharing terms between the partners that lead to having the project finance included or excluded from the public budget. Withholding information from the general public when public funds are used is paradoxical with democracy. The complexity of the contract and the fragmentation of responsibilities put both transparency and the partnership at risk. Such challenges can thwart the advantages that PPPs offer, specifically in hard financial times where there is more attention to this type of project delivery. Therefore, the contract itself, the regulation, and the enforcement system remain among the key insights into making PPPs more transparent. Since government is one of the partners and the ultimate responsible entity to carry out the promises in PPPs, it may compel even greater transparency (Greve & Hodge, 2012; Hodge, 2004; Martin & Halachmi, 2012). PPPs continue to be an important instrument for the future and transparency is a success factor. Thereby, PPP policies addressing transparency need to be considered more seriously following: first, the crisis experiences and second, the growing number of private organizations that work with governments following the emphasis on market-type mechanisms (Greve & Hodge, 2011).

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Advantages and Disadvantages of Transparency

  Transparency is an important component for better governance (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010, p. 8). Different scholars have highlighted different aspects of the range of benefits that transparency offers. From a broader perspective in public administration, Nelson (2003) states that public information and transparency for the objectives of governance has benefits such as: reaching out to stakeholders, learning from outside comments, informing the public about missions, fostering a positive image, promoting efficiency and stability. From a political perspective, transparency has the following benefits:

- Strengthens accountability;
- Minimizes the risk of corruption (as a result of Hawthorne effect, Peters & Pierre, 2012, p. 212-3);
- Empowers citizens;
- Improves performance and efficiency;
- Increases legitimacy of political system;
- Benefits fair market competition;
- Provide access to information for expert outsiders;
- Benefits powerful insiders to transfer liability and risk to others (Ball, 2009; Baume & Ppadopoulos, 2012; Greve & Hodge, 2011; Hood & Heald, 2006; Obama, 2009; Pietro, 2013).

  Trust is the other proposed benefit of transparency (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013), however, some studies have a skeptical position (Fine Licht, 2012) and some empirical research sees it dependent on the context (Gimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013).

Advantages of Transparency in PPPs

  While a large body of literature remarks positive effects of transparency, some scholars emphasize negative ones (Pietro, 2013). Ball (2009) contends that transparency and openness can make negotiations lengthier and, sometimes, interested groups with greater access to ongoing discussions can disrupt and change the agenda (p. 298). Grimmelikhuijsen (2010) identifies the dark side of transparency when people become aware of everything behind the scenes of government. This breeds political cynicism and might cause discontent in citizens and decline in

their trust in government—a matter of concern in the US for decades (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010). Pietro (2013) contends the same consequences as a result of providing inadequate (too little) information, which he believes can be worse than providing no information. His other concern is the danger of the opportunities that transparency and its companion mechanisms offer which can be robbed by more educated sectors of society in detriment of the less well offs (p. 62).

It can be concluded that Hood & Heald's (2006) so-called "beneficial nature" of transparency depends on how well it is being done, transparency policies, quality of information, directions and varieties of transparency, and the habitat in which they interact (Fung et al., 2007; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014; Hood & Heald, 2006). Without careful design and implementation, transparency policies can do more harm than good (Fung et al., 2007).

Transparency in Practice

Transparency practices are a result of the right-to-know policies or targeted transparency. The former requires that existing government reports and documents available to the public are intended to create a more informed public. The latter requires government entities and private sector organizations to collect, standardize, and release factual information to inform the public in a targeted way. Goals and requirements of targeted transparency are more ambitious and focused toward reducing specific risks or improve particular aspects of public services (Fung et al., 2007).

The concept has a double nature. It can be both as a result of and as a factor influencing the interaction between government and society at large and among different government actors (Meijer, 2013). The central focus of transparency is the availability of data about an organization or actor so that it allows monitoring the performance of that organization or actor by the external actors (Baume & Papadopoulos, 2012; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2011; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013; Nelson, 2003).

In recent years, technology advancements have reduced the direct costs of transparency. Governments' means of releasing data are now the Internet and websites through which data has been made more visible and accessible for citizens (Hood & Heald, 2006; Greve & Hodge, 2012; Loretan, 2013; Mihm, 2011). However, transparency improvements would not happen unless the administration desired to open up government and give more accessibility to citizens. Creighton (2005) notes other means of providing transparency and giving information to the public as below:

- Briefing;
- Newspaper insert;
- Information repositories;
- Public service announcements;
- Newsletter;
- Internet;

- Presentation to community groups;
- Panel;
- News releases;
- Media interview;
- Media briefing.

Within the process of disclosing information attention to important elements of the process is vital for transparency to be effective. One of the main components is to enable the audience to use the information and complete the process. Disclosure systems may need to aggregate, translate, simplify, or benchmark the facts so that the result and decisions fit the objectives that motivated disclosure in the first place (Fung et al., 2007; Hood & Heald, 2006). Message credibility depends on aspects of the message itself, e.g. information quality and accuracy (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010, p. 15). Incomplete, inaccurate, confusing or distorted information can cause more harm than good (Fung et al., 2007).

Under the topic of transparency, there are major concerns about disclosure and quality of certain documents and information (see Table 1). To different scholars different characteristics represent an optimal transparency practice. Identified constituents of quality information for content and the manner in which the content become available is summarized in Table 2. All information disseminates from a source or supplier—a public sector, a private sector, or a third party, which has a major contribution to the quality of information. Information or data is usually offered to the receiver; general public, community, or whomever interested through one or multiple means that Creighton (2005) lists above. Figure 4 represents the information dissemination process along with the constituents of quality information and document.

From a technical perspective, and as a result of lacking a uniform, standardized pattern of providing transparency, the quality of transparency initiatives and the extent to which transparency is adopted varies (Meier, 2013). People generally desire actors and institutions to be transparent. However, when evaluating the transparency of the decision-making procedures, they prefer to rely on external sources such as journalists or special interest groups rather than getting directly engaged in the actual information provided by transparency reforms. Sole openness might not be enough by itself. For effective access, the information disseminated has to be received, processed, and consumed by the public. This can be considered the last integral part of

Table 1.

Sample of Documents that are subject of Transparency in PPPs

Documents/ Subject of Transparency

- Up-front assessment
- Tender documents: RFEI/ RFQ/ RFP
- Number of respondents for: RFEI/ RFQ/ RFP
- Names short-listed for RFP
- Policy content: adopted measures/ implementation manner
- Project value-for-money report
- Official's method to measure the value-for-money
- Documents indicating the reason to apply a PPP delivery method
- Comparative options
- Information of partnering entities
- Transparency of costs

Pre-Contractual Assessments

- Elected officials contact information
- Upcoming meeting schedules
- Meeting agendas
- Meeting minutes
- Procedure manuals (internal policies & processes)
- Decision-making process:
  - Steps taken to reach a decision
  - Rationale behind the decision
- Public consultation & survey reports

Pre-Contractual Negotiations

- Final concession agreement
- Government contracts
- Terms of contractual agreement
- Contracts:
  - Legal framework
  - Supranational bodies
  - Local & regional statues
  - Risk sharing stipulations
- Summaries of government contracts
- Budgets or financial statements & information

Contract

- Performance evaluations of ongoing activities
- Ongoing performance data
- Technical & environmental reports
- Financial documents: Financial statements/ Budget reports
- Summary reports
- Record of completed projects & performances against expectations
- Record of future payment contracted for each PPP scheme
- Capital value of contracts signed to date & in procurement

Implementation

- Post implementation evaluation
- Outcomes or effects
- Return of equity actually achieved by private sector investors

Post-Implementation

Source: Armstrong (2011); Creighton (2005); Greve & Hodge (2012); Grimmelikhuijsen (2010); Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch (2012); Hood & Heald (2006); Krawchenko & Stoney (2011); Ng et al. (2012); Roach (2011).

Table 2.

Dimensions of Quality Transparency

Quality of Information/ Document		Quality of Provision

▪ General & local information on policy issues
▪ Comprehensive & Completeness: No piecemeal or imperfect information
▪ Understandable
▪ Usability & Inferability: the degree to which information can be used to draw verifiable inferences
  ● No Cooked data
  ● No Heavily mediated, misrepresented & manipulated data
  ● Raw information
  ● Verified by a third party
▪ Simplicity: visual & textual aid, include simplifying device: graph or chart
▪ Provide data in formats that enable citizens to do their own analysis
▪ Accurate
▪ Reliable
▪ Unbiased; color of information should not be positive about government or officials' actions
▪ Degree of disclosure:
  ● No limited transparency: simply informed & presenting some parts of decision-making process
	● Full transparency: providing full content including: decision-making procedure, processes, & discussion among the decision-makers
	▪ Different information format:
	  1. In retrospect
	  2. In real time; the most recent reports
	  3. At periodic intervals; periodical reports
	  4. Continuous
	▪ Periodical reports
	▪ The most recent report
	▪ Aggregation level:
	  ● High: monthly or annual report (Less transparency)
	  ● Low: detailed report (high transparency)
		▪ Visibility: the degree to which information is easy to search for
		▪ Information availability:
		  ● Not released at all
		  ● Released in summary form
		▪ Accessibility of documents:
		  ● Site/ location of documents where they can be obtained (internet, regional offices, etc.)
		  ● Available languages
		  ● Cost of documents
		▪ Assistance with public access
		▪ Public outreach & professionalism
		▪ Promptness; no late information
		▪ Timely & Close to real time
		▪ Timeliness of information availability with providing enough time between disclosure and determination of the policy
		▪ Available mechanisms & resources for influence
		▪ Opportunity for evaluation
		▪ Information provision in both:
		  ● Active: proactive disclosure by the agency &
		  ● Passive: reactive respond of the agency to external demands

Source: Armstrong (2011); Arnestein (1969); Baume & Papadopoulos (2012); Fine Licht (2012); Greve & Hodge (2012); Grimmelikhuijsen (2010); Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer (2014); Grimmelikhuijsen et al. (2013); Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch (2012); Heald (2003); Hood & Heald (2006); Krawchenko & Stoney (2011); Michener & Bersch (2013); Mihm (2011); Nelson (2003); Roach (2011).

the information disclosure that completes the process (Baume & Papadopoulos, 2012; Fine Licht, 2012; Hood & Heald, 2006). Meantime, governments and regulators must be equipped with enforcement tools and means as well to access information. Government action is needed for the reason that only government can compel the disclosure of information from private and publicentities, legislate permanence in transparency, and create transparency backed by legitimacy of democratic process (Fung et al., 2007; Greve & Hodge, 2012).

Figure 4.

Information Dissemination Model
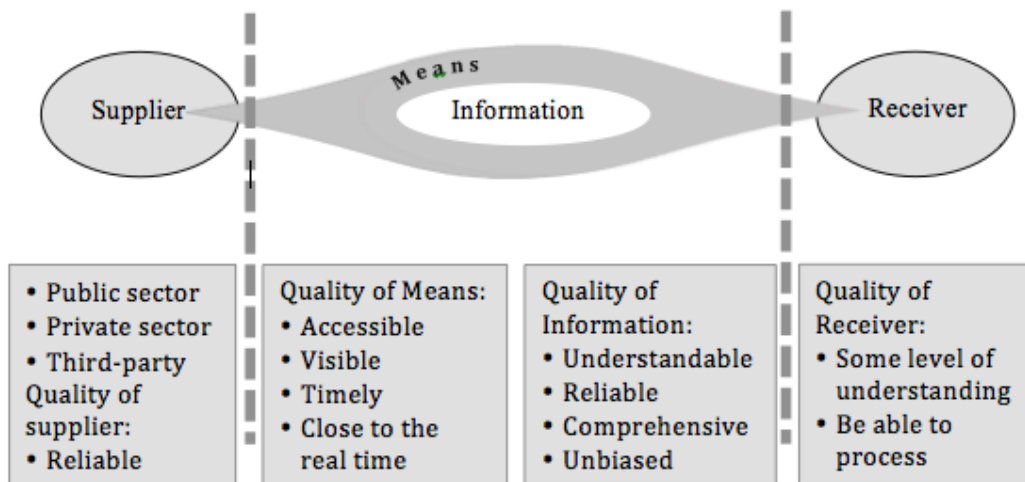
Note: See Table 2 for the complete list of transparency's constituent parameters.

Transparency in Practice and PPPs

Very few scholars have focused on the topic of transparency within the area of public-private partnerships (Greve & Hodge, 2011 & 2012). Greve & Hodge (2012) suggest transparency in PPPs as "contract transparency". Such transparency is characterized with the focus on institutions, specifically contract institutions, and full disclosure, accessibility of documents, timeliness of information availability, and available mechanisms for resource and influence (Nelson, 2003). In their study, Greve & Hodge (2012) discuss that conceptually relevant authorities can provide access to PPP information. They argue that transparency should exist in all stages of the PPPs (2011) (see Table 3). Analysis of transparency must be based on different phases of a PPP project. Transparency evaluation based on the framework that Greve &

Hodge (2011) propose will be a valuable one, especially, when there is a transparency agenda in place in PPPs prior to all the phases.

Table 3.

Dimensions of Transparency and the Process of Private partnerships

	Fullness of disclosure	**Accessibility of documents**	**Timeliness of information availability**	**Mechanisms available for resource and influence**
Phase 1	Example: Disclosure in the pre-contractual phase (process)			
Phase 2		Example: Accessibility of the contract (event, institution)		
Phase 3		Example: Accessibility to information on operating PPP company (process)		
Phase 4			Example: Timeliness of information of performance of PPP (event	
Phase 5				Example: Influence on future of PPP project after performance review (event)

Source: Greve & Hodge (2011, p. 9).

Transparency and Obstacles

Resistance to transparency comes from the problem it aims to reveal. Fear of issues, such as providing information on corruption and mismanagement, make data suppliers hesitant to offer transparency (Pietro, 2013). The paradox comes from the fact that while government actors are supporters of transparency, they wish for some level of secrecy and privacy. In their study of the impact of some independent variables in transparency, Grimmelikhuijsen and Welch (2012) conclude that the presence of industries has a negative relation with transparency. Industries may seek to limit government transparency for the reason that open disclosure of detailed information provides advantages to competitors or leads to increased regulatory pressure. As Baume & Papadopoulos (2012) note, what one side gains from transparency is considered as a threat for the other side.

Public Participation

Importance of Public Participation

Civic engagement or participation is an essential component of [American] democracy and another important element of the Obama administration agenda (Creighton, 2005; Halachmi & Holzer, 2010; Obama, 2009; Tulloch & Shapiro, 2003; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007; Woodford & Preston, 2013; Woods, 2009). In the process of public participation those affected by a decision have the opportunity to have an input into the decision. The process increases the public's influence on decisions affecting their lives. From a general perspective, the process is about involvement of stakeholders—especially local residents—in administrative functions and decision-making (Tang et al., 2005; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007). Terms and approaches such as 'community engagement'; 'community-based planning'; 'collaborative community building'; 'citizen participation'; 'civic participation'; 'civic engagement'; 'collaborative participation'; and 'public participation' are used interchangeably in debates about inclusive forms of local governance. However they all mean the same—involvement of the grass roots in governance process (Cooper et al., 2006; Stoney & Elgersma, 2007).

By the end of the 19th and the early 20th Century, following the American Progressive Reform Era, there was a quest to change and organize administrative government around professionalism, efficiency, and scientific and administrative management. The Progressive Movement included reforms to the electoral process that limited citizens' opportunities to

influence these processes and the day-to-day government administration. These reforms expected citizens to vote or leave the administration services to the professionals (Cooper et al., 2006, p. 77).

Power was viewed as a zero-sum game where more power for citizens meant less for government. The importance of citizen participation emerges from the growing demand for accountability and taxpayers' curiosity about government's priorities and procedures to achieve its objectives (Halachmi & Holzer, 2010). Fung (2006) sees the principle reason for enhancing citizen participation in deficient governance of elected representatives or administrative officials. In the US, un-addressed interests of the society [especially the poor and minorities] increased during the 1960s and 1970s. Accordingly, federal requirements for citizen participation increased. In the 1970s and 1980s, many procedural reforms were made to provide greater access to the process of policy implementation for the interested public. These reforms included public notices, mandatory public hearings, freedom of information requirements, and mechanisms to open the rulemaking processes to public scrutiny (Woods, 2009, p. 518). Arnestein's classic article, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" (1969), clearly reflects the adversarial orientation of this time period. Citizens seemed to gain control but manipulation of the processes and lack of resources [especially financial ones] did not allow them to be truly effective. The 1970s were a pivotal moment in the history of civic engagement during the Carter administration when federal agencies were required to engage citizens in administrative and policy processes. The purpose was to first foster true democracy and second, to facilitate participation of those left out from the governance process (Cooper et al., 2006; Halachmi & Holzer, 2010; Robbins et al., 2008). However, lack of resources propelled administrators to do as minimal as possible to just comply with mandates rather than applying them as effective tools.

From the planning perspective, requirements for public hearings and citizen participation have a long history. Mandates of the early Housing Act of 1949, Urban Renewal Program of 1954, and the Model Cities program of 1960s for citizen participation are some examples. They are designed for more democratic and effective governance in the US (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Robbins et al., 2008). Adoption of public participation requirements by the states' growth management laws is a result of planners poor job in incorporating citizens and considering their inputs into plans (Brody et al., 2003; King et al., 1998). Mandates for public participation address two frequent objectives: learning citizen preferences and educating them about the policy

issues. They also aim to increase the localities commitment to the principles of governance—rights of individuals to be informed, to be consulted, and to have the opportunity to express their views on government decisions (Arnstein, 1969; Brody et al., 2003, p. 246; Robbins et al., 2008).

Participation is now broadly considered to be an essential element of the planning process. Today, the interest in public participation has claimed to be renewed following planning goals such as: modernization of the cities and public services toward New Public Managements (NPM); reconnecting the citizens and local government; engaging the stakeholders; and developing local ownership and capacities (Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Robbins et al., 2008; Stoney & Elgersma, 2007).

Different scholars have highlighted different aspects of the importance of participation. Some are listed as below:

- Providing the opportunity for the affected public and decision makers to communicate and get informed about each other's values;
- Improving decisions by incorporating citizens' local knowledge and better reflect their needs, priorities, and concerns;
- Knowing the public's or taxpayers' preferences;
- Advancing fairness and justice;
- Facilitating consensus building;
- Improving support from the public;
- Maximizing citizen efficiency;
- Developing government trust in citizens;
- Contributing to competency;
- Improving the quality of governmental responsiveness;
- Having less divisive and combative populace to govern and regulate
- Successful development and project implementation (Arnstein, 1969; Bryson et al., 2013; Cooper et al., 2006; Creighton, 2005; Halachmi & Holzer, 2010; Hawkins & Wang, 2012; Innes & Booher 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Roach, 2011; Stoney & Elgersma, 2007; Tang et al., 2005).

The process also serves democratic values of public action such as: legitimacy, justice, and effectiveness (Fung, 2006).

Skocpol & Fiorina (1999) discuss that participation is beneficial to the American democracy and that meaningful engagement of the members of the citizen groups in modern democracy is toward the betterment of their society. Compared with representative democracy, face-to-face participatory democracy has a higher value. This type of participation in voluntary activities contributes to the following:

- The development of individuals' capacities by education about their communities and how to make it a better place to live;
- The creation of the community and the cultivation of democratic virtues;
- Equal protection of interests in the favor of the public (Schlozman et al., 1999, p. 427).

For different participants, participation is important in different ways. For citizens, it raises their responsibility to the community and provides them the opportunity to be a part of a important decision. For activists, it helps them to be influential. And for administrators, it offers the essential inputs to make good decisions.

Traditionally, the principle role of government is to act in the public interest. However, service delivery is no longer seen as a one-way process but a coproduction of professional and managerial staff with users and their communities (Bovarid, 2007). For example, New Public Management (NPM) suggested ways where so-called service providers could be made more responsive to the needs of the users and their communities. Following this revolutionary concept, specifically in the field of urban planning, the service users and their communities can—and often should—be a part of service planning and delivery. Citizens and are now collaborative partners (Hawkins & Wang, 2010).

With the growth of urban population, democratic societies become more interdependent, networked, linked by new information technologies, and challenged by problems. In such an environment, citizen participation in policy planning and decision-making will gain even more prominence (Stoney & Elgersma, 2007, p. 2).

Advantages and Disadvantage of Public Participation

Values of public participation have been long recognized by the governments and officials. The purpose behind public participation practices is the advantages that these processes offer. From a broad perspective, good-quality participation satisfies participants and provides an opportunity for them to learn from each other (Halvorsen, 2003). Unlike most literature that

Table 4.

Advantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision Making

	Advantages to Citizen Participants	Advantages to Government
Decision process	• Education (learn from and get informed from government representatives) • Increase citizens' awareness level • Opportunity to express their concerns • Persuade and enlighten government • Gain skills for activist citizenship • Empowerment • Giving a sense of ownership to people	• Education (learn from and get informed from citizens) • Persuade citizens; build trust and allay anxiety or hostility • Build strategic alliances • Opportunity to know more about their customers' service expectation • Motivation to address problems • New ways of understanding issues • Secure buy-in for decisions and their implementation • Limit delays, mistakes, and lawsuits • Meet legal requirements and Gain legitimacy for decisions • Manage uncertainty

	• Resolving conflict among competing interests
	• Enhance understanding of public problems, and generate innovative solutions and approaches
	• Improve local agency decision-making and actions
	• Contribute to openness and responsiveness of administrative processes
	• Faster project implementation with less need to revisit
	• Create and sustain adaptive capacity or ongoing problem solving and resilience
	• Generate:
	  o Resources like knowledge
	  o Commitment to follow-through
	  o An enthusiasm for decision-making and policy implementation	

Outcomes	• Gain some control over processes • Foster citizen and community capacity • Promote citizens' active public spirit	• Reverse the growing democratic deficit • Citizens' commitment to implementation • Contribute to citizens' belief about agency responsiveness

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- Provide a sense of belonging to a community

- Increase accountability and administrative, service, and management competence
- Less opposition from citizens
- Avoid worse case confrontation
- Avoid/ minimize litigation costs and delays
- Maintain credibility and legitimacy
- Anticipating public concerns and attitudes

- Incorporating public values into decisions
- Break gridlock; achieve outcomes
- Develop joint objectives and solutions
- Improve coordination of services and growth
- Gain higher rates of community participation and leadership development
- Affect the productivity of government
- Satisfaction of citizens
- Raise agencies efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy
- More prudent use of resources
- Increase transparency and the quality of data used to make decisions by addressing the information needs of decision makers
- Advance social justice
- Produce policies, plans, and projects of higher quality
- Improve government-community trust
- Build social capital
- Enhance democratic governance process
- Better alignment of local government with local needs
- Improve sustainable development

Source: Bryson et al. (2013); Creighton (2005); Evans-Cowley & Hollander (2010); Halachmi & Holzer (2010); Hawkins & Wang (2012); Innes & Booher (2004); Institute for Local Government (2012, July & November); International Association for Public Participation (November 4, 2013); Irvin & Stansbury (2004); Lowndes et al. (2001); Robbins et al. (2008); Stoney & Elgersma (2007); Wang & Wan Wart (2007); Woodford & Preston (2013); Woods (2009).

Table 5.

Disadvantages of Citizen Participation in Government Decision Making

	Disadvantages to Citizen Participants	**Disadvantages to Government**
Decision process	• Pointless if decision is ignored	• Costly • May backfire and create more hostility toward government • Dilute public accountability
	• Time consuming	
Outcomes	• Worse policy decision if heavily influenced by opposing interest groups	• Loss of decision-making control • Possibility of bad decision that is politically impossible to ignore • Less budget for implementation of actual project

Source: Irvin & Stansbury (2004).

simply lists the advantages and disadvantages of public participation, Irvin & Stansbury (2004) group both of these categories into advantages/ disadvantages to citizen and advantages/ disadvantage to government while considering both decision process and outcomes. Developing on their method and based on the literature reviewed, Table 4 and Table 5 present a summary of positive and negative effects of public participation processes. While either group has specific advantages and disadvantages for itself, there are some advantages and disadvantages that can be included for both.

One of the main arguments against public participation is the issue of time and cost and that the public participation process will make the decision-making processes lengthier and more expensive (Cooper et al., 2006; Innes & Booher, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Stoney & Elgersma, 2007; Woods, 2009). However, some scholars contend that this up-front investment can pay off in the long-term and when it comes to an agreement (Brody et al., 2003; Creighton, 2005). Another contrary argument calls these mechanisms unsuccessful and ineffective for the failure of these mechanisms in encouraging external participants and the minimal effect of feedback received by agencies on the administrative actions (Woods, 2009).

The average citizen lacks technical skills. Generally, they are not familiar with bureaucratic routines and are emotionally involved in issues. For this reason, arguments against direct citizen participation claim that:

- Citizens are not rational;
- Mass direct citizen involvement is too expensive, slow, and cumbersome;
- Not everyone is informed, knowledgeable, and qualified;
- Citizens are required to have skills, money, and time which they mostly lack;
- There is a potential for political conflicts to increase (Robbins et al., p. 565).

There is a call for early and ongoing participation that offers additional advantages such as:

- Having meaningful stakeholder involvement;
- Injecting community knowledge and expertise into the planning process;
- Allowing plans to reflect public views and preferences (Brody et al., 2003; Creighton, 2005; King et al., 1979; Tang et al., 2005).

Many disciplines are involved in the issue of public participation—for example, public administration, urban planning, and policy-making and service delivery. Among all, in the field

of public administration there is a broader agreement on developing and implementing mechanisms for citizen involvement in decision-making (Bryson et al., 2013; Hawkins & Wang, 2012). However, designing these processes is still an issue.

Public Participation in Practice

Participation is a multi-way set of interactions among citizens and other stakeholders who together produce an outcome (Innes & Booher, 2004, p. 419). Public engagement improves the quality of decisions and thus the effectiveness of the government. In very simple words, community engagement programs bring interested groups together to enhance their input, improve the dialogue between the community and/or stakeholders and city staff on different issues, and subsequently improve decision-making and development (Stoney & Elgersma, 2007). "The process is based on the belief that those who are affected by the decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process" (International Association for Public Participation, November 4, 2013).

A specific methodology cannot be formulated that can be applied in all the public engagement practices. Records of practices indicate that such approaches can not be effective. Different situations need different design considerations. While there is a common core of methodological practices and principles, each process have to be drafted to fit its context, using a new combination of tools as part of an evolving cycle of action and reflection by the institution involved. In an effective practice, planners' choices must be based on capacities and contextual factors. In addition to a full understanding of what is regulated and mandated, these choices have to proceed from an understanding of political capacity, understanding of the political environment and the level of power that relevant authorities desire to redistribute; social/community capacity, community's interest level, demographics, and intellectual capacity; environmental capacity, environmental characteristics such as location; and technological capacity, knowledge of technological resources and constraints.

In describing how participation is being practiced, Creighton (2005) argues that participation is a continuum with four major categories—informing the public, listening to the public, engaging in problem solving, and developing agreement (see Figure 5). Public information programs are one-way communication to the public. Although these programs do not constitute genuine public participation, they are fundamental components of an effective public participation program (Creighton, 2005, p. 9; Halvorsen, 2003). Depending on the

context, being at any point along the continuum may be appropriate. Innes & Booher (2004) argue that when the dialogue is done well, even if the final results seem unacceptable for everyone, the fairness of the decision is assured. However, doing the action right and having a high quality process is important, too. A 'bogus' process of participation, where there is no impact on the final outcome, tarnishes the credibility of the organization conducting the process and the process itself. Further it undermines the credibility of any future genuine processes. A history of participation with no visible impact on agencies decision can be worse than no participation (Creighton, 2005; Halvorsen, 2003).

While the purpose of participation is similar across disciplines, reflecting interests and concerns of the public, the practice of public participation varies within different fields. However, in an ideal quality public participation there are certain considerations and features that have to be taken into

Figure 5.

Continuum of participation
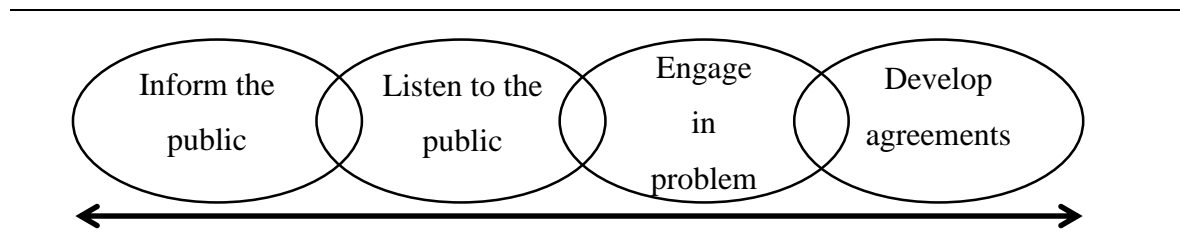
Source: Creighton, (2005, p. 9).

account. Scholars classify these considerations and feature in different ways—based on the objectives (Glass, 1979), process development planning (Creighton, 2005), and set of guidelines for designing the process (Bryson et al., 2013).

Any type of public participation includes a *design phase* and a *process phase* (see Figure 6). The process phase is mainly about communication and exchanging ideas, interest, and concerns among those who are engaged. There are also pre-communication and post-communication phases that complete the process phase. There are sets of considerations within each phase that contribute to an ideal process in terms of its quality and effectiveness. Each phase has its dimensions. Both design and implementation of the processes need the presence of an effective leadership, a requirement that increases as the level of participation increases (Bryson et al., 2013).

Figure 6.

The Phenomenon of Public Participation
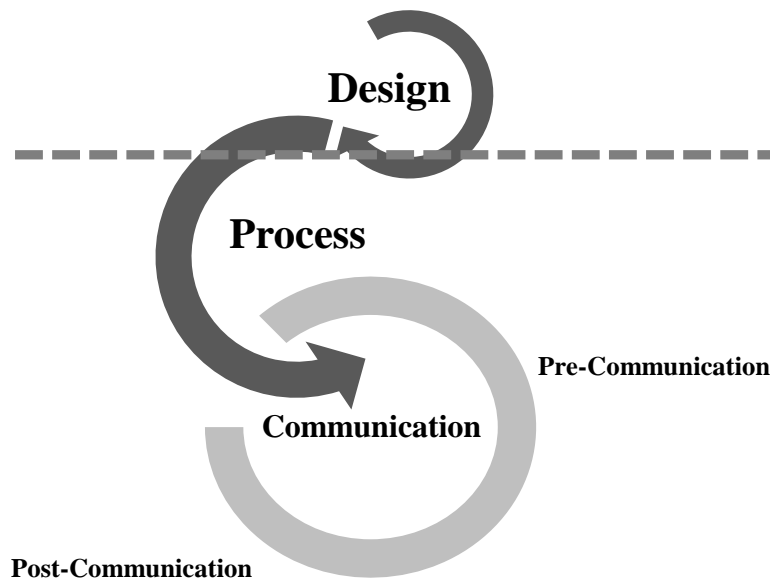
Design phase. In any thoughtful and well-developed design, there are five categories that have to be addressed: objectives, context, administration structure, participants, and mechanisms. Objective and context are the very first steps of the process design. Having citizen participation is not the ultimate goal but a means to an end. These processes are applied to address specific objectives. Determining the objectives further helps to craft other categories accordingly. For example, as Glass (1979) concludes, the success of any participation program is highly tied to considering the relationship between objectives and techniques. To fulfill some objectives there might be a need to implement more than one technique. The better designers or planners of the process can articulate the objectives, the better they can develop other dimensions of the design. Whether participation is needed, and if the answer is yes what is the required level of participation are the following issues. Context is the other important factor with a very determining role in designing the process. Since the ultimate role given to service users is to be decided by managers and professionals, there should be a good understanding of the context (Bovaird, 2007).

Regulations, political environment, constraints and resources are essential parameters of the extent to which a public participation process can expand. For example, the means of

participation should be appropriate to the demographics of a community. Federal programs such as urban renewal, community development, aging, and health accepted and required some form of participation (Glass, 1979, p. 181). However, legally required participation methods in public decision processes in the US are claimed to be ineffective. Examples include public hearings and written public comments on proposed projects, use of citizen-based commissions, boards of director for public agencies (with quasi judicial or legislative power), advisory committees, and task forces (Innes & Booher, 2004, p. 423). They do not achieve genuine participation, satisfy members of the public, improve the decisions that agencies and public officials make, and incorporate a broad spectrum of the public. Attention to these dimensions helps the process to better fit in its locale.

What matters next is to plan out the process and the timing of participation during the planning process or the project. The available level of funding, staffing methods, provision of technical assistance, thinking about the kind of information that is available and required for an effective process and who controls it are all dimensions of the administration structure that have to be addressed. A careful articulation of roles and guidelines for conducting the process provides a more favorable environment. Staffing the process and assigning the agents that connect the structure and citizens are other important elements. Trained staffs that dedicate an adequate amount of time to do their tasks contribute to the overall effectiveness of the process. Last but not least, a measuring system should be thought about and developed in order to be able to judge the performance close to the end of the process. Depending on the level of interaction and involvement that organizations seek, appropriate techniques will be selected from a broad range of available methods (Creighton, 2005) (see Table 6). Table 7 presents a comprehensive summary of the important dimensions of the design phase.

Solely, a meaningful participation process can solve the issue of non-participation and encourages the public to put an extra effort, in addition to their normal responsibilities, and engage in the process. Some mechanisms have specific limitation and difficulties of their own. For example, surveys only demonstrate the public opinion at one point of time. Or traditional public meetings limit the time and extent to which an individual can be engaged in the process and thus have a meaningful and effective participation. No singular technique can satisfy all the objectives. Utilizing multiple techniques contribute to a greater level of participation and effectiveness (Brody et al., 2003). Wang and Wan Wart (2007) argue that while the level of

participation in decision-making is a measure of the depth and genuineness of the process, modes of participation are a measure of the participation breadth in governments. An appropriate technique reflects the demographics of the affected community. In terms of access, it addresses flexibility of schedule and in general convenience of the process. Embedded technological choices such as new web-based technologies allow for even more democratic and effective participation. In development of a participation program, attention to different interest levels is important. Different stakeholders have different interest levels. They range from unsurprised apathetics to co-decision makers (see Figure 7).

Table 6.

Summary of Popular Techniques for Public Participation

• Community visioning Workshop	• Citizen focus group Citizen task forces	• Newsletters
• Citizen surveys/ Web-based surveys	• Citizen-based committees	• Business community meeting
• Public hearings	• Open/ roundtable discussion	• Chamber of commerce meetings Individual citizen representatives
• Community & neighborhood meetings	• Small meetings	
	• Citizen review board	• Legislative standing committees
• Citizen advisory board	• Delphi process	• Public service announcements
	• Written public comments	
	• Briefings	

Source: Creighton, (2005).

   Process phase. Similar to the design phase, there is a list of 'must haves' to reach an ideal level of public participation. Pre-communication and post-communication phases complete the actual participation and interactions of the process phase.

   Prior to the process, the targeted portion of the community or participants has to become aware of the process, its time, and location. Thus, the process should be well advertised in order to identify participants and be more effective. Woods (2009) identifies public notification and public access as encouraging mechanisms for public participation. Moreover, sometimes a certain level of training needs to be provided and some technical studies are required to be discussed with the public prior to their actual participation to add to the effectiveness of the process (Creighton, 2005).

Table 7.

Dimensions of Quality Public Participation Design

Design

1. Objectives
   - Need of a participation process
   - Reason of involvement/ Problem identification
   - Careful articulation of objectives
   - Conform the emphasis
   - Level of participation needed
2. Context
   - Good understanding of general (demographics, political, etc.) and specific context (stakeholders, etc.)
   - Constraints & resources:
     o Legislative
     o Time
     o Budget
     o Technical
     o Technology
     o Level of interest
   - Information infrastructure
   - Favorability of locale
   - Challenges

- Level of controversy
3. Administration structure
   - Prepare a participation plan Initiator of the process (state, government, or the public)
   - Required Level of funds
   - Required time
   - Staffing:
     o Inside members or outside consultants
     o Trained in citizen involvement
     o Percentage of the time dedicated to task
   - Careful articulation of roles
   - Adequate level of facilitation
   - Technical assistance
   - Preparation for controversy
   - Required information
   - Guidelines to conduct the process
   - Evaluation mechanisms

4. Participants
   - Good representation of all elements
   - Recognizing stakeholders
   - Identifying involved groups
     o Size: level of participation
     o Depth: citizen diversity in terms of income & ethnicity
     o Diversity of citizen participation: level of expertise that participants bring to the participation process
5. Mechanisms/ Techniques
   - Appropriate techniques
   - Adequate opportunities relevant to demographics
   - Multiple techniques & opportunities Flexible schedules
   - Appropriate time
   - Accessibility (location)
   - Application of new technology-based methods

Source: Bryson et al. (2013); Cooper et al. (2006); Creighton (2005); Evans-Cowley & Hollander (2010); Goven & Langer (2009); Halachmi & Holzer (2010); Institute for Local Government (2012, July & November); King et al. (1998); Lowndes et al. (2001); Stoney & Elgersma (2007); Tang et al. (2005); Tulloch & Shapiro (2003).

Figure 7.

Orbits of Participation

Figure labels (from outer to inner ring): Unsurprised apathetic, Observer, Commenter, Technical reviewer, Active participant, Co-decision maker
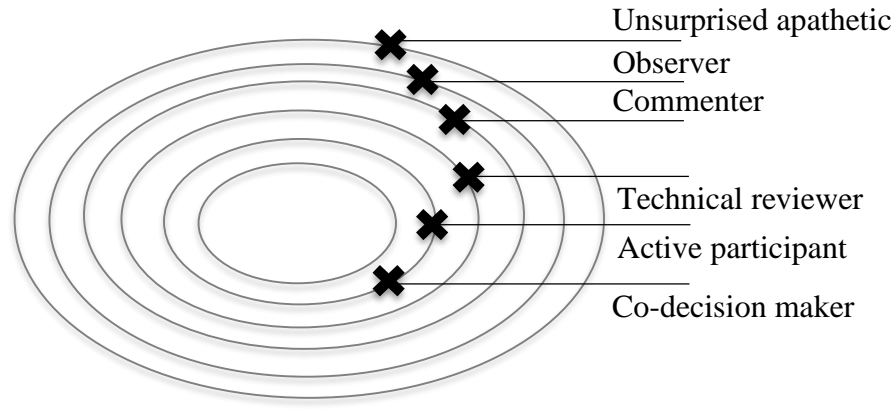
Source: Creighton, (2005, p. 53).

During the communication stage, early and continuous involvement of the participants in an informed and transparent process has been highly recommended. Unlike political participation, participation in administration occurs on a continual basis (Brody et al., 2003; Creighton, 2005; King et al., 1998; Tang et al., 2005; Wang & Wan Wart, 2007). Those who are engaged in the process have to be a broad representative of the voices of the affected ones. Better representation of all elements of society in decision-making process was promoted as a way to attain a higher level of democracy (Halachmi & Holzer, 2010). Table 8 presents a comprehensive summary of the influential dimensions of the process phase.

Concentrating on the objectives of the process is a critical issue; distraction undermines the effectiveness of the process. Access to transparent information, which has been thoroughly described in the section on transparency, is a major prerequisite. The presentation method of information also contributes to the level at which information becomes useable and accordingly participation becomes possible. In this regard, Evans-Cowley & Hollander (2010) report visually prominent, summary-based information, maps, and pictures are participants' preferred formats of information. Healthy participation requires a flow and sharing of information from the producers of the process to likely participants (Tulloch & Shapiro, 2003, p. 55).

Except for the participants, staffs are present and in charge of facilitating the process. They need to be unbiased while providing assistance. A high quality process is deliberative and

Table 8.

Dimensions of Quality Public Participation Process

Process		
Pre Communication	**Communication**	**Post Communication**
- Public Notification - Using multiple means such as: official website, news paper advertisement, mailing to interested individuals, or making phone calls - Considering enough time between the notice & the actual process - Providing workshop & training opportunities for participants - Early involvement - Continuous involvement - Regular meetings - Appropriate & flexible timing - Convenient location (site) - Representation: - Incorporate a broad spectrum - Include important groups & key participants - Clear definition of purpose & scope - Emphasized objectives - Information (Transparency*): - Support multi-way flow of information - Trustworthy information - Access to prompt and quality information - Open flow & share of information - Appropriate presentation - Usable information - Transparent process (Clarity in process, sponsorship, purpose, design, and how decision makers will use the process results) - Unbiased process	- Opportunities to share thoughts (by written or oral comments) - Careful & effective listening - Acknowledge of different view points - Collaborative process: - Fair distribution of power - Treated participants equally - Gather information from each other - Opportunities for learning - Joint problem solving & fact finding - Organized interests - Opportunities to voice disagreement - Enable to view each others expressed ideas - Achievable expectations - Resolving & overcome conflicts - Protection of public interest - Attempt to satisfying multiple purposes - Documenting & considering ideas, preferences & recommendations - Effective communication: - Exchange view in text &	- Incorporate public values into decisions - Enough time between the actual process & enforcement or implementation - Opportunity for the public to petition for: - Delaying effective date - Detailed analysis - Clear share of performance related data (documentation & sharing of evolution of ideas by storing, organizing & displaying discussions) - Feedback evaluation - Commitment to implement the outcome - Report back to participants - Communicate feedback & how participants' effort had influence - Satisfying members of the public - Opportunities for

▪ Genuine participation
▪ Provision of assistant
▪ Expert and unbiased facilitators
▪ Deliberative process:
   • Open & honest discussion
   • Through & respectful
	graphic formats
	• Use participants language (if it is other than English)
	• Use non-technical vocabulary
	▪ Time efficient
		measuring performance
		▪ Conduct assessment
		▪ Reporting on lessons learned

Note. * Based on the purpose of this study transparency is considered a requirement and a prerequisite for a meaningful community engagement. The quality of the kind of transparency that is mentioned here has been well covered and developed on the previous section on transparency. For more details refer to the previous section.

Source: Bovaird (2007); Bryson et al. (2013); Cooper et al. (2006); Creighton (2005); Evans-Cowley & Hollander (2010); Fung (2006); Goven & Langer (2009); Halachmi & Holzer (2010); Halvorsen (2003); Innes & Booher (2004); Institute for Local Government (2012, July & November); King et al. (1998); Robbins et al. (2008); Schulz (2013); Stoney & Elgersma (2007); Tang et al. (2005); Tulloch & Shapiro (2003); Wang & Wart (2007); Woodford (2013); Woods (2009).

collaborative where conflicts are resolved in any case of controversy (Halvorsen, 2003; Innes & Booher, 2004). Unlike traditional methods of consultation where the only goal was to capture opinions through citizen deliberation, citizens should be actively involved in decision-making and provide an in-depth understanding of their perspectives and values for government (Woodford, 2013, p. 252). Communication becomes effective when it is practiced through multiple means (text and graphic formats), using the language of participants and non-technical vocabulary.

In the post-communication stage, there is a need for a minimum amount of time before actually implementing the decision or enforcing the policy. The public should be able to review the decision or petition for more details. They must have access to data and information for measuring the performance (Halachmi & Holzer, 2010). Data sharing increases transparency. Thus, during the actual process preferences and evolution of ideas have to be documented, analyzed, stored, and organized in order to increases the relevance of performance reports and their credibility in the public eye.

Finally, planners, designers, and decision makers have to conduct assessments based on the performance measurements developed earlier in the design phase. Lessons learned from any participation process have to be considered as an input toward redesigning an ongoing process or designing the future ones. Undoubtedly, looking for the most effective participation process is important with the lack of resources that we face in today's environment (Schulz, 2013, p. 35).

To different scholars different sets of dimensions are characteristics of a successful process. However, in assessing best practices of public participation, the whole process is tailored to fit in to the context and response to the problem it is meant to solve. Thus, the process is more likely to be meaningful and successful.

Public Participation and Obstacles

Non-participation. Apathy is a major problem in participation practices. In a meaningful democracy, the voices "Should be clear and loud—clear so that policy makers understand citizens' concerns and loud so that they have an incentive to pay attention to what is said" (Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010; Skocpol & Fiorina, 1999, p. 430). Reluctance of participants, specifically those forming the community stakeholder group, "Stemmed from past experiences of what they considered deficient or pro forma consultation" (Goven & Langer, 2009, p. 928) or the perception that their feedback has a minimal effect on administrative actions. Comparing with

1990s, Scokpol & Fiorina (1999) report a 25 percent drop in the voting rates since 1960s (p. 8). From three-quarter of Americans who had trusted the federal government in doing the right by 1960s, less than a third believed so in the beginning of the twentieth century. Americans have become disinterested in public affairs and have almost very little contribution and involvement. Simply, they are not willing to participate and be a part of a collective problem when they perceive that their endeavor are ineffective in the final decision.

Mis-Representation. The other issue is that since sessions are usually open for everybody to participate, actual participants are self-selected and a deficient representative of the larger public. They are mostly wealthy, educated people, or individuals with special interest or strong views who tend to participate more than those without these characteristics (Fung, 2006).

Lack of Skills. Assuming a reasonable rate of participation, according to some contradictory arguments, yet inadequate level of qualitative (skills and knowledge) and quantitative (time and energy) characteristics in citizens, as it has been argued in the previous section, is a barrier for public participation practices (King et al., 1998; Robbins et al., 2008). This is especially the case in using new technologies where there is a lack of knowledge in their effective application, whether from the program initiators or the participants, which causes some limitations. Moreover, some bureaucrats are concerned about committing to decisions generated from non-expert citizens or stakeholders (Halachmi & Holzer, 2010).

Participation. In contrast with the issue of non-participation, another considerable problem happens when the public seeks a higher level of involvement than what the organization wants to offer. The solution Creighton (2005) suggests to organizations in such cases is to be as clear and specific as possible with the public on the level of involvement they can actually offer.

Redistribution of Power and Citizen Empowerment. Participation is concerned with redistribution of power where power holders share some level of power with those normally excluded from decision-making processes. Political interests want to retain control. Fear of loss of authority by elected officials raises concern (Innes & Booher, 2004; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). Dilute public accountability and blurring the boundaries between the public and private sectors are two examples of their concerns. However, individual empowerment is an essential component of engaging community members and when it is weakly developed it will be difficult in practice (Bovaird, 2007). Citizen empowerment is all about providing opportunities for participation and access to skills, and prompt quality information (King et al., 1998). However,

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for security issues or protecting intellectual property, there are constraints on releasing the required information (Creighton, 2005). "Ill-informed participation makes the process unworkable and counterproductive in the long-term" (Stoney & Elgersma, 2007, p. 24-5).

Time. The pace of the project and maintaining a momentum while providing opportunities for participation is an influential factor in the effectiveness of participation process for the project as a whole. Hence, finding an optimum between the bureaucratic process and the democratic process is challenging (Stoney & Elgersma, 2007). Citizen engagement can contribute to the success of a process, but the participatory process cannot be dominant as the main concern is to answer 'whether the benefits of the process outweigh the costs?'

In the US, several authors list the obstacles of implementing an ideal form of participation as follows:

- Open meetings laws;
- Forcing on using votes instead of seeking a common ground and building social capital;
- Fear of losing authority by elected officials;
- Limited time that citizens can dedicate to participation;
- Lack of resources for disadvantaged groups;
- Lack of collaborative skills among planners and citizens;
- Lack of opportunity for genuine dialogue among stakeholders;
- Lack of adequate resources such as: time, finances, or technology;
- Potential wastefulness of the process in terms of time and cost;
- Conflicting goals;
- Resistance of well-entrenched institutions of public decision-making against change (Evans-Cowley & Hollander, 2010; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004; Stoney & Elgersma, 2007; Tulloch & Shapiro, 2003).

Public Participation in Public-Private Partnerships

Coproduction in the context of multipurpose and multi-stakeholder networks raises important public governance issues (Bovaird, 2007, p. 846). Involvement of a private sector in public works is controversial. Since the beginning of the current decade, literature on public-private partnerships (PPPs) has expressed some concerns about the issue of public engagement. These concerns have risen from unsuccessful practices. Overlooking interests and values of the

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general public, especially within the financial aspects of the project and the value-for-money, resulted in public oppositions, prolonging the PPP process, and costly conflicts and delays. The public interest guides government, thereby, efficiency is not the only goal. Thus, the public partner should seek a leadership role that defines the content of the partnership (Martin & Halachmi, 2012).

The importance of public engagement specifically at an early stage is now recognized as a success factor for PPP projects (Hodge, 2004; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Martin & Halachmi, 2012; Ng et al, 2012; Roach, 2011; Siemiatycki, 2009). Early public engagement in an informed and transparent process will add to the timeliness, efficiency, and accountability of the project. Further, these measures contribute to an effective and efficient process of public engagement that builds trust and manages political interests and expectations, while avoiding and reducing public opposition (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011).

Public-Private Partnerships And Their Undermining Character of Meaningful Community Engagement

Undermining a meaningful community engagement is not a direct goal of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs). The promise behind the application of this type of project delivery is toward achieving a better outcome. However, there are inherent factors within PPPs practices that raise concerns about transparency and public participation. These factors can be categorized into three groups of: contextual framework, dimensions surrounding the project locale; nature of PPPs as a type of project delivery system, fundamental logic behind public-private project and service delivery; and mechanisms of implementation, processes through which the project is delivered.

Contextual framework

Legal framework directs many practices at different governmental levels—national, local, and regional levels— including PPPs. In the US, the regulatory framework protects openness and accessibility on one hand and confidentiality on the other hand. Following the modern public administration, the agenda of Freedom of Information (FOI) or the right of the public to access data and know what information is being held by the government, open-data movement, and open government aim to release data. They are designed to add to openness and strengthen government democracy. However, while transparency is a focus point in the public sector, more tasks are being transferred to the private sector. Despite the fact that only some level of rationality could justify confidentiality, private law domain and claims of commercial-in-confidence protect details of PPP contracts. Moreover, improper tools and means of enforcement do not let governments and regulators provide access to information (Greve & Hodge, 2011 & 2012; Michener & Bersch, 2013; Roach, 2011). In support of confidentiality, Siemiatycki (2007) claims that providing confidentiality gives the private sector the incentive to deliver innovative and cost effective services, specifically during the tendering process in the beginning of every PPP project. Later, Siemiatycki (2009) argues that confidentiality gives the power to (a) the public sector to bargain for the best long-term value and (b) the bidders to protect their intellectual property. Although disclosure is necessary to gain public legitimacy, sometimes the private sector will participate only if some certain level of their business information remains disclosed. To fulfill this end there are constraints on releasing the required information.

The same logic applies to public participation practices. Practices of public participation in PPPs have been a result of the presence of the public sector in these types of projects and the mandates that requires them to conduct citizen participation. However, the private sector is not required to engage the public in its decision-making processes in PPPs unless it finds a benefit in the engagement.

Political factors are as important as the regulatory framework in forming actions. The exact type of PPP arrangements depends on policies and ideologies of the public partners signing these contracts. In less popular projects in some contexts, there is a potential that power holders from each or both sectors limit transparency and public involvement. Such projects are considered obstacles for provision of our transparency and public participation since from the political perspective they breed criticism of the government—the ultimate responsible entity to serve the public interests. Thus, the public partners are likely to draft contracts of this type of projects toward a limited level of openness and participation (Greve & Hodge, 2012; Hodge et al., 2010; Sagalyn, 2007).

Record of practice is the other factor tied to context that could undermine transparency and public participation. No or limited level of experience in PPPs, specifically at the local level, could distort the provision of these values. The reason is that in contexts unfamiliar with technical aspects and complexities of PPPs, it is difficult for the public sector to conduct effective transparency and public participation practices based on the contextual capacities. In the other words, limited experience in integrating dimensions of context with partnerships is a barrier for a meaningful community engagement and result in overlooking these values.

Nature of the PPP type project delivery

Inclusion of the private sector in roles that were previously carried out by government is the main controversial aspect of PPP contracts. The presence of private entities in the provision of public service and infrastructure distorts the provision of transparency and makes it an issue (Greve & Hodge, 2011 & 2012; Roach, 2011; Wall, 2013). An area of criticism to PPPs is when a private entity is involved in service delivery the public sector loses control that it hitherto owned. This is especially the case in the projects where the private sector has a higher level of involvement. In the 1970s a concern was that "…those financing and carrying out public/ private

projects had too much influence compared to those who would ultimately pay for or be affected by the projects (Sagalyn, 2007, p, 7).

From a different perspective, partnerships have to be genuine. In a *genuine partnership*, the public and private sectors must be focused on sharing financial risks and blur their in-between boundaries (Linder, 1999). In this regard, the other criticism is that such an intimate collaboration with blurring the roles and the responsibilities between the public and the private sector makes monitoring difficult for the public sector and raises concerns related to providing information transparency and public participation opportunities (The Canadian Council for Public-Private Partnerships, 2013).

The private sector is assumed to provide *Value for Money (VfM)*; albeit, contracting out a single package of bundled tasks at an earlier stage and for a longer period of time leaves more room for innovation and efficiency. Handing over more tasks to the private sectors encourage them to perform effectively since they would have significant capital at stake. However, all these factors limit citizen engagement and the ability of the government to plan for public interests, thus "While commercial risks were largely well managed, governance risks were not" (Hodge, 2004, p. 37). A reason is that private parties' lack the understanding of political processes, and the complexity of public administration.

Duration of the PPPs is another undermining factor. It does not matter for the private parties, it is rather a matter of governance and citizen expectations. The concern is that these long-term arrangements reduce the capacity and flexibility of the government to address future public interests and provide limited opportunities for a meaningful level of transparency or public participation. This is the case especially for the contracts that are up to several decades long (Hodge, 2004; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011). Duration of these projects can affect the focal goals and decisions as well. As a project takes longer, the predictability of the conditions such as the financial environment becomes more difficult for the partners. This became specifically an issue in the case of this study—Manhattan's downtown redevelopment.

Mechanism of Implementation

Complexity of contracts is a less visible dimension of PPPs that also undermines transparency and public engagement. Since the 1970s both public and private partners seek formalized partnership in the form of written agreements. Thus, partnerships have become more

institutionalized (Reuschke, 2001). Formal legal agreements—contracts— determine responsibilities of the partners, provide security for the participants and reduce risk. Deliverables and achievements, payment schedules, and direction on the right of oversight are all specified in the contracts. Considering the critical financial scale and governing aspects of the PPPs, signed contracts are the main reason that makes the practice of transparency and public participation troublesome (Greve & Hodge, 2011 & 2012; Hodge, 2004; Roach, 2011). Restrictive terms within contracts constrain future planning, and thus could be another potential source of tension between the public, the private sector, and the citizens.

Contracting out tasks through bundling multiple contracts together to deliver a major piece of public infrastructure makes the intellectual access to PPP arrangements difficult. In some parts of Australia governments employ lawyers to translate the content of PPP contracts and make them understandable for new reviewers and thus enable the deals to become accessible to the public (Greve & Hodge, 2012). However, not every context has an adequate level of resources to take advantage of these types of facilitation methods.

Generally, PPP projects are *on or off budget*; included or excluded from the public budget depending on risk sharing terms within the contract. Technically, PPPs can be considered "off budget if a certain amount of risk is transferred to the private sector" (Greve & Hodge, 2012, p. 6). Having ready access to documents depends on the risk sharing terms between the partners. Large-scale infrastructure projects demand a great deal of responsibility and risk for private companies, and since a certain amount of risk is transferred to the private sector, the projects are considered off budget. This would contribute to the complication of transparency and participatory opportunities. A long-term impact of the so-called off budget projects is that, again, although the commercial risks were transferred to the private sector, the governance risks remains with the public sector. Later, governments might be forced to intervene for their commitment to provide public services and that the political risks of not delivering a project can't be transferred; some PPP practices in New South Wales and other parts of the world are good examples of such experiences (Bovaird, 2010; Hodge, 2004; Sagalyn, 2007).

Any model of project delivery should provide both timely information and a transparent process to support meaningful public engagement and maintain the legitimacy of the planning process (Hodge, 2004). However, following the discussion on the amount of responsibility and risk shared between the sectors, an important question will be who has the *ownership of data*.

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Accordingly, the matter is to what degree access to performance information is provided among broad stakeholder groups [or whether they are kept within the private boundaries?]. This is specifically a matter of criticism in PPPs where a great deal of information can be withheld under the clause of "commercial-in-confidence" (Greve & Hodge, 2012; Siemiatycki, 2007). This issue prevents proper public scrutiny of the performance and probity of the private companies.

Rapid execution tends to be valued higher than due process and the public interest. Governments often view PPPs as a purchasing device, and with the objective of quick delivery, have risked due process and adequate public policy consideration in doing so. The profit-seeking nature of the private sector along with the goal of the public sector to gain Value for Money (VfM) pushes PPPs toward a higher pace. Literature includes examples of such cases where there is no provision for consumers' protection (Hodge, 2004; Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Ng et al., 2012; Sagalyn, 2007).

In summation, citizens have the right to access information and details of the PPP projects and participate in the course of planning. The fact is that governments have not deliberately wanted to reduce or conceal important information. Lack of transparency is a side effect of having a commercial contract where the operational responsibility is given to private sectors (Greve & Hodge, 2011). In practice, technical adoption and implementation of PPPs have been treated separately from citizen engagement and transparency practices. This issue has been reflected in literature as well (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011).

Factors pertained to the PPPs context and the way they are delivered can raise democratic debates of transparency and public participation. Nevertheless, the contract itself and the regulation and enforcement of the contract remain among the key insights into making PPPs more transparent (Greve & Hodge, 2012).

Summary of Literature Review

Previous experiences conclude that robust community engagement needs to be institutionalized as a part of the regulations guiding PPPs. Thus, transparency and public engagement practices should be expanded and consider public interests in order to avoid or reduce public opposition. Although they may seem cumbersome in the beginning, they significantly reassure public concerns. Proper application of PPPs makes them effective tools for delivering public services. However, the degree of transparency and public participation varies in

different projects. Transparency and public participation are related to each other. The former is a requirement for the effectiveness of the latter. Transparency and quality of the documents representing the activities and performances contributes to the quality of the inputs in the participation arenas and thus a meaningful community engagement within PPPs from a planning perspective (see Figure 8).

Greater transparency and public involvement are critical to make public planning accountable, raise citizen support for a project, and improve the outcomes of specific decisions (Roach, 2011; Siemiatycki, 2009). Community engagement issues of public-private partnership projects pertain to the fact that technical aspects of such projects have been treated separately from public involvement and transparency. Literature reflects this separation as well (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011). Well-integrated transparency and public involvement practices within different phases of PPP projects raise transparency and maintain public involvement. The reason is that the public can explicitly realize how their voices are heard and their values are accounted.

Despite the popularity of PPPs in American urban development, these projects have not been in the agenda of many planning academics in the US. Lack of systematic evaluation of summaries of implementation challenges creates a troublesome gap between theory and practice. This is the case specifically at the local level since a city may only undertake a major urban development PPP once or twice. The quality of the planning processes used to achieve the gains impact on system users—members of the community. Even in successful projects, the durability of the partnerships may still be a question. However, hitherto studies of PPPs have generally not addressed the issues of: access to information, particulars of deal negotiation, and the potential of meaningful public consultation within the planning process. Systematic evaluation of social issues such as community engagement along with financial and managerial aspects contributes to the broader literature on PPPs. Planning practice would benefit from case-based research that analyze the process and demonstrate how the context and local politics shape the actions chosen. Although public involvement is required, projects cannot be dominated by participatory practices. The key challenge for designers of transparency and engagement practices is to find a balance (Sagalyn, 2007; Siemiatycki, 2007 & 2009; Stoney & Elgersma, 2007).

Figure 8.

The Concept of the Link between Transparency and Public Participation
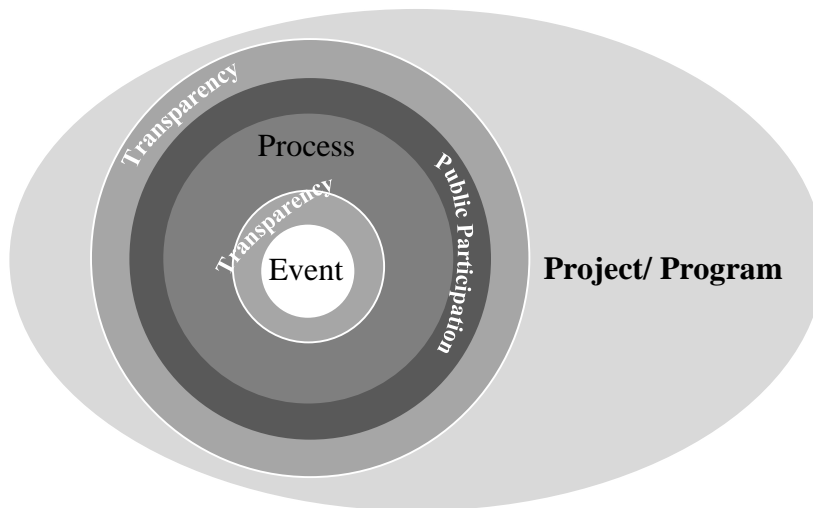
Democratic values of transparency and participation facilitate PPPs governance and reduce their planning risks, but why have they become an issue in PPPs? While some studies are concerned about confidentiality of information in PPPs, others propose greater public participation to promote more fair processes. The PPPs long-term closed contracts contrast with the goals of good governance in the planning process and often undermine the capability of the government to plan for the public interest. These arrangements disrupt open access to information and limit the future dimensions of decision-making regarding citizen expectations, specifically at the local level with less PPP experience. During the PPPs' process, public opposition exposes the project to a higher level of uncertainty and risk and might hinder the project development (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Siemiatycki, 2009).

Chapter 3 - Methodology

This study focuses on meaningful community engagement in public-private partnerships (PPPs). These partnerships are frequently the subject of criticism based on the idea that ignoring the public interest creates problem for the partners and consequently causes PPPs to fail. The empirical foundation of this study is a single in-depth, embedded exploratory case study of an urban development PPP. The following section describes the sample and includes an overview of the case of study, a description of units of analysis and measurement techniques, analytic strategy employed, and conclusion. Finally, this study evaluates the meaningfulness of the process of community engagement by applying a set of identified dimensions of quality transparency and public participation.

Description of Sample

The population is the urban renewal and redevelopment projects in the US. Those projects that were delivered through the PPP method at the local level form the sampling frame. To fulfill the purpose of this study, a direct and convenient access to the context, stakeholders, and the affected community is important. Thus, the locality and proximity of the case study result in considering projects within the state of the author's residency, Kansas. The sample, downtown redevelopment, has been chosen based on its geographic proximity and convenient access. Limitations in the financial resources and timeline have narrowed down the concentration of this paper on the ongoing PPP project in Manhattan, KS. On this single PPP project an in-depth case study will be conducted. The preliminary data about the downtown redevelopment, along with the stakeholders' information were obtained from (a) the Manhattan City Website, (b) informal background conversations with city staff, and (c) reviewing over 227 articles from the local newspapers on the project from 2000 to 2011.

Downtown Redevelopment

Third Street downtown redevelopment refers to the commercial and residential development of the north and south end project areas that surround Manhattan Town Center—the earlier mall project located in Manhattan, Kansas (see Appendix A). In this $194-million public-private partnership project, the City of Manhattan cooperated with a Midwest based developer. While sectors had separate responsibilities, they worked together to make the whole

redevelopment cohesive in a way that benefits the town. The project was financed by private investment of the developer; the city's local investment; Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) bonds received from the State of Kansas and the Department of Commerce; and the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) bonds generated by the city (The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014a).

An Overview of the Current Case Study

In 1999, the city administration and citizen led committees began to study the potential for a redevelopment project to the north and south of the Manhattan Town Center (also known as the Manhattan Mall) on Third Street. The primary redevelopment areas were defined in the "Downtown Tomorrow Plan," a plan that was adopted in the following year. The goal of the plan was to ensure the long-term viability of downtown as the main commercial, office, governmental, and cultural center for the coming years. The hope was that the plan would address the changing needs of the downtown while maintaining its economic stability (Cayton, 2000b; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b; The City of Manhattan, 2012) (see Table 9).

One of the main political concerns of 2000 and 2001 was when a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) project was proposed as a financing mechanism to subsidize the cost of land acquisition. In Tax Increment Financing, the difference between the local taxes, currently generated by the property, and the new increment of local taxes generated by the redevelopment, is used to finance the project. In this stage of the project, it financed public costs to acquire the property. In the early TIF district formation attempts, Riley County or the School District USD 383 had some concerns and they stopped the process and vetoed the effort several times. The majority of the opposition was from low and moderate-income occupants of the proposed TIF area that were against displacing families and businesses. Several residents were especially concerned about the use of eminent domain and the potential for the government to use its power to take their land. Oppositions of this kind caused delays for the final plan (Cayton, 2000c; Letters to the Editor, 2000a; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

Early during the process, in 2002, the chamber of commerce and a local architect initiated talks to different individual groups interested in downtown and asked for ideas, comments, and concerns to come up with key categories for the project. The major concern was that the community would only support a 'developer at risk' willing to assume the risk for the project rather than relying on the city to assemble and finance land upfront. Further, in the early 2003,

Table 9.

Redevelopment Timeline

1999

- City Administration and citizen led committees identify the development potentials

2000 & 2001

- The city started to form a TIF district for both the North and the South ends
- Opposition of the county and the school district
- Community support for a developer at risk

2002

- The chamber, the local architect, downtown merchants, and community leaders had a series of conversations and meetings to gain insight and direction on the North and South redevelopment projects

2003 & 2004

- Local architect and the developer created a conceptual master plan with the guidance of the steering committee
- The developer was identified and recommended to the Manhattan City Commission
- The city performed their due diligence and then entered into a pre-development agreement to perform certain functions such as financial and a participatory role in the development of a conceptual master plan
- Creation of the steering committee
- After numerous steering committee meetings, the conceptual master plan was recommended and accepted by the city commission and the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board

2005

- The city created a redevelopment TIF district including both the North and the South ends that led to:
  - The city to acquire property within the district using eminent domain law;
  - The difference between the local taxes, currently generated by the property, and the new increment of local taxes generated by the redevelopment to be used to finance public costs to acquire the property;
  - Using the state's share of sales taxes to finance public improvements through issuance of STAR bonds

2006

- The North Final Development Agreement (FDA)
- Approval of Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board & Adoption of the master plan by the city commission

2007

- The [early] South FDA due to the change in eminent domain law
- Acquired all properties and applied eminent domain for five properties

2008 to Present

- Filing of the lawsuit against the PUD amendment
- The issuance of special revenue TIF bond for the remaining land acquisition in the south
- The city and the developer renegotiated and amended portions of the North and South FDA
- Settle of the lawsuit
- Implementation

the Manhattan Area Chamber of Commerce, a local architectural firm, downtown merchants, and community leaders held a series of conversations and meetings that resulted in a plan. Their focus was to gain insight and direction on how development areas of the south and the north ends should be designed, and how the city should continue the process. Since the community rejected the earlier proposals from interested developers, the chamber believed that the citizens needed to develop their own plan. Hence, there would be a consensus between the public at large, the elected officials, the school board, the city, and Riley County. This was followed by several forums and debates among the city commission candidates and some business people on how to implement the redevelopment (Cayton, 2000a; Mayes, 2003a; Scott, 2003a; Seaton, 2003a; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

Later in 2003, the chamber evaluated and interviewed a number of qualified developers that responded to the request for proposals (RFPs) and had relevant experience to perform the redevelopment projects. Eventually, it recommended two development companies to the city commission. The general public was not involved in this selection. This raised commissioners' concern in that the selection might look like a pre-arranged plan to the community. However, the chamber argued that it had considered important criteria in choosing this team. These criteria were willingness to take the financial risk, taking a potential project's good and bad components, and willingness to work with the community (Mayes, 2003b). Nevertheless, to address this issue, the city commission formed an independent steering committee to review the project and viability of the selected developer before making any final decision so that it would not appear to look like a 'done deal' to the community. The committee became the community's front row in redevelopment and its members included: downtown business owners, representatives from local government, the school board, and surrounding neighborhoods that represented the interests of sections of the community (Manjrekar, 2003a, 2003b; Mayes, 2003c; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

After the city's financial re-evaluations, the development company was approved and entered into a pre-development agreement with the city to perform certain financial and participatory functions (Mayes, 2003d). The pre-development agreement outlined the parameters of the framework for future agreements of the city and the developer regarding the development. Meanwhile, the local architecture firm, the developer, and two other firms that had previously worked with the city became engaged in creation of a conceptual master plan. For this purpose,

the city and the steering committee helped the creation of the plan (Scott, 2003b). They held nine months of numerous meetings including five formal public hearings from 2003 to 2004 to form the downtown redevelopment master plan in line with the big picture for the areas (Mayes, 2003d; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014c). The plan was a combination of many conversations and discussions evolving toward a conceptual master plan that was later recommended to the city commission. The goal of the redevelopment was to fund the required public infrastructure improvements without relying on the city's tax base. The plan was focused on a mixed-use development. Both the city commission and the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board accepted the final plan after it was recommended (Mayes, 2003e; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

In the interim, there were numerous concerns from individuals directly affected by the project, especially the property owners, on affordability of new housing; the timing of the project; its start date; and when to schedule businesses for relocation; the timing and use of eminent domain; and the compensation for the property values (Mayes, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c). However, the developer promised to negotiate with the property owners and not use eminent domain. There were also some individuals that found the process to not be inclusive of everyone involved. Their argument was that not all of those affected by the use of eminent domain had been contacted regarding information or negotiation. The city commission had the responsibility to address and minimize any disruptions against standards of the community good before deciding upon the final proposal (Mayes, 2004d, 2004f; "Tasks in Redevelopment", 2004). Moreover, putting together the funding components was critical, since the city wanted to gain state support of the sales tax funding source. Thus, the process of reaching the final agreement was lengthy.

On the other hand, the developer conducted negotiations with landowners and potential tenants of the area. However, they did not release any names of future tenants –which was followed by many rumors. For the developer, finalizing the purchase of any pieces of land or contracting with tenants was contingent upon getting the final approval for the redevelopment by the city commission. A critical piece of getting the approval for the developer was to market the property. Despite this, the developer was ready to start the project as soon as the agreement was signed (Daugherty, 2005; Mayes, 2004e; Staff Reports, 2004).

The city and the developer wanted to finance some portion of the redevelopment with the state sales tax called Sales Tax Revenue Bonds (STAR). However, later they discovered that the bond could only be used for the north end of the project. Whereas, the initial plans were based on the assumption that this fund would be available. This issue led to several design changes that would make the district profitable enough to pay for itself. These changes were followed by the public reviews that raised the community's concern and became the starting point of many debates and discussions on the purpose and priorities of the redevelopment (Mayes, 2005a, 2005b; Staff Reports, 2004).

A major concern was not providing understandable document formats for the citizens earlier in the process. Based on an article by the Manhattan Mercury, previous two-dimensional drawings were not understandable for the general public. Even individuals with the vision to understand the plans had found the plan inconsistent. While they had been told that those versions were schematic and the final product would be different, the project partners announced that they could no longer make any changes (Clark, 2005). Issues of this kind brought into question the genuineness of the planning process. A matter of concern was what had happened to the design guidelines supposed to be adopted by the developer?— the guidelines that the steering committee put together in the previous year (2004). Or why was the design different from what had been promised? Many groups expressed concerns that echoed the unsatisfactory design. Following the criticisms, the city commission voted to pay the local architect to make sure that the entire development would address the recent concerns—issues of pedestrian and auto connectivity to the historic downtown (Mayes, 2005c, 2005d; Sherow, 2005).

Late in 2005, the city finally formed a Tax Increment Finance Redevelopment District including the North and the South End redevelopment areas. The creation of the TIF district allowed the city to acquire property within the district, use the difference between current local taxes and ones generated by the redevelopment, and gave the city the opportunity to use the state's share of sales taxes for certain public improvements. Initially, the developer helped the city to acquire all the properties in the north end with buying unmarketable TIF bonds and paying for the land. In the south end it solely assisted the city in negotiations and the city was the entity paying for the land costs (Scott, 2005; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

In 2006, due to a Kansas legislative change in the statutes, eminent domain could be no longer used for economic development purposes. The city expedited the process of entering to

the Final Development Agreement of the south end in 2007. The agreement allowed the land acquisition for the south end project to use eminent domain. To carry this out, the effective date of the change in the state law was extended upon the city's request giving the developer time to continue negotiating for the south end. The developer was not successful in all the negotiations to buy the properties on time. Therefore, eminent domain was applied to two (out of forty) remaining properties in the north end of the project. Nevertheless, the city commissioners were reluctant to apply the eminent domain process. They saw eminent domain as the last option since they believed that acquiring land should be based on negotiating a deal with the owners (Mayes, 2006a; The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

By mid 2006, the city and the developer entered into the Final Development Agreement (FDA) for the north that outlined the responsibilities of each entity. After a public hearing conducted by the city commission and approval of the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board, the master plan was adopted. Following this, the focus shifted to the south end and effectuating a predevelopment agreement so that the developer could start acquiring properties. Nevertheless, the time frame was tight because of the deadline to use the right of eminent domain and the developer wanted to acquire the properties as quickly as possible. Despite this, the commissioners and the city stressed the importance of reaching some sort of negotiated contract and pushed the developer to do so. These negotiations were also accompanied by many debates and discussions. Eventually, the city used its condemnation power to acquire eight properties on the south end. Although the city provided relocation assistance, not all the business property owners were satisfied. Meanwhile, the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce formed a steering committee composed of nine members to focus on specific ways to revitalize the city's core area—historic/old downtown. By the end of the year [2006], the city's proposal for STAR bonds was approved. The proposal was based on a regional attraction that could draw visitors from the city and the state (The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b; Wright, 2006a, 2006b).

For the city to be able to issue bonds for the improvements and property acquisition on the South End, the developer was to have 70 percent of the North End leases signed. Therefore, the viability of the south end was tied to the north end. However, it could secure only 12 percent of the leases. The developer focused on a mix of tenants of top retail performers that target the middle-income range. Around mid 2007, the developer disclosed the names of the potential tenants for the first time. It argued that although these national retailers and restaurants had

expressed interest and signed letters of intent, only 12 percent of the area was successfully leased (The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b; Wright, 2007a).

Announcing HyVee as the main part of the north end project raised major controversies. The community did not find a grocery business in line with what was proposed in the original plan and what they had expected ("Let' Do More Than Fill Space", 2007). They opposed HyVee for three main reasons. First, it would change the character of the neighborhood and hamper making Manhattan a regional destination for shopping and entertainment. It also would not be compatible with the surrounding properties. Second, the existing food and beverage businesses were serving all the existing customers and HyVee could be a threat to these local stores. Third, the community thought that HyVee would not contribute to the sales tax instead it would pull the tax from the existing stores and put that into paying off the bonds. However, the city argued that the retailer had done their marketing analysis and decided to be in Manhattan. It found HyVee as the right fit for the project in the 2007 time period. The developer also stated that having HyVee would greatly contribute to the financial health of the bond structure. The Manhattan community believed that the developer wanted to fill the remaining space and proceed to the south end project rather than address what the residents wanted (The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b; Wright, 2007b, 2007c).

As the developer proposed some design changes to address HyVee's need for space, the temperature of the controversies became even higher. The alterations required a zoning revision—a Planning Unit Development (PUD) amendment—against the community's interest. At that point, the community insisted on demanding the developer to commit to the initial agreement and expected the officials to reject the proposed change (Letters to the Editor, 2007). However, according to the initial agreement between the city and the developer, the developer had taken the risk of buying the land. And, the city was not given the authority to have any say over which retailers were to be included (Seaton, 2007b). Moreover, the economic environment [of the 2007] and the retail environment had changed which made the situation even more challenging (The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b).

Following these controversies, there were many conversations on the future of the city and the Manhattan community, whether a grocery store was the right fit for the north end, and the debate over not giving the developer the approval required to continue the project. Especially, since the financial viability of the south end redevelopment was contingent to the

north end. Similar concerns were expressed among the city commissioners as well. One of the commissioners believed that the developer's vision for the project was different from what the community had desired (Welstead, 2007). Eventually, the developer invested the effort to address the concerns. Despite this, opposing groups started to demonstrate disagreement by launching a protest against the amendment. Manhattan citizens felt that the officials and the local government represented the developer rather than the community (Sherow, 2007). Some community representatives argued that such a stress on rapid execution would be not worth losing public trust (Scott, 2008a). Eventually, in mid February 2008, a local downtown redevelopment advocacy group expressed their opposition in the form of filing a lawsuit to void the north end PUD amendment. The plaintiff lawsuit was based on two issues (a) proximity to an on-site historic building and (b) the reasonableness of the amendment. The lawsuit became costly for the city and the developer. The city was constrained in time and delays resulting from the lawsuit had the potential to stop the project and affect the community and the taxpayers (Scott, 2007; Scott, 2008b, 2008c).

Around mid 2008, the county court dismissed the lawsuit and ruled in favor of the city. After lengthy debates, by the end 2008, the lawsuit was settled and the amendment received enough votes by the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board and the city commission to become approved and proceed. However, the community expected the commissioners to continue monitoring the developer to deliver its promises for the south end. The city re-issued special revenue TIF bond to cover the remaining land costs on the south. In August of the same year, the city and the developer renegotiated and amended portions of the north and south Final Development Agreements (The City of Manhattan Kansas, 2014b; Scott, 2008d). Next, the developer started to finalize the contracts of the south properties and replace businesses. Since then [to the present], the implementation process has taken place.

Description of Research Method

Arguably, this exploratory case study method is well suited for the present study due to the recent concerns about transparency and community engagement and the lack of sufficient, meaningful data from local PPPs and the way they addressed these issues. A classic work on case studies defines this method as: "An empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon with its real-life context, especially when

- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 1992, p. 13).

Selection of the case study method as the research tool for this study has two main reasons. First, the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context where context is an integral part of the case and unlike experimental methods, it is strongly linked to the phenomenon of study (Yin, 1994 & 2003). Second, in understanding a case that is dependent on its context, the investigator has no control over the events. The very unique strength of the case study method is its ability to deal with a broad spectrum of evidence such as documents, interview, and observations. The current study applies the survey method in the forms of a personal interview and questionnaire.

Surveys have been broadly applied as a data collection method about people, projects, and programs by governments and other research entities. In general, they are being used as a method to evaluate the performance. The accuracy of these data retrieved from surveys is important for policy makers and scientists. The other reason for application of this method is that in some cases, similar to the case in this study, targeted facts are difficult to observe systematically, thus the goal is to find out about people's thoughts and feelings (Fowler, 1995, p. 1).

Research Method Concerns

Selecting case studies as a form of methodology comes with some concerns. Many concerns are a result from the way case studies have been done previously leading to a lack of trust in credibility of a case study research. The quality of data collected has been long a matter of concern for survey researchers (Goldsmith, 1989; Yin, 2003). There are some biases associated with survey as a methodology for research. One of them is the problem of recall bias. The following sections will first, describe recall bias and how it might affect a case study, downtown redevelopment, and explore the related previous studies and strategies; second, include other types of biases that might need attention; third, provide a methodological approach on how to mitigate the biases.

Recall Bias

Surveys, including questionnaire and interview, are prone to *Recall Bias.* Recall bias is a methodological bias specifically associated with this data collection method. It is especially a

matter of concern in studies and research designs that are in retrospect—where increasing the sample size can't reduce such systematic error (Beatty & Willis, 2007; Hassan, 2006). However, a careful design of the survey tools that includes the design of questionnaire and interview questions mitigates the risk of recall bias (Pinto, et al., p. 2).

Recall bias threatens the internal validity and credibility of this study. It distorts access to quality data and measuring of what this study aims to measure. To address the bias, the aim is to apply strategies to improve the measuring instruments also known as content validity of the data collection phase for a higher quality data.

Previous Studies and Strategies on Recall Bias

Every type of research method has its own concerns—so do surveys. Toward increasing the quality of surveys, scholars have found out that clear questions pose memory and recall tasks while allowing respondents to accomplish their role and express accurate answers. To achieve a better result, using both interview and questionnaire is recommended. Starting with the interview aids to avoid recall bias (Pinto et al., 2011). In this regard, the most critical factor in surveys is the design and articulation of the questions [to the point that the validity of results is tied to the design]. Design of the questions affects the participant's motivation. Poor wording, for example, can distort comprehension and cause systematic biases (Bhandari & Wagner, 2006; Collins, 2003).

Recall bias is associated with the retrieval of information since memory decreases over time. The time interval between the event and the time of its assessment affects the accuracy of recall (Hassan, 2006; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). That is why studies are especially valuable close to the real time of projects, simply because they minimize recall bias. Scholars propose multiple ways to identify recall problems and improve surveys (Beatty & Willis, 2007; Collins, 2003; Jobe, et al., 1990; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001).

The first step in minimizing recall bias is to properly define and articulate research questions, the degree of required detail, interviewing techniques, and the extent to which personal characteristics influences the accuracy of recalling (Hassan, 2006; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). While drafting questions, focusing on possible consequences of events is an effective method to address recall bias (Fowler, 1995).

Second, there are strategies recommended to facilitate recalling and improve reporting. Ones that were applied in the current study are summarized as below:

(a) *Conducting more than one interview* by informing the respondents about the subject of the questions in the earlier interviews and later, having the actual interview. Respondents become more attentive when they are informed about what they will be interviewed about (Fowler, 1995, p. 26);

(b) *Asking respondents to maximize their effort* increases respondents' commitment and affects the quality of recall in surveys (Jobe et al., 1993);

(c) *Encouraging the respondents* to take their time and instructing them that accurate recall is important (Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001);

(d) Using *longer questions* rather than short ones is a simple way that contributes to recalling. Providing an introductory material gives memory time to recall and is proven to improve reporting (Flowler, 1995; Jobe, et al., 1993; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001). In addition, "Longer questions give respondents time to search their memory" (Fowler, 1995, p. 23);

 (e) *Providing appropriate cues* enhances or impairs recall and increases accuracy. Cues can be provided in forms of instructions or introductions to a series of related questions that define a domain of relevant events. Restricting the recall task to short reference periods is claimed to improve accuracy of recall. Whereas, long reference periods encourage guessing and estimating and do not add to the quality (Collins, 2003; Jobe, et al., 1993; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001);

(f) Applying *decomposition technique* and decomposing a complex task into several more specific ones also improves accuracy by asking additional questions and evaluating the consequences of the subject (Jobe, et al., 1993; Schwarz & Oyserman, 2001).

There are opposing arguments for each strategy, thus not all the strategies are guaranteed in every context. It must be considered that while these strategies appear to contribute to the quantity of data or events that respondents may recall, they do not assure quality and accuracy of data (Jobe, et al., 1993).

Pilot tests are another recommended method. It can alert the comprehension and recall problems. However, some dimensions of this study limited the results that could be achieved by this method. One was that there were 21 qualified stakeholders or respondents existed for the survey and collection of data. Thus, conducting a pilot study on this group was likely to affect

the result of the actual study. The section on analytic strategy provides more information on the application of the above strategies and their order in the current study.

Other Potential Biases

Except the recall bias, one of the other biases is the *selection bias*. This bias pertains to an error in choosing the individuals or groups to take part in the study; meaning that selected individuals might not be the appropriate representatives for evaluation of the project in this study. To address this concern, participants were selected from different groups representing the stakeholders. The fact that these members represented the affected community including: different sectors, interest groups, and the broader community or city-at-large helped to mitigate the selection bias.

Researchers sample to reduce *response bias*. In this study data was collected from the responses of 21 highly involved individuals. However, there is a chance that the wider community's opinion on the project performance might be different. In the other words, responses (data collected) might not reflect what exactly the community thinks about the meaningfulness of the community engagement process. From this perspective, response bias is probable.

Interviewer bias is another bias that can affect the results. The interviewer's personal influence and bias makes interviewing highly vulnerable to interviewer bias. Although interviewers have to keep an objective approach and prevent communication of personal views, they may give cues that influence respondents' answers. In addition, sometimes non-verbal influences such as the interviewer's age, race or gender, which was also the case in this research, can affect the respondents. By application of a well-designed and structured process in the data collection method this study attempted to avoid this bias.

Measurement

A measurement of the meaningful community engagement in this study was based on the subunits of transparency and public participation. The two continuous variables were evaluated independently based on the perception of twenty-one key stakeholders about the quality of each during the course of the downtown redevelopment first through an in-depth interview and second a questionnaire. Twenty-one of the downtown redevelopment key stakeholders were the targets

of interview, the individuals to whom the questionnaires were provided later. These key stakeholders hold the following roles:

- Member of the local government, the city;
- Member of the chamber of commerce, board of directors;
- Downtown Manhattan Incorporation,
- Former elected officials;
- Accountant;
- Representative of the city-at-large;
- Active members of the community;
- Business owner in downtown;
- Business owners in redevelopment areas;
- Business property owner;
- Downtown area resident;
- Representative of the historic preservation group;
- Member of the U.S.D 383 board of education,
- Local developer/ Owner of an Asset management business;
- Property manager;
- Director of a local development institute;
- Representative of a local church adjacent to the redevelopment area;
- Community activist.

Interview

To address the qualitative aspect of this study and add depth to data, the interview was designed around eight issues that targeted the overall quality and meaningfulness of the process of community engagement—including transparency and public participation. The focus was to find out about the respondents perception on:

1. Whether they were provided with an adequate level of information to make informed decisions and be influential;
2. The political environment in providing a meaningful community engagement and whether the authorities sought a genuine process;

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3. Barriers and obstacle of the provision of a quality process during the Downtown Redevelopment project;

4. Local factors influential on success or failure of a meaningful community engagement;

5. Breakdowns of the providing a quality transparency and public participation for political, social, or technical reasons;

6. Effectiveness of their participation and whether the outcome reflected the agreement achieved during the participatory processes;

7. How the public interest was protected and fairness of the process was assured and whether there was any mechanism in place for this purpose;

8. The overall quality of transparency and public participation during the course of the project and whether there was any difference in the earlier planning processes and the critical or controversial phases.

In addition to the issues above, respondents were asked about their thoughts on how presence of the developer affected the community engagement during the course of the project. Result and findings from this question are reported under question 9 in the interview section of the following chapter.

Questionnaire

Unlike the interview, the design of the questionnaire targeted certain dimensions of a quality process. It addressed technical evaluation of the subunits of transparency and public participation. The following sections describe what these dimensions and subjects of evaluation were.

Transparency

Considering constituents of quality transparency (see Table 2) and the purpose of this study on conducting an overall evaluation of the process, transparency in the downtown redevelopment was evaluated based on seven dimensions. The evaluation examined (a) the quality of information and documents and (b) the quality of the way they were provided. Table 10 includes the list of documents and information subjected to this evaluation.

In evaluating the quality of the information and documents, the dimensions dealt with:

- Completeness (T1): The degree to which the information was complete and not piecemeal or imperfect);

- Understandability and simplicity (T2): The degree to which the information was (a) understandable and (b) if the documents included simplifying devices such as visual and textual aid, graphs, and charts;

- Usability (T3): The degree to which the information was usable and could be used to draw verifiable inferences;

Table 10.

List of Documents Subjected to the Evaluation of Transparency

Documents

A. General Information on Meetings and Procedures

- Elected officials contact information
- Upcoming meeting schedules
- Meeting agendas
- Meeting minutes
- Procedure manuals (information on internal policies and routines)

B. Information on Processes, Results, and Outcomes

- Decision making process:
  - Steps taken to reach the decision
  - Rationale behind the decision
- Public consultation and survey reports
- Final concession agreement/ Final contract
- Budgets or financial statements and information

C. Implementation Phase

- Ongoing performance data
- Technical & environmental reports
- Financial documents: Financial statements/ Budget reports
- Summary reports
- Record of completed projects & performances against expectations
- Record of future payment contracted for each PPP scheme
- Capital value of contracts signed to date & in procurement

- Unbiased characteristic (T4): The degree to which the information and the content of the documents were free from any prejudice and favoritism of the information providers;

In evaluating the information and documents provision, the focus was on:

- Accessibility (T5): The degree to which the documents and information were easy to reach for location wise;

- Timeliness (T6): The degree to which the information was provided in (a) a timely fashion, close to real time and (b) promptly;

- Proactiveness (T7): The degree to which the information and documents were provided proactively by the sponsors and not upon the community's request.

Public Participation

Following the same strategy, public participation was evaluated from the process standpoint around ten dimensions. Considering the constituents of quality public participation process (see Table 8), the evaluation examined three stages of (a) the pre-communication, (b) communication, and (c) post-communication of the public participation opportunities listed below (see Figure 6). Table 11 includes the list of opportunities subjected to this evaluation.

The evaluation of the pre-communication stage was based on the following dimensions:

- Public notification (P1): The degree to which the community and stakeholders were notified prior to the sessions through the city's official website, local newspapers and advertisements, or even hard copy mails and phone calls;

Evaluation of the communication phase focused on:

- Time and location convenience (P2): The degree to which time and location of the meetings were perceived convenient;

- Representation (P3): The degree to which participants were good representatives of the Manhattan's community;

- Regularity of public involvement (P4): The degree to which the respondents perceived their involvement on a continuous and regular basis;

- Collaboration (P5): The degree to which the participatory processes were perceived to be collaborative— (1) where dialogue happens, (2) engagement is continuous, (3)

participants are treated equally, (4) learning takes place, (5) mutual sharing of knowledge happens, and (6) joint problem solving occurs (Brody et al., 2003; Innes & Booher, 2004);

- Transparency (P6): The degree to which the overall process has clarity in process, sponsorship, purpose, design, and how the results will be affected;

Table 11.

List of Opportunities Subjected to the Evaluation of Public Participation

Public Participation Opportunities

- Community visioning workshop
- Citizen surveys/ Web-base surveys
- Public hearings
- Community & neighborhood meetings
- Citizen advisory board
- Business community meetings
- Citizen review board
- Citizen focus group
- Citizen task forces
- Citizen-base committees
- Open/ roundtable discussions
- Small meetings
- Legislative standing committees
- Briefings

- Unbiased process (P7): The degree to which the opportunities were perceived unbiased and not leading to a set outcome;

The evaluation of the post-communication stage take the following dimensions into consideration:

- Public values incorporation (P8): The degree to which public values influence the final decisions;

- Feedback communication (P9): The degree to which there was an effective communication on how participants' effort had influence;

- Participation effectiveness (P10): The degree to which respondents perceived their participation to be influential.

Analytic Strategy

Design

The number of qualified participants was limited in this study. Thus, the emphasis on maximizing the quality of responses (data), while addressing recall bias, was the highest priority. Data was collected through two survey forms of open-ended interviews and a questionnaire. Questions were carefully reviewed by the major advisor of this study. Data collection process took six continuous weeks (during November and early December 2014) and the goal was to talk to at least twenty individuals. The design and conduct of the process were drafted to be objective.

In line with the purpose of the study, respondents are picked from the public sector, the private sector, and the community (see the measurement section of this chapter for the complete list of stakeholders). Respondents from different groups provide different perspectives. Such a composition in the group of respondents contributes to a higher quality data and a comprehensive result, especially since the subject of this study focused on a single project. The sectors that were in charge of conducting quality practices might be less likely to report the weaknesses of the process, thus questioning participants from different sectors reduces this type of bias in the results.

Data was collected through two methods: first through an in-depth interview that provided a qualitative perspective for the final evaluations. The open-ended interview questions were designed to collect general information on the overall quality of transparency and public participation during the redevelopment project (see Appendix B).

Second, through a questionnaire which examined the degree to which certain dimensions were present during the process of the project. A technical evaluation of the participation opportunities considering the two subunits was conducted by application of a Community Engagement Attribute Evaluation System (CEAES) based on the recognized nominal and ordinal variables of quality transparency and public participation practices (see Appendix C). Attributes of CEAES are drawn from Table 2 and Table 8 demonstrating dimension and metrics of quality

practices. For transparency, documents and information in different phases of the project (see Table 10) and for public participation, the quality of the participatory opportunities (see Table 11) were the subjects of the evaluation.

The CEAES is in the format of a questionnaire composed of questions designed to examine transparency of documents and information considering their content and the way in which they were disclosed, and public participation processes in general. A list of documents and their measurement criteria for transparency and public participation metrics were a part of the questionnaire. A Likert-like scale was used to determine the degree to which stakeholders perceived or agree that a specific criterion had been present. This scale followed a typical five-level format ranging from 'Not Available' to 'Very High'. However, in this case, 'Not Available' shows the absence of the variable and 'Low', 'Moderate', 'High', and 'Very High' demonstrate the level of the agreement with the presence of the variable while 'Very High' indicates strong agreement. The attributes of the applied CEAES did not embed any weighting system. Therefore, quality transparency and quality public participation practice were not coded as the sum of the evaluation results on the presence of variables or metrics. Thus, the final result regarding each dimension is reported exclusively.

Process

Early in the first week, an invitation letter along with a fact sheet was emailed to thirty-two potential participants. Contact information of the subjects was obtained from the city and online resources. The electronic invitation included information about the researcher, the reason that the individual was invited, purpose, dimensions, process, and goals of the study. This was followed by eight acceptances by the end of the week. Early in the second week, a hard copy of the invitation letter and the fact sheet was posted to the business address of the remaining potential participants. Thereafter, nine acceptances were received via email; one individual declined to participate.

In the beginning of the third week, the remaining sixteen stakeholders were contacted via their business phone number. This was followed by six more acceptances. Three of the potential participants had left the community and their new contact information could not be found. Two expressed that they had not been involved to the level to be able to provide any input. The other three were not willing to participate. And, the two last were not followed by a phone call due to having twenty-two acceptances from the other individuals.

Participants were interviewed individually except two cases where respondents 6 and 7, and respondents 15 and 21 were interview at the same time. Prior to the day of interview, copies of (a) the interview questions, (b) the questionnaire, and (c) the consent form regarding research involving human subjects were sent to the participants via email. The email provided information on each material and the participants were asked to review the materials before the interview.
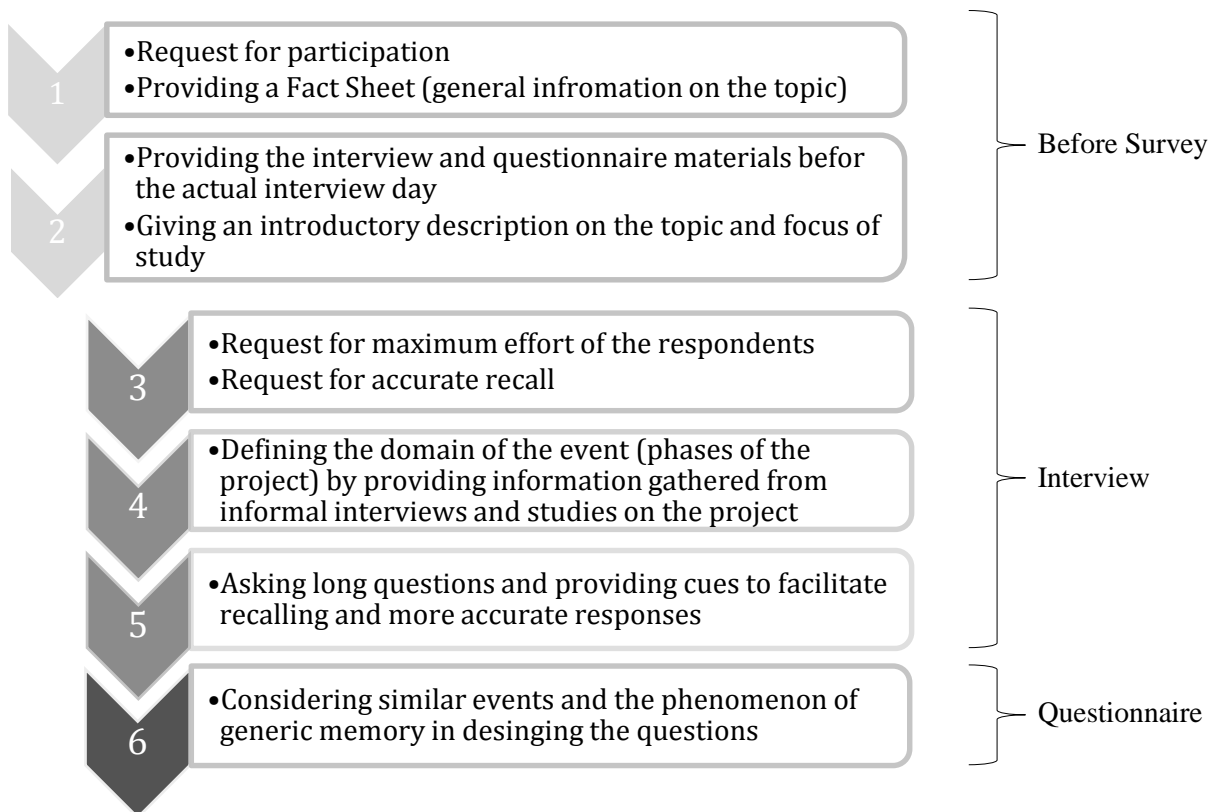
One of goals of designing the process was to improve the quality and accuracy of data (responses) and addressing recall bias. In the beginning of the meetings, the author provided paper copies of all three documents mentioned above to each of the respondents. The interview sessions started with giving more detailed information about the focus of the research to the respondents (see Figure 9). Respondents were also asked to maximize their effort in answering the questions, and to try to provide accurate responses. The interviews were conducted first to prepare their memory for a more accurate recall later while filling the questionnaire. Despite the follow up email describing that the interview would be conducted prior to filling the questionnaire, some participants had filled the document earlier before the day of the actual interview. However, after the interview process, these respondents were asked about their willingness to revise their answers. While two participants of this group requested to review their answers, they did not make any change.

In the beginning of each interview, the domains of interest were clarified for the respondents. This domain includes early informal planning phases before the actual start of the project, and before signing the contract, through the final phases of the implementation. For this purpose, the forward recalling strategy was applied (respondents were assisted to recall the events in an order from the earlier phases of the project to the present). Preliminary studies on the project, from the online resources and the local papers, and informal interviews played an influential role in this regard. Reviewing a brief summary on the stages of the project helped the respondents to associate their responses to the relevant events.

Next, with long questions and provision of explanations wherever needed during the interview, more cues were provided. The stress was on providing appropriate cues and thus a meaningful context for the respondents' memory. Breaking down the questions and asking about the consequences were the two techniques embedded in the survey design for achieving a higher quality data. In cases where the respondents had questions about terms and the structure of the process, the interviewer provided objective information.

In their study, Collins (2003) and Schwarz & Oyserman (2001) argue about retrieval of information and that rare and more distinctive events are more likely to be remembered by respondents—which was the case in this study. The argument of studies on recall bias is mostly about recall problems of individuals on self-reporting. In such cases, respondents were the only sources of data about themselves—if no database was in place. However, within the focus of this study, all respondents were surveyed about their experiences in a single project. The scale of the downtown redevelopment makes the project memorable for both the city and the citizens [including the respondents]. Therefore, every piece of data contributed to the big picture and examined whether the community was meaningfully engaged in the project.

Figure 9.

Survey Agenda Considering the Recall Bias

1	• Request for participation • Providing a Fact Sheet (general infromation on the topic)	Before Survey
2	• Providing the interview and questionnaire materials befor the actual interview day • Giving an introductory description on the topic and focus of study	
3	• Request for maximum effort of the respondents • Request for accurate recall	Interview
4	• Defining the domain of the event (phases of the project) by providing information gathered from informal interviews and studies on the project	
5	• Asking long questions and providing cues to facilitate recalling and more accurate responses	
6	• Considering similar events and the phenomenon of generic memory in desinging the questions	Questionnaire

Accordingly, the design of the questions of the questionnaire targeted the overall perception of the respondents on existence and quality of each dimension through the process of

the project. The interview proceeded with filling the questionnaire with the presence of the interviewer—the principal author of this study. Questionnaires were provided in hard paper copies. Bull's so-called 'old-fashioned paper copies' were perceived to be preferred over the electronic versions (Bull, 2014). The author provided more subjective details upon the respondents' request during the process of completing the questionnaire.

Finally, by the end of the interview day, each respondent received a thank you letter regarding appreciation of their participation and that they would be updated on the findings of this study.

Validity and Generalizability

Literature supports the validity of the subunits in measuring meaningful community engagement (Andersson, 2008). There is also support for the subjects and the methods that this study will apply for evaluation. For transparency, the components are the information, processes, and decisions materialized in the form of documents such as Request For Proposals, meeting minutes, and contracts; and for public participation, they are the phases of the design and the process (Armstrong, 2011; Brody et al., 2003; Bryson et al., 2013; Fung, 2006; Grimmelikhuijsen & Welch, 2012; Innes & Booher, 2004; Robbins et al., 2008).

In terms of generalizability, results and findings of this study are accurate and are assumed to be reliable. Repeating the process, the same outcomes would be achieved for the same case study. The final recommendations are applicable to other similar situations as general guidelines in designing and conducting a quality process—meaningful community engagement. However, as it has been mentioned earlier, there are many factors in play in PPPs and a meaningful community engagement practice that are tightly tied to the context (political, social, cultural, time frame, and etc.) of the projects. "A generalization that specifies the conditions under which a mechanism produces an outcome is theoretically precise but empirically contingent" (Gläser & Laudel, 2013). Thus, consideration of the same results and findings in other cases does not guarantee success but guides toward a more meaningful process.

Summary of Analytic Strategy

This study conducted an in-depth case study of an urban redevelopment Public-Private Partnership project in Manhattan, Kansas. The goal was to find out about the perception of the affected community on the meaningfulness of the community engagement practice. Initially,

general data and information was drawn from the comprehensive studies of the project and its context. Evaluation of the community engagement quality was pursued through examining subunits of transparency and public participation by application of two methods. First, an open-ended interview was conducted with highly involved participants— twenty-one personal interviews with key stakeholders. Selected individuals represent different sectors, stakeholders, and interest groups whom were closely involved or had some level of influence and contribution on the project. Considering the project duration, approximately 10 years, not all the individuals were constantly involved throughout the process. Second, a technical evaluation of the practice of community engagement was conducted in the form of a questionnaire. Data collected from the two survey methods was analyzed and reported in the following section of this report.

As a data collection method in case studies, surveys are the subject of criticism for recall bias in retrospective studies. Such a bias affects the results of the study. However, there are strategies to address and avoid this bias. These methods are designed to facilitate the recall task for the respondents and to add to a higher quality data. Similar to other research, this study is prone to a range of biases—selection bias, response bias, and interviewer bias. Appropriate application of mitigation strategies helps to minimize these biases and was applied, to the greatest extent possible, to this study. Considering the key role of the contextual factors, methodology of this study might not be entirely applicable for community engagement evaluation of other urban redevelopment public-private partnerships. However, it does provide a framework for future evaluations.

Chapter 4 - Analysis and Findings

The methodology of this study is based on the two survey methods of interview and questionnaire. Collected data from each method is analyzed and reported exclusively. This chapter describes the analysis followed by a report of findings. This study is based on the evaluation of the factors identified as constituents of a quality community engagement practice in the literature. In this regard, data from the interviews and the questionnaires reveal the respondents perception on what was done successfully and what needed more attention and improvement toward a quality practice of meaningful community engagement.

Questionnaire

Data obtained from the questionnaires was manually inserted into Qualtrics research software, an online data collection tool (Qualtrics, 2014). By the end of the survey process, a report of the quantitative statistical analysis, results, was exported from the software into an excel format and became the base of the technical analysis of this study. This report included statistics of the responses. Results of findings for transparency and public participation are reported exclusively as follows.

Results on Transparency

A thorough look at the means generated from data reveals that the practice of transparency was done fairly well (see Table 12). However, the unbiased character (T4) of the information and proactive provision (T7) of the documents and information are the two dimensions that achieved relatively lower scores (means: 3.24). The scores in Table 12 show the overall perception of respondents on the quality of each transparency dimensions regarding both the content of the documents, information, and the way in which they were provided.

Access to information (T5) and timeliness (T6) of its provision are the two dimensions with the highest means (means: 3.95 & 3.9). Around 70% of the respondents perceived these dimensions to be mainly high and very high. However, as a part of the dimension of timeliness, the perception about promptness of the information provision is in a slightly lower degree (see Appendix D).

Table 12.

Transparency

Dimensions	Mean
Documents Content	
T1. Completeness	3.57
T2. Understandability & Simplicity	3.66
T3. Usability	3.67
T4. Unbiased Content	3.24
Information Provision	
T5. Accessibility	3.95
T6. Timeliness	3.92
T7. Proactiveness	3.24

Note: Mean of T2 is reported as the average of the means for dimensions of understandability (3.57) and simplicity (3.76). Mean of T6 is reported as the average of the means of timely fashion (3.95) and promptness (3.9) (see Appendix D).

More than half of the respondents (57%) believed the information completeness (T1) to be high (see Appendix D). The majority (86%) found the information understandable and 57% deemed the degree of simplifying means (T2) to be high. Moreover, respondents (48%) indicated that they could use the documents and were able to do their own analyses with the information provided to almost a high degree. Data does not reveal a broad agreement on the degree of completeness (T1), understandability and simplicity (T2) of information to be very high (see Appendix D).

Unsurprisingly, perceptions on the bias of the information and the documents were revealed to be lower, among other indicators of transparency, and are dispersed. While 33% scored the unbiased character of the documents' content low, 29% perceived it to be moderate and 38% found its degree to be high and very high. The degree of the proactive provision is the other dimension that received lower score. Findings clearly demonstrate a disparity of perceptions in the extent of this dimension.

Results on Public Participation

Similar to the practice of transparency, public participation obtained means well above average. Unbiased character (P7) of the participatory opportunities and feedback communication (P9) received the lowest degrees (means: 2.90 and 2.76). Table 13 reports the findings from data on the quality of public participation practice.

Table 13.

Public Participation

Dimensions	Mean
Pre-Communication	
P1. Public Notification	4.38
Communication	
P2. Time & Location Convenience	3.76
P3. Representation	3.52
P4. Regularity of Public Involvement	4.48
P5. Collaboration	3.43
P6. Transparency	3.52
P7. Unbiased process	2.90
Post-Communication	
P8. Public Values Incorporation	3.24
P9. Feedback Communication	2.76
P10. Participation Effectiveness	3.52

Statistics demonstrate a strong agreement on the high degree of dimensions of public notification and regularity of participatory opportunities (means: 4.38 & 4.48). The majority (91%) ranked the extent of public notification high and very high (see Appendix E). Furthermore, over half of the participants (57%) perceived the regularity of the involvement to be very high. P4 significantly obtained the highest mean among all the dimensions subjected to evaluation of meaningful community engagement in this study.

The mean for the convenience of time and location of the meetings is above the average, however, not many respondents perceived the degree of this dimension to be very high; equal to 57% of the individuals agreed on P2 just to be *high*. From the 21 respondents to this questionnaire, 16 questioned the interviewer on collaboration (P5). They requested more clarification on what exactly the dimension refers to in the context of public participation processes. Based on the literature reviewed and the definition provided in the 'Measurement' section of the chapter on Methodology, they were provided with more information in this regard. While no one evaluated this dimension to be *very high*, more than half of the respondents agreed on a high degree. P5, P7, and P9 are the three dimensions with no 'very high' score.

Representation of the general public (P3) and transparency of public participation process obtained equal means (3.52). However, there is a greater agreement on the former to be high (48%) and the latter to be moderate (43%). While 52% of the respondents believe the collaboration within the participatory sessions to be *high*, none perceived it to be *very high*.

Similar to the findings from transparency, approximately half of the respondents believed the unbiased character involved in practice to be *low* (mean: 2.9). However, statistics of the question on P7 demonstrates a bipolar pattern; 48% believed it to be *low* while 38% reported a high degree (see Appendix E). Looking at P8 and P10, Table 13 indicates that these dimensions roughly received good degrees. However, similar to P7, there is a bipolar pattern in place. Statistics reveals while over half of the participants responded either high or very high, the rest believed the degrees to be low (see Appendix E). Meanwhile, (~) 80% of he respondents gave P9 a very poor degree (mean: 2.76).

In summation, the practices of all the dimensions subjected to this evaluation were perceived to be well above the average. This fact demonstrates that there was an effort in place in providing a meaningful community engagement in downtown redevelopment. While regularity of the public involvement (P4) and public notification (P1) achieved the highest scores, feedback communication (P9) achieved the lowest scores. Looking at the statistical details, not all the respondents had broad agreement on the quality of incorporation of public values (P8), bias in the concepts of transparency (T4), and public participation (P7). Accordingly, the results of these dimensions were dispersed. Considering the three dimensions of T4, P7, and P9, the practice was associated with some sort of communication problem. Moreover, the outcome of the project was not well addressed the existing interests and concerns.

Interview

Interview responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed with the assistance of NVivo software, a qualitative data analysis tool (QSR, 2014). The analysis was conducted by the author of this study and focused on identifying strengths and weaknesses of the transparency and public participation practices from the perspectives of different participants. Analysis of the interview responses followed the process showed in Figure 10. Instead of a line-by-line coding

Figure 10.

Steps between Responses and Conclusions
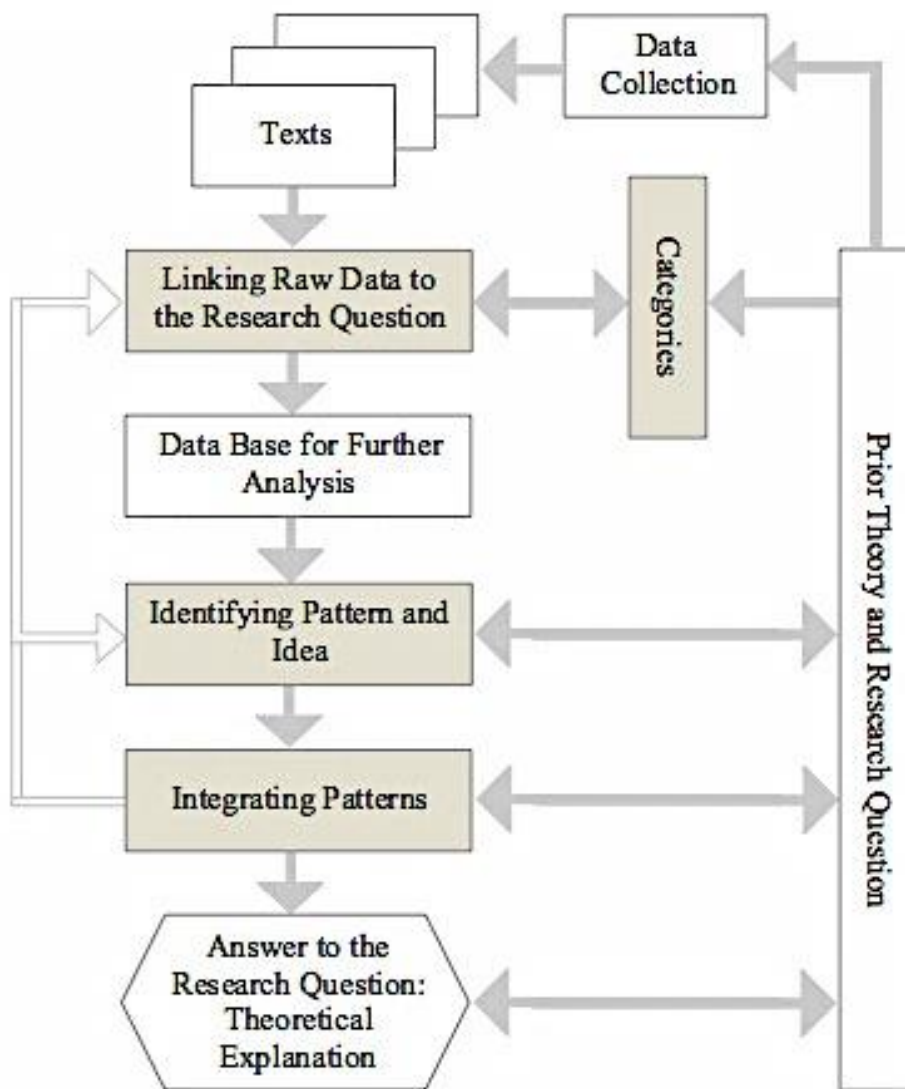
Source: Gläser & Laudel, (2013).

of the qualitative data, collected data is coded based on a summary of the key points of the respondents' perception on each of the interview questions that ultimately address the research question. Subsequently, the codes were categorized based on integrating the repeating perceptions and patterns (Charmaz, 2006; Gläser & Laudel, 2013; Saldaña, 2009).

Findings of interviews on transparency and public participation are reported on a question-by-question base followed by general critiques on the overall process of conducting the community engagement.

Contextual Facts

Following the former public-private partnership project of Manhattan Town Center (MTC), in the 1980s, "City staffs understand the parameters of what a potential city engagement could be in a project" (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014). Partners within the public sector became aware of the needs for a better community engagement practice in the later downtown redevelopment project. In other words, there was more familiarity with what the community wanted in terms of transparency and public participation and their support for a developer at risk. Downtown Redevelopment was considered a more complex practice considering (a) the complexities of having a developer at risk rather than having a shared financial risk model and (b) the location of the project which was in the middle of the city. However, both the city and the community had an understanding of deliberation and constituents of a potential community engagement (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014).

In the initial stages of the process before the start of the project, the city and the Manhattan Chamber of Commerce (the public partners) reached out to the community to explore the public view and gather input on how the community envisioned the project. The project concepts were built upon the common themes raised from community meetings and discussions (Respondents 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014).

Following this effort, the chamber, a local architect, and the developer communicated the feedback of those community meetings in the form of conceptual images and plans reflecting those themes with the general public. As it has been mentioned earlier, this part of the planning

process happened prior to any final agreement and the start of the project (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014)

With the actual start of the project, arranging the development agreement for the north end coincided with the financial reality of the time due to the market downturn in 2008 and the change in the market environment. Consequently, the envisioned retail anchor tenant, KOHL's, decided not to join the Manhattan's market. Facing the economic reality, the circumstances impacted and the project plan went through some changes. There was no common understanding or vision of how the north end would develop. The end result in the new plans included a suburban strip mall with a suburban scale grocery store rather than a dense mixed-use urban environment with retail stores as was envisioned initially. There were many debates and controversies around the changes in the plan. Meanwhile, the public had a high interest to know about the potential tenants of the area but the developer was not willing to release any names prior to finalization to make sure whether a tenant would be a part of the project (Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014).

Critics on the Selection Process, the Developer, and the Arrangement

Generally, the overall process was perceived by the respondents to be transparent. However, in all fairness many respondents questioned the topics related to the selection process, the developer, and the final arrangement. Some perceived that the process through which the developer was selected as the best choice for the entire project did not seem clear and was not conducted in an acceptable manner. Considering the end result of the project, some argued that the developer was limited in their ability to perform and thus not qualified to deliver the promised mixed-use project.

Some respondents perceived that the developer was given too much power and that city commissioners did not have enough leverage on the developer. This issue was apparently the reason why the developer did not deliver what was promised in the beginning. (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014; Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondent 14, personal communication, November 26, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014).

On the other hand, there is an argument by some that considering the selection criteria, (a) having financial capabilities, (b) willingness to take the risk, and moreover, (3) willingness to work in the project geography, the selected developer was the best choice (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

Questions

1. Provision of an adequate level of information to make informed decisions and be influential;

Respondents broadly agreed that overall access to enough information was available for the citizen-at-large. Upon request, individuals could also have access to specific reports. Data reveals that a good effort was placed on providing opportunities for the individuals and interest groups to be informed and engage in the processes and discussions. The process was perceived to be transparent with well-advertised meetings and generally a very public approach. Moreover, it received a great deal of coverage from the media that also provided access to different viewpoints (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

For the purpose of informing the general public numerous techniques were applied. Respondents noted that these techniques ranged from conducting different levels of interaction, forming steering committees to have diverse perspectives, televised commission meetings, posting information on the city's website, providing hard copy document in the public library, to having the coverage of the two local newspapers. Also, a local radio station provided continuing coverage. There were also multiple public hearings, maps and images of how the area would look like, and later in the process, providing a monthly newsletter on updates of the progress or lack thereof for the overall development. Considering the timeline of the project, social media was not in place as it has developed today.

There was a specific effort dedicated to educate and inform commissioners, boards, and committee members. They had early access to information and thus able to provide guidance and conduct a satisfactory decision-making processes (Respondent 6, personal communication; November 17, 2014). However, not all the information was available. Some was kept

confidential while some was perceived to be leading and given in a biased format (Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014). But, respondent 2 believed that "The public was provided with an adequate level of information to understand what was going on in the project" (personal communication, November 11, 2014). Moreover, respondent 18 (personal communication, December 2, 2014) argued that there had been a good balance between what the public side wanted in terms of transparency and what the private side demanded in terms of confidentiality.

2. The political environment in providing a meaningful community engagement and whether the authorities sought a genuine process;

The general approach of the local government was to seek transparency and inform the public. There was no political resistance in this regard. Rather, politicians pushed for distribution of information, higher transparency, and interaction with the developer and the citizens. Diverse interest groups ranging from different members of the community to opponents of the project were all engaged in the process (Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014). Not doing their job successfully, respondent 7 (personal communication, November 17, 2014) argued that the officials wouldn't get reelected. Transparency was perceived to always be a part of the process, especially, for the reason of complying with the open meeting laws (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014). Dealing with a private developer is perceived as a factor for an additional emphasis on transparency. However, as it is mentioned earlier not everything was disclosed (Respondents 6 & 7, personal communications, November 17, 2014).

In such a complex arrangement, the respondents perceived that the authorities had done a good job in providing transparency and public engagement. Respondent 6 (personal communication, November 17, 2014) expressed that information was provided as transparent as possible at the time. Some respondents argued that previous experiences of the developer in working with other communities and its willingness to share information in a timely manner facilitated the process (Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondents 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

However, it is perceived that the level of transparency and public participation was higher in the earlier phases of the planning process. Later in the project, less transparency was perceived especially during finalizing the Final Development Agreement (FDA) of the north end (Respondents 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014; Respondent 16, personal communication, December 2, 2014). There is also an argument that provision of transparency and public participation was due to the state laws and statutory requirements rather than genuinely seeking public input to help shape decisions. Thus, it was more a matter of complying with requirements controlled by laws (Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014; Respondents 17 & 18, personal communications, December 2, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014). Respondent 20 (personal communication, December 4, 2014) explicitly stated that transparency and public participation opportunities were more of a series of procedural steps that needed to be implemented in order to proceed with the project.

There were stages where authorities and political leaders were perceived to provide leading information to direct the community in a specific way. For example, regarding the theme of an entertainment businesses located in the south end (Warren Theatres), there was a perception that the city represented its own interest rather than the interest of the community (Respondent 5, November, personal communication, November 14, 2014).

3. Barriers and obstacles of providing a quality community engagement process during the project;

   "Complication of the project involved numerous issues at many levels" (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014). Among the possible barriers and obstacle of a quality community engagement process some of the respondents underlined the characters associated with the nature of the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a barrier. The first is the fact that with the private sector and that everything was not disclosed. Others include complexity of the contract as a legal document and the funding mechanism of the project that included Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and State Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) bonds (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication November 19, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014),

Some respondents believed that one of the major obstacles was misinterpretation of the local newspapers and reporters. Eventually, to address the issue and ensure distribution of accurate information, the city published its own monthly newsletter to report on the status of the development (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014). Respondent 3 (personal communication, November 12, 2014) believed that this barrier is a common problem in a project of this scale, since different perspectives and interpretations were involved.

More and more questions were also another so-called obstacle. Respondent 6 (personal communication, November 17, 2014) argued that more questions required more answers and thus an additional effort to generate responses. Not only the community in general but also the committees and city staff had unending questions. Thus, more information needed to be in place in order to be able to move forward. This was to the point that the real partnership was perceived to be between the city and the committees. With having the information coming from sources that were not under the control of the project partners, the case became even more complicated. The reason was that the partners, specifically the public side, had the responsibility to react to inaccurate information and answer the questions raised. This was the case during the controversial stages of the project especially regarding the names of the potential tenants (Respondent 4, personal communication, November 13, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014).

Two of the respondents claimed timing of the meetings was an issue. They added that there were no agenda or reports of minutes provided for open legislative meetings. Therefore, participants did not know what had been discussed, what would be discussed, and where the discussion would fall on the meeting agenda until the same day. In their opinion, information was provided in the form of lengthy documents containing solid facts and not enough lead time was provided prior to the meetings. In this case, clarity of the information was also an issue. While having a good level of public participation, meetings were perceived to be unstructured where they usually failed in getting to a consensus or disagreement (Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014).

Technology was seen both as a means of access and a barrier. Access in term of that everything could be posted online and make communications faster. A barrier in terms of that not everybody had access to computers or knew how to work with them (Respondents 15 & 21,

personal communications, December 9, 2014). Time was as also perceived as an obstacle from two different aspects. During some stages of the process, such as change in the eminent domain law, time constraints put pressure on the overall process and led to a less satisfactory public engagement. Respondent 12 (personal communication, November 24, 2014) argued that there were times where there was a need for immediate action. Thus, providing an opportunity to include the public input was not feasible. On the other hand, respondent 9 (personal communication, November 19, 2014) perceived the pace of the project as a barrier. He argued that if the process had proceeded more rapidly, the desired retail store would be a part of the project. Moreover, the overall length of the project, approximately ten years, was a challenge for citizens to stay engaged especially for those with a lack of inclination and time.

4. Local factors influential on success or failure of a meaningful community engagement;

There is no broad agreement on success or failure of the process. Respondents mentioned different success and failure factors throughout the interviews. Being in a university community with educated and informed individuals serving as city commissioners, advisory committee members, and citizens-at-large and getting engaged in the processes was constantly emphasized as one of the main success factors. Especially, since the community had previously gone through the successful PPP experience of the Manhattan Town Center (MTC) project (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondents 6 & 7, personal communications, November 17, 2014; Respondent 13, personal communication, November 25, 2014).

Having a partnership approach in the community and that people in the community care about the future of their environment is noted as another success factor (Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014). The community was willing to become engaged and be involved. The reason was that with a large project scale in such a small community, a larger portion of the population had an interest in what was happening (Respondent 10, personal communication, November 19, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). A good partnership among the city, university, the county, school district, and the chamber of commerce and the partnership of these groups with the community are perceived to contribute to the success of the community engagement process (Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014; Respondent 16, personal communication, December 2,

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2014). Respondent 19 (personal communication, December 3, 2014) believed that forming a diverse committee representing different community groups together with an experienced leadership to voice their opinions as an important factor.

Moreover, the community had multiple opportunities to hear what was going on. Interested groups and individuals could easily contact their representative and the elected officials to get even more information or express their ideas (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014; Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014).

On the other hand, inadequate participation from some groups of the public and the fact that some people would build their views on very little information that came from unreliable information resources was perceived to be one of the factors in distorting the process. These two factors were especially an issue during the controversial stages of the PUD amendment to accommodate the grocery store (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014).

Respondents constantly mentioned the early photographic images of the project as an issue. They have found them as a major failure factor in conducting a meaningful community engagement. Despite all the disagreements with the physical changes, the project outcome looked different than what was envisioned in those initial illustrations. Respondent 19 (personal communication, December 3, 2014) realized the earlier plans and pictures as a representation of the previous successful projects of the developer rather than what the Manhattan market could actually support. Not using a proper illustration of what the project would look like raised the community's expectations (Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Later, due to the financial reality of the time and for the financial success of the project, not being able to meet those expectations led to the community's dissatisfaction (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 16, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014).

5. Breakdowns of providing a quality transparency and public participation for political, social, or technical reasons;

A group of respondents perceived no breakdown in the process for three reasons. They found the steering committees highly interested in providing transparency and participatory

opportunities and believed that the commissioners were inclusive of all the members of the community. In addition, regardless of the design issues, from the economic standpoint the project worked out well (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 10, personal communication, November 19, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

However, the majority perceived the real breakdown of the project to be the communication breakdown. The communication issue has been mentioned as a problem many times at different stages of the project. For instance, one respondent noted: "That people got a larger vision of what they thought the project should be than what the realities became" (Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014). This goes back to the earlier illustrations of the project that had given an unrealistic vision to the community and that later, the community's wishes could not be realized as a result of the outside factors (Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014).

Not having a specific individual or group to think and plan on how to communicate with citizens was another problem. There was no team with the responsibility to get the information and provide it in a simple enough version so that the citizens could understand the material. In this regard, difficulty of communicating the financial elements was the major concern (Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014). Meanwhile, the alleged misinterpretation of the information by the media had an adverse effect. Frequently, the community felt the process to be like a "roller coaster" thinking that there were getting something but then realizing that they would not. Several respondents noted that: "It kept getting misinformed about for example, the type of stores that were going to be a part of the plan" (Respondent 4, personal communication, November 13, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014).

Some respondents strongly perceived that the developer had all the power to decide and they were not informed that they didn't have any say. Thus, they felt unable to influence what was happening (Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014).

There were occasions where there was not such a genuine and effective communication between the commissioners and the community. Some representatives didn't communicate with

their constituents and their particular group as they were expected to (Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014). Thus, there were points where the public was not informed enough about the decisions. There was a lack of follow through. This was especially the case before finalizing the type of stores that were to come to the community's market (Respondent 16, personal communication, November December 2, 2014). Accordingly, respondent 2 (personal communication, November 11, 2014) argued that sometimes the community became aware of issues that had happened 4 to 5 years ago. Although there were opportunities to participate and have an input by then, the community started paying attention to things that had happened several years before after decisions had been made for them.

6. Effectiveness of the participation and whether the outcome reflected the agreements achieved during the participatory processes;

Addressing this question, respondent answered both 'Yes'es and 'No'es. Some didn't perceive the participation effective while some did. Respondent 1 (personal communication, November 7, 2014) perceived that the outcome as the direct result of what the community in aggregate wanted. The outcome was a result of numerous complicated interactions with the community and articulation of needs and solutions. Respondent 9 (personal communication, November 19, 2014) added that a project of this size required the majority of the public's support. Thus, to proceed, it needed to be built on this support, considering the financial reality of the time and what this reality allowed the project to become. In the other words, the project was a result of what he believed the aggregate public opinion in the context of what the financial reality allowed. He mentioned that not everything discussed in the participatory processes became incorporated into the final decisions. But, the final decisions addressed some of the ideas and complaints (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Respondent 2 (personal communication, November 11, 2014) argued that if they had reached to any agreement during the public sessions, the project would have gone to that direction.

Some respondents perceived that the public's opinion, especially disagreements, were disregarded to the point that some perceived that they could not make any change (Respondent 17, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014). While

there were many opportunities for public comments, Respondents 15 & 21 (personal communications, December 9, 2014) perceived that there was not any consensus. Participatory opportunities were effective in terms of brining different perspectives and viewpoints to know the public and gather input. Initially, participatory processes are believed to be highly efficient while later, they didn't necessarily change the outcome nor reflect the concerns (Respondent 13, personal communication, November 25, 2014).

As it has been mentioned earlier, the result became different from the earlier plans. Basically, it was not "what was sold to the public" (Respondent 14, personal communication, November 26, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014). However, there were examples where the community voice was heard and the developer redesigned some part of the project (Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Although the ultimate result might be the best of what the community could have, it was not what had been expected by some (Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014). Respondents 12 (personal communication, November 24, 2014) claimed that the change in plan was due to the change in the market conditions and the change in the eminent domain law eliminating the ability of the project partners to acquire land.

7. How the public interests were protected and fairness of the process was assured? What were the mechanisms in place for this purpose;

The general perception is that the city commission was the main bodies to protect the public interest and assure the fairness of the process (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014; Respondent 13, personal communication, November 25, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014). Decisions of these elected officials were assumed to protect the public "Health, wealth, and safety" (Respondent 12, Personal communication, November 24, 2014). The planning board, other elected officials, and the city staff were the other bodies serving the same purpose. Without their approval the project could not proceed (Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014).

In terms of process, the nature of the open planning processes and the public desire for more information and transparency protected the community and assured that voices were heard and the public had the opportunity to speak. Following the application of statutory processes of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), State Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) bond, and eminent domain, built in public discussions were a part of the process. Thus, these requirements were perceived to provide the opportunity for the public to participate and communicate their opinion (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014). Moreover, respondent 6 (personal communication, November 17, 2014) mentioned the constant effort of the city staff to educate and inform the community and get feedback on particular items.

Respondents that perceived the public interest was protected underlined three reasons. First, the general public re-elected the same officials later during the process. Not doing their job successfully, elected officials would not get reelected (Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Second, compared with the previous Manhattan Town Center (MTC) redevelopment project, a lower number of properties were condemned. There were two different appraisal teams and a third one as a referee to work with the authorities to assure the fairness (Respondent 7, personal communication November 17, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014). Third, to make sure that the public interest was protected, the financial arrangements were evaluated by an independent consultant (Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014).

Some respondents looked at protecting the public interest from the financial perspective. They perceived a necessity for a revenue stream that could pay off for the TIF district and maintain a sustainable long-term financial life for the project would protect the interest of the general public (Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014). Accordingly, respondent 8 (personal communication, November 18, 2014) argued that the public was also protected in terms of the community's tax base and from paying higher taxes. Despite this, one of the respondent (Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014) perceived that a better job could have been done to make the redevelopment look like what the community wanted without sacrificing the financial success of the project.

8. The overall quality of transparency and public participation during the course of the project and whether there was any difference in the earlier planning processes and the controversial phase of rezoning;

From a general perspective, some respondents perceived no shift in the process in terms of having participatory opportunities, transparency, and openness of the communications (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014). However, respondents 6 & 12 (personal communications, November 17 & November 24, 2014) argued that going through the learning curve, quality wise, the level of transparency and communication became better during the process. As the topics got controversial, he believed there were a higher level of excitement and participation from the community. However, a few perceived less participation due to "The length of the project on one hand and disappointment of the community in not getting what was envisioned on the other hand" (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014).

There was a higher level of transparency and community engagement early on in forming the original ideas. In this so-called "low risk low stake" stage of the project there was more interest and positive atmosphere on what could be built. It is also perceived that there were even more interests in developing the project based on the public input (Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 13, personal communication, November 25, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014).

There are numerous arguments on the controversial topic of rezoning. From the transparency perspective, less transparency is perceived. For example, information on changes in plans following the changes in the market environment was perceived to be less available. Some respondents perceived that the information was provided in a biased manner so that the project could move forward (Respondent 4, personal communication, November 13, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November19, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014). Many respondents perceived that the rezoning issue didn't receive an adequate level of attention. They believed that although such opposition and controversy required even more communication, the

community did not truly get engaged (Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014; Respondent 14, personal communication, November 26, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Community engagement was perceived to be limited to complying with participatory procedures rather than being managed in a way to provide a higher quality process in this stage. Respondent 11 (personal communication, November 22, 2014) argued that getting "a sense of what the community is thinking and truly seeking community involvement required proactive effort to invite the community to participate." Accordingly, it is perceived that there was a need for a pause in the process to explore some topics since there were more questions (Respondent 14, personal communication, November 26, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014).

9. How the presence of a private sector as the developer at risk affected the community engagement?

The developer was present in the public meetings and some respondents perceived their presence helpful in discussing the issue with the general public. While the developer was present in the meetings, communicating with the citizens was perceived to be the city's responsibility. There were arguments that not all the members of the private sector were friendly. Manner and approach of the developer in the sessions was not completely perceived to be positive. The developer was not perceived to manage the tension in the meetings and thus not making the process easier (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondents 16 & 17, personal communications, December 2, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

In terms of information provisions, the developer was perceived to be conservative in releasing information on the negotiations with any potential tenant of the project (Respondents 6 & 7, personal communications, November 17, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014; Respondent 14, personal communication, November 26, 2014). Respondent 3 (personal communication, November 12, 2014) argued that taking more risks gave the developer more say in the tenants' mix and how deals were going to be negotiated. Moving forward, the developer was viewed negatively due to making the top financial decisions in

private that didn't conform to the community's expectations (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014).

Summary of Findings

Following the compliance with statutory requirements, transparency and public participation were perceived to be always a part of the process. However, sometimes this compliance questioned the genuineness of the process and contributed to the perception of transparency and public participation opportunities as a series of procedural steps to move forward with the project rather than truly seeking the community's input.

Along with the regulatory framework, three other factors associated with the context of the project are perceived to positively affect the quality of practice. First, needless to say, through the previous redevelopment experience both the public authorities and the community gained a better understanding of a public-private partnership (PPP) practice, dimensions of a quality community engagement, and the effectiveness of deliberation. Second, being in a university community and having educated and informed individuals that served different roles and were a part of different groups led to a higher quality practice. Third, a partnership approach existed in the community. Members of the community cared about the future of the community and were willing to get involved.

The majority of the technical dimensions of these two concepts received scores above the average. Among all the dimensions, practices of the two dimensions of public participation public notification and regularity were perceived to be in a significantly higher quality level. However, bias seems to be always an issue in practice toward having quality transparency and public participation (see Appendices D & E).

In general, there is no solid agreement on the overall quality of the process. The perception of the respondents falls in a spectrum that ranges from ones that underline the concerns and ones that emphasize the achievements.

Transparency

Access to information was provided through multiple sources. The coverage from media offered different viewpoints on the information. Despite this, alleged misinterpretation of the local newspapers and reporters was sometimes a barrier toward having accurate information (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 6, personal

communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014). The authorities did not have control over this type of information sources. However, reacting to the problem and due to their responsibilities, they had to answer questions raised from this type of information and provide even more information on a continuous basis. This was at the point that they started to publish their own newsletter and provide a transparent source of information on the status of the project.

A considerable number of respondents found the information biased and not provided in a proactive manner (see Table 12). This was especially the case during the controversial phase of the Planning Unit Development (PUD) amendment, where they perceived less transparency and argued that information was biased and provided in a leading manner so that the authorities could move forward with the project. Despite the community's request for more information, in this phase, confidentiality of negotiations and inability to discuss some matter due to litigation limited the authorities to provide the expected level of information.

Public Participation

All throughout the process, multiple opportunities were provided for the interest groups to voice their thoughts and opinions. The community's interest was protected through the elected officials, community representatives, and the regulatory framework of the state and the statutory requirements of the application of the financing mechanisms. However, there was a concern that sometimes there was no clear agenda provided prior to the sessions (Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014). While some dimensions received the highest scores, some were practiced in a fairly good quality levels and some were associated with concerns (see Table13).

Disparity in the questionnaire results regarding some dimensions does not support a solid perception on the quality of the way these dimensions were practiced (see Appendix E). In this regard, collected data from the interviews reveals some concerns. Some respondents believed that the project became what the community in aggregate supported and the financial reality allowed. A point of controversy became that despite numerous participatory opportunities, the outcome was not reflective of what was expected (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014; Respondent 17, personal communication,

December 2, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Generally, the quality of transparency and public participation practices were perceived to be higher in the earlier so-called "low risk low stake". The perception of the community on transparency of the process and participation had its highest level during this phase of the process. However, the two outside factors of the change in the eminent domain law and the financial reality of the time added pressure to the complexity of the project implementation. First, due to the unfavorable economic environment not all the potential tenants were still willing to join the community's market. Second, the change in the eminent domain law created a time constraint and pushed the process toward finalizing the tenant mix so that the developer could proceed with land acquisition. Accordingly, bias was perceived to occur in the process. Similar to transparency, bias in public participation also became an issue (See Table 13). Numerous controversies and disagreements existed during this stage of the process. While compliance with the statutory requirements was still in place, quality of the opportunities perceived to be less effective.

Communication of feedback has received the lowest degree among all the dimensions (see Table 13). In fact, looking at data from the interviews, communication has been constantly mentioned as a major issue during the course of the project (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 4, personal communication, November 13, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014; Respondent 16, personal communication, November December 2, 2014). This was especially the case early in the project when the project partners communicated the feedback of the earlier community meetings with the general public. This communication occurred through visual illustration of the plans and what the area would look like after the redevelopment. This unrealistic presentation of the project is argued to raise the community's expectation and become a factor for the perception of the community engagement failure.

Dealing with complexities of a PPP project, outside pressures, and alleged misinterpretation of the information, made the practice hard for the public authorities whom were

in charge of the community's concerns and interest. Especially, during the controversial topic of rezoning, respondents believed that there should have been a higher level of attention and communication. In the interim, some respondents felt that the developer was given too much power to the point that they perceived their participation ineffective. Last but not least, sometimes the committees or the public representatives didn't communicate with the community effectively thus the community wouldn't receive enough level of information. Later, after decisions were made, the community became aware of those decisions however, they could not influence the process anymore.

While from the technical perspective the overall community engagement had a good quality level, there are arguments on the meaningfulness of the practice. Not all the dimensions and aspects of the process were practiced in a high quality degree. Regarding the outcome, there were many debates associated with the practice of community engagement. Although the ultimate result might be the best of what the community could have from the financial perspective, it was not what the community expected physically (Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014).

Chapter 5 - Discussion and Conclusions

The current chapter addresses the central research question of this study and answers whether the community was meaningfully engaged in Downtown Redevelopment. This chapter starts with presenting exclusive conclusions on the questionnaire and interviews. This section highlights the main issues associated with the practice of community engagement in my study, and is followed by recommendations for future planning practices as well as directions for future research.

Conclusions of Questionnaire

An evaluation of the practice highlights the general weaknesses and strengths of the implementation of transparency and public participation. Respondents broadly agreed that most dimensions were present in the practice of community engagement during the downtown redevelopment. However, the details of statistics provide a clearer picture on the perception of the respondents and thus the technical aspects of the practice. The following conclusions also guide further research to areas that require a higher level of attention and improvement. Findings from the questionnaire provided a general perspective on the quality of certain technical dimensions, while findings from the interviews provided more in-depth qualitative details.

Transparency

Quality transparency in practice is the first building block of a meaningful community engagement. Based on the findings from the questionnaire, all the transparency dimensions were practiced with a quality above average and over the mean of '3'. This is specifically the case for access to the documents and their delivery to the stakeholders in a timely manner by the sponsors (the city and the developer company) that obtained higher scores (means: 3.95). Access to an adequate level of information is the very first step to achieve the aim of a quality public participation (Bryson et al., 2013; Halachmi & Holzer, 2010; King et al., 1998; Tang et al., 2005). The institute for local government (2010) underlines informed participation—what it describes as access to information—as a principle of a high-quality and effective public engagement. A Canadian case study by Krawchenko & Stoney (2011) reports that lack of such access to detailed information on costs and financial documents was a major reason for a citizen-based lawsuit. On the other hand, Halachmi & Holzer (2010) argues that timely access needs to

be especially in place for data on performance. In the downtown redevelopment, data reveal the likelihood of a good, timely, and prompt access to information for the general public.

While too much time and effort was invested in provision of the four dimensions of completeness (mean: 3.57), understandability (mean: 3.57), simplicity (mean: 3.76), and usability (mean: 3.67), in our study, there was a need for a more targeted practice. Many respondents did not believe that these dimensions had been present in a 'very high' degree. Complete information is an initial step toward transparency. In this regard, while simplified information contributes to the highest transparency degree, inaccurate, obscured, and incomprehensible information distorts understandability (Mischener & Bersch, 2013).

Proactive disclosure and the unbiased degree of information have the lowest scores. Generally, documents were perceived biased and not disclosed proactively by the authorities. This fact undermines the quality of the transparency practice and thus the meaningfulness of the community engagement. However, perceptions on the degree of bias are dispersed (see Table 14). Thus, a solid conclusion is less likely to be reliable. The overall practice of these two dimensions was not evaluated as well as other dimensions of transparency (see Table 12).

Table 14.

Details of Collected Data on Transparency

Dimensions	Mean	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Unbiased Content	3.24	0 %	33 %	29 %	19 %	19 %
Proactiveness	3.24	5 %	14 %	33 %	29 %	19 %

Public Participation

Public notice (mean: 4.38) and regularity (mean: 4.48) of involvements were revealed to be practiced in very high quality degrees. These two dimensions received the highest scores among all the dimensions identified as measures of a meaningful engagement in the current study. Public notification is a key index in the assessment of procedural mechanisms for providing public participation (Woods, 2009). Effective practices also come with regular involvement. In this study, respondents believed that they were notified about the opportunities and their involvement happened in an orderly and continuous basis.

Arguably, a good effort was put forth on the quality of the dimensions of time and location, representation, transparency, and the degree of collaboration. These dimensions were all present and their means are well above average while their scores have more weight on the 'high' degree. However, it seems that there was some type of barrier for these factors to be practiced in a higher quality level that needs more investigation. All are in the range of the lower scores with few 'very highs' (see Table 15). A reason for this pattern could be that these dimensions had not been viewed and implemented in a targeted manner at full capacity.

Table 15.

Details of Collected Data on Public Participation 1

Dimensions	Mean	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Time & Location	3.76	0 %	10 %	19 %	57 %	14 %
Representation	3.52	0 %	10 %	43 %	33 %	14 %
Transparency	3.52	0 %	14 %	29 %	48 %	10 %
Collaboration	3.43	0 %	10 %	38 %	52 %	0 %

The majority of the dimensions subjected to this evaluation were geared toward the higher degree or the lower degree. However, data on public participation reveal an interesting fact. Results from dimensions of an unbiased process, incorporation of public values, and influence of participation have a bipolar pattern (see Table 16). While there is a major score on the 'high' and 'very high' ends, there is also a considerable weight on the 'low' end. There is a score gap in the quality of these dimensions in the 'moderate' range. A reason for this gap could be the diversity of the respondents representing different interest groups and hence perspectives. Different sectors have different values. Thus, the outcome did not necessarily address what the community exactly wanted. Accordingly, some groups perceive the process to be biased where they see their participation less effective. Apparently, in the evaluation, these factors were viewed as 'Yes'es or 'No'es; good or bad. While a certain group scored the dimensions high, the other group scored them low. It is likely that the respondents voiced their positive or negative feeling about the outcome of the project. Information and incorporation of the public preferences and values are the initial social goals of public participation (Creighton, 2005; Goven & Langer, 2009; Institute for Local Government, 2012, July). Creighton (2005) argues this goal as the first

evaluation criteria of public participation practice. He adds when participation is not integrated in the decision-making processes, it is not effective and brings no value to the public or the authorities.

Table 16.

Details of Collected Data on Public Participation 2

Dimensions	Mean	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
Unbiased	2.9	0 %	48 %	14 %	38 %	0 %
Public Values Incorporation	3.24	5 %	29 %	14 %	43 %	10 %
Participation Effectiveness	3.52	5 %	24 %	10 %	38 %	24 %

Among the several dimensions, practices of feedback communication (mean: 2.76) and unbiased character (mean: 2.9) of the participatory opportunities was perceived to be poor. The Institute for Local Government (2012, November) underlines the former as one of the important principles of a high quality public engagement. Like bias in the content of the information, bias in the process of public participation is perceived to have a low score. In quality practices of public participation, the processes are conducted in an unbiased way. This includes having unbiased facilitators if there are any (Creighton, 2005; Irvin & Stansbury, 2004). In a meaningful community engagement, dimensions of the post-communication phase of public participation processes are as important as the pre-communication and the actual communication phases of the practice. In this regard, feedback communication (discussions on the degree to which public values were incorporated) and the effectiveness of public participation manifest how inputs were addressed in the final decisions. Subsequently, it demonstrates to the participants that their participation is influential and thus encourages them toward a higher level of involvement.

Conclusions of Interview

Complementing the findings from the questionnaire, data collected from the interviews provided an in-depth understanding on the details of the practices in the downtown redevelopment. Analysis demonstrates that the overall quality of the project was viewed from two different perspectives. Respondents who looked at the financial component perceived that

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the project fulfilled its purposes and was successful. However, the meaningful community engagement element of this Public-Private Partnership (PPP) practice is associated with some key concerns.

Transparency

In line with the findings from the questionnaire, analysis of the interviews supports the finding that there were no major problems, except for the issue of bias. There is no solid data for the reason that some perceived the information to be biased. However, following some perceptions a very likely scenario is that the authorities wanted the project to move forward so that it could provide revenue and thus pay off its financial instruments (Respondent 4, personal communication, November 13, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November19, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014).

Transparency of information aims to make data on the organizations and their performance available and thus allows the external actors to monitor them (Baume & Papadopoulos, 2012; Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2011; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2013; Nelson, 2003). In downtown redevelopment, an area of concern was the availability of such information on the details of the developer negotiations with the potential tenants. Despite the community's request, not everything was provided. This led to the perception that the authorities, especially the public sector, did not provide full transparency. Following an argument in the literature, the private sectors sometimes limit the ability of the public sector to be transparent since disclosure of some details is in their disadvantage (Baume & Papadopoulos, 2012).

Credibility of the information usually comes from the reliability of the source that provides the information (see Figure 2) (Grimmelikhuijsen, 2010). In the case of this study, a few respondents believed that data provided from sources not under the authorities and the project partners' control, was sometimes involved with misinterpretations (Respondent 3, personal communication, November 12, 2014; Respondent 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18, 2014). This is especially an issue since people usually prefer to rely on external sources rather than getting directly engaged in the actual information (Baume & Papadopoulos, 2012; Fine Licht, 2012). Not having a transparent stream of information made the authorities expend more effort to

address the misconceptions. During the controversial zoning issue, the project partners became involved with numerous alleged misinterpretations from the media on one hand and misconceptions from the general public on the other hand. This fact led them to start their own publication. All the information was eventually distributed (Respondent 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014), however not having a solid agenda on especially the way that it would be provided distorted the quality of the practice.

Public Participation

Reviewing the practice of public participation, this section looks at the conceptual framework described in the section on public participation in the chapter two of this document on literature review (see Figure 6 & see Table 8). Considering the constituents of a quality practice (see Table 7 & Table 8) and the data collected from the interviews, not all the purposes of a meaningful practice were met. All quality public participation includes a design phase and a process phase. One of the major areas of attention is the design process. Although the design process is the initial important step in a quality practice, findings do not support the existence of any early thoughts or strategies on how to conduct the public participation process in the downtown redevelopment. There is also no support for the existence of any guidelines on how to proceed under different situations. Bryson et al. (2013) argue both design and implementation of any quality practice needs an effective leadership, a requirement that increases as the level of participation increases. However, there was no specific individual, group, or committee to bridge the communication gap and constantly lead the process toward connecting the community and the project partners.

Not having an administrative structure led to several weaknesses in the practice of public participation. One was perceived as a communication concern throughout the project. The other one was the issue of mannerism. Some respondents brought up their negative perception regarding this issue. An obvious example of the former was during the presentation of the earlier images and plans of the project. Respondent 8 (personal communication, November 18, 2014) argued that no clear explanation on the initial plans and the layout options were provided. Despite using visual maps and pictures, the community was able to fully visualize what was in the illustrations (Respondent 10, personal communication, November 19, 2014; Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication,

December 3, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). Another example of the communication concern was the outside pressures following the changes in the eminent domain law and the financial environment. To address this dissatisfaction and opposition, there was a major need from an organized entity to manage a more attuned, attentive, and sensitive process. Table 7 notes this requirement as 'preparation for controversy'. A number of respondents argued that the process did not receive sufficient attention during this phase. In the other words, a higher level of attention was expected from the community during this controversial phase both regarding the level of communication and dispute resolution (Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondent 12, personal communication, November 24, 2014; Respondent 14, personal communication, November 26, 2014; Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014).

Lack of trained staffs and the issue of mannerism, mentioned by several respondents was another concern related to the category of administrative structure. Respondents 9 (personal communication, November 19, 2014) didn't perceive the developer friendly and willing to answer the public questions. There were cases where the developer argued defensive and did not accept constrictive criticism. Having trained staffs that dedicate enough time to connect the structure with the citizens adds to the effectiveness of the process (Creighton, 2005).

Analysis of data demonstrates that the practice of public participation was viewed as a goal rather than a means to an end. However, in the early planning processes of the redevelopment, it is perceived that the public authorities conducted the practice otherwise. A specific group with clear objectives was formed to gather the public input. The five categories of a quality design for public participation: objectives, context, administration structure, participants, and mechanisms were perceived to be better addressed at this phase (Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 13, personal communication, November 25, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014).

Similar to the design phase, a quality process phase has certain dimensions and requires a major level of attention (see Table 8). As it has been framed earlier, every ideal and quality process of public participation includes three stages of 'pre-communication', 'communication', and 'post-communication'. Looking at the 'pre-communication' stage, the highest scored dimension of public notification was very likely to be a result of statutory requirements.

Provision of public notification is recognized as an encouraging mechanism for the participation of the public (Woods, 2009). In this regard, the regulatory framework has clear requirements for notifying the general public. Many respondents believed the process was mainly designed to comply with these types of requirements (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014; Respondents 17 & 18, personal communications, December 2, 2014; Respondent 19, personal communication, December 3, 2014).

The other dimension of the 'pre-communication' stage related to the provision of some preliminary information and training in the form of workshops was perceived to have some issues. Discussing technical studies prior to the actual participation contributes to a quality practice (Creighton, 2005). The community only supported a developer at risk type of model. However, it was not informed about how this type of contract would work in practice. Based on the collected data from the interviews, sometimes there were the perceptions that the developer had all the power to decide thus, the community could not be effective and influence the process (Respondent 1, personal communication, November 7, 2014; Respondent 11, personal communication, November 22, 2014; Respondent 17, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondent 18, personal communication, December 2, 2014; Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014). Evidently, the community was not clearly informed about the dimensions of the contract that they signed with a developer at risk. They were not familiar with the fact that taking all the risks by the developer would actually give it more power in making the decisions. Moreover, there were no public discussions of the type of firms that the Manhattan market could have in terms of size and type (Respondent 6, personal communication, November 17, 2014). Thus, sometimes the expectations of the community were perceived to be unrealistic from the perspective of the project partners.

Another important constituent of the 'pre-communication' stage of a quality public participation that has not been mentioned in the literature is a provision for a clear agenda. Absence of a clear agenda on what would happen prior to the public meetings was a concern for approximately 10% of the participants (Respondents 15 & 21, personal communications, December 9, 2014). This was especially true in those sessions where multiple topics were supposed to be covered. These respondents also argued that a summary of what had been

discussed in the previous sessions early before the meetings would be helpful, since not everyone could be present in all the sessions.

The second highest scored dimension in this study was regularity, listed as a dimension of the 'communication' stage within the process of public participation. The high level quality of this dimension can also be justified with the same reasoning provided for the first dimension— public notification. Again, regulatory frameworks addressing public participation have clear requirements for the number and order of the participatory opportunities (Innes & Booher, 2004). The requirements usually take the form of public hearings.

From a practical standpoint, the 'communication' stage was perceived to have no major problems. Except the dimension of unbiased process, representation, collaboration and transparency all had room for improvements. None of the above three dimensions were strongly practiced in a 'very high' quality level. The majority of the respondents believed that the process was biased to some extent.

One of the most important dimensions of the 'post-communication' stage is the incorporation of the public values into decisions. In a quality participation practice, the outcome is a product of a multi-way set of interactions among citizens and other stakeholders (Innes & Booher, 2004). Based on an analysis of 239 cases of public participation, Creighton (2005) argues the first social goal of the evaluation of public participation practice to be the 'incorporation of the public values into decision making'. From this perspective, and considering the fact that in the downtown redevelopment the outcome became different than what the community desired, the practice of public participation at this stage was not meaningful. Another important constituent of the 'post-communication' stage is communicating with the community about the final decisions and explaining how their input was considered and used by the local officials (Institute for Local Government, 2012). Results of this study reveal a poor quality degree regarding this dimension. Comparing with other constituents that were the basis of this evaluation, communication of feedback received the lowest score. Generally, communication was perceived to be a problematic issue throughout the project (Respondent 2, personal communication, November 11, 2014; Respondent 4, personal communication, November 13, 2014; Respondent 5, personal communication, November 14, 2014; Respondent 7, personal communication, November 17, 2014; Respondent 8, personal communication, November 18,

2014; Respondent 9, personal communication, November 19, 2014; Respondent 16, personal communication, November December 2, 2014).

Discussion

Proper application of the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) makes them effective tools for delivering public services. However, in most projects the emphasis is on physical and financial concerns while it is also important to investigate the social connections of the project. Obviously, the project must meet its technical purposes while adding minimal financial burden to the taxpayers. At the same time, it must achieve community support and be a reflection and outcome of the stakeholders' values. During the PPPs' process, sometimes, public opposition hinders the project development and exposes the project to risk (Krawchenko & Stoney, 2011; Siemiatycki, 2009). The long-term arrangement of the public sector with a profit-seeking private entity often limits the ability of the public authorities to address the public interest in the PPPs. In this regard, democratic values of transparency and participation facilitate PPPs governance and reduce their planning risks. However, transparency and public participation improvements would only happen when the administration desires to open up government and gave more accessibility and voice to citizens.

An overall look at the statistics of this report gives a clue as to the good quality of the majority of the dimensions of transparency and public participation practices in downtown redevelopment. However, based on the details of the practice and the perspective of this study, the community engagement is not perceived to be meaningful. In line with the previous experiences, this study provides evidence for the need to institutionalize a robust community engagement as a part of the regulations guiding PPPs. This includes addressing different dimensions of a quality practice in the statutory requirements.

An area of concern regarding transparency of information was related to the proactive provision of information. Bias of the information was also an issue. Perhaps this is due to the reliance on unreliable information source as a consequence of not having a transparent source of information. The fact leads the project partners to the need to address questions on: (1) why was the information perceived to be biased? (2) what are the dimensions of unbiased information? (3) how could they avoid providing such information? Disparity in data related to transparency could follow to the conclusion that selection bias is less likely in the results. The other

conclusion that could be reached is that individuals chosen as participants were good representatives of the public sector at large and different interest groups.

Incorporation of public values, bias of the process, and the feedback process were the three weaknesses of the public participation practices. My findings associate problems of the participatory practices mainly with the absence of a prior integrated plan in the project process, and an administrative structure. Lack of a strategic plan to address the conduct and management of public relations was an important failure factor. This statement is applicable to the practice of transparency as well. There was no group in place to be responsible to distribute information. While there was enough information provided, the information was not provided to the community in a systematic way. A careful articulation of roles and guidelines for conducting the process provides a more favorable environment. In downtown redevelopment, absence of a plan on how to provide the information, communicate throughout the project, and take action during the controversial stages of the project undermines the meaningfulness of the community engagement practice.

Financially, the developer was perceived to perform a successful job of managing the gap between the community's interest and the project costs (Respondent 20, personal communication, December 4, 2014). However, as Innes & Booher (2004) argue since the dialogue was not done well, fairness of the decision was not assured and the final results didn't prove acceptable for everyone.

Recommendations

Understanding and evaluating the public engagement element of a local Public-Private Partnership (PPP) practice may provide some clues about creating high quality PPPs. Results of this study have important implications for the debate on meaningful community engagement. As the use of the private sector often leads to more federal regulations and increased monitoring, this study hopes to address the gaps in the practice and the legal framework of community engagement. The following recommendations are intended to guide the existing regulations and practice toward having a more effective framework.

1. Consider flexibility in the long-term PPP contracts;
2. Have a prior plan and guidelines regarding a meaningful community engagement;

3. Form an independent group or committee responsible to provide quality community engagement, this group should (a) include members from both sectors, (b) be funded from both partners, and (c) be prepared for the controversial phases;

4. Educate the community on the dimensions of the arrangement and the project;

5. Improve the quality of information by addressing the dimension of bias;

6. Have a transparent stream of information;

7. Provide a constant communication with the community throughout the project;

8. Provide a higher level of information and engagement during the controversial stages from both the quantitative and qualitative perspectives;

9. A continuous monitoring system by people from different interest groups, having a citizen oversight committee or additional committees depending on time and budget.

Limitations

The result of this study clearly identified major areas of concern in a local Public-Private Partnership (PPP) practice. However, inclusion of a greater number of participants could provide more information on the details of the practice and lead to stronger conclusions. Due to the unwillingness of the private developer, data regarding their perception was absent in this study. While the perspective of the private developer would not change the result of this study, it would better guide the future practices.

Future Research

Future research will benefit from conducting case-based studies toward developing a database on nonfinancial aspects of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), especially the community engagement element of project performance. Studies of PPPs at different scales would reveal concerns that these practices face at different levels. Such a large evidence base allows planners and practitioners to identify challenges of delivering projects through PPPs. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to conduct cross-case evaluations and find weaknesses and strengths of this type of project delivery. Government officials at different levels can learn from these experiments and better reflect the needs in the policies.

To address a meaningful community engagement, this study recommended considerations for flexibility; therefore, what could be some of the terms that provide such flexibility? It was also recommended to form an independent group responsible to provide an

integrated community engagement; however, composition, funding sources, and details of such a group or committee need more investigation.

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Appendix A - Manhattan Downtown Redevelopment District Map
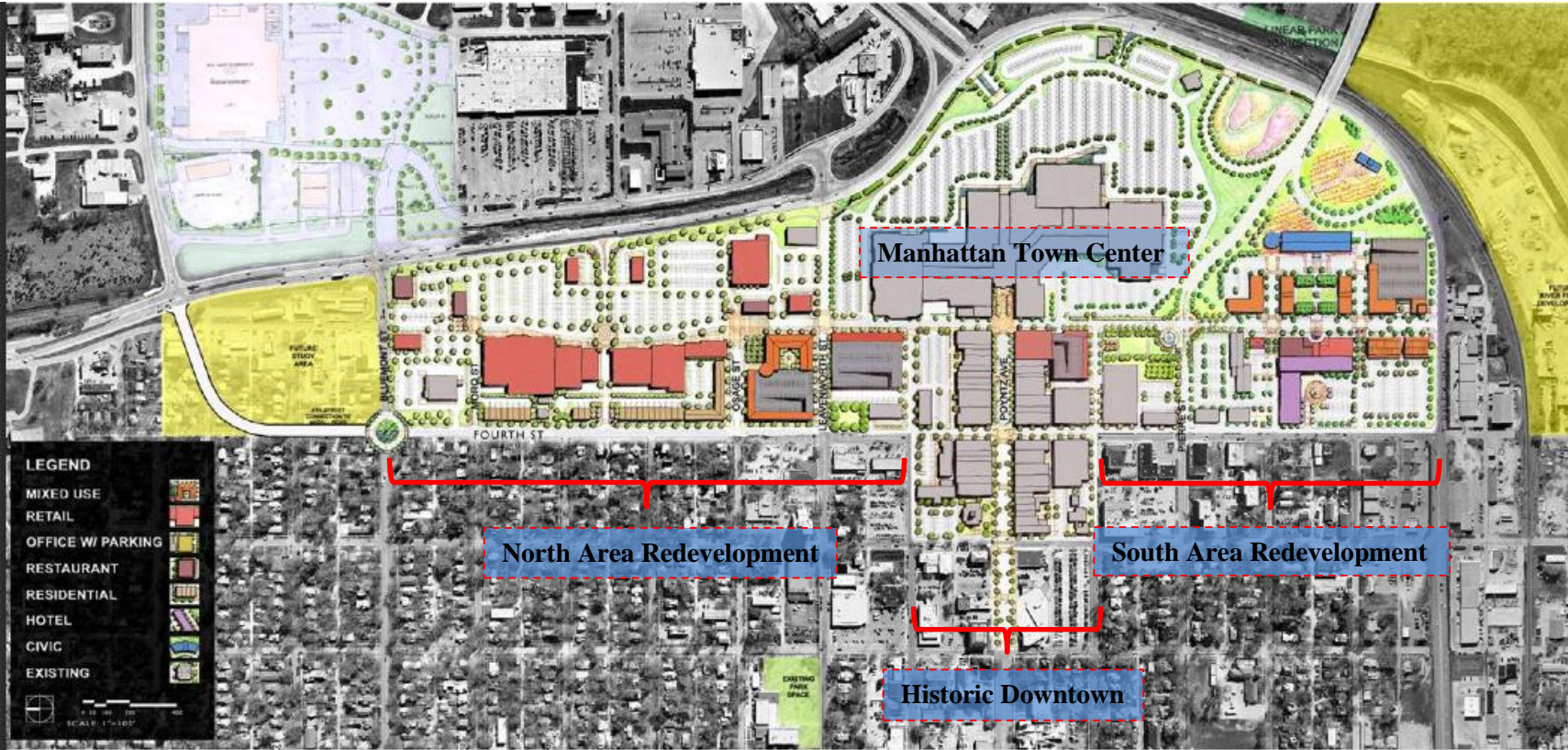
Source: City of Manhattan (2015, January), Retrieved from: http://cityofmhk.com/documentcenter/view/1946

Appendix B - Interview Questions

The following questions are designed to evaluate the quality of information/ Document transparency and public participation in the Manhattan Downtown Redevelopment project.

▪ *List of Documents that are Subject to Transparency Evaluation*

A. General Information on Meetings and Procedures:	B. Information on Processes, Results, and Outcomes:
- Elected officials contact information - Upcoming meeting schedules - Meeting agendas - Meeting minutes - Procedure manuals (information on internal policies and routines)	- Decision making process: - Steps taken to reach the decision - Rational behind the decision - Public consultation and survey reports - Final Concession agreement/ Final contract - Budgets or financial statements and information
C. Implementation Phase	
- Ongoing performance data - Technical & environmental reports - Financial documents: Financial statements/ Budget reports - Summary reports	- Record of completed projects & performances against expectations - Record of future payment contracted for each PPP scheme - Capital value of contracts signed to date & in procurement

▪ *List of Public Participation Opportunities that are Subject to Evaluation*

- Community visioning workshop - Citizen surveys/ Web-base surveys - Public hearings - Community & neighborhood meetings - Business community meetings - Citizen review board - Citizen focus group	- Citizen task forces - Citizen-base committees - Open/ roundtable discussions - Small meetings - Legislative standing committees - Briefings

10. Were the participants provided with an adequate level of information [or the information you thought that you need] to be able to make informed decisions and be influential? Did the public use the information?

11. How did you find the political environment in providing transparency and public participation? Did the authorities genuinely seek to be transparent and provide public participation?

12. In your opinion, what were the barriers/obstacles if any in providing transparency and public participation? [ex. Distributing important information and documents/ involving the community in decision-making processes]

13. What were the local factors/characteristics influential in success or failure of conducting a meaningful community engagement?

14. Did you see any breakdowns in providing information transparency and public participation opportunities? (For political, contractual, cultural, social, and technical reasons)?

15. Did you perceive the participations to be effective? Did the outcomes reflect what had been agreed upon during the participatory processes?

16. How was public interest protected and fairness of the process assured? /Was there any mechanism in place to protect the public interests and to assure the fairness of the public participation process?

17. Was there any difference between information transparency and public participation quality before entering into the Final Development Agreement and during the rezoning issue?

Appendix C - Questionnaire

<table>
<tr><td>**Meaningful Community Engagement in Downtown Redevelopment**
Community Engagement Attribute Evaluation System (CEAES)</td></tr>
</table>

The following questions are designed to evaluate the quality of **Information Transparency** in the project including the phases of *Planning and pre-contractual* stage of the *North end Final Development Agreement (FDA)* & *Implementation phase—Rezoning issue*.

List of Documents that are Subject to Transparency.

A. General Information on Meetings and Procedures:

- Elected officials contact information
- Upcoming meeting schedules
- Meeting agendas
- Meeting minutes
- Procedure manuals (information on internal policies and routines)

B. Information on Processes, Results, and Outcomes:

- Decision making process:
  - Steps taken to reach the decision
  - Rational behind the decision
- Public consultation and survey reports
- Final Concession agreement/ Final contract
- Budgets or financial statements and information

C. Implementation Phase

- Ongoing performance data
- Technical & environmental reports
- Financial documents: Financial statements/ Budget reports
- Summary reports

- Record of completed projects & performances against expectations
- Record of future payment contracted for each PPP scheme
- Capital value of contracts signed to date & in procurement

Please specify the degree of the following dimensions about information TRANSPARENCY (based on the documents listed above). *Not Available* indicates the absence of the dimension while *Low, Moderate, High,* and *Very High* show the degree to which the dimension was present.	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
1. Were you provided with information and documents that were ACCESSIBLE and EASY TO REACH FOR?	O	O	O	O	O
2. Were you provided with information and documents in a TIMELY fashion and CLOSE TO REAL TIME?	O	O	O	O	O
3. Were you given information and documents PROMPTLY?	O	O	O	O	O

	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
4. Did the authorities disclose information and documents PROACTIVELY?	O	O	O	O	O
5. To what degree disclosed information and document were COMPLETE– no piecemeal or imperfect information?	O	O	O	O	O
6. To what degree were the information and documents UNDERSTANDABLE?	O	O	O	O	O
7. Did the information and documents include figures, graphs, and charts as an aid to explanation?	O	O	O	O	O
8. To what degree were the information and documents USABLE to help you do your own analysis?	O	O	O	O	O
9. To what degree were the information and documents UNBIASED?	O	O	O	O	O

The following questions are designed to evaluate the quality of the **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION** opportunities listed as follows:

- Community visioning workshop
- Citizen surveys/ Web-base surveys
- Public hearings
- Community & neighborhood meetings
- Citizen advisory board
- Business community meetings
- Citizen review board
- Citizen focus group
- Citizen task forces
- Citizen-base committees
- Open/ roundtable discussions
- Small meetings
- Legislative standing committees
- Briefings

Please specify the degree of the following dimensions about PUBLIC PARTICIPATION opportunities. *Not Available* indicates the absence of the dimension while *Low, Moderate, High,* and *Very High* show the degree to which the dimension was present.	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
10. Was there PUBLICATION NOTICE prior to each meeting? (Through City's official website, newspaper advertisement, mailing to interested individuals, or phone calls)	O	O	O	O	O
11. Were the meetings convenient in terms of TIME and LOCATION?	O	O	O	O	O
12. In your opinion were the participants REPRESENTATIVE of the Manhattan community?	O	O	O	O	O
13. To what degree was your involvement on a CONTINUOUS and REGULAR basis?	O	O	O	O	O

	Not Available	Low	Moderate	High	Very High
14. To what degree were the participatory processes COLLABORATIVE and participants treated equally?	O	O	O	O	O
15. To what degree was the overall processes TRANSPARENT?	O	O	O	O	O
16. To what degree were the overall processes UNBIASED?	O	O	O	O	O
17. To what degree were PUBLIC VALUES incorporated into the final decisions?	O	O	O	O	O
18. To what degree did the organizers COMMUNICATE FEEDBACK to show that the participants influenced the decisions?	O	O	O	O	O
19. To what degree do you feel your participation influenced the decisions?	O	O	O	O	O

– **END OF THE SURVEY** –

Appendix D - Questionnaire Results for Transparency

	Not Available (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Total Responses	Mean
Completeness	0	10	29	57	5	21	3.57
Understandability	0	5	43	43	10	21	3.57
Simplicity	0	0	33	57	10	21	3.76
Usability	5	0	33	48	14	21	3.67
Unbiased	0	33	29	19	19	21	3.24
Accessibility	0	5	19	52	24	21	3.95
Timely Fashion	0	0	29	48	24	21	3.95
Promptness	0	0	33	43	24	21	3.90
Proactiveness	5	14	33	29	19	21	3.43

Appendix E - Questionnaire Results for Public Participation

	Not Available (%)	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Very High (%)	Total Responses	Mean
Public Notification	0	0	10	43	48	21	4.38
Time & Location	0	10	19	57	14	21	3.76
Representation	0	10	43	33	14	21	3.52
Regularity	0	0	10	33	57	21	4.48
Collaboration	0	10	38	52	0	21	3.43
Transparency	0	14	29	48	10	21	3.52
Unbiased	0	48	14	38	0	21	2.9
Public Values Incorporation	5	29	14	43	10	21	3.24
Feedback Communication	5	33	43	19	0	21	2.76
Participation Effectiveness	5	24	10	38	24	21	3.52