



**NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE**
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

**THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
HANDBOOK:**

**A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN
LITHUANIA**



**NATIONAL
DEMOCRATIC
INSTITUTE**
FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

1717 Massachusetts Avenue N.W.
Fifth Floor
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 328-3136 Fax: (202) 939-3166
E-Mail: demos@ndi.org
Home Page: <http://www.ndi.org>

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THE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION HANDBOOK A Practical Guide for Local Governments in Lithuania

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.



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PREFACE

Citizen participation is an essential part of democratic government. It helps government leaders make decisions that respond effectively to community needs. In turn, it builds public support for the work of government.

This handbook is designed to encourage local elected officials and administrators in Lithuania to reach out and involve citizens in setting community goals and priorities, and solving community problems. It provides an overview of citizen participation programs as well as practical information about how to carry them out. While the handbook is written primarily for local officials, we hope that members of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other individuals interested in the work of local government will derive benefit from it as well.

The information in this handbook draws mainly from the experience of the United States. This is not to imply that the American way is the only way to organize citizen participation. Every established democracy has examples of effective citizen participation programs. We encourage you to adapt the techniques discussed in this handbook and to create new ones that are particularly suited to your community.

While this handbook focuses on activities that local governments initiate to promote citizen participation, we regard such activities as only half of the story of citizen participation. Citizens, too, must take the initiative in working with their governments to solve community problems. Still, to ensure participation, local officials have to take the first step of inviting citizens into the governing process, informing and educating them about all of its aspects, being accessible to them, and breaking down the barriers, both physical and psychological, that prevent citizens from taking an active interest in their community.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) has conducted programs to promote citizen participation in local government throughout Central and Eastern Europe, including Lithuania, where it works in partnership with the Municipal Training Center of Kaunas Technological University. Based in Washington, NDI is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to strengthening democratic institutions and promoting democratic participation around the world.

Mark Levinson, who spent one year as NDI's field representative in Lithuania, conceived the handbook and wrote the first draft. NDI Local Government Consultant Wallace Rogers wrote the chapter on Strategic Planning and helped with the editing. The handbook was translated and produced with the help of the staff of the Municipal Training Center in Kaunas.

INTRODUCTION

Citizen Participation and Democracy

The participation of citizens in the decisionmaking and governing process is essential to a democracy. This participation finds its most basic expression in the vote. In fact, we tend to label a government as democratic or nondemocratic based solely upon whether or not it has received its authority as the result of an election. Yet democracy is more than a people's ability to elect its leaders. Democracy also requires that citizens be provided regular opportunities between elections to communicate their needs and preferences to government, either individually or through associations and political parties.

The role of government in a democracy is complex. On the one hand, governments are given the authority to make decisions on behalf of the community; on the other hand, they are required to respond to the community's shifting wants and needs. An election, while it determines who should lead, often does not provide a clear indication of where the electorate wants the community to go. Governments therefore need to find other ways to determine the needs and interests of their constituents. They do this by seeking them out, informing them about the work of the government, answering their questions, and involving them directly in the decisionmaking process.

Of the different levels of government, local government presents the best opportunities for citizen participation. Local government is more accessible to people than the national or regional levels, and the decisions local governments make directly affect people's lives. One can expect that people in a community – at least some of them – will be interested in knowing what their local government does and eager to become involved in its work. Moreover, the challenges that local governments face are generally of a limited enough scale that the efforts of individuals and community organizations can make a difference in solving them.

Why Involve Citizens in the Decisionmaking Process?

Citizens are both the source of local government authority and the recipients of local government programs and services. Or, to use the analogy of a business, citizens are both the boss and the customers of local government. The money that local governments spend is public money. As a result, local governments have an obligation to consult regularly with citizens about how they are planning to spend their money and to report to them on what they have been doing. From this, one might conclude that citizen participation presents mainly a burden to local officials. In fact, citizen participation can provide local governments with several important benefits:

- **Citizen participation helps local governments identify community needs and priorities.**

Local governments everywhere have a common problem: they lack resources to do everything that needs to be done in their communities. The most difficult decisions that local government officials make involve the allocation of those scarce resources. Needs and desires regularly go unfulfilled. Local governments need to find ways to determine effectively and fairly which programs and

projects ought to be undertaken and what expenditures ought to be made. By involving citizens in this process, local governments can improve their knowledge of citizen preferences and build public support for the decisions they make.

- **Citizen participation enables local governments to design programs and services that meet the needs of their constituents.**

Much like a business, local government delivers a product. Like businesses, local governments need to evaluate continually whether their product meets the needs and expectations of their customers (the citizens). A business may manufacture the best product of its kind in the world by certain standards, but if people do not want it or cannot afford it, the company will fail. Soliciting comments from citizens about existing programs and involving citizens in the design and even the implementation of new programs and services is the best way for local governments to ensure that their product will “sell.”

- **Citizen participation gives local governments access to community resources.**

People in a community have information that can help a local government solve problems. For example, social welfare organizations will often have the most detailed information about local health and social conditions; local business representatives are likely to have ideas about how to promote economic development. Working with representatives of different sectors in the community increases a local government’s ability to make informed decisions.

Local governments often also involve nongovernmental organizations and private companies in the actual delivery of public services, such as health protection, road maintenance and public transportation, social services, and garbage collection. An NGO provider or a private business working on a government contract can sometimes reduce delivery costs by providing similar services to more than one community at the same time. NGOs may also have financial resources other than tax dollars to help cover the cost of providing a service.

- **Citizen participation helps local governments manage conflict in the community.**

Local governments often have to make decisions that are opposed by part of the community or fuel conflicts among different groups in the community. For example, a decision to enlarge some of the streets near the center of town to make room for more traffic may find the support of the local business people, but may be opposed by pedestrians and people concerned about preserving the town’s cultural heritage. Citizen participation will not make such conflicts disappear. However, by involving competing interests in the decisionmaking process, local governments can address potential conflicts early on and increase the chances of reaching a decision that will be accepted – if not cheered – by everyone.

- **Citizen participation helps build public support for local governments.**

As noted, local governments receive their authority from citizens. It stands to reason that if citizens are pleased with the work of their local government, they will support it during the next election.

On the other hand, if citizens are not satisfied with their local government, they may seek to change it. By informing citizens about the work of their local government and involving citizens in making decisions, politicians and administrators give the community reasons to support them. Even if they are not able to solve every problem, they are demonstrating that they are doing their best to meet the community's needs and that they care about what people want. Citizens in turn gain a deeper understanding of the difficult problems their local government is trying to solve and the choices it has to make. On the surface, this appears to be mainly a political argument: "Promote citizen participation, and you will have a better chance of being reelected." Yet citizen participation serves to build support not only for a particular group of officeholders, but also for the institution of local government. If the process works well, citizens will become active supporters and partners of their local government, regardless of who is in charge of city hall.

Costs of Citizen Participation

As with anything worth doing, there are some difficulties involved in implementing a citizen participation program.

- Involving citizens in the decisionmaking process makes that process more complicated. Public officials may have to contend with widely divergent opinions regarding a particular issue. Without proper leadership, the process may break down: problems may be endlessly studied and debated, or some participants may try to delay a decision with which they disagree.
- There will likely be short-term cost increases. Conducting activities such as public meetings and supporting citizen advisory committees requires the allocation of resources – time, money, people. Furthermore, as citizens who participate are not always representative of the entire community, additional resources may have to be allocated to encourage more people to become involved.

Anticipating these and other potential difficulties at the outset makes it easier to address them.

When Does It Make Sense to Involve Citizens in Decisionmaking?

Not all local government decisions require or benefit from citizen involvement. Decisions about how many miles of road need to be re-surfaced, the government's purchasing or employment policies, and how much the community will borrow to meet its obligations, are properly made by directors and managers, and the elected officials who appointed them with little public involvement. But broader questions, such as "What kinds of services should government provide?" and "To whom should they be provided?" do require the involvement of citizens if they are to be addressed effectively. For example, if a local government wants to build a bridge or a new highway, the engineering decisions about the structural design of the bridge will be made by professionals with little public involvement. However, the location of that bridge, or a decision about whether to pay for building and maintaining it with revenues from tolls or from general taxes, may be a source of controversy in the community. For the bridge project to be successful it must address a perceived public need, and there ought to be agreement within the community about where to build it and how

to pay for it. These are the kinds of decisions that are best made in consultation with the people that will be most affected by the project. To do otherwise can lead to controversy and delays, and may ultimately derail the project.

HOW TO INVOLVE CITIZENS IN LOCAL SELF-GOVERNANCE

Communication is a key element of citizen participation. The more citizens know about how government decisions are made, the more they are willing to accept and support these decisions, and the better they are able to act as partners of government. In turn, local governments must listen to what their citizens have to say and be willing to incorporate their views and suggestions in their decisions.

A balanced and broad-based citizen participation program uses many of the techniques described in this chapter. All are designed to make information available to the public and to promote communication between citizens and local government officials. These techniques can be adapted to any community. The only limitations to making them work are the creativity of the individuals charged with carrying them out and the strength of the local administration's commitment to involving citizens in its work.

Getting the Message Out

The following techniques are designed to inform people about an issue or an event. They transmit basic factual information from government to its citizenry.

Written Communication

Press Releases – a “news” story prepared by a local government office and submitted to the media. Press releases are typically used to announce an event, make a statement, or provide background information. A press release includes the date on which the information should be publicly released, a name and telephone number of someone in the government that the media can contact for more information, and text that a reporter can use as a basis for a story. It is unusual for the media to publish a press release exactly as it is written. Its purpose is to bring a reporter's or editor's attention to a story that the government thinks is important. A press release helps ensure that all reporters have the same information about a story. If the subject of the release is newsworthy, the media will probably develop its own story, but the story will be based at least in part on the information received in the press release.

Annual Reports – an annual publication used by governments to describe the past year's activities. A good annual report includes names, addresses and office telephone numbers of important community services, and the government officials responsible for them. The report should provide the public with a description of the achievements of each of the government's major departments during the year. Current and future plans should also be mentioned. Annual reports are usually distributed to the news media, neighborhood and civic organizations, and major institutions in the community. They are also made available to the public in libraries and government offices.

Special Reports – a publication that discusses a problem or issue in depth. Special reports include a discussion of the background and current status of the problem and plans to address it. They are distributed to the news media and to interested business and citizen groups. They should also be

made available to the public in libraries and the government offices responsible for addressing the issue covered in the report.

Briefing Bulletins – a brief written statement that provides important facts about a situation as it unfolds. Briefing bulletins are updated as new information becomes available. Issuing briefing bulletins shows citizens that the government is handling the situation, monitoring it closely, and reporting what it knows as soon as the information has surfaced. If the technique is used appropriately and the information provided is accurate, it encourages trust in the work of government and helps control rumors.

Newsletters – typically contain stories and news that inform readers about government projects and programs and important decisions the government has made. They include announcements about public hearings and other government-sponsored events and usually have wide distribution. They can be produced by the government itself, or by a citizens group assembled for this task. These can be in any format, from single sheets to elaborate newspapers. A good alternative to a newsletter is a regular column or supplement in a newspaper that is widely read in the community.

Government Directories – a special section in the local telephone book that helps citizens find the person or office in their local government to contact about a particular problem. Sometimes directories are published as booklets and are widely distributed by the government itself.

These types of publications have several advantages: they can reach a large number of people; they are easy to produce; and they are relatively inexpensive.

They also have a couple of disadvantages: people tend not to read all the information they receive, so the information may not always reach its audience; and these techniques offer little opportunity for feedback. It is difficult to ascertain how much of the information was read, what effect it had on the reader, and what response it produced.

Oral and Visual Communications

Presentations and Speeches. It is very important for government officials, especially elected officials, to get away from their offices regularly and speak to groups of voters at business luncheons, neighborhood or church organization gatherings, meetings of civic organizations, and sports clubs. Local officials are often invited to talk about specific activities or controversial issues in which the government is involved. Such appearances stimulate public awareness about an issue and offer the official a chance to make his or the government's point of view known. Questions from the audience usually follow the presentation or speech, but such appearances are mainly opportunities to present information rather than collect it.

Media Appearances. Public officials are invited regularly to appear on public affairs programs or to participate in live interviews on news programs or make public service announcements. Such programs often reach a large audience.

Exhibits. A well designed and attractive exhibit makes information interesting and easy to understand. Exhibits can be installed in almost any public area. They can be live demonstrations or presentations of charts and maps that indicate trends, successes or plans for projects or programs. A scale model of a planned building, a bridge, or a land development project can often generate interest. If exhibits are well located, many people notice them. The technique presents important information in a way the public can easily absorb and understand.

Collecting Information

The best way to collect information about people's attitudes and interests is through **public opinion polls** or **random sample surveys**. Both techniques can help determine community opinion at a particular point in time, or changes in public opinion over a period of time, if they are repeated. However, their quality (and, hence, their usefulness) depends on how well the questions in the survey or the poll are designed and how well the poll is executed. Moreover, professional polls or surveys tend to be expensive.

Other ways of collecting information are:

Records of citizen contact, letters and telephone calls. City agencies and departments often maintain a log of visitors and their concerns, as well as records of telephone calls. This data can be useful in determining the types of problems citizens are experiencing and the kinds of services they need, and how well government resources are being allocated in providing different public services.

Citizen Suggestion Boxes. This initiative provides citizens an opportunity to submit comments or suggestions regarding the government's work or problems in the community. Comments are collected in a box, usually located in the main lobby of the city government building. The box is emptied every day and the mayor and appropriate department heads are advised about what has been suggested. This device is especially useful in measuring the effectiveness and quality of the services the city provides.

Sending and Receiving Information

The simplest and most effective form of two-way communication is a conversation. Unfortunately, local government officials can reach only a small number of people in this manner. Local governments therefore must find ways to communicate with larger audiences and to accommodate competing viewpoints. The following is an overview of techniques that enable local government officials and citizens to exchange views and information and to work together in making decisions on behalf of the community.

Informal/Temporary Techniques

Public Meetings and Hearings. Public meetings are the most common and basic opportunity for government officials and citizens to come together to discuss an issue of public concern. They typically address a specific problem or project and are organized by the government or by a local

organization. A formal version of the public meeting is the public hearing, which is usually held by the mayor or city council before adopting an important decision. Public hearings are usually open to the general public, whereas other types of public meetings, depending on their purpose, are often organized for smaller audiences who are then specially invited to attend. See the next chapter for a detailed discussion of how to organize a public meeting or hearing.

Task Forces, Special Committees, and Commissions. These kinds of initiatives allow local governments to utilize the skills and resources of their citizens. The city's chief elected official appoints a group of citizens (usually mixed with a few local government officials) who have either an interest or expertise in the area the committee is trying to address. Citizen committees usually function in an advisory capacity, but are sometimes given the authority to make decisions. A task force, special committee or commission can often help build community support for a proposal, especially a controversial one. While designed to be temporary, these bodies sometimes take on a semi-permanent status.

Community Information Fairs. This is an informal way of informing the community and creating an environment where one-on-one conversations between officials and citizens can take place. Booths, exhibits or information tables about a variety of public issues or services can be set up, with individuals assigned to each of them who can answer questions from citizens. Information fairs are usually designed to coincide with a popular community event, such as a festival, that attracts a large audience.

All these initiatives are designed to be temporary, in that the meeting or group will disband once its purpose has been accomplished. They are particularly useful for stimulating discussion and helping define problems and develop solutions to them.

Advantages:

- They are relatively easy to organize and inexpensive to operate.
- Government maintains control of the agenda and is a partner in developing the information that is produced. They provide an opportunity for government to present its point of view.
- They promote two-way communication between citizens and government, which can result in a better understanding of different views regarding an issue.
- They expand the talent pool for solving a particular problem.
- They can operate out of a variety of locations, including city hall, neighborhood schools, and churches.

Disadvantages:

- They tend to favor people who are especially articulate and have the time to participate.

Formal/Permanent Techniques

In addition to establishing citizen committees to assist local government with a specific problem on a short-term or temporary basis, most communities in the United States rely on a variety of permanent citizens bodies to assist their local governments. Types of citizen committees include: **citizen advisory committees, community boards and commissions, and neighborhood teams.** All of these committees consist of representatives of civic organizations, businesses and business associations, individual residents, and a few public officials. They meet regularly to review and discuss issues that confront the community (or part of the community, in the case of neighborhood teams). Like temporary committees, these bodies can help local officials gather information about community needs and evaluate the quality of the government's programs and services. They take advantage of the expertise that is present in the community and can help build support for government policies.

Citizen Advisory Committees. Citizen advisory committees can be formed to assist local governments with almost any issue. They are typically used to help local governments understand and project economic trends, make land use and long-range planning decisions, conduct historic preservation and architectural reviews, and advise on business and economic development. An advisory committee can be designated to study a specific problem and disband when that work is completed, or meet on a regular and permanent basis. The committee's membership can be expanded or reduced over time to meet the needs of government decisionmakers.

Community Boards and Commissions. Boards and commissions are committees that are officially constituted, are a permanent part of the government's organizational structure, and are granted authority by the government to manage programs and make decisions on its behalf. Members serve for limited terms and are appointed by the mayor or city administrator with the approval of the city council. As official bodies created by the government, they require detailed records of their meetings. Boards and commissions appear throughout the organizational structure of local governments in the United States. In the United States, their meetings are mandated by law to be open to the media and the public.

Neighborhood Teams. Organizing neighborhood teams gives community activists and ordinary citizens a chance to get to know and work directly and regularly with people in government. They also provide city planners and decisionmakers with firsthand information about community needs and about the services the government provides to a neighborhood. Neighborhood teams help build partnerships between local government and individual citizens, community groups, and business associations. They enable local government to develop its service delivery in a way that responds to citizen needs at the neighborhood level.

Additional Formal/Permanent Techniques

Complaint Bureaus and Ombudsman Offices. These are city departments or officers who assist citizens with directing their requests or complaints to the proper location in the government

bureaucracy. They also make sure that the city has taken action to respond to a citizen's request or complaint. Offices like this are a good source of information about citizen concerns. Offering citizens such a service and operating it effectively can inspire trust and confidence in the government.

Mini-City Halls. These are neighborhood facilities, staffed by local government employees and open during normal business hours, that provide information and assistance to citizens where they live or work. Mini-city halls are a convenient way for citizens to obtain information about local government activities, obtain applications for programs and receive assistance in completing them. They can also serve as locations for meetings of neighborhood teams.

Public Comment Sessions. City councils often convene a public session in addition to their regular meetings to give citizens the opportunity to address the council directly. Citizen comments or complaints become part of the public record, and council members make sure that the administration follows up on them. Individual statements before the council usually have a time limit (approximately three minutes).

Advantages:

- These techniques are highly visible. If they operate effectively, their visibility can help build public confidence in the institution of local government; and
- Committees are permanently established, which means they can be mobilized rapidly to help the government during an emergency.

Disadvantages:

- These techniques come at a cost as they require the regular allocation of staff, facilities, and other resources to be managed properly; and
- Formal bodies are more complex and difficult to manage because they generate more activity (e.g., adjusting schedules, electing officers, keeping records of meetings, publishing agendas, writing press releases) than the informal or temporary techniques discussed earlier in this chapter.

An Example of Broad-Based Citizen Involvement: Richmond, Virginia (USA)

The City of Richmond's Master Plan divides the city into nine planning districts. Each district is served by a District Team of approximately 20 citizens representing neighborhood-based civic and business organizations and residents. In monthly meetings, the members of each District Team work, in conjunction with the City Planning Department and other city agencies and offices, to:

- Identify neighborhood priorities;
- Develop action strategies for accomplishing each priority;
- Improve public services;
- Coordinate public service requests;
- Influence budget decisions and other resource allocations that are made by city department directors, the city manager, the city council; and
- Facilitate communications between government and district residents and provide assistance to businesses and residents in the district.

In addition to its District or Neighborhood Team Process, the City of Richmond uses a large number of citizen advisory committees, boards and commissions to help it gather information, study proposals, deliver and manage services and make community decisions. Some of these committees include:

The City Manager's Revenue Committee. A committee of local bankers, business people and economists that meets monthly with the city manager and staff of the departments of budget and finance to discuss the local economy and assist the city in projecting revenue trends. The members are appointed by the city manager.

The Board of Equalization and Assessment. A committee of local experts in the value of real estate, appointed by the city council. They are empowered to review the taxable assessments of real estate in the city. (The assessed value of private property determines how much property tax the owner pays.)

The Board of Architectural Review and Historic Preservation. A panel of citizens with interest and expertise in local history and architecture appointed by the city council to review and make recommendations regarding development plans affecting the city's historic preservation districts.

The Richmond Port Commission. A board of directors appointed by the city council that is empowered to manage the business and administrative affairs of the Port of Richmond.

The City of Richmond Personnel Board. A committee of citizens appointed by city council that establishes all city government personnel policies and acts as the final level of appeal for government employees who wish to challenge disciplinary actions taken against them by their supervisors.

The East End Initiative Community Board. Appointed by the city manager, the members of this board are all residents of the city's East End and representatives of neighborhood organizations. The Board reviews and makes recommendations about programs and services that the government operates in the neighborhood, and oversees the management of the East End community center and the mini-city hall.

The Richmond Police Department Citizen Review Board. A committee of citizens established to review police procedures and practices and make sure that the police department is responsive and responsible to the needs of the community.

The City of Richmond Planning Commission. A committee of citizens that reviews and makes recommendations regarding land use and zoning restrictions. The Commission holds public hearings and makes recommendations to the city council regarding changes to the city's land use and zoning plans.

There are more than 100 officially established and regularly meeting boards, commissions and citizen advisory committees in the City of Richmond. Together, they help the government establish community priorities, manage programs and plan for the community's future. Over one thousand citizens, mostly volunteers, participate on these committees, lending the community their time and expertise.

In addition, many more short-term committees of citizens and city government employees are regularly established by the city council or by the city manager to review specific issues as they arise and make recommendations on a wide variety of problems and conflicts facing the community. In this way, hundreds more community members are actively involved in helping the city's government do its job, working in partnership to help create positive change and growth for the community.

And, still, these committees represent only part of the opportunities for citizen involvement that exist in this typical American city. Outside the confines of city government, there exists a broad array of neighborhood and community associations and public interest groups, business and industrial associations, private social service agencies, church groups, parent-teacher associations, student and other youth groups, arts and cultural societies, and more – all actively involved in their community, bringing problems to the attention of local government and working in partnership with the government to solve these problems.

HOW TO CONDUCT A PUBLIC MEETING OR HEARING

A public meeting or hearing is the most basic means by which government and citizens come together to discuss issues or problems in the community. A well-managed meeting can help defuse or control opposition to a project or policy and help unite the community. Nevertheless, local government officials often are reluctant to participate in public meetings.

The reason is that a public meeting, if it is not managed properly, can be a waste of time for organizers and participants alike. A poorly managed meeting can degenerate into confrontation between opposing interests, with nobody gaining anything. A carefully managed public meeting, on the other hand, is often cited by public officials as one of their most rewarding experiences in government.

The key to a successful public meeting is planning and preparation. This chapter presents basic steps to follow in organizing a public meeting or hearing.

Putting Together a Meeting Management Team

It is important that the right people are involved in organizing the meeting. The team should consist of the following people:

- The **decisionmaker** chairs the meeting. A person of high enough authority to enjoy public respect and attention; ideally, the person responsible for the project, program or policy that is the subject of the meeting.
- The meeting **manager** or **facilitator**. This is often, but not necessarily, the same person as the chairperson. His or her job is to make sure that the meeting is conducted in a civil and orderly fashion. That includes making sure that everyone has a chance to ask questions and all questions are answered and that the discussion stays on subject. Most important, he or she should help the participants reach a consensus.
- A **logistics coordinator**. This is the meeting's "producer." He or she is responsible for finding a location for the meeting, distributing necessary notices and advertisements about the meeting, overseeing the production of hand-outs or other written materials to be distributed at the meeting, coordinating the delivery and operation of audio-visual or other equipment that may be necessary for the presentations or discussion, managing the registration of speakers, etc.
- A **media liaison**, who can write and distribute press releases and field questions from reporters both before and after the meeting
- **Presenters**. These should be individuals who thoroughly understand the issue to be discussed at the meeting and can present it in a clear and interesting way -- so that people hearing about the issue for the first time understand it.

- A **recorder** or **notetaker** makes certain that public comments and statements are accurately and properly documented. He or she is also usually responsible for drafting a report of the meeting afterwards and distributing it to the participants and anyone else who needs to know what was discussed.

There are several advantages to having a separate chairperson and facilitator at the meeting. The **chairperson** sets the tone of the meeting and can give it political legitimacy. The chairperson welcomes the people who have come to the meeting, introduces the presenters and notable individuals who attend the meeting, and explains the purpose and procedures of the meeting.

It helps to have another person facilitate the meeting, especially if the subject is controversial and the chairperson has taken a position on the issue. An impartial **facilitator** is in a better position to act as a moderator between opposing factions and help them move toward consensus or compromise. A facilitator can take firm control of the meeting's process, limiting speakers to their allotted time and place in the speaking order.

The facilitator should:

- Create an environment that is open and invites people to express their views;
- Clarify comments made at the meeting so that everybody understands what is being said; and
- Act as a neutral moderator, helping to draw out information and different opinions and motivating participants to find consensus where possible.

The facilitator is not responsible for making decisions. In fact, decisions are usually not made at meetings like this. The purpose of a public meeting is to present and discuss information that will help in making a decision.

Presenters should be very familiar with their topics and comfortable making public presentations. Presentations are usually made by someone other than the meeting's chairperson or facilitator. This approach reinforces the chairperson and facilitator's appearance of openness. If the topic is complex and requires a long presentation (more than 15 or 20 minutes) it makes sense to divide the topic into subtopics and assign each to a different presenter.

Producing a detailed and accurate **record** of the meeting is very important (and in the case of a hearing is usually required by law), so that any suggestions or comments can be followed up and considered in the actual decisionmaking. Often, tape recorders are used to make sure that all comments are captured precisely.

Pre-Meeting Planning

The management team should assemble at least four weeks before the meeting to determine how the meeting should be organized and assign responsibilities to members of the team. There should be as many meetings of the team as are needed to accomplish the following:

Research and discuss any **legal requirements**, such as groups or individuals that must, by law, be notified of the meeting, any meeting procedures that have to be followed, or any requirements concerning the content of notices announcing the meeting that must be followed.

Develop a **notification** and **publicity plan** and assign someone responsibility for carrying it out during the first planning meeting. The notification plan should identify potential opponents and supporters of the proposed program or policy to be discussed at the meeting, including any community organizations that are interested in or affected by the topic. These individuals or organizations should be expressly invited. The plan should also determine how to advertise the meeting in the media.

Notices should be informative and easily understandable. Besides stating where and when the meeting will be held, notices should list the topics to be discussed and advise the public of its role at the meeting, how people can participate, and the purpose or intended result. It should also tell people whom they can call with questions.

Decide on the meeting's **format**. What is most appropriate? Is the meeting's purpose to provide information to the public, or will public comment and discussion about a proposal be its principal objective? The answer to this question determines the meeting's format. (Examples of different types of meetings are discussed later in this chapter.)

Determine the **time** and **location** of the meeting. In setting a time, keep in mind the schedules of the people whom you want to attend the meeting. The location should be easy to find and offer the kind of environment that encourages people to listen and speak. You should also consider whether the location will allow you to use any **equipment** (such as audio-visual equipment) you may need for the meeting.

Determine other necessary **supplies** and **materials**.

Establish the **agenda**. Who will make presentation(s)? How long should they be? How much time will be allowed for comments or questions from the audience? How long should the meeting last? (Two hours is a sensible maximum.)

(For more information on agendas see the section of this chapter entitled *Agenda Planning*.)

Ground rules that determine how the discussion will be conducted should also be established at the planning meeting: Will people have to register beforehand if they want to speak at the meeting? How much time should be allowed for each speaker? Overall, the rules should be flexible enough to accommodate the concerns and needs of the people attending the meeting, but they should also be fixed enough to maintain order and civility. One or two citizens, a group of citizens, or a city official should not be permitted to dominate the discussion; the rules should allow for a fair distribution of the limited time available.

Different Types of Meetings

Informational Meetings provide citizens or a public body with information about a particular issue. They usually take the form of:

- Individual presentations – one or more experts on a subject make presentations regarding the issues or proposals under review.
- Panel discussions – several experts are invited to discuss the issues or proposals before an assembled group of interested community members.

In both cases, members of the public attending the meeting are given time to comment on or ask questions about the presentations.

Advisory Committee Meetings often begin with a presentation by a government or committee staff person that provides a basis for the discussions. As discussed earlier, advisory committees usually consist of people from the community who have some expertise or interest related to the committee's purpose. They are appointed to investigate or research an issue and make recommendations to the city council or mayor. These committees meet regularly. Although the meetings are usually open to the public, people who sit in on the meetings are only infrequently invited to comment on the discussion or ask questions. In this case, citizen participation takes place mainly through the work of the committee members themselves.

Problem Solving Meetings consider a controversial issue in the community. Their purpose is to reach agreement on a solution to the problem. Involvement in such meetings is usually by invitation only.

Participation Techniques

There are many ways to facilitate the presentation and discussion of ideas and build consensus. Two of these include:

Brainstorming: this is a good technique for collecting and creating new ideas. It is essential that all participants in the process are encouraged to take part and that no idea is unfairly criticized.

- Encourage all participants to provide ideas.
- Record all ideas without evaluation.
- Conduct a discussion of all of the ideas.
- Rank items by priority.
- Record the results of the meeting.

Consensus Building Citizens in a community often have different ideas about what the community's priorities are and how things should be done. Finding common ground among these different interests and ideas is one of the most important tasks of local government. It is the first step toward making decisions that everyone can support.

- Take no votes and make no arbitrary choices that do not reflect the consensus of everyone at the meeting.
- All participants should commit to voicing their disagreements honestly and openly at the meeting.
- All participants must permit other people in attendance to have their say.
- All participants should agree to continue discussing the subject until a consensus is reached. That is accomplished by working toward a proposal that makes at least some accommodation to all the points of view represented at the meeting.

Agenda Planning

A well-organized agenda is essential for conducting an effective meeting or hearing. The agenda establishes the structure for discussion and affects decisions about appropriate techniques for encouraging participation, creating results and reaching agreements. Answering the following questions will help you devise an effective agenda:

Purpose:

- What is the purpose of the meeting or hearing?

Introduction:

- What background or information do participants need about the purpose of the meeting?
- How will the meeting proceed?
- What are the meeting's specific goals, tasks and intended outcomes?

Topics for Discussion:

- What are the important topics for this meeting?
- What new information needs to be presented or solicited?
- What previously discussed information needs to be reviewed?
- How much time should be devoted to each topic?

Meeting Roles:

- Who is the best person to present information on each topic?
- Who will be the meeting's chairperson, discussion leaders and recorders?

Facilitating the Discussion:

- How should the discussion be structured? What participation techniques might be appropriate?
- What specific questions can be asked to stimulate and guide the discussion?

Summary:

- What information or decision should be highlighted in the summary?

Follow-up:

- What follow-up assignments will likely result from the meeting?
- Who should be responsible for each assignment?
- What is a reasonable schedule for accomplishing each follow-up assignment?

Closing the Meeting:

- Who should deliver the closing remarks? (Usually the chairperson.)
- How can every participant's contribution be acknowledged?

Tips for Conducting a Successful Public Meeting or Hearing

Rehearsal

It is always a good idea for the chairperson, facilitator and all presenters to review the meeting plan and rehearse their presentations. Doing so ensures that everyone understands the agenda and will be working together as a team. A rehearsal also helps the presenters relax and provides the logistics coordinator an opportunity to review the presenters' needs.

Welcoming Citizens

The chairperson and other local government officials should create a friendly and constructive environment for the meeting by acting as gracious hosts, greeting people with a smile and a handshake as they arrive.

The Media

Introduce the chairperson to the media before the meeting begins. A time can be arranged for interviews or statements. However, such contacts should not be allowed to delay the event. If necessary, the chairperson should quietly excuse himself at some point after the meeting has already started (as long as there is a facilitator who can lead the discussion in his absence) to meet with a reporter in a place where their conversation will not disrupt the meeting.

Begin on Time!

The beginning of the meeting will establish the tone for the entire event. A punctual start demonstrates respect for the citizens who have taken the time to attend the meeting. Do not delay.

Introductions

The chairperson should introduce other important public officials who are present and greet the audience. He or she should then explain the purpose of the meeting, review the agenda, and describe the ground rules for conducting the meeting. (It is helpful to have somebody distribute copies of the agenda to people as they enter the meeting room.) The chairperson can also relate the logistics of the meeting: where the microphones are located, where and how people should register to speak, where information packets or refreshments are located, etc. He or she should conclude his or her remarks by thanking everybody for attending.

Stick to the Agenda

Keep the agenda moving, make sure the discussion stays focused and insure that the meeting ends on time. Before closing the meeting, the chairperson should announce next steps and how results of the meeting will be incorporated into the government's decision on the issue in question. The chairperson should conclude his or her short closing remarks by thanking everybody again for attending the meeting.

Debriefing: Accomplishments, Lessons Learned, Follow-up

The meeting management team and any government officials who participated in the meeting or whose work may be affected by it should assemble within a week after the event to review the meeting and its results.

Some typical review questions are:

- Did the meeting accomplish its goals?
- What did government officials learn that will help them manage a program or resolve a issue?
- Are additional meetings necessary?
- What can local officials learn from this meeting to improve future meetings?

Produce a summary report of the meeting and distribute copies to all relevant decisionmakers, the management team, all news media and as many of the meeting's participants as possible. The report should identify the time, place and sponsor of the meeting. It should also provide a summary of the meeting's agenda. The report should further mention:

- Who attended and participated.
- What ideas were discussed.
- What decisions were made.
- What follow-up actions are planned.
- When and where any future meetings on this topic will be held.

One of the most important aspects of citizen participation is follow-up. Make sure that all promises that were made at the meeting, such as providing the public with further information on an issue,

are kept. Doing so demonstrates to citizens that government officials listened to what they had to say and take it seriously. Such impressions encourage continued participation and increase public confidence in the institution of local government.

STRATEGIC PLANNING: AN APPLICATION OF DIRECT CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Strategic planning is a process that can help any organization, public or private. It is a tool that helps ensure that organizations undertake projects which clearly relate to their purposes and which represent the best investment of their resources (time, staff and money). A strategic plan is developed by a task force appointed for this purpose which includes not only people who work in the organization, but also representatives of other organizations and individuals who are affected by the organization's work. The task force accomplishes its work through consensus decisionmaking.

Members of the task force develop a vision for the organization and a set of goals and priorities that will help the organization allocate its resources and allow its members to pursue a coordinated set of objectives.

For local governments, the strategic planning process produces a written plan, developed by knowledgeable people in the community, that a mayor, a council member, or an administrator can consult for guidance when he or she has to make difficult choices. However, it also provides additional benefits:

- A chance to profit from the talent and expertise of leaders of different sectors in the community (e.g., business, social and cultural organizations).
- An opportunity to show the general public, especially the people involved in the planning process, that local government is working to meet the community's needs and that it is interested in what the public has to say.

Elements of Strategic Planning

Strategic planning involves several basic steps:

- Developing a clear statement that describes the mission or the purpose of the organization.
- Setting goals for the organization that are attainable and to which everyone in the organization can relate and contribute.
- Assessing the organization's strengths and weaknesses, especially as those strengths and weaknesses compare to other organizations conducting similar work.
- Listing the organization's most pressing needs or weaknesses and suggesting ways to address them in order to accomplish the organization's purpose and achieve its goals.
- Developing programs and projects that build on the organization's strengths, while at the same time moving the organization consistently toward its goals.

For each individual program or project the organization decides to undertake, the strategic plan should include the following:

- A timeline;
- An explanation of funding sources; and
- Information about who will be assigned to organize and manage the project.

All of the projects described in the strategic plan should be rooted in one or more of the organization's strengths and each project's accomplishment should serve to move the organization toward realizing its goal or vision.

A strategic plan is usually developed by a committee of 10-20 members, appointed by the organization's chief executive officer. The committee's sole purpose is to develop the strategic plan. The plan is often managed by an outside facilitator who is responsible for keeping the committee focused on its task and enforcing and enhancing consensus decisionmaking during the committee's meetings. The best strategic plans are produced by committees that are broad-based and whose members have been asked to serve because they have an interest in the organization or a special expertise related to the organization's purpose. Political alliance or friendship with the person who appoints the committee should not be a criterion for membership.

The plan the committee develops is advisory, but can be an important document that is frequently considered and consulted when policy decisions are made and resources are allocated.

Strategic Planning Applied by Local Governments

Strategic planning provides obvious benefits to local governments. Some decisionmakers (especially elected ones) may not, however, always understand or appreciate these benefits. It is important to remind them that a strategic plan is only advisory, but that it can be a useful management tool. Such an explanation can defuse the unspoken concerns of officials about giving up power and authority to a citizens committee. In order to gain support for the strategic plan, the person who has principal responsibility for implementing it should endorse the effort from the outset. That person should also be responsible for appointing the planning committee. In local governments this person is usually the mayor.

A typical strategic planning committee or task force might consist of the following:

- representatives of the major political factions within the city council
- a representative of the mayor
- the city planning director or his representative
- representatives of various organizations and interests within the community:
 - large industry
 - small business
 - religious and cultural interests
 - regional government

- senior citizens
- education
- tourism and hotel businesses
- the chamber of commerce
- housing providers
- veterans groups
- medical providers
- labor organizations
- service clubs

All major sectors of the community should have a voice on the committee in order to develop a plan that reflects the community's consensus. The quality of the committee's product and its long-range usefulness depend on the participation of people who represent the full spectrum of community interests.

It is unnecessary to assign a staff of experts to assist the committee or for the committee to spend its time sorting through a lot of factual data. The planning committee's job is to develop a statement that describes the general direction in which the community ought to be moving and to make specific suggestions about how it can reach its destination. It will be the job of local officials afterward to follow the "road map" the committee provides and arrange the details of the trip. Only at this point would experts be useful.

Facilitating a Strategic Planning Process

An outside facilitator is often asked to coordinate the committee's work. Helping people with different views and interests to reach a consensus is a difficult task. Still, when people who have overseen strategic planning efforts comment on the experience, they often make the same observation: seemingly irreconcilable differences of opinion usually have common elements, especially when they are presented on the same piece of paper and placed before everybody to review. A strategic plan should reflect the consensus of everybody on the committee who has expressed an opinion or taken a position. Every statement, project or program should be based on the range of views represented on the committee and should strive to accommodate all of these views in some way. If the members of the committee can all agree on a plan, it is likely that the whole community will support the plan as well.

The facilitator should be a good listener and possess the ability to come up with words and phrases which capture compromises. If there is no separate notetaker, the facilitator will be responsible for writing a report of the discussion. Following the first session, every meeting should begin with a review of the issues that were previously addressed.

The facilitator should arrange the committee's agenda in accordance with the strategic plan's outline (*i.e.*, mission statement, vision statement, assessment of strengths and weaknesses, needs assessment, program development). When discussion lags or its tone turns negative, the facilitator should not hesitate to suggest items for the committee to consider, perhaps drawing on the experiences of other communities that have addressed similar problems. The plan should, however,

be the end product of the committee and not the facilitator. The facilitator simply helps the process move along.

After four to six hours of hard work spread over two or three sessions, the committee will have probably completed the planning process. If the project requires too many meetings, the group's attendance dwindle and enthusiasm will wane. The facilitator then writes a draft of the plan the committee has developed. The committee reviews the draft at its next meeting (usually its third or fourth). Additions and revisions are incorporated in a second draft, which the committee reviews at its last working session. The plan is written and prepared to go to print.

Results

The committee should formally present its plan to the mayor or the organization's executive board. The strategic plan may also be forwarded to the city council or the full board of directors. The local government shows its commitment to the strategic planning process by formally adopting a resolution accepting the plan.

Besides helping local governments establish direction and goals for the community, the strategic planning document can be useful to a local government in its relations with the outside world. The mayor can, for example, show the plan to foundations and federal and state grantmaking agencies when applying for funding for programs. The plan describes an innovative approach to solving community problems. It demonstrates to outsiders that the city or the organization knows where it wants to go and has some good ideas about how to get there. The fact that it was written by a committee representing a cross-section of the community informs outside funding agencies that most of the programs and projects described in the plan have good potential for popular support.

Strategic planning principles can be applied in any public organization. The primary interest and challenge of public officials is almost always to do more and better work with fewer resources. Strategic planning is a way to help them do just that.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, citizen participation is much more than a political or public relations tool. It describes a comprehensive approach by which local governments and their constituents can work together every day to solve problems, set priorities, make plans and decisions, design and implement programs and policies, and deliver services.

To foster this partnership, local governments must create an environment that invites and enables citizens to participate by informing them about what is happening in their community, demonstrating the willingness of local government to answer questions and listen to suggestions from citizens, and providing the public with concrete opportunities to become involved in the decisionmaking.

Local governments can begin by:

- Requiring departments and agencies to make all public records easily available and understandable.
- Publishing a regular newsletter about community issues, news and events, and an annual report that describes the government's accomplishments and plans for the coming year.
- Convening regularly scheduled public information meetings and public hearings; identifying and inviting citizen leaders to attend the meetings to encourage widespread and regular participation.
- Conveniently scheduling city council meetings and providing a separate and comfortable audience seating area in the city council chambers so that citizens can easily follow the proceedings.
- Establishing committees of citizens and citizen group representatives to address and study important community issues and make recommendations about how to respond to them.
- Actively seeking partnerships and opportunities for collaboration with community organizations.

These and other efforts will require local governments to invest money and other resources. They will require local officials to take the time to reach out to citizens and involve them in their activities. Citizen participation means extra work for local governments; however, the benefits usually outweigh the costs. Citizen participation can help local officials make better decisions and produce programs and services that better address citizen needs. Indeed, citizen participation can help local governments save both time and money by drawing on the talents and resources of the entire community. Finally, the techniques outlined in this handbook can serve to build support for local government decisions and confidence in the institution of local government.

APPENDIX

THINKING STRATEGICALLY ABOUT THE CITY OF LVIV, UKRAINE

**A Plan for the Future
developed by the Lviv 2001 Citizens Task Force
November 1996**

This plan has been developed by a citizens group that represents most of the city's diverse interests -- the business and finance sectors, politics, education and culture, community service organizations. The Plan's foundation is a vision of what we believe Lviv can become. It is a road map that describes how to get there. It suggests that we build on the city's present and many strengths to overcome the present and many barriers that stand between where we are now and what we want Lviv to be. Those strengths are:

1. Lviv's distinctive architectural features and its cultural and educational facilities
2. the city's geographic location, between Eastern and Central Europe
3. a highly trained, professional and skilled workforce
4. the city's rich history and its cultural and ethnic diversity that combine to create lifestyles based on traditional values
5. an infrastructure that will support expanded and improved social programs, economic development, and tourism opportunities

SUMMARY: We suggest that Lviv do what is necessary to significantly enhance its status as a tourism destination place. The city's industrial base should be maintained as best as that can be done, but the quality and extent of Lviv's eventual redevelopment largely depends on its ability to promote itself within Ukraine, to the rest of Europe, and among its substantial North American Diaspora, as an important cultural and educational center. This goal should be the principal focus of the city's economic development effort.

Within the Plan's Elements are suggestions that the city government set up several public commissions and make them a permanent part of its administrative structure (a public utilities commission, a housing authority, an economic development commission). They make good use of the city's best and most important resource - its talented and knowledgeable population

THE GOAL

Lviv will be a city that is eminently liveable for its residents, an important cultural center of Europe, and its East/West gateway.

ELEMENTS OF LVIV'S STRATEGIC REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

ELEMENT 1. QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES

If Lviv is to become a truly liveable city, public facilities and services that its residents and visitors use every day have to be improved and expanded so that they are affordable and dependable. Doing this in an environment where money and resources are extremely scarce requires ingenuity, patience, and well coordinated short and long-range planning.

Present circumstances suggest we will often have to look outside Ukraine for funds to get started. But we can be sure that the conditions for receiving that kind of help will require us to be able to show that Lviv will be able to maintain and expand what we have built with the grants and loans we get.

Common sense suggests that we who live and work in Lviv are in a better position than central government officials who live and work in Kiev to know what needs to be done to make living here better. We need clearer legal authority and more political autonomy to be able to make decisions locally that will improve everyday living conditions, and we need to be allowed to keep more of the tax money we raise in Lviv here in order to do what needs to be done to accomplish that.

PROJECT 1-1: Water System Improvements

1. Target infrastructure improvements in and around the city center, in areas of the city's most dense residential development, and in places where industrial activity is most likely to occur.
2. Phase in a system where business users will pay 100% of the cost of providing what they use by 2001. Residential users will pay 100% of cost in seven years.
3. All new construction and substantial rehabilitation building projects, public and private, should be required to be individually metered, the only exceptions being when such an improvement compromises historic or external architectural integrity of a landmark structure

Lviv apparently has access to \$7-25 million from the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development to help get water system improvements started. The scope of the initial project should be based on how much is available. Expansion of the effort should be dependent on how much more money can be secured from the central government and how much revenue can be raised through fees for service.

When construction projects are assigned, consideration should be made to give qualified local private contractors a job priority. (The approach creates new jobs and a potential for increased profit tax revenue for the city from the businesses involved.)

PROJECT 1-2: Public Utilities Commission

1. Establish a five-member Public Utilities Commission appointed by the mayor for fixed terms, except for one member appointed by the city council from among its deputies. The other commissioners should be residents with expertise in areas like civil engineering, environmental issues, and finance. Staff for the commission should be provided by appropriate city utility agencies. The commissioners should be part time, their pay based on the time they spend doing PUC business. The PUC should be operational by June 1997
2. The commission will advise the mayor and his utility departments on matters related to water and sewer service, generation of electricity, heating and hot water issues. All proposed user-rate adjustments and proposals for capital improvement projects should be submitted to the PUC for comment and advice.
3. Shortly after the PUC is established, it should organize hearings to which it invites energy and utility experts to share opinions about how the city can best supply dependable electricity and natural gas service to residents and businesses. The PUC should submit a report of its findings by October 1997.
4. By the beginning of November 1997, the PUC should identify at least two other public utility-related topics it wants to investigate. One it might consider is the feasibility of providing individual electric hot water heaters for homeowners and renters (subsidizing their cost based on family income). The possibility of manufacture and distribution of these units from a factory in Lviv should be pursued if the project proves to be practical. Possible funding source: the USAID \$25 million project.
5. The Mayor's office should apply for funds from the Eurasia Foundation to set up the PUC and get its work started.

PROJECT 1-3: Social Services

The Mayor's office, through its existing social service agencies, should investigate the feasibility of privatizing them and making contracts with them and qualified non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide their service to the city's residents who need them. City government may be able to save the cost of maintaining the agencies and directly paying the employees. Perhaps the new businesses created will pay business profit taxes. A feasibility study considering this approach should be completed by June 1997.

The city also has responsibility for providing its residents health care services. This is one of its most important and most expensive programs. This service should remain one of the Lviv government's highest priorities. But ways to share that cost with people who can afford to pay for the minimum level of health care service the city provides should be investigated. Better use can be made of health care insurance. Insurance can either be provided by a public or a private enterprise. Employers should be required to pay most of the cost of such insurance, but employees have to bear some of the burden.

The mayor should appoint a committee of experts from both inside and outside government that will be charged with studying the issues of health care needs, health care costs, and health insurance. There should be ways available for businesses and individuals who are doing better than average economically to share a part of the public health care expense. The committee's report should include recommendations about levels of employee contributions to employer-provided health care insurance, the feasibility of charging a minimum fee for visits to public health care providers and health care facilities, and how health care insurance can be best provided - through the government or private insurance companies, or some combination of both. The committee's report should be due by the end of 1997, so that some of its recommendations might be able to favorably impact the city's 1999 budget.

PROJECT 1-4: Housing

1. The city should privatize all of the residential housing it currently owns as quickly as it can. This will save maintenance costs, provide the city with income realized from whatever it can sell the properties for, and expand the base for an eventual tax on private property.
2. Poor people who cannot afford to pay for housing should be allowed to live in privately owned housing - the city government paying the people who own the apartments where they live their tenants' rent. Funds for this rent subsidy program can come from a fund created by investing the money the city realizes from the sale of the residential property it currently owns.
3. All newly constructed or substantially rehabilitated housing should be required to be individually metered for water service, have thermostats installed so the people who live there can control their heating, and include hot water tanks in each unit.
4. New Housing Construction Demonstration Project

The city government should investigate the feasibility of providing suitable property free of charge to a privately-owned local construction company who will build energy-efficient duplex (two-family) housing on it. Perspective owners of these housing units should be able to demonstrate that they can provide 25% of the cost of these houses and are willing to enter into a co-operative agreement with the private housing developer in order to pool their funds so that the developer can get funding for the project. Private banks, the World Bank, and the Soros Foundation are possible funding sources for the project.

5. Housing Rehabilitation Fund

The city should create a program where owners of apartments and houses can get no-interest loans to make structural improvements (heating, electrical, foundation and roof, plumbing, insulation) to the places where they live. Loans should be forgiven if the homeowner continues to live in his house for seven years after the improvements are made. Otherwise the loan will be repaid when the owner sells his property. Money for the improvements will be provided in equal parts by the city and homeowner. City building inspectors will supervise the work. Applications to the Soros Foundation and the World Bank should be made by the Mayor's office to fund half the money for the housing rehabilitation fund project (by June 1997). The city or the oblast government should fund the other half.

6. The Lviv Public Housing Authority

The city should establish a public housing authority, its five-member board of directors appointed by the mayor and the city council for fixed terms. One member should be a city council deputy; another, the person in city government charged with managing the city's housing programs. The mayor should appoint the remaining three members from among people and organizations interested in housing issues, including tenants of public housing.

The PHA's job will be to advise the Mayor and the city council on all matters related to housing for poor people and families, including rent subsidy programs and the operation of city agencies involved in providing housing. The PHA should be operational by the end of April 1997. The Eurasia Foundation may be interested in providing start-up funds for a PHA.

PROJECT 1-5: Transportation

1. Comprehensive Street Improvement Plan

Administrators in charge of public works and streets and highways should develop a five-year street improvement program that is based upon three things:

1. what funds can be realistically allocated for street improvements from local revenues and what funds might be made available from the state government
2. what is in immediate need for improvement (based on a system that rates the present condition of the street)
3. maximum benefit for street improvement (based on traffic count; the streets most used get fixed first)

The plan should be finished in time to be used to figure out how much money ought to be allocated for street improvements in the city's 1998 budget and which streets should be worked on that year.

2. The Public Transport System

Public transport is often used by people in Lviv who can least afford increases in bus and tram tickets. But the system needs to replace old rolling stock and make substantial improvements to its infrastructure. It needs more money to do that. Besides as little increase in fares as possible, two other new sources of funds should be pursued: (1) selling advertising space on the sides of trams and buses, and (2) assessing a surcharge on the annual registration fee for automobiles owned by people who live in the city. (This will probably require special legislation or decree from the state government.)

Revenue collected by selling tickets and from taxes or surcharges should be used exclusively for improving the public transport system.

PROJECT 1-6: Public Education

The city government should develop a comprehensive plan for making capital improvements to the part of the public education system for which it is responsible (everything except institutions of

higher learning). Using the plan, what local and oblast funds are available can be allocated for specific projects on an as-needed and a maximum-benefit basis. The plan should consider the physical condition of existing buildings and demographic analysis of where most children are likely to be living between now and 2005. The study should be done by a team drawn from appropriate city government agencies (the education and planning departments) and be ready in time to be consulted when appropriations are proposed as part of the city's 1998 budget.

As providing high level educational opportunities is another very important function of local government, the city government should continue to make education services a high priority. When private property taxes begin to be collected, this should be remembered when this new revenue is allocated. Besides improving buildings, equipment needs to be added or replaced, new textbooks need to be purchased, teachers need to be paid higher salaries. Perhaps using profits earned from the sale of lottery tickets is a possibility for raising more money for education in the meantime. That money can be placed in a special fund that can be only spent only for those purposes. The city council's commission on finance and budget should study the whole issue of increased funding for public education and make a report to the mayor and the city council by September 1997.

ELEMENT 2: ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (Making Lviv Ukraine's "Window to the West")

Lviv is a very special city in Ukraine because of its important role in Ukraine and the region's historical development, its unique layout and architecture, and its abundance of educational and cultural facilities. Lviv's geographic location enhances its traditional role as a regional trade center, and makes it Ukraine's most easily accessible city for people from Eastern and Central Europe. Although the city has a developed (but currently under-utilized) industrial base, Lviv's successful transition as an important urban center will be best accomplished if it is built on its heritage and not the legacy the Soviet state left here. Most new jobs and successful new businesses in Lviv will be associated with tourism, cultural activity, trade, education and training programs.

PROJECT 2-1: Historic Preservation

1. The city government should designate unique areas of the city "historic preservation districts". Redevelopment and new development activities within these places should be required to be done so that they conform to existing styles of architecture that enhance the districts.
2. Historic preservation districts should be given special consideration when it is decided where public works projects are done first.
3. As property taxes are instituted, consideration should be given to offering tax breaks and tax credits to people and businesses who locate and improve property within historic preservation districts.

PROJECT 2-2: Festivals and Special Events

The city government should help set up a non-profit Lviv Events Corporation. Its seven member board of directors should include the mayor and business owners, hotel owners, and representatives of cultural interests. The city should provide the LEC with office space, staff, and 20% of its

funding. The rest of the corporation's funding should come from the private sector and fees and commissions associated with the events LEC organizes and sponsors.

The LEC's responsibility will be to develop a calendar of events for the year and see that they are arranged. The board of directors will hire a full time manager who will carry out those tasks. The LEC should be operational by October 1997 and be in charge of organizing and managing special events and festivals in Lviv beginning in 1998.

PROJECT 2-3: Promoting Cultural Activities

Lviv should clearly establish its position in Ukraine as its center for the performing arts, the site of its best museums, and the principal place in Ukraine and Eastern Europe where students can develop skills in acting, singing, painting, sculpture, museum administration, library science, and architecture.

1. The mayor will organize and convene a committee made up of people who direct universities located in Lviv and artists who work here. They will develop a co-ordinated plan that promotes the community's interest in this area by assuring that educational institutions in Lviv offer a full range of opportunities for arts education and they will offer a plan to enhance the city's museum collections. The committee should also identify wealthy Ukrainians living here and abroad who might finance the implementation of their plans and recommendations.

The committee should assume responsibility for following up on these leads. They should begin meeting in September 1997 and spend 1998 implementing their plans.

2. The city government should investigate the feasibility of establishing a small admission fee to museums, charging for tours of the opera house and designating part of the city's hotel room tax to be used to build and maintain a fund for renovating and operating museums and performing arts centers. Donations from local businesses should also be sought.
3. Artists who rent city-owned space for their studios should have the option of paying part of their rent with what they produce, which then can be added to the city's public art collections on either a permanent or temporary basis. Those arrangements can be worked out by the city's director of cultural activities.

Recommendations about all these things should be made to the mayor by May 1997 so that whatever is adopted can affect the city's 1998 budget for cultural activities.

PROJECT 2-4: The Lviv Economic Development Commission

An Economic Development Commission should be established as soon as possible. It can be made up of perhaps nine members (the Mayor and the person from his administration in charge of economic development; two city council deputies; five local businesspeople), and be an expansion of the current organization the city has formed. Their responsibilities should be:

1. to advise the city government on matters of economic development, privatization, and job creation
2. to help represent Lviv at international trade shows and delegations of businesspeople visiting Lviv who are considering locating businesses here
3. on behalf of the city government, to visit existing business located in Lviv on a regular and scheduled basis in order to assure them how important they are to the city's economy, discuss any business-related problems the city can help with, talk about plans and possibilities for expansion of their businesses.
4. make recommendations to the city government about ways it can operate more friendly, conveniently and efficiently with respect to dealing with business interests.

Businesses that deal in trade and international finance should be special targets of the EDC (doing what it can to encourage expansion of those already operating in Lviv and trying to attract more of their type to locate here). A case for encouraging the development of businesses that manufacture home water heaters, water meters, home heating thermostats, and health insurance services can also be made. These are all products that will be increasingly in demand as both Lviv and Ukraine's transition continues. The EDC should study the city business incubator and recommend ways its operation can be expanded and improved upon. The EDC would also be a big help to the city if it could use its expertise to help the city determine which of its presently functioning industries are potentially most profitable, particularly among Lviv's formerly active high tech industries. Funds to help operate the EDC and promote its activity may be available from the Eurasia Foundation.

ELEMENT 3: LVIV BETTER CONTROLS ITS DESTINY

Having the means available to raise the money Lviv needs to provide city services, a fairer proportion of financial assistance from the state government, and more autonomy to decide how money can be raised and ought to be spent are prerequisites for making much in this Plan reality. Neither the city government, the city council, nor any number of citizen organizations can make this happen. What is required in many cases is authorization from the state and oblast governments through legislation and executive decrees.

The city has to be able to make its case in an organized, prioritized and coordinated way. We suggest that the Mayor and the City Council jointly and regularly (annually, as part of the budget process) produce a report that describes exactly what the city needs in terms of legislation, executive decrees, and special or increased funding to accomplish its strategically planned redevelopment. This report should be provided to national and regional leaders of political parties, legislators who represent Lviv in the Parliament, and important administrators in the state and oblast governments whose jobs are to attend to cities' needs.

Here is what ought to be done, in order of importance:

1. Through Ukraine's Association of Cities and the city's friends and representatives in Parliament, the Mayor and the city council leadership should try to influence pending local government legislation so that what is eventually adopted allows Lviv the greatest measure of autonomy. (Remind government officials about the European Charter of Local

- Self-Government, and obligations being a member of the Council of Europe.)
2. The City should lobby the national government to adopt legislation that allows Lviv to keep half (50%) of what it collects in taxes. (That is a real incentive to do a better job collecting taxes.)
 3. The list of what kinds of taxes local governments can adopt should be expanded and clarified.
 4. Cities should be allowed to keep at least half of the money raised from the sale of government-owned property to private business firms and individuals.
 5. Legislation that allows local self-governments to establish taxes on private properties and set up the administrative structure necessary to collect these taxes fairly and efficiently should be adopted as soon as possible, so guidelines are in place well before they need to be applied.

Once a lobbying agenda is decided upon and submitted to the appropriate elected and appointed state and oblast public officials, the Mayor's office should monitor the progress of the adoption of its items, and advise the people of Lviv about who is helping or hindering the process.

Besides promoting its interests in an organized way at oblast and state government levels, the city government needs to enhance its public image among its own residents. Here are some suggestions about things that can be done to accomplish that:

- Publish a community newsletter once every three months. Make 5,000 copies of it and distribute it to community and business organizations, housing associations, at neighborhood centers, among city government employee groups. The newsletter can include information about city issues and projects, upcoming public meetings, and the work of citizens advisory commissions (and notice of any vacancies on committees).
- Do in-service training for city officials whose jobs include contact with the general public. Teach them how to be friendly in their dealings, how to best seem helpful in answering or directing their inquiries, how to better adjust working in the new system where they serve the public (voters) as well as their supervisors.
- Produce a color brochure about Lviv. Print it in English. Distribute it to international delegations, special visitors, business prospects, and at and cultural trade expositions.

Responsibility for arranging these things can be assigned to the person in the mayor's office who is in charge of public relations. Funds to help pay for these projects should be sought from the Soros or the Eurasia Foundations.

