

Public Participation In Urban Planning: A Case Study Of Surat City Brts

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary planning theories acknowledge the value of community participation in the development processes of our built environment, suggesting that community involvement has the potential to achieve a more sustainable outcome. Research in this field indicates that citizen participation can generate trust, credibility and commitment regarding the implementation of policies. Public participation in urban planning is not only an important manifestation of the government's right to public democracy and it is an important measure to enhance the harmonious relationship between the government, the planning department and the people. It is also an important measure to ensure the tripartite sharing of planning achievements. However, it is of great practical significance to discuss the problems of public participation in urban planning because of the unsatisfactory public opinion, enthusiasm and participation effect of public participation in urban planning. This paper analyzes the significance of public participation in urban planning with a case study of Surat city BRTS, analyzes the existing situations and involvement of public in BRT System. The activity of community participation is based on the principle that the built and natural environment works better if citizen are active and involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumer.

KEYWORDS: Public participation, urban planning, stakeholders in urban development, BRT System

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I. INTRODUCTION

Public participation is the involvement of the people in creation and management of their built and natural environment. Under the premise of very limited urban resources, urban planning mistakes can lead to huge waste and in the process of urban planning, stakeholders are active and extensive participation is an important factor to ensure the objective and scientific nature of urban planning. It is clear that in order to ensure the realization of fair and balanced urban development; several sectors of society are impacted. Decision-making for equitable urban development ought to involve all those who will be affected by the decisions to be made. It must be recognized that all stakeholders' values and concerns are legitimate and should be taken into consideration. This is ensured by seeking deliberate and significant participation from all stakeholders. Contemporary planning theories acknowledge the value of community participation in the development processes of our built environment, suggesting that community involvement has the potential to achieve a more sustainable outcome. Over the past twenty years more than a dozen new megacities have emerged creating a new landscape for global urbanization. Based on the perspective of urban management, urban planning is the comprehensive development of urban construction to the specific period of construction and planning, so as to improve the rationality and intensification of urban resource application and maximize the role of urban resources. To a certain extent, urban planning is an important basis for urban construction and management. Public participation is a formal institutional arrangement that occupies an important place in urban planning work programs. However, in the actual planning operation, the public participation system is usually simplified and marginalized and the public does not really participate in the planning decision-making.

II. PURPOSES OF PARTICIPATION

- To involve citizens in planning and design decision making processes, and as a result, make it more likely they will work within established systems when seeking solutions to problems.
- To provide citizens with a voice in planning and decision making in order to improve plans, decisions, service delivery, and overall quality of the environment.

- To promote a sense of community by bringing together people who share common goals.
- Participation should be active and directed. Those who become involved should experience a sense of achievement.
- Traditional planning procedures should be reexamined to ensure that participation achieves more than a simple affirmation of the designers or planners intentions.

III. IMPORTANCE OF PARTICIPATION

- The planning system is meant to reflect the general wishes of the local community and there is a need on the local authority to consult widely during the formulation of a local plan and in the operation of the development.
- The fact that the council is made up of effected members ensures a certain level of representation, but wider public consultation is required.
- When a planning application is submitted the local authority publishes details in the local newspaper and in some circumstances, a notice is displayed adjacent to the site. In cases of special sensitivity, individual households in an affected area might be asked for their opinions or there may be a small public exhibition.
- However, in most cases, if members of the public wish to find out what is proposed they have to visit the planning department, request the material that has been submitted and examine it on the premises. They can then write to the planning committee if they have any objections.
- No matter what the scale of proposal, development control can be thought of as a process of negotiation: at its simplest, between the applicant and the local authority, with only rudimentary involvement by the public. In the most complex cases it involves a prolonged process of 'trading off' between parties, and high-profile public debate.
- Not all of the local authorities or the public's interest in a proposal will be in its visual form: they will also wish to consider its functional content; its impact on the environment (on traffic in particular) and on the local economy.
- However, we are concerned here with the visual modeling of proposals and the ways in which the traditional method of depositing plans and physical models is being replaced by digital methods which have the potential to be developed as interactive tools for use in the negotiation process.

IV. DETERMINATION OF GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The planning that accompanies the design of any participation program should first include a determination of participation goals and objectives. Participation goals will differ from time to time and from issue to issue. Participation is likely to be perceived differently depending on the type of issues, people involved and political setting in which it takes place; If differences in expectations and perception are not identified at the outset, and realistic goals are not made clear, the expectations of those involved in the participation program will likely not be met, and people will become disenchanted. To address participation effectively, the task should conceptualize what the objective is for involving citizens.

V. CASE STUDY

5.1. SURAT CITY PROFILE

Surat is located on the banks of River Tapi, which serves its course from the South-East to the South-West. It has apposition of the ninth largest urban area in the country (Registrar General & Census Commissioner, 2011). The city is famous for its textile trade, diamond cutting, and polishing industries. Area of Surat city is 326.51 Sq. Km. and population density is about 136.80 ppha as observed in 2011. Seven administrative zones- North Zone, South Zone, West Zone, East Zone, Central Zone, South-East Zone and South-West Zone divide the city geographically. Surat has radial road pattern with a combination of a grid iron pattern having a network of major and minor roads. Roads connect about 80% of the S.M.C area. There are seven main roads (corridors) that connect the CBD area.

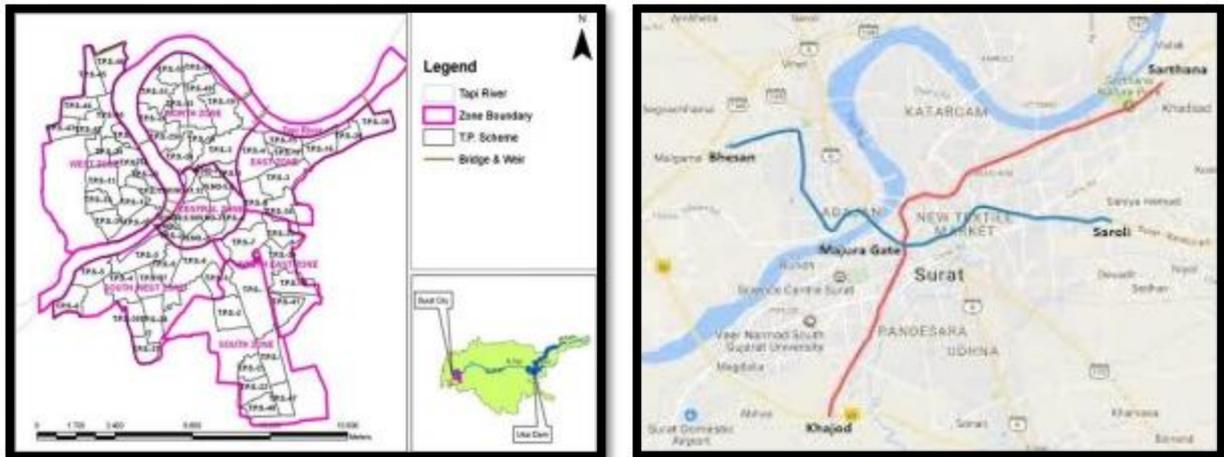


Figure 1-Surat city map (Source: Maps of India)

5.2. SURAT BRT SYSTEM

Surat BRT system intends to provide speedy, safe, pollution-free, reliable and an efficient public transit to the Citizens. Specially designed BRT Buses traversing on dedicated lanes along with a particular provision for other modes namely the cyclists, pedestrians, and mixed traffic. BRT system arterial road network have about 125 kilometers length in Surat. There are ten interchange stations proposed. On an average, around 15,000 passenger travel daily. The frequency of the bus is 5-8 minutes. The capacity of the bus is to carry 25 passengers. The stations situated in central median. Stations are equipped to issue tickets, bus information display and audio systems and have other support infrastructure. The off-board ticketing is not yet in practice. The use of the smart card is expected to be extensive in future.

Different questions responded by the commuters during the user-satisfaction survey were compiled and analyzed. Facts revealed that the most of the commuters were travelling on daily basis. Major emphasis over the lacking component in the system towards a facility of foot-over bridge connecting road-side footpaths to BRT bus station. Major issues identified were like overcrowding during peak hours, private vehicles travelling within and obstructing BRT lane, parking facility around stations, and absence of effective feeder system. Some consumers found to be satisfied with existing BRT facility. Major of commuter mass depicted the need of connectivity to railway station. Also, the need for daily commuter pass was identified.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Participation of people in BRT System of Surat is moderate some BRTS Users are satisfied with the service that is provided and others are not also, the fare being charged is found reasonable. There are some issues like Overcrowding and private vehicles in dedicated BRT lane obstructing the bus movement were highlighted. A facility of parking alongside of the bus stations, feeder system and foot-over bridge is anticipated. At present only two corridors are in operation and hence, the demand for other routes and locations are seem appropriate. Citizens are want these services as the prices are affordable, reasonable compared to other modes. Certain modifications if made, the existing service can sustain for a longer duration with effective mass movement on the roads of Surat city. Implementations in existing system were found to be effective in future for the public participation and also for the planning and environment point of view. Planners have been constantly looking for ways to receive feedback from the public during the entire process.

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