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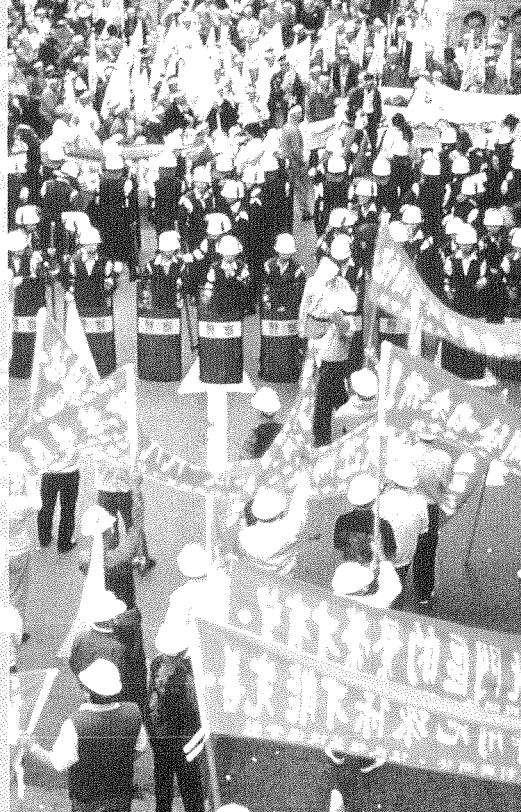
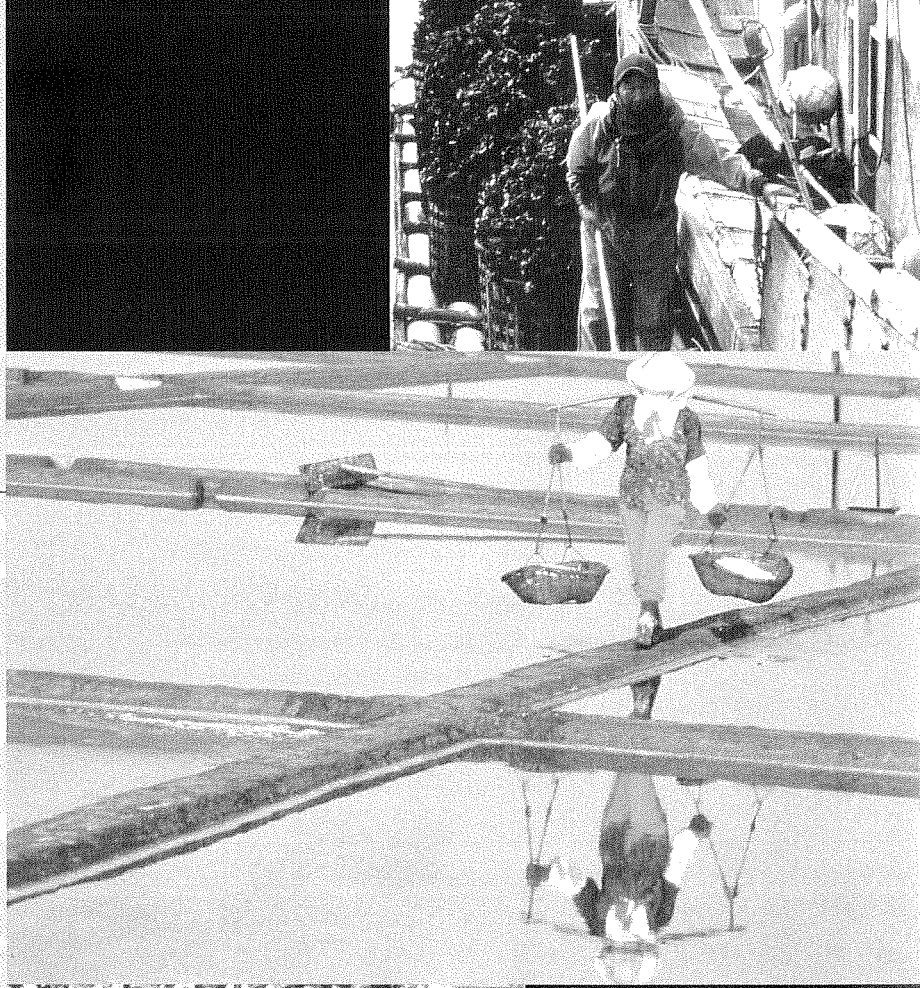
A Refrain with a

Participatory design is rooted in fundamental American traditions of the right to assemble and civil disobedience. Protesting urban renewal as a scheme of Negro removal was a vital expression of the civil rights movement and the birth of advocacy planning.

Photos and graphics: Randolph T. Hester, Jr.

Citizen participation distinguishes placemaking in the United States. But the dominant form of participation, advocacy design and planning, is so institutionalized and parochialized that it no longer meets many of its goals. At best it subverts creative efforts through conflict mediation and, in fact, is a major contributor to several debilitating problems of our time. Therefore, I am issuing a call to supplant advocacy with a new approach to local citizen participation in community design.

View



Cultivating a Visionary Synthesis

Increasingly, American approaches to participatory design are being imported by new democracies around the world. The community design plan for the Tseng-Wein River area of coastal Taiwan illustrates the opportunities and challenges in emerging participatory societies that lack U.S. traditions of participatory planning. The text and photos that follow tell the story of that region and the plan. ▶

*Photos: Commonwealth magazine and Randolph T. Hester, Jr.
Graphics: Randolph T. Hester, Jr.*

In this article, I trace the development of local participation¹ from its historical roots through the civil rights movement, and I examine the multiple impacts that movement has had on the way we make places today. I uncover a participatory gridlock that compels me to urge a new local participation with a broader view of the public good.

The Roots of Participation

Participatory design in the U.S. is buttressed by principles on which our government was founded and values held dear since the inception of the nation. These provide both the ideological and operational underpinnings of local participation.²

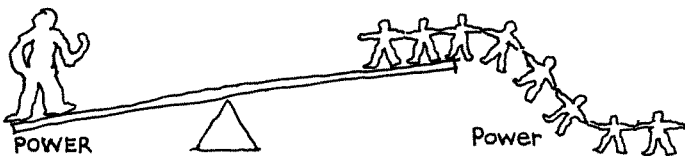
Much of the political discussion surrounding the founding of the U.S. centered on the role of local participation. Benjamin Franklin considered active partic-

basis of citizenship was also derived from face-to-face participation.

Not surprisingly, the Constitution's First Amendment grants not only freedom of speech but also the right to peaceably assemble and the right to petition the government to redress grievances. These rights, along with those embedded in the Tenth Amendment, which empower states and the people, protect local participatory activity.

Equally powerful in the nation's collective memory is civil disobedience. Henry David Thoreau posited a corollary to Jefferson's moral imperative to participate in government: as one must obey just laws, one must disobey unjust ones. This theme of civil disobedience is recalled repeatedly in local activism. It is the foundation of Saul Alinsky's *Rules for Radicals* as well as the central justification Martin Luther King, Jr., used in his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and throughout the civil rights movement. It is one basis for today's militia movement.

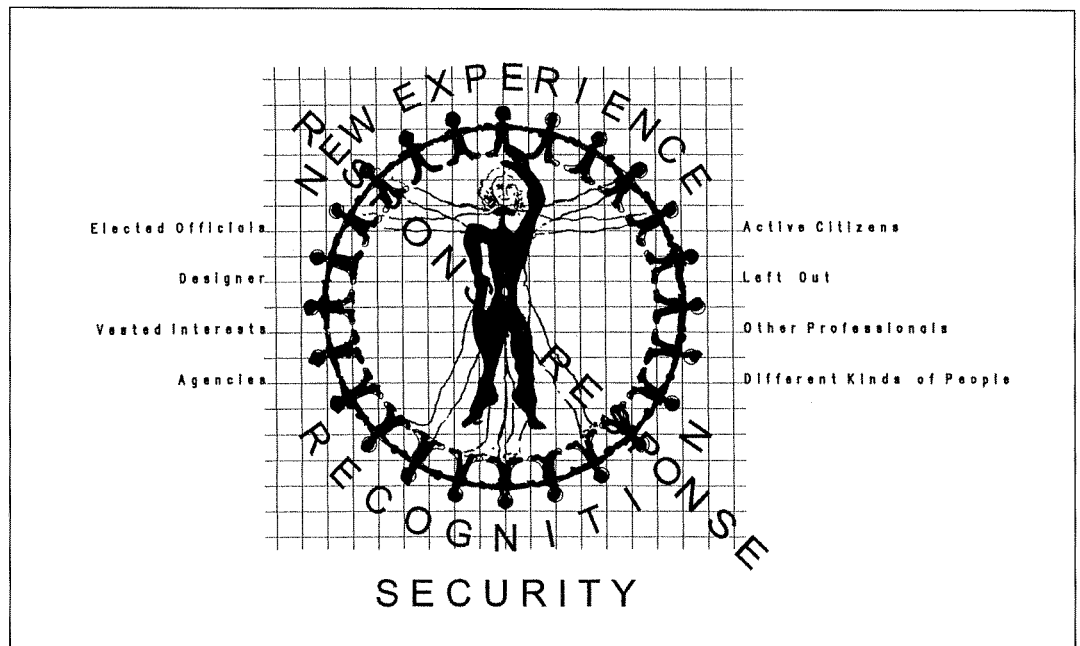
Americans have traditionally formed groups to solve problems. To objective observers this, as much as or more than the supremacy of the individual, distinguishes the U.S. from other nations. In *Democracy in America*, Alexis de Tocqueville noted that Americans of all ages, conditions and predispositions were constantly forming associations for great and small undertakings. He observed that Americans were unable to act in the public interest by themselves. Importantly, Tocqueville regarded these local associations posi-



Above: Saul Alinsky, in his book *Rules for Radicals*, defined strategies for equalizing power through direct participatory action — techniques that were useful in both labor organizing and city design.

ipation in government a moral imperative because every citizen's opinion was important.³ The archetypal expression of this is the New England town meeting, at which attendance is expected and each citizen may voice his or her opinion. For Thomas Jefferson, the

Left: Participatory design is based on a particularly American characteristic of forming associations to reduce dependence on government. Human fulfillment and community development objectives are so defined that participatory efforts are the common ground of both progressive and conservative politics.



tively, because they replace dependence upon government.⁴ Herein lies the philosophical common ground of progressive community designers and anti-government Republicans.

Andrew Jackson concretized the populist ideals for local self-help, private and public barn raising, and decentralization. Jackson held that the yeoman was more capable than the bureaucrat. The Agricultural Extension Service and early social work projects, such as settlement houses, put the principle of self-help into operation. They guided the making of civic works of all sorts, from town halls to streets to garbage disposal, through volunteerism.

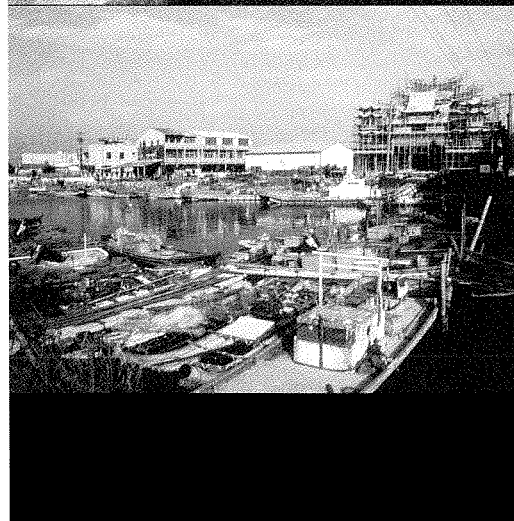
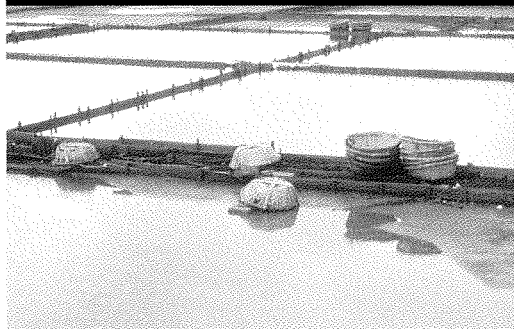
For more than a hundred years, the day-to-day operations of most American local governments were managed directly by elected officials, and most civil plans were created and improved through voluntary efforts. But by the late 1800s, the inability of elected officials to deal with increasingly complex urban problems and widespread corruption led to calls for local government reform. Ultimately, the city manager form of local government replaced elected commissioner-managers, professionalizing city management and reducing government corruption.

One of the unforeseen side effects of professionalized city management was the separation of citizens from decisions about their local environments. Professionals assumed more and more responsibility for daily operations and community design. Citizens gladly gave up the chores, and professionals gladly took over not only the chores but also the power associated with their execution. Thus began a long, slow decline in hands-on citizen control of local places, and an unconscious undermining of local participatory democracy, planning and design.

Civil Rights

If participatory community design slumbered in the hypnotic trance of professionalized city management, it was reawakened with a start by the civil rights movement. Issues of racism and poverty unimagined by the authors of the Thirteenth Amendment exploded into the American consciousness. Civil rights leaders issued the challenge in the precise words of Franklin, Jefferson, the First Amendment and Thoreau.

In his April 16, 1963, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," King justified local civil disobedience by laying claim to the traditional tenets of participatory democracy — with Shadrack, Meshack and Abednego, Socrates and the Boston Tea Party supporting.⁵ The challenge for



► The Tseng-Wen River area is home to a vibrant fishing and aquaculture economy that provides sixteen thousand jobs and a centuries-old way of life. People live in villages like Chi-Ku, Chiang-Chun and Pei-Men, which are surrounded by lagoons, mangrove forest and wetlands that attract more than two hundred species of birds, including the rare Black-faced Spoonbill. ►



► Fishermen were shocked and outraged when an industrial complex, the Binnan project, proposed filling Chi-Ku Lagoon and thousands of acres of wetland. Their jobs and way of life were to be sacrificed for the Binnan Complex, supported by the President of Taiwan and powerful corporation. A government-sponsored environmental review seemed and seems likely to be rubber stamped in spite of serious conse-

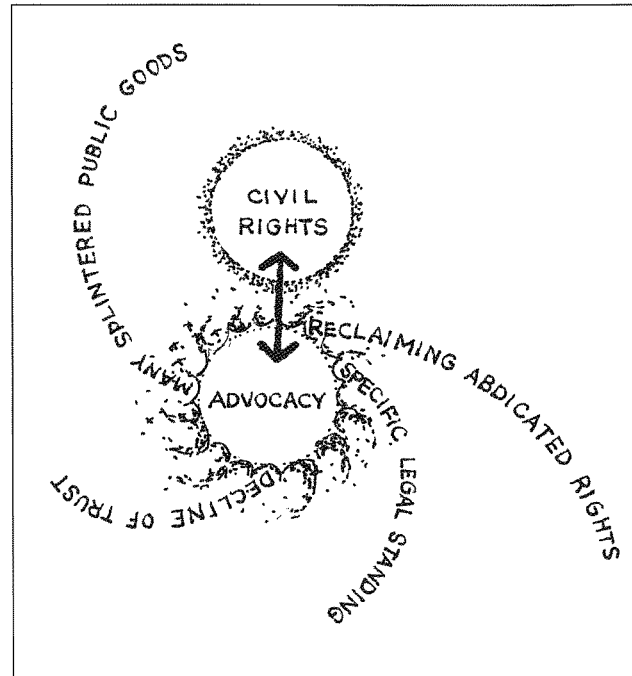
quences like inadequate water and violations of Agenda 21 principles of biodiversity—two aboriginal village will be flooded to secure water from three watersheds away and the black-faced spoonbill will be sent into an extinction vortex from habitat loss).

But the fishermen had little legal recourse. Bloody protests resulted and continue. Simultaneously the fishermen and a local legislator ►

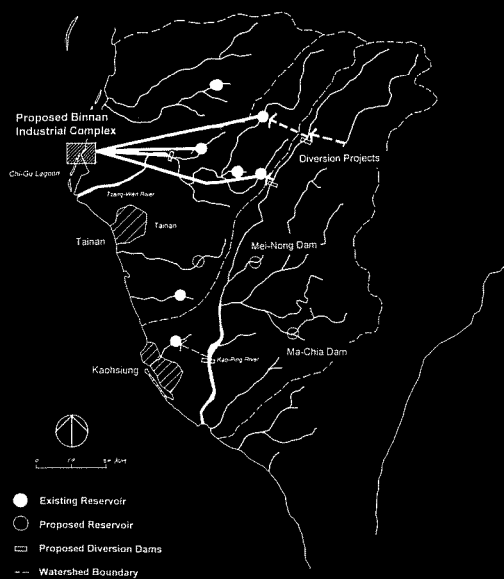
the white moderate, King argued, was his or her inability to choose justice over order. This could just as well have been a professional challenge to designers whose very work was creating order.

Although the civil rights movement attended primarily to legal, educational and social issues, the physical city was the battleground. Plans for urban renewal and freeways in low-income black neighborhoods became the focus of civil protests and local participatory design.

Advocacy planning was created especially to serve the civil rights struggle by preventing urban renewal (often called “Negro removal”) and freeway construction from destroying the neighborhoods of low-income



Map of Related Water Supply and Diversion Projects for the Binnan Industrial Complex



ethnic groups. An advocate planner, as Paul Davidoff described, served low-income ethnic clients as a lawyer who exclusively advocates his or her client’s interests.⁶ Most of us who practice community design today were initiated into participatory design through advocacy.

Advocacy planning required extensive community participation, not only to create plans that met clients’ needs but also to empower low-income residents to improve their lives and environments and to be active in community life. This new approach to planning embraced disorder to achieve justice, forever changing American city design. Even more, the civil rights movement rekindled local participatory democracy in every aspect of city life and changed the way citizens participated in city making.

Reclaiming abandoned rights. When poor black people began protesting urban renewal, more affluent citizens smugly thought, “That couldn’t happen to me” but were shocked to realize they, we, none of us, had power over our local environments. We couldn’t get something as simple as a stop sign put up in our neighborhoods because we had given up the right. Six months of bureaucracy separated us from a decision and then the answer might be, “We’ll study it.” Citizens all over the country began reclaiming what Tocqueville observed was a characteristic of the U.S. — local associations doing what government might be expected to do.

Specific legal standing. During the civil rights era, national community development legislation required widespread and maximum feasible participation at the local level. The Model Cities Program ushered in institutionalized participation in poor neighborhoods and federal revenue-sharing required similar participation in each city.

This led to extraordinary local success stories. Yet in some cases, citizens attained more power than they were willing or able to assume responsibility for. Power required too much time, effort, unselfishness and vision to assume the responsibility.

The environmental impact review, part of the landmark National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) required citizen granted local citizen participation special legal standing. Unfortunately, it largely conferred the power to stop projects, an unexpected by-product of the legislation.

Many splintered public goods. Few people questioned the growth-oriented plans of cities until the civil rights movement ushered in advocacy planning, which called for planners to develop separate designs for poor communities and to argue for those plans regardless of the larger public impact. Citizens of all persuasions realized that the single city plan didn’t represent them either. In fact, that single agenda didn’t represent most people.

Advocacy, conceived to address issues of racism and poverty, inspired multiple city and neighborhood plans representing multiple vested interests. This effectively ended the idea of a single, citywide public good. These many splintered plans, each seeking positive outcomes for individual neighborhoods and homogenous cities, have debilitated wholistic, visionary public plans. Any broad city vision is likely to be attacked because it violates some narrow, vested interest.

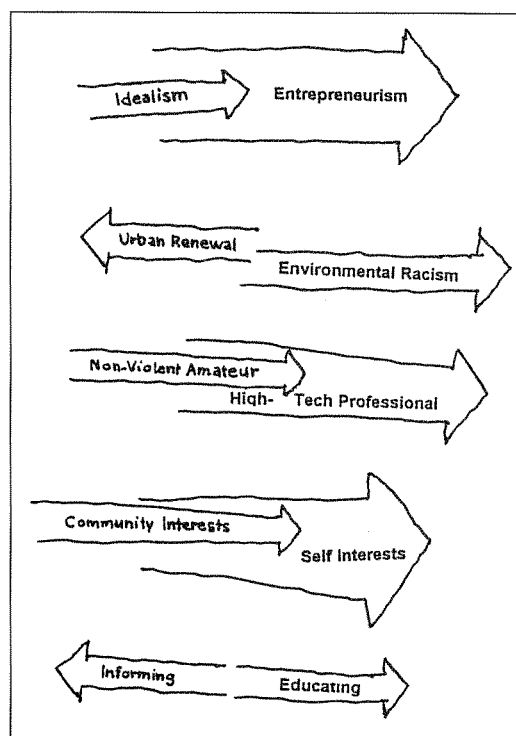
Decline of trust. Until the 1960s, citizens had increasingly trusted scientists, elected leaders, police authority, city managers and experts who formulated city plans. But the urban renewal and freeway battles associated with the civil rights movement called that trust into question, replacing it with skepticism. Bogus science justifying growth and environmentally disastrous projects turned skepticism to disdain; citizens began to dismiss science as relative in every case because hired-gun scientists gave competing scientific spins on almost every decision of short-term economic import. As a result, the value of science, truth, experts and rational planning was debunked.

This is worrisome because society has a desperate need to integrate the best available knowledge about biodiversity and sustainability into decision-making at the local level. The mistrust of leaders is shortchanging participatory efforts, since local participation never fulfills its potential unless there is strong local leadership.

Recent Shifts in Participatory Design

The civil rights movement impacted participatory design directly and profoundly, yet transformations in local participation since then make it wildly different than it was during the civil rights era. Although it is impossible to characterize participation throughout the country, five trends can be noted.

From idealism to entrepreneurship. For a moment, the civil rights movement held up local participation as



Opposite page: Advocacy planning served the civil rights movement but it has had profound unintentional side effects that run counter to its original goals.

Left: Participatory design has been transformed dramatically over the past three decades. Some trends evolved, some revised, all became more complex and varied depending upon local context.

Opposite page, top: Grassroots groups once were subjected to top-down, manipulative education programs. Now they use sophisticated educational campaigns to influence plans or introduce innovations.

Opposite page, below: Successful participation requires a careful balancing of private and public interest.

the great hope for equality and a just society. Early participatory designers, drawn to that hope, were extraordinarily idealistic. Most of us didn't know how to do what we were trying to do, but luckily the establishment people were blockheads, providing opportunities for grassroots action.

Doing participatory planning and community development now is extremely difficult compared to thirty years ago. Idealism seldom suffices. Bureaucrats seldom make mistakes. They protect their interests through risk management and standard operating procedures. Legal minutiae govern every aspect of collective action and community development. Moreover, community design now depends on knowledge of real estate, bank practices and housing loans, not just good intentions and protest. As a result of these factors and more, idealism has changed to entrepreneurship.

From urban renewal to environmental racism. Urban renewal and freeways were the main threats to poor

tance, and it remains much more difficult to accomplish any collective goal in a poor neighborhood compared to a wealthier one.

From non-violent amateurs to high-tech professionals. Participatory methods have transformed from unsophisticated techniques inspired by the non-violence of Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr., to high technology games, entertaining stimulations, mediations and modified nominal group techniques. Can you imagine Saul Alinsky's shock at this evolution? From baked beans to computer-generated alternatives and standard operating procedures. But with improved participatory techniques, designers are much better equipped today to design meaningfully with citizens.

From community to self interest. Local participation during the civil rights era revolved around community purpose, hence the name "community design." There was a sense in poor neighborhoods that "we are all in this together." The assumption was that if



Above left: Racial exclusion targeted by the civil rights movement evolved from color barriers to equally insidious environmental racism.

Above right: Today participatory design entails high technology games, simulations and mediation techniques.

neighborhoods thirty years ago. Now these places face new threats, as well as old ones only recently discovered. The power of advocacy to address issues of race and poverty has not only been diluted, but also is being used to exclude poor people of color.

For example, as wealthy citizens mastered local participation and environmental risks have become clearer, poor communities have received a disproportionate number of unwanted and dangerous land uses. Such environmental racism restricts access to desired resources and poses health risks unimagined several decades ago.

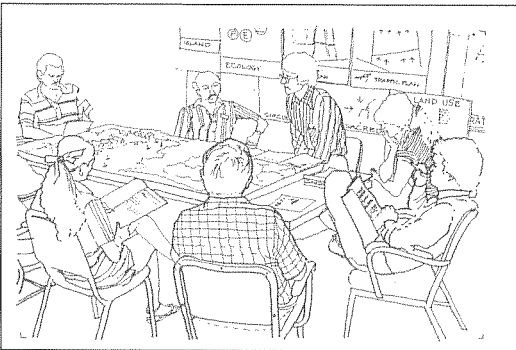
Issues like these have split the focus of participation between positive community development and resis-



leadership were developed in poor communities, then those people would stay and be leaders. But, many of those people, when they get resources, abandon their neighborhoods.

This is exacerbated by the fact that every community desires to achieve what the social class just above it has. The environments that people create represent the best possible life they can achieve. That life is often defined by others; environmental status-seeking results in a bigger house, a private pool, a wider street, a fancier gated neighborhood — all of which diminish community.

Public life in America is always a combination of community and private interests. The balance shifts from



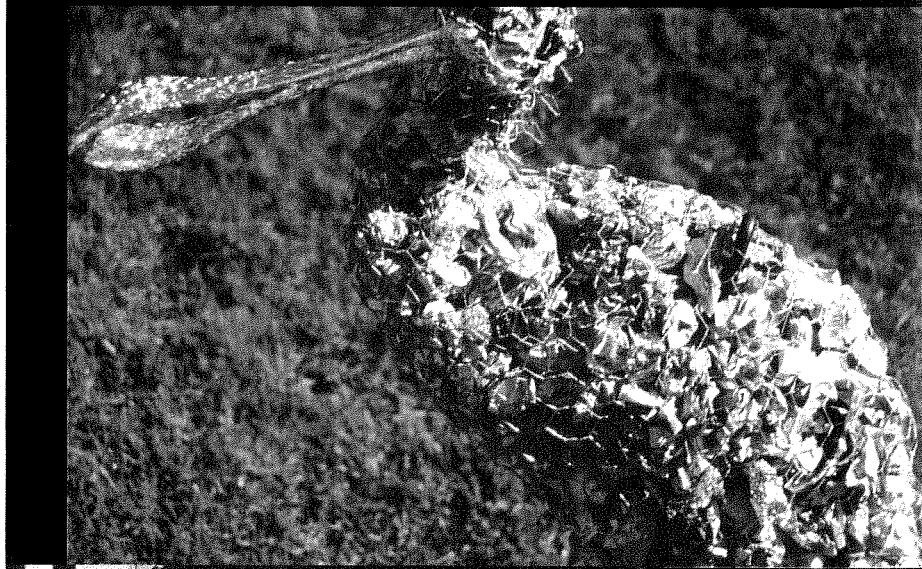
time to time in one direction or the other. Citizens today are more openly motivated by self-interests; they are usually short-sighted; local efforts are increasingly segregated along class and racial lines; citizens are increasingly sophisticated in their knowledge of participation law; and often they are fearful. NIMBY, LULU and NOOS actions, among others, motivate citizens; SLAPP suits counter.

From informing to educating. When Arnstein characterized the different degrees of citizen participation thirty years ago, she looked unfavorably on the use of participation as a process to inform or educate the public; after all, government representatives often simply informed citizens of plans after they had been finalized.⁷

Today grassroots groups use sophisticated educational campaigns themselves to influence the outcome of plans or introduce innovations. They frequently do research to discover what other groups have done in similar situations, using newsletters and computer networks that link thousands of local groups. In addition, they often do primary field research aided by scientists, specialists and advocacy organizations. Education, once aimed to manipulate citizens at the grassroots, has become one of the most powerful grassroots tools.

Wanted: A Refrain with a View

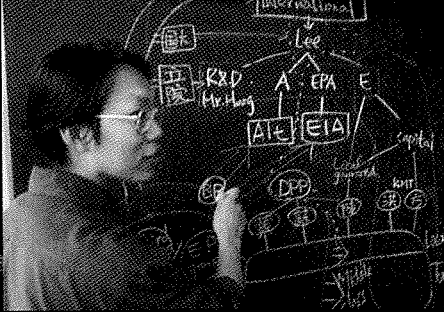
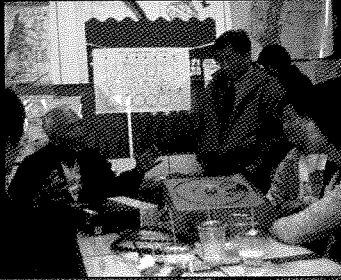
Participatory design today remains rooted in historic values dear to American citizens. Associations, civil disobedience, local control, populism and more are



► solicited assistance from National Taiwan University, the University of California Berkeley and American participatory designers. The resulting work reflects both advocacy-era confrontation and a participatory refrain with a view.

The local legislator and students from NTU and Berkeley have orga-

nized massive public education campaigns within the watershed and worldwide. Local events have attracted thousands of regional visitors to learn about the fragile ecology; sculptural spoonbill migration on the Berkeley campus kicked off the international education campaign. ►



► Alternative plans have been developed by a team comprised of Berkeley and NTU scholars and experts from various fields working directly with local fishing groups. Local fishermen had to teach scientists and designers about little-known patterns of nature and culture through many day-long boat trips to remote wetland locations (little scientific study had been done on spoonbill behavior but fishermen knew their patterns intimately). Local workshops are tedious, often going through three translations for each speaker. Scientific maps had to ►

alive in grassroots planning. More people participate in local planning than ever before, and more people volunteer their time, energy and talent. Local participation enjoys unprecedented legal authority, educative capacity and technology.

Unfortunately, the result in many cases has been gridlock, not participatory utopia. The capacity of participatory design to address issues of local environmental racism and poverty diminished as advocacy became the planning approach of choice for other interests. Effective advocacy allowed powerful, local interests — both new and old — to dominate, creating many splintered special interest plans, all empowered by participatory process and associated legislation with the capacity to block other actions. Conflict mediation, the best recent participatory innovation, is seldom able to do more than divide the public good among the most powerful interests.

This is due to more than advocacy gone mainstream. A second problem is that local control has become the political dumping ground for intractable problems. Third, local control has been illusory, granting the power to stop actions without investing localities with the powers they need to solve problems. As a result, citizens are unwilling and unable to accept responsibility at the neighborhood level. Fourth, non-local authority has not provided leadership to balance selfish neighborhood interests which, in turn, have discounted most attempts at visionary leadership. Fifth, advocacy planning was particularly ill-equipped to develop and use the integrated science and systemic interconnectedness required for ecological sustainability.

Advocacy served and serves a purpose. Otherwise, it would not have come to so dominate American city making. But we are faced with a challenge to invent new, local participatory planning processes that better address today's issues. I believe the new process most needed to replace parochialized advocacy creates what I call a local refrain with a view.

A Refrain

The practice of local participation must be shifted dramatically towards a more holistic and inclusive view, which can be illustrated with a musical analogy. Advocacy encouraged the public to sing new, individual verses until no one remembered the words of the civic refrain — what we sing with everyone else in our communities. We need to learn how.

Certainly, methods that teach empathy and demonstrate systemic interdependence should be used more in participatory processes. Techniques such as role-playing, listening, Lost on the Moon and shared goal-setting shake participants out of their narrow, vested interests. Transactive, community-building techniques like these follow a welcome trend towards consensus building and away from adversarial planning and litigation. But they often create a refrain without a vision, uninspired status quo places.

A View: Visionary Synthesis

To achieve a refrain with a view requires a visionary synthesis that takes into account various vested interests, their content, personality and power. This synthesis must reveal opportunities that most people have not recognized, extract broad civic vision from community participants and culminate in the creation of inspired places that touch the heart. This can be done by a visionary leader like Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr., of Charleston, S.C., a citizen with public foresight like Zel Young in Mount Vernon, Wash., or a grassroots group with regional perspective like Friends of Runyon Canyon in Hollywood. But in many cases, multi-insightful participation depends on the community designer. This is a vital role, often abdicated in favor of facilitation or mediation.

Participatory vision can be nurtured through creative processes like synectics, Take Part workshops, getting a gestalt and other architectural approaches to problem-solving. Visionary consensus can be implemented incrementally by employing community building and visionary approaches in concert, simultaneously. For example, consider the use of cross-linked participation in contrast to segregated participation.

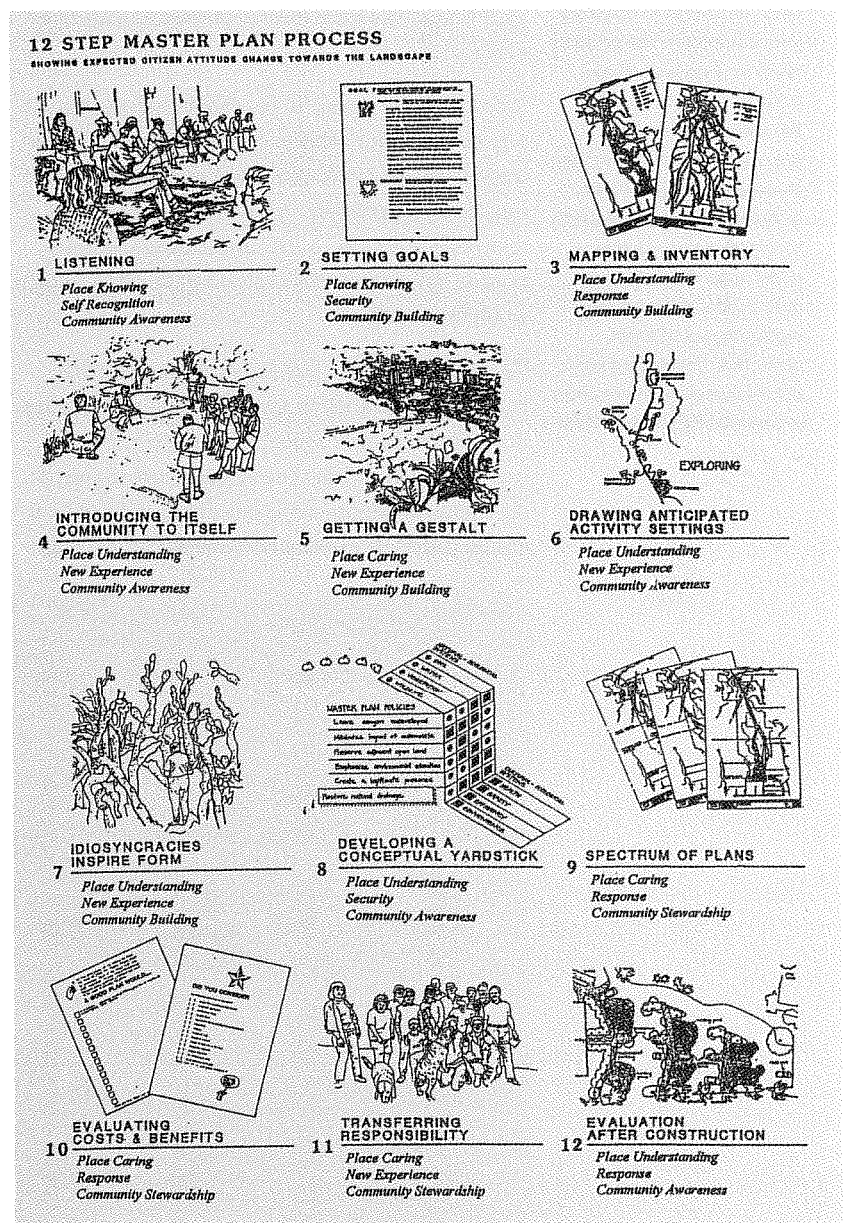
Cross-linked participation. Balkanized participation produces local groups with similar goals moving on parallel tracks without communicating or cooperating, and, in many cases, undermining outcomes that could be mutually beneficial. Cross-linked participation begins to stitch these efforts together, breaking barriers of locality, region, class, ideology and culture.

For example, the Chesapeake Bay experiment engages citizens throughout that watershed to cooperate to improve water quality by identifying local sacred places. The idea is that people who are at odds over local private property rights and no-growth battles will most often agree about the specifics of places that are sacred — unique to their locale and essential to

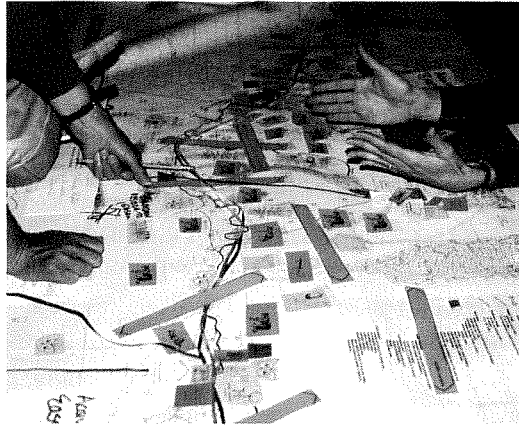
community life. When the discussion moves beyond the ideological growth — no-growth barrier to a place-specific dialogue, a strong consensus can emerge about what to protect and where and how to develop.

The first demonstration experiment was in Union County, Pa., a hundred miles away from the bay along its main tributary, the Susquehanna River. Local people, who had little interest in the bay's water quality, identified creeks and drainageways that were central to the community's identity. These watershed features were among the most sacred to people, regardless of their position on property rights. A first-ever plan is now being developed by the county in cooperation with local citizens to preserve the water-courses and manage water quality. In this way, non-

The twelve-step participatory design process used by the author has expected outcomes from each step in terms of design content, place relationship, human fulfillment and community development. The process relies on orderly steps to promote fairness and the use of science and more disorderly steps to encourage creativity and innovation.



Right: Community design workshop for a regional open space network in the Santa Monica Mountains.



Far right: Research on the Soquel Demonstration State Forest near Santa Cruz, Calif., depends on citizen science volunteers. The project seeks to restore steelhead trout and coho salmon to the Soquel watershed.



Below right: Workshops in the community design process in Yountville, Calif., involved citizens walking the town under scripted guidance to define what the most memorable images of town were, then developing specific design plans to enhance or improve those memories.

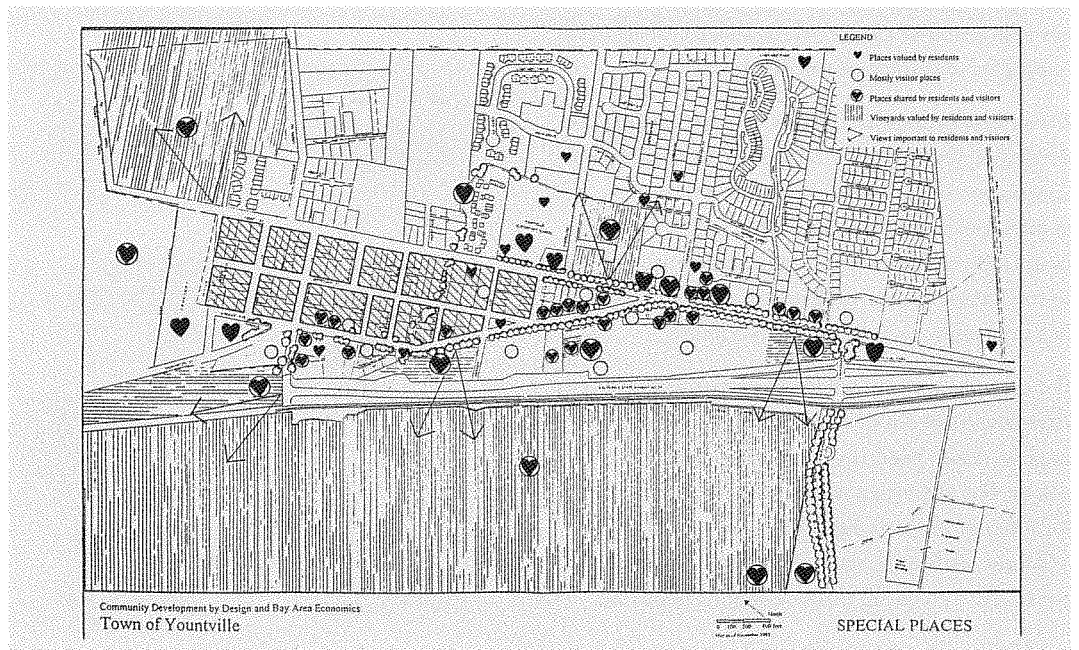
point source pollution problems can be addressed in many different communities, not by federal mandate, but by getting local people of different persuasions to jointly identify what is most important to their sense of place.

Renewable participation. To be relevant today, participatory design must be able to contribute directly to the creation of sustainable communities. Of all our institutions, local participation is best situated to help reform personal day-to-day unsustainable behavior because it represents the local part of thinking globally and acting locally.

The key is to institute participatory processes that help increase people's awareness of ecological implications of their choices about housing size and daily transportation; and that encourage people to consider the cumulative impact of their actions, confront local groups with their recent unsustainable politics, offer

concrete examples by building more sustainable local habitats, and create local institutions that can endure and thrive beyond knee-jerk crises.

Combining urban ecological science with participatory methods requires experimental approaches to city-making like Urban Ecology's *Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area*. The *Blueprint* was developed by hundreds of Bay Area residents working with international experts on various aspects of sustainability. The focus of these interactions between lay participants and scientists was a series of educational workshops in which experts made presentations then worked with citizens to apply scientific and technical principles to designing the Bay Area. This forces the science experts to turn their knowledge into specifics of city design and forced citizens to consider complex data rather than NIMBY approaches to urban development.



More importantly, an overhaul of NEPA to encourage sustainable innovations and discourage frivolous litigation would make local participation more sustainable. The EIR process that resulted from NEPA legislation has two major problems regarding creating a more ecologically sound city.

First, the act suggested that the preservation of nature is good, which works well in wilderness environmental reviews, but in urban contexts preserving nature is not the same as preserving biodiversity. As a result, the EIR review forces subdividers to set aside open space (“nature is good”), but most often the open space preserved is in fragments that do not link core habitats, eventually resulting in biodiversity loss. Or the EIR finds a low-density subdivision perfectly acceptable, although it violates many principles of sustainable city design. All you need to do to mitigate negative environmental impacts is widen streets. NEPA needs to be revisited to strengthen principles of urban biodiversity and sustainable city design.

Second, the EIR process needs revisiting to strengthen protection of poorer communities. At present, environmental review leads to dumping unwanted land uses in poor neighborhoods and prevention of social service uses and access to open spaces in wealthy neighborhoods. Wealthy and—or professional communities use the participatory of legal rights of NEPA to abuse its intents.

Third, the process is so bureaucratized that it stifles creativity in making cities more sustainable. Changing the rules would lead to a period of experimentation that is sorely needed.

Fourth, the citizen right to sue leads to frivolous suits that are driven by selfish interest, not the public good. A clarification of biodiversity and sustainable intents should limit legal action.

Reflective participation. The increasing ability to decentralize education provides the possibility to localize science and thereby reduce mistrust of it. More thoughtful, even meditative, local participatory design should result. One model is the Conrad, Montana, Study Group, which has met for years to research, discuss and think about alternative actions for the town. The step in conflict resolution of listing areas of uncertainty, the Agricultural Extension Service, Friends’ meetings and citizen science create foundations for other reflective participation.

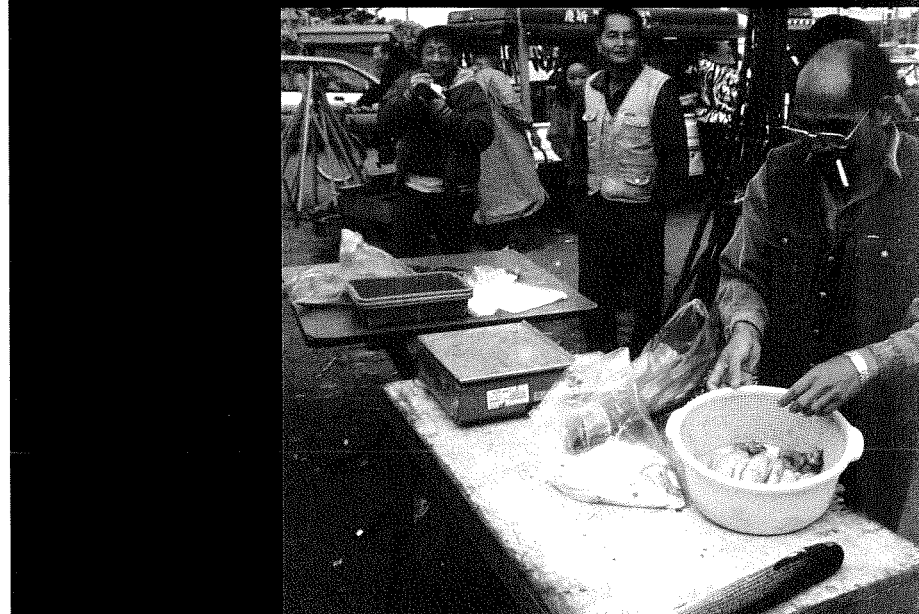


► be localized. Decisions are infrequently made at workshops, requiring instead thoughtful family discussion out of public view.

The alternative plan rejects the petrochemical complex and reallocates water to fishing, aquaculture, ecotourism, value-added industry

and high technology. A coastal highway is likewise rejected because of damage to the wetland upon which the existing and future fishing economy depends. Wetland critical for the spoonbill survival are set aside for conservation and fishing.

Urban development is directed to existing ►



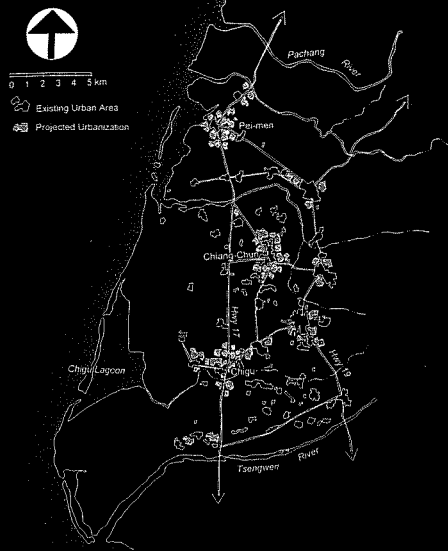


► towns and away from fragile habitats. Eco-tourism experiments have been widely popular. An ecological center is on the drawing boards and a salt museum has been proposed. Local organizations have been strengthened through the participatory effort and have made unusual cross-linked coalitions with competing towns and the few supportive government agencies.

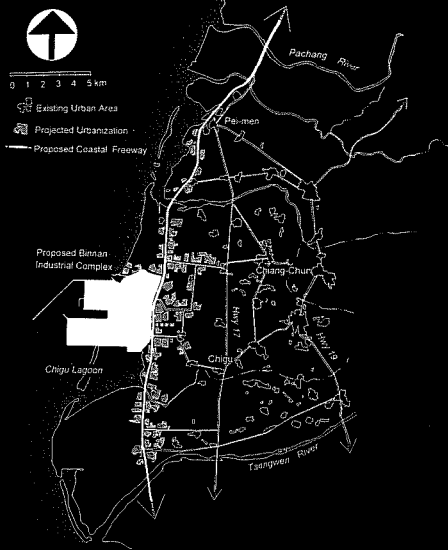
In spite of all these participatory success, the environmental assessment of the petrochemical complex is still likely to be approved. It is not clear what action will then be required but the combination of international outrage and local empowerment constitutes a new force in grassroots community design in Taiwan.

—Randolph T. Hester, Jr.

Projected Growth with Ecotourism and Green Industry



Projected Growth with Binnan Industrial Complex



To elaborate on one example, the Cornell Lab of Ornithology brings together ecologists and volunteers who are trained to do research in complex processes like the dispersal and spread of diseases. Important discoveries about conjunctivitis, among other research topics, have been made through this program.

Neighborhood science similarly monitors water quality, tree health and toxics in communities around the country. In the Soquel watershed near Santa Cruz, Calif., the state forestry department is engaged in ongoing research to determine how to improve the salmon habitat. Citizens volunteer to do fish and insect counts under the supervision of field scientists. Improvements to streamside vegetation, gravel and stream banks and changes in forest practices have significantly improved fish habitat and urban water quality.

Refocused participation. We need to refocus on the fundamental reason participatory design was embraced thirty years ago: environmental justice. Readjusting the vision of “Letters from a Birmingham Jail” in today’s light offers three day-to-day practica:

- (1) Local participation can best enhance a sense of community when that intention is consciously pursued, even at the expense of other worthy objectives.
- (2) Local participation can overcome environmental injustices only when the process precludes pushing those injustices onto a less powerful locality.
- (3) Local participation can empower the disempowered only if it does not continually empower the already powerful.

Advocacy alone cannot be expected to solve environmental injustices. Approaches like filing *amicus civicae* briefs and cross-linking to benefit poor communities need to be championed.

Local checks and regional balances. For a refrain with a view to work most effectively, however, new forms of governance are required. Effective community participation depends equally on local empowerment and strong non-local authority — with a dynamic, continuous tension between the two.

This requires two counteracting forces, one closer to the grassroots, the other closer to the top than present city and county government. The grassroots must be empowered with the authority and responsibility for positive local action. This empowers neighborhood

government with some of the authority of present city and county government, which it would replace.

The non-local balance to local control is best situated at both the national and regional levels. This requires empowerment of regional government with a clear delineation of jurisdiction, preferably along bioregional lines, to balance parochial interests and to enforce ecological sustainability and environmental justice.

This duality should spawn visionary, self and community interest planning that engages people at the grassroots with real power, face-to-face decision-making and caring, yet is balanced with bioregional authority. This would place appropriate value on incrementalism, yet prevent narrow, local focus without larger public vision.

Conclusion

There remains extraordinary power in collective, grassroots participation. Groups still are able to do things together that they could never do independently. Although there is nothing inherent in the process of local participation that guarantees positive change, it is one of the best investments of time and energy in effecting positive personal and city metamorphosis.

But local participatory design needs another major reformation. We must invent techniques, processes, policy and legislation that support that reformation. In this article, I have outlined the characteristics of a new form of participation in community-making. Down with parochialized advocacy! Up with a refrain with a view!

Notes

1. Local participation refers to citizen participation in community design, often called participatory design or grassroots design. Although each of these has a slightly different meaning, they are taken here as a single entity, more alike than different.
2. This sections borrows heavily from lecture notes for a course, "Citizen Participation in the Planning Process," taught at the University of California, Berkeley. I am indebted to Marcia McNally and Ed Blakely for their ideas.
3. In practice, only the opinions and participation of land-holding white males counted.
4. How these ideas related to community development is described in R. Warren, *Perspectives on the American Community* (New York: Rand McNally, 1973).
5. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," in T. Lowi, Ed., *Private Life and Public Order* (New York: Norton, 1968), 45-54.
6. Paul Davidoff, "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 31:4 (1965), 331.
7. Sherry R. Arnstein, "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners* 35:4 (July 1969), 216-224.