The Role of Participatory Democracy in Achieving Environmental Sustainability:

A Review of Community Engagement in
Regional Transport Planning in South East Queensland

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Abstract

This study explores the role that more participatory, more direct democracy can play in achieving steps towards sustainability in western nations. More specifically, the study focuses on the present difficulties of implementing sustainable transport plans, and on the possible benefits of improved community engagement in regional transport planning. The primary aim of the study is to identify opportunities for achieving sustainable transport outcomes in the metropolitan region of South East Queensland, Australia.

Theoretical literature is reviewed in order to bridge three relatively isolated areas of research: (1) participation in democratic political theory; (2) participation in planning theory; and (3) participation in the theory of environmental decision-making for sustainability. Social learning through participation in dialogue and decision-making for sustainability is identified as the missing link in most attempts to achieve sustainability. Based on the theoretical literature, a framework of participatory planning for sustainability is proposed containing seven elements that are characteristic of successful participatory planning processes that have resulted in social learning and have achieved steps towards sustainability. The seven elements of the proposed framework are: (1) broad-scale; (2) consensual/collaborative; (3) discursive/dialogical; (4) empowered/independent; (5) local; (6) multi-scale; and (7) ongoing/continuous.

In order to ground the theory-based proposed framework in practical experience, six case studies of successful participatory planning for sustainability are examined and evaluated according to the seven elements of the proposed framework. Each of the

six case studies are shown to fulfil at least two of the elements of the proposed framework, thus providing examples of a range of approaches that could potentially be adapted to regional transport planning in South East Queensland in order to assist in the achievement of sustainable transport outcomes.

The theoretical and practical literature reviews are followed by a more detailed case study of regional transport planning in South East Queensland, and in particular the Queensland Government's *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland* and the *Transport 2007* interim action plan. A detailed examination of community engagement and public participation in these recent regional transport planning efforts illustrates the Queensland Government's failure to fulfil any of the seven elements of the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability. The study therefore suggests that recent and current regional transport planning is not likely to lead to sustainable transport outcomes, due to the lack of opportunities provided for community members to experience social learning for sustainability. Recommendations are provided based on the theoretical and practical literature reviews, outlining a range of approaches that could be adopted by the Queensland Government to fulfil each of the elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability, and ultimately to achieve significant steps towards sustainable transport outcomes.

The study concludes with a discussion of the likely initial responses to the findings presented, as well as identification of potential opportunities for future research. Further qualitative and quantitative research is suggested to build upon this exploratory study.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Motor vehicle use is increasing globally at an alarming rate. Along with increased car use comes an exacerbation of the many negative impacts of motor vehicle use on human health, social equity and the environment. A growing awareness of the urgency of these problems has led to the development of seemingly progressive government-initiated transport policies and plans across Europe, the USA, Australia and elsewhere. Unfortunately, these government responses have largely failed to reduce motor vehicle use and in most cases have not even slowed the rate of increase of driving, let alone to produce transport systems that are "sustainable" by any definition.

The biggest barrier to sustainable transport has often been a lack of political will, or more precisely a perceived lack of public support for public transport and other alternative transport infrastructure and services. Without political support for alternatives to the motor vehicle, individuals are unlikely to increase their own use of or support for sustainable transport, especially when they lack a clear understanding of the long-term implications.

In South East Queensland, attempts to implement sustainable transport policy appear to be encountering the same difficulties as other cities and metropolitan regions around the world. In 1997, the Queensland Government launched its *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland (IRTP)* (Queensland Government 1997a), a plan which recognised the need to avert the damaging trends in motor vehicle growth in the region and instead set ambitious targets for increasing the percentage of trips by public transport, cycling and walking. The plan, which underwent a fairly typical consultation process incorporating the views of many citizens and stakeholders, was hailed by sustainable transport campaigners as a major step forward, establishing more sustainable transport modes as the planning priority. Since that time, however, there has been growing concern that *IRTP* targets are not being met (see, for instance, Yeates 1999, and Queensland Conservation Council

2000), and the Queensland Government's own figures show that current trends are even worse than those forecast in 1997.

The main challenge facing transport planners and governments around the world is to find a way to successfully *implement* sustainable transport policy despite perceived resistance to change towards greater sustainability. One solution that is suggested by international experience is increased public participation in the transport planning process. Through involvement in decision-making, citizens are not only encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviours, but are given an opportunity to hear the views of other citizens, to learn what solutions are available, and to compare the consistency of various policy alternatives with their own short-term and long-term interests. This process, described in this study as "social learning", is seen as an essential condition for the achievement of steps towards sustainability in western democratic countries. Social learning is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, along with other related concepts from the theoretical literature.

The main theoretical question underlying this research is whether or not sustainability can be achieved in industrialised western democratic countries without a significant increase in public participation, or without a more participatory form of democracy. There is a broad-ranging body of literature linking achievement of sustainability with greater citizen participation and empowerment, emerging out of research in democratic political theory, planning theory and the theory of environmental decision-making and education for sustainability. However, there has been limited focus on the importance of linking government policies on community engagement and sustainability, especially in relation to regional transport policy-formulation and planning. This study reviews and compares these diverse areas of research to identify the key elements of a proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability, and to provide specific recommendations for improved community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland.

1.1. Background to the Problem

Even before the emergence of the modern motor vehicle, problems were already associated with bulky personalised transport. For example, the Roman Emperor Hadrian was reported to have exclaimed:

> This luxury of speed destroys its own aim; a pedestrian makes more headway than a hundred conveyances jammed end to end along the Sacred Way. (Hadrian quoted in Hayes 1995: 25)

Centuries later, traffic congestion problems had become even worse, and the UK government commissioned *Traffic in Towns* (Buchanan 1963), one of the earliest studies to acknowledge the "problems posed by the rapid growth of motor traffic", which "are among the most baffling which face modern society" (Buchanan quoted in Blessington 1994: 63). The problems are indeed so baffling that almost 40 years after the Buchanan report, modern society has still not succeeded in slowing the rapidly growing car problem.

Banister (2000) lists a number of "issues to be addressed if transport is to conform with the principles of sustainable urban development". These are:

- traffic congestion, and the impossibility of providing enough road space for cars;
- increasing air pollution;
- traffic noise;
- road safety (250,000 deaths each year worldwide);
- degradation of urban landscapes and amenity;
- reduction of accessibility for others;
- global warming and the continued dependence on oil[1];
- decentralisation of cities (urban sprawl);
- inequitable spatial segregation and declining property and business values; and
- globalisation (increased freight transport in particular) (Banister 2000: 16).

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[1] For a detailed analysis, see Fleay (1999), who suggested that global oil supply would peak in about 2000, leading to ever-increasing oil prices thereafter, as well as decreased production to about one-quarter of current levels by 2050. This will lead to what C. Campbell and Laherrère (1998) call "the end of cheap oil", and a clear need to shift transport to another primary power source.

Not listed by Banister (2000) is the problem of the economic impacts of city-wide dependence on the motor vehicle. A myth has persisted that road-building and car use are good for the economy, as explicitly suggested by the UK government's "Roads for Prosperity" programme. However, Tickell (1993) could find no economic basis for this myth. Although the document claimed a cost to UK business of £15 billion a year from traffic congestion, his research could uncover only "anecdotal" evidence for this figure (Tickell quoted in Newman 1995: 13). In a report for the World Bank, Kenworthy, Laube, Newman and Barter (1997) show that out of 37 cities around the world, those with the greatest per capita wealth (Gross Regional Product or GRP) are those with lower growth in car use. Pharoah (1996) refers to German evidence that in 38 German cities, retail trade performed best where city centre motor vehicle provision was below average. Studies have also revealed that investment in walking and cycling is of far greater economic benefit than road spending (Shayler, Fergusson and Rowell 1993; Henson and Walker 1994; Hathway 1996). However, this body of evidence has not altered the dominant belief among politicians and the wider public that building road infrastructure is good for the economy.

Job creation is another frequently touted benefit of road-building. However, Tickell's (1993) evidence shows that £66,000-80,000 is needed to employ one person in road building, while only £30,000-50,000 is required for one railway job, £20,000-40,000 in building houses and just £9,000-18,000 in installing domestic insulation. He considers road-building to be "very poor value for money as a job creator" (quoted in Newman 1995: 13). Whitelegg's (1993) concludes:

> There is simply no evidence of the claimed link between access [to roads] and employment or economic prosperity. The emperor has no clothes.
> (quoted in Newman 1995: 13)

Another significant problem of road-building is "induced traffic" – also known as "latent demand" or "generated demand" – the well-documented principle that additional road space will generate additional traffic (Pfleiderer and Dieterich 1995; Pharoah 1996; Gibbs 1997; Chen 1998). To be exact, Hansen and Huang (1997) found that a one per cent increase in road space led to a 0.9 per cent increase in traffic. This means that road-building not only results in additional air pollution and

other negative externalities of increased motor vehicle use, but also that "to attempt to meet increased demand [for road space] with increases in road capacity is no longer viable" (Lucas 1998: 211). Although induced traffic has been the subject of many studies since the 1940s (Chen 1998), the UK Government is the first government that has embraced the reality of induced traffic, incorporating its effects into cost-benefit analysis and environmental impact assessment of proposed road projects in the UK (SACTRA 1995).

The "problem" of induced traffic is off-set by the potential solution provided by its converse – that the removal of road space results in a decrease in motor vehicle use. Hamer (1998) and Kruse (1998) list several examples of road and bridge closures that did not result in massive gridlock as expected, but rather led to the disappearance or evaporation of much of the existing traffic. Pfleiderer and Dieterich (1995) suggest that in fact the only way to significantly reduce private motor vehicle use is to slow down road traffic, thereby causing longer trips to be less desirable. The resulting increase in travel times encourages people to eliminate unnecessary trips and to use alternative modes of transport instead, and in the long term, provides an incentive for people to work and shop closer to home and a disincentive for people to live in the outer reaches of "suburban sprawl". Unfortunately, some of these options can be politically unpopular in cities where widespread car use is the norm.

Each of these individual problems is the topic of its own body of focused research, including statistical quantification of the magnitude of the problem and broad-ranging discussion and debate regarding which solutions might be the most appropriate. However, the focus of this study is not on the technical question of how a city and its transport system can be designed to facilitate more sustainable transport, but rather on how sustainable transport policy can be implemented.

Proposed policy solutions
Since 1972, the United Nations has led the way internationally in support of sustainability generally, and specifically, greater community engagement and public participation in the transition to sustainability. As a result of this leadership, and in particular the *Our Common Future* report (WCED 1987) and the *Agenda 21*

"programme of action" (UNCED 1992b), many western nations have adopted their own policies embracing sustainability as well as the need for increased public participation in decision-making. Some examples of these national policies include those in the European Union (CEC 1993), the United Kingdom (UK DoE 1994), Germany (BMU 1994), the Netherlands (VROM 1994), the United States (PCSD 1999) and Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 1992). These national strategies for sustainability have often been supplemented by strategies focusing on sustainable transport, including those developed by the European Union (CEC 1992) and the United Kingdom (UK DoE/DoT 1994).

While Australia is yet to produce a transport strategy at the federal level, other relevant Commonwealth policy documents addressing transport planning include *The National Greenhouse Strategy* (AGO 1998), *Australia Cycling* (Austroads 1999) and *Developing an Active Australia* (Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services 1998). In addition, most Australian states and territories, and even some local government authorities, have developed proactive transport plans to achieve more sustainable transport systems during a specified time period. Table 1.1 lists the details of a number of such transport plans for Australian cities, including Brisbane's *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland* (Queensland Government 1997a), Sydney's *Action for Transport 2010* (NSW Government c.1998), Canberra's *Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning in ACT* (ACT Department of Urban Services 1999), and Perth's *Metropolitan Transport Strategy 1995-2029* (Transport WA 1996). Many of these plans present a vision of a different approach to transport planning, and most make some reference to "sustainable transport", though the quantifiable target is more often to reach specified levels of increased public transport use, cycling and walking.

Table 1.1:   A comparison of Australian urban transport plans

City & Publication	End date	Targets: Modal shift or other	Reference to sustainability?
Brisbane (Queensland Government 1997a)	2011	Car: 78% to 69.5% PT: 7% to 10.5% Cycling: 2% to 5% Walking: 13% to 15%	• lists several objectives for "more sustainable transport (p.17) • definition of sustainability: "Maintaining into the indefinite future certain essential and desirable characteristics of the way we live and the environment in which we live." (p.161)
Sydney (NSW Government c.1998)	2010/2021	1. halting the growth in per capita vkt by 2011; 2. halting the growth in total vkt by 2021	• "leave a better environment for our children" (p.2); • no mention of "sustainability"
Canberra (ACT Department of Urban Services 1999)	no end date specified	no quantitative targets	• goal is a "sustainable" and "affordable" Canberra (p.13)
Perth (Transport WA 1996)	2029	Car: 63% to 46% PT: 6.4% to 12.5% Cycling: 5.7% to 11.5% Walking: 10% to 12.5%	• goal is to "ensure Perth's transport system will be economically and environmentally sustainable" (6)

Notes: "PT" = public transport; "vkt" = vehicle kilometres travelled;

"modal shift" = changing the percentage of trips travelled by the various

transport modes

Source: compiled by the author

"Sustainable transport" has been defined in a number of ways. The OECD (1995)

defines "environmentally sustainable transport" as:

> Transportation that does not endanger public health or ecosystems and meets the needs for access consistent with (a) sustainable use of renewable resources at below their rates of regeneration, and (b) use of non-renewable resources at below the rates of development of renewable substitutes. (OECD 1995, quoted in Westerman 2000: 2)

In his overview of "a sustainable transport system for Queensland", Westerman

(2000: 2) provides a simpler and broader definition, suggesting that transport is

sustainable if it is "capable of being continued". He further suggests that sustainable

transport is an "on-going" and "continuous" process Westerman (2000: 18), rather

than a specific end-point. While there is no universally agreed *most sustainable* or

best transport system, this study merely seeks to assist in the achievement of

sustainable transport outcomes, or in other words, making transport continually *more*

sustainable.

"Transport planning gridlock": The challenge of implementing policy

Despite the emergence of proactive and often radical transport policies all around the world, many studies during the past five years point to their almost universal failure to affect significant change in actual transport planning practice or in consequent travel behaviour. Most of the evidence comes from Europe and the United States, but there is some evidence that the overseas experience is consistent with Australian experience. These experiences point to the need for a fundamentally different approach to transport planning worldwide.

Many studies have shown that overarching transport policies focusing on sustainability do not always lead to sustainable outcomes at the project level. Lucas (1998) carried out a detailed analysis of 18 local authorities in the London area and whether their transport projects were consistent with sustainability principles laid out in the UK's *Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport* (UK DoE/DoT 1994). Her findings showed that despite widespread awareness of and documented support for sustainable transport goals, policy statements generally moved further from the principles of sustainability the closer a project was to implementation (Lucas 1998: 218). Reasons she gives for this divergence between policy and outcomes include preferences of developers, planning expertise that is traditionally based on road infrastructure, and public preferences and opinion.

Public resistance to sustainable transport measures is widely documented. Nijkamp, Ouwersloot and Rienstra (1997: 696) suggest that democratically elected politicians "do not favour measures which largely run counter to public opinion." Bhattacharjee, Haider, Tanaboriboon and Sinha (1997) point out that although reducing travel demand has been shown to be a very successful way to reduce congestion, such measures often meet public opposition. One illustrative case occurred in 1976 in Santa Monica, California, when one lane in each direction of an eight-lane freeway was changed to a high-occupancy vehicle lane during peak hours, restricting use to cars with three or more passengers and buses. Despite a 65% increase in car-pooling and a 300% of bus-ridership over 21 weeks, increased congestion in the other lanes led to public outcry and critical media coverage that pressured the California

Department of Transportation to end the trial and cancel a number of similar proposed HOV projects (Kitamura, Nakayama and Yamamoto 1999).

The paradox here is that while political will seems to be an essential element of a sustainable transport formula (Blessington 1994), *political* support seems to depend on *public* support. Meanwhile, public support for alternative modes depends largely on government provision of services and infrastructure, which in turn depends on political will. As a result, transport planning continues to contribute to worsening transport problems due to a lack of public awareness about the significant negative impacts of attempting to relieve traffic congestion by building more roads. This paradox I describe as "transport planning gridlock": sustainable transport policy cannot be implemented, but neither can any other sort of transport policy, and the result in many cases is both figurative and literal "gridlock".

However, just as the public can oppose sustainable transport solutions, they can also oppose continued car-based transport planning. A number of authors have commented on the difficulty of building new freeways and widening roads in an atmosphere of widespread community demand for more sustainable solutions, including *The Economist* (1994), Newman (1995), Burchell (1996), and Richardson and Haywood (1996). Adler (1999) writes (negatively) of the significant challenge community lawsuits have posed to road-builders in the United States. And Ahlstrand (1998) outlines a case in Sweden where public opposition to the road-based aspects of a transport strategy resulted in the scrapping of the *entire* strategy (including ambitious rail and transit infrastructure), rather than just the road-based proposals.

At first glance, politicians appear hopelessly caught between public opinion *for* roads and public opinion *against* roads – another illustration of the "transport planning gridlock". However, this apparent "challenge" to government authority can also be seen as a significant opportunity for those governments and politicians who wish to employ the democratic process to build public support for a sustainable transport system. Bratzel (1999) observed that all five European cities that had been "relatively successful" in implementing sustainable transport systems had experienced a "policy-window" in the form of public protests against road-building in the 1970s

and 1980s. Having been given a "political mandate" to invest in transit, cycling and walking, politicians were able to put in place transport systems that easily outperform the car-based systems that many members of the public often *think* they want.

Government perceptions of public resistance to sustainable transport solutions may also be more imagined than real. Blessington (1994) quotes a survey of Europeans in 13 different countries which showed that 84% of the public and 85% of politicians supported investment in public transport; however, only 49% of politicians *believed* that the public agreed with them. Similarly, a Warren Centre study (Glazebrook 1999) showed that 70% of the residents of Greater Sydney 89% of decision-makers supported using road budget funds to improve public transport development. However, decision-makers *thought* that only 56% of the public would support sustainable transport outcomes. In addition, while not including the views of decision-makers, a study for the Perth metropolitan region (Market Equity 1999: 14) showed that 87% of residents were at least "somewhat supportive" of "diversion of funds from new roads to public transport, cycling and walking".

Of course for the politician, choosing the most acceptable transport policy is not a simple matter of polling. Public opinion is very dynamic and complex, and just as public outcry for congestion relief does not guarantee that a new freeway proposal will not be protested, documented community concern for specific problems caused by motor vehicle use does not automatically translate to support for direct measures to reduce car use. One notable recent study (Golob and Hensher 1998), focusing on Australian cities, closely analysed public attitudes about greenhouse gas emissions and how these attitudes correlate to support for or opposition to specific measures to reduce demand for motor vehicle transport in five Australian cities. On a five-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", 83% of respondents either agreed with or strongly agreed with the statement that "The increase in greenhouse gas emissions is a threat to life as we know it." Similarly, 83% either agreed with or strongly agreed with the statement that "Australia does have to worry about global greenhouse gas emissions." However, despite this extremely high level of concern about greenhouse emissions, respondents showed only mild positive support for the

encouragement of car-pooling, tax rebates and levies for fuel-efficient and fuel-inefficient cars respectively, and a personal commitment to reduce their actual motor vehicle travel. Other measures polled even worse, such as "preferential parking at work locations for fuel-efficient cars" and "taxing employer-paid parking". Although the authors stress that there is not a direct link between environmental concern and a personal willingness to change travel behaviour, their analysis shows that "policies can be marketed to the public" through advertising campaigns focusing on the environmental benefits of reducing car use (1998: 1).

Influencing public opinion is undoubtedly an important step in positively influencing the behaviour of individuals, and considerable behaviour change will be required if sustainable transport plans are to be successfully implemented. Having recounted an instance where public preference for motor vehicle access resulted in unsustainable transport outcomes west of London, Lucas (1998: 225) concludes first and foremost that "the public need to be made more aware of the negative implications of their current travel behaviour through a comprehensive and regionally co-ordinated travel awareness campaign." Hartgen and Casey (1990) tell of a Charlotte, North Carolina (US) approach based on live segments on a local news program, rather than the traditional television advertising campaign. Experts appeared each night for a week discussing existing transport problems, why congestion cannot be relieved through road-building, and how viewers could personally benefit by using public transport instead of driving. Other even more successful examples of successful participatory planning processes in support of sustainability are included in the six case studies in Chapter 4.

Evidence suggests that a transport policy on its own, no matter how radical, will not lead to a sustainable transport system without widespread public support. Currently, very few cities in the world can claim to have strong public support for investment in public transport, cycling and walking. Meanwhile, many governments seem paralysed by the fear of unpopularity, rather than proactively seeking to influence public opinion towards greater support of existing sustainable transport plans. Talvitie (1997: 10-11) poses the question whether we have yet devised a successful

process for the implementation of transport plans, and answers "an outright 'no'." A drastically different approach may be warranted.

1.2.   The Structure of this Thesis

This study explores the role of improved public participation in decision-making in achieving steps towards sustainability in western nations. More specifically, the study focuses on overcoming the present difficulties of implementing sustainable transport policies and plans through improved public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning. While the study aims to contribute towards better participatory planning for sustainability in western nations generally, the primary aim of the study is to identify opportunities for achieving sustainable transport outcomes in the metropolitan region of South East Queensland, Australia, through improved public participation and community engagement. This chapter has outlined the background to the problem of implementing sustainable transport policies and plans, and now turns its focus towards the structure of the remainder of the thesis.

In Chapter 2, the research design of the study is outlined. The study is based on two research strategies of theoretical analysis and case study research, with regional transport planning in South East Queensland as the specific case study to be explored. The chapter contains a justification of the rigour of the study's findings, and a discussion of the specific research techniques that have been used in the study. The techniques employed in the study include literature search, Weber's "ideal types" (Neuman 2000: 44), document analysis and comparison between case studies.

In Chapter 3, theoretical literature is reviewed in order to bridge three relatively isolated areas of research: (1) participation in democratic political theory; (2) participation in planning theory; and (3) participation in the theory of environmental decision-making for sustainability. Social learning through participation in dialogue and decision-making for sustainability is identified as the missing link in most attempts to achieve sustainability. Based on the theoretical literature, a framework of participatory planning for sustainability is proposed containing seven elements that are characteristic of successful participatory planning processes that have resulted in

social learning and have achieved steps towards sustainability. The seven elements of the proposed framework are: (1) broad-scale; (2) consensual/collaborative; (3) discursive/dialogical; (4) empowered/independent; (5) local; (6) multi-scale; and (7) ongoing/continuous.

In Chapter 4, the proposed framework is applied to six case studies of successful participatory planning for sustainability. The six cases are examined in order to illustrate concrete, real-world examples of the theory explored in Chapter 3. Each case study is evaluated according to the seven elements of the proposed framework developed at the end of Chapter 3, with four of the six case studies fulfilling all seven elements of the proposed framework and the other two case studies fulfilling four and two elements respectively. The six "successful" cases provide examples of a range of approaches that could potentially be adapted to regional transport planning in South East Queensland in order to assist in the achievement of sustainable transport outcomes.

In Chapter 5, the theoretical and practical literature reviews are used as the basis for a detailed case study of regional transport planning in South East Queensland. The specific focus of the case study is the consultation that has been undertaken in the development and implementation of the Queensland Government's *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland (IRTP)* (Queensland Government 1997a), and the *Transport 2007* interim action plan (Qld Gov't 2001a). In addition, the Queensland Government's *Community Engagement Division Directions Statement* (Qld Gov't 2001b) is examined. It is concluded that regional transport planning in South East Queensland since 1995 has failed to fulfil any of the seven elements of the framework of participatory planning proposed in Chapter 3. The study therefore suggests that recent and current regional transport planning is not likely to lead to sustainable transport outcomes, due to the lack of opportunities provided for community members to experience social learning for sustainability. Recommendations are provided based on the six "successful" cases, outlining a range of approaches that could be adopted by the Queensland Government to fulfil each of the elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability, and ultimately to achieve significant steps towards sustainable transport outcomes.

Finally, the study concludes in Chapter 6 with a look to the future. Opportunities for future research are discussed, including both theoretical and practical approaches for building on the findings of this study. Likely initial responses to the study's findings are also discussed, including further defence of the feasibility of the participatory processes recommended by the study.

As illustrated in Figure 1.1, the three major components of the study are:

1. Construction of a framework of participatory planning for sustainability based on theoretical analysis (Chapter 3);

2. Review of six cases of successful participatory planning processes that have fulfilled various elements of the proposed framework, and have thereby achieved steps towards sustainability (Chapter 4); and

3. Review of public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland to assess how well the elements of the framework have been and are being fulfilled (Chapter 5). Recommendations are also provided based on the six successful cases to suggest specific ways in which participation in regional transport planning can be improved in SEQ.

Throughout this thesis, the terms "sustainability" and "sustainable development", and the phrases "public participation", "community engagement" and "citizen involvement" (and combinations thereof) are used interchangeably. While definitions are provided in Chapter 3 for "sustainable development" and "public participation", the purpose of this thesis is not to explore the semantic differences between these various concepts. Rather, the goal is to provide a basic understanding of the concept being discussed, and then to delve beyond the definitions to gain a better understanding of what practical solutions can be found to the questions raised by the study.

Figure 1.1: Three major components of the study
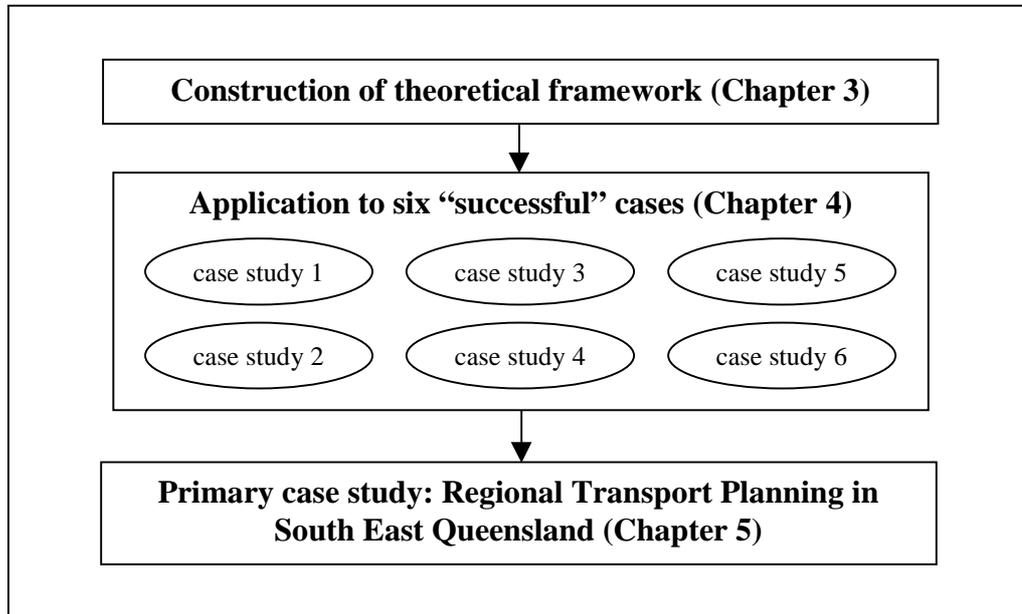
Source: developed by the author

1.3. Research Aims, Questions, Steps and Outcomes

The Appendix provides a research matrix listing the aims, research questions, specific steps and outcomes of the study. The study has two overarching aims, the first regarding participatory planning for sustainability in general:

- To identify ways to achieve steps towards environmental sustainability through improved public participation and community engagement in policy-formulation and planning;

and the second focusing on the specific case of South East Queensland:

- To identify ways to achieve sustainable transport outcomes in South East Queensland through improved public participation and community engagement in regional transport policy-formulation and planning.

Similarly, the study addresses two research questions, with the first more general:

- Can improved public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning contribute towards the achievement of sustainable transport outcomes?

and the second focusing specifically on South East Queensland:

- How can public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning be improved in South East Queensland?

In order to answer the research questions, the following five research steps have been undertaken:

1. Review literature pertaining to participation in democratic political theory, participation in planning theory, and participation in the theory of environmental decision-making and sustainability, in order to better understand the inter-relationships between them (Chapter 3);

2. Construct a theory-based framework identifying the key elements of participatory planning for sustainability (Chapter 3);

3. Seek out examples of successful participatory planning for sustainability, and assess them based on the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability (Chapter 4);

4. Review public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland since 1995 to evaluate against

the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability (Chapter 5); and

5.   Present recommendations for improving community engagement in regional transport planning in SEQ in order to achieve steps towards greater regional sustainability (Chapter 5).

Finally, each of the five research steps corresponds to a specific outcome of the study:

1.   A better understanding of the role of participatory democracy and participatory planning in achieving sustainability (Chapter 3);

2.   Development of a framework of participatory planning for sustainability, especially in relation to regional transport policy-formulation and planning (Chapter 3);

3.   Identification of concrete examples of successful participatory planning for sustainability (Chapter 4);

4.   A review and critique of public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland (Chapter 5); and

5.   Recommendations to lead towards greater achievement of regional sustainability in South East Queensland (Chapter 5).

1.4. Significance

In addition to the five outcomes listed above, this research project is ultimately significant in terms of its contributions towards addressing the significant negative impacts currently resulting from the unsustainable transport system in South East Queensland, as in most western cities. These negative impacts include human health deterioration due to air pollution, inactivity and road danger; environmental degradation; decreasing social equity; economic inefficiency; and an overall drop in quality-of-life and amenity. While some of these problems could theoretically be solved in isolation through technological or other means, the only way to reduce all of the negative impacts of motor vehicle use promptly and simultaneously is to

actually reduce motor vehicle use (Banister 2000). If this study contributes towards this ultimate goal, then it is of great significance for humanity as a whole.

Chapter 2.   Research Design

In this chapter the research design of the study is outlined, including discussions of the study's rigour, the research strategies adopted, and the data collection and analysis techniques employed. The study is *exploratory* and qualitative in nature, with the aim of uncovering new ways of solving a particular problem in a particular setting, with potential transferability to other settings. The research problem is the difficulty of implementing sustainable regional transport policies and plans, and the particular setting is the metropolitan region of South East Queensland, Australia. There are two research strategies employed in the study: (1) theoretical analysis; and (2) case study research. The primary focus of the case study research strategy is on regional transport planning in South East Queensland, with existing theoretical knowledge used to enlighten the specific case. But the case study research strategy is also used to examine six other "successful" cases to provide concrete, real-world illustrations of participatory planning for sustainability. These successful examples will contribute towards recommendations to improve participatory planning in South East Queensland. The aims, research questions, specific steps undertaken and corresponding outcomes of the study are listed in Section 1.3, as well as in the Appendix.

2.1.   Ensuring Rigour

According to Berg and Mansvelt (2000: 176), "poststructuralist thinking casts doubt on foundational arguments that seek to anchor a text's authority in terms such as reliability, validity and generalisability." Neuman (2000: 171) suggests that "qualitative researchers are more interested in *authenticity* than *validity*" (his italics), and instead emphasises avoiding "false or distorted accounts". Baxter and Eyles (1997: 521) propose an entirely new set of criteria for qualitative research, stating that "the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability" for establishing rigour in qualitative research "are analogous to the traditional quantitative standards of validity, generalizability, reliability and objectivity." But they conclude, in agreement with Morgan (1983: 399, quoted in Baxter and Eyles

1997: 522), that "insufficient attention has as yet been devoted to evolving criteria for assessing the general quality and rigour of interpretive research."

In the absence of any broadly accepted framework for confirming the accuracy or authenticity of qualitative research, Baxter and Eyles (1997: 506) emphasise "academic integrity including responsibility and honesty: dimensions of self-reflection, essential to qualitative research". Bradshaw and Stratford (2000: 46) refer to the need to establish "trustworthiness", or ensuring that "others using our research have reason to believe that it has been conducted dependably". Berg and Mansvelt (2000: 180) suggest "transparency" to ensure that "qualitative texts are open to scrutiny by research participants and audience." This approach is similar to the concept of validity based on "natural history", one of the "four kinds of validity or tests of research accuracy" for field research identified by Neuman (2000: 369). In his words:

> *Natural history* is a detailed description of how the project was
> conducted. It is a full and candid disclosure of a researcher's actions,
> assumptions, and procedures for others to evaluate. A project is valid in
> terms of natural history if outsiders see and accept the field site and the
> researcher's actions. (Neuman 2000: 369)

There is clearly no set of rules or guidelines by which a qualitative study can be conclusively proven to be rigorous, robust, valid, true, objective, or in any way universally acceptable. Instead, following Bradshaw and Stratford's (2000: 48) suggestion that we as researchers can improve the dependability and plausibility of our work by "declar[ing] our own philosophical, theoretical and political dispositions", I will attempt to do just that in the following paragraphs. It is hoped that this account will provide "a full and candid disclosure" (Neuman 2000: 369) of my personal background, assumptions, biases, and specific motivations for undertaking this research project. This account should also go some way to address Berg and Mansvelt's (2000: 180) call for "transparency", and Baxter and Eyles's (1997: 506) call for "self-reflection."

I became aware of the specific research problem addressed in this study between 1997 and 2000. Not having been able to afford a car, I relied on a 20-year-old bicycle

and Brisbane's trains, buses and ferries (as well as my own two feet) to get around. The initial benefits of my car-free lifestyle were euphoric: I was saving money, keeping healthy and active, saving the environment, and enjoying positive social interaction with my community. But these benefits were gradually almost completely off-set by the many frustrations of being without a car in a car-dependent city: walking and cycling were inherently dangerous in high-speed, poorly-engineered road environments; and public transport services were infrequent, limited in their geographical coverage, poorly integrated between and even within modes, and expensive. These frustrations led to my increasing involvement in advocacy for sustainable transport in Brisbane and South East Queensland.

As a sustainable transport advocate, I began learning about issues such as road safety, the negative impacts of car use, transport funding and decision-making, global issues such as greenhouse gas emissions and international conflicts around oil supply, and issues of consultation and participation. I worked on a range of campaigns including both strategic and project-based, and worked with a number of environmental, social justice and political groups in both voluntary and paid capacities. The more I learned, the stranger it seemed to me that we were not moving more quickly towards a sustainable transport system. To be sure, there was no shortage of arguments against allowing motor vehicle use to increase, and both local and state governments were strongly committed to the promotion of alternatives to the motor vehicle, at least rhetorically. Yet paradoxically, it was incredibly difficult to secure even marginally positive outcomes towards sustainability, or even to stop clearly retrograde outcomes such as new freeways and significant road-widenings.

My personal motivation for undertaking this research project was to better understand this paradox, the disparity between stated government policy and actual transport planning outcomes. I was already convinced that significant change would be required in most Australian cities to achieve a sustainable transport system – the only question was how this could best be achieved. Thus, it could be said that I arrived at this research task with a bias towards the need for significant change in transport practices and systems. However, I was not aware that others agreed with me until I began reviewing the theoretical literature during the early stages of

developing a proposal for this thesis, in February 2000. What I had expected in the beginning to be a search for the right technical solutions to achieve a "sustainable" urban form, and the right set of policies and plans to provide a "sustainable transport system", in the end led to a deeper question of social and political dynamics and the role of citizens in decision-making.

As a researcher, my reading and learning, and my choices of where to focus my attention, have been determined largely by my practical experience as a sustainable transport advocate, as a participant in consultation processes, as a frustrated cyclist and public transport user, and as a community member generally. However, I don't believe my experience could possibly be very different from that of most researchers, no matter how objective they might claim their findings *or opinions* to be. I have been delighted to discover theorists in the fields of democratic political theory, planning theory and environmental decision-making theory, whose views and findings are consistent with my own personal experiences and intuition, but this does not mean that I have sought findings and opinions that agree with my pre-existing views. In fact, my greatest joy in the research process has been to encounter many ideas that have expanded or challenged my previous understandings, while still seeming "consistent" with my personal experience, believable, plausible and credible. This outlook is consistent with Aristotle's [1976] emphasis on context-dependent personal experience, as discussed in the following section where the case study research strategy is explained.

With my personal background in the open, I can honestly and sincerely state that I believe this thesis presents ideas and analyses that accurately reflect the theoretical traditions from which they come. I believe the study has extended and applied these ideas in ways that are in the spirit of the original ideas, and in ways that further the clarity and applicability of the ideas. But ultimately, I believe the only proof of the rigour and robustness of this study and its outcomes will be if the ideas put forward establish some resonance in the reader. If the study is consistent with the personal experiences of the reader, then that person will consider its contents to be "valid" and "true". However, no matter how objective or proven most readers might accept the study's conclusions to be, there will always be other readers who will consider the

study invalid simply because they hold a different opinion. Such is perhaps the nature of "theory", and knowledge generally.

2.2. Research Strategies

The two research strategies employed in the study, theoretical analysis and case study research, are discussed in detail below.

Construction of framework using theoretical analysis

In Chapter 3, a theoretical framework will be constructed based on theoretical literature review and analysis. An extensive literature review will outline relevant existing theory in three bodies of literature: (1) participation in democratic political theory; (2) participation in planning theory; and (3) participation in the theory of environmental decision-making for sustainability. The literature is then analysed using Weber's *ideal types*, described by Neuman (2000) as follows:

> Ideal types are models or mental abstractions of social relations or processes. They are pure standards against which the data or 'reality' can be compared. An ideal type is a device used for comparison, because no reality ever fits an ideal type. (Neuman 2000: 431)

The theoretical literature is reviewed in order to identify the key elements that might be expected to contribute towards social learning through participation in planning, and which ultimately might contribute to concrete steps towards sustainability. This process culminates in the construction of a proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability. Due to its origination in theoretical rather than practical knowledge, the framework is intended as a loose and flexible guide to improve participatory planning for sustainability, rather than as a comprehensive and detailed set of guidelines. Instead, concrete case study examples are offered in Chapter 4 to provide further elaboration of the framework. This approach is consistent with Neuman's (2000: 432) suggestion that "a researcher could develop an ideal type of a social process or relationship, then compare specific cases to it." Application of the framework to cases is discussed in more detail in the following section on the case study research strategy.

The first two research steps – (1) the review of theoretical literature, and (2) the construction of a theoretical framework – are based on the research strategy of theoretical analysis, and have therefore been designed to have a level of transferability or generalisability to settings other than South East Queensland. According to Baxter and Eyles (1997: 515), "transferability refers to the degree to which findings fit within contexts outside the study". This is similar to Robson's (1993: 66) more traditional definition of *external validity*: "the degree to which findings can be generalized from the specific sample in the study to some target population." It is not suggested here that theoretical analysis is inherently "objective" and therefore "universal" or equally true in any setting. These issues are discussed further below, based on Flyvbjerg's (2001) questioning of the social science bias for theoretical knowledge over practical knowledge. It is recognised that the "theoretical" literature used as the foundation for the theoretical framework has come from a range of different types of work. These include both quantitative and qualitative studies, works that intend to be purely theoretical as well as very specific cases, and the personal experiences and opinions of various theorists and authors who are widely considered to be "experts" in their respective fields. Nevertheless, the theoretical analysis and framework presented in this study have been performed and constructed independent of any specific context, and are therefore suggested to be no less relevant to other western settings than they are for the case of South East Queensland.

Application of framework using case study research

A case study research strategy is used for the last three research steps in Chapters 4 and 5. These research steps are: (3) the application of the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability to six "successful" cases (Chapter 4); (4) the review of regional transport planning in South East Queensland based on the proposed framework (Chapter 5); and (5) the presentation of recommendations for improving participatory planning in South East Queensland based on the six case studies (Chapter 5).

Robson (1993: 40) defines the *case study* research strategy as "development of detailed, intensive knowledge about a single 'case', or of a small number of related

'cases'." This study has not intended to create a "detailed" and "intensive" body of knowledge or evidence about the specific case of regional transport planning in South East Queensland. Rather, its focus has been on applying a theoretical analysis to a specific case in order to provide concrete outcomes within the context of that case. In this sense, this study consists of a balance between the research strategies of theoretical analysis and case study.

The role of the case study in social science research has been broadly disparaged for decades (see, for instance, D. Campbell and Stanley 1966; Dogan and Pelassy 1990; and Diamond 1996). According to Flyvbjerg (2001: 70), these researchers' views are based on the dominant view in social science, based on the writings of Plato [1986], that "context-independent", "universal" scientific knowledge is of more value than "context-dependent", case specific knowledge. However, this view has been challenged by a number of researchers (see, for instance, Eckstein 1975; Ragin and Becker 1992; and Platt 1992). Even Donald Campbell (1975), once the strongest critic of the case study, "is today considered one of the strongest proponents of case study methodology" (Flyvbjerg 2001: 69).

H. Dreyfus and S. Dreyfus (1986, quoted in Flyvbjerg 2001) suggest that an individual whose knowledge is based only on context-independent theoretical rules can only achieve a "novice" level of skill or understanding until concrete experience raises them to a higher level. They propose a human learning model consisting of the following five stages: (1) novice; (2) advanced beginner; (3) competent performer; (4) proficient performer; and (5) expert (quoted in Flyvbjerg 2001: 10). Flyvbjerg (2001: 71) applies the Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) model to social science research, suggesting that "the case study produces precisely the type of context-dependent knowledge which makes it possible to move from the lower to the higher levels in the learning process. He further suggests that "in the study of human affairs, there exists only context-dependent knowledge", thus ruling out the possibility of purely "objective" scientific theory (2001: 71).

Flyvbjerg's view is a departure from the Platonic preference for "universal" scientific knowledge in favour of the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis*, or prudence. Aristotle

[1976] identified three "intellectual virtues": *episteme*, or scientific knowledge;

techne, or craft and art; and *phronesis*, or prudence, described as follows:

> Prudence [*phronesis*] is not concerned with universals only; it must also take congnizance of particulars, because it is concerned with conduct, and conduct has its sphere in particular circumstances. That is why some people who do not possess theoretical knowledge are more effective in action (especially if they are experienced) than others who do possess it… But prudence is practical, and therefore it must have both kinds of knowledge, or especially the latter. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1141b8-27, quoted in Flyvbjerg 2001: 58)

While Flyvbjerg's (2001) argument is intended to justify the use of case studies for the purpose of generalisation or transfer to other settings, this study has only partially employed case studies in this way. This study attempts to strike a balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, as supported by Aristotle's emphasis on "both kinds of knowledge" in the definition of *phronesis* above. Thus, theoretical analysis, rather than a case or cases, is used as the basis of the theoretical framework of participatory planning for sustainability. Where Flyvbjerg's view of the generalisability of case studies is relevant to this study is in the presentation of the six "successful" case studies in Chapter 4. The detailed narrative descriptions of the cases are intended to provide other researchers, practitioners and community members with concrete examples of successful participatory planning processes and exactly how they fulfilled each element of the proposed framework in order to contribute towards the achievement of sustainability. While some readers may prefer to focus on the theoretical framework as a basis for improving participatory planning in other settings, some will no doubt find the six concrete examples to be of equal or even greater value in the creation of successful participatory planning processes. While the same might be said of the review of participatory planning in South East Queensland or the recommendations provided specifically for that region, the South East Queensland case study is intended as an end in itself rather than as a contribution towards transferability or generalisation.

The six case studies examined in Chapter 4 represent what Flyvbjerg (2001: 78-79) calls "extreme", "deviant" or "atypical" cases. The purpose of selecting extreme cases is "to obtain information on unusual cases, which can be especially problematic

or especially good in a more closely defined sense" (Flyvbjerg (2001: 79). Furthermore, Hubert Dreyfus suggests that a valuable case can be recognised "because it shines", and that "you just have to be intuitive" (H. Dreyfus quoted in Flyvbjerg (2001: 80). The six cases selected for the application of the framework in Chapter 4 were selected because they *appeared* to represent "successful" examples of participatory planning for sustainability, and because they appeared to offer what might be considered "exciting" concrete illustrations of the various elements of the theory-based framework. Without question, my own personal intuition and experience (which included carrying out the theoretical review and analysis in Chapter 3) contributed towards the specific mix of cases selected for examination in Chapter 4. Thus, while the six cases certainly offer insight in terms of improving participatory planning in South East Queensland and in other settings, they are by no means to be considered the *only* examples of good practice, let alone "world's *best* practice".

2.3. Data Collection

For both the theoretical analysis and case study research strategies, *literature search* is the main data collection technique employed. Literature search has been used to uncover the relevant theoretical literature for the "ideal types" theoretical analysis in Chapter 3. In addition, the six case studies examined in Chapter 4 were discovered through literature search, and were selected according to their ability to provide concrete illustration of the elements of the proposed framework (as discussed in the previous section). Material for the six successful case studies have been gathered from both scholarly and practical sources, both of which must be acknowledged as reflections of the respective authors' own interpretations of actual events.

Finally, literature search has been used to shed light on the primary case of regional transport planning in South East Queensland in Chapter 5. This examination of public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland has been carried out based on a review of all publicly

available and relevant Queensland Government policies and documents.[2] Contact was made with the "Integrated Transport Planning – South East Queensland" Division of Queensland Transport, and staff were able to provide a number of documents to assist in this study. The complete list of government documents and policies used in the review are provided in Table 2.1. Most of the necessary information about the nature of public consultation that has contributed to regional transport planning since 1995 were able to be found in the two major planning documents: (1) the *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland (IRTP)* (Queensland Government 1997a) and the *Transport 2007* interim action plan (Qld Gov't 2001a). A number of additional documents were accessed to examine the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* policy-formulation and implementation processes, as shown in Table 2.1. In addition, other relevant government policies and documents were examined, also listed in Table 2.1.

It is worth noting that Queensland Transport staff were unable to trace any documentation pertaining to the disbanding of the Regional Transport Reference Group (RTRG) in 1999. It was felt that such documentation would have offered significant insight into the strengths and the weaknesses of the RTRG process, as well as perhaps explaining the Queensland Government's justification in abolishing the group. However, the absence of documentation does indicate the low level of importance placed by the Queensland Government on learning from and continually improving participatory practice.

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[2] Initially, unstructured or semi-structured interviews were considered, in order to gather the views of stakeholder participants, government bureaucrats and planners on specific participatory processes that had been undertaken in recent regional transport planning in South East Queensland. However, after a preliminary review based on the proposed theoretical framework, it was determined that these interviews could not offer any findings of great significance to the study because past practice in South East Queensland clearly fell far short of fulfilling the proposed framework. While a detailed evaluation of specific past participatory processes could have determined how similar processes could be carried out more successfully in future, the approach would have had limited value in terms of designing new and innovative processes for SEQ. As discussed in Chapter 4, the theoretical framework suggests that participatory processes that are limited to stakeholder participation are unlikely to lead to social learning for a significant proportion of the wider public, and are therefore unlikely to contribute significantly towards sustainability. It was therefore determined that rather than gathering feedback from stakeholders and government representatives on past practice, a comparison of SEQ against other successful examples from around the world would be more likely to yield relevant findings to improve public participation in regional transport planning in SEQ.

Table 2.1:   Government documents and policies reviewed

Reference (Year)	Title	Description
Regional transport plans		
Qld Gov't (1997a)	*Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland (IRTP)*	transport component of the *Regional Framework for Growth Management* for SEQ, setting modal shift targets to be met by 2011
Qld Gov't (2001a)	*Transport 2007: An Action Plan for South East Queensland*	interim action plan under the *IRTP* which sets interim targets to be met by 2007
Related regional transport planning documents		
RTRG (1995)	*Communique from SEQ Regional Transport Reference Group to the SEQ Regional Transport Committee*	outlines the preliminary views towards a regional transport plan from the stakeholders represented in the RTRG
Spinks and Lobban (c.1996)	"Consultation Report: Appendix to IRTP Report"	summarises the consultation process for the *IRTP*
Mary Maher & Associates (1997)	*Analysis of Submissions to the IRTP for Queensland Transport*	detailed listing of issues raised in consultation on the draft *IRTP*
Qld Gov't (1997b)	*Public Consultation Policy, Standards and Guidelines: the way to better decisions* (Departments of Transport and Main Roads)	guidelines for consultation for transport projects and policies
Qld Parliamentary Public Works Committee (1997)	*South East Transit Project*, Report No. 39	final report of the committee's inquiry into the South East Transit Project and Busway
Qld Gov't (1999a)	*2007 Vision: A Draft Transport Technical Paper*	a draft version of *Transport 2007*
Qld Gov't (1999b)	*The Queensland Greenhouse Response Strategy 1999 – Key Issues and Proposed Approach: Transport & Land Use Planning Sector*	Queensland's proposed strategy for meeting the National Greenhouse Strategy (AGO 1998) in terms of transport
Qld Gov't (1999c)	*Cycle South East: Integrated Cycle Strategy for South East Queensland*	cycle strategy to contribute towards the *IRTP*
Qld Gov't (2001c)	"Transport 2007 Consultation Report"	summarises the consultation process for *Transport 2007*
Qld Gov't (2001d)	"Transport 2007: Response to Issues Raised in Consultation"	detailed listing of issues raised in consultation on the draft *2007 Vision* and how these were incorporated into *Transport 2007*
Other government documents and policies		
Qld Gov't (1995/1998/2001)	*Regional Framework for Growth Management (RFGM) – SEQ 2001*	overarching land-use plan for SEQ incorporating transport (*IRTP*) and air quality (*SEQRAQS*) components
Qld Gov't – EPA (1999)	*South East Queensland Regional Air Quality Strategy (SEQRAQS): A Strategy for Improving Air Quality in South East Queensland*	air quality component of the *Regional Framework for Growth Management* for SEQ
Qld Gov't (2001b)	"Community Engagement Division – Directions Statement"	outlines the government's commitment to improving community engagement in government decision-making

Source: compiled by the author

Chapter 3.   Building a Framework of Participatory Planning for Sustainability

This chapter contains a review and analysis of theoretical literature in three distinct bodies of research: (1) participation in democratic political theory; (2) participation in planning theory; and (3) participation in the theory of environmental decision-making for sustainability. Based on this theoretical overview, a framework for successful participatory planning for sustainability is proposed at the end of the chapter. This framework is then used as the basis for an examination of six case studies in the next chapter, as well as for a more detailed analysis of regional transport planning in South East Queensland in Chapter 5.

3.1.   Participation in Democratic Political Theory

Democracy is a widely celebrated institution in countries whose political systems are based on it. However, there is little public awareness, or discussion, of the different models of democracy that are possible. Rather, democracy is often considered to be the only political alternative to totalitarianism (Pateman 1970: 2), leading to the simplistic conclusion that clearly any form of democracy is better than totalitarianism.

An analysis of the different models of democracy around the world could focus on any number of characteristics or elements. In this study, the focus is on the form of public participation in government decision-making. Some democracies quite strictly exclude the public from exercising political influence with the exception of electing their political representatives every few years, while others have a strong tradition of day-to-day citizen participation in government. This study adopts the most commonly identified democratic dichotomy: that between representative (or liberal) democracy and participatory (or direct) democracy (Woodcock 1971: 12; Barber 1984: 117; Dryzek 1990: 13; McLaverty 2002: 6).

In the following sections, representative/liberal and participatory models of democracy are defined, described and compared. Then, using these definitions, the theoretical basis of participation in planning and participation for sustainability are reviewed, with the conclusion that participatory democracy is not only the *better* of the two, but is the *required* form of democracy for achieving sustainability in western developed societies.

Defining democracy

The word "democracy" comes from the Greek words "dêmos" (people) and "-kratíā" (power or rule)[3], thus meaning "government by the people"[4]. The term is first attributed to Greek historian Herodotus, who identified four essential features of democracy:

1. equality before the law;
2. popular deliberation and the development of a popular consensus;
3. public accountability of the officials; and
4. equality of speech (quoted in Fagence 1977: 23).

One of the most well-known definitions of democracy was coined by United States president Abraham Lincoln, who in his "Gettysburg Address" referred to the democratic form of government in the United States as "government of the people, by the people, for the people" (Lincoln 1863/1990: 734). This basic definition of democracy provides a loose guide to its meaning, but Beetham provides a more modern definition that reflects the "democracy" that is described in this study:

> If democracy, then, belongs to the sphere of the political decision-making for an association or collectivity, then a system of collective decision-making can be said to be democratic to the extent that it is subject to control by all members of the relevant association, or all those under its authority, considered as equals. (Beetham 1999: 4-5, quoted in McLaverty 2002: 5)

However, a more detailed examination of the two main models of democracy – representative (or liberal) democracy and participatory (or direct) democracy – is required to provide the theoretical foundation for this study.

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[3] From "democracy" and "-cracy", in *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (1986), Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Representative democracy

The concept of representative democracy sprang out of the modern notion that direct democracy could not be practiced efficiently or effectively in large industrial nations and societies. Representative democracy is frequently referred to as "liberal democracy", and Lafferty and Meadowcroft's (1996) use of the terms "contemporary democracies" and "actually existing democracies" illustrate that most western democracies are currently based on this form of democracy. Modern representative democracy is often explained or justified by the suggestion that direct democracy, where all citizens participate in decision-making, is an inefficient form of government. Direct democracy may have worked in ancient Greece or might have been appropriate for a small village where consensus between all citizens could be reached, but the suggestion is that direct democracy is simply impractical for larger, more complex societies where too many decisions have to be made too quickly. As described by Benjamin Barber (1984):

> Liberal democracy was, to be sure, an attempt to adapt pure democracy to the realities of governing in a large-scale nation state. Pure democracy suggested a form of government in which all of the people governed themselves in all public matters all of the time; such a form could hardly be expected to function efficiently in a nation of continental proportions with millions of citizens. Representative democracy therefore substituted for the pure principle a definition of democracy as a form of government in which some of the people, chosen by all, govern in all public matters all of the time. (Barber 1984: xiv)

The term "liberal democracy", often used as a synonym for "representative democracy", provides a clearer explanation of the ideological basis for this model of democracy. Barber (1984) described the problems of liberal/representative democracy as stemming directly from the mutually conflicting nature of liberalism and democracy:

> Liberal democracy is based on premises about human nature, knowledge, and politics that are genuinely liberal but that are not intrinsically democratic. Its conception of the individual and of individual interest undermines the democratic practices upon which both individuals and their interests depend. Liberal democracy is thus a 'thin' theory of

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[4] From "democracy", in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1980), Merriam-Webster, Springfield MA.

> democracy, one whose democratic values are prudential and thus provisional, optional, and conditional – means to exclusively individualistic and private ends. From this precarious foundation, no firm theory of citizenship, participation, public goods, or civic virtue can be expected to arise. Liberal democracy, therefore, can never lead too far from Ambrose Bierce's cynical definition of politics as 'the conduct of public affairs for private advantage. (Barber 1984: 4)

Barber's description of liberal democracy above focuses on two key characteristics of this style of democracy: (1) the perceived need to keep government small and less powerful so that it does not hinder individuals' pursuits of their own goals; and (2) that the purpose of government is to contribute to the improvement of *individuals*, rather than contributing towards a better *society*. But another underlying characteristic of liberal democracy merely hinted at by the Barber passage above is the notion that a representative government chosen by the majority will be able to serve all individuals' interests, or in other words, one universal collective interest that is common to all citizens.

Many have questioned the notion of one common collective interest in a society, as well as the ability of a political elite, whether elected in a representative democracy or otherwise appointed in any form of aristocracy, to protect that collective interest. An early example of this scepticism was put forward by Alexis de Tocqueville (1835/1990: 240): "Under aristocratic governments public men are swayed by the interest of their order, which, if it is sometimes confused with the interests of the majority, is very frequently distinct from them." While de Tocqueville's statement was focused on 19th-century aristocracy, it would be no less valid if applied to today's industrialised democracies, where news stories of corruption and conflict of interest among politicians appear so regularly, even in western developed countries, that they are often not even treated as major stories.

More recently, the collective interest as a guide for public decision-making has been further questioned. Sandercock (1998), for instance, refers to the postmodern disintegration of the notion that decision-makers (her specific focus is on planners) can work towards one universal collective interest. Rather, a "multiplicity" or "plurality" of interests in society has become evident, meaning that a range of voices must be heard if all interests are to be protected (Sandercock 1998).

Sandercock's (1998) emphasis on more voices in decision-making flies in the face of "modern" democratic political theory. According to Carole Pateman (1970), one of the earliest modern political theorists to elaborate on and advocate a specifically representative form of democracy was Joseph Schumpeter (1943). His model was developed as a "scientific and empirical" political theory, a "realistic definition of democracy" based not on values and ideals but on reality (Pateman 1970: 3). Schumpeter's view was that "an increase in political participation by present non-participants could upset the stability of the democratic system" (Pateman 1970: 3).

Schumpeter's "realistic definition" of democracy was a substantive shift away from the basic definition of democracy as "government by the people". He defined democracy as: "That institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (Schumpeter 1943: 269). Here the focus is on the competition for power, rather than the way decisions are made or by whom. According to Pateman, Schumpeter drew parallels between his democratic theory and the market economy: "voters like consumers choose between the policies (products) offered by competing political entrepreneurs and the parties regulate the competition like trade associations in the economic sphere" (Pateman 1970: 4). While in theory anyone would be eligible to compete for political power, clearly some members of society would be greatly advantaged over others in terms of financial resources and status in order to win a position of power. Indeed, Schumpeter advocated that candidates for leadership should come from "a political or ruling class" (quoted in Pateman 1970: 4).

Schumpeter was not the last theorist to put forward an argument for a democratic theory based on strictly limited citizen participation, and attacking "classical" direct democracy. Indeed, Schumpeter's views were very influential according to Pateman (1970), with theorists including Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954), Dahl (1956), Sartori (1962) and Eckstein (1966) building on his work in the following decades. While each of these theorists had their own unique outlook and emphasis,

their common thread was the focus on voting as the only appropriate method for citizens to assert power or influence in a democracy (Pateman 1970: 7).

The question emerges whether such a limited form of democracy can be considered democracy at all. Citizens, or "the people", do indeed rule indirectly through representatives that they have some power to appoint. However, as in an aristocracy, only a small proportion of citizens have the ability, wealth or status to successfully win Schumpeter's (1943) electoral "competition", and once these elites have gained power, citizens have little or no influence over what their "representatives" choose to do, until the next election.

An important common characteristic between representative democracy and aristocracy is the focus on elites or experts who make decisions for everyone. But is this approach consistent with the basic definition of democracy as "rule by the people", or is representative democracy not really democracy at all? The word "aristocracy" can be defined as "rule by the *best* people",[5] coming from the Greek "aristos", or "best";[6] and this definition bears considerable resemblance to Schumpeter's (1943) conception of the electoral competition "winners" as the *best* people to make decisions in a democracy. According to de Tocqueville (1835/1990), aristocratic leaders only rarely pursue the interest of the majority instead of their own interests; and the only major difference between a democratic political elite and an aristocratic political elite is the former's need to gain re-election in a number of years. He further suggested that "Everyone is the best and sole judge of his own private interests" (de Tocqueville 1835/1990: 64-65). A political system does not qualify as "democracy", or "rule by the people", if it grants a political elite or body of experts the exclusive power to make all decisions. Instead, a democracy grants each individual some power or opportunity to influence the decisions that affect their lives. According to Barber: "If democracy entails the right to govern ourselves rather than to be governed…, then liberal democratic institutions fall short of being democratic" (Barber 1984: xv).

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[5] From "aristocracy", in *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (1980), Merriam-Webster, Springfield MA. (emphasis added)
[6] From "aristocracy", in *Oxford Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (1986), Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Participatory democracy

The concept of participatory democracy resurfaced in the 1960s and 1970s, alongside strong movements for peace and for environmental protection, with citizens demanding more influence over government decision-making. Participatory democracy was not a new concept; its roots dated back to the 18th century in the writings of philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762/1968), William Godwin (1793/1971) and John Stuart Mill (1860/1910). But with representative/liberal democracy at the height of its dominance in terms of both political *practice* and political *theory*, a new generation of theorists was required to reshape the participatory traditions of democracy into concrete proposals and models to be applied to modern (and postmodern) government institutions. This section will examine the early roots and more recent developments in the theory of participatory democracy.

In general terms, participatory democracy can be described as a political system where the people really do rule, in contrast to representative democracy where citizens have no direct influence over decisions that affect them. Benello and Roussopoulos (1971) provide a more detailed description of the distinguishing characteristics of "radical" participatory democracy:

> In a participatory democracy, decision-making is the process whereby people propose, discuss, decide, plan, and implement those decisions that affect their lives. This requires that the decision-making process be continuous and significant, direct rather than through representatives, and organized around issues instead of personalities. (Benello and Roussopoulos 1971: 5)

F. Emery (1989) describes a similar concept which he refers to as "real democracy", and Barber (1984) sees participatory democracy as "strong democracy":

> Strong democracy … is self-government by citizens rather than representative government in the name of citizens. Active citizens govern themselves directly here, not necessarily at every level and in every instance, but frequently enough and in particular when basic policies are being decided and when significant power is being deployed. Self-government is carried on through institutions designed to facilitate ongoing civic participation in agenda-setting, deliberation, legislation, and policy implementation. (Barber 1984: 151)

and

> Strong democracy tries to revitalize citizenship without neglecting the problems of efficient government by defining democracy as a form of government in which all of the people govern themselves in at least some public matters at least some of the time. To legislate and to implement laws at least some of the time is to keep alive the meaning and function of citizenship in all of us all of the time; whereas to delegate the governing power, even if only to representatives who remain bound to us by the vote, is to give away not power but civic activity, not accountability but civic responsibility, not our secondary rights against government but our primary right to govern. (Barber 1984: xiv-xv)

The modern (post-classical) theory of participatory democracy started with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1762/1968) *Social Contract*. For Rousseau, citizen participation in decision-making was essential to ensure individuals' interests were protected through equitable decisions, and to ensure good government. But the most important aspect of participation in decision-making is the education of the citizen. According to Pateman (1970: 24): "Rousseau's ideal system is designed to develop responsible, individual social and political action through the effect of the participatory process." Through participation, the citizen learns "that he has to take into account wider matters than his own immediate private interests if he is to gain co-operation from others, and he learns that the public and private interest are linked" (Pateman 1970:25). Rousseau considered his participatory system to be "self-sustaining" in that once it is established, the system helps to further develop the skills that are necessary to maintain and constantly improve the system. And finally, Rousseau suggested that the experience of the participation process would result in the citizen being more likely to accept whatever decisions, laws or policies are created through the process (Pateman 1970: 27).

Rousseau (1762/1968) did not develop his participatory theory with an entire national government in mind, partially because the first democratic government was yet to be established. But a number of later theorists, such as John Stuart Mill (1860/1910), Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1851/1969) and G. D. H. Cole (1920), expanded Rousseau's foundation into a full theory of a modern participatory political and social system (Pateman 1970: 27). Mill's most important specific contribution was to emphasise that citizens should participate in decision-making not only at the national level but also at the local level, where "the real educative effect of participation occurs", and where "the issues dealt with directly affect the individual

and his everyday life" (Pateman 1970: 31). Proudhon and Cole contributed by extending participation theory into the realm of the workplace, another setting where citizens could "learn democracy" more easily than at the less directly relevant level of the national government (Pateman 1970: 38; Woodcock 1971: 23).

From the historical and theoretical discussion above, the following key characteristics of participatory democracy can be discerned:

- **continuous:** citizens are involved in decision-making on a continuous basis and in the full range of decision-making activities;

- **significant:** citizens play a significant role in decision-making – i.e. their ideas and opinions lead directly to the final decision;

- **all citizens contribute:** not every decision is made through a consensus from every citizen, but every citizen is involved in some decision-making some of the time, particularly those issues that most affect them;

- **focus on discussion:** substantive debate and discussion occurs, through which solutions are found, citizens learn about each other's opinions and needs, and support for and ownership of decisions and policies are engendered; and

- **opportunity for learning:** the process of involvement in decision-making provides an opportunity for learning about issues and about society, and leads to a sense of personal responsibility and personal sense of belonging in the citizen.

Key characteristics of the two democratic models

Table 3.1 shows a comparison of the two models of democracy discussed above: representative democracy and participatory democracy.

Table 3.1:   Key characteristics of the two democratic models

Model	Other names	Theorists	Characteristics
representative democracy	• liberal • contemporary/ actually existing	• Schumpeter (1943) • Berelson et al. (1954) • Dahl (1956) • Sartori (1962) • Eckstein (1966)	• small, efficient government • elites compete for positions of power
participatory democracy	• direct • strong • radical • classical • discursive • true • pure • real	• Rousseau (1762/1968) • Proudhon (1851/1969) • Pateman (1970) • Benello & Roussopoulos (1971) • Barber (1984) • F. Emery (1989) • Dryzek (1990)	• citizens continuously involved in decision-making • significant issues decided by citizens • all citizens contribute • focus is on discussion, not outcomes • opportunity for learning leads to sense of responsibility and belonging

Source: compiled by the author

The preceding discussion has explored participation in democratic political theory, outlining the key characteristics of the two main models of democracy: representative democracy and participatory democracy. Thus far the discussion has remained general and theoretical. In the next section, however, one particular form of decision-making – planning – will become the focus as the role of participation in planning theory is explored.

3.2.   Participation in Planning Theory

After the municipal reform and "managed society" movements of the late-nineteenth century and the resulting separation of the government from the people (D. Burke, Foster and Nash 1970: 15), demands for citizen participation resurfaced in the 1960s. Jean Hillier attributes this "turning point in the story of participation" to the increased awareness that individuals could actually influence decision-making, as was illustrated by the Anti-Vietnam War and civil rights movements (Hillier in Sarkissian, Cook and Walsh 1997: xi). But while public demands for greater involvement in decision-making have led to some practical and legislative improvements, doubts about the effectiveness of existing participatory planning approaches emerged early on, and these doubts remain unresolved more than three decades later.

This section begins with an examination of how participatory planning can be effective, followed by an analysis of what planning approaches are consistent with representative versus participatory democracy, as discussed in the previous section. Finally, a number of key characteristics or conclusions are suggested, before the role of participation in sustainability is explored in the final section of the chapter.

Early perspectives on participatory planning

One of the first writers referred to in most reviews of citizen participation in planning is Sherry Arnstein (1969). Arnstein defined citizen participation as "a categorical term for citizen power", and "the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future" (Arnstein 1969: 216). Arnstein reflected that though "virtually everyone" applauds the concept of "participation of the governed in their government", enthusiasm for participation quickly wanes when applied to redistribution of power to "the have-nots" (1969: 216). In order to help distinguish mere rhetoric from legitimate "participation", Arnstein proposed an eight-rung "ladder of citizen participation", shown in Figure 3.1. The first two rungs of the ladder – Therapy and Manipulation – are categorised as "non-participation". The next three rungs – Informing, Consultation and Placation – she refers to as "degrees of tokenism". Finally, the top three rungs – Partnership, Delegated power and Citizen control – are considered "degrees of citizen power" (Arnstein 1969: 217). Thus, according to Arnstein's definition, only the top three rungs qualify as real citizen participation, because only they lead to a redistribution of power to the "have-nots".

Figure 3.1:   The eight rungs of Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation"
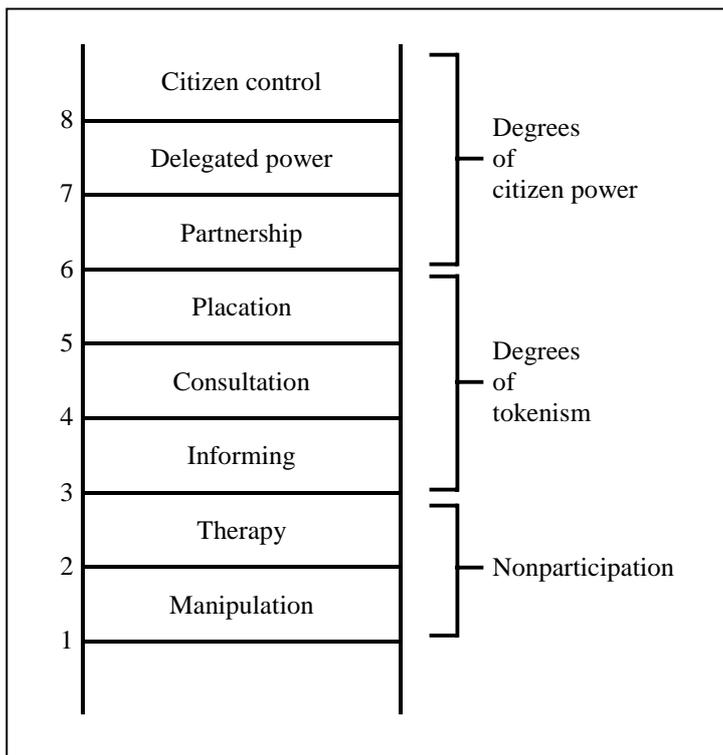
Source: Arnstein (1969: 217)

Along with Arnstein (1969), other early enthusiasts of citizen participation such as Godschalk and Mills (1966), Bolan (1967) and E. Burke (1968) raised high expectations of what could be achieved through increased participation in planning processes. But even as these high expectations were being raised, real-world planning experience was turning this optimism into discouragement. Authors such as Broady (1969), Kasperson (1974), Fagence (1977) and Sandercock (1978) suggested that increased participation alone would not solve any of society's problems, from poverty to inequality to environmental degradation. Rather, they suggested the planning profession as a whole would have to undergo a radical transition to keep up with recent changes to society. For instance, Broady (1969: 216, quoted in Fagence 1977: 1) called citizen participation "a mere palliative for the ills of the planning profession"; and even decades later, Sandercock (1998) suggested that nothing short of a paradigm shift from "modern" to "post-modern" planning would be enough to overcome these "ills".

One concern of many critics was that the *quantity* of participation was not leading to *quality* participation. According to Kasperson (1974: 1), critical scholarly debate about the role of citizens in decision-making had been replaced by "popular sloganeering and genuflection at the altar of *citizen participation*" (author's emphasis). In referring to "the uncritical propagation of such empty slogans as 'maximum feasible participation' or 'widespread participation'", Kasperson (1974: 1) was not the last critic to treat the concept of participation with some degree of cynicism. Similarly, Sandercock (1978: 117) called participation "the new conservatism" and "the great red herring of the seventies".

Much of the disappointment with early attempts at public participation may be attributable to the superficiality of participation that was attempted. For instance, Sandercock (1978: 128-129) outlined four case studies in Sydney where participation was limited to advisory committees, and "public meetings, leaflets and questionnaires". Another typical illustration is the three Canadian examples offered by O'Riordan (1977), all of which centred around short-term (rather than ongoing) "task forces", "policy committees" and "public hearings". Having observed the failure of many similar traditional-style attempts to facilitate citizen participation, critics became understandably disappointed that the promise of participation was not being realised. Only a limited number of individuals could be involved, and these participants almost never included the most marginalised in society; and the planning profession was not yet open to more innovative and inclusive approaches.

One of the first positive developments to come out of the early disappointment and frustration with citizen participation theory was the recognition that participation could have multiple objectives, rather than always needing to result in redistribution of power to the poor. Edmund Burke (1968) was the first to hint at this new dimension to participation theory, suggesting that different participatory techniques could help planners to achieve different objectives, which he suggested were education, goal identification, attitude change, and organizational stability (E. Burke 1968: 288, quoted in Glass 1979: 181). Rosener (1975) and Glass (1979) each took this concept a step further, providing lists of techniques and which functions or objectives they could help to achieve. Rosener's (1975) matrix contained 37
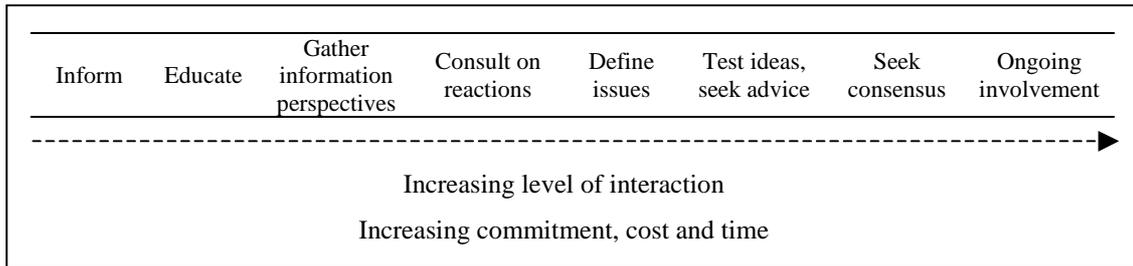
techniques and 14 functions, while Glass (1979: 182-183) provided a more compact "typology" of 12 techniques analysed for their relevance to each of five objectives of citizen participation: information exchange, education, support building, decision-making supplement, and representational input.

More recent issues in participatory planning

After a period of decreased interest in participation in the 1980s (Jackson 2001: 138), the search for effective methods of participation was renewed and broadened in the 1990s with a number of deeper theoretical analyses contributing to the debate on citizen participation. These analyses have some relevance for the context of participation in planning for sustainability, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

Different methods for different purposes. Building on Arnstein (1969), Dorcey, Doney and Rueggeberg (1994) have provided a modified framework for analysing citizen participation. Instead of a vertical, hierarchical "ladder" with the higher approaches considered better, Dorcey et al. (1994) view the range of participation methods as merely a horizontal "spectrum" (Jackson 2001: 139 – see Figure 3.2). While Arnstein's (1969) ladder clearly infers a negative connotation on the lowest "rungs", using terms such as "manipulation" and "tokenism", Dorcey et al. (1994) suggest that "each level in the spectrum may be appropriate, depending on the decision to be made", and that "as higher levels of involvement are employed, each of the lower forms may need to be carried out simultaneously, in order to keep all stakeholders involved and informed" (Jackson 2001: 138). This subtle development reflects a move away from single-purposed planning focused on community economic development towards a more diverse set of multiple and sometimes conflicting purposes for planning.

Figure 3.2: Dorcey, Doney and Rueggeberg's "Spectrum of Public Involvement"

Inform	Educate	Gather information perspectives	Consult on reactions	Define issues	Test ideas, seek advice	Seek consensus	Ongoing involvement

Increasing level of interaction

Increasing commitment, cost and time

Source: Dorcey et al. (1994), quoted in Jackson (2001: 139)

Expertise and "the public interest". According to S. Campbell and S. Fainstein (1996: 10-11) planners have long seen themselves as serving "the public interest" as an objective and neutral "expert". But as communities become more diverse, identifying a single public interest becomes an even greater challenge than it already was. Instead, planners now have to "serve the public interest by negotiating a kind of multicultural, technocratic pluralism", or in other words, through becoming mediators, facilitators and communicators. Sandercock (1998: 13) comes to a similar conclusion, that planners must embrace multiculturalism and multinationalism, or as Benhabib (1995) calls it, "the presence of more than one we" (quoted in Sandercock 1998: 13). But multiculturalism is not the only factor that separates "publics" and "interests" from one another; and a small group of people could never determine the interests of every individual in a society. Or as de Tocqueville (1835/1990: 64-65) stated, "everyone is the best and sole judge of his own private interests."

The view of planning as an objective science where experts can determine empirically what is best for everyone is a *technocratic* view. Frank Fischer (1990: 17-18) defines technocracy as "a system of governance in which technically-trained experts rule by virtue of their specialized knowledge and position in dominant political and economic institutions", and "a theory of governmental decision making designed to promote technical solutions to political problems". This technocratic approach to planning poses "a deep-seated challenge to democracy" and "the 'irrational' decision processes of democratic politics" (1990: 22-23). There is no place for citizen participation in the technocratic paradigm, as "neither the politician nor the everyday citizen has the information and sophistication" to contribute

towards complex decisions (1990: 22). Earlier critiques of technocratic decision-making include Nelkin (1975, 1977, 1984) and Putnam (1977); and Stewart, Dennis and Ely (1984) examined value judgements made by planners in the context of providing allegedly technical advice to a citizens' task force on air quality policy.

The technocratic view of exclusive expertise also neglects the significance of local citizen knowledge and expertise, or what Irwin (1995) has called "citizen science". Irwin advocates a greater focus of science on the "needs and concerns of citizens", as well as "a form of science developed and enacted by citizens themselves", and incorporating "contextual knowledges" rather than limited to knowledge gained through formal scientific method (Irwin 1995: xi). Irwin argues that without greater interaction between scientific, technological and citizen knowledge, scientists (and experts generally) will not be able to develop enough citizen support for their findings, and citizens will not be able to experience the "social learning" necessary to contribute towards the making of complex decisions (Irwin 1995: 7).

Technical expertise cannot on its own lead to concrete solutions. According to Bolan (1967):

> No matter how we improve our substantive knowledge of how cities function, and no matter how we improve our capabilities in information handling, operations research, and prediction, if there is not a corollary development of the community's capacity for improved decision-making within the framework of democratic processes, there is the real possibility that heavy investment in the current forms of city planning technique will have been in vain. (Bolan 1967: 244, quoted in Fagence 1977: 5-6)

This means that even if planners were to somehow develop any universal model the ideal city, the ideal city could only be built if members of the public were given the opportunity to understand what makes this proposed "ideal city" so ideal. In other words, unless planners (and governments) can gain the support of citizens for their proposed decisions, a proposed planning improvement will never become a reality within a democratic political structure.

Learning through participatory planning. As discussed in the previous section, Rousseau's (1762/1968) theory of participatory democracy was based on the premise that citizens learn through their involvement in political decision-making. Similarly,

the theory of social learning in planning centres around participants learning through involvement in the planning process. Social learning theory has its roots in John Dewey's (1920/1950) philosophy of "learning by doing" (quoted in Friedmann 1987: 188). Lewis Mumford (1938) was the first to apply social learning theory to regional planning. Mumford's emphasis was on regional planning as an educative process, referring to "the 'intelligent absorption' of the plan by the regional population":

> Regional plans are instruments of communal education; and without that education, they can look forward only to partial achievement. Failing intelligent participation and understanding, at every stage in the process, from the smallest unit up, regional plans must remain inert. (Mumford 1938: 375-381, quoted in Friedmann 1987: 198)

By the "smallest unit", Mumford pictured (sadly through out-dated gender stereotypes) neighbourhoods and households where social learning would occur continuously:

> Political life, instead of being the monopoly of remote specialists, must become as constant a process in daily living as the housewife's visit to the grocer or the butcher, and more frequent than the man's visit to the barber. (Mumford 1938: 382)

More recent theorists have built upon the foundation of social learning provided by Dewey and Mumford. Godschalk (1967: 972) called for "a continuous cooperative venture" between planners and citizens, which "could not only educate and involve the community in planning, but could also educate and involve planners in their community. (Friedmann 1973: 21) called this approach "transactive planning", and later "mutual learning" Friedmann (1987: 402). Friedmann developed these theories into a complete theory of "radical planning", where planners play the role of mediators to contribute towards "a more self-reliant, politically active community" (1987: 395). Klijn and Koppenjan (2002: 163) suggest that not just planners but politicians as well should get involved in participatory processes, "as initiators and facilitators of public debates".

Consensus-based, communicative planning. Some of the leading theorists of open, inclusionary, communicative approaches include Forester (1989, 1999), Innes (1995) and Healey (1992, 1997). Based on Habermas's (1984) *Theory of Communicative Action*, these approaches focus on the planner's role in facilitating a negotiation

between stakeholders. Along with Innes (1995), Bryson and Crosby (1992) and Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) have focused on building consensus through interaction between diverse stakeholders. For the purposes of this study, the importance of these communicative, interactive approaches to planning are: (1) their focus on reaching a policy or strategy outcome that satisfies all stakeholders; and (2) their emphasis on the discursive process itself as an opportunity for all "actors" to share their own values and hear those of other "actors". During these processes, "trust and knowledge are generated and circulated, to provide a foundation of social and intellectual capital upon which collaboration can build" (Healey 1997: 247).

While much of this literature applies more to small group processes with finite numbers of participants, there is the potential for application to broad-scale participatory and discursive processes. Healey writes:

> While there is now a considerable body of practical advice on how to engage in such discourse within the context of small groups, the challenge for collaborative discussion about urban region futures is more complex. (Healey 1997: 272-273)

But the value of overcoming this challenge is clear:

> The broader the base and depth of involvement in strategy-making and the richer the links among the relational webs involved, the greater the 'ownership' of the new strategic understandings is likely to be, and the more strategic directions, once invented, are likely to endure. (Innes, Gruber, Thompson and Neuman 1994, quoted in Healey 1997: 247)

Who should participate? Much of the early focus of citizen participation literature was on redistribution of power to the "have-nots" (e.g. Arnstein 1969), and preventing the middle class from dominating new participatory opportunities (Sandercock 1978). In many societies, the have-not citizens who most often require special encouragement and assistance from planners to be involved in decision-making are ethnic minority groups. Hollnsteiner (1976), Cosgrove and Kliger (1997) and Sandercock (1998) are among the many authors who have developed and analysed processes for facilitating multi-cultural participation in planning. However, Tauxe (1995) broadened the scope of participatory marginalisation with her "ethnographic" account of the difficulties experienced by the predominantly white, English-speaking residents of a rural town in the USA as they were consulted by

urban planning professionals. Thus, there is clearly a broad range of ways in which groups can be excluded from effective participation unless open, inclusionary approaches are employed.

The above analyses clearly reflect the desirability of every group or sector of the community – in other words every individual – being provided with an opportunity to participate meaningfully in planning decision-making. However, less frequently discussed in the planning literature is the concept of every citizen *being* involved in planning decision-making, rather than just being given the *opportunity* to be involved. Central to the concept of social learning through planning is the importance of all citizens, or at least a large proportion of them, being involved in or at least aware of planning decisions, at least to some extent. Relevant here is Barber's (1984: xiv) conception of the right and responsibility of citizens to actively "govern themselves in at least some public matters at least some of the time". This view, along with the social learning theory, means that in order for participatory processes to be successful, all citizens must be involved to some extent, not just the "haves" or the "have-nots", and not just the representatives of a small number of stakeholder organisations.

Where should participation happen? Citizen participation in planning often requires potential participants to go out of their way to be involved in unfamiliar processes in unfamiliar places. Unfortunately, only individuals whose self-interest is under attack, who are quite possibly already cornered and frustrated, or who feel quite comfortable and confident in the participatory setting are likely to bring themselves to the process. Sandercock (1978: 123) questions the assumption of the "grass-roots radical" approach to participation (cf. Alinsky 1971) that "there is a reservoir of popular enthusiasm waiting to be tapped" by community leaders seeking broad public support for their demands. Instead, Sandercock paints the picture of a largely disinterested and apathetic public who are unlikely to treat participation in planning as an important or even possible way to influence decisions that affect them.

For proactive participation in strategic and day-to-day planning decisions, the venue will have to be local and already familiar and relevant to people. Friedmann (1998:

23-25) considers the household to be a potential and even essential setting for the exchange of political and economic power. Other authors suggest that that "most effective transformations start off in informal contexts" (Innes et al. 1994, Ostrom 1990, quoted in Healey 1997: 269). While individual advocates and planners can work to improve household access to "social power", most often focusing on reducing poverty, Friedmann (1998: 25) notes that "access to household resources on a societal scale depends to a great extent on provisioning by the state." Thus, it is suggested that participatory planning can achieve significant transformations while effectively empowering communities at the household level; but innovative processes will be required, possibly with the primary assistance of adequate resourcing from the state.

When should participation occur? The question of timing of public participation in planning is covered most thoroughly in the literature of environmental assessment. When a project undergoes environmental impact assessment (EIA), public participation should occur as early as possible (Ortolano and Shepherd 1995; Shepherd and Bowler 1997). Earlier public participation gives the public an opportunity to meaningfully "influence the selection of alternatives or key project variables"; but conversely, "the later that public participation occurs in the EIA process, the higher the risk that public comments will only minimally influence the final decision" (Shepherd and Bowler 1997: 727). But there is a role for the public at every step in the EIA process, including after project approval and during implementation (Bush 1990; Shepherd 1998).

In some instances, however, once a project has already reached the point of EIA it can already be too late to ensure a positive project outcome, regardless of the quality of participation in the EIA process. Rather, the public should also be involved in the assessment of policies, programmes and plans, a process most commonly known as strategic environmental assessment (SEA) (Sheate 1992, 1995; Therivel and Partidário 1996; Partidário 1996; Shepherd and Ortolano 1996; Morgan 1998). And as with EIA, the earlier the public is involved in SEA, "the more the developer (or policy- or plan-maker) will benefit from the process" (Morgan 1998: 37).

The implication of the EIA and SEA literature is that public participation should occur continuously throughout a planning process, from early visioning stages until during the ongoing implementation period; and the public should be involved in all levels of planning decision-making, from high level policy visioning to programs, plans and strategies, and down to detailed local project delivery and implementation.

Democratic theory and planning

S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein (1996) present a typology of four planning theories and the political theory they each characterise. They are: (1) technocratic theory and traditional planning; (2) democratic theory and democratic planning; (3) socialist theory and equity planning; and (4) liberal theory and incrementalism. Relating their definitions to the discussion in the previous section, democratic planning can be linked to participatory democracy, whereas incrementalism is more closely aligned to liberal/representative democracy.

Democratic planning. According to the S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein (1996) typology:

> The democratic planner, like the democratic governor, both responds to constituents and attempts to educate them, to show them alternatives and the relation between particular policies and their interests. Indeed, the reason that citizens must participate in government and retain power in their hands is not only to prevent governmental outcomes contrary to their interests but also so that they themselves may grow, learn from participation, and become even more knowledgeable and better able to govern themselves. (S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein 1996: 276)

The role of the democratic planner, in a general sense, is to facilitate equal democratic representation of minority interests in the face of potential majority control by:

> …cultivating community networks, alerting less organized interests of significant issues, assuring that community-based groups are adequately informed and engage in critical analysis of policies affecting them, exercising skills in conflict management and group relations, and compensating for political and economic pressures. (Forester 1989: 155, quoted in S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein 1996: 269)

Further, democratic planners attempt to create "the necessary conditions for genuine democracy" by "pressing for the interests of typically excluded groups" (S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein 1996: 269).

Liberal planning/incrementalism. Incrementalists, on the other hand, are not really planners at all, according to S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein (1996: 272). Consistent with liberal democratic theory, incrementalism involves "no specifying of ends and means" (1996: 272), and "only those relatively few alternatives that represent small or incremental changes from existing policies" are considered (Lindblom 1965: 144, quoted in S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein 1996: 271). This arrangement is quite acceptable to those who are relatively satisfied with the status quo, particularly "the preservation of the existing arrangement of social power" (1996: 272). However, this approach is not so appropriate for handling urgent local and global problems, such as poverty or environmental degradation.

Which techniques? Participatory planning for participatory democracy is not simply a matter of choosing the right participatory technique. More importantly, planners must be working to improve the abilities of all groups to participate in an equitable and constructive dialogue about the issues, with the goal of identifying solutions that best resolve problems and conflicts. While a number of guide books provide extensive listings of participatory techniques and guidelines for citizen involvement (see, for instance, Arnstein and Metcalf 1976; M. Emery 1989; Connor 1992; Local Government Management Board 1994; ICLEI 1996; Sarkissian et al. 1997; and Wates 2000), any technique can potentially contribute towards democratic planning, or alternatively can be used to limit citizen influence over decision-making, depending on how they are carried out.

More than stakeholder participation. In terms of the framework being presented in this literature review, participatory planning processes that only involve representatives of stakeholder organisations or the few citizens dedicated enough or frustrated enough to participate of their own accord, cannot be characterised as democratic planning or participatory democracy. According to S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein (1996:277), with only "a small minority" of citizens likely to participate in today's democracies (due to the cost in time and energy and the futility and frustration of most efforts to participate), planners (and governments) have to "take upon themselves the task of divining the will of the majority, in which case the

planning process could hardly be called democratic." Stakeholder participation without broader participation is more characteristic of representative democracy – inadequate for the purposes of facilitating social learning, and perhaps of limited value in terms of taking advantage of local knowledge to achieve improved policy outcomes.

Key characteristics of democratic and participatory planning

Based on the discussion in this section, participatory planning for participatory democracy must have the following characteristics:

- **multiple knowledges** – local, citizen knowledge and expertise must be recognised and incorporated into solutions and decision;

- **social learning** – emphasis on the facilitation of social learning for participants and planners alike;

- **broad-scale** – the general public must be included in the social learning process, not just the "key stakeholders";

- **multiple interests** – the process must facilitate a negotiation of all interests towards a satisfactory consensus solution that satisfies all interests;

The following section is focused on how the participatory democracy and participatory planning discussed above can contribute towards environmental sustainability.

3.3. Participation for Sustainability

W. H. Auden described democracy as not "a particular form of political structure", but as "the completely open society", saying, "We have in fact no choice at all; we have to adapt ourselves to an open society or perish" (Auden quoted in Woodcock 1971: 11). The framework presented in this study relies on Auden's premise. If humanity's destruction of the environment and the planet does indeed pose a threat to the survival of humanity itself – as many have suggested from the ground-breaking *Limits to Growth* (D. H. Meadows, D. L. Meadows, Randers and Behrens 1972) to David Suzuki's (1993) *Time to Change* – then a global revolution in public participation in government decision-making is necessary in order to make environmental sustainability possible.

The following review of literature on participation for sustainability is based on the premise that the major challenge in achieving sustainability is a social one rather than a technical one. In the words of Edmund O. Wilson:

> The shift to sustainable development will depend as much on education and social change as on science. Around the world modest projects are being advanced with one common result: if procedures tailored to the special case are used, economic development and conservation can both be served. People can be persuaded; they understand their own long-term interest and they can adapt. (Wilson quoted in Foster-Turley 1996: 1)

The main focus of this section is on the role of participation, education, social learning and dialogue in achieving sustainability.

The roots of participation for sustainability

Participation in decision-making has been acknowledged as an essential component of sustainability (or sustainable development) since the concept was first developed in the 1970s and 1980s. The United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development's report *Our Common Future* (WCED 1987) is often credited with initiating the global movement towards environmental sustainability. The report defined "sustainable development" as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (WCED 1987: 43). One of the key elements the report suggests is required to achieve sustainable development is "a political system that secures effective citizen participation in decision making" (WCED 1987: 65). The report places even more emphasis on environmental education, which the report suggests will be necessary to help "individuals in the real world to be persuaded … to act in the common interest" (WCED 1987: 46).

The United Nations' emphasis on participation and education for sustainability did not begin or end with *Our Common Future*. The 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm recognised the need for education of children and adults in order to "broaden the basis for an enlightened opinion" on environmental matters (UNEP 1972: Principle 19). This led to a ten-day International Environmental Education Workshop in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1975, and the *Belgrade Charter* (UNESCO-UNEP 1976: 2), which declared that "Environmental education should emphasise active participation in preventing and solving

environmental problems." The Charter was turned into an action plan at the first Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi, Georgia (USSR) in October 1977. The *Tbilisi Declaration* outlined the need for both formal (school-based) and nonformal (community-based) education in tackling global environmental problems, including an aim to help individuals and communities to "acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes and practical skills to participate in a responsible and effective way in anticipating and solving environmental problems" (UNESCO-UNEP 1978: 2). "Participation" was listed as one of five objectives of environmental education: "to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels working toward resolution of environmental problems" (UNESCO-UNEP 1978: 3).

The importance of participation in achieving sustainability was upheld by the non-government-led *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1980). While most of the strategy focused on ecological problems and scientific and technical solutions to them, the document also included a section dedicated to "building support for conservation: participation and education". The justification for this section was provided in its first sentence: "Ultimately the behaviour of entire societies towards the biosphere must be transformed if the achievement of conservation objectives is to be assured" (1980: 29). In addition to the contribution made by public participation towards improved decisions, the educative role of participation was also acknowledged:

> Local community involvement and consultation and other forms of public participation in planning, decision making and management are … an indispensable means of educating both the public in the importance and problems of conservation, and policy makers, planners and managers in the concerns of the public. (IUCN/UNEP/WWF 1980: 29)

More recently, the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro restated the importance of public participation in the achievement of sustainable development. The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* (UNCED 1992a: Principle 10) stated that: "Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level." In addition, the United Nations' *Agenda 21 Programme of Action* placed a strong emphasis on citizen involvement and

community partnerships, asserting that sustainable development requires "full participation of all parties concerned" (UNCED 1992b: §2.6). Chapter 28 focused on "local authorities' initiatives in support of *Agenda 21*", and provided guidelines for each local authority to "enter into a dialogue with its citizens, local organizations and private enterprises and adopt 'a local Agenda 21'" to work towards a more sustainable local community (UNCED 1992b, §28.3). The following quote clearly outlines the importance of citizen participation, social learning and mutual learning on the path towards sustainability:

> Through consultation and consensus-building, local authorities would learn from citizens and from local, civic, community, business and industrial organizations and acquire the information needed for formulating the best strategies. The process of consultation would increase household awareness of sustainable development issues. (UNCED 1992b: §28.3)

But despite these international visions of participation-based sustainability, and some level of national and even local adoption of the key principles around the world, success in actual practice has been limited. At the national level, many regions and nations have responded to *Agenda 21* by developing policy commitments to pursue sustainable development. Examples include the European Union (CEC 1993), the United Kingdom (UK DoE 1994), Germany (BMU 1994), the Netherlands (VROM 1994), the United States (PCSD 1999) and Australia (Commonwealth of Australia 1992). In addition, "Local Agenda 21s" (LA 21s) have sprung up all around the world, including over 60 in Australia (Agyeman 2000); and Environment Australia (1999) has prepared a document entitled *Localising Agenda 21* to assist Asia-Pacific nations in "involving the entire community in preparing a long term sustainable development action plan" (Environment Australia 1999: 2). However, actual steps towards sustainability due to these measures have been few, according to T. Fischer (1999) and Agyeman (2000); and in the meantime, theorists have begun to seek a deeper understanding of the social change process necessary to shift a society, and a global community, towards sustainability.

Learning through environmental participation

One of the first theorists to examine the role of learning in the movement towards sustainability was Lester Milbrath (1989). His conception of "social learning" for

sustainability is much broader than just public participation in decision-making, but participation is a key component. Milbrath resists defining "social learning", but suggests it is something close to "a self-educating community" (Berry 1987: 79, quoted in Milbrath 1989: 88). Social learning includes not only individuals learning from social interaction, but also society learning from the cumulative learning of its individual members (1989: 91-93). According to Milbrath, we cannot create a sustainable society without social learning: "If a society is to be truly sustainable, most of its people must learn what that requires of them personally in terms of changes in their values, lifestyles and institutions" (1989: 280). He further outlines a number of ways in which society, government and other institutions would need to change in order to facilitate social learning adequately. One of these ways is through open government that invites citizens to be a part of the decision process: "A strong tradition favoring citizen participation, and vigorous encouragement of it, is an important aspect of openness that stimulates social learning" (1989: 112).

Fien and Whelan (2002) provide a good review of "social learning for sustainability", as well as an "eco-psychological" basis for social learning. They quote Gladwin, Newburry and Reisken (1997: 239-240), who outline the unsustainable aspects of the dominant human "mental models", or ways that people represent the world (quoted in Fien and Whelan 2002: 2). The implication of this deeply ingrained lack of "ecological consciousness" (Roszak 1992: 320) is that any "top-down interventions" or technical solutions to environmental problems will be difficult to implement, let alone to maintain, until individuals' understandings of the world have become more attuned to sustainability (Fien and Whelan 2002: 2). Lee (1993) breaks down the concept of social learning for sustainability first developed by Brooks (1977) into two components: (1) conservation research (the more technical "compass" to guide solutions), and (2) democratic values, skills and institutions to encourage an active civil society and dynamic "bounded conflict" (the more socially-focused "gyroscope" element of education, participation and dialogue) (Fien and Whelan 2002: 2-3; Fien and Skoien 2002: 271). Thus, social learning for sustainability must consist not only of a community-wide search for technical solutions to environmental problems, but must also consist of citizen involvement in decision-making and in the implementation of solutions. Included in this second

category would be the increasingly-documented social learning experience offered by participation in social change activism and in local environment groups (Whelan 2000, 2002; Fien and Skoien 2002).

Learning through environmental dialogue

John Dryzek (1990) has contributed another theory of importance to environmental politics in his "discursive democracy". Based on the classical (Aristotelian) politics, communicative action (Habermas 1984) and participatory democracy, Dryzek's theory, like Healey's (1997) collaborative planning, focuses on the need for political discourse to reach "consensus on what is desirable based on a reciprocal understanding of the accepted legitimate (if different) opinions" held by participants, or citizens (Dryzek 1990: 17). Writing specifically about the ability of western governments to tackle the current environmental crisis, Dryzek (1992: 41-42) suggests that the dominant institutions of market capitalism, the administrative state (or bureaucracy) and liberal democracy are "essentially irrational in an ecological context". In particular, liberal democracy is ill-suited to resolve environmental problems due to the disproportionate distribution of power towards business, its brief time horizon between elections, and its "addiction to economic growth" (Dryzek 1992: 22-23). Dryzek (1992: 22) admits that "more progress has been made in dealing with environmental problems in the world's liberal democracies than in any other political system"; but he attributes these successes to the growing strength of environmental interest groups.

While not completely pushing aside the current liberal democratic political system, Dryzek (1992: 30) suggests that environmental problems will only be solved through the expansion of an "autonomous public sphere" where "individuals enter into discourse which involves mutual respect, openness, scrutiny of their relationships with one another, the creation of truly public opinion, and, crucially, confrontation with state power." Within the "public sphere", Dryzek advocates processes he describes as "discursive designs", meaning that they are consistent with his concept of "discursive democracy" outlined above. He suggests that liberal democratic governments have taken some positive steps towards "*incipient* discursive designs", including environmental impact assessment, participatory planning, public inquiries

and hearings and right-to-know legislation (1992: 33). However, according to Dryzek (1992: 35), "discursive exercises which are … not sponsored by the state" have much greater potential to "facilitate political transformation" towards positive ecological outcomes.

Dryzek raises and attempts to resolve perhaps the greatest source of skepticism among critics of participatory (or discursive) democracy: the question of whether increased rational discourse will necessarily lead to greater environmental protection. In his words (Dryzek 1992: 38): "Is it not conceivable that the individuals involved in discursive designs would reflectively and competently choose to downgrade environmental concerns in comparison with (say) economic prosperity or social integration?" Dryzek (1992: 39-40) argues that discursive democracy: (1) increases "sensitivity to feedback signals" by allowing concerns to be raised freely and promptly; (2) can facilitate greater understanding of the complex problems characteristic of environmental issues, and can lead to resolutions; and (3) is particularly effective in situations where the values and interests uncovered through discursive interaction "are generalizable to all of the parties involved", as is the case with the destruction of the environment upon which all human life is dependent.

Dryzek's (1992: 39-40) argument that discourse can lead to consensus is particularly appropriate when applied to environmental issues. While Sandercock (1978: 124) questioned the willingness of any participants in a participatory planning process to "lose" in order to help others (particularly the "have-nots") "win" or gain power. However, environmental issues and sustainability present a fundamentally different context than economic and social conflicts in that environmental degradation hurts all people to a greater or lesser extent while environmental protection can be formulated in such a way that everyone will benefit, at least in the long term. This is what Dryzek (1992: 40) calls "generalizability". However, an open, inclusive, equitable, *discursive* process is required so that social learning can occur and individuals can become aware of the potential benefits of sustainability for their own personal lives, and so that most effective and equitable solutions can be identified.

Dryzek is not alone in advocating a more participatory and discursive form of government in the pursuit of sustainability. Gunderson (1995, quoted in van den Hove 2000: 458) advocates what he calls "deliberative democracy", where environmental decision-making grounded in deliberation and discussion results in more "collective, holistic and long-term thinking". Torgerson (1990: 144, quoted in Dryzek 1992: 35) suggests that professional administrative expertise alone is "insufficient to produce effective policy" without "input from a broader public". Paehlke (1988: 299) points out that environmentalists have continually called for "more open and participatory procedures", asserting that "environmentalism cannot be successful in the long run without a continuous enhancement of democratic participatory values and opportunities (1988: 308). Barnet (1980: 313) suggests that "major structural changes cannot take place in any country without the mobilization of the whole people". Thus, despite claims from some theorists that environmental problems would lead to the death of democracy (Passmore 1974; Heilbroner 1974; Ophuls 1977), there is clearly a wealth of opinion and evidence that environmentalism has expanded democratic practice, and that further expansion of democracy is required in order to move towards sustainability (Paehlke 1988: 299).

A number of researchers suggest that participation is even more important to environmental decision-making than to other forms of decision-making due to the unique characteristics of environmental issues. Lafferty and Meadowcroft (1996: 4) suggest that environmental problems are particularly complex, technical and uncertain. In a more detailed analysis, van den Hove (2000: 458) identifies four unique physical characteristics of environmental issues: (1) complexity; (2) uncertainty (due to imperfect scientific knowledge and inherent irreducible complexities); (3) large temporal and spatial scales; and (4) irreversibility. These *physical* characteristics in turn lead to seven unique *social* characteristics of environmental issues:

1. physical complexity is compounded by social complexity in terms of conflicts of interest and multiple interests among actors, and the need to find innovative solutions to avoid a solution to one problem causing side-effect problems;

2. because of the transversal nature of environmental issues, cross-sectoral problem-solving is required across numerous policy areas;

3. flexible and adjustable solutions are necessary so that new information and research can be integrated as it becomes available;

4. it is difficult to determine responsibilities and to identify potential victims, there is significant "unevenness of impacts" (see also Blowers and Leroy 1996), and solutions often need to be implemented by individuals – all of which means that many actors need to be involved in finding an appropriate solution;

5. the blurred line between "local" and "global" aspects means that problem-solving must consider "microscopic" as well as "macroscopic" aspects (see also Mormont 1996: 140);

6. because some benefits will only be seen in the long term but sacrifices and lifestyle changes may need to be made sooner, implementation of solutions must be done with the input and cooperation of those who must sacrifice, and traditional short-sighted politics may need to be modified; and

7. to avoid irreversible environmental damage, action must be preventative and proactive rather than remedial, perhaps based on the precautionary principle (van den Hove 2000: 461-462)

Van den Hove (2000: 463) concludes that "participation of a wide range of actors in the problem-solving process", which she suggests "can potentially guarantee a higher degree of legitimacy to the decisions taken since a wider range of social forces will have been allowed to influence the process instead of simply being imposed 'from above'."

One of the earliest theorists to emphasise the importance of community dialogue in assisting social change was education theorist Paolo Freire (1970), author of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Writing from a developing world background, Freire suggests that mainstream education is merely a tool for further oppression of the poor. Instead, educators should help individuals to develop their own *conscientição*, a "critical consciousness" of the unjust social, political, and economic structures that

oppress them (1970: 19). Freire describes a process very similar to the concept of "mutual learning" described by Friedmann (1987):

> Through dialogue, the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. The teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. (Freire 1970: 67)

Freire discusses the role of "revolutionary leaders", who he insists must use "dialogical" instead of "antidialogical" methods to help the people to change oppressive social structures. Dialogical approaches, which involve the people in an ongoing dialogue about problems and solutions, help to empower the people and increase their capacity to take control of their own lives. In contrast, antidialogical approaches are characterised by manipulation of the people and preventing them from becoming organised or developing the skills necessary to improve their circumstances. Freire suggests that antidialogical approaches, whether undertaken with the explicit intention to maintain oppression or with the supposed intention to liberate the oppressed, can only contribute to the further oppression of the people. According to Freire (1970: 161), "revolutionary leaders must not use the same antidialogical procedures used by the oppressors; on the contrary, revolutionary leaders must follow the path of dialogue and of communication."

While Freire does not specifically consider environmental issues in his analysis, his "pedagogy" becomes quite relevant to this discussion if the sustainability movement is viewed as a form of non-violent, largely non-political revolution. There is clearly a revolutionary change necessary to shift our societies from current unsustainable structures and practices to new ones that can lead to and maintain environmental sustainability. Some writers have even referred to this shift as "the sustainability revolution" (see, for instance, D. H. Meadows, D. L. Meadows and Randers 1992; Brill, Brill and Feigenbaum 1999; and Nattrass and Altomare 2002). Within this metaphorical "revolution" from our existing society to one that is substantially different, Freire's theory can be seen as strongly consistent with the previously outlined theories of participatory democracy and democratic planning, and is particularly consistent with the concept of "social learning". For the revolution to be

successful, Freire clearly states that participation and dialogue *must* play a central

role in the process:

> It is absolutely essential that the oppressed participate in the
> revolutionary process with an increasingly critical awareness of their role
> as Subjects [as opposed to as inactive 'objects'] of the transformation. …
> Sooner or later, a true revolution must initiate a courageous dialogue with
> the people. Its very legitimacy lies in that dialogue. (Freire 1970: 121-
> 122)

And without dialogue, any small gains of the "revolution" are likely to be overturned

quite promptly, perhaps even by the people.

Freire questions the motivations of "revolutionary leaders" – or in other words, the

politicians, planners and community leaders who hope to achieve sustainability –

who are afraid to involve the people in their own "liberation", or in this case,

environmental problem-solving:

> Denial of communication in the revolutionary process, avoidance of
> dialogue with the people … is really a fear of freedom. It is fear of or lack
> of faith in the people. But if the people cannot be trusted, there is no
> reason for liberation; in this case the revolution is not even carried out *for
> the people*, but *'by' the people for the leaders*: a complete self-negation."
> (Freire 1970: 123-124, his emphasis)

If sustainability will truly improve life for everyone, then there is no reason to fear

the increased awareness of the community. In fact it is this increased awareness

alone that will be able to bring about the "sustainability revolution".

Freire's (1970) emphasis on including the people in an ongoing revolutionary

dialogue is similar to the concept of engendering a sense of ownership in community

members, another essential element of participation for sustainability (Cuthill 2001:

184). The requirement for significant personal behaviour change in order to move

towards sustainability compounds the need to involve individuals in decisions that

affect them. Transport issues especially, like waste management, water consumption

and electricity use, have an immediate and even *intimate* relevance to citizens.

Unfortunately, an overwhelming majority of citizens will have to change their

current travel behaviour considerably if we are to move towards sustainability, which

means changing lifestyles and overcoming deeply ingrained personal habits. Redclift

(1992, quoted in Warner 1997: 414) argues that "if people are not brought into focus

through sustainable development, becoming both architects and engineers of the concept, then it will never be achieved anyway, since they are unlikely to take responsibility for something they do not 'own' themselves." In Warner's (1997: 414) words, local people must be enabled to "generate, share, analyse, prioritize, and contribute to, or control, decision-making", as he suggests is central to *Agenda 21* (UNCED 1992b).

While many theorists have emphasised that participatory approaches are a required element in achieving sustainability, Faucheux (1997) and Lafferty and Meadowcroft (1996) suggest that participation on its own is not necessarily a sufficient condition, and that other aspects of policy-making and planning do play a role. According to Lafferty and Meadowcroft (1996: 261): "While mechanisms to involve groups in negiotiation, accommodation and the assumption of collective responsibility may be a necessary condition for seriously addressing environmental dilemmas, they are certainly not sufficient." They list the following additional components necessary for policy success in moving towards sustainability: (1) a "clear strategic orientation" for sustainable development expressed by "competent central authorities"; (2) strong regulatory and management regimes for controlling environmental impacts; (3) public education campaigns; (4) appropriate financial and fiscal incentives and disincentives; and (5) social capacity building to increase community "participatory competence" and access to information resources (Lafferty and Meadowcroft 1996: 261-262). Nevertheless, community participation, and specifically the process of social learning through environmental dialogue, is an essential and possibly even primary element in the achievement of sustainability.

Broad-scale participation

If the learning process inherent in participation in decision-making is indeed the key ingredient necessary in order to build public support for positive planning and implementation, then stakeholder involvement in environmental decision-making will not be adequate to achieve sustainability. A recent study by Beierle and Konisky (2001), based on 24 stakeholder advisory committee planning processes in the Great Lakes region of the USA and Canada, suggests that stakeholder participatory processes may fail to improve environmental quality. The study found that

stakeholder participation successfully led to three of the four potential benefits of participation: (1) increased quality of environmental planning decisions; (2) improved relationships among various "players"; and (3) increased capacity for managing environmental problems. However, there was no correlation between the quality of the participatory process and the fourth benefit, which was real improvements in environmental quality through actual implementation of the plans. While cautious about generalising from these isolated cases, the authors identify three failures of the participatory processes examined that might reflect weaknesses inherent to stakeholder processes: (1) most of the processes "failed to engage the wider public in decision-making"; (2) the advisory committees were often "not socioeconomically representative"; and (3) most "did not include all important interests at the table" (Beierle and Konisky 2001: 526).

This study is based on the premises that environmental degradation negatively affects all humans, and that all humans stand to benefit from a move towards long-term sustainability. Based on these premises, everyone is a stakeholder, or in other words, has a "identifiable interests or 'stakes'" in environmental decisions (Beierle and Konisky 2001: 517). Thus, the only way to legitimately gather "stakeholder" input and ensure "stakeholder interests" are protected is to involve more individuals in the decision-making (and social learning) process.

As outlined previously, Kasperson (1974: 1) and Sandercock (1978: 125) are among the many who have criticised "maximum feasible participation" and "widespread participation" as insincere and superficial approaches to public involvement in public decision-making. However, if new, more sincere approaches to participatory planning are developed and adopted with the intent of providing a learning opportunity for the general public, not just stakeholders, and to gather the (newly-educated) opinions and viewpoints of the broader public, only then can public support for sustainability be obtained by planners, decision-makers and community leaders. Broad-scale participation at the local neighbourhood level also allows community members to participate locally, within their own comfort zone or sphere of influence. This is consistent with Freire's (1970: 85) advice that educators and "revolutionary leaders" must always take into account the people's "situation in the

world", or in other words ensuring that issues are raised in such a way as to be relevant to community members, and so that community members feel confident that they can contribute effectively to the process.

Through a successful broad-scale participatory planning process, community leaders and sustainability-minded governments can develop strong support for policy decisions. But the key is for the process to be truly *successful*, meaning that citizens *must be included in a dialogue* and able to develop their own understanding of the situation as well as to contribute their own ideas, values and concerns (Klijn and Koppenjan 2002). Jänicke (1992: 54) goes one step further, suggesting that western industrialised countries that can be described as "consensual" rather than "conflictual" in terms of their political style and environmental decision-making approaches are "more successful in the field of environmental policy". However, Klijn and Koppenjan (2002: 141) note that while successful "interactive policy making" can create support for policy, a failure to involve the public can conversely lead to citizens or special interest groups vetoing or blocking policy initiatives. Thus, no matter how "broad-scale" a process may appear in terms of the number of citizens involved or the number of leaflets distributed, a closed, top-down, exclusively government-driven decision-making process cannot be considered "participatory" by the definition outlined here, and will not necessarily lead to broad-scale community support, or towards sustainability.

3.4. Proposed Framework of Participatory Planning for Sustainability

Based on the theoretical literature reviewed in this chapter, seven key characteristics of successful participation for sustainability can be identified as the main elements of a framework for designing and evaluating participatory processes for sustainability. These seven elements are: (1) broad-scale; (2) consensual/collaborative; (3) discursive/dialogical; (4) empowered/independent; (5) local; (6) multi-scale; and (7) ongoing/continuous. These elements are suggested as the central components in the facilitation of social learning among citizens, and therefore central components in the achievement of steps towards sustainability. Each element is discussed in more detail below. Please note that the order of presentation is alphabetical, and is not intended to reflect which elements are more or less important than others.

Framework element 1: broad-scale

Participatory planning for sustainability should involve broad-scale participation of citizens in order to lead to education and social learning for the wider public. This element is based on the suggestions by Friedmann (1987), Milbrath (1989) and others that social learning is an essential step towards the achievement of sustainability. Broad-scale participation for sustainability is specifically seen as going beyond stakeholder involvement by representatives of special interest groups, as suggested by S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein (1996) and Beierle and Konisky (2001).

Framework element 2: consensual/collaborative

The importance of consensus-based, collaborative problem-solving and decision-making is emphasised by Healey's (1997) theory of "collaborative planning", as well as the consensus-building theories of Jänicke (1992), Innes (1995), Bryson and Crosby (1992) and Susskind and Cruikshank (1987). All of these theories have at their foundation Habermas's (1984) *Theory of Communicative Action*, and focus on the planner's role in facilitating negotiation between stakeholders. Consensual and collaborative processes focus on reaching a policy or strategy outcome that satisfies all stakeholders.

Framework element 3: discursive/dialogical

This element relates to the quality and extent of the discourse or dialogue that leads to the making of decisions. This element is based largely on Dryzek's (1990) concept of "discursive democracy" and Freire's (1970) concept of "dialogical" versus antidialogical procedures. Discursive and dialogical participation must be substantive, open, inclusive and equitable. Consistent with Sandercock's (1998) guidelines for planning for multiple publics, all should be enabled and encouraged to participate regardless of class, gender, race, religion, age, level of education, or any other distinguishing characteristic. While this element may seem quite similar to "consensual/collaborative", this element focuses on the discourse itself, whereas the previous element emphasises the importance of reaching a solution that everyone can live with.

Framework element 4: empowered/independent

"Empowered" refers to a government facilitated or sponsored process in which participants are granted decision-making power. Alternatively, "independent" refers to a community-led process that does not require government support or legitimisation, but rather deals directly with the community and the media, and perhaps exerts pressure on government decision-making from outside of government. The importance of this element is highlighted by theorists such as Arnstein (1969), Freire (1970), Innes et al. (1994) and Healey (1997). The essential characteristic of either empowered or independent participatory processes is the granting of full decision-making control, as this power or sovereignty provides the necessary incentive for participants to engage in social learning in order to better understand complex issues, contribute towards solutions that they know will be implemented, and take ownership of the final decisions.

Framework element 5: local

Participation at the local, neighbourhood level, is more likely to be directly relevant to a larger number of participants. This element is therefore related to the "broad-scale" element. Theorists who place importance on local participation include Pateman (1970), Freire (1970) and Friedmann (1998), as well as United Nations' *Agenda 21* (UNCED 1992b). Participation at the local level also encourages the consideration and valuing of local "citizen knowledge", as emphasised by Irwin (1995).

Framework element 6: multi-scale

Multi-scale participation allows citizens to consider strategic, long-term policy visions right down to detailed project level implementation. The literature most directly relevant to this element stems from the push for citizen participation in strategic environmental assessment (SEA), led by Therivel and Partidário (1996), Partidário (1996) and Shepherd and Ortolano (1996). However, any comprehensive decision-making forum or process should allow participants and decision-makers to look at the full range of relevant issues and pressures, which means that discussions involving even quite confined, local decisions could result in participants questioning

and wanting to modify higher-level strategies that may contribute to the problem rather than the solution.

Framework element 7: ongoing/continuous

This element highlights the need for an ongoing venue for influencing decision-making, as opposed to one-off, isolated consultation on a particular project. Barber (1984) and Freire (1970) are two theorists who highlight the importance of offering citizens ongoing access to meaningful participation, and the ongoing nature of dialogue and social learning. In addition, the literature on environmental impact assessment (EIA), for instance Bush (1990) and Shepherd and Bowler (1997), emphasises the importance of involvement from early in the decision-making process and continuing even after implementation or "completion" of the project in a monitoring and evaluation capacity.

Summary of the proposed framework

Table 3.2 contains a summary of each of the seven elements of the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability, including a brief description and a list of the key theorists whose work forms the basis of each element.

Table 3.2: Elements of proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability

Framework element	Brief description	Theorists
broad-scale	providing for the participation and/or education of the wider public, not just that of special interest stakeholder group representatives	• Friedmann (1987) • Milbrath (1989) • S. Fainstein and N. Fainstein (1996) • Beierle and Konisky (2001)
consensual/ collaborative	decision-making that seeks sustainable solutions that all concerned can live with	• Habermas (1984) • Susskind and Cruikshank (1987) • Bryson and Crosby (1992) • Jänicke (1992) • Innes (1995) • Healey (1997)
discursive/dialogical	substantive, open, inclusive and equitable process, enabling and encouraging all to participate regardless of class, gender, race, religion, age, level of education, etc	• Freire (1970) • Dryzek (1990) • Sandercock (1998)
empowered/ independent	whether government facilitated or community-led, full decision-making control is granted to participants, thus providing the incentive for participants to learn to better understand complex issues	• Arnstein (1969) • Freire (1970) • Innes et al. (1994) • Healey (1997)
local	at the neighbourhood level, where decisions are perceived to be more directly relevant to a larger number of participants	• Pateman (1970) • Freire (1970) • UN *Agenda 21* (UNCED 1992b) • Irwin (1995) • Friedmann (1998)
multi-scale	allows citizens to consider strategic, long-term policy visions right down to detailed project level implementation	• Therivel and Partidário (1996) • Partidário (1996) • Shepherd and Ortolano (1996)
ongoing/continuous	provides an ongoing venue for influencing decision-making	• Freire (1970) • Barber (1984) • Bush (1990) • Shepherd and Bowler (1997)

Source: compiled by the author

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that planning processes must be modelled on the principles of participatory democracy rather than representative/liberal democracy, and must facilitate social learning through broad-scale participation, in order to have any chance of resulting in concrete steps towards sustainability within western democratic nations. This view, based on the range of theoretical approaches outlined above, has been explicitly expressed by a number of theorists. Jänicke (1996: 82) suggests that "environmental policy success is first and foremost a result of learning processes." Irwin (1995: 7) states: "There will be no 'sustainability' without a greater potential for citizens to take control of their own lives, health and

environment." Similarly, according to Warner (1997: 429): "The confluence of economic, social and environmental sustainability can only be achieved through a form of participation that brings together and creates ownership and commitment from all parties affected by, or influential in, its attainment." In the context of democratic political systems where all voting adults are at least indirectly "influential in" the general direction of government, there is a clear need for broad-scale social learning for sustainability.

The framework proposed here is intended as a loose and flexible guide to improve participatory planning for sustainability, rather than as a comprehensive and detailed set of guidelines. Instead, in the next chapter, concrete examples are offered of participatory processes that have led to actual steps towards sustainability. These cases will provide further elaboration of the framework by helping to answer the question of precisely *how* participatory planning for sustainability might be achieved. The proposed framework will be applied to evaluate each case, and will then be used in Chapter 5 to evaluate regional transport planning in South East Queensland, the specific focus of this study.

Chapter 4. Applying the Framework

After more than three decades of positive and negative criticism of public participation in planning, it is clear that an exclusively theoretical argument for increased and improved participatory planning will not be sufficient to convince anyone to increase and improve public participation in planning. Sceptics of public participation, as well as the planners, politicians and other decision-makers who must embrace it, may be better convinced by real examples. But in the words of a bicycle planning guidebook that is viewed by many cycling advocates as legendary: *It Can Be Done* (Bicycle Victoria 1996). Just as this publication overcame the common planning and engineering excuses by presenting various ways that adequate, safe space could be provided for cyclists on existing roads, similarly the purpose of this chapter is to illustrate a number of specific ways in which public participation has led to more sustainable outcomes.

In this chapter, six case studies are outlined illustrating innovative participatory planning processes that have helped communities and regions around the world move towards sustainability. The case studies have been chosen for their possible relevance to a model for participatory regional transport planning for sustainability, particularly in South East Queensland. Each case study has successfully fulfilled two or more key elements of the framework of successful participatory planning for sustainability proposed in the previous chapter. For each of the six case studies, a brief description is followed by a list of the positive achievements of the process. Each case is then analysed to determine which elements of the participatory planning framework it has fulfilled, and its specific relevance for regional transport planning is discussed.

The six case studies examined are:

1. The "Participatory Budget" in Porto Alegre, Brazil;
2. "Neighbourhood Councils" in Mexico and Norway;
3. "Sustainability Indicators" in "Sustainable Seattle", Washington, USA;
4. "LUTRAQ" community-initiated transport planning process in Portland, Oregon, USA;

5. "VISION 2020" community vision for sustainability in Hamilton-Wentworth, Ontario, Canada; and

6. TravelSmart travel demand management and dialogue marketing program in Perth, Western Australia.

These cases are by no means intended as a comprehensive list of successful participatory processes or even types of processes. They have been chosen to provide concrete, existing examples of participatory processes that have contributed towards sustainability, and which could potentially be applied to sustainable transport planning in South East Queensland. The South East Queensland context will be discussed in depth in Chapter 5.

4.1. Case Study 1: "Participatory Budget", Porto Alegre, Brazil

Description. In 1989, the newly elected mayor of the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, opened up the municipal budgetary process to public participation. The process is described by Abers (1998, 2000) and Sandercock (1998: 147-151). For more than a decade, thousands of the city's 1.3 million residents have participated in the budget process each year, including the participation of more than 15,000 residents in 1995 (Abers 2000: 2). The process has seen some of the poorest and most underdeveloped neighbourhoods organise to secure significant improvements, and overall has contributed to much greater equality across the city (Abers 1998: 53). The political party that has developed this innovative approach to participatory municipal decision-making, the *Partido dos Trabalhadores*, or Worker's Party (PT), has gained election in a number of other local authorities and state governments across Brazil (Abers 2000: 228), and in October 2002 the party won the Brazilian presidency "by a landslide" (*Guardian Unlimited* 2002). In addition, the participatory budget process itself has been so successful that it has been adopted as the policy of even the conservative opposition parties, both in Porto Alegre and elsewhere in Brazil (Abers 1998: 65).

The participatory budget process in Porto Alegre follows an annual cycle (Abers 1998: 46-49). The cycle begins in April with open general assemblies held in each of 16 regions of the city. The assemblies are intended to build awareness of the process

and to encourage new participants to get involved. Next, a series of neighbourhood-based intermediary assemblies are held where local priorities are discussed and determined. A second set of regional assemblies is then held to decide on regional investment priorities. It is these preliminary stages of the process where the majority of local residents participate. The more complex budget negotiations occur at the Regional Budget Forums where delegates elected at the neighbourhood and regional assemblies come together to finalise regional investment plans at a series of meetings. Further negotiation and debate occurs both within the meetings and in public discussion, and decisions are finalised sometimes through direct voting, and sometimes through complex ratings based on various criteria and weighting. In September, Municipal Budget Councils focus on distributing resources among the regions and among the government agencies in order to implement the regional investment plans. Finally, in January, the process is reviewed and fine-tuned for the next year. One significant modification that has resulted from the review process was the addition in 1993 of five Thematic Budget Forums to coordinate budget areas relevant to more than one region, including: (1) education; (2) health and social services; (3) city-wide transport; (4) organisation of the city; and (5) economic development. While "many participants retreat from the process as soon as their most immediate problems have been resolved", some remain involved to help other neighbourhoods resolve their problems, and some "take an interest in regional and city-wide questions" (Abers 1998: 52).

Achievements. The Porto Alegre participatory budget process has had a number of positive achievements:

- Thousands of residents have participated in the budget process, including 8.4% of the entire population within the first five years (Abers 1998: 49);

- Individual participants and neighbourhood groups have developed participation skills and have gained a greater understanding of democratic processes, including political lobbying;

- The potential reward of actual development and investment has provided an incentive for communities to organise, and to learn about and better understand the highest priority needs of their neighbourhoods and regions;

- Reflecting the priorities of local residents, there has been a shift from large infrastructure projects to smaller local projects such as sewerage, paving of roads, clean drinking water, new schools and other community services; and

- The process has increased support for the mayoral administration among not only lower-class but also middle-class residents.

Fulfilment of framework. The participatory budget process in Porto Alegre fulfils all seven elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability, as follows:

- **broad-scale:** A large proportion of the city's residents participate or have participated.

- **consensual/collaborative:** Although some final decisions rely on voting, this voting is based on negotiations between residents, neighbourhoods and regions.

- **discursive/dialogical:** Through the series of meetings at different levels, residents discuss their highest priorities with those of other residents from their own and from other neighbourhoods, determining their highest priorities through discourse.

- **empowered:** Local government facilitates the process and empowers residents with ultimate decision-making control, despite frequent public pressure being brought to bear against government agencies and against the mayor himself as a result of the process.

- **local:** The highest number of residents participate in the series of local neighbourhood meetings each year, and local neighbourhood assemblies help residents to organise and learn locally.

- **multi-level:** Residents prioritise both detailed local projects and city-wide long-term strategic projects.

- **ongoing:** As a continuous annual cycle, the participatory budget process allows residents whose preferred investments are not adopted one year to bring them back the following year.

Rationale for inclusion. Although this participatory budget process has occurred in a developing world context and is not specifically focused on regional transport planning, the case is very relevant to this study. First, there appears to be no reason why the generally more highly educated people of western democratic countries would not be able to learn how to participate in such a process at least as well as the residents of Porto Alegre have. In addition, western governments have higher revenue to invest in the facilitation of such a process. Second, the process has integrated transport decision-making into the larger budget process, thus ensuring that transport decisions are consistent with other outcomes sought by residents. While the process *could* be adapted to consider only transport issues (or any other

specific issue for that matter), dealing with all issues in an integrated manner is more consistent with the holistic principles of sustainability.

4.2. Case Study 2: "Neighbourhood Councils", Mexico and Norway

Description. This case study is based on a combination of two sources. The first is an examination of "neighbourhood committees" in Mexico City, Mexico (Flores 2002); and the second focuses on "neighbourhood councils" of two different types across Norway (Aarsæther, Nyseth and Røiseland 2002). Similar to the participatory budget of the first case study, neighbourhood committees in Mexico City began after the left wing Democratic Revolution Party (PRD in Spanish) won the Mexico City governor election in 1997. The victorious party placed a high priority on citizen involvement, and "neighbourhood committees were conceived as a mechanism to prevent unilateral decision-making by local authorities, corruption and abuse of power" as had long been the norm (Flores 2002: 63). In 1998, the Citizen Participation Law (CPL) was passed, introducing a range of new participatory mechanisms to the metropolitan region, from expanded referenda and plebiscites to "popular initiatives" (where citizens propose to "create, modify or reform laws") to increased neighbourhood consultation, local co-operative projects and the establishment of "neighbourhood committees", or NCs (Flores 2002: 66). Some neighbourhoods embraced the new concept of the NC, but others resisted the new structure because "political and personal interests were being threatened" (2002: 66).

Flores' (2002) study focuses on the "delegación" or municipality of Tlalpan, where the establishment of NCs led to mixed results. It was recognised that "natural leaders" and sometimes quite strong community groups existed in the neighbourhoods before the new NCs were established. Thus, the new CPL aimed "to strengthen and legitimate neighbourhood organizations", rather than simply create new ones (2002: 67). Neighbourhood elections were held in most of the 140 "territorial units" or neighbourhoods in Tlalpan, with some elections not occurring due to "lack of information, apathy of the population or confronted political interests" (2002: 67). Some existing groups "preferred to continue operating as 'independent' organizations" rather than seek "legitimisation" through the NC

elections, as they feared they might "lose some of their negotiating power" (2002: 67). Another problem was that according to the CPL, "political parties should not have been involved in the election of neighbourhood committee leaders" (2002: 67). On the contrary, however, most elected leaders were affiliated with an organised political party before election, or became affiliated in order to become elected (2002: 68). According to Flores (2002: 72-73), the NCs clearly play a primary role as a "centre of a dispute for political power", even though this was not the original intention of the CPL. He suggests a need for the Mexico City government to explicitly recognise this role so that political parties can openly compete for positions "as happens in other countries" (2002: 73). In addition, it is noted that upper classes continue to organise successfully in neighbourhoods without involvement in the NCs, whereas the lower classes often have no other means of organising (2002: 74). Clearly, the neighbourhood committee approach in Mexico City is in need of further fine-tuning before the aims of the Citizen Participation Law can be achieved.

The results of neighbourhood councils in Norway have been similarly mixed, according to Aarsæther et al. (2002). In Norway, NCs are "formal political institutions operating on a territorial basis, covering parts of municipalities" (Aarsæther et al. 2002: 165). A 1992 revision to §12 of Norway's "Act of Municipal Government" provided the legal basis for "sub-municipal organizations", and established rules for their creation and operation (2002: 167). Despite a previous recommendation from the Local Government Committee for "direct, locality-based elections of neighbourhood councillors", the Parliament unanimously voted not to allow local election. Instead, NCs "may be established and terminated solely by the municipal council, and the people in the locality are not allowed to elect the council members or its leader" (2002: 167). This has led to two types of NCs being established: (1) the "top-down" model of NCs that are created by the municipal council with members of the NC appointed by government; and (2) the "bottom-up" model of previously existing organisations "obtaining formal recognition by the municipal council … as representatives of the people in the particular localities" (2002: 168).

Similar to the Mexican experience (Flores 2002), the top-down NCs have tended to be more heavily dominated by party politics (Aarsæther et al. 2002: 168). One difficulty for all NCs has been a lack of resources due to "little financial support from the municipality level", perhaps reflecting that "the municipal level has kept control of both service responsibilities and the money" (2002: 174-175). In fact, bottom-up NCs have tended to have far more money than top-down NCs despite receiving even less money from the municipality, as they have more means to generate their own income from their constituencies (2002: 175). Among members of both types of NCs, the researchers found "strong agreement" for the statements that "Our council is an important vehicle in getting 'goods' to our area", "Our council means a lot to people's well-being and welfare level", and "Most people regard our council as their spokesman" (2002: 181). Unfortunately, the authors did not collect any data about the opinions of the broader community about the role and effectiveness of their NCs.

Achievements. The main achievements of the neighbourhood committees in Mexico City and the neighbourhood councils in Norway have included the following:

- The establishment of NCs has begun a process of decentralisation of decision-making to the local level.

- The NC structure has provided a means for existing community groups to take part in formal decision-making processes at the local level in both countries.

- According to Aarsæther et al. (2002), NC activities and citizen participation in NCs can result in the production of social capital, "the collective resources for problem solving created by networks of civic engagements" (Putnam 1993)

Fulfilment of framework. Neighbourhood committees and councils in Mexico and Norway have begun to fulfil all seven elements of the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability:

- **broad-scale:** NCs can encourage a large proportion of neighbourhood residents to take part in local decision-making.

- **consensual/collaborative:** Although the party-political NCs found in both Mexico and Norway appear less likely to employ a consensual decision-making style, NCs in general represent a potential venue for all concerned residents to come together to negotiate the best solution to a range of different local and broader problems.

- **discursive/dialogical:** So long as NCs are able to decentralise political power and truly open up decision-making to community members, NCs can provide a venue for local discussion of problems and potential solutions much better than larger, more elite and exclusive local, municipal and state governments will ever allow.

- **empowered/independent:** The addition of the NC structure to local and municipal government in Mexico and Norway has empowered local neighbourhoods by giving them greater access to local decision-making; meanwhile, in some cases independent local organisations have been able to use NCs to advance their own agendas (though this has led to both positive and negative results).

- **local:** NCs can be the most relevant and accessible decision-making forum for local residents to begin participating in decision-making, thus leading to social learning, an important condition for achieving sustainability.

- **multi-level:** While NCs generally focus on local issues, NCs represent a local source of power to influence broader strategic decisions that affect the neighbourhood.

- **ongoing:** NCs provide an ongoing venue for local involvement in decision-making.

Rationale for inclusion. Neighbourhood councils represent an essential forum for *very local* decision-making for sustainability. As such, they would consider transport issues as one part of a more holistic vision of improved neighbourhood amenity and quality of life. The lack of a truly "local" local government in many cities can leave residents without any direction connection to the local decision-making process. Brisbane, for example, is the largest local government authority in Australia and consists of only 26 ward councillors to represent approximately 800,000 residents. In this context especially, NCs represent an opportunity to decentralise and open up local government authority to allow local community control and ownership of decision-making. NCs can also contribute to innovative and empowered local transport decisions to return to residents some control over the streets they live in.

4.3. Case Study 3: "Sustainability Indicators", Seattle, Washington, USA

Description. A one-day forum in November 1990 began a five-year process to find a way to measure the progress of trends towards or away from a "Sustainable Seattle" (AtKisson 1996, 1999). The initial forum asked participants "What legacy are we

leaving to future generations", and the goals of the forum were not pre-determined. However, the 70 people in attendance decided that the most important contribution they could make towards a more sustainable Seattle would be to compile a set of "sustainability indicators" to raise awareness of the complexity of community health and quality of life. It took two years for the Sustainable Seattle volunteer "task team" to compile a draft list of 29 indicators, which were then presented to a Civic Panel comprised of 150 invited citizens and representatives. Through consensus negotiation, research and technical advice over the following three years, the Civic Panel increased the number of indicators up to 99, and then down to a final list of 40 indicators that were: (1) reflective of trends relevant to long-term cultural, economic and environmental health; (2) statistically measurable; (3) attractive to media; and (4) comprehensible to the average person (AtKisson 1996: 340).

The final list of indicators was broken into five categories: (1) Environment (e.g. "Wild salmon returning to spawn in King County streams"); (2) Population and Resources (e.g. "Population growth rate" and "Vehicle miles traveled and fuel consumption"); (3) Economy (e.g. "Hours of work at the average King County wage required to meet basic living needs"); (4) Youth and Education (e.g. "High school graduation" and "Volunteer involvement in schools"); and (5) Health and Community (e.g. "Asthma hospitalization rate for children" and "Perceived quality of life") (AtKisson 1996: 343-344). Since publication of the indicators in 1995, the focus of Sustainable Seattle's continued volunteer activities shifted towards action to improve the indicators themselves.

Achievements. The main achievements of the Sustainable Seattle indicators project were as follows:

- A final report was produced (Sustainable Seattle 1995) outlining the final 40 indicators and reporting all available data on current trends;

- For some indicators, collection of new data has been initiated and is carried out on a regular basis either by volunteers, university students or local government;

- The indicators have gained growing acceptance from the public, the media and local government;

- The process has increased the understanding of sustainability among volunteers, Civic Panel members, local government, the media and the wider community;

- The examination of quality of life and current trends inherent in the process provided "a sense of common ground" among participants from every sector of the community (AtKisson 1996: 348); and

- The final report led to national and international interest in sustainability indicators, and the process has provided guidance to other groups in other cities.

Fulfilment of framework. The process of developing sustainability indicators fulfils all seven elements of the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability, as follows:

- **broad-scale:** Voluntary participation included hundreds of Seattle citizens, and the resulting media promotion involved countless others in an educational capacity.

- **consensual/collaborative:** Indicators were developed, modified and finalised through consensus negotiation to give them "grassroots legitimacy" (AtKisson 1996: 348).

- **discursive/dialogical:** During the five-year process, the proposed sustainability indicators were "hotly debated" by participants (1996: 340). While this approach was not the fastest way to produce sustainability indicators, the process did maximise public discussion, and created an opportunity for extensive learning about sustainability.

- **independent (and empowered):** The process was initiated and run almost completely through volunteer effort, completely independent of government. However, the final indicators were incorporated into the city government's comprehensive planning process, which was re-titled "Towards a Sustainable Seattle" (1996: 345).

- **local:** The focus throughout the process was on sustainability for *Seattle*, which kept the process relevant to local residents, although global implications of local trends were also considered.

- **multi-level:** Indicators were geared towards long-term trends of a more strategic nature, but this included consideration of detailed local issues and practices.

- **ongoing:** Rather than a one-off, reactive project, Sustainable Seattle was the beginning of an ongoing effort to move Seattle closer and closer to sustainability.

Rationale for inclusion. The most important elements of the Sustainable Seattle sustainability indicators process for regional sustainable transport planning are its

community-initiation, its focus on process rather than product, and its relevance to average citizens. Because the process was free of government influence, participants could focus on long-term trends, and could choose the indicators they felt were most important regardless of available data or potential political embarrassment. Rather than merely producing a set of indicators, the process provided a social learning experience for hundreds of participants and some level of education for the wider community. A similar process could be tailored towards helping residents understand current transport trends, whether their community is improving or deteriorating due to transport trends, and what can be done. In addition, the process increased understanding of transport in relation to other sustainability issues. For more information on sustainability indicators generally, see Institute for the Urban Environment (1994), D. H. Meadows (1998), Lawrence (1998), Bell and Morse (2001), and AtKisson and Hatcher (2001).

4.4. Case Study 4: "LUTRAQ", Portland, Oregon, USA

Description. When a bypass freeway was proposed outside of Portland, Oregon in 1988, citizens were concerned that the freeway would worsen the region's land use patterns and air quality, and would increase already high levels of dependence on the motor vehicle. In response, the non-governmental organisation 1000 Friends of Oregon proposed "Making the Land Use, Transportation and Air Quality (LUTRAQ) Connection" – and the ten-year LUTRAQ campaign and research project was born (Oliver 1994; 1000 Friends of Oregon 1997; Bartholomew c.1997, 1999). After a lawsuit against the building of the freeway failed, 1000 Friends argued that the environmental impact assessment (EIA) for the freeway should include assessment of an alternative based on improved land use planning and "transit-oriented development" based on public transport, cycling and walking. When this request was refused, 1000 Friends gathered a broad coalition of organisations with common interests and commenced a $1 million study (funded mostly by state and local government) to show that the LUTRAQ alternative could achieve the same congestion relief as the freeway, but without the negative effects of urban sprawl, air pollution and destruction of communities (Oliver 1994: 10).

The LUTRAQ study was so convincing that the Oregon Department of Transport decided to include the alternative in the EIA. In addition, Portland's regional government "Metro" adopted the LUTRAQ approach into its "Region 2040 Growth Concept; and in February 1994 the Governor of Oregon Barbara Roberts stated: "If there is an alternative that meets the transportation needs of Washington County and the region without building a bypass, state policy clearly requires us to pursue that other alternative" (Bartholomew c.1997: 3). In the end, the results of the EIA showed that the LUTRAQ alternative was "equal or superior to the Bypass in virtually every category", and the bypass was not recommended (Bartholomew c.1997: 3). By 1997, it was clear that the bypass would never be built, and the campaign was finalised. However, it will be another 20 to 40 years before the decades of motor-vehicle-based transport planning can be reversed through more responsible land use and transport planning.

Achievements. The LUTRAQ campaign and research project had the following achievements:

- Instead of a bypass being built, long-term and more sustainable solutions were put in place to improve land use planning, transit-oriented development and air quality;

- State and regional governments firmed their commitment to land use planning and transit-oriented development;

- Due to the highly technical and comprehensive nature of the LUTRAQ study, greater understanding of complex land use, transport and air quality issues was achieved among government bureaucrats, planners and traffic engineers, as well as in the wider community;

- The LUTRAQ concept became a "rallying point" for citizens opposed to irresponsible and short-sighted transport planning (Bartholomew c.1997: 3); and

- A strong non-government coalition (Coalition for a Livable Future) was brought together, with all groups becoming "more sophisticated and comprehensive in their understanding of their missions" (Bartholomew 1999: 5)

Fulfilment of framework. The LUTRAQ campaign fulfils the following 4 elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability:

- **consensual/collaborative:** 1000 Friends secured consideration of their LUTRAQ alternative in the EIA process alongside the original bypass proposal, which means in a sense that the group was able to demand its own

equal place at the decision-making table. While 1000 Friends was able to take part in a form of consensus negotiation or collaboration, it is worth noting that this opportunity would not have been handed to them in the absence of their own external lobbying and pressure. However, the LUTRAQ approach suggests that community organisations can indeed create their own opportunities for more equitable collaboration with decision-makers through the use of innovative and effective lobbying techniques.

- **discursive/dialogical:** The consideration of a progressive alternative to the proposed bypass was the only reason that considerable community dialogue occurred; without LUTRAQ, community support for more sustainable alternatives and political pressure against the bypass would not have been achieved.

- **independent/empowered:** The success of the LUTRAQ campaign resulted solely from 1000 Friends' positioning outside of the state government decision-making structures that were committed to the bypass. Adversarial as well as collaborative approaches were able to be used. However, the process could not have occurred without considerable funding from the federal *and state* governments.

- **multi-level:** While the LUTRAQ campaign began as a reaction to a specific project proposal, the result was a comprehensive overhaul of strategic land use and transport planning for the Portland region.

However, the process did not fulfil the following elements:

- **broad-scale:** LUTRAQ was a very technical research project based on expert rather than broad-scale participation; however, the LUTRAQ study led to community education on a broad-scale due to the community dialogue and debate about the bypass.

- **local:** The focus was more regional rather than local, although the study did show residents the potential benefits of the LUTRAQ approach for their own neighbourhoods.

- **ongoing:** LUTRAQ was a one-off community-initiated campaign (although it was ten years long and continues in other forms). However, no systematic process of public participation in transport planning has resulted from the campaign.

Rationale for inclusion. The LUTRAQ project not only overcame an unsustainable transport planning proposal, but simultaneously achieved a significant step towards sustainable transport and land use planning. As a model, the process illustrates a well-organised community-based organisation working with a broad coalition of organisations with overlapping interests to increase community awareness of the desirability of more sustainable alternatives to freeway-building. In addition, the

model shows the dynamic success of a non-governmental organisation winning a campaign with the help of considerable support from the very government it opposed. Success was also due to the ability of 1000 Friends to switch from collaborating "inside" the government decision-making process to opposing government from "outside" no less than six times during the ten years, without being co-opted, without threatening their relationship with government, and without losing their community support (Bartholomew 1999: 5). Bartholomew (1999: 3-4) lists a number of similar organisations and processes that have occurred and are occurring across the United States, and suggests that "only with the leadership of a nongovernmental organization" can more progressive, more sustainable options "be developed and considered" (1999: 4).

4.5. Case Study 5: "VISION 2020", Hamilton-Wentworth, Ontario, Canada

Description. The VISION 2020 sustainable community planning process in the Canadian Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth was an innovative government-initiated and community-run program in the early 1990s (Region of Hamilton-Wentworth c.1996, 1999; Frisby 1997; Bekkering 1998; and MacGregor 2000. The process began in 1990 with the regional government's decision that a serious commitment to sustainable development was needed, and that the community rather than the government should lead the way. A citizen-based "Task Force on Sustainable Development" was formed and "mandated" to develop a community vision for sustainable development (Region of H-W c.1996: 1). The citizens' task force organised town meetings and community forums, held focus group discussions with "people normally overlooked", and convened Vision Working Groups and Implementation Teams to develop strategies on specific topic areas and design mechanisms for reporting on their implementation. Overall, the task force met with over 1,000 fellow citizens before finalising its VISION 2020 strategy. The Region of Hamilton-Wentworth immediately adopted VISION 2020 into its own Official Plan for land use and Economic Strategy, as well as the new Transportation Review and Pollution Prevention and Management Plan (Region of H-W c.1996: 2-3)

The Hamilton-Wentworth regional government's commitment to sustainable development and to the participatory process continued even after the development of the initial VISION 2020. The Region established a Staff Working Group on Sustainable Development, produced a "Sustainable Community Decision Making Guide", and convened a community consultation process to develop Sustainable Community Indicators. In addition, the first annual VISION 2020 Sustainable Community Day was held in 1994, and over 2,000 people attended the second annual celebration and community forum in November 1995 (Region of H-W c.1996: 4). In addition, a "Constituent Assembly" of 23 citizens was established to "involve the community in a discussion of how to ensure a high quality of life for citizens" (Frisby 1997: 10); and more recently in 2000, implementation of VISION 2020 was handed over to a community-based non-government organisation called Action 2020 (MacGregor 2000: 22). According to the Region:

> There must be a willingness on the part of Regional Staff and Council to allow the community to become directly involved in the decision making process. The process must include components where the community is allowed to take direct responsibility for initiating and implementing projects. (Region of H-W c.1996: 5)

The experience showed that "patience … is required to bring everyone's understanding to a common level", and "If community responsibility and ownership is to be developed, it is imperative that the members of the community investigate and develop their own solutions" (Region of H-W c.1996: 5).

Achievements. The main achievements of the VISION 2020 process are as follows:

- Participation by thousands of residents in the formulation of the vision and in subsequent Sustainable Community Days has provided an opportunity for increased understanding and learning;

- A set of 35 Sustainable Community Indicators were compiled, and form the basis of an annual VISION 2020 report card;

- The Region of Hamilton-Wentworth (c.1996: 6-7) lists a number of specific steps taken towards sustainability as a direct result of the original Vision, ranging from land conservation to bikeway and bicycle rack installation to water conservation to waste reduction;

Fulfilment of framework. The Hamilton-Wentworth VISION 2020 fulfils all seven elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability:

- **broad-scale:** Thousands of citizens participated in the initial vision formulation process, and subsequent activities have continued to involve and educate the public.

- **consensual/collaborative:** VISION 2020 was formed through a consensus-based process, which required all decisions of the citizens' Task Force to consider the range of views among the diverse participants.

- **discursive/dialogical:** The consensus-based decision-making process of the original citizens' Task Force required discussion among participants before any final decision could be made. However, while Task Force discussions provided a discursive experience for the relatively small number of participants, the process unfortunately did little to involve the wider community in the dialogue.

- **empowered:** The citizens' Task Force was formed and facilitated by the regional government, but it was empowered to make decisions that would eventually be adopted by the regional government.

- **local:** Town meetings and focus groups appear to have brought the VISION 2020 process to the local level to some extent.

- **multi-level:** Long-term strategic issues as well as specific details were incorporated into the Vision.

- **ongoing:** The Sustainable Community Indicators and Report Card provide a means for ongoing citizen involvement in the movement towards sustainability, and the handing over of the process to a non-governmental organisation should provide an even more grass-roots avenue for ongoing community involvement.

Rationale for inclusion. The Hamilton-Wentworth VISION 2020 sustainable community planning process represents a potentially useful model for achieving greater regional sustainability. The most important aspects are the presence of a strongly committed local/regional government with sufficient political will to entrust citizens with decision-making power and to subsequently adopt the decisions made by community members. The partnership between government and a non-governmental organisation to oversee ongoing implementation of the Vision is another very positive aspect. However, it is worth noting the suggestion from MacGregor (2000: 23-24) that "the indicators are not being met"; that an "Old Boys Club" has adopted the community's vision in order to win awards rather than to achieve sustainability; and that the process has been hijacked "by an elite group of people with a pro-development agenda". Perhaps even more importantly, MacGregor (2000: 24) questions whether the level of *voluntary* citizen participation required to develop and implement such a process is in itself unsustainable.

4.6. Case Study 6: "TravelSmart", Perth, Western Australia

Description. In order to encourage personal travel behaviour change, Transport Western Australia has begun a comprehensive TravelSmart "travel demand management" program to encourage travel alternatives to the motor vehicle such as public transport, cycling and walking. The TravelSmart program is described as "a community-based program that involves groups and organisations in activities to encourage more walking, cycling and teleaccess[7], the use of public transport and less 'driver-only' journeys" (Transport WA 1999: 2). The ultimate goal is to make a cost-effective contribution towards the achievement of Transport WA's ambitious Perth Metropolitan Transport Strategy, which aims to decrease the percentage of "car as driver" trips from 63% of all trips in 1991 to 46% in 2029 (Transport WA 1996: 21). Travel demand management is defined as non-infrastructure-based intervention to encourage more desirable and more sustainable travel decisions, and to reduce the negative impacts of travel (Transport WA 1996: 76). Thus, rather than focusing on technical improvements to the transport network, some of the main elements of TravelSmart include helping schools, workplaces and other major destinations to encourage travel alternatives, emphasising the potential health benefits of decreased car use, and a "dialogue marketing" program to encourage travel change at the household level.

Dialogue marketing is essentially a form of social marketing (Kotler and Roberto 1989; Andreasen 1995), or using mainstream consumer marketing techniques to change attitudes and behaviours rather than to sell products or services. Specifically, every household is approached with information on local travel alternatives to the motor vehicle. All residents who express an interest are visited personally, given individualised assistance to find travel alternatives to match their lifestyles, offered a personal escort for their first public transport trip, and given rewards for successful travel change (Transport WA 1999: 13). Despite the *one-way* nature of dialogue

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[7] Teleaccess, also known as tele-commuting, is when employees work from home rather than physically commuting to their employer's office. Along with alternative transport modes, teleaccess is an important element of travel demand management as it can reduce the need to travel at all.

marketing, as opposed to an approach focusing on community empowerment and social learning through active participation, the success of the program has been significant. For instance, a 1997 trial of the program in South Perth achieved a 14% decrease in "car as driver" trips (from 60% to 52% of all trips), while increasing public transport use by 17%, cycling by 61% and walking by 35% (Socialdata 2000: 3). In addition, survey responses indicate that a fifth of all car trips across Perth can be realistically replaced by public transport without any improvement to services and any significant loss of convenience for the traveller. Similarly, another quarter of all car trips could be switched to bicycle, and another fifth to walking. Thus, the dialogue marketing approach offers a very cost-effective and politically non-controversial method of travel demand management (Transport WA 1996: 76). For a fraction of the cost of one short stretch of freeway, which would only relieve traffic congestion in the short term while leading to a range of other problems in the long term, it is estimated that dialogue marketing can be delivered to every household in Perth for $29 million (Transport WA 1999: 14), and this funding has already been secured.

Achievements. Some of the main achievements of the Transport WA TravelSmart program are as follows:

- Residents of Perth have an increased awareness of not only the need for travel behaviour change but also *how* to change their own behaviour;

- Workplaces, schools and other major destinations are being empowered to promote travel behaviour change within their organisations;

- A significant reduction in motor vehicle is being achieved across Perth in a cost-effective manner, while also reducing traffic congestion and saving residents $2.8 million per year (Transport WA 1999: 13)

- Coupled with improvements to the public transport and cycling networks, TravelSmart dialogue marketing can optimise the impact of these investments and motivate people to consider new options (Transport WA 1999: 14)

- According to Transport WA (1999: 14), TravelSmart "will certainly aid the deferral of transport infrastructure demand (i.e. less roads will be needed) while encouraging better use of existing infrastructure and services."

Fulfilment of framework. The Transport WA TravelSmart program fulfils the following 2 elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability:

- **broad-scale:** Contact will be made with *every* household in Perth, providing an opportunity to outline the state government's strategy for more sustainable transport as well as to stimulate consideration of travel alternatives. In the South Perth dialogue marketing trial, 36% of households expressed interest in learning about travel alternatives; other individuals will be engaged through TravelSmart Workplaces, Schools, etc.

- **local:** Because dialogue marketing comes to the household, individuals do not need to go out of their way to get involved or to learn about travel alternatives. Workplace and school programs are also potentially local contexts for encouraging travel behaviour change.

However, the TravelSmart program does not fulfil the following elements:

- **consensual/collaborative:** As a primarily marketing-based program, TravelSmart is for the most part a one-way, top-down program with government encouraging residents to change their behaviour.

- **discursive/dialogical:** TravelSmart's one-way marketing approach does not promote discourse within the process, though word-of-mouth communication within the community would occur once individuals and households have begun changing their travel behaviour.

- **empowered:** TravelSmart does not provide residents with an opportunity to change the transport network or even to provide input to planners. In schools and workplaces, some empowerment may occur.

- **multi-level:** There is no opportunity for residents to contribute towards strategic or even detailed local planning.

- **ongoing:** As designed for Perth, TravelSmart does not provide any form of ongoing decision-making or planning process.

Rationale for inclusion. The TravelSmart program, particularly through its dialogue marketing component, represents the most comprehensive and broad-scale coverage of any of the processes examined in this literature review. While as described here the program has focused solely on travel behaviour change and one-way communication, there is no reason why the comprehensive, household-based approach cannot be adapted to become a part of more strategic and dialogical participatory planning processes. For instance, simply by allowing for two-way communication, planners could gather valuable feedback on detailed local issues as well as more strategic issues. Going further, household visits could be the first step towards encouraging residents to participate in a locally-based planning process. Local community groups could be empowered (and funded) to run the process, thus contributing towards a stronger voice for local sustainable transport improvements.

Thus, the TravelSmart program provides a successful model for its current goals, but could be significantly expanded into a full-fledged participatory planning process for sustainability.

4.7. Summary of Case Studies

While not every case study above represents fulfilment of all seven key elements of the framework for successful participatory planning that were identified in the previous chapter, each case study does fulfil some of the elements. Table 4.1 shows the elements of the framework illustrated by each case study.

Table 4.1: Case study fulfilment of framework elements

Case study	Elements of framework fulfilled						
	broad-scale	consensual/ collaborative	discursive/ dialogical	empowered/ independent	local	multi-scale	ongoing/ continuous
1. Participatory Budget	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Neighbourhood Councils	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Sustainability Indicators	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. LUTRAQ		✓	✓	✓		✓	
5. VISION 2020	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. TravelSmart	✓				✓		

Source: compiled by the author

Thus, each case study outlined has fulfilled at least two elements of the proposed framework for successful participatory planning for sustainability; and as discussed above, each case study has been successful in achieving steps towards sustainability. It is therefore suggested that while a participatory process may not be required to fulfil all seven elements of the framework in order to be successful, based on the theoretical literature review presented previously it is suggested that a process that does not fulfil *any* of the elements could ever be successful in leading to significant steps towards sustainability.

The next chapter contains a review of regional transport planning in South East Queensland. Specifically, recent participatory planning processes will be examined to see how well they have matched up to the proposed framework for successful participatory planning for sustainability.

Chapter 5.   Case Study: Regional Transport Planning in South East Queensland

In this chapter, the case study of regional transport planning in South East Queensland is reviewed in a similar but more detailed manner to the brief case study reviews in Chapter 4. First, the background to regional transport planning in South East Queensland is outlined. This is followed by an examination of public involvement in the Queensland Government's (1997a) *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland*, with specific reference to the seven elements of the framework of participatory planning for sustainability proposed in Chapter 3. Finally, recommendations are provided for how public participation could be better harnessed for the achievement of steps towards sustainable transport in South East Queensland.

5.1.   Background: Regional Transport Planning in South East Queensland

South East Queensland is a metropolitan region on the east coast of Australia consisting of 18 local government authorities. The geography of the region ranges from the urban areas of Brisbane, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast, to the rural hinterland areas. The region is experiencing rapid population growth, from approximately 2 million residents in 1991 to a projected 3 million residents in 2011 (Queensland Government 1997a: 1), and as a result the region faces potentially significant exacerbation of existing transport and environmental problems. In 1997, the Queensland Government launched its *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland (IRTP)* (Qld Gov't 1997a), to form the transport component of the land use focused *Regional Framework for Growth Management* (RFGM) – *SEQ 2001* (Qld Gov't 1995/1998/2001). The *South East Queensland Regional Air Quality Strategy* (SEQRAQS) (Qld Gov't – EPA 1999) has also been produced, forming the air quality component of the RFGM. In 2001, building on the *IRTP*, the Queensland Government released an interim action plan entitled *Transport 2007*, which provides mid-term targets towards the *IRTP* 2011 targets, as well as more detail on the measures to be taken to meet the targets (Qld Gov't 2001a).

The *IRTP* acknowledged the damaging trends in motor vehicle use in the region due not only to increased population but also to residents driving further and more often. To address these problems, the *IRTP* set ambitious targets to increase the percentage of trips by public transport from 7% of trips in 1992 to 10.5% of trips in 2011, cycling from 2% of trips to 5% (later raised to 8%), and walking from 13% to 15%. These achievements would decrease motor vehicle trips from 78% to 66.5% of all trips by 2011. Unfortunately, after factoring in population growth trends, actual vehicle kilometres travelled (vkt) would still increase by more than 60% between 1992 and 2011, even if the ambitious targets were achieved (Qld Govt 1997a: 21).

Since 1997, the Queensland Government has implemented a number of transport planning initiatives under the umbrella of the Integrated Regional Transport Plan. The highest profile projects have been the construction of the South East Busway (opened April 2001), the AirTrain airport rail link (opened May 2001) and the Goodwill Bridge for pedestrians and cyclists (opened October 2001). However the *IRTP* has also permitted and partially funded the construction of the Inner City Bypass, a $250 million, 6km freeway that has provided no public transport enhancement. In addition, the Queensland Government has thus far failed to provide an integrated ticketing system for South East Queensland, and two different light rail proposals have been scrapped since 1998. And while a TravelSmart dialogue marketing program is being explored to reduce travel demand across the region, there is as yet no firm commitment to the program from the Queensland Government. Meanwhile, the state government remains solidly committed to their busway strategy; however, the Queensland Parliamentary Public Works Committee (1997: 22) agreed with criticisms from a number of transport experts that busways represent "an engineering solution to what is essentially not an engineering problem", and that future busway proposals should be put on hold in preference for better integration of the public transport network.

The success of the *IRTP* is brought into further doubt by the Queensland Government's own assessments that *IRTP* targets are not being met. For instance, while the *IRTP* "trend" projected the public transport modal share (percentage of all

trips by public transport) to drop from 7% of trips in 1992 to 6.3% of trips in 2011 (Qld Gov't 1997a: 1), *Transport 2007* reports that the public transport modal share had dropped to 5.98% by 1999, lower than the 2011 "trend" projection and considerably lower than the 2011 target of 10.5% (Qld Gov't 2001a: 86). In addition, the modal split for cycling has also dropped below the 2011 trend (2%) to only 1.5% of trips (Qld Gov't 1999a). These figures show that transport planning decisions are not only failing to move the region towards the more sustainable *IRTP* targets, but that the transport system is performing even worse than the *IRTP*'s "business-as-usual" case.

Failure of the Queensland Government's transport policy can also be seen in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions due to the transport sector in Queensland are currently projected at a 40% increase over 1990 levels in 2000, with current trends leading to an 80% increase by 2010 (Qld Government 1999b: 2a). Considerable change would have to occur if the transport sector in Queensland is to contribute to Australia's *National Greenhouse Strategy* (AGO 1998), consistent with Australia's internationally-agreed Kyoto Protocol target of limiting greenhouse gas emissions to an 8% increase by 2010 (AGO 1998: 101).[8]

In summary, despite the strong rhetoric within the *IRTP* and other government policy statements that the planning priority had shifted to more sustainable transport modes, in reality the Queensland Government has not shown a high level of commitment to sustainable transport outcomes. While prominent and colourful charts illustrate the ambitious modal shift targets, both the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* include a considerable number of road construction and road upgrade projects that continue to encourage more trips by motor vehicle. Based on the principles of "induced traffic", that additional road space will generate additional traffic (Pfleiderer and Dieterich 1995; Pharoah 1996; Gibbs 1997; Hansen and Huang 1997; and Chen 1998), it is no wonder that South East Queensland travellers have continued to choose motor vehicles over more sustainable transport modes. Using the *IRTP*'s terminology, it is possible that the "balance" between "moderating traffic growth and giving priority to

public transport" on the one hand and "widening and upgrading existing roads" and "constructing new road links, especially bypasses and ring road connections" on the other (Qld Gov't 1997a: xiii) has been too heavily weighted towards road provision.

5.2. Public Participation in SEQ Regional Transport Planning

The Queensland Government Departments of Transport and Main Roads have adopted a fairly progressive set of guidelines for "public consultation" in transport planning (Qld Gov't 1997b). Some of the most important guidelines include the commitments to "consultation with a range of stakeholders … as early as possible in relevant decision-making activities before decision-making occurs", and "open, accountable and transparent" decision-making processes (Qld Gov't 1997b: 3). In the case of both the Integrated Regional Transport Plan and *Transport 2007*, extensive consultation processes have been undertaken, and these are discussed in more detail below, followed by a description of the more recent Queensland Government "community engagement" policy. The government documents and policies used as a basis for this review are listed in Table 2.1, at the end of Chapter 2.

IRTP consultation

The *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland* (*IRTP*) was "developed with extensive input from the community" (Qld Gov't 1997a: 11). Consultation during the development of the plan occurred in two main phases. The first phase consisted of distribution of 21,000 copies of a discussion paper (though the recipients are not specified), resulting in 1,200 "comprehensive written submissions", distribution of an information brochure to 735,000 households with 45,000 tear-off survey forms returned, 22 workshops around the region with a total of over 1000 people in attendance, and meetings and seminars with major interest groups (Qld Gov't 1997a: 11-12). The second phase centred around a draft *IRTP*, with 21,000 information brochures distributed, 13 more workshops held and 547 submissions on the draft *IRTP* received (Qld Gov't 1997a: 13). A toll-free telephone hotline was also employed to gather additional feedback during both phases.

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[8] While the Kyoto Protocol itself and the Commonwealth Government's *National Greenhouse Strategy* (AGO 1998) both acknowledge Australia's target of no more than an 8% increase by 2010, Australia is yet to sign the Kyoto Protocol to make this commitment legally binding.

Another important component of *IRTP* consultation was the formation of the Regional Transport Reference Group (RTRG) in December 1994 (RTRG 1995: 2). The RTRG was comprised mostly of representatives from stakeholder groups, as well as from local governments and other state government agencies. The RTRG provided an extensive "communique" in response to the *IRTP* discussion paper, noting in the Introduction:

> A recurring theme from the working sessions of the RTRG has been that transport issues have already been clearly documented and actions have been proposed in other studies including the South East Passenger Transport Study 1991 (SEPTS), the Metropolitan Freight Strategy 1994 (MFS), and the draft Brisbane Bicycle Plan 1994. While recognising that these processes were not perfect, and did not cover the entire South East Queensland (SEQ) study area, the RTRG decided that enough effort had gone into identitfying the transport issues in SEQ, and expressed a preference to focus effort and resources on achieving outcomes. (RTRG 1995: 2)

This passage shows that even before the *IRTP* had been finalised, and well before the *Transport 2007* action plan had been considered, stakeholders were already weary of the continuous flow of policy processes rather than actual implementation.

Another key recommendation of the RTRG Communique was the inclusion of "effective, on-going community consultation, education, and information that is inclusive, universal, resourced, bottom-up, iterative…" (RTRG 1995: 3). In line with this recommendation, the final *IRTP* included Action 14.2: "Convene a Regional Transport Reference Group to meet regularly with elected and appointed transport officials to provide input on current issues and ideas for improvement" (Qld Gov't 1997a: 150). Although this Action was implemented, and the RTRG continued to meet approximately every two months until April 1999, the group was then disbanded with no formal evaluation of the RTRG made available. In 2000 a "Ministerial Transport Planning Advisory Group" was formed including the participation of a similar range of stakeholders, but this group did not have a role to systematically oversee implementation of the *IRTP*. While individual projects under the *IRTP* still undergo consultation according to the consultation guidelines (Qld Gov't 1997b), there is currently no ongoing, systematic public involvement in the implementation and evaluation of the *IRTP*.

Transport 2007 consultation

The *Transport 2007* interim action plan (Qld Gov't 2001a) underwent similar consultation to the *IRTP* during its development. Almost 10,000 copies of the draft *2007 Vision* (Qld Gov't 1999a) were distributed on TravelSmart Day,[9] 27 October 1999 (recipients once again not described), with 350 submissions received. In addition, regional workshops were held, presentations were given to stakeholder groups, and a toll-free hotline and website were employed. However, unlike the *IRTP*, *Transport 2007* does not include any actions to involve community members in the implementation and evaluation of the policy on an ongoing basis. However, the Queensland Government is currently discussing arrangements for public participation in "SEQ 2021", the updated *Regional Framework for Growth Management* of which the transport component "Transport 2021" will be largely based on *Transport 2007* and the *IRTP*. This new framework may represent an opportunity to revive ongoing public participation in regional transport planning in South East Queensland, or alternatively may become yet another participatory policy process that distracts both the government and the community from "achieving outcomes".

Queensland Government's Community Engagement Division

The Queensland Government has recently established a Community Engagement Division to assist the entire government in increasing public participation in decision making (Qld Gov't 2001b). The "Directions Statement" for the Division defines "community engagement" as "arrangements for citizens and communities to participate in the processes used to make good policy and to deliver on programs and services" (Qld Gov't 2001b: 5). Three different forms of community engagement are identified:

- "information" (one-way communication from government to citizens);
- "consultation" (two-way communication between government and citizens, but with prior definition of the issue by government); and
- "active participation" (a "relationship" in which "citizens and communities actively engage in the policy-making process", although "the responsibility

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[9] TravelSmart Day was a state-wide promotional day for public transport, cycling and walking.

for the final decision or policy formulation rests with the elected government"). (Qld Gov't 2001b: 5)

As the Community Engagement Division is only in its early stages, activities thus far have only included a focus on regional communities, women's policy, multicultural affairs policy, crime prevention, and Cape York Partnerships (Qld Gov't 2001b: 9). However, there is clearly an opportunity for the Queensland Government to consider the opportunities for and the benefits of applying its new community engagement focus to regional transport planning. The specific role of community engagement in building community support for sustainability is also not explored in any detail within the Directions Statement. Thus, while the Queensland Government has to some extent embraced both community engagement and sustainability, the Queensland Government does not appear to have formally recognised a link between the two.

5.3. Evaluation Based on the Proposed Framework

Based on the review of Queensland Government policy above, regional transport planning in South East Queensland in recent years clearly has not engaged the community in a way that is consistent with the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability. A predominant focus on stakeholder engagement and involvement has been much more consistent with the characteristics of representative democracy rather than the participatory democracy that was identified in Chapter 3 as preferable for achieving sustainability. The Queensland Government's failure to open up decision-making processes to the public has thus far limited citizens' opportunities to experience social learning related to sustainable transport. Below, regional transport planning in South East Queensland is evaluated in terms of each element of the proposed framework.

Framework element 1: broad-scale
Although the *IRTP* consultation process involved distribution of information leaflets to 735,000 households, the Queensland Government has never seriously attempted to encourage broad-scale public participation in regional transport planning in South East Queensland. The daily treatment of transport issues in the mainstream media

have a much more powerful influence on the opinions of the public than a one-off information leaflet. In order to achieve sustainability, this study suggests that the Queensland Government will have to involve the community in broad-scale social learning on strategic regional transport planning issues, helping the average resident to understand how various transport decisions can potentially affect their lives positively or negatively.

Framework element 2: consensual/collaborative

The consultation processes undertaken for the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* were both characterised by the government offering a draft document for discussion, and then processing submissions "in-house" to contribute towards another draft. In the case of *Transport 2007*, a formal "Response to Issues Raised in Consultation" (Qld Gov't 2001d) was provided outlining submissions and how the government had decided to incorporate or not incorporate them. A more detailed evaluation report referred to in the *IRTP* Consultation Report (Spinks and Lobban c.1996: 20) may or may not have provided a similar listing for the earlier *IRTP* process; however, I was unable to access this document during the research process. But it is clear that in neither case were community members involved in the processing of submissions to shape the next draft document.

The only process that could have potentially included a consensus-based decision-making process would have been the Regional Transport Reference Group, had it been given the power to actually make decisions. The absence of consensus-based discussions means that stakeholder representatives, let alone members of the wider community, have not had the opportunity to hear the views of others and to attempt to reach a final decision that all participants can live with.

Framework element 3: discursive/dialogical

Just as regional transport planning in South East Queensland has not employed any consensus-based decision-making, community members similarly have not been enabled to participate in an open, inclusive and equal discourse on the issues. With public discussion of transport issues limited to the mainstream media coverage, it

will be very difficult for the Queensland Government to implement some of its most important strategic actions for sustainable transport.

Framework element 4: empowered/independent

Neither the *IRTP* nor *Transport 2007* has empowered community members to develop a policy about which they feel a sense of ownership. Rather, each policy has been kept firmly under Queensland Government control. The Regional Transport Reference Group is the example that comes closest to community empowerment, but this group appears to have been unable to assert any power towards the implementation of the *IRTP* before the group was disbanded for unknown reasons in 1999. Arnstein (1969: 223) suggested that none of the Model Cities she reviewed could be considered to have met her criteria for "citizen control" since "final approval power and accountability rest with the city council." Similarly, even the Queensland Government's highest form of community engagement, "active participation", fails to qualify as citizen control or real empowerment because the final decision is made by government.

Framework element 5: local

Although each consultation process involved holding up to 22 workshops around the South East Queensland region, neither process ever managed to truly bring regional transport planning to the local context. In a region the size of South East Queensland, 22 workshops would mean that most residents would have to travel a considerable distance to attend a meeting. In addition, the meeting could not be of local relevance, and the attendees of the meeting would not be neighbours. Thus, the consultation processes were likely to have seemed irrelevant to most members of the community.

Framework element 6: ongoing/continuous

Although the Regional Transport Reference Group provided a form of ongoing community involvement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland until April 1999, nothing of the kind has existed since the group was disbanded. As a result, there is no avenue for the community to ensure transparent, accountable and effective implementation of the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007*. It should be noted that even a group like the RTRG has limited ability to ensure ongoing involvement and

social learning on the part of the wider community, unless the group and process are well-resourced and perhaps supplemented by other periodic, more locally-based workshops and discussions.

Framework element 7: multi-scale

While the consultation processes for the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* included a focus on long-term strategy, regional transport planning in South East Queensland appears to be failing due to the gap between the overarching strategies and actual project-level implementation. Consultation processes for individual projects are not sufficient to ensure that project outcomes are consistent with, or "integrated" with, the long-term strategy. And because of the absence of ongoing public participation in the implementation of the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* since the disbanding of the Regional Transport Reference Group, there is no way for the community to make sure that the long-term strategy is being delivered appropriately at the project level.

Summary of framework evaluation

In summary, regional transport planning in South East Queensland fails to qualify in terms of any of the seven elements of the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability. Based on the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter 3 and the case studies explored in Chapter 4, it is thus suggested that the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* are not likely to achieve any significant steps towards sustainability without considerable enhancement of the public participation processes employed. The following section will explore a number of ways in which the Queensland Government can improve public participation in regional transport planning in order to assist in the implementation of sustainable transport policy in South East Queensland.

5.4. Recommendations for Improved Regional Transport Planning in SEQ

Based on theoretical literature reviewed in Chapter 3 and particularly the case studies examined in Chapter 4, a number of recommendations can be made towards the improvement of public participation in regional transport planning in South East Queensland. Recommendations are provided to assist in the fulfilment of each of the seven elements of the proposed framework of participatory planning for

sustainability. Most of the recommendations are intended for the Queensland Government; however, a number of recommendations could potentially be implemented local governments or even by non-government organisations with an interest in facilitating social learning and increased community support for sustainable transport outcomes.

Recommendations for element 1: broad-scale

- Adopt Transport WA's (1999) TravelSmart dialogue marketing program for South East Queensland to offer every household an opportunity for personalised information on more sustainable travel alternatives.

- Extend the Transport WA program to include gathering ideas for local transport network improvements, or to formulate long-term, strategic transport policy.

- Based on the concept of neighbourhood councils, facilitate community-based neighbourhood transport councils or networks to provide a venue for discussion of transport issues, to gather community ideas for sustainable transport improvements and to assist in actual implementation.

Recommendations for element 2: consensual/collaborative

- Facilitate region-wide and neighbourhood-based vision-formulation processes where community members determine the best long-term solutions to regional and local transport problems.

- Facilitate a consensus-based process for stakeholder representatives to elaborate their views and share them with each other and with the wider community, and to develop a shared vision for a sustainable transport future.

Recommendations for element 3: discursive/dialogical

- Provide the means for in-depth community dialogue about transport issues.

- Extend the theme of the October 2002 Conference, "Where are our travel decisions taking us?"[10] to a series of neighbourhood-level problem-solving and vision-formulating workshops throughout the region.

- Provide funding and other kinds of resources to proactive non-government organisations to increase the public profile of sustainable transport solutions, and to raise awareness of the benefits of sustainable transport.

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[10] This conference was held 17-18 October 2002 at the Hilton Hotel in Brisbane, and brought a number of national and international transport experts to Queensland. However, the target audience was a limited number of transport planners and experts rather than the general public, as could be expected from the cost of registration (approximately $700).

Recommendations for element 4: empowered/independent

- Provide funding and other kinds of resources to community organisations to enable them to independently and strongly advocate for sustainable transport outcomes, as have 1000 Friends of Oregon and other similar organisations (Bartholomew 1999).

- Employ local residents and non-government organisations to carry out community-based dialogue marketing.

Recommendations for element 5: local

- Employ the Transport WA (1999) TravelSmart dialogue marketing approach to get a significant proportion of the public thinking about transport issues and decisions within their households.

- Give residents convenient access to relevant local transport information and discussion by facilitating community-based neighbourhood transport councils or networks.

Recommendations for element 6: ongoing/continuous

- Based loosely on the Porto Alegre participatory budget (Abers 1998), establish a community-based land use and transport decision-making structure, perhaps with local neighbourhood transport councils or networks as the foundation.

- Reconvene a stakeholder representative body like the Regional Transport Reference Group, but where the members are granted actual decision-making power towards implementation of sustainable transport outcomes. (This option is not suggested as a substitute for processes that involve the wider community. Rather, it is merely a venue to ensure dialogue between key stakeholder groups and to gather innovative ideas and approaches.)

Recommendations for element 7: multi-scale

- Establish an independent, community-based "watch-dog" group to evaluate all local and state government transport projects in terms of their consistency with the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007*.

- Provide a mechanism for community members to challenge any specific local or state government project that they believe does not contribute to the achievement of *IRTP* and *Transport 2007* targets.

- Undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the *IRTP* and *Transport 2007*, including a comparison of the sustainability outcomes of a number of different scenarios as well as a process for community involvement in the assessment

Summary of recommendations

As suggested by Dorcey et al. (1994), each different participatory approach can serve a different purpose in the overall planning process. Similarly, many of the recommendations listed above can be integrated to construct a participatory planning process with a range of dimensions to suit diverse publics. It is not suggested that every recommendation will work immediately or will be easy to implement. As with the Porto Alegre participatory budget (Abers 1998), it may take a few years before community members have developed the necessary skills to participate effectively in the process. And ultimately, this study suggests that embracing complex and potentially challenging participatory processes may be the only way to achieve sustainability.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

This study has attempted to provide an improved understanding of the interaction between participation, democracy, planning and sustainability. Specifically, it has been suggested that the achievement of sustainability in western nations will require social learning among citizens to increase community support for sustainability. Three areas of theoretical literature were reviewed in Chapter 3 – (1) participation in democratic political theory; (2) participation in planning theory; and (3) participation in the theory of environmental decision-making for sustainability – and a theoretical framework of participatory planning for sustainability was proposed. The proposed framework identifies seven key elements or characteristics of successful participatory planning processes for sustainability: (1) broad-scale; (2) consensual/collaborative; (3) discursive/dialogical; (4) empowered/independent; (5) local; (6) multi-scale; and (7) ongoing/continuous.

The proposed framework was then used to evaluate six case studies of successful participatory planning for sustainability in Chapter 4, as well as a more detailed review and evaluation of regional transport planning in South East Queensland in Chapter 5. The results showed that while the six successful cases each fulfilled from two to seven of the elements of the framework, recent public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland had not fulfilled any of the seven elements of the framework. Recommendations based on the successful approaches of the six case studies were then presented to improve public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland.

The major finding of this study, that public participation in decision-making must be drastically expanded and improved consistent with the seven elements of the proposed framework, is not suggested as an easy, "quick-fix" solution. Rather, as in the case of the participatory budget in Porto Alegre, Brasil (Abers 1998), it will no doubt take hard work, patience and commitment in order to make a shift to a more participatory society, with citizens gaining ever-increasing participatory skills. But

this "revolutionary" shift is indeed suggested as perhaps the *only* solution, or rather a necessary part of the whole solution to achieving sustainability in western nations. If we, as citizens, as planners and as politicians, *do not* dedicate ourselves to a more participatory style of governance in order to achieve sustainability, then we face the even more difficult (and politically unpopular) circumstances of potentially catastrophic deterioration of our current quality-of-life, or in the worst case, the end of civilisation or of human life itself. The stakes are high, and we are all stakeholders.

The recommendations for improved public participation in regional transport planning in South East Queensland presented in this study will no doubt be criticised by some as unrealistic and unfeasible. After all, many would suggest that most citizens are busy, apathetic, and inexperienced in the world of civil society and government decision-making. This is why each recommendation must be examined in much greater depth, and trialed in various settings to learn more about the possible different ways that they can each be implemented. How can busy people be convinced that participation is worth their time and effort? How can apathy be turned into interest? How can initial hesitations and discomfort be overcome and participatory skills be built? All of these questions represent further research and experimentation that will contribute towards improved participatory planning for sustainability. Other areas of potential future research are outlined below.

According to the ancient proverb, "The journey of 1,000 miles begins with one step."[11] In making the transition to a more participatory society and a more participatory form of democracy, it could be that the first step will be the most difficult. As suggested by Sandercock (1978), ill-conceived participatory processes can result in increased conflict without the achievement of any great benefit; and if processes and structures are not put together with care, they can be easily manipulated to the advantage of those who are already most organised, rather than leading to positive outcomes. It is possible that the most effective first step to introduce citizens to a higher level of civic responsibility and decision-making

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[11] Lao Tzu (or Laozi) [1982], *Tao Te Ching*, translated with an introduction by D. C. Lau, Chinese University Press, Hong Kong.

control is to focus on long-term visioning for the region, where immediate interests are less threatened and citizens from a range of perspectives can recognise shared interests. After initial successes more citizens would be likely to become involved, and governments and politicians would perhaps be more likely to relinquish some power. Of course if governments are unwilling to take the first step on their own, then it is possible that citizens will have to apply pressure to open up decision-making processes. But as the theorists from Rousseau (1762/1968) to Barber (1984) suggest, once the first step has been taken, participatory democratic processes can only get stronger and stronger as more citizens develop the necessary skills and display them to others.

While it might be seen as a limitation of this study that it has focused on public participation predominantly from the perspective of government-initiated processes for achieving sustainability, there is no reason why non-government, community-based organisations and individuals could not carry out some of the recommended approaches to participatory planning for sustainability. Indeed, writers such as Milbrath (1989) and Banister (2000) suggest that sustainability is best achieved through strong grass-roots, bottom-up, community-led processes and pressure. It should also be noted that a number of the recommendations for South East Queensland presented in Chapter 5 are specifically intended to be implemented by the community rather than by government.

A more significant limitation can be seen in the study's focus on the implementation of government policies and plans to achieve environmental sustainability. This study was constructed based on the documented problem of sustainable transport plans being developed but not being implemented all around the world (see Chapter 1). In this context, it has made sense to focus on finding ways that government (with assistance from the community) can implement their sustainable transport policies, as well as other policies targeting sustainability. Furthermore, most major metropolitan regions in Australia, including South East Queensland, have already developed transport plans and policies with greater sustainability as an explicit goal. The premise of the study is that community resistance to sustainability is based on a lack of awareness of the threats to their own self-interest represented by increasingly

unsustainable transport, as well as perhaps an unwillingness to change personal behaviour due to deeply ingrained habits and lifestyles. Thus, the study has focused on ways to overcome and overturn this community resistance to sustainability by involving the public in decision-making processes to raise awareness and identify long-term solutions that community members are willing to support. However, the study did not examine other reasons for widespread government failure to implement sustainable transport policies, an area where further research is warranted. These reasons might include: conflicts of interest among elected politicians and their political parties; political lobbying by and financial support for political campaigns from special interest groups and industries who are opposed to sustainable transport outcomes; or a lack of sincere commitment to sustainability beyond the rhetoric of printed policy.

The study has attempted to find ways that a government *with* a sincere commitment to the implementation of their own policies could indeed do so by adopting the recommendations provided, thereby moving closer to sustainability. The successful participatory planning techniques described and recommended within this study are only likely to be attempted, let alone carried out successfully, in the presence of such a government commitment. Alternatively, it is acknowledged that a strong and well-organised community could potentially act independently of government to work towards greater participation and social learning for sustainability. But the success of this study has been limited to providing ways to overcome the lack of community support that currently hinders the implementation of sustainable transport policy in many cities, rather than addressing the other reasons for governments' implementation failures. *If this study has indeed removed the obstacles to implementation of government policies targeting sustainable transport, and yet governments continue to fail to implement their sustainable transport policies, then this continued failure would have to be blamed on other factors that politicians and bureaucrats are less likely to acknowledge publicly.*

6.1. Opportunities for Further Research

While this study has employed a qualitative approach to correspond with the exploratory nature of the research, quantitative research as well as further qualitative

research can now be undertaken to build on the findings of this study. Further research is suggested in two main areas: (1) theoretical research that is generally applicable throughout Australia and other western nations; and (2) practical research and experimentation focused on achieving sustainable transport in South East Queensland and in other regions. While the specific recommendations provided here are focused on the South East Queensland context, there is no reason why further research could not explore their relevance to other settings, or indeed go so far as actually trialing some of the suggested approaches.

Further theoretical research is necessary to confirm and refine the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability presented here. More detailed guidelines could potentially supplement the proposed framework, although it is recognised that there is a limitation to how generally applicable a more detailed and prescriptive framework can be. Further compilation of successful case studies of participatory planning for sustainability, especially focusing on transport, will be invaluable in helping governments and communities achieve local sustainability. In addition, research could contribute to a better understanding of the psychological dynamics of social learning and participation, and of the possible mediating roles of social learning and participation in environmental education and increased support for sustainability. Quantitative analysis could be employed to determine which of the elements of the framework might be most important to successful participatory planning for sustainability, including perhaps establishing a method of weighting the various elements, or providing a predictive model for the achievement of sustainability through different participatory.

Further research can also enlighten the practical application of existing theory to regional transport planning in South East Queensland, and potentially in other metropolitan regions. For instance, qualitative and quantitative research is needed to explore the likely success and feasibility of the various recommendations presented in Chapter 5. Which recommendations are of the highest priority to be implemented? Which are most likely to meet success in the short term, as opposed to those that should be carried out after other initial successes? How can citizens best be prepared for an ongoing role in participatory planning for sustainability? Further research is

also necessary to examine in much more detail the local implications, both positive and negative of the various participatory processes recommended, in order to identify specific opportunities as well as to ensure greater success of the processes.

Qualitative and quantitative research is necessary to develop a much greater understanding of the community itself in South East Queensland. Further research could explore the ways in which the citizens of South East Queensland would be most willing or likely to take an active role in planning for sustainability, what settings would be most conducive to increased participation, what incentives are necessary, and how these incentives can be delivered to optimise their impacts.

To contribute to the public dialogue on sustainable transport, one very valuable study would be to explore the level of public support for sustainable transport versus continued road-building, as discussed in Chapter 1. Such a study for South East Queensland might follow the model of the Market Equity (1999: 14) study for the Perth metropolitan region, which showed that 87% of residents were at least "somewhat supportive" of "diversion of funds from new roads to public transport, cycling and walking". However, even more valuable would be a study like the Warren Centre study for Greater Sydney (Glazebrook 1999), which showed that while both the public (70%) and government decision-makers (89%) wanted to see road budget funds diverted towards public transport development, decision-makers *thought* that only 56% of the public would support sustainable transport outcomes. Beyond contributing to a more robust community dialogue, such a study for South East Queensland would go some way to inspire greater political will for implementing sustainable transport outcomes.

Finally, it is acknowledged that this study contained only a superficial review of the overall approach to regional transport planning in South East Queensland, as its focus was on providing innovative ideas and approaches for future participatory planning. However, a detailed and systematic evaluation of public participation in the development and implementation of the *Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland* and *Transport 2007* would be of great value for future attempts at improving public participation and community engagement. To my

knowledge, no such study has ever been performed, either by independent researchers or by the Queensland Government itself. Specifically, the Regional Transport Reference Group (RTRG) process that was facilitated by Queensland Transport between 1995 and 1999 should be examined to document both its successes and failures, and to provide a public account of why the group was disbanded.

In the spirit of this study, it is suggested that as much of this research as possible should be carried out by the community itself, or by independent university researchers, and students in particular, rather than by government itself or exclusively by professional consultants. Community-led research will not only contribute to further social learning for sustainability, but will also ensure that the questions being asked and explored are relevant to the community. The suggestion to hand over the control of research to the community is not to say that government should outsource its research responsibilities to unpaid community members. Rather, there are innovative ways that government can facilitate high-quality community-led research while contributing at the same time to the achievement of sustainability.

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Appendix: Research Matrix

Research problem: The difficulty of implementing sustainable regional transport policies and plans				
Setting: The metropolitan region of South East Queensland, Australia				
Aims	**Research Questions**	**Research Steps**	**Research Techniques**	**Outcomes**
To identify ways to achieve steps towards environmental sustainability through improved public participation and community engagement in policy-formulation and planning	Can improved public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning contribute towards the achievement of sustainable transport outcomes?	1. Review literature pertaining to participation in democratic political theory, participation in planning theory, and participation in the theory of environmental decision-making and sustainability, in order to better understand the inter-relationships between them	Literature search (theoretical analysis)	A better understanding of the role of participatory democracy and participatory planning in achieving sustainability
		2. Construct a theory-based framework identifying the key elements of participatory planning for sustainability	Weber's "ideal types" (Neuman 2000: 44) (theoretical analysis)	Development of a framework of participatory planning for sustainability, especially in relation to regional transport policy-formulation and planning
		3. Seek out examples of successful participatory planning for sustainability, and assess them based on the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability	Literature search (case study research)	Identification of concrete examples of successful participatory planning for sustainability
To identify ways to achieve sustainable transport outcomes in South East Queensland through improved public participation and community engagement in regional transport policy-formulation and planning	How can public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning be improved in South East Queensland?	4. Review public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland since 1995 to evaluate against the proposed framework of participatory planning for sustainability	Document analysis (case study research)	A review and critique of public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in South East Queensland
		5. Present recommendations for improving public participation and community engagement in regional transport planning in SEQ in order to achieve steps towards greater regional sustainability	comparison between case studies (case study research)	Recommendations to lead towards greater achievement of regional sustainability in South East Queensland