

GOVERNMENT INSTITUTION AND LOCAL PRACTICE OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNING Community Planners in Taipei

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in 1999, the Taipei City Government started to promote a 'Community Planner Program' in an effort to encourage residents to take part in creating a city of self-identity. This is the sixth year since the program was launched. With the central government's support and promotion by academia, more than half of all administrative divisions in the country have introduced the program. Specifically, the program has been introduced to earthquake-hit areas to speed up reconstruction. Through review of past experiences, compilation of existing firsthand data and applicable literature, the implementation of the 'Taipei Community Planner Program' is described, current successes are examined and hurdles encountered during the process are detailed. It is also my objective to explore the future of the program. Study results indicate that the Community Planner profession needs to be respected while the success of the program lies in good resident participation. In the long run, community planners are to act as defenders of the interest of the general public by assuming an active role in the participatory planning system. They should shoulder heavier responsibilities in the construction and maintenance of 'urban redevelopment.' It is hoped that with the description of the design concept of this program, those who are concerned about participatory community planning and design may gain an insight into the program.

THE PRACTICE PROCESS OF THE 'COMMUNITY PLANNER'

This is the sixth year since Taipei took the lead in introducing 'Community Planners' into the local planning process. The history of and reasons for the design and revision of this program are described below.

Growth of Community Consciousness and Rise of Grassroots Strength

As income rises and political reforms are implemented, the Taiwanese society is becoming more and more open. Since the 1980s, community energy has been growing gradually.

Communities have begun the methods of controlling and expressing themselves. In particular, mayors of state-governed cities were elected by city residents for the first time in 1995. The political restructuring enabled manifestation of grassroots forces in Taipei.

In response, 'The Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP)' in the mid 1990s became the policy of Chen Shui-bian, then mayor of Taipei, in an attempt to meet community needs and solicit votes from middle-class communities. In the meantime, the 'Community Construction and Management or CCM (Sher-chu-zong-ti-yin-zhao)' policy by the Council for Cultural Affairs of the central government intended to turn community forces into a mechanism for community building nationwide. Taipei's NIP and the central government's CCM became the two major strategies for undertaking local planning in the mid 1990s. They also became the channels for communities to obtain government support and more resources. This urban reform through community participation helps to bridge—government institutions and local communities.

Predicaments and breakthroughs experienced while promoting NIP

Since 1995, the Taipei City Government began promoting NIP in an attempt to consolidate community energy and vigor into the public sector's implementation mechanism in order to reshape the cities.

Challenges and predicaments arise as NIP is implemented. The last year Chen was in office, despite the pressure of getting reelected, many NIPs were unable to be completed by their target date. Therefore, the Development Bureau began thinking about how to strengthen the function and role played by professional planners in terms of environmental renewal and their work with the public sector in the area of community planning. The drawbacks of the NIP implementation mechanism are detailed below:

- Little Communication and Cooperation between the Bureaucracy and the Community—

'NIP' is performed by non-governmental organizations under contract to the city government. However, once planning is completed, difficulties follow as ideas are implemented by the public segment. Examples include extremely high costs and difficult subsequent management and maintenance and design changes or revisions. Complicated by the difficulties posed by horizontal communication and division of work between different branches of the public sector, the community's expectations turn into disappointment and discontent. Many communities are therefore discouraged. In some cases, the community and the public segment criticize each other for not doing enough.¹

- Lack of Intervention by Professionals in Communicating and Consolidating Community Opinions—

Impacted by local politics and elections, 'Li' (a unit of neighborhood) offices and community development associations often share conflicting interests. Since the government does not sign contracts with Li offices, it is difficult for the government to implement Lin/Li renewal programs without support by local opinion leaders and residents.²

- Disadvantaged Communities Are Not Receiving Enough Attention—

Most of the communities actively participating in submitting proposals for environmental renewal are middle-class communities. Many disadvantaged, low-class, edge-of-the-city communities are in more need of improvement of living quality through bettering the environment than middle-class communities. However, they haven't been able to find suitable professionals to help them.³

For the above-said three reasons, the Development Bureau in 1999 began asking the community and the professionals to form partnerships when promoting NIPs. The Bureau also hopes that the professional team may become representative of Party B in order to assist the community in consolidating opinions and in strengthening the feasibility of implementing NIPs. Meanwhile, the Bureau is thinking about how to encourage more professional planning teams to work in the field of community services. This is how the 'Community Planner' program began.

THE INITIAL FRAMEWORK OF TAIPEI CITY COMMUNITY PLANNER PROGRAM 1999

The Roles Community Planners Play and Their Qualifications

According to 'Rules Governing Recruitment of Community Planners 1999 by the Urban Development Bureau, Taipei City Government (hereinafter referred to as the Rules)' the roles community planners play and their qualifications are:

- Professional knowledge in space planning and design
- The passion to serve the community
- Community planners play the role of a liaison between the community and the government. They deal with issues that are related to "public space."
- Community planners are to be very familiar with the environment of the area they serve and feel strongly about the place.

What Community Planners Do

What community planners do, as stated in the Rules, have much to do with the handling of issues relating to the community's

public space. They include providing professional consultation services, making proposals to improve community environments and participating in seminars by the city government on urban development issues and giving advice.⁴

The Way Community Planners Work

Setting up a 'Community Planner Office' – Community planners are to open their offices in the communities they serve or set up a Community Planner Office at an adequate location for easy access by community residents to discuss various issues relating to urban public space and construction within the community. The Office is to provide professional consultation services or be made available for the participation and discussion of the planning and design work.

Use of the Internet – Internet service is to be available for easy access by residents to obtain relevant information. Questions by residents may be answered through the discussion areas of websites or via email. The Development Bureau and Community Planners may communicate with each other via email, simplifying the administrative operating procedure between the city government and community planners. The city government may thus support community planners' work in a more efficient manner.

Measures Taken by the City Government

Qualifications of Community Planners – According to the Rules, individuals specializing in urban planning, urban design, urban renewal, community construction planning, community environmental planning, community design, architectural planning, architectural design, landscape design, transportation engineering, civil engineering, and environmental engineering are eligible to apply. However, they also have to have a certain degree of knowledge of the community they are to serve and be willing to devote themselves to the community. It is obvious that the Development Bureau already believes that the educational background of community planners is not to be limited to environmental planning. Nevertheless, their backgrounds still show traces of 'Development Bureau Character.'

Selection of Community Planners – Selection of community planners is conducted in several ways. Community groups or local opinion leaders may recommend candidates of their choice. Trade associations and academic organizations also have the right to make recommendations. Individuals who think that they are qualified may apply as well. To select the right space planning professionals in order to build a community planning human-resources database and help community residents conduct environment renewal, the city government has decided that community planners are to be selected in the following three-step procedure: preliminary examination, on-location inspection and panel review as stated in Table 1.

Procedure		Description
1	Preliminary Examination	The Bureau conducts preliminary examination of applications according to the Rules (including the required content and format) and the purpose of community planners.
2	On-location Inspection	The Bureau sends personnel to office of applicant to conduct on-location inspection in order to determine whether it is easily accessible, whether it provides adequate discussion room, whether it has Internet access and whether applicant understands fully the role of community planner.
3	Initial Review	The Bureau reviews information obtained in the first two steps and submits "The List of Semifinalists" to the Panel. Thirty applicants are to be selected from the List.
4	Panel Review (Final Review)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Bureau invites experts/scholars, representatives from relevant organizations and members of responsible departments of the city government to form the Panel (the number of representatives from the government is not to exceed one half of all panelists.) The Panel is to review the semifinalists. 2. During the review process, applicant is to provide relevant information requested by the Panel. 3. The Panel has the option to ask applicant to make presentations in the process. 4. Applicant may submit supplementary written information voluntarily during the process or when requested by the Panel. Once adopted, the information is to be used as the basis for implementing program by recruited community planners. 5. Applicants failed the preliminary examination are to be reported to the Panel for confirmation and necessary adjustments.

Table 1. Taipei City Community Planner Selection Procedure 1999. (Source: Bureau of Urban Development, Taipei City Government; compiled by the author)

Community Planner Meeting – To enhance communication with community planners, the Bureau holds a Community Planner Meeting every two to three months. The purposes of the meeting are:

- Community planners report progress of their work and discussion with each other.
- Assist community planners to solve problems raised by residents that cannot be solved by planners immediately; discussing proposals made at the meeting.
- Feasible environmental improvement suggestions that need to be dealt with immediately are resolved at the meeting and turned over to concerned government offices for speedy handling.
- Provide community planners an opportunity to exchange work experiences.
- Review the operating procedure and implementation mechanism of the community planner program.
- Offer residents, community organizations and news media the opportunity to gain knowledge of the operations and progress of the community planner program.

Assistance to Community Planners –

- Funding:

The amount paid by the Bureau to the community planner depends on the content and quantity of services listed in the written proposal by the community planner. The amount is NT \$500,000 (U.S. \$15,000) or thereabouts. The exact amount is

to be agreed upon by both parties through negotiations. During the period the community planner is hired, the Bureau is to negotiate with the planner the amount to be paid for extra work done.

- Information:

For the information needed by the community planner when carrying out community services, the Bureau is to assist the planner in obtaining from various departments of the city government information needed and provide relevant reference books.

- Website:

As the Internet transmits data, provides interactive discussions and posts the latest information, the Bureau has set up the first community planner website: www.communityplanner.taipei.gov.tw.

The website is:

- a) Professional: With community planners of different professional backgrounds, consultations on urban and community public space are made possible through the Internet.
- b) Real-time: With the Internet, community planners are able to respond quickly and in a timely manner to residents' inquiries. Internet-surfers are able to obtain opinions and information through the website.
- c) Multilateral: Through the website, city residents, community planners, different departments of the city government, district government offices, Li offices and community organizations

are able to discuss issues regarding environmental improvement.

- d) Participatory: City residents are encouraged to participate through the Internet public forums.

The Bureau creates a communication channel between the government, the community planner and residents through the website. In addition, community planners are offered individual website space to use. Meanwhile, the Bureau is able to monitor the quantity and quality of work done by community planners through the website's back-end management and statistics mechanisms.

Concurrent Outsourced Study and Review – To avoid a lack of external input, in the same year the Organization of Urban Re's (OURs) was commissioned by the Bureau to conduct 'Evaluation of the Operating Strategy and Mechanism of the Taipei Community Planner Program.' The results were used to make amendments for the promotion of the community planner program.

REVISIONS OF AND CHANGES TO THE 'TAIPEI COMMUNITY PLANNER' PROGRAM

It's been six years since Taipei City began promoting 'Community Planner.' As government officials keep being replaced, the program has undergone many modifications and expansions. Table 2 is a summary of the changes.

Honorary Community Planners

According to the Bureau's plan, Serving Community Planners are selected by the city government based on applicable rules. They sign contracts with the Bureau and accept funding from it to perform community planning duties according to the contract. Honorary Community Planners, though also selected by the city government, don't sign contracts with the Bureau. They work as community planners according to their skills and interests. In a word, Serving Community Planners are paid while Honorary Community Planners are not.

With their professional skills, community planners help residents and disadvantaged groups to conduct environmental renewal and make suggestions for improvement of public open spaces. There is no doubt about their role as service providers. Nevertheless, there is a competitive yet cooperative relationship between community planners and the planning department of the government. As community planners are paid by the city government, their stance is questioned by some residents when the city government's policy differs with residents' needs. As a result, some of the first group of community planners said they would rather not get paid by the city government in return for more freedom to do what they wanted. This is why the Bureau began the Honorary Community Planner pilot program.

As the 'Community Planner' program is in its experimental stage, it is completely funded by the Construction and

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
# of Applicants	62	47	63	56	58	
# of Applicants Selected	28	42	52	53	51	50
Nature	Serving: 28	Serving: 29 Honorary: 13	Honorary: 52	Honorary: 53	Honorary: 51	Honorary: 50
Funding	NT\$500,000	NT\$300,000	Honorary	Honorary	Honorary	Honorary
Job Description	Professional Consulting	Professional Consulting	Professional Consulting	Professional Consulting	Professional Consulting	Professional Consulting
		Neighborhood Development Projects	X	X	X	X
Professional Exchange Platform	Community Planner Meeting	Community Planner Meeting	Community Planner Meeting	Community Planner Meeting	Community Planner Meeting	Community Planner Meeting
	X	Neighborhood Community Planner Work Meeting	X	X	X	X
	X	X	Community Planning Service Center	Community Planning Service Center	Community Planning Service Center	Community Planning Service Center
Professional Training	X	Young Community Planner Training Program	Young Community Planner Training Program	Young Community Planner Training Program	Young Community Planner Training Program	Young Community Planner Training Program
	X	X	Community Planning Service Center	Community Planning Service Center	Community Planning Service Center	Community Planning Service Center
Community Resources	X	X	Community Colleges	Community Colleges	Community Colleges	Community Colleges
	X	X	X	Children Environment Experience Camps (4)*	Children Environment Experience Camps (2)	X
Websites	V	V	V	V	V	V
Liaison	X	V	V	V	X	X
Outsourced Studies	Taipei City Community Planner Program Operating Strategy and Mechanism Evaluation and Study	Taipei City Neighborhood Development Plan and Community Planner Program Operation Evaluation and Strategy Study 2000	Review of Taipei City Community Planner Program and Selection of Community Planners; Review of Taipei City Neighborhood Development Plan and suggestions	X	Taipei City Community Building Center Establishment Project	(about Community Planner)

*: Number of Camps

Table 2. Taipei Community Planners.

Planning Agency, at the Ministry of the Interior. So far, the city government doesn't have regular funding for the 'Community Planner' program. As the funding from the central government decreases by the year, the city government is thinking about how to use limited funding to hire more community planners in order to meet residents' expectations of the 'Community Planner' program. The objective is that every community has a community planner. Consequently, the second year (2000) the Honorary Community Planner pilot program was conducted, nearly half of the first group of planners and new planners supported the program. The Bureau in the third year (2001) turned all the planners into honorary planners. Meanwhile, the soliciting and adopting of environmental renewal plans and neighborhood development plans were added to reinforce the 'Community Planner' program. These changes not only gave planners enough room to apply their specialties to their work but also allowed individuals other than community planners to contribute to the cause of community development and renewal.

It is found that with the implementation of the 'Community Planner' program, administrative resources may be effectively taken advantage of. The promotion of honorary community planners should encourage passionate professionals interested in serving their communities to work with their fellow residents to realize planning and design ideas and to cooperate with the public segment to maintain environmental justice. Looking from a different perspective, the phenomenon fully demonstrates the support by the public segment in terms of funding and its impact on the promotion of other relevant work.

Promoting the 'Neighborhood Development Plan (NDP)'

The promotion of the NDP is aimed at improving regular NIP. Rather than focusing on short-term goals, the NDP stresses long-term objectives in an effort to gradually eliminate the disadvantages of traditional urban planning. It is hoped that, through participation by residents and partnership between the public and private sectors, a new resource consolidation model may be established in order to improve government decision-making, upgrade urban living quality and strengthen the city's competitiveness in the globalization process.

Expectations and needs of community residents are more likely to be met if community planners (local professionals) are to assist community residents in reaching a consensus in terms of the development of the community with their professional knowledge. The community planner is to work with residents to draw up an NDP with community living, environmental quality and public interest taken into consideration.

Therefore, the Bureau's plan to include community planners in the promotion of urban reform policy is observable. It is also observable how the government officials' understanding of

community planners impacts the establishment and revision of the system.

Establishing Community Planner Experience Exchange Platform: From 'Neighborhood Community Planner Work Meeting' to 'Community Planning Service Center' –

Many community planners told the Bureau that they became community planners so they could use their leisure time to provide the community with their services. Therefore, the Community Planner Meeting held by the Bureau once every two to three months requires that they submit formal reports, which has created excessive administrative work for them. The Bureau also discovered that though the subjects of discussion of the meeting center around 'The Old City Center,' 'The City Center' and 'The Area Neighboring the City Center,' subtler community needs are usually not dealt with. For this reason, having those who are willing and popular with community residents convene the Neighborhood Community Planner Work Meeting encourages exchange between community planners of the same neighborhood. By doing so, professionals are encouraged to conduct in-depth studies of the common issues of the neighborhood and reflect the needs of the neighborhood.

The 'Community Planner' program has entered its third year. Since some planners of some communities have been replaced, the Bureau finds it necessary to help communities to set up permanent offices in order to provide residents with a relatively more stable space of discussion and assembly. Residents are encouraged to participate in community affairs with the establishment of permanent offices. As it is hard to find suitable locations and personnel as well as raise enough funds in a short time, it is the Bureau's plan to encourage colleges to have space planning departments and non-governmental or non-profit organizations to sponsor the establishment of Community Planning Service Centers.

For schools, this move encourages teachers and students alike to care more about neighboring communities. Young professionals may learn about the specifics of becoming a community planner. For the public sector, the abundant teaching and human resources as well as the hardware of the private sector may be utilized to provide the community with long-term community planning services. For the community itself, more passionate professionals are willing to contribute to the cause. For community planners, there are plenty of opportunities for dialogue between profession practice and learning. Because of the win-win advantage, the Community Planning Service Center replaces the Neighborhood Community Planner Work Meeting, becoming the platform of experience exchange between community planners.

The Young Community Planner Training Program and Community Empowerment

The purpose of the 'Young Community Planner Training Program' is to recruit passionate, creative, young, space planning professionals who are willing to devote themselves to community planning and to offer them opportunities of systematic learning and practical training. Their abilities in communication, coordination and consolidation are to be nurtured until they possess the knowledge and skills needed to promote community planning affairs. The goal is that they are committed to becoming community planners, devoting themselves to the work of community building and sustainable development.

Since it was launched, many from different segments of the society have responded with much interest. As experiences accumulate, new recruits are no longer limited to space planning professionals and community operators. The Program has even become the role model of other counties and cities. Miaoli County, for example, copied the Program and gradually set up a community planning and building mechanism while

Tainan City developed unique Tainan Studies in the process. The successes of the application of the Program to other counties and cities should be attributed to the conscientious and careful attitude of the study of Professor Huang Ding-kuo.⁵ He not only compiled the handouts of lecturers and placed them in one book but also published the details of how the Program was conducted and reviewed.

Since residents are of different social, economic and cultural backgrounds, the Taipei city government needs individuals who not only possess professional knowledge in community planning but also have the passion for community work. That's how the Program was conceived.

In order to practice 'community empowerment', the Bureau has joined forces with community colleges and community planning service centers to offer a series of seminars on urban planning and community building. 'Children Environmental Experience Camps' have also been launched to make residents more aware of the environment so that the ideas of community planning and perpetual development may take root.

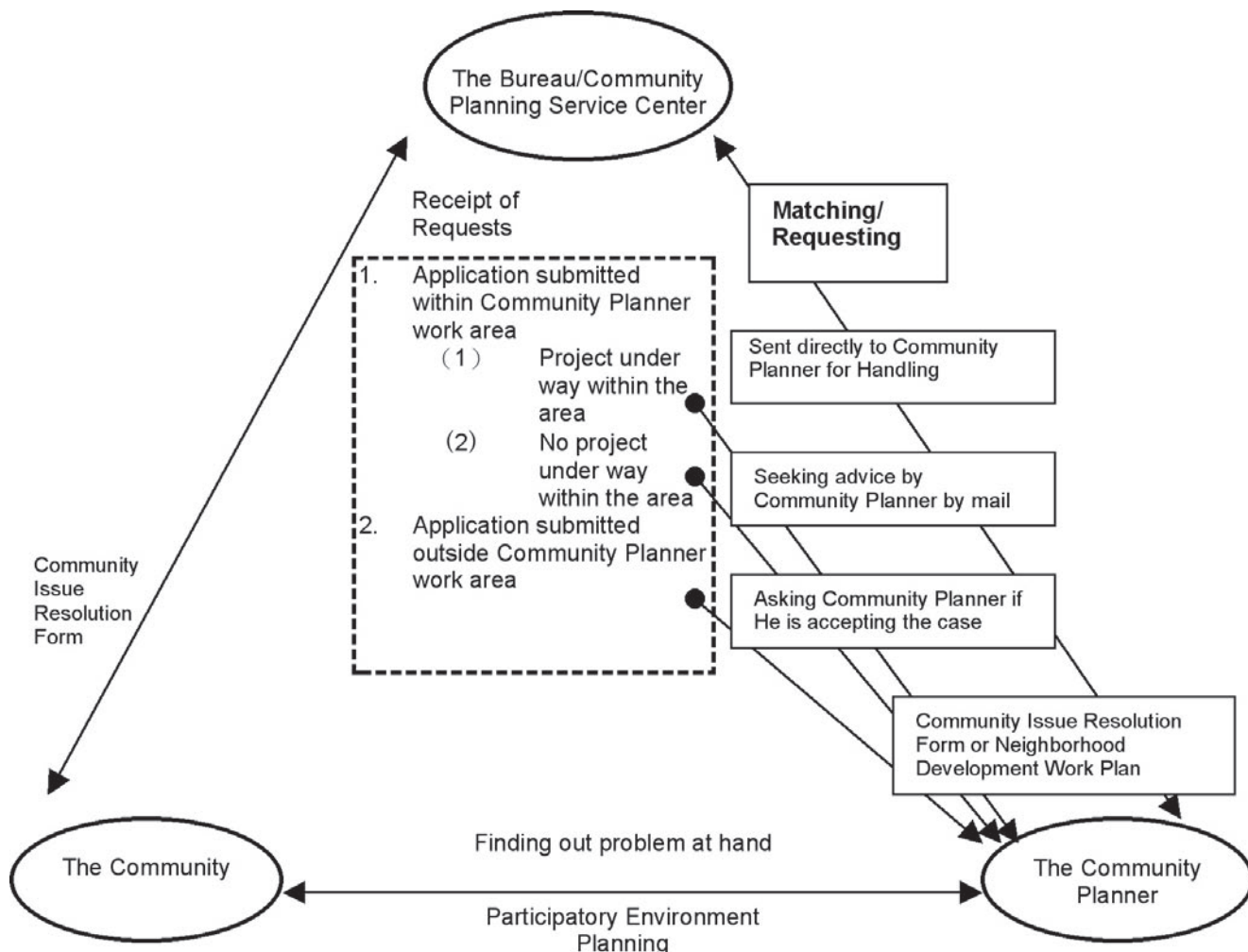


Figure 1. The Community Planner Matching/Requesting Mechanism (compiled by the research).

The Community Planner Matching/Requesting Mechanism

All Taipei community planners are now honorary planners. In order to better serve disadvantaged communities, encourage participation by residents and help establish the link between community planning service centers and community planners, the Bureau consulted the Professionals Dispatch System established after the Kobe earthquake to facilitate after-quake restoration and reconstruction. The result was establishment of the Community Planner Matching/Requesting Mechanism as illustrated in Figure 1.

With the establishment of the Community Issue Resolution mechanism, the Planning Service Center becomes the community planning workstation within the administrative division that is responsible for communication and coordination. Its main task is to find the right community planner to help community residents to eliminate flaws in the community public spaces.

The Community Liaison Mechanism

Mr. Zeng Xuzheng wrote an article titled 'The City Government Needs Prodding? Community Autonomy, the City Machine is yet to be Fine-Tuned.' It was published in *Liberty Times* on December 30, 1999. He said, 'The community's overall needs once and again accentuate the absurdity of the self-centeredness of different departments of the city government. The community is a base of actual living. With the community as the center, many issues are involved and intertwined. When the community tries to solve a problem, many departments of city government are involved. However, the departments are so used to their self-centeredness; they are not able to effectively solve the problem. In some cases, they even damage the morale of the community.'

For this reason, the Bureau is considering encouraging resident participation and to effectively increase its departments' efficiency. It has been decided that a "community liaison" will be instated for every department that interacts with the community. The idea is borrowed from the liaison office between the President's Office and the Legislature. The liaison will be the consolidated contact point between the department and the community, while the Bureau will be the coordinator between different departments and the community. Through Internet interactions and seminars, the exchange and understanding between the community planner and the community liaison are reinforced. Meanwhile, the horizontal communication between different departments is expected to be improved.

Unfortunately, the mechanism failed to eliminate the self-centeredness of the departments and stopped being promoted in 2003.

REASONS FOR INITIAL SUCCESSES AND BOTTLENECKS CURRENTLY FACED

Taipei City Community Planner Program's Achievements

1. Improving the Use of Public Spaces

Through the environmental renewal plans and neighborhood development plans proposed by the joint efforts of community planners and community residents, public spaces and living quality have been improved. The improvements include bettering neighborhood parks, widening and renewing sidewalks for schoolchildren and pedestrians, utilizing idle spaces, building thematic spaces and invigorating industries. The Program contributes much to creating activity spaces that meet community needs and have community characteristics.

2. Encouraging Participation by Residents

Throughout the entire environmental renewal process, community planners play an important role in the communication between the government and community residents. (Sometimes they even become the targets of criticism.) In the participatory planning and design process, community planners materialize the ideas of residents in terms of the use of spaces. Residents see the process and results of the spatial changes that are created by themselves. They therefore realize the true meaning of participation and community autonomy is thus accomplished.

3. Improving the Public Segment's Efficiency

The communication and interaction among different parties during the environmental renewal process may not be entirely satisfactory, but the process does bring new ideas to those government officials who work strictly by the book. The process makes breakthroughs and creates an "everyone wins" situation. In addition, the fact that community planners deal with different departments of the city government to assist them in implementing many projects indirectly encourages competition between the departments and results in their improvement.

The Reasons behind the Success of Promoting the Initial-Stage Community Planner Program

The Taipei Community Planner Program is successful because it receives support from the central government. The Program was later introduced to other parts of the country and to the disaster-stricken areas in order to rebuild communities. The Program is the first of its kind in the nation. There were no previous examples to follow. Nevertheless, the Bureau set up a four-person taskforce to lay the firm foundation of the Program. The main reasons behind its success are:

1. A Well-Thought Out Strategy and Procedure

- Experts, scholars and trade association representatives were invited to give their opinions.

- A conscientious and careful selection process.
- Letters of appointment were handed out by the mayor to community planners.
- Thematic community planner conferences were held on several separate occasions. The mayor's good image and the media's power were used to promote the community planner program.
- The community planner website was set up at the same time to increase the Program's visibility.
- Outsourced studies were evaluated concurrently.
- The Program was publicized through all sorts of channels.

2. Leadership of consensus and support from high-ranking officials of the city government.

Under the leadership of Chen Weiren and Xu Zhijian, the former and current chiefs of the Bureau, the Program has been one of the Bureau's top priorities. Community planners were invited to participate in the review and change of urban plans, and consultation of urban design reviews. Efforts have been made to continually promote neighborhood renewal plans, neighborhood development plans, improvement of public spaces and urban renewal. In the event of trouble when Mayor Ma goes on his field trips, he often instructs his assistants that community planners are consulted first.

3. Support by the Central Government

In the initial stage, the Program was an experimental project. The city government had no funding for the Program. It was until a \$20 million subsidy was received from the "Expanding Domestic Demand - Creating a New Look of the City" program sponsored by Construction and Planning Agency, Ministry of the Interior, that the Program was able to be launched.

4. Support by Academia

Long before the Program was launched, academia had proposed Community Planning, Community Architecture and Community Design. Many scholars offered precious suggestions to the Bureau when the Bureau first proposed the Program.

5. Response from Professionals

Taipei Architect Union is an example. Soon after Architect Zhang Junzhe became president, he wrote an article saying he would encourage architects to become more involved in the community they lived in. He said architects should actively participate in community building and become a "community architect." They should take part in renewing the environment and help to create a community not only suitable for living and working in but is beautiful. So far, community planners

and members of community planning service centers have consisted of individuals of architecture, urban planning, urban design, landscape design, environmental education, community work and other occupational backgrounds.

Bottlenecks

As time progresses, it is found that the number of community planners stagnates and the visibility of their work decreases. The chief reasons are:

1. Fewer Resources from the Government

Taking a close look at the community building projects now under way, it is obvious that whether there is funding from the government determines whether the project will be successful. As a result, the operations of the Program still rely heavily on funding from the government.

Community planning concerns the interests of residents of different stances in the community. For the government, who habitually considers resident participation as the mere communication with neighborhood chiefs or local opinion leaders, community planners are more likely to face the complex community issues than be the bridge between the public and the private sectors. Having become used to judging performance from the perspective of funding or time, the government thinks less of the sub-standard "performance" of environmental renewal than some "invisible construction projects." Many issues urgently waiting to be dealt with emerge after the usually "quiet" communities have been "stirred up" by community planners. The public segment is unable to tackle so many problems within a short time, which leads residents to think that the public segment is slow to react. The conflicting opinions within the community further aggravate the problem as a result of the loss of votes in coming elections. All the above-mentioned factors make the public segment even slower in the promotion of the "community building" work. When recessions strike, some community planners are unable to continue to contribute to community planning. This is because they have to work hard to make ends meet.

2. The Obscure Role Community Planners Play

According to my personal experience and observation, some community planners think the reason that their work is often obstructed is simply because they lack the authority. It never occurs to them that the role they play is different from that of the planners of the government. What they should do is assist the public and the private segments in solving problems with their professional skills. Some community planners consider themselves "directors" of the community, causing discontent among community residents and tension felt by opinion leaders. Some others accept residents' suggestions without giving enough thought to the importance of the environment and public interests.

When the program was first launched, Associate Professor Chen Liangquan once said, "If an architect or a consultant is chosen by the city government or the Bureau, it is questionable whether the architect may become 'the community architect.' Though he is called "the community architect" or is chosen to serve the community, his boss is still the Bureau or the city government. In fact, the needs and opinions of the community are not necessarily the same as those of the city government or the Bureau. Whose side is 'the community architect' to choose when that happens? The community architect certainly should play a role of coordination. However, since he is chosen by the Bureau, he tends to get into an 'awkward' position. The Phase-1 Architects the Bureau proposed recently could only become duty-bound 'architects stationed by the city government in various administrative divisions' rather than 'community architects.'" No matter whether community planners are planners of residents or planners of the city government, they are planners of the Bureau rather than planners of the city government even though they get the letter of appointment from the mayor.

3. Awakening of Community Awareness - The Transitional Period

At the beginning of the Program, the Program was aimed at solving problems the city government faced when promoting neighborhood environmental renewal. The much-hyped Program led residents to believe that community planners were able to solve all their problems. Residents were disappointed to find that they were not while planners felt enormous pressure.

The problem was further aggravated by incomplete awakening of community awareness, personal interests in disguise of community planning, different aesthetic ideas and folk beliefs. Community planners therefore face questioning and challenges from all sides when conducting planning. Some left their posts after unsuccessful cooperation with the community.

Furthermore, the idea of community building itself has not taken root. Most people think community planners offer their services for free. Full-time community planners therefore cannot make a living without funding from the public segment. The situation has prevented many professionals interested in becoming community planners from doing so. The phenomenon can only be corrected by efforts in the longer term.

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS

The Success of the Program Relies on Solidifying Resident Participation

Establishment of the Program is not for the design profession itself. As a result, the prerequisite for promoting the Program is the realization that the Program is after all a supplementary mechanism to solidify "resident participation."

Residents have the right to determine how the environment and space is used. Only with their participation can the environment and space be planned and designed in a way that meets their requirements and a humane, hospitable living space created.

Consider the issue from the resident, the planning profession and the public sector angles. Residents should fight for their rights and abilities of space planning. Planning professionals should think about how to help residents to fight for their rights of space planning and what should be left for residents to decide. The so-called "rights" have much to do with "abilities." Without abilities, the rights or power are likely to be dominated by those who have abilities. Therefore, the community planner's job is obvious. His responsibilities include reinforcing residents' power in controlling their environment. This is closely related to the community planner's abilities. The more able a community planner is, the more he can do to help residents take back their lost rights. His job is to discover the deepest needs and most basic requirements of residents.

What the public segment (the planner) has to do is very similar to what the community planner has to do. The only difference is that the planner of the public segment has more power than the community planner. Therefore, the public segment should think about how to share some of its power with others so that residents have more say in deciding what their environment should be like. Once residents have the power, the community planner naturally has something to do and goals to set. When the Program was first launched, some planners in the public segment already thought of using existing resources to train community planners and correct the biased or erroneous ideas of some planners in the public segment.

Promotion of the Program Depends Largely on Government Authority

The community planner programs now promoted in other counties and cities are directed by the public segment. The reasons are:

- The Program was originally initiated by professionals in the public sector.
- The community force is not powerful enough to create a need for the Program.
- The community planning profession does not pay well enough for professionals to earn a living.
- Residents trust community planners because they know the planners are hired by the government, not because they trust their professional knowledge and skills.
- The planning profession, when it comes to community planning, has not become a real profession. (At present, community planners are not from within the community. Rather, they are individuals interested in participating

in community affairs.) Consequently, when the planning professional returns to or enters the community, it is easier for him to claim that he has the government's certification.

The Most Important Qualities of a Community Planner are Passion and Professionalism

The author thinks the difference between a community planner and a regular planning professional is not that a community planner is selected and certified by the government. Rather, it is that a community planner has the passion to serve the community and the professional knowledge required.

Moreover, when the community planner is conducting community planning, he faces not the person who pays him but residents of the community who have different ideas about community planning and different interest groups and political factions. Without the passion to serve the community, it is hard for anyone to face the different needs and questioning from all sides. The biggest challenge the community planner faces is how to find the solution to the problem through creativity of the planning profession and how to carry out the solution with utmost sincerity and the best communication (another aspect of the profession.) Both passion and profession are indispensable.

Suggestions

1. Legislation of the Community Building Act

Both the Taipei city government and the central government are currently working on legislation for community building. The author suggests that, in the legislation process, more stress is laid on the public sector than the private sector in order to urge the public sector to invest steadily in community building. Meanwhile, existing administrative mechanisms should be adjusted to give residents more opportunities to participate in running their communities. Businesses may be encouraged to sponsor maintenance of community public spaces in return for tax credits. By doing so, more funds could be raised to finance community building.

2. The Urban Planning Review Process should be More Open

Reviews of and changes to urban planning concern residents' interests. The pursuit of public welfare and the upgrading and improvement of the quality of the living environment require much professional knowledge. However, the existing evaluation method that focuses on the target population is becoming ineffective and unsatisfactory as the structures of industry and population change rapidly. As a result, many European and US cities are managing their communities with vision. An open urban planning review process is helpful in creating a process similar to advocacy planning under the development permit system. Community planners are good candidates for managers of community opinions, working with the public

segment in helping community residents to determine the rationality and adequacy of reviews of and changes to urban planning.

In the short term, the Bureau is advised to modify the operating procedure of the Neighborhood Development Plan. The suggestion is that it thinks about how to include community residents' visions of community development in the review process of urban planning in a more conscientious and careful manner. For community planners, they should endeavor to improve their professional knowledge and skills in order to be able to play the role of community manager. At a time of financial difficulties, they are advised to take the initiative to become organized in an effort to exchange experiences among themselves and to shake off the image of being representatives of the public sector. By doing so, they may expand their workroom from public spaces to "the private domain." They can play the key supporting role in the urban renewal projects now under way so they can find a way to make a living in the existing Taipei urban setting.

ENDNOTES

¹ At that time, many NIPs were handled by local non-governmental organizations such as Li offices, community development associations, etc. They were not handled by planning professionals. As a result, most communities sought assistance from professionals while these professionals played a role of participant or assistant.

² Would it be more suitable for professionals (the third party) to play the role of communication and coordination and provide professional opinion?

³ Where are the professionals? Professionals, you should take the initiative to help them!

⁴ Such as consultation of applicable laws and regulations, consultation of improvement and sponsorship of public space and explanation of applicable civic administrative operations.

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TWO ASIAN MODELS OF PLANNING DECISION MAKING

Case Studies of the Planning Process in Singapore New Downtown and Kaohsiung Multifunctional Business District

Perry Pei-Ju Yang and Ze Li

ABSTRACT

Singapore and Kaohsiung, two major port cities in East Asia, have been facing urban physical changes through large-scale urban initiatives in the central city areas during the past decade. This paper explores how the distinctive planning systems in the two cities affect the local actions and help shape the physical environment and future scenarios. Two central city areas are investigated and taken as different Asian models for understanding the processes behind urban transformation. In Singapore, urban form making follows a top-down planning control system. In the 1990s, a new downtown plan was proposed at the reclaimed land, Marina South, using the concepts of through-block linkages, all weather comfort and separated multimodal pedestrian and transportation circulation. The ambitious plan is supported by the three tiers of Singapore's urban planning system from the island-wide conceptual plan, district-wide land use plan to the site specific urban design guidelines. In the Kaohsiung City central area, we observe a different urban pattern of street networks, block systems and building types generated through an evolutionary process of urban growth from the north to the south over a few decades. At almost the same period, a new business center was proposed on a piece of large-scale industrial land along the waterfront near the existing central area. A relatively loose spatial and regulatory framework was provided in Kaohsiung, where an incremental process was adopted for dealing with the multiple and complex landholdings on the new waterfront business center. A recent governmental-initiated planning mechanism of "community architect" plays a certain role in the process through participation. The article finally raises the issue of participation in the shaping of better environment in the Asian urban context. The two Asian