

Public Power in the Planning Process:

an Evaluation of Access, Deliberation, and Accountability in the
Decision-Making Processes used to create the Lansdowne
Partnership Plan

By

Claire van Koughnett

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Executive Summary

Public Power in the Planning Process is a discussion of the decisionmaking process used in the creation of the Lansdowne Partnership Plan, which deals with the redevelopment of an urban park in Ottawa. It analyses three stages of the process (from June 2009 to

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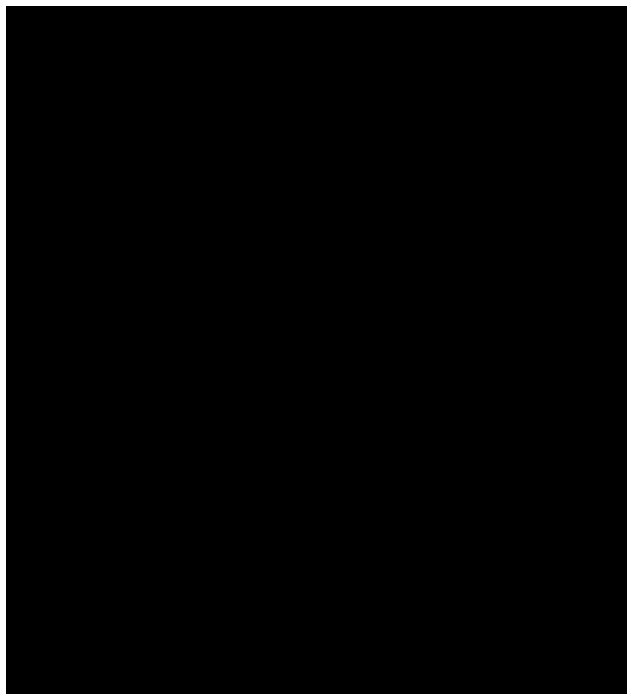
Methodology

The research was based on a review of available documents from a newspaper, and the website of the Friends of Lansdowne Park. Based on these documents, key events and positions were identified. The process timeline was divided into three key phases (emergence, collaboration, and antagonism) which then formed the basis of the analysis. The process is evaluated using analytic frameworks designed for collaborative planning processes. Christensen et al. (2008) identified the key stakeholders and their resources, interests and action channels. The main component of the analysis is based on the framework developed by Alger and Löfgren (2008) which is designed to evaluate how democratic a collaborative planning process is. The framework identifies five main criteria based on democratic norms, three of which were used in this report. Finally, the process was also analyzed using the Ladder of Citizen Participation model developed by Arnstein (1969).

Analysis

of access, deliberation, and accountability, a section illustrating the key stakeholders, and a section placing the three phases of the process on the Ladder of Citizen Participation.

Arnstein's (1969) Ladder of Citizen Participation is a simple tool to rank participatory planning processes on a scale of citizen empowerment. The first phase of the process scores near the bottom, at the informing level. The second phase scores as placation, as City Council made an effort to tack a



2 Theorists of collaborative planning processes highlight the important gains which come in the form of intangible results. These include change and adaptability, trust, relationships, political capital, and learning. The analysis examined these aspects of the decision making process and indicated that the process for the Lansdowne Partnership Plan degraded trust and relationships and increased tensions between stakeholders.

3 There are many areas for future research on Lansdowne Park. First, future research should include extensive interviews with key stakeholders. Second, it should investigate events over a broader timeline, in order to include events from early 2007 until 2012 or later for a better understanding of the effects of the process on trust and relationships and to include the cancellation of the beginning of the design process and the implementation of the plan. A third area for suggested future research is the evolution of the plan, and its relationship to the interests and actions of stakeholders. Finally, future research should include all five of Agger and Löfgren's criteria: the development of adaptiveness and the development of political identities and capabilities.

4 The three analytic frameworks achieved different levels of success as evaluation tools for the chosen case. Agger and Löfgren's (2008) framework for the democratic analysis of collaborative planning processes allows a variety of processes and aspects to be analyzed based on democratic values. The framework is applicable to the chosen case study and adaptable to multiple situations and contexts, and can be used for the analysis of a variety of very different cases. The use of democratic principles makes the perspective of the analysis clear, grounding it in commonly understood norms. Christensen's (1993) framework for stakeholder analysis seems rather simplistic and rigid. It works very well, however, when combined with another more detailed analytic framework. The Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969) is a simplistic though well recognized model. In the case of the Lansdowne Partnership Plan, the first two phases worked well with Arnstein's (1969) framework, while the third phase did not. The Ladder of Citizen Participation is not recommended for more complicated, nuanced, or multifaceted problems.